

FAMILY BRANCH NARRATIVE

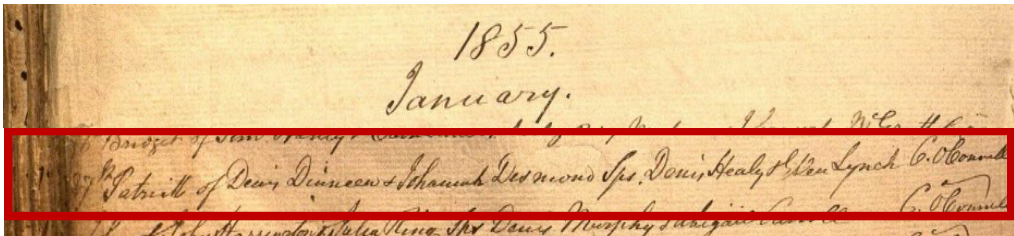
Patrick Deneen and Julia Keohane

Great Grandparents

1855

Patrick

Patrick Deneen was born on January 26, 1855, in Ahil Beg, Bantry, County Cork, Ireland, to Denis Dineen and Johanna Desmond. His birth details are confirmed by multiple census records, his obituary, and handwritten notes from his wife, Julia Keohane, and his granddaughter, Julia Kelly (1923–2007). Patrick was the youngest of five children. He had three brothers: Andrew (1841–1918), Denis (1847–abs. 1854), who died in childhood, and Denis Lawrence (1854–1928), as well as an elder sister, Julia Johanna (1853–1909).

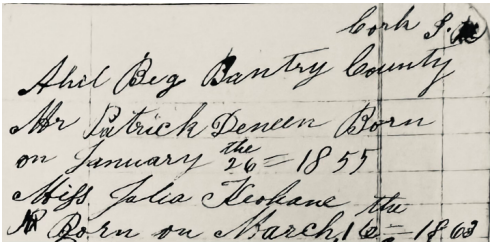


Baptism, Bantry Cork & Ross. Transcription:

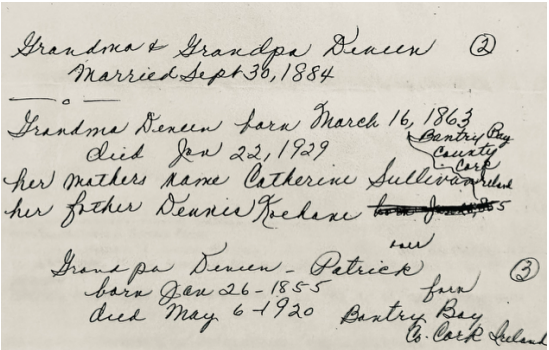
1855. January.

27 Patrick of Denis Dineen & Johannah Desmond Sps (sponsors) Denis Healy & Ann Lynch C. O'Connell [priest]

Digital image by E-Celtic Ltd; Dublin, Ireland's Irish Catholic Registers



Birth dates written in the hand of
Julia Keohane Deneen

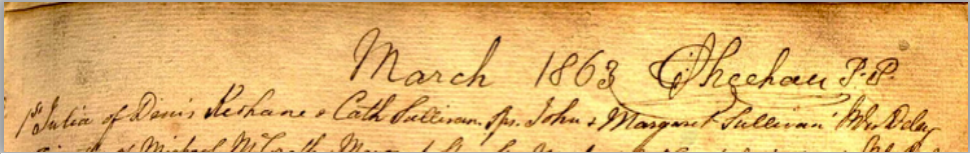


Important dates captured by granddaughter Julia M. Kelly

1863

Julia

Julia Keohane was born on March 16, 1863, in Inchinagown, Bantry, County Cork, Ireland. She was the sixth among eight siblings born to Denis Keohane and Catherine 'Kate' Sullivan with brothers and sisters named Jeremiah, Mary, John, Margaret, Bridget, Kate, and Ellen.

