
Assembling and Correlating Indirect Evidence for the Identities of the Parents of Edward Sheehy (1859-1894)

By Lynn Nelson

Family tradition names the parents of Edward Sheehy as John Sheehy and Mary Broder, both born in Ireland.¹ Edward's New York City baptism extract is the only known record confirming those names.² Nothing more is known about his parents. The evidence establishing the identities of John and Mary (Broder) Sheehy comprise many strands of unconnected information that come together in the family's hidden final resting place.

INTRODUCTION

Edward Sheehy, a first-generation American of Irish-born parents, came of age in the Lower East Side of Manhattan during the latter half of the 19th century among tenements teeming with European immigrants. His parents, John Sheehy and Mary Broder, were part of the huge wave of Irish immigrants who settled in New York City in the mid-19th century. The great famine in Ireland may have brought them to America, not just for a better life but for survival. But who were they, as unique individuals? When were they born, where did they live, what did they do for a living? When and where did they die? Answering these questions transforms names into real individuals and is a prerequisite to trace their Irish origins.

The process of putting flesh on the bones of mere names is often a challenge, and particularly so in New York City, which has a reputation as “the black hole of genealogy.”³ While that reputation is overstated, there are many challenges facing the researcher seeking documentation for people who lived in 19th century New York City. The massive population growth from the vast numbers of immigrants continuously arriving to the city (from a population of half a million inhabitants in 1850 to almost 3.5 million by 1900⁴) strained the record-keeping capabilities of the jurisdictional authorities, allowing people to fall through the

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¹ Sheehy family traditions regarding the parentage of Edward Sheehy b. 18 June 1859, Lynn Nelson, compiler (MSS notes circa 1969; privately held by Nelson, 231 Craigdan Dr., Dallastown, Pennsylvania), as reported by Mary (Massey) Nano, Edward's granddaughter and Nelson's grandmother, 1969.

² Church of St. James (New York, New York), Sacramental Certificates, 1859-1895 (privately held by Lynn Nelson, 231 Craigdan Dr., Dallastown, Pennsylvania, 2016), Edward J. Sheehy baptismal certificate (1859), issued 1992, citing no book or page number.

³ Leslie Corn, “New York City Research Guide, Part One: Vital Records, Property Records, and Estate Records,” *American Ancestors* (undated), online article (<http://www.americanancestors.org/Browse/articles> : accessed 03 July 2016), para. 1.

⁴ U.S. Bureau of the Census, “Population of the 100 Largest Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States: 1790 – 1990,” online publication, *U.S. Census Bureau* (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/twps0027.html> : accessed 03 July 2016), tables 8 and 13.

cracks with no enforcement or motivation for compliance. Records were maintained at several different jurisdictional levels (federal, county, municipal), further complicating research. The New York State census, taken every 10 years between the U.S. Federal census years, is not available for New York County (Manhattan) for 1865 and 1875,⁵ two key years for that major municipality. Relatively few vital records of this time period are computer-indexed and the contemporaneous indices often require knowledge of the approximate date of the event. The dense urban population created an environment where numerous people shared the same common names, and multiple people had the same less common names. Compounding that issue is the minimal information recorded on many of the early records, making it very difficult to distinguish between people sharing the same name.

For these reasons, a typical “search and find” research methodology often will not be successful in 19th century New York City. The pursuit of the identities of the parents of Edward Sheehy illustrates the process of accumulating bits and pieces of potential information from multiple sources, analyzing them for consistencies and conflicts, and piecing them together to create a whole story.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Edward Sheehy was born 18 June 1859 in New York City, the son of John Sheehy and Mary Broder.⁶ He married Catherine “Kate” Dobbins 29 March 1881 in New York City⁷ and they had the following children:

- John (1880-1882)⁸
- Edward Jr. (1883-1922)⁹
- Mary (1885-1947)¹⁰

⁵ FamilySearch, “New York, State Census, 1865 (FamilySearch Historical Records),” online publication, *FamilySearch* ([https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_State_Census_1865_\(FamilySearch_Historical_Records\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_State_Census_1865_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records))) : accessed 03 July 2016), para. 2. FamilySearch, “New York, State Census, 1875 (FamilySearch Historical Records),” online publication, *FamilySearch* ([https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_State_Census_1875_\(FamilySearch_Historical_Records\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_York_State_Census_1875_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records))) : accessed 03 July 2016), para. 1.

