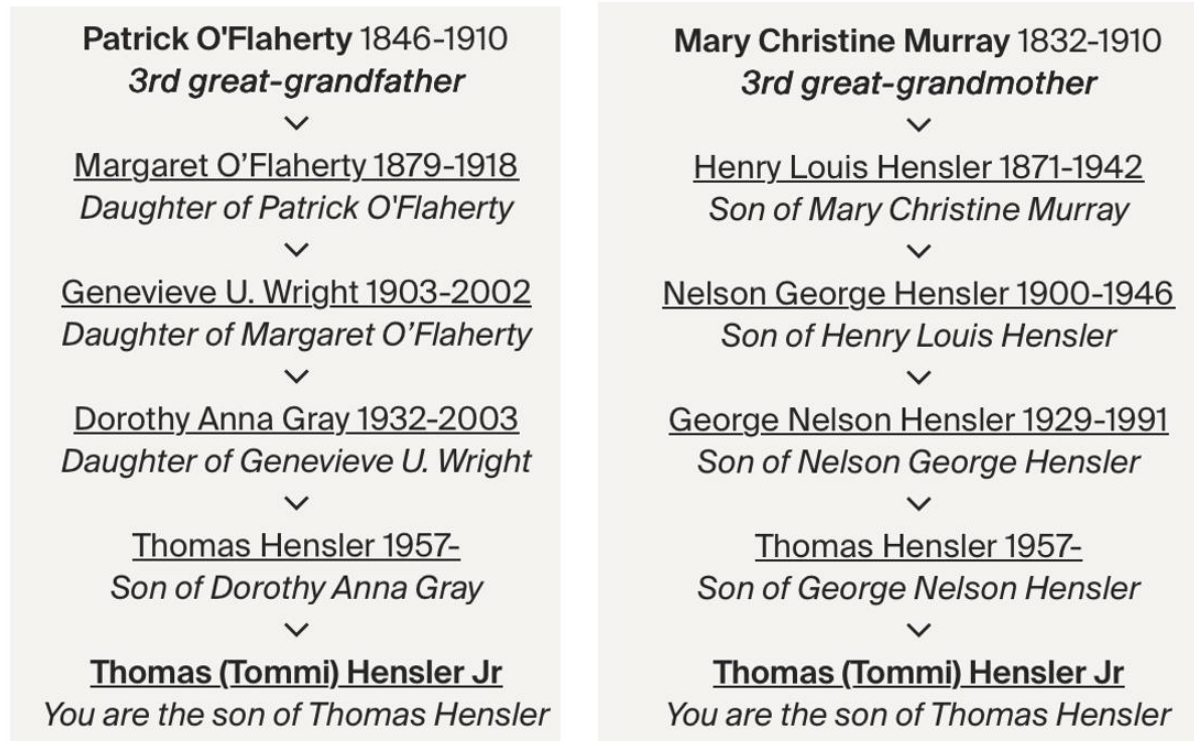


## GALWAY IRELAND STORY

On my mom's side, we have connection to Galway through Patrick O'Flaherty.  
On my dad's side, we have connection to Galway through Mary Murray.



### **Patrick O'Flaherty born the same week as the Ballinglass Incident**

The Great Famine in Ireland from 1845–1852 became one of the most devastating human tragedies in modern European history. Millions of poor Irish families depended heavily on the potato because it could grow abundantly even on very small plots of rented land. When potato blight destroyed the crop beginning in 1845, entire communities suddenly lost their primary food source. What began as agricultural disaster quickly became widespread hunger, disease, eviction, and social collapse throughout Ireland.

The Ballinglass Incident in County Roscommon during March 1846 became one of the most haunting symbols of the suffering that surrounded the famine years. Landlord Denis Mahon ordered the eviction of tenants from the village of Ballinglass because they could not pay rent. Families already weakened by hunger and poverty were forced from their homes while cold rain and harsh weather swept across western Ireland. Roofs were torn from cottages to prevent people from returning. Witnesses described mothers carrying children into ditches and fields with nowhere to go. The event shocked readers throughout Ireland and Britain when newspapers carried reports of the tragedy.

The Ballinglass evictions revealed that the Irish Famine was not only about crop failure. It was also about poverty, land systems, rent pressure, displacement, and survival. Entire villages across western Ireland feared eviction and starvation. Families faced impossible choices: remain and risk hunger, enter overcrowded workhouses, or attempt emigration across the ocean.

For the Hensler family story and the connected Irish family lines of Carroll, O'Flaherty, Gavin, and Murray, the historical timing carries deep emotional meaning. Patrick O'Flaherty was born in Galway during the same week the Ballinglass Incident unfolded. While Patrick himself was only a newborn child, the world surrounding his family would have been filled with fear, uncertainty, collapsing crops, rumors of eviction, and difficult conversations about survival.

Galway was one of the regions deeply scarred by famine and emigration. Families such as the O'Flahertys, Gavins, Carrolls, and Murrays carried forward the inherited resilience that became part of the Irish immigrant story. Many survivors eventually crossed oceans to America carrying little more than hope, family loyalty, work ethic, faith, and determination. The famine years permanently shaped Irish identity and left emotional scars that echoed through later generations.

For the KeepGoingKeepLoving project, Patrick O'Flaherty's birth during the week of the Ballinglass Incident creates a powerful historical symbol. One child entering the world in Galway while, elsewhere in western Ireland, families were being forced from their homes during the opening shockwaves of famine. Suffering and hope existed together in the same moment. That contrast captures the larger Irish story itself — endurance, sacrifice, survival, and the determination to keep going despite overwhelming hardship.



