

THE NSW IMMIGRATION DEPOSIT JOURNALS REVISITED

Published in *Australian Family Tree Connections*, March 2008

By Pat Fearnley & Aileen Trinder

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of the Pastkeys index to the NSW Immigration Deposit Journals 1853-1900. However, it appears that, despite our almost evangelical spreading of the good news over the years, their existence, and the absolute treasure trove of genealogical information they contain, seems to have escaped the notice of both the new generation of researchers and of many long-term family historians.

For that reason, and also the fact that the re-issue of our index on CD has made searching the index even easier, we thought it timely to revisit the Journals and raise awareness of their research value.

Various assisted immigration systems had operated in the Colony from the early 1830s with all or part of the fares to NSW being paid by the colonial government. The problem arose of a shortage of an adequate skilled labour force due, in part, to the number of immigrants who paid their own passage and had the funds available on arrival to become property owners. As the passage fare to New South Wales would have been out of reach for the general labourer, the government made it possible by these assisted systems.

One very successful assisted immigration scheme was the Remittance or Nomination system. The Department of Lands issued Regulations, known as the Remittance Regulations, detailing how the scheme was to operate. The Regulations were amended and reissued at times and the scheme was discontinued after 1865 until it recommenced in January 1875; continuing then until May 1900. The Regulations stated that any person could nominate immigrants from the United Kingdom with the eligible immigrants to be mechanics of every description, domestic servants and all persons of the labouring class. The specified deposit amounts varied over time and also differed according to age and sex. In mid-1863, the age groups and amounts were 'Under 12 years' (Male £4, Female £3), '12 and under 40 years' (Male £7, Female £4), '40 and under 50 years' (Male £9, Female £7) and 'All above 50 years' (Male £12, Female £12). There was also provision made for unnamed immigrants to be nominated but these attracted higher deposit amounts.

The Journals record moneys deposited in the Colony by persons wishing to sponsor the immigration of a nominated person, or group of persons, frequently members of their own family or prospective employees. The depositor attended at the local petty sessions courthouse in the country districts or at the office of the Agent for Immigration in Sydney, paid the deposit for the passage and any additional sum to provide outfits for the voyage. The outfit for an adult cost about £3. The immigrants were brought out in ships chartered by Her Majesty's Emigration Commissioners in London. If the immigrant did not find employment on arrival, the depositors had to also undertake to provide for the immigrants from 10 days after their arrival or pay a specified daily amount to the government for their support. There was provision made for the refund of deposits if

nominated persons declined to emigrate or if the amount deposited exceeded that required.

After the deposit was made, some time (months usually, but occasionally years) later, the immigrant arrived. Examples of an application form, remittance certificate, deposit receipt and passage certificate are to be found on the CD together with a copy of the Regulations issued by the Department of Lands, Sydney, on 19th May 1863.

The Journals comprising 23 volumes (Series NRS 5264 4/4576-4/4598) are held by the State Records New South Wales and have been microfilmed. The nine microfilm reels (2668A-2672) form part of the SRNSW Archives Resources Kit (ARK), parts of which were originally published as the Genealogical Research Kit. The Kit is held at 40 Community Access Points (details in SRNSW Archives in Brief No. 40) and holders of parts of the ARK are listed in Archives in Brief No. 46. The Journals are particularly valuable for the period 1860-62 when the Immigration Board's lists are missing, and after 1870 when these no longer supply the place of origin within the county in Ireland or another country. So even if you already have the name of a ship on which your ancestor arrived, a check in our index under both immigrants and depositors could lead you to that vital extra information such as the parish of residence or origin, or that all-important detail for Ireland, the townland, that might be available from no other source.

Many convicts and early arrivals who had established themselves in the Colony took the opportunity, in some cases as long as 15 or 20 years after their own arrival, to sponsor relatives and the immigrant's details given in the Journals – such as address, parish, townland, employer and, in the odd case, army regiment, in the home country – can in a great many cases provide a definite lead to a birthplace for those elusive earlier arrivals whose own shipping records appear to be non-existent or whose death certificate merely gives a birthplace as *Ireland* or *England*. At the very least, it can be established that a depositor was in the Colony by a certain date.

It is important to be aware of the existence of chain migration where successive generations of a family were sponsored by the previous one. At first glance a researcher might think that the time span of these records – 1853 to 1900 – would not be relevant to their family, perhaps because the person of main interest was a convict who arrived before 1853 or was a person whose ship of arrival is known, but, as our index lists all names under both immigrant and depositor, a check of all one's surnames can often provide a welcome surprise as links to previously unknown related persons can suddenly leap out of the page at you and thus expand your knowledge of the extended family and lead you on to other aspects of research.

The grouping of families in the Journals is in itself of great help. Firstly, where a common name (such as Mary Collins) is involved, this assists in identifying the correct Mary and, secondly, often in the shipping records some older family members are listed separately from their parents as unmarried male or female immigrants and not specifically linked with their particular family. Status, such as widow (and occasionally,

widower), orphan, niece, twin, wife or mother of depositor, is commonly given. *Husband in Colony* is another frequent note of great help in research.

Reproduced below is an extract from our index from which it will be seen that we have placed, in code form, details of what is available in each original Journal record. A full explanation of the codes appears in the introduction on the CD, but for example O = occupation, S = ship, L = location and of course Chapman Codes for counties/countries.

