

The Shanachie

Vol. XXXIII — No. 3 — 2021



Theater presents musical on career of ace softball pitcher

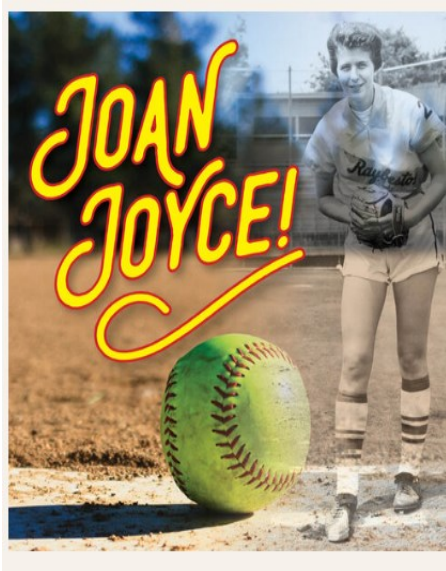
Baseball, softball, golf, tennis, you name it. All sports are thriving once again throughout Connecticut. So great is the enthusiasm and involvement that the Legacy Theatre in Branford has featured this summer a musical based on the life story of one of Connecticut's most famous athletes.

Her name is Joan Joyce and the musical's title is *Joan Joyce!* with the exclamation point apparently as a reminder to theatergoers and the public in general of just how overpowering the Waterbury native has been in each of the many sports she has played.

Joyce, who now lives in Florida where she has coached sports at Florida Atlantic University for a quarter century, is the granddaughter of European natives who settled in Waterbury. Thomas and Mary Slattery Joyce, her paternal grandparents, were born in Ireland. Alexander and Margaret Lavinavich Greggis, her maternal grandparents, were born in Lithuania.

In the 1930s, Joan's father and mother — Joseph Joyce and Eugenia Greggis — were employees of companies that helped Waterbury earn the nickname of the nation's Brass City. Joseph was for 38 years a foreman in the Scoville Manufacturing Co.'s rod mill. Eugenia was a machine operator at Chase Brass & Copper Co. Joe and Jean, as they were known, were married on Aug. 12, 1939.

THE LEGACY THEATRE
Stony Creek, CT



The Legacy Theatre in Branford is a fitting place for a musical about Joan Joyce, our state's all-star softball pitcher. When the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame inducted her, it explained; "Joan Joyce has left an indelible mark on women's athletics. Throughout her playing and coaching career, Joan has been a champion of women in sports. She has created a legacy that has been a major contribution in bringing women's sports into the public spotlight."

Joan was born just a year later, followed by a brother, Joe Jr., and a sister, Janis. Their parents arranged to work different shifts so that one of them would be home all the time. After a few years, the family purchased a small ranch-style home near Fulton Park in central Waterbury.

It was almost inevitable that an athlete or two would sprout up in the Joyce family because Joe himself was an avid and talented competitor in many sports, including basketball, football, baseball and softball. In the biography of her written by Toni Renzoni, one of Joan's memories is of her and her brother Joe Jr. attending her Dad's games. "Immediately after my father's softball games," she said, "Joe and I would run onto the diamond to play catch ... The same was true for his basketball games. Whenever there was a timeout, Joe and I would be the first ... to grab a basketball so we could shoot hoops."

By the time she was seven, Joan's father was teaching her the fundamentals of softball. The fact that the Joyce home was close to a municipal park added to her athletic opportunities. The city sponsored softball teams in each park and Joan was, again, among the first in line to represent Fulton Park. "That's where I began pitching," she recalled, "although at the time, the

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BROTHERHOOD
— OF —



The railroad era and an Irish family

There was a time when seven railroad lines carried passengers and freight in and out of Hartford. New Haven and Waterbury each had six rail lines and Middletown had five. Eight trains a day sped from New London to Norwich, four a day from smaller towns like Farmington to New Hartford and Litchfield. One Connecticut historian, Ellen Larned, aptly described the significance of the railroad era that began in the 1820s and grew steadily through-

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Joan Joyce musical

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games were slow pitch."

When Joyce entered Crosby High School in Waterbury in 1954, she rapidly became known for her athletic prowess. In 1955, the Crosby yearbook had a photograph of her as the "Most Athletic" girl in the school. She was the leading scorer on the basketball team and in her junior and senior years its captain. At the age of 16, she tried out for and made the roster of the New London Wheels, a highly regarded amateur hoop team. In 1958, the Wheels won the Eastern Seaboard AAU championship by defeating a New Jersey quintet 53-52 with Joan scoring a record 44 points.

