

## **SISTER ZACCHAEUS RYAN**

GRANDPA AND GRANDMA RYAN  
JOHN R. RYAN AND JULIA GARRY RYAN

While encouraging other relatives to tell their stories I realized I needed to do my homework, too. I do believe that Megan McKenna's words are true for all of us. "We are known by the stories we tell. They give sense of power of who we are."

I had the privilege of knowing both of my Grandmothers as well as my Grandfather Ryan. I also knew I was special to them.

My earliest memory of Grandma Ryan was the morning our brother Bud was born. Ethel O'Hern and I were playing school when Dad came and he and Grandma told us that Lois and I had a baby brother.

Three years later when Grandma was ill I made my first stop every morning at her bedside. The morning she died, as I greeted her she held my hand and asked me to prayer for sinners. That noon Grandma died. After Grandma's funeral and we returned home I recall Grandpa Ryan walking through the house shouting "Julia, why did you do this to me? Why did you leave me?"

Life with Grandpa Ryan holds many memories – some more humorous now than then.

- His daily checking of the exact time the sun set with Dr. Miles Almanac and his watch.
- Listening for the mill whistle from New Prague. Again, check on time. From this operation I learned the speed of sound.

Dr. Miles or Farmers Almanac were sources of other scientific bits of knowledge as to phases of the moon, planets, times to plant, as well as birthdays of famous Americans. Buffalo Bill, Chief Shakopee and others were real for me.

- Many of the family recall Grandpa's trips to New Prague and Jordan in the lumber wagon and shorter trips to Lydia in the buggy for a supply of summer sausage.
- Green tea was the only tea I knew of and the five times we served Grandpa tea every day were like the canonical hours – Prime, Terce, Sext, None and Vespers.
- A famous quote of Grandpa's when he didn't get attentions was, "All officers and no soldiers." We knew the meaning quite early and also that he was the commanding officer.

- How many of you remember the Easter Runaway with Himself and Aunt Mayme? When they didn't arrive at Church, Dad left and found them at home a bit shaken and bruised, but Thank God, safe. The bit had broken and Mabel took them to St. Patrick, around the school and back home, non-stop. The trip ended when Mabel ran into the barn.
- The first sign of cold days Grandpa would say, "This will make a man think of his last summer wages."
- Winter also brought the sleigh. When Grandpa came for us we had our system of one standing guard talking to him while others hitched the sled/toboggan to the sleigh for a ride. Grandpa's big coat collar cut off his side vision and so heedless of the danger we had our thrilling rides.

While dwelling on Cedar Lake, do you remember County Fair Days. Getting our exhibits read at school and for 4-H? Then going to the fair – its ferris wheel, merry-go-round and the special events: the human cannonball, tightrope walkers, animal tricks, the exhibits and the boxing exhibitions. One year John Ryan was our hero on the boxing number.

Speaking of Fair Days, my first checks were prizes for my leaf booklet. In fact, I won two prizes – a first at Jordan Fair of 75 cents and a second at Shakopee, which paid \$1.25. I really should have shared the winnings with Albert Ryback as he had climbed many trees along the roads to pick the exact leaf I thought best for the booklet.

## GENEALOGY

Genealogy is a human science which involves the lives and times of people and as such we come to know the history of the people against the backdrop of the country's situations in which they lived, the reasons for immigration, the plight of the people politically, economically, culturally and religiously speaking.

My main sources of information were primary types of evidence, vital records, tombstones and wills as well as obituary notices, newspapers, plat books, local histories, picture albums and autograph books.

I was interested in and was pursuing my genealogy before I knew that was the word for it. My earliest years spent in a small Irish community made me aware of my roots in Ireland and I could name the counties in Ireland almost as well as the states in our country. I had heard of Patty "Tip" Dougherty so called because he was a Tipperary man while others were from County May, (God help us) and County Clare. I learned from Grandpa Ryan the story of St. Patrick and it was made real by the big picture we had of St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland. I heard stories of the Night of the Big Wind in Ireland (it was real) also stories of the Little People, Knock Shrine and the Potato Famine. The small leather covered book of the Hickey Family excited my interest in family shields and mottos.

