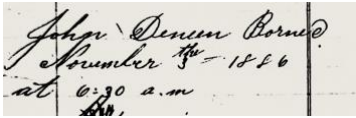


Branch 2 of 7

2. John Walter Deneen—*Jack*

November 3, 1886–July 9, 1956
Great Granduncle



Patrick and Julia welcomed their eldest son, John—affectionately known as Jack—on November 3, 1886, in Corning, New York. It is highly likely he was named in honor of Julia’s brother, John Keohane, the sibling who had so desperately tried to convince her to stay in Ireland for one more year.

Jack grew up in the family home at 245 West Second Street and attended St. Mary’s School. Like many young men in Corning, he entered the town's defining industry early; the 1905 New York State census records him as a 19-year-old glass worker, and by 1910, he had risen to the position of a "gatherer" at the Glass Works.

By 1915, Jack sought a life beyond the glass furnaces of Corning. The New York State census from that year reveals a dramatic change: he was living as a boarder at 475 Pearl Street in the bustling metropolis of New York City, earning a living as a streetcar conductor.

Life in Manhattan during this era was a study in contrasts. Jack lived cheek-by-jowl with a diverse melting pot of working-class tenants—including laborers, dock workers, subway builders, and candy packers—who had immigrated from Italy, Germany, and Russia. For a single man, city life offered the dazzling distractions of the "golden age of vaudeville" and the flickering magic of silent film nickelodeons. However, it also brought immense daily hardships. Overcrowded tenements routinely lacked basic plumbing or hot water, forcing entire floors of residents to share a single communal bathroom.

As Jack adjusted to the rhythms of the city, the shadow of World War I loomed large. While the United States fiercely debated neutrality and isolationism, catastrophic global events like the 1915 sinking of the Lusitania slowly turned public sentiment toward intervention. When the Selective Service Act established the draft in May 1917, Jack didn't wait to be called. At 30 years old, he enlisted on June 23, 1917. Passing the strict military physical requirements of the era—which mandated minimum height and weight benchmarks and a sufficient number of healthy teeth—he was assigned to naval training.

Jack began his naval instruction aboard the U.S.S. Granite State (the former U.S.S. New Hampshire) before transferring to active duty as a seaman second class aboard the U.S.S. North Carolina.

His days were defined by the grueling routines of a sailor: maintaining the decks, standing watch, handling mooring lines, participating in endless emergency drills, and assisting the gun crews.



Name: DENEEN JOHN WALTER		Service Number: 130-93-43	
Enrolled: NAVAL ENROLLING OFFICE NEW YORK N.Y.		Date: 6-23-17	
Sampled:	30 YRS 7 MOS	Rate: SEAMAN 2 CLASS	344XX
Age at Entrance:	245	WEST 2ND ST. STEUBEN	CORNING N.Y.
Home Address:	245	County:	State:
E Served at		From	To
U S S GRANITE STATE		6-23-17	10-13-17
U S S NORTH CAROLINA		10-13-17	11-8-18
NAVAL HOSPITAL		11-8-18	11-11-18
NEW YORK N.Y.		11-11-18	11-11-18
Served as		No. Days	
SEAMAN 2 CLASS		465	
SEAMAN		41	
Remarks:			
INACTIVE DUTY 7-22-19			
DISCHARGED			
Date: 6-22-20			
Place: HEADQUARTERS 3RD NAVA			

USS North Carolina transporting troops during WWI



Family Group: DENEEN | KEOHANE

REMEMBERS A SUB THAT DIDN'T RETURN TO BASE

Editor Old Timers:
Attention Terry Ward:
Just a few lines to say I
read your letter on the Old
Timers Page.
During World War I, I was
a seaman on the North Caro-
lina doing convoy duty. The
U. S. S. Grant was in the con-
voy more than once.
During one trip the U. S. S.
Grant had trouble and had to
slow down and the rest of the
convoy, about 12 transports,
were ahead and the North
Carolina slowed down waiting
for the Grant.
I was on the forecabin and
saw the wake of a torpedo that
missed the 12 of them. Then
the sub went by the North
Carolina on the port side. By
that time the Grant started to
move ahead and passed the

North Carolina on the star-
board side.
Shortly after the submarine,
astern of the North Carolina,
started up and tried to pass
us on the starboard side. May-
be to get a shot at us but the
North Carolina fire a few
shots and, if I am not mis-
taken, made a couple of bulls'
eyes with five-inch shells.
During the eight trips that I
made on the North Carolina
that was the only submarine I
saw. But, of course, there
could have been more. How-
ever, I do not think that one
went back to its base.
I am sure that was in the
month of August, 1918. But I
will stand for correction.
JOHN W. DENEEN,
Bay St., Box 86, Sag Harbor,
L. I.

The North Carolina was tasked with the critical mission of escorting troop and supply convoys along the East Coast between major ports like Norfolk and New York. Despite the proximity to home, danger was ever-present. Decades later, in 1951, Jack recounted a harrowing incident to a local newspaper: in August 1918, German torpedoes narrowly missed his convoy in the Atlantic. Following the Armistice, his ship shifted to the rewarding task of repatriating victorious American soldiers from Europe, a mission Jack proudly supported until his honorable discharge on June 22, 1920.

Jack returned to Corning to a household in mourning. His father, Patrick, had passed away just one month prior, on May 20, 1920. For a time, Jack reconnected with his roots. The 1927 Corning city directory

paints a vivid picture of a family in mid-transition: his 64-year-old widowed mother, Julia, acted as head of household at West Second Street, with adult daughters Mary (37) and Anna (35) living at home. Jack (41) was listed alongside his younger sisters Frances and Teresa, who were working in other cities.

