

Frances Kroell Haile
Initial Kroell & Jennett History
Distributed to Family Members
May 1981

May, 1981

TO: Members of the Kroell and Jennett families:

FROM: Frances Kroell Haile

This is the story of an odyssey, the realization of a lifetime dream of visiting the birthplace of my grandparents and learning as much as possible about their forbears and their families. It is, of necessity, personal and I hope you will be able to overlook the subjective nature of the narrative. Some of you have heard much of it before but perhaps you will not mind reading it, nevertheless. If it adds to your knowledge and appreciation of our common family heritage, I shall be very pleased.

I wish to express appreciation to my sisters and brothers and to all who have helped me in my search for facts in this endeavor, have encouraged me to continue, and have shown interest in my committing the facts to paper. I am especially grateful to Annie Gallagher (Mrs. Lee Moore), to Christina Burns (Mrs. Robert Faerber), and Mary Etta Gillespie, all of whom gave me very valuable information from their personal knowledge of the Jennetts. Most of all, I am grateful to my husband, who made all this possible through the trips he planned and enabled me to make.

THE KROELLS

I. "Willy" Kroell.

In January, 1971 there was an article in the Atlanta paper about a young man named Wilhelm Kroell (nicknamed Willy) who was a ski instructor at Georgia's only ski resort, Sky Valley, located in the extreme northeast corner of the state just across the state line from North Carolina. He was 21 at that time, was said to be not only an expert skier and talented musician but also a certified mountain guide. By the time I followed it up, he had returned to Austria but it was said that he would be back the next year. The next year I did call him and Michael and I went up to see him, fortunately reached him just before he was to leave again, early this time. It had been an unseasonably warm winter and skiing had not been at all good at Sky Valley. He was a very personable young man, very blond and handsome, was apparently a great favorite with everyone there. I found him very easy to talk to. He said he preferred to speak French rather than English, but we thought his English was very good. He was truly a talented musician, played accordion and guitar and we had the pleasure of hearing him play the accordion, sing and yodel, as the group of young Austrians there were making a record the day we were there.

Willy told me that his mother's people came from Ginzling, a village north of Mayrhofen, Grandpa's home, but that he had been born and had grown up in Mayrhofen, also. I had taken along what old photos I had of Grandpa's relatives but he was unable to recognize any of them until he came to one of an old man who he said had lived in his home when he was a child. He said, "He was an old man then." Willy's father was dead and he said his mother didn't know much about his father's people but that he had an uncle in Mayrhofen who would, that he would inquire when he went back. (I never heard from him). More of this later.

II. Mayrhofen (sometimes spelled Mairhofen).

Two years after my conversation with Willy, I stopped teaching and Michael and I planned what was my first trip to Europe, the highlight of which was to visit in Mayrhofen. We left in October, 1974, took the train from Weisbaden in Germany to Innsbruck and arranged to go by bus to Mayrhofen, a distance of about 60 miles south. We left early in the morning on a bright sunny day and I could not believe the majesty and beauty of the Tyrolean Alps. The road was narrow and usually there were fences

along on either side. The driver went hurtling down the valley and it seemed as if we would collide each time we met another vehicle. As people got on and off the bus I was struck by their friendly and gentle nature, a characteristic, I found, of Austrians, especially in the Tirol, and it renewed my memories of Grandpa whom I think of as being that way. Everyone spoke and smiled at each other as they got on and off, whether they knew each other or not. After awhile someone took out an accordian and everyone started to sing in the happiest way. I was beside myself to be there in the midst of it.

The Ziller River runs right down the valley between the peaks and when anyone refers to the Zillertal they mean the valley of the Ziller River, which flows right through Mayrhofen, incidentally. The farms are something to behold, beautifully cared for and the fields like a picture. Since the mountain slopes come right down to the valley, every bit of tillable land must be utilized. It is strictly an agricultural economy, farming and dairying, though in these days tourism is very big, also. You could hardly ride a mile without seeing a sign on a farmhouse or a house in a village with a sign saying it was a Gasthaus where tourists can stay. The weather had not yet turned fall-ish and beautiful flowers were everywhere, their colors the bright and clear hues that one finds in mountain regions. It was obvious that the Austrians love flowers and music and are basically a very happy people.