Joyce might have had a career in basketball, but for a couple twists of fate. At the age of 13, she tried out for the Raybestos Brakettes, a women's top-notch fast pitch softball team from Stratford. While pitching with the Brakettes she learned to use the "slingshot" instead of the "wind-mill" delivery. That change gave her greater power and accuracy and, as time would tell, made her pitches almost unhit-table.

In 1957, she pitched her first no-hitter in a Brakettes win against a Waterbury team and in 1958, when she graduated from Crosby, Joan pitched two no-hitters as the Brakettes won the national fast-pitch softball championship.

After her graduation, Joyce continued schooling with night classes in physical education and began a career as a gym teacher and coach at a number of high schools including St. Mary's in Greenwich, Bethel High School and Water-

bury Catholic High School where she was the volleyball coach, another sport she had starred in at Crosby.

In 1963, after 10 years with the Brakettes, Joyce decided to go back to college full-time. She moved to the West Coast and enrolled in Chapman College in Orange, CA, a school that fielded the Orange Lionettes, one of several California top-flight women's fast-pitch softball teams.



Joan Joyce pitched 150 no-hit games and 33 perfect games in her career. In the 1990s, she was appointed head coach of the Florida Atlantic University women's softball team. Her teams have won 13 Sun Conference championships.

On Monday, Aug. 17, 1964, while at Chapman, Joan pitched and won a marathon game against the Whittier California Gold Sox. The game ended at 3 o'clock in the morning when the Lionettes scored the one and only run. Joan pitched the entire 29 innings, striking out 39 batters. The win sent the Lionettes to Orlando, FL, to compete in the women's softball tournament where on Friday, Aug. 21, Joan pitched against her former teammate Bertha Ragan and the Brakettes. The pitching on both sides was superb, but the Lionettes won 2-0 with Joan hurling still another no-hitter.

When Joan arrived at Chapman, the college had no women's basketball team. She got an OK to organize one, did some recruiting in the area and became herself the leading scorer.

By 1964, the Lionettes hoop team was good enough to win two games in the AAU tournament before being eliminated by the tournament winner, Nashville, TN.

Joan came back to Connecticut in September 1966 and stayed for a time with her parents at their homestead on Tudor Street in Waterbury. In 1967, she once again donned the uniform of the Raybestos Brakettes and continued to sparkle both on the pitching mound and the batter's box for eight more

years. "Her pitching record while playing for that team," said the Connecticut Women's Hall of Fame, when it inducted her in 2007, "was 753 wins and 42 losses, including 150 no-hitters, 33 perfect games and a .09 earned run average. As a hitter, her highest single-season batting average was .406 in 1973. She was the national tournament batting champion in 1971 with an average of .467."

In 1974, the Women's Softball World Championship was held in the United States for the first time. The hosts were the Raybestos Brakettes and the week-long competition drew overflowing crowds to Stratford's Raybestos Memorial Field. At that time, no American team had finished as champion since the tournaments began in 1965.

In the home team's opening game victory, Joyce held the New Zealand team to just one hit. The Brakettes compiled seven straight victories, including two wins over the Australian powerhouse. In the first game, Joyce held the Aussies to just one walk, no fair balls and only two foul balls. In the second game, Joyce pitched a perfect game, no one reaching first base.

In the final championship game, the Japanese team resorted to an extremely unusual strategy. Their best hitter with a .367 average was the only one to swing at her pitches. All the others bunted. The only hit off Joyce was a blooper bunt that went over her head. In the fourth inning, the Brakettes scored three runs that were more than enough to claim the worldwide title.

In 1976, Joyce was one of the founders of the Women's Professional Softball League. Top-grade fast-pitch softball was the obvious purpose, but beyond that was the more important cause of opening one more door that for the most part been closed to women: sports. The league described its founding as "the first opportunity for women to perform as professionals on a team basis, the first chance to reap the rewards professional male athletes have enjoyed since Babe Ruth made our national pastime. Women's Professional Softball stands at the forefront of that new coming pastime."

