

Letter from Margaret Sweeney, daughter of Peter Joseph Sweeney (1867-1945) and Margaret Conmee (1867-1935)
(Transcribed just as Margaret wrote it, by Sandy Hershelman, P.O. Box 521, Port Hadlock, WA 98339 or <hershelman@olympus.net>)

Sunday, July 3, 1960

Dearest Agnes and Ella:
Dearest Mary and Elmer:
Dearest Jen and Fay:

May all of you and yours enjoy a healthy and happy Independence Day tomorrow. And I hope you will fly the 50 state flag. Seems we, as a Nation, are growing in numbers, but becoming smaller in the eyes of the World. Not a pleasant thought at all, is it??

On my radio today, I heard the re-enactment of the preceding meetings and discussion of the Continental Congress, in re the drawing up of the Declaration of Independence. It was quite stirring, I thought because of the fears, those brave men had of the consequences of their acts, if England frowned on the separation; but as all of us know, they were resolute enough to chance the passage and signing of the D. of Independence; all but the Colony of New York, who waited until November to sign it.

I keep thinking that I wished our leaders of today were as sincere, selfless, loyal, with the same firm belief in their convictions, as the signers of the D. of I. way back there during the years of strife, they thought they were living through; 'tis a good thing they do not know the chaos which prevails in the U.S. today.

I know each of you has his/her own ideas of what the glorious Fourth should mean and of our leaders now, so I shall not foist my own opinions on you any more than I have done thus far, in this note.

Since my two former letters, I do not have any change or rather different new news. I visited Walter and Anne on Wednesday, as is my wont. Walter is better than he had been, not that he can walk or do anything for himself, but he was more alert and interested.

Then I went to Cassie's on Friday and they were all as usual, and were planning on going to Twin Lakes for the weekend. I do not care to go, because I am AFRAID of the motorboat and I no longer go in the water; so I just decline the invitation.

And last night, (Saturday) Irene invited me for dinner; and later we had a terrific, rain storm, hail, thunder and awful lightning, which lasted four hours and drenched us with two and one half inches of rain. All viaducts, under passes, and streets were flooded to the curbing; and it was announced today that \$250,000 damage was done to power lines, with tree limbs breaking and falling on cars and sewers backing up, not able to handle so much rain. It was really frightening. We had had tornado warnings, and I really think that storm was the offshoot of a tornado.

Now, the real reason for this is to supply Ella with the information, she requested from me in JANUARY, in re to the dates and births of Aunt Jennie's family (the Conmee branch).

May God grant eternal rest to Aunt Jennie, her parents and brothers and sisters. I'll include all of them now, for I shall have to mention them again.

Grandpa Conmee and Aunt Jennie are the only two not buried in Mount Carmel Cemetery, Hillside, Ill. There is a tombstone on the lot, with Grandma Conmee, Uncles Rob,

Frank and Johnny's names thereon, with dates of death; all the others, Aunts Laura, Jeanette, and your Aunt Minnie have small markers (each). My dad, Peter J. S. is there, too, but not included in this information Ella wants for her FAMILY TREE record.

Elmer dear, you know as well as I, about the monument and the individual markers; for you were very loyal to your dear Mother's family and served as pallbearer for each and every one of them. Of course you know, too, Mary, for you were also there.

As a growing child and as an adolescent, I recall the death of most of these. I also recalled that the oldsters talked so much about how YOUNG each one was, at the time of death. I did not think them young, for I was so young, myself, that 40-50-35 yrs, of age VERY OLD. Let me say here and now that I've long since changed my opinion; but it took maturity to convince me.

Going to the cemetery down through the years, I found it easy to make mental notes of the dates of death of each; and had no need to make written notation of the same.

However, I had NO way of knowing the dates of birth — other than my own good Mother's, Aunt Laura's and Aunt Jeanette's; and the latter two, ONLY the months and days, but not the years.

