

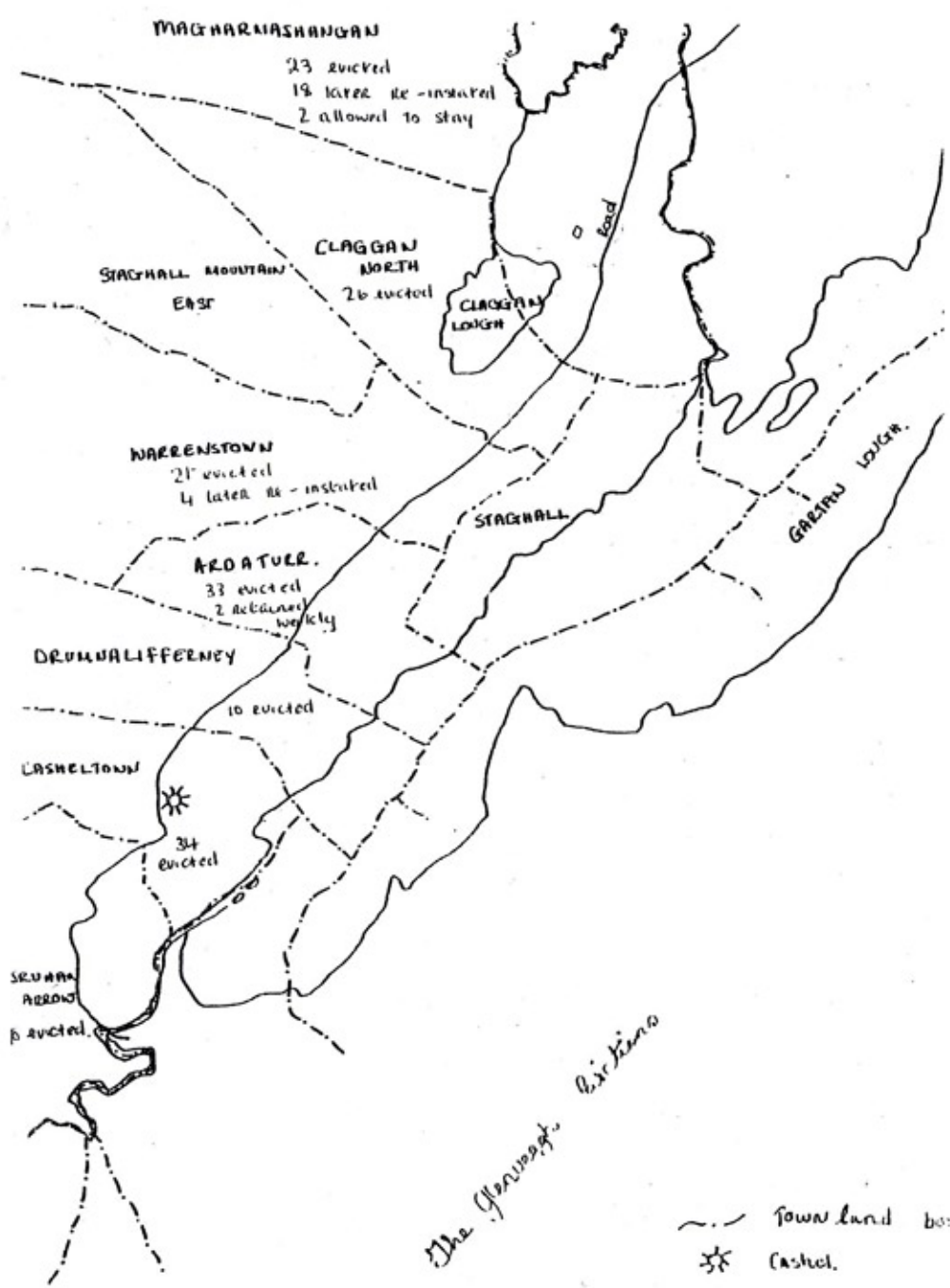
After the Battering Ram -



the trail of the dispossessed
from Derryveagh, 1861 - 1991

by May McClintock

Published by An Taisce.



The Derryveagh–Australia Connection

The history of the Derryveagh Evictions has been well documented by A. M. Sullivan in 'New Ireland', Dr. Vaughan in 'Sin, Sheep and Scotsmen', and by Liam Dolan in 'Land war and evictions in Derryveagh 1840-65'. It has been recorded in song, is part of the folklore of the Gartan area, and recently made the story of the film, 'The Echo of the Distant Drum'. The thousands of visitors to Glenveagh National Park can see the video which tells how the 240 inhabitants of Derryveagh situated in the western shore of Lake Gartan, were forcibly evicted by the landlord, John George Adair, in April 1861. The purpose of this article is to deal with the immediate aftermath of the eviction and the Derryveagh-Australia connection.

