

Perspective

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Irish need not apply

Most of us in the U.S. are immigrants who have ancestors who came to settle in America many years ago, or perhaps they arrived more recently. Each family has a story to tell about how they arrived in the U.S. and I find them all to be interesting. I thought I might share my family's story today.

St. Patrick's Day has come and gone, but every March 17 I think back to my Irish roots. My grandfather, John Francis Buckley (He went by "Frank") was born on November 4, 1882, in Boston to Irish immigrants who arrived a few years before. Frank's father, (John Joseph Buckley) was born in County Cork in Ireland but became a naturalized U.S. citizen on October 24, 1882, two months after the birth of his son.

According to my grandmother, there was a lot of prejudice against the Irish in the 1880s and historians say that this prejudice began decades earlier when waves of Irish left Ireland in the late 1840s driven by the potato famine that devastated Ireland beginning in 1847.

After arriving in the United States, the Irish filled the most menial and dangerous jobs, often at low pay. They cut canals, dug trenches for water and sewer pipes, laid rail lines, cleaned houses, slaved in textile mills, worked as stable workers and blacksmiths. The Irish worked cheap and working-class Americans saw Irish immigration as a bad thing for they took jobs away from them. Therefore, the Irish were not

So there I was

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always welcomed.

According to my grandmother, it was not uncommon to see signs with the initials, NINA (No Irish Need Apply) in the windows of businesses. My great grandparents had owned land back in Ireland and were tired of the discrimination, so they moved back to Ireland in the mid-1880s with my grandfather and his sister.

Frank grew to adulthood in Ireland and when he reached the age to begin working, his mother apprenticed him to a miller, then to an accountant, and finally to a master electrician. Ireland was becoming electrified at this time and Frank traveled throughout Ireland converting large estates to electricity. Family folklore revealed that at age 27 (1909), Frank was accused of blowing up a British ammunition depot using his skill with electricity. Frank was not a member of any militant organization, such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA); however, he did favor Irish independence. Following the ammunition dump explosion, the authorities placed a bounty on Frank and he left

Ireland to return to the land of his birth.

While in Boston, grandfather met and married another Irish Immigrant living in Boston, Annie McGinty, my grandmother. Frank went to work for the railroad before getting a job at the Boston Navy Yard. In 1933, he was involved in a serious accident at the Navy Yard and was blown 20 feet into the air. Frank died a short time later, during the height of the great depression.

According to my aunt, after Frank died there was no income. Annie did small house-keeping jobs but there was no way the family of four could survive on this limited income, so Annie's Irish family living in Liverpool, England, sent Annie money that was obtained through the family business, an illegal gambling establishment. The gambling business was run out of my great grandmother's kitchen while one of her daughter's kept the books. My great grandmother slept on the many gold coins beneath her feather mattress.

The family had a good reputation of always paying off the

winners and they were known to help their neighbors, such as paying for funeral expenses when a neighbor passed away. Although illegal, the working-class communities in Ireland strongly supported the book-makers who were providing entertainment and employment. The Betting and Gaming Act of 1960 in the United Kingdom legalized off-track betting and my relative's business became legitimate.

The money sent to my grandmother kept my dad and his two sisters alive until they

graduated from high school in the late 1930s and early 1940s and were on their own. My dad ended up in the Navy serving aboard a destroyer escort, visiting such exotic places as Okinawa. One of his sisters was a Navy nurse while the other sister was a clerk/typist for the U.S. government at the Nuremberg War Crime trials.

After the war, my dad and his sisters got married and raised families of their own. We never stayed in touch with my grandmother's Irish family in Liverpool and that is too

bad, since I think it might have been interesting to know a relative in the gaming industry. As for myself, I never had much luck with gambling. In this year's NCAA Basketball Tournament, I predicted Baylor was going win the tournament and they lost in the first round.

If any readers of the Tuscola Review have a family story of how their family arrived in the U.S., please send me an email with contact information and I will follow-up with an interview. Your story just might wind up in the Tuscola Review.



Note taking as a life skill

I wonder if other iPhone users use the Notes app the way I do.

In total there are 44 notes saved; many of the ones I've left out are soccer related, list of contacts, schedules, and even a list of players who volunteered to ride in a parade several years ago.

In no particular order, here's a few titles and brief descriptions of the many notes that have followed me through several phone upgrades. Like a good random electronic cable, I just never know when I'll need that note again. Getting rid of it is not an option.