IMMIGRANT	AGE	DEPOSITOR	DEP.NO	D.O.DEP	SRNSW	REEL	REMARKS
ABERNETHY Barbara	48	NICHOLSON William	3408	19/01/1863	4/4584	2671	LND/R/S + Fam
ABERNETHY Catherine	25	ABERNETHY C C	2221	31/03/1879	4/4591	2673	A/LKS/R/S W of Depr
ABERNETHY James	51	NICHOLSON William	3408	19/01/1863	4/4584	2671	O/LND/R/S + Fam
ABERNETHY Jane	9	NICHOLSON William	3408	19/01/1863	4/4584	2671	LND/R/S + Fam
ABERNETHY Jessie	23	ABERNETHY Robert	2317	11/12/1885	4/4598	2676	L/LKS/S + Fam
ABERNETHY John	70	ABERNETHY Robert	2317	11/12/1885	4/4598	2676	L/LKS/S + Fam F of Depr
ABERNETHY John	19	ABERNETHY Robert	2317	11/12/1885	4/4598	2676	L/LKS/S + Fam
ABERNETHY William	14	NICHOLSON William	3408	19/01/1863	4/4584	2671	LND/R/S + Fam
ABERTON James	25	ABERTON Eleazer Mrs	494	05/09/1833	4/4576	2688A	
ABIGAL Anne	24	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	O/L/LND/ENG/R
ABIGAL Emily	2.5	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam
ABIGAL James	31	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	O/L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam 3347-22/12/65
ABIGAL James	1	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam
ABIGAL Mary	36	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam
ABIGAL Mary	4	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam
ABIGAL Thomas	1	ABIGAL Francis	3823	19/07/1865	4/4587	2672	L/LND/ENG/R/S & Fam

A majority of the immigrants were Irish. For example in 1858 it was 51.8%, in 1864 it was 69.66% and in 1875 it was 58.8%. The remainder were from England, Scotland, Wales or Europe.

Often, investigating the records of associated families or other individuals sponsored by the same depositor can provide additional leads to the area from which your ancestor originated. In many cases, too, the information is very precise, as shown below in the entry for Joseph Duff, a great help in a large city like London. There are also entries for Irish immigrants residing in England whose referee is in Ireland – very useful in pinpointing the place of origin. These are just a few examples illustrating the type of information found in the Journals:

- In 1859 Michael Duff sponsored Joseph Duff, 42, a Dock Labourer. The Journals record his address as 2 Blossom Street Whitelion Street Norton Folgate London and his sponsor was Mr George Tappin, Timber Merchant, Kingsland Road London
- John Rooney arrived in 1879 on the *Corona* but both shipping lists give his native place only as Kings County. In the Immigration Deposit Journals, however, he appears as John Roney of Gillan, Kings County sponsored in the same year by James Murphy. His referee is Mr Terrence Dooley of Cloughan, Kings Co, so here are not one, but two possibilities for tracking John down in Ireland, not to mention the name variation that might not previously have been considered
- The Hawkins family also arrived on the *Corona*. The shipping record shows only that they were from Wexford and that John Hawkins, the head of the family, died on the voyage. However, the Journals, while also noting John's death, disclose that he was the father of the depositor Edward Hawkins and that his address was C/o Thomas Wilkinson, Esq, Castlehill Enniscorthy, Co Wexford. The family's referee was the Rev Mr Murdoch, the Rectory, Enniscorthy

The following are some examples of the results that sometimes flow from just checking the index for a surname:

- John Shepherd, married in London in 1852 was known to be in Balmain Sydney by 1855 but no record of his arrival could be located nor any information about his birthplace. However in 1854 he sponsored George and Elizabeth Shepherd who arrived on the *Lloyds* and their shipping records yielded the information that George had a brother John living at Balmain, gave the parent's parish in Middlesex and ultimately led to tracing the family to Hertfordshire in the 1760s.
- In 1845 William Jessop, a convict, married Margaret McDade whose only known place of origin was Donegal. Following an entry in the Journals through to the immigration correspondence, it was found that Margaret's sister Mary McDade declined to emigrate as she was married and the record gave the name of the parish where she was living in Donegal.
- In 1850 Irish girl, Bridget Quigley, 16, arrived in New South Wales. She married George Dagworthy and went to live at Camden. Fifteen years after her arrival, at Camden CPS she paid a deposit for Ellen Reynolds, 20. Investigation of Ellen's shipping record established her as Bridget's sister, their mother having remarried. Ellen's native place was shown as Bloomfield Co Sligo and this opened up another avenue of research into the family.

Unfortunately, only a slim volume of the Depositors' Index survived for the period October 1856 to December 1857. This volume has been supplemented by additional records found at SRNSW – *Immigration; CGS 5269, Persons Proceeding to the Colony under Remittance Regulations, Oct 1856-Feb 1858 [with Ships arriving Nov 1856 to Feb 1858]*; part of 1 box (Ref: 9/6182.1), 1 bundle which consist of Embarkation Orders and Shipping Lists. These records provide the vital link between family and extended family, often cousins, uncles etc with different surnames, and give the ship of arrival. Each immigrant's age is given and families are grouped. Our Pastkeys *Immigration Deposit Regulations Supplementary Index 1856-1857* lists these records and it was originally published separately on microfiche but is now included on the Pastkeys Immigration Deposit Indexes CD.

We trust that this article will alert researchers to some of the very valuable research opportunities that the NSW Immigration Deposit Journals provide and prompt some lateral thinking when it is believed that a dead end has been reached on a particular line of research. You just never know!

Further Reading:

Reid, Richard. "From Ballyduff to Boorowa – Irish Assisted Immigration to New South Wales 1830-1896" (pp27-33): *The Irish Australians: Selected Articles for Australian and Irish Family Historians*; Edited by Richard Reid and Keith Johnson. Joint publication of the Society of Australian Genealogists and Ulster Historical Foundation, August 1984
Madgwick, R.B. *Immigration into Eastern Australia 1788-1851*; Sydney University Press