

Strength & Luck

by Nonnie Augustine

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There was no food in Ireland for young Patrick Kennedy who'd known nothing of blooming. So he crossed the wintry sea in a bucking, groaning boat to Liverpool. Once the damn ship docked in sloppy, exhausted triumph, Patrick was shoved and hurried to join the mass of his countryman lost in the dirty alleys snaking from the docks. English churchwomen met them with bread and jugs of weak ale. There was more food if he worked and he would not go without food again so Patrick, who'd been a farmer, became a stevedore, all the while hating coal-smothered Liverpool, and hated by the English working alongside him. When he'd had enough of the place and the place had had enough of him he boarded *The City of Manchester*, a ship bound to New York, or so he'd heard. The voyage was 49 days of hell, the only good being the end of it. Patrick's skinny self stayed free of the typhus that forced quarantine on those it didn't kill. When he stumbled down the gangplank the recruiting man grabbed him by the shirt and pushed him onto a cart belonging to the Union Army and he survived the Civil War, too. Because Patrick Kennedy went through all that and lived to have a family with Catherine McCarthy I am here to write these things down about my great-great grandfather, born in Cork, Ireland in 1836, dead in New York in 1877.

