

## OBITUARY

My father, Thomas Anglim, was born in Clonmel, County Tipperary, Ireland in May 1865. There was discussion between him and his sister Nellie as to the accuracy of this date, but no conclusion was ever reached. The early history of my father in Ireland before he emigrated to this Country is little known now, and consisted mostly of oft-told tales; heard at wakes and weddings, or when he mellowed in his cups. Old football matches; brushes with the Peelers ( the LAW to you ). Evictions, and various other measures taken by the English to try to subdue the Irish. A long and bitter tale, the memory of which is now rapidly being forgotten. He came to this Country in early 1888. A man of little education, New York could offer him little in the way of employment, except the usual jobs that were available to donkeys, as they were called. Micks was another name that could start a fight in those days. Digging ditches, carrying the "Hod", or longshore work were some of the ways the Irish made a living in those days. My Pop was a longshoreman for years after he and my mother were married in 1893. He had moved up a bit and had gotten himself a job as a packer with a dry goods concern, H.B. Claflin Co. when he first appears in my memory. That would be back in 1902. A memory of the night we moved into a tenement at 163 Varick St. We had moved out of ~~the~~ other place to this one because it was cheaper. Up four flights of stairs; three rooms; living room, or parlor as we airily called it, with two windows looking out to the street. Then a kitchen with a window on an air-shaft. Then a bedroom - no window-. The kitchen had a hole in the wall for the flue from your own stove. Also a sink with one tap, Cold naturally. I remember the gas had not been turned on so we found our way about with kerosene lamps. Gloomy and strange. I cried but Pop was wonderful. He comforted me. Our family then had only three kids. Four more were born in that place, and I mean they were born in that airless little bedroom, not in a hospital. Pop always tried to be cheerful, to look on the bright side, though, looking back, it took some doing. Our expanding family with no increase in income, made it rough on my mother, who had the job of managing this menage. If, at times she lashed out at the unfairness of life, who could blame her. We stayed out of her way when she was in a lashing mood. Jobs were hard to get in those days, and just as hard to keep. Bosses were tyrants and had to be buttered up. They had the power of life or death. A man losing his job in those days was in real trouble. No unions, no unemployment insurance, no minimum wage, no nothing. McKinley was considered a kindly man because one of his campaign slogans was "The Full Dinner Pail". Sure, feed the horses good; they'll work better. The Republicans were in full control of the country and building up their tremendous fortunes. Any kind of sickness was trouble, but a major sickness was disaster. I remember my father having to go to the hospital a couple of times, and then we found out what good neighbors were for. Our aunts and uncles did what they could, but most of the time they were in the same trouble themselves. I remember our Jewish butcher, Moe, ran our meat bill up to \$19. a tremendous sum in those days. Never bothered her and kept bringing the meat. Of course he got paid off, but in dribs and drabs. All the memories of those times are not bitter. There were some nice times too. I remember a few Saturday nights when the family exchequer could stand it, I was allowed to accompany my Pop to the saloon over on Hudson St, where they had a better grade of beer and a generous bartender who would squeeze a little more beer into the can. On the way to the saloon we would stop off at a fish place and order an oyster fry, picking it up on the way back. I have eaten in some pretty fancy places since then and had some pretty fancy food, but NOTHING could taste any better than that oyster fry. The fish man would give us some oyster crackers and a pickle. The other kids were asleep. To be allowed to go out with my father at night and participate in a treat like that is something I'll never forget.

Other nice memories of my father: He had a tremendous interest in sports. Baseball he knew not, but football and other field sports he knew well. He used to organize racing events among the kids on the block; once around the block and even handicapping us according to his estimate of our abilities. I won my share of these events which pleased him very much. It was rough going on the cobblestones most of our streets were paved with then. His main interest was football - Gaelic football - a game similar to soccer and which he played and played well for many years in his youth. He was a member of a championship team that played exhibitions in the old Garden. He had a season pass to old Celtic Park out in Queens, a place devoted to Irish Football matches and other sports in the afternoon, and drinking, dancing and fighting in the evening. When I was a little older, about eight or nine, he would take me over for the afternoon sports, not the evening ones, if he could afford the extra fare. He was nice to be with. He knew most of the sports figures of that day. Tommy Conneff, who held the World's Mile record for many years around the turn of the Century. He once introduced me to Tom Kiely, a giant of a man who, Pop said was at that time "All Around" champ of Ireland.

