

# Descent

MAGAZINE OF THE SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGISTS



DECEMBER / SUMMER 2022

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## Descent

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Southern aisle of the Great Church at The Hague  
Creator: Johannes Bosboom, c.1827 – c.1891  
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Image from Unsplash

## Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples and we pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. The Society acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which Richmond Villa stands.

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# President's Message

MELISSA HULBERT

As we go to print, SAG's 90th year has drawn to a close, but what a memorable celebration it has been.

## #SAG90

I'd like to thank everyone for their participation in our events this past year, especially our #SAG90 events, celebrating our 90th Anniversary. It has been wonderful to not only attend our celebratory events in-person, but also to meet so many members, some of whom travelled from interstate to join us. It has certainly been a year to remember and I look forward, as I'm sure you all do, to what the next 90 years will bring as we continue to trace our families together.

## Volunteers Welcome

As 2023 approaches, we are looking for volunteers to help us on a variety of projects including in our library, education activities, indexing, cataloguing and digitisation of acquisitions, conservation work, research services and many other activities. If you have an interest in helping the Society in a friendly and social space, then please get in touch at [info@sag.org.au](mailto:info@sag.org.au).

## Our Library

Have you visited the library lately? If not consider popping in. In the past 12 months, new staff have joined the Society and a few things have changed since you were last there. We're looking at developing regular in-person and hybrid events in 2023, so keep an eye out for these and if in Sydney, we'd love to meet you in-person at one of these events.

## Strategic Planning

Earlier this year, some of our volunteers, staff and directors met to discuss the strategic planning for the Society in the coming years. From this discussion, a member survey was created and will likely arrive in your letterboxes or email inboxes over the summer. Please take a few minutes to have your say in the future plans for your Society by responding to the survey. We'd love to know what you, our members, want so we can put together a strong long-term plan for the years ahead.

## New Research Groups

The new year will also see some new research groups. I'd like to welcome and thank those who have volunteered to be a group leader for our new groups. Research groups are open to all members to participate, all that's required is an interest in the research area. Keep an eye out for announcements when our new webpages for these groups become live on our website.

## Thank you to all volunteers and presenters

On behalf of the Society, I wish to pass on my thanks to all our volunteers and presenters. Our volunteers have, as always, been helping the Society; some with presenting courses, webinars, leading research groups and hosting events, while others have been working behind the scenes in many roles including helping the Society in the Library, digitising records, answering research enquiries and participating on committees, just to name a few. We could not operate at the high standards we do without you.

Our staff have also gone above and beyond in our 90th year. Their professionalism, skills, and knowledge have kept the Society functioning at a high standard and they have made the Society a welcoming and friendly place to visit. I wish to thank them for all of their hard work during this past year.

I'd also like to thank our Board, all of whom are volunteers, for their hard work during this year in helping the Society run smoothly and efficiently and I also look forward to welcoming two new directors soon.

Wishing you all the very best for the upcoming festive season and a safe and happy 2023, full of many family history discoveries!

## Beth-Halevy, Abraham Bezalel (1913–1944)

KATHRYN LE GAY BRERETON

Abraham Bezalel Beth-Halevy (1913–1944) — footballer, translator, and Australian Army infantryman — was born on 25 May 1913 in Kalisz, Poland, third of five children to Izrael Dawid Rzepkowicz and his wife, Haja Perel, née Szurek. In the Hebrew calendar, Abraham's birthday, 18 Lyar 5673, fell on Lag B'Omer, a Jewish holiday symbolising fighting Jewish spirit.

In 1916, the first Hebrew school opened in Kalisz and Abraham, aged three, was allowed to tag along with his older brothers, starting him early on a path to fluent Hebrew.

The Jewish community in Kalisz, persecuted through the ages, was decimated during WWI as authorities stood by and did nothing. Having survived, the Rzepkowicz family emigrated to Palestine in 1920, joining other Jews embracing the Zionist movement, ascending to the Holy Land of Israel, arriving just prior to the adoption of the British Mandate in Palestine.

In 1923, the Rzepkowicz family legally changed their surname to Beth-Halevy in Eretz, Israel. Abraham attended school at the Tel Aviv Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium, continuing to study Hebrew and English. Football also arrived in Palestine with the British, and Abraham became a keen footballer.

By 1936, with the Arab revolt threatening British rule, Abraham was hired as an interpreter for the 1st Battalion of the British Army Essex Regiment, and the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment.

As a Palestinian, Abraham claimed his British nationality and attempted to emigrate to Australia in October 1936, sponsored by his cousin, Jack Skolnik, who had already emigrated to Melbourne. Both men had been interpreters in Palestine, Skolnik collecting information for British Intelligence from Turkish and German camps. Unfortunately, Abraham's application was unsuccessful.

Forced to remain in Palestine, Abraham was selected to play for the Maccabi Tel Aviv Football Club. He played in the Palestine Football League where ten thousand strong crowds cheered him. In 1938, alongside his older brother Mojsie (Jerry Beit Halevi), Abraham represented Palestine in the All National Football team. He also played in the 1938 FIFA World Cup qualifying squad and his team won the Palestine League title in 1939.

In 1939, as part of the touring Palestinian Maccabi Football team, Abraham arrived in Melbourne via Suez, Egypt, aboard the *Strathaird*, care of the Australian Soccer Football

Association. While touring Australia, Abraham received news the British Army had found his name on a list of Palestinians that Arab Rebels were seeking to kill. He reapplied to remain in Australia, but was again refused.

Skolnik intervened. He lobbied member of parliament, Harold E. Holt, to reconsider Abraham's application. References were provided by British Army officers and the Victorian Soccer Football Association. Abraham was allowed to remain in Australia. He stayed in Melbourne, working for Skolnik as an accountant, and playing football for Victoria and the Moreland Football Club.

In March 1942, Abraham enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Melbourne Town Hall. He farewelled his fiancé, Sara Wajcman, and left to serve his new country.

Abraham became a Lance Sergeant in the 2/12 Infantry Battalion, landing in New Guinea in August 1943. In January 1944, he took part in Operation Cutthroat, an offensive to capture territory from the Japanese in the Finisterre Mountains.

On the eve of 21 January 1944, Abraham's unit marched for hours through heavy rain and waited, exhausted, until morning to climb up and over Prothero 1, a steep knoll on the north of Shaggy Ridge. At dawn, his battalion successfully ambushed the Japanese. Gun battle ensued and Abraham, aged 30, was killed in action. It was 25 Tevet 5704.

After the Japanese retreated, Abraham was buried at Prothero 1, before being temporarily reinterred at Dumpu Australian War Cemetery, New Guinea in March 1944. On 2 June 1944, he was permanently buried at Lae War Cemetery, New Guinea. His grave inscribed "the beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places". His parents unsuccessfully tried for more than three decades to repatriate his remains to their family grave in Israel.

Abraham was mourned in Palestine for his service to sport and in Australia for his service to the nation. Tributes were published lauding one of Palestine's great sportsmen. His brother delivered his war service medals to his father in Palestine and a memorial was held in Tel Aviv on the anniversary of his death.

Abraham's name was added to the Memorial Obelisk at Melbourne General Cemetery by the Victorian Jewish Returned Soldiers' Circle, and he is forever remembered on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Kathryn Le Gay Brereton completed the Society's Certificate in Genealogical Research in 2021 and was the recipient of the University of Tasmania's scholarship for Society members in 2022 to undertake their Diploma in Family History.



# IN SEARCH OF ... RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Photo by Lukas Meier on Unsplash

This issue of *Descent* shines the spotlight on the theme of religion — no small task, as you can imagine.

As we were curating presentations for November's one-day conference and articles for this issue, the same fundamental questions continued to be raised by our members, volunteers, and staff — unprovoked, without collaboration, and freely written. Religion, it turns out, is a topic that causes profound rumination.

- » How does religion relate to family?
- » What was the role of religion in the lives of our family?
- » How have religious institutions shaped research into our ancestors?

These questions are not ones with easy answers. Rather, as the following articles reveal, there are a multitude of ways to think about the impact of religion on the idea of family and the study of family history. In part, this is due to the diverse number of religious beliefs and the personal nature of religious practices

over time. Family historians find themselves consulting an ever-increasing array of religious sources, such as parish registers, cemetery transcriptions, and family bibles, to eke out minute social details of their ancestors' lives.

The 2021 Australian Census confirmed that religious affiliation in Australia was continuing to diversify, and that more people than ever before identified as having no religious affiliation. The role of religion in our contemporary lives is in sharp contrast to that of our ancestors.

What then has taken the space religion used to fill? Dr Rebecca Robinson<sup>1</sup> recently posited that family history research has become a replacement for religious community and practice in this post-religious world.

We wonder what our ancestors would think of that!

- 1 Robinson, Rebecca. 2021. "Pilgrimage and Purpose: Ancestor Research as Sacred Practice in a Secular Age" *Genealogy* 5, no. 4: 90. <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy5040090>

## UPCOMING IN SEARCH OF ... THEMES

11 March 2023  
Ireland

10 June 2023  
Southern Europe

## CALL FOR ARTICLES & CONFERENCE PAPERS

Do you have an ancestor from Ireland or Southern Europe and would like to submit an article about them to *Descent*, or present a paper at one of our online conferences in March or June next year? We welcome submissions or suggestions for papers and presentations on these topics — please email: [editor@sag.org.au](mailto:editor@sag.org.au)

### Ireland

Deadline for notification to write on the topic of Ireland: **10 January 2023**

Deadline for article: **30 January 2023**

### Southern Europe

Deadline for notification to write on the topic of Southern Europe: **10 April 2023**

Deadline for article: **27 April 2023**

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO *DESCENT*

The Society welcomes articles for publication in *Descent*. Preference is given to articles which demonstrate methods, sources and tactics which will help others with their research. Family is about sharing — so we encourage you to share your stories with your fellow family historians.

**Length:** 2–3 page articles (1,000–2,000 words) although longer articles will be considered; 1 page articles (700–900 words); short articles (100–400 words).

**Copyright Clearance:** Copyright clearance is your responsibility and you must ensure that written and illustrative material does not breach copyright and all sources are correctly acknowledged.

Full details regarding submission lengths, images, copyright and consent can be found on our website at <https://www.sag.org.au/Our-Magazine-Descent>

Please note SAG does not pay author fees.



# SISTERS BECOME SISTERS

by Natalie Lonsdale



Sisters Bridget and Margaret Rausch's lives were changed forever when their Irish mother Mary, died in January 1880.<sup>1</sup> Her death, from tuberculosis, also left behind a five-year-old son named John.<sup>2</sup>

Their father, Jean (John), an immigrant from Luxembourg, had migrated to Australia in 1855 to try his luck on the Victorian goldfields.<sup>3</sup> Failing to find his fortune, John returned to his farming roots selecting land on traditional Yorta Yorta country in southern New South Wales, near the town of Moama. It was named *The Moira Run*.<sup>4</sup>

After their mother's death, it is unknown if the girls, Bridget (12)<sup>5</sup> and Margaret (9),<sup>6</sup> stayed on the farm with their father caring for their younger brother or were sent to live with extended family or friends. Misfortune struck again four years later in October 1884, when John died after a bout of hepatic fever, leaving his children orphaned.<sup>7</sup>

Fortunately, John Rausch proved to be a man of foresight and modern principles, leaving his estate in trust to all three children, until they each turned 21, when an equal amount of property would become their own unconditionally.<sup>8</sup> After their father's death, it is not known where young John was sent, although Rausch descendants believe he may have gone to relatives in Creswick, Vic.<sup>9</sup> The sisters however, found a home, and their life's callings at the Brigidine Convent in Echuca.

The Brigidine Convent was founded in March 1886 in the original home of Echuca's founder, emancipated convict Henry Hopwood. The two-storey house was comprised of eight rooms, a detached kitchen, coach house and stables. Built between the Murray and Campaspe rivers, the home was considered "... the most sought after site in the town."<sup>10</sup>

The call from the bishops to set up Catholic schools in Victoria began with the 1872 Education Act.<sup>11</sup> Government financial support was withdrawn from religious schools and other private providers, and in its place, a compulsory, free and secular education was established and controlled by the state.

Religion was a source of conflict to be avoided in the new government school system.<sup>12</sup>

The Bishop of Sandhurst, the Most Reverend Martin Crane led the appeal for Irish Sisters to come and teach in the river-port town of Echuca. Echuca wasn't officially recognised as a "Catholic town" like its compatriots Kilmore or Axedale, but many Irish migrants were arriving from the Victorian goldfields to take up farming selections in the area, and the Sandhurst Diocese could see a need for Catholic education and a church in the town.<sup>13</sup>

In 1885 his request to the Brigidine Order in Tullow, Ireland was granted, and four volunteer nuns were chosen to make the journey south.<sup>14</sup> Enduring a sea journey of more than six weeks, the Sisters arrived in Echuca and were warmly welcomed by a crowd of over 500 people.<sup>15</sup> There is a beautifully written tribute in the convent archives in Tullow honouring the four courageous Sisters travelling to Echuca, dated 6 January 1886.

