

John Gaharn and Bridget Munford

Compiled by Michael E. Byczek
4x-great-grandson

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Michael E. Byczek's 3x-great-grandparents were James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn. They were married in Ireland where three of their eldest children were born prior to settling in Port Huron, MI. Documents from Port Huron verify that Bridget's parents were John Gaharn and Bridget Munford. There was a wide range of ages for James, Bridget, and their children that were recorded in various documents throughout their lives in the United States. Their exact place of birth was not listed in any known document, except for one reference to Dublin. However, that may have been an approximate location (i.e. near Dublin). It is also possible that the family sought opportunities in Dublin prior to immigration. It is unknown if the word Dublin meant the city or county.

A data science approach to analysis of Irish church records was undertaken to match all known information across three generations of the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families. The overwhelming conclusion is that James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn were from the Collinstown Catholic Parish of County Westmeath. The following verified facts were vital during the research phase:

1. Bridget's parents were John Gaharn and Bridget Munford.
2. The birth order of James and Bridget Flanagan's three Irish-born children were Patrick, Mary, and Catherine.
3. The most accurate estimate for when Patrick was born is 1858. Mary was about one year younger than Patrick. Catherine was about five years younger than Mary.
4. If Patrick was born about 1858, his parents would have been married about one year earlier (1856-57).
5. Bridget's sister Mary Gaharn lived with the Flanagan family in Port Huron. Mary was about two years younger than Bridget.
6. The best estimate for the birth of Bridget is January 1835 and her sister Mary about August 1837.
7. An estimate for when James Flanagan was born is 1822-23. He was a few years older than Bridget (up to ten years older than his wife).
8. Mary, the daughter, was the informant on her sister Catherine's death certificate, which listed Dublin as the place of birth.

An initial assessment of Irish records revealed that the surnames Gaharn and Munford were very uncommon throughout the entire country. Other researchers also commented on how few documents existed for the surname Munford, suggesting that both surnames may have been phonetic. The Gaharn and Munford surnames tended to be clustered in and near County Meath, which is adjacent to County Dublin.

Analysis of church records identified a near-perfect match to all known facts about the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families from Port Huron, MI in the Collinstown Catholic Parish in County Westmeath. Collinstown is about 50 miles away from the City of Dublin. Counties Westmeath and Meath are adjacent.

Verified church records, all from Collinstown, are somewhat illegible and each surname may have been spelled phonetically (i.e. Bumfort versus Munford and Gaghan versus Gaharn):

1. A marriage took place with names that are very similar to James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn in 1855. It was previously estimated that they had been married about 1856-57.
2. A baptism for a child named Bridget Gaharn took place in 1835, which is the exact year that was estimated for her birth. The parents were very similar to John Gaharn and Bridget Munford.
3. A baptism for a child named Mary Gaharn took place in 1838 whose parents were very similar to John Gaharn and Bridget Munford. Her year of birth was previously estimated as 1837.
4. A baptism for a child named James Flanagan took place in 1829. It was previously estimated that he was born around 1822 and that he was a few years older than Bridget. If the 1835 baptism is the correct record for Bridget, that means that James was six years older. The parents of James Flanagan from this baptism record were Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey.
5. There are three baptism records for children of James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn at the church in Collinstown: (1) Patrick in 1856; (2) Mary in 1858; and Catherine in 1861. These are the only three known children born to these parents in the entire parish. These records match the names, ages, and birth order of their children. It was previously estimated that Patrick was born in 1858, Mary in 1859, and Catherine in 1864.

Michael E. Byczek submitted a DNA test in the autumn of 2024, not for genealogy but to intervene as an attorney to promote accurate historical narratives. While the DNA results on ancestry.com do not have adequate data science functionality, there was a positive match with one descendant of Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey from the Collinstown area in County Westmeath. The DNA match does not prove a genetic relationship. It does prove that two users who submitted a DNA test were, within a margin of probability, likely genetic cousins who independently identified themselves as the direct blood descendant of the same Patrick Flanagan and Catherine Casey from County Westmeath.

The combination of church records in the same parish across three generations, a preliminary DNA match between descendants of common ancestors, and Dublin having been listed as the only known reference to a location in Ireland suggests that on the balance of probabilities, James Flanagan and Bridget Gaharn were from the Collinstown Catholic Parish of County Westmeath.

