

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Dan Pallante -- Family History

Personal Experience

O H 1251

MARGARET GILLIGAN

Interviewed

by

Daniel Pallante

on

July 1, 1989

MARGARET GILLIGAN

Mrs. Margaret Gilligan (Burns) was born on June 15, 1913 in Youngstown, Ohio, the daughter of John Burns and Gertrude McCarthy. The family settled on the South side of Youngstown, on Myrtle Avenue, where the children attended St. Patrick's grade school and South High School. Mr. and Mrs. Burns had two other children: Jack and James.

The family had a complete Irish background and attended St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on the South side. Margaret's mother passed away at an early age of a stroke and, as a result, most of her life was spent taking care of her father, two brothers and, later, her husband, whom she married on August 6, 1934. Both Margaret's father and husband, John Gilligan, worked for The Youngstown Sheet and Tube Company, so Margaret's job was taking care of home. She never worked for a particular company, but belonged to several organizations associated with the church.

After Margaret and John were married, they lived in a one room apartment on Falls Avenue. Later, they moved back in with her father to live on Myrtle Avenue until he passed away. They later settled on Meadowbrook Avenue in the Brownlee Woods area, until John's death in 1973. She stayed there a few years, then later moved to Millcreek Apartments, where she still resides. Margaret and her husband had two children: Monica Jean and James Michael. They both attended St. Patrick's grade school but Monica went to Ursuline and Michael went to Cardinal Mooney. Monica married James Pallante and has three children: Mary Ann, James, and Daniel. Michael married Janet Molzan and also has three children: Matthew, David, and Christopher.

P This is an interview with Margaret Gilligan for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, on the family genealogy of Dan Pallante, by Daniel Pallante, on July 1, 1989.

What do you know about your parents and their background?

G: They were both born in Youngstown, I think I am not sure, but I think they were My father was born June 5, 1875. His name was John Matthew. My mother was born in 1884, in Youngstown. I cannot remember his name All I knew was pa

P: All the kids referred to him as pa?

G Yes. Pa McCarthy I do not know what his name was

P: Okay. Both your mother and father were born in Youngstown?

G Yes.

P Where did they first live?

G I do not know where they first lived

P When they were married, do you remember?

G. Oh, they lived on Myrtle Avenue They built a home on Myrtle Avenue.

P: Myrtle is on the South side?

G Yes.

P Their jobs?

G. My father worked a partnership and later on they broke up He went on his own in the oil company

P. What did the oil company do?

G They sold oil from house to house He dropped his handkerchief once in a can of kerosene and it turned blue Then he bought a red handkerchief and he dropped it in another one, and he sold red and blue kerosene. He used to go out all around the countryside and sold oil to people who ordered it from him

P: Where did he get the oil at?

G I do not know where he got the oil He never talked about that.

- P: What was the name of the company?
- G: Dahy Oil Company.
- P: Your mother did not work?
- G: Not right away, but she worked later. She worked for Freedom Oil Company and she was a registrar. They had to go down to Welshes Shoe Store and they registered people to vote. And she worked at elections. She was on the board of elections.
- P: So that is the only job you know of your father working?
- G: Then he went and worked in the mill. He was a machinist in the Sheet and Tube.
- P: Youngstown Sheet and Tube
- G: Yes.
- P: Do you remember what year?
- G: No, I do not know when he did that. He was still in the oil company when I was born.
- P: So that was 1913?
- G: Yes. Four or five years later he quit the oil company and went in the mill as an apprentice and learned to be a machinist.
- P: Do you know anything about where they were raised?
- G: My mother went to the public school. I do not know what public school. Whatever was there. She was married when she was only twenty.
- P: She did not work then. She just raised the kids.
- G: Yes. She just raised the kids until after we were raised. Then she went to work for Freedom Oil. When I was born, she took me over to some colored lady's house and she watched me. Mrs. Barrett was her name. She watched me everyday when my mother worked.
- P: Did your father participate in the war at all?
- G: No. He was not in the war.