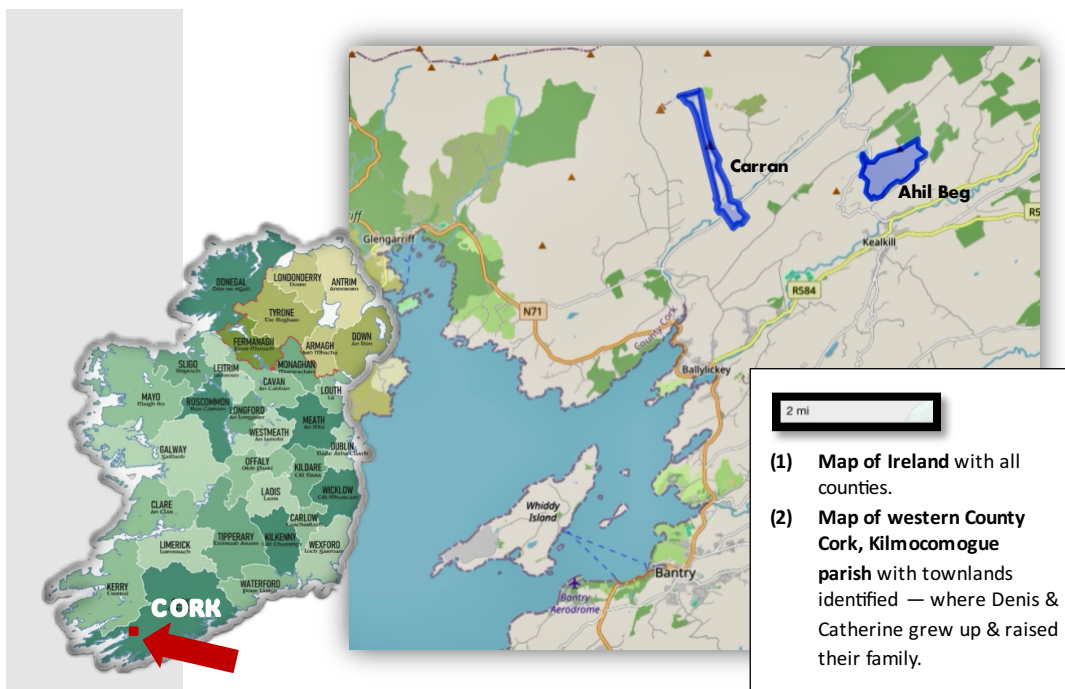


Transcription: March 1863 Sheehan P.P.

1st Julia of Denis Keohane & Cath Sullivan Spr. John & Margaret Sullivan

Digital image by E-Celtic Ltd; Dublin, Ireland's Irish Catholic Registers

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE



Both families lived in rural County Cork a mountainous landscape of rocky terrain, stone walls, and dense hedgerows. The Dineens resided in the townland of Achail Bheag (Ahil Beg), while Julia's maternal roots tied her to Carran. These townlands represent the smallest traditional units of Irish land division, pre-dating the 12th-

century Norman invasion. Their boundaries follow natural features and have remained stable for centuries.

What is in a Name?

Surnames are profoundly important to the Irish, deeply rooted in history, genealogy, and local identity. They can signal family origins, clan connections, and provincial heritage; names such as Murphy, Kelly, and O'Sullivan carry deep medieval roots.

The **Dinneen, Dinnen, O'Dineen, Dinan, Deneen, Denheen** surname originated in Munster, particularly in southwestern County Cork and County Kerry, rooted in the ancient Gaelic tradition. It is translated as *descendant of Duinnín*, often interpreted as *little brown one*, suggesting a diminutive, personal byname. Major changes in spellings of names occurred in Ireland after Cromwell's conquest in the early 17th century. The British colonizers Anglicized Irish names by removing Irish prefixes, translating, simplifying, and standardizing the spellings.

The Ó Duinnín sept served as hereditary poets, chroniclers, and historians to the MacCarthy Mór and O'Sullivan families. They were known as **seanchadh (historians/antiquarians)** who, after an extensive 14-year education, were responsible for maintaining the history, law, and genealogy of their patrons. Early records from the 17th century link the family to the school of Irish poetry in Blarney, Co. Cork.



Patrick Deneen's (1855–1920) official birth entry in the church records spelled his name Dinneen, but he adopted the Deneen spelling after emigrating to America. His brothers and first cousins who immigrated used both the "i" and "e" spellings of Deneen.

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Keohane is an Anglicized form of the Gaelic Mac Eocháin, which means "son of Eochán". Eochán is a diminutive of the personal name Eochaidh, which translates to "horseman" or "horse rider". The Keohane surname is predominantly found in County Cork, Ireland.



There is a noted connection between the Keohane and Crowley surnames in the Cork and Kerry regions. It has been theorized that these names may represent two branches of a single ancestral clan. One prevailing theory posits that the Keohane surname originated from a faction of the Crowley family that became separated from the main lineage, possibly during period of heavy fog. This hypothesis is supported by the similarity to the Irish word "ceocháin," meaning fog.

Irish naming conventions for children often followed a pattern: the eldest son was named after his paternal grandfather, the second son after his maternal grandfather, and the third son after his father. A similar pattern existed for daughters, with the first daughter named for her maternal grandmother and the second for her paternal grandmother. If a child died, particularly in infancy, the name was often reused for a later child. This was a traditional method, but it was not always followed precisely.

Land

For the Irish, land represents identity, security, and a profound spiritual connection to history. That meaning grew from centuries of dispossession, colonial tenancy, and the constant struggle to hold onto a place that was more than property. It is viewed as *soul* or *homeland* (baile fearainn) rather than mere property. Millennia of folklore personified the landscape as sacred, while centuries of colonial dispossession turned land tenure into a fierce battle for dignity.

This connection is anchored in historical property documents like Griffith's Valuation (completed once on every property in Ireland between 1847 and 1864 to assess rateable). In the 1853 records for Kilmocomogue Parish, Patrick's father, Denis, is listed renting a house, an office (farm building), and land in Ahil Beg. Directly adjacent, John Dinneen rented a house and garden. Given their proximity, Denis and John were almost certainly brothers farming neighboring plots.

In Ireland, the
sea whispers
tales of
wanderlust,
while **the land**
sings a song of
belonging.

