

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

Branch 2 of 7

James Francis Kelly

1869-1948

Great Grandfather

James Francis Kelly was the third son born to Sylvester and Jane Kelly, following his older brothers Vesty and Patrick. He was likely named in honor of his uncle, James Kelly (1834–1911)—Sylvester's older brother—who had also immigrated to America and settled nearby in Cayuga County.

Growing up in Auburn, the Kellys shared a close-knit Irish Catholic social circle with the Graney family, who lived just a few blocks away. Mary Frances Graney was born in Auburn shortly after her parents immigrated to the

United States. Deepening the ties between these two families, James and Mary were wed on the morning of April 27, 1892, at Holy Family Church in Auburn. James's brother, John, stood by his side as best man, while Mary's sister, Anna Graney, served as her maid of honor.

The 9:00 AM ceremony was well attended by a large gathering of relatives and friends. Afterward, guests celebrated with a wedding breakfast hosted at the 89 Perrine Street East home of Mary's father and stepmother. A local newspaper account beautifully captured the couple's standing in the community, praising Mary as highly regarded among her many acquaintances, and describing James as a general favorite who was well liked by all. Their wedding stood as a joyous reflection of the family's rising prominence within Auburn's vibrant Irish Catholic community.

Even before the wedding, James had already begun carving out a life for himself 40 miles southwest of

Auburn in Geneva, New York. Immediately following the festivities, the newlyweds departed for Geneva to begin their married life together.

In 1892, Geneva was a prosperous lakefront village rapidly transforming from its agricultural origins into a booming industrial and civic hub. This expansion was so meteoric that village leaders were already drafting a new charter; by 1897, Geneva officially gained city status.



James Francis Kelly
about 1920



Image generated by Gemini's 'nano banana' AI image generator tool using actual photos of James, Mary, and the interior of the Church of the Holy Family in Auburn, along with their wedding announcement that described Mary's attire.

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Mary Graney Kelly about 1920

Work was plentiful along the shores of Seneca Lake, where factories, rising smoke, active rail lines, and the constant hum of freight activity dominated the waterfront lowlands. That same year, the Patent Cereals Company relocated from Brooklyn to Geneva, building the waterfront's largest complex, complete with massive grain elevators and production lines for breakfast cereals and wallpaper paste. Heavy manufacturing flourished across the city, driven by prominent firms like the New York Central Iron Works, the Herendeen Manufacturing Company, and the Phillips & Clark Stove Works.

Geneva was also exceptionally well connected to the rest of the country. The Lehigh Valley Railroad, the New York Central, and the Fall Brook Railroad all sliced through town, keeping the factories fed with coal from Pennsylvania and grain from local farms.

James found his footing in this heavy manufacturing landscape as a boilermaker. This highly skilled trade required shaping heavy sheet metal and steel plates into airtight shells for industrial use. It was grueling, intense work that demanded laying out meticulous patterns, cutting, bending, hammering, heating, and riveting metal—all under hot, deafeningly noisy, and frequently hazardous conditions.

If James sought peace and quiet at home after a long, exhausting shift in the shop, he likely found very little of it. He and Mary quickly blessed their home with a large, bustling family of eight children: Anna Marie (b. 1893), James Francis (b. 1895), John Thomas (b. May 1896), Sylvester (b. August 1898), Irene Elizabeth (b. 1901), Harry (b. 1902), Mary Cecilia (b. 1908), and Howard (b. 1911).

In 1900, James and Mary were renting a home at 14 Middle Street in Geneva. Over the next decade, their hard work paid off; by 1910, they had purchased their own home at 188 Barrister Street in Corning, New York. James continued his dangerous trade as a boilermaker in the local railroad shops, where his skill and leadership eventually earned him a promotion to foreman.

James and Mary built a life in Corning for roughly 25 years. During this quarter-century, they watched their children grow, marry, and begin families of their own. Eventually, they made the decision to sell their Corning home and relocate to Buffalo. By 1935, with the Great Depression straining finances and age catching up to them—James was about 66 and Mary was 63—moving in with their daughter, Irene, became a comforting and practical choice.