The farmhouses are large and sturdily built and the barns invariably bigger than the houses, also attached to the houses so the cows can be cared for during the heavy snows of winter. I remembered pictures of Grandpa's family members tending cows in summer on the slopes of mountains and saw many of the same kind of cows. I was told that they are Swiss brown cows and I saw no other kind in Austria. Since it was October, the grain and hay had been harvested and were either standing in fields in shocks or had been stored in the special barns built in the fields for this purpose only. It was explained to us that this was necessary due to the frequency of lightning striking and setting fire to barns where hay was stored in large quantities.

On the way we passed two villages with names that I remembered. The first was Zell am Ziller which means "Zell on the Ziller River." When I inquired about the name I was told it was to distinguish it from another Austrian town also named Zell. I believe Frank went through Zell am Ziller when he was in Austria not too long ago. It seems to me that Aunt Mary and Aunt Kate also spoke of the village but I have the impression that they didn't have the name quite right. The next village was Hippach and that must have been where Grandpa's sister, Anna, lived because I have a letter from her to Papa dated March 20, 1926, which was from Hippach.

As we approached Mayrhofen I had the most uncanny feeling of "coming home" and soon realized why. The little framed picture that was on the stair landing at Grandpa's house was of the approach to the village, with the snow-covered towering mountains and glaciers in the background, the houses clustered in the valley, the parish church and town hall the outstanding buildings, and some homes built up into the lower slopes of the mountains. That same picture is very popular today and I was fortunate in finding a 30" x 22" poster made from a lovely color photograph of the same scene, which I have on the wall of the room where I type and sew, so that I can look at it often and take myself back in memory to Mayrhofen. As you enter the town you immediately see a monument bearing the words: "Gruss Gott im Mayrhofen" which, roughly translated, means: "God bless you in Mayrhofen." What a lovely greeting, I thought.

Mayrhofen is now a ski resort. The season had not yet opened and only one of the village's hotels was open so we had been fortunate in securing lodgings at Hotel Neuhaus, more fortunate even than we realized, as it turned out. The hotel was of typical Tyrolean architecture with wooden carved balconies and window boxes full of flowers in bloom. It looked rustic but inside it was elegant, with marble floors in some of the salons and

the stairs, beautiful wooden floors elsewhere, covered with beautiful oriental rugs or runners, and huge floor vases filled with fresh flowers tastefully arranged each day by the proprietor's wife, Frau Moigg. Our room on the second floor overlooked a lovely small garden with several apple trees full of ripe fruit; we had a balcony and a breathtaking view at all hours of the Alps not very far away. Everything was very comfortable, marble bathroom and all, and our cover was something like the old-fashioned featherbed (though not that voluminous or heavy) that I remembered sleeping on as a child.

We were walking in the flower garden in front of the hotel in the late afternoon of our arrival when Herr Moigg came out, introduced himself and was very interested in my search for information about my grandfather. It developed that Kröll (Kroell) is a very common name in Mayrhofen and that Herr Moigg's mother had been a Kröll. But because it was such a common name it was very difficult to establish family ties, especially with the few facts I had, as it turned out, something like trying to trace a Smith or Jones in this country. Herr Moigg very kindly made the hotel bus and driver available to us and the next day we visited two sisters who lived in a house they said was built on the site of the one in which Grandpa was born and had lived, according to their information. They were most gracious, served us tea, and reminded me very much of Aunt Kate and Aunt Mary.

Herr Moigg had advised us to go, first thing the next morning, to the church (the only one in the village and it was Catholic), which we did. The priest was very busy due to having two weddings that day (Saturday) and unfortunately didn't have much time to spend with us but I was very happy with what I did find. He couldn't speak a word of English and our German wasn't all that good so we had some trouble communicating. When I indicated that I wanted to find the record of George Kroell's birth, he looked at me with complete blankness until I remembered that in German, George is pronounced something like "Ghee-or-guh". When I got that out, he brightened and when I wrote down the birth date, he found the right baptismal record. All the record books were very orderly, just so, like you'd expect from people of Germanic background. So I had the thrill of seeing the entry, in some long-ago priest's spidery handwriting: Georg Kröll, born April 23, 1843, son of Kayden Kroll, owner of a restaurant, and of Maria Geisler, the daughter of Jacob Geisler, a farmer." That was the first time I realized who the Geislars were, though some of you undoubtedly knew that. When I conveyed to the priest that I wished to know how many other children there were and that I did know that Grandpa had a sister about 2 years younger, he found the entry for Anna, born July 30, 1846. Since I couldn't give him any other information and he was so pressed for time, he didn't seem inclined to search any more and didn't let me handle the record books; I still don't know how many other children there were. If any of you know, I would appreciate your letting me have this information. Anna, I knew, had married a man named Wegselberger but the priest made it plain that that wouldn't be much of a clue since the Wegselbers were as numerous in Mayrhofen as were the Krölls! (Incidentally, after this trip, I learned a lot more about how to go about this genealogical research. First of all, I would have allowed a lot more time to do it in, even if it meant giving up some other trip. It takes a lot of time and painstaking effort, especially in a foreign country, but I have found everyone to be kind and helpful. As we were leaving the priest's study, he gave me a sprig of edelweiss from a small container of water on his desk, the first live edelweiss I'd ever seen, another gesture of Austrian kindness, I felt.

