

THE NSW IMMIGRATION DEPOSIT JOURNALS 1853-1900

First published in Descent, March 1988

By Pat Stemp [now Fearnley] and Aileen Trinder

In the course of indexing these journals, the authors have come to realize their value as a genealogical source. At first glance, readers may not think the journals would be relevant to their research – perhaps their ancestor was a convict or arrived prior to 1853 – but often this has been shown to be incorrect. It is hoped that examples given in this article will prompt family researchers to make much more use of these valuable records.

The NSW Immigration Deposit 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 persons they wished to employ. Many convicts and early arrivals who had established themselves in the Colony sponsored 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 give their birthplace as "Ireland" or "England". At the very least, it can be established that a depositor was in the Colony by a particular date.

The Journals are contained in 23 volumes in the Archives Office of New South Wales [now State Records New South Wales] available on microfilm Reels Nos. 2668A-2676 and 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. The amount of information provided varies and the following is a summary of what can be found for the different periods. In general, the name only of the depositor is given but the immigrant's age is almost always given. From December 1857 it is usual for occupations to be given for both males and females, although sometimes, if older children in their late teens are part of a family group, occupation is omitted and they are shown as "and family".

The grouping of families in the Journals is in itself of great help with research; 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, or a specific notation of a second marriage, thus establishing relationships not otherwise apparent between people with different surnames. "Husband in Colony" is another frequent note of great help in research. In isolated cases, some occupations given may be suspect as a ditto mark used for an entire column results in two-year olds being classified as labourers or miners, but this is a trifling complaint when it is

considered just how much other valuable information is disclosed in these Journals.

JANUARY 1853 TO SEPTEMBER 1856: For this early period the information is very basic – depositor, immigrant, immigrant's age but occasionally information is given in the remarks column. Several examples are;

17 February 1855: Julia Mullalley sponsored by Anne Gogerty, and four named Gogerty children. The remarks column for Anne's entry states: "nee Sheardon".

9 February 1855: in separate deposits Susanna Kearns sponsored Patrick Kelly and Kate Tierney. Kate's entry states: "Niece of Patrick Kelly".

10 April 1855: The notation for Michael Burk, aged 11, states: "Nephew of William Burk, 30. His father is dead but his mother, the depositor (Winifred Burk) is living in the Colony. She emigrated in April 1854".

OCTOBER 1856 TO DECEMBER 1857: There is an index of depositors only as the journals themselves have been lost. Nevertheless, if a surname is sufficiently unusual it will place a person in the Colony at this time.

FROM DECEMBER 1857: From this period on, the information is quite detailed. As before, age, occupation and family groupings are given, but in addition a location in the home county in England, Ireland, Scotland or Wales is noted. For some Irish immigrants a parish or (occasionally) a townland is also included. For those from cities, particularly London, a full street address is often available – for the researcher this of course opens up the possibility of further census or post office directory searches. The referee is usually the clergyman of the parish, or an employer such as a collier or a newspaper. In addition, ship of arrival is frequently entered in the remarks column.

It should be mentioned that (on a random basis only) we have cross-checked some deposit journal entries specifying a ship with the printed shipping lists published by the Archives Office (1860-79) and on numerous occasions have failed to find the sponsored immigrant in the lists. Spelling variants could perhaps account for some of these, but by no means all.

(No.2978) Depositor, Raymond & Co. Emma Tyrell, 31, and children James, 9, Edward 7, Rachel 5, Eliza 1 of Poplar, London. Husband in Colony. Referee: Rev Mr Baisley of Poplar & Dr Robinson. Per "Fitzjames". To be sent to Moreton Bay. Emma Tyrell's niece Emma Ellen Rosy had the same deposit number but apparently she was the subject of a refund application.

(No.3807) Patrick McNamara sponsored Patrick McNamara, 24, a labourer from Ireland. His referee was Sir Burton McNamara of Tromore [sic] Clare. Per "Mangerton", To be sent to Moreton Bay.

EARLY JANUARY 1862 & ALSO PARTS OF 1863: For this period, in addition to occupation, unmarried immigrants are shown as such.

1864 & 1865: In this period, in the majority of entries, there is a reference to the Clerk of Petty Sessions location (CPS) such as Wollongong, Goulburn etc. indicating the area in which the depositor resided.

1866-1874: Unfortunately no journals or indexes have survived for this period.

1874 ONWARDS: Quite detailed information, as before. There are occasional foreign immigrants mentioned. Some examples from this period:

7/9/1876 John Maher sponsored John O'Loughlin, 40, sergeant F Company 2 Battalion, 18th Royal Irish, Colchester Essex. Per "St Lawrence", 8/6/1877

11/5/1878 Nathan Schactel sponsored Ephraim Schactel, 17, a tailor of "Kalish, Austrony, Germany". Referee was Mr George Cohen of 73 Coleman Street Lond. Per "Earl Dalhousie", 15/1/1876

21/10/1879 Petter Anderson sponsored Carl Anderson 17, and August Nilson, 21, both labourers of Helsingborg, Sweden. Their referee was Dr Applegren of Helsingborg. Per "Peterborough", 1881

17/7/1877 George Ashum sponsored Thomas Surman, 42, a ploughman of 3 Mill Street, Tewkesbury, Gloucester, his wife Caroline, 40 a milliner, Frank Jenkins 9, and Carry Jenkins 7. Thomas is stated to be the stepfather of the two children.