In the crisp air of Tuesday morning, whilst drowsy Dublin was lazily unlocking its eyelids, the wail of breaking hearts was heard again at the North Wall. It was the old, too well known wail of the Irish emigrant. There is no wail so touching, so like the inconsolable Rachel's, for unrivalled is the attachment of the Irish to their Motherland ... this time the emigrants were all of the tender sex, ladies impoverished by their own free vow, reduced too by voluntary obedience, yet not distressed but exultant in their "no surrender" war of Chastity against the voluptuousness of a selfish age ...

Their answer to our question "Why do you leave home and country, aged parents, devoted kindred, a community you love, a poor that worships you?" was: "The charity of Christ urgeth us." As, 100 years ago [sic] the voices of the Irish came to Patrick craving light and leading us, so in turn, to the fervent daughters of St Brigid at Tullow, had come the voices of the uninstructed in far off Echuca, of the Diocese of Sandhurst, beneath the Southern Cross.<sup>16</sup>

A fitting accolade to the women who were giving up home and country to serve the children and families of Echuca.

Thrust from a partly-cloistered convent in wintry Ireland to a hot, dusty, redgum forested country town in Victoria, modesty and the desire to serve others rather than to bring attention to themselves, has left little record of the Sisters' own feelings and personal experiences.

After a week of recuperation, the Sisters went straight to work. Mother Benedict Moore and Sr Thomas Healy took over teaching the infants at St Mary's parish school from lay teachers Mr & Mrs A. R. Larkin, and Mother Borgia Hayden. Sr Vincent Brennan set about establishing a fee-paying boarding school at the convent to help financially support the Sisters.<sup>17</sup>

An advertisement placed in the Melbourne Catholic Archdiocese newspaper, *The Advocate*, in April 1886, read:

The Brigidine Nuns, celebrated for their system of teaching and training the young, will be prepared to receive boarders on the 3rd May next. The Convent is located in the most healthy part of the town near the Victoria Park, and has extensive grounds attached. The course of education will comprise English, use of globes, astronomy, history (ancient and modern), arithmetic, foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, painting, drawing and plain and fancy needlework. Terms and other particulars may be obtained on application to the Superioress of the Convent.<sup>18</sup>

Such a broad and exciting curriculum for young Catholic ladies in rural Victoria was a rare opportunity, and Bridget and Margaret's trust fund provided the finance needed to enrol. The convent boarding school offered a safe place for the girls to live and learn, and protection from any unwanted marriages or dangers that might befall young ladies of vulnerable position in the late 1890s.



Above: c. 1890 A front view of the Brigidine Convent at Echuca. The assembly of Sisters and students at the College stand outside the Apsley House section of the college. This was the house the four founding Sisters came to in 1886. Further back, on the left-hand side of the photograph, is the Hall and classroom section of the college which was added on in 1894. The front section of the building is the Brigidine convent which was erected in 1888. The building to the right of the photograph was the first High School (formerly the Stables) built in 1887. St Joseph's College, Echuca Photographic Collection.



Above: Margaret Rausch (Sister Augustine) as a boarder at the Brigidine Convent, date unknown. St Joseph's College, Echuca Photographic Collection

Left: c. 1886 Four Foundresses of the Brigidine Convent and two Novices St Joseph's College, Echuca Photographic Collection.

The humble, kind, and intensely faithful Brigidine tradition impacted the Rausch girls deeply, and three years later in 1889, 22-year-old Bridget entered the Brigidine Noviciate, as a trainee nun. The Brigidines were attracting many Australian-born women to their fold, and by the early 1900s the Echuca Convent was comprised mainly of Australian rather than Irish Sisters.<sup>19</sup> Bridget received the Religious Habit in 1890 and in religion became Sister Veronica.

On Sunday High Mass was celebrated at St. Mary's, Echuca, by the Rev. Father Knowles, O.S.A. Bishop Reville, O.S.A ... much interest was taken in the proceedings, and this was shown by the presence of over 200 non-Catholics. Two young ladies were received as novices by Dr. Reville into the community of the Sisters of St. Bridget, established at Echuca ... Miss Rausch (in religion, Sister Veronica), of Moama ...<sup>20</sup>

Sr Veronica was professed in 1892 and worked in the Convent as a house-nun, cooking, and caring for the Sisters and boarders, eventually becoming Mother Veronica. She celebrated her Golden Jubilee of Profession in August 1942.

After a lifetime of service, and "... a lengthy illness born with remarkable patience ..." <sup>21</sup> Mother Veronica died at the Convent in 1949 aged 85. A memorial service was conducted in the Convent Chapel and the first student to be enrolled at the Convent School in 1886, Hector McKenzie,<sup>22</sup> was one of the coffin bearers. Mother Veronica is buried in the Echuca cemetery.

Margaret Rausch also became a Sister. Her calling was to a nursing ministry rather than teaching. Shortly after her 21st birthday, Margaret travelled to Sydney and entered the Little Company of Mary (LCM) as a postulant in 1891.<sup>23</sup> The Little Company of Mary was founded by English woman Mary Potter in 1847. Mary had suffered much illness in her own life, and she dreamed of a mission, "... centred on prayer

and caring for those who were sick, dying and in need."<sup>24</sup>

In 1885, six Sisters set out from England to Australia and began their ministry in Kings Cross, caring for the sick and vulnerable by establishing a soup kitchen, night refuge and school for the blind.<sup>25</sup> The Sisters were known as the "Blue Nuns" named for the pale blue veil they wore.<sup>26</sup> They went on to establish hospitals in Sydney, Adelaide, Wagga Wagga, Melbourne, Hobart, and Canberra.<sup>27</sup>

Margaret made her final vows in December 1899 at the Convent of the Maternal Heart in Lewisham, Sydney and in religion was known as Sister Mary Augustine.<sup>28</sup> In 1906, after attending a prescribed course of lectures in anatomy and physiology, general nursing, medical nursing, surgical nursing, hygiene and invalid cookery, Sr Augustine completed her requisite three years of training at Lewisham Hospital and was admitted to membership of the Australasian Trained Nurses' Association (ATNA) in August 1906.<sup>29</sup>

Sr Augustine was one of the first trained nurses in New South Wales, as previously nurses did not have to undertake any examinations. It wasn't until 1905 that ATNA introduced an Australia-wide examination for nurses, enabling "... the Association to uphold professional nursing standards, maintain a register of trained nurses, contribute to nurse education and discuss nursing affairs..."<sup>30</sup> An annual report from ATNA in 1906 recorded that the Sisters believed "... it was for the good of the Hospital ... All the Sisters from the Rev. Mother down underwent the test ... the speaker declared that the examiners were absolutely astounded at the excellence of the work done by the Sisters".<sup>31</sup>

During the First World War, Sr Augustine spent time with the Little Company of Mary community in Adelaide, working alongside her fellow Sisters at the Calvary Hospital, now called the Calvary North Adelaide Hospital. She assisted the Sisters of Saint Joseph with nursing Archbishop O'Reilly





Left: Bridget Rausch (Mother Veronica) at the Brigidine Convent, Echuca, date unknown, Alaimo/Rausch Family Collection

Right: c. 1921 Margaret Rausch (Sr Mary Augustine) Little Company of Mary, Sydney. Courtesy of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary Region of the Southern Cross Archives.

during a long illness in 1914 and she is pictured seated near Mother General Mary Hilda Potter, niece of the LCM founder Mary Potter, on her visit to Australia in 1928.<sup>32</sup>

Mother Hilda was adamant that the Adelaide nuns have their own convent and living quarters separate from the lay nurses and maids. Subsequently, a new convent was opened in Barnard Street, North Adelaide in 1929.<sup>33</sup>

By 1935 Sr Augustine was back in Sydney working at the Lewisham Hospital.<sup>34</sup> After years of nursing and praying for the sick, it is unfortunate that we do not have more details about her dedicated life of service. What extraordinary stories of life and death she could tell us. Sr Augustine died in Ryde, NSW, in 1941<sup>35</sup> and is buried in the Field of Mars Cemetery.<sup>36</sup>

- 1 Death record for Mary Rausch, died 23 January 1880, Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, New South Wales, 8061/1880.
- 2 Birth record for John Rausch, born 29 August 1874, Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages, New South Wales, 13945/1874.
- 3 Shipping record for J. Rusch, arrived 14 October 1855, Victoria, Australia, Assisted and Unassisted Passenger Lists, 1839–1923, Ancestry.com. Accessed 8 September 2022.
- 4 Moira is a Bangerang word meaning “place of reeds”.
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- 6 Terry Alaimo to Natalie Lonsdale, email, 11 November 2021, original in author’s possession.
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- 11 Thelma Murtagh C.S.B., *Brigidine History Victoria Province 19th Century 1886–1893* (Geelong West, Victoria: Brigidine Convent, 1985), 3.
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- 16 Sturrock, *Women of strength women of gentleness*, 8–9.

- 17 Geoff Waters, ed. *The Brigidine Story Echuca* (Malvern, Victoria: Brigidine Association, 1986), 12.
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- 19 Sturrock, *Women of strength women of gentleness*, 34.
- 20 “Diocese of Sandhurst”, *The Advocate*, 2 August 1890, 16.
- 21 “Obituary Sister M. Veronica”, *Riverine Herald*, 6 December 1949, 4.
- 22 The Brigidine’s allowed male pupils to be enrolled at the Convent as day students.
- 23 Courtesy of the Sisters of the Little Company of Mary Region of the Southern Cross Archives.
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- 27 Little Company of Mary Australia Aotearoa New Zealand Tonga, “Our Story”, <https://www.lcm.org.au/our-story/our-heritage/lcm-australia/>. Accessed 19 September 2022.
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- 30 Australian College of Nursing, “Nurse education in Australia: Part 3”, <https://www.acn.edu.au/nurseclick/nurse-education-in-australia-part-3>. Accessed 20 September 2022.
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- 33 Forbes, *Calvary Hospital Adelaide*, 71.
- 34 Electoral record for Margaret Rausch, Lewisham Hospital, nursing sister, “Australia Electoral Rolls, 1903–1980”, Ancestry.com. Accessed 20 September 2022.
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## THE BUSHRANGERS' PRIEST

by Andrew Redfern

Originally from Cashel, Ireland, Denis McGuinn arrived in Adelaide in 1847, as a result of a recruiting mission by Adelaide's then Bishop, Francis Murphy. The following year, he became the first catholic priest to be ordained in South Australia<sup>1</sup> and was subsequently the first resident priest of the town of Clare, prior to the arrival of the Jesuit Fathers.<sup>2</sup> He made his way to New South Wales and served at Appin, then followed a period of four years at the gold mines. While stationed at Wellington, he assisted in the establishment of the hospital, before being posted to Forbes and then Carcoar.

It was during his time at Carcoar that he assumed the title "The Bushrangers' Priest", which had been held by his predecessor, Father Tim McCarthy (1829–1879), who had worked to rehabilitate bushrangers and restore them to society.<sup>3</sup>

During the 1860s, the nearby goldfields of Lambing Flats, Bathurst and Forbes proved an enticing hunting ground, leading young men to a life of easy crime.<sup>4</sup> The scrubby hills bordering Young, Grenfell, Cowra and Carcoar — known as the Weddin Mountains — were the perfect hideout for outlaws, including the notorious Frank Gardiner and Ben Hall.

Father McGuinn was successful in securing two associates of Ben Hall. In November 1864, a young John "Jimmy" Dunleavy surrendered himself to Fr McGuinn and a week later, following a tip-off as to his whereabouts, Fr McGuinn rode out to find Jimmie Burke in the Abercrombie Hills, where he captured him and handed him over to the authorities.

Following their transfer to Bathurst, and while they awaited trial, Fr McGuinn wrote to the Colonial Secretary, Sir Charles Cowper, requesting consideration of a lesser sentence for the two men. When the request was received by the judge, however, a furore erupted. Judge Wise gave Fr McGuinn a severe dressing down, belittling the involvement of the clergyman in the arrest; seeing McGuinn's actions as "very much at variance with the ends of justice"<sup>5</sup> and stating categorically that priests had no business meddling in the law. No leniency was given and both men received 15 years hard labour.

Following the formation of the Bathurst Diocese in 1865, Fr McGuinn returned to Sydney, then went to Berrima, where he spent five years, then to Bungendore where he was appointed the first resident priest in 1874.<sup>6</sup> He died in Dubbo in 1887 and is buried alongside his brother and family. His nephew became a leading solicitor in Dubbo, although no further "meddling in the law" by Fr McGuinn is known of, or recorded.

His life as a religious man paved the way for two grandnephews to become priests and a grandniece to become a Sister of Mercy in the Bathurst Diocese.



Reverend Denis McGuinn held in the McGuinn family collection.

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Andrew has been tracing his family history since the mid 1980s, sparked by his mother's interest in genealogy. Fascinated with Colonial Australia, DNA and using creative ways to bring the stories of his forebears to life, Andrew loves uncovering the rogues and villains in his history. So far, he has managed to unearth an escaped convict, a travelling comedian, a murderer and several patients in mental asylums. Read about these and many more at his website: [www.andrewredfern.com](http://www.andrewredfern.com)



## Looking for Ellen Hiney AKA Sister Mary Paulina

by Michelle Goldsmith

Growing up in a long line of religious sceptics, I was surprised to discover not only a Catholic nun in the family tree but one who served with Australia's only Saint, Mother Mary MacKillop.