When the evictions were completed, a total of 33 families were allowed to remain in possession until the following November and five families were locked out. Within a few days the relieving officer for the district had visited the area and recorded the conditions of each family. In the townland of Altnadogue, the three Sweeney families were locked out. They had small holdings in Glendowan, on the opposite side of Gartan Lough, where they went and built sod houses. The relieving officer, however, stated that Owen Sweeney could not support his family of eleven on his small patch of land and that he would have no alternative but the Workhouse. There is no record of the Sweeney family being admitted to the Workhouse, so one assumes they managed to survive.

In Burgorms the McCormick family of six were allowed to remain until the following November. But widow MacAward and her family of six daughters and one son was not so lucky – her house was the first to be levelled and she was described as 'being in very miserable circumstances, she has removed to a distance from the locality, and has been advised that she can at once be admitted to the Workhouse'.

In the townland of Ardatur, out of the total of six families of thirty-two persons, four families went to the Workhouse. One family was found to be wandering through the ruins of their house, and the sixth, named Carr, had returned to the former proprietor of the estate, Mr. Johnston, where they had once worked.

In Shoughangarrow there were three families. Two were in the Workhouse, and the third, named Callaghan, was still in the neighbourhood and presumably had found shelter with relatives. Castletown, a townland named after the cashel which is still in existence, had an acreage of 251 acres. Of these 206 were mountain. Prior to the evictions, eleven families eked a living on the 45 arable acres. When the relieving officer made his observations he found one house

standing. It was owned by John Friel; he had been allowed to remain as a weekly tenant, but not allowed to cultivate the land. Five families were in the Workhouse, where one of them, John Doherty, a widower, aged 80, died within a week of admission. The remaining families in Cashelstown were still in the neighbourhood, and the family of Robert Burke had moved in with John Friel. The observation states 'Robert Burke and his family are in John Friel's house. Wife seems to be old and sickly, and a case requiring immediate attention. I subsequently heard that this woman's husband was a weaver and possessed of £40 in cash, nevertheless I sent an officer to visit her'.

Two families named Ward lived in Drumnalifforney, Owen Ward and his family of six and Widow Ward and her daughter. The widow and her daughter had to go to the Workhouse, while Owen Ward and his family got shelter with relatives in an adjoining parish. The constable who had been evicted told the touching story of how the Sheriff had repeatedly warned Ward to leave the premises and 'the old man in doing so kissed the walls of his house and each member of his family did the same and then left'.

William Armstrong, Alexander Lawn, Cornelius Kelly, Edward Coyle and Rose Dermott were tenants in Warrentown. All were evicted and their houses levelled, with the exception of Armstrong's which was locked. No mercy was shown to Rose Dermott, described as an orphan and living alone, she received the same treatment as the rest. A week after the evictions, when the whereabouts of these tenants was investigated, there was no trace of them, but it was believed they were somewhere in the neighbourhood sheltering with relatives. Alexander Lawn, a widower, and his three children, later sought admission to the Workhouse. A daughter, Catherine, aged 18, a son, William, spent short spells there, but Susan, aged 15, was described as 'sick', and she remained in the Workhouse until January 1862.

Three Bradley families lived in Cleggan, a townland with 89 acres of mountain, 12 acres of water and 31 arable acres. John Bradley was allowed to remain as a weekly tenant, and the other two moved in to his house. Staghall is one of the biggest townlands in Derryveagh, with a total acreage of 1,000 acres. But when one deducts the area of mountain, water and wood of 822 acres, it left very little arable to support the four families who lived there in 1861. James Lawn, William Ward, Daniel Friel and James Doherty were the tenants, and it is interesting to note that with one exception, they were the same families listed in the Tithe List of 1832 and Griffith's Survey in 1858. So one presumes they all survived the Famine. James Lawn and his family of ten were allowed to remain in possession after the eviction, but only until the following November. William Ward and his family were dispossessed, and the relieving officer stated 'This family is still in the ruins of their former home and appear to be in a bad

condition'. Daniel Friel was allowed to remain as a weekly tenant and it is recorded 'This man informed me he had been all his life a servant, that he had managed to save £36 out of his earnings, then a few years ago he invested the whole of this sum in the purchase of the tenant right of the holding from which he had been ejected, that he is now utterly desolate and seemed to be a very bad case'. The fourth family in Staghall, James Doherty, his wife and son, left the district immediately after the evictions.

The tenants in Magherashangan were named McMonagle, Bradley and Flanagan. Roger Flanagan, aged 52, his wife Eleanor, aged 30, and their three children, Patrick (6), Mary (5), and Rose (1), were admitted to the Workhouse, where they remained for six months. Paddy Bradley, Frank Bradley, Daniel Bradley and James McMonagle were allowed to remain as weekly tenants, but not to cultivate the land. John Bradley lived with his sister, both were deaf and dumb. The ruins of their house are still to be seen.

