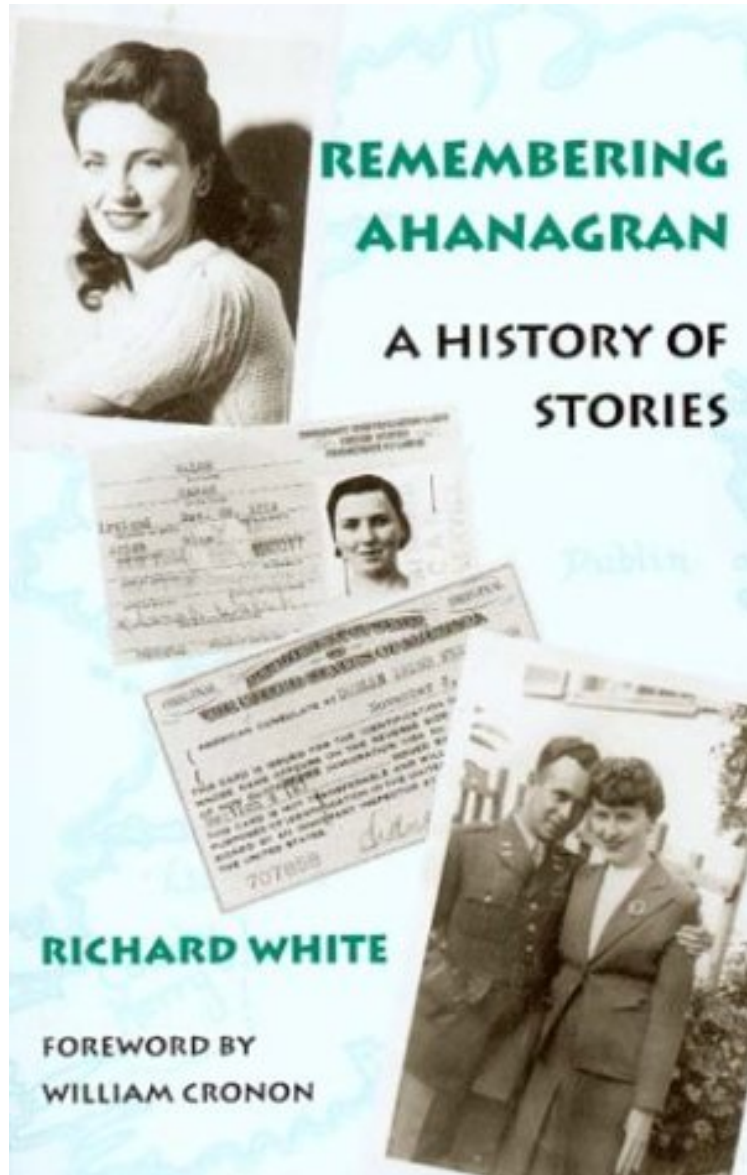


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Remembering Ahanagan: A History of Stories

Richard White, William Cronon

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Richard White, William Cronon : Remembering Ahanagan: A History of Stories before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Remembering Ahanagan: A History of Stories:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting story of the author's mother, and her ...By Larry Klaasen Very interesting story of the author's mother, and her stories and remembrances of Ireland, and the Co. Kerry farm she came from. But the author is also a historian, and researches the facts in the stories, even visiting Ireland and