The search for information on the life of Ellen Hiney, later Sister Mary Paulina, resulted in the discovery of some very interesting resources, many of which are unavailable to the public. This leaves gaps in Ellen's family history, but it did expand my research to include more social and local history.

My maternal Irish Catholic four times great-grandfather, John Hiney, arrived in Sydney, New South Wales with the 17th Regiment of Foot (Leicestershire) in 1830.<sup>1</sup> I am still to confirm if wife Ellen Mooney and children Patrick and Catherine travelled on the same ship, although I do know the children were born in Ireland before the journey.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth and Ellenor (Ellen) were born soon after in Sydney, as the family followed John and the regiment around the colony.<sup>3</sup>

After leaving the nomadic regimental lifestyle in July 1835, the family continued moving for John's career, eventually settling on Norfolk Island in 1837 when John became Chief Constable.<sup>4</sup> Despite the relocations the family grew to include Hester, John Joseph, Sarah Agnes, James, Alice and Mary.<sup>5</sup>

The family continued to move around after John was pensioned from his position on Norfolk Island in 1849, returning to New South Wales and living in Sydney, Lansdowne and finally Campbelltown by about 1866.<sup>6</sup>

Searching the historic digitised newspapers via Trove, I discovered an erratum in the *Freeman's Journal*, a publication dedicated to Catholic news. It corrected a misspelling of a surname from the previous edition; "Hiney" had been incorrectly written as "Heeny".<sup>7</sup>

**ERRATUM.—In our last issue when giving an account of the religious reception at St. Patrick's Church, we stated that Miss Ellen Heeny was one of the young ladies who took the white veil. The name should have been Miss Ellen Hiney.**

Following the trail, I discovered that Ellen, John and Ellen's fourth child, had taken the white veil of the Sisters of Mercy in St Patrick's Catholic Church in 1869.<sup>8</sup> As I couldn't locate a marriage or death notice for Ellen here was a possibility I hadn't considered!

It made sense that the St Patrick's mentioned in the newspaper was the church at Parramatta, as it was the closest to Campbelltown at that time. Unfortunately, to date, attempts to obtain information from the Sisters of Mercy about their early Sisters has been unsuccessful and I do need to follow up this line of enquiry.

Internet searching led me to an archived database developed by St Bede's Catholic College in collaboration with other religious orders called *Women of Vision: An Index and History of Nuns and Sisters of the Catholic Church in Australia 1838-1918*.<sup>9</sup> This database also includes the history of various Orders.

Hoping to find information about Ellen being a Sister of Mercy, I discovered she had joined the Josephites in Penola, South Australia, on 27 May 1872.<sup>10</sup> Her religious name had been Mary Paulina and she died in 1917.<sup>11</sup> The database not only listed Ellen's date of birth, which I had already confirmed, but it held details of her parents, including her mother's maiden name, Mooney.<sup>12</sup>

Her death certificate, issued in the name of Sister M. Paulina Hiney, confirmed she died on 27 May 1917 in Kensington, South Australia.<sup>13</sup>

Whilst I admit that my entire knowledge of nuns and the Catholic Church comes from watching the 1991 ABC series *Brides of Christ*, I harboured a suspicion that information about individual Sisters may be difficult to locate. I was correct.

Books or newspaper articles about the Order's history, schools or activities rarely identify the nuns individually. They are simply referred to as "the Sisters". No such ambiguity occurs with the priests who are always named in full!

Additionally, I discovered that many books and other records listed on Trove concerning religious orders are held in private church or university archives and are inaccessible to the public.





c. 1909 Mother Mary MacKillop, her sister Annie and brother Fr. Donald MacKillop S.J. Image sourced from State Library of South Australia.

Undeterred, I decided to contact the Order directly. Thankfully, Roslyn Kennedy, Congregational Archivist, Sisters of St Josephs of the Sacred Heart, North Sydney, was very helpful. Whilst confirming their archives are not open to the public Ms Kennedy was able to advise (via email) that Sister M. Paulina had entered the Congregation in Adelaide, teaching at the Order's South Australian schools in Manoora (1879–1885), Burnside (1885) and Laura (1886).<sup>14</sup>

Ms Kennedy also advised that private letters in their archives show Sister M. Paulina corresponded with Mother Mary MacKillop on school matters.<sup>15</sup>

Ms Kennedy was able to provide an obituary from the Order's newsletter *The Garland of St Joseph*, dated 16 June 1917:

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June a very old member of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Sacred Heart was called to her reward. Sister M. Pauline [*sic*] spent many years of her religious life in the schools, and she bore the trials of the early days with a sweetness and patience which won her the love and esteem of all her companions. She worked well and faithfully till her advancing years deprived her of the ability of carrying out what her still unflagging zeal prompted her to undertake, and at length a severe illness warned her Sisters that the end was approaching, and it came quietly on the day following the Feast of the Sacred Heart. A solemn Requiem Mass and Office were celebrated for the repose of her soul at the Convent, Kensington, where she had breathed her last. The interment took place at the Mitcham Cemetery, where rest many of Sister's early companions. – R.I.P. <sup>16</sup>

So many questions remain and without family diaries or letters, answers to personal information remain supposition. Why had Ellen taken the veil? Did she feel it was her only choice, still single at 39 and from a large Catholic family?

Her younger brother, John Joseph, presumably there for the gold rush, had died in 1868 in Boatman's Creek, Inanghwa, West Coast, New Zealand. A notice appeared in the *Freeman's Journal* in July 1868, announcing that John had died on 28 February of that year.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps the grief of losing a brother moved Ellen to the religious life in the following year.

How did Ellen end up as a Josephite in South Australia in 1872 when it was reported she had taken the veil in New South Wales as a Sister of Mercy in 1869?

Literature detailing the early days of the Josephites reveal they were pioneers of social welfare, believing in free education for all as well as assisting women and children in distress.<sup>18</sup> Without access to the Order's archives I can only speculate, but I like to believe these ideals inspired Ellen to become part of a community devoted to helping those in need.

I then changed my research direction. Turning to local and social history resources, including books and historic newspapers, a picture of Sister M. Paulina's life took shape. Placing her in the context of the times, these revealed the remote communities in which she served had limited resources. The Sisters appear to have been hard working — raising money and assisting the needy. Whilst general and not specific in nature, these stories filled vital gaps to her story.

## Searching for Sisters

Advice for seeking historic information on religious sisters:

- » Check the Women of Vision database.<sup>9</sup>
- » Contact the Order directly.
- » Check historic newspapers for general stories on the Order as well as your ancestor.
- » Look for archives of churches, religious schools and hospitals.
- » Look at cemeteries.
- » Search Trove for books and other resources. If privately owned, contact the librarian anyway.
- » Many scholars have completed theses on religious orders/topics and you may be able to access them via university websites for free.
- » Search under first name "Sister".

Hopefully, some day there will be greater access to private archives, and I will have answers to my questions. In the meantime, it is good to know Sister M. Paulina's letters are preserved and, due to their connection to Mother Mary MacKillop, are considered "precious" by the Order.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, researching the social and local history of her time has filled many gaps in her story. It is important to remember that family history is much more than names and dates; always look to the times in which your ancestor lived. You may be amazed at what you discover.



Michelle Goldsmith is a family history librarian who enjoys encouraging and assisting newbies with their family history research as well as discovering more about her own.

She credits listening to the stories of her older relatives with starting her down the family history rabbit hole, but wishes she had asked them many more questions!

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## MR GOUDIE & THE PRESBYTERIAN COWS

by Janet Halliday



*Photo by Iga Palacz on Unsplash*

In the 1950s, the Rev. James Goudie was minister of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Gunnedah NSW. While my family was nominally Presbyterian, we lived on a farm 50 km away and rarely attended St Andrew's. However, once a month Mr Goudie would phone up his flock at the neighbouring farms and arrange to hold a service at the house of one of the families. We took it in turns to host the service.

With an early tea-time, clean clothes and faces, the congregation would arrive around dusk. Mr Goudie was genial and slight and was interested in you. Mrs Goudie, on the other hand, was an imposing, rather portly lady, very buttoned-up. I was scared of her.

With them they brought a small portable organ with bellows and a pile of hymn books. In the living room the dozen adults sat on a variety of chairs facing the Goudies and the organ, while umpteen children sat cross-legged on the floor. The cat wandered in and out if someone had left the door open.

As we were told to behave by our parents and looked down on from on high by Mrs Goudie, we all took it very seriously and there was no pushing or shoving. The oldest child would hand out the hymn books, feeling important.

Mr Goudie's home services were tuned to the circumstances. There were lots of little children whose attention wouldn't last long, sometimes a baby would cry, farmers had to get up early the next morning and the Goudies had a 50 km drive along unsealed roads back home to the manse.

The short sermon was always very cheerful and the hymns were sung with gusto, with Mr Goudie pumping away on the wheezy organ. Occasionally there was a christening — it was all quite jolly.

Looking back, I can see that the supper that was served after the service was equally important to Mr Goudie, as it enabled him to chat to people he would not otherwise see. From the point of view of the smaller fry in the congregation, the supper was of course the best bit as the ladies always brought cakes.

The other significant aspect of these get-togethers was financial. While our mothers were boiling the kettle and trying to stop us eating all the cakes, Mr Goudie and the men talked about the weather, farming and the state of the sheep and cattle market. The church always needed money and the amount collected in the plate each night was a drop in the ocean.

To raise funds, Dad and other farmers interested in helping the church, began buying a few heifers at the local stock sales. These young female cows were then given free pasturage on the various farms. In time, they matured and had calves themselves. When the market was favourable, some of the stock was sold off and the proceeds went to the church.

As there was a lot of rain in the 1950s, times were good and the system continued. Mr Goudie indeed had a vested interest in the Presbyterian cows.

Janet Halliday is a retired TAFE NSW Manager. A volunteer guide at the Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney, she has a keen interest in family history, literature, choral singing, travel and keeping fit.



## A METHODIST MINISTER'S LIFE ON CIRCUIT

by Louise Barker

Reverend Charles McLelland Barker — my great-grandfather — was a much-loved Methodist minister, travelling on the country circuits in NSW at the beginning of the twentieth century.

A few years into his ministry at West Wyalong, Reverend Barker had a close brush with death when he experienced a serious horseriding accident. Fortunately he recovered and went on to marry and have a family. Only a few years later, however, while on the circuit in Young, Reverend Barker became sick with pneumonia and died at only 37 years of age. At the time of his death, his wife Edith was pregnant with my grandfather and already had two young children.

Charles McLelland Barker was born 27 April 1870 at McArthur Street, Parramatta, the only son of John and Eliza Barker. His father, John Charles Barker, was the first town clerk of Parramatta, elected in 1861; but at the age of 32, John died of tuberculosis. His young wife Eliza was left to bring up her two-year-old son, along with three little daughters: Amy (7), Nina (5) and Amelia (4).

Eliza was remembered as “an upright small stern woman”<sup>1</sup> credited with making “affectionate and courageous provision”<sup>2</sup> for her son.

Both John and Eliza came from Wesleyan Methodist families and Eliza’s father had been a reverend in New Zealand. There was probably little surprise that Charles also entered the ministry.

As a provisional minister, Charles was put on circuit, posted to Nyngan and then Wyalong, where he fell off a horse while travelling to one of the small towns in the area. The incident described in *The Cumberland and Fruitgrowers Advocate*<sup>3</sup> stated that his “mettlesome steed” threw him to the ground. With his foot stuck in the stirrup, the Reverend was dragged along the ground and found unconscious. He was hospitalised with his injuries, but “before he had been long in the institution he had established himself as a great favourite”.

When Charles was able to return to work several months later, he was relocated to the Coolamon Circuit. Perhaps he stayed away from horses because it was on a train in Tumut that he met my great-grandmother, Edith Bax, and their courtship began.

He was ordained in March 1900 and the following year, on 10 July 1901, he married Edith at the Wesleyan Church in Petersham, Sydney. A notice in the *Sydney Morning Herald*<sup>4</sup> described in great detail the church decorations, the guests who attended, their wedding gifts and the outfits of the bridal party.

Edith wore, “white figured silk, with semi-train edged with tiny flounces, the bodice being trimmed with pearl passementerie and satin streamers, and the usual veil and wreath”.

The couple holidayed in Stanwell Park before Charles left Coolamon to take up the Casino circuit. The Coolamon community presented him with a “gold Albert chain with a pendant suitably inscribed” and honoured him as having “a great knack of getting over difficulties which ministers in country circuits so often have to contend with”.<sup>5</sup>

While in Casino in 1903, their son Harold was born. In 1905 Edith fell pregnant with her second child, and as Charles was moving on to the Young circuit, she went to stay with her parents in Sydney. Charles wrote to his wife that his mother, Eliza, “will be bitterly disappointed if the baby’s name is not Charles or John. She sends no love to the baby until she knows what his name will be.”<sup>6</sup>

Eliza was miffed that they had given their firstborn the name “Harold”, rather than either of her husband’s names. However, the child was a girl, Kathleen, born in Woollahra in May 1906.



