ACHILL ORAL HISTORIES

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Interview with Dr Margaret Lynch 3rd November 2023 18.00 hrs GMT 14.00 hrs Cleveland on Zoom.

Angela: My name is Angela Maye - Banbury I'm the Chairperson of Achill Oral Histories. And I have the great pleasure of having a very, very special guest with us here today all the way—with the miracle that is technology and Zoom—Dr. Margaret Lynch who is with us from Cleveland, Ohio. And, of course, there is a very intimate and very well-established relationship between Achill Island and Cleveland. And Margaret will expand on that as we're talking. Margaret, you're very, very welcome to Achill Oral Histories, and thank you so for contributing your oral history as part of our special collection funded by the Heritage Council Ireland. Margaret has made an outstanding contribution in [sic]progressing and advocating for the Irish diaspora in the USA and particularly in Cleveland, Ohio, over a career that spans some three decades. She has been working as an Executive Director—and is one of the founders of—the Irish American Archives Society since 1994. The Society is an organisation dedicated to the preservation of knowledge and information about the Irish diaspora. The Society is part of the cultural and Information Centre industry, and it is based Cleveland, Ohio. And Margaret—and many congratulations on this wonderful accolade, Margaret—was inaugurated into the Cleveland International Hall of Fame in June 2022. So I can't think of anyone who's better qualified to talk on the relationship between Cleveland, Ohio, and Achill Island than Doctor Margaret Lynch. So thank you so much, Margaret, for agreeing to spend some of your very valuable time with us here today on the 3rd November 2023. Margaret, can I just begin just by asking you how your involvement with the Irish diaspora and particularly Cleveland began?

Margaret: I suppose this began with my birth. I was born into a family that was very involved in Irish American activities here in the city of Cleveland.

My grandparents on my father's side were very active in the Ancient Order of Hibernians and the Ladies Auxiliary of the Ancient Order of Hibernians and were frequently involved in representing [the] Irish nationality at various nationality events in Greater Cleveland. There were, at various times, nationality fairs and things like that—events in the Cultural Gardens of Cleveland which are a series of gardens maintained by different ethnic groups in Cleveland. And so we were involved in that kind of stuff since I can remember. Then my Mom sort of picked up the mantle from my paternal grandparents as well and became equally involved. We were involved in Irish dancing. My aunt on my Mom's side had [taken] Irish dancing when she was a young person as well. And then I took my children to Irish dancing. So Irish dancing was a strong through line. So it was just part of my life from earliest days.

Three of my grandparents were born in Ireland. My fourth grandmother was born here in the US, but she lived in a very Irish-identified neighbourhood, and she was a great storyteller and knew a lot of information about her family and her husband's family. And so her stories were part of our lives from a very early age as well. I then became kind of professionally involved, if you will.

My professional involvement came about a little bit, much later, I suppose. I got reinvolved in Irish dancing when my kids were small and helped out at the Irish dancing school. But then I also was asked to join a group of people who were starting this group, Irish American Archives Society, in 1994. It was started by a professor of history at Cleveland State University. And he was a person who knew my parents, and I had known him, you know, as well. And he was an Irish immigrant himself, and he was a specialist in immigration studies and . . . but also in urban history. He helped found an urban studies programme at Cleveland State University. And he was trying to create a group that would focus on presenting, preserving and helping to interpret and present the history of the Irish in Cleveland. We focused at first on a relationship with a local history museum, Western Reserve Historical Society, in trying to encourage people to donate collection[s] of documents, photographs etc to the Western Reserve Historical Society, and we supported a part time position for a curator. However, we found that people didn't really understand what kinds of things we were interested in preserving. They didn't

know that we were also looking for: you know, not necessarily a[sic] papers of super important people, but if, you know, your family happen to have diaries or letters or whatever, you know. And there seemed like there needed to be more emphasis on community relations or community outreach to raise the profile of what we were trying to do. And that was not the mission…The Western Reserve Historical Society really wanted the librarian to focus on the processing of the papers etc. So we decided to sort of shift our model of operations in 2008. And I had been on the board the whole time from 1994 to 2008. But I resigned from the board at that time because I wanted to apply for the position of Executive Director, which I did do and which I have been doing since 2008. So that then became a huge focus professionally as it had been personally all along.

Angela: Yeah. So that was how that happened. It sounds as though Irish identity was very much part of you when you were growing up and then it evolved into this, you know, professional role that you've, that you had. And you were saying that you wanted to reach out to people whose maybe histories or stories hadn't been as well-documented as more high-profile people. Could you just maybe just explain a little bit about how your relationship with Achill Island has evolved over the years?

Margaret: Yes, right. Well, that's been a key part of all of these experiences because my dad's family was from Achill Parish—we will say—because they left from Tonragee on the Curraune Peninsula. But they had been bounced around a bit because they had been evicted. And so they actually had started out on the island before they ended up in Tonragee. So my grandmother who was born in the US . . . Her family was all from Achill, the Shraheens area. My dad's [Lynch] family had been in the . . . probably Derreens—I'm not saying that right—I should say. Yeah, sorry about that. I didn't grow up hearing that name, so I didn't grow up with an idea of how to pronounce it till later, but anyway. They were evicted from that area and then ended up in the Valley for several decades and then at the end of the day, they went, moved once again, to Tonragee. So I knew . . . My grandmother, although she was born here . . . I knew the stories quite well of both her family, the Gallagher family and my grandfather's Lynch family. There were—They were actually interconnected families anyway and had various

relations, relationships. So my grandmother knew both the histories of both families quite well. And as I said before, she was quite a storyteller. And we were always hearing about stories from Achill from a young age, you know, imprinted on my memory.

And then we started going . . . I guess I started, we as a family . . . I guess my parents had been to Ireland a couple of times. And then my grandmother, after my grandfather died in the 1960s, she also had been to Ireland a couple of times on trips. There was . . . The West Side Irish American Club here in Cleveland organised large trips every year in the ‘60s and early ‘70s. And she went on a couple of those. So she and my parents had sort of made connections, etcetera. Then we took a family trip in 1979. And since then I've, you know, made at least a dozen, probably more, trips to Ireland, partly because my kids were . . . In their Irish dancing participation, they competed at the world's level, and we did go to Ireland a number of time[s] for dancing competitions. Then there were other various, you know, reasons here or there.

When we first started going to Achill, our main connection, well we had two. . . Most of my dad's family had come to Cleveland. Nearly everyone--but, but some—and all of his immediate first cousins were in Cleveland. Not in Ireland. But he did have some second and third cousins in Achill and there were . . . We connected first with the Gallagher side because that was my grandmother's side, if you will, and she was related to the family that—you know, both sides were related—to the family that ran The Way Inn bar in Tonragee on the main road going towards the [Achill] Sound. And then my dad's second cousin was Dennis Gallagher who was the representative for the Gaeltacht region, at that time, in the Irish Parliament. And so we frequently . . . We would go into the Way Inn every trip. And we were related to Rita, who is . . . Johnny and Rita Murphy—Rita was our relative. And then Dennis Gallagher, we would seek him out. And he knew—he was quite a storyteller too—and knew everyone as well. And, you know, he started taking us to, you know, different places. We knew all along where my grandfather’s family house was. It's abandoned, of course. But the property had been through a couple of sales. It has been in the hands of a German doctor for a long time. But it's kind of been abandoned

again in a way, but we always visited the site whenever we were here. We didn't really . . . There were certain people that my grandmother had made contact with, you know, in the couple of times that she had visited. And a couple of them had passed away, and we didn't really always understand, I mean, I didn't understand that they had maybe sons and daughters who were still around. And my grandmother then passed away as well in 1986. So we would have had other relatives that we didn't really know about. And so after my grandmother passed away and then after Dennis Gallagher passed away, and then the Murphys were getting older as well, and Rita passed away etcetera. (And now the bar is empty or, you know, closed.)

