

Branch 3 of 7

Edward Patrick Kelley—*Eddie*

1874-1965

Great Granduncle

Edward “Eddie” Kelley was the fourth child born to Sylvester and Jane Kelly. Like several of his brothers, he permanently adopted the “ey” spelling of the family name, distinguishing his branch as the Kelleys.

At just twenty years old, Eddie married eighteen-year-old Clara Lily Dennis on March 27, 1895. Clara was born in New York to Isaac Dennis and Mary Fox Dennis, who had immigrated to America from England and Germany, respectively. Clara grew up alongside her two sisters, Madeline and Vera.



What stands out most profoundly about Eddie and Clara’s wedding is that it did not take place within the familiar walls of an Irish Catholic parish. Instead, the couple was wed at the Wall Street Methodist Church in Auburn, New York. This church was renowned for its progressive, 19th-century, biracial congregation; notably, the nephew of legendary abolitionist Harriet Tubman was among its registered members.

Auburn’s Methodists were deeply rooted in Wesleyan theology, emphasizing God’s boundless grace for all people and a vibrant faith expressed through active service to the poor and oppressed. Many members of the congregation were frontline advocates for social reform, lending their voices and strength to prison reform, women’s rights, anti-slavery movements, and early efforts toward true racial equality.

For Eddie’s devout Irish Catholic parents, Sylvester and Jane, this marriage outside the Catholic Church may have been deeply troubling. In that era, the Church fiercely discouraged mixed marriages with Protestants, and Catholic parents routinely harbored heavy anxieties over whether future grandchildren would be raised in the ancestral faith.

While no surviving family accounts detail exactly how the Kelly family reacted to the union, it is clear that Eddie and Clara built a remarkably resilient marriage and a strong, enduring family together.

The foundational research on Eddie and his branch of the Kelley family was meticulously compiled by descendant Dr. Valerie Burke DeLeon. The couple quickly grew their family, welcoming their first child, Mary Jane, in January 1897. She was followed by Edward S. Kelley Jr. in January 1898 and Giles Willard Kelley in December 1899. Records indicate that another infant may have been born during this prolific window but died prior to 1900.

The 1900 census recorded Edward and Clara renting part of a house at 331 West Genesee Street in Auburn. To provide for his young household, Edward worked as a wood sawyer at a local sash and blind factory. Over the next decade, three more children blessed their home: Donald Neil in 1905, Vera Rosalyn—undoubtedly named in honor of Clara’s sister—in 1907, and Kenneth Watson in 1909.

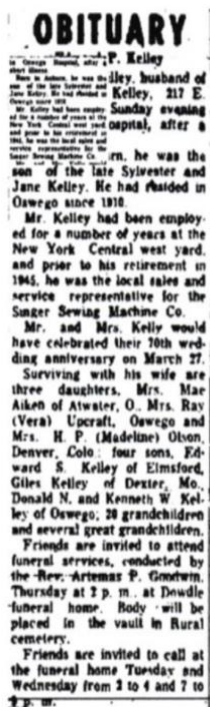
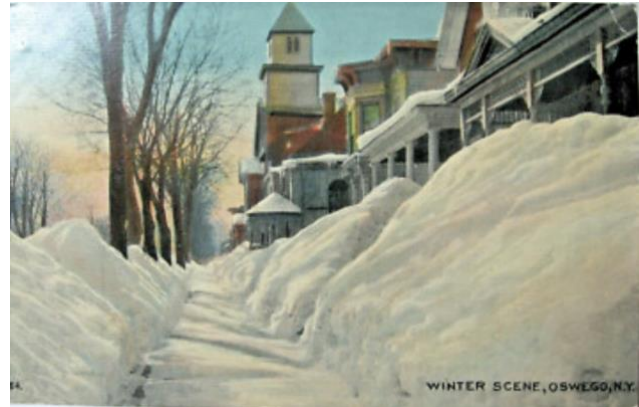
By 1910, the family had relocated to 159 Franklin Street in Auburn, though eleven-year-old Giles was notably absent from their census entry that year. At this juncture, Edward had stepped out of the factories to work as an insurance agent for the City of Auburn.

