

The Descendants Of
Patrick Cavanaugh
1832 - 1917
and
Mary Ryan
1831 - 1912

Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota

The Descendants of Patrick Cavanaugh and Mary Ryan

Since the Irish support of the Stuart king, James II, in 1695, Catholics had been “barred from the army and navy, the law, commerce, and every civic activity. No Catholic could vote, hold any office under the Crown, or purchase land, and Catholic estates were dismembered by an enactment directing that at the death of a Catholic owner, his land was to be divided among all his sons, unless the eldest became a Protestant, when he would inherit the whole.”²

Catholics could not attend schools, nor keep schools, nor send their children to be educated abroad. The practice of the Catholic faith was forbidden, and informing was encouraged. Priest hunting was treated as a sport.

By 1832 when Patrick Cavanaugh was born, these penal laws had been repealed.

Patrick would have been among the first generations to be eligible for an education in almost 150 years. Yet, for whatever reason, he apparently had no opportunity for education. He could neither read nor write, yet he was able to “cipher.”

But the damage, which started in 1690 when William of Orange took the English throne from James II, had been done. “Orangeman” had begun as an expression of contempt for William’s men. Now, it was an expression of hatred for the English, the northern Protestant, and those who curried favor with the English – the Orangeman – the Orange Irish —

The penal laws had been repealed; the Irish should have been able to rediscover the life of their ancestors. But they were destitute, the land was under the control of the English and the plenty that it produced was shipped to England.

For generations, Ireland had been the land of agriculture and husbandry. Its cattle and grain produced an annual abundance – solely for the English. The Irish had only the potato for sustenance. The family pig was destined for the landlord as rent. They had the poorest of the land upon which to live and so the Lumper potato, the coarsest of potatoes, capable of growing in the poorest of soil, became their staple.

A glass of buttermilk and the potato, while a boring and unimaginative diet, provided the minerals and vitamins necessary for healthy growth. Their children didn’t have rickets, nor did they go hungry for there was usually a spare potato or two at the hearth for midday if desired. Laughter was still heard in the hovels of the poor.

Then, in 1845, Famine threw his mantle of death across the land—

There had been crop failures in the past but they had been regional in nature, now the blight spread across the entire face of Ireland. Amid the healthy fields of grain, the Irish peasant hungered. The grain must go to England. Amid the plenty of English landowners’ cattle, the Irish family was starving. The Irish family’s pig was sacrosanct for to lose the pig, was to be unable to pay the rent. To be unable to pay the rent was to be evicted from the land. To be evicted was almost certain death.

Black Leg³ now stalked Ireland as Famine’s companion.

As always, there were those who preyed upon the desperate. The stories are well-told.

Poor Unions, a regional welfare-type program, were made responsible for the poor within their jurisdiction. The Guardians⁴ soon discovered it was more economical and less

² *The Great Hunger* Cecil Woodham-Smith p 27

³ Black Leg--Scurvy

⁴ Governing Boards

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trouble to purchase a one-way ticket to Canada, the United States, or other countries than to place whole families on assistance. The cheapest tickets were purchased, usually aboard ships that were in desperate need of repairs. Passengers, already weakened by hunger, died in the squalid quarters of the ships' holds. Others drowned as the ships foundered at sea. Those who survived were left still destitute and still starving, but now in a foreign land. The term "coffin ship" was born.

Soup kitchens, too few and too far apart, were begun. Their largess was strictly rationed — a quart of soup to adults and a pint of soup to children. The spoons were chained to the bowls. In some instances, tickets were sold to tourists so they could watch the starving Irish eat.

But there were also those who tried so valiantly to help and were stymied by English law and economic structure. Quakers sent food in donated ships, but English law required it be offloaded and reloaded to English ships before delivery to Ireland — an expenditure that reduced the amount of aid they could send.

By the spring of 1847, world opinion had forced the English to allow foreign ships carrying relief to go directly to Irish ports.⁵

All through the United States generosity was shown, railroads carried all packages marked IRELAND free of charge. Other public carriers stored and delivered any bundle or box bound for the Irish at no cost. The U.S. Government allowed its warships to rush to Ireland's shores with supplies.

People reached out with what they could whether the offering was great or small.

They who knew more than anyone the pain of starvation and loss of home, the impoverished Choctaw Indians, still raw from their Long March⁶, raised the sum of \$170.00⁷ for the relief of Irish.

The people of the United States sent more relief than all of Europe combined.

It was not enough.

When it ended, Ireland had lost two million people, about thirty percent of its population, to Famine and emigration.

Patrick Cavanaugh emigrated.

