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## O'Farrell, Una interview

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# Stockton Immigrant Women Oral History Collection

by Sally Miller

## O'Farrell, Una (Irish)

January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1981

Interviewed by Jamie D. Kilpatrick

Transcribed by Devon Clayton

[TAPE 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

Jamie D. Kilpatrick: This is an oral interview with Mrs. O'Farrell on the evening of January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1981.

[Tape Pause]

Una O'Farrell: My dad was in the armies, fight for freedom, I mean Ireland's fight for freedom has gone on for generations but he was in the university lecturer when you know in 1916, 1918. The last of really when the uprising was, and he was out with his students and got a bullet in his arm, and dad was told that it wasn't treatable. My dad was told he would have to move to a warm climate, like a Switzerland sanitarium or California, was the other choice. He was already on the run, when...(unintelligible)...and so he managed to a get a passport and come out to California in 1923, and he and mother were engaged at the time. So she followed him the next year, because he did very well, the dry heat is what they said. So they were married here, and they were

making their life here until the depression came and they still had family in Ireland, and they hadn't really been true immigrants in the way, there were other circumstances. You know, the wound, so they saw others losing everything around them and so they decided 1932 was actually Eucharistic congress here in Ireland, and there were great numbers of people traveling and there were good deals and travel rates and they decided...there were 4 of us that had been born here, and they decided to go back to Ireland. One of the few families, who you know, came out and went back. So I was only a little more than an infant, I was about 3 years old and we were raised in Ireland. We had some connections here, we had made some friends. So I never expected, we never expected to come back here, and then when I did my uh, teacher training that's like what normal school used to be here, teacher training college and I did 3 years and I did my exam under a London foundation, and then I got interested in Special Ed and cerebral palsy children really. And so I decided to come out here. Mother had a friend at goes to college in Oakland, and I decided I wanted to learn more about cerebral palsy because nobody knew anything in Ireland. And I came out here to go to Mills College for a year and half, went back to Ireland and taught, in first school. Then when Shawn and I, when we'd known each other a long time, but when we decided to get married, he was in a job that was uncertain, and our friends were waiting years to get by, so he came out in 54.

Kilpatrick: And you were already here?

O'Farrell: No I was back teaching in Ireland, when we got engaged. So he came out, at that time you didn't have to have a relative sponsor you, anybody who would be responsible for you, that was a sponsor. So I had a friend that I had met here when I was in Mills College, and I done some folk dancing. So this was a folk dance friend, said very graciously anyone you want to marry Una, has got to be okay and they signed away their lives, but you know what you do when you sponsor. Somebody you don't know, so Shawn came out in 54, and I followed the following spring, and then we were married in April and thought we were going to San Francisco because that's the area where all the Irish are and it would be most like our climate. But it happened that Fiberboard an office here put him in Stockton. So then once we settled here, you know you get settled down and you have kids in hurray like we did. We have 6 children, the oldest is 25 now, and once we put in roots and Shawn worked here, he changed jobs a couple of times before he went out on his own, and I started teaching once our youngest was in kindergarten. And uh, know we think Stockton is a pretty good place to be, you know. It's been, it's been, I think more reasonable place to raise a family, a little more you know urban, but it's also farm country, and a big city, though we lived outside of Dublin, both of us, the big city didn't really appeal that much. San Francisco seemed very expensive, and hard, we probably would have been in apartments down downtown at first and we couldn't pay that much.

Kilpatrick: So when you were in America, before you went to Ireland, how old were you were your other brothers and sisters?

O'Farrell: My oldest brother was 7, when we went back to Ireland and he's a priest and he has had American citizenship because he was born here, and it's been very convenient because he's traveled with American passports. My second brother went into the airplane business and worked for years in Europe, and he came out to Los Angeles, so he's raised his children there, where some of them were born. And then I'm here and there are 3 in Ireland, and the youngest in our family Peg Fairbrook now, you probably know Mr. Fairbrook, well Peg came out 12 years ago because Shawn and I hadn't been home for 12 years, it was impossible with 6 children to go out and visit with the family and my parent were both alive at that time, and Peg lost her husband and had a retarded boy, so we wanted to see what we could do for her. So we invited her to come out [laughs] invited her to come out and mind our 6 children so we could make a trip home, and she decided to stay on a couple of months and we had the little retarded boy tested, you know and in the mean time she met Paul Fairbrook, and that was like a fairytale, and he took her and her little boy home to the family he already had, and it's neat for me to have family her. Because you know it means graduations, birthdays, you know there's family around and it's really nice.

Kilpatrick: So when she came out did you make the trip back to Ireland?

O'Farrell: We went back; Shawn and I went back for 3 weeks. Left her with 6 of ours and her retarded boy and she was driving on the other side of the road and [laughs] but she managed and uh she's been happy here too, she really is, it worked out really well.

Kilpatrick: What was it like for you? Like what kinds of feelings did you experience when you went back...having been gone for all those years?

O'Farrell: Well it was hard to be gone that long really because we were a very close family, and mother and dad, well we went back once because we were married first and we had a little apartment downtown and we had nothing, really nothing to start out and I was expecting Laurie, and I took a teaching job which I quit in 3 months and the first boy was born and when he was a year and half we went back. Luckily both Shawn's parents both died within 5 years of each other and he was the first grandchild, so we did make one trip in the first 3 years and that was the trip that, you somehow have to make it before you settle. You know, you go back and you look at everything, and then you decide well are home is...where you make it. Then we came and we started to settle and you know we rented here first and then we bought, and then we built on, but that first trip you're still very close to the family, and of course our oldest boy, Shawn's dad showed him around the town that they lived in, very proud of it. In fact people were coming out of their stores and would say "looks like a foreign child" which was funny

because he's 100% Irish, but Rory was dark haired and just soaks up the sun and had this great tan and people say "is he really your grandson? Is his mother Irish too?"

Kilpatrick: That's funny.

O'Farrell: Yeah, it's funny. But then the next time we went back, my family had scattered. Because I'm 3<sup>rd</sup> in the family, they were like 4 or 5 at home the first time, when I got back there was just my 2 sisters. And then, well Peggy come out here, so there was one sister, so they really have scattered. Then mother and dad came out and visited us after, they came out the year Rory was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and that was really neat. Because dad, we had the little house before we built on, dad was an architect and he sat outside in the sun, he really relived his years in California, he loved the sun. He visited the missions with us, and he drew a plan to built out of our house, and he went back, and I remember when he went back, and he said "you have made your home here, this is your location, this is your life and you know we think it's great." This is neat because it's hard to be that far away, especially when you have the first grandchild.

Kilpatrick: Yeah.

O'Farrell: You know, and they really wish they had come closer. So they made one more trip then after Peg was married.

Kilpatrick: Uh huh.

O'Farrell: And then mother had some heart trouble, and they haven't come since, but now I go back every year if I can.

Kilpatrick: Oh that's sweet.

O'Farrell: Because now she's 86, and we lost dad this spring, but it's really worth while, just to keep contact. You memories and having them, we're very close to them in the way that my father, asked, having met all the children, he said he really wanted to get to know them, and he thought they should know their heritage. You know now it's roots and all, but, because we're very Irish to the extent that I teach Irish dancing, and Shawn plays Irish music, you know we're involved with dance schools and such. So the kids have grown up with this, but it's foreign to their friends, so by going back, each one after they got out of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade visited Ireland and met their grandparents, and dad sort of is a great talker he was, and he sort of filled them in on, you know that summer about their background. They have good feelings about, you know where we all come from which is good. In fact, Nora the girl who is doing special ed, we go back this summer to stay with my mother.

