

The Inconstant Girls: the Migration Experience of Nearly 200 Irish Orphan Girls and Young Women Sent to Adelaide in 1849 Aboard the Barque Inconstant

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The barque *Inconstant*, 588 (or 601) tons, was built on Cape Breton Island in Canada in 1848.¹ Under the command of Captain Patrick Culliton (variously spelled as Cullitan or Callitan), the vessel departed from Plymouth, England on 15 Feb 1849 and arrived at Port Adelaide, South Australia on Thursday 7 June 1849.² On board were 211 people (equivalent to 206 statute adults) who had embarked at Plymouth, including 197 poor orphan girls, primarily from Ireland, who were being sent to South Australia under the provisions of what became known as the Earl Grey Scheme. According to the *Register of Births and Deaths at Sea*, the 211 passengers consisted of 18 English and 193 Irish.³ In addition to the orphan girls, there appear to have been fourteen other people aboard *Inconstant* consisting of three married adult males and three married adult females as well as three boys and five girls between the ages of one and fourteen years.⁴ During the voyage one female infant died, there were no births and the remaining 210 passengers arrived safely in Port Adelaide. Like so many emigrants, these orphan girls effectively disappeared from Ireland forever, travelling to far distant places and giving rise to commentary in recent Irish historiography:

Little is known, however, about the experiences of these women and girls or their impact on the various host countries. Their contribution to the emigration process has been largely underestimated or ignored.⁵

This chapter examines some aspects of the lives of a small number of these girls, seeking to discover something of what the migration experience might have been like for a group of young Irish Catholic girls during the middle of the nineteenth century.

The Earl Grey Scheme was in operation between March 1848 and April 1850 and was specifically designed to send orphan girls aged between the ages of fourteen and eighteen from the Irish Poor Law workhouses to the Australian colonies.⁶ For the British Government and the Irish Poor Law administrators, the Earl Grey Scheme was seen as one way to help reduce the excessive numbers of destitute people crowded into the workhouses during the years of the Great Famine in Ireland (1845–51). In

many respects the year 1849 can be seen as the height of the Famine in Ireland with more than 900 000 people in the Irish Poor Law workhouses.⁷ Authorities believed that it would prove cheaper in the long run to help female paupers to emigrate than to continue to support them, possibly indefinitely, in the workhouses.⁸ For the Australian colonial governments and the local colonists, it was an opportunity to correct an ongoing gender imbalance in the colonies as well as a means of obtaining female domestic servants who could work for rural colonists.⁹

In March 1848 a memorandum was sent to the Boards of Guardians of every Irish Poor Law Union asking for lists of suitable orphan girls.¹⁰ Many Unions responded and lists of girls were produced and submitted.¹¹ *The Eighth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners* (1848) provides us with more information about how the Earl Grey Scheme was intended to work:

We also hope that we shall be able to select from among the orphans now maintained in the workhouses of Ireland a large number of eligible females. In respect of this class of emigrants it is intended to place a teacher on board each ship, on the understanding that any additional expense incurred on this account should be borne by the mother country, which will be relieved from the expense of supporting these young persons. We are now in correspondence with the Poor Law authorities in Dublin on the subject of these emigrants.¹²

The Ninth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners enthusiastically describes how the Commissioners believed the Earl Grey Scheme was working in 1849:

We have accordingly, also, selected for South Australia a limited number of single females taken from charitable institutions in Ireland. This emigration, being of a novel character, has occupied our most earnest attention; and some of these young people, previous to embarkation, have been examined by a member of the Board. The result of this examination, as well as that of our officers, who have made special reports upon the eligibility of the Irish orphans, was highly favourable to these emigrants; and we have been much gratified by the intelligence recently received from the colony, that, although in the first instance a prejudice had been conceived against them, this feeling had given way before the good conduct of those who were first engaged—that all the remainder had been immediately taken off, and that the colony would willingly receive more of the same description.¹³

The female orphans were intended to be domestic servants in the Australian colonies and were indentured (or 'apprenticed') to local colonists to undertake tasks such as washing clothes and milking cows. Over two years a total of 4114 women were subsidised for emigration by 118 Irish Poor Law unions and they were sent to Australia aboard twenty vessels, eleven to Sydney, six to Port Phillip and three to Adelaide. Of these, a total of 606 girls were sent to Adelaide aboard three vessels including the *Inconstant*.¹⁴

The majority (186) of the 197 female orphans aboard *Inconstant* were reported as originating from Ireland, specifically from workhouses in 8 Irish Poor Law unions:

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Union	County	Province	Number of girls
North Dublin	Dublin	Leinster	12
Mullingar	Westmeath	Leinster	40
Tullamore	King's (now Offaly)	Leinster	18
Parsonstown (now Birr)	King's (now Offaly)	Leinster	30
Mountmellick	Queen's (now Laois)	Leinster	22
Tipperary	Tipperary	Munster	22
Limerick	Limerick	Munster	24
Newcastle	Limerick	Munster	18
Total			186 ¹⁵

Although the girls sent to Australia were classified as 'orphans' it is possible that some, at least, may have been 'abandoned' children of living parent(s) as it was not unknown for destitute families to leave children they could not care for at the gates of the local workhouse.