Everyone in the village soon knew about "die Amerikanische" who was there to learn anything she could about her "grosvater." We went for a walk on Sunday morning after Mass up the main street of the village (and I do mean up, one mile in length and with a steady ascent). We were stopped and/or greeted with friendliness by many people, including a couple of lovely elderly ladies, one of whom informed us that she had once been to Atlanta, Georgia and she proudly showed us her Kennedy half-dollar which she had had made into a medallion and was wearing on a silver chain. We glanced across the

street while attempting to converse with them and noticed a dress shop with the name "Anna Wegselberger" over the door but were unable to establish with the ladies anything about her. Michael did take a picture of the shop, however. It being Sunday, everything was closed except a couple of souvenir shops, so, again, we were unable to follow up a clue.

Another little anecdote you might find interesting: We took all our meals (just 2 a day, lunch and dinner, with a continental breakfast in the morning) at Hotel Neuhaus (and delicious they were, too, though of heavier quality than I was accustomed to). We were assigned to a lady named Mary who served us and looked after us and we were given a particular place to sit, also, which simplified things considerably. Mary, of course, knew why I was there. She was in her forties, I judged, black-haired and very peppy. I noticed that she bossed the busboys and other people around mightily. The first day she kept looking at me very intently, it went on all during the meal and I finally began to wonder what was wrong. At last, as she served the final course, she nodded and said something like: "Du bist eine Kroll, jawohl" - "You're a Kroell, alright." That, of course, pleased me very much. Another time we'd had an enormous meal for lunch, something I never do but Mary had me so intimidated I didn't dare not eat (you didn't have a choice, there was a little menu each day telling just what would be served). Anyway, when it was time for dessert and I had put away pork roast and potato dumplings, Mary said, "Will Madame (all she ever called me) have the apple dumpling now? I said, "Oh, Mary, I couldn't eat another bite." Whereupon she said something like "Humph", fixed me with her piercing brown eyes and flounced out. Next thing I knew there was the biggest apple dumpling I ever saw right in front of me and you'd better believe I managed to eat it! When we checked out of the hotel I told Herr Moigg how nice we thought Mary was and it was the first time I saw him laugh out loud. He said, "You think she's nice? Well, sometimes." then he explained that she was his sister, so that accounted for the bossiness, I'm sure. Her name was Mary Kröll, which no one had told us!

When I had asked Herr Moigg (who spoke excellent English, incidentally) whether he knew Willy Kröll, I was delighted to learn that he did. He had known his father, who had died about 20 years before, and told me that Willy's father did indeed have a brother living in Mayrhofen who was, I gathered, an important person in town. He attempted to reach him by phone but learned that he was out of town on a vacation so that was another disappointment. He did call Willy in Ginzling, asked him to come down to see us the next day, which he did and we had another nice chat with him. He had married since his return and said, rather wistfully, I thought, that he wouldn't be able to come to America again even though he could make much more money in a season than he could at home. He said his mother runs a small inn and gift shop and needed him to help since he was the only son and also, since he was married now he had "many responsibilities." When I asked why he didn't bring his wife, he looked embarrassed and indicated that they were expecting a child very soon. He also said his father's brother was the only one who knew the family history and since he was away that closed that avenue of information. At any rate, I was able to establish that Grandpa had at least one brother, since the old man mentioned by Willy was his father's grandfather.