The following year, Edith was pregnant again and late in her confinement went to stay with her parents once more in Woollahra. She wasn't there long when she received the terrible news that her husband had fallen seriously ill with pneumonia.

Edith, her mother Emily and Charles' mother Eliza travelled together to Young to be by his side. He died on 6 December 1907.

Fortunately, he had rallied sufficiently three days earlier to write a will bequeathing, "All of my property to my dear wife Edith Emily Barker, to be used and disposed of by her for the benefit of herself and the children."<sup>7</sup> Edith was the sole executrix.

My grandfather, Charles McLelland Barker, was born on 18 January 1908, six weeks after his father's death.

When Eliza died in 1914, she was buried alongside her son in Waverley Cemetery. Her headstone is inscribed "In loving memory of Eliza White Barker, mother of the Rev. C. McLelland Barker." There is no mention of her husband or her three daughters. The verse reads "In death they are not divided". Mother and her beloved son together for eternity.



Reverend Charles McLelland Barker, date unknown, sourced from Camden Theological Library

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# Amelia

A life of travel, adventure,  
sorrow and family escapades

BY JUDY MEYER



Outside the Fort Street Barracks, a young woman lifts her skirts to her knees to adjust the lacing on her long knee boots; coincidentally a young soldier happens to be passing. The soldier stops to talk and so commenced a courtship that resulted in a marriage on 8 September 1857<sup>1</sup> at the Wesleyan York Street Chapel in Sydney.

The bride was Amelia Cooper and her groom Samuel Withers; the witnesses to the marriage were her mother, Elizabeth, and her brother Thomas. Amelia's eldest daughter, Caroline, would describe this incident in 1932 in a newspaper interview.<sup>2</sup>

Little did Amelia know that her coquettish behaviour with Samuel would lead to a life of travel, adventure, sorrow and family escapades.

Amelia was born 20 May 1838 and baptised 18 June 1841 at St Mary's Newington in Southwark (South London).<sup>3</sup> Her parents were Thomas John and Elizabeth Ann Cooper (nee Hurren). The 1841 census shows the Cooper family residing in Tiverton Street, Newington together with Amelia's siblings Thomas (1836) and Emma (1840).<sup>4</sup>

The family had applied to be Bounty Immigrants<sup>5</sup> and in July 1841 sailed for Australia, arriving in Sydney on 5 November 1841. The Cooper family settled in The Rocks area of Sydney and initially lived in Cambridge Street and later Princes Street where further siblings were born: Elizabeth (1842), Caroline (1845), Margaret (1848) and Charles (1851). With the building of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Princes Street was demolished to make the approach to the bridge.

After a long illness, Amelia's father, Thomas Cooper, died<sup>6</sup> on 14 April 1851 aged 42; leaving her mother to raise six children — the youngest only four months. The family would support themselves as mattress makers, and later the extended family did work for the Australian Steam Navigation Company making mattresses and pillows.

In 1856 Samuel Withers was a corporal in the 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot. He enlisted in July 1853 at the age of 15, and arrived in Melbourne on 30 October 1855 from Ireland. After their arrival the regiment was sent to the gold diggings at Castlemaine; one of their duties was to escort gold shipments. In 1856 the detachments at Ballarat, Castlemaine and Sandhurst were relieved and returned to Melbourne, which is possibly when Samuel was transferred to Sydney for a period.

After their marriage Samuel and Amelia moved to Melbourne, and the birth of their first child, Charles Frederick, occurred there on 27 April 1859<sup>7</sup> at Spencer Street, Melbourne. Samuel and Amelia remained in Melbourne until April 1860 when he was detached with the regiment to New Zealand during an insurrection of the Māori Wars (now known as Land Wars).<sup>8</sup>

After Samuel's departure for New Zealand, Amelia returned to her family in Sydney.

On 8 November 1860 Samuel sent a letter to the Cooper family in Sydney — which was partially published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 26 November — describing the progress of the war and giving great detail about a large skirmish that had recently occurred in the Waikato/Taranaki district, North Island.

On 11 January 1861 Charles Withers died<sup>9</sup>, aged 20 months, at 142 Princes Street.

Obviously after her son's death Amelia felt she had nothing to lose and was not going to sit at home waiting for Samuel's possible return. Not intimidated by her husband's letters of the fighting, Amelia travelled to New Zealand. Family stories told of Amelia living in the army camp "under canvas".

It was in New Zealand that Samuel and Amelia's next child, Caroline Elizabeth Anna, was born<sup>10</sup>, reportedly in a military tent behind the firing line during a Māori battle. The birth notice appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 16 December 1862.

WITHERS, Mrs. Daughter born 24 November 1862 at Auckland, New Zealand; husband is Sergeant Withers of HM 40th Regiment.

In a series of interviews with Caroline published in *The Propeller* in 1932<sup>11</sup> entitled "Echoes of the Past" she recounted two occurrences shortly after her birth. The first was of an enraged Māori tribesman who attempted to kill Amelia and Caroline near their tent in the camp with a nulla-nulla<sup>12</sup> (retained by the family with a bullet hole in it). Apparently only prompt action by Samuel saved their lives.

The second incident occurred when Caroline was 18 months old. Walking past a camp cauldron, liquid splashed over her right arm — from the shoulder down and part of her side. At one point amputation was considered by the regimental doctor, which her father refused. Amelia immediately returned to Sydney with her daughter. A German doctor, Dr Eichler in Bridge Street, managed to save her arm. All her life she wore long-sleeved dresses to cover the scars and was never able to straighten her arm completely.

After returning to Sydney, Amelia in all probability stayed with her family until Samuel's return in August 1865, after his army discharge in New Zealand having served 12 years. The Cooper family remained a close-knit unit, quite often living next-door to each other. In 1865 her sister Elizabeth married her brother-in-law John Withers at Forbes.

Shortly afterwards Amelia had another adventure. Her family were held up by the bushrangers William Seymour and John Ford on 3 February 1866 at Pulpit Hill near Penrith.



The story appeared in the *Sydney Mail*<sup>13</sup> on 10 February 1866 under “Robbery by Bushranger”. From *The Propeller* articles Caroline advised:

My father’s brothers Fred and John, were then at Forbes, and father took us up in the train as far as Penrith, which was the terminus of the railway line then. From there we journeyed in one of Cobb & Co’s coaches till we reached Forbes. After a short visit we left his brothers, and, when near Penrith, on the way back, we were bailed up by bushrangers.

My father had 30 pounds taken from him, while the highwaymen cut the bags open and took everything of any value they could find. It was said that they got away with about 300 pounds altogether.

I was only a little child at the time, but I can remember it all as plainly as possible I didn’t seem to feel afraid; I was too young and innocent to understand what the rascals were really up to, I suppose.

Well, off they galloped into the wild bush, and the coach brought us on to Penrith, where my father gave information to the police, and before long the bushrangers were captured and most of the money recovered. I have heard my father say that he got his 30 pounds back, and that was what concerned him most I suppose.

These details are verified in the newspaper report on the trial of Seymour and Ford in the *Empire* on 13 March 1866. Apparently after taking the 30 pounds, they returned ten shillings to Samuel to enable the family to return home.

The family settled in Sussex Street and the following children were born: Anna Margaret (1866), Thomas Edwin (1868), Samuel John (1871), Alice Maria (1872), Robert William (1874) and John Samuel (1880).

Amelia lost Samuel aged four months and later Thomas, who drowned at Patent Slip Wharf near King Street, just a week before his sixth birthday. Caroline in her article explained that Amelia had gone to David Jones and bought birthday items and clothes. After the drowning, the store exchanged them for mourning clothes.

In 1878 the family moved to their new home at 427 Harris Street, Sydney with her brother Charles owning the property next door. It was at Harris Street that Amelia’s mother, Elizabeth, died on 12 January 1881 whilst living with the family.

From 1878 to 1888<sup>14</sup> Amelia invested in properties in Balmain, Petersham and Leichhardt. During this time Samuel Withers was Chief Bailiff in the District Court.

During these years, as well as raising and looking after her family, Amelia had interests in and attended the Empress of India Benefit Society, Hope of Petersham (a Temperance Society) and the Royal Foresters. These societies would have been both a social and humanitarian interest for Amelia. The Royal Foresters decided that they had a duty to assist their fellow men who fell into need “as they walked through the forests of life”. This “need” arose principally when a breadwinner fell ill, could not work and, therefore, received no wages. Illness and death left families financially distressed and often destitute.

Perhaps it was memories of her family struggling after her father’s death that made her socially aware.

Caroline reminisced about her mother providing great services for the welfare of the poor and needy, she always took a practical interest and remembered her many good deeds.



Attacking the mail (Bushranging, NSW 1864) Artist Gill, S. T., 1818–1880, State Library of Victoria.

After an illness of only four days Amelia died<sup>15</sup> on 8 July 1895 at John Street, Leichhardt, aged just 57 years and was buried at Rookwood Independent Cemetery.<sup>16</sup>

The Probate Packet<sup>17</sup> for Amelia Withers late of *Empress Villa* No. 6 John Street, Leichhardt indicates she left no will. By an act of court Samuel Withers requested letters of administration for the estate and stating that duty was payable on a sum of £1,500.

When we think of our female ancestors, we probably think of them cooking over a stove or fire, washing clothes on a washboard, keeping the house tidy and looking after family. As well as a loving wife and mother, Amelia was obviously a woman who was courageous, charitable, self-reliant, a property investor, and adventurous.

- 1 NSW BDM Marriage Certificate 1857 No. 709.
- 2 “Echoes of the Past” Part I, *The Propeller*, 22 July 1932, 7.
- 3 Birth date from baptism at St Mary Newington, Southwark, Surrey LMA ref. X39/15 Bishop’s Transcripts.
- 4 1841 Census HO107/1065/5 ED 10, 34–35.
- 5 NSW State Archive Reel No. 31, Bounty Immigrants Arriving in NSW, 1828–42, 4.
- 6 NSW BDM Death Certificate 1851 207 111
- 7 Victorian BDM Birth 1859 No. 6132.
- 8 40th Regiment of Foot campaigns 1860–1865 - First Taranaki War, Invasion of the Waikato. <https://sites.google.com/site/40thoffoot/home-1/new-zealand-maori-war>.
- 9 NSW BDM Death 1861 No. 36.
- 10 NZ Birth Certificate 1862, Place of Registration – Auckland.
- 11 “Echoes of the Past” Parts I-VII *The Propeller* (Hurstville, NSW), 1932: 22 July, 7. 29 July, 7. 5 August, 7. 12 August, 7. 19 August, 2. 26 August, 2. 2 September, 2.
- 12 Nulla-nulla is Aboriginal possibly a Māori Taiaha (fighting staff).
- 13 “Robbery under Arms”, *Sydney Mail*, 10 February 1866, 2.
- 14 NSW Land Titles Office.
- 15 NSW Death Certificate 1895 No. 8830.
- 16 Independent Cemetery, Rookwood Section A Grave No. 721.
- 17 NSW State Records Probate Packets NRS-13660-4-537-Series 4\_13061.

Judy Meyer joined the Society in 1989 and has been a volunteer librarian for 34 years and a SAG Research Officer for seven years. Her extensive tree covers the UK together with Germany and the USA. Family history and travel are her joys!



# EDUCATION@SAG

BY VANESSA CASSIN

A huge “Thank You” to the many volunteers who have assisted with our Education Program this year. The Society would not have been able to present the variety and number of events and courses we have done in 2022 without the generous donation of their time and expertise.

Education Program volunteers fall into three broad categories:

- » The **Education Committee** who provide inspiration for events as well as a sounding board for staff to pitch ideas.
- » The **presenters and group leaders** who devote innumerable hours developing and delivering content for courses, webinars and group meetings.
- » The **hosts** who support our presenters during online presentations by providing introductions, troubleshooting technical problems, and facilitating question and answer sessions at the end.

In 2023 we will be appealing for more volunteers to assist as group leads and event hosts. If you are confident appearing on camera, managing an audience, and have some time to spare, please watch out for a call-out for potential volunteers to attend an information session in the New Year.

Our suite of longer-form courses has continued to grow throughout 2022. In November, we commenced a Creative Writing Program in partnership with Rosemary Cutts of The Write Folk that will run for the better part of 12 months. At the end of the course, SAG will publish an anthology of creative fiction from the participants. We are all very excited to see the finished product!

Our final conference of the year was held on 26 November, and focused on the role of religion in our colonial ancestors' lives. We were absolutely delighted with the positive response we received from individuals and organisations when approached to participate. Almost everyone immediately agreed to present, and we were left with the enviable problem of fitting all the presentations into the program.

## Research Group Round-up

2022 has been a very busy year for our research groups.

We established or reinvigorated three groups: Scottish Research, Reunion & Mac Support, and Colonial Australia.