The geographical distribution of these workhouses, and therefore the places of origin of the girls, is interesting. None was located in the province of Connaught—the far west of Ireland (across the Shannon river) and none was in Ulster—the north of Ireland. The significance of this is that famine mortality was the greatest in the province of Connaught, in particular in the counties of Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon and Galway.¹⁶ However, five out of the eight of the workhouses were located not in Connaught but in the province of Leinster—the province that included Dublin—where the effects of the Famine were less severe. Most of the eight workhouses were also conveniently located either on or near a railway line with a connection to Dublin. In some respects it could be argued that convenience rather than need determined which girls in Irish Poor Law Union workhouses were given the opportunity to emigrate to Australia.

The Poor Law workhouses were a relatively recent innovation in Ireland arising from the Act 'for the Relief of the Destitute Poor' enacted in 1838.¹⁷ This Act had divided Ireland into 130 administrative divisions called Poor Law Unions—each with a workhouse. All of the eight workhouses mentioned above were newly built and had opened between 1841 and 1845, with the exception of the North Dublin workhouse, which was a refurbished 'House of Industry' and had opened in 1840. These workhouses varied in size from the 550 person workhouse at Newcastle (in County Limerick) to the 2000 person workhouse at North Dublin but most were designed to accommodate 700 or 800 people and therefore were considered medium-sized workhouses.

To consider one of these workhouses as an example, Parsonstown, which was a plantation town in King's County (now County Offaly) named after the Parsons family (the Earls of Rosse) who established a castle there and brought in English tenants during the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth

century the town was involved in the highly successful manufacture of and trade in linen and woollens. Two whiskey distilleries had been established there by the 1820s. Overall the population of King's County (Offaly) declined by about 35 000 from 147 000 to 112 000 in the decade from 1841 to 1851 as a result of emigration and deaths from the Famine.¹⁸

The Parsonstown Union covered an area that was mostly contained within King's County but included parts of the north-east of County Tipperary to the west of Parsonstown. The Parsonstown workhouse was located just across the Camcor River on the road to Kinnity about one mile outside Parsonstown.¹⁹ Today the workhouse is still in a remarkably intact condition.

It seems fairly certain that seven of the *Inconstant* girls came from the Parsonstown Union Workhouse—Catherine Bracken, Catherine Carroll, Margaret Collins, Mary Dean, Anne Dolan, Mary Maher and Bridget Murray.

Clearly the effects of the Famine and the difficult conditions experienced in the workhouses were the primary so-called 'push' factors or reasons as to why such girls took the opportunity to emigrate from Ireland. Even before the Famine, the diet of Irish labourers and their families was extremely limited, consisting primarily of potatoes. It has been suggested that 'the lean months were May, June and July when the old potatoes had run out and the new ones were not yet ready to eat'.²⁰ Unfortunately the principle behind establishing the diet of workhouse inmates was 'that the food of a pauper, maintained at the public cost, should not be more abundant or better than that of the poor man maintaining himself in independence by his industry'.²¹ The diet at the Limerick workhouse for women and girls over the age of nine years, for example, consisted of seven ounces of oatmeal and half a pint of new milk for breakfast, no lunch and three and a half pounds of potatoes with three quarters of a pint of new milk for dinner.²² In addition to the poor diet, the workhouses were seriously overcrowded, encouraging the spread of infectious diseases of massed humanity such as typhus and dysentery.²³

Another reason that the girls might have felt encouraged to emigrate to Australia—one of the so-called 'pull' factors—is found in a letter from an Irish emigrant in Australia that appeared in one of the local Tipperary newspapers under the heading NSW/Adelaide:

I would encourage any person to come out here ... We know nothing of poverty ... servant girls (get) from 8s to 10s a week and the best of diet. It is rather difficult to get servants of any kind—girls no sooner land but they get married and well settled in a very short time ... Will you for God's sake encourage as many poor labourers to emigrate ... How can people remain starving at home while there is a country like this, they want energy. This country is far preferable to America—there labour is plenty but here the contrary. Should twenty millions come here they are sure to obtain a comfortable living.²⁴

Local newspapers often printed information about emigration—the weekly *Leinster Express*, for example, had a regular section titled 'Emigrant's Guide' that included the following under the heading 'Description of South Australia':

I need not tell you that it is a beautiful country: and the climate is delightful, producing nearly all the European, and many tropical fruits ... There is a vegetable garden, of course; a small vineyard, for wine; and a great variety of table grapes. There is also a flower-garden, containing a great variety of beautiful flowers ... and my son here, in addition to what I have before enumerated, has a pretty cottage, handsomely furnished. All I have to desire for him is an amiable and accomplished wife.²⁵

While many of the girls probably could not read (or write), it is probable that there was considerable exchange of just such information by word of mouth.

