

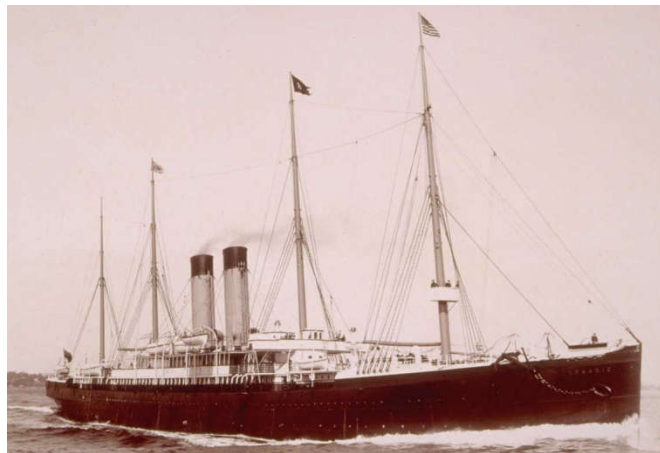
Tokens of History
By
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*"Saint Patrick Meets Saint Valentine:
The Luck and Love of an Irish Immigrant in Shasta County"*



P. A. SHEEHAN / COPPER CITY, / CAL. // GOOD FOR / 10c / IN TRADE

The story of this token begins in Wales sometime around 1872, when a young lad sets sail for America. His name is Patrick Andrew Sheehan, born in Wales of Irish parentage on March 18, 1863, the day after Saint Patrick's Day. Young Patrick is leaving on a grand adventure along with his mother, grandmother, and two siblings to meet their father Daniel, who has already paved their way to the American Dream. But that dream would come at an awful price. The living conditions on these voyages were generally very uncomfortable, and included: seasickness, inadequate food, lack of privacy, cramped living quarters, and spreading illnesses. We do not know just how long or difficult that trip was, but we do know that when Daniel Sheehan went to the dock to welcome his family to their new homeland, he found poor young Patrick alone: the rest of the family had died from a cholera outbreak, and been buried at sea.



There are two types of luck, one of which is not good, and Patrick appears to have had more than his fair share of the bad kind. But they say you can't keep a good Irishman (or woman) down, and that

was true for Patrick Sheehan. The young lad is said to have immediately went to work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania with his father. The 1880 Census finds them both working the mines in Reade, Pennsylvania. Also in the household is a new spouse for Daniel (age 50), Julia (35), and their two children Mary (5) and baby John (6 mo). By 1894 the Great Register shows Patrick living in French Gulch, California. There Saints Patrick and Valentine would conspire to bring our hero a bit of good luck (and love), in the form of an Irish lassie named Sarah J. Feeney, mother of four and widow of Richard Feeney, owner of the Feeney Hotel.

This hotel still stands, and according the ECV plaque outside, it was:

"Built in 1885 by Richard Feeney and first known as the Feeney Hotel. The hotel catered to miners and stage coach travelers. The saloon houses the 1850's Empire Bar once housed in the Empire Hotel. This bar was brought around Cape Horn from England, then by horse and wagon to French Gulch. The main dining room and parlor with bedrooms were added later. The Feeney family owned and operated the hotel until it was sold in the late 1940's. The new owners changed the name to the French Gulch Hotel."



There is a token from the hotel bar, which the author is trying to find an example of, that reads "AT FEENY BAR / ED. L. WOLF / PROP. // GOOD FOR / ONE DRINK". Ed Wolf is Sarah Feeney's son-in-law, having married her daughter Mary in March of 1898. It appears that ownership, or at least management, of the entire hotel may have passed on to Mr. Wolf, as on February 15th, 1901, Sarah and our hero Patrick were married in Sacramento County. In August of that same year the newspaper reports that "Patrick Sheehan, a miner well known in this country, came down from French Gulch Saturday and will go to Copper City in a few days to take charge of his saloon property now under lease to John Miller." According to this add from 1903, his place was named the Bully Hill Saloon, and had a twin under different management in the town of De La Mar:



Patrick's bad luck was to return in 1908, when he loses his beloved Sarah:

*MRS. SHEEHAN DIES IN COPPER CITY
SHE WAS LONG A RESIDENT OF FRENCH GULCH, WHERE BURIAL WILL BE
MADE*

Special to The Searchlight

COPPER CITY, Feb. 20 -- Mrs. Patrick A. Sheehan died here in the family home at 10 o'clock this morning. She had been bedfast for a month, her illness being described by the physician as a complication of diseases.