The league began with 10 teams. Joyce along with tennis star Billie Jean

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Lyons family immigrated to Connecticut by way of Quebec

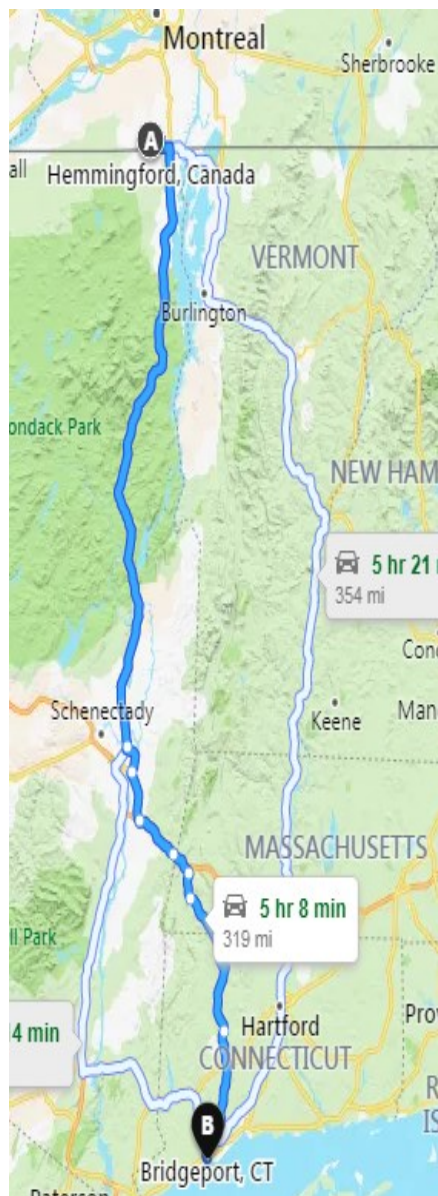
By Paul Keroack

While most 19th century emigrant Irish came to Connecticut through the ports of Boston and New York, it is known that a number made their way through Canada. However, that nation did not record entry of persons from the British Isles since they were regarded as fellow subjects of the United Kingdom.

Before their journey to Bridgeport, Patrick and Ann Lyons were documented in Canadian records. In the late 1850s they lived in Hemmingford, Quebec, which borders northern New York State west of Lake Champlain. The town was founded in 1799 by English-speakers, American Loyalists among others. By mid-century French farmers began to settle there. Their parish church was St-Romain de Hemmingford. Both French and Irish families were recorded in the parish sacramental register.

Rose Lyons was born April 22, 1858, and baptized on May 2, daughter of Patrick, a day laborer and Ann "Deuleton" (Dalton). Godparents were Henry and Elizabeth Falloon (Fallon). All these persons signed the French-language register entry, along with the priest. The Lyons' next child John was born Sept. 10, 1860, and baptized over a month later. In 1863, Thomas was born Feb. 10 and baptized after five days. Perhaps the parents feared for his survival, baptizing him relatively soon compared to the earlier children. He died 14 months later. Patrick's occupation was then recorded as "meunier" – a miller. On Jan. 22, 1865, Catherine Sarah Lyons was baptized two weeks after her birth. In these latter three baptisms, neither Patrick nor the godparents signed the register.

They were enumerated in the 1861 census of Canada East (Quebec). Patrick, a miller age 23. Ann, 20, children Rose, 3, and John, 2. Also with them was James Dalton, 19, probably Ann's brother. There were several mill own-



Irish natives Patrick and Ann Lyons spent a few years in Hemmingford (A) in Quebec, before settling in Bridgeport, (B) 319 miles to the south.

ers in the township who Patrick may have worked for. In the parish there were also many other Irish-born residents and their children.

The Lyons family journeyed to Bridgeport sometime in the next two years, possibly by railroad. Daughter Margaret was born there on 20 Jan. 1868, and baptized in St. Mary's church in East Bridgeport, a heavily Irish neighborhood. Patrick was listed in the

1867 city directory as a laborer on Cullen Street, close to a John Lyons, and in the 1869 edition was a miller living near Pembroke Street, not far from a Terrence Lyons. Their next child was Elizabeth, born 1 July 1870.

By 1872 the Patrick Lyons family moved to Stratford avenue, which crossed the river into West Stratford, then a borough of the town of Stratford. He probably worked at George F. Cook's Yellow Mill, a flour mill where grain was ground. It must have been a large structure. An 1873 accident injured a worker when he fell from the third story of that mill.

Henry Lyons was born 1 April 1873 and died at the age of four months. Anna F. was born September 8th of the next year. It is not known how long she lived but she was not named in the 1880 census. Adaline and Francis completed the family, born in 1877 and 1880, respectively.

