

A Bonding Time

By Dorothy Denon Dunlap

This summer Roundtable member Dorothy Denon Dunlap sent in the following article with a letter explaining how her family came to meet at the gravesite of their Irish-born ancestors in Calvary Cemetery in New York, after years of what she describes as "amateur" genealogical research. Her work was rewarded when she "found the proverbial "Pot of Gold": lots of [living] cousins of varying ages and degrees." We are happy to share her research with the rest of the membership. Mrs. Dunlap and her husband would love to hear from any other cousins or relatives of the Dunlap and McCue families. Stanton P. and Dorothy Denon Dunlap can be reached at: 13843 Sleepy Hollow Lane, Fort Myers, Florida 33905.

Twenty-six cousins, representing three generations of descendants of Thomas James Dennin/Denon and Thomas McCue, gathered at First Calvary Cemetery on June 22, 1994 to visit the gravesites of our Irish born ancestors.

Thomas James Dennin had his name spelled many different ways during the 19th century making it difficult to accurately trace his life. It appears that he immigrated to New York City in the mid 1830's, applied for Naturalization in 1835 and signed Naturalization Papers in 1840, signing DENON to his papers. When I obtained copies of the Declarations of Intent and of Naturalization, I noticed that his name was spelled as Dennon and as Dennen. Thomas James' wife, Margaret Mary was born in Ireland, too. We don't know their counties of origin but haven't given up hope. Their son Thomas J. Denon was born in Manhattan in 1847. I believe they had an older son, James, and that both boys lived apart from their parents with the family of John Dennon in Manhattan. Thomas James is listed as a "driver" and as a "carman" in New York City Directories in the mid 1860's. They lived at 301 Mulberry Street when a grave in First Calvary was purchased by him on the day his wife was buried, May 24, 1868. Thomas James was buried in the same grave on May 8, 1870. Thomas James and Margaret are buried as Dennon.

Thomas J. Denon enlisted in the Navy on April 7, 1862; he was fifteen years old. At the time of his discharge on August 21, 1865, he was stationed in the Brig Sea Foam serving as a Paymaster's Clerk. In an application for a widow's pension, he is described as about five feet four inches in height, blue eyed, with a fair complexion and having a small scar on his forehead.

St. Peter's R.C. Church on Hicks and Warren Streets was the site of his marriage to Mary Ann McCue on February 8, 1875. The Reverend E.W. McCarty officiated and Nicholas Fitzsimmons and Kate Brady were witnesses. The newlyweds lived at 188 N. 8th Street in Greenpoint, attended St. Vincent de Paul on N. 6th Street and had twelve children. Their first son, Thomas Joseph, was born in 1879; he was my grandfather. Thomas J. worked as a clerk in a store in Manhattan until his death in the house on N. 8th Street on November 2, 1900. Mary Ann lived until 1920 when she, too, was laid to rest in the grave in First Calvary. This generation of Dennon/Denons and McCues stayed in Brooklyn.

The Dennon grave, which was unmarked until this Spring, holds seven family members: Margaret and Thomas James Dennon/Denon who were born in Ireland in 1813 and 1814; their son, Thomas J. who was born in New York City in 1847; his wife,

Mary Ann McCue Denon who was born in Brooklyn in 1855 and three of their twelve children. Thomas J. Denon's service in the Civil War made him eligible for a gravemarker from the Veterans' Administration. Upon making application to the Veterans' Administration in Washington and with the cooperation of the Superintendent of Calvary Cemetery, arrangements were made to have a veteran's marker placed on the Dennon/Denon grave. The names inscribed are those of Thomas J. Denon and Mary Ann McCue Denon. When we gathered at the site the names of all those interred there were read and prayers were said in their memory.

Thomas and Margaret Sodan McCue were Mary Ann Denon's parents. Thomas McCue was born in Ireland in 1830 and immigrated to New York in 1850; his wife was born in Ireland in 1828 and immigrated in 1848. Her parents were Patrick and Margaret Sodan; they didn't come to the United States. Thomas McCue purchased a grave in First Calvary in 1863 when this family lived on N. 7th Street. Thomas' occupations over the years were "driver, carman and laborer". The McCues had six children and from 1880 on, lived in the same house at 188 N. 8th Street as their daughter and son-in-law, Thomas and Mary Ann Denon. Both families attended St. Vincent de Paul's Church.

Thomas and Margaret McCue's daughter, Margaret, left this house in 1888 to become Sister Vincentine, C.S.J. At the time of her retirement in 1954, Sister Vincentine was the Superior at St. Malachy's Convent in Rockaway Park. Thomas and Mary Ann Denon's daughter, Marion, was Mother Concepta, an Ursuline Sister. She is interred in the Ursuline Sisters' plot in First Calvary.

Thomas McCue drowned in the East River and was buried in First Calvary on July 11, 1890. Margaret, his wife, died in the house on N. 8th Street and was buried in the same grave on July 6, 1898. Lawrence Gallaghin, born in New York, died at age 65 and was the first to be interred in the McCue grave (June 30, 1875). We have no idea who he was!

Thomas Joseph Denon married Katherine Cannon in 1904 and set up housekeeping at 595 Driggs Avenue. (Katherine's mother was Sarah Lappan Cannon. Sarah immigrated to Brooklyn with her parents, John and Mary Lappan and seven other children from County Armagh in 1849. Sarah was four years old. Katherine's father was Martin Cannon.) My father, Joseph Edward Denon was born in 1905 in the Driggs Avenue house and was baptized in St. Vincent de Paul's Church on N. 6th Street. Thomas and Katherine had four sons and two daughters. This generation of Denons moved to Lenox Road in Brooklyn. Thomas Joseph Denon was employed by IGO Brothers until his death in 1946. My grandparents are buried in Holy Cross Cemetery. One of their daughters, a delightful blue eyed lady of 84 years, is still living. The rest of their children are gone: one son was killed in World War II, and my father, Joe, was interred in Arlington National Cemetery in 1979.

The house on N. 8th Street, as well as the Driggs Avenue house are still there. Both homes looked quite well last year when we stopped to look from the sidewalk. (I didn't have the nerve to ring a doorbell.)

The Denon and McCue descendants go on and on for seven generations. The visit to the final resting places of our Irish born ancestors at First Calvary was a moving experience for us all. It was a bonding of generations. We are a circle of family!