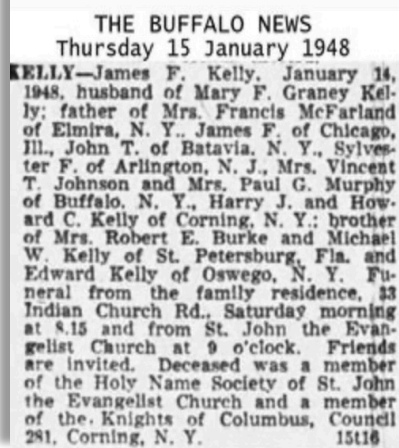
Irene, a registered nurse, lived with her husband, Vincent Johnson, at 33 Indian Church Road in Buffalo. Irene's sister, Mary, also lived in the busy household. Census records indicate that James formally retired from his long career as a boilermaker shortly after settling in Buffalo.



James' 60th birthday in 1929

On Floor: Jane Kelly (Frank's daughter), Julia Mary Kelly (Jack's daughter), Ginia Kelly (Frank's daughter)
Seated: Bertha Bellinger Kelly (Tess' wife), Esther Devlin Kelly (Frank's wife), James Francis Kelly Sr., Mary Graney Kelly, Anna Kelly MacFarland & daughter Mary Frances MacFarland, Bob Kelly (Frank's son)
Back Rows: maybe Elsie Hansen (eventually Howard's wife in 1935 – she was 17 in 1929), Howard Kelly, Sylvester "Tess" Kelly, Vincent Johnson, Irene Kelly Johnson, Harry Kelly, John T. "Jack" Kelly, Catherine Deneen Kelly, James F. "Frank" Kelly, Mary Kelly

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James died on January 14, 1948, at age 78. Decades later, at a family gathering in 2002, my father, James Francis Kelly III, remembered attending his grandfather's wake when he was 20 years old. He recalled that the body was laid out in the dining room, surrounded by chairs against the walls, while male family members took turns sitting throughout the day and night before the funeral.

The vigil reflected an Irish tradition of waking the body and never leaving it alone. When I asked whether they talked or sat in silence and prayer (*can Kellys when gathered actually sit in silence without telling stories?*), Dad said the occasion was reverent, but he remembered his

father and uncles quietly sharing stories about their father, careful not to draw attention from their mother, sisters, or wives.

Mary survived her husband by twelve years, passing away in 1960 at the age of 87. Today, James and Mary rest peacefully together, buried side-by-side at Holy Cross Cemetery in Lackawanna, New York.



Mary and James Kelly @ 1940 in the home of their son John T. 'Jack' Kelly at 39 Prospect Ave., Batavia, N.Y.



The Next Generation: An overview of Branch 2...Descendants of James F. Kelly and Mary Frances Graney

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1. Anna Marie Kelly

1893-1985

Grandaunt

As the eldest child of James and Mary Kelly, Anna likely carried significant responsibility from an early age, helping her mother manage a busy household and caring for her seven younger siblings.

By the time of the 1910 census, sixteen-year-old Anna was living in Corning with her family and contributing to the household as a dressmaker in a local ladies' dress shop. Driven to pursue a life of service, Anna graduated from St. Patrick's Parochial School and entered medical training at St. Joseph's Hospital, graduating as a registered nurse in 1918. Her nursing career took



Anna Marie Kelly
about 1911

her across New York State, including dedicated years working in both Elmira and Buffalo.

On September 17, 1927, thirty-four-year-old Anna married thirty-two-year-old Francis Joseph McFarland at St. Vincent de Paul's Church in Corning. Known fondly throughout the family by his nickname, "Packy," her husband was a Navy veteran of World War I, having served honorably as a seaman second class until his discharge on January 12, 1919. Packy built a long career as a trainman for the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western Railroad, while Anna balanced keeping a warm home, raising their two children, and continuing her vital work as a nurse.

A Personal Memory: Around 1977, during a Finger Lakes camping trip, my parents and I stopped to visit Aunt Anna in Elmira.

Though I may have crossed paths with her

at an earlier family funeral, this visit marked our first real, meaningful conversation. She welcomed us with immense warmth, asking all about my schoolwork and personal interests. She passionately championed nursing as

a career path even though I was only ten. She sent me home with medical books to read.

Anna passed away on July 23, 1985, having been predeceased by Packy three years earlier in 1982.

