

EI-956

FRANCES GALLAGHER [PH] MURPHY

BIRTHDATE:

INTERVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 27, 1997

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW:

RUNNING TIME:

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.

INTERVIEW LOCATION: MANHATTAN, NEW YORK

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

IRELAND

AGE:

SHIP:

PORT:

RESIDENCES:

LEVINE: —September 27th, 1997.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: I'm here at the Mary Manning Walsh Home in Manhattan. And I'm with Frances Murphy—

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —who was born Frances Gallagher—

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —in Galway, Ireland. We're not sure at this precise moment what Mrs. Murphy's birthday is or the year she came or how old she was at that time. But I'm going to check that—

MURPHY: Yes.

LEVINE: —with her records—

MURPHY: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: —here at the home.

MURPHY: With the—with Patty now, you know, the—yeah.

LEVINE: We'll find out. We'll make sure. We'll find out. Okay. Let's start.

MURPHY: And so could Casey, the—the—the one that hangs with me.

LEVINE: Okay.

MURPHY: Because she was with us that time. She—she knows a thing or two. Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Okay. Well, now, let's start at the beginning. When you think about Galway, what are the things you remember? What are the things that stick in your mind?

MURPHY: I remember the—the [unclear] soldiers, you know, like, just coming to the war. The war started the next day, and the place was crawling with soldiers and 'twas kind of a rough spot with the soldiers and, you know, and everybody that was joining the army and n—not joining. And, you know, kind of exciting or [unclear] up.

LEVINE: What was that war? What war were you—

MURPHY: I couldn't tell you now, dear, what—I forget. And I should know but I forget now.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did you—and you had contact with the soldiers? With the soldiers?

MURPHY: I had very [unclear] contact because the night before I went to someplace. Now, where did I go with somebody? And I—some—somebody. And they—they didn't know where to take me home. So they buried me someplace. And that was the time that I got the bad leg. I never had a bad leg before that, and that was the time that I—all—all I had on with the misfortune with the bad leg and everything.

LEVINE: Wh—when you say they buried you, what do you mean?

MURPHY: They buried me in a hole in—not—not—not the ground but a kind of a hole in the—I guess either kind, maybe [unclear] cottage or—'twasn't a cottage. It was like a hole in—in the wall or something that was covered up and—

LEVINE: And this was so that you wouldn't be harmed by the soldiers?

MURPHY: Yes, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And you spent the night in the hole?

MURPHY: I spent the night in the hole, yes. And then I was supposed to enter this place, a hospital, you know, or that one that's there near there someplace, you know.

LEVINE: Oh, you were put in the hospital for your leg.

MURPHY: Yeah, put—yeah. Uh-hmm. And then I don't know how long I was there. And then Irene came along and I met her in there. We came along. She—[unclear] came along, had to help me out, you know. Oh.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Now, you mentioned your mother's name was Mary.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Mary Cavanaugh [PH] was her maiden name.

MURPHY: Yeah, uh-huh.

LEVINE: What was your father's name?

MURPHY: William.

LEVINE: William.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And did you have brothers and sisters when you were in Ireland?

MURPHY: When I was born?

LEVINE: When you were—yeah, when you were born, were there other children?

MURPHY: [unclear]. There was a girl—a girl older than me. And that was another year older, was nine or ten months older than me. It was just—her name was Bridget.

LEVINE: Bridget.

MURPHY: And then there was—the boy was the oldest of the family and his name was Patrick.

LEVINE: So there was Patrick, Bridget—

MURPHY: Bridget.

LEVINE: —and then Frances.

MURPHY: And me and—and [unclear], the [unclear]. That fellow, he's in there now, you know.

LEVINE: Your brother?

MURPHY: Yes.

LEVINE: Oh. He's here in this home?

MURPHY: He's in the—northern New York.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: I'm sure you'll meet him every day. He's tall, dark, thin fellow.

LEVINE: And he—

MURPHY: What's his—

LEVINE: And he came—and he was born in Ireland too?

MURPHY: What is his name? Now, isn't that funny? Is it Martin? It isn't—maybe it is. It's so funny. I can't think of his name.

LEVINE: Oh, that's okay. Maybe you'll think of it later.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: So—let's see. So you grew up and do you remember the house you lived in in Galway?

MURPHY: I don't, really. I think it's just something on the beach [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was—would—did your mother and father grow up in Galway too?

MURPHY: Well, they—they had grown up in Galway but then I think they left altogether.

LEVINE: They left for America.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm. I don't know where the—I don't know where the where after—when I was born.

LEVINE: Well, when you were born, did your father go to America after you were born?

MURPHY: Oh, I think he was there already when I was born.

LEVINE: And did he stay in America or did he come back to Ireland?

MURPHY: He—coming back. He came and went.

LEVINE: He kept coming back and going and coming back.

MURPHY: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what did he do for work? Do you remember?

MURPHY: When he was home he always had to work on a farm. What he did in New York, I don't know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And did you live in a farming area?

MURPHY: Yeah, I did. Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: In the old castle.

LEVINE: The old castle?

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: What was the name of the castle?

MURPHY: [unclear]. That was not—can't I think of it and I should know it. Was an Irish name. And isn't that funny? I can't think—

LEVINE: Okay. Well, if you think of it you can just—

MURPHY: [sentence unclear]. Isn't that funny how I can't think of the name.