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

Later that same year, the Kelleys made a major geographic move, relocating to Oswego, New York, where they purchased a permanent home at 217 Bridge Street. Edward initially found employment there as a gas repairer for the local railroad shops. In 1914, Clara gave birth to twin daughters, Madeline and Myrtle Eileen. In a heartbreaking turn of events, little Myrtle passed away just a few weeks after her birth.

Perched on the southeastern shore of Lake Ontario, Oswego was a city defined by its environment. It was renowned for brutal, unforgiving winters; cold, dry air sweeping across the relatively warm lake waters created massive lake-effect snowstorms, cementing Oswego as one of the snowiest cities in the entire United States. Civically, it served as a vital water and rail transportation hub, acting as a premier export point for Pennsylvania coal heading north.

Eddie and Clara successfully guided their large family through the staggering global upheavals of the early 20th century: World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, and the monumental cultural tides of the Women's Suffrage, Prohibition, and Civil Rights movements. Their deeply held faith likely served as an unwavering anchor through these turbulent decades.



Oswego Palladium, March 1, 1965

Demonstrating immense patriotism, two of their sons answered the call to serve during World War I and returned home safely, while one of their daughters stepped forward to serve during World War II.

Eddie managed to remain steadily and securely employed throughout the leanest years of the Great Depression, ensuring his family was always provided for. He worked for a number of years at the New York Central West Yard and later transitioned careers to serve as a representative for the Singer Sewing Machine Company before finally retiring in 1945.

Eddie passed away on February 28, 1965, at the venerable age of ninety, leaving behind a sprawling and deeply affectionate family tree. His funeral was presided over by a Baptist minister, the Rev. Artemas P. Goodwin. If Eddie and Clara remained close to the progressive Christian principles of the church where they first exchanged vows, then the long-awaited social justice they had prayed for over a lifetime was finally beginning to take historic shape during the height of the Civil Rights era.



The Next Generation: An overview of Branch 3...Descendants of Edward P. Kelley and Clara Lily Dennis

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

1. Mary Jane Kelley—*Mae*

1896-1982

1st cousin 2x removed

Mae was the eldest child born to Eddie and Clara.

At just nineteen years old, she married Daniel Aiken on March 30, 1915, in Oswego, New York. Daniel had grown up in Statesboro, Georgia, but had moved north for opportunity. Together, the couple raised three daughters.

By 1920, Mae and Daniel relocated to Ohio, eventually settling permanently in the town of Randolph. Daniel secured a stable career working as a mechanic for the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in nearby Akron. Decades later, the 1940 and 1950 censuses recorded Mae contributing to her community by working as a cook in a local school cafeteria.

Daniel passed away in 1952, and Mae survived her husband by thirty years, maintaining a close connection to her family until her passing in 1982.

Children: Virginia M. Aiken (1916–1990), Ione M. Aiken (1923–1989), Patricia Kay "Pat" Aiken (1931–2024)

2. Edward Sylvester Kelley—*Junior*

1898-1985

1st cousin 2x removed

Eddie and Clara's second child, a son, was proudly named after his father and paternal grandfather. Edward entered the workforce early, and by 1915, he had entered the printing trade. By 1917, he was working as a compositor, setting type for the Oswego Times.

When the United States officially declared war on April 6, 1917, the local Oswego Naval Militia was instantly mobilized by 11:00 PM that very night. The next day, Edward Jr. boarded a train to New York City with the Ninth Division, Third Battalion, mustered into service as a seaman second class. Edward ultimately rose to the rank of Quartermaster Second Class (QM2) in the U.S. Navy.



