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Corrigenda and Addenda

Vol. 1

p.52, 11th line from bottom: Arles is not a civil parish, but a village

p.176, 1.17: Fig. 6.2 should be 6.6

p.187, n.6: author's name is Breandan Mac Cnaimshi

p.194, 1.14: Power Law should be Poor Law

p.203 et seq. the newspaper here should be the Londonderry Sentinel

p.206, 1.17: the village is spelt St. Johnston
Aspects of Irish Assisted Emigration to New South Wales, 1848-1870

by

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Chapter 4

The General Characteristics of Irish Assisted Emigrants to Sydney, 1848–1870

No other Irish emigrants during the 19th century were as systematically reported upon as the assisted emigrants arriving in the Australian colonies. From the 1830s to the cessation of government emigration to Queensland in the 1890s the colonial Immigration Agents produced annual reports, supported by detailed statistical tables, showing the general characteristics of all assisted immigrants arriving from the United Kingdom. For N.S.W. the Agent’s reports provided a continuous account of the colony’s yearly immigration from the 1830s to the 1880s.¹ These reports provide a general picture of the Irish immigrants, both on their own and in relation to the English and Scots: their numbers, sexes, ages, literacy, occupations, religious denominations and counties of origin. However, when the reports are analysed in conjunction with the more extensive personal details supplied by each immigrant to the Immigration Board in Sydney more complex and interesting patterns appear: wide disparities in the numbers arriving from different counties and from areas within these counties, significant differences in sex ratio between counties, variations in the proportion of families in the emigrant flow over time and from certain areas, change and diversity in literacy rates and much else.

The Regional Origins of the Irish Assisted Immigrants

Emigration officials rarely commented on where the assisted Irish came from within the island. When they did they showed an awareness of that movement’s intensely regional character. In 1849 Emigration Commissioner Murdoch defended the Commissioners’ failure to select enough Irish for the colonies at the height of the Famine. This cessation in recruitment had been necessary because the area from which most applications came was temporarily “in a disturbed state”.² He was referring to the short-lived 1848 rebellion, the centre of which was the county of Tipperary in the province of Munster. More disparagingly, in 1855 N.S.W. Immigration Agent, Captain H.H. Browne, criticised the Commissioners for sending too many young servant girls from Clare, Galway and Tipperary, “people from the Southern Counties of Ireland”.³

¹ For full list of N.S.W. Immigration Agent’s Reports, 1848–1870, see bibliography.
² Evidence of Emigration Commissioner, T.W.C. Murdoch, to House of Lord’s Select Committee on the Operation of the Irish Poor Law, pp.974-975, BPP, 1849, Vol.16.
³ N.S.W. Immigration Agent’s Report, 1855, pp.2-3.
The statistics confirm that Munster dominated the emigration to Sydney. [Figure 4.1] During the first wave of assisted immigration culminating in the "bounty emigration" of the early 1840s the emigration rates from Munster and Ulster were equal. Thereafter for the rest of the century Munster had nearly double Ulster's rate and was always well ahead of both Leinster and Connacht. The main surprise in these figures is the western province of Connacht. Although it sent just over half Leinster's number of emigrants from 1860 its emigration rate was greater than that of the eastern province. But the most noticeable aspect of the Irish/NSW emigration was the persistence of these provincial disparities in the intensity of the emigration to Sydney during the fifty years of the assisted passage.

County figures not only confirm Munster's pre-eminence but also reveal the most intense concentration of emigration to N.S.W. from any part of Ireland. [Figure 4.2 and Map 1] Of the country's 32 counties the adjacent Munster counties of Clare and Tipperary supplied just short of one Irish immigrant in every three arriving in Sydney between 1848 and 1870. Clare alone sent double the number of the third highest county, Limerick. With 67% of all the province's emigrants the Tipperary/Clare sub-region overshadowed the whole Munster, indeed the whole Irish emigration, to Sydney. Not surprisingly emigration rates in these two counties were well ahead of any other county and Clare's rate alone was nearly double that of Fermanagh, the county with the third highest rate. Even more remarkable is that half of all the emigrants came from just five neighbouring counties—Tipperary, Clare, Limerick and Cork in Munster and Galway in Connacht. [Figure 4.2. No 1-2/4/12/16]

The next most significant group of counties associated with N.S.W. seems overshadowed by this overwhelming Munster/Connacht cluster. These were the contiguous southern and western Ulster counties of Fermanagh, Cavan, Donegal, Tyrone and Armagh. They supplied just over 20% of the emigrants and had emigration rates nearly double those of a whole swathe of midlands and western counties. [Figure 4.2. No.3/7-10] Outside these two county groups, with the exception of Kilkenny and Kings County in the centre of the island and Wicklow in the east, the intensity of the Sydney emigration fell away sharply. In Munster the emigrants from Kerry in the far south and Waterford on the east coast made little difference to the overall Munster figure. The weakness of the Sydney link was also evident moving north-west from County Longford in Leinster into the Connacht Counties of Roscommon, Leitrim, Sligo and finally to Mayo on the Atlantic coast. From this large area of Connacht just 1,588 emigrants went to Sydney, 3.7% of the total. [Map 1]

Provincial boundaries impose a certain artificiality on the Irish/N.S.W. emigration map. This is clear from a consideration of the intensity of emigration within counties. For
statistical purposes Galway emigrants have to be considered as coming from Connacht but the origins of these emigrants within the county show that this movement was in effect a spill-over of the Munster emigration from Clare and Tipperary. The south Galway baronies of Kiltartan and Leitrim, bordering on these two counties, had the highest emigration rates in Galway. [Figure 4.3 and Map2] With the exception of the barony of Dunmore in the central north to the north-west or north-east within Galway emigration rates fell away markedly. From Ballynahinch, Ross and Moycullen, Galway’s three large western baronies containing 18% of its 1851 population, came only 4% of its Sydney emigrants. By contrast Kiltartan on Galway Bay, bordering the Clare baronies of Burren and Inchiquin, contributed 21%. In Kiltartan the coastal parish of Kinvarra sent a steady stream of people to Sydney. Just along the coast from Kinvarra is the County Clare parish of Ballyvaughan, the heart of the Sydney emigration in the barony of Burren. Despite their administrative separation by both a provincial and a county border, Kinvarra and Ballyvaughan were the centre of a localised movement to N.S.W. from the coastal strip and immediate hinterland of the south-eastern portion of Galway Bay.

The Sydney emigration from Ireland’s south-west was not simply a county or provincial phenomenon. This movement was concentrated within a region lying to the south and west of the midlands town of Tullamore in County Offally (Kings County). The boundaries of this area were encompassed by a line running from Tullamore south to the Tipperary town of Clonmel, south-west to Cork City, north-west to Loop Head on the edge of the Shannon estuary, north-east to Tuam in Galway and finally back east to Tullamore. Within this region lay 24 of the 33 Irish baronies with emigration rates to N.S.W. of 10 per thousand or greater. [Figure 4.3: starred baronies and Map2] East of the Tullamore/Clonmel line there were only a small number of widely separated baronies with strong Sydney links—the three baronies of north-east Kilkenny, Ballinacor North in Wicklow, Moyfenrath in Meath and Rattullagh in Westmeath. Of these the most isolated was Ballinacor North in central Wicklow. Despite having the highest rate of any barony in the whole of the province of Leinster Ballinacor was surrounded by an area of weak association with Sydney. [Figure 4.3 and Map2]

Apart from the barony of Roscommon in eastern Connacht all the remaining baronies of significance were in Ulster. [Figure 4.3 and Map2] The highest emigration rates in the province were experienced in an area stretching north from mid-Fermanagh to south-west Tyrone taking in the baronies of Tirkenney, Lurg, Tirhugh, Omagh West and Omagh East. Outside this area in both counties rates fell away sharply, especially in Tyrone. The Fermanagh emigration was exceptionally localised. Of the 1,107 Fermanagh emigrants so far identified with a particular barony 74% came from the baronies of Lurg and Tirkenney lying to the east and north-west of Enniskillen. Here too, as in the
baronies of south Galway and north Clare, county boundaries did not mark the limit of the attraction to Sydney. This ran on from parishes like Drumkeeran and Magheraculmoney in Lurg into the neighbouring parish of Dromore in the Tyrone barony of Omagh West.

No other area of Ulster matched this cluster of baronies in Tyrone, Fermanagh and Donegal. The emigration from Cavan and Armagh, the only other Ulster counties with high emigration rates, was spread fairly evenly across both counties. [Figure 4.3 and Map 2] One other area which arrests attention within Ulster is the far north-western Ulster barony of Kilmacrenan in Donegal. With 16 emigrants per thousand Kilmacrenan had the second highest Sydney emigration rate in the whole of Ulster.

Not only was the N.S.W. emigration marked by these regional concentrations but they were also fairly stable over time. [Figure 4.4] Among the eight counties with the highest rates in the 1850s and 1860s, five—Clare, Tipperary, Fermanagh, Limerick and Cavan—stayed in the top eight throughout the century. These rates also reflect something of the rise and fall of interest in emigrating to N.S.W. In Kilkenny for example, the Sydney emigration was very much a phenomenon of the 1850s. The most dramatic increase in the rate of emigration to N.S.W. between 1841 and 1860 was in Donegal. After 1855 Donegal provided the only major new source of Sydney emigrants and the 1859 proportion of Donegal’s total emigration highlights the county’s sudden, spectacular rise in both absolute and relative significance for N.S.W. [Figure 4.5 Col 13] Seventeen percent of the country’s emigrants left between 1848 and 1858 but 38% in 1859, a year in which 31% of all the N.S.W. emigrants were from Donegal. Closer examination shows that 60% of all 1848–70 Donegal emigrants came to Sydney in just three years—1859, 1861 and 1864. This unique emigration pattern resulted from the work of the N.S.W. Donegal Relief Committee of 1858 whose activities will be described in Chapter 7.

While Donegal was the only county to experience such a sudden upsurge in numbers other counties also experienced variations in the intensity of emigration to Sydney. By 1856 just over half the Irish assisted had arrived in Sydney. [Figure 4.5 Col 1] Key counties such as Tipperary, Clare and Galway experienced a pattern of departures for N.S.W. close to the national average over the whole period. [Figure 4.5 Cols 2-3/8] Another important Munster county, Cork, would have been close to the average departure rate were it not for 1854 when it sent an unusually high 12% of all its emigrants. [Figure 4.5 Col 4] The Emigration Commissioners were responsible for this leap in Cork’s contribution when they despatched a whole shipload of inmates from the Cork Union
Workhouse in an attempt to meet the colony’s demand for female servants. Mayo, a county with few emigrants, sent 50% of them in just three years—1850, 1855 and 1864. [Figure 4.5 Col 10] The increase in 1855 can be accounted for by the general rise in recruitment by the Commissioners which affected virtually every county but the higher numbers from Mayo in 1850 and 1864 resulted from recruitment under special emigration schemes. In 1850 Mayo provided a large number of workhouse girls to the orphan emigration of 1848–1850 and in 1864 the Donegal Relief Committee’s agent ran out of willing recruits in Donegal and made up his numbers from Westport in Mayo. His efforts there involved only a small group of 17 but this was sufficient to bring about a major increase in that year’s proportion of total Mayo emigration.

Aberrant departure rates in more significant counties represented different local responses to the two main emigration schemes—selection by the Commissioners or nomination in the colony. In Kilkenny the Commissioners were very successful in recruiting emigrants in the mid-1850s. The three years 1853–1855 accounted for 40% of the county’s total and of these only 100, 16%, were nominated by colonial residents. Sixty-two per cent of all Kilkenny’s emigrants had left for Sydney by 1856. [Figure 4.5 Col 7] This contrasted sharply with Ulster counties like Fermanagh and Tyrone both of which had low departure rates in the first half of the 1850s. A greater proportion of the Tyrone and Fermanagh emigrants left in the 1860s when all the N.S.W. emigrants were colonial nominees. [Figure 4.5 Cols 11-12]

Only 2% of all emigrants from Ireland between 1852 and 1870 received an assisted passage to N.S.W. Not surprisingly, given their high emigration rates, Clare, Fermanagh and Tipperary sent a significantly greater share of their emigrants to Sydney than any of the other counties. [Figure 4.6] Only in Wicklow was Sydney a more attractive destination than is suggested by the county emigration rate. More of Wicklow’s emigrants chose N.S.W. compared with counties with much higher rates such as Limerick. But whatever the contribution of other provinces it is the emigration from the rural south-west, from Munster, which has left the best known mark on the Australian historical landscape. Of the 20 Irish diggers killed or wounded in the Eureka rebellion at Ballarat in 1854 11 were from Munster. Prominent among them were seven men from County Clare.

4 Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 7 July 1855, Correspondence Relating to the Australian Colonies, pp.31-32, BPP, 1857, Vol.10.
5 For Mayo orphan numbers see Chapter 6, Figure 1. For recruitment by the Donegal Relief Committee’s agent in Mayo see Chapter 7, p.209.
The Sex Ratio of the Irish Assisted Immigrants

Supplying labour to the employers of N.S.W. was never regarded by the Emigration Commissioners as the only, even the main, purpose of assisted emigration. They shared, as they saw it, with the colonial authorities the responsibility for creating a balanced social framework in Australia and nothing was regarded as more important in achieving this than ensuring a proper ratio between the sexes.\(^7\) Two processes worked against the natural development of male/female parity in N.S.W; up to 1840 men formed the overwhelming majority of those arriving as convicts and, once the gold rushes began in the early 1850s, men dominated the flood of free, unassisted emigration. It was the Commissioners’ efforts to ensure a proper balance in the Sydney emigration under their control that explains one of its main features—the over-representation of Irish women among the female assisted immigrants between 1848 and 1870. [Figure 4.7]

Irish free emigration to the colonies has been strongly associated with the image of the young, single Irish female.\(^8\) But the yearly changes in the proportions of male and female arrivals indicates a more complex emigration pattern than is suggested by the overall statistical preponderance of Irish women. [Figure 4.8] Again the explanation lies in the operation of the two main emigration schemes—selection by the Commissioners and nomination in the colony. Up to the end of 1856 only 35% of the emigrants were males and in only two years between 1848 and 1856, in 1851 and 1856, was there anything like parity between male and female arrivals. [Figure 4.8] Over the next 14 years the situation changed dramatically. Sixty per cent of all the assisted men who came to the colony did so from 1857 to 1870. During this period virtual parity was achieved; 52% of the immigrants were male and 48% female. [Figure 4.8] Quite simply after 1856, when the Commissioners scaled down their recruitment activity in Ireland and obtaining an assisted passage was in the hands of the Irish themselves through nomination in the colony, a natural balance asserted itself.

The relative ease with which men could obtain a passage to Sydney under the remittance regulations after the mid-1850s was fully appreciated by the colonial Irish. In 1856 Bessy Browne in Melbourne paid for her younger brother, Edward, to come to Victoria as little local assistance was being offered to males.\(^9\) When Edward arrived in

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7 Emigration of single women, 8th Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners (hereafter CLEC), p.8, BPP, 1847–48, Vol.26; N.S.W. Immigration Agent’s Report, 1865–66, p.7; Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, Despatch No.118, 8 July 1851, Colonial Office/N.S.W. Original Correspondence, CO.201/441.

8 Chris McConville, Croppies, Celts and Catholics, Melbourne, 1987, p.34.

9 Maryanne and Bessy Browne to their brothers Patrick and Edward and their sister Bridget Browne, 18 November 1856, Browne letters, Father Brien Maher, Bungendore, N.S.W.
1857 he was carrying money from friends in Ireland who wished to be nominated for a passage in Australia. Edward found this to be more expensive in Victoria, where the regulations required twice as large a deposit for men as for women. He wrote that he would look into the possibility of having them nominated by friends in Sydney where there were fewer obstacles to male emigration.

The overall imbalance between the sexes was not uniform throughout Ireland. In Leinster 61% were females while Ulster was almost in balance. Munster, 56% of whose emigrants were females, reflected the national figure. [Figure 4.9 Col 1] At county level disparities ranged from virtual equality in the three northern counties of Tyrone, Fermanagh and Derry to a situation where over two-thirds of Dublin's emigrants were female. However in every county females predominated up to 1856 and, in all but four counties in Ulster, this reached a figure of 60% or more. [Figure 4.9 Col 2]

Although the creation of this pre-1856 imbalance was deliberate policy on the part of the Commissioners it was felt more in Ireland than any other part of the U.K. Among the English assisted emigrants there was actually a surplus of males. Here the Commissioners claimed, probably correctly, that they were never able to induce enough single English female servants to emigrate when their wages were virtually the same as in the colonies. In order to satisfy the colonial demand for female servants, and their own determination to redress any tendency for the emigration to become even slightly male-dominated, the Commissioners made up their female numbers from Ireland. There, they claimed, they never experienced any difficulties in attracting enough Irish women to fill their quotas. This so called "recourse to Ireland" was often unpopular in the colony but without it, the Commissioners argued, they would never have been able to compensate

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10 Edmund, John, Maryanne and Bessy Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857, Browne letters.

11 The Victorian deposit rates were: males aged 12 to 29—£4 to £6; aged 30 to 40—£6 to £8: females, 12 to 29—£2 to £3; aged 30 to 40—£3 to £4: Immigration Remittances, Victoria, 1 August 1856, NSW/IC, 9/6298. In N.S.W. there was a flat rate of £4 for both sexes aged between 12 and 40: see Chapter 8, Figure 1.

12 Edmund Browne and others to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857, Browne letters.

13 51% of all English assisted immigrants between 1848 and 1855 were men: Yearly table, Return showing the Ages of the Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom who arrived during the Year ..., N.S.W. Immigration Agent's Reports, 1848–1855.

14 Emigration Commissioners to the Colonial Secretaries of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria, 5 November 1855, Emigration Commissioners/Letters to Emigration Agents, Colonial Secretaries, etc., CO.386/128: "... the difference of their wages here and in Australia is not sufficient to constitute a temptation to encounter the discomforts of a long sea voyage, and the uncertainties and the breach of family ties attending a removal to Colonial life".
for the 2:1 surplus in favour of males in the unassisted emigration or to hold down the male excess evident in the N.S.W. census of 1856.\textsuperscript{15}

While official policies explain the general over-recruitment of Irish women they do not account for the large excess of women from some counties. Over 70% of all emigrants from Mayo, Longford or Kerry, counties of minor significance in the overall emigration, were women. The explanation here lies in the years during which this surplus occurred. Mayo, for example, contributed 85 women in 1850 and only one in 1851. In fact 1850 accounted for 22% of all Mayo women who received an assisted passage between 1848 and 1870. Likewise 22% of all Kerry women to reach Sydney did so in 1850. In Longford this concentration was even more pronounced: 53% of that county’s 1848-70 female total arrived in two years, 1849 and 1850. These were the years when the Commissioners satisfied Sydney’s demand for female labour through the Irish workhouse orphan emigration scheme and every Irish Poor Law Union was given the opportunity to contribute a quota of girls.\textsuperscript{16} Overall between 1848 and the end of 1850 females outnumbered males by two to one in the Sydney emigration.

Between 1853 and the end of 1855 the balance again swung heavily in favour of females. [Figure 4.8] After the end of the orphan scheme the Commissioners sent out fairly equal numbers of men and women but in 1852 the news of the Australian gold discoveries and the type of emigration which ensued made them quickly alter their policy:

Up to the end of 1852, it was found sufficient to maintain the equality of the sexes because even in New South Wales where a disparity had been caused by transportation it was principally among the older classes and was gradually disappearing ... But after 1852 when the gold discoveries gave birth to an unassisted Immigration the great bulk of which was male, we thought it our duty so to adjust our selections as to counteract as far as possible this undesirable result.\textsuperscript{17}

The result was the largest single excess of Irish women ever to reach the colony, the intake of 1853. [Figure 4.8] Females from Clare and Tipperary made up 31% of the 1853 female intake. In these counties the Commissioners’ virtual exclusion of single men in this gold rush atmosphere produced a huge excess of females; in 1853 males made up 25% of the emigrants from Tipperary and only 18% of those from Clare.

A final significant excess of female emigrants occurred during the implementation of the Assisted Immigrant Act in 1854 and 1855. In late 1853, at the request of the


\textsuperscript{16} For the numbers sent from each county see Chapter 7, Figure 1.

\textsuperscript{17} Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 12 September 1855, Emigration Commissioners/Entry Books of Correspondence, CO.386/72.
N.S.W. government, the Commissioners began recruiting under the regulations of this Act which required emigrants to bond themselves to repay their fares.\(^{18}\) The Commissioners claimed that this was not acceptable to most female domestics in England and they stepped up recruitment in Ireland.\(^{19}\) Again the Munster “Australian” heartland of Clare, Tipperary, Limerick and Cork helped the Commissioners meet their requirements by providing 52% of all females in 1854 and 47% in 1855.

These years also saw a rise in the number, if not the proportion, of males among the assisted Irish. There was a 67% increase on 1852–53 and almost as many men arrived in the three years 1854 to 1856 as in the whole six years from 1848 to 1853. Males were not excluded under the Assisted Immigrant Act but they found it almost as difficult as in earlier years to gain a passage from the Commissioners. In 1855 only 121, 21%, of the single male emigrants went out under the Act.\(^{20}\) All the rest were colonial nominees, an indication that the Irish in the colony had begun to use the remittance regulations to create their own balance in the selection process. By contrast, virtually all the single women applied to the Commissioners, not always because there was nobody in the colony to nominate them, but because the £1 emigrant contribution required was considerably less than the £5 necessary for nomination in the colony.

By contrast the second half of the 1850s and the 1860s were years of significant assisted Irish male emigration to N.S.W. [Figure 4.8] Admittedly males never reached Sydney in quite such overwhelming numbers as females during the years of selection by the Commissioners. Nevertheless Irish men were now arriving in the colony in virtually equal, sometimes even greater, numbers than Irish women. That never occurred between 1848 and 1855. Without this period of balancing up by the N.S.W. Irish community through the use of the remittance regulations the whole mid-19th century emigration to Sydney would have been dominated by the women of Clare, Tipperary, Limerick, Cork and Kilkenny.

The Age and Family Structure of the Irish Assisted Emigrants

“Emigration”, according to Fitzpatrick, “was a young man’s—and a young woman’s—game”.\(^{21}\) This was certainly true of the mid-century Irish immigrants at the port of

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\(^{18}\) An Act to regulate the Indenting of Assisted Immigrants and Others in the United Kingdom and elsewhere, and their employment in this Colony for a certain time after their arrival therein, Supplement, N.S.W. Government Gazette, 4 January 1852.

\(^{19}\) N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 5 March 1855, Immigration: Working of the Present System, N.S.W. Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1855, Vol.2, p.446.

\(^{20}\) Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.

Sydney. The great majority, 71%, were young adults aged from 15 to 29. [Figure 4.10] There was little provincial deviation from this figure, an outer limit being set by Connacht with 76% of its emigrants in this age group. [Figure 4.10] There were however quite significant differences between men and women within this broad category. Women came to the colony at a younger age than the men, 29% of them arriving as late teenagers or young adults aged between 15 and 19. The men, in general, were older; 33% were over 24 as against 24% of the women. [Figure 4.10] Neither age distribution was representative of the Irish population as a whole. At the census of 1851 and 1861 the 15-29 age group were 22% and 23% of the population respectively; between 1848 and 1870 they formed 71% of the N.S.W. emigrants. Irish children were under-represented among the assisted Irish by about 45% while adults 44 years and over were a rare sight on any government ship. [Figure 4.10]

How did their ages compare with all Irish emigrants between 1852 and 1870? Both groups were dominated by the 15 to 29 year olds but the Australian emigrants were more tightly concentrated in this age range. [Figure 4.11] Male emigrants shared a similar age pattern but it was among the females that an interesting disparity emerged. Nine per cent more women went to Sydney in the 15-19 age range as Irish female emigrants as a whole. [Figure 4.11] Here the general Irish tendency for women to emigrate earlier than males was strengthened by the addition between 1848 and 1850 of 2,220 workhouse orphan girls. This produced a situation during those years where 51% of all assisted females were between 15 and 19 years of age. [Figure 4.12] Children under 15 were just as much a feature among the Sydney bound Irish as any other group but older emigrants, those aged 30 and above, made up only 12% of the assisted compared with 23% of all Irish emigrants. This difference was accentuated among those aged 40 and over. The age-related financial contributions, payable both when selected by the Commissioners and under the colonial remittance regulations, would have held down the number of older emigrants.\footnote{22} In the 1860s nomination in N.S.W. for males between 40 and 50 cost £9 and £12 for anyone older than 50.\footnote{23}

Only once between 1848 and 1870 did emigrant ages vary markedly from this pattern. The orphan scheme had a dramatic effect on the 1848-1851 figures. [Figure 4.12] Female emigration from all four provinces was dominated by these young girls who provided up to 43% of Munster’s total and a staggering 73% of Connacht’s. The

\footnote{22} Under the Commissioners’ general regulations the lowest contribution demanded for the 40 to 50 age group was £5 between 1851 and the introduction of the Assisted Immigrant Act in 1854. Under this latter Act those under 45 paid £1, those between 45 and 50 £2 and those over 50 £11.

