

EI-509

EILEEN MURRAY LYNN

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PORT:

RESIDENCES:

- **IRELAND: CORNAFULLA, ATHLONE, COUNTY ROSCOMMON**
- **US: BOSTON, MA; QUEENS, NY; MINEOLA, LI, NY**

ORAL HISTORIAN'S NOTE: Mrs. Lynn is the wife of John Lynn, Interview EI-510. Paul E. Sigrist, Jr., Oral Historian, 5/9/1996.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. It's July 31, 1994, and I'm here in Mineola, Long Island, with Mrs. Eileen Murray Lynn.

LYNN: Murray, yeah.

LEVINE: Um, Mrs. Murray came from Ireland when she was twenty-five years old, and

she came through Ellis Island in 1953. Well, I'm very happy to be here, and I'm glad your grandchildren are out of the house. [Laughs]

LYNN: Yeah, yeah, the Indians, huh? [Laughs]

LEVINE: So, let's start at the beginning. If you would tell me your birth date.

LYNN: Yeah. I was born on June 27th, 1927.

LEVINE: Okay. And where were you born?

LYNN: In Ireland, Ireland. County Roscommon, Ireland.

LEVINE: Okay.

LYNN: Yeah. I come from a little town, well, it's Athloane. We're on the outskirts.
They call it Cornafulla. It's the name of the village.

LEVINE: Oh. Could you spell the name of the village, please?

LYNN: C-O-R-N-A-F-U-L-L-A. Cornafulla.

LEVINE: Cornafulla.

LYNN: Uh-huh.

LEVINE: And what was the town or city . . .

LYNN: Yeah. Athloane, A-T-H-L-O-A-N-E, Athloane.

LEVINE: Okay. And, uh, did you live in Cornavilla?. . .

LYNN: Cornafulla.

LEVINE: Cornafulla.

LYNN: Yeah. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Did you live in Cornafulla up until the time that you came to America?

LYNN: Yes, yes, I did, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, maybe you could describe the village for me.

LYNN: Yes. It's a very small village. And, uh, where we were born, it was attached house. And there was, uh, maybe in that village about ten houses altogether. So now, uh, it has changed a lot. There's a lot of new houses. So we . . .

LEVINE: When you were there, when you were living there, the ten houses, was, I mean, what was it like living in a village with just ten houses?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah, it was nice, you know. Everybody, you know, visited each other in and out, and it was really nice. And we could walk to school.

LEVINE: Was the school in the village?

LYNN: No, no, no. It was not that far, about fifteen minutes from us.

LEVINE: So you would walk to school?

LYNN: We'd walk to school. And right now they can't walk to school because of all the cars. There was no cars then, you know. So now they have to take their kids to school.

LEVINE: How did people get around besides walking when you were there?

LYNN: Riding bicycles. We rode bicycles. And then they had the donkey, and the trap. The donkey and cart. They rode in that, you know.

LEVINE: Did your family have a donkey?

LYNN: Yes, yes.

LEVINE: And a cart?

LYNN: And a cart, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Now, what would you use it for? What, what, where would you go when you were using the donkey and cart?

LYNN: Well, they used it on the farm, you know, bringing home stuff and, uh, they used it, and they used to sell, you know, turf, they used to call it, for the fires, and all that. And then we had this, the donkey, and, uh, we had, you know, they called it the trap, it was --- we used to go to church in that. It was like a sidecar. [Laughs] That's how we used to go to church. The church was about, oh, five miles from us, five or seven, maybe seven miles.

LEVINE: What was the sidecar like?

LYNN: Yeah. It was nice, you know.

LEVINE: How many . . .

LYNN: There'd be about three people on each side.

LEVINE: You had like a sidecar on each side of the donkey?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. Three seats on each side, and you stepped up into it on the back, from the back. There was a little door in the back. And they all gone over to church. Everybody would have the donkey and cart. That's how we got to church. So then, uh, as we grew older, we had the bicycles. So you don't see, see much bicycles over there now or anything, you know. It's all cars. It's nearly like here. It's nearly like here. Yeah. It has changed quite a bit.

LEVINE: Well, uh, what was your father's name?

LYNN: Tommy Murray.

LEVINE: And, uh, your mother's name?

LYNN: Bridget Lennon, L-E-N-N-O-N.

LEVINE: Lennon was her maiden name?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And did you have brothers and sisters?

LYNN: Yeah. I have two brothers, Thomas and John. And then I have, uh, four sisters. I have Mae, Lilly, Anne and Agnes. My sister Agnes, she's in Texas. She's a Sister. Then my sister Anne is in Florida, in Tampa, Florida, and then my two sisters are in Ireland. They're in different --- they're married back there, in their family. So they're in different villages.

LEVINE: I see.

LYNN: They're, you know, about ten miles from each other.

LEVINE: Did your brothers come to this country?

LYNN: Uh, no. Just one came over to visit. My younger brother, Thomas, came over. He came here four years ago. My brother John was never here yet. You know. Then my two sisters were over. That -- my sister Lilly and Mae, they were here six years ago, so we took them in to see the Statue of Liberty. We took the bus tour all through the city and that. It was nice. They liked it. Then they went to Florida to visit my sister, and they went up to Boston. We had people, friends, you know, relatives up there. And they went to Texas to see my sister, so they got around, huh?