But, in the meantime, through as you say before, like the miracles of modern communications, I had connected with a couple of different people online who were relatives. And we're talking now about like third cousins, if you will, for me—who we hadn't known before. One group… We always knew that there were two brothers [who] had stayed. My dad's family name in the US is Lynch, but it's Lynchehaun. And we knew that two brothers of my great grandfather who had stayed in the Valley and had children there, families there. We had never really connected with that group. But a couple things kept . . . sort of happened to give us a little bit more of a start of a connection there. Rosemary Lynchehaun, who works in the tourist office in Achill Sound, is related on her mom's side to another family in Cleveland and was visiting Irish dancing one day. And somebody said "Oh, there's [a] Lynchehaun over there" or something. And I went up to her, and it turns out that she was descended from one of these brothers. And she would be my third cousin. And then online, in a genealogy forum, I met a woman named Mary Jo Needham who was descended from another of those brothers. And she doesn't live in Achill anymore, but . . . and in fact grew up in Salia, but I think she lives in Athlone now. But I, you know, intermittently began corresponding with her about family history. And she knew quite a lot and helped make sense of some things that my grandmother knew but maybe didn't have a context for and really kind of helped to start pinning down the eviction of . . . Both of [the] Gallagher and Lynch families had the tradition that they were evicted by William Pike. And so, you know, she sort

of knew more about that and gave more context for that. That was, that was all through those—all through personal connections.

Then professional . . . The professional started merging in here. And I had done background research as part . . . as director of the Irish American Archives Society, had helped a filmmaker do some background research for a documentary on Johnny Kilbane, the boxer Johnny Kilbane. And he had a colleague in Ireland who was doing another documentary, a totally different project. But it had a Cleveland connection, and he recommended to this other filmmaker that she get in touch with me to help her do some background research as well. And that film happened to be about the aviator, female aviator, Nancy Corrigan whose family was from Owenduff. And as it turned out, not the filmmaker herself, but the woman who was going to narrate the project—and it was really her passion project that was getting this off the ground, Bernadette Masterson. My first, you know, communication was with the director and with the research assistant there. But then I started corresponding with Bernadette. And something began clicking in my memory bank. And I said, "Wait a minute, I think we could possibly be related." And we were and are. And it was through the same family connection that would have connected with us with Rita Murphy at the Way Inn, same series of Gallagher—Gallagher siblings—and Dennis Gallagher as well. And they were descended from another one of these siblings of my great grandmother's. And their name was Corrigan, you know. Her [Bernadette's] mother had married a Masterson. So she came to Cleveland and narrated the film connected with her. And then her brother Brian got in touch with me, and I was able to meet Brian and another sister in Ireland in Lynott's pub on for the first time—last time [we] came in 2022, the summer of 2022. So that kind of connection sort of started happening there.

I'm trying to think - there's another strand of this. But anyway, when we came in the summer of 2022, well, I came. Sorry about this. So dance, I said dancing had brought us back to Ireland a number of times. So one of those years was 2013. We went to Achill. And I made a more concerted effort to try and connect with some of these Lynchehauns who were In the Valley (because of the fact that I had

met Rosemary in Cleveland). And I met Neil who had been a school teacher and he was related to Mary Jo Needham—he's [a] very sharp-witted fellow, I guess I should say—and [he] said "Did I come and watch him play Gaelic football when he was in Cleveland in the 1970s?" And I said "I didn't. I didn't know anything about you." Then he goes "Well then you're not related to me!" (laughs). But anyway, we are. So anyway. So I had sort of made a few forays there. But then this last time we were there in 2022, I made more of an attempt to connect with some people in those Valley Lynchehaun strands and met two sisters. One owns a B&B in the Keel area and her husband does those walks, hikes and guided walking tours. Then this last time we started . . . We connected with another very important person, which is Mary Jo O'Keeffe. And we also met Mary Jo Needham in person. She met us and we went to the Valley with her. But then that was the first time I had met her in person after many years of corresponding. Oh and a little detour there. Through the Achill Diaspora Facebook page, we met . . . Vincent English and Thomas Moran came to Cleveland a couple of times and [we] met them, and they told us about their plans for the Bunacurry monastery. I knew . . . you know, [they] invited several of us to join this Achill diaspora Facebook page. And through the Achill Diaspora Facebook page, then I started meeting up with relatives on both the Gallagher and Lynch side, including a branch of the family that, you know, we had lost contact with in the 1880s. But I recognised his name from research that I had done and reached out to him. And his family had left Cleveland and gone to Kansas [Missouri] in the 1880s. But we've then been in touch, and he's been in touch with Mary Jo Needham as well. He's part of this Lynchehaun group. And I also started meeting people who even connected back to my great, great grandparents who had left from Shraheens in 1870. So I have not met any of them in person yet, and that hasn't quite, you know, come to all total fruition. But I have an idea of where the house [is] that they left. I haven't been able to focus on finding it yet, but I hope to on our next trip.

But in the meantime, then we went back last summer with my entire extended family, and I had contributed two stories about the Gallaghers and the Lynches to Vincent English's book about 'Sharing Our Stories.' Or . . . you know, and right next to one of my stories in the book was a story put together by Mary Jo O Keeffe and her daughter. They've lived near and had done a lot of work on the evicted

abandoned village of Ailt in the southern part of that peninsula there and I had through Mary Jo Needham begun to think that the Lynchehauns had lived in, in . . . and that had been their eviction moment, if you will. And so I got in touch with them [the O'Keeffes]. And we had a great visit. My brother and two sisters were able—and myself—were able to visit her and her family. We returned the next day, and they took us on a hike up the hillside to look down on the area where they had probably been evicted from. And they had discovered a newspaper article where some of the evicted people were described as sheltering in the chapel at Kildownet. And [that] included Michael Lynchehaun, the family of Michael Lynchehaun, which is . . . would have been my, you know, that would have been my family. So all of these things, have been coming together. Certainly, my professional connections have helped to figure out where/ how to connect with other people and broaden that base of connection. But it's grown slowly over time. But, you know, we've . . . it's always been a part of our lives.

One of our best moments on our [2022] trip was when all of my . . . So we had 22 - 23 people [of] different ages, from small toddlers to . . . I guess I was the eldest person there. Maybe not the eldest because my brother-in-law might be a year older than me. But I'm 70 years old and so we all gathered. We rented bikes to go on the Greenway, and the Lynchehaun house is just kind of . . . The Greenway goes behind it. So we stopped and we're all there together at the Lynchehuan ruined house. And for the first time [we] also met one of the members of the Graven family. The Gravens had purchased the property from my great grandparents those many years ago. They left in 1921 and then they [the Gravens] had sold off a part of the property to this German gentleman. But we had never met any of the Graven family. So that was another plus to that visit as well. All kinds of intersections of the personal and the professional have continued.