Kilpatrick: Tell me, Can you tell like just some of the folklore, that is, that your father would tell someone?

O'Farrell: Well, where dad and mother lived for the last couple of years is right near Kilmainham Gaol, which is where the leaders of the rebellion in 1916 were jailed, and he brought them up to the jail. He filled in the background and you know what's going on in the North and why there's still a division and why people in Ireland feel so strongly anti-British. Not disliking English people but disliking the fact that there's still some British rule in Ireland. You know and the newspapers make it look like a religious war but it's just happens that religious boundaries coincide with political boundaries. You know like in Israel, so you know it heightens the problem. But I mean dad, when he went back from California in 1932, it had been like 10 years since any freedoms, any declarations of freedom for Ireland, for Southern Ireland, and he was contacted by what would now be the IRA [Irish Republican Army] and he didn't want to have anything to do with the new found goals, the rest had to be done by slow negotiation and any, before he died he used to talk about it you know say "I won't see it, maybe you won't see it but eventually Ireland has got to be liberated because that's the way the country will be united, you know it's going to happen someday and the British are going tired of sending their young people and spending their time keeping what's called peace." And he was very sort of, well I think he must have must have been somewhat of a rebel not just a student in his young days, you know he felt it was all going to come someday. He had a real impatience with governments, that they waited until there was another explosion and someone else died or killed before they sat down to talk, you know and then months could go by and then there'd be a another bomb and he felt that as ever politicians wait and just avoid. But he was a great talker and a great storyteller and sang Irish songs, and you know his, I feel that we had been lucky enough to have been 10 years out here in this country he had a much more open feeling about the war over there. We got a lot of freedom, like I was encouraged to go into a profession, and my sisters, we all got a very early choice, I think that there were things about freedom and that and about accepting people, because Ireland is a very closed society, and dad had met so many here, so when my brother became a priest we had African travelers in our home, we had priests, we grew up with a confident, open house that made it very for us to come out here. Because I know some of the Irish in San Francisco are very close and we're sort of glad in way, we settle here because it's very easy to be caught up in sort of little community and it's we and they, and Stockton we sort of mix more here in the community. We feel we've been very fortunate...

Kilpatrick: Yeah I noticed it's really a small area, and housing out here isn't, like fairly, not all Irish people came over and settled in one group...

O'Farrell: No, they do now in San Francisco, Market Street area and such, but there are very few Irish in Stockton. Because it's not the climate, we...first summer, heat and we were in a small apartment downtown and every weekend we got in the car and drove out to San Francisco, and thought oh, you know, Shawn looked for jobs out there,

then we moved out, we rented out here. From a friend of a friend and it was just a small house, but somehow once we got out in the country a bit, then it seems, this is you know, we're about 10 minutes from UOP, but it's still out in the country. Used to be walnut trees, and then we got a chance to buy it, and then we added on later, in fact we added on this room, and a bedroom, and a bathroom when Fergus, when I was in the hospital with Fergus was coming, we put in the fireplace. So in that way, also the opportunities here, like we have 4 in college at the moment. Just the thought of 4 in college, you know, to anyone is staggering, and in California with what it has to offer in advanced education, if kids really want it, it's really pretty amazing. None of them have gone to private schools but they've, you know, UOP [laughs]

Kilpatrick: Yes [laughs]

O'Farrell: So, but they, well you know they work summers, and then go to school, they went too [ ] elementary, because that was one graduation too, [ ] sometimes for higher education. But we've been very satisfied with Stockton because we can be out in the country a little bit, and yet only 15 minutes from, from...

Kilpatrick: Yeah. Um when you were living back in Ireland, with your family, brothers and sisters did anybody else live in your house, besides you said we took in some borders...

O'Farrell: Oh it was, it was the sort of house that was always an open house, um, my parents had a tradition of hospitality. We had, yes, we had visiting people come, we didn't, we had a woman who lived with us for some years, when we were small who came as a sort of mother's helper to my mother, she was a teacher who had taught in British in Ireland and then didn't have the credentials for the other schools and she was with us for a couple of years. But uh, like I met Shawn, through a dramatic group that put on plays a couple of times, just, you know a small theater group, that met in a big room that was inside of our house. Our house was a big old house, and it was a billiard room, for the people lived before. Well we still called it the billiard room but it just had a piano, and books and a floor where you could do dancing, because we used to have dancing lessons once week and our friends came in. The drama club practiced there and that where I met Shawn, he was involved with drama groups and Irish language groups. And then I came out here to school, and it was when I went back that we got together again and decided to get married. But, uh, still, my mother's home in Dublin, and she has a much smaller home, as she's gotten old, but she still has company all the time, just all these people. She doesn't get up until 10 or 11 in the day but she doesn't go to bed until 10 or 11 at night.

Kilpatrick: When you were being raised in Ireland, do you remember what it was like, like I get the idea that a lot of your being raised, you were more Americanized than most Irish...?

O'Farrell: Well somewhat. Um, only that mother and dad had eaten different foods, met different people, um. We used to put up the flag on 4<sup>th</sup> of July, because there were American citizens in the house. And kids in the neighborhood, used to come up and say "what are you doing" you know and they wondered what was that family with the strange house. Because Dad built our house, in the Spanish style with a tile roof, and patio in the back...so there were certain influences, and yet it was a very Irish family. You know we had Irish dance lessons and we went to school to learn the Irish language too...

Kilpatrick: Excuse me I'm going to cough again; I gotta do it (laughs).

O'Farrell: Do you have a tickle in your throat?

Kilpatrick: (coughing) yeah it's like an itch.

O'Farrell: Um but we always had connections. Mother and Dad still wrote to people they knew here and that's how I got a chance to go to school here. I wrote to a lady who was in education at Mills college, and I wrote when I finished my training, and I said I'm interested in Special Ed, where could I find that in California because that's where I have some friends, and my parents have. And she wrote back and she said I wouldn't have any influence outside of Mills College, why don't you apply here. And I didn't know at the time it was such an expensive school, and a small school, you know but it had what I needed. I came out and I was able to audit some classes, and then it was very convenient that I came back here, because I had a BA because I stayed a year and a half I got a BA at Mills, so when I went to get a credential it helped that I had, had coursework here. That I had a BA from here, so it was very easy to get accredited, I just had to take a couple of things to begin with the teaching credential. So I'm back teaching and I'm called a reading specialist, because there's way more language work I do at the schools. But uh I was lucky that I was teaching before there were a lot of teachers you know, this was 12 years ago.

Kilpatrick: Did your parents, did, you told me they encouraged you to go into school, your sisters and brothers did they get much schooling?

O'Farrell: Well my mother was...my Dad is, he went to Cork University for Engineering, and got his degree in Engineering and Architecture too. And mother was rather unusual for her time, 1920s, she would have been called a physical therapist probably, but there it was called massage and Swedish gymnastics, and she qualified under Swedish examining and all that. It was really like physical therapy, and she was quite the



swimmer, and diver, and horseback rider, and when I think back over, at the time we were growing up as kids, we used to joke that she didn't work [inaudible], we'd just say mother's massage, you know because she was very particular about how you stood and your back, if your feet weren't flat or something. But at the time, when I think about her contemporaries, most women, any who were in careers in Ireland, it was worst than teaching, were single. Even when Shawn and I wanted to get married in 1954, the laws in Ireland at the time, I would have to resign from my teaching position, I was in the school for the handicap and cerebral palsy, and I would have had to leave anyway, so that was another thing that influenced our immigrating. Because at the time, the minute you were married you had to resign from the, any civil service job.