In the 1880 census, Patrick's son John also worked at the mill and younger daughter Catherine was employed at a hat factory. Despite the presence of her name in the record, nine-year-old "Lizzie" had died of convulsions two days before the enumerator's visit. Listed with the family was "brother" Terrence Lyons, age 35, ten years younger than Patrick, with no occupation given. Also, in the same census year Terrence Lyons, a saloon keeper, was residing in New Haven, with his wife and several children – matching the names for that family in earlier Bridgeport records.

Four years later tragedy struck the family several times in close succession. Patrick died 16 January 1884 of consumption at the age of 48. In 1885, 17-year-old Margaret died on July 14th and in November her 27-year-old sister Rose died, both from lung disease. Son John was supporting the family working as a porter at 469 Water St. in Bridgeport. Tuberculosis was endemic

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Quebec was first stop for some immigrants

(Continued from page 3)

in Bridgeport as in other cities, a contagious bacterial disease without a known cause or effective treatment – a slow pandemic which decimated families. It may have been aggravated by Patrick's work as a miller – "flour lung" being a recognized occupational condition.

Catherine Lyons married Thomas B. Lavey, a 22-year-old Pennsylvania-born laborer on 24 Feb. 1886 in Bridgeport. Their daughter Mary A. was born on 27 Nov. 1887. The next year, Catherine's widowed mother Ann married John Garvey, a second marriage for both. The remaining Lyons siblings, John, Ada and Francis lived with the Garveys.

In 1889, the part of Stratford in which they resided was annexed to Bridgeport. Their street was renamed Carroll Avenue where John Lyons opened a grocery at 165 Carroll next door to their home.

One street over, on Union Avenue lived Patrick's brother Terrence Lyons, by then a factory worker. Shortly after giving birth for a second time Catherine Lyons Lavey died, aged 25 on 17 May 1891, of bronchitis. Her premature son died a few weeks later. The 1892 directory notes that Thomas B. Lavey "removed to New York." On 27 Nov 1895, 34-year-old John Lyons died of tuberculosis. The 1896 city directory listed Mrs. Ann Garvey, with no mention of Mr. Garvey. Ann Garvey died on 16 Jan. 1897 at age 54, of the family condition "consumption." The last surviving adult member of the family was Adaline, not yet 20.

From this point the family's story takes a hopeful turn. The 1910 U.S. census lists Thomas B. Lavey, 41, iron molder, wife Annie, 38, daughters Mary, 22, and "Rosanna, 20," residing in the Marble Hill neighborhood of northern Manhattan. The daughters worked in shops, Mary as a cashier and

her younger sister in sales. Thomas's marriage is noted as his second, Annie being the mother of one child.

The family appears also in the state censuses of 1905 and 1915, the latter in Brooklyn. The younger daughter is correctly named Isabel in these censuses. By 1915, Thomas is not present, nor is Mary, who had married James A. Mulligan in 1912. In the 1920 census the Mulligans lived in the Bronx and were parents of five children. Living with them was "sister-in-law" Isabel Lavey, a bookkeeper. They eventually moved to Yonkers.

Remaining in Bridgeport, Adaline Lyons worked as a dressmaker, boarding with the same family for a decade. After 1910 she became a stenographer and later a secretary for Catholic Charities. At her death on 23 Dec. 1964, the obituary noted she was survived by a niece, Mary Mulligan, and also by "step-nieces," Misses Ruth and Florence Evans and Mrs. Edna Camp.

Who were these step-nieces? Her uncle Terrance Lyons, after losing his wife and most if not all his children, had remarried in 1885 to a recent widow, Catherine McCormick Ford who had three young daughters. Of these, Alice, about the same age as Ada, married Richard Evans. Alice Ford Evans and her three daughters were not related to Ada but having endured so many losses perhaps Ada was happy to have Evans as a family connection close to home as well as kin in New York.

Mary A. (Lavey) Mulligan died in 1971 and is buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, Yonkers NY, with her husband James and sister Isabel. The Evans sisters lived into the late twentieth century and two are buried with their mother in St. Michael's Cemetery, Stratford.

Sources: *Ancestry.com*. 1861 Census of Canada. *Canada East, Huntingdon (Co.)*, p. 101.