LEVINE: I know. Sometimes you—

MURPHY: And it's—and I know so often and said it so often but now just gone out of my head.

LEVINE: And what—what do you remember about your family life when you were in Galway? What was it like in your family?

MURPHY: Well, we lived in the castle, mostly.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: Until the—the kids were kind of grown up and went out and kind of took care of themselves then.

LEVINE: Well, how was it that your family lived in the castle? Why did your family live in the castle?

MURPHY: Well, [several words unclear]. I don't know anything.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: The—I don't know anything about this and I don't know of any—

LEVINE: I see.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: But you went to school.

MURPHY: I went to school and, funny, this woman [unclear], she came in. She wasn't a relative of ours at all. But she came in one time into—into Galway just for a visit. And somebody spoke to her about us and about how the—she been a teacher and—and how the—we're going to school and all this kind of thing. And she got interested in us. So she come to the—come [several words unclear] and we met her. And she came back to the house with us. And she spoke to my father. And my father always wanted education. He wanted to know something. So she—he spoke to her and she spoke to him. And the next thing, then they got a—the other two were small. The boy and the girl were tiny. But what's her name? The—

LEVINE: Bridget?

MURPHY: Elizabeth.

LEVINE: Oh, Elizabeth was the—the teacher?

MURPHY: Yeah, the—yeah. Well, [unclear] finally took [unclear] to the school when she was—I don't know how old she was at the time. But they took her for some small thing and educated her besides, you know.

LEVINE: Wait. They took the—who did they take? Elizabeth?

MURPHY: Elizabeth, yes.

LEVINE: Was she your sister?

MURPHY: She wasn't [unclear] because she wasn't born in our family. She was one of the—the—the girls that was picked up in the street.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: And she was from the neighbor's. They knew—they knew family [unclear]. And she was from the neighbor's.

LEVINE: Did she—

MURPHY: And then the neighbors always were very good to—to the family, the whole family, you know. They kind of looked after them too as best they could.

LEVINE: I see. So this teacher came and she took Elizabeth.

MURPHY: Yes, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And she—where did she go with her?

MURPHY: She went to school. I—I remember so well the morning she—the teacher took her to school. Then I went up to the school. I went up with them, you know, just so—curiosity, I guess, or what when she—and how this—the teacher left. And she left her to go in by herself. But she had already told the teacher who she was. So her father was quite a big man in the [unclear]. She knew him very well and that he was brilliant man. He—he could—he would—I believe he was quite [unclear]. And she thought that they'd get the daughter a [unclear] like the father grew up. So that's—then she took the daughter, the woman that—that she went to—that morning to talk to was g—going to school too. And she

started to teach the woman, you know, and not—[unclear] was a different person. The woman was happy because it was this—just a kind of—they spoke about the—what they were doing and everything. So the woman was always nice to her. That's the woman. She's [unclear] Mary. I don't know if you know her or not.

LEVINE: Mary. No, I don't know her. But you—were you of school age at that time?

MURPHY: No, I wasn't.

LEVINE: You were younger?

MURPHY: No, I was older.

LEVINE: Oh, you were older?

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: So you went—

MURPHY: Yeah. And the way I went to school was I was educated by the teacher because she did—I lived with her and she took the two of us. She took Patty and I when my mother died.

LEVINE: Oh, when did your mother die? How old were you?

MURPHY: I was eight and Patty was 10, I guess.

LEVINE: And your mother died. Do you remember that?

MURPHY: She was—I remember her being sick.

LEVINE: What did she die of?

MURPHY: Of course, she—I don't know. Some growth or something, I thought.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And then did—was she laid out in the house?

MURPHY: Yes, I think she was, the best I remember. I forget some of that.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: But I remember the big bed that was laid out for her. That I remember.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember anything about the funeral or anything?

MURPHY: I don't remember a word about the funeral. I don't—I guess maybe I wasn't taken. Well, I don't know how old I was then. I couldn't be any more than four or five or six, if I was that.

LEVINE: And then what happened after your mother died? Where—who took care of you?

MURPHY: That man that we were with now. He took us.

LEVINE: The—and who was he? The man who took—

MURPHY: He was—he was just walking in the village and with some other people. And he—he liked to—to walk with people that he knew. So he was walking with my father. And then he took—my father moved in with us too, you know, and Willie, or one of the—Willie—one of the brothers, anyhow, was in too. So those four was together. And my mother was there until she went away on education.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And so you went to school when you were living with your father—

MURPHY: And—

LEVINE: —and this man?

MURPHY: Yeah, Mr. Lee.

LEVINE: And Mr. Lee.

MURPHY: Yeah, and Mr. Lee was a teacher so we had education home and—

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: —and school.

LEVINE: So you were educated at home—

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: —by Mr. Lee?

MURPHY: Yeah, and he was very good. He taught us, you know. Some people—some [unclear] were like that. And the man wouldn't teach us a darn thing. But this man looked over our lessons and corrected them and so forth.

LEVINE: And so you studied at home.

MURPHY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: And—and then you went to the school?

MURPHY: Yes. We went to school while we were still [unclear]. Oh, and—oh, we got in school. We study at home, you know.

LEVINE: Now, was this a Catholic school?

MURPHY: I think it was. It was—oh, what school it was. Was a mount—a mountain area there now and I can't think of the name.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Was your family religious?