LEVINE: Yeah.

LYNN: Yeah.

LEVINE: Well, tell me, do you remember any religious observances in Ireland that, um, were in any way different from religious observances here?

LYNN: No. When they have, like, what they call Knock back there, Knock Shrine.

LEVINE: How do you spell it?

LYNN: Knock, K-N-O-C-K. Knock, Knock Shrine. They have that back there. Then we climbed this Kilpatrick, they call it, the Rick. It's like a big mountain.

LEVINE: And you climbed that?

LYNN: I did that twice before I came over here.

LEVINE: And is it, it's like a pilgrimage?

LYNN: Yes, it is, yeah.

LEVINE: And what, um, is it difficult to climb it?

LYNN: Oh, it takes quite a while. It does. Like, as you get in on the mountain it's hard to climb in, you know, on the real top. And that, so, uh, it was nice. It's a long time ago.

LEVINE: Is that, is that mountain shrine dedicated to a particular saint?

LYNN: Uh, Saint Patrick, Kolpatrick [ph.], Saint Patrick.

LEVINE: Oh, I see.

LYNN: Yeah. That's Saint Patrick, yeah. Yeah, and it's very misty on top when you go up there. They built a church on the top. They didn't have one then. But it's, you know, it's hard rocks and climbing. And some people climb it in their bare feet. Yeah.

LEVINE: What does it, what does it mean? In other words, when you climbed it . . .

LYNN: Yeah, well, you go up. It's a pilgrimage, and it's the sacrifice. You sacrifice. You know, it's hard climbing it. And then they have mass up there when you get up there. And that ---- they ---- there isn't much you can carry up with you. They sell water on the way up, and all that, you know. So, uh, it's, I did it before I came over here, maybe in '50 or so.

LEVINE: I see. Was the, is the, uh, Kolpatrick, is it near the village you grew up in?

LYNN: No, no, no. It's where my husband came from, Mayo, down in County Mayo.

LEVINE: Oh, I see. So you really had to take a trip just to go there.

LYNN: Yeah. Well, the train. It took about, I don't know how many hours. Not too much, you know. So, uh . . .

LEVINE: How about being, being either, uh, receiving your communion or confirmation, any of those things? Did those stand out in your mind?

LYNN: Yeah. I remember my confirmation. I had an uncle. My Uncle Patrick, he lived in Boston. And, uh, his wife, she came from near our village. We knew her brother at home. So I remember my confirmation. They sent, my sister Mae and I, we're just a year apart, he sent over our dresses, shoes and stockings. And I remembered that, that I remember. My communion, I don't remember.

LEVINE: How did you feel when you received the package from your . . .

LYNN: Oh, yeah, yeah. The two were the same. We were all excited. Yeah. We

thought they were pretty. Because you didn't get them over there then like you would here, you know, the dresses and that.

LEVINE: Well, what would you wear as a, you know, growing up in your village? What would you normally wear?

LYNN: Well, when we were growing up there was no ----s -- you didn't wear s pants then. Now they do. It's like here now.

LEVINE: Well, what did you wear, then?

LYNN: Oh, dresses, skirts, and that, you know. So, uh, right now it's just like here, the sneakers. We never had sneakers back there. It's the same as here.

LEVINE: Do you remember your shoes that you had growing up?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. The same as here, I guess. The same ---- sandals.

LEVINE: Was there anything different about, about . . .

LYNN: No, the clothes were much the same as here, yeah. Much the same.

LEVINE: How about, uh, school? What do you remember about school?

LYNN: Yeah. School was, uh, well, it's about three miles from us, you know, and that. And it was a big school, no heat. We had no heat in the schools, then. We were used to it, I guess. You know, we grew up like that. And so the girls and the boys, they were all together. You know. So, uh, I don't remember too much about it.

LEVINE: Was it, was it, uh, a strict education?

LYNN: Oh, yes, yes. They were strict. Yes, they were. I didn't go to the nuns. We didn't have the nuns.

LEVINE: Was it a parochial school, or a public school?

LYNN: A public school. So, uh, we had to go, if you had to go to the sisters, you had to go into the town, you know. That would be the high school. We just, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: So the children would go to the public school in the village, and then if they went to high school they would go into town.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah, the brothers. They had the brothers, too, in there. Yeah, in the high school. Uh-huh, in the town.

LEVINE: How about grandparents? Did you have grandparents?

LYNN: Yes, I did. I didn't remember them. My, uh, father's father I remembered. My mother's, not too much. I was very little when they died.

LEVINE: What do you remember about your father's father? Can you think of any time you spent with him?

LYNN: No, I can't. I can't think, no, no. Not much. I was very little when he died. You know.

LEVINE: Yeah. How about aunts and uncles?

LYNN: Yes. Well, my Uncle Patrick, he sponsored us. He lived in Boston, so then I had an uncle, Tommy, my mother's brother, he lived right next door to us. He was a bachelor.

