

EUGENE DALY - By his Daughter

by Marion K. Joyce

Eugene Daly with his wife Lil and their only child Marion (Mary) in 1929. Mary is now a widow, living in Missouri.



EUGENE Patrick Daly was born in Athlone, Co. Westmeath, on January 23, 1883.

He was the oldest of a fairly large family. Ireland was under British rule in those years and many young Irishmen joined the Royal Irish Constabulary and worked for the Crown.

Every year on July 12, the Orangemen's day, the North of Ireland held demonstrations, riots and all sorts of provocative parades celebrating their victory over the Irish in 1690. It was, and still is, a dangerous day. Lots of extra security was sent in to reduce the chaos and injuries and damage to persons and property synonymous with the day. Officer Daly and many of his peers were sent up to Belfast to keep law and order. They came under assault.

HIS FATHER KILLED

Eugene's Dad was hit on the head by a brick thrown by a rioter. The injury proved fatal and in a matter of days Eugene was an orphan, the head of the household and his mother's only help and mainstay. He got a job in the Woollen mills. He was twelve years old and earned at the start two shillings a week. His mother had no time for grief as her family had to be reared. She took in boarders and made her way as best she could.

One of Eugene's brothers grew up and became a British soldier. Years later another brother became a soldier in the Irish Free State Army. Eugene took to his job in the mills and learned as he went. He became a good mechanic and was in charge of tuning all the looms on which the ladies wove Irish tweed. By 1912 he had made his decision to emigrate to the United States.

THEIR SAVIOUR IS CALLED AN 'IDIOT'!

The two girls that he helped rescue from the *Titanic*

SAW MEN SHOT

The town of Athlone has the river Shannon running through it, with many boat clubs and a yearly regatta. My Dad was an excellent oarsman and swimmer and that was why he tried to persuade the officers to allow him into a lifeboat. He saw that there weren't enough men to man the boat.

His legs were badly frozen, but hardy young man that he was, he recovered and suffered no ill effects over the years. Kate Daly, my grandmother, was a tiny woman but one of great strength and character. She raised her family according to her convictions. They lived quite close to the Franciscan church in Athlone. Her sons served Mass as altar boys in their young years. Early or late, whenever they had to be there, she rooted them out. And my Dad used to tell how she would douse them with cold water if they were slow to move out of bed when she called them.

Titanic, he put on his shoes and his trousers and, a heavy black overcoat with an Astrakhan fur collar. He still had it on when picked up by the *Carpathia* - that coat and his watch and rosary were treasured relics of his survival.

Many a cold night in my childhood in Ireland, that coat would be thrown over us in bed to keep us warm. We called it "the *Titanic*"

He had a job in Yonkers, and coming home from work one evening in late May, early June, he noticed these little flashing lights over the grass margin and all around him. He was really confused and a little frightened. Was he seeing things? He was afraid to ask his landlady in case she would think he had been drinking or that he was queer in the head. Ultimately someone told him about fireflies. Precious innocence!

That was my Dad. He had a noble simplicity about him that endeared him to some, and caused him to be a pain in the neck to others. He was so straight that he would have no part of even the slightest dishonesty, and he lost out of many opportunities because of his principles. Anything that he thought would be displeasing to God was not for him.

to straighten him out? Who but Eugene, big-hearted simple Eugene. What an unlikely pair!

companion to various wealthy matrons. When Jim and Eugene were hanging around together, she was working for a lady named Mandelbaum.

Lusitania to go home on holiday, but Mrs Mandelbaum changed her travel plans and reneged on the vacation time. So my Mom had to cancel her ticket and was very angry and disappointed at the time -- later she was thanking God for her life.)

Her friends from home and her sister Delia all thought Lil had married beneath her because Eugene was a mechanic and their folks at home were shopkeepers and merchants, etc. The old Irish snobbishness still persists - the penny looking down on the halfpenny.

Lil and Gene were married in St Anthony's Church in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and had a small quiet wedding reception and short honeymoon. Then he went off to war and Lil went back to work.