Kilpatrick: Oh wow.

O'Farrell: Now that changed in later years, but in a way it weakened. I think the educational system helped. But at that time in Ireland, you had a family and you stayed home to look after them.

Kilpatrick: So it was just expected. The traditional get married, have children, and settle down. Um did women take jobs like seamstresses, on side in the house?

O'Farrell: Yes, when we were children there were still families who had maids and nannies we called them, you know not children's nurses but still childcare.

Kilpatrick: Mary Poppins.

O'Farrell: Yes. Right all purpose people who worked from morning til night practically. There were some women doctors, medicine seemed to be a field they got into before business, and still not too many women worked outside. There seemed to be more here because so many women inherit businesses from their families. Like Katie you know my daughter and Emma's daughter who's gone into architecture and my brother in law is a stained glass artist in Dublin, and he thought she could have gone into horticulture or interior decorating, you know how would a girl ever gonna get started in architecture well he doesn't know Katie. She was encouraged by a teacher at Delta, when she took some classes, actually turned out there is tremendous advantaged for women in architecture because there are so few women in the field yet. It's hard work but she has her whole life, (laughs) she thinks, but there are active advantages I think now in certain fields like Engineering, management and such. But on the whole yes my family became, were more educated, like one of my aunts was a professor in Albany, whereas one of my uncles was at Cork University, you know so that were, they had, had more education because my grandfather was a doctor. And Shawn's family came, his dad was in business, and had probably little interest in training, he was very smart with figures and business and he managed like a Safeway store, a chain, and had much simpler home life, but was also eager for his kids to get educated and have work.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, and uh, can you kinda tell me something, about the community you lived in, when you were growing up in Ireland?

O'Farrell: Yeah. We lived in a town called Dalkey, outside of Dublin. Now Dublin is a huge city, really, when you think about the size of the country. The town that we lived in, we moved twice, we moved to the very new community, what we call a subdivision here, first and Dad built our house. Then we on out to Dalkey on the sea coast, which was really a neat place, my brothers would write poetry about it in the spring, and um I would sing. We had a very rich family life, there were 8 of us, and we had to travel a few miles to school, but um, and not a lot of money, with 8 children, even though Dad was a professional man, you know it was always secondhand bicycles, and always some holidays with relatives, certain things. Dad didn't own a car for years, until my brothers were grown, car transportation was the way to go, but it was a smaller community, where everybody knew everybody. Like one night I was on the train, I remember, and my brothers were scared something was going to happen to me. But I got off at our local railway station; I don't remember what it was called, and the station master he knew, and he called a policeman and the policeman knew me, you know, everybody knew you. The postman knew us, the baker, used to deliver and come in and have a cup of tea with mother because we lived up on the hill and it was sort of a long haul, um and the neighbors around you, it was very close that way. You never went swimming, without friends, you never went to the grocery store were you didn't see friends, and uh we knew the rest of Shawn's family, although we met in different ways you than just neighbors, our families knew each other very well.

Kilpatrick: So it's a fairly closed in community?

O'Farrell: Yeah. Well like one girl's school and one boys school in town, so you all went through the same schools, unless you're going into the next town on the bus or something. But most of us knew each other...[background sound {plane or bus?} drowns out speaking]...active in the boy scout council and I was active in the girl scout council, you know so you knew just about everybody, that's what Shawn was saying was such a shock this last time going back, to walk down the street of that town and not see anybody you knew, and there was a time in life that you thought that would never happen, because you would greet every other person. You know, you open your eyes to the passing years, although things don't obviously change that much there, people do move around, and you know new generation comes and forgets and you feel like a stranger in your own town.

Kilpatrick: Yeah. I can imagine. What was expected of you, like um when you were growing up, what did your folks like, as chores around the house or did take outside jobs?

O'Farrell: No, very few outside jobs, very little. I was lucky in that my dad, my dad's family, his sister was just around to raise the kids, and then grandpa was a doctor. Dad's older sister raised their family, and he was determined, because there were two boys in their household, and our mom, and then me and three more boys and three little sisters, so I really was spoiled, growing up, because Dad was determined that the girl was not going to raise these boys and do all the work. And I was, so we all had chores, like the boys got the dishes, I never remember bringing in the firewood, things that boy's should have to do. Whereas I had friends that I would visit and we'd want to go to a movie at night and I had one friend in particular, and her four brothers would sit by the fire and she'd have to get up and do the supper dishes, and I'd have to wait, and they didn't even have to think, like that was her job, the girl did the dishes, the girls got the firewood, the girl you know, and a lot of Irish boys, were spoiled being waited on by the girls. I think that's why some of them wait so long to get married, they have it so easy, you know.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, that's what it sounds like.

O'Farrell: Yeah the women waited on them.

Kilpatrick: But in your family it was more...

O'Farrell: It was. I was lucky I think, because Dad, felt that women should share, and I did iron, I always ironed, that was my chore, and for the girls to do. But then there were other jobs that they were expected to do.

Kilpatrick: Did your brother's take outside jobs, at all?

O'Farrell: Um, there were almost none, when they were in high school.

Kilpatrick: Oh really?

O'Farrell: It was very difficult. Uh you could deliver papers for a store, yet almost nothing. That was about it, and the people didn't pay for babysitting, I used to mind children of a friend every so often, I was interested in kids and I wanted to teach, and I knew very early I think, that I wanted to teach and at least I could mind these neighbors children when she wanted to go shopping or something. But I never got paid; it was not babysitting, at that time, 1930s, and 1940s. I was, 44' I graduated high school so I was, 14 I babysat for that family but I was never paid. And there were no jobs, I wanted to do teaching training, in Ireland and the fee was quite expensive, quite high, and I made a deal, my mother arranged that I would help supervise some of the girl's boarding school during their recess and lunch hour to pay my fees. It was a Montessori where I was training, but it was hard, because there were so few arrangements that you could make. Where at the university, took free university students to get a part time job, you either

went into some sort of business training, for a store or some civil service job or you went to university, that way you were expect to, that your parents paying. I had a brother, went to London and then onto Germany, because he was doing architecture and he just couldn't afford the schooling, and I have another brother who would rather be printing, than going to university because he wouldn't have gotten through. But very few of his friends had jobs, some of them would go to England during the fruit season and work there, but uh, but even farms in Ireland are small and the family works at them.

Kilpatrick: Did you live on a farm?

O'Farrell: No, we lived in next to Dublin, in a very old farm, which was cold, but a lot of Irish homes are cold, and it was like 10-15 minutes to train, close to transportation and it's nice to live near Dublin. I mean that theatre that I experienced and the ballet, and opera, that we could go to, it'd be like living near San Francisco. Was really raised loving to go, in fact when Shawn and I went together we went to the theater all the time, because that was one of our interests, but it was a very rich...period for us with just, but when I meet kids in Stockton who say "I've never seen a play, I've never been in the theater", it's sort of amazing that course there'd be television but it's not the same.

Kilpatrick: So, other than going into Dublin for plays and stuff, what else was done for social events and entertainment?