The *Inconstant* girls were inspected by Lieutenant Henry R.N., the Emigration Agent, and the representative of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners (CLEC) in Ireland. Lieutenant Henry appears to have regularly travelled around Ireland, visiting the workhouses and selecting girls to be sent to Australia.²⁶ During early January 1849 he visited the Mountmellick and Parsonstown workhouses to select orphan girls for the Earl Grey Scheme.²⁷



Parsonstown (Birr) Poor Law Union Workhouse opened in 1842.
Photograph: Mark Staniforth (September 2002).

The Irish Poor Law Commissioners specified that the Board of Guardians had to provide each girl with a suitable 'outfit', which consisted of six shifts, six pairs of stockings, two flannel petticoats, two pairs of shoes (not boots) and two gowns (one of which had to be made of warm material). This outfit was exactly the same as the requirements that were laid down by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners for female emigrants in 1847. Some Unions took this very seriously and provided the girls with an extensive 'outfit' that included more than just the clothing specified by the Poor Law Commissioners:

On Monday last the young women (32 in number) selected at the Limerick workhouse as emigrants to Australia left this city by the early train for Dublin under the care of the Master Mr John Scott. The outfit of these young women is highly creditable to the Guardians. We should under different circumstances, lament the alternative of thus

expatriating our countrywomen, but seeing the ruin that misgovernance has created all over the land we may felicitate these young women on quitting their native shores and wish them every prosperity in the land where their lot will be cast.²⁸

Each Board of Guardians was expected to arrange, and pay for the costs associated with, transporting the girls from their workhouse in Ireland to the Plymouth emigration depot. At least the twenty-two girls from Mountmellick left from Dublin for Plymouth aboard the steamer *Devonshire* soon after Wednesday 7 February 1849. It seems that their particular voyage to Plymouth was 'uncomfortable which caused the girls to be greatly dejected'.²⁹ On arrival at the depot, the girls were lectured about what they could expect during the voyage. They were also given a medical examination and vaccinated against smallpox.³⁰

The *Inconstant's* brokers in England were Walton and Son; the vessel was chartered at a contract price of £13 7s 6d per statute adult. The Master was Patrick Culliton, the First Mate Garrick Barry and the Third Mate was Edward Barry who also acted as schoolmaster and hospital assistant). Dr Charles Watkins was the surgeon-superintendent, and Mrs Catherine (Kate) Moran was the head matron. The sub-matrons (or constables) were Eliza Barlow, Eliza Brady, Emily Gregory, Mrs Clarissa Kelly and her daughter. Mary Ann Cummings was the nurse and Richard Cummings was listed as a constable. John Crocken was the cook's assistant.³¹

On arrival in Adelaide there were allegations of misconduct on the part of the Captain, the Surgeon-Superintendent and the Head Matron. In a sworn statement given by three crew members, Mrs Rose Simpson, carpenter W. Congdon and boatswain Charles Mearitz, the captain was accused of striking the Surgeon and it was further claimed that 'the Doctor said that the Captain and Mrs Moran wished him to have one of the girls in the cabin and do with her what he liked'. The emigration agent at Port Adelaide, Captain Charles P. Brewer, was ordered to inquire into this letter of complaint and he duly reported that: 'I beg to point out that the men who signed it are all disaffected towards their captain one of them having been put in jail for misconduct on board'. There were further allegations by one of the sub-matrons (Mrs Kelly) of 'great impropriety' in connection with the captain and the matron.³² One of the girls, Eliza Taafe, was declared insane for reporting some of these alleged improprieties, but none of these allegations was ever fully substantiated. Emigration Agent Brewer concluded that:

With such conflicting evidence I have found it difficult to come to a very satisfactory conclusion but on the whole I am of the opinion that the surgeon should not have allowed the two matrons to take their places at the cabin table thus giving an opportunity for the undue familiarity which I think has taken place among them and that the matron was very indiscreet in admitting the visits of the Captain to her private cabin under any circumstances whatever, thereby giving occasion for suspicion of the immoral conduct with which she has been charged but which is not proved.³³

On the same day that *Inconstant* arrived in Port Adelaide, the following appeared in the *South Australian Government Gazette*:

Applications will be received immediately for orphans expected by the *Inconstant*, and applicants desirous of availing themselves of their services are requested to attend in person or by proxy on the second day after the arrival of the vessel, at the office of the Secretary, Native School. It is recommended that the orphans be removed immediately after the arrangements have been made.³⁴

A few days later the following appeared in the 'Local Intelligence' section of the *South Australian Register*:

On Monday evening an extraordinary procession was seen on the North-terrace road. Ten drays fully laden with Irish female orphans and their luggage were seen moving along at a brisk pace towards the Native School Location, where it is understood they will find a temporary asylum. They all seemed warmly and comfortably clad, and excited much sympathy.³⁵