I've been doing a lot of research. One of my research—ongoing research—projects is to investigate the people who came to North America on the Tuke immigration scheme in 1883 and 1884 And 15 boats left from the Blacksod Bay harbour from . . . And the people came from surrounding communities,

including Achill, Mulranny, and Ballycroy, but—a lot of them—also from the Belmullet Peninsula. But I met through professional connections as well . . . We had…. You mentioned before Achill twinning. Every year in Cleveland . . . We have a Mayo society here in Cleveland and they're connected with the international Mayo society alliances or groups, and every year we have a ball sponsored by the Mayo Society. And for—maybe not all of the 20 years of the Achill twining because I don't think the Mayo society was really active for a couple of those early years—but for many of the years of the Achill Cleveland twinning, this Mayo Society Ball has been a focal point. Guests have come from Ireland, including members of the Mayo County Council, but also from the Achill Development Corp. Terence Dever and Kenny Deary have been the most consistent people. But others have come along the way. And so those connections have been fostered as well. And one of the years, we had the Mayo Society international convention or conference here in Cleveland. And a delegation came from Belmullet for the first time, from the heritage centre in Eachléim (Aughleam) up there. And they had really been the people who had been trying to call attention to this Tuke immigration scheme. [They] had built a website that was designed to sort of help people research or identify who was on those sailings so that people looking for family history might be able to find a connection there. So they made a presentation, and I immediately suspected that there would be—have been . . . A certain number of people would have come to Cleveland. I started a research internship at John Carroll University a local Jesuit University, with the history department there, and have had one to three John Carroll University history students every year since 2015. And [each year] we've taken an individual sailing [of] about 300 people or so and tried to track where they went to in the US, with a special attention to how many people ended up in Cleveland. But since you never know—we've basically been tracking every . . . trying to identify where all of the people ended up. We've only done six sailings in this manner yet. I don't know take . . . Getting to fifteen seems (laughs) . . . I don't know, like, if my energy is going to hold out but we're trying.

But that Tuke immigration scheme, you know, brought new connections to light. One of my research assistants—a student I met when he was in 8th grade—I met him at a genealogy talk. And he had—

those who are really smitten by the genealogy, or bitten by the, genealogy bug will recognise--he had a binder full of all kinds of stuff and . . . But this is pretty serious for an eighth grader. And I've actually had him working for me every summer since then—[the] summer between 8th grade elementary school and high school secondary school. And it turns out that his family on one side were Gannons. And it was actually . . . The Gannons came to Cleveland on the Tuke immigration scheme, which he did not know when we started doing the research. but which we soon figured out. But not only that, I remembered that my great Uncle Neil had had written some memoirs, private for his family, at a certain point. And I looked back at them, and it was the Gannon's land that the Lynchehauns took over when the Gannons left on the Tuke immigration scheme. One of the purposes of the . . . One of the ideas for the Tuke immigration scheme was there were too many people living on too small . . . plots of land that were too small. And the idea was a whole family was supposed to leave. And they were supposed to leave their holdings with someone who was staying behind so that the person who was staying behind could have a larger footprint of a holding. And our family took over the Gannon property. Maybe not immediately, I don't know about that, but I think it possibly could have been—because I had figured out that the Lynches had probably come to Tonragee in the 1880s. But my uncle in his memoirs, great uncle, mentioned that the, that the property had belonged to the Gannons, who had left for America "a long time since." And he was born in the early 1900s so 1880s would have been long time since for him.

So anyway, so there's been innumerable past connections. We noticed that Vincent English had on his website a picture that showed some blankets, kind of woollen blankets. And my sister and I were looking at the website one day and we're like, "Wait a minute, don't we? We have some of these blankets." And the Lynchehauns had brought . . . When they came to the US in 1921, they brought with them four blankets, four woollen blankets. In our memory of them, we thought they were practically like. . . They were sort of like . . . I don't mean to be demeaning, but they were kind of like . . . [They] had the texture of a burlap sack, you know. They were not . . . They were scratchy, and they were not—like, they weren't like—our warm and fuzzy, you know, blankets, you know. But we remembered

my mom had saved them in the basement. And my mom passed away, and we were cleaning out her house, and we found these blankets. So one of the things we did last summer was we gave Vincent English one of the blankets because he told me—or I must have . . . maybe he might have written about this on the Achill Facebook page or something—that they were studying the way that the salvage edges were created on these blankets. Each weaver had a signature way of closing off the edges. And they were trying to sort of collect these blankets to see if they could eventually figure out the kind of signature, you know, of the weaver. So we gave one of the blankets . . . I gave one of the blankets to him in 2022.So anyway I'm sorry, but there's so many connections.

Angela:. No, please don't apologise. No, that was, that was just utterly fascinating. I mean. I was listening, I was kind of mapping the network of family relationships: the Gallaghers, the Lynches/Lynchehauns, your side of the family, and then kind of your physical and metaphorical journey coming back to Achill. And what did you think of? What did you think of Achill when you did get here the first time that you came here? You know, with your family, because having learned, heard all these stories and you were saying that you know your grandmother's [a] great storyteller and you have these objects, you have the scratchy blanket. I know exactly the kind of blanket that you . . . that you mean. It's not that . . . your cuddly Kashmir, is it? It's, you know, it’s industrial, there’s not a lot of softness there. But yeah, as a kind of artefact as a cultural artefact . . . Over a century, it's survived and there's a part of you here in Bunacurry Monastery. So that's a really nice thought, I think. So what [did] you think of Achill when you first got here? Did you have any preconceptions of what it would look like or feel like you were kind of emotionally connecting with your past?

Margaret: Well, we always knew . . . My grandfather, he used to tell his kids . . . They would say—this was something they loved to hear him say—"What was your address in Ireland? What was your address?” And he would say “No 1 Seashore Boulevard.” Because the house was right on the Bay, right on the southern part of Blacksod Bay. I mean, it probably had some other inlet name right there. But you know it was basically part of Blacksod Bay. And my great uncle, one of my great uncles, told me