Bridgeport birth records, 1864-70, p. 192, 198. *Ancestry.com*. *U.S. City Direc-*

tories, 1822-1995. *Bridgeport, 1867-1985*.

Bridgeport city directory for 1873-4, "Chronological Record," p. 8. *Bridgeport birth records, 1871-1878*, p. 153, 1857-1887 (RC listing), p. 209, 217, 224.

1880 U.S. Census, Stratford, ED 126, p. 398 B-399 C. *Stratford death records*, p. 482, 492, 494, 496.

Bridgeport marriage records, 1871-1893, p. 260, 318. *Bridgeport birth records, 1886-1890*, p. 170. *Bridgeport death records, 1889-1892*, p. 124, 1893-1899, p. 134, 207. I found no records for Francis beyond his 1880 birth and census entry.

1910 Census, Manhattan NY, ED 613, p. 10 A. *1905 NY State Census, Brooklyn, ED 24*, p. 18. *1915 NY Census, Brooklyn, ED 10*, p. 19. *Ancestry.com*. NY, NY *Marriage License Indexes, 1907-2018*. *1920 Census, Bronx, ED 413*, p. 4 A.

Ancestry.com, Periodicals & Newspapers. *Bridgeport Post*, 24 Dec 1964, p. 27. *Bridgeport marriage records, 1871-1893*, p. 256. *1880 U.S. Census, Bridgeport, ED 129*, p. 475 A; Ford had 5 children, 3 of them in their teens. www.ctstatelibrarydata.org/death-records (index), 1897-1969. *Ancestry.com*. CT *death index, 1949-2012*. [Findagrave.com/memorial 204811210](http://Findagrave.com/memorial/204811210) (Mulligan); [memorial 47794862](http://memorial/47794862) (Evans); [memorial 166401484](http://memorial/166401484) (Edna Camp).

For those interested in genealogy research, the sources listed are available on free websites. except for those identified as being on *Ancestry.com* (although many libraries have free access), and *Rootsireland.ie*. However, one can view a free index to Irish baptisms and marriages by registering at *Findmypast.com*. With names and places from the index, browse and view the free Irish RC parish register images at <https://registers.nli.ie>.

Familysearch.org is free upon registration - images of microfilmed historical vital records are found under the Catalog tab, by place name. Searches by name under the Records tab may locate persons in other sources as well. www.ctstatelibrary.org, marriage and death indexes, 1897-1969. *Findagrave.com* has headstone data searchable by name, cemetery or memorial number.

Plumber with Leitrim roots linked to New Haven Fenians

By John J. Doody

Thomas and Bridget McNamara Kilbride and their newborn daughter, Mary, emigrated from Mohill, County Leitrim, Ireland, to New York City in 1852. After visiting with Bridget's siblings, the McNamaras and Kellehers in New Haven, they settled in Port Henry, NY, on Lake Champlain.

John Kilbride, their oldest son, was born there in 1854. The oldest object in the family is a book titled "Napoleon and His Marshals, Vol. 1," dated 1846. It is inscribed "Thomas Kilbride's book, Fort Henry, New York." The book is notable for its anti-English sentiments in the preface, for example: "The sanctimonious pretense of England, that she was fighting for human liberty, until help put down the conqueror of the world, is now stamped a falsehood by every enlightened man. Patient."

The family moved to New Haven, CT, around 1876 and built a home on Bishop Street. The children prospered and John Kilbride was the pride of the family, a well-paid plumber, working for E. Arnold & Co. in New Haven. John also was active in Democratic politics. He was appointed to the board of the New Haven police commissioners in 1881 at the age of 27 and his political future in the city seemed very promising.

In September 1882, John was stricken and died from malarial fever at the age of 28. The police board published a memorial to him in the annual city government report. In part it said, "He exhibited traits of character while a member of the Hon. Board, that I am sure you can all look back upon as worthy of emulation. The interest of Police Department and the welfare of the city were the chief objects he had in view ... his advice and counsel could always be relied upon in any case where sound and wise judgment was needed ..."

John was not married at the time of his death, so his assets were distributed through probate. Probate administrator was his brother, Thomas Jr.



James Reynolds was born in Co. Cavan in 1831 and came to the United States in 1847. In the 1860s, he established a brass foundry in New Haven. He was among the most prominent leaders of the Fenian Brotherhood in America in the 1800s. On his stone in St. Lawrence Cemetery are chiseled a likeness of him and of a whaling ship, and the words "Catalpa Jim." He was known by that name because in 1875, he mortgaged his home in New Haven so the American Fenians could purchase the Catalpa and send it to Australia to free six Irish rebels who had been sentenced to life imprisonment there. On April 17, 1876, the prisoners were freed and the Catalpa sailed for America, arriving in New York on Aug. 18 that year.