P. Do you know anything about his education? Where he was raised?

G He went to school three years

P So he basically worked most of his life?

G. Then he worked for different things. I think he was a miner and different things when he was young I do not remember what

P: What year were they married?

G. James would be 83 years old now, so when was that?

P: He is seven years older than you

G Yes.

P So he was born in 1906

G Yes. They were married something like twenty-two months when he was born

P. So they would have been married somewhere in 1904

G: Yes That is where I got 1904 from They had a big wedding. It was at St Columbo

P Where did the family go to church then?

G There was not any, only St Columbo

P. That was the only Roman Catholic church in the area?

G. When they got married, yes Later, when I was little, I do not know how old, my brother went to the first grade at St Patrick's

P Which brother?

G. James. And all of us.

P So they were married in St Columbo Were all three of you baptized in St Columbo?

G All three of us were baptized at St Patrick's

P All three of you were baptized at St. Patrick's?

G No. The older brother was baptized in St Columbo, and I think the second one was baptized in St. Columbo I was baptized in St. Patrick's

P So James was born in 1906

G Yes.

P And when would John have been born?

G Two years later

P 1908?

G No, he was born in 1907 He is going to be 82 this year, or 83.

P So he would be five years older than you.

G He is six years older than me Or almost six I was born in June and he was six years old in September. My other brother was two years older than him. He was born November 30th

P What was a typical day when all three of you were young?

G My brothers were quite a bit older than me. I was babied very much when I was young.

P Did those guys work at a younger age?

G No, they did not work

P Where did both of them go to school?

G St Patrick's

P So that would have been until the eighth grade

G Yes Then Jimmy went to South High and graduated

P What did he do after graduation?

G He worked in the Sheet and Tube In the rod and wire department

P What about John?

G: He went to business college.

P After St Patrick's?

G. Yes He was sickly He had tuberculosis and he was kind of late graduating from St. Patrick's, then he went to business college Then he went to work for a trucking company, I do not remember the name He went on up to be a certified public accountant. He took education later on and he was a certified public accountant.

P Did Jimmy always work for the Sheet and Tube?

G After a while he ended up as foreman

P How old was he when he died?

G Forty-five.

P What did he die of?

G Cancer.

P What about John? Did he work as a CPA until he passed away?

G Yes He worked down at Libbey and Libbey. I know he worked for Libbey and Libbey when he died

P How old was he when he passed away?

G Fifty-nine

P What did he die of?

G Congestive heart failure.

P Let us go back with you. You went to St Patrick's, too

G Yes All of my life

P: Until eighth grade, right?

G Until eighth grade I went to Ursuline one year and then I quit and went to South

P. Until the eleventh grade?

- G. Eleventh grade, because I did not graduate. My mother had a stroke and I had to take care of her
- P. So you would have been seventeen or eighteen?
- G. Sixteen.
- P. Sixteen when your mother had a stroke and you had to take care of her? You were the only one at home, then?
- G. No. My father and my uncle. We had raised two kids, Bob Burns and Eddie Quinlin
- P. So in the house at that time was your dad's brother?
- G. My dad's brother, his son and my mother's sister's boy That is when I quit school It was just me and my uncle Ab and my uncle Jim and Bob and Eddie.
- P. Where did they work?
- G. In the mill. Uncle Ab worked in the mill and Jim worked in the mill Bob and Eddie were just kids. They were younger than me, both of them They went to St. Patrick's, too.
- P. How about the people in the neighborhood? Did most of the men in the neighborhood work in the mill? When you were growing up, did most of the fathers work in the mill?
- G. I do not know They guy next door was a street car conductor Then he went to Strauss's and worked
- P. What were major appliances around the house?
- G. We had a 1900 washing machine that shifted gears. It went back and forth It was one of the first washing machines that was made
- P. It was all manual? It was not electric?
- G. It was electric, but you had to shift gears to make it go. There was a motor underneath it and you shifted and it went back and forth Then you pulled it up straight and stopped It had an electric wringer on it We had an electric iron when I was born. I do not know before They must have had irons you had to put on the stove You heated the iron on the stove and ironed with it You had two You took one and when that got cold, you took the next one We had an ice box, the one that you put ice in

P: I see. How often would the guy with the ice come?