1880s: The address of the depositor is always given and, occasionally, an occupation. There is no mention of referees, but the sailing date of the immigrant's ship is provided. It is interesting to see that, in some cases, details of the immigrant's transport arrangements after arrival are given, such as: "Arrived by 'Orient' 12/1/1897 and forwarded by train to Glen Innes en route to Inverell. The two volumes of entries decreased by 1884 to about 730 for the year and by the late 1890s had dwindled to an average of five deposits per month. Some examples of entries for this period:

2/1/1885 Depositor William Foster of 90 Forbes Street Woolloomooloo, sponsored Louisa Foster, 28 (Wife) E.(?) Foster, 6, and William, 4, living at Westend Tower, Brixham Devon. Per "Bombay" 12/9/1888

17/1/1888 Marcus Benjamin at Hardy Brothers, watchmakers, of 13 Hunter Street Sydney sponsored his wife Gruno 31, of Plungjan, Russia, Therese 11, Wolf 8, Dwora 6 and Fanny 4, per "Orizaba"

To date, the most elderly immigrant we have encountered is Nanny Batters, widow from Lancashire, aged 82, sponsored in February 1859. Unfortunately no ship was given, so we can't be sure that she ever made it to the shores of New South Wales! Unexpected information is revealed at times. Take the entry on 13 March 1860 which says: "Mary Ann Poole is a married woman and a passage certificate has been granted in her favour, on the representation of the depositor, that her husband is suffering imprisonment for bigamy". Or on 7 June 1860: "John Dixon is stated by the depositor to be in delicate health". A cryptic notation "The Rambler" against the name of Daniel Brennan in June 1854 is puzzling, Janet Borthwick, 48 gives her occupation as "Cow Feeder". And elsewhere, it is stated of Joseph Bunn: "This lad is deaf and dumb but his paper has been specially authorised by the Secretary for Lands". And again: On 27 March 1889, a depositor of 15 Kent Street Millers Point Sydney, sponsoring his children aged 19, 11, 8 and 6 of Blackrock, Cork, Ireland has a notation: "Wife in the lunatic asylum, Cork, since December 1885".

Right from the beginning of the journals, the remarks columns contain many notations giving a certificate number and a date later than the date of the journal entry. This number, if followed through the various immigration correspondence registers at the Archives Office of NSW (see Page 232 of the Concise Guide –Letters received from Miscellaneous Persons re Migration to new South Wales – 43 Volumes 4/4719-61) leads ultimately to the boxes of correspondence containing in many cases, applications for refunds by depositors, not necessarily because the immigrants failed to come, but rather because they paid their own passage, or they were entitled to a partial refund.

The following are examples of research leads obtained through the journals:

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, or any information on his birthplace. However, on 4 September 1854 he sponsored George Shepherd and his wife Elizabeth and the journal entry specified that this couple arrived on the "Lloyds". Inspection of that ship's records yielded the fact that George had a brother John living at Balmain, gave his parents' parish in Middlesex, and ultimately led to census parish records from which the family has been traced back to Hertfordshire in the 1760s.

In 1845 William Jessop, a convict, married Margaret McDade whose only known place of origin was Donegal. No record of her arrival has been found. Following an entry in the journals through to the

immigration correspondence, we found William applying for a refund of deposit for Margaret's sister Mary McDade, aged 20, the reason being that she declined to emigrate as she was married. The useful information gleaned from the file, however, was the name of the parish in Donegal where Mary was living. Incidental information was that William and Margaret were at the time of the application living at Rushcutters Bay.

In 1850, Irish girl, Bridget Quigley, 16, arrived in New South Wales, her father Patrick then being deceased, but mother Ann still living. Bridget was born in Sligo or Roscommon and in 1858 she married George Dagworthy and went to live at Camden. Fifteen years after arrival, in 1865, at the Camden CPS she paid a deposit for Ellen Reynolds, 20. Investigation of Ellen's shipping record established her as Bridget's sister, her mother having apparently married a Thomas Reynolds. Ellen's native place was shown in the Immigration Deposit Journals as Bloomfield, Co Sligo, and this gave a lead for further research on Bridget Quigley and their mother's second marriage.

Depositor Martin Hogan sponsored Patrick Hogan and, whilst Patrick's location is shown as Co. Clare, all the other Hogans in the group have a location in Lancashire. There seems to be quite a number of Irish residing in England whose referee is in Ireland with a consequent pointer to their place of origin in Ireland; this should not be overlooked.

From these random examples the type of research avenues that can be opened up using the Deposit Journals is evident and the value of checking all the surnames being researched becomes obvious. It should be noted that the one deposit number is used for a particular group being sponsored on a specific date – i.e. not one deposit number for each immigrant, and we have noted on numerous occasions apparent relationships between immigrants who are sponsored by a different depositor or on a deposit number in close proximity, so it is recommended that, when looking at any entry to establish the names of all persons sponsored under a particular deposit, entries to be checked for a few pages before and after, as this could yield further leads. It should also be borne in mind that some years could elapse between payment of the deposit and arrival of the immigrant.

In some parts of the journals the handwriting is difficult to decipher (a not unfamiliar problem to genealogists!) In cross-checking with the Archives Office (now State Records) Shipping Index 1860-79, many name discrepancies have been noted, no doubt resulting from careless transcriptions of shipping clerks or the best available interpretation of illegible handwriting. For this reason, a list of name variants with all possible interpretations is being made by the authors. Apart from the usual, such as McKeon/McEwen/McEwne, the less apparent have been noted. For example:

Bahan/Barn/Behan
Eighan/Egan/Eagan
Torney/Taugney/Forney/Turney/
Tenny/Terney/Tierney
Gaughan/Vaughan

McPharland/McParlan/McFarlane
Whoulaghan/Wheelihan/Holoran/
Hoolehan
Phaser/Fraser,
Nihill/Neal/Neill

The Immigration Deposit Journals microfilms are included in Stage IV of the Genealogical Research Kit [now the Archives Resources Kit] released in February 1988.