Everyone in the village was invited to both weddings on Saturday and we were assured that that included us, so both of us went to the first one (I went to the second one, too, but that was a bit much for Michael). I was delighted to see many of the older people in the wedding party wearing traditional Tyrolean dress, the women in full, long embroidered skirts, basque bodice and blouses with round gathered necklines and short or long puffed sleeves. Several women also had on the hats typical of the region, which you have probably seen in pictures. Many of the men had on short wool or leather pants with liederhosen (knee sox), embroidered vests and jackets, and the Tyrolean alpine hats. However, I was told that it is less and less often that you see the traditional costumes, only on special occasions and it is a pity because they are charming. The young people, except for some children, were in modern dress and both brides looked just

like American brides. As is the custom, the wedding party gathered at the priest's residence and all walked the 2 or 3 blocks down the hill to the church in procession, so we had the opportunity of watching them approach.

Both receptions that night were at the Hotel Neuhaus and that was great fun, too. The larger wedding party (of the first one we attended) must have been from a well-to-do family because they were seated for dinner at tables in a very large ballroom where there was plenty of room for dancing, also, while the other party was in a smaller room, but very nice also. There was a brass band for each and you never heard such lively music with all the sound effects characteristic of Austrian music, bells, cymbals, something that made sounds like birds, and the musicians would yodel and whoop at intervals. What impressed me most was that everyone danced, from the youngest to the oldest, the bride and bridegroom dancing with everyone there, it seemed. I remember especially a young boy, about 8 or 9, I guess, dancing beautifully with a grandmother and both seemed to be having the time of their lives. The dancing was lively, too, believe me, mostly polkas or complicated-looking traditional dances of the region. Every now and then the whole party would form a continuous line, one behind the other with hands around the waist of the person in front, dance all around the room then out into the room where we were sitting. When they saw us they beckoned and invited us to join them. I was game but Michael said he didn't dare, so we didn't. With two brass bands going until the wee hours of the morning the hotel was a lively place indeed that night.

This has been long, I know, but I wanted you to get the feel of Grandpa's village and its people.

It was raining and threatening snow the next morning and we wanted to visit Bavaria before proceeding to Italy, so we left, reluctantly, I might add. We have been back to Austria once since and both of us really wanted to return to Mayrhofen. I was given the choice and I had always wanted to go to Vienna, too, so we went there instead. I haven't regretted it but missed seeing the Zillertal again. God willing, we may do so yet.

I have not been able to establish exactly when Grandpa came to Montevallo or how he got there, think that would be interesting and perhaps someone else knows this. At one point I had told Herr Moigg that I didn't see how my grandfather could bear to leave his beautiful village. He explained that it had always been the custom for families to give a farm to their sons when they grew up or when they married (so they could make a living) but that with large families and with cultivatable land becoming scarcer, times becoming harder, there simply was not enough land to go around. Since the whole economy was based on agriculture, those who could afford to do so, sent their sons to America or elsewhere to make their fortunes. Also, since Austria in Grandpa's time was a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with warlike Prussia the dominant state, each male was required to spend 2 years in the army when he reached 16. A substitute could be paid to take his place, without penalty or ostracism, and that is my understanding that that is what our great-grandfather Kayden did for his son Georg.

The first census of Montevallo that I have been able to find on which Grandpa's name appears is the census of 1870, which contains the following information:

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Head of household: | Kroell, George |
| Age last birthday | 25 |
| Occupation: | Miner |
| Birthplace: | Austria |
| Wife: | Mary |
| Occupation: | Keeping house |
| Age last birthday: | 24 |
| Birthplace: | Ireland |
| Children: | Frank |
| Age last birthday: | 1 |

Papa was born ^{that} the next year so he and the other children would not appear until either the 1880 or 1890 census, I assume, have not gotten to that yet as the old family cenetery contains that information. There are some very little graves in the far right-hand corner whose headstones had been almost covered up with the building up of silt. I managed to remove enough of the dirt to read this one:

George Kroell, Jr.

Born

December 27, 1875

Died

June 25, 1878

Next to it is:

John Kroell

Nov. 2, 1872

(Death date undecipherable but he was obviously very small)

I believe Grandma and Grandpa must have had two sons named John as I understood Uncle John was the youngest in the family and the baby above was born right after Papa.

How I wish I had talked to Grandpa about his homeland. And how I wish that Papa had been able to go there as he longed to do when he was older. I'm sure that Grandpa must have wished to return and when I went I felt that in a way I was going for both of them.