LEVINE: What was he like?

LYNN: Yeah, he was nice. We had to go out and clean his house when we were little, all the time. He used to have his meals at our house. And he was, he was nice. Very quiet, you know. So, uh . . .

LEVINE: Did you ever go anyplace with him?

LYNN: Uh, no, no. Then my Aunt Margaret, she lived in another town, which was a long ways from us. So she used to come there every summer with her kids. She had three children. And she'd come down and spend the summer with her brother, my uncle. And I had an Aunt Anne I used to visit a lot.

LEVINE: What was she like?

LYNN: Yeah, she was nice. I liked her. She had two children. Her husband died when they were very little. So we used to go down and stay there and help her on the farm and all that.

LEVINE: Was she doing farming?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. She lived on a farm. I grew up on a farm.

LEVINE: Oh. So was your father a farmer?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: What was he growing?

LYNN: Oh, they grew, ah, potatoes, all kinds of vegetables. And, uh . . .

LEVINE: Livestock?

LYNN: They had livestock too, yeah. Now they don't do much of that any more. They don't do any farming much.

LEVINE: Well, like the livestock?

LYNN: We had carrots, and all kinds of vegetables. Turnips, and we grew everything like that. And, uh . . .

LEVINE: Was it just for the family, or he was selling . . .

LYNN: Yeah. They'd sell the potatoes. They used to sell them. And then we used to, we had, uh, turkeys we used to sell at Christmas. We'd have maybe twenty turkeys or twenty-five. You'd never see one back there any more, no. We had pigs, [Laughs] which I hated.

LEVINE: Did you have to do chores with these animals?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah, we did, yeah, we did. So, uh, yeah, they don't carry, have that any more. Then we had the chickens and the hens, and there were fresh eggs. My kids used to love the eggs when they'd come back. We'd be down looking for the hens to lay the eggs.

LEVINE: You remember some of your favorite dishes that your mother made when

you were growing up?

LYNN: Yeah. With the new potatoes they used to make this dish.

LEVINE: What was it?

LYNN: Ah, they just made the potatoes, and they put scallions in with it, and butter, and it was delicious, though. Yeah. The new potatoes. And, uh, their food is much like here.

LEVINE: What do you remember people doing for fun, for enjoyment, when you were there?

LYNN: Yeah, we, well, we went to the movies, and . . .

LEVINE: There was a movie, not in your village?

LYNN: No, not in our village, no, in the town. Then we had the dances. When we were growing up we had the open-air dances. They called them the Maypole. We had that. They don't have that there no more.

LEVINE: What would happen at a Maypole?

LYNN: Yeah, well, they had the dancing. You know, they had the floor, the wooden floor. Then they had the carnivals, they had dancing with that, too. They had the big tents, and they had the band, and music, and that have, uh, that have food, dinner and all that. So I don't know if they have that any more there.

LEVINE: Uh, let's see. Is, how about your father? What kind of a man was he?

LYNN: He was very quiet, very, very quiet, all the time working, very quiet. Yeah. He was a nice, good man, you know --- very religious. The rosary was said every night. Everybody had to kneel down for the rosary.

LEVINE: Before going to sleep?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And how about your mother? How would you describe her?

LYNN: Yeah. She was a, she was good. She would, you know, spank us more than him, you know. Of course, you always tried to put more over on your mother than your father. But she was good.

LEVINE: Can you remember any attitudes that your mother or father had? In other words, things that they believed in, that they tried to get across to you, and your sisters and brothers, ways of living, or . . .

LYNN: No, no. They didn't really have to, I guess. No, I don't remember anything.

LEVINE: How would you describe yourself as a young woman?

LYNN: Oh, I don't know. Well, I, when I was about twenty then, I went to live in Athloane, you know, where I worked. I worked in a store, and I used to come home, you know, on, once a week and that. So we stayed, lived in where ---. Then my sister, Anne, she lived in the town, too, before we came over here, for about five years maybe.

LEVINE: So you'd go and you'd work all week?

LYNN: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then you'd come . . .

LYNN: And I'd come home once a week. Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And would you walk home?

LYNN: No, we'd cycle, bicycle.

LEVINE: I'm trying to think, are there any other experiences that you can think of, in the village, or, what was life like for you working in a shop?

LYNN: Yeah, it was nice. We were busy, kept busy.

LEVINE: What kind of shop was it?

LYNN: Yeah, it was grocery. They sold confectionery; they sold ice cream and all that. Then they had a dance hall as well. So, at the dances we would have to work. You know, they had a snack bar and stuff. We'd have to work at that at night. That would be on a Sunday night, that had that. So, uh . . .

LEVINE: So, um . . .

LYNN: I enjoyed it. Then . . .

LEVINE: When you look back on your childhood there, how do you think about it now?

LYNN: Yeah. I don't know. I wouldn't want to go back. [Laughs]

LEVINE: Go back and do it again.

LYNN: No, no. Yeah, I like this country. I always liked it.

LEVINE: Well, how was the decision made that you and your sister would come here?

LYNN: Ah, we just wanted to come. We just --- I always wanted to come, I don't know why.

