

## RESEARCH NOTE

# Points of Departure: Remittance Emigration from South-West Ulster to New South Wales in the Later Nineteenth Century\*

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**SUMMARY:** This paper considers aspects of the local geographies of Australian emigration created in south-west Ulster by the New South Wales government-sponsored remittance emigration scheme between 1858 and 1884. The scheme mobilized the financial resources of settlers in New South Wales to part-fund the passage of friends and relatives from Britain and Ireland. The paper utilizes the comprehensive socio-economic and demographic archive generated by the scheme, to explore the response of rural communities in thirteen civil parishes in Counties Cavan and Fermanagh to this opportunity to emigrate. It concludes that although the emigrant sample's demographic profile accorded with conventional models of Irish assisted emigration, it was also marked by pronounced over-representation of Protestants and under-representation of Catholics. Possible explanations for this are considered in terms of the positionality and human capital of the three major denominations and the efficiency of their social networks in negotiating the bureaucratic process in Australia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Academic paradigms change, but scholarly interest in international migration remains as strong as ever. Recent synoptic literature has reviewed the diverse tropes through which scholars in a range of disciplines have viewed the causes, practices, and consequences of European emigration during the nineteenth century. The cultural grounding for their engagement is hardly to be doubted. Over 40 million emigrants are estimated to have left

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Europe for various “New Worlds” between 1850 and 1913, while between 1815 and 1913 some 23 million are thought to have left the British Isles alone, including 4 million from Ireland after 1850.<sup>1</sup>

Emigration was at the heart of European cultural experience during the modern historic era, and this alone offers ample justification for the continuing scholarly engagement with the issue. But the nature of that engagement is changing. In a recent collection of papers which addressed migration studies’ own paradigmatic shifts, the Lucassens have pointed to the epistemological inadequacy of models of population movement predicated on a straightforward binarism between free and unfree emigration, settler and labour migration, or subsistence and betterment movements. They also noted the limitations of studies that allege the unique emigrant experience of individual ethnic communities.<sup>2</sup> Other, equally fundamental shifts in our understanding of emigration have been identified. No longer is emigration necessarily envisaged as an adjustment to incipient Malthusian crisis, or as a peculiarly European reaction to industrialization, but rather as a process of individual empowerment and rational response to developing opportunities within the international labour market.<sup>3</sup>

Integral to these understandings is an increased awareness of the importance of the migrants’ socialization in their communities of origin prior to emigration.<sup>4</sup> Hoerder argues that the emigrants’ acculturation or “second socialization” at their destination (itself frequently conceived of in very narrow terms as a specific “place” or “job”), depended on their “point of entry” into the receiving society, their purpose in migrating, their resources, and their gender, ethnicity, and rural or urban background.<sup>5</sup> All of these reflected the emigrants’ “first socialization” in their originating societies.

Recent studies of Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Scandinavia, as well as southern Europe, have explored the regional and local character of this

1. Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Belfast, 1996); Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe 1815–1930* (Cambridge, 1995); Walter Nugent, *Crossings: The Great Transatlantic Migrations 1870–1914* (Bloomington, IN, 1992); P.A.M. Taylor, *The Distant Magnet: European Emigration to the USA* (London, 1971); Eric Richards, *Britannia’s Children: Emigration from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland since 1600* (London, 2004), pp. 117–232.

2. Jan Lucassen and Leo Lucassen (eds), *Migration, Migration History and History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives* (Berne, 1997).

3. Robin Haines, Margrette Kleinig, Deborah Oxley, and Eric Richards, “Migration and Opportunity: An Antipodean Perspective”, *International Review of Social History*, 43 (1998), pp. 235–263.

4. Dirk Hoerder, “From Dreams to Possibilities: The Secularization of Hope and the Quest for Independence”, in Dirk Hoerder and Horst Rössler (eds), *Distant Magnets: Expectations and Realities in the Immigrant Experience, 1840–1930* (New York, 1993), pp. 1–32.

