



Diaspora Stories

Ancestor's Name: CATHERINE S. SHAHAN

Place of birth (if known): ASHFORD, Co. LIMERICK

Your Name: M. AURBEN CROWLEY NEE SHAHAN

Contact (optional): 081 235 1556

CATHERINE WAS THE ELDEST OF TEN CHILDREN ON A SMALL HOLDING VERY MUCH UNDER THE LANDLORD'S THUMB. HER PASSAGE WAS PAID BY AN AUNT IN NEW YORK, WHICH SHE WAS OBLIGED TO PAY BACK. SHE WAS SIXTEEN WHEN HER UNCLE TOOK HER BY HORSE & CART TO CHARLEVILLE AND SHE BOARDED THE TRAIN EVENTUALLY ARRIVING IN COBH. SHE HAD A CLOTH BAG, A PAIR OF SHOES TO PUT ON WHEN SHE GOT TO THE TRAIN AND HER MOTHER'S SHAWL. HER FIRST TRIP TO NEWCASTLE WEST TOWN WAS TO ARRANGE HER PASSAGE. IN 1868, HER MOTHER'S SHAWL WAS STOLEN. SHE WOULD NEVER TALK ABOUT HER EARLY TIME IN NEW YORK AS SHE LIVED IN A "RAILWAY" ACCOMMODATION AND IT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE HORRIFYING. SHE EVENTUALLY GOT A JOB AS A HOUSEWIFE WITH A FAMILY - THE HEAD OF WHICH BECAME A SENATOR AND MOVED HOUSE AND STAFF TO WASH DC. HE SENT HER TO NIGHT SCHOOL AND SHE BROUGHT OUT TWO SISTERS AFTER ANOTHER AND ONE AFTER THE OTHER ALL BUT TWO ARRIVED IN WASH DC. TWO SISTERS BOUGHT A HOUSE WHICH BECAME A SAFE HAVEN FOR MANY IMMIGRANTS. SHE GOT A JOB IN THE BUREAU OF ENGRAVING WHERE THE DRAPEY WAS PRINTED AND GAVE HER WORKING LIFE THERE.

I agree to submit this story for publication by Skibbereen Heritage Centre.



Signed: 49

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