



O'Rourke Ellen

September 24, 1910 - December 16, 2011

Ellen Canning O'Rourke, age 101, in Hamden, CT on December 16, 2011. Ellen was born to Michael and Bridget Dorigan Canning on September 24, 1910 in the townland of Anskert, near Mohill in County Leitrim, Ireland. Ellen was preceded in death by her husband, Tommy O'Rourke, and eight brothers and sisters. Ellen is survived by her four children, her son, Thomas O'Rourke, and daughters, Mary Larke, Eileen Donahoe and Kathleen Murphy. Ellen leaves behind eleven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews in England, Ireland and the United States. Ellen's childhood took place in a revolutionary Ireland. She recalled vividly the agitation of the Catholic population after the Battle of Selton Hill, which occurred in a nearby townland on March 11, 1921. As the names of the dead South Leitrim Volunteers became publicized that Friday evening, the enraged farmers dug out wide ditches on all the local roads to keep the British Black And Tan lorries in town. To the end she remembered the names of the dead neighbors and the ballads to their memory in that now obscure event. Lacking any opportunity in rural Ireland, Ellen came here in 1930. Her family was representative of the times as four of her siblings were already here to welcome her to America. Ellen, as most of the young Irishwomen arriving here, became domestic live-ins, sought for their honesty, spoken English and willingness to work long hours. They viewed coming to America to work as a gift, compared to the endless toil of working the land in Ireland. Today, we cannot comprehend the satisfaction they attached to their slender wages.

Ellen stated that before her job she had only seen money. The Irish Dispora, from the Great Famine to the 1930's, drove millions of Irish people into the cities of North America. Ellen was among the last of those with any memory of those days of furious loyalty to the cause of the "Old Country". Of present day Ireland, Ellen once noted with prescience that there will be no Kevin Barry's getting hanged for the euro and the European Union. A funeral Mass for Ellen will take place on Monday, December 19, at St. Rita's Church in Hamden at 11AM. There will be no calling hours and the burial service is private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Ellen's memory to St. Rita School 1620 Whitney Ave. Hamden, CT. 06517 or to Sisters of Charity of Mount ST. Vincent, Bronx, NY 10471 Sisk Brothers Funeral Home 3105 Whitney Ave. Hamden in care of arrangements.