about standing on the shore and looking. You really couldn't…You weren't really looking at the Atlantic Ocean there, really, you know. But you know, he would imagine, you know, that he is standing out there. And he always knew or was pretty sure he's going to end up in Cleveland because so many of the family had, you know, come to Cleveland in multiple generations. And he stood on the shore of the Bay and thought about America, being in Cleveland, being on the other side and how he would be there one day. And so that placement of the house where it stands etcetera was very resonant to us, to me. And I think I had, you know, some kind of picture of it. I didn't know exactly what it was going to be. But, you know, I had . . . It had evoked a picture in me. And we knew that there was a hill behind it, behind there, you know . . . The Currane hill on the peninsula is behind it. And my grandfather had some . . . like the back end of something. Tondragee was supposed to be like the back end of some . . . back end of the hill or something like that. I'm sorry, but I don't remember exactly what. But they had some saying. And my other grandfather would tease him and say "I always knew you were hilly billy." Hillbilly is an American phrase for people [who] come from the Appalachian Mountains. Which was funny because my other--that Grandfather[who] was saying that—lived on the top of the hill on the Belmullet Peninsula. So . . . But it wasn't as high. But anyway . . . So I guess I had, you know, a bit of an idea of it. I didn't really... I thought the Valley was going to be an actual valley, which it wasn't at all. Which we were like, "Wait a minute. This is like a crossroads. What is [it]? Why is it called 'The Valley?'" You know, I should call [out the Irish name of] the Valley. [I] didn't know that it was kind of an anglican- . . . an anglicization and truncation of a Gaelic name, of an Irish name. But so, you know, some things really surprised. I'd heard . . . My grandmother had stories to tell about her father. They did a lot of—she didn't have this word, but, you know, I would now recognise as 'booleying'—on Slievemore during the summer as the teenagers [of] the family—or even younger than teenagers—would go up and take their cows up the hillside and stay on the hillside during the summer. And she had lots of stories from her father about that experience. So I had an idea of Slievemore. It was [in] my head already. And I saw the relationship of the Valley to Slievemore. Both the Gallaghers and the Lynches, as I said earlier, had been evicted, and both had ended up in the Valley. I didn't know then but, you know . . . that the

Lynchehauns had lived near Grace O' Malley Castle in Kildownet, so that was like a special place as well. You know, we didn't . . . It was confirmed much later by the O'Keeffe's, you know, et cetera. And Mary Jo Needham had introduced the idea that it could be, you know, have been and then this, this long, distant relative who had . . . that ended up in [Missouri--corrected from Kansas].his actual great grandmother had Kildownet given as her birthplace on her death record, which you usually don't get. It's usually just Ireland, you know, it's usually not that specific, so…

So yeah, I mean, but the beauty of especially Keel, Keem Bay and things like . . . that was just stunning, and I maybe didn't quite expect how stunning it was going to be. But my grandfather had always said to his kids "You can't eat scenery." And so it was all these different things where, you know, we're coming back there to appreciate this beautiful scenery. It was immaterial to him in a sense—or he claimed it was, I don't know if it really was—but, you know, because it didn't provide enough of a livelihood. So we enjoyed…We used to meet . . . They were always very friendly to us at the Way Inn. And there were some old Lynchehaun brothers. They were kind of hard to understand. But they were also descended from one of the Valley families, but they had intermarried with the Tonragee east family, also [a] Lynchehaun family. But they would always talk to us, and there'd always be a lot of teasing in the bar about "the Yanks have returned," "the exiles have returned." My great grandfather was nicknamed Michael Vicksheen. And so to distinguish our Lynch direct line from others, the Murphys always called us the Vicksheens. You know, "the Vicksheens are here," you know, blah, blah, blah. So even though we didn't know . . . And years later [we] found that a Gallagher relation would have also been there frequently and was annoyed that we were always so friendly with these Lynchehaun brothers because he was as equally related to us and we never, you know . . . But we were like "We didn't know you." His name was Patty Joe McGinty, and he lives in Tonragee west, I think, hopefully still. And so there were people that, you know, we might have known but we didn't know at that time. We hadn't really connected at that time. Nonetheless, we always felt welcomed.

And even though . . . There were people in Cleveland whose families had come much more recently, had come to Cleveland in the 1950s and 1960s. And it was their parents who were immigrants. And they had first cousins that they were visiting, you know. So in the . . . in the scheme of Achill connections, we didn't actually rate or rank in Cleveland because our connections were, you know, my dad's second cousins and our third cousins, et cetera. And we didn't even know half of them at the time when we were growing up. We didn't know any of them, you know, and we didn't have first cousins to go back to every summer the way there were lots of people in Cleveland, maybe they didn't go back every summer, but they went back, you know, frequently and or their . . . They would go back, their families would send them back for the whole summer, you know. At a certain . . . One of my big partners in crime here is Colleen Corrigan Day. And she is the person who's kept the Achill-Cleveland Twinning alive. And she's the officer of the Mayo Society. And she went back with her grandmother for a whole summer to Dooega when she was 12 years old. And so we didn't even, you know, in the landscape of Achill Cleveland, we were under the radar, if you will, in a way, because we didn't have those first- generation connections that other people did have and a lot of people at dancing have.

Angela: Yeah. That’s really interesting. I think the different connections that bring us to Achill and you know how we're all, we're all interconnected in many ways. I think you know, whether it's through, you know, sort of bloodlines or first generation or second generation. There just seem to be a real kind of community of people across the world, the Irish diaspora, the Achill diaspora seem particularly unique in many ways, I think, because there was such a mass exodus from, you know, the times of the Great Hunger and because of the injustices with the evictions, during that period and after that period and people trying to assign meaning to these events and to feel that sense of connection with their sense of self. It kind of goes very much to the core of who we are. I've tried to find a robust source to back this up, but there's something like 250,000 people in Cleveland who have Achill heritage. And, of course, that depends on how you define Achill Island or parish or heritage. And a quarter of a million is very, very compelling. Unlike the chain migration to Scotland and other parts of the UK from Achill where the men particularly—and many of the women—but the men particularly would go and do tatty

hooking in Scotland and begin the north and work down through the seasons and leaving the women to take care of the home, to try and eek something out of these, you know the very barren land that we have here. And was it your father who said “We can't eat scenery?”

Margaret: My grandfather. That whole group of both Gallaghers and Lynches that lived in Tonragee . . . They all did tattie hoking every summer. My great grandfather did and used to take the train back through and throw his bag out the window when they're, you know, passing across his property so he wouldn't have to carry it back from the [Achill] Sound. But we knew about that from my grandmother's story. She had grown up here, so she didn't use the terminology. But as soon as I started hearing or understanding these as a researcher, I was like “Oh yeah.” Like booleying. I recognised that was what my grandmother was telling me about, telling us about.

I would be remiss in not mentioning two other major projects that we did as the Irish American Archives Society that connected me back to Achill in different ways as well. We had Johnny Kilbane, the world championship boxer, his father had left from Ireland. Probably Cloghmore on . . . and he might have also been part of this eviction group in Ailt as well and his family. There's also a family on Achillbeg, and Mary Jo O Keeffe’s father had been—it was a Kilbane, a Kilbane—and had been part of helping them identify where the, where the family might have lived, both in Cloghmore and on Achillbeg. But at any rate, we had . . . A great grandson of Johnny Kilbane is living, was living, in Cleveland, and we connected with him. And we did a lot of activity around that 2012 commemoration of the 100 years since his first title fight in 1912, and we connected with the Achill-born documentary film maker. I mentioned him but not by name, but his name is Des Kilbane. And he came to Cleveland and was doing research and filming as part of his “A Fighting Heart” documentary about Johnny Kilbane. Then we commissioned him to do a documentary about the making of a sculpture that we commissioned that would be a commemoration of Johnny Kilbane, [the] building . . . Through some fate, we were able to capture the attention of Rowan Gillespie, who had done the Famine group in Dublin, and he did a group of three figures: Young Johnny, champion boxer Johnny, and elder statesman

Johnny. After he [Johnny Kilbane] retired as a boxer, he went into local politics and was the clerk of courts for many years. So that project kind of brought us, you know, in touch with more Achill based kind of research.