G: I do not know. He came around everyday, but you had to put a card out. You had a card, whether you wanted twenty-five pounds, fifty pounds, seventy-five, or one hundred. It had four numbers on it. You put it on the number you wanted. We used to get seventy-five pounds. That is where we used to keep our food cold. We had a garden. My father dug a garden. We had gas lights and a gas stove. We did not have a telephone. Once we had a telephone. I do not know when they took it out. We had it at the foot of the stairs and it was on the wall. It was old fashioned, with the receiver that you hung up on the side, and you talked into the phone. It was as modern as it could be. Not one of those that you had to wind up.

P: How about entertainment? What did everyone do for entertainment?

G: We had no entertainment. We had no radio, we had no television, or anything. We used to walk down to Mill Creek park and eat breakfast and cook on the grills down there. We did not do anything for entertainment.

P: How about through high school? Were there any big hang-outs?

G: Yes. We hung out at Costas, downtown.

P: What was that?

G: It was a restaurant. Below Federal Street.

P: Was it a soda shop?

G: Yes. When I went to Ursuline, we went down there everyday. When I went to South, one of the girls, whose father was a doctor, had a car and we used to drive down in the car and stop there.

P: What kind of car was it? Do you know?

G: No (laughter)

P: When was the first time your family owned a car?

G: When my brother was working, he bought one. My father never drove.

P: How did he get to work?

G: He went on a street car. And then he went on the bus. We had trolley buses after street cars. And then we had buses. They used to go all night, then

Nobody had cars. My grandfather had a car. He had an electric car and an old fashioned Ford.

P: Where were your grandmother and grandfather born?

G: My grandmother was born in Ireland. Finney was her name, Mariah Finney. I think his name was Michael McCarthy, but I am not sure.

P: He was born in Ireland, too?

G: No, he was born in some little town in New York, I do not know where.

P: How did he end up in Youngstown?

G: I do not know. That was long before my time (laughter). They did not tell the kids anything. They did not talk to the kids like they do now.

P: Where did your mother and father meet?

G: They never told me how they met and I never asked. My mother died young, you know. She was only fifty-three.

P: How old was she when she had the stroke?

G: She was forty-six, and then she had another one when she was fifty-three, and she died from it.

P: After she had the stroke when you were sixteen, she was basically sick.

G: She died in October. Your mother was two in June.

P: When did your father die?

G: He died when she was nineteen. She knew him.

P: You were sixteen when you were in the eleventh grade at South, and you were still living at home?

G: Yes. Still living at home.

P: When did you meet your husband?

G: I went with him for five or six years.

P: Did you meet him when you were at South?

- G No. I met him down on Federal Street. We used to go downtown at lunch time, we went with the car. We went in Costas and ate our lunch. Then we used to walk up Federal Street, and all the men used to stand in front of Strauss's. They working in the Sheet and Tube. We used to talk with them. I met him at a party we had out in Poland, and he came to the party and I came to the party. He brought another girl and I was with another boy and he hung around me all night and from then on.
- P Was your mother still alive then?
- G Oh yes. She did not die until later.
- P You said when she was fifty-three.
- G Yes. She died in 1937.
- P So you were twenty-four.
- G Yes. We lived on Falls Avenue before she died. We had an apartment on Falls Avenue.
- P When did you get married?
- G I got married in 1934. And she died in 1937.
- P When you got married, you went back and lived in the house?
- G We went back there and lived for a while, and then we got an apartment.
- P And that was on Myrtle Avenue?
- G Yes. And then we went down to Falls.
- P: You were still taking care of your mother then?
- G Well, we moved back home when my mother was still living. We had to move from Falls Avenue. We rented this upstairs in a house and the people that rented to us got put out. Well, they lived in the whole house and we just took the upstairs and we had to get out because they did. It was furnished and they took the furniture out. We did not get put out but they got put out. I had to push the buggy, my daughter Monnie, home, and move in again.
- P How much do you think your husband was making then? Have you any idea how much he was bringing home?