James Joyce
1914

Parish of Kilmocomogue

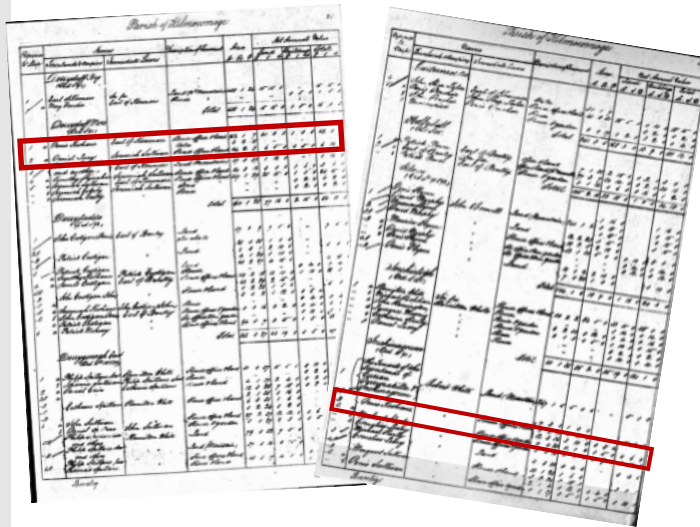
1	a	Nancy McHugh	Carl of Kilmore	House & garden	135	1	11	13	15	0	0	5	0	14	0	0
2	a	Denis Dinneen	Carl of Kilmore	House & garden	0	3	5	0	6	0	0	14	0	0	10	0
3	a	John Dinneen	Denis Dinneen	House & garden	260	3	15	33	0	0	2	17	0	35	17	0
Total																

Millage (Acres & Parts)

1	a	Patrick Dinneen	Carl of Kilmore	House & garden	126	1	23	15	0	0	0	0	0	20	15	0
2	a	John Dinneen	Patrick Dinneen	House & garden	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3	a	Denis Dinneen	Carl of Kilmore	House & garden	0	3	5	0	6	0	0	14	0	0	10	0
4	a	John Dinneen	Denis Dinneen	House & garden	260	3	15	33	0	0	2	17	0	35	17	0
Total																

Heritage World Family History Services. Ireland, Griffith's Valuation, 1847-1864 [database on-line]. Provo, UT,

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE



Denis Keohane, Julia's father, is mentioned twice in the Kilmocomogue Parish (West Co. Cork including town of Bantry) from 1853. These records help place Patrick and Julia in the landscapes of their early lives.

Derryduff More, Bantry, Ireland

—955 acres from Earl of Kenmare

Total value of holdings: 42 pounds

Inchinagoum, Kilmocomoge, Cork, Ireland

—22 acres from Robert White renting a house, offices, and land Total value of holdings: 5 pounds



Patrick and Julia grew up in the sobering shadow of the Great Hunger (1845–1852). Their childhoods were defined by severe rural poverty, land insecurity, and a slow, painful regional transition away from total potato dependency toward livestock and dairy farming for export.

An 1849 agricultural report by husbandry instructor Henry J. Fawcett described the Bantry region's farming methods as "very backward." Fields were left fallow for four to five years after a single grain crop, and primitive wooden ploughs "put together with pins" only scraped the top few inches of soil. The mountainous area lacked proper roads, relying instead on rugged horse-and-basket "pannier tracks" to transport goods to the busy market and flour port of Bantry town.

To survive, families lived in small, mud- or stone-walled cottages rented from middlemen or the Earl of Bantry. Because small tenancies tied families to specific parishes, most farmers married within a short radius of their birthplace, frequently meeting future spouses at local markets.



Sunrise,
Sunset



Picture depicting cutting turf late 19th century Ireland.

Life for Patrick and Julia meant working alongside their families from dawn until dusk. Because wood was scarce, mornings began by cutting, drying, and hauling turf (peat) from local bogs for fuel. Breakfast was simple, usually consisting of potatoes and buttermilk.

Children tended to family vegetable plots, clearing stones and weeding. Caring for a few pigs or a dairy cow was critical, as livestock sales frequently paid the landlord's rent.

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Ar scáth a
chéile a
mhairimid

We live in the
shelter of one
another



Rush light

*Peace
Be with
You*

1876
Julia

Without modern machinery, central field labor relied heavily on the manual construction of "lazy beds"—raised ridges of earth built using heavy spades. During the lean summer months of July and August, when the previous winter's potato stores rotted away and the new harvest was not yet mature, families faced temporary food scarcity, relying heavily on tight-knit kinship networks and shared community resources for survival.

Daily life in West Cork relied on deep communal interdependency. Because landlords controlled the land, families worked strategically to keep holdings intact, typically passing the lease to a single heir while unmarried siblings provided essential farm labor. Survival depended on "neighboring"—the traditional practice of extended kin and neighbors pooling labor and resources.

Domestic chores were grueling and entirely manual. Laundry began by collecting rainwater or hauling water from nearby brooks. Stained clothes were soaked overnight. Women manufactured lye soap in large batches using animal fat mixed with the ash of burned bracken

or potato plants. Stale urine was routinely used as a natural bleaching agent. Women used a heavy wooden stick called a battledore to beat dirt out of the fabric. The clothes were then boiled in a large pot and spread over sunny bushes or stone fences to dry.



The final tasks of the day involved tending the livestock and bringing in turf for the fire. The family ate their main—and often only—substantial meal in the evening, usually consisting of boiled potatoes and cabbage. Evenings were spent around the hearth, illuminated only by the turf fire or a simple rushlight (a dried rush dipped in tallow). Neighbors and extended family frequently gathered to share folklore, sing songs, or play cards.