MURPHY: Well, they were. They went to church every Sunday.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Said a prayer. And of course—

LEVINE: Did you make your first holy communion?

MURPHY: Oh, of course. I was—I was brought up very religious, yeah. [several words unclear] open to mass every morning and—

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: —was very religious. I—

LEVINE: What—what was that day like? That day that you made your first holy communion? Do you remember that day?

MURPHY: I remember that. The teacher, the woman dressed [several words unclear]. She didn't know what—what [unclear] was going to be until the day came. And then she dressed me in a white dress. She got a white dress for me and she brought me in and she brought—oh, dear God—big guy. What's his name? What's the big guy's name? Willie? He's [unclear]. [unclear] the—the brother, [unclear], the—

LEVINE: Patty?

MURPHY: No, no, no. The—the—the girl—the boy, the young boy was Willie. And then the—the fellow that used—that wasn't our brother, was [unclear].

LEVINE: Oh. I don't know his name.

MURPHY: Oh, sure. [unclear]. We set it up [unclear] and you—you would forget it. But he came with me the same time and he got—he went into school the same time, though he was older than me. But I was—how old was I? Four—16 or 17, I guess.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Well, before you were singing some songs. Did you learn those songs in school?

MURPHY: We did, yes. We learned quite a bit of music in school and 'twas—it 'twas funny thing about the music with her. One time, she went to—she was bringing in the [unclear] to the—some shop in Galway. And the [unclear] was snapped from her. And she didn't have the [unclear] and she was—went around crying. And then she found an old—an—an old [unclear] and some [unclear] the ground. And she didn't know whether it was thrown out or no good or what. And she brought it back to the—to the—where she was, you know, where she lived. And the old man there, the [unclear], he knew—he knew instruments. And he took the [unclear] right in and tried it and come to the conclusion it was fairly good but that it needed some oil or something to—to limber it, you know. So anyhow, they kept it [unclear] and then she—she gave that to—

LEVINE: Hmm.

MURPHY: And—

LEVINE: Frances, can you sing some of the songs you remember from Galway?

MURPHY: I could if—I could if I—

LEVINE: Pick out some that you like in particular.

MURPHY: [singing] "This world has many glorious land." I have no voice now. My voice is gone—

LEVINE: That's okay.

MURPHY: —completely.

LEVINE: As best you can.

MURPHY: [singing] "Where beauty April dwell. Oh, the snow-crowned hills and rivers grand and happy summer dell. Where all the boys [unclear] loves ever more to tell. Where heroes died in former day and freedom's markers fell. My old land, I love you still, what ere your faith may be. My own land, my own land, you're all the world to me."

LEVINE: That's lovely.

MURPHY: Oh.

LEVINE: Yeah. Now, how about any other songs or poems that you remember?

MURPHY: Oh—oh, yes. We had a lot of them. Yeah, but I forget a lot of them now. But if I heard them once I can rattle them off but otherwise not, I forget them. We had one—there was one to the Blessed Mother that they used to—they used to sing in school. And that was someone about a map or something. This was very popular in school too. So anyhow—

LEVINE: What was the one about the—weren't you singing one about a bluebell?

MURPHY: The what?

LEVINE: A bluebell?

MURPHY: [singing] "Bluebell, bluebell." I don't know enough.

LEVINE: No.

MURPHY: They used to sing that, yes.

LEVINE: Well, if there's any other song or poem that you learned in school—

MURPHY: Isn't it funny how they're all not—not—not been—haven't anything to do with them for the longest time now, that I kind of have them—forgotten.

LEVINE: Well, you remembered some in the hallway. I—I wish I knew them so I could—I could prompt you and you'd remember them.

MURPHY: "And this poor dog, he was faithful and kind, to be sure."

LEVINE: Oh, the one about the dog. Why don't you do that one?

MURPHY: Well, the—they had a—a young puppy—puppy dog, you know, that they had. And they had him for long and he got killed. They had one before that that was too—very mischievous and they had to do away with him because he did—destroyed things or did things, you know.

LEVINE: Do you remember the poem about the dog?

MURPHY: “Poor dog. He was faithful and kind, to be sure and constantly loved me, although I was poor. When the sour-looking folks sent me heartless away, I had always a friend and my poor dog, Tray. Where now can I go, poor, forsaken and blind and find one to guide me, so faithful and kind? To my own distant home so far far away, I can never return without my poor dog, Tray.” That’s some of it, anyhow, and then there’s a whole lot more to it.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-hmm. Now, did you sing songs in school?

MURPHY: Me?

LEVINE: When you were in school, did the class sing?

MURPHY: Well, they’d ask me maybe sometimes, you know. Sing.

LEVINE: Did you have a good voice?

MURPHY: I don’t know. I’ve [several words unclear] and you can—you can tell me to shut up, maybe. [singing] “I sing you a song, the good young man.” I heard it one time on the street, this—were saying and we—[several words unclear]. “I’ll sing you a song of a good young man but the good young men are few. Or if there’s one of the good young men, there’s 20 of the opposite too. This young [unclear] I sing about is good as good could be. He wouldn’t tell a lie or wink his eye, such a good young man was he. Now, this good man was led astray by some of the bad young men. They brought him into a distant [unclear] where he stayed till after 10. He roamed about till 12 that night and a row with the fellow began. And he walked home with two black eyes. He wasn’t a good young man. Now, the Salvation Army this young man joined and he marched with General Booth. And he marched and he preached and he preached and he marched till he hadn’t a soul about. One night he robbed the collection box and away with the money he ran. And General Booth and the [unclear] in search of the good young man.” [chuckles]

LEVINE: [chuckles] Now, did you—can you remember sitting at—with your family and singing songs?