5. Dirk Hoerder, “From Migrants to Ethnic: Acculturation in a Societal Framework”, in Dirk Hoerder and Leslie Page Moch (eds), *European Migrants: Global and Local Perspectives* (Boston, MA, 1996), pp. 211–262.

pre-migration experience in the context of nineteenth-century inter- and intra-national labour migration both within Europe and to North America. A recurrent theme in these analyses has been the iconic power of the “American myth”, whether constructed in terms of (sometimes misinterpreted) information about that particular “New World”, or about equally unfamiliar and alien European destinations such as Berlin, London, Paris, or Vienna. In each case the result was profoundly similar: the creation of expectations of personal advancement which, although they may have involved nothing more than the desire for a money wage and the freedom to spend it, instilled in the would-be economic migrants a sense of dissatisfaction with the locally-constructed social inequities and constraints of their present life.<sup>6</sup>

Although a minor destination for nineteenth-century European emigrants, modern Australia’s demographic history continues to be seen to offer insights not merely into the aggregate practices of European emigration, but also into its social production, in ways which illuminate current understandings of the more extensive North Atlantic migration field.<sup>7</sup> This is largely due to the particularly comprehensive bureaucratic records left by the various colonial government-sponsored Australian emigration schemes which provided the bulk of that country’s emigrants during the nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup> One of these, remittance emigration, forms the subject of this paper and is discussed in detail below. But it is worth noting that, funded by the sale of government land in the colonies, between c.1831 and 1886 these government schemes provided either free or subsidized passages to people who would otherwise have been debarred by age, poverty, or lack of other opportunity from settling in Australia.<sup>9</sup>

Of the 23 million people who left the British Isles during the nineteenth century, nearly 1.6 million settled in Australia, including, by Fitzpatrick’s estimate, one-third of a million Irish.<sup>10</sup> By contrast, at least 6 million Irish emigrants are thought to have settled in the United States and Canada between 1815 and 1920.<sup>11</sup> One of the most distant of all emigrant destinations, the Australian colonies suffered from comparatively high relocation costs (despite the colonial government assistance schemes), uncertain and protracted information networks, and the growing effects of

6. Hoerder, “From Dreams to Possibilities”, pp. 1–32; *idem*, “From Migrants to Ethnic”, pp. 211–262.

7. Haines, Kleinig, Oxley and Richards, “Migration and Opportunity: An Antipodean Perspective”, pp. 235–237.

8. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, pp. 91–122.

9. By far the best account of these schemes is to be found in Robin F. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor: Australian Recruitment in Britain and Ireland, 1831–1850* (London, 1997).

10. D. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Cork, 1994), p. 6.

11. D.N. Doyle, “The Irish in North America, 1776–1845”, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland 5: Ireland Under the Union 1, 1801–1870* (Oxford, 1989), p. 683.

unsustainable patterns of environmental resource exploitation. By the late 1880s the consequences of the latter were increasingly apparent. Plagues of rabbits, drought, and dust storms coincided with the international depression of the 1890s – triggered in Australia by the collapse in overseas bank credit following the land boom – to expose the country’s economic vulnerability within the globalizing world economy, and bring a temporary end to its reputation as “a working man’s paradise”.<sup>12</sup>

Irish emigration was indissolubly bound up with the overall pattern of British settlement in colonial Australia, and has attracted its own extensive literature.<sup>13</sup> In Fitzpatrick’s phrase, this has identified the “identikit assisted Irish emigrant”, i.e. someone whose passage was wholly or partly paid for by government, as a single young adult, most probably female, of rural origin, who possessed few skills, and who was four times as likely to be Catholic as Protestant.<sup>14</sup> Unassisted emigration by people paying their entire fare themselves rectified some of these imbalances. Overall, the Irish migration profile displayed a remarkable gender symmetry, but retained its sectarian imbalance. This, however, was somewhat reduced by the predominance of Protestants among unassisted emigrants.