Mrs. Sheehan was age 51 years. Before coming to Copper City a few years ago, when she married Mr. Sheehan, she lived in French Gulch. She was then Mrs. Feeney and for a great many years conducted the Feeney Hotel. She was a kind-hearted woman and made many friends wherever she lived.

By her first husband she had three children: Mrs. Ed L. Wolf of French Gulch, Mrs. Wallace McCampbell of Copper City and Harry Feeney. All three were present today at the death.

Funeral arrangements have not been completed, further than that burial will be in French Gulch.

Sarah was reunited with her first husband in death, and they can be found at rest in the French Gulch Catholic Cemetery:



In 1910 we find that Patrick has left Shasta County and is living in Point Richmond, near Richmond, California. Patrick's bad luck would continue, but out of its ashes our Saints Patrick and Valentine would again conspire to make him lucky in love (as Michael Corleone said in Godfather III, "Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in"). Patrick would be "pulled back" to Shasta County by a fire that engulfs a business he still owns:

June 14, 1910:

NARROW ESCAPE IN COPPER CITY FIRE

(Special to Courier-Free Press.)

COPPER CITY, June 14--A two story frame lodging house, belonging to Patrick Sheehan, and rented by Mrs. Russell, burned early this morning, and was the scene of many spectacular escapes by the lodgers in the upper story.

At 3 o'clock flames were seen to be issuing from that portion of the ground floor, where the electric wires entered the building. Before much could be done to save the property, the blaze became universal and it was seen that the lives of several lodgers were in imminent danger. They made attempts to reach a place of safety by the stair route, but being cut off dropped down convenient posts of the porches, which were instantly afterwards enveloped in flames.

Those who made a safe but perilous getaway were Walter Taylor, Harry Ashton, Ed Lynn, Charles Malone and Edmund McDonald, and not one saved anything of his belongings except what he stood up in, and not much of that.

The building was worth about \$2,000, and was insured. Mrs. Russell had the contents covered by an \$800 policy, and lost everything. Mr. Sheehan lives at Point Richmond, and is expected up in a couple of days.

The 1910 Census tells us that this "Mrs. Russell" who is running the lodging house is Mary F. Russell, a 44-year-old widow of (you guessed it) Irish parentage. Mr. Sheehan did return to sift through the ashes, and evidently what he found was smoldering enough to spark a blaze in his heart for the Widow Russell, and in hers for him. I could not find just what year they were married (the obituary below states 1909, but this can't be correct), but married they became. They were to spend nearly two apparently happy decades together in Copper City. Patrick would continue to mine for copper, but also mind a store. Mary Sheehan would share in running the store, as well as becoming the Ydalpom (pronounced way-dal-pom) postmistress, appointed on June 11, 1924.

Getting back to the token that started us down this path, I do not know whether it was minted for use in Patrick's Bully Hill Saloon, or the store he and Mary ran in later years. As it is "Good For 10¢ In Trade" rather than for a drink or cigar, it is likely from their store.

Patrick's luck would finally run out, during one last journey:

November 12, 1929 Record Searchlight:

*PATRICK SHEEHAN DIES INSTANTLY WHEN MOTOR PLUNGES OFF HIGHWAY
NECK FRACTURED BY IMPACT*

Resident of Copper City 40 Years Killed as Automobile Leaves Road on St. Mary's Hill and Rolls 50 Feet Down Embankment

COPPER CITY, Nov. 12--Patrick Sheehan, 65, was instantly killed this afternoon on his way to his home here when his automobile left the grade on St. Mary's hill, a half mile west of the Silverthorne ferry, somersaulted three times and came to rest on Sheehan's body, breaking his neck.

Sheehan, who was alone, had been in Redding purchasing supplies for the store which he conducts here. His touring car was loaded with a sack of sugar, a sack of potatoes, two cases of eggs, and other provisions and it is the theory of officers who were called to the scene after the tragedy that these articles had shifted in the machine suddenly, causing the wheels to slide off the narrow road. Sheehan had evidently put on his emergency brake, but was unable to regain the road.