- G: No. I do not know how much he made. He ate steak everyday. He used to work three to eleven. He was working in the Sheet and Tube.
- P: He was also a machinist, right?
- G: Yes, but in the Sheet and Tube
- P: When you got thrown out of the apartment at Falls, how old was Monica?
- G: She was only a year old, I think, because I had to push her in the buggy
- P: So then you went back home. How long did you live there?
- G: We left home and got another apartment on Falls Avenue. Twice we were on Falls.
- P: So you went back home and then you went back to another apartment?
- G: Yes. We were there until Monnie was about four. Because I could not stand my father.
- P: How did your father and your husband get along?
- G: Terrible.
- P: Terrible (laughter) How long did you live on Falls the second time?
- G: I lived there for a year. We went from Falls to Thorn Street. Monnie started school there. She was six years old when she started school.
- P: Where did she go to school?
- G: St. Patrick's
- P: This is your oldest daughter?
- G: Yes. Then we moved upstairs on Hillman Street, in an apartment, and we only lived there a year when the house in back got empty. It was a cute little house and, oh it was full of rats. We moved in there when Mike was born. He was born in 1943.
- P: So he was born in 1943, and you were still living on Hillman?
- G: Yes. My father rented his house to some people, and they were terrible. They tore the house all apart. I do not know how old Mike was, about

three or four, when we moved up there

P. Where was that?

G. On Myrtle Avenue We moved back to the same home we came from. We stayed there until we came to Meadowbrook.

P. How long would you say that would be? Was my mother still in high school?

G. She graduated from high school. She got married from there

P. Okay When was she born?

G. She was born in 1934 She was twenty-two when she got married.

P. So it would have been 1956 when she got married

G. Yes.

P. Now, did Mike graduate from high school from Myrtle?

G. No Then we moved over on Meadowbrook

P. Okay. So he was going to Mooney

G. Yes My father died in there We lived there a long time after my father died.

P. How long did you live on Meadowbrook?

G. We lived on Meadowbrook twenty years, when Jack died In 1960 we moved to Meadowbrook In 1981 I moved out here.

P. If you go back to high school and the war years, what were the really big things that took place? How do you remember the war and the Depression? How did the Depression affect the way everyone lived?

G. In the first war, I was five years old They had stamps for sugar and different foods. They had to go over to South High to get them I wanted to go and I was not allowed to go. I cried and stamped my feet (laughter) There was not any of my family in the war because my two brothers were too young and my father was too old The next war was in 1940 My husband was twenty-six or twenty-seven He did not get called, though It was over before he got called He had a family and was married, and they did not call them But toward the end they were

calling more and he was not called

P: In 1929 you would have been sixteen years old. What special things can you remember about when the Depression hit?

G: I remember my father made 365 dollars in a year, with all he worked. He made a dollar a day. He would have made more, but he only worked part-time. There was nobody working then.

P: Was he selling oil then, or working in the mill?

G: He was working in the mill in the Second World War. First one, he was selling oil then.

P: Were there any things that were really different because of the Depression? Did you have to make different sacrifices?

G: Yes. We did not have anything. My brother Jack was married to a farmer in Pennsylvania.

P: Where did he live?