One of the probate appraising administrators was a prominent manufacturer and Irish nationalist, James Reynolds. There are a few James Reynolds in the New Haven directory in 1882, but the reason for thinking that it is the Irish nationalist becomes clear.

Probate records show that John had left almost \$700 in a bank account and a one-third interest in the family home. The family, of course, knew its priorities. They used the bank money to purchase a burial plot for the whole family

in St. Bernard's Cemetery, with a large monument inscribed with their Irish home, County Leitrim.

Due to the sudden death of John, those organizations he worked closely with held collections by his friends and coworkers. These collections were recorded in the probate records as follows: "cash collected of E. Arnold and company, \$18.00; Cash collected of Clan-na-Gael Association ... \$21.50."

It appears in the documents to indicate that John Kilbride was close to or a member of the Irish nationalist organization, Clan na Gael, which was working for the armed overthrow of the English occupation of Ireland and was the leading organization for Irish nationalist sentiment in the United States at that time. The name James Reynolds, found in his probate documents, takes on added relevance because of Reynolds's major role within Clan na Gael.

It also speaks to the fact that being Irish American and belonging to Clan na Gael did nothing to hinder one's acceptance into the rising political class of Irish Americans in the New Haven Democratic Party. Their assistance proved valuable for electing a Democratic Party mayor in 1881 and would elect the first Irish American mayor in 1899. Nothing in the oral tradition or written Kilbride family history spoke to the role of Irish nationalist sentiment in the first generations Irish immigrants and their children.

We are only left with tantalizing clues from the unique objects and records of their lives. We do know that the Kilbride family was very proud of John Kilbride's accomplishments and prospects at that time.

A written family history recalls that a stuffed dove from John's funeral was kept in his mother's home for many years after his death.

John J Doody, is John Kilbride's great grand nephew and a member of the Connecticut Irish-American Historical Society.

Collection of Irish railroad wife's writings preserved at UConn

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out the 1800s. She wrote that the modern history of her part of the state, Windham County, "dates its birth from the first whistle of the steam engine. That clarion cry, awoke the sleeping valleys. Energy, enterprise, progress followed its course. At every stopping place new life sprang up. Factory villages received immediate impetus ... and manufacturing enterprises were speedily planned and executed ..."

What Larned saw happening in Windham was happening throughout the state and the nation. It began along the Atlantic coastline and day after day pushed westward. The first railroad reached Chicago from the east in the spring of 1852. Six years later there were 15 rail lines into Chicago. Passengers and freight could reach New York City, 790 miles away, in just two days. By 1870, railroads spanned the continent and in every year from 1866 to 1916 American railroads added at least a thousand miles of track.

Larned was not the only Connecticut writer who understood the significance of the railroad era. Tucked in among many larger collections of our state's history in the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center on the University of Connecticut campus in Storrs is a small portfolio of the writings of a New Haven wife and mother who played a small but interesting role in that era.

Her name was Louise Gaffney Flannigan. She was the daughter of Irish immigrants and her writings tell of how important railroading was in the lives of many Irish-Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Her parents, Matthew Gaffney and Mary Curtiss Gaffney were both born in Ireland in the 1830s. They arrived in New Haven apparently in the 1850s. Matthew had no trouble finding work because New Haven was known for its thriving carriage industry and he was a harness maker. He spent 40 years in that business — the final years of the



Born in New Haven, the daughter of an Irish immigrant who was a harness maker, Louise Gaffney married a railroad conductor, Francis Flannigan, above. Later Louise and most of their children became railroad employees and she became a poet and historian of New Haven railroad history. Documents in the Dodd Research Center say that this picture was taken on their wedding day.

horse and buggy era — with the Henry Hooker & Co., designers and builders of high-class carriages.

His occupation in the transportation industry provided his family with a degree of prosperity. The 1870 census returns list the Gaffneys living at 272 Portsea Street in the heavily Irish "hill" section of New Haven near modern-day Yale New-Haven Hospital. Their home and property was valued at \$6,000. The oldest of the family was a 66-year-old native of Ireland, Margret Gaffney, probably Matthew's mother. Matthew himself was 36 and wife Mary was 32. Their three children were Isabella, 9, Frederick, 6, and Louise, 3.

