

History

The Carroll family legacy moves on

Part Four

The last member of the Carroll family of Willimantic died unmarried in the city on June 2, 1961. Mary Carroll was a granddaughter of Joe and Margaret Carroll, who arrived in Willimantic with their eight children from the Pennsylvania coalfields in 1874-75. The Carroll family is first listed in Willimantic in an 1875 directory. The 1880 census reveals that the majority of the adult members of the Carroll household were wholly or partially illiterate, and all but son James worked in a cotton mill.

Mary was the only daughter of Frank Carroll, one of Joe and Margaret's two sons. Six of Joe and Margaret's eight children were daughters. Ellen, Eliza, Sarah, and Mary remained unmarried. A fifth daughter, Margaret, was married but had no children. It was left to daughter Julia who, although only married to James Bulger



Tom Beardsley

for a short time, had two daughters, Gladys and Mildred. Gladys would have 12 children.

Gladys Bulger married Alfred Nelson Morin in 1915, the son of a French Canadian father and an English mother. He was born in 1895 while his father, Peter, was working in cotton mills at Fall River, Mass. Alfred's grandfather, Narcisse Morin (1853-1916) was an early French Canadian immigrant to New England's cotton mills. He died at 27 Union St., Willimantic. Narcisse changed his name to Nelson Morin, and that became his grandson Alfred's middle name. Alfred's father,

Peter Morin, moved his family to Willimantic in 1901 to take a job at the American Thread plant. He had married Minnie Shoard, a member of one of the many English families working in the Fall River mills at the end of the 19th century. Peter became a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He was a well-known overseer at the American Thread when he tragically died of a heart attack in 1911, age 38.

In 1923, Peter's son Alfred and his family lived at 32 Spruce St. in one of the Carroll family homes. Alfred was a foreman at the Rossie Velvet Co. By 1927, Alfred and Gladys were the parents of eight children, living in the small Spruce Street home: Gladys May, born 1916; Ruth, born Aug. 2, 1917; Alfred Peter, born Aug. 11, 1918; Edwin James, born Sept. 26, 1919; Ellen Carroll, born Sept. 11, 1920; Robert Crawford, born February 1922; Lois,

born May 8, 1923; Mildred Rosetta, born Sept. 27, 1924; and Julia Eulalie, born July 20, 1926.

The Spruce Street house was obviously too small for the large family and on Feb. 2, 1927, J.C. Snow of Nashville, Tenn., sold 37.8 acres on the road to Gurleyville, adjacent to University of Connecticut land, to Alfred and Gladys Morin of Willimantic. The Morins remained on the farm for a decade, and on May 1, 1937, they sold it to George and Gudrum Jacobson, and came back to Willimantic to live at the larger Carroll house at 41 Prospect St.

The Morin children came of age during the war time years. World War II was responsible for relocating millions of Americans, and the Morins were no exception. Hartford and Groton offered more opportunities in the commerce and defense industries, and other members



Alfred Nelson Morin, seen here in 1959, spent the greater part of his working life in Willimantic and Mansfield.

joined the armed forces. The Morin family finally sold 41 Prospect St. in November 1949. It was the end of an interesting chapter in Willimantic's rich Irish and French Canadian history.

Alfred and Gladys' granddaughter, Donna Ramsey of Colorado, is proud of her Willimantic roots. If you knew any of the Carrolls or Morins, she would be delighted to hear from you.

This digitized version of Tom Beardsley's article is made possible by The Willimantic Public Library. All Tom's articles and much more Willimantic history can be accessed at the library. We are grateful to the copyright owner, "The Chronicle" for permission to reproduce this article. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.