I would like to say a special thank you to Cathie Sherwood and Lucy Warden who are stepping down as group leads of the Scottish and Colonial Australia groups respectively.

I would also like say a very big thank you to Lilian Magill who is stepping down as Convenor of The Writing Group after a number of years in this role.

New leads are currently being recruited for these groups and I look forward to introducing them to you in 2023.

2023 will bring further additions to our suite of research groups.

A Northern America Research Group will hold its first meeting on Saturday 18 February. This group will focus on the United States and Canada.

Board member Darryl Low Choy has assisted us to locate a new group lead for the Chinese Australia Research Group, which has been on hold this year. The date of the group's first meeting will be announced as soon as it is confirmed.

The majority of our groups have selected their 2023 meeting dates, so please refer to the enclosed/attached flyer and mark the dates of your favourite group meetings in your calendar now.

I look forward to seeing all our members again in 2023 and sharing your stories of research breakthroughs.

Our **Certificate in Genealogical Research** is designed for those with at least three years of family history research experience and who have at least a basic knowledge of available resources. The coursework is designed to extend your research knowledge into areas you may not have as much experience in.

The course consists of 8 assignments undertaken throughout the year. For each assignment you will be given the outline of what is required, together with some guidance to assist in preparing your submission. The assignments have been carefully selected to reflect the sorts of skills needed by genealogists and the course is essentially built around practical exercises in self-directed learning from experience.

Enrolments are currently open for our February 2023 course.

For more information and pricing please visit: [www.sag.org.au/event-4872937](http://www.sag.org.au/event-4872937)



# DNA CORNER

BY CHRISTINE WOODLANDS

## Big changes at AncestryDNA: DNA matches split up by parent

In October 2022, AncestryDNA commenced splitting your matches by the maternal and paternal lines of your family without your parents taking AncestryDNA tests.

While most AncestryDNA testers already have access to the “Beta Version” of the feature it’s understood the rollout will be completed by February 2023. There may be times when this feature is not available on your account as AncestryDNA continue to make enhancements.

DNA enthusiasts already using the new feature, however, find it reliable and very useful.

### How do you know if your DNA matches are split by parent?

Have a look at your DNA Match page on AncestryDNA. If you have the new feature, you will see the three tabs below your name. Select the **By parent** tab.



AncestryDNA uses their SideView technology to split up your matches based on the DNA segments that you share with your matches. If they can link at least 90 per cent of the DNA segments you share with a match to one side of your genetic family, that match is assigned to that parent.

Your matches are assigned four labels:

- » Parent 1
- » Parent 2
- » Both
- » Unassigned

If you know which side of your family even one match is on, you have enough information to label Parent 1 and Parent 2 as either Paternal or Maternal. If you’ve assigned the side incorrectly, the parent labels can be easily edited.

### Unassigned matches

Matches appear in this category if the test was processed after Ancestry’s last update in April 2022, or there isn’t enough DNA information to assign them to one parent or the other.

You can read more about this great new feature at **DNA Matches Split Up By Parent** in AncestrySupport.

To learn more about working with AncestryDNA, we have four “First look at AncestryDNA” sessions next year: Monday 9 January, 28 March, 19 July and 7 October 2023.

These two-hour sessions are held via Zoom, but are not recorded. If you are interested in joining a session, keep an eye on the events calendar at [www.sag.org.au](http://www.sag.org.au).

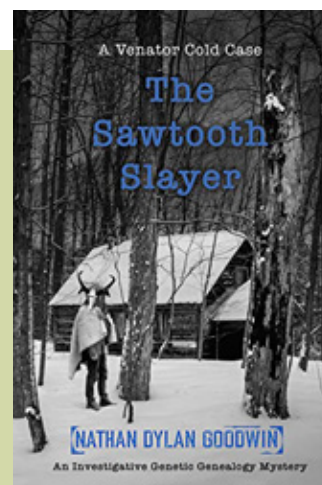
## THE SAWTOOTH SLAYER

Nathan Dylan Goodwin released his second book in The Venator Cold Case series in October 2022. It’s a must read especially if you’re interested in how DNA evidence is used in investigative genetic genealogy. “Another amazing story”, “gripping and brilliant” and “deeply absorbing and exhausting” are among the positive reviews.

Nathan’s writing is entertaining and informative and prompts readers to think about how they can approach their own research. In *The Sawtooth Slayer*, Maddy and her team are searching for records in European regions that can so often be a challenge in our research. All in all, this is an enjoyable way to learn about the use of DNA and other evidence in family history research.

I was very disciplined and limited myself to 90 minutes reading from the day the book appeared on my Kindle. After a week, I’d finished and am now waiting for the next book as so many seeds for future stories have been planted. My Christmas holiday reading list will include re-reading both *The Sawtooth Slayer* and book one, *The Chester Creek Murders*, in the lead up to presenting the Summer 2023 program of SAG’s “Analysing your AncestryDNA matches”.

You can purchase Nathan’s books from his website: <https://www.nathandylangoodwin.com>



## ANNOUNCING ... Museums of History NSW

Earlier this year, NSW Parliament passed legislation that paves the way for the creation of a new cultural institution focused on the history of the State.

The new *Museums of History NSW Act 2022*, amends the *State Records Act 1998*, and establishes Museums of History NSW (MHNSW), the first cultural institution in the State with history as its core mandate. This new Act will commence as at 31 December 2022. MHNSW will be formed by the coming together of the vast collection held by NSW State Archives (SARA), and the 12 museums and collections cared for by Sydney Living Museums (SLM).

As a key custodian and storyteller of history, MHNSW will delve into the past to gain a better understanding of our place in the world today and will engage in the stories of the State for a more informed perspective tomorrow. We will place history before us rather than behind us, making it immersive, discoverable and relevant to the people of NSW.

Paramount is greater access to and understanding of the past — its rich and varied histories, stories and cultures. MHNSW will focus on growing, managing, preserving and providing public access to the State Archives Collection and the objects, materials, buildings, places and stories that shape the historical, social, political and cultural identity of NSW.

### MHNSW website

The MHNSW website, <https://mhnsw.au>, has already launched. The website sees the collections and resources of NSW State Archives and Sydney Living Museums brought into one online location.

The website will continue to grow into a powerful platform for storytelling. With its expanded search function — in tandem with



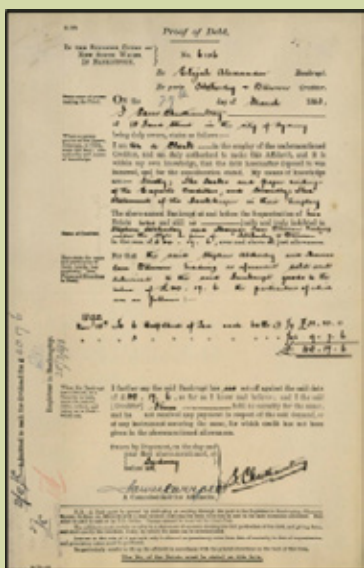
our ongoing digitisation work — it will make our collections, sites and resources more discoverable and accessible, and enable us to build stronger and deeper connections with communities across NSW and beyond.

### What do these changes mean for you?

The services to the public that we provide in respect of the State Archives Collection (primarily our Reading Room, online indexes, guides and our copy service) will work the way they always have. Our online indexes, research guides and catalogue will be enhanced by the Sydney Living Museums' collections including the Caroline Simpson Collection.

A key change to the Act brings another significant improvement to public access to the State Archives Collection. From 1 January 2024 the open access period will be reduced from 30 years to 20 years. Records will be automatically opened after 20 years unless there is a closed to public access direction put in place by the agency that controls those records.

## COPYING SERVICES



NRS-13655-1- [10/22838]-6136  
Elijah Alexander Proof of Debt,  
27 March 1893

### New insolvency and bankruptcy files copy service

We are delighted to announce that we have added nearly 50,000 Insolvency files, 1842–1887 and Bankruptcy files, 1888–1928 to our copy service!

Insolvency is the inability to pay debts or meet expenses. Prior to 1888 insolvency matters were generally heard by the Civil Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The Bankruptcy Division of the Supreme Court was established in 1888. Bankruptcy is a state in which a person is unable to pay creditors. Unlike the concept of insolvency, bankrupts were required to undergo a legal process usually resulting in the liquidation of their estate in order to meet expenses. If a person was declared bankrupt, they were unable to operate a business for profit, enter a business contract or borrow money.

You can find the files using our online indexes. Click on the red Details link to

see the full index entry in our catalogue and order copies. Click on the shopping cart icon to order and pay for your copies. Digital copies are provided unless otherwise specified.

Please note that you do not need to order files already digitised in our catalogue.

### Copied files now online

In addition to the digitised records and images we add to our online catalogue, digital copies generated via our Copy Order Service have also become available.

You may have noticed some of these digital files attached to items already, distinguished by the PDF icon. Click on the item, under the heading “Click below to view file”, then simply click on the button to load and view the digitised file.

More than 2,000 probate packets have already been added, along with insolvency, bankruptcy, deceased estate files, as well as divorce files, with many more to come.



## NEW INDEXES

### Index to Colonial Secretary Letters Received, 1826–1896

We are so thrilled and delighted to provide online access to the Colonial Secretary: Index to Letters Received, 1826–96 (the Joan Reese Index).

This select index was compiled by **Joan Reese, Linda Bowman** and **Aileen Trinder**. It was first published on microfiche as the *NSW Colonial Secretary's In Letters Index, 1826–1896*, based on Joan Reese's *Convicts and Others Index, 1826–1894*.

The index covers the Colonial Secretary; NRS 905, Main series of letters received, 1826–1896. The Colonial Secretary was the pre-eminent figure in public life during much of the 19th century. The papers of this office are among the most valuable sources of information on all aspects of the history of the Colony and the State of NSW. The index includes papers on matters as varied as:

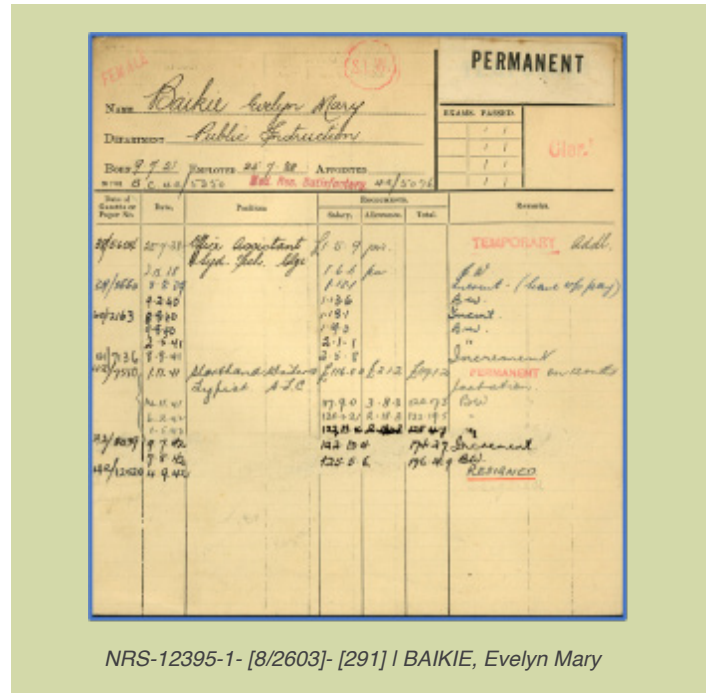
- Convicts
- Immigration
- Admission and discharges of children into and out of orphan schools, and the industrial and training schools
- Warrants for admission to and notification of death/discharge from asylums
- Memorials or petitions from inhabitants of towns and villages including their signatures
- Applications for burials in the Devonshire Street and Camperdown cemeteries
- Government employees
- Lists of Aboriginal people in particular areas and lists of blankets distributed to Aboriginal people
- Maps, plans, sketches and tracings
- Apprehension of bushrangers and runaways
- Reports, printed circulars and by-Laws for various localities
- Military, military forces and regiments

Find the index in our Indexes Online under C (for Colonial Secretary), or in our catalogue. Search using name, locality and place as a search term. We are offering a copy order service for this index. See our Colonial Secretary Guide under Research A–Z for more information about the index, how it was compiled and tips for searching.

The index is an extraordinary achievement and has been a labour of love for Joan Reese, Linda Bowman and Aileen Trinder. To all three, Joan, Linda and Aileen, our great thanks and appreciation for all the work that has been done on this remarkable finding aid to a valuable part of the State Archives Collection.



NRS-4481-4-766-[AF00262223]  
[Colonial Secretary's Office]  
[no date]



NRS-12395-1- [8/2603]- [291] | BAIKIE, Evelyn Mary

### Public Service Board Employees history cards

We recently uploaded over 64,000 employee history cards to our catalogue. These cards were kept by the Public Service Board between 1911 and c. 1968. The cards cover a range of occupations throughout the NSW Public Service, from Office Assistants to Technical Education Teachers to Inspectors.

The cards show details such as position, dates of employment, salary and remarks.

Search the cards in our catalogue using the series number NRS-12395 and the name of the employee, for example “NRS-12395 Evelyn Baikie” (above).

