

I HAVE AN AUNT ALICE?

I began my family genealogy research with my father's side of the family and when I found my paternal great grandfather Patrick Carolan in 1900 census I was thrilled. I saw the familiar names, Patrick and his wife Margaret and his daughters, Mary (my grandmother), Elizabeth (my "Aunt Bess") and Alice? Who was Alice I wondered? That wasn't a name I had heard before. Oh dear, I thought, tragedy ahead; after all the census also revealed that Margaret Carolan had borne 7 children but only 3 were alive. But these children were no longer young – Alice was 16 at the time of the 1900 census.¹

This third daughter was such a surprised to me because I grew up with my father's family through summers spent at the summer cottage they owned in the Catskill Mountains of New York. My Aunt Bess had bought the cottage sometime in the 1920's and it remained with my family until 1973. Two generations had grown up there, swimming, playing tennis, hiking and golfing. The cottage had become a repository for family memorabilia...photos, trophies, books, and religious articles. My grandfather Smith had died at this summer home and was buried nearby as was his wife, my mother, 2 aunts and several more relatives. For me and my generation of cousins, it was home. In fact, the summer cottage was called Carolan Lodge. So, I thought I knew the Carolans and their extended families. When we sold the house, I retrieved most of the photographs and some of the ephemera. My favorite was a group family picture that showed my father as a very young boy with ringlets.²



Figure 1 My father in ringlets

When I found Patrick and family in the federal 1920 census, Patrick was living with my grandfather William J. Smith. William had married Patrick's daughter Mary and both she and Aunt Bess

¹ 1900 US Federal Census, Richmond County, New York, Richmond Ward 1, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 580, page: 60 (stamped) sheet: 26A, dwelling 33, family 541, line 7, Patrick Carolan, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-in/sse.dll?db=1900usfedcen&h=67326932&ti=0&indiv=try>, accessed 06 Jun 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1153.

² Wedding Photograph held by author

were listed. The third daughter, Alice, was not listed nor was her mother, Margaret. So, I assumed they had both died, perhaps in the great flu epidemic of 1917.³

My Carolans had lived in Staten Island, NY, a borough of New York City, which made researching vital records more challenging. New York City vital records and indexes are kept there and must be visited in person. Since I am not living near NYC now, that made my research more difficult and time-consuming. Lacking vital records, I looked for obituaries. In the 'The New York Times obituaries index', I found a Margaret T. Carolan – but she passed away in 1933 - this must not be my Margaret, wrong time frame I thought.⁴

Getting information from the remaining family members was also difficult because most of the extended Carolan clan had moved and drifted apart over the years; communications between us was not frequent. I then 'researched' my cousins and found a phone number for my cousin Patsy. Of my generational cousins, I am the second youngest and my cousin Patsy is the second oldest, 15 years separate us. I called Patsy, we were talking about my findings and when I got to Alice, she said "Alice, you mean Alice Hood?" I was astonished! Alice lived! Now to find her.

Armed with Alice's married name, my research was a bit easier – I found her in Manhattan in the 1920 census *and* her mother Margaret was living with her - so neither of them had died in the flu epidemic⁵. So much for my assumption. Soon I had them in the 1925 New York State Census, back in Staten Island and just a block down the street from the Smith household, where Margaret's husband Patrick lived.⁶ As more census data became available, I could assemble more information about Alice which I added it to the family tree I had created on Ancestry.com. I also realized that the 1933 obituary for Margaret Carolan was, in fact, correct. So much for making assumptions! A valuable lesson learned.

Alice had married Harold Hood and they had two daughters, Celeste and Marietherese. By searching other family trees, I found a match for Celeste and added the extended family information for her in-laws. A couple of years later, I got a message through Ancestry inquiring about one of Celeste's in-laws and before I had a chance to reply that they weren't my relatives, another message came through asking about Patrick Carolan. This message was from a "new" cousin, a direct descendant of my great Aunt Alice and therefore Patrick Carolan.

³ 1920 US Federal Census, Richmond County, New York, New Brighton, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 1547, sheet: 4B, dwelling 80, family 75, line 74, William J. Smith household, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1920usfedcen&h=54231569&ti=0&indiv=try>, accessed 06 Jun 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1238.

⁴ The New York Times obituaries index vol. 1 1858-1968, NY Times, New York, New York: The Times, c1970

⁵ 1920 US Federal Census, New York County, New York, Manhattan, population schedule, enumeration district (ED) 806, sheet: 2B, dwelling 115, family 66, line 94, Harold Hood household, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1920usfedcen&h=45899924&ti=0&indiv=try> accessed 06 Jun 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1204.

⁶ New York, State Census, 1925, Richmond County, population schedule, A.D. 01, enumeration district 04, page 3 (unmarked), line 47, street: Hamilton Ave, house number: 168, Margaret Carolan household, digital image, *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1925nystatecensus&h=15758401&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt> accessed 06 June 2017); citing State population census schedules, 1925. Albany, New York: New York State Archives.

*Mr. and Mrs. Patrick J. Carolan
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Alice Rosalie
to
Mr. Harold Scott Hood
on Monday evening, April ninth
at half after eight o'clock
Saint Peter's Church
Saint Mark's Place
Baton Island, New York*

My "new" cousin Laurie and I corresponded back and forth and she sent me copies of some family memorabilia that her family had kept. One item she sent was the wedding invitation for Alice and Harold, for Monday April 9th but no year was given.⁷

I knew Harold was single in the 1915 census which was taken on June 1st⁸ and that he was married by the time he filled out his World War I draft card⁹. By researching calendars for 1916 and 1917, I found that they were married in 1917.¹⁰

Figure 2 Wedding Invitation

⁷ Wedding invite privately held

⁸ New York, State Census, 1915, Richmond County, population schedule, Assembly District 01, enumeration district 12, page 4, line 13, street: Dongan St, house number: 118, Thomas Hood household, digital image, Ancestry (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1915nystatecensus&h=8997761&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt> accessed 06 June 2017); citing State population census schedules, 1915. Albany, New York: New York State Archives.

⁹ World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918," digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=ww1draft&h=1653758&ti=0&indiv=try> : accessed 6 June 2017), Harold Hood, no. 20, Precinct: 128D Staten Island City, Richmond, New York; citing *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards*, NARA microfilm publication not listed; no specific roll cited.

¹⁰ Events History, Calendars by Year (<http://www.eventshistory.com/day-of-week/1917-april-9/> accessed 06 Jun 2017).

After looking at my family tree again, I realized that my father would have been not quite 5 when Alice and Harold were married and with that I came to the realization that the family group picture with my father in curls was Alice's wedding picture. I had had Aunt Alice with me all along, just waiting to be re-discovered.



Figure 3 Alice Carolan Wedding Picture (Alice is seated in the middle)