THE JENNETTS

Let me say at the outset that I am extremely proud of both my Austrian and Irish heritages, but honesty compels me to admit that I am hopelessly in love with the Irish!

1. Avoca, County Wicklow

After going to Mayrhofen, I couldn't be satisfied not to go to Ireland, too, so in April, 1976 we left on a trip planned for a 10-day stay in Ireland and shorter visits to England, Holland and Luxembourg.

Arriving in Dublin on a Friday, we inquired at once at our hotel as to the best way to go about looking up genealogical information. We were told that Dublin Castle was the place and that we should go there immediately since the next week was Holy Week (which is truly observed in Ireland as the most solemn religious week of the year) and that the Castle would be closed all that week, until Tuesday of Easter Week. We took a cab and rushed to Dublin Castle where are located the country's genealogical offices. In my innocence I assumed that all I had to do was mention the name Jennett and all kinds of information would become available immediately, especially since there would be no language barrier this time. Imagine my surprise when the researcher, a gentleman, looked completely blank and said he had never heard that name before. I soon became accustomed to that puzzled look all over Ireland when I mentioned the name, never found a soul who had ever heard of it. The researcher became quite interested, however, possibly because it was an unusual name - maybe he gets tired of looking up O'Connors, Fitzgeralds and so on for Americans! After exhausting all his references downstairs, he took us upstairs, saying he would turn us over to another gentleman who would be the only one who could help us if anyone could. Out came a handsome, tall, scholarly-looking white-haired man with the most courteous manner of anyone I had met in a long time. We didn't know until later that he was the Chief Herald of Ireland, who is appointed for life and is responsible for all the genealogical records of the Republic. He looked and looked as time went by and the closing hour of 5:00 drew near and I became more fearful that our trip would be in vain. While his research went on, Michael and I were searching records of passenger listings of ships sailing to America during the period I thought the Jennetts might have come. However, I was told that many ships kept no records of their passengers, especially if they came by steerage (I don't know that the Jennetts did, but it was a possibility), and that even if they did their records were usually incomplete. Finally, the Chief Herald in a very please-way told us he had found one reference to the name Jennett in all those old books (newer ones, too, of course). It was in a book published before 1850 and located the Jennetts in the parish of Castlemacadam in County Wicklow. Since I had been told that Great-grandmother's maiden name had been King, I asked if there were any Kings in the same parish. When he said yes I felt sure we were headed in the right direction at last.

The village of Avoca was our destination but the Chief Herald told us to go by way of Arklow, a seacoast resort town about 5 miles from Avoca, since there were bus connections from Dublin to Arklow and then from there to Avoca, while we could only go directly to Avoca in a private car. We don't try to drive in countries that drive on the left side of the road so we always depend on public transportation, which can be inconvenient sometimes - but safer! When we got to Arklow we went at once to the priest's residence there to inquire if there was any record of Jennetts in their books. I don't know how much they searched but they telephoned us at our hotel later and said they hadn't found any.

In the meantime, I took the precaution of calling the priest at Avoca, Father O'Byrne, and set up an appointment with him for the next afternoon. There was only one bus a day to Avoca and it was in the afternoon. The pretty little village is built right along the banks of the Avoca River and just as we got off the bus and

walked across the bridge, the sun came out - a good omen, I thought, because it had been raining steadily ever since we got to Arklow. We walked up the hill to the Church of St. Mary and St. Patrick and found Father O'Byrne waiting, a very pleasant young man who seemed eager to be of help to us. It was quite cold that day and the room where we examined the records (he had them all ready for us) didn't have a speck of heat (the Irish use very little heat, we discovered!) but I was soon so excited I didn't mind being rather numb from the cold. Father O'Byrne got out the books for the 1840's and the 3 of us began searching. They were not as carefully indexed as they had been in Mayrhofen, the information was not as complete when we did find something and while the ink was still legible, often the paper had been torn and patched with tape which made it harder to read the entries.