The concluding comments of the Relieving Officer state 'Large manure heaps stand at the ruins of nearly all the houses; with exception of three or four holdings the land remains uncultivated – altogether the place presented a melancholy picture. I have seen nothing like it since the evictions in Mayo in 1847'.

Not everyone went willingly to the Workhouse or accepted charity. In one instance five men were found huddled around a fire in the open air, and when asked if they wanted to go to the Workhouse replied 'We are staying here to vex Adair'. One old woman unable to walk was offered the use of a horse and cart to bring her to the Workhouse. She refused the offer and said 'When I'm ready to go I'll provide my own horse and cart'.

But of those who went, some stayed for a week, some for three months, and some like Susan Lawn from Warrentown, stayed until arrangements were made for emigration. On the Sunday following the evictions neighbours visited the inmates in Letterkenny Workhouse and found them huddled together, weeping and unable to eat their dinner. According to the folklore in Cloughaneely, the residents there made a collection for the Derryveagh homeless, and built huts near the coast in Killult which provided temporary shelter. There may well be descendants of these families still in Cloughaneely, as indeed there are in Glendowan, Churchill and Creeslough, but the biggest number of descendants would now be found in Australia.

It may help readers to understand the Australian connection if a brief account of Donegal emigration to Australia in the mid 19th century is given here. While the evictions in Derryveagh became one of the most harrowing experiences in Donegal history, they were not an isolated instance. In the 1850's there was much distress in rural Donegal. Many families could not make a

living from their tiny plots of ground, not indeed, pay the rent in post-Famine conditions. Anyone who could not pay the rent was liable to be evicted. The only solution was emigration – emigration to Britain and North America mainly, but sometimes to Australia.

After about 1855, some of the emigrants were taking advantage of the New South Wales assisted immigration scheme. Under this, residents of New South Wales could pay a contribution to the Government in Sydney to bring out a relative or friend from Britain or Ireland, with the government subsidising the cost of the passage. By 1858, there was mounting concern in Australia about news of increased suffering in Donegal. It was reported that the landlords were squeezing the tenants off the land to make way for more profitable farming procedures or to clear the land for more profitable pursuits such as large-scale sheep-rearing, using Scottish shepherds.

It was, perhaps, the interest of one of the Catholic clergy in Australia that focussed attention on the plight of Donegal tenants. Archdeacon John McEncroe, a native of Tipperary, arrived in the Colony in 1832. He became involved in the assisted passage schemes and seems to have been an inveterate collector of funds. In February 1855 he sent £500 to Cardinal Cullen for the widows and orphans of the Irish soldiers who died in the Crimea. In May 1858 he convened a public meeting in Sydney to form a Donegal Relief Fund. He had been long enough in Australia to watch it grow from a jail farm to a colony of free settlers.

Archdeacon McEncroe sought to make systematic use of the government's assisted immigrant scheme. He took a deputation from the Donegal Relief Fund to interview government officials in July 1858, and handed over £900 which was used to assist the passages of 225 people. This special fare to Australia was £5 for men and £3 for women. By the end of 1858 the Donegal Relief Fund had handed over £3,800, and the government issued further certificates for passages. These certificates were issued for persons aged between 12 and 40 years. This age restriction meant, of course, that many families in Donegal were torn apart, the older adults and younger children were left behind while the strong young men and women emigrated.

During the 1850s Archdeacon McEncroe visited Donegal and concentrated his attention on the Gweedore and Cloughaneely districts. His impression of the agricultural labourers there was that they had a more miserable existence under the landlord system than the convicts had experienced in New South Wales. His agent, J. H. Scott Durban, compiled a list of emigrants who could be assisted by the Relief Fund. These people were mainly from the Gweedore area and from Tory Island.

The first batch arrived in Sydney from Liverpool on the 'Sapphire' on May

24, 1859, after a voyage of 15 weeks. On July 14, 1859, the 'Lady Elma Bruce' deposited a further 258 sponsored emigrants in Sydney. Because there had been an outbreak of measles during the passage, the vessel was quarantined for two weeks before the passengers were allowed to land. The Donegal Relief Fund passengers comprised 24 married couples, 94 single men, 91 single women, 15 boys, 7 girls and 3 infants. The third batch of assisted passengers arrived in Sydney on October 4, 1859, on the 'Caribou', and in May 1861, 166 persons from Gweedore arrived on the 'Nile'.

The arrival of each of these four ships was reported in the Sydney's Freeman Journal, of which Archdeacon McEncroe was editor, and recommended the passengers to prospective employers as farm labourers or domestic servants. The government, too, encouraged them to go to 'immigrant depots' in country centres, from where they could be hired by landholders. From 1859-61 the total of immigrants to New South Wales was 2,544 persons, that was 68% of all immigrants, and about one-third of these were from Donegal.