\footnote{23} For colonial deposits for older emigrants under the remittance regulations see Chapter 8, Figure 1.
impact the orphans made on the emigrant age profile was felt in virtually every county; they were clearly in evidence in Tipperary’s statistics and overwhelming so in those of the Connacht counties of Mayo, Sligo and Roscommon. [Figure 4.13 No.1-2] Surprisingly the figures for both Clare and Fermanagh, counties with high emigration rates to Sydney, were little affected by the orphans. In neither county was the overall proportion within the 15-19 age group unusually high from 1848 to 1851. [Figure 4.13 No.3-4] Indeed Clare girls were more inclined to leave in this age range in the 1860s than in the late 1840s and early 1850s. After the end of the scheme in 1850 female age distribution remained fairly stable. [Figure 4.14]

This bunching of the Irish in the young adult age categories set them apart from other assisted emigrants. [Figure 4.15] In the 14-21 age group they formed 61% of all arrivals. [Figure 4.16] Again this resulted from the over-representation of young Irish females; 55% of all assisted females were Irish but among 14-21 year olds this rose to 68%. [Figure 4.16] This situation was temporarily reversed by the Commissioners between 1856 and 1859. Stung by colonial complaints that they were relying too much on Ireland, they increased their recruiting activities in England and lowered the required single female emigrant contribution to ten shillings.24 In 1857-58 they were able to induce 3,762 English women to emigrate and left colonial nomination to take care of the Irish quota. For those two years only one female immigrant in three was Irish. [Figure 4.17]

The strength of the adult figures among the Irish suggests that a feature of their emigration was the relative absence of families. Certainly they brought fewer young children with them than other U.K. immigrants. Of the English and Scots 29% were under 14; the comparable Irish figure was 14%. [Figure 4.15] There was little change in these national proportions even in the 1860s when the Irish dominated the Sydney immigration. In no four-year period from 1848 to 1870 did the overall percentage of children among the English and Scots fall below 25% while for the Irish it was only 9% from 1860 to 1863 and 10% from 1864 to 1870.

Unfortunately the N.S.W. Immigration Agent published no statistics on families. Consequently it can only be inferred from the relative number of young children that families were more in evidence among the English and Scots. However a reconstruction of Irish family groups from the shipping lists indicates that more of them came to the colony in this way than is apparent from comparisons of age groupings. Hidden by the

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24 Government Emigration Commission, Regulations for the Selection of Emigrants for Passages to Australia, 1857, N.S.W. Colonial Secretary’s Special Bundles, Immigration Regulations—proposed amendments, 1856–57, 4/722.1, AONSW.
basic colonial age statistics were the young adults who travelled within a family unit. Typical of families with older children were the Condons who arrived under the Assisted Immigrant Act in January 1855 from Mitchelstown, County Cork. Maurice and Mary Condon, both aged 49, were accompanied by seven children of whom five were older than 14. During 1855 1,050 Irish arrived as part of a family unit; 30% of them were over 14. If family is taken to include those who travelled as couples without children, widows or widowers with accompanying children, or married women and children with a husband already in the colony then the family share of the Irish emigration was a sizeable 39%. [Figure 4.18] Indeed at the height of the N.S.W. emigration, 1852 to 1855, 49% of the Irish arrived in such groups.

This extensive family emigration of the mid-1850s was due to the Commissioners’ efforts after 1851 to attract families, even those with considerable numbers of children. Large families, it was thought, were less likely to leave N.S.W. for the Victorian goldfields. Emigrant contribution rates were dropped and the Assisted Immigrant Act, under whose provisions the Commissioners began recruiting in mid-1853, allowed heads of families up to the age of 45 to obtain a passage for £1.26 Unlike the previous general regulations, which had required much larger sums from families, this £1 now covered a man’s wife and all his family under 14.27 The Act made a considerable impact on male age distribution from 1852 to 1855 when 47% of all male arrivals were either over 30 or under 14. Most of the older men were family heads. [Figure 4.19]

Within Ireland Ulster people were the most likely to emigrate in family groups. [Figure 4.20] Indeed family emigration was a feature of all the northern counties with the exception of Donegal and Cavan. [Figure 4.21 No.17/23] Donegal’s low figure was the result of the unique manner in which significant emigration to Sydney began in that county. In 1859, Scott Durbin, the N.S.W. Donegal Relief Committee’s agent, commenced selecting emigrants in Donegal’s north-western barony of Kilmacrenan. Although he did not reject families, he concentrated his recruiting on the unmarried.28 Before 1859 the extent of family emigration from Donegal had been similar to that from other Ulster counties and from 1852 to 1855 64% of the county’s emigrants travelled in family groups. Indeed these four years witnessed the greatest degree of Ulster family

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25 Wacousta, arrived 4 January 1855, 4/4957, AONSW.

26 N.S.W. Immigration Agent’s Report, 1852, pp.1-2: An Act to regulate the Indenting of Assisted Immigrants and Others etc., op.cit.

27 Ibid.

28 Scott Durbin, Agent for the Donegal Relief Committee of Sydney to the Committee, 13 December 1858, reprinted in Freeman’s Journal, Sydney, 19 February 1859.
emigration to Sydney with eight out of nine northern counties recording more Sydney emigrants leaving within families than as single men and women.

After 1855 Irish family emigration gradually fell away. From 1864 to 1870 families were only 28% of the Irish total. [Figure 4.18] The financial requirements of the remittance regulations, the main scheme under which the Irish reached Sydney after 1856, were a considerable disincentive to family emigration. In 1855 the Henry family from Kilrea, County Derry paid only £1 to the Commissioners to emigrate under the Assisted Immigrant Act.29 The family consisted of John Henry, aged 31, his wife, aged 28 and five children ranging in age from 13 to 4. To nominate a similar family in N.S.W. would have required £18 in 1857 and £25 in 1862.30

The Religious Denominations of the Irish Assisted Immigrants

Dr. John Dunmore Lang’s famous attack on what he saw as the excessively Irish and Roman Catholic nature of assisted immigration is generally associated with the 1840s, especially the years 1839 to 1841. His first assault on the potentially baleful influence of Irish Roman Catholics came in his 1841 pamphlet—The Question of Questions, or is this Colony to be transformed into a Province of the Popedom?31 Less well known is his application of this evocative phraseology 34 years later to the period 1857 to 1867. In The Fatal Mistake, written in 1875, Lang praised the immigration systems of Queensland and New Zealand in the 1860s.32 These colonies had offered land grants to immigrants and so encouraged out the right type of small British capitalist. By contrast N.S.W. was receiving, once again, the wrong sort of immigrant:

... a semi pauper class ... chiefly Roman Catholics, of the humbler classes, from Ireland, they came out also to subject us and our institutions to the domination of certain ultramontane zealots, whose chief object is to transform our noble colony into a mere province of the Popedom.33

One need not share Lang’s prejudices in order to understand the origins of his apprehensions. Australian historians once stressed the supposedly homogeneous nature of 19th century Australian society because its population was overwhelmingly drawn from the unified political state of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. However that kingdom was rarely, especially before the Great Famine of 1845 to 1850,

29 Samuel Bodington, arrived 17 February 1855, 4/4955, AONSW.
30 For deposits required in N.S.W. under the remittance regulations see Chapter 8, Figure 1.
31 Rev. John Dunmore Lang, The Question of Questions or is this Colony to be transformed into a Province of the Popedom?, Sydney, 1841.
33 Ibid., p.29.
perceived by contemporaries as a cultural entity. Within the United Kingdom its large Irish, Catholic and Gaelic component was segregated on an outlying island. In N.S.W., by contrast, the Catholic Irish were everywhere. By 1861 in country, town, and city they formed anywhere from 15% to 48% of the population.\textsuperscript{34} Rightly or wrongly they were seen by many Scots Presbyterians like Lang and English liberal politicians like Henry Parkes as the major threat to the development in Australia of a liberal progressive society on the British Protestant model.\textsuperscript{35} Moreover this was a Catholic challenge begun and sustained, as both men were well aware, by assisted emigration from Ireland. Between 1848 and 1870 of the 104,705 assisted immigrants landed in N.S.W. at either Sydney or Moreton Bay 38% were Roman Catholics. [Figure 4.22.1 Col 2] Ninety six per cent of these Catholics were Irish. [Figure 4.22.1 Col 2]

Most Irish Catholics came from the province of Munster. [Figure 4.23 Col 3] Given the county origins of these immigrants, many congregations in the colony must have seemed like the counties of Tipperary, Clare, Limerick, and Cork at prayer. Nevertheless each church would also have had a leavening of worshippers from every county in the island. [Figure 4.24] In general Catholics were drawn from each province in reasonable proportion to their denominational strength. [Figure 4.23 Col 2] However, with the exception of one or two counties, as one moved north and east of Munster and Connacht the Catholic proportion of the total emigration gradually declined. [Figure 4.24 B/C/D/E] Less than 50% of the Ulster emigrants were Catholics. [Figure 4.23 Col 1] Indeed Ulster Catholics would have been significantly under-represented among Ulster emigrants had it not been for the high proportion of Catholic emigrants from Donegal. [Figure 4.24 B/18] Before the work of the Donegal Relief Committee began in 1858 Donegal emigration was mainly composed of Protestants from east Donegal. Without this post-1858 emigration from the Catholic north-west of the county, Ulster assisted emigration would have been predominantly non-Catholic. Even in Cavan, where Catholics were 80.5% of the population, they made up only 62.1% of the N.S.W. emigrants. [Figure 4.24 D/26]

Unlike the Catholics, N.S.W. Protestant assisted immigrants were not so dominated by one ethnic group. Certainly the great majority of the Anglicans were from England but Irish Anglicans would not have been a rarity at Church of England services.

\textsuperscript{34} James Waldesersee, Catholic Society in New South Wales, 1788–1861, Sydney, 1974, Table 27, p.284.

\textsuperscript{35} For a full elaboration of Parkes' views on Irish Roman Catholic immigration and the need to restrict it see Irish Immigration: Speech by Henry Parkes, M.P.: Delivered in the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, on the Second Reading of a “Bill to authorise and regulate Assisted Immigration”, October 14th, 1869, Sydney, 1869, Ferguson Collection No. F13784, National Library of Australia.
in the colony. [Figure 4.22.1 Col 2] Anglicans made up 16% of all N.S.W/Irish emigrants and 84.3% of them came from Ulster and Leinster. [Figure 4.22.2 Col 1 and Figure 25 Col 4] But Ulster was the core of this emigration with two out of every three Irish Anglicans being from that province. [Figure 4.25 Col 4] In Ulster one county stands out; Fermanagh in the south-west provided a quarter of all the Ulster Anglicans. Only 38.4% of Fermanagh’s population were Anglicans but they made up 61.6% of the county’s N.S.W. emigrants. [Figure 4.26] In all Ulster counties, with the exception of Donegal, Anglicans were considerably over-represented among the emigrants. [Figure 4.26]

These assisted Ulster Anglicans, along with a smaller number of their co-religionists from the other provinces, raise the question of the meaning of the term “Anglo-Irish” in Australia’s immigration history. O’Farrell draws a distinction between the “Anglo-Irish” and the “Ulster Protestants”. The former he sees as the better educated, and usually better off, settlers from the southern provinces drawn from the minor gentry and professional classes.36 Between 1848 and 1870 Sydney attracted 2,107 assisted Anglicans from Leinster, Munster and Connacht.37 These people were neither professionals nor members of the gentry. Most Irish Anglicans descended from 16th and 17th English immigrant stock and many of them settled in large numbers along the religious and ethnic divide in counties Tyrone, Fermanagh and Donegal where they became farmers of a kind barely distinguishable from their indigenous Catholic neighbours. In later years some sank to the level of cottiers and landless labourers. Significant numbers of these less socially elevated Anglicans also settled in the other provinces mainly in rural Leinster and parts of Munster. Bruce Elliott has identified and analysed the emigration of just this sort of less well off Anglican from north Tipperary to Canada in the pre-Famine decades of the 19th century.38 Only further research can determine the exact socio-economic status of these poorer Irish Anglican assisted immigrants; but given their ancestral and denominational background it is hard to see what else to call them but “Anglo-Irish”.

Ulster Protestantism is usually linked with the Presbyterianism of the Scotch-Irish. Ulster Presbyterianism however was the most under-represented of Ireland’s three major religions in the Sydney emigration. Presbyterians made up 9% of the Irish population in 1861 but only 3% of the N.S.W. assisted emigrants. [Figure 4.22/2 Col 1] Not surprisingly the Presbyterians were overwhelmingly from Ulster and mainly from the

37 Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848-1870.
Presbyterian strongholds of north-east and central Ulster—the counties of Antrim, Down, and Derry. [Figure 4.25 Col 6] It was not Presbyterian emigration which allowed Ulster’s particular brand of Irish anti-Catholicism to take root in the colony. The Orange Order in N.S.W. found its initial strength in the Ulster Anglicans, large numbers of whom settled in the Illawarra district south of Sydney.³⁹ There the Orange Lodges, a feature of south coast Anglicanism, were fed by a steady stream of assisted immigrants from Fermanagh and Tyrone. In his opposition to Irish Catholic immigration the Scots Presbyterian, Dr Lang, would have had no stronger supporters than these Ulster Anglicans. Ironically they were themselves the beneficiaries of the same emigration system which had allowed the Catholic religion to establish itself in strength in N.S.W.

The Level of Literacy Among the Irish Assisted Immigrants

Illiteracy accompanied by relative stupidity were the common attributes of the assisted Irish as perceived by colonial society. Bridget, the untutored domestic, and, to a lesser extent, “thick” Mick, her equally unlettered brother, were common targets of Sydney and Melbourne cartoonists throughout the latter half of the century.⁴⁰ O’Farrell sees the very “fact” of being assisted and Irish as sufficient for contemporaries to assume an inability to read and write.⁴¹ It was with obvious delight that he discovered that only eight out of 38 Irish assisted males, who arrived at Port Fairy, Victoria in 1857 on the Chance, were illiterate:

The contemptuous stereotype of the “thick Mick” does not apply: the fact that Ireland exported agricultural labourers is not a reflection on the quality of Australia’s Irish migrant intake; it is a comment on the condition of Ireland’s economy.⁴²

All assisted immigrants arriving at Sydney were asked by the Immigration Board if they could read and write, read only or do neither. How truthful were their responses to this question? In 1864 only 9% of both male and female Irish immigrants, who were hired out with the assistance of the Immigration Office, overstated their ability to write. Although they told the Immigration Board they could write they signed their wage agreement with a mark not a signature. [Figure 4.27] Curiously 7% of the females,

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⁴⁰ Such cartoons were very much a feature of the Melbourne Punch throughout the 1870s. The following is a fairly typical example of a dialogue between an Irish servant and her mistress entitled “Confusion of Ideas”:

Old Lady: “Shocking news in the paper again this morning, another poor fellow committed suicide”.

Bridget: “Gracious ’m, how dreadful! I hope they’ll hang him!”

⁴¹ O’Farrell, op.cit., p.126.

⁴² Ibid.
women who claimed only the ability to read, later signed their agreements. In 1861 the Irish Census Commissioners were curious about the number of people, especially women, who claimed only to be able to read. Reading ability, they felt, must have been acquired at school where pupils would also have been taught to write. In explanation the Commissioners thought that the large number of Irish who said they could only read included many early writers who were never again asked, or needed, to use this skill. Consequently the ability to write had deserted them. What remained with many of them, as the Sydney female wage agreements suggest, was the ability to sign their name. Despite any slight imperfections in the data the immigrants' statements regarding their literacy were probably reasonably accurate as for the great majority literacy was not a prerequisite for employment or, except perhaps in the early years for males, for a passage.

The majority of the Irish assisted immigrants were basically literate. Among those over four 70% could read, a fact which certainly invalidated the general colonial assumption that the Irish lacked basic education. [Figure 4.28] Admittedly among English and Scots over four only 15% were illiterate compared with 30% of the Irish. Just how literate an immigrant was depended on when he or she arrived. Illiteracy among the Irish declined by 8% between 1848–51 and 1864–70 and the possibility of a recently arrived immigrant from Ireland being able to write increased from 43% to 59% [Figure 4.29] Interestingly both Irish and British immigrants showed a decline in literacy between the years 1848-51 and 1852-55. This may have been the result of the Commissioners ceasing to use any selection process based on literacy after the early 1850s. Passage application forms for 1848 and 1849 contained a question on literacy and local selecting agents were asked to check the accuracy of an applicant's response. This question was dropped from forms for passages under the Assisted Immigrant Act in 1854 and never appeared again on any form for applicants in the U.K. Those sponsored under the remittance regulations were never questioned regarding literacy except on arrival in the colony.

The degree of literacy among the Irish themselves varied greatly. Both sex and county of origin gave some indication of relative literacy. Overall males were 7% more literate than females although at county level the difference ranged from 12% in Donegal to 1% in favour of males in Down. In two counties—Kings and Kildare—males and

44 Ibid.
45 Instructions to Agents for the Selection of Emigrants, 1 June 1846, Section 5, in Despatch, Emigration Commissioners to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, Immigration, p.8, N.S.W. Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1848.
females were equally literate and in five counties—Armagh, Wicklow, Antrim Wexford and Dublin—females were actually more literate. [Figure 4.30 Females-19-20/25-26/29-31. Males-6/10-11/13/17/19-20] Again generally males and females from counties in the east and north were better educated than those from counties in the south and west. [Map 3] However there were a number of exceptions to this fairly broad categorisation; Waterford in the south-east had the highest male and the second highest female illiteracy rate. Similarly, while nearly half of the Mayo females were illiterate males from that county were only slightly less literate than emigrant males in general. [Figure 4.30] These county figures may also conceal wide differences in literacy between parishes. The emigrants from the parish of Clonoulty in central Tipperary were considerably better educated than those from Tullaghobegley in north-west Donegal. [Figure 4.31] Judging from these emigrants Clonoulty’s female population was well along the road to literacy while those in Tullaghobegley had barely begun.

Literacy was also closely linked to an immigrant’s religion. The Church of Ireland males and females had illiteracy rates considerably below those of the Catholics in each province and every county. [Figure 4.32] Indeed these Irish Anglicans were just as literate as immigrants from Great Britain. [Figure 4.28 and 4.32] Even among these Protestants there were regional differences; those from the southern provinces of Leinster, Munster and Connacht were more literate than those from Ulster and indeed more literate than the British immigrants. [Figure 4.28 and 4.32]. At the other end of the scale Catholic females recorded the highest illiteracy rates of all the emigrants. Although they were not the most illiterate over one in three of the women from the core emigrant counties of Clare, Tipperary, Cork, Limerick and Galway could neither read nor write. [Figure 4.32] The image of the ignorant, uneducated Irish immigrant probably found most of its substance in the comparatively illiterate state of hundreds of these Munster and Connacht Catholic females of the 1850s who obtained their first colonial employment in the homes of the middle and lower middle classes.

A final pointer to an immigrant’s literacy was occupation. O’Farrell’s contention, that the Irish agricultural labourers were far from illiterate, is borne out by the Sydney statistics. Among the two largest male occupational groups forming 78% of all male immigrants—the farm labourers and labourers—only 25% were illiterate. Indeed 63% could both read and write. [Figure 4.33] Irish skilled tradesmen, as one might expect, showed extremely low levels of illiteracy. [Figure 4.33] As with the men a woman’s ability to read and write was closely linked to her occupation. All the schoolmistresses and governesses could both read and write and only 10 of the 257 dressmakers were unable to read. [Figure 4.34] However, as has already been suggested, the colonial encounter with Irish illiteracy took place in middle class homes where the chances of
having to hire an illiterate Irish Catholic servant were greatest. The occupations of the
great majority of Irish immigrant women related to domestic service and over 50% of
these women, while able to read, could not write. Among the large numbers of farm
servants, house servants, domestic servants, general servants and the like almost one
woman in three was illiterate. [Figure 4.34]

How literate were the assisted Irish compared with the home population? Overall
illiteracy in Ireland declined by 14% between 1851 and 1871 by which year one third of
the population, 33%, were illiterate. The chances that a given individual was literate was
closely related to their age. In 1851 for example males generally were 9% more likely to
be illiterate than males aged between 16 and 25. Moreover during the twenty years of the
mid-19th century, the period of most intense emigration to N.S.W., there was a rapid
improvement in literacy throughout Ireland. Forty two per cent of the male and 50% of
the female 11 to 15 year olds were unable to read in 1841; by 1861 this had declined to
26% and 27% respectively. The N.S.W. emigrants emerged from from a country where
increasing numbers of children and young adults were achieving basic literacy.

In broad terms the emigrants were more literate than the Irish population. Males
emigrating between 1848 and 1855 were the group most in advance of the home
population. Over the 1850s the gap narrowed and by the 1860s Irish males were only 4%
less literate than the emigrants. Where the male emigrants were most clearly superior was
in their ability to write as well as read. [Figure 4.35] The difference between emigrant and
non-emigrant females was also fairly pronounced in the early 1850s. This showed itself
most strongly in the read only category. By the 1860s, although the female emigrants
were still slightly more literate than other Irish females, the differences between them, in
all categories, were now small. [Figure 4.35]

The majority of the emigrants however were young adults between 16 and 35 and
the great majority of them were even more tightly concentrated in the 16 to 25 age range.
In 1851 these age groups had the lowest illiteracy rates in Ireland although in 1861 they
were overtaken by the 11 to 15 year olds. These emigrant 16 to 35 year olds were more
literate than those of the same age in the home population at the 1861 census. [Figure
4.36 Ireland] This emigrant superiority was evident in all but four counties for males and
in all but eight counties for females. Both male and female emigrants from Ulster were
slightly less literate than the province in general. [Figure 4.36/starred cases] Most of these
cases can be explained by the abberant nature of the emigration from the counties
concerned. The number of Ulster illiterates was greatly increased by the large number of
Donegal emigrants who were selected by the Donegal Relief Committee in 1858, 1861,
1862 and 1864. Most of these people were from Tullaghobegley, one of the most illiterate
parishes in Ireland. [Figures 37 and 31] If Tullaghobegley is ignored then the Ulster
illiteracy rate for the 16-25 age group reverts to 14% for males and 18% for females. In Leinster and Connacht the figures for 16-25 year old females in Carlow, Westmeath, Queens County and Leitrim were heavily influenced by the relative illiteracy, compared with other female emigrants, of the workhouse orphans of 1848 to 1850. The orphans, all aged 16-19, made up just over 30% of all female emigrants from those counties. Except in these special cases the colonists of N.S.W. had few grounds for any assumption that to be Irish was to be illiterate.

The Occupations of the Irish Assisted Immigrants

Of all the various aspects of the assisted Irish their occupational structure was the most predictable. Eighty nine per cent of occupied males claimed to have worked in agriculture while 95% of the females stated they had been employed in some form of domestic service. [Figure 4.38.2] These were precisely the main occupational categories which qualified an emigrant for an assisted passage under the various regulations issued between 1847 and 1863. The Irish were a vital element in meeting colonial demand for agricultural and domestic labour; 53% of the male agricultural workers and 69% of the female domestics were recruited from Ireland. [Figure 4.38.1] To those colonists who depended on recently arrived labour it must at times have seemed as if an Irish employee was all they could ever obtain from the local immigration authorities. For rural labourers this was certainly true of the 1860s but less so in the 1850s when there were more Englishmen and Scotsmen than Irishmen available for hire. Irish women however dominated the market for domestic servants. Only between 1856 and 1858, when their share of female immigration fell to 40%, were Irish women less than 50% of all female domestic servants. [Figure 4.39]

These broad categories were themselves dominated by a handful of occupations. Just short of 90% of all the immigrants were encompassed by 20 job descriptions and five occupations—farm labourer, labourer, farm servant, house servant and general servant—accounted for 66%. [Figure 4.40] Of these 20 occupations only four were unrelated to rural labouring or household service. Despite this labouring and serving bias in the statistics the occupations of the assisted Irish as stated to the Immigration Board covered a wide range of skills. Numbers of Irish bakers, stonemasons, plasterers, carpenters and blacksmiths did manage to obtain an assisted passage to Sydney. In general these men could command high wages in the colony. Along with assisted teachers and policemen here was at least the nucleus of a skilled and reasonably educated leadership among the Irish working classes of N.S.W. [Figure 4.41] Irish women, with the exception of needlewomen and dressmakers, possessed few skills outside of domestic
and farm service. Indeed taken together dressmakers and needlewomen were the largest group of relatively skilled Irish workers to come to the colony. [Figure 4.41]

This occupational structure reflected the agricultural nature of mid-19th century Ireland. Only Dublin, with its service industries, and Belfast, with its linen factories and nascent shipyards, provided any contrast to the predominantly rural character of the Irish workplace. According to the Census of 1851 70% of Irish males were employed “Ministering to Food” as either producers, manufacturers or traders. Among the male emigrants 49.4% had an instantly recognisable rural labouring occupation but this increases to 85.6% if those calling themselves simply “labourers” are included. [Figure 4.41 Summary; Male/Food Producers; Miscellaneous/Labourer] The Census Commissioners placed “labourers” in a “miscellaneous” category and regarded them as distinct from those who laboured on the land. Irish males emigrating to Sydney from the mid-1850s, when the majority were colonial nominees, were more inclined to call themselves “labourer” rather than agricultural labourer. [Figure 4.42] The remittance regulations of 1857 opened the assisted passage to all members of the working classes, and rural labourers lost their previously preferred status under the old general regulations. Virtually all these Irish “labourers” of the post-1856 period came from rural parishes and their work experience, such as it was, would have differed little from “farm” or “agricultural” labourers. Apart from the census category “Ministering to Food” only that dealing with “Justice” accounted for a slightly disproportionate number of male emigrants. This was caused by the expansion of the colonial police in the 1850s and 1860s which relied heavily on emigrants from the Irish constabulary. [Figure 4.41 Justice]

It is more difficult to relate the occupations of women immigrants to the categories of the Irish census. Only 22.3% gave occupations such as farm servant which linked them clearly to their overwhelmingly rural origins. [Figure 4.41 and Food/Producers] Most women gave a number of occupations to the Sydney authorities for which there was no precise equivalent in the Irish census. For example there was no sign in the 1851 Tipperary census of a housemaid, housekeeper or cook yet 272 Tipperary housemaids, 118 Tipperary housekeepers and 30 Tipperary cooks made their appearance before the Immigration Board in Sydney between 1848 and 1870. For such women the Irish Census Commissioners had only one possible classification—“Servant (domestic)”. Allocating all the emigrant domestic service occupations to this classification produces the extraordinary situation where 72.4% of the Sydney arrivals appear to have been drawn

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46 Table of Occupations, all Ireland, General Report, 1851 Census of Ireland, pp.634-636, BPP, 1856, Vol 31.
from a census category covering only 30.4% of occupied women in Ireland in 1851. [Figure 4.41, Miscellaneous]

As Fitzpatrick argues these immigrant job descriptions were more an indication of a woman's hopes for the future than an accurate account of her previous employment history in Ireland.\(^{47}\) Their relative youth—29% were aged between 15 and 19—suggests that few of these girls had had any real experience of domestic service outside the family home. Many of them emigrated because of limited employment and marriage opportunities in rural Ireland. When they arrived at Sydney it was not surprising that they described themselves in the manner most likely to lead to a good position. In this context it is revealing to follow the use by Irish female immigrants of a job description which probably closely matched their Irish work experience, but was less acceptable to a middle class employer at Sydney—farm servant.