Margaret O'Flaherty 1879-1918  
*Daughter of Patrick O'Flaherty*

## **Mary Deery tells me about Mary Murray**

Ancestry DNA matches Tom Hensler, Mary Deery, Sue Boyland and Caroline Dowdall to the Murray families of Inniskeen, Ireland. Murray family members then moved to Galway, Australia, Great Britain, and USA.

Mary Deery says “I will try and explain in 2 ways (facts and insights)”

Sue Boyland has been researching the Murray Dooley family tree since the 1980s. Her research led her to Woodford in Galway where she partnered with a cousin, Seamus McEneny, in himself a local historian.

Their research brought them to Inniskeen Co Monaghan. You will find that in the book. Sue visited Inniskeen in 2018 but was shy at asking people if they knew her ancestors who left Inniskeen in 1844.

When she returned to Australia, she then contacted the Kavanagh Centre in Inniskeen who put her in touch with me. She found a DNA match with my cousins, the O'Keeffes, in New York.

I then did a DNA test with Ancestry and matched with her sisters, oddly enough not with her.

But we both matched Hensler descendants of a Mary Murray in Cincinnati as did Caroline Dowdall another cousin of mine here in Inniskeen.

We were thrilled because Mary was not mentioned in the Woodford Murray oral history. We didn't know she existed until then.

### ***Insights***

You might think this odd or even harsh but let me try to explain.

Micheal Murray, Mary's father, and his family did not exist in the Inniskeen Murray oral family history either. There has been a lot written about this so here are some thoughts on it.

Ireland like every nation has had its share of traumatic events that has changed its course in history. The most traumatic event I believe was the Great Famine of 1847. This was not a natural famine but one that came about because of 150 years of mismanagement of the land by an English landlord and land agent system. Google it. I don't want you to think I am anti British.

One of the policies of this system was that every father had to divide his farm equally to his sons to the point that the land became too small for people to survive on and it became overpopulated. Mary Murray and her family found themselves affected by that policy in Inniskeen, as the Bath Est and its land agent James Evatt were already making plans to depopulate the land in the early 1840s. By 1844 four of her brothers Thomas, Henry, Philip and James had emigrated to England and she, with the rest of her family, migrated to Woodford in Galway.

I would love to know why she emigrated to Cincinnati Ohio as her Dooley cousins went to Chicago and her Murray cousins went to New York. And later her McEneny nephews went to St Louis. But she obviously did go there.

Just to try and give you an insight here Thomas. The mass movement of people during and after the famine of 1847 is very hard to comprehend even for us. Many have written about the long-lasting impact that had on the Irish and the common thoughts are that the grief was so huge that the people who were left behind did not speak about those who left. It was just too hard to talk about them.

Just imagine Mary Murray walked with her family about 250km or 150 miles from Inniskeen to Woodford to set up a new life in a place they knew absolutely nothing about. No Internet, no pictures, nothing. They left everything they knew in their small world but didn't know what to expect in their new world. But this wasn't by choice, this was forced which makes a huge difference.

When Mary walked out of her house in Woodford to go to America, she knew she would never see her family again and they knew they would never see her again. It is like a living death. And to cope with that they didn't speak of her just like the Murrays in Inniskeen did not speak of Micheal and his family when he left. It is as if grief bore into our DNA and that is the way we deal with loss.

And remember Thomas too that Mary probably could not read or write. The English did not allow education for tenants and schools were only built until after the Great Famine. And she probably spoke more Irish than English. So, all in all, I would say there were no letters sent home either.

Mary Murray, in my thoughts, is an amazing woman. She left her roots in Inniskeen to walk to Galway with her family to the unknown, she left her family in Woodford again to go to the unknown in Cincinnati. She grieved all of this and then lost her husband in a work accident. Her sense of loss during her life must have been horrific.

In a way I think Mary was knocking at the "Murray Story" door saying I am here do not forget me and I am so glad we found her and she is part of it.

In answer to your question on where I live in relation to Galway. I live on the east coast of Ireland in Inniskeen. Galway is on the west coast. Hopefully some day you and any members of your family would like to pay a visit to Inniskeen and see where it all started.

One more little insight on the deep seated grief I speak about, when descendants of emigrants come to visit Ireland, possibly third, fourth, fifth generation of whatever country they are in, the people here in Ireland refer to them as "coming home", because as I say deep down in our DNA we are still waiting for those first emigrants to come home and love to see their descendants.

I hope this helps with your short story. I am sure it will be brilliant.

My understanding of how we are related:

Patrick Snr my great <del>great</del> grandad	brother	to	Michael Muray
Patrick Jnr my great grandad	1st cousin	to	<b>Mary Murray</b>
Owen Murray my grandad	2nd cousin	to	Henry Louis Hensler
Thomas Murray my father	3rd cousin	to	Nelson George Hensler
Mary Murray Deery	4th cousin	to	My Dad George Hensler

And then George Hensler and Dotty Hensler had 11 children, and I am the 4<sup>th</sup> oldest. Their children were George, Denise, Anne, Thomas (me), Terri, Beth, Joan, Mary Jo, Tony, Donny, and Michael. And then I have one son who is also named Thomas.

This is my understanding on the DNA relationship.

Bye for now

Mary Deery