When news of the Derryveagh Evictions reached Sydney, there was great consternation and concern for the victims. Archdeacon McEncroe began fund-raising in Sydney and a member of the Victorian Parliament, named Michael O'Grady, was prominent in the Melbourne fund-raising. The agent in Donegal made arrangements for free passages for the young men and women from Derryveagh, and consequently in January 1862, a total of 150 sponsored passengers, embarked from Portsmouth on the 'Abyssinian'. It would be easy to say at this stage that the journey took 114 days, that there were 7 deaths during the voyage and 3 births. But the reader may be interested in a description of the journey that was undertaken by these men and women, remembering that it may have been in all probability the first journey any of them had ever made outside their own immediate neighbourhood. At this stage, too, it may be of interest to state that of all those who left, there is no record that any of them ever returned and even now, 127 years later, only one descendant has come back to Derryveagh.

One can only guess the heartbreak and sadness experienced by all the families as they watched their young people set off for Australia. But the departure of the Derryveagh folk has been chronicled and a clear picture has evolved. They were escorted by A. M. Sullivan, and in his book 'New Ireland' he wrote 'On their way to the railway station in Letterkenny, en route to the Dublin-Liverpool ferry, they passed their ancient burial ground (Gartan) and here in a body they knelt, flung themselves on the graves of their relatives, which they reverently kissed again and again and raised for the last time the Irish caoine. Then - some pulling tufts of grass which they placed on their

bosoms – they resumed their way on the road to exile'. Arriving in Dublin a dinner was arranged in their honour by Canon McFadden who addressed them in Gaelic, 'Boys, don't forget Ireland, don't forget the old people at home. Sure they will be counting the days till a letter comes from you. And they will be praying for you'.

Most of the surnames involved in the evictions are represented on the passenger list of the 'Abyssinian', the ship that took them to Sydney from Plymouth – Armstrong, Bradley, Coll, Conaghan, Coyle, Curran, Dermott, Doherty, Friel, Gallagher, Lawn, Rodden, Sweeney and Ward. The Donegal Relief passengers comprised 68 single men, 70 single women, and the only married couple from Derryveagh, James and Mary Doherty, with their two-year-old son John and infant daughter Bidy. Bidy did not survive the journey – within a week of leaving Derryveagh she died of convulsions and was buried in Plymouth. Some young people from Churchill and Glenswilly took advantage of the Relief Fund – among them a young man named Thomas Forrest from Roshine, and Martin Rankin from Breenagh. A grand-niece of Thomas Forrest, Mrs. McMahan from Trentagh, has told me that he became a policeman and she remembers her grandfather receiving letters from him when she was a child. Martin Rankin's relative, Mr. Robert Smyth from Convoy, knows that Rankin went to the gold mines first in Australia, then to New Zealand, and later joined his family in mid-West United States where they had emigrated.

The journey to Sydney took 114 days and the ship's captain made the following report on arrival:

'I do myself the honour to report the arrival of the immigrant ship 'Abyssinia' on May 29, 1862.

'I enclose a list of the births and deaths during the voyage, and an abstract return showing the manner in which the immigrants were disposed of.

'The immigrants on arrival looked in a healthy condition and the vessel was in a fair state of cleanliness – a portion of the immigrants though were of the very lower class, and both the Surgeon Superintendent and Matron complained of the difficulty they had experienced in making them conform to rules of cleanliness and discipline, to maintain which the Surgeon had appointed an additional constable beyond the regulated number and the ordinary gratuity was sanctioned to this man.

Mrs. Brock, the matron, had a severe fall on the day before arrival of the vessel. She was carried to the Depot and received special medical attention for which the Minister of Lands sanctioned payment of £6-6s. for medical fees.

'At the visit of inspection held by the Board, the immigrants expressed themselves satisfied with the provisions supplied and generally with the

treatment they had received. The only complaints were one by a girl named Biddy Conaghan against the matron which, however, she subsequently declined to prosecute, and the Board, having made enquiries, learned that Mrs. Brock had acted with an indiscretion which was sufficiently visited by a caution conveyed to her by then.

'The other complaints were by James Sweeney and Michael O'Gorman and were of the loss of clothes. The Board enquired very fully into this matter, but the evidence they could obtain was insufficient and too conflicting to warrant them in considering the captain or the ship liable for the loss, or to justify further action on their part. To their proceedings, however, they append a strong expression of opinion as to the defective arrangements which appear to have prevailed for the supervision of the immigrants' luggage in its transit from the Depot to the ship and reception on board.