LEVINE: What did you know about it?

LYNN: Nothing. We didn't know nothing.

LEVINE: Well, do you know why you felt like you wanted to come?

LYNN: Yeah. I guess just wanted to come, and that. So, my uncle was in Boston, so he sponsored us.

LEVINE: Did you, uh, did you correspond with him?

LYNN: Yes, we did, yes. We always did.

LEVINE: With, who would write the letters? Would it be your mother, or your father?

LYNN: Yeah, we used to write to him. And then when we're coming, we used to write more, you know. And, uh, then when we came here . . .

LEVINE: Excuse me; before we go on to coming here, do you remember anything your Uncle Patrick wrote about this country before you actually came here?

LYNN: No, he never, no, he didn't, no. He didn't write anything.

LEVINE: Would he write encouraging you to come, or how was it?

LYNN: Yeah, well, I guess he left it up to us, you know. If we wanted to come, he sponsored us.

LEVINE: And what was he doing in Boston at that time?

LYNN: He worked on the railroad, and he'd been on the railroad for years.

LEVINE: Did he . . .

LYNN: Yeah. He used to, yeah, he used to live in Florida.

LEVINE: So he had been in this country for quite a while?

LYNN: Oh, yes, yeah, for years. I guess he came when he was young. He had no family. He had no children at all. And, uh, he, he's been back, but I had never remembered him. You know, we were very little, very young when he came back. But then they didn't come back too much, not like now. Yeah, you know, now they're, that's all you see over there. They come back. And then they're coming over from Ireland more than --- even more than us going back. So it's changed quite a bit. You know. It has.

LEVINE: Well, there were always people immigrating from Ireland.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: A hundred years before you actually did. So you must have known of people

who had come here, besides your uncle.

LYNN: Yeah, uh-huh. Even, there was this lady, lived in our village, and she had come back there, and she got married. She had, oh, eight kids. But she never talked about this country much. She never did.

LEVINE: Do you know why she came back?

LYNN: Oh, I guess she came back; she married this guy back there, yeah. And, uh, and she, she was in a small little house, eight kids, but she was a very nice lady.

LEVINE: So you and your sister let your Uncle Patrick know that you wanted to come.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: And then what happened?

LYNN: Well, I guess we had written to him, and said we would like to come. And then he worked, you know, and then we had to go and get our passports, and get things ready. It took quite a while. So, uh, we stayed with him, then.

LEVINE: Well, how did you feel about, uh, about coming, once you knew you were coming?

LYNN: Yeah, we're all excited about it. I guess when you're young, you venture anything, huh? So, uh . . .

LEVINE: So when you, do you remember your leaving? Do you remember packing to

come?

LYNN: Oh, yes, yes, yeah. I remember leaving, too. And, uh, there was this other girl. She wasn't from our village, but we knew her going to school. And she came on the same, we were on the Mauretania, the boat. She was with us.

LEVINE: And where did the Mauretania leave from?

LYNN: From Cork. It was quite a ride down there from us. So her sister was going out with this guy that had a big station wagon. So he, I don't know how many he had in the station wagon. There was him, his girlfriend, and her sister, and the sister that was coming, that was four, and Anne and I, five, six, six, and me. I think he had about nine of us in the station wagon. Oh, we had a lot of fun on the way down there. [Laughs] So when we got there, the police, they got after him, but they didn't give him a ticket or anything. Said that he had too many, you know, in the station wagon. So, uh, it was fun.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything you packed that you wanted to take with you to this country?

LYNN: I don't remember, no, no.

LEVINE: And, uh, how about, when you got there, did you have any examinations or anything?

LYNN: Oh, yes. We had to - we had to be vaccinated. We were sick from that. My sister, she was in the hospital on the boat all the way over.

LEVINE: How come?

LYNN: From the vaccination.

LEVINE: Oh, you had them right before you left?

LYNN: Yeah, before we left. It reacted on her. And I was a little sick, but not as bad as her. Oh, yeah, you had to be vaccinated when you came here. If you had a cold, they wouldn't let you in here, at one time. Now they come.

LEVINE: Well, um, tell me about saying goodbye to your mother and father and other sisters and brothers?

LYNN: Yeah. Yeah, you felt bad. I can barely remember it now, but you felt bad, you know.

LEVINE: Did you think you would be coming back, or did you think you would be staying when you left?

LYNN: Oh, we reme -- we knew we would be staying. So we went back to visit. I don't know how long I was here then. Maybe, uh, maybe eight years or so.

LEVINE: So, okay. So you were on the Mauretania, and your sister was ill in the hospital on the ship, and how, what was it like for you, the voyage?

LYNN: Oh, it was great. We had a great time. We used to write a letter every day. We sent letters, a letter home. It must be twenty pages and that. And, uh, the food was delicious, but as soon as we'd go down to the dining room you'd get sick. I --- I don't like boats since. I had to ride on boats. You know, 'cos it was rough at times, choppy, the waters. But it's beautiful, though, on it. We were just five days on it.

LEVINE: And you were, were your living quarters comfortable?

LYNN: Oh, yes, yes, they were.