A few months later the war ended and our brave Eugene was back again large as life, and with very strong feelings about his bride working for any rich Madame. So, despite offers of a job in the silk mills in Connecticut and a house as well (on condition that Lil would still be free to cater to the Madame) my Mom found that she had to say goodbye to the luxury of her job and settle down in a cold water flat in Brooklyn with a greasy mechanic arriving home hungry and tired each evening. But she made the adjustment and they adjusted very happily.

My Mom, who was a very pretty woman with a great personality, had had many opportunities to wed before she met Eugene. But she said that she knew when she married him that she had a faithful spouse and that he was the only one of all her suitors who would go to Church with her. And that was the most important thing of all.

The Greenpoint section of Brooklyn was very nice in those years. They spent their Sundays (after Church mind you!) in Coney Island and they had a nice life together. They were in their early 30s when married. My Mom always prayed for a baby, but none came. Then in 1921 they got a cable from home to say that Eugene's mother was dying. So my Mom booked passage right away and they sailed for home.

PANICS ABOARD SHIP

As soon as the ship was a few hours out Eugene lost all sense of security. He was in a state of extreme panic. He couldn't eat or sleep. He walked the decks the whole voyage, and my Mom paid a steward to look out for him. Finally they arrived in Queenstown and there they rested a little before going on to Athlone. When they finally got there, his Mom was over her sickness and recovered and lived for many years. She was in her nineties before God finally took her.

When all was well, Lil was ready to return to their life in the States. She had lived over there since she was seventeen and loved it. The climate at home in Ireland was hard on her. She hated the dampness and the cold. But to her great chagrin, Eugene wouldn't budge. Not an inch would he budge. He wouldn't cross that wild ocean again for love nor money. No sir! His Mom wanted them to settle in Athlone. Eugene had sent her money over the years to buy a nice house there, and she wanted him to enjoy it with her.

My mother's people in Co Mayo wanted them to settle there. Her Dad, my Grandpa Caulfield, was a land commissioner and could get them a nice piece of land and help them build a house. My Mom wanted no part of that plan. They decided to go on a little holiday by themselves to think things out. They went to Galway, often referred to as the next parish to America.

My Mom liked Galway. There was a woollen mill there just like the one Eugene used to work in as a young lad. He promptly got a job there. They rented a little house at No. 7 St John's Terrace. Meanwhile the prayers were still going up for a baby, and four years later, my 42-year-old Mom felt funny and thought she might have a tumour. Lo and behold, the tumour turned out to be me! And here I am to tell the tale!

My Mom never stopped thanking God for sending her the child she had desired for so long. They were eight years married before I came. Now the little family was complete and life was happy. It had its ups and downs – the mill closed and Dad had no job for a while when I was small – but he busied himself doing odds and ends and working whenever he could.

He was a great fixer, always fixing things for our neighbours and friends. Clocks were a speciality of his. He'd drive his wife crazy. He'd have all the parts spread out on a newspaper on the kitchen table and you couldn't touch anything until he put in all back together again – which he usually did.

St John's Terrace consisted on two rows of small council houses occupied by simple working people like my Dad. For the most part they were sober churchgoing people, although there were a few reprobates. I grew up in spite of all my Mom's coddling and in my early teens I met the love of my life.

He was a handsome young man with a beautiful voice. We sang together in our church choir and he came to my house to hear my father's collection of John McCormack records. Eugene loved and revered John McCormack. As you know, my Dad was very musical. He was not only a piper, but a great Irish step dancer in his young years. When I was very young he had a set of bagpipes and when he played them, our dog would howl pitifully as the pitch of the pipes was hard on the dog's ears.

My Mom did not appreciate the music of the bagpipes so my Dad switched to the flute and the flagelette. These he played remarkably well. He played all the jigs and reels and hornpipes that were danced to by serious set dancers. He also loved marches. He loved Sousa marches and xylophone music. We had quite a collection of records. They sent back to the States for some of their things, and among them was an RCA his Master's Voice phonograph and a large record collection.

Well my young man was interested in my Dad's records, and of course in me. We palled around together for a year or two and then when he had to leave to work in England with his father we suddenly realised that we were destined for each other. When I was 18 and my darling Michael was 20, he asked my father for my hand. Dad allowed us to become engaged, but we had to wait until WW2 was over before he's consent to us marrying.