'The Abyssinia is well adapted for the conveyance of immigrants, but the manner of the fitting up was in many ways defective. For instance, the large water closet placed in the hospital for the accommodation of the single females not only occupied much space, but is reported by the Surgeon as objectionable in a sanitary point of view. In the previous vessel which arrived here, the 'Annie Wilson', there was a small water closet at each side of the 'tween decks, which seems a far better arrangement as economising space, giving always one for use on the lee side and preventing (without the necessity for constant watching) the congregating of a large number of persons in the water-closet at one time.

'In the married peoples' compartment the water-closet was so insecurely fitted that it was found necessary to remove it at an early period of the voyage, and supply the families with utensils. The store part of the vessel was unoccupied, and might advantageously have been fitted up with a wash-house or troughs, as the appliances for ablution were very scant.

'The water-kegs were a constant source of annoyance during the voyage, they were perpetually breaking loose from their fastenings and rolling about the deck.

'The Surgeon-Superintendent, Mr. Thomas Slater, whose eighth voyage in charge of immigrants this was, appears to have discharged his duties (which in this vessel seem to have been more than ordinarily onerous) with his usual efficiency, and states that he received every co-operation from the Master and Officers. He reports also favourably of the Matron, and of the schoolmaster who was appointed by the Commissioners. The attendance at school on board was satisfactory.

'Although there were 7 deaths during the voyage, they arose from ordinary causes and there was no prevailing sickness'.

The deaths referred to by the Captain were caused by bronchitis, diarrhoea,

pleurisy and consumption. The Surgeon, in his report, states that bronchitis prevailed at the commencement of the voyage, and pleurisy at the termination, owing to bad weather. He further gives a list of beds and bedding on board: 22 single beds, 3 double beds, 14 blankets, 22 rugs, 17 pillows, 12 pillow cases and 6 towels.

The medicines used were: acetic, citric, gallic and tartaric acid, ammon. Sesquicarb and ammon. Muriat, amyllum, antimon, potassio-tart, calx recens, camphor, chloroform, aloes, belladonnae, ferri sulph, iodium potassi, kreosote.

Regarding the complaints made by James Sweeney and Bidy Conaghan, the following details are given:

James Sweeney made a statement, complaining of the loss of a box of clothes:

1 black frock	£1-5-0
1 pair of trousers	12-0
1 vest	6-0
1 pair of trousers	6-0
1 pattern of vest	1-6
1 pair of drawers	3-0
3 pairs of stockings	3-0
1 yard of flannel	2-0
1 sheet	2-0
tobacco	1-0
1 towel	6
and box containing all of them	1-6
	£3-3-6

This statement was witnessed by John Benson and Denis McLean, which further stated that 'I came on board the vessel by a steamer, that the box was put on board the vessel and that some days later I got my box and opened it and took out some of the clothes and aired them - that I put them back in the box and locked the box and then gave it up to one of the men connected with the ship and that I have not since seen it'.

Bidy Conaghan's complaint states: 'I, Bidy Conaghan, emigrant on board the Abyssinian, have a sad complaint against our matron, Mrs. Brock, for striving to take away my character in the following manner. On the 15th night of May, 1862, she sent for me to go to her and in the presence of all the girls wanted me to take off my clothes. I objected to being stripped by her and she took me to her cabin and made me take off all my clothes 'til she'd try was I in the family way. It was an insult to the doctor and to me which I will get satisfaction for when I land in Sydney, if God spares me'.

In the event, however, Bidy Conaghan withdrew her complaint on arrival,

perhaps Mrs. Brock's accident and her indignity at having to be carried off the ship was enough to give some consolation to Biddy.

The school-master on board the *Abyssinian* was Michael Francis Cullen. He taught school for 62 days during the voyage, and the attendance included some of the Derryveagh emigrants. His observations at the end of the voyage state: 'Nine children and five adults who commenced in their alphabet were able to read tolerably well on arrival, and all the other adults made very good progress in reading, writing and arithmetic'. His comments on educational books state there was a fair supply – 'many were found useful and suitable, there should be a supply of Professor Sullivan's and large geographies given from the Irish National Board. A large supply of writing paper would also be desirable, and the slates given should be framed. The books for amusement gave general satisfaction, but they were rather limited'. He concluded with the rather sad comment: 'There are so many difficulties in the way of teaching on board ship that I can't venture on any suggestion to the establishment of a regular system of education on board in future ships.

When the ship docked in Sydney the passengers were in most instances hired to local landowners. The young Derryveagh men went as farm labourers and were paid £35 per annum and a weekly ration of 10 lbs. mutton, 10 lbs. flour, 2 lbs. sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. tea.