Initial assessment of records from Collinstown shows that John Gaharn and Bridget Munford had at least five children, all baptized at the church in Collinstown:

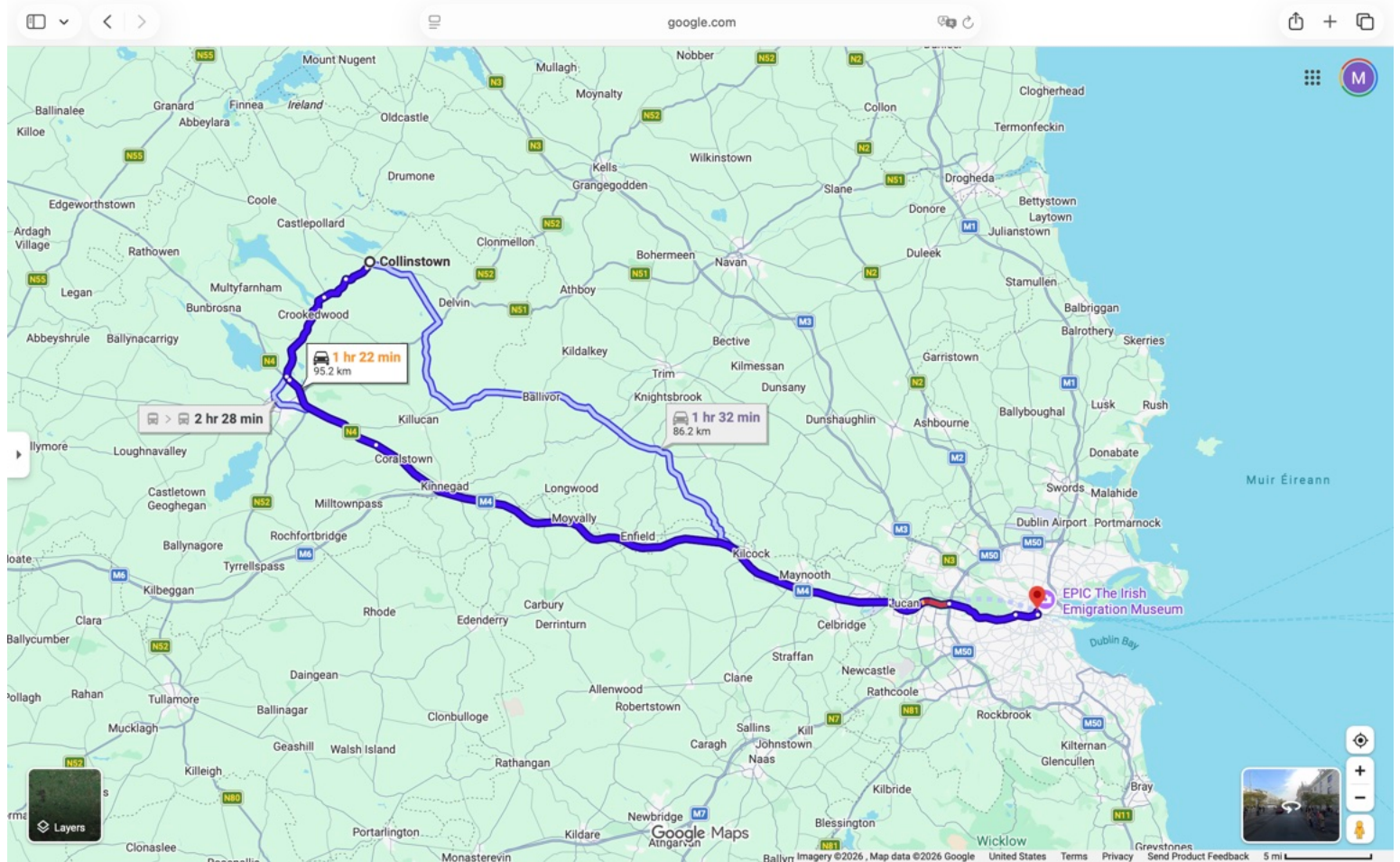
Child	Baptized	Notes
Nicholas	8/27/1826	
John	5/11/1829	
Bridget	3/19/1831	Most likely died prior to 1835
Bridget	3/2/1835	Married James Flanagan and settled in Port Huron, MI (Presumed)
Mary	7/22/1838	Settled in Port Huron, MI and resided with the Flanagan family (Presumed)

It is not possible to determine the most precise spelling of the Gaharn and Munford surnames, but that is how the names were written in documents from Port Huron, MI.

The death certificate and obituary for James Flanagan, husband of Bridget Gaharn, are the only known documents that have not been found that may have listed an exact place of birth. All other documents for the Flanagan and Gaharn families in the United States only listed Ireland for their birth, other than one death record that referenced Dublin.