⁶ Sheehy family traditions about Edward Sheehy b. 18 June 1859. Church of St. James (New York, NY), Edward J. Sheehy certificate, 1859 baptism, issued 1992.

⁷ Church of St. James (New York, New York), Sheehy-Dobbins certificate, 1881 marriage, issued 1991.

⁸ For birth, Church of St. James (New York, NY), John Sheehy certificate, 1880 baptism, issued 1992. For death, New York City, “New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949,” database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2240477> : accessed 07 June 2016), entry for death certificate number 421794, John Sheehy, 07 May 1882.

⁹ For birth, Church of St. James (New York, NY), Edward Sheehy certificate, 1883 baptism, issued 1992. For death, Kings County, New York, death certificate no. 1922-10354, Edward Sheehy; Department of Health, Brooklyn.

¹⁰ For birth, Church of Our Lady of Grace (Hoboken, New Jersey), Sacramental Certificates, 1885-1891 (privately held by Lynn Nelson, 231 Craigan Dr., Dallastown, Pennsylvania, 2016), Mary Sheehy baptismal certificate (1885), issued 1992, citing no book or page number. For death, Kings County, New York, death certificate no. 1947-4547, Mary Massey; Department of Health, Brooklyn.

- Catherine (1887-1892)¹¹
- Thomas (1889-1919)¹²
- James (1891-1893)¹³
- Richard (1895-1924)¹⁴

Edward had at least one sibling, John Sheehy, born 1861 in New York City.¹⁵

CENSUS STARTING POINTS

Censuses capture entire family groups at specific moments in time and across time periods and help identify families when few details are known, therefore, they are a prime starting point to research Edward's parents. Searches of U.S. federal census records for New York City using criteria compatible with the target family¹⁶ presented the following candidates for Edward's family.

The 1860 U.S. Census

Only one family enumerated in the 1860 census in New York City reported details consistent with the target family:

¹¹ For birth, Church of Our Lady of Grace (Hoboken, NJ), Catherine Sheehy certificate, 1887 baptism, issued 1992. Also, New Jersey, "New Jersey Births and Christenings, 1670-1980," digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/312728> : accessed 21 April 2016), register entry for Cathrine Sheehy, 29 August 1887, vol. 26, Hoboken, Hudson, p. 115, line 26; citing FHL microfilm 494208. For death, New Jersey, "New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988," digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/312728> : accessed 21 April 2016), register entry for Catherine Sheehy, 31 December 1892, vol. 37, Hoboken, Hudson, p. 121, line 93; citing FHL microfilm 589793.

¹² For birth, Church of Our Lady of Grace (Hoboken, NJ), Thomas Sheehy certificate, 1889 baptism, issued 1992. For death, Kings Co., New York, death certificate no. 1919-2048, Thomas Sheehy.

¹³ For birth, Church of Our Lady of Grace (Hoboken, NJ), James Sheehy certificate, 1891 baptism, issued 1992. Also, New Jersey, "New Jersey Births and Christenings, 1670-1980," digital image, *FamilySearch*, entry for James Sheehy, 15 June 1890. For death, New Jersey, "New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988," digital image, *FamilySearch*, entry for James Sheehy, 1 January 1893.

¹⁴ For birth, Church of St. James (New York, NY), Richard Sheehy certificate, 1895 baptism, issued 1992. For death, New York City, "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949," database entry for death certificate number 14445, Richard Sheehy, 27 July 1924.

¹⁵ Church of St. James (New York, NY), John Sheehy certificate, 1861 baptism, issued 1992.

¹⁶ Ancestry census databases were searched for an Edward Sheehy (Sheehe, Sheehan) living in New York City, born in 1859 in New York City with a father John and mother Mary. Candidates for the three census years of interest (1860, 1870, and 1880 — Edward's pre-adult time period) with the parents born in Ireland were the focus. "Census and Voter Lists," database and digital images, *Ancestry* (<http://search.ancestry.com/search/category.aspx?cat=35> : accessed 15 March 2016).

1860 Target Sheehy Family Details			1860 Census Family Details ¹⁷		
Name	Expected Age	Birth Place	Name	Age	Birth Place
John	Unknown	Ireland	John Sheehan	32	Ireland
Mary	Unknown	Ireland	Mary Sheehan	32	Ireland
Edward	1	NY	Edward Sheehan	1	NY
			Cornelius Sheehan	13	Ireland

Edward's expected age and known birthplace, as well as the given names and birth places of his parents, are consistent with this census record. The recorded name of Sheehan, a common Irish surname, could sound similar to Sheehy to an enumerator's ears.