And then during the pandemic, we were looking for a way to do something virtually that would keep . . . make it seem like we were still doing something, et cetera. And well, two things. But the first is that I knew of the book “My Father's Wake” by Kevin Toolis, and I looked him up online and noticed that he did talks. And then also . . . and I really was kind of like getting in touch with him to see if he [would] do a talk online about, you know, the subject of the book. But he had kind of evolved in a different direction by then. I saw that he had filmed himself doing a poem on a beach. And the . . . I think he's from Dookinella. (All of a sudden, it's gone off my head where he lives.) Yeah, and the beach had been re discovered, if you will. Or the . . . because of the . . . I don't know. . . He [Kevin Toolis] was standing on the beach that had been, you know, covered by water for many years. But anyway, and we actually commissioned him to do another poem like that about immigrating from Achill to Cleveland. And we showed it online. And then we actually commissioned him to do another one, which . . . or he was . . . had a project kind of going (and we helped participate in it) about the Irish struggle for independence and especially in the West in the Newport and Achill areas, etcetera. So that was another, you know, project that sort of interconnected us with Achill. The . . . I think Sean Molloy did the drone footage, video footage of Achill. It was . . . that was really stunning. That was incorporated in the backdrop for Kevin’s filmed poem, if you will. So you know there have been, you know, I've been like kind of on the lookout for things that would, you know, foster the connection more. And that certainly was one of those things that wasn't a personal, I’m not related to Kevin Toolis that I know of. But anyway, it . . . but it helped foster that, that connection, if you will.

Angela: Absolutely. I think all these different ways that people interpret Achill in the particular meaning that Achill has for so many people and so many different levels, whether it's, you know in, you know, Kevin Toolis's case in the form of writing or literature inspired by his own father's death and the way

that the Irish commemorate death. Or whether it's through poetry. And we've got so many wonderful poets here, Michael O'Donnell, who is also very kindly shared his oral history with us as part of this phase and the last couple of months, John F Dean, of course, a very famous poet, who was born in Bunacurry. His very early memories are of the monastery that you talked about earlier, Margaret, and these, and these different ways that Achill connects people. And what do you think it was like for the Achill people going to Cleveland for the very first time? I mean, it's quite hard to imagine when you're when you're young, you sort of get on with things and you probably don't think about it too much. But I can't think of two more contrasting environments in terms of a culture shock, you know, going from a very rural quiet, you know. Not really a lot of infrastructure, you know., little or no public transport, you know, works to a city as modern, as it still is, and as industrialised as Cleveland was then. What's your sort of interpretation of the perception that the Irish had, particularly the people from Achill when they first got to Cleveland? Is there anything that you've read that sort of . . . or seen that gives us any insights there?

Margaret: Yeah. I have thought about that a lot. In particular, when the Irish came to Cleveland, they ended up, you know, doing these sort of hard labour kinds of jobs, you know, hard manual labour. And they were always living in these neighbourhoods that were right on the edge of industrial activity--because when they first started arriving in the 19th century, you mostly tried to live close by to where you worked. So that kind of meant you were living on top of... And the industry was always growing, and it just didn't stay over there. It was like spreading and growing. And so they were always living in these very precarious kind[s] of places, really perched at the edge of railroad yards or docks and things like that. And my grandmother's family, she was Gallagher on both sides. There were two different neighbourhoods that were, [that] could be described in that way, which were Newburgh, which grew up around the steel mills, and then the Angle which grew up around the iron ore docks and the shipbuilding yards and railroad yards. And different sides of her family had lived in both neighbourhoods. And they were literally… And her story and her stories of growing up were all of that hard scrabble. You know, picking up coal that had fallen off the railroad cars in the coal yard. You know,

scrounging around to see if they could get enough coal that they wouldn't have to buy or pay for, you know, that had fallen off the railroad cars. There was an oil tank. Huge. I mean, like, I'm not talking about a little, you know, I'm talking about like, you know, as big as a house kind of oil tank at the bottom of the hill where she lived at one point. So her stories were definitely of the urban . . . Her own personal family stories were definitely of the urban—dense, urban, crowded, noisy environment. And yet she had these stories, both from her parents—who had both grown up in Ireland—but also then through my grandfather, of living by—her family had come from Shraheens—living by the Sound. And then the Tonragee group, you know . . . Her family on one side—and then her other Gallagher side—had intermarried with the Lynches and were also in Tonragee. We got the idea that that was very rural and picturesque and scenic, you know. So that contrast was very alive to us in in her stories.

Various people—my great grandfather, her father—had worked on the iron ore docks. They had these huge buckets, if you will, that they were filling with iron, and then they would use a chain, pully, situation to swing it over and load it up into the train cars. And one of those buckets had slipped and crushed his foot when he was working on the dock. And then, you know, after that he always had trouble working because his foot had been crushed. I mean, he always did work. But then he had to go to basically ditch digging for the gas company. They were putting in the gas lines and he had ditch digging. And, you know, there was some humiliation to all that because the Gallaghers . . . And this is like our Dennis Gallagher, the TD—his grandfather had been a school master in Currane. And my great grandfather helped him in the school and would have liked to have been a schoolteacher himself. But this was his older brother and there's already one schoolteacher in the family, you know. And so his other brother Hugh was turned to shoe making. But my great grandfather emigrated instead. But he was always kind of bitter, and there was this saying that, that we heard: “For all your . . . for all your learning, you still only have shovel and pick.” So we had the idea that he had . . . that in the Achill community, they, they had the aspiration to be educated. And another, his youngest brother, became a priest. But he ended up being basically a ditch digger, you know, with shovel and pick. And he was kind of bitter about that. So that was actually . . . And then my other, her, my grandmother's

grandfather on her mother's side, worked in the steel mills on the blast furnaces. And it is like working in, in an inferno, you know. So that culture shock, you mentioned before that—I've written some plays, and that culture shock is actually a big part of what I've written about. But there is something that survived and that was the sense of community and fellowship. And that helps sustain people in a new place. And then they really—because of how forbidding it was—they really kind of huddled together in these neighbourhoods and kind of recreated their community, [their] sense of community here, first in Newburgh. But then there were some big strikes and the Irish workers were kind of shut out because they were the strike organisers. And they actually imported workers from Central Europe to replace them, if you will. And so the Angle then became kind of the focal immigration area for a lot of the Achill people. And my grandmother . . . It was called . . . One of the nicknames was "Achill Patch," you know, because so many people from Achill [were] there.