In the 1880s, the Gaffney children entered the job market: Isabella as a

corset maker and then a teacher; Louise at the City Market; Frederick as a brakeman on the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad which became the major line in southern New England in 1872 when several smaller lines were consolidated.

The New Haven yards of the railroad were not far from the Gaffney home and for a young man, railroading must have seemed to offer more career opportunities than almost any other field at that time. The job of brakemen was to see that the couplings between cars were properly set and to help slow trains by applying brakes from the top of cars. It was dangerous work and brakemen were often injured or killed.

The family's involvement in railroading was increased by Louise who began writing prose and poetry about the work and workers. Some poems were lighthearted. She began one about the crew of her brother's train —

"There is a fast freight train

"Leaves New Haven at 11:15

"With as thorough a gang of jolly boys

"As ever can be seen."

Other poems, however, told of the many accidents and collisions that took the lives of railroad workers and left families in grief. One began —

"Another brakeman has passed away

"And another heart-rending tale

"Of how our Brother Harry M. Newhall

"Lost his life in a wreck caused by a broken rail."

Her writings were published in railroad magazines and in city newspapers. At a ball during the holiday season in 1887, the New Haven lodge of the Brotherhood of Railroad Brakemen presented Louise with an honorary pin and badge and bestowed on her the title of "poetess" of the brakemen.

In 1890, Louise married a railroad man, Francis Flannigan, a native of

New York City. He was a conductor on the New Haven railroad. Conductors supervised the train's crew and were in charge of loading and unloading passengers and freight. The newlyweds lived at the home on Portsea Street and eventually had seven children.

Louise's father Matthew Gaffney died in April 1893. His obituary in the *New Haven Journal-Courier* described him as "one of the oldest and best known Irish residents of the city." Among the floral arrangements at his wake were two that represented the changing times: one from his fellow workmen in Hooker's carriage company and one from the members of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

For Irish families, railroading became a culture rather than just a job. An item in the *New Haven Register* on June 27, 1894, reported: "A delegation of members of Elm City Lodge 21, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, decorated the graves of their deceased members last Sunday. They visited St. Lawrence, St. Bernard and Evergreen cemeteries ... The local lodge has over 100 members. It pays \$3 a week sick benefit and \$12 on the death or disability of a member. Mrs. Louise B. Gaffney Flannigan is poetess. The officers are Joseph W. Keeton, master; W.B. Huntington, secretary, and Frank J. Flannigan, financier."

In 1897, the lodge and the company made it possible for Frank and Louise to experience what the railroad era had accomplished in a way few other Americans could. On May 4, they and other lodge members boarded a train at 12 noon in New Haven for a month of transcontinental travel.

"We arrived in New York City at 2 p.m.," wrote Louise in her diary, "We were guests of the Conductors Club of North America at their rooms on East 34th St. We left at 7 p.m., took the ferry to Hoboken, NJ, where the Pullman car shone with bright lights and elaborate decorations awaited us, we departed amid cheers and singing.

"We went by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad to Buffalo where we arrived in time for breakfast ... We left at noon on the Lake Shore and

Michigan Southern for Cleveland for supper and arrived in Chicago on the sixth. We were treated to a tally ho ride all over the city ... We left in the evening over the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, crossed the Mississippi River to Kansas City and Topeka for dinner, then through the state of Kansas, a fertile country with its extensive fields and cattle grazing in its plains.

"We arrived in Colorado Sunday morning and at Trinidad the little church bell was ringing and the people were winding their way to worship ... Coming over the immense prairie was the faithful priest on his burro ...

"On, on we go and then commence our ascent of the Rocky Mountains. None can imagine the grandeur of these huge giants, and we are given help from two extra engines, one before and one in the rear to help us over these barricades. We climb up slowly and surely, each puff of black smoke tells of the labor of our iron horse, through curve and ravine we crawl along ... then down we go into the valley and New Mexico ... Immense herds of cattle are seen and the cowboys gallop along near our train on their fine horses with their tanned faces beneath huge sombreros and their spurs sparkling in the sun."

California was "God's own country" to Louise. "The wild flowers covered every spot ... immense groves of orange and lemon trees, almond, fig, apricot and banana plants ... The roses climb all over the houses ..." Leaving San Francisco after "a sail down the bay and through the Golden Gate," the railroaders went on to Oregon and Mt. Hood, Washington and Seattle.