Dr Moorhouse, secretary to the Children's Apprenticeship Board, subsequently reported on 23 June 1849:

on the morning of the 9th we had twenty girls forwarded to the Depot. On the 10th one died of typhus fever after a few days illness ... on the 11th 103 were removed (from the vessel) ... The vessel was clean and under good discipline and the orphans with the exception of one insane and another sick which proved to be typhus, healthy ... out of these by the *Inconstant* only about 35 can milk cows and the remainder show no disposition to learn, many of these also know nothing of washing clothes and this causes the colonists to show indifference about hiring them. The Irish orphans are chiefly wanted for the country settlers and are almost useless if they cannot milk cows and wash clothes ... Their habits in the Depot are not so cleanly as could be desired.³⁶

Moorhouse goes on to list the dates when the girls were landed from the vessel and the dates when they were hired. From this it is evident that by 22 June 1849, approximately two weeks after the vessel arrived, at least 189 girls had been landed and most of them (141) had been hired by the colonists. These Irish orphan girls were clearly in demand as indentured servants.

What do we know about the *Inconstant* girls and their subsequent lives in the Australian colonies? The *South Australian Register* names 117 and the *Adelaide Observer* names 118 of the 197 girls believed to be aboard *Inconstant*.³⁷ The South Australian Maritime Museum has an incomplete computer database listing of the passengers aboard *Inconstant* that appears to be largely based on the *Register* and *Observer* lists.³⁸ Five of the girls have been traced through the Dublin workhouse registers in the National Archives of Ireland: Bridget Fay, Eliza Harrick, Mary Ann Newman, Mary Taafe and Rebecca Thomas.³⁹ Seven girls have been traced to the Parsonstown (now Birr) Union workhouse in King's County (now County Offaly): Catherine Bracken, Catherine Carroll, Margaret Collins, Mary Dean, Anne Dolan, Mary Maher and Bridget Murray.⁴⁰ Sixteen of the girls who travelled aboard *Inconstant* were named as prostitutes in an 1850 Government return of Adelaide prostitutes: Margaret Bryan, Eliza Corrigan, Ann Curran, Essy Dale, Margaret Dehee, Mary Dorgan, Ann Fulham, Eliza Graham, Cath. Macmahon, Mary Maher, Ann Malone, Eliz Marr, Isabella Martin, Theresa Nevens, Cath. Reardon and Rosanna Ward.⁴¹ Nine girls were subsequently listed in the *South Australian Government Register of Cases*

of *Destitution*: Ann McKee, Johanna Connor, Bridget Wire, Eliza Kelly, Cathy Meany, Johanna O'Flannigan, M— Germaine, — McKay and Ann Dolcha.⁴² The subsequent histories in Australia of four of the girls have been traced by family historians: Rose Ashmere, Margaret Dehee, Johanna Flannigan and Mary Taafe.⁴³

To be eligible for the Earl Grey Scheme, the Irish orphan girls should have been born between about 1830 or 1831 and 1834 in order to meet the requirement that they be aged between fourteen and eighteen years of age. Several of the girls appear to have been born earlier than 1830; for example, Eliza Lynch in about 1829, Catherine Fraser and Ann Malone in about 1828. Others like Margaret Dehee may have been born as late as 1835. Precise birth dates are very difficult to establish and there were good reasons for some of the girls to misrepresent their age in order to meet the eligibility requirements. Details about the (incomplete) biographies of two of the ten girls follow.⁴⁴

Margaret Dehee (Deehy or Duhy) was born in about 1835 in Donohill in County Tipperary. The surname is probably Duhy as there is a birth registration in the Anacarty parish for Magaret daughter of John Duhy and Margaret Kinnen? Other birth entries in the same register are listed for John Duhy and Margaret Gilfoil (or Guilfoyle) who were described as living in Grange in the parish of Donohill. Margaret Dehee was listed as a prostitute in November 1850. She married Robert Strickland at Smythes Creek, Victoria on 29 September 1857 and had at least 5 children: Phoebe Jane (b.7 April 1851 in Adelaide, at 19 married James Sheard and died 3 Feb 1914), Susan (b.1853? married at 25 years to Thomas Bailey on 26 Oct 1878), Sarah (b.1855? married at 31 years to William Thomas White on 21 May 1886 and died 15 June 1898), Ellen (b.1857? married three times and died in 1936) and Katherine (b. 1860? and died 1935). Margaret Dehee married for the second time (probably bigamously as Robert Strickland was still alive) to George Lindrea on 1 April 1871 and had one more child: Lucy (b. 20 March 1869 in Bendigo, at 33 she married William Herman Matthew Kerr on 4 Nov 1892 and died 13 Aug 1944). Margaret Lindrea (formerly Dehee) died on 8 April 1920 aged about 85 and was buried in Bendigo, Victoria.