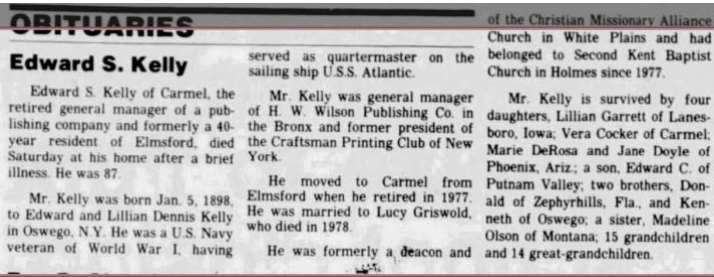
AI generated picture of sailor uniform of
QM2 US NAVY WWI

During the Great War, the Navy's primary missions were convoy escort, anti-submarine warfare, and the perilous transport of the American Expeditionary Forces to Europe. As a QM2 aboard a WWI vessel—such as a destroyer, battleship, or troop transport—Edward was directly responsible for manual navigation. Operating in an era completely devoid of radar or GPS, he relied strictly on celestial navigation using the sun and stars, paper charts, and dead reckoning to guide his ship safely through deadly minefields and hostile submarine zones. Quartermasters were heavily relied upon for silent visual communication,

utilizing semaphore flags, flashing signal lamps, and flag hoists to transmit messages between ships without using radio frequencies that German U-boats could easily intercept. Edward was also responsible for keeping the official ship's deck log, meticulously tracking shifting weather patterns, speed, and compass courses.

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

Following his safe return from sea, Edward married Lucy E. Griswold on November 23, 1921, in Manhattan, New York. Together they raised five children. Edward remained dedicated to the publishing profession for the rest of his working life, ultimately climbing the ranks to serve as the General Manager of the prestigious H.W. Wilson Publishing Company in the Bronx. Deeply spiritual, Edward also served as a deacon in the Christian Missionary Alliance Church. He passed away on March 30, 1985, at the age of eighty-nine.



Children: Lillian Teresa Kelley (1920–2011), Vera Kelley (b. 1925), Marie Kelley (1925–2005), Edward C. Kelley (b. 1930), Jane Kelley (1933–2021)

3. Giles Willard Kelley

1899-1983
1st cousin 2x removed

Like his brother Edward, Giles answered the call to serve during World War I. When the United States declared war on April 6, 1917, the Oswego Naval Militia mobilized by 11:00 PM that same night. The following day, Giles boarded a train to New York City to join the Ninth Division, Third Battalion, as a seaman second class. He was assigned to the training ship USS Granite State—the same vessel as John Walter Deneen—before deploying to active duty.

A form titled "PASSENGER LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS" with instructions for filing. It contains a table with columns for No., NAME AND NUMBER, Sex, Age, Date of Birth, Organization, Relationship, Address, and Remarks. The entry for Giles Willard Kelley is highlighted in red. Below the table is a section for "Total Officers" and "Total Men" with checkboxes for various categories. The form is dated "APR 1917" and has a "DECLASSIFIED" stamp at the bottom right.

Giles served with the American Expeditionary Force, Siberia (AEF Siberia), a U.S. Army contingent deployed to Vladivostok, Russia, from 1918 to 1920 during the Russian Civil War. President Woodrow Wilson authorized this mission with strict, limited objectives: secure massive stockpiles of Allied military equipment at port cities, facilitate the safe evacuation of stranded Czechoslovak troops, and coordinate with the Red Cross to distribute humanitarian relief to the Russian populace.

American troops were explicitly ordered to remain neutral and avoid interfering in Russia’s internal politics. This stance created severe friction with British, French, and Japanese commanders who

wanted to use the Allied forces to crush the Bolsheviks. Tasked with guarding the Trans-Siberian Railway without taking sides, U.S. forces endured tense standoffs with both their nominal allies and local Red Army partisans. On top of the geopolitical hostility, the troops battled extreme logistical hardships, brutal winter conditions, and rampant disease.

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

Following his service, Giles returned to the family home in Oswego. On August 18, 1923, he married Mary Lou Brack (1905–1982) at the First Methodist Church in Henderson, Kentucky. Mary Lou had previously been married to Frank Gabe in 1921 and was divorced. The newlyweds relocated to Indiana to establish their household. Together, they raised Mary Lou's son from her first marriage, Keith Gabe, and had three children of their own.

Giles worked a variety of occupations throughout his life, including painting, sales, and grocery clerking. He and Mary Lou shared a fulfilling 60-year marriage. Mary Lou passed away in 1982, and Giles followed her the next year in 1983.