the old farm with his mother, and he elaborates on the stories with new information for the reader. Presents a unique view of the tribulations of family members, including her father, going to America for work. And especially now at the 100th anniversary of the Rising, to see some of the effects in a small rural area. 8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Workmanlike look at Irish immigration in the 1930s By John L Murphy This is the same book published in hardcover with a different cover and the subtitle "storytelling in a family's past." I did not find White's actual content all that engrossing. His historian's determination to separate fact from his mother's "storytelling" embellishments or lacunae follow the usual patterns of such explorations into the clash of contrasts. The Irish mom-meets-Jewish American dad that gave birth to White appealed to me, but reading the pages of life in Chicago in the 30s vs. his father's military stint made this book little different than a self-penned history of one's family by the designated genealogist in the clan. White does write considerably better than such amateurs, but what he writes about does not rise above the mundane or the all-too-familiar tales of peasant agitation, the old IRA, and the leaving of the village for the big city. His eye occasionally gleams the telling detail, regardless. A petition for citizenship reveals that the husband does not know his wife's birthday, and his guess is off three years. His mother is asked as a 16-year-old at entrance to the country if she was a polygamist. The legend of St Rita, patron of the Chicago parish his family lived in tells in its own moral that God shapes you up only then to kill you off. Jack Benny and Father Coughlan were the radio shows one never missed on Sunday. One detail shows an error on White's part: on pg. 23 he claims that his relatives had their baptismal names "Gaelicized" by the priest as Helen-Hellena and William-Guilielmo, but surely this is the customary Latinization found on many Catholic documents rather than a return to the Irish which would make Eileen and Liam? This book reminds me of a few others that have recently delved into the Irish-meets-American immigrant encounter. Thomas Lynch's "Booking Passage," looking at White's North Kerry from across in West Clare, would complement White's book. His style in its spareness yet its eloquence reminds me of Henry Glassie, the folklorist who compiled "Irish Folktales" and chronicled a Fermanagh community in "Passing the Time at Ballymenone." Finally, books like David Monagan's "Jaywalking with the Irish" and Steve Fallon's "Home with Alice" similarly compare Irish American memories with extended Irish residences. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A son rediscovers his mother father all the family By annethis was recently read on our WPRadio Chapter - A story that a son rediscovers the journey of his mother, a most naive Irish girl who lands in Chicago, about all those she lives with and then later of his father - who she only met 2 times before he proposed and she accepted - he tells it so tenderly. the father's family is Jewish and hers, Irish Catholic- and in that era, a forbidden match. but his mother Sarah finds her way in life overcoming many losses of relations with their disapproval- on both sides - he discovers who they were and writes it with a way of seeing then and now and all the weaving of the many characters that we all find in our family history. I loved it and want to buy a copy to keep and reread.

Sara Walsh was born in 1919 in the west of Ireland, in a land of storytellers. In prose that is neither history nor memoir but something larger and brighter than both, *Remembering Ahanagan* captures her memories of her early years in Ireland, her migration to the United States, and her marriage to Harry White, the Harvard-educated son of Russian Jewish emigrants. Her son, eminent historian Richard White, in collaboration with Sara, forces history as it is traditionally written into conversation with personal recollections.

"Remembering Ahanagan is a rare and remarkable achievement: a book that carries as great a charge in emotional power as it does in intellectual energy." "Richard White gives us a beautifully rendered account of his mother's life, tracing her journey as a young girl from Ireland toward the new identities she forged for herself in Boston and Chicago. Subtly weaving memory and history to suggest how the two reinforce but also challenge each other, *Remembering Ahanagan* is a powerful meditation on the immigrant experience in America. It is an absolutely wonderful book." William Cronon "In this brilliant book, Richard White proves that he is not only one of the finest historians in America but also one of the most eloquent and ambitious. Through a loving but clear-eyed examination of the tales his immigrant mother tells of her early life in Ireland and the United States, he has managed to uncover a host of surprising truths—about his own family, about the complex, often poignant relationship between history and memory, and about what it means to be an American." Geoffrey C. Ward "Remembering Ahanagan is a rare and remarkable achievement: a book that carries as great a charge in emotional power as it does in intellectual energy. Sara Walsh's memory and Richard White's history travel through terrain from the most urgent American concerns of immigration and intermarriage to the most elemental, universal issues of love and death. This book gives its readers access to the company of two people with extraordinary gifts for life's basic enterprise: taking in experience, and making sense of it." Patricia Nelson Limerick "With equal and equally tender respect for document, memory, and lore, Richard White recreates and joins his Irish and his Jewish ancestry. An extraordinary book." Lore Segal About the Author Richard White is Margaret Byrne Professor of American History at Stanford University.