3,325 Irish female farm servants came to the colony between 1848 and 1870. Before 1858 the Immigration Agent hid this occupation away in his annual report under the general heading of "domestic servant". From 1858 onwards female occupations were described in more detail and 456 Irish farm servants, 31.6% of all Irish females in the Agent’s general domestic servant category, arrived in 1858 and 1859. [Figure 4.43] Over the next eight years the Irish farm servant gradually disappeared from the reports; from 1860 to 1863 14.3% so described themselves and they were a mere 3% of arrivals from 1864 to 1870. Over the same 13 years, 1858 to 1870, there was a corresponding leap in the proportion of those calling themselves housemaids and house servants from 46.6% to 85% of all domestic servants. [Figure 4.43] Clearly house servants were in demand, farm servants were not.

The extant emigrant occupational statistics for Ireland also suggest that N.S.W. assisted females adapted their job descriptions to suit colonial requirements. Irish domestic servants with secure employment were as disinclined to emigrate as servants in England; only 13.5% of all 1851–1855 Irish female emigrants were domestic servants. This was significantly less than their 30.4% share of all occupied females in Ireland in 1851. [Figure 4.44 Cols 5-6] Farm servants were much more emigration prone; although only 20.3% of all occupied females they formed 79.4% of the emigrants. [Figure 4.44 Cols 5-6] The reality of the Irish female labour market was that many young women had no specific year round employment and this was evident in the 47% of female emigrants over 15 who provided the port authorities with no occupation. It is unlikely that the Sydney Irish departed from this national pattern to the extent that only 23.3% were farm

servants and 72.5% domestics. The assisted passage required that they should be mainly domestic servants and that was how they described themselves to the Immigration Board. But like many young Irish women of the 1850s they were undoubtedly emigrating from a small farm rural environment in search of their first full time, paid situation.

Was there such an individual as the “typical” Irish assisted immigrant? Bernard Bailyn has written of the problems created for the student of immigration once his subjects—the immigrants—stop being gross statistics and can suddenly be viewed up close:

At first we view things from afar, and find clear and gross configurations ... Then we learn more and more; and at special times and by special developments ... we suddenly come up close ... and see a world in detail that is very different from what we imagined from afar.  

Looking at the Sydney assisted immigrants through the detailed medium of the Immigration Board’s lists makes the observer aware of innumerable small Irish worlds in motion—individuals, families and groups caught at the moment of transition between home and the colony. From the mass of detail collected about them new “clear and gross configurations” can be created which move us further away from any simple concept of the “typical” immigrant. Undoubtedly all of them were united by a common origin—mid-19th century Ireland—but they also reflected the diversity of that society. There is no one phrase to sum up a body of people who contained within their number literate Catholic carpenters from Dublin, young Presbyterian orphans from a Belfast workhouse and Anglican farming families from Kings County. To come up close to the shipping records is to see a picture of this emigration in which certain dominant strands—the movement of labourers and young, underemployed women from Clare and Tipperary—are offset by smaller themes—literate Anglicans from the southern provinces or skilled tradesmen from all over Ireland.

This account has concentrated on providing a basic description of the characteristics of mid-century Irish emigrants to N.S.W. But new questions have emerged which will require more detailed examination: the origin of the intense regionality of the N.S.W. emigration within counties and parishes, the quality of emigrant literacy, the significance for colonial religious practice of the importation of large numbers of Munster Catholics and Ulster Anglicans, the response of Ulster families to the Assisted Immigrant Act and so on. However these new “gross configurations” do provide a profile of a distinctive body of immigrants who, given their numbers, were to form the demographic and cultural base of the Irish community in N.S.W. in the second half of the 19th century.

Chapter 5

"I Met With Adam Chidle": Emigration from Clonoult, County Tipperary to New South Wales 1848-1870

On the 28 August 1857 Edward Browne of Hurdle Flat, Beechworth wrote a letter to his brother Patrick Browne living on the Browne family farm in the townland of Clonoult, parish of Clonoult, County Tipperary. If, recently arrived in the colony, he felt any homesickness it was not a sentiment he conveyed to Pat; it would indeed have been surprising had he done so, for, as walked through the Flat, he saw many familiar faces:

I met with Adam Chidle Patrick Callon Thomas Kearny Edmond Reilly and two of his Brothers all in good health and Phillip Murphy he has a citation in Beechworth.

Nearly a third of his letter contained information about Clonoult people who had made the long trip to Australia before him. As Edward knew, he was writing for an audience beyond his own immediate family, an audience thirsty for the latest news of their emigrant sons and daughters, brothers and sisters. Within six weeks of his arrival in the colony he could tell Mrs Murphy of Ballagh that he had met her three brothers, Thomas, William and Michael, all of whom were doing well, that the Finn family were living near Sydney at a place called "Cabbetown", that Widow Kennedy could set her mind at ease about her two sons, both of whom were "here in good health and doing well" and much more. From Edward anxious families in Clonoult would learn something about 30 of their relatives, a figure which suggests that a firm emigrant pathway existed between this Tipperary parish and Australia.

Of all the parishes of 19th century Ireland it is the possible link between Clonoult, County Tipperary and Australia that has surfaced in the historical literature [Map 5.1]. It is a link however, not with the transient camps of the Victorian goldfields, but with the pastoral district surrounding the small town of Boorowa in New South Wales, 200 miles south-west of Sydney. Waldersse has shown the particularly strong Irish Catholic element after 1820 in the expanding population of the south-west stretching from Campbelltown down the Port Phillip road and out into the squatting districts of the

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1 Edward Browne, Hurdle Flat, to Patrick Browne, Clonoult, County Tipperary, 28 August 1857, Browne letters, Father Brien Maher, Bungendore, N.S.W.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.
Lachlan and the Riverina. In describing this movement he was struck by the “transfer of souls from Clonoult, County Tipperary to the banks of the Boorowa River”, a process he saw as having its origin in the success experienced by ex-convict Edward “Ned” Ryan in establishing a squatting empire reputedly as big as Ireland itself. Transported from Clonoult, together with his cousin Roger Corcoran in 1816, he encouraged kith and kin to join him at Galong near Boorowa. Eventually the area became, in the words of that staunch opponent of Irish Catholic immigration to New South Wales, Reverend John Dunmore Lang, “a paradise of the Ryans”.

The graveyard at Galong is full of Ned’s Ryan relatives referred to for identification as “Finn” Ryans, “Barry” Ryans and “Nagle” Ryans. These people were, according to Walderssee, of a “rather higher order than the ignorant labouring classes”. O’Farrell, on the other hand, describes much of this Irish settlement in the area as characterised by Ned Ryan’s “patriarchal persuasion of many labourers from Tipperary to join him”. Tipperary was a most important source of assisted emigrants to New South Wales but how significant was the parish of Clonoult in this movement? Given these contrasting impressions of the social origins of Clonoult emigrants arriving in New South Wales, what sort of people were leaving there for Sydney between 1848 and 1870? Why indeed were they leaving the parish at all during those years?

The Significance of Clonoult as a N.S.W. Emigrant Parish

The Immigration Board’s lists record the arrival of approximately 434 emigrants from the Roman Catholic parish of Clonoult in Sydney between 1848 and 1870. Thus 5.9% of the 7,255 County Tipperary assisted immigrants during this period where from there.

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6 Rev. John Dunmore Lang, quoted by Walderssee, op.cit., p.120.
8 Walderssee, op.cit., p.178.
10 Immigration Board’s Lists, Sydney, 1848–1870, hereafter IBL/NSW, 4/904–4/4995, and Agent’s Lists, 1860–1862, 4/4796, Archives Office of N.S.W., hereafter AONSW. The total immigrant figure for County Tipperary is from the Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870. Not all the Clonoult immigrants gave the name of the parish to the Board on arrival. Some gave townland names, some older names for the parish such as Rossmore. Between 1860 and 1862 inclusive the Board’s Lists are missing but the Agent’s lists survive. From these lists and the records of the remittance scheme for those three years it has been possible to find the Clonoult immigrants who arrived at that time. However the figure of 434 is, at the time of writing, a good estimate. There are probably a few more Clonoult arrivals between 1848 and 1870 on the lists who have so far escaped detection.
This figure represents the greatest intensity of emigration from any region of Tipperary featured on the Board’s lists, a proposition sustained by a consideration of the distribution of Tipperary emigrants within the county. From the places of origin on the lists 4,756 (65.5%) emigrants have so far been definitely identified with one of the county’s 12 baronial divisions. Much greater research time, such as that devoted to identifying the Clonoulti emigrants, would allow for most Tipperary emigrants to be placed within their barony and parish. The result would be a more accurate picture of the distribution of the emigrants within the county. But even the outline of emigrant distribution based on the 65.5% so far allocated to a barony reveals marked variations in the regional intensity of emigration to New South Wales. [Figure 5.1]

Emigration to Sydney was weakest in the south and east of the county. [Map 5.2] The baronies of Slievardagh in the east and Iffa and Offa East and Iffa and Offa West in the south, with just under 30% of Tipperary’s 1851 population contributed between them only 7.2% of the Sydney emigrants. [Figure 5.1] Moving north-west from this region into Middlethird the attraction of the colony increased. However the centre of the Australian emigration was in the heart of the county: in Eliogarty in the central north, Clanwilliam in the centre and Owney and Arra in the central west. But the barony with the highest emigration rate of all was the central barony of Kilnamanagh Lower. This barony, containing just 2.8% of Tipperary’s 1851 population, contributed 6.0% of the Sydney emigrants. What stands out is Kilnamanagh’s N.S.W. emigration rate — 37.8 per thousand, almost ten points higher than its nearest rival, Owney and Arra. Forty five percent of the area of this barony was taken up by the Roman Catholic Parish of Clonoulti and all of the 434 emigrants so far positively identified as coming from that barony came from Clonoulti.

The strength of this Clonoulti/Australian link is more evident when compared with two other Tipperary parishes which sent large numbers of emigrants to Sydney — Thurles in Eliogarty and Tipperary in Clanwilliam. At the centre of both of these was the town of the same name although the parish, in each case, extended out into the surrounding rural area. So far 363 N.S.W. emigrants have been identified as coming from Tipperary parish and 359 from Thurles, accounting for approximately 10% of the N.S.W. total.11 These parishes had a significant share of the N.S.W. emigration and in any general account of that movement would require investigation. However Clonoulti’s pre-eminence as an Australian parish is clear from this three parish comparison; its N.S.W. emigration rate was 143% greater than Thurles’ and 206% greater than Tipperary’s. Put another way, allowing for those who left before Census night in 1851,

11 Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.
one in every 11 people living in the parish in 1851 sailed through Sydney Heads during the next 18 years as assisted immigrants. All told they accounted for 30% of the parish’s population decline between 1851 and 1871, an astonishing figure when it is remembered that these were the years of the Victorian “gold rush” and that other colonies, such as South Australia, were also importing large numbers of Irish assisted immigrants, many of them from Tipperary. It is inconceivable that Clonoultys did not send a share to these sister colonies.

In laboriously statistical terms, this only proves what Edward Browne already knew when he wrote home from the “diggings” in 1857. Residents of Clonoultys waited as eagerly for letters from Beechworth and Bendigo as from Boston and Baltimore.

Clonoultys: The Years of Decline, 1841–1871

Until fairly recently students of Irish 19th century emigration have tended to take a nationwide view of that process, concentrating their analysis on the millions or hundreds of thousands and attempting to grasp the outlines of the phenomenon as a whole. Consequently much is known about the general context of the movement as it developed before, during and after the “Great Famine” of 1845 to 1849: how many were leaving, from what parts of Ireland, from what sort of socio-economic background, their general destinations and something of their fate at journey’s end. The emigrants themselves however, apart from those few chosen to exemplify a pattern or illustrate a trend, often remain so many statistical abstractions. Irish men, women and families made their decision to leave not in the context of Ireland, or Munster or indeed Tipperary but as residents of small rural environments such as parishes and townlands. Those impersonal socio-economic forces making for emigration and change in 19th century Ireland may now be visible to historians as national and international forces but they were felt and acted upon at the time by individuals at a local level. Before trying to describe who the

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12 Anne Stock, “Assisted Migration during the Fifties, with Special Reference to Victoria”, B.A.Hons Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1958, Table 5, Native Places of Assisted Immigrants. Of the 20,570 Irish who arrived in Victoria as assisted immigrants between 1850 and 1856 20%, 4,179, were from Tipperary. I am grateful to Dr David Fitzpatrick, Trinity College, Dublin, for this reference.

13 There is no general bibliographical source for works on Irish emigration/immigration but see the footnotes and bibliography to Kerby A. Miller, Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus, New York, 1985. One recent study which breaks this mould is Bruce Elliott, Irish Migrants in the Canadas — A New Approach, Belfast, 1988. Elliott has studied in detail the emigration and subsequent internal migration of 775 protestant families from north Tipperary to lower Canada between 1816 and the immediate post Famine period. In his foreword to Elliott’s work Professor D. Akenson says of Irish emigration/immigration studies to North America: “What is surprising is that almost all of the historical literature, both as pertains to Canada and the United States, is devoted to discussing emigration from the old World and immigration into the New as an abstract process or an aggregate phenomenon”.

Clonoulty emigrants were we need to know what was happening in the world they inhabited — the parish of Clonoulty.

To those in Clonoulty who lived through the 50 years bounded by the Census of 1821 and 1871 the most striking aspect of the parish's experience would have been the rise and decline of its population. [Figure 5.3] Surprisingly it failed to share the county and national growth rate of the 1820s only to experience, in the 1830s, a rate almost twice the national average and three percentage points above that of the county. 1841 marked its demographic apogee, with an officially recorded population of 6,932, although this figure probably increased up to the first years of Famine in 1845 and 1846. That catastrophe bit deeply as by 1851 over one-third of Clonoulty's 1841 population had disappeared compared with a quarter for the county and a fifth nationally. The 1850s and 1860s were decades of further decline until by 1871 the parish contained only 46% of its 1841 population. The rate at which this had occurred since 1851 now fell below that for Tipperary although both parish and county lost almost twice the national average. [Figure 5.3] Other changes, gradual before the Famine and fairly sudden both during and after it, accompanied this loss of population and an appropriate place to begin a description of these is the year 1841.

Nolan places Clonoulty in the mid-range of Tipperary population density at 30 to 39 people per 100 acres in 1841. [Figure 5.4] Individual townlands within the parish recorded much higher densities. Clonoulty was divided into 54 townlands ranging in size from Glenough Lower's 2,354 acres of mostly mountain to the 46 acres of Westonslot and for easier analysis and description these townlands have been arranged into six groups based on a townland's population loss over the 30 years between 1841 and 1871. Group One, containing five townlands, actually gained population while all the rest suffered losses of from seven to 100%. [Figure 5.5] In Clonoulty therefore there was a close relationship between population density and subsequent decline; both Groups Five and Six recorded losses of between 61% and 100% and densities well above the parish average. However this vantage point still only provides the general outline of population density and loss; a finer focus reveals a more complex pattern.

To enter the parish in 1841 at the townland of Lisbook was to encounter 125 people on 80 acres, a density of 156 per 100 acres. This was the highest in the parish and as high as any in the county. [Figure 5.6 No.33] Moving west from Lisbook through the adjacent townlands of Gatterstown, Woodford, Piercetown, to the combined townlands of Ballagh/Kilmore, a distance of barely two and a half miles, density figures

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were 7, 6, 52 and 129 respectively. [Figure 5.6 Nos.54/45/35] Eleven townlands scattered throughout Clonoulty had densities of 60, placing them in Nolan’s top population density band for Tipperary as a whole. [Figure 5.6 Nos.18/29/31-33/35/38-39/42/46/48 and Figure 4] In fact living in these townlands was 28% of Clonoulty’s population, 1,954 people, concentrated into 12% of its land space, a density of 84 people per 100 acres.

As famine followed by emigration produced the 54% population loss suffered by the parish after 1845, the intensity of this decline varied between the townland groups. [Figure 5.7] In Clonoulty, as in the county and the country, the Famine years before the Census of April 1851 witnessed the bulk of this loss; within five and a half years 2,409 people, 35% of the 1841 population, an average of 438 per year had vanished. Over the next 20 years this rate fell from an average of 91 per year in the 1850s to 40 per year in the 1860s. Again attention is arrested by Group Five which sustained the same high loss rate both during and after the catastrophe. Group Six townlands also experienced a staggering 84% Famine loss but this fell away to a comparatively low 19% thereafter. By 1851 the total numbers in Group Six were small and the more moderate loss of the 1850s and 1860s suggests that in these townlands a fairly sustainable population level had been achieved after the enormous impact of the Famine itself.

If focus is shifted to individual townlands then a quite bewildering set of figures appears, many of them defying easy explanation. [Figure 5.8] Coolanga Upper, for example, showed an astonishing capacity to grow by 112% during the Famine decade only to equal the average parish figure of a 29% decline from 1851 to 1871. [Figure 5.8 No.1] Once again the numbers were small and peculiar local factors must have operated to produce such a divergent statistic. More predictably, most of the townlands with population densities in excess of 60 per 100 acres had population loss rates higher, often considerably higher, than the parish average. [Figure 5.8 Nos.29/32-33/35/38/42/45] Clonoulty Churchquarter, on the other hand, despite its high population density, was comparatively lightly affected by the Famine and shed population at a moderate rate thereafter. [Figure 5.8 No.18] The case of Lisbook was quite peculiar. [Figure 5.8 No.33] Here was the parish’s highest population density yet over the Famine decade its population grew by 2%. Lisbook’s large population loss occurred in the subsequent two decades. Even in Group Five, all of whose townlands sustained massive loss over the 1841–1871 period, the intervening years saw some strange swings in population; Knockaderry initially increased by 27% only to fall by 66% overall, while Corbally shed virtually its whole population during the Famine. [Figure 5.8 Nos.37-38] A full explanation of Clonoulty’s population history during this period of crisis and change is well outside the scope of this study but it is important to present these figures as the
complex micro demographic pattern from which the N.S.W. emigrants emerged and in which, as will be seen, it is possible to locate some of them as individuals.

Population statistics are only indicators of crisis and decline; they do not reveal what sort of community was being affected and in what ways. The people of pre-Famine Clonoulty would have been less concerned with such abstractions as population densities than with clothing, feeding, and housing themselves and to achieve this required access to resources notably land, houses and employment. By these indicators in the mid-1840s most of Clonoulty’s people were living in comparative poverty.

As the Census Commissioners of 1851 argued, “The houses of a country are an index to the condition of its inhabitants”. 15 By their standards conditions for just under half of Clonoulty’s 1841 population were grim; they classified 45% of the houses in the civil parishes of Clonoulty and Clogher in the lowest class, Class 4, “mud cabins having only one room”. 16 [Figure 5.9] The inhabitants of these could be called the extreme poor. Looking at Tipperary as a whole Jones Hughes uses a wider definition of poverty; those living in houses valued by the Griffith valuers at under £1 he classifies as the “poor”. 17 [Figure 5.10] Using this definition almost two thirds of the people of Clonoulty were “poor”. Clonoulty, and especially the Clogher portion of the parish, had over 65% of all its houses valued at under £1. Applying Jones Hughes’ scheme to our townland groups reveals the relative concentrations of the “Houses of the Poor” within the parish. [Figure 5.11] Although no part of Clonoulty had less than 55% of its houses in the poverty category once again the notable concentrations are observable in the higher population loss Groups — Four, Five and Six.

It is the changes, both absolute and relative, between the Census house classifications for 1841, 1851 and 1861 that indicate clearly which sections of the community were most affected by the Famine and subsequent emigration. In 1841 virtually half of Clonoulty’s people lived in a Class 4 house. Between 1841 and 1861 the Class 4 houses, and their inhabitants, melted away; 71% vanished during the Famine and by by 1861 there were but 71 of them left, 14% of the housing stock of the parish. [Figure 5.9] But these figures also show that, while the Famine devastated the Class 4 house dwellers, the 1850s saw a marked decline in the numbers of Class 3 houses, — “a better description of cottage, still built of mud, but varying from two to four rooms and windows”. 18 After the Famine people from these less poverty stricken surroundings were

16 Ibid.
18 Census of Ireland, 1851, General Report, op.cit., p.23.
showing a greater willingness to leave. The housing figures however, throw no light on emigration from the wealthier sections of Clonoulty. The number of Class 2 houses increased both absolutely and relatively between 1841 and 1861.

If decent housing was a rarity in pre-Famine Clonoulty access to land was also a difficulty. The problems facing a growing rural population in gaining access to land in pre-Famine Ireland have received much attention from historians, particularly the agrarian violence attendant upon the struggle for land by the poor. In much of Ireland between 1820 and 1845 this struggle was exacerbated by two simultaneous processes; the desire of many landowners to make their estates profitable by rescuing them from leaseholding middlemen and to consolidate smallholdings into viable economic units, and that of the leasehold farmers to respond to dramatic changes in agricultural prices which, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars had favoured cattle and sheep raising rather than labour intensive tillage. What the landlord wanted was an estate parcellled out in economically sized farms, whose lessees would be capable of sustaining a regular and substantial rent. To pay this rent farmers naturally wanted to take advantage of those markets in which they could make the greatest returns and this suggested a switch from crops to grazing. Consequently they increasingly restricted the amount of land sublet to the poorer sections of the community for mere subsistence farming. What were the results of these processes in Clonoulty?

Clonoulty’s landholding structure, as it evolved in the 1830s and 1840s, can be seen in the Griffith Valuation of 1848. For the majority of parishes in Ireland this valuation, which named by townland every lessor of land down to the level of small rateable garden plots under one acre, was conducted and printed in the 1850s and 1860s. The valuation commenced in Tipperary in early 1846. The valuers began their work in Clonoulty in the spring of 1848 and were finished by 23 October. They would have been aware, given the sights which surrounded them in Famine ridden Tipperary, that they were valuing a society about to collapse. Clonoulty’s collapse occurred somewhere

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20 For a full analysis of these processes at work in pre-Famine County Cork see J.S. Donnelly Inr., *The Land and people of Nineteenth Century Cork*, Dublin, 1975, Chapter 1, “The Rural Economy”, pp.9-72.


22 *Valuation of Tenements* [Griffith’s Valuation], Union of Cashel: Parish of Clonoulty, pp.20-37, Parish of Clogher, pp.9-21, Dublin, 1850, hereafter Griffith/Clonoulty 1848 or Griffith/Clogher 1848.
between the valuation of spring and summer 1848 and Census night 1851. In 1848 the valuers recorded the existence of 914 houses; in 1851 the Census enumerators found 668, a 27% drop in just under three years. One house must have evoked the valuers’ pity, that of James Fogarty in Ballagh townland, valued at 3/- in a parish where 27% of the houses were in the lowest valuation category of 5/-. The valuation revealed that smallholders were the largest group among the Clonoulty tenantry. [Figure 5.12] While the parish mean farm size was 23 acres the median was a mere 10 acres; in other words the parish was a stronghold of “cottier” farmers and, further down the economic scale, of landless labourers and “conacre” men. In Ireland generally MacDonagh defines these cottiers as “penniless entrepreneurs” who rented small farms on a yearly basis from the larger farmers hoping to make enough from the sale of their crop to pay the rent. In central Tipperary in the mid-1830s a cottier was anyone holding from five to ten acres. This distinguished them from those at the very bottom of the social heap — “a labourer, who holds less or no land”. Tipperary witnesses to the 1836 Royal Commission on the Condition of the Poorer Classes in Ireland testified to the strong desire on the part of labourers and landless men to become “cottiers”. The most “cottiered” parts of Clonoulty were the townlands of Groups Four, Five and Six where the median holding size was six, seven and six acres respectively. Moreover these were the Groups with the highest 1841–1871 depopulation rates and where 69% of Clonoulty’s people lived.

At individual townland level a grimmer pattern was evident [Figure 5.13] Thirteen townlands possessed a median holding size of 4 acres or below; in three of these the median was one acre and in two less than one. [Figure 5.13 Nos.4/7-8/18/22/24/30/33/35-38/52] Some of these townlands, such as Fana, were small and had few holdings. [Figure 5.13 No. 4] Of all the townlands in Clonoulty Cappamurragh, with only five holdings, displayed the greatest divergence between mean and median farm

23 Returns relating to the Field Valuation in the County of Tipperary, BPP, 1851, Vol.50, pp.920-921. This return shows that the valuers began their work in Clonoulty in spring 1848 and finished in autumn of the same year.