The girls received work as general servants, with wages of £15 per annum. All seem to have obtained employment in country areas – Maitland and Singleton, north of Sydney, Bathurst in the west, Berrima, Woolongong and Kiami in the south. As they were now scattered around and many of them could not read or write, they would have found it difficult to maintain contact with each other. And there, I'm afraid, is where we lose contact with the young men and girls who left Derryveagh, for in spite of extensive research carried out in Australia, all trace of them and their descendants has been lost. Only the descendants of the married couple, James and Mary Doherty, and their son John, have been traced. This research was carried out by Dr. Bernard Barrett, State Historian for Victoria, in 1983. After much detective work he located the graves at Welby cemetery, near Mittagong, N.S.W. This is ten kilometres from Berrima where, according to the *Abyssinian* documents, James Doherty began working in 1862. Near James' and Mary's grave is the grave of their son, John, who was two when he arrived on the *Abyssinian*; he was 74 when he died in 1934.

Dr. Barrett subsequently located and interviewed a daughter of John Doherty. She is Enid Doherty, born in Australia in 1908, now Mrs. Taylor, and living in 1983 in Westmead, near Parramatta, Sydney. He also tracked down a grandson of John, Father Tony Doherty, who is in charge of Catholic Adult

Education in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

Father Doherty came to Derryveagh in 1985, and near the scene of the evictions he conducted a short and touching ceremony. A brief description of the evictions was read to some of the present day inhabitants of the area. Father Doherty reminded them of the influence their forbears had on moulding the character of Australia. He told them: 'I found it extremely moving as I drove up the road to Churchill from Letterkenny, realising that I was coming up the road my great-grandparents had struggled down all those years ago. It touched depths I hardly knew existed. I made the journey of 12,000 miles from Australia back to Ireland. The journey concluded when I reached a pile of rocks, the tumbledown remains of James and Mary's cottage, putting me in touch with my past like nothing has ever done before'.

The story of Father Doherty's journey to Derryveagh was told in 1986 in the film 'Echo of a Distant Drum'. It was hoped when the film was shown in Australia that some descendants of the other Derryveagh exiles of 1862 would be located, this has not happened yet.

This is not the first time an appeal has been made on behalf of the Derryveagh descendants. On June 9, 1897, at the 1300 centenary of the death of Colmcille, Father James McFadden who escorted the young people from Dublin in 1862 made the following plea:

'Of my early days as a priest saddening recollections force themselves upon my mind today. When I gaze on yonder hillside, I remember where so many helpless, unoffending families were thrust out ruthlessly from their houses to beg or die. The houses were levelled; no quarter, no parley might be sought, emigration to Australia was the only resource. A. M. Sullivan in his New Ireland tells of my efforts in seeing these people off, but standing here today 35 long years have elapsed, I feel saddened beyond measure to see those homesteads still desolate and not one of the evicted tenants reinstated. Would it be going too far on my part to suggest that an effort be made to approach the landlady (Mrs. Adair) as to the restoration of such of those tenantry as still survive or the representatives of those who died? Who knows, but Colmcille may intercede and secure us a happy issue'.

Now as we move quickly towards another Colmcille centenary, we know that Canon McFadden's hopes were not realised. All that remains in Derryveagh now are the tumbledown walls of a few cottages. They are unmarked, and a stranger to the district would be unaware of their significance. Would it be going too far on my part to suggest that these ruins be made permanently secure – a monument to a lost generation?

Chapter 2

Genealogical research is never completed. The previous chapter written in 1989 showed only one family descended from the Derryveagh emigrants had been located in Australia. However as a result of the documentary 'Echo of a Distant Drum' another family has been found in Canberra. The family member there, Group Captain John Ewan Gerber, O.B.E., A.F.C. had been researching his European origins for many years. The search for his paternal grandmother Catherine Ward had progressed to a point where little more could be conducted in Australia. Her certificates showed she had been born in Derryveagh, Co. Donegal in 1845, daughter of John and Grace Ward (nee McCafferty) and had come to Australia on the Abyssinian in 1862. John Gerber's difficulty was trying to locate Derryveagh. As a result of seeing the documentary he contacted Dr. Bernard Barrett, historian for the State of Victoria and Mr. Richard Reid researcher at the Australian National University, both of whom suggested he get in touch with me. His letter to me was interesting and informative and revealed that his grandmother, Mary Ward, and her brother John were members of one of the evicted Ward families of Derryveagh. The story of Mary Ward and her family in Australia is best described by her grandson.

'My paternal grandmother Catherine Ward married my grandfather George John Gerber at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney on the 17th June, 1867. Father Hugh d'Ackermann was the officiating minister of religion. According to the certificate issued Catherine Ward, spinster was born in Derryveagh, Ireland and aged 22 years. Her parents were John Ward, farmer and Grace McCafferty. Thus Catherine was born in 1845 and George John Gerber was born in Bavaria, Germany in 1836.

Eight children resulted from the marriage: John Joseph b. 1868, James 1870, Mary Ann 1872, Daniel 1874, George and Daniel (twins) 1877, Henry Francis 1879 and Grace Cecilia 1882. Examination of the Births, Deaths and Marriage Certificates show that Catherine Gerber was born in Derryveagh, Co. Donegal.