Like emigration in general, the Irish migration stream to Australia, and

12. H.M. Boot, “Government and the Colonial Economies”, *Australian Economic History Review*, 38 (1998), pp. 74–101; N.G. Butlin, *Forming a Colonial Economy: Australia 1810–1850* (Cambridge, 1994); *idem*, *Investment and Australian Economic Development 1861–1900* (Cambridge, 1964); R.V. Jackson, *Australian Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century* (Canberra, 1977); S. Macintyre, *A Concise History of Australia* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 129–130; J.M. Powell, *An Historical Geography of Modern Australia: The Restive Fringe* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 1–66.

13. In addition to the articles cited elsewhere in this paper, see also: Neil Coughlan, “The Coming of the Irish to Victoria”, *Historical Studies of Australia and New Zealand*, 45 (1965), pp. 65–86; M. Campbell, *The Kingdom of the Ryans: The Irish in Southwest New South Wales 1816–1890* (Sydney, 1997); G. Forth, “‘No Petty People’: The Anglo-Irish Identity in Colonial Australia”, in P. O’Sullivan (ed.), *The Irish World Wide: History, Heritage, Identity*, vol. 2: *The Irish in the New Communities* (Leicester, 1992), pp. 128–142; E.M. Johnston, “Violence Transported: Aspects of Irish Peasant Society”, in O. MacDonagh and W.F. Mandle (eds), *Ireland and Irish Australia: Studies in Cultural and Political History* (London, 1986), pp. 137–154; T.G. Jordan and A.L. Greiner, “Irish Migration to Rural Eastern Australia: A Preliminary Investigation”, *Irish Geography*, 27 (1994), pp. 135–142; T. McLaughlin (ed.), *Irish Women in Colonial Australia* (St Leonards, 1998); P. O’Farrell, “Landscapes of the Irish Immigrant Mind”, in J. Hardy (ed.), *Stories of Australian Migration* (Sydney, 1988), pp. 33–46; *idem*, “Defining Place and Home: Are the Irish Prisoners of Place?”, in D. Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Home or Away? Immigrants in Colonial Australia: Visible Immigrants 3* (Canberra, 1992), pp. 1–18; *idem*, “The Irish in Australia and New Zealand, 1791–1870”, in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland 5*, pp. 661–681; *idem*, “The Irish in Australia and New Zealand, 1870–1990”, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A New History of Ireland 6: Ireland Under the Union 2, 1870–1921* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 703–724; Bob Reece, *The Origins of Irish Convict Transportation to New South Wales* (London, 2001); E. Richards, “Irish Life and Progress in Colonial South Australia”, *Irish Historical Studies*, 27 (1991), pp. 216–236.

14. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, p. 13.

the British settlement of which it formed a part, were both spatial behaviours.<sup>15</sup> Emigration depended on a variety of imbricated spatial knowledges, imagined and acted upon at individual, family, community, and governmental levels, as well as regionally, nationally, and internationally. These “imagined worlds” facilitated the intending emigrant’s migration decision, but were themselves asymmetrical, ambivalent, and imperfect, and heavily charged not only with expectations of arrival and betterment, but also with a sense of departure and loss. In Jacobson’s phrase, emigration “meant taking up residence on the periphery of one’s former world, and yet former centres did not necessarily lose their centrality”.<sup>16</sup> Emigrants thus embarked on psychological as well as geographical journeys.

Earlier geographical theories of migration attempted to accommodate these complex, subjectivized knowledge environments in terms of the relative weighting of simply-specified “push” and “pull” factors, distance-decay effects on the quality of information, and the dislocating effect of intervening migration opportunities.<sup>17</sup> With the increasing critical awareness of the politicized nature of seemingly objective archival sources, and of the social production of all forms of migrant spatial knowledge, the assumptions of data neutrality on which these earlier models were based seem increasingly hard to sustain.<sup>18</sup>

