

Colm Sullivan

Colm Michael Sullivan (*Colmcille Súilleabháin*) was born on St. Patrick's Day, 17th March 1860 in Malahide, Ireland. He arrived in Larkin City in June 1880, whereupon he became the first lighthouse keeper at Banshee Point.

His love affair with Molly Larkin (daughter of Larkin City founder John Larkin) resulted in the birth of twin sons, Mick and Johnny, in 1881. In order to prevent a scandal, Colm agreed to marry Molly's personal maid Maureen Kelly and raise the children. Johnny died at the age of five.

Colm and Maureen had one child together, son Aidan (born in 1886), who later became a priest.



Maureen passed away in 1910, while Colm went on as lighthouse keeper until his retirement in 1919. He moved to a cottage in Larkin City, which is now the home of his same-named art gallery.

Colm died in 1933, at the age of 73. He is buried in the Larkin City Cemetery.



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Colm Sullivan Art Gallery

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Larkin City, ME 04910
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www.cmsgallery.com



Colm Sullivan Art Gallery

Watch history come to life...



Monday-Thursday 10AM-6PM

Friday-Saturday Noon-7PM

Closed Sundays



Molly Larkin

The romance between Colm Sullivan and Mary Margaret (Molly) Larkin would indelibly shape future generations. Their love affair mingled the Larkin and Sullivan families forever, blood ties that continue to the present day.

Their son Mick, born in 1881, went on to marry Layla Barton-Brooks (daughter of Larkin family butler Nigel Barton-Brooks) in 1905. Their son Jean-Claude was born two years later. While short-lived, Jean Claude's marriage to Jennifer O'Connor produced one son, George Sullivan (aka Ben Webb). George later became the father of three children: Charlene (Carly) O'Reilly, Mike Sullivan and Sara Sullivan.

Carly married Liam Larkin in 1980, at the time not realizing their blood relation to one another.

Their daughter Megan Larkin was born in 1985.

Megan is now director of the Colm Sullivan Art Gallery, and proud great-great-great-granddaughter of both John Larkin, founder of Larkin City, and Colm Sullivan, former lighthouse keeper and artist extraordinaire.

Colm Sullivan

Colm Sullivan was a poor Irish immigrant when he arrived in New York Harbor in June 1880. Lucky for him, he was hired off the boat by John Larkin, our city's founder, to operate the new lighthouse on Banshee Point.

The Artwork

Colm was also a supremely talented artist. His first American portrait was of Mary Margaret Larkin, also known as Molly, only daughter of John Larkin.

The flourish of Colm's artwork reveals the history as it began between the Larkin and Sullivan families. The pictures are plaintive, expressing deep emotions on still-life of canvas. He painted multiple landscapes of the Irish boat docking in New York City in 1880, along with the lighthouse and keeper's cottage. A plentiful cache of personal images also emerge: Molly Larkin and Colm on a beach picnic; Molly and Colm in the throes of passion, their naked bodies glistening in firelight; Molly screaming in childbirth, straining herself in a bed to bring forth twins; Molly in her attic refuge, head bent in deep depression with a bottle of laudanum in her hand; Molly and Colm facing one another in the room atop the lighthouse; Molly throwing herself from the cliffs at Banshee Point, her skirts billowing after her; and the bare and stark image of Molly's headstone in the Larkin family cemetery.

Colm also painted his children and grandchildren, rendering Mick, Layla, Jean-Claude, Jennifer and baby George Sullivan in the same exquisite detail that was common in all his work. Other portraits included lifelike depictions of the Larkin family and the estate, with a few images of Larkin City scattered in the mix.

Also included in the Colm Sullivan Art Gallery are old family photographs under glass, and the original copy of Colm's journal, which was written in his own hand. The journal was donated to the Gallery by Colm's great-grandson, Mr. Ben Webb (aka George Sullivan).

Visions

Colm envisioned incidents in his mind. He had knowledge of events, and painted each from memories of people involved. He took part in many of the occasions personally, but others he painted from imagination and recounts of the happenings. His art is a living history of his own family, the Larkin's and their wondrous estate, and brings his descendants full circle.



Colm's rendering of the lighthouse keeper's cottage at Banshee Point

Colm Sullivan lived in the keeper's cottage next to the Banshee Point Lighthouse for almost 40 years, where he created much of his artwork. After he retired in 1919, he lived in a cottage in Larkin City (now the Colm Sullivan Art Gallery) and continued to paint until his death in 1933.

TRIVIA

Colm Sullivan was the first lighthouse keeper at Banshee Point (from 1880 to 1919). After he retired, his son Mick Sullivan took over keeper duties until the lighthouse was automated in 1927.