The Gerber family lived in Sydney until 1877 when the family moved to Melbourne. George John Gerber was a tobacco manufacturer before he left Sydney and he followed the same trade in Melbourne. Later, in 1888, he became a licensed victualler at the Loughmore Castle Hotel, North Melbourne. (It is interesting that the hotel owned by Catherine Ward, Loughmore Castle, bears the same name as that planned by John George Adair in Tipperary, before he built Glenveagh castle. Was Catherine aware of the name, did she decide on the name of her hotel to show she was one up on Adair – the man who had

evicted her from her home?)

Daniel Gerber, her son born in 1874, died in 1876 from 'shock to the nervous system consequent on severe burns'. Interestingly, the informant of the death was J. Ward, uncle. Further research located the marriage certificate of this uncle, John Ward, which stated that 'John Ward, bachelor, school master of Sydney, married Mary McGlynn, spinster residing with her sister in Lambton, New South Wales at St. Mary's, Catholic Church, Newcastle, 24th September 1871. Examination of the birth certificates of the children of this marriage show that both John and Mary McGlynn came from Co. Donegal, that John was the son of John & Grace Ward, Derryveagh and that he was born in 1842.

Five children resulted from this marriage, Kate 1872, John Joseph 1875, James Joseph (Francis) 1877, Daniel 1879 and Hannah Catherine Grace Adelaide 1880. Kate and Daniel died in infancy. John and Mary Ward lived in Sydney after their marriage, where John worked as a school master, then as a labourer, then as a tobacconist. Some time after 1880 the family moved to Adelaide.

John Gerber concluded this brief history of the Wards 'Did they migrate to Australia together or independently, as convicts, as assisted migrants or free migrants is a matter of great interest to their descendants? Nor is the exact location of their birthplace known'.

As a result of this information which I received from John Gerber, I was able to inform him that Catherine Ward was taken to Australia on the Abyssinian and her passage was paid by the Donegal Relief Fund. Furthermore I was able to give him the exact location of Derryveagh and the story of the evictions. To date, the arrival of Mary's brother John in Australia has not been found on any shipping list. It is known from his death certificate that he arrived in 1867. John Gerber has a strong suspicion, but not the proof, that his school teacher grand uncle was a member of the Fenians. It is interesting that some time before John Ward died in 1903, and when he knew he was suffering from a terminal illness, he left his family in Adelaide and came to Sydney. He is buried in Waverley Cemetery near the Republican Memorial of Irish patriots of 1798 and the Fenian Brotherhood. Did he choose his final resting place?

In October 1989 John Gerber decided to visit Europe to locate the birthplaces of his grandparents. These included Bamberg, Bavaria, Germany, (paternal grandfather), Isle of Skye, Scotland (maternal grandmother), North Uist, Scotland (maternal grandfather) and Derryveagh, Co. Donegal (paternal grandmother). His observations of his pilgrimage say 'The localities were visited in that order. In Germany the language proved to be a difficult problem, while in Scotland depopulation and lack of suitable written evidence to help the budding genealogist was disappointing. In Letterkenny, Co. Donegal,

circumstances were completely different. With enthusiastic historians on the ground it was, as our American friends say 'a whole new ball game'. An enormous amount of research had already been completed and committed to record. The itinerant researcher was, with this guidance, prevented from committing himself to time wasting, non-productive research. Information came from questions, discussions and conducted tours of sites of interest to the researcher of descendants of the Derryveagh Evictions. A tour of the site of the Derryveagh Community leads one to appreciate that although probably beautiful in summer it would be bleak in winter and living would be difficult. Those who migrated would appreciate the milder Australian winters. The visit to the site was conducted by May McClintock and the tour of the area by Neil Doherty, Kilmacrennan gave an insight to the life and times of the Derryveagh Community, a lasting insight which could not be gained by straight research of records.

Mr. Gerber has now undertaken the task of recording his impressions, which he will pass on to other descendants of Catherine and John Ward. He also has a cassette recording of a B.B.C. talk back radio programme made in January 1990, when the B.B.C. talked to himself and Father Tony Doherty and discussed the possible effects of the Derryveagh evictions on the Australian descendants of the Irish migrants.

The documentary 'Echo of a Distant Drum' provides some of the background of the Irish migrants to Australia, genealogical material provided by the Irish Government together with the wealth of information in various forms available from Australian sources all contribute to the understanding of the problems of migration, and their influence on Australian history.

In 1991 Richard Reid, an Ulsterman working in the Australian National University will finish his thesis on Irish emigration to Australia. Part of the thesis will deal in great detail with the clearances of Cloughaneely, Gweedore and Derryveagh, 1858 - 1862.