LEVINE: Now, uh, so what would you manage to write for twenty pages?

LYNN: Oh, what was happening on the boat, you know.

LEVINE: Did anything happen on the boat that, when you think of that trip, comes to your mind?

LYNN: No, nothing really, no. But each day we, we wrote whatever. I forget what it was. You know. And we landed here ---- we mailed it. Yeah, it was a good idea.

LEVINE: So do you remember the boat coming into the New York Harbor?

LYNN: I barely remember. I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty, and it was very misty, and it was, this was in June, we came. And we weren't that close to it coming in, but I remember seeing it, you know, and that.

LEVINE: And you knew what it was?

LYNN: Yeah. Oh, yes, we knew what it was, yeah. And then, um, this friend of ours, she lived in Greenpoint, so she met us there. And we stayed the night with her. We stayed two days with her.

LEVINE: This was someone you knew from Ireland?

LYNN: Yeah, from Ireland. Yeah. From our village. That was her mother that was

over here that I was telling you about. Yeah. So, uh, I remember then going to Central Park the next day, feeding the pigeons and that. And, uh, then, uh, we didn't take ---- we were supposed to take the train up to Boston. My uncle was mad at us. We didn't go that day. So we waited, we stayed another night with her, and the next day, then, we took the train up.

LEVINE: Do you remember any things that struck you as really new and different when you first, the first few days or weeks when you were here?

LYNN: Uh, yeah, it was, you know, the big, the tall buildings, and, of course, New York, well, we didn't see the city too much, because it was Greenpoint we got off and came out. And, uh, when we took the train up to Boston. We met this girl on the train, and our first job in Boston was in Filene's Department Store, and this girl that we met on the train, she was a buyer for Filene's. And when we went to work, didn't we see her in Filene's, a day or two later. Isn't that something, huh?

LEVINE: You mean, you went to work in Filene's?

LYNN: Yeah, in Boston. Yeah, yeah. That was our first job.

LEVINE: Um, I really neglected to ask you something important. What were your impressions, and what happened to you at Ellis Island?

LYNN: Uh, I don't remember about Ellis Island much at all, no. I guess coming in and we got off, and she met us. I don't remember too much. I remembered the statue, that's all.

LEVINE: Okay. So what was working in Filene's like?

LYNN: Yeah. We worked ---- oh, it was crazy. We worked in the basement.
[Laughs] And then they'd have, uh, they'd have a sale on, you know, they'd have a sale on shoes, or whatever. They'd be coming in like cattle, down the steps, pounding and grabbing, fighting. It was crazy. We didn't stay too long there.

LEVINE: I guess you had, had you ever seen . . .

LYNN: No, not, not, no, no. And that's a big one, from Boston. Have you seen it?

LEVINE: Yes, I used to go there.

LYNN: Yeah. Nothing like the one we have here. We have one in Roosevelt Field, a small store.

LEVINE: What's the difference?

LYNN: Oh, no. It's, this is a small store we have over here. But Filene's is a big store. It's like Macy's. And we used to be tired. You know, oh God, when you come here, the heat? We got, oh, a terrible sunburn. We went to the beach. This cousin took us to the beach, and we lay out in the sun for hours, not realizing. Oh, we were deathly sick from it. So you never learn. We were here a couple of years, and we get burned again.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

LEVINE: So where were you living in Boston?

LYNN: My uncle lived in West Roxbury. It's a nice section, very nice. He had a house there. And, uh, we used to sit out in the backyard, and we'd do the

lawn for him. He had the old push lawnmower. Nothing fancy. And his house was in a really nice section. So, uh, Boston is nice.

LEVINE: What was, what was your Uncle Patrick's, sort of his attitude toward you and your sister?

LYNN: Yeah, he was nice, but he was strict, very strict.

LEVINE: What might he be strict about?

LYNN: Yeah, you know.

LEVINE: What would he be strict about?

LYNN: Well, he didn't, no, he was okay with us, but I imagine if he had kids of his own he'd be very strict.

LEVINE: And how about his wife?

LYNN: Yeah, she was very nice. She was really nice. Then she had her niece staying there, too. Was her sister's daughter. And she had the three of us there at times.

LEVINE: So where, what did you do after you left Filene's basement?

LYNN: Then we went to work in First National Stores. You know, it's like the A&P --- or that --- the cash register. And, uh, that was, then we left to come to New York. We spent about two years in Boston.

LEVINE: Why was it that you went to New York then?

LYNN: Ah, we just came down. You know, you're young, just got the idea --- well, we'll go to New York.

LEVINE: Now, which sister was this that was with you?

LYNN: My sister Anne.

LYNN: Anne, yeah.

LEVINE: And what was Anne like?

LYNN: Yeah, she's all go-go, you know. She loved fun. The two of us always got along together. Like we both worked in the same town in Ireland, and then we came over here together. And then, uh, when she got married, she lived in Woodside, too, but then she moved to Florida.

LEVINE: So when you came to New York you went to Woodside?