While it is true that received wisdom on Irish emigration to colonial Australia acknowledges some aspects of the spatiality of emigrant behaviour in Ireland, the generalized character of many of these representations fails to reveal the spatial complexity of emigration practices at a more local level, where they impacted on the lives of individuals and communities. For example, Fitzpatrick’s benchmark analysis of the Registrar General’s annual returns of emigration between 1841 and 1914 offers an island-wide but county-based analysis. It indicates an overall pattern of low-level participation in Australian emigration at county level during this period, save for two regions where this was relatively pronounced: the south-central Midlands, notably Clare and Tipperary, but also including Offaly, Kilkenny, and Limerick, and the south Ulster borderlands, notably Fermanagh, Cavan, and Armagh.<sup>19</sup>

15. L. Proudfoot, “Landscape, Place and Memory: Towards a Geography of Irish Identities in Colonial Australia”, in Oonagh Walsh (ed.), *Ireland Abroad: Politics and Professions in the Nineteenth Century* (Dublin, 2003), pp. 172–185.

16. Mathew F. Jacobson, *Special Sorrows: The Diasporic Imagination of Irish, Polish and Jewish Immigrants in the United States* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), p. 2.

17. See, for example: H.R. Barrett, *Population Geography* (Harlow, 1992); J Beaujeu-Garnier, *Geography of Population* (London, 1967); G.J. Lewis, *Human Migration: A Geographical Perspective* (London, 1982).

18. James S. Duncan, “Complicity and Resistance in the Colonial Archive: Some Issues of Method and Theory in Historical Geography”, *Historical Geography*, 27 (1999), pp. 119–127.

19. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, pp. 15–16.

Just how representative this overall measure of the regional variation in emigration to Australia was of the propensity to emigrate under different local circumstances, different government sponsorship schemes, and in different years, is harder to judge. It is notable, for example, that while McDonald and Richards' analysis of the "Great Emigration" to Australia of 1841 also identifies Tipperary, Fermanagh, Clare, Limerick, and Armagh as places where Australian migration was grossly over-represented in that year (in terms of the proportion of migrants they supplied compared to their proportion of the total British population), so too were Galway, Tyrone, Donegal, Antrim, and Wicklow.<sup>20</sup> This suggests that, embedded within the secular regional pattern identified by Fitzpatrick, were more localized pulses of emigration of the sort intimated by Reid, the elucidation of which may enhance our understanding of emigrant behaviour in both Ireland and Australia.<sup>21</sup>

This paper offers one such analysis. It seeks to recover the secular trends and local geographies exhibited by remittance emigration to New South Wales from a sample of thirteen civil parishes in south-west Ulster between 1858 and 1884. In doing so, it offers a local and regional perspective which mirrors recent analyses of continental European labour migration in its emphasis on the socialization of emigrants in their communities of origin before departure. Remittance emigration differed from other government schemes insofar as already-resident sponsors in Australia were required to pay part of the cost of their nominee(s)' passage, while the latter were also expected to find referees to testify to their character. Here, we explore the patronal networks in Australia and Ireland that were activated to facilitate the remittance emigration from the study area, and examine the denominational profile of both the successful nominees and their Irish referees. We conclude by considering the implications of this evidence for our present understanding of the ways in which different communities in Ireland engaged with the emigration process. The paper begins, however, with a discussion of the social production of the sources on which the analysis is based, and of their place in the narrative of nineteenth-century assisted emigration to New South Wales.

#### REMITTANCE EMIGRATION: NARRATIVES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

This paper is based on data derived primarily from two sources, the New South Wales government's remittance deposit journals and emigrant

20. John McDonald and Eric Richards, "The Great Emigration of 1841: Recruitment for New South Wales in British Emigration Fields", *Population Studies*, 51 (1997), pp. 337–355.

21. Richard Reid, "Aspects of Irish Assisted Immigration to New South Wales, 1848–1870" (Ph.D., Australian National University, 1992), pp. 102–103.

arrival journals. The first records the deposits paid by sponsors already in the colony to help fund, in this instance, the passage of 1844 potential migrants from the sample parishes in Counties Cavan and Fermanagh between 1858 and 1884. The arrival journals contain additional information about the 1,306 of these nominees who actually made the journey to Australia, and which was collected on their arrival at Sydney.<sup>22</sup> These data constitute a small proportion of the total number of deposits recorded in the remittance deposit journals, and an even smaller proportion of the 75,000 people who permanently emigrated from Cavan and Fermanagh to all destinations during the same period.<sup>23</sup> Their utility lies in the uniquely comprehensive information they provide about the emigrants, which we may use to recover the detailed social contexts for this emigration in both Ireland and Australia.