Even if other possible records are found at another church or in a different county in Ireland, the possibility of Collinstown as the correct origin of the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families cannot be dismissed. It may never be known exactly where the families were from, but Collinstown will always remain a highly probable place of origin because documents from the United States do not appear to ever have included an exact location.

Taken together, these independent records strongly support the conclusion that the Flanagan, Gaharn, and Munford families from Port Huron, Michigan originated in the Collinstown Catholic Parish in County Westmeath.



Proximity of Collinstown and Dublin
Source: Google Maps



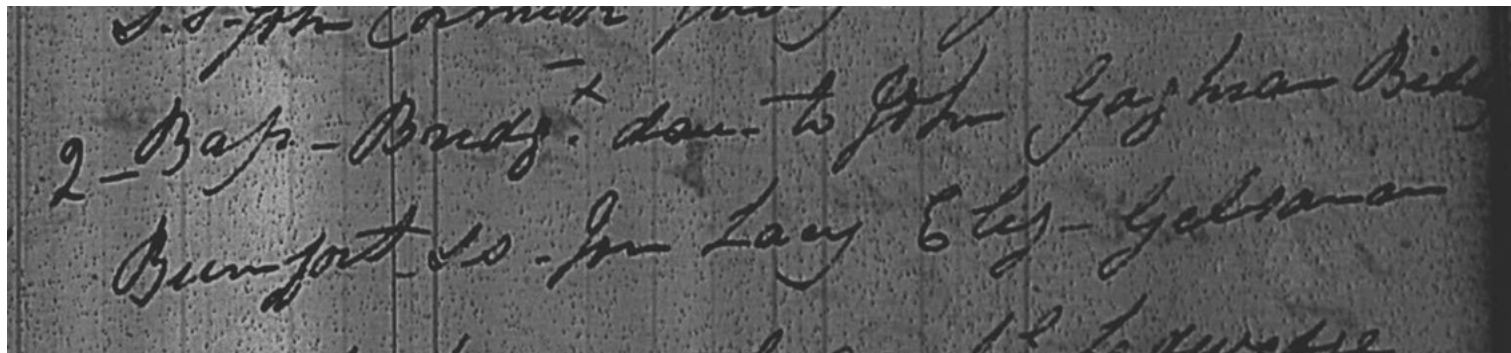
Present-day St. Mary's Catholic Church
Collinstown (County Westmeath, Ireland)

Source: Google Maps (Street View)

Children of John Gaharn and Bridget Munford

Representative documents are shown below.

The best estimate for the birth for Bridget (Gaharn) Flanagan is January 1835. A baptism took place in Collinstown on March 2, 1835 that is near-perfect match.



Presumed baptism of Bridget Gaharn
Baptized on 3/2/1835
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

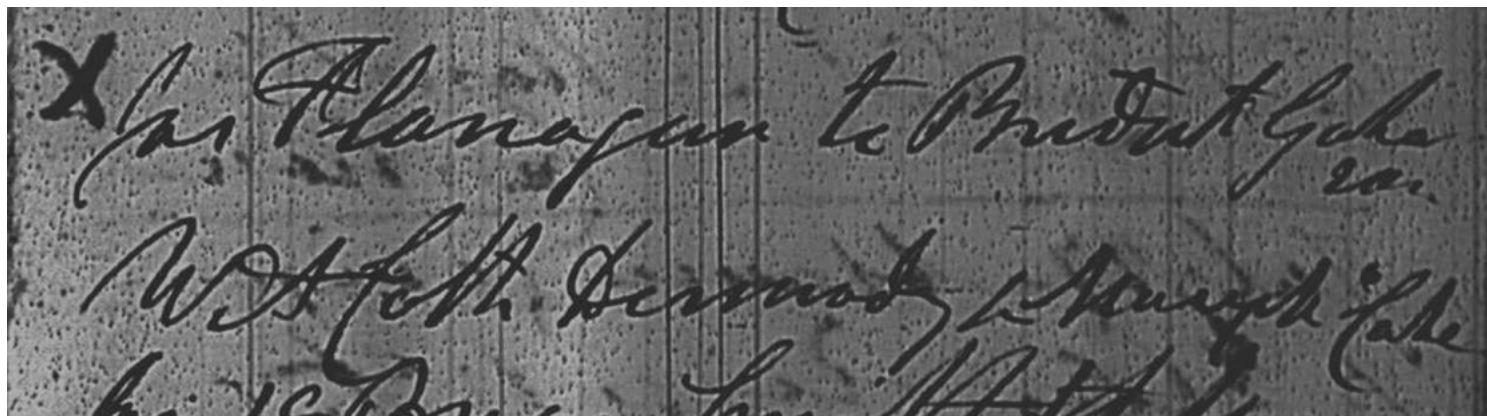
The record is somewhat illegible.