Following his mother's death on January 21, 1929, Jack permanently relocated to the New York City region. Just months later, on June 21, 1929, he married Rose M. McWilliams, a native of Sag Harbor, New York.

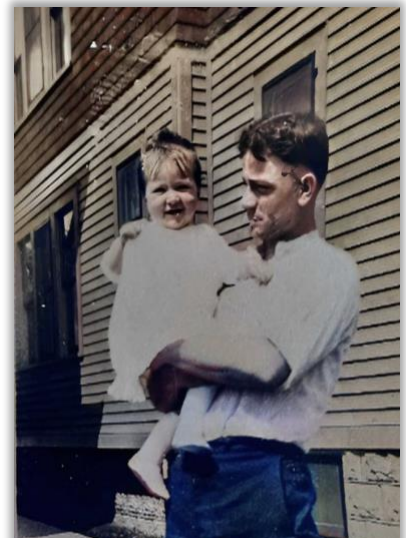
By 1930, the newlyweds owned a home at 131 Bay Street in Sag Harbor. As the Great Depression gripped the nation, Jack secured a coveted, stable uniform job as a watchman for a private estate, patrolling premises and controlling gate access.

Sag Harbor, a former whaling community whose last historic ship had departed in 1871, was reinventing itself through small-scale manufacturing. Though the town was updating its infrastructure with indoor plumbing and new roads, the financial devastation of the Depression was severe; some desperate locals even demolished their own buildings just to sell the raw materials for cash. To compound these hardships, Jack and Rose witnessed the catastrophic destruction of the historic, unnamed New England Hurricane of 1938.

By 1950, the couple had moved to Apartment R at 307 Bay Street, and Jack was employed by the Sag Harbor Village Office. He and Rose never had children.

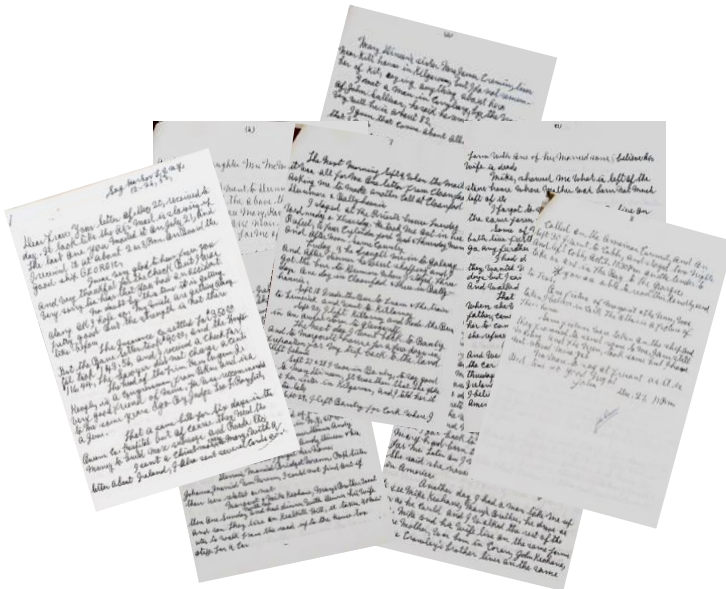
In the winter of 1953, Jack undertook a profound personal pilgrimage back to Ireland. He meticulously chronicled his emotional reunions with long-lost relatives in an extraordinary eight-page letter written to his sister Frances ("Fran") on December 26, 1953.

The letter offers an intimate look into the humor and dynamics of the Deneen siblings. Thanking Fran for a recent letter and a generous check, Jack wryly complained about their sister Mary, who still lived in the Corning homestead:



John W. Deneen, circa spring 1928
Holding nephew James Francis Kelly

Family Group: DENEEN | KEOHANE



"I sent a Christmas card to Mary with a letter about Ireland and a handkerchief from Ireland. She sent a card short and snappy. She has not written a letter to me in a long time. I wonder why?"

For the family genealogist (talk about imposter syndrome), Jack's letter became a goldmine of discoveries, unlocking branches of the family tree that had not appeared on modern databases. He joyfully detailed finding a web of aunts, uncles, and cousins across County Cork:

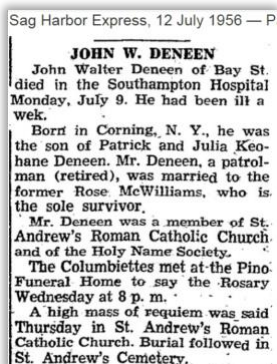
"We have a double first cousin Dennis Andy Dinneen, his father was our uncle Andy Dineen & his Mother was Mother's Sister I forget her name [Margaret]."

On another afternoon, Jack visited a cousin named Mike Keohane, who was farming the ancestral land in Carran where Julia had been raised. Jack wrote:

"John Keohane lives in the same house with his married sons. Mike showed me what is left of the stone house where mother was born—not much left of it."

Crucially, the phrasing in this letter revealed that the siblings affectionately referred to Patrick and Julia as "Pop" and "Mother."

We have a Double First Cousin Dennis Andy Dinneen, his father was our Uncle Andy Dineen & his Mother was Mother's Sister I forget her name
Dennis married Bridget Warren, Pop's Sister
Johnny married Ann Warren, I could not find out if they were related or not.



Just three years after walking the hills of his mother's youth, Jack passed away on July 9, 1956.

Although his local obituary focused narrowly on his immediate household, listing his wife, Rose, as his sole survivor, Jack's passing was a significant milestone in the family history. He was the very first of Patrick and Julia's children to die, leaving behind six grieving sisters (Jo, Mary, Anna, Kate, Frances, and Teresa), two nephews (Jim and Jack Kelly), and a niece (Julia Kelly). Putting this short piece together about Jack, I leave his story with respect for an honorable life lived dedicated to service, hard work, and love for his family.

Children: None.