24 Griffith/Clonoulty 1848, p.23.


28 Ibid.
size, 77 acres to less than one acre. All the smallholders here were landless labourers renting small plots from the head landlord and local magistrate, John Greene.\textsuperscript{29} Greene farmed 258 acres of Cappaghmurragh himself and had a house valued at £24, a valuation surpassed by only one other house in Clonoulty, that of Edmund Murphy of Ballymore.\textsuperscript{30} The "gentry" status of both these men was acknowledged by the valuers; in the printed valuation the abbreviation "Esq" was appended to each of their names.\textsuperscript{31} Greene's tenants may have been moderately lucky: their presence in this townland in close proximity to his farm suggests they may have been his permanent labour force. No such relationship existed in the townlands of Ballagh and Kilmore enclosing the parish's only "official" town — Ballagh. Here the landlord, the absentee Colonel Alexander Percival, while retaining direct control of his property, had nonetheless permitted over two-thirds of these townlands to be rented out to cottiers and conacre labourers.\textsuperscript{32} The result was a mean holding size of eight acres and a median of one. [Figure 5.13 No.35]

One part of the parish where small tenants had been experiencing the policies of a landlord determined to construct viable economic holdings since the mid-1820s was the Hawarden estate. The estate was run from Dundrum House, one of the largest "gentry" seats in Tipperary, in neighbouring Knockavilla parish.\textsuperscript{33} In Clonoulty the Hawarden lands, 6,121 acres, accounted for 31% of the parish. Viscount Hawarden, an absentee before the Famine, took an active interest in his Tipperary property and in 1822 appointed as his agent at Dundrum, John Stewart, desparately referred to locally as the "Scotchman".\textsuperscript{34} Judging by his subsequent actions, he had instructions to reform the estate. Stewart set out to divest those portions of the property, which the tenants held directly from Hawarden, of their cottiers and landless labourers. Where middlemen held a lease over a townland, as in the case of Clone, he simply bided his time till the lease fell vacant and then incorporated the lands under direct estate control.\textsuperscript{35} [Figure 5.13 No.50] When Clone fell into his hands in July 1843 the existing tenants were promptly evicted,

\begin{enumerate}
\item\textsuperscript{29} Griffith/Clonoulty 1848, p.25.
\item\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., p.24.
\item\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pp.23-24 and 34-35.
\item\textsuperscript{33} Nolan, "Patterns of Living ...", in Nolan (ed), op.cit., p.319. At £88 Dundrum House had the second highest valuation of any "big house" in Tipperary. Its demense estate was the largest in the county.
\item\textsuperscript{34} Evidence of Father John Mackey, Parish Priest of Clonoulty, Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect of the Occupation of Land in Ireland, known as the Devon Commission, hereafter Devon Commission, Part 3, p.287, BPP, 1845, Vol.21.
\item\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., Evidence of Father Mackey.
\end{enumerate}
an event which explains its 100% population loss between 1841 and 1851.\textsuperscript{36} [Figure 5.8. No.50] When questioned by the Devon Commission in 1844, Stewart defended his management practices against the accusation that the estate was heartlessly clearing its tenants. He produced lists to show that every tenant, who had been obliged to quit his or her holding since 1822, had been fully compensated for this; in reality what the lists showed was the fairly constant pressure which the poor of the estate must have felt themselves under to leave.\textsuperscript{37}

One measure of Stewart’s success before the Famine was the difference between landholding size and house values on the estate compared with the rest of the parish. [Figure 5.14] While the cottiers continued to hold their own, those renting less than five acres and living in the lowest house category, those valued at 5/- or less, were losing out under Stewart’s management. By 1848 there were proportionately far more medium sized tenancies of 15 acres or greater on the estate than in the rest of the parish. [Figure 5.14] Stewart’s success in reducing the numbers of smallholders was also evident from the closer relationship between the estate’s mean and median landholding size — 27 acres to 23 acres — than the parish’s 23 to 10. [Figure 5.15] Although in 1848 many smallholders were still on his rent books, particularly in the townlands of Drum, Gortnagranna, Srahavarela, and Gorteenamona, they were fighting a losing battle for survival on the Hawarden Estate. [Figure 5.15 No.9-10/12/14]

This struggle for land among the landless labourers was common throughout pre-Famine Ireland. These men depended on obtaining two necessities to keep themselves and their families alive year by year; conacre and casual agricultural employment. The point at which a man slipped from the ranks of the cottiers into this underclass is difficult to determine; in the neighbouring Barony of Middlethird those renting less than five acres per year were not considered cottiers.\textsuperscript{38} Rather they rented a small piece of ground or conacre from a farmer, who often manured and prepared the ground.\textsuperscript{39} The resultant crop, tended by the conacre labourer, was often held against the rent and these tenants gambled on being able to obtain work for wages to meet their families’ needs.\textsuperscript{40} In Clonoult in 1836 the Parish Priest, Father Maloney, reported that 600 men were in this

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., Evidence of John Stewart, pp.833-836.
\textsuperscript{38} Poor Law Enquiry, Appendix D, evidence of Mr Scully, p.81, BPP, 1836, Vol.31.
\textsuperscript{39} Poor Law Enquiry, Appendix F, Con-acre/Quarter or Score Ground, p.27, BPP, 1836, Vol.33.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
category of conacre labourer, the land sometimes being given to them in lieu of wages. Of these 600 only 260 could find permanent year-round work and, given the rapid population increase which Maloney observed to be occurring throughout the parish, he foresaw only increasing distress for such parishioners. By 1844 however, the Parish Priest, Father Mackey, felt the labourers’ situation was becoming even more desperate as local farmers showed a “disposition to turn every acre of land that is fit for grazing into grass”. This, Mackey asserted, was being done on the “saving principle”, the farmer’s desire to save money on labour costs, a saving which could only result in further restriction of employment in an already well over-supplied labour market. About to experience five years of famine cottiers, labourers and, to a lesser extent, small farmers looked back on three decades of decreasing opportunity for their way of life in Clonoulty.

As the Famine passed so to did a rural Ireland dominated numerically by cottiers, labourers and their dependants. Clonoulty mirrored the trend. Where at the 1848 valuation, 61% of its holdings, had been less than 15 acres, the first valuation revision in the late-1850s revealed a statistical somersault in relation to landholding structure. Sixty four per cent of holdings were now over 15 acres. [Figure 5.16] The under five acre holdings, the plots of the conacre labourers, showed a marked decline. Right across the parish many landlords took the opportunity created by death and emigration to reform their properties, a process exemplified by the changes in Clonyross (Percival). [Figure 5.6 No.46] Before the Famine this townland’s 446 acres had been in the hands of a middleman, who continued in possession until some time in the late-1850s. Under his management 37 separate holdings had been allowed, 26 of them under 15 acres. The Famine took its toll with 92 of its 270 people and eight of its 38 houses disappearing. But more radical change came when the lease fell vacant and the landlord, Colonel

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41 Supplement to Appendix D, parish questionnaire, Parish of Clonoulty and Clogher, question 24, Father Maloney, p.242, BPP, 1836, Vol.33.

42 Ibid.

43 Evidence of Father Mackey, Devon Commission, op.cit., p.285.

44 Ibid.

45 Manuscript valuation revisions, c.1859, hereafter Revision/Clonoulty 1859 or Revision/Clogher 1859, Civil Parishes of Clonoulty, Clogher and Holycross, 1859, Land Valuation Office, Ely Place, Dublin. 1858 figures for Tipperary and Ireland from Agricultural Statistics for the Year 1858, all Ireland, p.40 (Roman numerals), Tipperary South Riding, PP.61/62, BPP, 1860, Vol.66.

46 Griffith/Clogher 1848, p.12 shows John Vincent as the immediate lessor in Clonyross (Percival). Revision/Clogher 1859, p.6-8, shows the townland in the hands of Philip Percival.

47 All population and housing figures for Clonoulty 1841 to 1871 are from Census of Ireland, 1871, BPP, 1873, Vol.72, County of Tipperary, Parish of Clonoulty, pp.752-753, Parish of Clogher, p.752, Parish of Holycross, p.697, hereafter Tipperary/Census 1871. This census published retrospective tables by townland and parish back to 1841.
Percival regained control.\textsuperscript{48} However it came about, either by landlord persuasion or personal decision to leave, Percival managed to reduce the number of holdings to 13, only two of which were under 15 acres and the majority over 30.\textsuperscript{49} Where in 1851 there had been 30 houses and 178 people, by 1861 there were only 11 houses and 80 people.\textsuperscript{50}

On the Hawarden Estate starvation and want accelerated the process of clearance and consolidation pursued by Stewart. During the Famine the rest of the parish lost 26\% of its people and 24\% of its houses; the estate’s rate of decline was a third as much again in each case. [Figure 5.17] MacDonagh’s analysis of the Famine emigration suggests that in general during the years of actual crop failure, 1845 to 1848, the very poorest sections of Irish society, lacking the means to leave, starved at home.\textsuperscript{51} On the estate however cash compensation for quitting a holding was a well established policy and this may have made all the difference in allowing its pauper tenants to head for the emigrant boat. In 1848 Gorteenamona remained a stronghold of cottiers and conacre labourers; by 1859 its 35 holdings had been reduced to 6 and its mean holding size increased from six to 39 acres. [Figure 5.15 No.14] The first three years of famine must have produced great hardship among the smallholders of Gorteenamona but the failure of the 1848 potato crop may have caused them to feel that enough was enough. Perhaps at this point they became willing to accept any compensation on offer from Stewart for “going away” and headed for the ports. No evidence exists to suggest that this is indeed what happened but where the Griffith valuers had rated 30 houses in the summer of 1848 the Census enumerators recorded 10 in April 1851.\textsuperscript{52}

Perhaps the best way to grasp the full extent of the changes which had swept, and continued to sweep, across this Tipperary parish over the 20 years from 1841, is to traverse, from the vantage point of the 1861 Census, those same townlands with which this survey began — Lisbook, Woodford, Gatterstown, Piercetown and Ballagh/Kilmore.

By 1861 Lisbook had lost 33\% of its 1841 population, a comparatively low figure for what had been the parish’s most densely peopled townland in 1841. Just as surprisingly, between the valuation of 1848 and the revaluation of the late-1850s, its mean holding size remained at two acres while the mean housing value actually fell from

\textsuperscript{48} Revision/Clogher 1859, pp.6-8.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Tipperary/Census 1871.
\textsuperscript{51} MacDonagh, \textit{op.cit.}, p.423.
\textsuperscript{52} Griffith/Clonoulty 1848, pp.33-34; Tipperary/Census 1871.
14/- to 9/-. However those same problems which had existed for the conacre men of the pre-Famine years did not lessen in the 1850s and somewhere between the revaluation and the 1861 Census Lisbook lost five of its 19 houses. By 1871 it had declined to the point where it almost qualified for inclusion in townland Group Five, having lost 59% of its population from 1841 to 187. By 1861 it was in the middle of an emigration whose intensity was exclusively post Famine.

Woodford and Gatterstown had changed little as both townlands had been, and remained, under the control of Edmund Murphy "Esq" of Woodford House. Murphy rarely let to cottier or conacre tenants, and between 1848 and 1859 the only poor occupiers on these lands, cottier Patrick Keefe and the Widow Ryall, disappeared from the valuation records. In 1861 within the boundaries of the 358 acres of these townlands were 13 people and two houses — Murphy's "gentleman's seat" in Woodford and a small farmhouse on his lands of Gatterstown where he had installed a caretaker tenant. By 1871 even this family had gone and between Lisbook and Piercetown, apart from Murphy's house was uninhabited farmland.

Piercetown, Ballagh and Kilmore were all in the estate of Colonel Percival and together comprised 818 acres. Here had been one of the largest concentrations of the parish's pre-Famine population, a density of 813 people per 100 acres, and an area where the "poor" of Clonoulty had been able to obtain small plots of land and build a house. Many of these houses had been in Clonoulty's only "town", Ballagh. Between 1821 and 1841 Ballagh met the criteria of the Census Commissioners for classification as a "town": less flatteringly Nolan calls it a "transit cluster". Nolan has identified nine such clusters in pre-Famine Tipperary associated with "turnpikes, crossroads or similar central locations". Ballagh had been a magnet for the landless of Clonoulty as few holdings in the surrounding townlands can be traced for the occupiers of its 56 houses in 1848. Famine clearance was heavy in these townlands as 40% of their 1841 population of 850 had vanished by 1851, a process which continued to 1861 by which year a further 15% had gone. The 1859 revaluation showed that most of the area’s conacre and cottier holdings had been consolidated into larger farms and at its centre was an appropriate

53 Revision/Clogher 1858, pp.13 and 28.
54 Griffith/Clogher 1848, p.14.
55 Tipperary/Census 1871; Revision/Clogher 1859, p.13.
57 Ibid.
58 Tipperary/Census 1871.
monument to a devastated population — the ruins of Ballagh “town”. In 1851 the Census Commissioners declared;

The town of Ballagh does not now contain 20 houses; its present population has therefore merged in that of the townlands of Ballagh and Kilmore, in which it is situated.59

By 1861 Ballagh and the parish were well into those two post-Famine decades which saw one in 11 of their 1851 population take the “assisted passage” for Sydney. Where had they come from in the parish and which socio-economic strata were prominent in this emigration stream?

The Clonoulty/N.S.W. Emigrants 1848–1870

On landing in Victoria in 1857 Edward Browne had not gone to the Ovens “diggings” by chance; three of his brothers and sisters, John, Maryanne and Eliza had all preceded him there not, as in his case, via Melbourne, but as assisted emigrants to Sydney.60 Ultimately of the ten children of Edward Browne and Betty Ryan of Clonoulty Hill, born between 1817 and 1835, only Patrick survived in Ireland to inherit the family farm.61 It was to Patrick that the three extant letters written by the colonial Brownes in the 1850s were addressed. Part of the purpose of such letters was to convey news to people beyond the family of their friends and relatives and the Brownes referred to 47 other Clonoulty emigrants in this correspondence, making it a rich source for investigating the nature of the Australian emigration from the parish.62 So far the focus of this analysis has been on the parish of Clonoulty, providing the necessary context for the emigrants. Now it will be on the emigrants themselves, linking them with their townlands of origin and examining their pre-emigration situation within the parish. This analysis reveals both the social structure of the N.S.W. emigration and its relation to those forces reshaping mid-19th century Clonoulty.

The background of those cited in the Browne letters hints at the social diversity of the Australian emigration; it ranged from landless labourer, conacre labourer, cottier, and

59 Census of Ireland, 1851, County of Tipperary South Riding, Parish of Clonoulty, Note Y, p.323, BPP, 1852/53, Vol.91.

60 Maryanne and Bessy Browne were on the Telegraph, arrived 18 September 1853, IBL/NSW, 4/4936 and John Browne was on the Araminta, arrived 29 July 1854, IBL/NSW, 4/4938.

61 Parish register, Roman Catholic Parish of Clonoulty, pp.32-33, Bishop’s Palace, Thurles, County Tipperary and Mid West Regional Archives, Limerick. Revision/Clonoulty 1859, p.26, shows Patrick Browne in possession of the family farm.

62 There are three relevant Browne letters, all written in the 1850s: John Browne to Patrick Browne, 29 April 1854; John, Maryanne and Bessy Browne to Patrick Browne, 18 November 1856; Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857, Browne letters, Revd.Brien Maher, Bungendore, N.S.W.
small farmer through to strong farmer. Predictably, the one level of society missing from these letters was the "gentry". The Brownes themselves came from a strong farmer background, the family farm in 1855 consisting of 82 acres of top valued land, one guinea an acre, in Clonouilty Hill.63 Similarly placed families mentioned in the letters were the Maloneys of Clonouilty Curragh and the Finns of Srahavarella.64 The Finns paid their own way to Sydney.65 From a level below this came Mary Gleeson of Clogher, whose father Roger fell into the small farmer class, renting 25 acres and living in a house worth £1/10/-66 Mary married John Ryan in the colony, whose widowed sister, Mary Kennedy, was Roger Gleeson's sister-in-law; Edward asked Patrick to let "Widow Kennedy know that her two sons are here in good health".67 Both the Kennedys went to N.S.W. as assisted emigrants.68 The Kennedys were conacre labourers living on one acre in Clogher in a house valued at 10/-.69 Few Clonouilty families involved in the emigration to N.S.W. were poorer than the Murphys of Ballagh. Bridget Murphy arrived in Sydney in January 1856.70 Bridget's mother was Mary Stapleton, four of whose brothers had taken an assisted passage to Sydney between 1841 and 1851. Edward sent her news of three of them:

let Mrs Murphy of Ballagh no that I had the plesure of meeting three of her Brothers here Thomas William and Michael and are in good health.71

No landholding was recorded in the valuation records for Bridget's father, Edmund Murphy, in either 1848 or 1859. In 1859 he rented a house rated at 10/- in what remained of Ballagh town.72 Presumably he, his wife and eight children born between 1835 and

64 The Maloneys were mentioned in John Browne to Patrick Browne, 18 November 1856. The Maloneys held 37 acres of land and had a house worth £8, Griffith/Clonouilty 1848, pp.26,27 and 37. The Finns are mentioned in Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857. For information of the Finns of Campbelltown I am indebted to Father Brien Maher, Bungendore, N.S.W. For the Finn baptisms see Clonouilty parish register, p.655 and 239. For the Finn farm of 48 acres see Griffith/Clonouilty 1848, p.37.
65 Information from Father Maher.
66 Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857; Mary Gleeson baptism, Clonouilty parish register, p.258; Roger Gleeson's farm, Griffith/Clogher 1848, p.9.
67 Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857.
68 Both Kennedys were on the Maitland, arrived 22 April 1856, IBL/NSW, 4/4962.
69 Griffith/Clogher 1848, p.10.
70 BEE, arrived 6 January 1856, IBL/NSW, 4/4958.
71 Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857.
72 Revision/Clonouilty 1859, p.32.
1854, lived here on what he could earn as a labourer. How typical were these people of the 434 Clonoulty emigrants who came to Sydney between 1848 and 1870?

a. The Clonoulty/N.S.W. Emigrants: An Overview

Four hundred of the 434 Clonoulty emigrants, 92%, can be traced in the parish’s baptismal register. Using the register the emigrants’ families have been reconstituted and assigned to their townlands of residence before emigration. Thirty-six of the parish’s townlands were involved in this emigration but emigration rates varied between townland Groups and even more between townlands. [Figure 5.18] Seventy-nine per cent came from the two Groups where the 1841–1871 loss rate was between 41% and 80% but the most noticeable concentration of emigrants, 56%, was in Group Five. In fact observed from townland level there was a group of contiguous townlands running from Cloneyharp and Clogher in the north-east in a straight line south-west through Corbally, Clonoulty Hill, Clonoulty Churchquater, Clonoulty Curragh and Srahavarella to Ballagh/Kilmore and Piercetown from which came 250, 63%, of the emigrants. [Map 5.3 and Figure 18] All of these townlands had population densities well above, and often, as in the case of Ballagh/Kilmore, considerably above the parish mean of 35. [Figure 5.6] Here indeed was the N.S.W. emigrant heartland of Clonoulty. Even within this emigrant core two areas stand out, Srahavarella and the combined townlands of Ballagh/Kilmore which enclosed Ballagh “town”. Srahavarella lay in the Hawarden Estate but, with the exception of Coolanga Upper, contained the only real concentration of emigrants from that property. Altogether 103 emigrants, 26%, came off the estate and can be examined in relation to the particular changes occurring there described above. Again Ballagh/Kilmore was, as we have seen, at the collapsing centre of the parish during the famine years. Because these two sub areas of the parish formed the socio-economic context for nearly half, 47%, of those 400 Clonoulty emigrants traced back to a specific townland they will be analysed separately.

The comparative wealth or poverty of the emigrants can be assessed in relation to their standard of housing and access to land. Using Jones Hughes’ definition of the “poor” as those living in a house valued below £1, the emigrants would seem to have emerged from a background thoroughly typical of the parish as a whole. [Figure 5.19] Where 64% of the parish could be considered as “poor”, this applied to 66% of the emigrants, hardly a significant variation. [Figure 5.19] However even among the “poor” there were degrees of poverty. This was evident from the Griffith valuers use of a fifteen, a 10/- and a 5/- valuation. The vast majority of the valuations under £1 were placed in one

73 Murphy baptisms, Clonoulty parish register, pp.448-453.
of these three categories although there are instances of intermediate values and even, as in the case of poor Fogarty of Ballagh, one of 3/-. Fogarty was part of the N.S.W. story as one of his three sons, Malachi, took an assisted passage to Sydney in 1863.\textsuperscript{74} No Clonoultymigrant, for whom a roof can be found in the valuation, can have had a more miserable one than Malachi Fogarty.

Fifty-six per cent of the N.S.W. emigrants came from houses valued at 10/- or less. [Figure 5.20] It is difficult to equate the Census Commissioners’ house classifications to the 1848 valuation. However, by applying the Clonoultym 1841 Census proportions of each of the Commissioners’ four house types to the 1848 valuation, then houses valued at 10/- and under equate roughly with Class 4, 11/- to approximately £1/15/- with Class 3, £1/16/- to approximately £6 with Class 2 and above that figure with Class 1. On this basis the largest single group of Clonoultymigrants, 56%, lived in the most wretched kind of housing in Tipperary, the Class 4 house. [Figure 5.20] Given that the Commissioners’ classification was intended to be a national standard, these houses would have been little better than similar housing in western counties, such as Mayo, often used as the index against which to measure 19th century Irish poverty.

Not all who obtained a free passage to N.S.W. from Clonoultym were from such an impoverished environment. Few houses in the parish had a valuation in excess of the £6 which would have placed it in the Census Commissioners Class 1 category. One such house belonged to Timothy Maloney of Clonoultym Curragh. Maloney was a medium sized farmer, holding 15 acres in the Curragh and 22 in neighbouring Srahavarella.\textsuperscript{75} His house was valued at £8, clearly, to quote the Commissioners, a house of an even better description than a “good farm house”. Giving his age as 60, Timothy received an assisted passage to Sydney in 1860 having been nominated by his son, John, who with four of his sisters, had arrived in 1853.\textsuperscript{76} One can only speculate at what made him emigrate; his wife had died some time between 1853 and 1860 and two more sons accompanied him in 1860. Perhaps of his family of 11 none remained behind in Ireland to see him into old age. Whatever his motives, assisted emigration from this kind of background was exceptional.

\textsuperscript{74} Fairlie, arrived 29 April 1863, IBL/NSW, 4/4982.

\textsuperscript{75} For Maloney details see Note 64.

\textsuperscript{76} Ellenborough, arrived 12 October 1853, IBL/NSW, 4/4931. Tudor, arrived 17 August 1860, IBL/NSW, 4/4981.
When Timothy left even a house of this value, situated next to the Catholic church, suffered a similar fate to the cabins of the “poor” — it was thrown down.\textsuperscript{77} The valuers were not called upon to record their feelings as they observed the slow, silent haemorrhaging of Clonoult in the wake of the Famine. However, the phrases they used to describe vacant or decaying properties provide an apt metaphor for the results — “ruins”, “dwelling down” or “waste of houses”.\textsuperscript{78}

More typical of the better class of emigrant, thought by Walderssee to have gathered round the Ryans of Galong, were those from Class 2 houses, valued between £1/16/- and £6 — a “good farm-house”. Eleven of the emigrant houses were of this type, although if the required value for a 2nd Class house is raised to £2, possibly a more realistic figure, then only four emigrant families would qualify. Among such emigrants were the Meagher family of Ballagh/Kilmore living in 1850 in a house valued at £3/12/-, the Mahers of Ballycamus in one valued at £2/14/- and indeed the Brownes, whose father’s house was valued at £2/15/-\textsuperscript{79}

In this context it is worth drawing attention to one family in particular — the family of Michael Ryan and Mary Barry of Coolanga Upper. In 1853 Mary, a widow, took nine of her children to Sydney on the \textit{Malvina Vidal} and from there on to Boorowa.\textsuperscript{80} Her destination in the colony is no surprise as she was Edward “Ned” Ryan’s sister-in-law and the “King of Galong Castle”, as he was known, may have offered assistance to his brother’s widow and children. This family became known locally as the “Barry” Ryans, a title necessary to distinguish them from the numerous Ryans round Boorowa.\textsuperscript{81} When “Ned” Ryan’s daughter, Anastasia, died in 1900 the mantle of this Ryan dynasty fell upon his niece, the assisted emigrant Anastasia “Barry” Ryan from Coolanga Upper. She ran Galong until it was handed over to the Redemptorist Order at her death in 1914.\textsuperscript{82} Anastasia was buried next to her brother, Lawrence, in Galong Cemetery and above them both were erected two of the largest monuments of this kind in the N.S.W. bush, a pair of angels sculptured by Rusconi of Gundagai from Anastasia’s own designs.\textsuperscript{83}

\textsuperscript{77} Revision/Clonoult 1859, p.23. The entry beside the Maloney house in the valuation revision states: “Dwelling and stone offices down”.
\textsuperscript{78} Revision/Clonoult and Clogher 1859, passim.
\textsuperscript{79} Griffith/Clonoult 1848, pp.35 and 28.
\textsuperscript{80} \textit{Malvina Vidal}, arrived 20 June 1853, IBL/NSW, 4/4934.
\textsuperscript{81} Barrett, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.174-175.
\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Ibid.}, p.142.
\textsuperscript{83} \textit{Ibid.}, p.145 and 148.
both of them were born in a cabin assessed by the objective eye of the Griffith valuers as worth 10/- a year in rates. This was hardly the kind of environment Waldерsee had in mind when he described these Ryan immigrants, the relatives of “Ned”, as of “a rather higher order than the ignorant labouring classes”. The “Barry” Ryans were a few gradations down the social scale from other assisted emigrants like the Brownes or Malneys.