Thrown From Machine

The automobile catapulted down the 50 feet bank. It is thought Sheehan was thrown out of the car on his head and that his neck was broken from the impact even before the machine crashed down on him.

Sheehan left Redding about 1 o'clock for his home. Shortly after 3 o'clock Arthur McDaniels of Copper City caught sight of the wrecked automobile below the road and investigated. In a few moments he was joined by George Miller, H. D. Miller and Charles Popejoy, all of Copper City. They telephoned from Fischer's station to the office of the sheriff at Redding.

Inquest Set For Today

Deputy Sheriff G. I. Stevenson went at once to Copper City and was followed by Coroner Elmer D. Larkin and Deputy Coroner Theodore McDonald. The body was brought to the McDonald & Scott establishment, where the inquest will be held today.

Sheehan, who had been a resident of Copper City about 40 years, is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mary Sheehan of Copper City, and one daughter, Mrs. Nellie Williams of Berkeley. Arrangements for the funeral have not been made.

Inquest Discloses Sheehan Death to Have Been Accident

FUNERAL SERVICES FOR COPPER CITY STOREKEEPER TO BE HELD TOMORROW

Funeral services for Patrick Sheehan of Copper City, who was killed when his automobile ran off the Copper City road Tuesday afternoon, will be held Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock in the chapel of McDonald & Scott. Rev. A. Gavin of the Catholic Church will officiate.

Burial will be made in the Eagles' plot of the Redding cemetery, and services at the graveside will be under the direction of the Eagles' lodge.

The inquest held yesterday afternoon confirmed the belief that Sheehan had come to an accidental death.

The present Mrs. Sheehan, who survives him, was Mrs. Russell before their marriage.

Mr. and Mrs. Sheehan moved to Copper City about 1900 and have resided there since [this was with his first wife, Sarah]. They conducted the store and post office of Ydalpom. Sheehan had no children of his own, but he was foster father to three stepdaughters. Mrs. Nellie Williams of Berkeley, daughter of Mrs. Sheehan, who arrived yesterday morning to be with her mother, and Mrs. Arleta Woll and Mrs. May Wolf, both of French Gulch, and daughters of Sheehan's first wife.

Mary would soon follow:



MRS. SHEEHAN OF COPPER CITY PASSES AWAY

Succumbs in Redding Hospital--Was Post-master in Her Home Town for Years

Mrs. Mary F. Sheehan of Copper City passed away at 8 o'clock Saturday morning in the hospital where she had been a patient for two weeks or more. She was born in California and was aged 69 years.

Mrs. Sheehan was the widow of Patrick A. Sheehan, who was killed in November a year ago when his automobile tumbled off the grade as he was returning home from Redding to Copper City.

The decedent had been post-master at Ydalpom, or Copper City, for a good many years. She had a little store in connection.

Mrs. Sheehan was formerly Mrs. Russell, and she then lived in Deadwood, tho she later conducted a lodging house in Keswick. She and Patrick A. Sheehan were married in 1909 [must have been 1910 or later] and then they settled in Copper City. They had no children, but Mrs. Sheehan by a former marriage had a daughter, Mrs. Nell Williams, who is so ill in a Berkeley hospital she will not be informed of her mother's passing.

The decedent leaves these brothers: William Craig, Tracy; Tim Craig, San Jose; and Peter Craig, Salinas. She was an aunt of Mrs. W. T. Withrow of Redding. She was a sister of Mrs. Hall of Tracy.

Arrangements for the funeral rest with McDonald & Scott.

*"Mary Frances Craig grew up on a 300 acre farm in the Pajaro District between Castroville and Watsonville. She was one of 10 siblings. She was married to John Russell and after his death married Patrick Sheehan. They were both miners in Copper City, Shasta County California. Mary was the postmistress at one time. **It was said that she could ride a horse better than any man.**" - Marge Scheuber*



Mary Sheehan was buried in Oak Hill Memorial Park in San Jose.



Patrick Sheehan is buried in the Shasta Aerie section of the Redding Cemetery, resting alone just as he entered this country.

There is no headstone, only a token to remember him by.