Then the train turned east on a northern route through Idaho, Montana and the Dakotas to Detroit and the Great Lakes, each region filled with new wonders. The final lap began with the Suspension Bridge over the Niagara River and Niagara Falls itself, of which she wrote, "the grandest sight of all." The tour ended crossing the Hudson River and into Connecticut where "my little ones with their innocent faces were at the depot waiting for Mama and Papa."

Frank Flannigan died on March 31,

1915, but the family at 272 Portsea remained a railroad family throughout much of the early 20th century. In the 1920 census returns, four of the Flannigans were listed as working for the railroad: Louise herself and two of her daughters, Rheta, 20, and Alvara, 18, as clerks and her son, Frank Jr., 16. In 1930, Louisa and Rheta were listed as clerks at the "steam railroad," and Frank Jr. was a trolley car repairman. By the time of the 1940 census, Louise had retired, but Rheta was still a railroad clerk.

In November 1932, Louise reminisced about railroading in an article in the *New Haven railroad's* magazine: "Let's take a trip down memory lane to the dim and almost forgotten past of 50 years ago when railroads were young and the nation was built through their help. They linked the East and West, coupled the North and South ... followed the path of Lewis and Clark to the far recesses of the Western lands. covered the trackless deserts, dense forests, lofty mountains ... The lantern shone far away over vast prairies that are today some of our largest cities. They supplanted the pony express, the prairie schooner and all primitive means of transportation.

"The railroad man whom we remember, with ruddy cheeks and cheery smile is fast passing on and we are proud to read of our half-century men receiving their honor medals ... My mind goes back to the 'braikie' (brakeman) with flowing tie, gingham jumper and Scotch cap who mounted icy cars with hand brakes, long-hour trips and small pay, but happiness lived in their hearts. Many a young life went out in the call of duty. Heroes they were, unheralded and unsung. But on His roll of honor they are enrolled."

Louise died on May 2, 1949, and is buried along with Frank and Rheta in the family plot at St. Bernard's cemetery in New Haven.

Source: *Louise Gaffney Flannigan Papers, 2007-0066, in the archives of the Dodd Research Center on the, UConn campus at Storrs.*

Joan Joyce

(Continued from page 2)

King and sports entrepreneur Dennis Murphy were the founders. Joyce was part owner of the Connecticut Falcons whose home was Falcon Field in Meriden. The Brakettes came into the league almost intact with Joyce as part owner, coach and pitcher. To the delight of fans in Connecticut, the caliber of play — pitching, hitting, double plays, outfielders throwing runners out at home plate, etc. — was every bit as professional at Falcon Field as at Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium.

With Joan coaching and pitching, the Falcons won consecutive league titles for the four years of the league's existence. It was a short life, but it opened the door a bit more for girls and women to live up to their potential on the playing fields in the years to come.

In the late 1970s, Joyce also got seri-



The Legacy Theatre in Branford

ous about playing golf. Jane Blalock a golf pro and one of the co-owners of the Connecticut Falcons convinced her to take lessons. In a difficult switch, she would stroke the small golf balls in the afternoon and pitch blazing fast softballs for the Falcons in the evening. She qualified in the Ladies Professional Golf Assn. and played on the LPGA tour

for 19 years. She even set a record of 17 for the fewest number of putts in a single round.

In the 1990s, when she was in her mid-50s Joan Joyce embarked not on retirement, but on a new career as head coach of women's softball at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, and a new athletic venture in golf. In her first year, her team had a 33-18 record. In the past quarter century she has led it to 13 Atlantic Sun Conference championships, and been designated the conference's softball Coach of the Year eight times.

Sources: Connecticut Softball Legend Joan Joyce, by Tony Renzoni; Fastpitch: The Untold History of Softball and the Women Who Made the Game, by Erica Westley; www.ancestry.com, U.S. census for Waterbury, 1880-1940 for Joyce and Greggis families; Fort Lauderdale, FL, Sentinel, March 28, 2013, for Joseph Francis Joyce obituary.

The Shanachie

Published quarterly by the
Connecticut Irish-American
Historical Society
P.O. Box 185833
Hamden, CT 06518
(203) 392-6126
www.ctiahs.com
ctiahs@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/CT Irish American Historical Society>

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"We have kept faith
with the past;
we have handed
a tradition
to the future."
Padraic Pearse

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