O'Farrell: Well were, as children in boy scouts and girl scouts, camping and all, that was our summer vacation. Then we visited relatives a lot as children, there was a lot of family, and then when we got more into college age and that, my parents, well the fact we lived near Dublin on the sea side, people would come out, there in the summer, it was more families visiting families. It's not typical, there's a lot of entertaining in Dublin...in pubs, and that, but as a family my mother had a great dislike for any sort of alcohol. So we went to plays a lot, and we were acting, my dad was acting, it was good, mostly with local community type companies, and my mother did it with [inaudible, discussing mother's local group], and I did quite a bit with her, because there were so many boys in the family. I remember sharing the war, you know Ireland was involved, it was called the emergency period and we all took classes, and that sort of thing, and I was in school. We were close, I think, more than a lot of um, daughters I think with their mothers, because the boys in the family. We weren't too into sports, I was more than my brothers, because I played hockey in school, and that was [inaudible, talking about sports and games?]. A lot of visiting and talk, and we'd stay up to 11:30, 12 o'clock at night and even this last time I went home, it amazed me. People were dropping in on mother at 10 o'clock at night and she's, you know 86, 10'oclock on a summer evening, cause you have that long summer nights, you know it's, Ireland is very far North, and people would visit, and she'd put on the teapot and they'd have a cup of tea. Then as children, we used to have this Irish dancing class, and always singing.

Kilpatrick: How did you celebrate holidays?

O'Farrell: Well, a lot of being Catholic, being in a Catholic country, a lot of the holidays are religious holidays. Christmas was very close family, and the church involved, St. Patrick's Day is big, like as green as it is here. Mostly with family, and with family friends, and we had this boat, that my brother built, it's in Ireland, and we go, just, you'd row a short distance and then picnic. That I could think of that's with your family.

Kilpatrick: Does like the whole family, aunts and uncles and grandparents...?

O'Farrell: And my grandparents would likely spend Christmas with them and couple of my aunts and uncles lived closer and they'd come with family, and we'd go down and swim, go down the hill and go have lunch for a bit, and we used to fish. But a lot of what you'd just call visiting, you know, that room at the side of our house was great because used to have a ping pong table and you know [phone ringing] and um and a lot of things like when I was in teacher training, that's when Shawn, that's when I first joined the drama group, we were just read and put on a play, it wasn't a great big thing, but a thing in the town. And then I used to go to the junior college and take art classes, and then the art group, that was a small group that used to meet. Because we had this big we had, and because we were just a big family with a lot of room, our house seemed to be used by so many groups, and these girls that visited when I was back home this summer, Dad died in February, and they were just reminiscing about our home. They said you know your father, was must have been in his 50's we'd all come from our days work, she said, this friend of mine, it's funny how he, we never got the impression that we were bothering him, all this bunch of teenagers or young 20s come up to do a bit of drawing, painting or a bit of dancing or practice a play, your Dad used to sit by the fire radio tune in, and listen and all this would be going on. When I think back over, and think of my own tiredness after a day's work sometimes, Dad had an amazing patience. Didn't matter how many came over, I don't ever remember him saying I wish they'd go home or you know...

Kilpatrick: That's my, my Gramp is just like that...

O'Farrell: He was just, he could tune out everybody, and pick up and just listen to the proper and tune it to the news station and put his ear up to it, and there'd be bedlam going on, you know. Sometimes a monopoly game, that was a big thing back then, but it could go on for hours, and uh, I think of it now, an open was really pretty special. Now going back to visit mother, so many people come and visit her and that's nice now that she's on her own, who just have good memories of, and Dad's funeral was unbelievable the people who turned up, boy scouts all these people who remember meeting in our house, I could go on forever about that. My family, because people say to me, you miss Ireland, I don't really miss Ireland, we made our home here, the memories I have of

those things are gone anyway, I don't think places really mean that much to me, it's the people. I'd love to go visit mother, you know 2-3 times a year but that's not possible for me to even get back every year, and there's family in Ireland that's still close to mother.

Kilpatrick: So the first time you came out to the United States, after leaving, was when you were in college?

O'Farrell: Mm hmm, that was after I'd done teacher training in Ireland, and I came to Mills College just to see what I could pick up about cerebral palsy and special ed for the handicap, and then after I'd been there for one semester they said we've evaluated you and you're like a junior of something, and you need so many more units to graduate. So then I applied for what they call an assistantship in the nursery school, they had one there, which was neat. They went through that foundation that I study under, they went through and evaluated me, and they told me what I needed, things like science, swimming, you had to pass a swimming test in California, and I had to take that California history and government thing, I was pretty unprepared for it, you know at the time I have no idea why I decided to stay and finish the BA because it didn't mean anything teaching in Ireland, I already had what I needed. But then coming back here, it was sure convenient that I already had the degree.

Kilpatrick: Did you live on the campus when you first came back?

O'Farrell: Yes. I lived on the campus, which now that I'm back it doesn't make any difference, but it was a mistake really. I had no idea of California life, and you know, because I lived on an all girl campus and it's a little unreal compared to other campus's and general state colleges and that. But it was convenient for me, and they certainly made it possible, see they had a nursery school, that had a direct learning, they took 2-3 students, so it was ideal, I could put in 4 hours a day here and then go to class.

Kilpatrick: So there really wasn't too much of a culture shock thing coming back to the United States after you'd been gone for so long?

O'Farrell: Not really.

Kilpatrick: Not too big of a difference really...

O'Farrell: And then marrying Shawn, you know, makes a difference. I think the first two months for him, were hard. He came out in November and took a job at the job at the emporium in San Francisco, and the money is different, and going into a job where you had to make change, and you have to look at every nickel and see if it's a quarter or a nickel, you know, and then the buying Christmas, and little kids. That was just different to him so, the amount to spend, the amount, Christmas and that.

Kilpatrick: Everything out here is a little more commercial.

O'Farrell: Yes and even kids wanting French cuffs, or this type of bowling shoes, or something, a certain set of demands, that advertising and that is much more advanced. Kids were just aware of what they wanted, and Irish kids were lucky if we got something in a package.

Kilpatrick: [laughs]

O'Farrell: Culture shock I don't know about. Because I was more aware, having been in school here, growing up in Ireland, people just have a different way of spending their weekends, you know, and that's sort of thing is what you get used to at first. We were lucky I think with the folk dancing, Shawn and I, we met friends right away through the Y in Stockton, and the folk dance club and it helped us with friends in the first few months. And people, sort of hospitality was sort of a shocker, when we came to Stockton, Shawn lived at the Y, because he got a job and then found an apartment, and then I came after, he had gone, while he was at the Y, he used to just visit the folk dance group, and I arrived in April, the couple he met at the folk dance group, they met me at the train, Shawn had arranged our marriage and the folk dance group turned out to our wedding, you know which was at Easter 1954, and gave us a shower the next week. They had never seen me, they only just knew this young Irish man in town, and gave us everything you could think, they had decided because I had come from so far that I wouldn't have anything, practical. I mean they gave us things like salt and pepper shakers, and frying pans and seasoning and flour, it was really you know, that's generous, I think it's maybe more here in California than the rest of the United States.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, I was about to say that, that kind of surprises me. Did your parents at all, arrange your wedding or was it all just you?

O'Farrell: In fact they all joke that they knew I was going to marry Shawn. He used to

**[TAPE 1, End]**

**[TAPE 2, Begin]**

[Laughing, tape machinery moving around]

O'Farrell: No, that hasn't happen, earlier in that way...and my parent's marriage wasn't arranged. That's more likely to happen in the country where farms are small, towns are small, and so on, where so and so would marry so and so and there'd be a farm somewhere. But that has changed, in the years since that went on, and certainly, Dublin was very cosmopolitan, you know very much more modern. Although, you'd still recognize what would be called a foreigner, you know German visitors...and people you could pick out, in the summertime.