Children: Keith Gabe (stepson, raised by Giles), Paul Andrew Kelley (1924–2019), Vera Rosalind Kelley (1926–2002), Giles Willard "Billy" Kelley (1929–2009)



Mary Lou and Giles
50th Wedding Anniversary in 1973

4. Donald Neil Kelley

1905-1991

1st cousin 2x removed

Donald Neil Kelley was born on February 8, 1905, in Auburn, New York, to Edward and Clara Kelley. On August 4, 1927, he married Ethel Marie Clifford (1907–1997) in Oswego, New York. Donald spent his career working in local textile mills. After retiring, he and Ethel relocated to Florida. He passed away on February 14, 1991, in Pasco, Florida, at the age of 86.

Children: Diane Marie Kelley (1935–), Donald Clifford Kelley Jr. (1939–2007)

5. Vera Rosalyn Kelley

1906-1968

1st cousin 2x removed

Vera married Raymond Hudson Upcraft (1904–1981) on June 27, 1925. Raymond worked as a machinist for Columbia Mills, Lagoe Machine Shop, and the Oswego Candy Company, eventually retiring as a maintenance supervisor at SUNY Oswego. Vera's home served as a central hub for major family milestones; local newspapers frequently recorded events hosted there, ranging from bridal showers to her parents' 65th wedding anniversary celebration in 1960. Vera passed away in 1968.

Children: Beverly Lone Upcraft (1932–)

Family Branch: KELLY | MURPHY

6. Kenneth Watson Kelley

1909-1992

1st cousin 2x removed

Kenneth married Ellen Irene Darling (1911–1967) on June 20, 1934. Active in their community, both Kenneth and Ellen were dedicated members of the West Baptist Church and the Order of the Eastern Star. Kenneth worked primarily as an insurance salesman alongside various other trades. Following a lingering illness, Ellen passed away young in 1967 at the age of 56. Kenneth later remarried Betty Jane Bernard. He passed away on June 29, 1992.

Children: Joan Lee Kelley (1939–2002), David G. Kelley (1943–)

Kenneth W. Kelly

OSWEGO — Kenneth W. Kelly, 83, of Johnson Road died Monday.

Surviving are his wife, the former Betty Jane Bernard; a stepdaughter, Carolyn Lagoe of Minetto; a stepson, Leigh Pringle of Hannibal; and a granddaughter.

Services are 9 a.m. Thursday at Neslon Funeral Home. Burial will be in Riverside Cemetery. Calling hours will be from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. today at the funeral home, 124 W. Fifth St.

7. Madeliene Kelley

1912-1994

1st cousin 2x removed

Madeliene was born on November 22, 1912, to Edward and Clara Kelley. Her twin sister, Myrtle, tragically did not survive birth. At age 18, Madeliene married James Swan (1902–), a Pennsylvania native serving in the U.S. Coast Guard, on February 5, 1931.



Madeliene went on to spend 14 highly respected years working for the Oswego County Farm Bureau. She was placed in charge of bovine disease eradication, keeping meticulous records of all local dairy herds. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the New York State Farm Bureau collaborated with the Cornell Cooperative Extension on a high-stakes campaign to eliminate Bovine Tuberculosis and Brucellosis (Bang's Disease). These highly contagious diseases threatened dairy farmers with economic ruin and caused dangerous undulant fever in humans who consumed unpasteurized milk. Managing strict quarantines, testing protocols, and ear-tag tracking across hundreds of farms, Madeliene played a vital role in protecting Oswego County's massive dairy industry.

In February 1943, Madeliene was granted a divorce from James. The following year, with World War II underway, she volunteered for the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve, known as SPARS (derived from the motto Semper Paratus—"Always Ready"). Created to relieve male servicemen from shore duty for sea deployment, the SPARS drew over 10,000 female volunteers between 1942 and 1946. Madeliene completed basic training in West Palm Beach, Florida, and was stationed at the Marine Hospital on Staten Island, New York, by late 1944.



On January 29, 1948, Madeliene married retired U.S. Navy Commander Harold "Pete" Olson (1909–1993). The couple eventually relocated to Missoula, Montana. Following Commander Olson's death in December 1993, Madeliene passed away on September 28, 1994, at the age of 81.

Children: None