Finally, the name Jennett seemed to jump at me from the page of a marriage record:

July 5, 1845 - John Bryan to Margaret Jennett

Then I went back to the baptismal records and found:

Bryan - Mary, of John Bryan and Margaret Jennett
(forgot to copy the date)

Sponsors: Patrick Jennett and Lucy King

This was the first time I found our great-grandfather's name

Then, in the baptismal records we found:

December 25, 1844

Jennett - Mary, of Patrick Jennett and Anne King

Sponsors: Adam Coleman and Lucy King

This was Grandma Kroell, so we started searching for the record of her parents' marriage. We finally went over to the church where the priest said there was one more old book. Looking through it, I suddenly saw:

January, 1842 (no exact date)

Gennett - Patrick Gennett to Ann King

Witnesses: Martin Doyle and Mary Byrne

Apparently the letters J and G were sometimes used interchangeably but there was no question as to who it was. So you can see that Lucy King (probably a sister of our great-grandmother) was godmother for both Grandma and the baby of Margaret Jennett (who was probably the sister of our great-grandfather).

Father O'Byrne said that, although there was no way to prove it, the fact that Patrick Jennett (for whom Papa was named) had someone named Martin Doyle as a witness when he married, rather than a man named Jennett, probably is proof that he was an only son because in those days it was always customary for a man to have a brother stand up with him when he married. Piecing it together, I believe there must have been only two children in the family, Patrick and Margaret. We looked and looked for other births but found none. However, later in a transcript which I commissioned and had sent from Dublin Castle, there was found a record of the baptism of:

Edward, of Patrick and Ann Gennett - 20 June, 1851

Christina had told me that the baby of the family (she didn't know whether it was Edward or Christopher) died on the ship going to America, was wrapped in a sheet and buried at sea. Since Christopher Jennett is buried in the old cemetery in Montevallo, it was

Edward who was buried at sea. I am still puzzled as to why neither we nor the researcher who later prepared the transcript were able to find a record of Christopher's baptism in Ireland since he was definitely born in County Wicklow. But times were so terribly hard then, all sorts of things could have happened.

The information on Edward's baptism is the only way I can pinpoint approximately the time of the departure of the family from Ireland. The family appears on the 1860 census of Montevallo (more of that later), so they had to come between 1851 and 1860. I have heard from one source that the father came first, to New Orleans, and worked to obtain money for the passage of the rest of the family. Then I was also told that they all came together and came into the U. S. at Mobile. If anyone knows for sure which is correct, I'd be interested in having that information.

Back to Avoca - Father O'Byrne told us that his church was built in 1850 after the original one was destroyed by fire. All the miners were out of work and they built the church. It is a handsome, huge structure, of grey stone and marble. How it was built by hand is beyond me. The records he has were saved from the old church. Also, he said that at one time the parish was divided so perhaps some of the records went elsewhere or were lost. From the bus we had seen a ruined church and very old cemetery as we approached Avoca and I wanted to investigate the cemetery but Father O'Byrne discouraged me, saying it was completely overgrown with weeds and briars and that I wouldn't be able to read the gravestones even if I could get to them.

There is a recurring story in the family that Patrick Jennett was "of the nobility," the landed gentry, and that Anne King was a housemaid in his family's home. When I mentioned this to a very knowledgeable gentleman with whom we talked at great length in Arklow, he said, "If that was the case, the family would have had to leave eventually because in those days they would have been completely ostracized." What really puzzles me is what could have happened to Patrick Jennett's parents. There is no records of them anywhere that I could find, but since I couldn't find any record of their deaths in Ireland I feel they must have come to America, too.

We have always understood that the family came to America because of the potato famine and I am sure this could well be true. I have read much about Irish history since that first trip there and can understand their leaving even better now. By 1847 people had literally starved to death by the thousands and the men, especially, died in great numbers of consumption caused from working in the wet fields and not eating in order to let their wives and children have what little food there was. Later in our trip when we were in Killarney we took a marvelous day-long tour called the "Ring of Kerry" trip. It covered 110 miles and the young driver handled it in very leisurely fashion, allowing us to stop often and see and hear things of great interest. At one stop he pointed out a railway which covers only 9 miles and has 4 tunnels. He said the government had it built in 1847 though it doesn't go anywhere, was built just to give the men something to do. They were paid 1 cent a day for an 8-hour day, (were given a bowl of soup at midday) and all the work had to be done by hand.