Children: Mary Frances McFarland (1928–2017), Francis Joseph "Frank" McFarland (1931–2014)



Anna Marie Kelly about 1901, age 8



Mary Frances & Frank



Anna & Packy McFarland about 1960

2. James Francis Kelly Jr —*Frank*

1895-1981

Granduncle

James and Mary's second child, and their firstborn son, was named James Francis Kelly Jr., though he was known throughout his life as Frank. Much like his older sister Anna, Frank shouldered heavy family responsibilities early on, serving as a vital role model and anchor for his younger brothers. By all accounts, he was exceptionally kind, gentle, and deeply loved by his siblings—particularly by my grandfather, John T. "Jack" Kelly.

Frank spent his boyhood in the bustling lakefront village of Geneva, New York, before moving with the family to Corning by 1910. The census that year recorded him at fifteen years old, already working as a laborer in a local glass factory. Five years later, he remained at home, advancing his skills as a machinist.



Frank Kelly about 1915

On March 6, 1916, Frank married Esther Marie Devlin in Elmira, New York. The young couple settled in Elmira and quickly welcomed their first two children, Mary Virginia ("Ginia") in 1917 and John R. ("Jackie") in 1918. Tragically, little Jackie died of scarlet fever in 1921—a devastating, heartbreaking loss that deeply affected the young parents.



Frank & Esther Kelly
about 1916

Showing immense resilience, Frank and Esther went on to welcome four more children over the coming decade: Robert Henry, Jane Anne, Rosemary, and Carol Patricia.

Frank supported his large, growing family through his meticulous trade as a master toolmaker. The family relocated several times over the next two decades, carefully chasing stable employment during the leanest years of the Great Depression. Their journey took them first to Southport, New York, then down to Nutley, New Jersey by 1935, upward to Chicopee, Massachusetts, and finally by 1950 to Chicago, Illinois. In Chicago, Frank's decades of industrial expertise earned him a position as the superintendent of a public-address equipment factory.

Frank and Esther made regular trips back to New York to visit their families and to celebrate family occasions and to stay connected to their extended family.



Bob, Ginia, Jane, Rosemary, Pat
about 1941

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🐾 Meeting a new member
of the family 🐾

Frank lived a long, meaningful life, passing away on March 27, 1981, at the age of eighty-five. Esther survived her husband by twelve years, passing away in 1993.

Children:

Mary Virginia "Ginia" Kelly (1917–1995)

John R. "Jackie" Kelly (1918–1921)

Robert Henry "Bob" Kelly 🇺🇸 (1921–1986)

Jane Ann Kelly (1923–2013)

Rosemary Devlin Kelly (1925–2017)

Carol Patricia "Pat" Kelly (1930–2015)



Visiting Jack & Kate and their Grandkids Albion, N.Y. 1966
Front Row: Kevin, Barbara, Mary, Colleen, Daniel, Marie, John
Back Row: Jack, Timothy on his lap, Margaret, Katherine, Maureen, Kate, Aunt Esther & Uncle Frank Kelly...wait a minute... someone *cool* hasn't been born yet...

3. John Thomas Kelly—*Jack* 🇺🇸

May 10, 1896–April 17, 1973

Grandfather



John 'Jack' Thomas Kelly
Circa 1916

Jack was born on May 10, 1896, just twelve months after his older brother, Frank. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such closely spaced siblings were often colloquially labeled "Irish twins"—a term that originated as a derogatory stereotype aimed at large, working-class Irish Catholic families. Jack, however, completely subverted the cliché, deeply cherishing the bond. He and Frank remained fiercely devoted brothers throughout their entire lives.

Jack spent his first fourteen years in Geneva, New York, completing his formal education through the eighth grade there before moving with his family to Corning by 1910. He immediately entered the workforce to help support the household. By the 1915 New York State census, he was proudly listed as a boilermaker, eagerly following in his father's professional footsteps.

On September 26, 1917, at twenty-one years old, Jack was inducted into the U.S. Army to serve in World War I. He was assigned to Company C, 303rd Engineer Regiment, a combat and construction unit. However, his time in uniform was cut short. According to his son, Jack, he possessed a

long history of heart difficulties, specifically evidenced by a loud murmur. After suffering a severe, sudden blow to the chest while playing football for the Fort Dix camp team, he was honorably medically discharged late in 1917, later receiving a 10 percent military disability rating for the injury.