Unexpected in the family is 13 year old Cornelius. Born in Ireland, he may be a relative or perhaps John's son from a previous marriage.

Due to the very common given names (John and Mary) and the name of Sheehan instead of Sheehy, this census record requires additional evidence to confirm this family as Edward's.

The 1870 U.S. Census

Only one family enumerated in the 1870 census in New York City reported details consistent with the target family:

1870 Target Sheehy Family Details			1870 Census Family Details ¹⁸		
Name	Expected Age	Birth Place	Name	Age	Birth Place
John	Unknown	Ireland	John Sheehe	45	Ireland
Mary	Unknown	Ireland	Bridget Sheehe	40	Ireland
Edward	11	NY	Edward Sheehe	11	NY
John	9	NY	John Sheehe	9	NY

The 1870 census family matches the target family exactly, with the exception of the adult female named Bridget instead of Mary, and a slight variation in the spelling of the surname. To confirm this family as Edward's requires additional evidence. Specifically, confirmation that Mary (Broder) Sheehy died and/or that John remarried a Bridget would support the hypothesis that this census record is Edward's family.

The 1880 U.S. Census

¹⁷ 1860 U.S. census, New York County, New York, population schedule, New York City, page 125 (penned), dwelling 179, family 1062, John Sheehan and family; digital image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 07 June 2016); citing Family History Library microfilm 803789.

¹⁸ 1870 U.S. census, New York County, New York, population schedule, 1st enumeration, New York City, page 49 (penned), dwelling 75, family 461, John Sheehe and family; digital image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 07 June 2016); citing Family History Library microfilm 552475.

Only one family enumerated in the 1880 census in New York City reported details consistent with the target family:

1880 Target Sheehy Family Details			1880 Census Family Details ¹⁹		
Name	Expected Age	Birth Place	Name	Age	Birth Place
John	Unknown	Ireland	John Sheehy	64	Ireland
Mary	Unknown	Ireland	Bridget Sheehy wife	52	Ireland
Edward	21	NY	Edward Sheehy, son	20	NY
John	19	NY			

This family is very likely the same family in the previously described 1870 census despite the nineteen year difference in John's reported age between the two censuses, which may be due to an informant who didn't know John's correct age or an error by the enumerator. Son John, at age 19, was probably on his own and no longer living with his family. As with the 1870 census, the 1880 census requires additional evidence to confirm it as Edward's family.

It isn't clear if these three census families are Edward's or even if they are the same family, but they are potential candidates and provide a basis for additional research. That research includes determining if the Mary Sheehy of the 1860 census died, if John Sheehy later married a Bridget, and a linkage to the subject Edward Sheehy.

THE DEATH OF MARY OF THE 1860 CENSUS

Confirming the death of the Mary "Sheehan" of the 1860 census between the time of that census' enumeration and the 1870 census would provide additional support that this could be the same family found in the 1870 and 1880 census with a new wife for John. Searches of a New York City death database using criteria specific to the target Mary Sheehy presented the following candidates:²⁰

- Mary Sheehy, age 43, died 03 Feb 1864, address 33 James
- Mary Scheehan, age 48, died 11 Jun 1864, address 432 1st Ave.
- Mary Sheehan, age 48, died 07 Apr 1866
- Mary L. Sheehan age 38, died 13 Apr 1866
- Mary Sheehan age 35, died 24 Mar 1870

¹⁹ 1880 U.S. census, New York County, New York, population schedule, New York City, enumeration district 29, page 495 (stamped), page 1 (penned), dwelling 1, family 1, John Sheehe and family; digital image, *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 07 June 2016); citing Family History Library microfilm 1254867.

²⁰ New York City, "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2240477> : accessed 07 June 2016), unnumbered entries for Mary Sheehy 03 February 1864, Mary Scheehan 11 June 1864, Mary Sheehan 07 April 1866, Mary L. Sheehan 13 April 1866, and Mary Sheehan 24 March 1870. A New York City death database was searched for Mary Sheehy (Sheehe, Sheehan), born in Ireland and died in New York City between 1861-1870; results were reviewed for women of an age to have borne a child in 1859 and of an age range compatible with the 1860 census Mary. New York City, "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2240477> : accessed 15 March 2016).

