

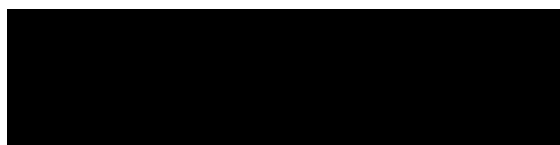
CLANN: IRELAND'S UNMARRIED MOTHERS AND THEIR CHILDREN: GATHERING THE DATA

Statement of Witness 29

Reference Code:	CLANN/WIT29
Status:	Natural relative of an adopted person
Institution(s)/Agencies:	Sacred Heart Mother and Baby Home, Manor House, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath; Sacred Heart Adoption Society; Department of Foreign Affairs; Adoption Board.
Date:	16 th December 2016
Records/Papers included:	Yes
Access Conditions:	Anonymised statements are freely available to the public.
Conditions Governing Reproduction:	Statements can be reproduced, however the citation below must be used at all times.

To cite this statement:

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WITNESS STATEMENT OF [REDACTED]

I, [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] WILL SAY:

1. I make this statement for the purpose of providing evidence to the Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation established by the Irish Government pursuant to Section 3 of the Commissions of Investigations Act 2004.
2. Attached to this statement is a bundle of documents marked [REDACTED]. References to page numbers in this statement are to pages in [REDACTED].
3. I make this statement as the natural relative of a child who was born in Manor House, Castlepollard, Co Westmeath ("Castlepollard") in [the early 1950's] and subsequently adopted.

Circumstances of my Early Life

4. I grew up the [REDACTED] of [REDACTED] children. My brother [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] years older than me and my sister [REDACTED] was [REDACTED] years older than me.
5. My sister was a [REDACTED]. When I was twelve and my sister was [REDACTED] and working as a manageress in a hotel I was told that she had been involved in a [REDACTED] accident and was recovering away from home.
6. Six years later I learnt where she had really been for ten months when my father informed me of what he had suffered due to my sister's "downfall". I then learnt that she had given birth to a son in Castlepollard.
7. Our father and our brother were the only people who had known where she was and of the birth of a grandchild and nephew. They did not tell our mother.

Finding out about my nephew

8. A few years after the birth of my nephew my sister again became pregnant. Our father in fury banished her to [REDACTED] where she was fortunate enough to be cared for by a lovely family and there reared her daughter.
9. I believe that my father only told me of the existence of my nephew so many years later because I was going to stay with my sister in [REDACTED].
10. When I could hear what he had to say through my shock and horror, I was so angry with my father for insisting at the time that my mother should never know of her grandson or what her daughter had been through. My father was most angry and bothered about the hundred pounds he had needed to pay over at the time and I now realise that this was what he paid to release her from Castlepollard.
11. Only once did my sister tell me and my husband of the heart breaking removal of her son from her care in Castlepollard. She was asked to dress him up for a photograph and leave him with staff for the photograph. She did this and, looking out of the window on the stairway, she had seen her son being carried into a car and driven away. She never saw or heard of him again. I cannot say whether he was accompanied by a nun or other people into the car. All she was told was that he was going to America.
12. My sister told us how she had cared for her son after his birth and when she spoke about the way he had been taken from her she sounded so genuinely surprised and upset that it makes me wonder if she had not consented to his adoption.

13. Our father was well known in the [REDACTED] of that time and I can only speculate that he may have used his influence to have the baby sent illegally to America.
14. It is my belief that when my sister gave birth to her daughter a few years later with the vow that no one would take her child from her, it was in reaction to what had happened to her in Castlepollard.
15. When my sister was dying I discovered to my astonishment that she had never been able to tell her daughter or the family who had taken her in about her son. I also learnt that she had never taken any steps to trace him.
16. After her death in [REDACTED] I realised that this man might have been looking for her over the years and run into a blank wall. I then tried to find a way to trace him myself.

Looking for my nephew

17. My husband died in [REDACTED] and it was then that I started looking in earnest for my nephew.
18. In January 2004 the Sacred Heart Adoption Society with whom I had been in contact advised me that they could not find any trace of my sister in the records for Castlepollard (page 1).
19. It was to be the same story looking for my nephew's adoption to America where neither the Department of Foreign Affairs (page 2) nor the Adoption Board (page 3) could find a trace of him.
20. I am now of the opinion that my father may have given a false name for her because his reputation was very important to him. Unfortunately she never told me if she had named her son so I have very little information to go on.
21. I am elderly now and my nephew must be heading for his mid-sixties. I and my youngest daughter have submitted our details to the National Contact Preference Register so that if my nephew should ever seek his family he will be able to find us.

Signed .

[REDACTED]

Date



All redactions have been carried out by the Clann Project

IN THE MATTER OF

The Mother and Baby Homes Commission of Investigation
Established by the Irish Government

EXHIBIT

Sacred Heart Adoption Society

Tel:
Fax:



BLACKROCK,
CORK.

12 January 2004



Please quote our ref:



Dear



Thank you for your letter regarding your late sister



We have checked the Castlepollard records but could find no relevant entry. There is no [redacted] in the Dublin admission book for the period you mention.

You say in your letter that the child was sent to the States for adoption. Please write to [redacted] Assistant Principal, Consular Services Section, Dept. of Foreign Affairs, 80 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. He may be able to assist you with your inquiry.

Yours sincerely,



Sr.



Taisleán
Telephone



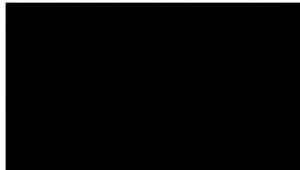
Tógairt
Reference



AN ROINN GNÓTHAÍ EAGHRACHA
Department of Foreign Affairs

BAILÉ ÁTHA CLIATH 2
Dublin 2

25 February, 2004



RE: Child born circa 1950 - 53 to



Dear



I am writing in reply to your letter of 19 January 2004 requesting information concerning a child who you believe was born to your late father, [REDACTED] in Castlepollard and was sent to the U.S.A. for adoption.

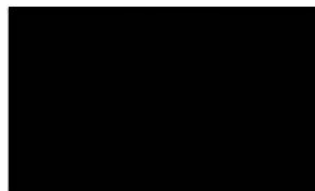
On the basis of the information provided by you, I have undertaken a full search of the lists of files opened in this Department from the 1940s to the 1960s in connection with the issuing of passports to children before their subsequent adoption in the United States. I must inform you that no such file has been found concerning a child born to an [REDACTED]

I am sorry that I could not have better news for you.

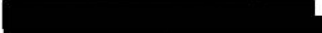


With kind regards

Yours sincerely



Aislinn Principal
Consular Services



[REDACTED]

From: <AdoptionInfo@health.nsw.gov.au>
To: [REDACTED]
Sent: 19 March 2004 11:54
Subject: Re: Message from Adoption Board website

Dear [REDACTED]

With reference your query about your nephew, I can find no trace in the Board's records so far. I will arrange for a search to be done in birth records in the General Register Office and it may be a couple of weeks before I can get back to you on that. Of course, if the wrong name was used, there may be nothing we can do.

I was just wondering if you are certain about the place of birth and also whether the child was a boy?

In any event, I will get back to you as soon as I can.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]