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While stationed at Fort Dix, Jack remained deeply connected to the love of his life, Catherine Cecelia "Kate" Deneen, writing to her daily and sometimes twice a day. Kate grew up in Corning, shared his devout Irish Catholic faith, and moved in the exact same social and parish circles.



They were wed on September 16, 1918. Their wedding announcement beautifully captured their local standing, describing Kate as "very well liked" with "a wide circle of friends," and Jack as "well and favorably known in this city." The young couple began their married life in Corning, later moved to Buffalo, and eventually settled permanently in Batavia, New York.

Over the decades, they transitioned from renting to homeownership, moving from 244 Sly Avenue in Corning to 171 Villa Avenue in Buffalo, renting at 69 Redfield Parkway in Batavia, and finally purchasing their own home at 39 Prospect Avenue in Batavia. Monsignor Sullivan of Albion personally held the mortgage on their Batavia house, and Jack and Kate frequently treated the trip to Albion to make their house payments as a pleasant afternoon drive.



Jack posing in the late 1920s with a regional group of heating executives, salesmen, and distributors for the Humphrey Radiantfire water heaters at 85 West Eagle Street, Buffalo N.Y.



Jack's steady hand and adaptability kept his family comfortable through the darkest years of the Great Depression. Though he began his working life as a heavy laborer, he truly found his calling in professional sales. Over his long career, he sold water heaters and automobiles, worked for a local gas company, and eventually enjoyed a long, successful tenure before retiring from the John Hancock Life Insurance Company.



Catherine Deneen
Circa 1916

The family navigated a devastating diagnosis for their youngest son, also named John and called Jack. Young Jack was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes which ten years earlier would have been a death sentence but advances in regard to insulin injections were a breakthrough in keeping people living with diabetes. During the 1930s, Kate undertook a demanding, around-the-clock role to manage her son Jack's type 1 diabetes, which involved boiling and sharpening needles, performing intricate urine tests, and meticulously weighing food to manage his condition. Through her unwavering, relentless care, she successfully ensured her son's survival and long-term health.

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For senior Jack, persistent health problems ultimately forced him into an early retirement. At age fifty-five, following a major heart attack, he applied for and received full veteran disability. Despite his cardiac limitations, he and Kate maintained a vibrant, joyful social life filled with bridge games, Moose Lodge events, active participation in St. Mary's parish, and constant gatherings with friends and family.

Jack passed away on April 17, 1973. His son later noted that his sudden passing was caused by a final heart attack, tragically brought on by the physical strain of washing overhead windows with a long pole, and compounded by a heartbreaking several-hour delay in receiving emergency medical treatment.



Jack and Kate
Circa 1960

Kate survived her husband by eleven years, passing away in 1984 at the

venerable age of ninety. Together they left a legacy of three children and thirteen grandchildren.

Children:

Julia Mary "Jule" Kelly (1923–2007) *Aunt*

James Francis "Jim" Kelly III 🇺🇸 (1927–2011) *Father*

John Joseph "Jack" Kelly 🇺🇸 (1932–2020) *Uncle*



1968: On the occasion of their 50th Wedding Anniversary

Seated: Jack and Kate Kelly
Standing: Jim, Julia, Jack Kelly

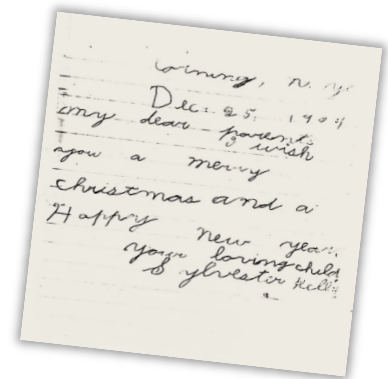
4. Sylvester Kelly—Tess

1898-1951

Granduncle

Born in August 1898, Sylvester's arrival meant that James and Mary suddenly had four children under the age of five. He was a sweet-natured boy who grew into an exceptionally kind man. His brother Jack—my grandfather—was deeply fond of him, as was my father, Jim Kelly.

His gentle disposition was evident from early childhood; at just six years old, young Sylvester wrote a charming, preserved Christmas Day note to his parents in 1904, sending the warmest holiday wishes from their "*loving child*."