And this is where a lot of the Tuke immigration group settled. I mean, there were other places too, but there was a particular concentration of Tuke immigration settlement in the Angle in the 1880s and not just the Tuke-sponsored immigrants, but those who were also fleeing the same famine conditions at that time. And I was able to find a paper that was part of a parish report to the diocese that basically says that . . . To explain why so many new parishioners were not paying money to the parish that year—they were non-paying members of the parish—the pastor had written something about "so many poor immigrants arrived this last year." You know, basically they had nothing to give. And it was a report in 1884 for 1883. And that was the year when the Tuke immigrants started arriving. So I think this group that I mentioned that went to Kansas [Missouri], I mean, they were, you know, they couldn't take it, you know? They longed for the rural environment that they'd grown up in. And there was a certain amount of the Tuke immigration group that did settle . . . And there was an active recruitment of...There were some priests in the Midwest, Kansas, Nebraska, Minnesota . . . were active Irish priests, who were actively recruiting Irish immigrants to settle on farmland rather than these evil, terrible cities where they would be led astray and where they'd be poor, you know. And so although this group of …the woman was a Lynch, but the man was Sheridan . . . Although they had arrived much earlier, they

left Cleveland in the . . . in 1883. Probably because they knew some of these Tuke immigrants—because they were all from the Valley and they came to Cleveland first, all of them. But they went on to… Many of them actually went to Nebraska. And these Sheridans did go to Nebraska first. But it was a very windswept . . . and not the greatest land either, the first place that they went to in Nebraska. And they ended up going to Kansas [Missouri] and then stayed there. But they were looking for that rural environment again. But most people . . . I have the story on my grandmother's side. They actually went out to Kansas as well at first. This was the 1870s before the Tuke immigration. But my great grandmother was like "This is, like, too lonely out here. I don't want to die here. I want to go back to Cleveland with our people." And she said, "our people" and "my people." And you know . . . and they came back to Cleveland instead. And so that sense of community did help some people, you know, over that and was all the more important because of that. And the churches were very important. Saint Malachi's parish was in the Angle, and St Pat's on Bridge just is where a lot of people moved up when they moved out of the Angle. And St Colman's further west. These were parishes where they recreated community, and it was very sustaining. And so, yeah, I think it was a big shock to the system. But I think having so many family, friends and neighbours, familiar faces as well, did help them through it.

Angela: Well, that's really interesting. Really interesting what you were saying about, you know, the, the church trying to reconnect people with a more rural landscape that they would have thought would have been more in keeping with their expectations of immigration. But then finding that some people, for some people, it's more about the people rather than the place. That you connect with your sense of identity is really around place and where you're from, you know—in inverted commas--it's the people, your family, that you have around you that actually give you that, you know, clear sense of identity. And we've talked quite a bit about accounts from the past and you're obviously very much involved with archival information and trying to preserve the past and oral histories, like Achill Oral Histories is in keeping with that commitment to preserve and curate the life stories of the people of Achill Island, past and present, for current and future generations. And what role do you, Margaret,

see oral history as having in terms of trying to preserve, to keep the past alive? You've mentioned so many names and connections that you have there, and I'm imagining myself that when someone plays your audio recording back and you know next week or next month or in years ahead that that they too will be inspired to maybe even connect directly with you because they will know that you are a relative of so and so in Shraheens or, you know KIldownet or… And what role do you think oral history has to play or can play to try and preserve these important stories?

Margaret: Yeah, I think it's super important. And I probably . . . Because I had such a good example [of one] before me, of my grandmother being such a good and lively and devoted storyteller. And a certain amount of the research that I've done since then, both on a family level and a broader community level, has been sort of inspired to find out if I can document, you know, some of the things that she talked about. And it has come to pass. And I said before that we didn't rate in the scheme of things in Cleveland, Achill Cleveland, Cleveland Achill because we didn't have first cousins and we didn't go back there every summer and visit our first cousins. But in reality, we've got something else because our family came here . . . Different parts of our family, extended family group, came at different times. And my grandmother had stories about all those time period[s]. And my great uncles as well. But unfortunately, we didn't grow up . . . They [the great uncles] had moved to Florida by the time I was more cognizant of things and [I] only got to talk to them in short bursts a couple of times. But my one great uncle wrote some things down. So our family history actually encapsulates a lot of that history. Going back actually even to the 1830s, my grandmother insisted to us that both the Gallaghers and the Lynches had come to Cleveland in 1839 and left because there was a bank panic in 1839. So they came to the US in 1830s at some point but went back to Ireland because of this bank panic, feeling that they didn't have a strong enough foothold here and things were tenuous. And they decided to go back. I'm not going to say I didn't believe her. But I wasn't sure that that was possible. And I hadn't really heard anything, you know, that would kind of verify that. But then I started doing . . . Another little obscure branch of research that I have gone along is: there was a group of people, and their name was Gallagher. But I don't think they were our direct relations at the time. But they were called

the Gallagher Ninety Nines. And my great grandfather had said to his kids: “There are three kinds of Gallaghers in Cleveland.” (And I'm not sure if he meant three kinds of Gallaghers in our family; we did have three Gallagher lines.) They were the Gallagher Ninety Nines, The Fireballs, and the Bhí dhá na dóite, which was our group, which were the ‘burnt sticks.’ The Gallagher Ninety Nines! I was like, what is that? And I never could find anybody that knew much about it. And then I'd hear somebody who would say it and then they go like, “Oh, well, you know, whatever, it just means like a, you know, run of the mill Gallagher”, you know, or something like that. “There's so many of them”, blah, blah, blah. Well, I finally figured out at one point and finally found, just by accident . . . Somebody else found a newspaper article from the 1920s when this group of people was having a family reunion. And they called themselves the Gallagher Ninety Nines. It was a real group of people. But they had actually come here in the 1830s and they were from Tiernaur, really. They weren't from Achill per se, but they did have Achill…Some of them married people from Achill, and they were probably . . . they were related to that early priest, Father Mick Gallagher, who was there during the Famine. And they, you know, they had all these interrelationships with Achill. And they were here in the 1830s, you know. And I was like “Could my grandmother have been right?” You know, could they have actually come [in the] 1830s because I can't find any evidence that they were here. Like, I can't find them in any directories or anything. Yeah. But then, then you've got that. So that was an early, you know, moment of immigration really early and kind of post-Canal. Oh and my grandmother had the story. So my grandmother . . . This is another thing, oral history. And I am going to get to a point about oral history here. But she always said that the first Achill man in Cleveland was a Patrick Grealis. It's sort of like I could never find, you know, anything that would, you know, connect up. And she said he worked on the Canal. So I thought, like, that meant digging the canal. But somehow or another when I found out that [this] Gallagher Ninety Nine group came to Cleveland in the 1830s . . . The canal was already dug then. The canal in Ohio was dug from 1825 to 1832. But they came, and their patriarch of the Gallagher Ninety Nines had been involved in digging another canal, the Welland Canal, which connected Lake Erie with Lake Ontario and bypassed Niagara Falls. And then he and a lot of people went on then and came to

