

FLEMING · SPECIALTY · COMPANY

MANUFACTURERS' REPRESENTATIVES

ROANOKE · VIRGINIA

June 19, 1938.

Barbara

Dear Mr. Hargadon:

I am glad to hear from you, and as I told you in my last letter, am going to give you some information regarding your name.

I myself was born in Ireland, five miles from a town by the name of Sligo, on the West Coast. I was one of fifteen children. None of my father's brothers or sisters had any children to our knowledge. My father had a store, where he made a very good living, and also several farms.

In this early days (I was born in 1895) our store was the trading center for a section nine miles long and five miles wide. Our wagon took the produce from the countryside to the ship, where it went to Glasgow and London, and in turn we sold the farmers all they needed. It was a life of plenty. There never was a day when my father did not either fish or shoot. He never worked to my knowledge, but he did a very good job of "bossing", because he was nicknamed "the boss".

He was a very proud man, and well read. One day an old tramp came into the store, all ragged, and he called my father by his first name "Hello BarBey!" in front of a shopful of people. My father was so stupefied with astonishment at the man's brazenness that all he could ask was "what do you want?" The tramp told him that they had gone to school together, and that he had just come back from the Boar War. Immediately my father changed countenance, welcoming him as a hero, and giving him the best to eat and drink.

My father was 40 when he got married and mother was 16. There was a difference in age there that the years could never bridge, and consequently there was not the same kind of partnership in existence between my father and mother as between my husband and I. He was very stern, a good business man, and they used to say "the most honest man in Sligo".

My mother sent us to the Ursuline Convent, the classiest girls' school in Sligo, and the boys to Summerhill College, which was under the supervision of the priests. My father was always too busy fighting for the freedom of Ireland to ever pay much attention to his family. He was a great orator, or we thought he was, which is one and the same thing. He held a minor office called County Councillor, to which he devoted one day each week. He never asked for a political favor for any of his own, although he could well have placed them in good jobs, but instead, let them wander off

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ROANOKE · VIRGINIA

#2

one after another, to win fame or starve in another country. The only thing he could not stand was failure of his own in his own country.

You mention in your letter about your ^{Grand} father having a brother with whom he was not on friendly terms. That too bears out my contention that there is some relationship somewhere, and I just cannot place it.

Bryan Hargadon was a brother of father's, but he lived in Ireland, and both his children, a boy and girl, are dead. He was very gentle in his ways, and so were his children. My father had a temper that made up for it.

There was another brother who went to America when he was a boy. He was in the San Francisco earthquake, in which he lost a lot. At any rate, he wandered home, stayed with Bryan a while, fussed with him, and died leaving everything he had to charity.

There was still another brother who went to America. This man was very smart. Taught in Maynooth College before going out, but nobody heard anything of him.

In the days when I was a child there was a saying "Thank God, we never had to emigrate to America!" In our family this was common, particularly on mother's side of the family. Frankly, we did not have to emigrate to America, but it was a very romantic country, as pictured by the farm girls who always helped mother with the housework, and who later emigrated to America, only to come back years later in the greatest splendor imaginable.

You are far removed from Ireland, but a day will come when you can pass on to your children the story that I am attaching hereto, copy of which letter was sent to me by Michael E. Hargadon, who is now working for the Canadian Pacific Railway, and who, in the days when I was young, used to be a newspaper reporter in Ireland and a smart young fellow.

Michael was a distant relative of ours, how related I don't know. There are few by the name of Hargadon now in Ireland. My brother is married and lives in our old home there, but that prosperous era in that location is now past, and will never be any more. Having three children of my own I know what a heart breaking thing it must have been for the mothers of Ireland to part from their children and see them come to this country to earn such a hard livelihood.

My nephews, who live in Chicago, and whose mother is

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my oldest sister, took the trip to Ireland two summers ago. Upon their return all they could talk about was the clean fun they had in Ireland, the horse races, politics, and the easy living they have. So, if your thoughts, sometimes go back to your origin, always remember that you came of darned good stock, as the saying goes. Even the children that are raised here, and go back, are proud of the heritage Ireland has given them.

I don't know how many generations of the Hargadons you know, but if you know enough of them you will find bobbing up now and then either a genius or a nut. I have one boy that is so Irish that I would love to have you see him. The Flemings all have been in this country so long that they don't know there is another country, but my husband never fails to mention the fact to our customers that I am Irish, and I never saw a father get so much pleasure out of a son as he gets out of our Irish boy, Hugh Patrick Fleming.

I hope that you can come up and see us some time, and bring your mother and sister along. When you get to the city limits just head for Mill Mountain, and ask anyone where 304 Arbutus Avenue is. They will direct you. I have been living here 15 years, and am completely southernized now.

What are you folks doing in Winston Salem? If I can help you in any way I sure would like to have the chance. I put two of the children on the train last night headed for Chicago, Hugh and Ellen, 11 and 10 years old, and George Jr. and his daddy left this morning to call on some incubator prospects in Peteraburg, and they will spend Sunday at the beach. I burn so badly in the sun that I would much rather stay home, and besides both Mr. Fleming and I cannot afford to leave the business at the same time.

Sincerely yours,

Hell Fleming

O.S. I had a hard time finding the attached letter. Keep it where you can some day show it to your children.

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