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I am the proud daughter of a remarkable woman, Mary O'Malley Carr, the matriarch of an Irish immigrant family who arrived in America in 1926. For many years, literally decades, I have been planning to record her story so that younger members of our family might come to know her or know her better. Yet, it took the interest and curiosity of Mary's great grand-daughter, Isabella Carr, to spur me on to put pen to paper and begin the narrative. It all started with Isabella's Fourth grade school project on immigration. Each student was to choose a family member, living or not, who was an immigrant and then to imagine that person's experience arriving and subsequently living in America. Isabella had heard her grandfather, Mary's son Robert, talk about his beloved mother and quickly realized Mary O'Malley would be an ideal prototype for her project. So she gathered reams of information from her grandfather and father, also Robert Carr, and set to work. In fact, she collected far more material than she could include in her 20-minute or so presentation, which was a big success at the school assembly. Later, back at home she wondered whether the family could add to the story and keep it going into the future (and into my narrative!)

And so, it was a little 10-year-old girl who was the guiding force behind getting this worthwhile story told.

My mother, Mary O'Malley Carr, was born in Ireland in 1890. She came to America in 1926 with her husband, Robert Carr. They had four children: John, Mary, Robert, and Isabella. Isabella was the youngest and was the one who inspired me to write this story.

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Mary O'Malley was born in 1897 into a farm family of 6 children in Castlebar, County Mayo on the rugged west coast of Ireland. She liked the atmosphere at her small, rural schoolhouse and enjoyed learning, but for her elementary school lasted only 3 years. Then, even as a youngster working at any available job, she seemed to understand and ponder the lack of opportunity in her homeland for the future. One of her jobs as she was growing up was barkeeper (or barkeep) in a local pub (information that came as a shock to us kids in our teens as we knew how our mother felt about drinking.) Knowing her penchant for finding advantages in any situation, we surmise she listened to the pub patrons as they conversed and used this as her "window on the world". True, Castlebar was in a remote area of rural Ireland but pub conversation anywhere can be the source of insights into the human condition and we can assume Mary was alert to her environment. Perhaps she even heard about opportunities in America as she went about her daily tasks. However it happened, Mary made contact with someone in Cambridge, Massachusetts, who put her in contact with a woman prominent in the education field, Mrs. Carmelita Hinton, who was searching for a mature, competent young nanny for her children. Letters made their way back and forth across the Atlantic and Mrs. Hinton settled on Mary O'Malley as her choice for the family nanny. Mr. Hinton had by then taken a post in the American diplomatic service in China.

We know little about Mary O'Malley's first coming to America but we can assume it was an exhilarating though intimidating undertaking for a hitherto inexperienced young woman. Eager to start out on the right foot, she immersed herself completely in her new family, was drawn to the children Billy and Jean and grew to love them as they loved her. Mrs. Hinton felt comfortable enough with the skills of her new nanny to spread her wings and throw herself into furthering plans for a new type of school to be built in Vermont based on her philosophy of education. (More about this later) The work was all-encompassing, requiring her almost constant attention, so a capable, reliable nanny was indispensable. Mary assumed more and more household responsibility in addition to her child-rearing duties and the entire family thrived. Not long afterward, Mr. Hinton assumed a temporary post in London, and the family relocated there for about 18 months. Mary remembered with delight wheeling the children through Hyde Park in the heart of the city. (I think my life-long wanderlust was triggered by these adventures!) After this short tour of duty in England, the household boarded an ocean liner in Southampton and dropped Mary off at Cobh from where she proceeded to Castlebar to marry James Carr as previously arranged. Two years after the marriage, the young couple with their infant daughter bid a sad farewell to their families at the traditional send-off referred to as an "Irish wake" and left Ireland once again to settle permanently in America.

Though this is essentially a story about (my mother) Mary O'Malley (Carr), it would be remiss to overlook her husband of 66 years and my father, James F. Carr. They raised seven children, the oldest of whom, my sister Mary Bridget, was born in Ireland in 1925. Our sister Anne Theresa was born in January 1927 shortly after their transatlantic liner, Samaria, docked in America. The ocean voyage must have been a nightmare, judging by the fact that Mary and James almost never talked about the experience and, of course, Mary was expecting her second child. The one thing they did talk about was how little Mary fared on the crossing. She was adventuresome, exuberant, untouched by seasickness and friendly to everyone. The newly arrived family made its way to Boston and Cambridge where Mary renewed contact with her former employer Mrs. Hinton who, understandably, was disappointed that Mary's current family situation precluded her availability for employment.