Other nice memories: The walks with Pop after Mass on Sunday morning, when Mom told him to take the older kids out of the house so that she could get the Sunday dinner ready. It was served around two or three in the afternoon and if times were good, it was a good one. The walks usually took us around the neighborhood, sometimes along the waterfront, pointing out places where he used to work, and telling us about the ships that were docked there. He once pointed out the ship that brought him to this country, the Cunarder "Etruria", and a rusty old hulk she was by that time. After dinner on Sunday afternoon, he took his nap in the parlor; on the couch; called couch in the daytime. At night it was a bed, full of kids. The newspaper over his face meant Do Not Disturb. We wouldn't think of it. He had a deep respect and yearning for education, especially for his kids. He encouraged us continuously, and he even offered to help with our homework, and he could, with the 3 R's. He often pointed out to his kids what the lack of education forced him to do for a living. His religion was Catholic. Unequivocally and simply, Catholic. He was a life-long member of the Holy Name Society, attended their meetings and went to Communion with them on the appointed Sundays. He was impervious to the winds that were even then blowing about New Thought and New Ideas about God. I think his feeling about God and religion can best be summed up in this story he told many times. I know it well and have probably told it a few times myself, but I am going to put it on paper for the first time. It seems that the Catholic priest and the Protestant minister of some little town in Ireland were entertaining a visiting fireman, a Jewish Rabbi (this could be true?). They were discussing theology with emphasis, no doubt, on the various points on which the three of them differed. Along came Fooley Smith a local character who whistled as he went. He was reputed to be missing a few buttons, but had native shrewdness. The Protestant minister proposed that they put the question to Fooley. The Priest warned the minister that Fooley might come up with a good answer, but the minister went ahead. Tell me Fooley, which one of us do you think is right? Your Catholic priest, me, a Protestant minister or this Jewish rabbi here. Fooley scratched his head for a bit and said: Well, if Jesus Christ came down to earth, the good father here is right. If he didn't come down to earth, then this Jewish rabbi here is right. But, let him come or stay, you're wrong anyway.

In politics too, he was simplicity itself. Democratic all the way. He read the old New York Evening World, a habit I formed then and continued till the paper ~~was~~ was sold to Scripps-Howard in the Twenties ( God Help Us ). But he formed his own opinions, and ~~x~~ they were good ones, even if they did sound like Mr. Dooley. He belonged to the local Democratic outfit, The Huron Club. He was faithful in his voting duties and always attended the Annual Outing

of the Club. By excursion steamer up the East River to College Point. The usual thing; three legged races, potato races and sports of that ilk. Plenty to eat, music by a brass band, a ball or two, and oceans of beer. Pop got his full share of all these things and came home in the late evening glowing and full of good cheer. Occasions of this kind were the only times I ever saw my Pop even approach a state of intoxication. He liked a drink and no doubt if he had more free money he would have drank more than he did. But, he simply could not afford it, and rather than cadge it or spend money that belonged to his family, he mostly did without. A pint of beer with supper, which he shared with his wife and even any of the kids. I was a frequent recipient of his largesse. God knows it was little enough relaxation for a man who had put in an arduous day of grinding labor at a stinking job in a dusty, dirty stinking place, and faced the prospect of getting up in the morning and doing the same thing all over again. The tenement was crowded and being on the top floor was hot in the Summer and cold in the Winter. Maybe one of the kids was sick during the night; he walked the floor uncomplainingly, humming "O believe me if all these endearing young charms" until the kid dropped off to sleep. He was unfailingly gentle and comforting. I copied that lullaby and used it on my kids. I wonder if either of you remember it. My Pop was a man of great courage. Year after year of dull stupid labor, with only the hope of a better life for his kids in the future to sustain him; no hope for a reprieve now, except to Calvary Cemetery. No hope for more money, better job, nothing. The Congressional Medal of Honor would be little enough for men such as he. And he was not alone. Thousands of Irishmen like himself, Jews on the East Side, Germans in Yorkville, Italians from Little Italy, were doing the same thing. And now the Porto Rican is ~~is~~ running into the same battle for a foothold; bias, discrimination, contempt, and even hatred are thrown at them. No man who saw the things that happened to the Irish, or any descendant of one who did, should participate in any activity designed to deny human rights to anybody. My father saw a sign on Broadway - "Man wanted - No Irish -. They cant put up signs like that any more, but there are other ways to show discrimination, and it is a source of deep hurt to me when I see my beloved Irish practicing those ways.