To come back briefly to John Ward and his education in Derryveagh. It is noted on the shipping list of the Abyssinian that few of the migrants could read or write. On John Ward's marriage certificate he stated he was a school master and signed his name, his wife Mary McGlynn was unable to sign her name.

Dan Kelly, Derryveagh pointed out to me several years ago the site of the Derryveagh school-house at Cleggan. The walls have disappeared but the site is clearly visible. When checking National School records in the Public Record Office in Dublin in 1990, I found the information I was seeking.

Direvagh School in the townland of Cleggan, one room building 18½' x 12½' x 7'. The school was established on January 1, 1859. In 1860 a salary of 50 shillings was granted to the schoolmaster James Gallagher. The number of the

school was 8338, and James Gallagher had come from school number 6203 where he had been dismissed. The manager of Direvagh school stated that the importations against Gallagher's character were wholly groundless.

On September 20, 1860 the Board ordered more books for the school and an inscription to be put up.

On October 19, 1860 the Board further ordered a clock.

In 1861, June 19 the teacher was admonished for not having entered attendance on the day of inspection. Manager again asked for books and a clock.

In 1862, May 22 James Gallagher was fined £1 for falsification of school accounts, and threatened with dismissal.

On May 27, books were to be procured. On November 28, 1862 the Board ordered the closure of the school and all grants were cancelled. The reason given was that the Landlord Adair took possession of the building, and the Manager, Father Daniel Kair, was unable to do anything about it. In 1860, the year before the evictions, there were 31 children on roll, 20 boys and 11 girls. In 1861 at the time of the evictions the numbers had fallen to 21, and in 1862 when the school closed there were only 9 children on the rolls. Thus ended the short career of the school. It is hardly surprising that few of the young people who went to Australia on the *Abyssinian* were literate. Where did John Ward receive his education? I suppose we will never know the answer to that question. However an interesting find last year was a book bought at an auction. The book was in a bad state, but it revealed that it had been owned by John Ward, Ardaturr, Derryveagh. He had written his name, address and date on the fly leaf. A copy of his signature has been sent to John Gerber, who is now checking it out on the original copy of John Ward's marriage certificate in Newcastle, New South Wales.

The remains of the 40 homes levelled in 1861 have now almost disappeared. An Taisce, the National Trust for Ireland, decided in 1989 to restore the gable end of one of the houses in Magherashangan. In July 1990 a memorial stone was erected on the wall, and unveiled in the presence of many of the descendants of Derryveagh. Father Frank McHugh performed the ceremony, in his address he pointed out that he was a grandson of one of the evicted people, he had learned the history of the eviction not from books or records, but from his grandmother. Messages from the Australian descendants were read at the unveiling ceremony. John Gerber's message reads 'It is with gratitude the descendants of John and Catherine Ward thank May McClintock for her dedicated research in establishing the connection between families here in Australia and the evicted community of Derryveagh.

My recent visit to Co. Donegal and Derryveagh brought home the harsh



The unveiling of the plaque by Fr. McHugh, himself a descendant.



May McClintock, Maurice Simms, Chairman of An Taisce, National Trust for Ireland, North West Donegal.

conditions of the evictions. On behalf of all the Ward descendants here I thank the people of Co. Donegal for their efforts commemorating the tribulations of these unfortunate people'.

Father Tony Doherty's message from Sydney reads:

'The story of any people is carried in its scars.

Whether told in quiet tones or sung in sweet melody.

It is the tale of pain and joy,

Of agony and ecstasy.

The story of the Derryveagh eviction is told of an uprooted people

Trudging down a road devoid of hope

To an unknown future.

April was the month

A month that carries the promise of new life.

Yet for the 40 families left homeless in the violent eviction of 1861,

It was the month of the shattered hearth.

Yet out of death

Rises the assurance of renewed life.

Healing focuses energy and strength.

Seed is buried, new green shoots appear.'

The memorial stone erected in Derryveagh bears the inscription. 'To the sacred memory of the people of the Derryveagh Eviction 1861.

April was the month of the shattered hearth'.



Ward grave at Waverley Cemetery
near Sydney Heads, N.S.W.



Remains of cottage with plaque

Sources of information:

1. Minutes of Letterkenny Workhouse records.
2. The Derry Standard April 1861.
3. A.M. Sullivan's 'New Ireland'.
4. Records of the 'Abyssinian'
5. Dr. Barrett, State Historian for Victoria.
6. Group Captain John Ewan Gerber O.B.E., A.F.C. Canberra
7. Paddy Friel, Public Record Office, Dublin
8. Dan Kelly and Patsy Doherty, Derryveagh.



Site of Schoolhouse at Derry veagh. Before the evictions in 1861, there were 30 children on the roll. The following year, John George Adair closed it down. An apple tree now grows out of the site.