Mary Theresa Taafe was born 25 May 1833 at Edenderry in County Offaly; she was the daughter of Joseph Taafe and Anne Cameron. Mary was admitted to the North Dublin workhouse on 26 July 1848 where she was described as single, sixteen years old, Roman Catholic, in good health and living in Jervis Street, North Dublin City. Both her parents were reported to have died of 'fever' in the workhouse in Ireland. She left the workhouse in February 1849 and was sent to Australia with her sister Eliza aboard the *Inconstant*. Mary Taafe married Samuel Dunn at the Roman Catholic Church in West Terrace, Adelaide 29 Dec 1851. Both were living at Langhorne Creek at the time of their marriage and continued to live there during 1852. Samuel Dunn, whose real name was Samuel Fields Knowles, was an escaped convict who had been transported for life to Van Dieman's Land arriving in 1838 aboard *Moffat*. He had absconded in 1846 and had spent some years serving aboard the whaling and trading vessel *Resolution* before arriving in South Australia.

Samuel and Mary are reported to have walked from South Australia to Amherst in Victoria with all of their belongings in a wheelbarrow some time before 1855 (probably in 1853). Between 1853 and 1875 they had fourteen children: all were born in Amherst apart from the first, Samuel Joseph, who was born in Avoca on 26 December 1853 (possibly during the journey to Amherst). Two of their children died in infancy and one, John James (aged ten years and seven months) was accidentally drowned in a well on 7 February 1874. Her husband, Samuel Dunn, died in 1898 and Mary continued to live in Amherst until 1902. Then, for the next two decades, she lived with her daughters Emily, Eliza and Rosanna in Waaia, Apollo Bay and South Melbourne. Mary died on 12 June 1923 at the age of ninety from 'senility and general debility' at the home of one of her daughters (Rosanna) in Albert Park. She was buried at Brighton Cemetery, Melbourne (Grave T 113 Roman Catholic section).⁴⁵

Perhaps thirty per cent of the current Australian population has some Irish ancestry—they are part of the Irish Diaspora. Many of the *Inconstant* girls married in Australia, had children and became the ancestors of a significant number of living Australians. For example, all of the ten girls selected for this chapter married and four were married twice: all of these marriages, except one, were 'official' and therefore recorded in the *South Australian Marriage Registers*. The one exception appears to be Mary Reddy's 'common law' marriage to Thomas Spalding that came to light through the documentation of her second marriage to William Cable. Margaret Dehee had clearly left or been deserted by her first husband Robert Strickland and entered into a relationship with George Lindrea by 1869: she was probably bigamously married to Lindrea in 1871 before Strickland's death in 1872. It is likely that a number of the other *Inconstant* girls entered into common law marriages, but documentary evidence of such relationships is difficult to find. It is also possible that some of the *Inconstant* girls were deserted by their husbands: Bridget Evans is a case in point, as her first husband Phillip James Brennan seems to disappear from the record between 1853 and 1861, but no death record in South Australia has been found.

The ten *Inconstant* girls had at least fifty-six children (an average of more than five each). Women in the nineteenth century often had large families and these Catholic girls were no exception: Catherine Shea had ten and Mary Taafe had fourteen children. Only nine of these fifty-six children are known to have died in infancy or childhood, thirty-four survived to adulthood and the age at death of thirteen is unknown. This is probably partly a feature associated with the early stage of this research where the fate of many of these children has yet to be established.

Of the ten girls considered, seven remained resident in South Australia for their lifetimes and three moved to Victoria (Margaret Dehee, Margaret Flannigan and Mary Taafe). Some of the girls died young, like Bridget Evans who died at the age of thirty-five (possibly in childbirth), but others lived well into the twentieth century, with three living to more than eighty years—Margaret Dehee, Mary Reddy and Catherine Shea—and Mary Taafe lived to ninety years of age.