MURPHY: Well, we used to one time but not very much but we would sing something, and then we'd [several words unclear] ask them to sing it again, you know, and so forth.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: Of course—and of course, my husband never stopped singing.

LEVINE: Oh, really?

MURPHY: He—he—every—every tune he heard outside, he'd come in and be home in the house and—yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah? Okay. So when you came to this country, who did you come with?

MURPHY: Nobody.

LEVINE: You came by yourself?

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember saying goodbye to everyone and leaving?

MURPHY: No, I sailed away. I—I don't—I—we—we [unclear] together. And then some came and some didn't come. And then my husband was there and he—he left some of them where—where we [unclear] and went back to collect the rest of them that didn't come. And when they came back the others were gone with the other kind. So it landed up that—that all the crowd didn't go. There's some that went and some that didn't go [unclear].

LEVINE: When you came to this country, were you married?

MURPHY: No.

LEVINE: No, that was before you—

MURPHY: No.

LEVINE: —were married.

MURPHY: Oh, sure.

LEVINE: You were younger.

MURPHY: Yeah, I don't know how old I was when I came here. I was young.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So you—you—when you came, you took the ship by yourself?

MURPHY: No, who was with me? There was somebody with me now that I can't think of who—I can't think of his name now that was coming out at the same time. And he came—he was a cousin of ours from Wales. Stanton, I think was his name.

LEVINE: And did you have relatives in this country?

MURPHY: Well, my aunt, my father's sister, was here. My father's brother was here. But—

LEVINE: Were they here in New York?

MURPHY: They were, uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So when you left, do you remember the name of the ship?

MURPHY: I don't.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the voyage?

MURPHY: No, I don't [unclear].

LEVINE: And how about when you got into New York?

MURPHY: I'm with my aunt, of course, or my aunt met me and brought me to her house.

LEVINE: Did she come to Ellis Island?

MURPHY: She did.

LEVINE: What do you remember about Ellis Island?

MURPHY: I don't remember anything. You know, you got off the boat and you're looking for somebody and—

LEVINE: Did you know that aunt? Did you know her from Ireland?

MURPHY: I—I met her before. Sure.

LEVINE: Yeah, okay.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: So she came and she took you to her house.

MURPHY: Her—yes. And then after a couple of days [unclear] took her to our house and we were there then.

LEVINE: And what are some of the things that struck you when you first came to this country? Things you had never seen before.

MURPHY: I couldn't—I was very poor speaker. And it seems I—the—that's the time they spoke so much of the language that was—I was in—anywhere but where the—but some of the crowd spoke the English and they kept speaking it so—to the help.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And when you first came here to your aunt's house, did you go to school then or not?

MURPHY: Oh, I know—I wasn't down there till [unclear] I went to school.

LEVINE: You didn't go to school in this country?

MURPHY: In this country, I went.

LEVINE: Oh, you did go.

MURPHY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Well, do you remember where you went?

MURPHY: Oh, it was a school right near where we lived. Now, I couldn't tell you. I forget now.

LEVINE: Do you remember what neighborhood your aunt lived in?

MURPHY: It was in Galway.

LEVINE: No, I mean in this country.

MURPHY: In Galway. [unclear] come to Galway, Galway City.

LEVINE: Oh. But then when you left Ireland and you came to New York, then did you go to school here?

MURPHY: No, no. I think just before we went—came to New York, we went to a—to—to school someplace out there in—in—off the—in—in America. I forget now. I forget that now but I know—

LEVINE: Do you—do you remember if you were living in Manhattan? Were you li—

MURPHY: Of course, I was only a baby. What the heck?

LEVINE: Yeah. Okay. So then do you remember what school was like here?

MURPHY: In Manhattan? Manhattan Junior. We went to that, to that Catholic school. The nuns would teach there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: So we went there and until we got out of there and then we went to—it wasn't a high school but was something like a high—was higher than the Catholic—Catholic school. I went to that for a while.

LEVINE: And then did you go to work after that?

MURPHY: Well, I think that they didn't—did we go to college or something?

LEVINE: I don't know.

MURPHY: I don't know now. I forget about that but I think that we did go to some college. Might be a steady college but—like part time.

LEVINE: Maybe you went at night?

MURPHY: Or sometime like that now. I forget.

LEVINE: Do you remem—

MURPHY: No, no. We went during the day when we went.

LEVINE: And did you study something that you wanted to do working?

MURPHY: Oh, we [several words unclear] because that's why we were sent for.

LEVINE: Your father wanted you to have an education.

MURPHY: Mmm, and my Pat—Pat Lee was more inclined for education and know more about it than—than my father, you know. And he was—was more interested in the children being into education.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything else about your father? Things that he wanted for you?

MURPHY: No. He was very easygoing, his way. He [unclear] and have it all, learned to dance and sing and the accordian, play the—Patty was good at the accordian. He used to play the accordian. But Patty—he wanted all school so he went to school. So—

LEVINE: And what did your father do when he came here?