The Catholic faith was the absolute anchor of Irish life. By 1880, the population practiced a distinct blend of orthodox Roman Catholicism and ancient Celtic folk traditions—a synthesis vividly expressed in the cultural customs of the traditional Irish wake. For generations, Irish Catholics had lived under severe legal restrictions imposed by the Penal Laws. Although Daniel O'Connell won Catholic Emancipation in 1829, the memory of underground worship remained fresh. Older family members could still remember when Catholics were forced to celebrate Mass in secret valleys, private homes, or barns.



St. Joseph's Church—Coomhola
Bantry Parish, Co. Cork | Built in 1806

By the mid-19th century, modest stone churches replaced these hidden spaces. St. Finbarr's in Bantry town, once a simple thatched-roof chapel, was rebuilt as a large stone church in 1826. Closer to the families was St. Joseph's Church in Coomhola, a small stone structure built in 1806. In April 1876, twelve-year-old Julia marked a major spiritual and social

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

1880

milestone by receiving the sacrament of Confirmation. Because a bishop's visit to West Cork was a rare and notable event, candidates from the surrounding countryside traveled to the area's main parish church, St. Finbarr's in Bantry. There, Julia publicly renewed her baptismal vows, marking her formal transition into religious maturity within the community.

The bonds between the Dineen and Keohane families were formalized through marriage. On April 13, 1880, Julia's older sister, Margaret Keohane, married Patrick's older brother, Andrew Dineen. Patrick and Julia stood beside them as their official wedding witnesses. Four years later, Patrick and Julia would marry far from home on September 30, 1884, at St. Mary's Church in Corning, New York.

Back in Bantry, a "dacent" (proper) wedding for farming families was a deeply festive, multi-day communal event. After the church ceremony, celebrations erupted with lively fiddle or pipe music, dancing that lasted until dawn, and plenty of whiskey and poitín (traditional Irish moonshine). These weddings offered a vital, joyous distraction from the heavy psychological weight and daily responsibilities of rural poverty.

Name	Age	Sponsor
Ellen	12	Bantry
Mary	13	Bantry
Mary	14	Bantry
Mary	15	Bantry
Mary	16	Bantry
Mary	17	Bantry
Mary	18	Bantry
Mary	19	Bantry
Mary	20	Bantry
Mary	21	Bantry
Mary	22	Bantry
Mary	23	Bantry
Mary	24	Bantry
Mary	25	Bantry
Mary	26	Bantry
Mary	27	Bantry
Mary	28	Bantry
Mary	29	Bantry
Mary	30	Bantry
Mary	31	Bantry
Mary	32	Bantry
Mary	33	Bantry
Mary	34	Bantry
Mary	35	Bantry
Mary	36	Bantry
Mary	37	Bantry
Mary	38	Bantry
Mary	39	Bantry
Mary	40	Bantry
Mary	41	Bantry
Mary	42	Bantry
Mary	43	Bantry
Mary	44	Bantry
Mary	45	Bantry
Mary	46	Bantry
Mary	47	Bantry
Mary	48	Bantry
Mary	49	Bantry
Mary	50	Bantry
Mary	51	Bantry
Mary	52	Bantry
Mary	53	Bantry
Mary	54	Bantry
Mary	55	Bantry
Mary	56	Bantry
Mary	57	Bantry
Mary	58	Bantry
Mary	59	Bantry
Mary	60	Bantry
Mary	61	Bantry
Mary	62	Bantry
Mary	63	Bantry
Mary	64	Bantry
Mary	65	Bantry
Mary	66	Bantry
Mary	67	Bantry
Mary	68	Bantry
Mary	69	Bantry
Mary	70	Bantry
Mary	71	Bantry
Mary	72	Bantry
Mary	73	Bantry
Mary	74	Bantry
Mary	75	Bantry
Mary	76	Bantry
Mary	77	Bantry
Mary	78	Bantry
Mary	79	Bantry
Mary	80	Bantry
Mary	81	Bantry
Mary	82	Bantry
Mary	83	Bantry
Mary	84	Bantry
Mary	85	Bantry
Mary	86	Bantry
Mary	87	Bantry
Mary	88	Bantry
Mary	89	Bantry
Mary	90	Bantry
Mary	91	Bantry
Mary	92	Bantry
Mary	93	Bantry
Mary	94	Bantry
Mary	95	Bantry
Mary	96	Bantry
Mary	97	Bantry
Mary	98	Bantry
Mary	99	Bantry
Mary	100	Bantry

Ireland, Select Catholic Confirmation Registers / Digital image by E-Celtic Ltd.

