

## Mary's Story



Mary SULLIVAN was born on 1 July 1878 in Windermere, Ashburton, to Patrick SULLIVAN and Catherine SULLIVAN nee FEALEY, immigrants from County Kerry, Ireland. Mary was an only child of 2 when her mother died on 14 October 1880 aged 27 from heart disease, who was often severely assaulted by her husband when he was drunk. So one can only imagine what sort of things Mary saw as an infant.

From Police records it was found that Mary had been left in the care of a Mrs Agnes SHERRIN opposite the Catholic Church in Barbadoes Street, Christchurch by her Father and that Mrs SHERRIN had gone to the Police after 6 months to see that Patrick SULLIVAN either took Mary away or pay for her keep.

Mary then ended up in the Burnham Industrial School and was boarded out with foster-parents and was returned to Burnham in 1891 and the following year at age 13 was sent out to Service.

Mary at the age of 21 entered the Convent of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions on 25 September 1899 in Christchurch, but she left in June 1901. She was known in religion as Sister Mary St. Fabian. Family hearsay was that Mary left because of ill health.

Mary met and married Edward McFALL an Irishman from County Antrim, Ireland, he a protestant and Mary a Catholic. They married on 26 April 1904 in the Anglican Church of St. Saviour, in Sydenham.

Mary and Edward had 5 children, 2 girls and 3 boys. It was agreed the boys of the marriage would be Catholic and the girls protestant.

Mary lost her second child a son at age 5 months of diarrhoea. Her fourth child Georgina engaged to be married at age about 20 had an operation on a goitre and suffered a blood clot in the brain and was never the same again, she turned violent and attacked her Mother with an axe. She was put into a mental hospital.

Mary was a wonderful cook and was very particular with household chores, she would polish the floors so well and also under the rugs, which were to be her downfall when she fell and broke her hip. Mary walked everywhere as she did not like public transport. After her husband died she sold their house in Brougham Street which was opposite the entrance to Nazareth house chapel to Lane Walker Rudkins who had been after her house for sometime. Lane Walker Rudkins then supplied her with a rent free flat a bit further down the road opposite the other entrance to Nazareth House. The flat had an electric stove which Mary did not like so a gas stove was put in.

Mary's last years of life were spent at Nazareth House rest home where she finally passed away on 15 March 1967, aged 88 and is buried in the Sydenham Cemetery.