The baby's name was Bridget.

The father was John. His surname is similar to "Gaghan".

The mother's first name was Biddy (otherwise Bridget). Her maiden name was similar to "Bumfort".

Patrick Flanagan used a range of dates for his birth, but the most accurate would be the 1870 census (1858). Therefore, the best guess for when his parents were married was 1857 or earlier. A marriage took place in Collinstown in 1855 that is a very good match.



Presumed marriage record of James Flanagan and Bridget Gahan
Married on 12/1/1855
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

This marriage record is somewhat illegible.

The groom is, without question, James Flanagan.

The bride's first name is Bridget. The first four letters of her surname is "Gahan" followed by what appears to be two letters.

PLACE OF DEATH		STATE OF MICHIGAN	
County <u>St. Clair</u>		Department of State—Division of Vital Statistics	
Township		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
Village		Registered No. <u>63</u>	
City	<u>Port Huron</u>	(No. <u>1113</u> <u>Leamy</u> St.; <u>5</u> Ward)	(If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.)
FULL NAME <u>Bridget Flanagan</u>			
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS		MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH	
1 SEX <u>Female</u>	2 COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	3 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Widow</u>	10 DATE OF DEATH <u>Jan 7, 1914</u>
4 DATE OF BIRTH <u>Jan 18, 1828</u>	17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>Jan 4, 1913</u> , to <u>Jan 7, 1914</u> , that I last saw her alive on <u>Jan 7, 1914</u> , and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>7 P.M.</u>		
5 AGE <u>85</u> yrs. <u>11</u> mos. <u>20</u> ds.	The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows: <u>Old age and gastric intestinal disturbance including indigestion & constipation</u>		
6 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession or particular kind of work <u>None</u>	Contributory <u>Pneumonia</u>		
(b) General nature of industry, business, or establishment in which employed (or employer)	(Signed) <u>J. A. Thompson</u> M.D.		
9 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>	18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS, OR RECENT RESIDENTS)		
10 NAME OF FATHER <u>John Gaharn</u>	At place of death <u>1</u> yrs. <u>0</u> mos. <u>0</u> ds. In the State <u>1</u> yrs. <u>0</u> mos. <u>0</u> ds.		
11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>	Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? <u>Former or usual residence</u>		
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Bridget Munford</u>	19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>St. Joseph Cemetery</u>		
13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>	DATE OF BURIAL <u>Jan 10, 1914</u>		
14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE		20 UNDERTAKER <u>Geo Thompson</u>	
(Informant) <u>Wm. W. McColloch</u>		ADDRESS <u>Port Huron</u>	
(Address) <u>Port Huron</u>			
15 Filed <u>Jan 7, 1914</u>			
REGISTRAR			

1914 Death Certificate for Bridget (Gaharn) Flanagan
Port Huron, MI

Her parents were identified as John Gaharn and Bridget Munford from Ireland.

be made later.

Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan

Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan, widow of James Flanagan, died at her home 1113 Kearney street, last evening. The deceased was eighty-five years of age, and had lived in this city for the past fifty years. She was well known throughout this county and her many friends will regret to learn of her death. She leaves a son John Flanagan, of Los Angeles, California; also two daughters, Mrs. Catherine Hogwood, of Chicago, Ill., and Mrs. Minnie McCullough of this city. The funeral will be held Saturday morning at 8:30 o'clock, from St. Stephen's church. Interment in Mt. Hope cemetery.