So Michael worked with his Dad in England and sang in the Irish clubs over there and came to the notice of none other than our famous Irish tenor John McCormack. One of the greatest moments was the day Michael met McCormack at a studio in London and made a recording there under his supervision. He

was so nervous – and the great tenor put him at ease by telling him about a slip of the tongue that he was victim to when singing for some great person in his own young days.

My Dad was so proud of Michael, and after we waited three long years he finally gave us the green light. On November 4, 1956, Mary Kate Daly became Mrs Michael Joyce. Here I am, eleven children and many years later, retired but not idle in Union, Missouri, where my son, Michael Jr, is a police sergeant like his great grandpa – Eugene's Dad. Michael's youngest, Moriah, was born on Eugene's birthday, January 23, 1994, and became our 25th grandchild.

Eugene and Lil had good memories of their life in the States, so when Michael and I got the chance to go over there, they were happy for us. We had lived with them from the time of our marriage until 1952. They helped us while Michael spent some years in London and Rome studying voice. My Dad worked on when he could have retired in order to help us. He was so strong and able, and totally devoted to his new grandchildren. We had two girls and a boy while we lived with them.

They settled down to their own life again and had nine years of quiet and tranquillity in Ireland until my mother died in 1961. Great things had been predicted for Michael and his beautiful tenor voice, but rock and roll had arrived and there was no place in show business for any kind of serious singer. Michael tried in America when we arrived, but very soon had to put dreams aside and buckle down to work to feed his ever-growing family.

My darling Michael became ill in his fifties with diabetes and all its complications, and our dear Lord took him to Himself ten years ago, just a little over a year into our happy retirement in Missouri after years in New York.

I am getting ahead of myself. After my mother's death, my Dad was all alone. He had cataract operations, and my friends wrote and told me that he needed care, so we asked him to come to us. He thought about it and decided to come. No ship this time – he rose above all that and flew out, living with us until his death on October 30, 1995.

My older children remember Eugene Daly well. He was tall and straight, even in his last years, although he used a cane. He always spoke in a loud voice, and he had industrial deafness from the din of the looms in the mill. My children were rather in awe of his loud voice and couldn't understand his rich Irish brogue. But they soon got used to it.

The night he arrived, his first question was. "Where is the church?" and I was proudly able to tell him that it was on the next corner to our house. We always made sure we lived close to a church, school and subway.

The only drawback was that you had to cross a heavily-trafficked street to get to the corner where the church was. As the weeks progressed, Dad became a neighbourhood concern. He ignored traffic lights for the most part. If one of our boys or girls wasn't handy to cross him to the church of a morning, he would literally hold up traffic with his cane, and cross majestically. If any driver honked at him, he would whack the bonnet of the car with his cane and yell in his loud brogue "What's yer hurry? When God made time, he made plenty of it."

Our Monsignor told this story at Eugene's wake: "I was standing outside the church one Saturday afternoon with my back to the street looking in when I felt a tap on my shoulder." (The cane again!) "I turned, and this tall old man asked me 'Are you the boss here?' acknowledged that I was indeed the pastor. 'Well then you must know Mike Joyce, he sings for you, doesn't he?' Why yes, of course I know Michael and Marion and the family very well and indeed Mike does sing for us. And who might you be, sir? 'I'm Marion's father, from Galway, Ireland.'

After introducing himself as Eugene Daly, my Dad continued to quiz him: "Are you a Jesuit by any chance?" 'Ah no, I'm not,' said the Monsignor apologetically. "That's a great pity," says Dad. "They are such clever men!"

We came over to America with three children, Dorothy, Priscilla and Adrian. We thought our first American would be a boy and planned to call him Eugene Patrick after Dad. But it turned out to be a sweet baby girl, and he named her Eugenie Patricia. After her came Michael Jr, Mary, Frank, Elizabeth (named for Lil, my mother), who only lived a few hours and is with her Grandpa in Heaven, then Brendan, Eileen and Monica.

A number of us now live in Missouri, in a little town called Union, about an hour out of St Louis. I love it here – it reminds me of Galway. Isn't that great! God has been so good to all of us. Praise and thanks to His great and Holy name!

Acknowledgements

www.encyclopedia-titanica.org 1996-2011 and third parties (ref: #5412)

URL : <http://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/eugene-daly-his-daughter.html>

PDF edition provided for personal reference only.