Cleveland and . . . to start digging this Ohio and Erie Canal. But they [the canal diggers] didn't stay in Cleveland because it started in Cleveland, and they went South. But the Gallagher Ninety Nines . . . He went back to Ireland. And then he brought everyone back—not to do more canal digging—but to Cleveland. Because he understood that it was going to be a trading hub for transportation and commerce. And so they really didn't work on digging the canal. But so then I was like "Does that necessarily mean digging the canal, or could it mean working..."? You know, there were lock tenders and things like. So anyway, long story short, I think that Patrick Grealis probably came to Cleveland in the 1830s as well, as a teenager, I mean like a 14 or 15 year old. And then he ended up working on a lock of the Erie Canal in New York near Albany for many decades. And then when all these people started coming in the 1880s, he was still alive. I mean, I'm only finding this through census records etcetera. He came to Cleveland [in the 1880s] because all kinds of people were coming in the 1880s because of this Tuke immigration scheme. And his wife—and his second wife and a child--are buried in Cleveland. But they can't be found in any Cleveland records before that. But they can be found in Troy, New York, you know, where there was a lock [in] the area of the Erie Canal in New York for several, for multiple decades. So anyway, what I'm trying to say is oral history, you want to back it up with as much documentary research as you can. But it contains the seeds of information that maybe hasn't been documented yet. This 1830s immigration time frame, I don't think has been really documented. But I do believe now that my family was here in the 1830s but went back. Then we have people who came in the 1860s, which was the next big sort of Achill . . . I mean, was really the. . . The first big wave of Achill Cleveland immigration happened in the 1860s. That family group that I mentioned to you that ended up in Kansas [Missouri] came then. My actual three times great grandfather is buried in Cleveland. He died here in 1868 even though his son stayed in Ireland. And all my direct line was born in . . . There was a small group that had been evicted 20 years earlier or 15 years earlier and hadn't found a secure enough, you know, place in Achill and they came in the 1860s. So I have that group. Then I have people… I don't have anybody in my direct line who came on the Tuke immigration scheme. But both in the Gallagher and the Lynch side, there were people in our immediate . . . siblings

of my direct line who came to Cleveland in the 1880s. And that's, you know. I've got the people who came to Newburgh and people who came to the Angle. And then 1920s—another big time of immigration—my grandmother, my great grandmother . . . Part of her impulse was . . . She did not want her sons getting involved in the Civil War. And she sent her younger, her older, sons off one by one because she didn't want them conscripted by the British in World War 1. So they actually came before World War One. The three older brothers came before World War One, and then the whole family came in '21. But part of the reason was she felt that [the one] who would have been the oldest son at home at this point had gotten into some kind of a confrontation with a British soldier on a train coming back from Scotland, coming back from England and Scotland, for the summer. And she . . . And there was . . . All kinds of people were choosing side[s]. The treaty hadn't been signed yet. But there was a lot of agitation at this time, and she wanted to take them out from that, apparently. So we've got the 1920s immigration. And then all of her Gallagher relatives, all almost every single one of them, came to Cleveland in the 20s. Then, so, the only part we were missing was the part that was, that was most visible in my youth—which was the most recent wave in the 50s and 60s. But we really represented all these other phases, quite extensively. And my grandmother's storytelling had actually had all of that in it, even if she didn't place it in quite the way a historian might have. But it had all of these, you know, immigration waves. She didn't know Tuke immigration—like, that too. Tuke didn't mean anything to her. But she knew that her aunt had come in the 1880s, and she knew that her father came at the same time period. But he didn't take the Tuke immigration money. He didn't take the free passage, and he looked down on the people who did take the free passage. He's the one who was a bit bitter about his education. But then he wrote letters for all these people who were just arriving because he was educated. He wrote letters back. And my grandmother would say…She was . . . There were people writing letters to Belfarsad, that was a place name in her head, you know. Like you know, and she thought it was, I don't know, it just stuck in her head, you know? Belfarsad, you know, and so we encapsulated all this history, you know, that could . . . that I have spent my later years now documenting. But [it] was all there in my grandmother's stories to begin with. So very long, long and

roundabout answer. But the oral history, I think, is the kind of beginning of everything and needs to be pursued.

I have done a small aspect . . . I have not really…there's so many different things . . . I'm the only paid person in my organisation. And there's a lot of things. And I cannot . . . It's not an Achill-centric organisation. It's really supposed to be all the Irish in Cleveland. So I can't really, you know, come out and make it totally Achill-centric there. But it is legitimately a strong strand of it, you know. So I've got, you know, these other things I'm trying to juggle and do, and lots of people's stories to try to help and preserve. I have not had a . . . had not had a real opportunity to really focus on oral history—even though it had been a big part of my own life—on a professional level. Until the pandemic. I started doing a podcast, and the first series of it was all research work. And I researched and wrote the episodes, and I spoke them. But then I started a second series, which was an interview series. And we didn't call it oral history, but in effect it was. Now we're trying to fit within a certain time frame because they were released as podcasts. And so they didn't, you know, none of them were as in-depth as this one. You've allowed me to go on and on. I appreciate that (laughs). But anyway, so they weren't maybe as thorough. But they're like my first attempt, and I did [it] the exact same way you're doing it. I did them all on Zoom recording, but we only used the audio and . . . But we edited it. I hope to get and do a second round of those. And I did start thinking about . . . But I was like, oh, I have so many people to talk to here in Cleveland. But I did start thinking about, well, I'm doing these online, I could, you know, have a series where I interview people in Ireland. And but you beat me to it with the transatlantic interviewing. But maybe we'll repay the favour and do a version of that at some point as part of ours too. But you know . . . So I do think it's very, very important and it can be really an inspiration to then try to build the documentation that fills out the picture, I think it does sort of give you kind of like behind a veil, not behind a veil . . . Sometimes incomplete because people's memories are, you know, focused on one thing and not another thing. Or maybe something happened when they were young, and they didn't understand the significance of it when they were young. And so what they remember isn't what an adult would have remembered or, you know, whatever. So it's kind of patchy sometimes,

let's say. So I don't think you can rely on it on its own by, you know, totally by itself. So I do think you have to kind of fill it in with research, additional research. But I think it's a vital part of the total research picture, if you will. It's all because of my grandmother. And I need to say her name because I haven't said it. Beatrice Gallagher Lynch was her name, and she was a major inspiration.

Angela: Beatrice sounded wonderful, and I would love to have had a recorder, maybe one of the older style Ediphones, the sort of wax reel ones. I mean, oral history is… the human memory is fallible. We remember the past and in the present we . . . the way we, we reconstruct things. There's a famous artist story, an American oral historian called Michael Frisch who talks about creating a 'shared authority' between, you know so . . . that people's accounts of the past could be triangulated, and we can join together the dots that maybe some aspects of mainstream history has missed. It's all history, it's a people's history you know it's recounted by people in their own words. It captures the dialect and the modes of expression and the rhythm and the music of speech. And yeah, the word for word, as reconstructed as represented as 'represented', represented by the speaker. So it's why it seems very compelling.

Margaret. And I didn't major in history as an academic because I saw history at that time… I mean, I wasn't disinterested in the way it was presented. But the way it was presented was through great events, you know, mostly wars and you know things like that. And this kind of history of the people was not part of the presentation of history academically when I was going to school. And so it didn't, grab my attention. But now I would have, you know . . . So I was an English major, a different way of storytelling. But now I've sort of gravitated back, you know, to historical storytelling, if you will. Because it does, I think grab people in a different way. And people's memories can be faulty. But the more I know and the more I've done research, the more I trust my grandmother's memories. There are a couple things here or there that maybe she didn't understand. But there are so many things that have proven spot on. I'll just give you one quick example that made . . . that was like, woah, I have to really . . . and has made me trust this 1839 story more. She always told us, she told us about the Lynchehauns

that had stayed in the Valley, and she said one of them was married to a Mamie Smith. I thought "OK, whatever." And then as I was, you know, doing research, I found that it seemed that . . . And more and more has been available. You know, you've got the marriage records and birth records, death records available online. You know from Ireland and they're free, you know, and then they've got the 1901 and 1911 [census records] for free through the National Archives etcetera. So it's been a great…so when I found the marriage records the woman's name was Lavelle. And I thought, you know, "Darn it, my grandmother was wrong.". But when I went to . . . when . . . The first time I went and looked and sought out Rosemary Lynchehaun in Ireland it turned out that Mamie, Mary, Lavelle's father was a blacksmith. And with so many different Lavelles, her family was called Smith. You know, they were the blacksmith [Lavelles]. And so my grandmother was right, even though she was wrong. You know, Smith wasn't literally her name, but that's how she was called: 'Mamie Smith.' That's how she was called by the people, you know, in the Valley. And so, you know, that I thought, you know, I shouldn't mistrust her. I shouldn't mistrust her, you know, even when it seems like she was wrong, there's going to be a way that she was. . .