Known affectionately throughout his life by the nickname "Tess," Sylvester worked primarily as a skilled laborer. He initially mastered the family trade of boilermaking alongside his father, later adapting his skills to become an electric welder for a heavy machine manufacturing company. Thanks to his highly sought-after trade, he remained steadily and securely employed even during the bleakest years of the Great Depression.

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Tess Kelly
1929

In 1927, at age twenty-nine, Tess married Bertha Bellinger, who was working as a maid in Painted Post, just southwest of Corning. Bertha had a complex past; she had previously married a man named Lyle Kingsbury in 1916 when she was eighteen, but the couple divorced two years later. Lyle subsequently died in Germany while serving in the U.S. military during World War I. Marrying a divorced woman in that era raised substantial concern within a strict Irish Catholic family. However, in the eyes of the Catholic Church, Bertha was canonistically considered a widow because her first husband had died. After successfully navigating the strict requirements to prove his death to the diocese, she and Tess were formally married in the Church on April 27, 1928, at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania.

Despite the official validation, Bertha was never fully embraced by the wider Kelly clan. My dad, Jim Kelly, later penned a revealing handwritten note right beside the historic 1904 Christmas letter Tess had sent his

parents: *"In my day, I met Tess, as he was known (Sylvester). He died young—and childless. A real nice guy from all reports. I liked him—so did my Dad. His wife Bertha was not well liked."*

Tess and Bertha lived in Corning before relocating to Arlington, New Jersey, in 1934, where Tess secured a position with the Worthington Pump and Machine Corporation. Previously, he had spent years working in the New York Central Railroad shops back home. After nearly two decades in New Jersey, the couple returned home to Corning in January 1951. Sadly, their homecoming was brief. Following a grueling, two-year battle with a chronic illness, Tess passed away on August 19, 1951, at the age of fifty-two. Bertha survived him by three decades, passing away in 1981.

Children: None



About 1935

Front: Bertha Kelly, Mary Graney Kelly, James F. Kelly Sr.
Back: Tess Kelly, Vincent & Irene Johnson

5. Irene Elizabeth Kelly

1900-1994

Grand aunt

The 1920 census finds twenty-year-old Irene living with her parents at 247 Decatur Street in Corning, already training diligently at the local hospital to build a career in medicine. She graduated from St. Joseph's Nurses Training School in Elmira, New York, in 1923, and launched a dedicated, lifelong career as a nurse, practicing in both Elmira and Buffalo.

In 1927, Irene married Vincent Thomas Johnson, a proud World War I veteran who had served honorably in the U.S. Army from July 25 to December 4, 1918, within the 37th Company, 153rd Depot Brigade. Vincent later built a stable career working for the Erie Railroad Company.

Updated: September 1, 2026

EMKelly

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By 1930, the couple had established themselves in Buffalo, where Irene worked active nursing shifts and Vincent worked as a machinist. Demonstrating the fierce, lifelong loyalty characteristic of the Kelly family, Irene continuously opened her doors to relatives in need. In 1930, her younger brother Howard lived with them. By 1940, Howard had moved out, but Irene's aging parents, James and Mary, along with her unmarried sister, Mary Kelly, moved into their rented home at 33 Indian Church Road.

By the time the 1950 census was recorded, the household dynamic had shifted through profound grief. Vincent had passed away from natural causes on January 13, 1944, at age fifty-four, leaving Irene a widow; her father, James F. Kelly, passed away just four years later in 1948.



Irene Kelly Johnson
1929



Ginia Kelly Howard (daughter of James F. Kelly II) visiting her Aunt Irene Kelly Johnson and her Grandmother Mary Graney Kelly in their home in Buffalo, N.Y. About 1950

Now a widowed matriarch, Irene continued to provide a soft landing for her family. My dad, Jim Kelly (the son of Irene's brother, John), was completing his undergraduate degree at Niagara University and moved in with his Aunt Irene and "Gram" between college semesters during the summer months.

Though Irene never officially remarried, she later found wonderful companionship with a gentleman known to the family as "Unc" O'Connor. The two became constant companions, frequently dining out, attending local social events, and enjoying their golden years together.

A Personal Memory: We frequently saw Aunt Irene and Aunt Mary together. The two inseparable sisters would regularly drive out to Albion for large family Sunday dinners and holiday gatherings. When navigating the highways eventually became too difficult for them, my dad would personally drive to Buffalo to fetch them, bringing them to visit either his mother in Batavia or our own family in Albion. I absolutely adored those visits from the "Aunties." They took immense joy in affectionately telling stories about my dad when he was a young boy.