LYNN: Ah, we stayed in New York. We stayed with this friend in Greenpoint that met us at the boat, and then we got jobs here. I worked in Schraft's Restaurant, and Anne worked for the telephone company. So we were --- that's where we got married.

LEVINE: You were working at Schraft's when you got married?

LYNN: Yes, yeah.

LEVINE: And how did you meet your husband?

LYNN: At an Irish dance in the city. They called it the Jaeger House.

LEVINE: Jagger?

LYNN: Jaeger House, yeah, Jaeger House.

LEVINE: And what, were you a member of, like, a social club, or . . .

LYNN: No, no. That's where all the Irish went dancing.

LEVINE: And where was that located?

LYNN: Uh, I forget. It was in --- I think it was on Lexington Avenue, around 59th Street or something like that, the Jaeger House. And then they had another one; I forgot the name of it. So that's where all the crowd would meet, you know. It was nice.

LEVINE: Do you remember meeting your husband?

LYNN: Yeah, I do, yeah. I was, um, this guy I knew from home that introduced me to him. So that's how we met.

LEVINE: And, uh, do you remember, uh, what you liked about him?

LYNN: Hmm, I don't remember. [Laughs] Yeah. I guess I started going out with him, and then we broke off, and then we got back together again. And that's,

uh, then he, I think we went up to Boston to my aunt and uncle. He took us up there, my sister and I. He drove us up there. So, uh . . .

LEVINE: And what is your husband's name?

LYNN: John. John Lynn, L-Y-N-N.

LEVINE: And, uh, now, had he come from Ireland?

LYNN: Yes, yeah. He's from Mayo.

LEVINE And had he been in this country a while when you met him, or was he newly arrived, or . . .

LYNN: He lived in Canada, but I don't know when he came in here. He wasn't that long in here, I don't think. I don't know if he came in '50, or what, to Canada. He came in first.

LEVINE: Do you think that, do you think that marrying a man from Ireland was, was in the cards for you? I mean, do you think that that's what you would do?

LYNN: No, I didn't, no. You never know.

LEVINE: In other words, you could have married someone else. It wouldn't, it wasn't that you were trying to find something.

LYNN: No, no, no.

LEVINE: Uh, let's see. Okay. So, uh, you got married, and you were working at

Schraft's when you got married?

LYNN: Yes, I was, yeah.

LEVINE: And, uh, then, and what was your husband doing?

LYNN: He worked ---- uh, he worked downtown. He worked as an elevator operator. And then, uh, we were married, I guess, maybe four or five years, and then he worked for the airlines. He worked for Pan Am airlines.

LEVINE: So, uh, let's see. Where did you, when did you move out of New York?

LYNN: Out of, uh, Woodside?

LEVINE: No, wait a minute. You came, when you were working at Schraft's, where were you living?

LYNN: Jackson Heights.

LEVINE: Jackson Heights, Queens.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Then you moved to Woodside after you were married?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Did you try to maintain contact with a social group that was from Ireland?

LYNN: Ah, no, not really, you know. Well, when we were going to the dances and

that and we were single, we knew some girls. Then after marriage, you have kids, and it was like with my sister-in-law, she lived, she had seven kids, I had five. So we lived right in the same block, nearly. And, uh, we were busy with them, with the kids.

LEVINE: So you stopped working then, after Schraft's?

LYNN: Yes, I did, when I had Joan, that's the older girl.

LEVINE: And what are your other children's names?

LYNN: Uh, Dennis and John, Mary and Tommy. And, uh, so, uh.

LEVINE: So, um, do you think you carried on any customs from Ireland after you got settled here?

LYNN: Uh, I don't think so, no.

LEVINE: Was there anything that you . . .

LYNN: Missed, you mean, from Ireland?

LEVINE: Something that you wanted to maintain, any -- either ways of cooking, or, uh, anything that you wanted to instill in your children, for example?

LYNN: No, not really. Sometimes just say to them, "Well, we didn't have this." You know, they get so much today. We'll say that sometimes. We did with very little, but we were happy.

LEVINE: Do you think you were the same kind of mother to your children as your mother was to you?

LYNN: Yeah, yes, I would say so, yeah.

LEVINE: In what regard?

LYNN: Well, I think it's different here raising the kids. We were raised, you know, on the farm, and went to school. Then when you came from school you had chores to do. Like here the kids didn't have that. So it's a whole different living.

LEVINE: Do you remember what chores were yours to do?

LYNN: Uh, no. We'd have to go out picking the potatoes ----- out in the hay, doin' the hay in the hayfields. Yeah. We always had something.

LEVINE: The turf? Did you have to do that?

LYNN: Yeah. You know about the turf, do you?

LEVINE: Yeah. I think it would be nice for the tape if you could describe the whole thing, the going in and gathering it, and . . .

LEVINE: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's, uh, we used to, we had the wheelbarrow, and they had, like, my father had to sod the turf, and they'd throw it up to you. You'd catch it, put it on the wheelbarrow, and you'd put so much. Then you'd go out on

the bog, it's the flat bog, and you'd have to put that, turn it over with the wheelbarrow, and then when it would be nearly dry, it would be there a week or two, you would have to turn the turf over, then you had to make little stacks, and then, uh, when that was done, then draw it home. We had the --
- you know, the shed for the turf.