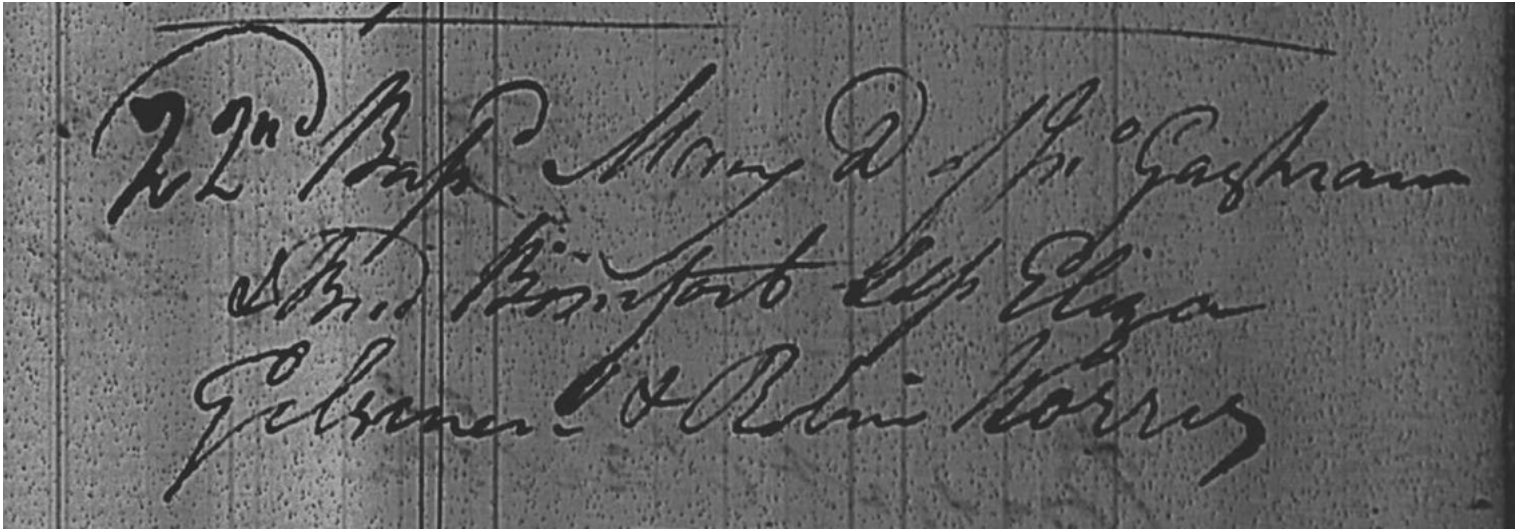
OBITUARY

Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan

The funeral of Mrs. Bridget J. Flanagan was held this morning at 8:30 o'clock from St. Stephen's church. Interment took place in Mt. Hope cemetery.

Bridget (Gaharn) Flanagan Obituary
Port Huron, MI - Times Herald
Top: 1/8/1914
Bottom: 1/10/1914

All known records suggest that Mary Gaharn was about two years younger than her sister Bridget Flanagan. If the baptism above is correct for Bridget, that would suggest that Mary was born about 1837. The best estimate from known documents indicates that Mary Gaharn was born about August 1837. A prospective baptism took place in Collinstown on July 22, 1838.



Presumed baptism of Mary Gaharn
Baptized on 7/22/1838
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

The record is somewhat illegible.

The baby's name is Mary. The father appears to be listed as "J" with the last name similar to "Gaghram".

The mother's first name is "Brid". Her maiden name is similar to "Bomfort".

PLACE OF DEATH		STATE OF MICHIGAN		697
County of <u>St. Clair</u>		Department of State—Division of Vital Statistics		
Township of <u>—</u>		CERTIFICATE OF DEATH		
Village of <u>—</u>		(No. <u>1113 Kearney</u> St.; <u>JAN 7</u> Ward)		Registered No. <u>260</u>
City of <u>Pittsford</u>		FULL NAME <u>Mary Gaharn</u>		[If death occurred in a Hospital or Institution, give its NAME instead of street and number. If away from usual residence, give "Special Information" below.]
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS				
SEX <u>Female</u>	COLOR <u>White</u>			
DATE OF BIRTH (Month) <u>Aug</u> (Day) <u>—</u> (Year) <u>1836</u>				
AGE <u>73</u> years, <u>—</u> months, <u>—</u> days				
SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED <u>Single</u>				
AGE AT MARRIAGE, NUMBER OF CHILDREN	If married, age at (first) marriage <u>—</u> years Parent of <u>—</u> children, of whom <u>—</u> are living			
BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>				
NAME OF FATHER <u>John Gaharn</u>				
BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>				
MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>—</u>				
BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) <u>Ireland</u>				
OCCUPATION <u>Domestic</u>				
THE ABOVE STATED PERSONAL PARTICULARS ARE TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF				
Informant <u>Bridget Flanagan</u>				
(Address) <u>Pittsford</u>				
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH				
DATE OF DEATH (Month) <u>Dec</u> (Day) <u>19</u> (Year) <u>1908</u>				
I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>—</u> , 1908, to <u>Feb 12</u> , 1909, that I last saw her alive on <u>Dec 12</u> , 1908, and that death occurred, on the date stated above, at <u>8</u> M. M. The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows:				
<u>Primarily Carcinoma of Uterus, with metastases to various organs.</u>				
Contributory <u>—</u>				
(Signed) <u>S. E. Cammer</u> M. D.				
1908 (Address) <u>178 1/2 Mulberry St Pittsford</u>				
SPECIAL INFORMATION only for Hospitals, Institutions, Transients or Recent Residents:				
Former or usual residence <u>—</u>	How long at place of death? <u>—</u> Days			
Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? <u>—</u>				
PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL <u>Wt to be buried</u>	DATE OF BURIAL <u>Dec 21</u> 1908			
UNDERTAKER <u>Geo Thompson</u>	ADDRESS <u>Pittsford</u>			
Filed <u>Dec 20th 1908</u>	<u>W. S. Henderson</u>		Registrar	