Their houses therefore were an indication that, despite a levelling of the better off, the Clonoulty emigrants were mainly from the lower and the lowest ranks of the parish. Moreover most of them came from townlands where holdings were among the smallest in Clonoulty. In these townlands both mean and median holding size was below that for the parish in general; 19 acres mean to a median of six acres compared to the parish’s 23 acres to ten acres. [Figure 5.21/Totals] Forty-one percent, 164 emigrants, came from townlands where the median size of holding was three acres or less. [Figure 5.21 Nos. 2-3/10/13/15/20/22-26] This suggests that many in the emigrant stream to Sydney came from a cottier or conacre labourer background.

An examination of those holdings associated with the emigrants confirms this impression. Where 40% of parish holdings were of the conacre labourer type, the corresponding figure for the emigrants was 54%. [Figure 5.22] If a category “no land” is added to these landholding statistics, that is to say emigrants for whom a house but no landholding can be found, then an even more depressing conclusion can be drawn. The emigrants came from that section of Clonoulty society which was losing the struggle for access to land. While 47% of the parish relied on either conacre or totally on their own labour, 72% of emigrant families were in this situation. Writing home to Clonoulty from Sydney, Melbourne and the “diggings”, the Brownes would have known that their news of relatives and friends would find its way from comfortable kitchens like that of Timothy Maloney to the mud floored, one roomed cabin of Widow Murphy’s Class 4 house.

b. “Cottiered and subdivided to a ruinous extent”: Some N.S.W. emigrants from the Hawarden Estate

Of all those pressures — land hunger, lack of employment, wretched housing and reforming landlords — which were bearing down on the smallholding and conacre families of pre-Famine Clonoulty, none created as much visible disturbance as Stewart’s consolidating policy on the Hawarden lands. Stewart gave evidence to the Devon Commission in 1844, not from any desire to put forward radical or reforming ideas, but

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84 Griffith/Clonoulty 1848, p.28.
85 Walderee, op.cit., pp.177-178.
to defend himself and his management policies from the attack upon them by Father Mackey of Clonoult.\footnote{Evidence of John Stewart, Devon Commission, op.cit., pp.825-836.} Mackey’s allegations were simple; consolidation of farms on the estate was a heartless process which had brought about great suffering and hardship among the tenants.\footnote{Ibid., Evidence of Father Mackey, p.287.} The substance and accuracy of these claims cannot be investigated here but, as was shown earlier, when refuting them Stewart produced lists of tenants who had been virtually forced to surrender their cabins and holdings for various sums in compensation. What Stewart sought to remedy, as he saw it, was that system of cottier and conacre farming which, owing to its primitive agricultural methods and economic precariousness, had damaged the estate. According to him the estate townland which exemplified the “ruinous system” of “cottering” was Srahavarella.\footnote{Ibid., Evidence of John Stewart, p.830.} This townland had the highest emigration rate to N.S.W. in Clonoult. [Figure 5.18 No.42]

Stewart’s control over Srahavarella began in 1837 when the middleman’s lease fell vacant.\footnote{Ibid.} He found Srahavarella “cottiered and subdivided to a ruinous extent ... with upwards of forty tenants upon it, the greater portion being in a state of abject poverty”.\footnote{Ibid.} By May of 1841 he had reduced this figure from 40 to 26, largely by encouraging the very poorest tenants, those with only a small garden and a cabin, to accept a token sum of money and leave.\footnote{Ibid.} These were not the cottiers, as only one, John English, held more than an acre of land and as English was able to sell his “interest” to another he received no money from Stewart.\footnote{Ibid.} What would have been plain to the remaining tenants however, was that they could expect fairly constant pressure from Stewart to vacate what he considered uneconomic holdings. Such disruption may have made some consider the possibility of emigration. The John English who sold his interest in his five acres in 1838 may have been given a block of land on another part of the estate in the nearby parish of Annacarty. A John English arrived in Sydney in 1855 with his wife and family of five, stating that his first two children were born in Clonoult.\footnote{Ibid., List of tenants etc.} The parish register confirms this, showing them to have been baptised from Srahavarella in 1837 and 1839.\footnote{Matoaka, arrived 17 May 1855, IBL/NSW, 4/4952.} It is a
reasonable assumption that the two John Englishs were one and the same. Having been pushed out once by a landlord such a family could be considered emigration prone.

Stewart’s next objective, the elimination of the cottiers, was achieved during the Famine. Between the valuations of 1848 and 1859 the number of holdings in Srahavarella fell from 27 to ten and median farm size rose from eight to 22 acres.95 Yet again it was the Famine which saw the sharpest decline in Srahavarella; house numbers dropped from 23 to 12 and the population by a similar 50% from approximately 202 in 1848 to 101 in 1851.96 By 1861 a further 29% of the 1851 population had disappeared.97 Two poor families who survived the hunger, but left for N.S.W. before 1859, were the Dwyers and the Sullivans. Malachi Dwyer and Jeremiah Sullivan were both smallholders in Srahavarella in 1848; Malachi had four acres and a house valued at 5/- and Jeremiah seven acres and a 15/- house.98 Both would have known they had no future on the estate.

But Stewart’s policies may have created a general atmosphere of uncertainty on the estate. Not only the landless and the cottiers were leaving for N.S.W. Thomas Byrne was the largest of Hawarden’s tenants in Srahavarella with 61 acres of highly valued land and a “good farm house”.99 In 1851 he took his whole family to N.S.W. Before the 1859 valuation the Finns, who had held 50 acres, also left to settle in the Campbelltown area near Sydney.100 Other factors, especially the burden of high poor rates during the Famine, were inducing better-off farmers to leave so the decisions of these families may have been less directly influenced by the estate as those of the poor of Srahavarella. That the latter were given every encouragement to go is beyond doubt.

c. “I met with Adam Chidle”: The N.S.W. Emigrants and the collapse of Ballagh, 1848–1870

Ballagh “town” was the end of the road in pre-Famine Clonoult. Near the centre of Ballagh in 1848 stood the house of William Treacy described by Stewart as a “day labourer”.101 Treacy had received money from the Hawarden estate to build this house, being one of those tenants evicted from Clone in 1843.102 Clonoult’s pre-Famine

95 Griffith/Clonoult 1848, p.37; Revision/Clonoult 1859, pp.37-39.
96 Tipperary/Census 1871.
97 Ibid.
98 Sullivan family, John Knox, arrived 29 April 1850, IBL/NSW, 4/4917; Dwyer family, Matoaka, arrived 17 May 1855, IBL/NSW, 4/4952; Griffith/Clonoult 1848, p.37.
99 Clonoult/Griffith 1848, p.37.
100 Ibid.
101 Evidence of John Stewart, Devon Commission, op.cit., p.828.
102 Ibid.
landless congregated in Ballagh; of the 107 houses in the "town" and surrounding townlands of Ballagh and Kilmore 43, 40%, had no land attached to them. Thirty-seven of these landless households were in the "town" of Ballagh itself, 66% of all Ballagh households. Indeed of all the landless households in Clonoult 60% were to be found in Ballagh and its townlands. The way in which this area drew in the landless and marginal population of Clonoult can be seen in the Census figures. These show the sponge-like nature of Ballagh's relationship to the parish; an extraordinary growth in the 1820s was followed by a steep decline in the 1840s, only to be followed by an equally dramatic growth up to the 1848 valuation. [Figure 5.23] This final spurt up to 1848 was against the parish trend, where houses and their inhabitants were already disappearing with the onset of the Famine. [Figure 5.9] Some, who had lost house and land in other townlands, were able to erect a temporary cabin at one or other end of Ballagh's two cross streets just before the catastrophe which engulfed Ballagh and Clonoult between the summer of 1848 and the Census of 1851.103

With an event like the "Great Famine" it is easy to resort to adjectival excess to describe the despair which must have gripped the poor of Ballagh/Kilmore. As Whelan says of Ireland as a whole during this crisis; "these deceptively simple figures bankrupt the imagination as to the degree of human anguish contained in them".104 For Ballagh "town" the figures are clear enough; where 56 houses had stood in 1848 there were 15 in 1859. [Figure 5.24] The poor simply fled after the failure of the 1848 crop. For those who survived, and by definition this includes all the N.S.W. emigrants, the immediate landscape had altered for ever. Gone were approximately 70% of the population from the "town" and close to 50% from the townlands of Ballagh and Kilmore.105 It is not surprising that those who stayed, surrounded by empty and ruined cabins, showed a high propensity to emigrate in the 1850s. Between 1851 and 1871 the population of Ballagh/Kilmore declined by 139 and of these just under half went as assisted emigrants to Sydney.106 [Figure 5.21 No.23] These emigrants left from the parish’s most shattered environment.

The N.S.W. emigrants were typical of this area of the parish; 67% lived in houses valued at less than £1. [Figure 5.25] Again most were to be found in the poorest houses valued at 10/- or less. Thirty three per cent of them, like many in Ballagh/Kilmore, were

103 Another name for Ballagh at this time was Ballagh Cross.
105 Tipperary/Census 1871.
106 Ibid.
landless and those who did have access to land, with the exception of two households, were cottiers and conacre labourers. [Figure 5.26] There is little that can be said about these people which is not in some way an indication of their material poverty and if the Clonoultym emigrants in general were poor then these Ballagh emigrants were extremely poor.

Just as the departure of farmers like the Byrnes from Srahavarella indicated a lack of confidence in the future on the Hawarden estate, so too did the emigration of some individuals and families from Ballagh. In 1848 Ballagh boasted two blacksmiths; after Edmund Dwyer took his family to Boorowa in 1861 there were none.107 He stayed on in the 1850s, a decade when trade must have been getting gradually slower. His falling income is suggested by the family’s move between 1848 and 1855 from a house valued at 15/- to a cabin of the lowest type at 5/-.108 With a family of seven to provide for he must have regarded the prospects in Clonoultym as dismal. Patrick Maloney, the teacher at the National School in Ballagh townland, would have felt the effects of the depopulation of Ballagh/Kilmore in his own schoolroom. He left in 1850 for Goulburn, N.S.W. during the years when Famine emigration from the parish was at its peak.109

The emigration of men like Edmund Dwyer and Patrick Maloney was symptomatic of diminishing opportunities in post Famine Clonoultym. Cottiers and conacre labourers had existed in this sort of economic situation for decades. Now it was being felt by previously more prosperous sections of the population. One man to feel the contraction of the 1850s was John Chidle. Chidle had been Ballagh “town’s” most prominent citizen and was, within the small rural world of Clonoultym, its most visible entrepreneur. In the “town” itself he rented out 21 small cabins, most of them in the lower valuation categories of 10/- and 5/-. [Figure 5.24 Notes] Edmund Dwyer rented his blacksmith’s forge from Chidle.110 Four more dwellings of a similar nature were located in Ballagh townland and he was also the landlord of Patrick Maloney’s schoolhouse.111 Scattered throughout the townlands near Ballagh “town” he rented about 35 acres of land from the head landlord.112 The dispersed nature of these holdings suggests that he may have been renting them out in conacre to the landless of Ballagh, as all of them were in easy walking distance of the “town”. Conacre renting would have been a profitable business in a parish

107 *Queen Bee*, arrived 31 March 1861, Agent’s List, 4/4796.
108 Griffith/Clonoultym 1848, p.24; Revision/Clonoultym 1859, p.4.
109 *Elizabeth*, arrived 16 April 1850, IBL/NSW, 4/4916.
where it let at as much as £10 per acre in 1836.\textsuperscript{113} It can only have fetched more in the decade before the Famine as the population and demand for land increased. However apart from the suggestive distribution of these holdings there is no proof that Chidle speculated in conacre land. That he did so in building supplies is clear from his renting of a limestone quarry and kiln in Ballagh itself.\textsuperscript{114} Among the residents of pre-Famine Ballagh everyone would have known, perhaps even have had dealings with, John Chidle. His house, valued at £7, would have been an opulent sight in these impoverished surroundings.\textsuperscript{115}

Whelan contends that the Famine barely impinged on the strong farmer and shopkeeper class.\textsuperscript{116} In comparison with what happened to the cottiers and labourers there is no arguing this point. However John Chidle was hard hit; by the 1859 revaluation only two of his 21 houses in the town were still occupied.\textsuperscript{117} In 1859, Ballagh’s new landlord, Philip Percival, deprived him of his limestone quarry and kiln. A valuer’s annotation — “free for tenants’ use April 1859” — indicated how Chidle had profited from this quarry in the past.\textsuperscript{118} All John’s entrepreneurial efforts were probably directed at providing for his large family; between 1819 and 1847 he fathered 14 children, six with Nelly Ryan, his first wife and eight with Ellen Devereaux, his second.\textsuperscript{119} In the light of Chidle’s declining fortunes in the 1850s it comes as no surprise that, as Edward Browne in 1857 walked down the mud streets of the Ovens “diggings”, he reported back to Clonoulty, “... I met with Adam Chidle”.\textsuperscript{120} Adam and his brother James, two of John’s sons, arrived in Sydney as assisted emigrants in July 1855.\textsuperscript{121} No Chidle baptisms appear in the Clonoulty register for the second half of the 19th century. John himself died in 1868 and the name has vanished from Clonoulty.\textsuperscript{122}

This survey of Clonoulty and its N.S.W. assisted emigrants has limited itself to positioning the emigrants within the socio-economic framework of the parish. Both the

\begin{footnotes}
\item\textsuperscript{113} Poor Law Enquiry, \textit{op.cit.}, Supplement to Appendix F, parish questionnaire, p.242, Parish of Clonoulty and Clogher, Parish Priest Father P.Molony.
\item\textsuperscript{114} Griffith/Clonoulty 1848, p.24.
\item\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Ibid.}, p.35.
\item\textsuperscript{116} Whelan “The Famine and post-Famine Adjustment”, in Nolan (ed), \textit{op.cit.}, p.157.
\item\textsuperscript{117} Revision/Clonoulty 1859, pp.4-6 and 31-32.
\item\textsuperscript{118} \textit{Ibid.}, p.4.
\item\textsuperscript{119} Chidle baptisms, Clonoulty parish register, p.73.
\item\textsuperscript{120} Edward Browne to Patrick Browne, 28 August 1857.
\item\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Gloriana}, arrived 27 July 1855, IBL/NSW, 4/4949.
\item\textsuperscript{122} Gravestone inscription, John Chidle, Clonoulty Roman Catholic cemetery, personal visit.
\end{footnotes}
contextual and individual evidence shows that these emigrants were poor and, more often than not, extremely poor. What is unexpected was that government assistance was reaching the better off, sometimes considerably better off, sections of the parish. In a sense therefore both Waldensee and O'Farrell are correct; the emigrants were composed of both “common labourers” and those of a rather higher order than the “ignorant labouring classes”. But if the case of the “Barry” Ryans is any guide, then “Ned” Ryan’s relatives were not in any material sense far above these “labouring classes”. All told this particular emigrant stream was diverse enough to be described by a partial inversion of those famous words of that opponent of Irish Catholic immigration, Dr. John Dunmore Lang. Where Lang found that Boorowa contained “a veritable slice of the County of Tipperary”, emigrating to Sydney between 1848 and 1870 was a “veritable slice” of the parish of Clonoult.
Chapter 6

"The Removal of Mendacity from One Soil to Another"; Destitute Irish who Received an Assisted Passage to N.S.W., 1848–1850

During the worst years of the Great Famine (1846–1850) there was comparatively little Irish emigration to Sydney. After the ending of the old “bounty” system in 1844 recruitment by the Emigration Commissioners began again at the height of the catastrophe in mid-1847. At this time the Commissioners emphasised that colonial funds were held by them in trust to select suitable applicants to meet colonial labour requirements not to relieve distress in any part of the U.K. Their work in Ireland during the Famine made little impact on Irish distress; between 1848 and 1850 only 6,568 Irish received an assisted passage to Sydney out of a U.K. total of 16,259.

Despite the Commissioners’ views the Famine years saw the arrival in Sydney of the largest number of destitute, or near destitute Irish, to receive an assisted passage between 1848 and 1870. These immigrants, approximately 2,799 in number, 43% of the Irish total between 1848 and 1850, all embarked under special schemes and would have been considered ineligible under the Commissioners’ normal selection criteria. These were the young female orphans from Irish workhouses, the wives and families of emancipated and ticket-of-leave convicts and the children of former “bounty” emigrants whose parents had left them behind on emigrating. As they formed such a large proportion of Irish arrivals at this period, and because each scheme was short term, specialised and separate from the Commissioners’ normal processes of application and selection, this emigration deserves analysis as a distinctive aspect of the whole assisted movement to Sydney between 1848 and 1870.

1. "The Removal of Mendacity from One Soil to Another": The Irish Workhouse Orphan Immigrants, 1848–1850

The basic story of the orphan emigration is well known. What is of interest here is


3 For totals 1848 to 1850 inclusive see Chapter 1, Figure 4.

4 Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.

5 For a full account dealing with the Irish end of the scheme see Joseph Robins, *The Lost Children: A
how the situation, selection and experiences of these girls set them apart from the mainstream of Irish assisted emigration to N.S.W. Altogether eleven ships brought 2,220 Irish female orphans from workhouses and other charitable institutions to Sydney between October 1848 and July 1850. The great majority, 2,197, were selected from Union Workhouses in every county in Ireland, with the sole exception of County Louth, and the remaining 23 came from the Foundling Hospitals of Dublin and Cork. [Figure 6.1] Recruitment instructions from the Emigration Commissioners to the Workhouse authorities stipulated that no girl younger than 14 or older than 18 be selected and that “the nearest to 18” be given preference. The ages given by the girls on arrival suggest that the selection criteria were closely adhered to: 72% were in the 16-18 age groups and only 19% were aged 14 or 15. [Figure 6.2] Three main benefits were claimed for this workhouse recruitment: firstly the Commissioners were able to keep up a constant supply of single female labour in a situation where few trained English and Scottish servants applied to emigrate, secondly it helped balance the predominance of males in the colonial population and lastly it provided some relief to the hard pressed Irish Unions overwhelmed by the victims of famine.

All the evidence suggests that these girls were the most destitute group of Irish ever to receive an assisted passage to N.S.W. McLaughlin’s work linking them with entries in workhouse registers shows their absolute poverty. A number of girls on the Earl Grey, the first orphan ship to reach Sydney, can be traced in the registers of five Poor Law Unions in the northern counties. The level of information in these registers varies from simple personal details — name, age, religion, address — to brief, but chilling, descriptions of an individual’s condition on entry. Elizabeth Just, aged 16 of Annaghmore, County Armagh was admitted to Armagh Workhouse on April 10 1847, starving and “thinly clothed”. She left on September 6, was readmitted in a similar state in early November and finally left to join the Earl Grey on May 24, 1848. The Armagh register also documents the final year of the family life of the Littlewood family of Richhill. Mary Littlewood and her children — Mary, 15, Thomas, 13, John, 11, and Ann Eliza, 9 — described variously as “thinly clothed”, “ragged”, “dirty”, “destitute” and

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6 Emigration of Orphans from Workhouses in Ireland, Circular No.58, Irish Poor Law Commissioners to Poor Law Inspectors, 7 March 1848, enclosing memorandum from Emigration Commissioners, Clause 1, *First Annual Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, Ireland, Dublin, 1848*, p.152.


9 *Earl Grey*, arrived 6 October 1848, IBL/NSW, 4/905.
“hungry” were in and out of the workhouse several times between 1846 and 1848. The family breadwinner, Samuel Littlewood, a weaver, died in February 1847 and the mother, Mary, in March 1848. Daughter Mary, aged 15, finally left the institution in May 1848 on her way to Sydney. Her story of family disintegration, hunger and destitution would have been no different to girls from workhouses throughout Ireland who were selected as orphan emigrants.

What set these girls apart from ordinary assisted emigrants was the selection process itself and, for those chosen, the provision of free clothing and travel to the embarkation port. For most Irish emigrants their first real meeting with the Commissioners’ staff was at the English depot; before that they were simply names on application forms and embarkation lists. By contrast the orphan girls went through a lengthy sifting procedure in Ireland. After volunteering for emigration they had to be approved in turn by the Workhouse authorities, the regional Poor Law inspector and finally by the Commissioners’ Irish representative, the Emigration Agent of the port of Dublin, Lieutenant Henry. Bridget Gearon’s progress from the Clonmel Union Workhouse to the Australian emigrant ship lasted for over a year. Bridget was one of 18 Clonmel volunteers considered eligible under the age restrictions imposed by the Commissioners. At 16 she was perhaps considered too young to go with the first batch who left during 1848, but some time in late March 1849 she was inspected and approved for passage by Lieutenant Henry. As part of their agreement with the Emigration Commissioners the Clonmel Guardians now provided all of Bridget’s pre-emigration expenses; she was given a full outfit of new clothing for the voyage, a sea chest, a Douay Bible and her fare to Dublin and on to Plymouth.

How carefully were the girls chosen in the harassed famine atmosphere of an Irish workhouse? Because their character was later severely criticised on arrival in Sydney extremely detailed accounts exist of the selection of the Belfast Union girls who went on the first orphan ship in 1848, the *Earl Grey*. Doctor William Magee, who sat on a sub-committee of the Belfast Guardians to select the girls, gave a full account of the procedure adopted. After a list of eligibles was submitted to the committee by the Master of the

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10 McClaughlin, *op. cit.*, p.35.
11 *Ibid*.
13 *Ibid*.
15 Evidence of William Magee M.D., annex in report of Poor Law Inspector Otway to Irish Poor Law
Workhouse the girls were assembled in the dining hall in front of the committee and the local Poor Law inspector, Edward Senior. Senior was particularly concerned that this first group to leave for the colony should be a credit to the Belfast Union and reflect well on the Poor Law administration of the northern workhouses. Consequently he claimed to have rejected anyone who could not at least read. Magee remembered this as embracing also the ability to write and thought Senior "unnecessarily strict upon that head". Of the 47 Belfast girls on the *Earl Grey* 33, 70%, claimed to be able to read. This was about average in a town where 85% of the female population aged 16 to 25 claimed to be able to read in 1851. Those who appeared to be physically weak were also rejected and others struck off after examination by the doctor. Yet more sifting and examining followed before the arrival of Lieutenant Henry so that the girls seen by him were definitely considered to be the pick of the Belfast Workhouse:

... the females, previously submitted for my consideration in a list of candidates for emigration, were then formally brought before me, in the dining hall ... each female was then called before me by name, one by one, and I enquired as to the age of each person, whether or not she had lost her parents, as to her being capable of reading or writing, her previous occupation, and respecting her character and conduct.

Henry further insisted that testimonials be sought from previous employers or respectable people who knew them and on a second visit to Belfast he personally inspected each reference. More girls were rejected even at this late stage. It is doubtful that these rigorous and time consuming methods were uniformly adopted in workhouses in the far south and west of Ireland. There officials and Guardians had to deal daily with hundreds of sick and starving. But even if only part of the Belfast system was in operation this would have constituted far closer local scrutiny than any other category of applicant from Ireland for an assisted passage was ever subjected to.

On arrival in the colony the girls were treated as a special class of immigrant. To supervise them a Sydney Orphan Immigration Committee was set up composed of the

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19 *Earl Grey*, arrived Sydney 6 October 1848.
20 Census of Ireland, 1861, Tables of Age and Education, Town of Belfast, Census of Ireland, 1851, *BPP*, 1856, Vol.29, p.113.
Immigration Agent, the Port Health Officer, the Water Police Magistrate, representatives of each religious denomination and prominent politicians and officials such as Charles Nicholson, Speaker of the Legislative Council. The Committee had wide powers relating to employment, wages, discipline and general moral guardianship over the orphans until they reached the age of 18. Symbolising this was a formal legal indenture drawn up between the Committee and each individual employer, indentures which could only be cancelled by the Committee or a local magistrate. If a girl had her indentures cancelled she remained legally under the guardianship and care of the Committee. The actual hiring agreements signed by the girls themselves also specified the much wider responsibility employers were expected to adopt towards them. When Daniel Tierney of Princes Street, Sydney, took on 17 year old Johanna Gaggin of Lorra, County Tipperary off the Tippoo Sahib in July 1850 he agreed, in addition to her normal wages and board, “to provide her with medical attention and medicines, to attend to her morals”, to teach her her duties and to allow her to attend Divine Service. Even a girl’s wages were not legally hers but were held in trust by the Committee. She received them “at their discretion” and with regard to future conduct.

Given the size and composition of the Committee general day-to-day administration devolved upon the Immigration Agent between 1848 and 1851, Francis Merewether. On arrival he either placed the girls in Hyde Park Barracks and indentured them from there or sent them into the country. [Figure 6.3] Sending them into the country involved the provision of adequate protection along the way and some care was taken in the selection of escorts. Applicants for these positions, like ex Sergeant Nolan of the 53rd Regiment and his wife, were required to produce references of their suitability for this work and their appointment was approved, not just by Merewether, but by the whole Committee. At the country centres the girls were put under the supervision of the local Bench of

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23 For members of the Orphan Committee see, Select Committee on Irish Female Immigrants, hereafter SC Irish Females, pp.37/43, Votes and Proceedings, N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 1858/59, Vol.2.


26 Servant’s Agreement, Johanna Gaggin with Daniel Tierney, no date, on display in Old Commissariat Store Museum, Brisbane, Queensland.

27 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Maitland, 23 May 1850, Copies of letters sent to miscellaneous persons re migration to N.S.W., hereafter CLMP/NSW, 4/4638, AONSW.

28 Application of Patrick Nolan for employment of himself as a Guardian and his wife as a Matron in the Immigration Department, 20 June 1849 N.S.W. Immigration Correspondence, hereafter IC/NSW, 9/6192, AONSW.