Although the 1860 census does not include an address to compare to these candidates, a correlation of indirect evidence identifies the census address. The census reports the names and occupations of the neighbors residing in the same dwelling as John and Mary Sheehy. The 1861 New York City directory includes entries for four of those neighbors, all residing at 33 James Street,²¹ establishing that address as the address of the 1860 census Sheehy family.

The first Mary Sheehy death entry of the potential candidates listed above shares that address and a fairly close birth year with the Mary Sheehy of the 1860 census record, confirming that the Mary Sheehy who died on 03 February 1864 is the same Mary in the 1860 Sheehy family census record. The Manhattan death register for this Mary Sheehy does not include a spouse's name or her maiden name²² so there is no additional support that the 1860 census family is Edward's family, but her confirmed death opens a potential path to tie the 1860 census Sheehy family to the 1870 and 1880 Sheehy family, where John has a different wife.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE 1870 & 1880 CENSUS FAMILY CANDIDATES

The candidate family in the 1870 census is very compatible with Edward's expected family:

- The pair of siblings, Edward and John, matches the target family in name, age, and birthplace.
- The father's name and birthplace match those of the target family.
- One conflict, the adult woman's name of Bridget instead of the expected Mary, may be due to Mary's death and John's subsequent remarriage.

The following considerations provide support that the family in the 1880 census is the same family as in the 1870 census:

- A trio of family members (John, Bridget, and Edward) is together in both census years, with compatible birthplaces.
- The calculated birth years for Bridget and Edward are approximately consistent between both census years. John's age difference of 19 years instead of 10 years may be due to an informant who didn't know John's correct age or an error by the enumerator.
- John's occupation is consistent across the two decades:
 - The 1880 census reports the Sheehy family living at 45 James Street and John's occupation as "grocer."²³ The city directory entries for 1879, 1880, and 1881 for John

²¹ Census entries for neighbors, 1860 U.S. census, New York Co., N.Y., pop. sch., New York City, page 125 (penned), dwell. 179, Patrick Cugin, Timothy Buckley, John Higgins, and Cornelius Collins. Directory entries for neighbors, *Trow's New York City Directory for the year ending May 1, 1861* (New York: John F. Trow, 1860), p. 120 for Buckley Timothy, p. 170 for Collins Cornelius, p. 331 for Goggin Patrick, and p. 396 for Higgins John; digital images, *Google Books* (<https://books.google.com/books?id=bYUtAAAAYAAJ> : accessed 07 June 2016).

²² New York County, Manhattan death registers, 1795-1865, volume 40, unpaginated entries arranged by first letter of surname, then chronological), Mary Sheehy, 03 March 1864; Family History Library microfilm 447567.

²³ 1880 U.S. census, New York Co., N.Y., pop. sch., New York City, p. 495 (penned), p. 1 (penned), dwell. 1, fam. 1, John Sheehe and family.

- Sheehy at the same address list his occupation as “grocer,” “pedlar,” and “variety,”²⁴ all indicating a seller of goods.
- In the 1870 census the Sheehy family is living at 22 Madison Street with John’s occupation as “peddler.”²⁵ The city directory entries for 1865 through 1873 for John Sheehy at the same address list his occupation variously as “grocer,” “pedlar,” “varieties,” and “vegetables”.²⁶

Absent in the online marriage indices for New York City is a reference to a marriage occurring between 1861 and 1870 for John Sheehy and a woman named Bridget or Delia (a nickname for Bridget).²⁷ While such a record would support the hypothesis that these census records are Edward’s family, its absence does not indicate that the marriage did not take place. Relatively few New York City marriage records are computer-indexed for this time period and the earliest years of that range do not even have contemporaneous indices, making it necessary to have knowledge of the approximate date of the event. With the potential marriage date range spanning nine years, that is an impractical research task in such a densely populated urban city.

A newspaper death notice reports the death of John Sheehy of 45 James Street (the same address as in the 1880 census) on 12 November 1881.²⁸ His death certificate does not offer any additional evidence to confirm him as Edward Sheehy’s father.²⁹

While the census and other records described above are consistent with known information about Edward Sheehy’s family, they do not provide definitive evidence to conclusively tie them to the subject Edward.