MURPHY: I don't know what kind of—of work. He worked on—on machinery and stuff like that, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about you? Did you then go to work after—

MURPHY: No, I—I only was here for a short while.

LEVINE: And how did you meet your husband?

MURPHY: I met him with the—he used to come to the house. And of course, the family knew him well and [unclear].

LEVINE: And was he also from Galway?

MURPHY: He was.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: In fact, their family, I think, lived in the same block as we did or in—quite near, I know, because I know I met his mother. She was a nice looking woman, very precise [unclear].

LEVINE: Hmm. And what did you like about your husband? Why did you want to marry him?

MURPHY: I didn't really to [unclear] he wanted to get married. [unclear] was always wishing and praising [unclear] to do and all this kind of thing and what a life I'd have and—and I believe it a fairy tale. Very good. He lived up to it.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Now, what kind of a man was he?

MURPHY: He was a teacher.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What did he teach?

MURPHY: He taught in school, taught all kinds of—kinds of stuff in school.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: Start in the college in Dublin.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Now, did you live in New York City when you were married?

MURPHY: No, we never lived in New York when we were married. We lived in Galway.

LEVINE: In where?

MURPHY: Galway.

LEVINE: You—did you go back to Ireland?

MURPHY: Uh-hmm, in Galway.

LEVINE: Oh, so after you got married you went back to Ireland?

MURPHY: Well, I never was really out of Ireland. Everywhere I went was Irish.

LEVINE: Yeah. But when you came to this country—

MURPHY: Oh, no. That was after—after I graduated from D—from Galway.

LEVINE: Okay. Okay. Well, can you think of any other songs that maybe your father used to like and used to sing?

MURPHY: Oh, my father was—would sing and sing and sing. Did you ever hear the funny old songs they used to sing?

LEVINE: I'd love to hear some.

MURPHY: Oh, he'd sing about the animals and, you know, and everything like that, sing about the cows and milking the cows and would be all in music. And—and then "The poor dog. He was faithful and kind to be sure and constantly lovely, although I was poor. And the sour-looking folks sent me heartless away, I'd always a friend in my poor dog, Tray. Where now should I go, poor, forsaken and blind, and find him to guide me, so

faithful and kind? To my old distant home so far, far away I can never return without my poor dog, Tray.”

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. And how about your fath—other songs that—

MURPHY: With my father. My father was all Irish, was all Irish. [singing] “If you’re Irish, come into the parlor. There’s a welcome there for you. If your name be Timothy or Pat, so long as you come from Ireland there’s a welcome on the mat. If you come from the mountains of Mooreland or Killarney’s lakes so blue, wherever you are you’re one of us. And if you’re Irish this is the place for you.”

LEVINE: Oh.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Well, how do you feel about being Irish and being American?

MURPHY: Well, I was Irish. I never thought about abandoning on the Irish.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. So did you carry on some of the Irish customs and Irish ways?

MURPHY: Oh, we did. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: Oh, yes. Where’s the babysitter?

LEVINE: The babysitter?

MURPHY: The baby [unclear].

LEVINE: Say it again. I’m sorry. I didn’t hear you.

MURPHY: Huh?

LEVINE: Say again what you asked.

MURPHY: Where is the baby today?

LEVINE: Which baby?

MURPHY: Isn't the one—you weren't the girl that be at the table?

LEVINE: No. I—you—that's somebody else.

MURPHY: Oh.

LEVINE: No, not me.

MURPHY: Oh, I see.

LEVINE: No. Well, for instance, can you think of any other poems that you learned maybe in school?

MURPHY: "The woman was old and ragged and gray and bent with the chill of the winter's day. The street was wet with the recent snow and the woman's feet were aged and slow. Down the street with laughter and shout, gladdened the freedom of school let out. Came the boys like a flock of sheep, hailing the snow piled white and deep. At last, came one of the merry troop, the gayest lad of all in the group. He paused beside her and whispered low, 'I'll help you across if you wish to go.' He guided her firmly and feet along, proud that his own were firm and strong. Then back again to his friends he went, his young heart happy and well content. 'She's somebody's mother, boys, you know. Though all she's poor and aged and slow. And I hope some fellow would lend a hand to help my mother, you understand, if ever she's poor and old and gray and I perhaps am far away.' Somebody's mother bowed her head on her knees that night at prayer she said that God would be kind to somebody's boy who was somebody's mother's pride and joy.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: Hmm.

LEVINE: That's a nice one.

MURPHY: Yeah. That's that.

LEVINE: You have a very good memory for songs—

MURPHY: I used to have.

LEVINE: —and poems.

MURPHY: I used to have. [singing] “Away down upon the Swanee River far, far away. There’s where my heart is turning ever. There’s where the old folks stay. All the world is sad and dreary, everywhere I roam. Old darkies, how my heart grows weary, far from the old folks at home. When I was playing with my brother, happy then was I. Oh, take me to my kind old mother. There let me live or die. All the world is sad and weary everywhere I roam. Oh, darkies, how my heart grows weary, far from the old folks at home.”

LEVINE: Hmm.

MURPHY: Yeah.

LEVINE: That one you probably learned here.

MURPHY: Huh?

LEVINE: Did you learn that song in this country?