I thought I'd go out on the train some day and copy the dates of death to be sure my memory was correct; but how to learn the dates of birth. I finally called the cemetery office on telephone and asked for BOTH. This very nice Mr. Fischer got out the record and gave me the dates of death at once for each. He said that NOW they do not concern themselves with the dates of BIRTH; no need for that; but, in the past, when a person was buried, their records showed the AGE at the time of death; such as 10 yrs. 4 mo. 11 days.

Said he would be glad to send me that information from his records and I could figure the dates of birth from same. His letter arrived this week and I spent an evening doing arithmetic, to arrive at dates of birth; then last night at Irene's, I asked Eileen to figure same, to see if she arrived at the same dates, as I had; in case, I could be wrong. So she worked from the dates of death, showing the life span of years, months and days, and arrived at the SAME answers. So now I know that ALL dates are correct. In the case of Grandma Conmee, they only gave years for her and years for Uncle Johnny; and for baby John DuMont, they listed only 7 months; which is true, for I recall that he was a tiny baby.

Evidently, when Grandma Conmee was MOVED from Mount Olivet Cemetery to Mt. Carmel, Aunt Laura did not supply the month and day of her birth; and the same for Uncle Johnny Conmee, so I could figure the YEARS of their births, but cannot give you the months and days of the month of their births.

Ella dear, you wrote that you had information on Aunt Jeanette, but I'm giving it to you, too, as the cemetery records indicate. And I DO know that your own dear Mother died on my birthday and that was in 1907 (am I right?) but I do NOT know the date of your Mother's birth, but you can supply that yourself; and, maybe, some time give it to me; for I think I'll make a copy of this for our kids — for they might like to have it and then I MIGHT add the info. on us Sweeney kids and you, cousin, for MY nieces and nephews.

At least, Jennie, Irene, Cassie and Walter would like to have a copy of what I'm sending you tonight. They really did not know as much as I about the Conmee family.

Mary, dear, you were so good to send Walter that "funny" get-well card. He got a "bang" out of it, and couldn't wait to have Anne show it to me Wed. And you were so thoughtful to write to Jen — and I also received your letter to me; but shall reply to that in another letter

SOON. I want to conclude this now and give the information on a separate sheet; and do not want to type too late, by adding more to this letter — lest I waken the neighbors.

Love to all,
Marg

CONMEE CLAN

Francis Conmee born in IRELAND of pure Irish stock married an English girl, born in LONDON, ENGLAND of pure English stock.

They came to America, settled in Chicago, Illinois, where they had ALL their children; who were, as nearly as I can recall, from my own childhood:

FRANCIS CONMEE, who became our grandfather

JANE CONMEE, never married (I remember when Aunt Jane died)

ANN CONMEE, never married (I remember when Aunt Ann died)

BRIDGET CONMEE, who DID marry, but I only knew her as Aunt Bridgie to my Mother and Aunt Laura; and I never heard her marriage name; too young, I guess.

PATRICK CONMEE, who also married whom, I would not know.

And, if Grandpa Francis Conmee had other brothers and sisters, they must have died before I was born; for the above are the only names I recall.

Now, this FRANCIS CONMEE married MARGARET MURPHY, who was born in Chicago.

Both MARGARET MURPHY'S parents were born in Ireland.

Among the children born to this Margaret Murphy and Francis Conmee were OUR Mothers.

I hope you can follow me. I'll go back and name GRANDMA MARGARET MURPHY CONMEE's sisters and brothers; those who were around in my childhood.

ELIZABETH MURPHY married to a SULLIVAN — she was lovingly called Aunt Betsy.

JOHN MURPHY — married, but I do NOT know to whom.

CATHERINE MURPHY — married to a James McCarthy. She was called Aunt Kate, of course.