Kilpatrick: Did you have any relatives, in the states when you came out for college?

O'Farrell: I had very distant, like second cousins, I think, that we wrote to at Christmas, though we'd never seen them, or traveled around to all the second cousins at least. And we did write to them, and when I came to California they met me and I spent a couple of weeks with them, but they were elderly, two spinsters and a bachelor. It was sort of different. Because there weren't any young people in the family, though I met people...When I went to Mills College that's where I first started doing some folk dancing teaching, Irish dancing, and there was a young man in the Bay Area that had heard...because I danced at some student event, and he came over and said he was interested in learning some Irish dances. So I met quite a few people through that...and I did visit quite a number of girls homes, from Mills, because they encouraged people to, you know I was considered the foreign student. Some of the homes, like...unbelievable, sort of piquant area, at the time TV was in its infancy in Europe, there were kids that practically had their own wing of the house, you know, and having grown up with a big family. That was a bigger...because when we came back here, we didn't, we associated with people more of our own interests, and through the folk dancing we met Lawton Harris. And..uh...you know, met some teachers along the way, you know how you met people, and then our kids got in school, and then you have a lot in common once you've got kids in school.

Kilpatrick: What was like..., what were a couple of things that really surprised you when you came out to California besides the hospitality that you mentioned? Like can you think of anything that was just really different? Like maybe the food, or?

O'Farrell: Well the food wasn't as a big a shock, the appearance and all, but just the whole, the way the whole population in Stockton eats by car. Because we grew up with buses and trains, we lived in a small apartment downtown, and I stayed home while Shawn went to work, and if I...I didn't even drive, when I came. So I learned to drive after Laurie was born, I used to walk around town, nobody would be walking, you know. It seemed like, at least at that time I knew we were safe enough, but I used to, especially when the weather got really hot, and that little apartment was, the building was such that you couldn't get a cross draft, so evening time I'd go down to Penny's and it'd be nice and cool to walk around Penny's, and just the amount of merchandise, and the attractiveness of stores. But, uh we used that was, go out at night and take a walk, because the apartment was hotter than...and then when we moved out of it to the outside of town a little, you know even in a place a little bit smaller, it uh the climate is. Other than that I don't know if...the other thing is the mixture of nationalities. When we lived downtown, which meant we went to St. Mary's church, there in town, and you came out and the Spanish spoken, you don't realize when you're in Ireland, that California has such strong ethnic groups. Like our parish here, in St. Michael's, when I went out there first, and this was still mostly farmland, you come out of church and it was Italian all around you, you don't realize, people think of America as English



speaking, they don't realize that children go to school with other languages. Now where I am at the moment St. George's you come out of church, and some days there, it's all Spanish, Mexican, and if you say a word in Spanish they turn around and speak to you, you know they presume that you're in that area that you know how to speak Spanish. And that, that was really amazing to me, and I remember when Peg visited first, when she came that time with us, and she came to our little, our children went to a school downtown, and she came to a Christmas program, or some little play that was supposed to be like a shadow play, and they have this big sheet up and the kids voices would come from behind it, when it was all over, they lifted the sheet and she said she was in shock. She couldn't believe it. Because our Dara (?) was the only white child in the group, they were all black or Mexican or Filipino, because this was in downtown school, and Peg said I couldn't believe it, the first time I had really come across a really mixed school group. But whether it's the movies, or whatever, it looked like there were black people in America and some of the rest, but then you move into a community and you realize how truly mixed it is. Peg used to say to me, are they Mexican or Italian, and you think oh my god the Italian's in this area would die [laughs].

Kilpatrick: That's funny. When you made the trip to America, in college, how was, was that like the first time you'd left home? How did that...?

O'Farrell: Mmm hmm. That was, uh, that was more scary because I had no idea how American colleges were ran, I just went through this teacher training course, in a very small college, training school connected to the high school, and there were like 6 of us in my teacher graduating class, and we got our diplomas. And I came out to Mills College which is still considered small, but I, I took a, I had a, let's see, I had a plane trip to New York, and I took a Greyhound bus from New York to San Francisco, and there were times on the Greyhound bus that I was scared, I thought oh my god, and you just went 5 days on the bus and I didn't stay over because I didn't know where to stay, you know, you on the bus, you know these places look alike. Greyhound comes into town and you get those piles of buses at the Greyhound station, sometimes I'd talk, and I got wise I would sit right behind the driver and talk to him, and find out, you know tell you about the places you were in. And every sort, I never believed that cowboys existed except in the movies and then in Wyoming they come in on the bus, well now western style is popular but they would come in practically with a piece of hay in their teeth, you know I mean, and be going on to the next town. And I couldn't understand at that time, I couldn't understand that sort of a southern accents and all that western, very hard to pick up, people would talk to me on the bus, and I'd say excuse me? You know, "How do y'all like it here?" or something [laughs], which just, almost the different dialects you get on a Greyhound bus.

Kilpatrick: What about the styles of clothes and stuff? Because I know, that if you land in New York that's pretty different?

O'Farrell: Well yes but I was hardly in New York. Because dad had a relative there, and I just stayed overnight, but uh, the styles of clothes. Everything is more casual, like one of the first people we met here in Stockton was Dr. J[rest of name inaudible] who was an Irish doctor in town. And the first day she came to visit me she had a pair of shorts on and sandals, and I thought, she was a doctor's wife, in Dublin if she was a doctor's wife she would have to dress like a doctor's wife, you wouldn't go to the grocery store with bare legs and, you know a pair of shorts. But that, um, people thinks there are like styles of society here, but you still can do what you want. Like at our house here we laughed about that, because we had party shortly after we got done building, and most of the Irish in town, came, but there was Dr. J[rest of name inaudible], and a carpenter but the others were mostly Irish here and were married, and wearing skirts and such, and we were just laughing about that. But in Ireland at a party, in someone's home, it would be very unlikely to have a doctor as a guest.

Kilpatrick: Because they're so...

O'Farrell: Because it's a different way, one believes in their trade. Like the school that I went to, the college that I went to was more of a professional school, but it was mostly trades that these children went to, were like public school here, they were national schools. And didn't expect to go through high school and then on to college, it was much more, more stratified still, although the opportunity...it's changing a little, as it becomes a little more traveled and what not.

Kilpatrick: So in Ireland, when you were there, was there like a fairly large middle class? Like there is here, and a small lower class, and a small upper class? Or is it?

O'Farrell: Yeah. Smaller upper class that's for sure, there are much fewer people making large amounts of money. Just that the business man, that's just a small number, like here you can, we met this gal, well she was in Ireland from Boston, and they were put in touch with our family, there a group of traveling students. This little trim, she explained that her father had made a fortune in the trim that goes around shoes.

Kilpatrick: Oh wow.

O'Farrell: Yeah I remember Dad saying at the time, there's no way you could make a fortune in that in Ireland, there's only 2.5 million people, you know. But uh, there are not that many fortunes made, and it's not that easy. Because here you have a bright idea and there's 200 million people, you know like corduroy camp or something, and tremendous buying public.

Kilpatrick: A friend of my father's made the little plastic things that go on the end of the bread, he put a patent on those and there's a billion trillion of those.