29 Ibid.
Magistrates who were given detailed instructions regarding their special responsibilities towards the orphans. The precautions taken with a group sent to Wollongong from the *Panama* in 1850 were typical of the system. Firstly Merewether demanded that the disused Mounted Police Barracks be cleaned and the windows glazed to allow the building to act as a temporary depot. Furniture, mess and cooking utensils were sent ahead of the party to the Chief Constable to equip the depot and the girls themselves escorted to Wollongong by the schoolmaster and matron from the *Panama*. Two JPs were requested to be present at the indenturing and the involvement of local clergymen was also strongly recommended. Clergy, it was felt, were the best judges of a potential employer's character. The magistrates were asked to supervise the depot closely and Merewether considered it a "good idea" to station a constable nearby at all times. However the magistrate's discretion did not extend to wages. These had been determined on a set scale by the Committee taking into account the girls' inexperience and their apprentice status as servants.

The Committee took its duty as the girls' guardian and protector seriously. As no Committee member knew Thomas Purchase, timber merchant of Parramatta, who applied for an orphan servant, Merewether requested the local Police Magistrate to find out if Purchase was married and could be considered a "suitable" person for an apprentice. In particular the Committee did not wish the girls to be seen by the lonely bachelors of the bush as instant partners. When the Bathurst magistrates requested guidance on this point Merewether informed them that orphans should not be married direct from the depot:

... girls should at first go into service where they will of course have opportunities of forming matrimonial connections based upon previous acquaintance with their husband.

Outside Sydney the local magistrate's judgment was accepted in most cases regarding marriage. When Merewether heard that Theresa Bell wanted to marry

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30 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Wollongong, 18 January 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
31 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Wollongong, 16 January 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
32 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Wollongong, 25 January 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
33 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, 16 January 1850.
34 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Wollongong, 25 April 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
35 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Parramatta, 26 October 1848, CLMP/NSW, 4/4635.
36 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Wollongong, 6 February 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
shipwright John Lewis of Manning River she had already been away from her master, George Rowley, for two months. The local priest, Father O’Reilly, refused to marry a girl still under indentures so Merewether authorised local magistrate Colonel Grey to cancel the indentures and permit the marriage if he saw it as “desirable”. However when a girl reached 18 it was made clear to her that she was on her own. The Bathurst magistrates were dissatisfied with Bridget Hammond’s conduct and Merewether informed them that, as she was now 18, she should be made to hire out on any terms she could get and told that she would not “again be received into the Depot or provided for by Government”.

In serious cases of ill usage or moral danger a girl’s interests were often pursued with vigour. In February 1850 Merewether received a signed statement from Margaret Devlin declaring she had been seduced by William Small, the son of her late employer at the Clarence River. Margaret became pregnant and Small was approached to make provision for the child. Eventually Merewether received payment in full for Margaret’s confinement but in May 1851 Small was still refusing to sign a bond drawn up by the Crown Solicitor obliging him to pay maintenance of 3/6d. per week until the child was 13. The Committee demanded that he either sign the bond or pay six months in advance on a regular basis to the Commissioner of Crown Lands at the Clarence. No further reference to this case can be found in Immigration Department records. Similarly the Police Magistrate at Wollombi drew the Committee’s attention to the situation of Mary Allingham claiming the need “to protect that unfortunate female from being led into scenes of immorality and vice at Mangrove Creek, the present place of residence of Mr John Drysdale [her employer]”. Merewether instructed the Brisbane Water magistrates to cancel her indentures and give her police protection.

Disciplining an orphan was normally a matter for individual employers. Where it became the concern of the Committee was in the period between arrival and hiring and

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38 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Bathurst, 19 April 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
39 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Commissioner of Crown Lands, Clarence River, 20 February 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
40 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Clarence River, 4 November 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
41 Ibid.
42 Police Magistrate, Wollombi, to N.S.W. Immigration Agent, 3 September 1849, 4/5699, AONSW.
43 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Bench of Magistrates, Brisbane Water, 15 September 1849, CLMP/NSW, 4/4637.
when employers declared they could no longer cope with a girl and asked for her indentures to be cancelled. What happened to Mary Smith shows how such cases could be dealt with. Mary was accused by her mistress, Anne Cordeaux of Campbelltown, of “bad conduct and disobedience” and ordered returned to the Parramatta Depot by the police.\(^{44}\) The Depot Superintendent was instructed that, if the case against Mary was proved and her indentures were cancelled, she should be subjected to the “stoppage of [the] usual allowance of tea and sugar” while she waited in the depot to be rehired.\(^{45}\) During the orphan immigration 82 girls were put on reduced rations at Hyde Park Barracks.\(^{46}\) This figure closely matches the 69 girls who had their indentures cancelled with detriment at the Water Police Court in Sydney between March 1849 and May 1851.\(^{47}\) All of them were punished by either a of loss of wages or sending away from Sydney or both. Most would have spent some time back at the Barracks subject to stoppages of tea and sugar. Although there are 254 officially recorded cases of the cancelling of indentures, deprivation of small luxuries was only applied in what were regarded as extreme cases of wilful disobedience.\(^{48}\)

Banishment from Sydney had a twofold purpose; it was a punishment calculated to make a girl feel the error of her ways and to remove her from the temptations and bad influences of the city. In August 1849 Mary Daniels from the *Earl Grey* was returned to Hyde Park for “disobedience of orders and wilful destruction of her master’s property”.\(^{49}\) She was soon in more trouble as Matron Capps reported her for going absent for the rest of the morning after attending chapel. She concluded that Mary had formed “some improper connection” and recommended “sending this girl from Sydney as soon as possible”.\(^{50}\) Despatching a girl to the country could also be used to prevent her keeping what the Committee judged to be bad company. Although there is no record of her indentures being cancelled, Merewether had Elizabeth Leer sent to Moreton Bay “in

\(^{44}\) N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Parramatta, 14 September 1849, CLMP/NSW, 4/4637.

\(^{45}\) *Ibid.*

\(^{46}\) Return of the number of Orphan Females receiving support in the Public Establishment at Hyde Park Barracks, who, since the formation of the Establishment in October 1848, have been punished for misbehaviour by authority of one or more of the persons who had the control or inspection of the same, 12 June 1851, *Votes and Proceedings*, N.S.W. Legislative Council, 1851, Vol.2. No pagination in the copy in the National Library of Australia.

\(^{47}\) Appendix J, Return of Orphan Female Apprentices whose Indentures were cancelled by the Court of Petty Sessions at the Water Police Office, SC Irish Females, pp.65-72.

\(^{48}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{50}\) Matron’s Report, Mary Daniels, in Hyde Park Barracks Daily Report, 12 August 1849, IC/NSW, 9/6193.
order to separate her from a person with whom it is desirable that she should have no connection".51

An exceptional form of punishment condoned by the Committee took place in a room at Hyde park referred to by the Matron as the “penitentiary”.52 Those whose indentures were cancelled for misbehaviour were placed in a separate room, 100 feet long by 20 feet wide, and under the supervision of a police sergeant and his wife made to pick oakum.53 Merewether argued that this was practically the only type of work they could do, as few of them, he asserted, were capable of needlework.54 They should not be allowed to sit in idleness while waiting to be rehired.55 His punishment return of 1851 shows that up to mid-June of that year only 55 girls had been subjected to a regime of oakum picking in a separate room combined with stoppage of tea and sugar.56 Underlying this treatment was an almost workhouse like philosophy as described by Merewether in his reply to questioning about the “penitentiary” from the 1858 Select Committee on Irish Female Immigration:

But it might have been that picking oakum was not an amusement in which they particularly delighted? The object was not to afford them agreeable employment, rather the contrary.

A disagreeable employment? An employment if possible less acceptable than the work which they would have to do in service, so that no inducement might be offered to them to seek a release from their engagements in order to return to the Barracks.57

This was exceptional treatment and reflected perhaps Merewether’s frustration with a small handful of difficult girls. However after their initial indenturing it is likely that no more than about 10% of the orphans again came under official notice for bad behaviour.

Unfortunately for the reputation of the orphans it was just such exceptional cases which kept them in the forefront of public attention. The quality of immigrants being selected by the Commissioners was a topic of constant editorial comment in the late 1840s and early 1850s as N.S.W. evolved from convict colony to self-governing status. When

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51 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Police Magistrate, Moreton Bay, 10 December 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
52 Evidence of Mrs Capps, formerly Matron of Hyde Park Barracks, SC Irish Females, pp.30-34.
53 Ibid., Evidence of F.L.S. Merewether, p.38.
54 Ibid., p.41.
55 Ibid., p.38.
56 Return of the number of Orphan Females receiving support in the Public Establishment at Hyde Park Barracks etc. ..., 12 June 1851.
57 Evidence of F.L.S. Merewether, SC Irish Females, p.38.
the very first ship in this experimental workhouse emigration, the *Earl Grey*, brought to
Sydney a large group of girls described by Surgeon Douglas on arrival as having been
“barefoot beggars” and “professed public women”, orphan immigration was at once
attacked as an Imperial attempt to treat the colony, yet again, as a dumping ground for
Britain’s unwanted population. Where once this had been convicts now it was paupers
of questionable morality. The *Earl Grey* case created an enormous public outcry and
resulted in a thorough investigation by the Poor Law authorities in Ireland as to how these
girls had been selected. Their report did little to lessen the sense of outrage in the
colony and the scheme was seen as pernicious from the start.

But even before the arrival of the *Earl Grey* the idea of orphan “pauper”
immigration was being condemned. The editor of the *Goulburn Herald* set the tone of this
criticism by categorising all workhouse inmates as infected by habits of “idleness and
sloth” and so totally unfit for the “active operations of a new colony”. Not only was
this the “removal of mendacity from one soil to another” but, given the country from
which the orphans were to be exclusively drawn, Dr Lang’s old fear of the
“Tipperarification” of N.S.W. was about to be realised. Not surprisingly from the
furore created by the *Earl Grey* to the termination of the scheme in mid-1850 the orphans
were rarely off the pages of the colonial newspapers.

Where the girls were most newsworthy and visible was in their regular appearances
in the lower courts. As the Committee had not the legal power to cancel indentures a
hearing in front of a magistrate was required. Captain H.H. Browne, the Sydney Water
Police Magistrate, set aside Fridays at the request of the Committee to hear the girls’ cases
and so prevent them from having to wait around the central Police Court. Girls, having
been returned to the Barracks by their employers, were brought to Browne’s Court at
Cadman’s Cottage in Sydney Cove by an Immigration Department official and, if Browne
was busy, placed in the Female Watch House until the case could proceed. During

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58 Report of the Orphan Immigration Committee respecting the Female Orphans who arrived on the
*Earl Grey*, extract from the Minutes of the Committee, 6 December 1848, in papers headed, New
South Wales/Immigration — laid upon the Council table by the Colonial Secretary by Command of
His Excellency the Governor and ordered by the Council to be printed, 13th June, 1850, pp.35-36,

59 Report of Irish Poor Law Commissioners to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 14 July 1849, *Votes and

60 *Goulburn Herald*, 23 September 1848, Editorial.

61 Ibid.

62 Evidence of Captain H.H. Browne, Select Committee on the Water Police Department, p.20, *Votes

63 Ibid.
1848 and 1849 Browne, no supporter of orphan immigration, claimed that he was hearing as many as 17 or 18 cases a week. He may also have been disinclined to give much weight to the girls’ own evidence against their employers. On 3 May 1850 Browne was observed dealing with six cases by the Surgeon of one the orphan ships, Doctor Strutt of the Thomas Arbuthnot. No Surgeon received more praise in the colony for his ability to handle the adolescent Irish orphans in a friendly but firm manner. Listening to Browne Strutt concluded that “the tone of the magistracy was against all the girls”.

It was a tone echoed in press reports of the proceedings. The Sydney Morning Herald carried regular short synopses of orphan cases often accompanied by brief but critical comment about the girls in general. When Judy Carney had her indentures cancelled by the Parramatta Bench for refusing to do her work she was observed two hours later “walking through the town smartly dressed, and apparently in good spirits at having received £2 or £3 balance in wages”. Judy had been ordered returned to Barracks but her employer had, contrary to regulations, given her her wages rather than pass them to the Committee. The Herald accompanied this description of a saucy servant by an admonition to the Emigration Commissioners on the inadvisability of allowing servants such as Judy to receive any wages where they had been dismissed for refusing to work. Displays of sullen impudence were also much in evidence in Herald reports. At Parramatta Frances Ternan was accused by Mrs Kennedy of not being prepared to stand at the wash tub without patent leather shoes, of beating and ill using her children and of showing her five shilling pieces she claimed to have obtained from “single men”. Observing Frances in court the Herald reporter was in no doubt as to her guilt:

The girl’s behaviour before the Bench clearly indicated her character.

In early 1850 the Herald, in a general comment on the frequent appearance of orphans in the courts, felt there was now a “well founded prejudice against employing these girls” and that orphan immigration had become not only a “total failure” but also “a positive grievance”. The Goulburn Herald summed the whole scheme up as simply the “removal of mendacity from one soil to another” while its Sydney counterpart, with equal

64 Ibid.
65 Diary of Surgeon Strutt, 3 May 1850, p.92, Ms.8345, La Trobe Library, Melbourne.
66 Sydney Morning Herald, 19 December 1849.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
69 Sydney Morning Herald, 4 January 1850.
70 Ibid.
71 Sydney Morning Herald, 26 January 1850.
contempt, felt that Sydney had become no more than “a self supporting colonial branch of the Unions of Ballinasloe and Loughray [sic]”.72

Apart from the predictable anti-Irish tinge to the growing press opposition to the girls, figures for the availability of new immigrant servants indicate that by 1850 an orphan was often all that was available. Their share of single female servants for hire from the Barracks went from 21% in 1848 to 68% in 1850. [Figure 6.4] While the Commissioners may have been able to guarantee a continuous supply of servants only by increasing reliance on Irish workhouse recruitment this also meant that increasingly the main kind of servant available in Sydney was a young, untrained Irish orphan. This fact, combined with the constant sniping at the girls in the press, produced an atmosphere of instant colonial condemnation of each and every arrival. Not long after the Panama brought another 157 girls in January 1850 the Goulburn Herald repeated its earlier condemnation of a system which daily produced newspapers teeming with “accounts of the misconduct of these poor orphans”.73 Ironically it was in this district of N.S.W. during March 1850 that the scheme was to find its greatest acceptance and, while the Goulburn Herald never softened its editorial opinion, it did report the altered state of local feeling about the girls. The story of this change of heart is the story of one orphan ship — the Thomas Arbuthnot.

The Thomas Arbuthnot reached Sydney on 3 February 1850 with 193 orphans drawn mainly from Unions in the western and southwestern counties of Galway, Clare and Kerry.74 From their first inspections the colonial authorities sensed a certain style about this ship, attributable they felt to the exceptional competence of the Surgeon, Charles Edward Strutt. The Emigration Commissioners must have felt heartened to receive the comments of the N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, Deas Thomson. Never had he seen this ship’s equal as regards “the healthy, cleanly and orderly state of the Emigrants”.75 This was undoubtedly due, not just to the excellent regulations of the Commissioners, but to the “skill, attention and discretion which characterised the proceedings of the Surgeon Superintendent, Mr Strutt”.76 Even the Captain praised both Strutt and the girls in his report to London:

72 Ibid.; Goulburn Herald, 23 September 1848.
73 Goulburn Herald, 26 January 1850.
74 Thomas Arbuthnot, arrived 3 February 1850, IBL/NSW, 4/4919.
75 N.S.W. Colonial Secretary to Emigration Commissioners, 8 February 1850, Colonial Secretary/Copies of letters sent to the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners, 4/3713, AONSW.
76 Ibid.
The Orphan Girls behaved remarkably well indeed, in fact I could not have believed without experience that Girls taken from the Meanest Peasantry in Ireland, would be so obedient, tidy and cleanly, they have arrived in the best of order, The Doctor is just fitted for this Service, a very good Man indeed when known.\textsuperscript{77}

The Commissioners, despite the usual dry, unemotional style of their accompanying letter, undoubtedly took great delight in forwarding these comments to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.\textsuperscript{78}

This universal praise of Strutt’s ability was important. It convinced Merewether that he had found the man capable of taking the largest single consignment of orphans yet despatched from Sydney into the country — 105 girls to the Yass region. Merewether was also conscious of the growing objections to orphan servants in the city and that more were probably on their way to the colony. In fact on 18 March, when the Committee learnt that the \textit{John Knox} with 276 more girls was due within weeks, they requested the Governor to discontinue orphan immigration “for the present”.\textsuperscript{79} It was never revived.

Strutt had no difficulty in getting volunteers to accompany him to Yass. At Hyde Park Barracks the girls crowded around him and, in a testimony to his popularity among them, “130 at once expressed their wish to go to any place that I might be going to”.\textsuperscript{80} Before his departure for Parramatta with the group on February 18 he met Mr Whitty, a prominent settler in the Tumut River area near Gundagai, who advised him to press on there if all the girls were not hired at Yass.\textsuperscript{81} A hundred girls could easily be disposed of there according to Whitty.

This was not the initial reaction at Yass. The local correspondent of the \textit{Goulburn Herald} expressed horror at the approaching “inundation” of this small bush community by “the class designated Orphans”, all bar one of whom were Roman Catholics.\textsuperscript{82} Yass simply could not absorb them. As far as he knew the only demand for female “helps” was at three public houses but that he had heard that, in order to “preserve immaculate the

\textsuperscript{77} Extract from Captain G.H. Heaton’s letter to his employers, with William Phillips, owner of the \textit{Thomas Arbuthnot}, to Colonial Secretary, London, 30 May 1850, Colonial Office/N.S.W. Original Correspondence, hereafter CO/NSWOC, CO.210/438.

\textsuperscript{78} Colonial Office to Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 23 July 1850, Colonial Office/Entry Books of Correspondence, CO.385/24.

\textsuperscript{79} Minute of the Orphan Immigration Committee recommending the discontinuance for the present of the Emigration of Female Orphans from the Workhouses in Ireland dated 18th March 1850, with Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, Despatch No.77, 22 May 1850, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/428.

\textsuperscript{80} Strutt diary, 11 February 1850, p.73.

\textsuperscript{81} \textit{Ibid.}, 12 February 1850, p.72.

\textsuperscript{82} \textit{Goulburn Herald}, Yass correspondent, 2 March 1850.
morals of these females”, they could not be assigned to such places. 83 Contrary to the opinion of that “monster faction — More Labour”, pauperism and destitution were on the increase in the country and should lead to an instant” retrenchment in our requirements upon the starving population of Great Britain”. 84 As Yass awaited this advancing deluge of pauperism the Goulburn Herald on 26 February was watching Strutt’s cavalcade of 15 drays “with freights of those useless beings, the orphan girls from the Irish parishes “pass down Auburn Street through the centre of the town. A stop should be put at once to the immigration of this “useless” and “mischievous” class. 85 In a final damning sentence the girls were variously dismissed as “depraved”, “stupid” and “fit for nothing”. 86 If these two gentlemen were typical of local opinion then Strutt faced a hard time in Yass.

On 1 March the party camped three miles from Yass at Mr Hamilton Hume’s house. 87 Here the girls “got to their boxes to make themselves smart for entering Yass”. 88 On Saturday morning, 2 March, “between 8 and 9 o’clock the town of Yass presented an unusually animated appearance” as the drays made their way through the town to the temporary immigrant depot set up in the old Mounted Police barracks. 89 Compared with the description of the girls at Goulburn, and with his own previous outburst against pauper “inundation”, the Yass correspondent now wrote of the “orderly, cleanly and healthy appearance of the young women” which elicited “universal encomiums”. 90 This was the first time Yass had seen the girls en masse and it challenged assumptions contained in the derogatory colonial title “Irish orphan”. Their conduct at church next day was considered “unexceptional” and by Sunday afternoon a large crowd, especially the local bachelors, had gathered on the river bank opposite the depot to “feast their eyes on the dear creatures as they promenaded, danced or gambolled arm in arm on the recreation green before the depot”. 91 Whatever apprehensions Yass had had before the girls’ arrival they appeared to be dissipating in the reality of their presence.

Strutt now spent the next month indenturing the girls. Sixty were hired in Yass and the surrounding pastoral areas and, taking up Whitty’s suggestion, he took 45 to

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83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid., Irish Orphans.
86 Ibid.
87 Strutt diary, 1 March 1850, p.76.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid., 2 February 1850, p.76.
91 Ibid.
Gundagai. From there they were hired by settlers from as far away as Albury and Wagga Wagga and by residents of the neighbouring town of Tumut. Great care was taken to ensure they were placed with suitable families and Strutt took two girls away from Mrs Warton and Mrs Digby of Yass in order to “place them with more Christian people”. After they had all been hired, and before leaving for Sydney, Strutt rode round the district paying a last visit to each of the girls. His concern for them and the care he took in placing them was not lost on the local community. At the Yass Courthouse on April 17 he was presented “with an address expressing the general satisfaction my girls had given in Yass and neighbourhood”. This document, signed by the magistrates, clergymen and many prominent male settlers in the area, 47 signatories in all, was published in the *Goulburn Herald*. What gave Strutt even greater satisfaction was the volte face of the *Herald*’s Yass correspondent. The girls, all “Irish and Roman Catholic”, and their Surgeon Superintendent, “an Englishman and a Protestant”, were now praised and regret expressed that any reflections should have been made on the “capabilities of these young women”. However much other orphans may have given trouble elsewhere “in this township and district they are highly appreciated and respected”.

Merewether was in no doubt as to Strutt’s achievement. For over 18 months the orphans, and the whole style of this emigration, had been under constant attack in the colonial press. However nothing of the success of the girls at Yass made its way on to the pages of the *Sydney Morning Herald* and, by the time Strutt arrived back in Sydney towards the end of April, the Governor’s despatch asking for the cessation of Irish orphan emigration was already on its way to London. Despite this decision Merewether emphasised to Strutt that his work had not been “thrown away”. The girls from the *Thomas Arbuthnot* having “acquired a good character during the passage” as a result of his efforts were now giving satisfaction in all quarters. But Strutt’s great achievement was to have managed to overcome the general prejudice against the girls in the country, a prejudice created by the press and which “you had to encounter in some of the districts

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92 Strutt diary, 18 March 1850, p.79.
93 Ibid. 16 April 1850, p.90.
94 Ibid., pp.90-91.
95 Ibid., 18 April 1850, p.90; Goulburn Herald, 20 April 1850.
96 Goulburn Herald, 30 March 1850, The Female Orphans.
97 Ibid.
98 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to Surgeon Strutt, 6 May 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
99 Ibid.
through which you passed”.

It is easy to dwell on the negative aspects of the orphan emigration. The problems which the authorities had in dealing with a small, difficult minority among the girls are well documented, the *Earl Grey* case especially. These, and the stories emanating from the procession of girls through the courts, have coloured accounts of the orphans ever since. At the level of emigration policy however the scheme was a failure. As colonial condemnation gathered force throughout 1849 and early 1850 what increasingly came under attack was the idea of basing emigration to a free colony, even in part, on the perceived failures of the home country. In rejecting the orphans the colonists were rejecting large scale recruitment from the workhouse under any circumstances. When in 1854 the Commissioners sent one shipload of women, most of them experienced servants who quickly obtained good positions in Sydney, from the Cork Union colonial reaction was instantaneous — no matter what the quality of the emigrants the workhouse was not to be resorted to for their selection.

If the *Earl Grey* is to be allowed so much prominence in the historical record so too should the *Thomas Arbuthnot*. The way in which that voyage and the dispersal of the girls was managed showed the possibilities of the scheme in the hands of competent and caring officials. Handled in that manner it might have been possible for the Commissioners to have kept up a carefully selected emigration of Irish workhouse females. However in trying to meet colonial demands for large numbers of domestic servants they sent N.S.W emigrants from a source with which it was all too easy for the colonists to find fault.

**“That Famine is Pressing Each Day More Heavily Upon them”: The Wives and Families of the Convicts, 1848–1852**

Sligo was one the counties in Ireland worst hit by the Great Famine of 1845 to 1850. One Sligo woman who sought an unusual solution to the near starvation of herself and her family was Anne Sharkett of the parish of Kilmfree. On 1 February 1847 she sent a petition to Sir George Grey, the Home Secretary in London, outlining her desperate situation:

... her own utmost endeavours are inadequate to maintain her three orphan children...she humbly represents that her children are helpless and desolate ... that Famine is pressing each day more heavily upon them, that time as it progresses seems to grow darker ...

A number of local priests, magistrates and farmers signed their names to Anne’s

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100 *Ibid.*

101 Petition of Anne Sharkett to Secretary of State for the Home Department, 1 February 1847, Convict Reference File 1847/S6, State Paper Office, Dublin, hereafter SPO, Ireland.
petition, one even adding, as if anyone doubted her, “it is really true”.102 Why write to the British Home Secretary, who had no responsibility for famine relief in Ireland? Anne thought Sir George would be able to help her as he was the British minister in charge of convict transportation to Australia. Her husband, James, who had been transported to Sydney, now had his conditional pardon which Anne implored Grey to have turned into an absolute pardon. This would allow him to return legally to Kilfree where he could support his family.103 Only the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland could grant her petition so on 18 March it was sent to the Chief Secretary’s office in Dublin Castle.