In 1910 my father moved his family to 117 Varick St. The family now had seven kids and desperately needed more room. The new place didn't have more rooms but we were promised the first chance at a four room flat in the new place. It took a few years to get the extra room, but it came eventually and eased the situation considerably. By this time my older brother and I were working and bringing in a few bucks. He had gotten a job after school with the Obelisk Laundry, run, ~~by~~ of all things, by an Irishman by the name of Mike Crowley, a real doll of ~~a~~ a man. In 1909 he got a job with the Edison Co. turning on the ~~the~~ street lights in the evening and turning them off again in the morning. He bequeated the laundry job to me. In 1911 when I was fourteen I went out and got a full time job - office boy, four bucks a week -. A month after I got the job the boss came to me and after balling me out for something I did or didn't do, said: You're Fired. In those days they didn't beat about the bush. When they fired you, you were fired NOW. I went home in tears and that night Pop, good old Pop, took charge. He told me he would speak to Mr. Millar the boss. He did, and I was an office boy for Claflins. Lo and behold shortly after going there, Mr. Millar repeated those fateful words, You're Fired. I was stunned and went looking for Pop. He knew all about it and why I was fired. ( The grapevine was good in those days. ) He just put his arm across my shoulder and said: Go home boy; I'll take care of it. And he did. That night when he got home he just said: Go back to work in the morning. Claflins wasn't too bad for those times. They gave vacations and my Pop used to work them and get paid double for his two weeks. At Tanksgiving

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they gave out turkeys to the married men. The size of the turkey depended on the size of the family. Large families were not unusual in those days and there were larger families than ours, but we managed to get a pretty good sized turkey. Thanksgiving Eve the older kids went down to Canal St. about half way to Pop's work, to meet Pop and help him carry the turkey home. Pop used to carry the bird up and put it on the kitchen floor, and it was a sign of growing up if one of the younger kids could pick it up and put it on the kitchen table. Christmas was a happy time, but simple. We hung our stockings over the coal stove in the kitchen, and invariably found a lump of coal, an orange, an apple and a few pieces of candy. We never had a tree. Even if we could have afforded to buy one and decorate it, we had no room for one. We made much of a visit from Mrs. Madigan, a friend of the family, who always brought us an enormous striped peppermint cane. A couple of times when we were very young, my Pop let his optimistic good nature run wild by organizing a trip to Coney Island on a Sunday. Plans were laid long in advance. O'Connell the shoe store man, provided enough empty shoe boxes, and Saturday Evening was spent in making sandwiches and other preparations, interspersed with prayers for a fine day Sunday. Came the dawn, and after breakfast and Mass, we all traipsed down to the Brooklyn Bridge. There must have been four or five of us kids including the youngest one which my father carried. Knowing what happened in our family after that, my mother, no doubt, was carrying another one, but we kids didn't know that. In addition, one or maybe two of the neighbor kids came along. At Brooklyn Bridge we fought our way on to the Smith St. Trolley, burdened down with our lunch boxes and other paraphernalia. What a problem in logistics. After the usual discussion with the conductor about; "How old is this one " or " How old is that one ", we were on our way without too much damage to our slender resources. I can still remember the tang of the salt air as we approached our destination and the wild scramble when the trolley reached Coney, for the water. Bath houses were no problem. The Kids just took off their shoes and their outer garments and presto - Bathing Suits -. The younger kids just got their feet wet, and none of the rest of us could swim then. Pop kept an eye on us and kept us herded within reach, by the use of his famous whistle - it could be heard for blocks, and we all knew its blast-. In a short time we were ravenously hungry and the shoe boxes were opened and the food was devoured without mercy. The long afternoon passed with the kids getting themselves good and tired and good and sunburned. Then the long trek to the trolley station, fight our way on the trolley, the usual discussion about ages, and the long weary ride to the Brooklyn Bridge. Then the long slow walk to Varick St, Pop usually with a kid asleep on each arm and the rest of us tagging along bone weary. It took a lot of guts for Pop and Mom to organize a safari like that, But the fresh air and the "wather" were good for the kids, they said.