A huge thank you to our wonderful volunteers and staff for all of the work involved in this project.

### Public Works salary registers

We have also added a new online index, thanks to the fantastic work of our volunteers.

Drawing from series NRS-12532, our Public Works Salary Registers Index includes over 500 entries capturing surname, first name, date of birth, first office listed, date of first appointment and remarks, and covering the period 1854 to 1895.

Search the index using our online indexes — look for Professions and Occupations, or via our Catalogue.

## ONLINE NEWS

### The 2019–2020 NSW Bushfires

Over 240 consecutive days from July 2019 to 2 March 2020, a series of catastrophic bushfires raged throughout eastern New South Wales. Approximately 5,520,000 hectares of land — urban, farm and bush — were burnt, representing approximately 7 per cent of the total area of NSW. The fires destroyed 2,476 homes, and there was immense loss of wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Tragically, 26 lives were lost, including six firefighters.

Nationally, in a fire season that affected all of Australia, a total of 34 people died, including nine firefighters.

In January 2020 the then Premier of NSW, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian, MP announced an inquiry into the causes of, preparedness for, and response to the bushfires in NSW. The inquiry report was submitted to Premier Berejiklian on 31 July 2020 and is available online.

Our new online gallery is a record of those traumatic eight months. The images are drawn from public submissions made to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry, and from its published report.



Image: Anne Pidcock, Submission 0144



Developed in partnership with *Sydney Living Museums*, this exhibition showcases snapshots of a city — highlights from a treasure-trove of images taken by the NSW Government Printing Office Photographic Branch.

From 1870 until the late 1940s, the Government Printing Office (GPO) Photographic Branch documented much of the NSW Government's activities using tens of thousands of dry glass-plate negatives, which are now held in our collection.

The GPO collection covers a diverse range of subjects: roadworks and wharf construction, fleet visits, suburban

soldier settlements, factory workshops, tourist sites, opening ceremonies for departmental buildings and significant State events.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the GPO collection is the wealth of incidental background detail captured by government photographers. Behind or alongside the government-focused subject matter, Sydney's streets, buildings, beaches and waterways form the stage setting for sometimes curious bystanders, who become accidental characters as they go about their daily lives. Tantalising glimpses of soldiers and sailors, nurses and schoolchildren, immigrants and wartime evacuees — never intended to be documented for posterity or revealed to the masses — now tease the present-day viewer from the edges of each scene.

A curated selection of 28 images is featured in *Sydney Snapshots* at the Museum of Sydney. At the time of writing, you can access a further 65,300 of these images in our catalogue.

Discover the people, places and events that shaped our city in the first half of the 20th century, through the lens of GPO photographers.

At the **Museum of Sydney 30 June 2022 – 5 March 2023.**



## CHRISTMAS/NEW YEAR HOURS

Changes to opening hours for our reading room over the summer holiday period are:

Saturday 24 December to Monday 2 January	CLOSED
Tuesday 3 January to Friday 6 January	OPEN 9am–4pm
Saturday 7 January	OPEN 10am–4pm
Tuesday 10 January	OPEN 9am–5pm

Please particularly note that we will be closed on Christmas Eve, Saturday 24 December.

We wish everyone a safe, happy and healthy holiday break.



# OUR SAG COMMUNITY



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Worthington Clark Pty Ltd

(\*deceased)

## Deaths

The deaths of the following members and former members were notified to the Society between August to October 2022. We extend our sympathies to the family and friends of them all.

**Shirley Frances Bongers**  
Bankstown  
7 September 2022

**Robert Stewart Cameron**  
Summer Hill  
12 May 2022

**Peter Dee**  
Mosman  
5 August 2022

**Elizabeth "Betty" Kate Hall**  
Drummoyne  
12 October 2022

**Stephen John Tunks**  
Padstow  
6 July 2022



# OUR SAG COMMUNITY

## Finding my Family

BY ALTHEA RODRICKS

Stepping out into the light after a night shift, I meander past a young jacaranda and see a female paramedic on the stairs. It's been two years since I was a flight attendant, and I feel an affinity to paramedics — I say hello and am greeted with a tired smile.

In this moment, I feel an acute sense of *déjà vu*. I feel as though I've been here before, even though this is my first night shift; my first experience photocopying medical records. I used to live a high life, now I'm rebuilding myself after COVID-19 as a medical records clerk. I don't know who I am anymore, besides being a newly married 20-something-year-old starting over from scratch.

This feeling sticks around long enough for me to ponder it for days. On the hour journey into the city, noting familiar ficus growing out of concrete pylons on every platform, I grin at my own reflection. I'm blessed to be a placement student with the Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG). I'm going to visit an archive for the first time. I'm going to be an archivist. But I have no idea where I come from.

Besides a staunch following of Roman Catholic tradition and an anglicised surname, I have very little to go on, except stories told by relatives and parents. When in primary school, I tried my luck searching on genealogical websites for clues of my family's existence only to be sorely disappointed. It never occurred to me then that three migrations — Portugal, India and Australia — might complicate matters, and part of me was resentful that my own family could not be traced.

Fast-forward to the year 2022, and I had just sat in on the Beginners Course in Family History with the SAG. The message of hope woke me up from my reverie: Start with what you know. Work backwards. Begin with a wide search and then narrow it down to specifics.

For me, there is no greater experience in the world than discovering something. When Gemma Beswick (SAG Library Services Manager) showed me how to work the microfilm

reader for the first time, I clapped like an excited seal. Dad's work used to sponsor the seal show at Taronga Zoo — we got free tickets when I was growing up. This recognition of Dad's workplace made me aspire to be like him. Loyalty, hard work, and humility are core tenets of my family.

I can't explain in words the moment of revelation when after sifting through records I deciphered the scrawl of a familiar word — my surname. The first thing I did was tell Dad. There in front of me were the digitised baptismal records of my grandfather, Bertie Rodricks, and his parents; my great-grandparents, Alfred and Mary. The record dates back to 1914.

I will be forever grateful to the volunteer who digitised this resource and made it available online. I now have confirmation that my middle name — Mae — comes from my maternal grandmother, Edna Mae. My second middle name — Mary, which was the name I chose at Confirmation — now confirms the serendipitous nature of my existence.

I've always felt as though something unseen is guiding me, wherever I go. That moment of *déjà vu* — that makes sense too. Listed next to my great-grandfather's name is his occupation. My great-grandfather was also a clerk.



**I can't explain in words the moment of revelation when after sifting through records I deciphered the scrawl of a familiar word — my surname.**

The SAG Library and Archives staff are continuing the tradition of hosting work placement students across our premises. Earlier this year we hosted Althea Rodricks — a wonderful postgraduate student from Charles Sturt University who is enrolled in a Master of Information Studies (Records and Archives Management) degree.

It was a pleasure to have Althea with us and we hope our future placement students are as excited as she was!

*Gemma & Karlie*



## AFFHO AWARD FOR MERITORIOUS SERVICE

### Martyn KILLION



During our recent 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary morning tea, we were delighted to play host as our Vice-Patron and former President, Martyn Killion, was presented with the AFFHO Award for Meritorious Service. This was announced at the recent Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO) Congress on Norfolk Island. An abridged version of the citation accompanying the award follows:

Martyn Killion has been involved in family history in Australia for over 40 years, working professionally in the archival and library fields, while also contributing as an active volunteer in the family history community.

He was a foundation staff member at the Western Sydney Reading Room at the State Archives and Records Authority, working there from 1987 until 2003. During those years he was a popular member of the public access team, regularly assisting researchers with family history enquiries. His enviable knowledge of State Archives' collections also made him in high demand as an engaging public speaker. He left State Archives in 2003 to work in other NSW government sectors, including the State Library of NSW.

In 2016 he returned to State Archives and is currently the Director Collections. Among his many duties in this executive position is the digitisation of the State Archives collection and his leadership in this area has seen an enormous increase in the range and number of records now available online to all family historians with NSW research interests.

A member of the SAG since 1990, he completed the Society's Diploma in Family Historical Studies in 1994. He joined the Board in 1999 and served two terms as President (2001–2005 and 2014–2018); the first term coincided with the launch of the Society's highly successful fundraising campaign to buy its own premises. He also served terms as Vice President, Convenor of Education, Honorary Archivist and Honorary Librarian. His service

was recognised with the award of a Fellowship in 2006 and his election as a Vice-Patron in 2019.

As part of the SAG's education team, he introduced a webinar program in August 2011, positioning the Society as a pioneer in providing its members with online access to world-class presentations from the comfort of their own home. In 2003 he successfully negotiated for the SAG to become the first organisation outside of the USA and UK to provide free library access for its members to the Ancestry website. These initiatives paved the way for other family history societies to follow. He co-led two successful SAG research tours to England in 2003 and 2004 and has lectured widely throughout Australia and in the UK.

With Heather Garnsey, he indexed 78,000 records of inmates of the Sydney Benevolent Asylum 1857–1900 and made these freely available at [www.sydneybenevolentasylum.com](http://www.sydneybenevolentasylum.com). This work continues to allow many family historians to break down brick walls in their research.

Martyn was President of AFFHO from 1991 until 1996 and its NSW representative from 2015–2019. He was co-editor of the 1994 edition of AFFHO's *Cemeteries in Australia: A register of transcripts*, as well as the 1992 and 1993 editions of its *Directory of Member Organisations*. Under the auspices of AFFHO he convened, on behalf of the SAG, the very successful 15<sup>th</sup> Australasian Congress on Genealogy & Heraldry held in Sydney in March 2018. This four-day event brought together over 700 family historians from around the world.

Martyn has successfully combined a solid professional career in archives with a lifelong interest in genealogy, and has brought to the wider family history community a great appreciation of the value of genealogy in the broader historical context.

#### SAG Family History Research Centre & Library Christmas/New Year Holiday Break

Please note the SAG Family History Research Centre & Library at 2/379 Kent Street and our offices at 120 Kent Street will be closed from 4pm Thursday 15 December, 2022 and will reopen 9am Tuesday 17 January, 2023.

# OUR SAG COMMUNITY



The photo of History House, 413 Riley Street, Surry Hills, SAG's home from 1971–1978 on the cover of the Spring 2022 issue of *Descent*, brought back fond memories from SAG Vice Patrons and past Presidents Malcolm Sainty and Keith Johnston.

We've enlarged the image so you can see, working from right to left: Jean Watson (Hon. Secretary), Joan Provis, Molly Blacklock, Malcolm Sainty, Lorna Blacklock, Jane Russell, and Keith Johnson.

All were SAG councillors at the time and the photo was taken by the then President Bruce Thomas about 1972.

## Apology to Julian Ebsworth

On page 101 of the Spring 2022 edition of *Descent* we paid tribute to some 73 members who had been SAG members for 45 or more years.

Unfortunately, there was an omission in the list and we extend our apologies to Julian Ebsworth in the UK, a member since 1963 and generous supporter of the Society throughout that time.



MIDAS: 5/4403 Christmas postcard photograph from the Henrys family of Wellington NZ, 1911.

The SAG Staff would like to wish all our volunteers and members a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Stay safe over the festive season and enjoy the company of family and friends.

We look forward to welcoming you back both in-person and online in 2023.



# BOOK REVIEWS



BY CHRISTINE SANDERSON

## The Good Genealogist

by Danielle Lautrec

*The Good Genealogist* is an important book. It is essential reading not only for those beginning their family history journey, but also for more experienced family historians who may need help to move forward with their research.

Both the novice and the old hand may look at the quantity of material in front of them and wonder how to organise it into a coherent story — a story that will impress their audience with the depth and breadth of the research, as well as the way it is recorded. For this is a very serious enterprise, and in the interests of everyone that the research be of a high quality and accurate so future historians can follow on the research with confidence.

Fundamental to reaching such high standards is the need for a way of ordering the material generated by research so that it is accurate and understandable. Danielle Lautrec provides a framework with great skill and readability, going step by step through the essential components which characterise good research.

This practical text is comprehensive and systematic, and if the process is followed it will improve the quality of family history research. Each chapter of this book focuses on a group of related skills, and it is recommended that it be read from beginning to end.

The basic structure of the research process outlined in the book includes spending some time initially on making a plan, then researching the subjects or people in such a way that it increases the chance of reaching accurate conclusions. Following this there is the need to analyse often fragmentary evidence; then a documentation phase which helps process what is discovered and to construct the researcher's view of their family history. Last but not least is the need to maintain the systems being used, particularly as software can become obsolete and may need to be updated or replaced.

Along with detailed descriptions of each concept are a number of colourful figures illustrating the text, and finally there is an impressive glossary and the all-important index.

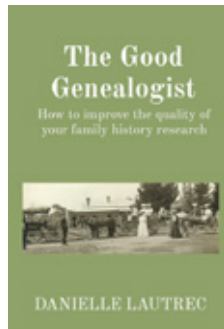
In conclusion, *The Good Genealogist* is an exemplary guide which lifts the bar on what could be considered well researched family history, elevating it to its rightful status within historical analysis. It does this by encouraging genealogists to systematically reflect on the process as they are researching, to follow certain procedures, and ultimately improve the quality of their family history research.