Name	Age	Sponsor
Ellen	12	Bantry
Mary	13	Bantry
Mary	14	Bantry
Mary	15	Bantry
Mary	16	Bantry
Mary	17	Bantry
Mary	18	Bantry
Mary	19	Bantry
Mary	20	Bantry
Mary	21	Bantry
Mary	22	Bantry
Mary	23	Bantry
Mary	24	Bantry
Mary	25	Bantry
Mary	26	Bantry
Mary	27	Bantry
Mary	28	Bantry
Mary	29	Bantry
Mary	30	Bantry
Mary	31	Bantry
Mary	32	Bantry
Mary	33	Bantry
Mary	34	Bantry
Mary	35	Bantry
Mary	36	Bantry
Mary	37	Bantry
Mary	38	Bantry
Mary	39	Bantry
Mary	40	Bantry
Mary	41	Bantry
Mary	42	Bantry
Mary	43	Bantry
Mary	44	Bantry
Mary	45	Bantry
Mary	46	Bantry
Mary	47	Bantry
Mary	48	Bantry
Mary	49	Bantry
Mary	50	Bantry
Mary	51	Bantry
Mary	52	Bantry
Mary	53	Bantry
Mary	54	Bantry
Mary	55	Bantry
Mary	56	Bantry
Mary	57	Bantry
Mary	58	Bantry
Mary	59	Bantry
Mary	60	Bantry
Mary	61	Bantry
Mary	62	Bantry
Mary	63	Bantry
Mary	64	Bantry
Mary	65	Bantry
Mary	66	Bantry
Mary	67	Bantry
Mary	68	Bantry
Mary	69	Bantry
Mary	70	Bantry
Mary	71	Bantry
Mary	72	Bantry
Mary	73	Bantry
Mary	74	Bantry
Mary	75	Bantry
Mary	76	Bantry
Mary	77	Bantry
Mary	78	Bantry
Mary	79	Bantry
Mary	80	Bantry
Mary	81	Bantry
Mary	82	Bantry
Mary	83	Bantry
Mary	84	Bantry
Mary	85	Bantry
Mary	86	Bantry
Mary	87	Bantry
Mary	88	Bantry
Mary	89	Bantry
Mary	90	Bantry
Mary	91	Bantry
Mary	92	Bantry
Mary	93	Bantry
Mary	94	Bantry
Mary	95	Bantry
Mary	96	Bantry
Mary	97	Bantry
Mary	98	Bantry
Mary	99	Bantry
Mary	100	Bantry

Ireland, Select Catholic Confirmation Registers / Digital image by E-Celtic Ltd.

Andrew | Dineen | Ahil | [Father] James (?) Dineen | Ahil | 1879 | Ap. 13th | John O'Leary | Patrick Dineen | Ahil
Margaret | Keohane | Corrin | [Father] Denis Keohane | Corrin | Julia Keohane | Corrin

USA
Patrick
1880



At age 25, Patrick left Ireland in the spring of 1880. He journeyed to Queenstown (now Cobh) and boarded the SS Erin, listed on the manifest simply as a laborer. He traveled in steerage—the lowest decks of the ship—where passengers endured crowded, poorly ventilated quarters, unsanitary conditions, and rough wooden bunks for a grueling 14-day transatlantic crossing.

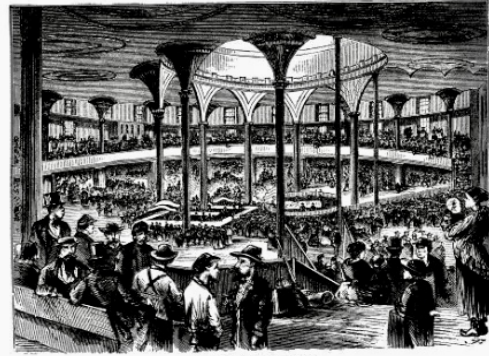
The SS Erin dropped anchor in New York harbor on May 20, 1880. Because the Statue of Liberty was not erected until 1886 and Ellis Island did not open until 1892, Patrick's introduction to America was through Castle Garden, located at the tip of Lower Manhattan. Steerage passengers were transferred from the steamship to the Castle Garden pier via a chaotic network of tugboats and barges, while wealthier cabin-class passengers disembarked directly into the city without examination.

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Crystal
City

USA
Julia
1881

The arrival process at Castle Garden was highly organized yet overwhelming. Health officers inspected the immigrants; those with contagious diseases or extreme destitution were separated and sent by steamboat to island hospitals on Ward's or Blackwell's Island. In the facility's massive central rotunda, clerks recorded each healthy immigrant's name, age, occupation, and destination. Due to the echoing, multi-lingual uproar of the rotunda, immigrants colloquially referred to the depot by the Yiddish slang term Kesselgarden (meaning "kettle garden" or a place of chaotic noise). Inside the depot, Patrick had access to authorized currency brokers, a Labor Exchange, and transport agents selling railway tickets. Emigrant aid societies were also on-site to help new arrivals find safe boarding houses and locate relatives.



View of the interior of Castle Garden
Harper's News Monthly, 1871



Patrick Deneen
Picture circa 1885

Patrick chose his destination carefully: he had Deneen cousins already established in Corning, New York. When Patrick arrived in 1880, Corning was rapidly transforming from a rural lumber town into a bustling, industrial "Crystal City." Centered on its booming glass industry, Corning's factories were actively manufacturing the historic hand-blown glass bulbs for Thomas Edison's newly invented incandescent lights. Concurrently, the city was expanding into a vital regional railroad hub. Seeking immediate employment to establish himself in the New World, Patrick found work in this booming transit network. United States census records later document his long-term employment as a railroad laborer—a physically demanding role that laid the financial foundation for his new life in America and his upcoming marriage to Julia.