⁵ *Paddy's Lament* Thomas Gallagher p 79

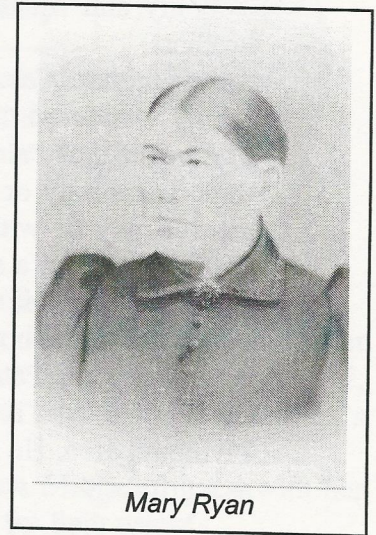
⁶ *The Choctaw Trail of Tears*

⁷ Over \$5,000.00 in today's currency

First Generation

1. **Patrick¹ Cavanaugh-46** was born in May 1832 – give or take a couple months and years. In the 1900 census, he claimed March of 1830 as his birth date. Family belief says Patrick was born in the city of Cork, County Cork, Munster Province, Ireland. He was the son of Patrick Cavanaugh-867 and Catherine Allen. Patrick immigrated to the United States with his sister, Bridget. It was through her death certificate that their father's name became known. Following the naming conventions of the time, it would mean Patrick was among the youngest, if not the youngest, of sons.

Patrick married **Mary Ryan-47**. She was born May 1831 in Wexford County, Leinster Province, Ireland. Her age varies more wildly in the census records – some indicate she was ten years younger than Patrick.



Mary Ryan

Both Patrick and Mary immigrated to the United States sometime during 1852. Family traditions conflict regarding their marriage with one grandchild saying they were married in Ireland and another claiming that Patrick and Mary met aboard ship and married in the U.S. The 1900 census states a marriage of 45 years, which puts the wedding date sometime in 1855 – after their arrival in the United States and possibly after their arrival in Plymouth.

AGED HOMESTEADER DEAD	
MRS. MARY CAVANAUGH, 81, CAME TO COUNTY IN 1856, SUCCEUMS IN PLYMOUTH TOWNSHIP.	
Mrs. Mary Cavanaugh, a pioneer homesteader in Hennepin county, died Sunday at her home in Plymouth township, where she had lived since 1856. In that year she came from Ireland with her husband, Patrick Cavanaugh. They sought the far west, passed through the village of Minneapolis, then in the midst of its first boom, and made their way to the smiling vales of Plymouth. On the land Mr. Cavanaugh located they lived together for fifty-six years. Mrs. Cavanaugh, who was 81 years old, is survived by her husband, two sons, John and William, both of Plymouth, and two daughters, Mrs. Joseph Donahue of Maple Grove, and Miss Elizabeth Cavanaugh, Plymouth.	

Minneapolis Journal
June 11, 1912

One plausible scenario that would fulfill family traditions would be that Patrick worked his way cross-country on the railroad until it reached Moline, Illinois in 1854. Ninety-one miles to the north lay Galena, Illinois. Bordered by Wisconsin and the Mississippi river, Galena was a thriving port for steamboats transporting both goods and passengers up the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers. Patrick could have accompanied other immigrants to Galena and the steamboats. Perhaps he met Mary Ryan on the steamboat from Galena. Such a scenario would fulfill the tradition of working his way to Minnesota on the railroad and meeting Mary on the ship.

On July 10, 1856⁸, just after the territory west of the Mississippi was opened for settlement, Patrick paid cash for the westerly half of the northwest quarter of section 34 – 80 acres, near Parker's Lake, in what would become the town of Plymouth, Minnesota.

⁸ First and Early Settlers of Hennepin County

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He was one of the first settlers of the area.

Among his neighbors were T. & M. Ryan. Mary had two brothers named Timothy and Maurice. It is probable that this Ryan property belonged to Mary's brothers.

Catherine Cavanagh-30, who did the first research on the Patrick Cavanaugh family wondered, "...where a 22-year-old man would get the money to pay cash." The belief that Patrick earned his way to Minnesota by working on the railroad for three years may or may not have paid sufficiently to save for a cash purchase. The answer may lie with Patrick's granddaughter, Anna Cavanagh Mengelkoch-17, who with a wink and a smile proclaimed, "Grandpa Pat had a wine cellar under the front porch. He supplied neighbor and traveler alike."