In the early teens our family had ceased expanding, Pat and I were making a bit more money and even Pop was doing better, so we were eating higher on the hog. Woodrow Wilson was elected in 1912 and in 1914, the European Nations who had been making faces at each other for some time, finally went to war. Who cared. Those guys over there were always fighting each other, and the Atlantic Ocean was mighty wide. But, in 1916 the Administration took a long look at the size of our piddling little army, and using the excuse of some trouble with a Mexican bandit by the name of Pancho Villa, mobilized our National Guard in Texas on the Mexican Border. My older brother, Pat, who was 16 months older than me, and some of his wild young friends, under the influence of a wave of patriotism then sweeping the country, and, no doubt a few beers, joined the old 12th Regiment, popularly known then as " The Dirty Dozen", and was off to Phila - I mean Texas, in the morning. One of the things it did for us, besides cutting our income a little was; it gave my other brother John and me more



stomach, which he attributed to gas and took home remedies for. It was a foul thing. My father was always clean and neat. Kept his body clean, his hair combed ( he had hair ) and his moustache trimmed. He was nice looking and you could be proud to be seen with him. I always was. We had to take him to the hospital around May 1st and he was operated on in a few days. Intestinal cancer. A sad memory: watching a nice guy being destroyed by a filthy, insidious thing. We all gathered; did what we could, but it was inevitable.

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On May 28th, 1934 five daughters were born to a French-Canadian family in northern Ontario. The Dionne Quintuplets. The news hit the headlines with a crash, and stayed there for a long time as the fight to save their lives was broadcast all over the world. The Dionne quintuplets are still headline news.

On the same day, May 28th 1934, Tommy Anglim died at Jamaica Hospital. I was with him at the time, and he died as he had lived, quietly and uncomplainingly. There were no headlines, nothing but a death notice in the New York Journal. But, his large family and many friends gathered from far and near to pay their last respects at the old-fashioned wake, an Irish ritual which was even then going out of style. Critics of the Irish, and the "STRANGERS", ridiculed this custom, saying it was disrespectful of the dead and even repeated some terrible lies that were told about the things that went on at some of them. Ten thousand nuts to them. There was no disrespect shown. Death, to the Irish, was just as much a part of our physical life as birth. As birth was the beginning of it, so death was the end of it, and if a man was known to have a strong possibility of reaching Heaven in the hereafter, there was no reason for any immoderate or hypocritical mourning. Two days before the funeral they started to arrive. Uncle Tim, my mother's oldest brother with his wife Bridget, was first. He was the same age as my father, but the two of them had a long-standing feud going. Only a few years before, I had to tear the two of them apart. They were trying to kill each with their fists. They were 65 at the time and ~~was~~ the war was over something that happened in ~~NINETEENTH~~ the Nineteenth Century. I don't know what, and cared less. Uncle Ned, my mother's second oldest brother; a quiet man, sucking his pipe and grabbing a ball as they went by. Uncle Din, my mother's younger brother, a Cop, and one of the wittiest men I ever know. Aunt Marge, his wife was with him. She was a doll, a former school teacher who sang well and played the piano well; was still in love with her husband. Even she thought he was witty, and that's something. Uncle Tom Kelly, a large man 6' 5" and wide enough to take the jamb with him when he came through the door. He had a laugh that could blow down a wall, and a sweet memory of him comes through from my kid days. Meeting him coming out of the "place" on the corner; greeting him with a hug; his clothes smelled of cigar smoke; the big hand in his pocket, and a nickle for me. Unforgettable. My father's younger brother, Pat Anglim, a jovial man, full of fun. All the aunts and cousins available; old friends and neighbors from New York; even some of the minor political wheels from Battery Dan's District. There was lots of room. My brother and three sisters had homes within short walking distance for some of the older relatives. The "Old Guard" would have none of this, however. Maybe towards morning, we could "con" some of them into lying down on a couch for a minute or two, and if they dozed off, slip their shoes off. The two neighborhood taverns did a land office business with the overflow, and managed to accomodate all comers even after closing time. After One A.M. when the strollers and the kids; the older women and the sick and disabled had left, the "Old Guard" had gathered in the kitchen and on the back porch. The "crayther" was flowing a little faster now; the tongues were loosened and the stories and "Lies" were flowing faster too. God help the poor misguided "narrowback" who dared to cross tongues with this formidable array of "Donkeys".

On the third day, Pop's body was taken to St. Clare's Church, a High Mass was sung; there was a long procession to Calvary Cemetery, and Pop was buried in the family plot. May God rest his valiant Soul.

Din May 27th 1962.