G: His family was from some place up in Pennsylvania. He used to go up there every weekend and brought back cabbages in bags, onions in bags, and pickles, and my mother would have potatoes and cabbage one night and potatoes and onions the next night. That is the way we ate. We used to get three pounds of oleo. We had to color it. The color came in a little jelly bean, and you squeezed and squeezed and squeezed three pounds of oleo. We used to go downtown and my brother brought home bread from Ohle's Market. He used to make it and you paid five cents a loaf for it. He used to walk home with the bread from the market. We used to go down to Hugh's Provision and get fat meat. It was like bacon, and you brought it home and fried it. You dipped your bread in it. Once in a while we had Jello and Tapioca (laughter). My mother used to cook for the rich people out on the road, then. She used to make their Sunday dinner and my brothers would take it out on the bike. Potato salad and ham and different things. She got paid in advance to make it.

P: Where was the real wealthy section of town?

G: The North side was wealthy.

P: What about the war? Anything special about World War II?

G: They had lots of work, that was all. I do not know how it affected. It did not

affect me

P You did not know any women who went to work?

G No None of my friends went

P: Were there a lot of people killed in the war?

G Not in our neighborhood, there was not. The only one I remember who was killed in the war was my cousin He was not killed in the war, though He came home and died afterwards, from the war. He was gased in the war Francis Driscoll was his name

P. What about your brothers' wives Did they stay in the area? Were they married?

G My brother Jack was married before I was, and so was Jimmy. Jack was married to Catherine Ford and Jimmy was married to Eileen Connley.

P Where did they lived?

G Jimmy lived on Dullison Avenue and Jack lived on Sumner Street

P How long did they live there?

G. I do not know how long they lived there I lived at home then and I did not see much of them

P How many kids did they have?

G. Jack had one and Jimmy had one

P Where does Jimmy's kid live now?

G Down south, someplace Atlanta or Alabama, or someplace I never see him

P What is his name?

G Jerry Burns Jack Burns lives in Jersey City

P Okay, let us go back now So both of your kids went to St Patrick's?

G Yes They graduated from there, both of them

P Your daughter went to Ursuline?

G Yes, and my son went to Mooney

P: Was he in the first graduating class at Mooney?

G I do not know. I do not think so

P. When was he born?

G In 1943

P. Monica was born in 1934.

G 1935.

P. And Mike was born when?

G: 1943.

P His full name, though, is James Michael, right?

G: Yes

P Why was he called Mike?

G Because my brother's name was James and I did not want to call him after my brother. Well, I named him after my brother. He came up to the hospital to see me. He was the only one who came to the hospital. See, my mother was dead and my father and my husband were drunk (laughter)

P Where was Monica born?

G Monica was born at home

P On Myrtle Avenue?

G: On Myrtle Avenue

P: That was in 1935. The doctor came right to the house?

G Yes. And then I had a visiting nurse

P Where was Mike born?

G. Mike was born in the hospital, St. Elizabeth's.

P: Did the same doctor deliver him?

G. No. Dr. Young delivered him Earl Young

P You spent most of your time taking care of them at home on Myrtle?

G. Yes. I took care of the house and them I had my father and my brother.

P Which brother was living at home then?

G. Jack He was divorced by that time.

P: He was divorced and came back home?

G. Yes. I had my father and my brother and my uncle Ab

P: That would have been around the time during World War II?

G: Yes My father, my brother, Uncle Ab Uncle Ab was there until Monnie was six months old and he got married then. Some lady that died. I do not remember if he came back or not. Yeah, he came back.

P. So you actually had three people bringing money in?

G No My uncle Ab only worked part-time when I was home My brother had no job then My father worked a little bit My husband worked off and on.

P So your dad was not working at the Sheet and Tube, right?

G Yes, he was working.-

P. Just working part-time?

G. No, he worked pretty good After my mother died, he got drunk everyday He worked eleven to seven everyday That is the reason we left there

P. So your dad, Jack, and your husband all drank excessively? .

G All three of them My other brother did not

P: Jimmy did not drink? That was when you went back to Falls?

G Yes. I went to Falls. That is when I left. My husband was in bed He would not even get up when they were moving him The guys went up and took the bed out from under him. (laughter)

P Do you think times were pretty tough then, or are you better now?