Afterwards at the lunch stop, I talked to the driver at great length about the famine. There was a blight on the potatoes caused by too much rain for 3 years in a row. The potatoes would be planted, would mature and then suddenly turn black and rot overnight. This famine lasted from 1846 to 1848, and 1847 became known as "Black '47" although the famine lasted on into the 1850's. All the big acreages had been taken from the Irish by the English landlords so the Irish farmers were left with only very tiny plots of land. They couldn't grow wheat or corn, only potatoes, which was all they had to eat. It was during these times that whole families just left and went wherever they could, many of course to America, where they weren't all that much better off, I'm afraid. Before the famine, Ireland had 8 million people; as a result of the deaths and emigration caused by the famine, 5 million were gone, leaving the 3 million population which remains today. People just walked off and left their homes and we saw many in ruins, very reminiscent of those in the "Dust Bowl" of the 1930's in this country.

I don't want to give the impression of Ireland as a dreary land - it is just the opposite. I have heard all my life about the green-ness of the country and it has to be seen to be believed, there is nowhere in the world like it. To go there in the spring, as I did for the first time, is a joy that can't be described. Instead of fences they use stone walls or hedgerows of gorse (a thorny, thick-growing plant) to separate the fields and everywhere you look there is that lovely, lovely emerald green of grass, trees and plants.

The Irish are the kindest, most hospitable people I have ever met, very hard-working and with no false pride or pretense whatsoever; no job seems to be beneath them and whatever they're doing they go about it with the greatest thoroughness and apparent good humor. I watched a middle-aged woman for 45 minutes in the railway station in Dublin once. She was industriously cleaning and polishing a brass column about 10 inches in diameter, taking off the fingerprints and dirt as high up as she could reach, and never once did she show any signs of being disgusted with that job which she probably does often. You don't see anyone lounging about, doing nothing, on the streets, or didn't when we were there last (in 1978) but now they have the dole (welfare) and I hope that hasn't changed things too much.

They are handsome people, with the freshest complexions and lots of natural color in their cheeks. The children are beautiful, sturdy, healthy and happy. Not once did I ever see one anywhere who was acting like a spoiled brat and it is quite evident that the Irish consider their children their greatest treasure. They are a gentle people with the innate kindness and consideration, especially toward strangers, that make one remember them always. When you talk to them you have their undivided attention, a very heady thing indeed!

I've always heard a lot about Irish men and drinking - you know all the old jokes, but in all our travels throughout Ireland I never saw but one man who had had too much to drink. The pub is the social club for them, where whole families meet each other in the evening (not the children, I don't mean that, just adults) to have a beer or glass of stout and spin yarns and exchange the news of the day. They are a fun-loving people but there is an undercurrent of sadness often, too. Their lives are those of hard-working people and hard times are something they have lived with always. Their mistreatment at the hands of the British for 200 years (continuing even today against the Catholics of Northern Ireland) has left its imprint on their nature. I remember being in a group here not long after we came to Atlanta, a group which included a young Irish priest. Since we always had Irish priests in Montevallo I've always felt very much at home with them and never met one I didn't like. On this occasion someone suggested that we sing some Irish songs and Father played the piano. A remark was made about how the Irish like to sing and he said, "Yes, and God knows the Irish have always had little enough to sing about." That remark of his has stayed with me ever since.

Avoca, by the way, is noted for several things. First, it is the spot where two rivers meet and flow onward together, a fact immortalized in a lyric poem familiar to everyone and written by Ireland's National Poet, Thomas Moore, in 1807 and called "The Meeting of the Waters." It is said that he wrote the poem while seated under a great oak beside the place where the rivers meet and the dead trunk of the great tree is still there. Secondly, there is located in the village a company, Avoca Handweavers, which makes the most gorgeous hand-woven woollen fabrics, rugs and bedspreads. We walked there from the church and hoped to see the looms in operation but it happened to be the one day in the week when the looms are shut down. However, we visited the show-room and saw some of their beautiful products. I asked them to send me some information and later received some beautiful brochures, have also seen some of their products advertized in magazines in this country. Lastly, the mines in Avoca still turn out small quantities of copper as well as some other minerals, though it is by no means any longer a big industry in the town.