Irene lived a remarkably long and impactful life, passing away on December 22, 1994, at the age of ninety-four. She was laid to rest at Holy Cross Cemetery in Lackawanna, New York.

Children: None



Irene Kelly Johnson & Mary Kelly Murphy Courtney
About 1975 in the small parlor at their brother Jack's house at 39 Prospect, Batavia NY.

6. Harry Joseph Kelly

1902-1966

Granduncle

Harry completed two years of high school before completing an apprenticeship as a machinist. By 1930, he pivoted into law enforcement, securing a position as a railroad policeman.

Though privately employed by the railroad, Harry was a state-authorized law enforcement officer charged with a high-stakes mission: protecting railroad property, cargo, passengers, and revenue during the severe economic desperation of the early Great Depression. His grueling shifts involved



patrolling active rail yards and shadowy boxcars, removing desperate transients attempting to "ride the rails" illegally in search of work, and guarding against rampant cargo theft. Trains carrying food, coal, and consumer goods—as well as illicit alcohol during the Prohibition era—were frequent targets for desperate citizens and organized thieves alike. Railroad police were also tasked with a delicate civil duty, monitoring employee unrest, union strikes, and potential labor-related industrial sabotage.



Harry Joseph Kelly
1929

On May 27, 1935, Harry married Dagny/Dorothy Stahl Erickson. Dorothy, a devout Methodist born in Norway, had emigrated to America as a child and brought two daughters from her first marriage into the household: Julia (b. 1916) and Agnes (b. 1918). She later found employment at the local Corning Glassworks.

Dorothy passed away in 1962, and Harry followed her four years later, passing away on their wedding anniversary, May 27, 1966.

Historical Family Note: Records and recollections suggest that Harry became estranged from his siblings and their families over time. In 2006, Beth Kelly Hogue—the daughter of Harry's younger brother, Howard—exchanged emails with her cousins Jim (my father) and Jack Kelly to piece together old family photos. Beth, who grew up and raised her own family right in Corning where Harry lived, made a poignant observation about the rift. She recalled family trips where she met almost all of her father's siblings and first cousins, noting that her parents even traveled to Chicago to celebrate Frank and Esther's 50th wedding anniversary. Clearly, the other brothers stayed close despite the geographic distances. Yet, Beth remarked with surprise: *"On the other hand, Harry, who lived in Corning, I never met at all."*

Step-children: Julia Erickson (b. 1916), Agnes Erickson (b. 1918) / Harry had no biological children.

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7. Mary Cecilia Kelly

1908-1989

Grandaunt

Mary completed all four years of high school and inspired by her older sister Irene, chose a career in medicine. She likely graduated from St. Joseph's Nurses Training School in Elmira, New York, to become a registered nurse.

By 1935, Mary had relocated to Buffalo to live with Irene and her husband, Vincent. By 1940, their aging parents had moved into the home as well. For generations, a persistent family rumor whispered that Mary had become pregnant out of wedlock, forcing the family to relocate to Buffalo to escape local scandal in Corning. While Mary may well have faced an unexpected pregnancy, census records and timelines thoroughly debunk the idea of a mass family flight. By the time Mary moved, her siblings were already entirely independent and scattered: Anna was married in Elmira; Frank, Tess, Harry, and Howard were all established in Corning; and Jack was married and living in Buffalo.



Mary Cecelia Kelly
1929



Mary & Fran
South Buffalo American Legion Feb. 1954

In the early 1940s, while working as a nurse at Our Lady of Victory Hospital in Lackawanna, Mary fell in love with Paul G. Murphy. They were married on February 2, 1942; Mary was 33, and Paul was 46. Tragically, their newfound happiness was shattered just one month later when Paul died suddenly on March 5, 1942. Paul was a proud World War I veteran who had served overseas for six months before his discharge in May 1919.