Notes

- 1 Robert Parsons, *Migrant Ships for South Australia 1836–1860* (Gumeracha, SA: Gould Books, 1988) 93.
- 2 Robert T. Sexton, *Shipping Arrivals and Departures South Australia 1627–1850* (Canberra, ACT: Roebuck Society, 1990) 160.
- 3 CO 386/170, *Register of Births and Deaths at Sea* (London, UK: Public Record Office, 1849) 19.
- 4 GRG 24/6, *Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) Microfilm reel 85 letter #1082.
- 5 Christine Kinealy, *The Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845–1852* (Dublin, Ireland: Gill & MacMillan, 1994) 315.
- 6 Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland 1831–1860* (London, UK: MacMillan Press, 1997) 142–65.
- 7 Colm Toibin and Diarmid Ferriter, *The Irish Famine: A Documentary* (London, UK: Profile Books, 2001) 133.
- 8 Chris O'Mahony, 'Emigration from Limerick Workhouse, 1848–1860', *The Irish Ancestor*, 2 (1982) 83.
- 9 Eric Richards and Ann Herraman, 'If she was to be hard up she would sooner be hard up in a strange land than where she would be known: Irish women in colonial South Australia', *Irish Women in Colonial Australia*, ed. Trevor McClaughlin (St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998) 84.
- 10 John Killen, ed., *The Famine Decade: Contemporary Accounts 1841–1851* (Belfast, Northern Ireland: The Blackstaff Press, 1995) 183–84.
- 11 Chris O'Mahony, 'Emigration from Tipperary Workhouse, 1848–1858', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (1994) 106.
- 12 CO 384/82, *Colonial Office: Emigration Original Correspondence—General Miscellaneous Correspondence—Secretary of State for 1848 enclosing the Eighth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners (1848)* (London, UK: Public Record Office, 1848) 163.
- 13 CO 384/84, *Colonial Office: Emigration Original Correspondence—General Miscellaneous Correspondence—Secretary of State for 1849 enclosing the Ninth General Report of the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners (1849)* (London, UK: Public Record Office, 1848) 13.
- 14 Haines *Emigration* 142–65.
- 15 Trevor McClaughlin, *Barefoot and Pregnant? Irish Famine orphans in Australia, vols 1 & 2* (Melbourne, Vic: The Genealogical Society of Victoria, no date) 398.
- 16 Liam Kennedy, Paul S. Ell, E.M. Crawford and L.A. Clarkson, *Mapping the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, Ireland: Four Courts Press, 1999) 36–39.
- 17 Sean Kelly, 'The Newcastle West Workhouse', *The Old Limerick Journal*, 32 (1995): 151.
- 18 Noel Farrell, *County Offaly Birr Family Roots: Exploring family origins in Birr* (Longford, Ireland: Noel Farrell, 2000) 1.
- 19 Kinnity is now the R440, about one mile outside Parsonstown (now called Birr).
- 20 Margaret Hogan, *The Great Famine, Birr and District*. Unpublished manuscript of a presentation given at the History Seminar held at Dooley's Hotel, Birr on 11 May 1996 (manuscript in the possession of the author). 2.
- 21 Chris O'Mahony, 'The Poor Law comes to Limerick', *The Old Limerick Journal*, 6 (1981): 19.
- 22 O'Mahony 'The Poor Law' 19.
- 23 Cairan O'Murchadha, 'Limerick Union Workhouse during the Great Famine', *The Old Limerick Journal*, 32 (1995): 40.
- 24 *Tipperary Free Press* 3 Jan 1849, 2.
- 25 *Leinster Express* 10 Feb 1849, 4.
- 26 John O'Connor, *The Workhouses of Ireland: The fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, Ireland: Anvil Books, 1995) 170–72.
- 27 Mountmellick Union Board of Guardians Rough Minute Book Dec 1848 – Sept 1849 (Portarlinton Library, Portarlinton, County Laois, Ireland) Entry for 10 Jan 1849 and Parsonstown Union Board of Guardians Rough Minute Book Aug 1848 – 15 Sept 1849

- (Local Studies Section. Tullamore Library, Tullamore, County Offaly, Ireland) Entry for 24 Jan 1849.
- 28 Limerick and Clare Examiner quoted in *The Tipperary Free Press* 10 Jan 1849, 3.
 - 29 *Mountmellick Union Board of Guardians Rough Minute Book* Dec 1848 – Sept 1849 (Portarlinton Library, Portarlinton, County Laois, Ireland) Entry for 14 Feb 1849.
 - 30 R. Dudley Edwards and T. Desmond Williams, *The Great Famine: Studies in Irish History 1845–1852* (Dublin, Ireland: The Lilliput Press, 1994) 355.
 - 31 GRG 24/6, *Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) Microfilm reel 85 letter #1082.
 - 32 GRG 24/6, *Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) Microfilm reel 85 letter #1105.
 - 33 GRG 24/6, *Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) Microfilm reel 85 letter #1142.
 - 34 *South Australian Government Gazette* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) 7 June 1849, 249.
 - 35 *South Australian Register* 13 June 1849, 2.
 - 36 GRG 24/6, *Colonial Secretary's Inwards Correspondence* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1849) Microfilm reel 83 letter #1070 1/2.
 - 37 *South Australian Register* 9 June 1849, 2 and *Adelaide Observer* 9 June 1849, 1.
 - 38 South Australian Maritime Museum, *Inconstant Passenger List* (accessed 17 April 2002).
 - 39 BGT 78/G/7, *North Dublin Workhouse registers* (Dublin, Ireland: National Archives of Ireland, 1849).
 - 40 Parsonstown (Birr) workhouse. *List of paupers resident in the workhouse 1849*. List created by Anders Eiriksson for the National Famine Commemoration Committee in 1996. Copy held by Mrs Margaret Hogan, Birr, County Offaly, Ireland.
 - 41 CO 13/70, *Government Return of prostitutes in the City of Adelaide: per Inconstant* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, Nov 1850).
 - 42 GRG 28/4 *Register of Cases of Destitution* (Adelaide, SA: State Records Office, 1850).
 - 43 Rose Ashmere contact Mrs Lesley Mullins, 20 Baldwin Road, Blackburn, VIC 3130. Margaret Dehee contact Mrs Wendy Baker, 103 Rattray Rd, Montmorency, VIC 3094 (wendy@genealogist.net). Johanna Flannigan contact Leonie Chirgwin, 8 Pau St, Noble Park, VIC 3174. Mary Taafe contact Mrs. Dawn P. Barbary, 16 Bromley St, Nathalia, VIC 3638.
 - 44 The brief biographies of these girls have been compiled largely from the following registers and directories held in the State Records Office, Adelaide, SA: *South Australian Biographies* 1849–1900. *South Australian Births Registers* 1849–1900. *South Australian Deaths Registers* 1849–1920. *South Australian Directories* 1849–1900. *South Australian Marriage Registers* 1849–1900. The biographies of the other eight girls follow:

Catherine Bracken (Robinson)

Catherine Bracken was born in 1830 or 1831 at Leamonaghan in King's County (now County Offaly). She has been traced to the Parsonstown (Birr) workhouse. She arrived in Port Adelaide at about the age of 19. She married William Robinson (a Roman Catholic) on either 22 or 27 Jan 1851 at the Roman Catholic Church in Mount Barker near Adelaide. William Robinson had arrived in Adelaide by 1849 and in the 1851 *Directory* he was described as a sheep farmer. At different times they resided at Richmond, Hill River, Macclesfield, Tilly's Flat and Salt Creek. Catherine and William Robinson had (at least) 3 children: John (b.185? -), William (b.1852? -) and Richard James (b.1854? - d.13 April 1905). Catherine Robinson (nee Bracken) died at the age of 52 at Kercoonda near Auburn in the Clare Valley, SA on 19 June 1882 and was survived by her husband William who died at the age of 81 on 12 Jan 1893 at Saddleworth, SA.

Catherine Carroll (Truman)

Catherine Carroll was born around 1831 and came from Shannon Harbour (a village on the Grand Canal near the junction with the River Shannon) in King's County (now County Offaly). She has been traced to the Parsonstown (Birr) workhouse. She arrived aboard the *Inconstant* at about the age of 18. Aged about 22 she married Matthew Truman (30 years) on 23 September 1853 at Holy Trinity Church, Adelaide. Matthew and Catherine had at least four children: Ann (b.8 Mar 1854 at Mount Barker, married at 21 years to Albert Lelamer [25 years] at Port Adelaide on 14 Nov 1875), Thomas (b.22 Dec 1855 at Grunthal), Sarah (b.22 May 1859 near Hahndorf, married at 17 years to William Henry Maynard [26 years] at St. Laurence Church, North Adelaide on 8 Feb 1877) and Mary Jane (b.22 Jan 1870 at Grunthal). No further record of Catherine Truman (nee Carroll) have been located but in the 1880 Directory Matthew Truman was listed as living in the Governor MacDonnell Hotel at Salisbury (an outer northern suburb of Adelaide) and he died on 29 Dec 1897 at the age of 74 at Parkside South (an inner southern Adelaide suburb).

Margaret Collins (Hamilton)

Born around 1830 or 1831, Margaret Collins came from Leamonaghan in King's County (now County Offaly). She has been traced to the Parsonstown (Birr) workhouse and arrived aboard the *Inconstant* at about the age of 19. Margaret Collins (20 years) married Richard Hamilton (33 years) on 19 September 1850 at Holy Trinity Church in Adelaide. Richard Hamilton was a miner and resident on the LeFevre Peninsular near Port Adelaide. They had at least six children: Ann Catherine (b. at Adelaide on 11 June 1851 - d.1852), Mary (b.11 Sept 1852 - d.1852?), Sarah Jane (b.6 June 1858 at LeFevre Peninsular - d.26 Nov 1858), Richard (b.15 April 1860. married at 34 years to Ann Eliza Reed [27 years] at St Andrews Mission Hall, Birkenhead), Clarissa (b. at Wirrawika Mines on 25 Dec 1862, at 16 years married Thomas Butler [22 years] on 31 Aug 1879 at the Roman Catholic Church, Port Adelaide) and John (b.22 March 1865 at Port Adelaide - d.9 May 1866 at Kingscote on Kangaroo Island). Margaret Hamilton (nee Collins) of Birkenhead died at the age of 70 years at Birkenhead (near Port Adelaide) on 24 Jan 1900 and her husband Richard died at the age of 83 on 9 June 1900.

Johanna Dillon (Mahomet/Chandler)

Born in about 1834, Johanna Dillon (aged about 18 years) married John Mahomet on 15 Nov 1852 at the Roman Catholic Church in Adelaide. John Mahomet was a shepherd who had arrived in Adelaide before 1847 and was listed as resident at Reedy Creek and Anlaby. They had two children: John (b.15 Aug 1854 -) and Thomas (b. on 1 March 1856, as Thomas Chandler [aged 21 years] he married Harriet Cock on 30 June 1877 at Trinity Church, Adelaide). John Mahomet died at Anlaby at the age of 45 years on 7 March 1864. 31 year old Johanna Mahomet (father listed as Thomas Dillon) married Henry Chandler (42 years) at the Registry Office in Melrose on 22 Feb 1865. Henry Chandler had arrived in South Australia before 1862, he had been

previously married and had two children (John Henry b 1850? and died aged 6 months on 16 Dec 1850 in Port Adelaide and Henry (b 1851? – 17 March 1864) but his first wife Sarah had died at 36 years old on 15 April 1864. As far as can be established Henry and Johanna had no children of their own. Henry Chandler died at 54 on 16 March 1876 and Johanna Chandler (formerly Dillon) died at the age of 66 years on 3 May 1901 at Adelaide.