²⁴ *Trow’s New York City Directory, for the year ending May 1 1879* (New York City: J.F. Trow, 1878), p. 1337, for Sheehy John at 45 James St. See also the following entries in Trow’s directories for subsequent years with varying subtitles, specifically: (1880) p. 1385 and (1881) p. 1422; digital images, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2469> : accessed 06 February 2016).

²⁵ Although the 1870 census does not include an address, a correlation of indirect evidence identifies the census address. The census reports the names and occupations of the neighbors residing in the same and neighboring dwellings as John and Mary Sheehy. The New York City directories contains entries for four of those neighbors, confirming the address of the 1870 census Sheehy family as 22 Madison Street. The census entries, 1870 U.S. census, New York Co., N.Y., pop. sch., New York City, p. 48, dwell. 74, Ann Clampit household; p. 49, dwell. 75, John Sheehy household and Michael Dywer household, dwell. 76, Thomas Leddy household and Thomas Stanton household. The directory entries, *Trow’s New York City Directory for the year ending May 1, 1868* (New York: John F. Trow, 1867), p. 800 for Dwyer Michael. See also the following entries in Trow’s directories for subsequent years with varying subtitles, specifically: (1869) p. 1050 for Stanton Thomas, (1871) p. 695 for Luddy Thomas and p. 207 for Clampit Ann; digital images, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2469> : accessed 07 June 2016).

²⁶ *Trow’s New York City Directory, for the year ending May 1 1865* (New York City: J.F. Trow, 1864), p. 804, for Sheehy John at 22 Madison St. See also the following entries in Trow’s directories for subsequent years with varying subtitles, specifically: (1866) p. 888, (1867) p. 922, (1868) p. 941, (1869) p. 989, (1870) p. 1007, (1871) p. 1106, (1872) p. 1050, and (1873) p. 1104; digital images, *Fold3* (www.fold3.com : accessed 06 February 2016).

²⁷ An online search of New York City marriage records for a John Sheehy marrying a Bridget or Delia between 1861 and 1870 performed in the following repositories yielded no candidates: Ancestry (Ancestry.com), FamilySearch (FamilySearch.org), and the Italian Genealogical Group (<http://italiangen.org/>).

²⁸ “Sheehy,” death notice, *New York Herald*, 13 November 1881, p. 9, col. 6.; digital image, *Old Fulton New York Postcards* (<http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html> : accessed 17 January 2015), Historical Newspaper Collection.

²⁹ New York County, Manhattan death certificate no. 1881-402292, John Sheehy, FHL microfilm 1322611.

A HIDDEN FINAL RESTING PLACE

The death register entry for Mary Sheehy of the 1860 census and the death certificate for John Sheehy of the 1870 and 1880 censuses report burial locations in Calvary Cemetery.³⁰ Calvary Cemetery office records indicate both burials are in the same plot,³¹ establishing that the families from the three census years (1860, 1870, and 1880) are the same family. There are no grave markers on this plot³² thus the only recorded details of their burials here are in the office files of the cemetery. An analysis of the interment list for this burial plot ties all parties together.

Interment List - Calvary Cemetery, First Calvary, Section 5, Range 7, Plot AA³³

Interment List Details				Author's Notes	
Name	Burial Date	Birth place	Age	Calculated Birth Year	Author's Comments
Mary Sheehy	02 Mar 1864	Ireland	43	1821	Mary Sheehy of the 1860 census ³⁴
James H. Sheehy	03 Apr 1864	NY	1 mon	1864	probable infant child of John and Mary Sheehy ³⁵
John Sheehy	14 Nov 1881	Ireland	66	1815	John Sheehy of the 1870 and 1880 censuses
John Sheehy	09 May 1882	NY	1	1881	child of Edward Sheehy and Catherine Dobbins ³⁶
John Sheehy	11 Oct 1892	NY	30	1862	Edward's brother ³⁷
Catherine Sheehy	01 Jan 1893	NY	5	1887	child of Edward Sheehy and Catherine Dobbins ³⁸
James Sheehy	02 Jan 1893	U.S.	1	1892	child of Edward Sheehy and Catherine Dobbins ³⁹

The interment list, correlated with the previously described evidence, confirms the identities of this John and Mary Sheehy as the parents of Edward Sheehy:

³⁰ New York Co., Manhattan death certificate no. 1881-402292, John Sheehy. Also, New York Co., Manhattan death registers, Mary Sheehy, 03 March 1864.