LEVINE: Did you use the donkey for that?

LYNN: Yeah, to draw it home. We had the donkey cart. Yeah. And that, uh, they don't do that much either any more. [Laughs] The hay I liked, it was clean, the hay field. They cut the hay, and you turn it, and you rake it and stack it. Yeah, that was nice. I didn't like getting the turf.

LEVINE: Describe your house where you lived when you were in Ireland.

LYNN: Oh, it was a small house. Just, it was a thatched house.

LEVINE: So . . .

LYNN: It had just two bedrooms, and a kitchen. Then it had a -- just little upstairs room. So then, now they have built a new house. They have moved, you can see the old one.

LEVINE: Oh, it's still there.

LYNN: Yeah, it's still there. My brother still thatches the house, and he keeps it up.

LEVINE: How often was the house re-thatched?

LYNN: I don't know, really. You know, I guess every four or five years.

LEVINE: So what was it, stone? Is it a stone house with a thatched roof?

LYNN: Yeah. It's like, uh, yeah, like a stone house. Stone, with a thatched roof.

LEVINE: What would that little upstairs room be used ---?

LYNN: That was just like a loft, you know. You could sleep up there. It had a roo -- had a window in it. So, then with the new house, and that had three bedrooms, and a kitchen, and a living room --- parlor, they called it.

LEVINE: What was your mother cooking on when you were a little girl?

LYNN: Yeah, they had the, they had the fire, just a stone fire, the fire.

LEVINE: A fireplace?

LYNN: Yeah, the fireplace. So, like in the new house now they have the range, you know, the Rayburn, they call it. And, uh, it was hard, but they managed.

LEVINE: Like, would your mother have a pot?

LYNN: They had the pots, yeah. They hang it. They had, like they call it, a crane, and they had the hooks on the pot. And they'd hang the pot on there, you know, boiling the potatoes, and they made bread --- made all their own

bread.

LEVINE: Where would the bread be made?

LYNN: Yeah, she'd make the bread. And then she had, like, she had, like, a griddle, they call it, on the stone with the fire. And she'd cook it there on that.

LEVINE: She didn't, did she have an oven at that time?

LYNN: No, no oven, no. Now they have, you know, in the new house.

LEVINE: So in order to cook the bread? It would be cooked on an open fire?

LYNN: Yeah. But she had, like, she had an oven that she put it into, you know, and she put it on the coal fire, and she had this little stand that she would sit it on, and then put a lid on that, and put coals on top of that, and cooked it. And then they had what they call griddle bread. They had the open griddle, and that was good.

LEVINE: Can you remember, like, for a very special occasion, what kind of a dinner your mother would prepare?

LYNN: Yeah. Well, they would cook turkey, and, uh, we made the kor [ph], you know, ham and cabbage. We made, like, pot roast, and stew beef. That's about it. Chicken, cooked a lot of chicken. We had our own chickens, you know, from the farm, which was good. Now they don't have no chickens no nothing. The eggs were good, the fresh eggs.

LEVINE: Yeah. It sounds like you remember the fresh eggs.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. And they, we made our own butter. They churned, you know.

LEVINE: You did it, made the butter?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh.

LEVINE: Now, maybe you could talk us through that process, of making the butter.

LYNN: Yeah. Well, they have, like they call it a churn, and then they had this gash, that they'd be all taking turns in it. And then they had the one that turned around with the handle on it. And then when it would be, they'd know when it had made butter, you know, when it was churned enough, they called it. And then my mother would get the butter together. That was good, that butter. They don't do it no more, you know.

LEVINE: Did you ever, uh, eat, eat the pigs that . . .

LYNN: Oh, yeah, yeah. No, we never, no. But a neighbor used to, and he would give us some. He killed a pig every year. That was, we were little then. But then it went that they didn't have any more. They're really something else, the pigs, to raise. They're messy.

LEVINE: So, um, what effect do you think growing up in Ireland, and then coming here as a young woman, what effect do you think it had on the rest of your life, the

fact that you had started out there rather than here? Do you think you have any kind of difference?

LYNN: Yeah. I guess, I don't know. I guess anything we got here you appreciated it, you know. We didn't have that much back there. We appreciated what we had, whatever little we got here, I remember.

LEVINE: And how about this time in your life? How is this phase, after your children have been raised and are gone?

LYNN: You feel like you're getting old then. [Laughs] Yeah. Yeah, you feel it. I have arthritis now, so I have to have a hip replacement, so I have that on my mind now. And, uh, I enjoy the grandchildren. They're here for, for three weeks. They come every summer. And . . .

LEVINE: What do you feel most grateful for or proud of?

LYNN: I don't know, I can't say. Well, I guess get my health is the most important thing. I've been lucky up to now.

LEVINE: Is there anything else, like when you think about Ireland, that you remember, or . . .

LYNN: No, no, there's nothing, no. No, it's just like when you go back you see the changes. I haven't been back there in ten years. It's getting much like here, very busy, and a lot of cars. And they have the supermarkets like here.