In April 1881, at just 17 years old, Julia followed Patrick to America—exactly one year after his departure.

A glimpse into her final moments with her family in Ireland survives through a 1953 letter written by her son, John Walter Deneen (1886–1956), to his sister, Frances Deneen Taylor. Recalling a trip to County Cork, John described visiting relatives: *"...had dinner with Mike and his wife & they wanted me to stay all night or for a few days but I said I have no other clothes — so I left and walked down the hill and to Margaret's house. That is the hill that mother came down when she was coming to America, and Mike's father came with her. He was Uncle John [Julia's brother], and he wanted her to come back home for another year, and she refused and I do not blame her!"*

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Resolute in her choice, Julia descended that hill and left her brother John behind. Passenger lists confirm she traveled without other Keohanes, though she may have been accompanied by a friend or neighbor from Carran. Such independence was a defining characteristic of Irish emigration at the time; by the end of the 19th century, single women accounted for 53% of Irish immigrants, making the Irish the only immigrant group of that era in which women outnumbered men.

To reach her steamship, Julia would have traveled by horse-drawn cart, caught a local train, and then taken a smaller ferry for the final leg into Queenstown (now Cobh). There, she boarded the SS England, arriving in New York City on April 20, 1881.



SS England — April 20, 1881
Port of Entry New York, New York, USA
Ship Manifest - April 20, 1881

Julia Keohane—age17—depart Ireland arrive America—steerage passage

While no direct evidence survives, Julia likely journeyed onward to Corning, New York, as soon as possible. The most practical and affordable route was by train, requiring a connection in Albany. This route gave Julia a full day to view the changing American landscape, carrying her from the Hudson River Valley to Albany, west through the Mohawk River Valley, and finally into the Finger Lakes region.

Adjusting to American life was made easier because both Julia and Patrick were literate and completely bilingual in Irish (Gaeilge) and English—a fact verified by later census records. Their upbringing coincided with a massive linguistic shift in Ireland. The introduction of state-funded National Schools in 1831 established English as the primary language of instruction, governance, and commerce. Furthermore, the devastation of the Great Famine (1845–1852) fell disproportionately on rural, Irish-speaking communities, accelerating the language's decline as English became firmly associated with survival, modernity, and opportunity abroad.

On September 30, 1884, 21-year-old Julia married 29-year-old Patrick at St. Mary’s Church in Corning, New York, cementing their new life together.

They had eight children between 1885 and 1905. A list of the children's birth details was found in a box of unmarked photos by her great granddaughters. Julia had recorded the name, date, and time of her children’s birth.

At home, Patrick stood at the top of the family hierarchy as the authority figure and main provider. Julia, like many Irish immigrant women, carried substantial responsibility and independence within the household. She managed constant domestic work—cooking, cleaning, washing, mending—and focused on the children’s well-being and education, sending them to St. Mary’s School.

1884

I Do...

1898



Patrick Deneen



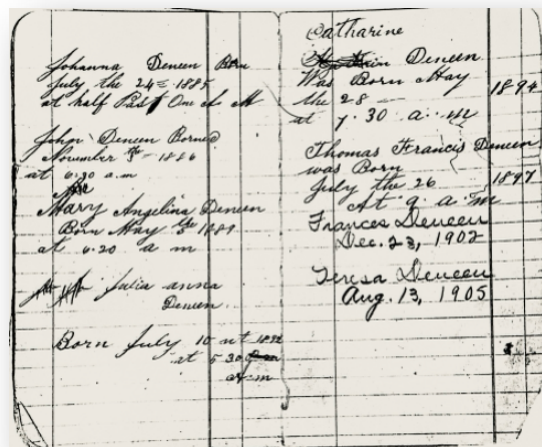
Julia Terhane

Their son Thomas was their sixth child and second son. He joined the family for only a short time, passing away before his first birthday. When they lost their infant son, Julia was 35 and Patrick was 43. The family likely followed traditional Irish mourning customs, holding a wake in their home where Thomas was laid out for visitation. Friends and neighbors gathered for a night or two to pay their respects, celebrating the child's brief life while supporting the grieving parents.

Following a formal funeral Mass, Thomas was laid to rest in consecrated ground at St. Mary's Cemetery. His surviving siblings were quite young when he passed: Jo was 12, Jack 11, Mary 8, Anna 5, and Kate 3. In keeping with the customs of the era, Julia wore black mourning attire for a full year. Because the general mindset of the time was to "power forward," there was likely little if any open discussion with the children about their grief.

Thomas's passing marked a poignant shift in the family archive. He was the very last child whose birth Julia recorded in her own hand. The births of her next two children, Frances and Teresa, were written by someone else. Whether Julia simply forgot and a relative stepped in later, or the profound grief of losing Thomas made it too painful to return to the page where she last wrote his name, his entry stands as a silent testament to a mother's broken heart.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.
May they be at God's right hand.



Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

—Early yesterday morning fire was discovered in the rear of the house owned and occupied by Patrick Deneen of Corning. The flames had gained considerable headway before the fire department arrived and nothing but a few household articles were saved. The adjoining buildings were also scorched and the goods of Miss Mary Wilson were damaged by water and smoke. The loss will be about \$700 on Mr. Deneen's place which is covered by insurance. Miss Wilson's place was not insured and her loss will be nearly \$200. The origin of the fire is unknown but it is thought the house became ignited near the chimney from a fire that was left in the stove when Mr. Deneen retired.

Fire Damages Deneen Home
Rochester Democrat & Chronicle:
August 23, 1893

During their peak family years (1880s–1920s), domestic life adapted to changing technologies. The Deneen home on East Pultney Street was heated by coal and wood stoves, lit by gas or oil lamps, and featured the developing, transitional plumbing of the era, utilizing both indoor and outdoor facilities. The dangers of these early utilities became real one night in 1893, when a house fire broke out after Patrick left live embers burning in the kitchen stove after retiring for the evening.



**28 E.
Pultney Street**

Google Maps
2025 image &
A.I. of how it
might have
looked in

1893
(Rented)



1902
Ouch!

The household settled into traditional turn-of-the-century roles. As the primary provider and patriarchal head of the family, Patrick endured the physically demanding and hazardous reality of a railroad laborer. This dangerous work involved laying heavy track, building bridges, and maintaining equipment for low pay and long hours. The physical toll of the job hit home on Wednesday, October 1, 1902, when The Corning Journal reported: *“Patrick Deneen, of East Pultney street, a railroad section man, is confined to his home by wound in his foot. As he was working, a comrade struck his pickaxe, by accident, and the point of the pickaxe went through the foot, above the toes.”*

Despite the hazards, Patrick's work ethic led to advancement. By 1915, census records show he had been promoted to railroad track foreman. In this role, he supervised a "section gang" of trackmen, commonly known as gandy dancers. Patrick was responsible for inspecting and repairing several miles of critical line—managing the replacement of wooden ties, resetting spikes, adjusting heavy steel rails, and clearing right-of-ways after severe weather. He also trained incoming, often foreign-born, laborers in the use of specialized hand tools like spike hammers, track wrenches, and picks.

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Home
Sweet
Home

While Patrick worked the lines, Julia managed the complex domestic sphere with substantial autonomy and resilience. She shouldered the relentless daily labor of cooking, cleaning, washing, and mending, while fiercely prioritizing her children's well-being and education, ensuring they attended St. Mary's School.

They moved a few times as a family before settling in at **245 W. 2nd Street** where family members continued to reside until daughter Anna Deneen passed away in 1974.



**122 W.
3rd Street**

Google Maps
2025 image &
A.I. of how it
might have
looked in
1905
(Rented)



**245 W.
2nd Street**

Google Maps
2025 image &
A.I. of how it
might have
looked in
1910
(Own)



Write
soon

Despite the distance, Julia maintained a vibrant, lifelong correspondence with her siblings back in Ireland, as well as stateside in upstate New York and with Deneen relations in Connecticut. At the dawn of the 20th century, a letter sent from Corning to Carran required a journey of two to three weeks, traveling via transcontinental trains, transatlantic ocean liners, and local rural couriers. The surviving letters offer poignant, sometimes amusing, glimpses into daily life, financial obligations, and the deep affection of a post-Famine generation.

A snippet of a handwritten letter in cursive script, reading "My dear sister Julia".

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

In an April 19, 1913 letter, Julia's sister-in-law, Mary Ryan Keohane (wife of her brother John), painted a vivid picture of their crowded home: "first Stephen being born Stevens day and then Mary, Denny, Jerry, Michael, then there was 2 babies in one birth Katie and John, then after Maggie, Bridget, Julia, Hannah, Con, Nora, Danny, Nelly, John and Katie and you see the 2 little twins died and then we called the youngest John and Katie again so you see we got a very big family in a small place..."

Mother is doing with John she is quite old and helpless she is present in writing this letter and she expect some assistance from you John and family are well he has 5 sons and 5 daughters a large Andy Denny are well she is not in health they are downy well Bridget was here on 15 August to see us she has 3 in family Kate her husband and family are well 4 sons 3 daughters we are very fine up to this and the crops are well and the country is improving I am working a small contract for the last 10 years but money is very small and too many going for them and prices cut down first 3 years 14 pence and 3 years 17-12 8

In 1902, her older brother Jeremiah ("Jerh") described his own family of eight children, writing fondly of his wife: "Mary wife is the same. She don't [want] to be rich or poor and if she was going to bed hungry, it would not trouble her."

He noted that while "crops are well and the country is improving," later letters turned dark. In 1913, Mary Ryan Keohane described a "very bad [year]" when an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease halted all cattle shipments from Ireland.

Emigration did not absolve Julia of family financial expectations. In 1902, Jeremiah wrote bluntly regarding their aging mother: "Mother is staying with John. She is quite old and helpless. She is present in writing this letter and she expect some assistance from you." Sibling dynamics also emerged; a December 30, 1918, letter from Julia's sister, Kate, showcased timeless sibling friction, noting of their sister Bridget: "About sister Bridget. She was here in August. She is far better. She wanted some potatoes. She want lots of things."