1909 Death Certificate for Mary Gaharn
Lived with her sister Bridget Flanagan at 1113 Kearney

Her father was identified as John Gaharn from Ireland without a mother's name.
Bridget Flanagan was the informant, but it is possible that the absence of a mother's name was a clerical omission

Mary Gaharn.

Mary Gaharn died at the home of her sister, Mrs. Bridget Flannigan, 1113 Kearney street, Sunday, after a long illness, at the age of 73 years. Funeral will be held from St. Stephen's church Tuesday morning, at 8:30.

Miss Mary Gaharn

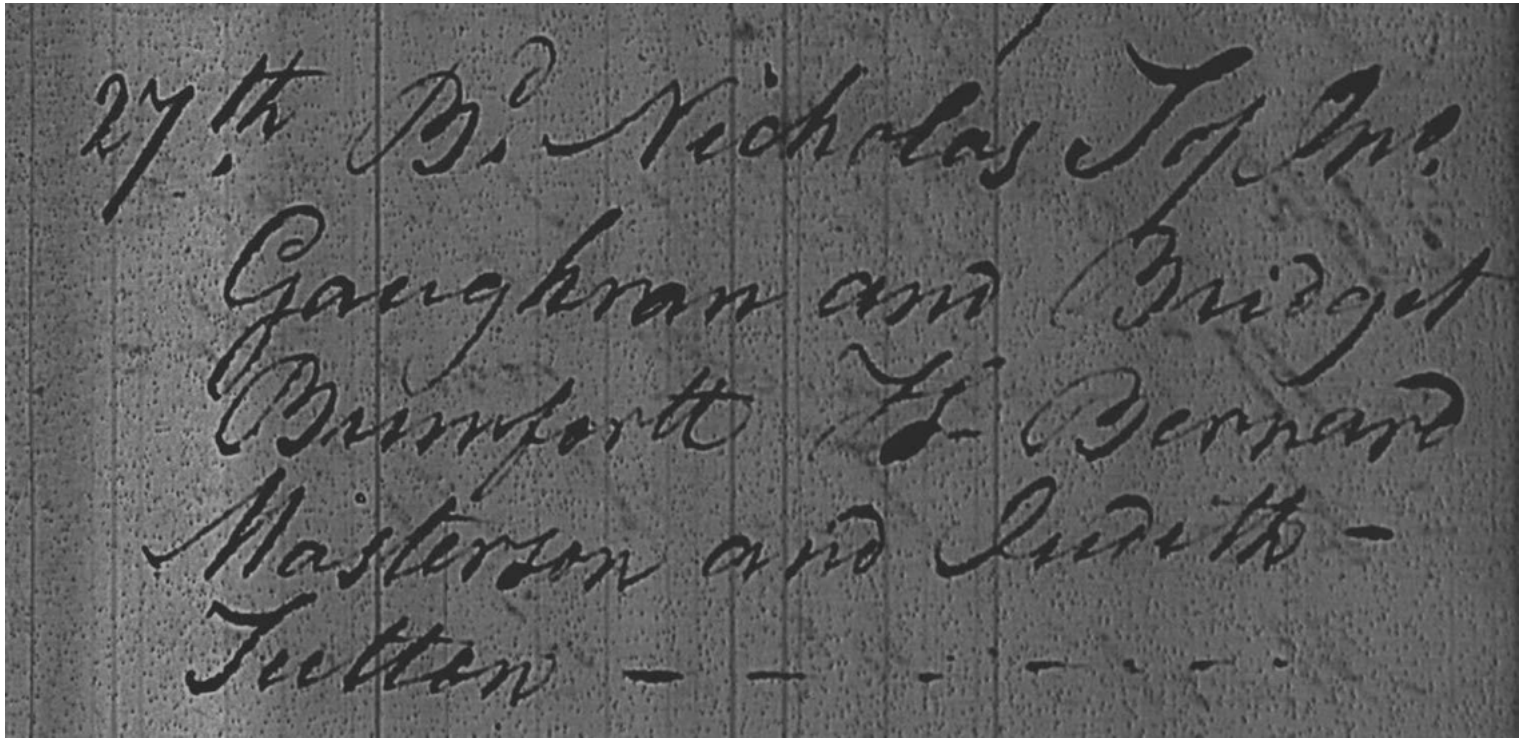
After a long illness, Miss Mary Gaharn, aged 73 years, died at the home of her sister, Mrs. James Flannigan, 1113 Kearney-st. Sunday afternoon. The funeral will be held from St. Stephen's church Tuesday morning at 8:30 o'clock. The remains will be taken to Mt. Hope cemetery for burial.