As the Castle authorities did not seem to have any transportation records a local policeman was asked to visit Anne to discover the details of her husband’s case. Constable Patterson of the Ballymote Barracks reported to Dublin that Anne Sharkett was indeed “of indigent circumstances”, that her 15 year old son laboured on the public works and that her daughter, although married, was dependent on her mother.104 James Sharkett had been transported in March 1829 for abduction. On 30 April, the particulars having been laid before him, the Lord Lieutenant decided that he could not interfere on behalf of either Anne or James Sharkett.105

As Anne’s petition passed round within the bureaucracy nobody, either in London or in Dublin, told her that another course of action was open to her — have James Sharkett apply to the Governor of N.S.W. for a free passage for his family. As a time expired convict of good conduct he was entitled to this. Just a fortnight before Anne’s petition reached the Home Office Sir George Grey and the Colonial Secretary, Earl Grey, had decided to revive the practice of sending out the wives and families of emancipists, upon application from the colony through the Governor.

Caroline Chisholm has usually been given the credit for the revival of this policy. She arrived in London from N.S.W. in mid-1846 and from late November began trying to persuade Earl Grey, Sir George Grey and the Emigration Commissioners to send out the convict families.106 She went to the Colonial Office at an opportune moment for the realisation of her plans. The government was proposing to re-introduce a form of transportation to N.S.W. which included sending the families of these new convicts provided they paid half the fare. An outline of this scheme was sent to Earl Grey from the

102 Ibid.
103 Ibid.
104 Constable Patterson, Ballymote, County Sligo to Captain Lawson, County Inspector of Police, Sligo, 31 March 1847, CRF 1847/S6, SPO.
105 Annotation on Patterson to Lawson, 30 April.
Home Office on 5 November 1846 and, on 31 December, Grey decided to extend the plan to the families of earlier transportees.\textsuperscript{107} There was to be one important difference between the two sets of convicts; those already in the colony would have their families out free except for the normal charges applicable to all colonial assisted emigrants of equipping themselves with an approved chest of sea clothing and finding their way to the U.K. embarkation port.

In allowing the families to go Earl Grey claimed he had only just heard of the cancellation of the previous policy. It had been terminated, he felt, for very inadequate reasons. Families had been sent out in small groups on female convict ships and, when transportation to Sydney ceased in 1840, the Home office had simply stopped the practice for lack of money.\textsuperscript{108} No funds were asked for or allocated to provide passages for these families in private ships. In explaining his decision Grey made no reference to discussions with Mrs Chisholm; for him the issue was a matter of Imperial policy:

This country, having thought it proper for its own convenience to send out great numbers of convicts to Australia, ought justly to be called on to pay for the cost of any measure for mitigating the moral evils thus inflicted on those colonies and among those measures there is none more needed than sending out the wives and families of the convicts.\textsuperscript{109}

But however Grey phrased it there is little doubt that it was Caroline Chisholm who had provided him with personal, first hand accounts of the grim effects of transportation on divided families.

Two and a half years elapsed between Grey’s decision and the embarkation at Plymouth of the first families under the government scheme. Well before that in April and July 1847 Mrs Chisholm obtained passages for a small number of families, mostly Irish, on two female transports going to Tasmania — the \textit{Asia} and the \textit{Waverly}. From Hobart they were to go on to Sydney by colonial steamer. These emigrants went through no U.K. selection procedure of any kind. All that was required of them was to be on the list which Mrs Chisholm had drawn up in the colony after her meetings with the convict husbands.\textsuperscript{110} A Colonial Office proposal that the list be looked over by Sir George Gipps, just back in England from his term as Governor of N.S.W., came to nothing as

\textsuperscript{107} Memo of Earl Grey on paper from the Emigration Commissioners relating to costs of sending out families of convicts, 31 December 1846, Colonial Office, London, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/370.

\textsuperscript{108} Grey memo, 31 December 1846.

\textsuperscript{109} Grey memo, 31 December 1846.

\textsuperscript{110} The \textit{Asia} list is with Caroline Chisholm to Home Office, London, 12 March 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/387. The \textit{Waverly} list is with Caroline Chisholm to Chief Secretary’s Office, Dublin, 2 July 1847, Free Settlers Papers, FS 1847/4 (hereafter FSP), SPO.
he died before it reached him.\textsuperscript{111}

Most of these families were very poor. For those who came over from Ireland to join the Asia Mrs Chisholm persuaded Irish cross channel steamer owners to give them a free passage.\textsuperscript{112} When they reached London she found many so poorly dressed that she personally begged local businessmen to clothe them adequately for the voyage.\textsuperscript{113} Some had either insufficient warning of the departure of the ship or were too ill to proceed. In 1848 Father Owen Feeny of Riverstown parish, County Sligo, wrote to tell John Tighe of Wollongong, N.S.W., why his wife and daughters, all on Mrs Chisholm’s list, had failed to embark in either the Asia or the Waverly:

I recollect the time Mrs Chisholme’s letters arrived for her to go as far as London and to get a free passage from that to Sydney, the notice then was quite too short for her to be prepared, and in London time enough for the day appointed she wrote to acquaint Mrs Chisholme of the fact, and afterwards there came a second letter from that lady ordering them to go to Dublin and take shipping in the Waverly, in which she had procured a passage for them. But it so happened that your poor wife and all the family were then in the Fever some of them recovering slowly and others only in the commencement of it I wrote to Mrs Chisholme stating their circumstances and since then no other offer has been made to them.\textsuperscript{114}

Compared with the families who went later under the government scheme those on the Asia and the Waverly were lucky. Within seven months of Mrs Chisholm’s approach to Earl Grey they had escaped from famine to Australia, at government expense, and with a minimum amount of official scrutiny.

One regulation, applied to Mrs Chisholm’s families, showed how the Colonial Office might define the term convict family. A number of young men over 14, who had accompanied their mothers from Ireland to join the Asia, were refused a passage at the dockside in London. Under the old system the sons of convicts over 14 had not been allowed to travel on female transports and this regulation was enforced on the Asia. The Home Office contacted the Emigration Commissioners to see if they could send the young men out as ordinary assisted emigrants.\textsuperscript{115} This situation caused an outburst from the Colonial Office’s Permanent Under Secretary, James Stephen. A convict family, he argued, was one consisting of a wife and her dependant children being sent out for the


\textsuperscript{112} Caroline Chisholm to Home Office, 12 March 1847.

\textsuperscript{113} Hoban, \textit{op.cit.}, p.192.

\textsuperscript{114} Father Owen Feeny, Riverstown, County Sligo to John Tighe, Wollongong, N.S.W., 18 August 1848, IC/NSW, 9/6191.

\textsuperscript{115} Memo of James Stephen on Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 9 April 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/389.
sake of the family and the colony, not the convict.\textsuperscript{116} To include adult male children, who would simply set up for themselves on arrival, seemed to Stephen “like giving a direct premium to this family as a reward for the criminality of its head”. It was simply “a perversion of the meaning of the word Family ... to understand it to include Adult men”.\textsuperscript{117}

Stephen’s reaction was the first sign that anyone at the Colonial Office in mid-1847 was concerned about selection criteria for the proposed convict family emigration. For the moment the matter rested with the new Governor of N.S.W., Sir Charles Fitzroy, to whom a despatch had been sent in March 1847 informing him that the former practice of sending out families was to be renewed. He was requested to recommend “proper objects for that indulgence”.\textsuperscript{118} Nothing was to be heard from Fitzroy until March 1848. In the meantime letters from convict families in Ireland forced the Colonial Office to keep thinking about who was a “proper object” for a free passage.

In August 1847 Anne Dorneen petitioned Earl Grey from Rathdrum Workhouse in Wicklow.\textsuperscript{119} As she and her family, six sons and one daughter, had been reduced to the level of “paupers” since her husband’s transportation, she begged a passage to Sydney. In reply the Colonial Office set out the two basic requirements for this “indulgence”; her husband must apply to and be recommended by the Governor of N.S.W. and he must give evidence of being able to support his family.\textsuperscript{120} The Colonial Office officials were a lot less helpful to Anne than to Ellen Coffee of Sligo Town who addressed a similar petition to the Colonial Secretary in September 1847.\textsuperscript{121} Perhaps they had disliked Anne’s indignant remark about her husband’s exile being the result of “false accusation”, not crime.\textsuperscript{122} Ellen simply admitted that husband Thomas had been sent out for assault in 1835 and that he was now employed on “the Plains of Manaroo”.\textsuperscript{123} He had written home suggesting she approach the government for a passage for herself and his daughter. Certainly she appeared to be a deserving “object” of official largesse having “struggled”

\textsuperscript{116} Stephen memo, 9 April 1847.
\textsuperscript{117} Stephen memo, 9 April 1847.
\textsuperscript{118} Despatch No.113, Colonial Office to Governor N.S.W., 24 March 1847, Colonial Office/Entry Books of Correspondence (hereafter CO/EBC), CO.202/51.
\textsuperscript{119} Petition of Anne Dorneen, Rathdrum Workhouse, County Wicklow to B. Hawes, Parliamentary Under Secretary for the Colonies, 16 August 1847 CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.
\textsuperscript{120} Colonial Office to Anne Dorneen, 21 August 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.
\textsuperscript{121} Petition of Ellen Coffee, Sligo Town, County Sligo to Earl Grey, Colonial Secretary, no date but received at Colonial Office 27 October 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.
\textsuperscript{122} Petition Anne Dorneen, 6 August 1847.
\textsuperscript{123} Petition Ellen Coffee, 27 October 1847.
for 12 years to earn a “subsistence”. However as in her present “abject state” she had no hope of joining Thomas, she requested a passage that she might “spend the remainder of her days with her husband”. 124 Ellen’s tone moved Grey to reply that he was writing to Governor Fitzroy on her behalf asking that enquiries be made as to Thomas Coffee’s conduct and character. 125 No offer of a passage was made but the implication was that a favourable report from N.S.W. would see her on her way to Sydney. However this process was not a quick solution to Ellen’s predicament; she was told not to write again as a reply from the colony would take at least 12 months. 126

The Colonial Office also saw an applicant’s poverty as critical to their eligibility. Anne Dorneen and Ellen Coffee were both clearly poor. Catherine Agnew of Portglenone, County Antrim found herself rejected for appearing too affluent. The Agnews were offered a place by Mrs Chisholm on the Asia but were unable to accept. 127 Then Catherine had approached the Commissioners, possibly for an ordinary assisted passage, but was refused. Finally she petitioned Earl Grey in November 1847 for the passage she had previously turned down as a convict’s wife. 128 Her mistake now was to describe her husband’s position in the colony in glowing terms; he had been there for ten years, was doing well and, as evidence of the trust placed in him by his employer, had been allowed to take his wool clip worth £1,114 to Sydney. 129 Grey personally minuted this petition to the effect that he would not offer her a second passage because, by her own account, her husband was in a good job and “can pay”. 130 Officially she was told free passages were reserved for those who lacked funds and her husband was doing too well to qualify. 131 Grey could not have looked too closely at Mrs Chisholm’s lists or he would have seen that Henry Tilson, who wanted his wife and daughter out from County Cavan, “had £319 in the Bank”. 132 Catherine Agnew sent in another petition. When previously she had described her husband as doing well she had only meant that he had shown himself a trustworthy employee. 133 He did not have the money to bring her and

124 Ibid.

125 Colonial Office to Ellen Coffee, 30 October 1847, CO/EBC, CO.202/53.

126 Ibid.

127 Petition of Anne Agnew, Ballyscullion, near Portglenone, County Antrim to Earl Grey, 2 November 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO. 210/390.

128 Petition Anne Agnew, 2 November 1847.

129 Ibid.

130 Memo by Grey on Petition of Anne Agnew, 2 November 1847.

131 Colonial Office to Anne Agnew, 2 December 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.

132 Caroline Chisholm’s Asia list, 12 March 1847.

133 2nd Petition Anne Agnew to Earl Grey, 9 December 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.
their three sons to Sydney. Just before Christmas 1847 Grey again refused her a passage.  

Governor Fitzroy received Earl Grey's instructions to resume taking applications from emancipists for their families in August 1847. He approved of the measure as, since his assumption of the governorship, he had received many petitions from the men themselves. Supported by the local magistrates Michael Smith wrote to him from Cooma in June 1847. Smith had heard that ordinary assisted emigration to the colony was to be resumed and wondered if his family could have a passage from Ireland as he was in no position to bring them himself being but a "labouring man". Without such help he despaired of ever being "reunited to them". Magistrate Henry O'Brien of Yass, writing on behalf of his servant, John Brown, suggested to Fitzroy that bringing these families out was a matter of equity given the proposed renewal of assisted emigration. When the situation in Ireland in mid-1847 was taken into account compassion too might move governments to action. Brown's family had written to him expressing a wish to escape from a country where "they are suffering from extreme want".

Such appeals prompted Fitzroy to investigate the whole issue. He found that the despatch from the Colonial Secretary, Lord Stanley, to Governor Gipps terminating the scheme in December 1842 had seemed to Gipps "so peremptory as to preclude any remonstrance against it". The argument at the time, that the measure should cease because the colony was no longer receiving convicts, seemed to Fitzroy to take no account of those still under sentence and in September 1846 he begged Earl Grey to rescind a regulation which bore "hard upon this unfortunate class". This was not just a matter of compassion but of reformation also. Since it had become impossible to get their families out many men had become less easy to discipline and demoralised. Aware of the pent up demand Fitzroy was thus predisposed to pursue Grey's revival of the policy with

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134 Colonial Office to Anne Agnew, 21 December 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/390.
135 Michael Smith, Cooma to Colonial Secretary, Sydney, no date but accompanying character reference dated 7 June 1847, enclosed in Despatch No.140, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 10 July 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/383.
136 Michael Smith to Colonial Secretary, 7 June 1847.
137 Ibid.
138 Henry O'Brien, Douro, Yass to Colonial Secretary, Sydney, 19 June 1847, enclosed in Despatch No.139, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 9 July 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/383.
139 Henry O'Brien to Colonial Secretary, 19 June 1847.
140 Governor of N.S.W to Colonial Office, Despatch No.13, 1 September 1846, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/368.
141 Ibid.
vigour.

Fitzroy’s new regulations appeared in the *Government Gazette* on August 27 1847. All convicts, who had obtained a Ticket of Leave or higher form of liberty could apply for their families to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts in Sydney. The recommendation of “two respectable persons” known to the government was required certifying to the convict’s good conduct and capability of supporting his family. Final approval rested with the Governor. Those whose applications under the previous regulations of May 1833 had been approved, sent home but never complied with, were asked to make fresh applications. Typical of these frustrated applicants was Timothy Hickey of Maitland. Hickey had written frequently to his wife in Cashel, County Tipperary asking her and their seven children to come out. Nobody could have informed him of the ending of the regulation in 1842 for in November 1845 he wrote home saying that Governor Gipps had approved his application but, having heard nothing since, he wondered if his papers were lying overlooked at the Colonial Office. Hickey’s case shows just how peremptory Lord Stanley’s termination of the scheme had been — the government had failed to honour applications which were on their way when the decision was taken.

The scheme worked simply enough. On January 11 1849, Phillip McCaghy, labourer, of Phillip Street, Sydney, filled in and signed the form entitled appropriately Application for Wife and Family. After supplying the names and addresses, both of his family and local referees in Ireland, McCaghy had the local Catholic curate, Father McKenny testify to his being “well conducted” and that he could support his family. The application now went to J. McLean, the Principal Superintendent of Convicts who checked the records for McCaghy’s ship of arrival, date and place of trial and sentence. Any colonial offence recorded against him was also noted but, significantly, not the nature of his original crime. McLean recommended McCaghy’s application so it went to the Governor for final approval. From there McCaghy’s name was added to one of the regular lists of recommendations sent in despatches to the Colonial Office between

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143 Ibid., p.904.
144 Information from Hickey contained in Henry Massey, R.M., Rosanna, Cashel, County Tipperary to Colonial Office, 8 June 1846, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/373.
145 Henry Massey to Colonial Office, 8 June 1846.
146 Philip McCaghy, Application for Wife and Family, 11 January 1849, Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, Letters from Principal Superintendent of Convicts, 1849, 4/2844.
147 McCaghy application, 11 January 1849.
October 1847 and November 1851. The way in which these applications were processed indicates that the colonial administration regarded an applicant, once approved and on a list, as virtually assured of having their families out.

Where either McLean or Fitzroy were in doubt they referred the application to London rather than reject it out of hand locally. Both felt unable to recommend Catherine Hanafin’s request for her two illegitimate sons, Pat and Thomas Sullivan, but forwarded it as a special case. Catherine felt she was being deprived of the indulgence because she had not declared herself as a married woman on arrival. However the children’s father had died two years before her transportation and her “feeling as a mother” was now inducing her to try to bring them “to this country from a country where I suppose they are starving at the present time”. The Colonial Office response was predictable. Stephen felt she must definitely be refused for the only reason for giving these two youths a passage rather than any other “two young Irishmen, would be that their mother has committed a crime and had previously had two illegitimate children”. Women like Catherine Hanafin did not fit Stephen’s picture of a proper object for free passage.

Twenty-three application lists were sent to London, two of which have not survived. Preliminary investigation of them shows that the Irish emancipists dominated the scheme from first to last. Of approximately 998 individuals sent for 845, 85%, resided in Ireland. Although the numbers involved are small it is revealing that Munster, the province of Ireland with the strongest 19th century free emigrant association with Sydney, generated 43% of all the applications well ahead of Leinster with 23%. Moreover County Tipperary, which accounted for 16% of all Irish assisted immigrants to N.S.W. between 1848 and 1870, accounted for 14% of the convict family applications. This was double Cork’s 7%, the next highest county.

Fitzroy’s first lists were greeted with cold censure and mild alarm. Even before a single list had been seen by either Earl Grey or his staff they reacted negatively to the Governor’s regulations of August 1847. In deciding to revive the scheme Grey had not thought about who should or should not receive a passage. Now, with the lists about to arrive on his desk, he attempted to define eligibility, seeing it as something to be decided in each individual case. It was his understanding of the previous practice that this

148 The Despatches in which the lists were included, and the date each was sent to the Colonial Office from Sydney, is at footnote 1, Figure 1.
149 Catherine Hanafin’s application enclosed in Despatch No. 222, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 2 November 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/385.
150 Hanafin application, 2 November 1847.
151 James Stephen, memo on Hanafin application, 2 November 1847.
152 Despatch No.160, Colonial Office to Governor of N.S.W., 13 September 1848, CO/EBC,
"boon" had not been granted on application but only as a reward for peculiarly good conduct. The mere avoidance of misconduct was not sufficient grounds for a passage. Men who had been a considerable time at liberty should help themselves; with the opportunity to earn and save they should not be looking to government to bring out their families. As the first lists arrived over the next months Grey became increasingly concerned at the mounting numbers promised a passage by Fitzroy. Finally in mid-September 1848 he sent a disapproving despatch to N.S.W. instructing Fitzroy to suspend the new regulations. Grey felt the Governor's generous interpretation of his instructions had allowed too many men to expect their families out.\textsuperscript{153} Disappointment could now be the only result as the government would not be able to grant passages in so indiscriminate a manner.\textsuperscript{154} This was not a revival of the old practice as Grey understood it and Fitzroy was put on notice to explain himself.

If the Colonial Office were not going to allow the Governor's selections who was to go? Grey found the lists lacked essential details. Fitzroy thought selection had been his responsibility so his lists had included little about the convicts themselves beyond their ship and date of arrival. No information had been sent about what Grey saw as a determining factor in deciding who should be entitled to their family — the length of time a convict had been in the colony and able to earn for himself. All the lists were now sent to the Home Office with a request for this information and, as the great majority of the cases were Irish, this involved sending them to Dublin. Whatever the results of these investigations might be in May 1848 Grey obviously thought the number to be sent should be small. He told the Home Office that those who had gone out in 1840 or later might qualify.\textsuperscript{155} This would involve no more than about ten families. With these protracted delays one begins to appreciate the good fortune of Mrs Chisholm's emigrants. Her concern had been simply to reunite the families as soon as possible.

While the Colonial Office tried to make up its mind whom to send Grey's restrictive thinking became the basis of official response to enquiries about a free passage. In May 1848 Mary Meehan of Roscra, County Tipperary, wrote enquiring to whom should she write about an order for a free passage which, her husband had informed her, was on its way home.\textsuperscript{156} A weary memo on Mary's letter suggested that as these enquiries were

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{154} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{155} Colonial Office to Home Office, 17 May 1848, CO/EBC, CO.202/55.

\textsuperscript{156} Mary Meehan, Roscra, County Tipperary to Colonial Office, 24 May 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/409.
becoming very frequent perhaps a lithograph reply should be prepared to deal with them.\textsuperscript{157} Emigration Commissioner T.F. Elliot responded to this by stating that, as families of men sent before 1840 would probably not be sent, any proposed lithograph would have to make that clear.\textsuperscript{158} Mary Meehan, who had mentioned that her husband was sent out in 1839 for 7 years, was told she would probably not receive a passage.\textsuperscript{159} Colonial Office officials referred to Mary as “this poor woman”; she had after all been ineligible for a passage by just one year. Less sympathy was wasted on the clear cut case of Mary Kehoe of Clough, near Baltinglass, County Wicklow. She had also heard from her husband that an order had gone home for them and that they would soon hear from the government. Was this true, she asked?\textsuperscript{160} She wrote again saying that her husband’s master, who had actually spoken to the Governor, had told him that there was “nothing to prevent you getting a free passage”.\textsuperscript{161} Grey and Elliot were in no doubt she should be prevented. Mary was informed that her husband, who went out in 1828, had been free for 13 years giving him “sufficient opportunity of acquiring by his industry the means of paying for your passage to N.S.W. should he feel so inclined”.\textsuperscript{162} Like Anne Dorney before her, Mary Kehoe did not appear deserving enough in her letters, painting her husband as the victim of a harsh judicial system which had transported him for “a rash act” committed under the influence of alcohol and bad company.\textsuperscript{163} Such an attitude did not help their case at the Colonial Office.

While the Colonial Office tried to come to a final decision many of the families in Ireland were in a desperate situation. In 1847 Caroline Chisholm had written to John Tighe of Wollongong, N.S.W., to expect his family on the \textit{Asia} and, when they failed to embark on either that ship or the \textit{Waverly}, he must have felt considerably alarmed.\textsuperscript{164} John had been one of those men disappointed by the termination of the family scheme in 1842. His application had gone in as soon as he had obtained his Certificate of Freedom in March 1841 but, like Timothy Hickey’s application, it would have got no further than the Colonial Office.\textsuperscript{165} When the family failed to arrive in the \textit{Waverly} John wrote home

\textsuperscript{157} Memo on Mary Meehan to Colonial Office, 24 May 1848.
\textsuperscript{158} Memo T.F. Elliot on Mary Meehan to Colonial Office, 24 May 1848.
\textsuperscript{159} Colonial Office to Mary Meehan, 5 June 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/409.
\textsuperscript{160} Mary Kehoe, Clough, Baltinglass, County Wicklow to Colonial Office, 3 March 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/408.
\textsuperscript{161} Mary Kehoe to Colonial Office, 15 May 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/408.
\textsuperscript{162} Colonial Office to Mary Kehoe, 6 June 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/408.
\textsuperscript{163} Mary Kehoe to Colonial Office, 15 May 1848.
\textsuperscript{164} Father Owen Feeny to John Tighe, 18 August 1848.
\textsuperscript{165} John Tighe, application for wife and family, in Despatch No. 231, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial
twice to find out what was happening. Both these letters arrived about March 1848 but it was not till January 1849 that news of the family's destitution reached him. Father Owen Feeny wrote on behalf of his wife, who was illiterate, describing the family's eviction from their cabin at Heapstown and of the illness which had prevented them taking up Mrs Chisholm's second offer:

They have been most desirous [sic] to go as far as you if by any possibility they could accomplish their wishes there is nothing in the world would make them so happy as to get an opportunity of going to you — They are now in very poor circumstances — you have heard of the great poverty and distress in this country — for the last two years but the present year promises to be at least as bad for the poor people as either of the last years — the potato crop is entirely blighted in this district ... if you could send a remittance of some money to your wife it would be indeed greatly wanted — she is very destitute of help.166

John went at once to the Wollongong Police Magistrate, Captain Plunkett, who wrote on his behalf to the Immigration Agent in Sydney.167 Tighe knew nothing of the Governor's new regulations and wished only to send some money home. When he heard of the new policy he put in his application.168 As he had been transported as far back as 1833 the family stood little chance of being accepted given Colonial Office policy in mid-1848. However by the time John's application reached London Grey had done a complete about turn and had decided that virtually all applicants could have their families out.

Two developments precipitated this sudden shift in policy: in the outcome there had been fewer applications than expected and a parliamentary grant in May 1848 proved sufficient to send out all who wished to go. In mid-December 1848 the Colonial Office was still sending newly arrived lists to the Home Office for transportation details "with a view to some selection founded upon the length of time during which they [the convicts] may have been in the colony".169 Events now moved quickly. By 21 December Grey had the first seven lists covering 752 people in train and two more, involving 104 people, were in hand with the Home Office.170 Moreover as later lists had come in during the second half of 1848 it had become clear that the numbers were tapering away. The early lists had been swollen by the unfulfilled demand from the previous scheme terminated in

Office, 30 June 1841, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/316.

166 Father Owen Feeny to John Tighe, 18 August 1848.

167 Captain P. Plunkett, Wollongong to N.S.W Immigration Agent, 19 January, 1849, IC/NSW, 9/6191.

168 John Tighe, application for wife and family, Despatch No.242, Governor N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 22 November 1849, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/417.