"Soccer Games" is the title. But I'm realizing that I probably need to add to this one be-

cause I have a total of two games under this that I'm meant to use to play with 30 children between 3-5 years old for 6 weeks. So if anything else, at least something good comes out of this.

"I'm responsible for holding you accountable" is the title. The rest of this quote is "... In a respectful and productive way. I am not responsible for your emotional reaction to that accountability." It's a quote from Brene Brown's newest book, Atlas of the Heart. A masterpiece about the language we use to describe emotions based on decades of research. I highly recommend it on audiobook. Which is why I had to type out this reminder last

month while listening to the book.

"Disruptive mood regulation disorder" is the title. There's nothing else in this note other than that. Sometime last year my therapist suggested this term during a session and I needed to remember it to do my own due diligence of internet research.

"J" is the title, followed by "570" underneath. After a few lines there's "M" with "440" underneath. I wrote this note in September 2019 and I can only guess it has something to do with soccer.

"Toll" is the title. The rest this note is "42M (Feb 16)." I can't tell you if I actually paid this missed toll after returning

Margie's Mess

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home from Chicago. What I do know is that after many missed tolls and extra fees, I finally ordered a toll pass and no longer have to make notes like this.

This one has no title. The contents read "Often we spend our days fretting the 'what ifs,' and missing the 'what is.' The

truth is, the possibilities are endless for what could happen. When we stay present and grateful for what is, life can be simpler." I don't know where this quote came from but reading it again now I know why past me wanted to keep it close.

"2451 push" is the title, followed by "3212 panel." I'm not sure what this is. They could be part numbers because as a technician I often have to jot down a part number on the fly.

My most recent note is what you're reading right now.

I have to end this with the oldest note. It was made on Jan. 5, 2013, and is one of the first things I make sure has transferred to a new phone. The tile is "MUAH" and there is no other content in the note. Written by my husband after he used my phone for something, I didn't find this note until months after it was made. It is arguably my most favorite too.

What really defines 'the good old days'

My friends and I spend a lot of time talking about the good old days. There is a universal yearning for yesteryear when life was simpler, responsibilities were few and relationships were uncomplicated.

Mike and Bill are older than me, so their good old days were before my time. Seems that their good old days were the best good old days in the history of good old days. They were born in the perfect era and in the right place. Nothing else can compare.

Their good old days were so fortuitous that I'm envious. They make my good old days seem bland and lackluster. I remember the just OK old days.

Maybe I'm just not old enough to appreciate my youth

Ramblin' Man

By David Porter
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in the same way. Time has not smoothed out the wrinkles or flattened the scars. My memories lack polish.

Did I have a rough life? No. Were there rough patches? Aren't there always?

The 50s, which were before my time, were unquestionably great years for music and cars

and life in small-town mid-America. But they weren't great for everybody.

The 60s were tumultuous by comparison. There were protests and drugs and a rawness to it. I was alive for half of the decade, but I don't remember much of it.

The 70s were like a splash

of cold water on the 60s. Hippies were passé and psychedelic music gave way to unobjectionable, benign lyrics, extravagantly silly dance moves and saccharine fashion. Those were my good old days.

The 80s rebelled with punk rock and brooding emo angst, but the 60s had written the book on defiance, so the 80s felt almost manufactured. There was a burst of outlaw country music and southern rock that contrasted with the goth scene.

Of course, the boundaries of time bleed through the decades as movements originating on the west and east coasts move slowly toward the center of the country.

Still, the good old days are unique to each individual. There is an awakening that takes place between the ages of 10 and 18 that defines a person's youth. The friend circle gains prominence as the family circle releases its grip. Kids begin to develop their own identities so the coming of age years are imprinted on their brains.

In that sense, it's the age, not the era, that becomes the good old days.

It's difficult to imagine that today will be somebody's good old days. For decades to come, we'll be arguing over who had it best and why. As those who came of age in the 50s slip into the ether, we children of the 70s will take the helm of remi-

niscence and there will be nobody to dispute that our day was the day.

The pain will fade and the scars will heal so we're left with only the pollyanna memories that we can polish and embellish to our liking. That's my goal, anyway.

Seventy years from now, old men will remember wistfully the pandemic era and the obstacles they overcame and the bonds that were forged with nary a mention of the turd that it was. Life is good like that. Not as good as the 50s, but as good as it gets for them.

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