HELEN Murphy, married, but to whom I do not know

DANIEL MURPHY, never married

Now when our GRANDFATHER FRANCIS CONMEE died, he was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery, at The Sag, Joliet, Illinois; in the LOT which was owned by his sister, BRIDGET, who lived in Joliet, Ill. at the time. I do not know when he died. But, I do know that he served in the CIVIL WAR, because Aunt Laura had his discharge papers and his uniform and sword, in her trunk, in the basement at Adams St. All these were destroyed when we had a severe rainstorm and the basement flooded and wet everything in the trunk — and we didn't know the water seeped in; and when we did find out, all contents were mildewed; and we could not even read grandpa's discharge from the YANKEE ARMY of the CIVIL WAR.

Now, when our GRANDMOTHER MARGARET MURPHY CONMEE died, Feb. 25, 1899, she was buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Chicago (as stated elsewhere) but when little baby, John DuMont, died in 1901, Aunt Laura bought the LOT in Mt. Carmel, and had her mother (our grandmother) removed from Mt. Olivet to Mt. Carmel and she was buried in 1901 at the same

time and DAY as little John DuMont; since Aunt Jeanette Conmee and Uncle John DuMont did not have a lot.

On the back of this, I shall list the information from the cemetery — which I think is what you want more, than the names of the sisters and brothers of your grandparents; but since I know what I have given, I thought I might as well pass it on to you.

YOU MOTHER'S IMMEDIATE FAMILY

FRANCIS CONMEE, of Chicago, married MARGARET MURPHY, of Chicago. Their children listed below.

Parents: Francis Conmee, do not know date of birth nor of death

Margaret Murphy Conmee; born 1841. Died February 25, 1899 at age of 58.

CHILDREN:

NAMES	DATE OF BIRTH	DATE OF DEATH	AGE DEATH
Francis (Frank) Conmee	Dec. 28, 1861	Aug. 7, 1910	48
Margaret Conmee Sweeney	Apr. 9, 1867	May 1935 (19th)	68
Robert Conmee	Sept. 9, 1869	Aug. 5, 1910	40
Jeanette Conmee DuMont	Dec. 23, 1873	Oct. 30, 1924	50
John Conmee	1876	Dec. 11, 1911	35
Laura Conmee	Oct. 3, 1879	May 10, 1944	65
Jennie Conmee Wyse		May 6, 1907	?

In that same lot "Lot 32—Block 12—Section N"

John DuMont (baby)		Feb. 9, 1901	7 mo.
Peter J. Sweeney	Nov. 16, 1867	Feb. 11, 1945	77 yr

In case you're interested, Frank, Robert, John and Laura Conmee never married.

There were two more children. A boy died at 2 months; I do not know his name, nor when born. And a girl, Nellie (Helen) was drowned at age of 5, at a picnic, and was buried in a cemetery, which is now Lincoln Park. And when the cemetery was made into Lincoln Park, many did remove their dead, but the Conmee family felt Nellie had been dead so LONG, it was useless to move her.

I named your own mother last, because not knowing her date of birth, I could not put her name in sequence of birth. And I'm quite sure I'm right about her date of death.

With each of these the cemetery stated, such as Francis (Frank Conmee) died August 7, 1910 at the age of 48 years, 7 months, 10 days; then I figured date of birth for each. But, with Grandma Conmee, they only gave age at death as 58 and John at 35 years without giving months and days, so I could not figure their month and day of birth — only their years. O.K.? Same for John DuMont, 7 mo.

This may also interest you: Uncles Rob and Frank died two days apart of Cholera Morbis; both buried same day. Uncle Johnny at age 35 died of tuberculosis; my Mother died of diabetes; Aunt Laura gall operation and liver op. (We think it might have been cancer). Aunt Jeanette died of heart trouble; as well as your own dear Mother. Little John DuMont died in convulsions and my Dad of a coronary attack. I think this just about covers it.

Note how YOUNG or much YOUNGER the men in that family died than the women. If you want to trouble yourself to learn how many grandchildren Grandma and Grandpa Conmee had, go ahead. Aunt Jeanette had two children, no grandchildren. My Mother had 6 children, 9 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren. And your Mother??