O'Farrell: Yeah isn't it amazing. And then of course change comes through. We were talking about health food, and wondering about the sales, well there is more interest now in like nutrition. But it's such a small business, it's such a small following, for here in California where it's big enough, you start a health food store there'll be enough people to keep it in business.

Kilpatrick: What type of fads, went through Ireland? I know like, with the 60s and the miniskirts and the heels...

O'Farrell: Well Irish, in the cities it follows so much, what happens in California, what happens in the United States, when it comes to Germany, it comes to Ireland.

Kilpatrick: But not in the country.

O'Farrell: Not in the country as much, but like, the bands, The Beatles was even bigger, because there isn't much TV or social life, so dancing still quite a big thing in country towns. The bands that went around and sort of pop music is big. Not as much record playing or record buying, but young kids going to dances. Because they don't marry as young either, it's sort of a longer period for you're going out, you know, and going to things like dances in the countryside. Certain things are different now, like my sister was into hiking boots, and hiking is big in the United States, though bicycling over short distances in groups, and like that. There were a lot more unmarried people between, uh 25-35. Some of my cousins we've almost caught up a generations, and part of it was just that the jobs were fewer in Ireland, and you had to be pretty well settled. But part of it is just tradition too, in the countryside. I was very young, when my brother announced his engagement at 23. Oh people were shocked, then they'd say to my mother "but he's hardly even brought in anything yet", meaning he hadn't you know, earned and brought anything into the family. It was true! He was in the airplane business, went off and he was getting married at 23, he was very young, that was very young, that's all we heard commented.

Kilpatrick: So, it's kind of expected, that sons make their living and support their families and what, before they go out on their own?

O'Farrell: Oh yes. Many families, very few living in apartments and that, you know you go through school and maybe go into trades training and you're started, and started like a plant job or a service job, you lived at home for 5, 6, 7 years. Shawn lived at home, although he was on the road and traveling, home was still his home base, and my brothers were [inaudible, talking about brothers], but two of my brothers went to college and to jobs, and left home to get married. And then my sister, my other sister, one sister, got married when she was 38, which that was sort of a she had a moving business, and you know, we never expected it, she's sort of surprised us all. She was the one who was, you know, home, and very happy.

Kilpatrick: So she had her own business?

O'Farrell: Yes. She was a weaver, and she went to Scotland and she rolled linens and cushions, she weaves beautiful tweed, and then she had a linen shop, she had a little weaving place, and the shop and this millinery came up for sale, so she finally, well with mother and dad, and family and they all went in with her, and she had, how long was she there... [coughing] she was employing 11 people. Oh she was written up in newspapers and everything, because she was really phenomenal and such a success and then she met this man in Ireland and they married, and she was 38. She was very lucky and I think she feels she was very lucky, to land a wonderful man, and still have a family.

Kilpatrick: Is that strange though, for a woman, to start a business like that in Ireland?

O'Farrell: Yeah. Not as strange now. At her time, like I said back in the day she was in newspapers. She was like 22, and had like this shop.

Kilpatrick: But did people kind of look up to that or did they scorn it?

O'Farrell: No. They, they, I think on the whole they admired, you did feel, I heard my mother, my mother still does "how does she work? But that's all right Una, then she'd say". She always figured somehow I'd manage, it's funny, how mothers like that anyway, I mean she's, all her own can't do anything wrong, but she, she'd say "well that young woman got married, now and I don't think she's looking after her children. They're always around the streets, and they're cold, and they're not looked after, and of course she went back to the work the minute she had that baby. I don't approve of young mothers." And then she might say "now you managed to get taught." But she didn't when we were children, and it of course a lot of job when you lived in Ireland too, were not easy, you could clean houses, and just come home exhausted. Well like a lot here, but profession are so hard. My uncle's architect [inaudible speaking, talking about uncle?]...she's having a rough time in Dublin, now that she's in practice, she's not working for someone else, she's by herself, and she's said there are many big jobs that have come up, and she's applied. Now who's your partner, do you, like, you know, are you just a woman architect, that's the sort of attitude that's alright for designing kitchens, you know, that sort of thing [coughing]. So she got her some difficulty. Though medicine where it seems like women are more easily accepted.

Kilpatrick: That's surprising. What about law?

O'Farrell: I never knew...I know there are some, but I'd say they wouldn't be at the stage here, like in a small town. Like that, I'd say you know people have nice jobs in all offices. You know, people are not encouraging you to go that far, and um and even school principals, the demand...especially when people are in business, or something,

you know people who think. You know, accounts, or like a bookkeeper, but the accountant, it takes some time to change.

Kilpatrick: In your family, between your parents, who made like the decisions? Is it, fairly, your father making most of the decisions?

O'Farrell: Major. But the day to day was more of...um...

Kilpatrick: Did the children have any kind of say in what went on?

O'Farrell: Oh not as much, in fact our children say they don't, it's funny now that they're older and they talk with us. You know with the way you watched us, and we are close, and I know I'm much more, I don't know what you call it...vigilant, then a lot of parents. Then our children have less freedoms, like I always have to know who they're with when they're out, or beyond a certain time and they always call us, even in my working years, I would be there to pick them up from school, and I knew they were on the bus or I knew exactly when they were coming, you know. And all the kids in the neighborhood, you know as long as they were there by dinner time it was okay, you know, and uh, and Laurie says "oh Mom, I was afraid to even ask the first year I was at St. Mary's if I could go to a dance." You know it was just presumed that they didn't get to do as much, you know, or didn't have as much freedom. And uh, I'm sure it's true, that when it comes to college and that sort of thing, you know, there's no way you can influence you know they're decisions, when I know that I um, I never took them to the pool and left them and those sort of things. And that was part of my tradition and also part of bigger family. But they had each other to play with so much you know. But um, but Katie says "still Mother, you were", she's was all steamed up over wanting to stay the night, and I know I used to call her a lot last year. "You just, I just get the feeling you're worrying about me all the time, what can I do to stop, are you really." And I'd say "no not worrying, but I have to know" you know.

Kilpatrick: [laughs] My mom's the same way.

O'Farrell: And the kids, when Deidre was in the house, she still doesn't talk over me or her Dad about the first couple of dates she had, and how he was practically walking the floor at 9:30 you know. She was all upset too, with some of her friends that had been dating since 13 practically. And she used to say "Gosh I don't know how any of us are going to get marry, just one date, Dad gives the guy a look that would [laughs] like he doesn't even trust him to take me to a movie." But I think it was easier for others in the family, Rory says, he felt he was breaking new ground, everything, and you know and you do, you don't grow up the same, you're a little girl at 16, you know, and I got my braids cut when I was like 15.

Kilpatrick: Well that's the idea I get. But you stay young until your 18. Is that true for the boys in the family also?

O'Farrell: Not as much. Not as much now, I mean it's like the low drinking age, be in a pub at 16 and get a drink. But children are children are long enough, I meet children and I think she must be like 12 and I find out she's like 15 or 16, and like when my children visited, and they're 100% Irish, and everyone thought they were at least 3 or 4 years older than they were. Well Fergus is very tall, but even the girls, they say "you mean you get to handle your own money." Now Shawn's sisters children visited from England, last year, and the girl she was 16, and her dad, sent the money to Shawn, her spending money, to hold for her, and our kids were going the other way with travelers checks, you know, and I could see the difference that while they're still at school they're kids, and you like get your mothers permission to get a hairstyle change. But uh...

Kilpatrick: I don't know if I could handle that [laughs] I'm an independent person myself.