Mary Gaharn Obituary
Port Huron, MI newspapers (12/20/1909)
Top - Times Herald
Bottom: The Daily Herald



Photo of Mary Gaharn's gravestone at Mt. Hope Cemetery in Port Huron, MI
Source: findagrave.com

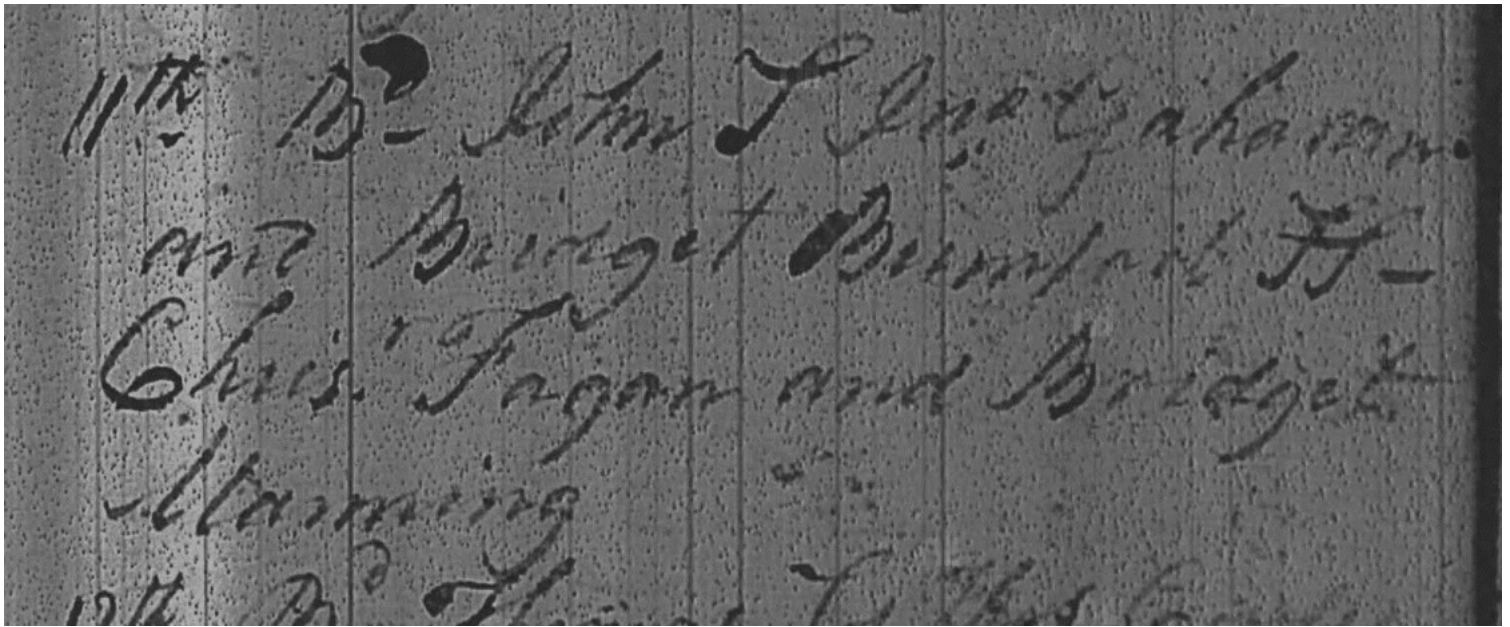
Mary Gaharn is buried alongside James and Bridget Flanagan



27th B. Nicholas Top In.
Gaughran and Bridget
Bumfort H. Bernard
Masterson and Judith -
Tetter - - - - -

Baptism of Nicholas Gaharn
Baptized on 8/27/1826.
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

The father was Jno with a surname similar to Gaughran.
The mother was Bridget Bumfort.