Danielle Lautrec. *The Good Genealogist. How to improve the quality of your family history research.* Society of Australian Genealogists, Sydney. 2022.

ISBN: 978-0-949531-92-6 (paperback)  
201 pages; SAG ref: A2/1/72

**Available from the SAG bookshop  
\$44.99 + \$15 postage & handling**

[www.sag.org.au/Sys/Store/Products/301206](http://www.sag.org.au/Sys/Store/Products/301206)



## 'Fair Delinquents'? Irish Famine Orphans of Colonial Bathurst and Beyond

by Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre

Who were the Irish Famine orphans of colonial Bathurst and beyond — the “fair delinquents” referred to in this story? They were teenage girls, destitute paupers living in the Poor Law Union workhouses of Ireland, selected to participate in the Earl Grey immigration scheme because they fitted certain criteria — they were healthy and of good character with appropriate domestic skills which would suit the needs of the colony.

4114 girls were chosen from the counties of Ireland, with over half, some 2253, arriving in Sydney between June 1848 and April 1850, with the destination of the rest being Port Phillip and Adelaide. On arrival, they were employed and indentured as apprenticed domestic servants, and while most of these placements were successful, a percentage was not. In the case of 185 girls, their indentures were cancelled and they were banished to regional depots such as Bathurst.

The reasons for their change of status and their consequent lives as residents of the region are explored thoroughly in this book, which is divided into two sections: the social history of the time and biographies of the girls. Margaret Atwood's quotation at the beginning of the biographies is apt: “The maddening thing about history is that it can leave out the things you most want to know”. While this may be true, particularly about women's history, this book attempts to shine some light on those spaces in which these girls dwelled.

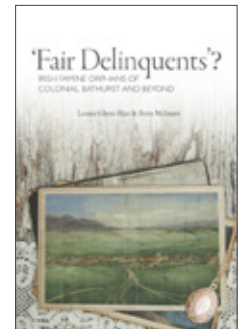
Despite scarce and ambiguous information, the biographies provide an excellent starting point for an exploration of these women, many spending the rest of their lives in the Bathurst area. The biographies have been drawn from available records, from records left by their husbands and the first generation of their children. What becomes obvious when reading their stories — no matter how brief — is that in spite of their backgrounds of poverty, trauma, dislocation and grief, which would be reasonable grounds for delinquency, they generally settled well into their new lives.

Far from being delinquent, the evidence of the biographies shows that they were not inclined to antisocial behaviour, instead becoming valuable members of Bathurst's colonial society. They were teenagers when they arrived, but they grew to adulthood, thrived, married, had children and died in the area. That they were committed to family life is shown by the extent to which they sponsored and brought out family members from Ireland.

Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre. *'Fair Delinquents'? Irish Famine Orphans of Colonial Bathurst and Beyond.* Eitherside Publications, Robina TC Qld. 2019.

ISBN: 978-0-6486675-0-6 (paperback)  
465 pages; SAG ref: A6/TIE 2

**Available from Eitherside Publications  
[www.eithersidepublications.com](http://www.eithersidepublications.com)**





# ARCHIVES REPORT



BY ALEXANDRA MOUNTAIN PhD

This *Descent*, I have decided to focus on a very important collection in the Archive — one notable for both its exceptional research value and the significance it holds to our Society.

The Waldron-McCarthy Collection is part of the immense bequest Reverend Oswald Bruce Waldron-McCarthy made to the Society following his death in 1978. Reverend Waldron-McCarthy was a foundation member of the Society, and president from 1956 to 1971. Following his retirement from the Society's council in 1973, he was unanimously elected a Vice-Patron. He also served as the honorary editor of the Society's journal — what is now *Descent* — for 12 years.

In addition to being a dedicated family historian, Waldron-McCarthy was a good-natured man with an excellent sense of humour and exceptional oration abilities; traits that served him well as an Anglican priest. In June 1934, he entered Moore Theological College, Sydney, and a year later, during his studies, was appointed catechist at St John's Church, Bishopthorpe, Glebe, where his parents had married in 1914. His final appointment as rector of All Saints', Oatley West, was in 1960.<sup>1</sup>

Reverend Waldron-McCarthy's service to the Society specifically, and to the study of family history more broadly, cannot be overstated. He was a passionate genealogist for more than 45 years, and during this time he collected a vast number of records from every institution or place that connected with his life. Following his death, these records and papers were donated to the Society, where Honorary Archivist Errol-Lea Scarlett worked tirelessly to sort, catalogue, and index the records to make them available to Society members.

This was no small task, as Keith Johnson, then-president of the Society, wrote in his Reverend Waldron-McCarthy memorial lecture for the Hurstville Historical Society, later published in *Descent*:

The Waldron-McCarthy genealogical collection, now housed at Richmond Villa, is of immense importance. It was huge and chaotic, largely because its owner, during the last ten years of his life, through illness, was unable to concentrate on any sustained task and, as a result, seems to have left his records in greater confusion each time he used a document.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, it ended up taking many years to finally complete the cataloguing and indexing of the collection. The papers were organised into 1,851 files by a team under the leadership of Errol Lea-Scarlett. The collection consists of family papers and photographs, transcripts of church registers, and research notes. His research papers were catalogued commencing in 1978 and continued into the 1980s, with extensive re-cataloguing done by the late Philippa Morris, and the last of his personal papers and correspondence were catalogued in 2013 (a further 48 items).

The Waldron-McCarthy Collection is searchable in the Archives (as a whole as Accession 1499) or as Series 18 for the majority of the records, with photographs found in Series 5 and 6. I highly recommend searching through the collection yourself, with ample time and a few cups of tea — it's an immense collection of papers, personal and institutional, and many treasures are buried within. For this issue, however, I've briefly written on two items that I feel match the theme of the issue: religion.



Rev. O. B.  
Waldron-  
McCarthy.

MIDAS 6/463.3

## Moore College Register

**MIDAS Item Call Number: 18/351**

This item is just one amongst many that delves into the history of Moore Theological College, where Waldron-McCarthy was ordained. To see the complete list, search "Moore College" in MIDAS, then sort the results by series to focus on Series 18, which will show the majority of papers Waldron-McCarthy held for the seminary.

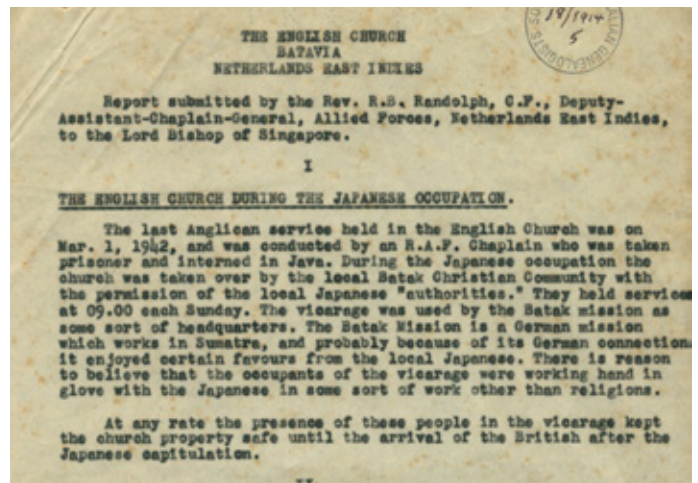
This item is a veritable trove of information for any ministers who attended Moore College from 1856–1935. In a small, hardcover notebook, Waldron-McCarthy has painstakingly handwritten the student registers of Moore College. He has recorded, for each member of the College, their name, age, who admitted them to the college, the date of their admittance, the date of their ordination (if there was one — McCarthy also noted when the individual retired before ordination), who ordained each minister, and their first place of employment. This copy of the student register is fully indexed on MIDAS — what excellent good fortune if your ancestor is in these pages!

## Java

**MIDAS Item Call Number: 18/1914**

This item contains a series of documents from Reverend Waldron-McCarthy's time as the British chaplain in Java, Indonesia, and is a fascinating glimpse into the importance religion played in building communities in far-flung British colonial outposts.

Waldron-McCarthy started in Java in 1950, as the island and the Anglican church were still grappling with the impact of the Second World War. Church pamphlets reveal dedicated services to fallen soldiers, and briefing reports sent to Waldron-McCarthy prior to his move to Java, detail the physical and emotional toll of wartime on the parish community and infrastructure. Interestingly, these briefing documents write of the new opportunity to regard the church "not only as a parish church, but as an 'embassy' in a foreign land of British Christianity."<sup>3</sup> Christianity as a tool of colonialism is not a new discovery, but it was surprising to see it written so clearly in 1950.



- 1 Errol-Lea Scarlett, "Obituaries: The Rev. O. B. Waldron-McCarthy, Th.L., Fellow, Vice-Patron, Foundation Member and Former President" *Descent* 9, No. 1, March 1979, 24.
- 2 Keith Johnson, "Rev. O. B. Waldron-McCarthy (1915–1978): A Study in Genealogy" *Descent* 11, No. 4, December 1981, 167.
- 3 MIDAS Call Number 18/001914, page 10.

In addition to illuminating the after effects of the Second World War on religious communities, this item is also a fascinating glimpse into the inner workings of the Anglican Church. Various contracts, written letters of acceptance and congratulations, secretarial notes regarding important services to hold, and even patiently traced warning signs of the island are all part of this item, and hint at the enormous amount of work it took to integrate into local life as a foreign minister.

Again, I strongly encourage any who are interested to dig around the Waldron-McCarthy Collection and see what you can find. The Reverend was an incredible man who took his duties as a minister and genealogist seriously — and the papers in his collection reinforce this dignified comportance. They offer a fascinating glimpse into the social importance of religion to colonial countries in a post-war world, provide a wonderful understanding of the time and patience it takes to be a family historian; and could very well contain clues to your own family mysteries, with parish registers and service pamphlets in addition to personal correspondence offering a multitude of names and biographies to sort through.

## A MIDAS MYSTERY

We are asking for help to solve a mystery in the Archives. Recently, one of our indefatigable volunteers was digitising an old family photo album, when a loose photograph fell from the tome.

The image depicts a large brick, possibly limestone, church and a group of 53 children and two adults neatly arranged in front. This photograph has no inscription with any name, place, or religious affiliation. Only the studio logo of the photographer is artfully stamped on the back: "Henry Fletcher Landscape & View Photographer".



There is no real provenance with the photograph — it was brought to our Archives by the owner of a second-hand store along with two other albums. In both of the other albums, there were pictures of clergymen — a clue, or a red herring? You can view details of the other items that were donated alongside by logging onto MIDAS and searching for Accession 8764 — <https://midas.sag.org.au/fullRecordAccession.jsp?recno=8764>

Our best guess, currently, is that this is a school photo, with students and teachers posed out front of the school church — but we have no way of knowing if this is true.

We would love your help identifying the location or any of the people in photograph! The photograph is published below, but will also be found on the front page of MIDAS, our online Archives catalogue at [www.midas.sag.org.au](http://www.midas.sag.org.au) under the "MIDAS Mysteries" section. Please email me at [archives@sag.org.au](mailto:archives@sag.org.au) with any potential identifications or further questions. We hope we can publish some answers in the next issue of *Descent*.





# HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LIBRARY COLLECTION

## Religion & Religious Orders

BY PHILIPPA GARNSEY

### RELIGION

Spirituality and religion have always been an essential part of the daily lives of many Australians. There are numerous books in the library relating to this topic to aid us in our family history research and to help us understand the way our ancestors thought and what motivated their lives.

If we accept that religion is central to beliefs about some kind of being whose powers transcend our human state, then religion has been important in Australian culture from the arrival of the first humans.

The following list covers numerous religions and their history in Australia. However I could only locate one book in the library containing a chapter on Indigenous religions:

*Many faiths, one nation: a guide to the major faiths and denominations in Australia*, edited by Ian Gillman, A3/90/10. This is a very comprehensive record of the various religions in Australia.

Christianity arrived in Australia on the First Fleet where the great majority of the people aboard were nominally Anglicans. However there were a significant minority of Catholics and between 8 to 14 Jews on board. The first religious service was celebrated the following Sunday by the Colony's Chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson.

The library contains almost 1,000 books on the subject of religion plus numerous CDs, microfiche and microfilms and pamphlets. The main call number for this subject is A3. The library catalogue can be searched from home prior to visiting the library and a list can be developed to take on your visit to the library.

Most of the books relate to a specific religion and if you are interested in a specific religion a few of the books you may find of interest follow:

- *Religion in early Australia: the problem of church and state*, edited by Jean Woolmington, A3/90/2.
- *Religions in Australia; the PIX series extended to 41 beliefs*, Tess Van Sommers, A3/90/15.
- *Our Heritage: the story of the Catholic Church in Australia from the First Fleet to the Second Vatican Council*, C. J. Duffy, A3/92/2.
- *These are the names: Jewish lives in Australia 1788-1850*, John S Levi, A5/35/15. The book chronicles the stories of Jewish men and women either transported or who came as free settlers between 1788 and 1850.