O'Farrell: Oh kids grow up sooner here and take responsibilities. But then they're more ready when they graduate, they're more ready for the break. Because some of the drinking in Ireland, I'm sure it's because of the health as little kids, and then suddenly they leave school, some of them at 16 and go into a job and have money, and they can't come from a job home at 16 years of age without stopping at a pub, and uh it's like, they used to send kids to boarding school here and they're suddenly free. I think it's better to have them graduate, I don't like, don't like the lack of responsibility here, to me that is still the biggest difference is parents feels the kids are raise at 8 or 9 and they're not home and you don't know where they are, like at school it's still a shock to me if I call up a home to you know report to a parent or inquiry about a child and the kid is there on his own at 6, and there on his own at 8 and there on his own at 10, and you know but a lot of kids are alone. Whether it's jobs or...and it's not that I just don't approve, I can't sort of see that as a life for a child, although in other ways children are spoiled here in a way of material things, and opportunities certainly. It's funny that feeling at the moment like Katie, and she could have gotten into anything, you know graduating from high school, she was good in math's and sciences, and my son was into engineering, and he could, just the fields in engineering, areas, the choices. Like because when Shawn got out of high school it was apprentice in the grocery business, his dad was in league with business training that was about it, unless you wanted to take civil service exam. That was that, that was the extent of the openings.

Kilpatrick: Was that about all the boys, at 16, the opportunity, you know...?

O'Farrell: Well it's still the unions are very closed here.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, you have to know the right people.

O'Farrell: And going into higher education, so many boys do what their dad does or do whatever happens to be in the town, if there's a creamery or a dairy in the town that was where you'd get a job. And that's about the choice around sea port to Dublin, which so many people from all around the country go up to Dublin, which is like going to New York was in the old days, when people, took a room with somebody...hard. But people seem to go back, and it's hard for a mother, whose kids are born in California. But just the opportunity and the freedom, the town is too small, you know. It's like petty-ness, to say I'm not part of that, here. I know it goes on here, with maybe cobblers, but I'm not part of that, you know. You're raising your children on your own and making your own decisions it's really, depending completely on yourselves. I think it helped our marriage, nobody told me, nobody to criticize what our choice was in schools, for our kids.

Kilpatrick: If you'd had married and stayed in Ireland, would your parents have had that influence over you?

O'Farrell: Well my, well my parents weren't so much, but they were advising along, you know, how months and years is the baby you know, everything, but certainly family, brothers and sisters all get in on the act. You know, it was very nice, no competition with the kids, there was no near relative you could compare with how they are doing, you know.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, no pettiness.

O'Farrell: But we were really on our own, it was up to us, you know.

Kilpatrick: So that's kind of nice.

O'Farrell: Like we took up camping with the kids quite early on, because that was a possible type of vacation. You know, and I'm sure we made mistakes, and we you know, well one thing we were really broke, we managed to get by the payday, you don't borrow from your brother or someone, you know. You really manage, it makes you very independent.

Kilpatrick: Yeah. I've learned that.

O'Farrell: And I think it's important, because it's nice for families to help out when they need be, when there's crisis, but that constant, uh, like everything in the family that are in Ireland, it's too much goes throughout the year, so it sometimes becomes a burden.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, so. Did coming to school here, in the United States, well being in an all girls school, did it really help you to understand the like American way of life and all that better? Had you studied any of that back in Ireland?

O'Farrell: Not at all.

Kilpatrick: [laughs] Not at all. So you learned everything here?

O'Farrell: America still very much, still is sort of like the movies, you know. I had no idea, like there were, just no idea of the variety of the people in the schools. When you go to college in Dublin, practically are the kids that are there, they're parents are privileged. People in college in here, one person's father own the service station on the corner, another one, you know, owns IBM practically, you know. That sort of variety, and the other thing was the amount of clothes, and god those girls, I moved in with a bag you know, those girls probably moved in with, I would think a wardrobe that I would think you could never use, you know. I would look into their closets and there'd be 16 pairs of shoes, you know, to go to school.

Kilpatrick: Yeah.

O'Farrell: And that sort of thing, but that was an eye opener to me, that the people buy and discard here, much more. And the kids have spending money, you know, they have stereos and record collections, and those sort of things, just something you expected in Ireland after you were married and everything settled. But, you know, most of us lived at home and had a bedroom, we were lucky, shared one you know. I swear my brothers, only had a musical instrument when they left home, and their clothing you know. And then the family did have cars, only ever went to jobs, but we owned very little. But I think, yeah, that Mills was a help, if only that whole, we talked about terms and the years of study, the semesters and units that I got at least I got to know what all that was. Because I met young Irish nuns here, who came over to go to school, and the first day they were in, I went to walk in and ask for a transcript and that's a term, you'd never heard, you know this type of thing. The just, learning the terminology, and if for instance I had never taught, I taught a little in Ireland, but I taught boys school, I trained in a girls school, and I taught in a boys school, and even the first time you have a co-educational class, its different here.

Kilpatrick: Yeah. Before you went back to America did you have, like I'm sure you had ideas, and stuff, but did you have any feelings about what it would be like to live there, well I guess did your feelings about America change when you got here?

O'Farrell: Well, having had my parents here, we always had good feelings, you know, they had been happy. But I had an anxiety that way, there's a feeling that's still amazes me, that we, came and women can find jobs, women can work, and it just happened so fast. Like Shawn got a Christmas job in the Emporium, and right after that he got a job with [inaudible]. Came up to, any job choose, he choose his job, it's changed since, it was up to him. And then when I went back to teaching, well I taught a few months before Laurie was born, and then we had this family over a number of years, and I never again, I didn't go back to work right away, I mean my youngest was 4, and started



thinking it was about time I went back to teaching, and I just went in and there were jobs. I mean that was 12 years ago, you could go in and apply at Stockton Unified and you got a place.

Kilpatrick: Yeah, lucky you.

O'Farrell: Right. 5 years later I wouldn't, well you're in Special Ed, you're probably in the best field. Really.

Kilpatrick: [laughs] I'm open. I would hate to go through all of this and then go 5 years without being able to find a job.

O'Farrell: No, I think Special Ed is going to be, the more they're telling student to provide the right program for every child, the more Special Ed programs there's gonna be. They've just got to.

Kilpatrick: Yeah.

O'Farrell: You know if you have the patience, and you're interested in it you know.

Kilpatrick: Yeah. I know I've got both of those already

O'Farrell: Well that's good because it seems to me, teacher training at one time you didn't discover that until the last year. Nora too, our daughter just got involved with volunteer work, and that's what she found she really enjoyed. Then I have this little nephew.

Kilpatrick: That's what I do too.

O'Farrell: Oh did ya? And then you either like it or you don't. I mean my 3 girls now, Maria's little nephew Cerebral boy you know, Peg's little boy, and Nora used to just love to babysit him, and she could teach him, she could get him to listen. Deirdre would go in there and she didn't feel, now she, you know we all know him pretty well, but like Nora would spend a Saturday in the summer taking him and a couple of others to the park or something, and Katie would say, when does she even talk to them, she remembers this one likes baseball card, and this one likes pop music, and you know, and Katie just looks at them like, I can't even remember which one is which. But I think teaching is got to be a profession you got to like it, and that's one thing that this overabundance of teachers has done. I think of lot of them have got out of it and didn't like it and we're better off without them. We have a couple of young girls now at St. George's school, enthusiastic and you know eager and they're paid so little to work at the school. But boy they want to do such a good job and it's good to see. It's not just something you do because you can be, and you're a mother and it's what you felt, I mean that just, I think there are better teachers coming on.