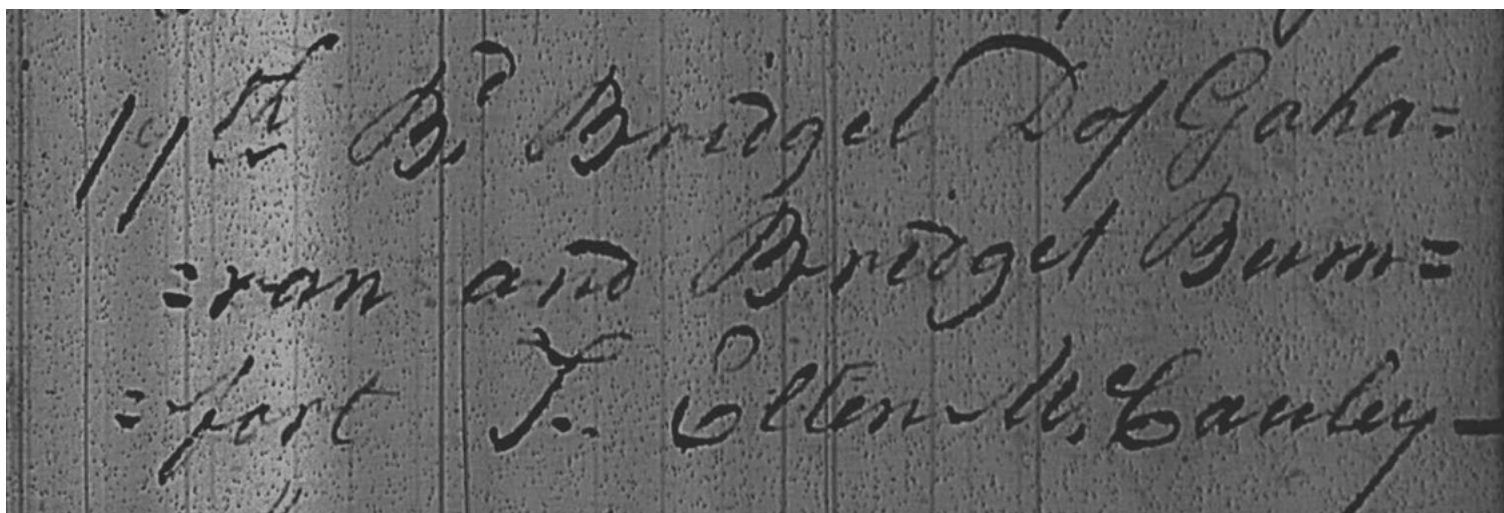
Baptism of John Gaharn
Baptized on 5/11/1829
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

The record is somewhat illegible.

The baby's name was John.

The father was Jno with a last name that was similar to Gaharan.

The mother's name was Bridget with a maiden name similar to Bumfort.



Baptism of Bridget Gaharn
Baptized on 3/19/1831
Collinstown (County Westmeath)

The record is somewhat illegible.

It was common for parents to use the same name for a baby who was deceased.

This baptism took place prior to the other Bridget, who is presumed to be Bridget (Gaharn) Flanagan.

The father's first name is not listed. His surname is similar to Gaharan.

The mother's name is Bridget with a maiden name similar to Bumfort.

Additional Information

Michael E. Byczek, an Illinois attorney and managing real estate broker, has compiled original records for genealogy since 1992. Research and analysis have been published on family websites for over 30 years. A project to compile comprehensive digital, print, and video documentaries for every direct blood ancestor began in September 2024 for accurate online genealogy.

John Gaharn and Bridget Munford are Michael E. Byczek's 4x-great-grandparents. Their daughter Bridget Gaharn (3x-great-grandmother) married James Flanagan, most likely in 1855 in Collinstown (County Westmeath). Their eldest child, a son, Patrick J. Flanagan (2x-great-grandfather) married Anna Kane at Sacred Heart Church in Chicago in 1886. Their second eldest child, a son, Martin J. Flanagan (great-grandfather) married Marie T. Talbot at Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago in 1922. Their eldest child, a daughter, Marie C. Flanagan (grandmother) married Michael S. Byczek at St. Bridget's in the Bridgeport neighborhood in 1950. Their eldest child, a son, Michael M. Byczek (father) married Betty A. Bykowski in 1974 at St. Helen's on Augusta and Oakley in Chicago. They have two children. Michael E. Byczek is the eldest and was born in Bridgeport.

Revision History:

7/8/2026
3/8/2026
6/14/2025
12/31/2024

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