Succeeding decades passed, filled with the busy life and mundane concerns of an expanding family of five additional children:

Margaret Frances, born in October, 1928
Virginia Rita, born in July, 1933
James Francis Jr., born in May, 1935
John DeValera, born in May, 1938
and Robert Emmett, born in May, 1940
(the only child born in the hospital)

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During this time there was little contact between the Carr and Hinton families, though frequent newspaper stories about Mrs. Hinton's project, the Putney School in Putney, Vermont, were published. Mary followed these articles as she retained fond memories of the family. It was from these occasional items that Mary learned the Putney School opened in the mid-30s and became well-regarded for its progressive, demanding curriculum paired with intensive, practical instruction in skills for independent living. One of its first graduates was young William Hinton, who followed his graduation by going to China and immersing himself in the turbulent atmosphere of the period.

For purposes of this narrative, let's now leap across the years to ca. 1978. By then I had married Emmett Shea, a college professor with an expertise in International Relations and U.S.-East Asian Relations. Among his book collection I came across by chance a tome written by a William Hinton, entitled Fanchen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village, described as a remarkable, on-the-scene account of China in the 1950's and 1960's. Imagine my surprise and delight! Mary O'Malley's precious little charge on their many strolls through London's famous Hyde Park had become a well-respected observer, participant and chronicler of a tumultuous period in Chinese history!

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This intriguing discovery was followed a short time later by a notice in our local Sunday newspaper that none other than William Hinton was scheduled to speak during the upcoming week at the Science Center at Wellesley College on Agriculture and the Communist Collective Farm. (I learned subsequently that William's daughter, Carmelita Hinton's namesake who was raised in China, was at that time teaching Chinese Language and Civilization at Welleslet College).

So guess who determined to attend the lecture!

That evening I went to the main lecture hall at the Science Center and sat at the rear of the middle aisle. I thought I knew a little about agriculture because James Carr was skilled in coaxing productivity out of poor, sandy Irish soil (and continued to till whatever plot of land he had access to.) But even the tall, massive bear of a lecturer who fascinated me, couldn't keep my attention focused on the agricultural benefits of night soil!

But hanging in there for 90 minutes was a small price to pay for the extraordinary events that followed. After the lecture, I walked down the long aisle toward the stage where Professor Hinton was answering student questions. At one point he cast his gaze at the floor I was standing on, threw his very long arms into the air with a roar and shouted for all to hear -

Mary O'Malley!!!!

(Until that time, no one had ever indicated I looked remotely like my mother.) Then, those same long, strong arms reached down met mine, and lifted me to the stage where he literally

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smothered me with bear hugs and kisses! I was overwhelmed, unable to speak. While I was regaining my composure he told me that he dearly loved and respected his accomplished mother, yet it was Mary O'Malley who held a special place in his heart. She was a warm, loving, ever-present constant for several years in his young life, never to be forgotten. In our time-limited but intense conversation, we agreed that in showering him with love, caring and little, though important life lessons, she was practicing and perfecting the maternal skills of which we, her seven children, were beneficiaries. After our emotional interchange we parted after I promised William Hinton to contact his 93 year old mother in Concord and arrange a meeting between two old friends.

On the appointed day, we drove to Concord, were welcomed by William's sister Jean and proceeded upstairs to where Carmelita Hinton was bedridden due to a heart condition. She was sitting up in bed facing a book rest holding her current read, Franklin and Eleanor. The two old friends greeted one another in a warm exchange and went on to catch up on the highlights of roughly 50 years of their lives. I think Jean Hinton had recorded the conversation but somehow we didn't get a copy. We were all delighted at the reunion decades in the making.

That was the last contact we had with the Hintons, but it was, in retrospect, a fascinating chapter in the family's history. If more information on the progressive school founded by Carmelita Hinton is desired, refer to the Internet **under**

The Putney