- *Mosques and Muslim Settlement in Australia*, Gary Bouma, A3/99/11. Discusses the role of religion in settlement and the experiences of those with a faith different from the majority of other members of Australian society.
- *The sectarian strand: religion in Australian history*, Michael Hogan, A3/90/12. Discusses the impact of religious rivalries on the development of Australian society from the First Fleet to the Festival of Light.
- *Armenians in Australia and New Zealand*, compiled and arranged by Father Aramais Mirzaian, A3/99/10. This is a brief history of the Armenians who have settled in Australia and New Zealand, with short biographies and photos.

Many of the books on religion also provide the history on the numerous Christian religions in Australia.

### RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Religious orders in Australia took responsibility for educating the young, providing health care to the sick, looking after the poor, educating the deaf, and caring for orphans and deserted children. These orders, and also lay people within religious groups, served huge social needs in colonial Australia and are still doing so today. For family historians, missing family members may have joined a religious order and their names, especially in Catholic orders, were changed to reflect a saint who was their patron. This often leads to difficulties in trying to trace the missing person.

Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Jewish faiths developed schools, on their preferred religious day of worship, to teach both their illiterate congregations and their children. The first Sunday schools commenced in the early 1800s in Australia.

Catholics set up religious schools to teach their children rather than using Sunday schools. Large numbers of religions still provide primary and secondary schools for the children of their members. These include various Christian schools as well as Jewish and Islamic schools.

- *Fanned into Flames: the spread of Sunday School in Australia*, Beverley Earnshaw, A3/90/8. This book records the reasons for the development of Sunday schools and how religious faiths were taught to ensure their continuation to the next generation.
- *Those that sowed: the first religious sisters in Australia*, Rosina Burns, A3/92/11. The Irish Sisters of Charity arrived in Sydney in 1838 and established St Vincent's Hospital, Sydney.





1922 Sisters of the Presentation Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Wagga Wagga.

This photo of the group of nuns was taken at Christmas time as decorations can be seen hanging from the balcony above the group. The women in the black caps are postulants while the women in the white veils are novices. The sisters in the black veils are fully professed. Courtesy of Mt Erin Heritage Centre, Wagga Wagga.

- *Catholic Education in Australia, 1806-1950: Catholic Education under religious orders*, Ronald Fogarty, A3/92/33(b).
- *Parson on the Track: Bush Brothers in the Australian Outback*, Ivan Southall, A3/91/1. The Bush Brotherhood was a group of Anglican religious orders providing itinerant priests to minister to sparsely-settled rural districts in Australia.

If you are fortunate you may find a book that records the names of the men and women who entered a particular religious order. Some books, which may be of interest, include:

- *The Josephite Story: the Sisters of St Joseph: their foundation and early history, 1866-1993*, Marie Therese Foale, A3/9/42. This book records the names of nuns and priests who entered the order in various places in Australia.
- *New South Wales clergy list for 19<sup>th</sup> century*, Anonymous, B8/6/Pam.2. An alphabetical list of 660 church priests and pastors in NSW in 19th century, with their time-periods. Covers most denominations in NSW in the 19th century.
- *The scheme: the Christian Brothers and childcare in Western Australia*, Barry M Coldery, F3/20/3. This book includes a register of staff and students.

If you need help to search the library catalogue, click on “Search our Collections” on the home page of the Society’s website. There you will find a Virtual Library Tour, Searching the Library podcast and tips on searching the library catalogue.

The library volunteers are experienced in searching both the catalogue and the collections, and are always happy to assist you in your search.

If you think you had a family member who belonged to a particular religious order, don’t hesitate to contact the relevant archivist or heritage centre. I have always found them more than willing to provide any information they have.

In addition local (especially rural) newspapers often published comprehensive obituaries, which can be found in Trove, for members of religious orders who were often widely known in a district.

### CONNECT WITH US ONLINE

SAG members can join us for our free virtual **Hang Out** every Friday at 4pm, where a range of speakers will explore websites, give research tips, demonstrate genealogy tools, tell stories and much more.

# LIBRARY NEWS



BY KARLIE FRELINGOS

This is a selection of books, pamphlets and other format items accessioned from July to November 2022.

The information provided is the title of the record, library classification number, format and donor's name.

All items are at 379 Kent Street unless otherwise noted. Consult the Library Catalogue on the Society's website for full details of the items on this list.

## Australia

**Beyond three brothers** (2010) Denis J Chamberlain. B4.795/1/20. (Book) Donated by Stephen O'Regan

**Crossroads** (2015) Sidney Sernack. A6/SID/2. (Book) Donated by Linda Radulovitch

**Defending the national tuckshop: Australia's secret army intrigue of 1931** (1988) Michael Cathcart. A3/81/21. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**Sub tuum praesidium: Marists Brothers in Australia 1872–2022** (2022) Julian Casey et al. A3/92/44. (Book) Donated by Stephen O'Regan

**The good genealogist: how to improve the quality of your family history research** (2022) Danielle Lautrec. A2/1/73. (Book) See review p. 139.

**In Search of a Legend: The Barenger Family of Kentish Town** (2022) David Turland. A6/KEN/10. (Book) Donated by author

**Max** (2020) Alex Miller. A6/BLA/19. (Book) Donated by Kathryn Barrett

**Ruth Mitchell (nee Rolosen): a life of service to family & community** (2022) Kim & Peter Bartley A6/MIT/Pam.3. (Pamphlet) Donated by authors

**The mystery of the Macclesfield Chalice: a Snelson armoury** (2020) Adrian John Snelson. A6/SNE/1. (Book) Donated by author

## NSW

**Beyond three brothers** (2010) Denis J Chamberlain. B4.795/1/20. (Book) Donated by Stephen O'Regan

**To the fertile plains beyond: the story of the crossing of the Blue Mountains, N.S.W. covering the period between 1802 and 1969** (2016) C. C. Singleton. B4.777/4/2. (Book) Donated by Stephen O'Regan

**A pictorial history of Canterbury Bankstown** (2010) Joan Lawrence, Brian Madden and Lesley Muir. B4.200/1/4. (Book) Donated by Margaret Neyle

**St. Patrick's Smithtown Parish centenary, 1886–1986** (1986) St. Patrick's Church. B4.440/92/Pam.1. (Pamphlet) Donated by Kathryn Barrett

## Tasmania

**Convict-era Port Arthur: Misery of the deepest dye** (2021) David W. Cameron. D3/23/23. (Book) Donated by Kathryn Barrett

## France

**The French revolution** (1967) R. Ben Jones. W3/1/15. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

## England

**A village in Chelsea: an informal account of the Royal Hospital** (1974) David Ascoli. N4.23/20/17. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**A house through time** (2021) David Olusoga & Melanie Backe-Hansen. M3/51/6. (Book)

**The bishops' register of confirmations in the London district of the Catholic Church in England, 1826–1837 and 1843** (2001) Catholic Family History Society. N7/1/2. (Book) Donated by Doreen Fawcett

**The burial register of St. Mary Moorfields, London, 1819–1853** (2003) Catholic Family History Society. N7/1/3. (Book) Donated by Doreen Fawcett

## Ireland

**'Fair delinquents'?: Irish famine orphans of colonial Bathurst and beyond** (2019) Leonie Glynn Blair & Perry McIntyre. A6/TIE/2. (Book) See review p. 139.

## Asia

**Burma surgeon** (1945) Gordon S. Seagrave. A6/SEA/3. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**The Indian mutiny in perspective** (1931) George MacMunn. W3/70/1. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**The Politics of the British annexation of India, 1757–1857** (1993) Michael H. Fisher. W3/1/16. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**White mutiny: British military culture in India, 1825–1875** (1998) Peter Stanley. M3/70/31. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**Clive of India** (1974) John Watney. M6/WAT/1. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**India yesterday and today: two hundred years of architectural and topographical heritage in India** (1998) George Mitchell. W3/1/17. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall

**The richest East India merchant: the life and business of John Palmer of Calcutta, 1767–1836** (2007) Anthony Webster. W6/PAL/1. (Book) Donated by Carol Gall



# RESEARCH RAMBLINGS



BY GEMMA BESWICK

## Did you know? Parish of St James

Society staff were recently approached twice in the same week with enquiries about the use of “St James” as a parish on early nineteenth-century Catholic marriage certificates.

For those familiar with Sydney, the term “St James” commonly refers to the Anglican Church of that name, which still stands proud in Macquarie Street in the Sydney CBD.

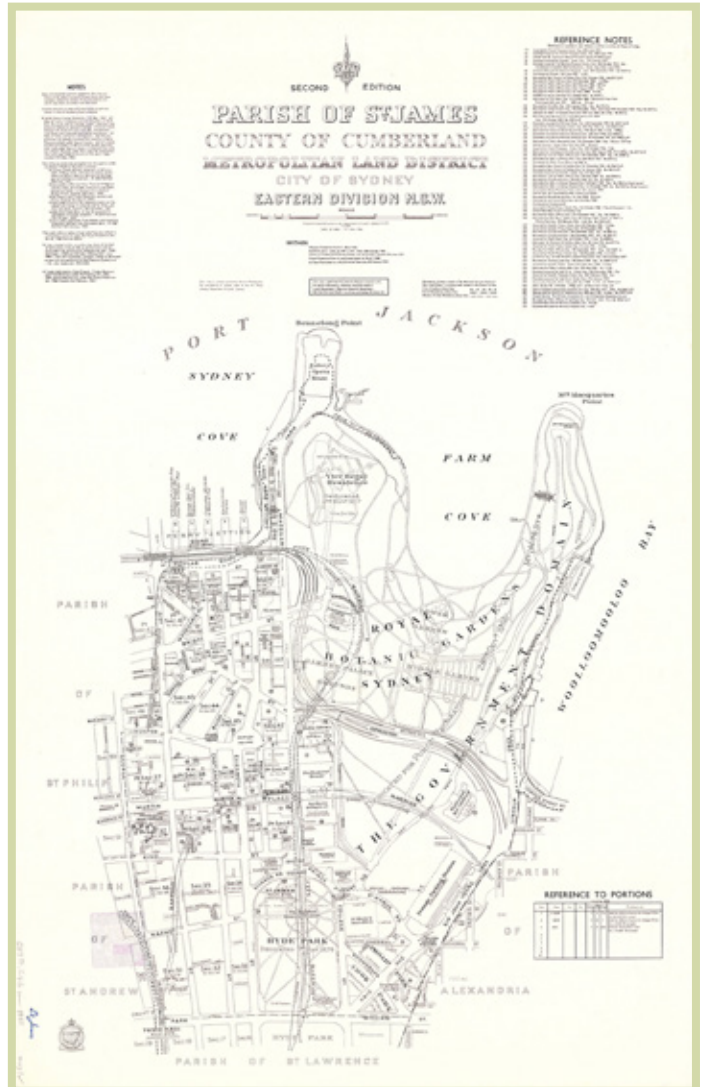
However, the “Parish of St James” refers to an early geographical, civil or cadastral area or parish, which took its name from the Anglican Church; and *“the boundaries of the Parish of St James, which occupies the north-eastern quarter of the City of Sydney, have remained essentially unchanged since the parishes were first mapped in the mid-1830s”*.<sup>1</sup>

This geographic area incorporated churches and places of worship of several denominations, including Catholic, Wesleyan, Jewish, and Friends (Quakers) amongst others. The Parish still incorporates a number of religious venues today.

Other parishes in inner Sydney included the Parish of St Philip (after St Philip’s in York Street, Sydney), and St Andrew (after St Andrew’s Cathedral, George Street).

The fourth parish of St Lawrence<sup>2</sup> was the reverse, giving its name (although spelt differently) to the church that would be built on George Street, Sydney and consecrated in 1845.

- 1 St James’ Church, 2022. History and Architecture. [online] St James - King Street. Available at: <https://www.sjks.org.au/church/history-and-architecture/#TheParish>
- 2 Christ Church St Laurence, 2022. Home - Christ Church St Laurence Sydney. [online] Christ Church St Laurence. Available at: <https://ccsl.org.au>



Map of the Parish of St James, County of Cumberland, sourced from National Library of Australia, <https://nla.gov.au:443/tarkine/nla.obj-570699571>

## Did you know? St Mary’s films

Early Catholic parish microfilms are often referred to colloquially as the “St Marys films”, many thinking that this refers to St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney. In the SAG Library catalogue, many of the microfilm titles start with “Church Registers of St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney”.

This causes confusion for researchers when a baptism, marriage or burial **did not** occur at St Mary’s or anywhere near Sydney!

So why is that wording on the reel?

The term “St Marys” in this case refers to the **Archives** at St Mary’s Cathedral or the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives, which were originally located at St Mary’s Cathedral, but covered areas all over New South Wales.

This might cause a red herring in your research!

St Mary’s films can be found in the Library catalogue at: <https://www.sag.org.au/Using-our-collections>

If you can’t make it into the Family History Research Centre & Library to check out the films, members can submit a **Quick Look Up Request** with details of the event(s) and microfilm number(s). Our research team will locate and copy the relevant entry and send it to you electronically. Contact us at: [research@sag.org.au](mailto:research@sag.org.au)

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