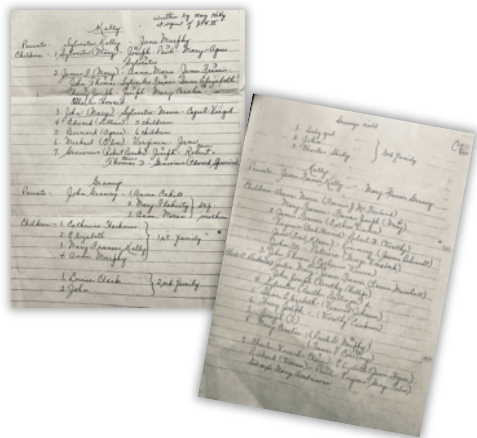
Devastated but resilient, Mary poured herself back into her nursing work at Our Lady of Victory. By 1950, she was renting a room from a local family in Buffalo. Eventually, love found her a second time when she met Francis Vincent "Fran" Courtney, a native of South Buffalo. Fran possessed a storied military background, having entered the

U.S. Army at just 16 years old and earning a commission as a second lieutenant by 1935. As a captain in the 174th Infantry during World War II, Fran fought in the brutal Pacific Theater campaigns of New Guinea and Saipan. He was wounded in action three separate times, earned the Bronze Star for valor, and left active service in June 1945.

Mary and Fran courted for many years before marrying on October 23, 1967. Over the following decade, Mary, Irene, Fran, and "Unc" O'Connor became an inseparable social circle. They spent their golden years playing bridge, dining out, and socializing at the South Buffalo American Legion.



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Fran passed away on April 30, 1976, leaving Mary a widow once more.

In the 1980s during a visit, my dad, Jim Kelly, asked Aunt Mary to write down what she remembered of the family lineage. Her exceptionally sharp mind and clear outline of the Kelly branches confirmed numerous historical dates and finally solved a long-standing mystery regarding her maternal grandfather, John Graney, clarifying his three marriages and children.

Mary passed away on April 3, 1989. In a poignant final detail, she was buried in her first husband's (Murphy) family plot at Holy

Cross Cemetery in Lackawanna, but her headstone proudly carries her second husband's (Courtney) last name.



Children: *possibly* a child placed for adoption

8. Howard Charles Kelly

1910-1991

Granduncle

Howard was the youngest child born to James and Mary Kelly. After completing four years of high school, he secured a position as a postal clerk in Buffalo, living with his sister Irene in 1930.

By 1935, he met the love of his life, Elsa "Elsie" Hansen, who had grown up back home in Corning. The couple married on August 31, 1935, settled permanently in Corning, and raised four children: Beth, Dick, Paul, and Ginny.



Howard Charles Kelly
1929



Irene, Mary and Howard Kelly
about 1911

Howard spent forty years working for both the Northside and Southside post offices in Corning. In the mid-20th century, before the restructuring of the United States Postal Service in 1970, mail delivery was grueling work. Postal employees endured low wages set rigidly by Congress, six-day workweeks averaging 44 to 48 hours, and heavy physical labor. Clerks and carriers navigated brutal upstate New York winters entirely on foot or in primitive, unheated trucks. Because mail arrived strictly by train via the Erie and the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroads, postal workers operated under intense pressure to meet strict, uncompromising rail schedules.

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To unwind from the daily grind, Howard and Elsie purchased a beloved family cottage on Keuka Lake. The cottage became the centerpiece of family life, filled with decades of happy memories of lakeside picnics, swimming, boating, fishing, and afternoons spent relaxing in the hammock.

Howard and Elsie's son Paul joined the U.S. Navy Air Force on June 8, 1966, and died while in service in Vietnam. When an active-duty service member died overseas or at sea, the military shipped the body home to the local train or freight station for the family's funeral home to retrieve. They laid their son to rest at St. Mary's Cemetery in Corning N.Y.

Following Elsie's death in 1980, a grieving Howard sought comfort in his extended family, spending significant time with his nieces and nephews—particularly the children of his late brother John (Julia, Jim, and Jack). He was remembered by all who knew him as an incredibly gentle, loving, and kind-hearted man. Howard later found companionship again and married Mary Ambrosone. He passed away on August 11, 1991, at the age of eighty-one.

Children: Elizabeth Ann "Beth" Kelly (1937–2025), Howard Richard "Dick" Kelly (1942–2006), Paul Charles Kelly 🇺🇸 (1947–1968), Virginia Elaine "Ginny" Kelly (b. 1949)



Howard and his parents Mary & James F. Kelly
circa 1930



Howard and his nephews Jack & Jim Kelly
1982

Look at that family resemblance!