MURPHY: Oh, yes. Yes. [unclear]. [unclear] was born in this country so—

LEVINE: Well, now, did you go to clubs that—in—in this country, did you go to clubs where—that were—there were Irish people and they had get-togethers?

MURPHY: Oh, they—oh, yes. We went to [unclear] on the way from school, would go in someplace [unclear]. And the [unclear] were nice and sometimes they’d say poems for us. Sometimes, they’d chase us home if we were noisy or a nuisance. You know. So that’s the way it went up and down Fiddler’s Elbow.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Did you ever play an instrument?

MURPHY: I played this on the piano and that’s about—and I played this on the accordian. That’s as far as I got [unclear].

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Never followed it up.

LEVINE: Do you remember any of the things you used to play?

MURPHY: I—I—

LEVINE: Any of the songs?

MURPHY: I—I should but not now. I can't remember them. [singing] "This world is [unclear]. This world has many a glorious land where beauty ever dwell. Oh, the snow-crowned hills and rivers grand and happy summer dell. Where all the [unclear] and [unclear] lay. Loves evermore to tell where heroes died in former days and freedom's martyrs fell. My own land, I love you still, what ere your fate may be. My own land, my own land. You're all the world to me." That was a short one but then I remember there—we had a big—I remember learning a big poem about my country. If I knew the—two lines then I'd know the whole thing. There was—and there was two or three good verses in it. It was all about—if I could remember the first—even the first line I could sing it. But I can't. I guess it's [unclear]. It's all about Ireland and telling about the—the land, the green land and the—isn't it funny? I can't remember. If I could remember a line then I could remember it all.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Oh, all—[unclear]. "This w"—is this now, is that right, "This world of many a glorious land where beauty ever dwell, where snow-crowned hills and rivers grand and happy summer dell. Where oft the poet in his lays loves ever more to tell, where heroes died in former days and freedom's martyrs fell. My own land, I love you still, what ere your fate may be. My own land, my own land, you're all the world to me. The [several words unclear] to tell him [several words unclear]. This is not mine to give. For truer hearts can never be for love of thee and thy. I lay this offering at thy feet so [several words unclear]." That was—that wasn't the one I meant to say. The one I—other one, I [several words unclear] but this is only a short one. But if I could only think of the first line, I could rattle it off.

LEVINE: Yeah.

MURPHY: So I—I—I'll think of it.

LEVINE: Okay.

MURPHY: Now, you have to be tired, listening to poetry now.

LEVINE: No, I like it.

MURPHY: Do you?

LEVINE: There's more—as much as you can tell, I'd be interested to hear it.

MURPHY: Well, that's true. It tells a lot.

LEVINE: Yes, it does.

MURPHY: Hmm.

LEVINE: Why do you like the poetry so much?

MURPHY: Well, we had a—we had a verse of poem every day. And the end of the week, we had the full poem.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: With a verse [unclear] and for—and for—before we'd have our—any other kind of class in the morning we'd have a verse of poem. And then that'd be our poem for the week, the whole poem. And that was the way the [unclear]. What did I say [several words unclear]. If I could think a line now I'd know it. It was something about a boy and how he sang and— isn't it funny? Now, I can't think of the line. And then he disappeared one time and he wasn't found for the longest time. And the [unclear] and brought him back. Oh, what? And his—he had an Irish name. His name was Pat. I forget now. Is it O'Brien or some I—some very Irish name, anyhow. [singing] "I love the lassie, the bonnie island lassie. She's as fair as the lily in the day. She's as sweet as the heather, the bonnie blooming heather and she's marrying my Scotch bluebell." That was another piece out of some of the—out of something. I wonder [unclear] come back to [unclear]. Where has he gone? I went home and they were all—they were—when I went home they were in bed snoring and I wouldn't wake them up because [unclear] very well, you know. They were all [unclear].

LEVINE: Who is this, Frances? Who?

MURPHY: Hmm?

LEVINE: Who was sickly?

MURPHY: My mother and father.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: So I didn't—I wouldn't wake them up.

LEVINE: Were there [clears throat]—were there ever any epidemics in Ireland when you were there when you were growing up?

MURPHY: [unclear]. Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember them?

MURPHY: No, I remember having spoken of but, thank God, I didn't run into any.

LEVINE: Hmm.

MURPHY: But they were bad. The [unclear] one time my mother got a [unclear] on the [unclear] her hand. [sentence unclear].

LEVINE: Wait. We'll stop here. [tape off/on]

MURPHY: "The school let out. [unclear] the boys like a flock of sheep here in the snow piled twice and deep. At last, came one of the merry troop, the gayest lad of all the group. He paused beside her and whispered low, 'I'll help you across if you wish to go.' He guided her trembling feet along, proud of his own, firm and strong. Then back again to his friends he went, his young heart happy and well content. 'She's somebody's mother, boys, you know. Though all she's poor and aged and slow. And I hope some fellow will lend a hand to help my mother, you understand. If ever she's poor and old and gray and I perhaps am far away.' Somebody's mother bowed her head on her knees that night of prayer, she said that God would be kind to somebody's boy, who is somebody's mother's pride and joy."

