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## Tommie the Yank, My Great-Grandfather

By **Peggy Calvey Patton**

I became a Great Grandmother in June, and it made me realize that this sweet baby girl, Findley, will not know or remember anything about me or our history. I am writing this story for perhaps her grandchildren or other relatives in 2074, Fifty years from now.

When you are the child of immigrants, your family history is often lacking, but I remember my mother saying that her grandfather had been in Cleveland in the early 1900s and I assumed that he was not happy living in the USA and returned to Ireland. Because she was crippled with rheumatism, my mother's cousins would gather on our front porch on West 112 Street on summer nights and that's where I heard more of the story about my mother's grandfather's visit to America.

These wonderful women, Mary English, Ann McNamara, Kate McIlwee, Ann Burke McLaughlin, Mary Glaze and a few forgotten in the haze of memory, were also his granddaughters; they often speculated about the trip. How different would their lives be if he stayed here and they didn't have their Achill Island childhood?

Later when I worked in Cleveland Municipal Court. I would visit the office of my cousin, Judge Joe McManamon. He once he asked me if I knew that our great-grandfather had spent a year in Cleveland in the early 1900s? Joe said his name was Thomas English, and he came on his 1st cousin's passport, who was a high-ranking Cleveland Policeman.

During a visit to Ireland, I asked my Uncle Johnny Moran about the story, he said it was true. He said after his grandfather's return, his was known as "Tommie the Yank" because he used Americanisms like "yeah" and "okay."

Thomas English, my maternal great-grandfather, was born on Achill Island off the west coast of County Mayo, in 1847. He married Mary McManamon in January 1867. They had nine children. My grandmother, Bridget English Moran, born 1868, was their

first child.

His first cousin Micheal English, was born on Achill Island in 1845, and immigrated to Cleveland in 1864 with his parents. The family settled in Cleveland.

He married Celia Gallagher in 1869. They had five children, three boys and two girls. He became a naturalized citizen in 1870, and went on the Cleveland Police Department in April 1871. Twenty-two years later, he attained the rank of Captain. In today's parlance he would be known as "Super Cop."

Captain English once went four days without sleep countermarching a large labor riot on Scranton Road that took place in May of 1874. His individual efforts brought a man named Otto Louth to justice for the murder of Maggie Thompson. He had the pleasure of seeing the man hanged.

He was widowed in 1882. Celia was only 32. In 1997, due to the pressure of his job, he took a stress related three month sick leave and went back to Ireland to regain his health. He returned to Cleveland and retired from the Police Department five years later, in November, 1902, after thirty-one years of service.

He returned to Ireland in 1906, planning to stay for a whole year to fully recover his health.

The two cousins who were very close in their youth decided that since the Police Captain would not be using his passport for the next year, Thomas would use it to visit his son, John T. English, who had immigrated to Cleveland in 1905. John T. got married in 1907, so that was perhaps the reason for the trip.

When I started the search for the police captain, I had assumed that his name was also Thomas English, but the only man with the last name of English on the Cleveland Police Department at that time was Captain Michael Martin English and the time frame fit. A retired policeman, Ptl. Patrick Reynolds did the research in the Police Library Archives for me and I am thankful for this wonderful gesture.

At the turn of the century, travel