Since returning home I have spent much time and travel in research and have come to the conclusion that the male line of the Jennett family simply died out both here and in Ireland. If Patrick Jennett was an only son, as appears to be the case, and since his sons evidently had no sons who lived to be adults, the family name disappeared. Mamie and I have researched both the old cemetery in Montevallo and the one in West Blocton and there is one Jennett in the latter that neither of us could identify. He is Benjamin F. Jennett who was an AEF veteran of World War I. He was born Feb. 20, 1896, died Oct. 9, 1940. If someone can enlighten me, I would like very much to know whose child he was, whether he ever married and had children (especially sons) and who his wife was. As you know, I'm sure, Uncle Pat (whom I remember most clearly, I think because he liked to dance the Irish jig to delight the children in my time) and Aunt Lelia Jennett are buried in West Blocton, but their children, Agnes and Patrick, in Montevallo. I wondered if Benjamin could have been their child, too. I'm sure Aunt Mary and Aunt Kate could have told me many of these things if I had ever realized how interested I was going to get in the family history, as I am now.

The Montevallo census of June, 1860 contains the following information:
(Please note the spellings. Either the census taker, Mr. French Nabors, was a very poor speller or he had a great deal of trouble understanding the Irish brogue!)

Dwelling House #138:

| | |
|---|---|
| Head of household: | Patric Ganette |
| Age last birthday | 41 |
| Place of birth | Ireland |
| Value of personal estate | \$10 (Please note) |
| Persons in household over 20 who cannot read or write | 1 (This had to be either himself or wife) |
| Wife | Ann |
| Age last birthday | 41 |
| Place of birth | Ireland |
| Children | |
| Cathrian, Age 17, female, Born in Ireland | |
| Mary Age 15, female, Born in Ireland | |
| Margret Age 12, female, Born in Ireland | |
| Christofer Age 10, male, Born in Ireland | |
| Crecender (Senie?) Age 7, female, Born in Alabama | |
| Sam Age 5, male, Born in Alabama | |
| Paddie Age 3, male, Born in Alabama | |
| Lusianne (Ann?) Age 1, female, Born in Alabama | |

I don't know why Christina is not on this census as she and Samuel were evidently twins. This dawned on me when I was studying their gravestones in the old Montevallo family cemetery. He was born Sept. 4, 1855 (died Nov. 16, 1901) and she was born Sept. 5, 1855 (died Mar. 13, 1928) so it must have been a case of twins being born a day apart which I know sometimes happens. Someone please correct me if I am wrong on this.

Both the parents, Patrick and Anne, are buried in Montevallo, too, and it seems to me that if their parents had come to America with them, they would probably be buried there also.

In my searching I have found notations that in the 1850 Alabama Census there is a Richard Jennett in Randolph County, A. H. Jennett in Mobile County, and a John Jennett in Mobile County. The last time I was at the Federal Records Center the microfilm records of that census for those counties were not available. However, it has come to my attention that I may be able to see them at a center near me which is operated by a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. This is a very active

religious body in Atlanta and, as you probably know, they do a great deal of genealogical research. It is my understanding that at this center they have copies of census microfilm of all the states so I hope soon to investigate this and, I hope, find further information on these men named Jennett. I will also look into the Montevallo census of 1880 as I believe there were more children born to the Patrick Jennetts.

Christina told me that two of the girls, Catherine and Margaret, both married Yankee soldiers, which must have caused a real flap in Montevallo. Margaret, she said, married a French Canadian named Houde and at some point they moved to Anacordis, Washington. She was nicknamed Meg. Catherine (or Katherine), called Kate, married a man named Tom Courtney and they moved to Norwalk, California. I hadn't heard this before and found it very interesting. All of what I remember of the Jennetts comes from my memories as a child and from things Mama told me, and since I never heard my mother say anything but good about anybody in her life I wouldn't have heard anything even slightly controversial. And let's face it, marrying a Yankee anytime after the Civil War would have been controversial in that part of the country! And vice versa, for the North.

A little more and I have finished:

Whenever I hear someone make a disparaging remark about the Irish, especially if they employ the word "dumb," I take the greatest pleasure in reminding them that before the English overran the country in the 1600's and with utmost cruelty and thoroughness made education for the Irish a crime punishable by death, Ireland was the center of learning for all of Europe. Not only that, the Irish monks preserved Christianity during the centuries when the rest of the western world was overrun by barbarian hordes. Within the last hundred years, Irish playwrights, novelists, poets, other writers, as well as statesmen have left an enduring legacy for the whole world.

If you have not read TRINITY by Leon Uris, please do. It will help anyone to understand the Irish better than any book I know and especially will help anyone understand "the troubles" in Northern Ireland today.

The Irish have a dear saying that I have made my own and one, I feel, that has helped them through many a bad time. It's: "Not to worry," when things go wrong.

J. J. J.