G They are better now, even with Social Security They were tough. The only entertainment I had, I used to go to the show on Sunday. I used to take Monnie, and then I took Mike, by himself.

P: When did you start doing things with your social clubs and organizations?

G Later, when I lived on Meadowbrook. My father was gone

P What happened to the house after he died?

G: I sold it. He turned it over to me. I bought it for a dollar. That was to legalize things I bought it for a dollar and then we sold it to a colored family because they were all colored on that street, then All our neighbors that were white had moved away.

P When was that?

G 1960 I joined the National Council of Catholic Women. I was several officers I was treasurer, I was president I belonged to St Elizabeth's Hospital Auxillary and I was president there

P: What church are you going to now?

G St. Luke's.

P. Earlier when the kids were growing up, you were going to St Patrick's?

G Yes. And I belonged to their auxiliary, I was president of that.

P You were made president May 31, 1959

G. And they gave me this. That was my officers And these tables came from Father Murphy, for being president And he bought me a silver cigarette lighter It is up in my cupboard, for being president. I was president two years

P. Father Murphy was the priest we met at the funeral.

G: Monnie said he was there.

P: When you were there, you were at St. Patrick's. When you went out to Meadowbrook, you were going to St. Luke's.

G: Yes.

P: So, Monica was married in St. Patrick's.

G: Yes.

P: She went right to Canfield, then

G: She went to Grandma's for two years.

P: She went to her husband's home and then she went out to Canfield.

G: And they built a home in Canfield.

P: Mike, what did he do right after he graduated from high school?

G: He worked for six months in the bank. He worked for my brother. My brother was a certified public accountant and they had to go through some guys' checks. They took pictures of them. He worked there for six months. He got enough money in six months to go to college. He quit work and went to Youngstown College. Every summer he worked to go to college. He worked down in Sheet and Tube in the electrical shop another year. He worked on the buses another year. He worked on the city buses. He sat and counted the people that came on, that were riding different places and different times. One time he would go at five o'clock and get on the first bus, and then late at night he would work and get on the last bus.

P: So grandfather, husband, and son, all three of them worked in the mill?

G: Yes. Mike worked summers, that is all. After he graduated, he worked six months and then he went to college and when he graduated from college, he got an interview with Toledo Edison and something in Columbus. He went to Toledo Edison but he did not like them and he did not get hired. He went to IBM, he got one at IBM and he went up there. That is the one he took and he moved right away.

P: What year would that have been?

G: Well, I do not know. He has been up there, I think, how many years?

P: When was he in the service?

- G. When he was up there. He got a leave of absence from the service and then went in for two years
- P. He graduated in what? 1960? When was he born?
- G. He was born in 1943. He started at five years old.
- P. So, maybe it would have been 1958 when he graduated?
- G. No, I think it was 1960. Because he went straight through school. He started at five and he went straight through, twelve years, and then he took six months off and then he started college. And he graduated in the summer time, by the time he got his degree
- P. Somewhere around 1965?
- G. I think it was 1965
- P. Somewhere in 1965 or 1966 he went to Endicot.
- G. He was at Endicot two years when he went to war. He did not go to war, but he went to Fort Knox. Then he went to Trenton, New Jersey
- P. That would have been 1967, 1968.
- G. And then he went to Washington and he worked in the Pentagon.
- P. He served the old guard
- G. Yeah, he served. He was an inch too short for the old guard. He was in the old guard, but he could not parade. But he did watch the President. It is on the wall in there. It tells you what date. 1969 he was in the old guard.
- P. And then when did he get married? That was early 1970, huh?
- G. He has been married fifteen years
- P. So he was married in 1974. So he has lived in Endicot since 1965, 1966? About twenty-four years? And he has three kids
- G. Yes. He has three kids
- P. Matthew, David, and Christopher
- G. That is right. And he married Janet, from Philadelphia, who went to school in

Mansfield, in Pennsylvania Is there Mansfield? I think that is what it is And she got her degree in Cortland.

P. Thank you

End of Interview