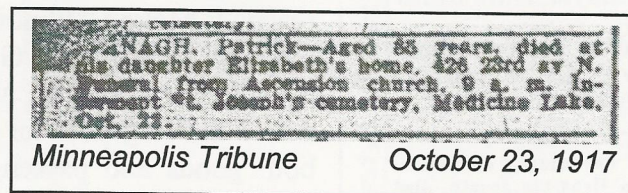
It should be noted that Ireland considered a good "poteen" brewer an asset to the community and Patrick may be one of those assets.

Patrick was a shrewd businessman and at one time owned four farms in the Plymouth area. He later transferred three of them to his children in preparation for or as a gift for their weddings.

Mary died of pneumonia on June 9, 1912 in Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota, and was buried in St Joseph's Cemetery, Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

After the death of Mary, Patrick sold the farm and moved to 426-23rd Avenue North, Minneapolis, with his youngest daughter, Elizabeth. Patrick succumbed to a heart infection on October 20, 1917 in Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota, and after services at Ascension church on October 23, 1917, was laid to rest next to his wife in St Joseph's Cemetery in Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota..

Plymouth still boasts a pond, Cavanaugh Lake, named after Patrick.



Patrick and Mary had five children:

+ 2 M i. **John Henry Cavanaugh-45**
Born on September 11, 1857 in Minnesota.
Died November 21, 1939.

+ 3 M ii. **William Cavanaugh-6**



*William
Cavanaugh*

Born on January 26, 1862.
Died November 1, 1934.

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+ 4 F iii. **Margaret Cavanaugh-652**

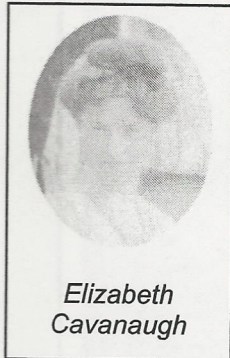
It is uncertain whether Margaret was born in April or May of 1866. The month of May is used in the census records, and her death certificate states May 26, 1866, yet her grandson, Leo Donahue-775 believed her birthday to be April 16, 1866.

Margaret
Cavanaugh



Margaret died on October 7, 1920.

5 F iv. **Elizabeth Cavanaugh-653** was born in April of 1868 in Minnesota.



Elizabeth
Cavanaugh

Elizabeth devoted her youth to caring for her parents and after Mary's death in 1912 she cared for her father. Between 1915 and 1917, she is listed in the Minneapolis directories as "housekeeper" in Patrick's home at 426-23rd Avenue North.

From 1917 until 1920, Elizabeth's sister, Margaret, lived with her and Elizabeth cared for her as she had cared for their parents.

Elizabeth and **James Devery-691** were married sometime between 1923, when the directory listed Elizabeth as retired, and 1930, when she is again mentioned in the directories as a storekeeper at 807 Lowry Avenue North.

James was born about 1871. He was employed as Groundman by Northwestern Bell in 1923, but by 1926 he had become an independent contractor and was living in the Lowry Avenue home. From 1927 until his death in 1931, he had a small grocery at that address. Elizabeth may well have run the store while James ran his contracting business, however, Elizabeth is not mentioned by name in the directories until 1930. James died on May 6, 1931 and was buried in St Joseph's Cemetery, Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota. It should be noted that while the date of death for James is garnered from a funeral notice, his headstone has the engraved year of 1930.

DEVERY, JAMES—Aged 60. Survived by wife and two sisters, Mrs. M. M. Somers and Bridget Devery, also two brothers, ~~Kearn J. Thomas Devery, all of Minn.~~ Funeral Saturday, 8:15 a.m. residence of Kearn Devery, 2342 Upton av N., Ascension church 9 a.m. Gill Brothers service.

After eighteen years of suffering from general paralysis, Elizabeth died of heart failure on July 9, 1945 in Alexandria, Douglas County, Minnesota. Elizabeth had lived in the Fritz home for fifteen years, but had been in Alexandria for only seven and one-half years, so it is assumed that she moved with the family. Whether the Fritz home belonged to friends or was a board and care facility is unknown.

Elizabeth is buried alongside her husband in St Joseph's Cemetery, Plymouth, Hennepin County, Minnesota.

6 F v. **Alice Cavanaugh-6360**

Alice is the unknown of Patrick's children. Only one record has been found of Alice's birth. However, the 1900 census says that Mary

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had five children, four of whom were still living. There is at this time, no way of knowing whether or not Alice was the oldest child. But it is suspected that since none of the Patrick's grandchildren had any recollection of anyone mentioning her, she died before the other children were born or when they were very young.

Alice died prior to the establishment of a cemetery in Plymouth and is probably buried on the original Patrick Cavanaugh farm in an unmarked grave.



426 – 23th Ave. N., Minneapolis, Minnesota

The home of Patrick Cavanaugh and his daughter, Elizabeth