170 Despatch No.225, Colonial Office to Governor of N.S.W., 21 December 1848, CO/EBC, CO.202/56.
1842, and applications from convicts who had become eligible between 1842 and the publication of the new regulations. Fitzroy was now informed that, thanks to the "liberality" of Parliament, those "poor people" who had had their hopes raised of a passage would not be disappointed.\textsuperscript{171} The Commissioners would be instructed to send, as soon as possible, the families of men transported in 1830 and after. If funds allowed all other families would then be sent.\textsuperscript{172} Straight after Christmas 1848 the Colonial Office, with some relief, handed the whole project over to the Emigration Commissioners with instructions to contact the families and make all the necessary arrangements.\textsuperscript{173} Grey wanted the first 600 embarked by 1 April 1849.\textsuperscript{174} When a new, short list arrived in March 1849 a clerk asked whether it, like previous lists, should be sent to the Home Office for transportation dates. Grey however had just heard from the Commissioners that a fair number of families either would not or could not avail of a passage.\textsuperscript{175} The list was not sent to the Home Office and all attempts at selection in the U.K. now ceased. Subsequent lists were minuted simply — "Direct the Emigration Commissioners to provide passages for these families".\textsuperscript{176}

Between mid-1849 and mid-1852 the Commissioners provided passages for 635 members of convict families to Sydney, 51\% of all who had been sent for. [Figure 6.2] Of these 479, 75\% have been identified on shipping lists as Irish. From the few pieces of evidence to have survived about them it is clear that, like Mrs Chisholm's families, they were mostly very poor. But there was one example of relative affluence among the group. The Tilsons, Margaret, 38, and Jane, 18, from Denn, County Cavan, embarked on the Panama in 1849.\textsuperscript{177} This was the family of Henry Tilson who, according to Mrs Chisholm's Asia list, had £319 in the bank.

The clearest indication of the destitution of many of these families was their difficulty in getting together the chest of sea clothing required by the Commissioners. This was not a minor matter. The Commissioners refused embarkation to any emigrant who did not produce the basic minimum regarded as necessary for a three month

\textsuperscript{171} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{173} Colonial Office to Emigration Commissioners, 28 December 1848, Emigration Commissioners/Entry Books of Correspondence, CO.385/23.
\textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} Memo from clerk and T.F. Elliot on Despatch No.208, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 25 September 1848, received 10 March 1849, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/399.
\textsuperscript{176} Memo on Despatch No. 230, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 20 October 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/400.
\textsuperscript{177} Panama, arrived 14 September 1849, IBL/NSW, 4/4912.
voyage. Fortye-five people turned down a passage because they could not afford the outfit. Mary Gildea of Westport, County Mayo stated her willingness to go but was unable to clothe herself and the children. Many who did go were clothed from charitable sources. When Bridget Smith of Dunshaughlin, County Meath, was contacted she asked that her husband be told the family could not go without an outfit. In her case the Dunshaughlin Board of Guardians agreed to provide what was required. In the Commissioners’ register dealing with this emigration there are numerous references to Irish Boards of Guardians supplying families with an outfit. Sometimes the emigrant was actually an inmate of the workhouse. In March 1849 Eliza Landrigan, described as a “pauper in the house”, showed a letter from the Commissioners to the Clonmel Guardians offering her a passage, provided that she had the prescribed clothing. The Guardians saw it as “sound economy” to get Eliza away and relieve the rates of her support. In other cases there is no indication of how clothing was actually obtained. The referees for the Rock family of Elphin, County Roscommon wrote that the mother was dead and the children too destitute to afford the outfit. Nonetheless the Rock children somehow obtained enough clothing to satisfy the Commissioners as they sailed on the Success in 1849. There was one suggestion that what was provided was not always adequate. The Surgeon Superintendent of the first ship to sail carrying convict families, the Panama, reported that they had been “badly supplied with clothing”.

Families faced two other main costs: the fare in Ireland to the port of embarkation and the normal £1 or £2 entrance money for the passage, which the Commissioners demanded of all assisted emigrants. To Elizabeth Crawford of Kilmallock, County Limerick £1 was a lot of money. When she realised she would have to pay it she put her case to the Guardians as a “destitute girl”. After an initial refusal they gave her the £1 plus

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178 For full clothing requirement on emigrant ships despatched by the Emigration Commissioners see circular and application form sent to intending emigrants in Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 10 October 1849, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/423.

179 See Figure 2. Column 5.


181 Entry for Bridget Smith, Register of Convict Families, p.31.

182 Register of Convict Families, passim.

183 Clonmel Union, County Tipperary, Board of Guardians’ Minute Books, 31 March 1849, p.226.

184 Entry for Rock family, Register of Convict Families, p.37.

185 Success, arrived Sydney, 18 December 1849, IBL/NSW, 4/4914.

her outfit. Julia Noonan of Ballygran, County Cork said she was too poor to afford even the fare to the port of Cork. The Commissioners doubted if she could afford the outfit and decided to inform this “poor woman” at once of the clothing requirement “to allow herself time to prepare or avoid later disappointment”. Despite her poverty internal travel costs did not deter Ellen Doherty. In September 1849 she received an Embarkation Order for the Anglia, due to sail from Plymouth in October. With Bridget, 14, and Daniel, 13 she set out to walk to Dublin from Buncrana, County Donegal, a distance of about 250 kilometres. They missed the boat but finally got away on the St Vincent in 1851.

For these families the Great Famine was the last in a series of catastrophes which reduced them to extreme poverty. Most had probably been far from affluent before the first of these occurred, that is the transportation of the head of the family. In the aftermath the convict wives were left to fend for themselves and their families for periods ranging from ten to 20 years. Their predicament emerges from that mixture of formal and melodramatic prose typical of the petitions they directed to the Irish authorities. Bridget Collins’ husband had been in N.S.W. nine years when she described to the Lord Lieutenant how, since his departure, she had struggled to support herself. Without the help of friends, she would “be in a most helpless and forlorn situation”. This dependency however was “precarious”, and she begged a free passage. In 1840 Rev. Fr. Hannigan of Ballinasloe, County Galway supported Mary Mannion’s request for a passage, seven years after Patrick Mannion’s exile. She was looking after four children “in a state of destitution within a few miles of my house”. With her husband gone one woman suffered eviction. Thomas Brassil of Sixmilebridge, County Clare went in 1835 and by June 1836 his wife Mary and five children had in her words “been driven

187 Elizabeth Crawford, Killmallock, County Limerick to Colonial Office, 16 September 1852, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/460.
188 Julia Noonan, Ballygran, near Charleville, County Cork to Colonial Office, 21 July 1848, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/409.
189 Memo by Emigration Commissioners on Julia Noonan to Colonial Office, 21 July 1848.
190 Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 10 June 1851, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/447.
191 St Vincent, arrived 15 December 1851, IBL/NSW, 4/4921.
192 Petition of Bridget Collins, Carrick on Shannon, County Roscommon to Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, 20 November 1840, FSP 1840/6, SPO.
193 Petition of Bridget Collins, 20 November 1840.
194 Petition of Mary Mannion, Lurgan, Abbeygormacon, County Galway to His Excellency the Right Honourable Baron Fortescue, Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland, no date but accompanying letter from Rev. Fr. Hannigan dated 21 August 1839, FSP 1839/141, SPO.
195 Rev. Fr. Hannigan, Somerset Glebe, Ballinasloe, County Galway to Lord Lieutenant, 21 August 1839, attached to petition of Mary Mannion.
from a house and a lot of land". They were now “in an exposed state of wretchedness without a house or place and in a famished condition”. Between their husbands departure and their own many of these women, like Mary Grehan of Collooney, County Sligo, were only able to support themselves from parish relief. Husband Martin Grehan was transported in 1838; in 1850 the parish priest of Collooney stated that the Grehans now had no “means of support but the provisions of the Poor Relief Act”.

Apart from poverty this emigration was characterised by its genuine family nature. Few non-convict Irish families reached 19th century Sydney as the result of nomination for an assisted passage by a husband or wife resident in the colony. Before 1858 the remittance regulations did not permit the sponsoring of such families. These Irish convict wives and their children therefore represent the largest single such group sent out from Ireland to Sydney between 1848 and 1870. [Figure 6.3] The abandonment of all effort by the Colonial Office to determine “proper objects” for a passage resulted in a wider definition of the notion of family by the Commissioners. Stephen Stapleton’s reward for the crime of his father-in-law, John Breen, was a free passage to Sydney. John Breen’s application had been for his wife and four children but one of them, Margaret, probably unknown to him, was now married to Stephen Stapleton. When contacted the family requested the Commissioners to allow Stephen and John’s grandchild, Michael a passage. A family did not now have to fit Stephen’s definition of a wife and dependant children; the Commissioners allowed the adult sons and daughters, sometimes accompanied by their own families. A line was drawn however at more indirect relationships. When John Fogarty, transported in 1829, tried to get out his niece, an orphan, the Commissioners referred to Earl Grey for guidance. Family, Grey advised, must be “immediate family” and he would not establish a precedent by sending out Margaret Fogarty. Again one is struck by the luck of Mrs Chisholm’s emigrants. Eliza

196 Petition of Mary Brassil, near Sixmilebridge, County Clare to His Excellency The Most Noble the Earl Musgrave, Lord Lieutenant General and Governor General of Ireland, 20 June 1836, FSP 1836/4, SPO.
197 Ibid.
198 Accompanying statement by Father Hugh Conway, parish priest of Dromard, 23 January 1850, on Petition of Mary Grehan, Collooney, County Sligo Earl Grey, no date, received in Colonial Office, 31 January 1850, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/437.
199 Panama, arrived 14 September 1849, IBL/NSW, 4/4912.
200 Application of John Breen for Margaret Breen and four children, 18 November 1847, in Despatch No.251, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 20 December 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/386.
201 Entry for Breen family, Register of Convict Families, p.26.
202 Father James Mackey, Clonoulty, County Tipperary to Colonial Office, 24 August 1849. CO/NSWOC, CO.201/425.
203 Memo by Grey on Father Mackey to Colonial Office, 24 August 1849.
Doherty, described as a "sister-in-law" of convict Francis McCay, got away in the Waverly in 1847.\textsuperscript{204}

The significance of this small, limited scheme derives from its difference from other forms of Irish assisted emigration to mid-19th century Sydney. First, these passages were financed by the Imperial not the colonial government. This, and the fact that their sponsors were clearly contributing to the local economy, permitted these poor families to slip unnoticed into colonial life. Not so those other Famine emigrants — the young, orphan women from Irish workhouses, who arrived in their hundreds between 1848 and 1850. N.S.W. paid for this scheme and publicly questioned the suitability of so called "pauper" immigration. Second, unlike the official N.S.W. remittance schemes dominated by the Irish in the late 1850s and throughout the 1860s, the convict scheme represented a genuine official attempt to reconstruct broken families. What crime had torn asunder the state provided a limited opportunity to reunite, and the Colonial Office’s initial attempt to restrict this opportunity disappeared once finance was no longer a restraining factor. Under the remittance regulations the colonial government encouraged colonists to sponsor their relatives for primarily economic reasons. They wanted young, preferably single, emigrants who would immediately find work as labourers and domestic servants. By comparison the convict scheme had a clear moral purpose. Last, unlike all other assisted emigrants, the quality and ages of these people were irrelevant to both the Commissioners and the colonial authorities. No comment was made by the Immigration Agent on any aspect of their suitability for the local labour market on arrival.

Whatever general conclusions emerge from this emigration the experiences of these people cannot fail to arouse our sympathy. The case of Mary Mannion was particularly poignant. In 1832 she was left in a small cabin in east Galway to bring up four sons on the exile of her husband.\textsuperscript{205} She rejoined him in N.S.W. 26 years later. John Tighe between 1841 and 1853 made four attempts, documented in official records, to bring out his family.\textsuperscript{206} They arrived in Sydney in 1858, 25 years after his departure from Sligo, not from Ireland but as steerage passengers on the Carrington from New York,

\textsuperscript{204} Caroline Chisholm’s Waverly list, 2 July 1847.

\textsuperscript{205} Telegraph, arrived 3 February 1858, IBL/NSW, 4/4977.

\textsuperscript{206} Three of John Tighe’s attempts are cited in footnotes 114, 165, and 168. His final effort can be found in the N.S.W. Immigration Deposits Journals which are the Immigration Department’s record of all deposits made under the various remittance regulations in force between 1848 and 1863. On 5 October 1853 Tighe made a deposit for his wife Margaret and daughter Mary: Immigrant Deposit Journal, 1853/4, 4/4576, AONSW. A letter from the Emigration Commissioners to the Colonial Office about this deposit recommended that the money be returned to Tighe because, "Margaret Tighe and her daughter Mary have gone to the United States and appear to be settled there with Margaret Tighe’s Son in Law": Emigration Commissioners to Colonial Office, 13 April 1854, Colonial Office/Emigration Commissioners, Entry Books of Correspondence CO.386/72.
U.S.A. Finally what of Anne Sharkett who had wanted, not to emigrate, but to have her husband returned to her in Ireland. Husband James applied for her and his three children in October 1847. Perhaps her situation had improved somewhat from that indigent condition in which Constable Patterson had found her in March 1847. When the Commissioners contacted her in early 1849 she declined their offer to join her husband saying she was too old for a voyage to Australia.

"We Could only Find Money for One": Irish Emigrant Children of the Regulations of 26 May 1846, 1848–1851

Between 1848 and 1870, apart from the convict family scheme, only one other set of regulations aimed deliberately at reuniting broken families — the regulations of 26 May 1846. Like the convict scheme they were the direct result of representations made to the authorities by Caroline Chisholm. During her travels throughout N.S.W. in the mid-1840s she was approached by a number of mainly Irish "bounty" immigrants who told her of how they had had to leave some of their children in Ireland upon emigrating. A typical case was Patrick Daly who arrived in 1839 from County Kildare, bringing two of his children with him but leaving one at home. Daly’s description of how he paid for the two children shows the strategies used by some emigrants to keep the family as united as possible:

Oh! how we were pushed to get out when the money was to be paid; the fact was we could only find money for one. Well, what did we do? There was a poor woman who wanted to get to her husband, a prisoner in New South Wales, and she had one child, so we agree to take her child as our own, and she goes out as a single woman in the same ship; for this she gives us £1, besides the £1 she gave us to pay for her child, and this saved us from leaving two children at home instead of one, as it paid the agent.

By February 1846 Mrs Chisholm had enough information on this subject to approach the

207 N.S.W. Shipping Master’s Office, Passengers Arriving, ship Carrington arrived Sydney from New York, U.S.A., 13 January 1858, X98, AONSW. I much indebted to Mr Peter Doyle of Wollongong Family History Society for having found this entry for me. To have searched for the Tighes as unassisted passengers in hundreds of unindexed shipping lists in the 1850s would have been beyond the patience of this researcher. It underlines the important contribution genealogists, as yet not fully recognised, are making to Australia’s immigration history.

208 Application of James Sharkett for Anne Sharkett and three children, Despatch No.219, Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 20 October 1847, CO/NSWOC, CO.210/384.

209 Entry for Sharkett family, Register of Convict Families, p.27.

210 For copy of regulations of 26 May 1846 see Governor of N.S.W. to Colonial Office, 9 July 1846, CO/NSWOC, CO.201/367.

211 Margaret Kiddle, op.cit., pp.82-83.

Colonial Secretary in Sydney with a list of parents in a similar position to Daly. She begged the Governor's "humane consideration" for those children who had been left behind and were now, she alleged, "suffering the extreme of want and misery" although their parents in the colony were capable of providing for them in "comfort".

Mrs Chisholm's appeal did not include a specific request for a free passage for these children but it was obvious that this was the solution to their predicament. The Governor, Sir George Gipps, therefore sent her letter and its accompanying list to Francis Merewether for comment. Merewether, although he disapproved of how the "bounty" agents had allowed families to leave children behind, recommended that they be brought out at government expense. Not only would this re-unite the families but the children would be an acquisition to the colony. The Governor agreed and Merewether placed a notice in the Government Gazette setting out the conditions under which passages would be offered and calling for applications. These regulations differed in many points from the ordinary remittance regulations. No financial deposit was required as a contribution towards the passage but application could only be made for proven children of "bounty" emigrants who had left the U.K. before 7 January 1842. A £5 promissory note signed by two "persons of credit" had to be lodged with the Immigration Agent as a guarantee that a child on arrival would be taken off the government's hands. Three weeks rations would be provided free but after that the note would be progressively drawn on. Sea clothes were also to be the responsibility of the parents. Although not stated in the notice all applications were, after recommendation by the Immigration Agent, sent to the Governor for final approval. Lists of children were than forwarded to the Emigration Commissioners.

The Commissioners found the children in a variety of personal circumstances. Many of the replies to their enquiries in Ireland revealed the disruption being brought about everywhere by the Famine. Most of their searching was conducted during the worst famine year of all, 1847, when thousands of Irish uprooted themselves and fled to the ports. Along with them went Henry Blake of Milford, County Carlow, who had been

213 Caroline Chisholm to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 18 February 1846, N.S.W. Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 4/2929, AONSW.
214 Ibid.
215 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 10 March 1846, Copies of letters sent to Colonial Secretary re migration to N.S.W., 4/4610, AONSW.
217 Ibid.
218 Ibid.
219 Ibid.
sent for by his parents in N.S.W. The Commissioners were informed that he had left from New Ross in the spring with his grandmother heading for Quebec.\textsuperscript{220} Given the huge death rate among those who went to British North America, in what became known as “Black 47”, one wonders if they survived.\textsuperscript{221} Others who might have been able to escape to Sydney would never make the trip. Patrick Considine, gaol guard of Ennis, County Clare told the Commissioners that Catherine, daughter of Patrick Considine who had emigrated to N.S.W., had died in mid-1846.\textsuperscript{222} Some appeared to be unwilling to leave the relatives or guardians they had lived with since their parents’ departure. For example Kitty Minehan, aged eight, living with Bridget Kief of Knockadereen, Killaloe, County Clare, did not want to go. John Crowe, a local farmer, visited them and gave a grim account of their situation in famine ridden east Clare in July 1847 to the Commissioners:

... I went to Bridget Kief’s house and I ask Kitty Minehan, would she go to her parents; answer no — I caught her by the hand, and said she should; she began to cry ... they are very poor living on 1 lb of meal each of them in the day.\textsuperscript{223}

Some relatives saw future personal advantage in holding on to their charges. The parish priest of Rosscarberry, County Cork, Jeremiah Moloney, suspected that the grandfather of Margaret Scannell, aged eight, whose parents had emigrated on the \emph{Canton} on 1841, wanted to keep the child with him “in the expectation of getting money from time to time from her father for supporting her”.\textsuperscript{224} On the other hand, Dennis McElhill, applied for by his mother, was in excellent health according to the priest at Termonamongan, County Tyrone. He was simply “not desirous of going or joining his parent ... he prefers living with James Steers”.\textsuperscript{225}

As with the convict families, finding money for the necessary clothing and the fare to the embarkation port was a struggle for many of these children and their relatives. A circular from the Commissioners emphasised that no “Public Funds” were available to help meet these costs and that failure to do so would result in loss of passage.\textsuperscript{226} John

\textsuperscript{220} John Alexander to Emigration Commissioners, 28 June 1847, copies of letters to Emigration Commissioners re children applied for under regulations of 26 May 1846, N.S.W. Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, 4/2802.1.

\textsuperscript{221} For a full description of “Black 47” see Terry Coleman, \emph{Passage to America}, London, 1974, pp.157-190.

\textsuperscript{222} Patrick Considine to Emigration Commissioners, 8 May 1847, copies of letters to Emigration Commissioners re children applied for etc.

\textsuperscript{223} \textit{Ibid.}, John Crowe to Emigration Commissioners, 2 July 1847.

\textsuperscript{224} \textit{Ibid.}, Jeremiah Maloney to Emigration Commissioners, 17 May 1847.

\textsuperscript{225} \textit{Ibid.}, John McCullah to Emigration Commissioners, no date but in same series of letters.

\textsuperscript{226} Form of Circular addressed to the Guardians and Referees of the several Children named in Mr Deas
McMahon’s son told the Commissioners that he could afford neither the clothing nor the fare to the port.227 Often relatives, prepared to let a child go, would not do so until they had received funds from the parents. John Levitt told the Commissioners that even if only £1 was required he could not supply it to enable George Cosgrove to join his parents.228 James Gannon of Mullingar, County Westmeath would not release his grandson, Michael, until he had heard from the boy’s father personally and was provided with the “means to clothe him [Michael]”.229 In some cases the local Boards of Guardians came to the rescue. The Clonmel Guardians sanctioned the payment of the fare to Plymouth of Mary and Anastasia Garret, aged 14 and 11.230 They appear to have been workhouse inmates as a Union official was assigned to take them to Dublin and to deliver them on the steamer into the care of Anne Pylatt, a dressmaker from Cashel going out on the same ship.231

However the Commissioners bent their own rules in relation to some of these children. They provided outfits for an unknown number sent out in 1847 on the Sir Edward Parry, the only vessel specially chartered for this emigration. No records survive to show how they decided whom to assist. Possibly they made provision only for those who reached Plymouth and were discovered at the pre-embarkation inspections to have insufficient clothing.232 To send unaccompanied children back to Ireland in the summer of 1847 was something that not even the most rule bound official could contemplate, so a sea chest was provided on the spot but charged to the colonial government. Merewether later approved this expenditure and repayment was not demanded from the parents in N.S.W.233 These were probably the only assisted emigrants ever to receive such help with non passage costs from the colonial government.

All told this was a small emigration. From the shipping lists only 99 immigrants can definitely be identified as having travelled under the regulations of May 1846.234 Of these

Thomson’s letter to Mr Walcott on Passages of Bounty Children, Enclosure No.4, N.S.W. Colonial Secretary’s Correspondence, 1848, 4/2802.1.

227 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to John McMahon, 7 September 1850, CLMP/NSW, 4/4638.
228 John Levitt to Emigration Commissioners, 12 May 1847, copies of letters to Emigration Commissioners re children applied for etc.
229 Ibid., William Perry to Emigration Commissioners, 29 June 1847.
231 Ibid.
232 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 31 March 1848, copies of letters sent to Colonial Secretary re migration to N.S.W., 4/4610, AONSW.
233 Ibid.
234 Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.
86 arrived on the *Sir Edward Parry* in 1848 and 13 others can be found on various ships between 1848 and 1851. In March 1851 Merewether recommended cancelling the regulations, arguing that as the scheme had been in operation since mid-1846 parents had had sufficient time to take advantage of it. Upon its termination the option of sending for their grown up children under the normal remittance regulations was still open to them.

There is a certain arbitrariness in grouping together those who came to Sydney under these three schemes as Famine emigrants. For the convict families and the children the Famine was, in a sense, only an event which now lends poignancy, and at times tragedy, to their story. These two schemes would almost certainly have been put into operation Famine or no Famine as they seemed reasonable to governments as the solution to problems brought about by the nature of previous convict and “bounty” emigrations. In the policy discussions surrounding the framing of both sets of regulations no reference was ever made to the situation in Ireland and no real sense of urgency was shown in dealing with individual cases. The orphan workhouse emigration was different. It was the closest the Commissioners and the Colonial Office ever came between 1848 and 1870 in seeing assisted emigration to Sydney, paid for by colonial funds, as a method of dealing with a particular social problem in Ireland. But whatever the general policies and purposes behind each scheme the result was that about 2,800 destitute and near destitute people were able to escape from famine ridden Ireland by obtaining a free passage to Sydney.

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235 *Sir Edward Parry*, arrived 17 February 1848, Agent’s List, 4/4786.

236 N.S.W. Immigration Agent to N.S.W. Colonial Secretary, 7 March 1851, copies of letters sent to the Colonial Secretary re migration to N.S.W., 4/4613.

Chapter 7

"Who Will not Give his Mite in so Good, so Holy, so Blessed a Cause": The Donegal Relief Committee of N.S.W. and Assisted Emigration from County Donegal to Sydney, 1859–1864

Before 1859 Sydney was not a popular destination with emigrants from Ireland’s most north western and isolated county — Donegal. From 1851 to 1858 N.S.W. accounted for barely one percent of all emigrants from that county. [Figure 7.1] Donegal also made little impact on the figures for Irish assisted immigrants arriving in Sydney; between 1841 and 1858 just two percent, 836 of the 44,228 Irish, came from Donegal. [Figure 7.1] However in 1859 Donegal’s share of the immigrants leapt to 31% and the next six years, 1859 to 1864, accounted for 60% of all N.S.W./Donegal immigrants between 1841 and 1870. [Figure 7.1] The effect on total Donegal emigration was no less dramatic. Assisted emigration to Sydney accounted for 34% of all county emigrants in 1859 and 16% of total county emigration between 1859 and 1864. [Figure 7.1]

If the gross emigration figures indicate an interesting and aberrant county pattern an examination of the Sydney shipping lists reveal an even more curious phenomenon. Donegal is divided into eight Baronies and from 1851 to 1858 only seven percent of the small number of Sydney emigrants came from the largest and most northwesterly Barony of Kilmacrenan. [Map 7] The connection with N.S.W., such as it was, centred on the eastern baronies of Tirugh and Raphoe in parishes bordering on counties Tyrone and Fermanagh. From 1859 on this pattern was almost completely reversed. Between 1859 and 1870 Kilmacrenan accounted for 78% of the greatly increased emigration to N.S.W. Even within Kilmacrenan one large parish dominated this increase, Tullagbegley on the barony’s north west Atlantic coast, known locally as the Gweedore/Cloughaneely region. Of the 789 Donegal arrivals in 1859 80%, 628, were from Tullagbegley, the largest number of arrivals from any Irish parish in any one year between 1848 and 1870. Subsequent Tullagbegley arrivals pushed this figure to 888 making this the greatest population movement from any one parish in Ireland to N.S.W. between 1859 and 1870.1

The process which brought these people to Sydney began in the village of Dunfanaghy, Donegal on 18 January 1858. On that day eight priests from parishes around Kilmacrenan’s Atlantic coast instituted the Gweedore and Cloughaneely Relief

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1 Irish Immigrant Data Base, 1848–1870.