I dreamed of seeing Ireland and the dream was realized fifty years later. In the 1960's my search became a serious one as time and travel permitted. I joined the Chicago Irish Interest group (CIA) at Newberry Library and on visits to Minnesota haunted the MHS or local County Court Houses in Scott, Rice and Dakota counties.

In the 1970's I sent out requests to all of my first and second cousins to complete family charts, send pictures, records, etc. This request continued until the evening before the book went to print in September 1980.

During that period I also worked on the Parish records of St. Patrick and many of my ancestors records are there. With the help of Margaret Westman and Sylvia Doerr, I transcribed the cemetery records at St. Patrick and later I transcribed Lakeville All Saints Cemetery. Each project helped me in finding my Irish Roots. My interviews with my parents, older relatives and my own recollections helped. I knew my Grandmother Julia Garry Ryan was born in Essex County, New York, where we found land records and learned that James Garry was a farmer and stonemason there before moving to Minnesota.

Information from John D. Ryan's tombstone led me to Murroe, County Limerick. I met Father Tierney at nearby Glenstal Abbey. Father Tierney had written the history of the Parish of Abington (Murroe) in 1960. He shared documents and information about my Ryan ancestors. Father took us to the ruins of Annaugh Church where many of the Ryans are buried and where Ryans worshipped before Henry VIII established the Church of England. Near the Church is acreage leased by my Great-great Grandfather in the 1820's and 1830's before he left for America. Within the ruins is the tombstone of Darby Ryan.

Again, it was James Garry's tombstone at St. Patrick that led me to Kilmaine, County Mayo and to the Garry townland. The James Hickey Genealogy Book put me in touch with Hickey descendants in County Clare. You can imagine the joy of finding a descendant still living on the original homestead, Fintan Callinan. Fintan and his wife, Marie, welcomed me and shared stories and places significant to the Hickey family.

The obituary record of Mrs. Patrick Moran led me to Niagara, New York and to nearby Lockport where, in the census and church records, I located John L. Brennan. His marriage record to Bridget Sheridan and the baptisms of two of their children were at St. John's Church. There were also records of marriages of other great uncles and great aunts of the Sheridans.

To understand their settlement near Lockport, New York, we must realize the vital part the Erie Canal played in the 1889-1850 period of Irish immigration. The canal was largely built by Irish labor and Lockport was a key town at the time. In James Hickey's obituary it stated he had worked on the Erie Canal and the Erie

Railroad. Later the Hickeys moved to Ohio and then on to Minnesota and homesteaded in Spring Lake Township, Scott County. In 1880 James and Catherine Roach Hickey moved to Graceville, Minnesota, Archbishop Ireland's Irish Settlement.

James and Michael Hickey's mother, Margaret Meskell Hickey, lived with their families. She died in Graceville and is buried there. I had an opportunity to pray at her grave when I visited there in the 1970's.

Although my books are not as highly documented as I would like or would do were I beginning now, my primary motive was to complete the family book for my forty-four nieces and nephews during 1980, the year designated as The Year of the Family.

Hopefully this genealogy will strengthen their love and support for one another and help them draw courage and strength from the faith and integrity of our ancestors. That faith that brought our ancestors through sorrows, joys, change and challenges in their daily lives. That is Our Faith and with God's help we, too, will have the same faith, love and courage today.

Sister Zacchaeus Ryan 2003

#### MOM'S GOLD ROSARY

The first Christmas after Mom and Dad met, he wanted to give her a very special Christmas gift. He found that in Joe Frank's Jewelry Store in New Prague. It was a gold rosary – real gold! It was Mom's most cherished gift and was always near her, night and day.

You can well imagine the emotions that welled up when she lost it while walking to the Mission at St. Patrick's in the spring of 1935.

Dad, Mom and Aunt Mayme Ryan walked to St. Patrick's nightly to make the Mission. Their path took them through the Jack Ryan and Garry pastures. One of the first evenings Mom discovered her loss. Each evening as they retraced their path they looked for the rosary. This search was almost equal to looking for a needle in a haystack. On the final night of the Mission, as they approached the fence in the Garry's pasture, there was the rosary, hanging on the wire fence!

"More things are wrought by prayer than we can ever fathom." Blessed Mother's Rosary has a special place in our faith life as it had in the lives of our ancestors.

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