LEVINE: Do you think, I mean, after you came over with your sister, Anne, did others of your family come over after you?

LYNN: No, nobody, no. My sister already had gone to Texas. She had entered the convent.

LEVINE: Oh, she at a convent now?

LYNN: Yeah, yeah. She's in Ireland right now, for the whole summer. You know, so she's still in Texas. She entered in Laredo, and then she was in . . .

LEVINE: She entered the convent?

LYNN: In Laredo, yeah. And then a cousin went with her, but she came out. And she's married back in Ireland. She lives in England right now. And she went to Laredo, and then she was in Galveston. We went to see her when she was professed, Anne and I. We were here then about two years at the time.

LEVINE: So when she was in Ireland, she wasn't in the convent?

LYNN: No, no.

LEVINE: It was only after, how long was she here before she entered?

LYNN: She entered from Ireland, and went over there. Yeah. See, there were some nuns home from Texas. They were Irish nuns. I guess they were

looking for girls to enter. And just like that, her and this cousin made up their minds to go. And we didn't think she'd stay, but she did.

LEVINE: Did it ever cross your mind to enter?

LYNN: No, no. No, it didn't. So . . .

LEVINE: So, let's see. Is there anything else you can think of about, uh, life in Ireland, or changes that you saw when you came here, or anything else about the experience of coming here?

LYNN: Yeah, well, it's the heat that gets you when you come here.

LEVINE: It's a lot cooler.

LYNN: Yeah, it's cooler back there, yeah. Now I wouldn't stay in that climate, back there. It rains a lot. And, uh, very damp. They don't get much summers. But it's peaceful, though, there. But you're used to the rat race here in the country. It's very lonely when you go back. And, uh, yeah, it's mostly the weather here. The climate is nicer. If it rains ---- it's damp --- it dries up right away. They get a lot of rain there. Their winters aren't as bad as here, though. Well, they wouldn't survive back there. They don't have the storm windows or, but they have the heating system now.

LEVINE: But when you were little, then didn't, they just had the fire.

LYNN: Just the fireplace, yeah. We didn't have the electricity then. They just had

gotten it. They just got it in before we left, maybe in '50 or that. So, we had the kerosene lamps. It's a big change.

LEVINE: Yeah.

LYNN: Yeah, so.

LEVINE: So do you think, when you think back on your childhood, it must seem very far away?

LYNN: Yeah, I can't remember much of it. I can't. No, I can't remember much. I remember, you know, the night before we left, and we had a lot of friends in and stuff, you know. That's about it, but my childhood I don't remember too much.

LEVINE: But, so, were people coming to wish you well?

LYNN: Oh, yeah, yeah. Aunts and uncles and that, you know. Yeah. When you're young you don't think, you just up and do. You have a lot more courage. So . . .

LEVINE: So, are you glad you did it?

LYNN: Oh, yes, yes, I am. I like this country. A lot of people go back to live, but they come back again.

LEVINE: Oh, is that right?

LYNN: Yeah, I've known a lot of people. Some settled back there.

LEVINE: Is there any part of you, if you were to divide your personality up, is there any part of you you consider Irish, and another part you consider American?

LYNN: No, no. I don't think we're like that, no. So long here . . .

LEVINE: You feel more of this country.

LYNN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, you have been here longer.

LYNN: Yeah, forty. What, forty-one years. A whole lifetime, huh, nearly.

LEVINE: And so, now, how many grandchildren do you have?

LYNN: I have three, yeah. Two in Florida, my daughter does here. She has two boys. And my daughter Mary has a little girl. She's nine. And the other two, the two boys are seven and eleven. Good thing they're not here now. We wouldn't hear anything on the tape, huh? In and out, they're full of energy.

LEVINE: Can you compare your grandchildren's childhoods with your own? How does it compare?

LYNN: No, I think they, they get more today, you know, in toys. And they have, you know, they have a lot for them today. They have, uh, Nintendo and all that.

Our kids didn't have that. They have a lot more to keep them busy today.

LEVINE: Well, when you were small, it sounded like you had enough to keep you busy.

LYNN: Yeah. We didn't have no toys.

LEVINE: You actually had no toys at all?

LYNN: Oh, just, I don't remember too much. Not much, no. We visit the neighbors, and just stayed in the neighborhood. You didn't have to worry about being kidnapped, like here now. It's the same back there too, now. They're afraid with the children, too. It's changed all over the world.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, is there anything else that you'd like to say before we close?

LYNN: I don't think so. You know, we're . . .

LEVINE: Okay. Well, that's very interesting, and I want to thank you very much.

LYNN: Okay, thank you. So they send me a tape, huh?

LEVINE: Yes. We'll send you a copy of the tape.

LYNN: Oh, boy. I hate to hear myself on tape. [Laughs]

LEVINE: I'll let you hear it in a minute. Let me just sign off here. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and it's July 31, 1994. I'm here in Mineola,

EI-509/LYNN

Long Island, New York, with Eileen Murray Lynn, and Mrs. Murray, I mean, Mrs. Lynn came from Ireland in 1953 when she was twenty-five years old, and I'm signing off now.