

Francis Joseph Coogan

Born 4 April 1902 Wishaw, Scotland. Died 29 March 1979, Pittsburgh, PA. Age 77

**Prepared by John Francis Coogan
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Frank came to this country from Wishaw, Scotland in the company of his mother and my father John Patrick. They sailed from Glasgow aboard the Furnessia landing at Ellis Island, New York, May 16, 1904. My first memory of Frank was when he lived on Blackadore Ave. across the street from his wife Mae's family, the Connery's of Blessed Sacrament parish. I recall that they had a refrigerator, something of a novelty at the time.



Frank Coogan

My next recollection is that of visiting where he worked for Proie Brothers Co., I believe it was on East St. on the North Side because I recall it was in a valley and there was a bridge over the street, similar to the Larimer Ave. Bridge over Washington Blvd.

The next job he had (though not for long) was as a supervisor for Haller Bakery in East Liberty. Next, he took on as a sales representative for Prudential Insurance and it was at about this time they moved to Knoxville and the parish of St. Canice.

A born sales representative, Bill remembers Frank advised Mr. Quinn to install a cold air return register in the hall of the Gerritt St. house to facilitate the return of air to the furnace and thus better to heat the house. He also chewed tobacco much to his wife's disgust particularly when he would excuse himself to spit out the juice. "Oh Frank, she would say, "I wish you would give up that terrible habit". Frank was always a snappy dresser, as I remember he wore grey spats.



Mae Coogan

Among his recollections, Jim knew of home visits with Frank and Mae. She was always most cordial, a kind of sympathetic person who tended to agree with most everything you said. One of her favorite sayings was, "You boys are getting so big." They had one child, Mary Jacqueline, and she was the apple of their eye and rightly so. Christmas was the principal occasion for our mutual visits. The Coogans had a set of Lionel trains with track switches - a fascination for us!

You could not describe the relationship between the families as close as months would pass with virtually no contact. This generally stemmed from a disagreement over something or another when there would be an abrupt cut-off and one did not mention that name again without caution. Perhaps this is why, even now, we have very little in common with Jacqueline C. Ellis and that is unfortunate as she is a first cousin. Larry, her husband, went on to become a famous hematologist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School. They had six fine children. Sister Margaret Frances tried to keep the family relationship going but at times, this caused more bad feelings than it created good ones.

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By the early Forties, Frank decided to enter a business partnership with Fred Proie and so they took a store on Penn Avenue across from Mansmann's department store in East Liberty. The business was a success since, at this time, Pittsburgh was attempting to control its environmental pollution problems. To the rescue came the John Zink gas conversion burner that could be adapted to the old coal furnaces. "Elaterite" roofing compound was another item they carried since it too was a big seller. Space became problematical so the enterprise moved to larger quarters on Broad St. However, it was shortly after this that Frank caught Proie taking kickbacks from suppliers. That brought about a split-up in the firm with Frank retaining the original ownership. It was also at about this time that he moved his family to West St. in Wilksburgh but shortly thereafter, they built a new home in Blackridge.

Concerning this home, Bill remembers that it had cost \$29,000 (a figure we could hardly imagine) and it was equipped with a "Precipetron" on the furnace to screen out dust. "You guys ought to get one, too". In addition, there was the heated driveway so you did not need to shovel snow in the winter. Another impression retained by Bill is that Frank was a natural at salesmanship, entrepreneur, since everything he bought was the best, and, "You ought to get one, also". Why not buy two?" Like the salesman sang in "76 Trombones" from the *The Music Man*, "right here in River City".

On another occasion, he stopped at the house to show off his new '46 Studebaker. At that time, he was signed up to take Mechanical Drawing at the evening division of Westinghouse High School. Additionally, then, there was the time when he took Jack and Bill to Deep Creek where the Coogans had a rental cabin shared with Mae's sister and also owned a speedboat so the boys had the treat of a ride. In addition, concerning that trip, Bill remembers they stopped in Somerset for lunch where Frank ordered a western sandwich something Bill had never heard of. Still another emotion remembered by Bill was the great emotion Frank displayed as he came over to our car at the cemetery following his father's burial.



As our Dad Frank was enamored with Notre Dame since he met the Holy Cross priests at Deep Creek. When their daughter "Jackie" married, it was to a Notre Dame graduate, (now Dr. Larry Ellis) at the basilica in South Bend.

Jackie As godfather, Frank was especially attentive to me. On the first Christmas that I was allowed to stay up late I recall how Frank came in loaded with toys one of which was a set of drums. At graduation, he gave me an "Eversharp" pen and pencil set, something I still have today. We knew Frank to be a generous man.

Frank and his wife Mae are buried at the All Saints Cemetery, Braddock Heights, PA, Section 70, Lot 37, Grave #8.