Angela: Right. You know, you know. Isn't that just? That's a that's a wonderful story, isn't it? For people who are identified by occupation. The Sweeney family. You've heard of them. I'm sure there was Joe. The merchant.

Margaret: The store, yeah.

Angela: And Sweeney, you know, he was known [as] Joe The Merchant, and there are, you know, and you know, there are countless other similar examples. So Beatrice, she was right. She would have been able to have defended her claims well. It's just so wonderful to talk to you.

Angela: Your (account) is wonderfully vivid for people all over the world, because people will be able to access this recording soon. And how would you see the relationship between Cleveland and the Irish American Archives Society developing in the future? We had the pleasure of having Mayor Bibb

here recently in Achill, just by accident, in Molloy's chemist in Achill Sound. How would you like to see the relationship between Clevland and Achill develop?

Margaret. Yeah, I think there's several different directions. One is just through tourism, visiting. I think that, you know, as I said, I grew up with people who had that first-generation connection, but everyone doesn't. And I think we're gradually creating enough connections on both sides. Everyone on both sides have been doing enough work that there are more connections that I think that . . . There are some people . . . Like, I mentioned Colleen Corgan Day, who's like the spearhead of the upholding of the Achill Cleveland twinning on our side. You know, she would love to create a heritage tourism enterprise, where we help people find out about their families and you know. Maybe they –like, I have second or third cousin[s]—[have] 3rd or 4th cousins that they don't know about [who] might be willing to connect and who have the other half of your story, you know, which you know is great. So I think you know, although it might seem like the connection could die out . . . be . . . as immigration changes. You know, we haven't had a major immigration wave, and that connection has always in the past been fostered by a new wave of immigration within the memory of a lifetime. So people who came in the 1880s would have known some of the people who came in the 1860s. They . . . and they could have connected, and they did. And then the people in the 1920s, the people from the 1880s were old. But, you know, maybe their children . . . or they might still be alive. So I can see it in my family, that replenishment of connection, of a sense of connection. But now there might . . . That might not be. . . That might not happen again. It might or might not; we don't know. But at the moment it doesn't seem like it's going to happen in that same way. So is it just going to die away? Which is possible. Or is it strong enough that people like myself, and people like Colleen, who have that sense of heritage will help, you know, foster it in other people. And you know, we meet up with . . . Of course, Terence Dever and Kenny Deary have been our sort of mainstays. But you know, people like Vincent English . . . I had an interview with a woman whose family owns the former Railway station [on] the Curraun side of the Sound, you know. And the station keeper's house is still there, and she wants to turn it into perhaps, you know, something to do with the railroad. The history of the railroad etc. So there are people on

both sides who are interested in fostering this. And so I think . . . And we are getting to know each other a little bit better. And visiting back and forth only reinforces that. I feel much more connected now than I would have like in the early 2000s when our original connector people were disappearing. And [I] hadn't made all these new connections yet. But this last time felt a real, like . . . Yes, we can meet this person in the pub. We can go, and we have people to meet and [have] people to talk to, you know. So I think that fostering that heritage travel, if you will . . . But also just what you're doing now and what Vincent's doing, and in collecting stories, I think, and with the communication. . . As it is now, you know there's chance for different kinds of connections that never would have been possible and would have required us to be there in person. Doesn't require it now. And we have to work towards it. This is like a huge task, you know. Is there, you know, an online portal where we're sharing [a] repository from . . . ? You know, we have concentrated on physical repositories. But you know maybe it needs to be a digital repository. I mean, I've collected so much information. But I don't have time in the day to put it all together and share it. But you know at some point we have to start. And I've got a friend named Bernie McCafferty who's a fantastic researcher, and he's a cemetery person. He's collected, you know, inscriptions on cemeteries here in Cleveland and also in [the] Achill and Newport area. And he's got all this stuff, but we have to figure out a way to get it in a shape that it can be shared. So I would like to work towards that. Because I think we've . . . There's a lot of information that would help people in that search for heritage that we have access to on both sides. I think that, you know, all these connections . . . And you reaching out to me. You [know], it's going to happen eventually. But it's a big job in its fullest form. But we can only take a stab at it and start and hopefully find people in the next generation [who] are interested enough to keep it going. That has to happen too. The connection will be broken, so it's up to us to keep it going and then it will be up to the next generation

Angela: I agree absolutely with everything that you've said. I mean, we have these different strands of people who are interested in our sense of history and our relationship with Achill or Cleveland. But we really do need some strategic overview so we can draw together these different, different strands. And

if we have people, if we have the right people around the table, whether it's a virtual table or a real table at the right time with the right skills and motivation to make things happen, you could very easily see these different strands of things coming together. I love the idea of an all-encompassing repository whereas at the minute that's all quite fragmented, you know, in different, in different places. As maybe, as you were saying, it's two possible scenarios. Things will fade away as those major waves of immigration ceased to happen because we're also residentially mobile, we connect more, standards of living are rising, in relative terms, you know those, hopefully, those sort of mass ways of immigration that we've had, we will have them again, but were very much part of the culture of the way that people lived. But another scenario would be that that we kept the connection going. I think in a world that's increasingly volatile and fragmented and fractionalized and how easy it would be to, you know, I always think of Zygmunt Bauman, the Polish sociologist—drawing from my own discipline of sociology—who [describes us as] "sleepwalking our way into a reflexive modernity." We're, we're all so busy—involved with things that we actually . . . We really seldom take a step back to really think about who we are and where we're going. So many demands on our time we're all being pulled and we're reacting to things rather than just taking a deep breath and saying, well, you know, let's just pause. Let's see if there's a will and motivation with a little bit of resource, it would be wonderful to work to our strengths, to pull together something more strategic. So and then be able to quantify progress. You know 'x' number of oral histories have been collected. But actually the sort of quality and more qualitative assessment of the impact of those things on people's lives I think would be really interesting to look at some point. And for people who do want to just fill those gaps [in] family history. And often people feel restless until they have that. It's like an unresolved chord. It sort of echoes. I think we just really need to just close that loop just gently before I can let it go. But it's been an absolute pleasure and a joy to meet you tonight. And thank you so much for being so generous and gracious with your time here, with me this evening, our time this afternoon, your time, it has been absolutely wonderful. And I know that your insights will be of great value to anyone who will play back this recording in the

very near future, and we'll make sure that it is curated for current and future generations. Margaret Lynch, thank you very much indeed.

Margaret: Thank you very much.

Ends