LEVINE: Wow. Do you know—

MURPHY: Did you hear the one about the dog? "Poor dog, he was faithful and kind to be sure, and constantly loved me, although I was poor. When the sour-looking folks sent me heartless away, I had always a friend in my poor dog, Tray. Where now can I go, poor, forsaken and blind and find one to guide me so faithful and kind to my own distant home so far, far away? I can never return without my poor dog, Tray." Yeah. My mom.

LEVINE: Your mom? Oh. [chuckles]

MURPHY: No. I—I could repeat poems from early morn till late at night.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Because I learned them in school, you know, and went to school everyday and learned a poem. We had to have a poem a day and then to learn a poem a week [several words unclear] and so forth. This is where we had to learn them, you know.

LEVINE: Mmm. Then did you have poetry contests?

MURPHY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: Where you had to recite?

MURPHY: Oh, s—oh, [unclear]. My goodness. “The woman was old and ragged and gray and bent with the chill of the winter’s day. The street was wet with the recent snow. And the woman’s feet were aged and slow. Down the street with laughter and shout, glad in the freedom of school let out, came the boys like a flock of sheep hailing the snow piled white and deep. At last came one of the merry troop, the gayest lad of all the group. He paused beside her and whispered low, ‘I’ll help you across if you wish to go.’ He guided her trembling feet along, proud that his own were firm and strong. Then back again to his friends he went, his young heart happy and well content. ‘She’s somebody’s mother, boys, you know, though all she’s poor and aged and slow. And I hope some fellow will lend a hand to help my mother, you understand. If ever she’s poor and old and gray, and I perhaps am far away.’ Somebody’s mother bowed her head, on her knees that night a prayer she said that God would be kind to somebody’s boy who was somebody’s mother’s pride and joy.” Ah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: Now, all that. I used to—of course, when we went to school we had a verse of poem everyday and the end of the week we had the whole thing. So that’s how I know so much of them now. But I have quite a few I’ve forgotten too. But when I [unclear] kind of go back to me. [chuckles]

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Frances was trying to remember a poem about Ireland. And she said if she heard the first line she could remember the whole thing.

MURPHY: Yeah, yes.

WOMAN: And what about the girls? The girls—when the I—the—the American dad came to Ireland and met the girls?

MURPHY: I don’t know that song.

WOMAN: You know it. You was saying it not too long—

MURPHY: I don’t remember the Rye—never had the Rye on my mind. [sentence unclear].

WOMAN: If you ever go to some—

MURPHY: [singing] “If you ever go over to Ireland, you’ll take a tip from me. Close your mouth and open your eyes”—

WOMAN: That’s it.

MURPHY: —“and don’t you make too free. You’ll find the cuttings over there are not so green at all. One of them made a fool of me way down in Donegal [PH]. I took a run to me [unclear] went walking down the lane. She said, ‘Now, don’t get funny for if you do I’ll scream. You’ve lost your Irish manners. You have no shame at all. And you Yankee [unclear] don’t mean a thing to the girls in Donegal.’ And then I went over to Galway to the town of old Moor [PH]. There I met a lassie, Mary and [unclear], she said, ‘Hello there, stranger. I never saw you before. And we don’t make class with hoboes in the town of old Moor.’ And then I went over to Dublin too, that city of great fame, walking down O’Connell [PH] Street I met a comely dame. She said, ‘Hello there, stranger. It’s nice to see you around.’ And [unclear] so she slapped me royal in dear old Dublin town.” Well, that’s all. [laughter] [applause]

LEVINE: That’s great.

MURPHY: Are you mad at me? Are you mad at me?

LEVINE: No, she’s not mad. She’s happy.

MURPHY: Hmm.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, that was wonderful. Well, [unclear], you’re getting—you’re remembering more and more.

MURPHY: Oh, what—what was in “The Old Dublin Town.” [singing] “Then I went over to Galway to the town of old Moor. There I met a lassie, merry and, you know, she said, ‘Hello there, stranger. I never saw you before. And we don’t make class with hoboes in the town of old Moor.’ And then I went over to Dublin to the city of great fame, walking down O’Connell Street, I met a comely dame. She said, ‘Hello there, stranger. It’s nice to see you around. But pardon me sir,’ she slapped me royal in dear old Dublin town.

LEVINE: [laughs]

MURPHY: Now—now, I’ve enough said for your [unclear] tired of it now.

LEVINE: No, I’m not tired. Can you think of any songs that—that people who came to America used to sing?

MURPHY: [sentence unclear] I might be able to.

LEVINE: Oh, boy. I'm trying to think of the name of an Irish singer who was very popular here in America.

MURPHY: Moore. [PH]

LEVINE: Moore.

MURPHY: Tylus [PH] Moore.

LEVINE: Maybe.

MURPHY: He was popular for a long time. Of course, he sang—he [unclear]—I can't remember the songs he composed now.

LEVINE: That's what I was trying to—

MURPHY: [unclear]. I should remember them, you know, now, but sometimes my head is like that. [sentence unclear].

LEVINE: Well—

MURPHY: Well, this one now. [singing] "I watched last night a rising moon upon a [unclear] strand till memories came like flowers of June of home and fatherland. I dreamt I was a child once more beside the rippling river. When first I saw in days of yore the moon behind the hill. It brought me back across the way to living memories still." I don't know it all. "It brought me back my merriest way, the moon behind the hill." And—now, isn't it funny? I can't remember too much of it. And 'twas in—'twas in my head [unclear] come out. But I kind of forget it. Now, [several words unclear].