Kate's 1918 letter also celebrated major family milestones in America, expressing joy that her young namesake, Julia and Patrick's fourth daughter, Catherine ("Kate"), had married John T. Kelly that September. She also inquired anxiously after Julia's son, John, asking, "did John come back from the War?"—which he did, returning home safely after honorably serving his country in the United States Navy. Throughout the letters, the shadow of the Great Hunger—which Mary Keohane simply called "the time the crops failed"—remained a quiet undercurrent. Born in the immediate wake of the Famine, this generation recognized that their paths had diverged radically from their ancestors, yet their letters remained anchored by an enduring sense of family unity.

they sent me 17 pounds to carry out the 2 first children so you see we never had a bad time as the children send us a good deal of money so now they are living out each other's shoe. The Cargan devil is in a close a weather he has good pay this was a very bad I mean last year every thing in the time of Crops failed and the disease of the foot and mouth came in the cattle and they would not let them be shipped from Ireland that made the poor bad bridge and her family is in poor condition and will close now with lots of love from us all Good by write

Caran
Carran
April 19/13

My dear sister Julia I received your letter about first weeks ago. I was glad to hear you are your family was well. which leaves us all at present thanks to God for his blessing to us all and as is the friends on meacham's street. I am well. I told me how John Brian got his leg off his brother's time's death for an left a young family after them and his wife also. God have mercy on their souls you don't remember. Please write to me. Dan is now he was put into the asylum yesterday and on his family of 10 after him. God help them.

About sister Bridget she was here in August. She is far better. She wanted some potatoes. She want lots of things. Dan is living still. her 3 children are working so she can be badly off. Mike was going to Birmingham last night with a Springer as he was calved. Just as he was going. I have no more to say at present. I remain your sister Kate. Harrington Hill. Done.

Caran
December 30/18

My Dear Sister Julia I mean to inform you that I received your letter. I was glad to hear that my namesake got married. I hope she will be happy. I know how are you and your husband & family. I did John come back from the War?

I conclude by sending you my best love from your brother. John Browley Keohane.

I will close now with lots of love from us all Good by write

With I must close love to all Mary

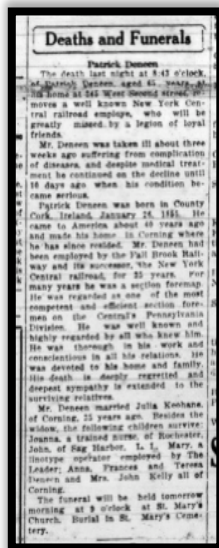
going. I have no more to say at present. I remain your sister Kate. Harrington Hill. Done.

Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

1929

Jan 10

Patrick Deneen passed away on May 6, 1920, at the age of sixty-five. His life spanned a period of breathtaking historical and technological transformation, from the devastation of the Famine to the global upheaval of



World War I, and from primitive wooden ploughs to steamships, expanded rail networks, indoor plumbing, electricity, and the mass production of automobiles. His obituary in Corning reflected the deep respect he had earned in his adopted home:

"He will be greatly missed by a legion of loyal friends... He was regarded as one of the most competent and efficient section foremen... well known and highly regarded by all who knew him... He was devoted to his home and family."



Patrick Deneen, circa 1919

Patrick passed just as his older children were forging their own independent adult lives. While Jo, John, and Kate had already established their own households, four daughters remained at home

on West 2nd Street to support 57-year-old Julia: Mary (30), who worked as a skilled linotype operator for the local press; Anna (27), employed as a stenographer; and Frances (17) and Teresa (14), who were still students.

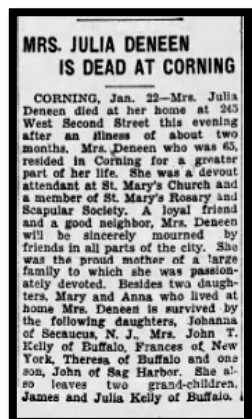
Julia remained deeply active in her community and her beloved parish of St. Mary's Church. Her later years were filled with the joy of grandmotherhood. In 1923, she welcomed her first grandchild, Julia Mary Kelly, proudly named after both of her grandmothers. The arrival of her second grandchild, James Francis Kelly, in 1927 brought equal happiness. Julia passed away on January 22, 1929, just a few years before the birth of her third grandchild, John Joseph Kelly, in 1932.

1920

May 6



Julia Keohane Deneen, circa 1925
Holding her granddaughter Julia Mary Kelly



Family Branch: DENEEN | KEOHANE

Her legacy was honored in the Corning community as a testament to the immigrant journey. She was remembered affectionately as the determined young woman who had walked down that hill in Carran to seek her destiny across the Atlantic, growing into a matriarch who was *"sincerely mourned by friends in all parts of the city... [and] was the proud mother of a large family to which she was passionately devoted."*

Today, their legacy lives on in the lives of their descendants. Patrick and Julia proved that a family's true wealth is not measured in property, but in resilience, love, and the quiet courage to forge a new destiny. They stepped into the darkness of a ship's steerage so that future generations could stand in the light of boundless opportunity. Every triumph, every education, and every dream realized by their descendants is the fruit of their sacrifice. Their journey remains a timeless reminder that no matter how far we travel or how deeply our roots are transplanted, the strength of where we come from will always illuminate the path to who we are destined to become.



Next: The following section shifts from the shared story of Patrick and Julia to brief profiles of their surviving children and grand children.