Bridget Evans (Brennan/Hele)

Born around 1834, Bridget Ann Evans (aged about 18 years) married Philip John Brennan on 16 Sept 1852 at the Roman Catholic Church in Adelaide. They were resident in Adelaide and had one child (John James Brennan b.1853? married at 39 years on 31 Oct 1892 to Bridget Farrell [27 years] at St. Anacletus Catholic Church in Peterborough and died on 3 Nov 1909 at 55 years). No trace of the subsequent fate of Philip John Brennan has been found but Bridget Brennan (father James Evans) subsequently married William Hele on 30 July 1861 at St Jude's Church at Brighton. They had a daughter Emily (b.24 Jan 1868 –) who was born at Marrabel. Bridget Hele (formerly Evans) died at the age of 35 years at Marrabel on 10 April 1870. She was survived by her second husband William Hele who died at the age of 53 at Wadnaminga, South Australia on 10 July 1893 (his surviving relative was listed as John Brennan, stepson).

Johannah Flannigan (Johns)

Johannah Flannigan (aka O'Flannigan) was born in 1832 in Ballymacdonnell in County Clare. She may have been selected from the Limerick Union workhouse. She was the daughter of Rody Flannigan and Nancy Maddocks. She married Samuel Johns (a Cornishman) in Bendigo on 30 September 1858. They lived in Short Street, Bendigo and had 6 children, all of whom survived childhood. She died on 11 May 1918 at about 86 and was buried in Bendigo, Victoria.

Mary Reddy (Spalding/Cable)

Born about 1834, Mary Reddy appears to have been the common law wife of Thomas Spalding. They had at least three children: Thomas Henry (parents were listed as Thomas Spalding and Mary Cable) was born about 1853, who married 19 year old Jane (or Jean) Houston on 22 Nov 1883 at the Public School at Warrow and died on 27 Feb 1937, Elixabeth (b.1856?, at 30 years married John Bascomb [23 years] on 9 Jan 1886, had 3 children and died at 37 years on 23 Nov 1891 at Tungatta Head Station, Tungatta) and William Charles (b. about 1857 and died 1941). Thomas Spalding (39 years) died on 15 Jan 1858 at Port Lincoln. Mary Spalding (father listed as John Reddy) married William Cable (or Cabell) on 1 Dec 1860 at St Thomas Church, Port Lincoln. William Cable (b. about 1836) was a farmer at Port Lincoln, Lake Wangery and Mount Dutton. William and Mary had no children of their own. William Cable died at the age of 45 at Mount Dutton on 21 July 1881 and was buried at Port Lincoln. Mary Cable (formerly Reddy) died on 26 March 1921 aged about 87.

Catherine Shea (Marlor)

Born around 1832, Catherine Shea (20 years) married John Samuel Marlor (26 years) on 26 Jan 1852 at Holy Trinity Church, Adelaide. John Samuel Marlor was listed as a mariner and laborer, resided at Port Adelaide and the LeFevre Peninsular. Unusually his religion is given as Church of England. They had ten children: Mary Ann Dorothy (b. at Port Adelaide on 28 March 1853, at 21 married William Bridgman [28 years] on 23 May 1874 in Port Adelaide), Maria (b. 7 Sept 1854, married at 29 years to William Powell Lee [39 years] on 3 May 1884 in Port Adelaide), Jane Catherine (b. 4 May 1856, at 18 years married Henry Richard Bevan [24 years] on 12 Sept 1874 at Port Adelaide), Robert James (b. 4 Mar 1858 at Bath Town, at 21 years married Sophia Nunn [21 years] on 1 May 1879 at Port Adelaide and died in 1919), Emma Elizabeth (b. 29 Nov 1859 at LeFevre Peninsular – died 12 Nov 1861 at LeFevre Peninsular), John Samuel (b. 31 May 1862 at LeFevre Peninsular – died at 10 weeks on 14 Aug 1862 at Port Adelaide), Emma Elizabeth (b. 22 Dec 1863 at LeFevre Peninsular –), Jemima Isabella (b. 19 May 1867 at LeFevre Peninsular, at 22 married Ralph Shepherd [23 years] on 29 May 1906 at Goodwood), Fanny Eliza Heath (b. 15 Oct 1869 at LeFevre Peninsular, at 24 married David Edwin MacDonald [25 years] on 8 May 1894 at Adelaide) and Charles William (b. 21 Nov 1871 at Bridgewater, LeFevre Peninsular, at 26 years married to Jean McRobert 23 years at Port Adelaide). Catherine Marlor (formerly Shea) died at the age of 77 years on 9 Feb 1909 at Adelaide (relative John Samuel Marlor – deceased husband).

45 Dawn P. Barbary, *Samuel Dunn and his descendants* (Nathalia, Vic: Dawn P. Barbary, 2001).

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