LEVINE: Pardon?

MURPHY: If I could think of a piece of it, you know, to—

LEVINE: Yeah.

MURPHY: But "brought me back across the waves to live in memory still. It brought me back, my Mary's grave, the moon behind the hill. And there beneath the silver sky I lived o'er again. I counted all the hopes gone by. I wept at all its pain. And when I'm gone, oh, may some tongue, the minstrel's wish fulfill, and still remember him who sang the moon behind the hill. [singing] "And still remember him who sang the moon behind

the hill. It brought me back across the waves to live in memory still. It brought me back my Mary's grave, the moon behind the hill."

LEVINE: Do you remember "When Irish Eyes are Smiling"?

MURPHY: Yes. [singing] "When Irish eyes are smiling, sure, it's like a morning spring. And the lilt of Irish laughter, you can hear the angels sing. When Irish hearts are happy all the world seems bright and gay. But when Irish eyes are smiling children steal your heart away." That's—I'm kind of hoarse or something. My—

LEVINE: [clears throat]

MURPHY: [singing] "While your smile is a part of the love in your heart and it makes even sunshine more bright, like the—spr—springtime of life." [speaking] "The springtime of life is the sweetest of all. There is ne'er [several words unclear] and when [unclear]. In springtime [unclear] flowers we smile each chance we get. When Irish eyes are smiling, sure, it's like a morning spring. And the lilt of Irish laughter, you can hear the angels sing. When Irish hearts are happy the world is bright and gay. But when Irish eyes are smiling it'll steal your heart away." And is nice tune to it too. [singing] "When Irish eyes are smiling sure is like your morning spring. In the lilt of Irish laughter, you can hear the angels sing. When Irish hearts are happy all the world seems bright and gay. But when Irish eyes are smiling, sure they'll steal your heart"—my—I'm getting hoarse—"away." I'm getting—losing my voice altogether. [singing] "For your smile is a part of the love in your heart and it makes even sunshine more bright. Like the [unclear] sweet song croning all the day long, comes your laughter so tender and light. Oh, the springtime of life is the sweetest of all. There is ne'er a real care or regret and when springtime is ours throughout all of [unclear], let us smile each chance we get. When Irish eyes are smiling sure it's like a morning spring. And the lilt of Irish laughter, you can hear the angels sing. When Irish hearts are happy all the world seems bright and gay. But when Irish eyes are smiling, sure they steal your heart away." I'm getting hoarse. Just—and I think I'd better go home now. What time is it?

LEVINE: It's [clears throat] 25 to 3.

MURPHY: Oh, is it that time? Yes. Time now when I want to go because they'll be waiting for me, you know, and they'll be cooking something. Do you want to walk a bit with me when I'm going home?

LEVINE: Okay. Let me ask you a last question. Okay?

MURPHY: You can come with me if you want.

LEVINE: [clears throat] What's the—what do you feel proud of? What makes you feel satisfied that you've done in your lifetime?

MURPHY: Nothing. I didn't do anything [unclear]. I didn't do anything to be proud of, dear. Nothing. Not one thing. Do—I—I try to be proud—not—not what you think proud is something [unclear] up. But I—I—I'm—I tried to be proud of something that I do that might be of use to anybody.

LEVINE: I guess a better way for me to ask the question is, what has given you a great deal of satisfaction in your life?

MURPHY: Well, I don't know. I was like that all my life since I was a baby. You know, somebody saying something and doing something and telling me they were happy because I did it and, you know, that kind of thing.

LEVINE: So in—in—in particular ways, you've been kind to people.

MURPHY: Oh, yes and—and people have been kind to me, like the Lee family were wonderful to me. My parents were good too, of course. And, you know, you—you grew up with it and liked it.

LEVINE: Now, you and your husband—what was your husband's first name? His first name?

MURPHY: Joseph was—

LEVINE: Joseph.

MURPHY: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Joseph. You had one child? Did you have a child?

MURPHY: We had two girls.

LEVINE: Oh, two girls.

MURPHY: And one of them is married and I don't know what happened to the other one. She was around lately but something happened to her.

LEVINE: Oh.

MURPHY: You know, in that time. And she was a lovely girl too.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

MURPHY: The other girl had a beautiful voice. She used to sing all the—sing in the choir all the time. Oh, she had a beautiful voice. And she'd be singing home, play the piano and singing, teaching us all the hymns and—

LEVINE: So in other words, this music has been a pa—big part of your life—

MURPHY: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: —from the time you were a little girl.

MURPHY: Oh, yes. Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

MURPHY: [singing] "I love a lassie"—we were young, you know. [singing] "I love a lassie." We'd get the boys to sing. [singing] "She's a bonnie highland lassie. She's as fair as the lily in the dell. She's as sweet as the heather, the bonnie blooming heather and she's Mary, my Scotch bluebell.

LEVINE: [laughs] Okay. Well, I want to thank you so much for all your songs and poems—

MURPHY: Oh, [unclear].

LEVINE: —and talking with me.

MURPHY: God love you. Thank you for listening to me.

LEVINE: Well, it's been a pleasure. I've been speaking with Frances Murphy, who came from Galway, Ireland—

MURPHY: Galway.

LEVINE: —to the United States. And we're going to find out what year that was and how old she was and what her birth date w—is. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]