³¹ Calvary Cemetery Office (Woodlawn, New York) to Lynn Nelson, letter, 20 April 2015, providing interment list for grave site at Section 5, range 7, plot AA.

³² Marylyn Massey-Ingenito, Brooklyn, New York [(e-address for private use),] to Lynn Nelson, e-mail, 19 April 2015, "Calvary Cemetery"; privately held by Nelson (LynnNelson104@gmail.com), 231 Craigdan Drive, Dallastown, Pennsylvania, 2015.

³³ Calvary Cemetery Office (Woodlawn, NY) to Nelson, 20 April 2015.

³⁴ Although the interment list reports Mary's burial on March 2, this is clearly an error as she died on March 3. John purchased the plot on March 4, which is probably the actual burial date. The interment list is an extract created by a modern-day clerk from multiple cemetery office files and subject to transcription errors.

³⁵ New York Co., Manhattan death registers, James Sheehy, 02 April 1864.

³⁶ New York City, "New York, New York City Municipal Deaths, 1795-1949," database entry for death certificate number 421794, John Sheehy, 07 May 1882.

³⁷ New Jersey Department of Health, death certificate 1892-93.46-568 (1892), John Sheehy; New Jersey State Archives, Trenton.

³⁸ New Jersey, "New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988," digital image, *FamilySearch*, entry for Catherine Sheehy, 31 December 1892. Although the interment list reports this child's birthplace as New York, she was actually born in New Jersey. The interment list is an extract created by a modern-day clerk from multiple cemetery office files and subject to transcription errors.

³⁹ New Jersey, "New Jersey Deaths and Burials, 1720-1988," digital image, *FamilySearch*, entry for James Sheehy, 1 January 1893.

- The burial plot contains the graves of Mary Sheehy of the 1860 census and John Sheehy of the 1870 and 1880 censuses, suggesting a close family relationship, almost certainly husband and wife, as they lived together in 1860 with child Edward, and John Sheehy was the purchaser of this burial plot at the time of Mary's death.⁴⁰
- The burial plot contains the graves of three young children of Edward Sheehy and Catherine Dobbins, strengthening the case that the John and Mary Sheehy buried here are Edward's parents. The burial of Edward's young children here after the death of the Ireland-born John Sheehy implies that Edward acquired the deed to the cemetery plot, doubtless handed down to him after the death of his father.
- The interment here of Edward's brother, the junior John, further confirms that this is Edward's family. This interred John's death certificate, while it does not provide his mother's maiden name, is compatible with Edward's brother John in name, calculated birth year, birth place, parents' names and parents' birth places. Furthermore, the junior John's place of death was 24 Willow Terrace, Hoboken, New Jersey, the same address where Edward and Catherine Sheehy lived in 1891.⁴¹

SUMMARY

The correlation of indirect evidence revealed the identities of Edward's parents. His mother, Mary Broder, was born in Ireland around 1825. She died in New York City 03 February 1864, leaving her husband with two small boys, Edward and John, and probably an infant son, James, who died just weeks after his birth.

Sources agree on Ireland as John Sheehy's place of birth, but reports of his birth year vary widely, not uncommon for illiterate immigrants during this time period. A credible birth year for him is around 1825. After Mary's death he married a Bridget, who helped him raise sons Edward and John junior. John worked as a seller of goods (grocer, peddler, varieties, vegetables) during his time in Manhattan, where he lived from at least 1859 until his death on 12 November 1881. His death certificate reports his parents as John and Margaret Sheehy.

CONCLUSION

When little more than a name is known, the process of accumulating and correlating indirect evidence can reveal the identity of a person. A synergetic combination of church documents, censuses, vital records, city directories, and cemetery records confirmed the names of Edward Sheehy's parents and established their identities.

⁴⁰ 1860 U.S. census, New York Co., N.Y., pop. sch., New York City, page 125 (penned), dwell. 179, fam. 1062, John Sheehan and family. Calvary Cemetery Office (Woodlawn, NY) to Nelson, 20 April 2015.

⁴¹ New Jersey death certificate 1892-93.46-S68 (1892), John Sheehy. *Gopsill's Jersey City, Hoboken, West Hoboken, Union Hill, and Weehawken Directory 1891-'92* (Washington, .C. : W. Andrew Boyd 1891), p. 465, for Sheehy Edwd at 24 Willow ter, digital images, *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=2469> : accessed 03 July 2016).