Kilpatrick: Plus the programs there at schools are just really...

O'Farrell: Have you been at UOP at you know all of?

Kilpatrick: Just this semester, I'm just a freshman.

O'Farrell: Oh you are! Oh that's right you did say.

Kilpatrick: [laughs] I've taken college courses before.

O'Farrell: So you volunteered in high school?

Kilpatrick: I worked in an elementary school with the mentally disabled all semester.

O'Farrell: See that's what appeals to me to. There's a great satisfaction in learning with kids, for them I have infinite patience. I don't have patience with parents, and I don't have patience, with kids, the bright kids who, I find they are much harder to be patient with the bright kids.

Kilpatrick: They try and outsmart you.

O'Farrell: But the slow ones that struggle and you practically see the brain moving you know. That's a challenge I do enjoy, and if you do I think there's nothing greater. Because a couple years ago, [inaudible, talking about school and teaching], would you like to go, and I couldn't think but yeah. The first few years were tough, the kids were all little and it was like Grand Central Station here in the morning getting everybody out to school and you know. Fix lunches and get the bus fares, and picking up in the evening and to try to fit in a dentist appointment, there were doctors to see when the flu it. But now that they're grown I can really enjoy it.

Kilpatrick: Did your folks ever have a desire to come back to America after they left?

O'Farrell: I don't know. I often thought Dad did. Because the winters he used to find long, like in February, he was, because he loved the sunshine here, and he loved warm weather. But he visited us in July, he sat out there under the tree and everyday he was outdoors, he really liked warm, and Ireland is never really gets warm. I think he would have, when he came back he enjoyed that visit, and many visit. You know he enjoyed everything about, and yet he says he's happy he raised the family in Ireland. And at that time he was, it was so early on, they didn't have as; we were able to get ahead a little faster because two could go to work.

Kilpatrick: Plus probably you had more of chance to here.

O'Farrell: I mean they were here, but Depression hit and that really must have been scary if you had no relatives, nothing to fall back on. And he worked for an engineering

company, and had four young children and he said everyday somebody was fired. And then they were asked to work 4 days instead of 5, and he decided that was the time, in the meantime Mother's dad had died and it was terrible, and they decided to go back and try it out. But that first winter they went back was hard, Mother said we whined, we were little kids and we whined that we were cold, we whined why couldn't we go out because you spend so much of the winter indoors, you know. And she wondered if we could ever get through this first winter. And then they you know, we moved into a bigger house and most of us were starting school, and then she would expect us to settle down. But it was hard for Dad, because having trained in engineering and come out here 10 years out here, all his classmates were in jobs, well established and Dad was starting at the bottom and that was hard. I think that was the hardest part for him.

Kilpatrick: So, what kind of job was he able to find when he went back?

O'Farrell: When he went back he was, well the first couple years were really hard, like Dad was in some engineering company and he worked with like a city or a county government, then he works for it's called the Turf Board that was what he enjoyed most, that was peak development in Ireland you know, they were in burning and cutting and machinery and all that. They would help with that, and then he went to Irish tourist board which was trying to develop a tourist trade, but Mother never did never work.

Kilpatrick: The whole time?

O'Farrell: A couple of times she thought about it, but that, and then raising 8 in Ireland, it was before the time of washing machines and dryers, and things so it was a lot of just daily chores.

Kilpatrick: So do both your sisters work now?

O'Farrell: Yes. Peg, uh, Peg Fairbrook is here in town, my sister in Ireland works because she had a career, but my sisters in law, they have 8 children. Shannon she hasn't worked, uh, he worked the first year they were married and she couldn't they only had one children, and she one of those tremendously efficient secretaries, and she's been offered jobs but she just likes to stay home. We don't need to she said.

Kilpatrick: Is she Irish?

O'Farrell: Yes. Now my brother who is married to a German girl they are unbelievable pair, they're both architects they are the most vicious [?] and she is sort of leading them on you know and they're activists and very very much, in fact when they were here he had a t-shirt that said, oh what's the word they use for their women...uh liberated woman, it was some statement on his t shirt, that someone have given him. Because they have an interesting home life but they two complete careers.

Kilpatrick: That's strange.

[Shuffling and clicking from tape recorder, shifting]

O'Farrell: ...with the airline company and they've been here, they followed us by 6 years so they're training...and the older one she is Irish, she has sung in the choir, she's done some volunteer work, she has a job.

Kilpatrick: Did, I know there must have been, when you came out here and got married, problems and tensions and things like that, how did you deal with that? Not having a family to fall back on here?

O'Farrell: Well, I uh think in a way it helped us. Because...

Kilpatrick: You just coped.

O'Farrell: You had to. No we did have some friends, there were some Irish friends here, like I remember the night Darryl was born, I had an Irish friend, and I had come over and stayed in the house with Laurie and that sort of thing. We had those sort of friends, we had friends that uh, helped us with the first house that we bought, you know just advising on uh, you know title search and that sort of thing because things were done different. The very, oh it was funny when Shawn came to Stockton to Fiberboard, the very first job he got, and the car, there were things for his job he needed to go do in downtown, bring blueprints down, so he needed a car right away, and he didn't have anything to put down on a car. This lady, she's a character in Stockton still, Gertrude, 30 cats, she was in charge of the office, and she said to Shawn she said "you're the young man from Ireland that's just got the job, I understand you have to have a car" and he nodded, because he was sort of the lowest of the office help when he started, she said "well if you need somebody to cosign, I know you're Irish my family is all Catholic and traditionally came from Ireland so if you need somebody to cosign for your car." It really amazed me.

Kilpatrick: Oh wow.

O'Farrell: Now maybe one Mexican does it for another, or one Italian, but to come to a town like Stockton where there's almost no Irish, and from then on Gertrude sort of took him under her wing, you know. I mean when Laurie was born, she came to see us, and she came, our kids put on a 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary for us, isn't that could. And they went down through the old family book I have you know, photographs and they invited her and she's now in her 80s, and she was telling me stories about Shawn, how greedy he was when he came in; it's about the first car. Because he bought the car in the parking lot, and then he didn't have his driver's license, so he went over to the place where you get the drivers license which was about 3 blocks away, the department of

motor vehicles and the fellow said you have to drive up your car in front, and he said “I can’t drive my car without a license” and the fellow said “haven’t you had a license? Or a license that’s valid?” and he said “no I’ve never had a license” he said “well you have to have a friend drive your car” and he said “I’m new to Stockton I don’t have a friend I could get out in the daytime to drive a car across the street” well that’s one thing, if it had been in Ireland someone would that way and know what to do, and he just said to the guy “well do you want me to drive it over illegally?” you know “against the law I have no license” so the guy said “okay I’ll come over” and walked the three blocks which is unheard of.

Kilpatrick: Yeah!

O’Farrell: Uh, he had, he’s a salesman, and he needed the sale. But that was amazing, when I still think of Gertrude signing for someone. Then Shawn rented an apartment downtown and he wanted to buy a bed first thing, he decided I was coming he had to have a bed, he went into Sears and they said you have to have credit, well credit records, it’s very hard in the first couple of months, so he had to buy on layaway, put down to \$10 and slowly paid, and once you pay something off, to have it there on layaway for over 10 weeks then you have a credit reference from the sale. You know even then, when you start out

[tape warps and fades out]

**[TAPE 1 END]**

**[Interview END]**