

Catherine Rice Mooney McConville & Arthur McConville, Born 1836 - County Down (near Dublin)

(A Letter)

She knew girls who had left Ireland for New York so when she became 18 she took a ship for America and joined her friends, working as a maid until she married Daddy (we always called him "Daddy" as did everyone.) She saved her money and helped pay his transportation. (There were times when Grandma regretted her investment). Her folks were farmers - she was raised by grandparents - Mooney. Her father's name was "Rice." The fact that they were both educated is interesting, I think. Both were very religious. I remember the bedroom altar complete with statues, holy water, rosaries and a prayer book with a prayer for each day of the year. She spent (it seemed to me) hours every day praying and Daddy spent a shorter period. I never saw them pray together and I don't remember either of them suggesting that anyone else should pray.

She was probably always a serious type while Daddy was a fun-fellow. Maybe being raised by the grandparents wasn't a gay life. She told me about her playhouse and she found a tiny footprint in it one morning so she knew a fairy had been there during the night. Her skin was dark and she could never get a freckle, she said. Daddy was the red hair (curly hair even), freckled one. She never wanted her picture taken, Mother says, because she thought she wasn't pretty. Daddy loved to have his taken.

Daddy was a policeman in Ireland. He used to show us his broken toes - from playing soccer barefoot.

Their first home was on a farm 18 miles east of Jamestown, New York and six children were born there. (A place known as South Valley, Catharogues County). Daddy was offered money to serve in another man's place in the Civil War but he didn't accept. They took the train from Jamestown for Chicago with six children and Mother remembers the trip. She said the conductor said "All these children on one ticket?" And Grandma said they are all under seven years old.

Daddy had owned 80 acres in New York which he turned over to a cousin who failed to send him the payments. He was a hired man with a separate house for his family, 20 miles from Bloomington, Illinois, until he bought a relinquishment in South Dakota in 1876. The children had pet pigeons and Grandma let them carry them on the train trip to Sioux City - it was awful, Mother said. He brought two cows and was offered the Davidson Block for one of them. He didn't accept.

He worked on a farm south of Elk Point until they moved on to south of Akron where Aunt Aggie and Uncle Vint were born.

Love

Mary*

**Mary is a daughter of Catherine McConville Poler*