The deposit and arrival journals contain entries relating to intending and actual migrants from all parts of the British Isles, as well as Germany, during the period between 1853 and 1900. Cavan and Fermanagh were the two counties in the Ulster cluster identified by Fitzpatrick as recording relatively high Australian emigration rates, which consistently returned the highest number of remittance deposits lodged in New South Wales per 100,000 of the Irish county's population between 1851 and 1881.<sup>24</sup> Although, as Reid notes, the emigration impulse did not stop at county boundaries, the consistency of Cavan and Fermanagh's predominance suggests that they offer the best opportunity to observe the local geographies created by remittance emigration. Prior to 1884, only Tyrone (in 1862, marginally in 1865, and again in 1882) periodically exceeded Cavan's total, while Fermanagh

22. State Records Authority of New South Wales [hereafter SRNSW]: Immigration Department, Assisted Immigrants Inwards to Sydney, 4/4974, 4976, 4978–4981, 4984, 4986–4988, 4990–4991, 5000–5026, 5028; SRNSW: Immigration: Persons on Bounty Ships (Agent's Immigrant Lists), 4/4789, 4795–4798, 4808, 4812, 5031; SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–4598.

23. "Emigration from Co. Cavan during each year from 1 May 1851 to 31 March 1881", Table 38 in HMSO, *Census of Ireland, 1881, Part 1: Area, Houses and Population, also Religion and Education*, vol. 111, *Province of Ulster*, no. 3, *Cavan* (Dublin, 1882); "Emigration from Co. Fermanagh During Each Year from 1 May 1851 to 31 March 1881", Table 38 in HMSO, *Census of Ireland, 1881, part 1: Area, Houses and Population, also Religion and Education*, vol. 111, *Province of Ulster*, no.6, *Fermanagh* (Dublin, 1882).

24. For each Ulster county, the annual remittance deposits per 100,000 population were calculated for 1858–1859 using the 1851 census; for 1862–1865 using the 1861 census; for 1875–1880 using the 1871 census; and for 1882–1884 using the 1881 census. In rank order, the average of these values for each county was: Fermanagh, 83.17; Cavan, 54.01; Tyrone, 35.57; Donegal, 30.69; Armagh, 15.51; Monaghan, 12.80; Londonderry, 11.44; Antrim, 7.87; Down, 4.80. Calculated from SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–4598; "Population by Counties and Provinces, 1821–1911", Table 6 in W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish Historical Statistics: Population 1821–1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp. 5–16.

remained pre-eminent throughout.<sup>25</sup> The thirteen sample parishes within Cavan and Fermanagh were chosen on a similar principle, and represent the parishes in these counties which consistently recorded the highest nomination rates relative to their agricultural area and post-Famine population (Table 1 and Figure 1).

The New South Wales remittance system was introduced in 1848, somewhat before the analogous scheme in South Australia (introduced in 1852), and formed the basis for initially similar schemes in Victoria (also from 1852), and Queensland (from 1860).<sup>26</sup> Like the colonial government-sponsored assisted-passage schemes, it was designed to encourage emigration by people who were ineligible by reason of age or occupation for a government-paid free passage. Colonial residents deposited money locally to be paid towards the cost of the passage and outfit of friends or relatives in the British Isles. These, if they satisfied the current criteria set by the New South Wales legislature for assisted passages as to character, health, age, and gender, (and assessed by the London-based Colonial Land and Emigration Commission), would be allocated a place on one of the ships chartered by the commission.

The remittance system survived in New South Wales until March 1886, when it was discontinued, except for the wives and children of already resident men.<sup>27</sup> Like the other colonial-government assistance schemes, it was subject throughout its life to frequent amendment and periodic disruption, as a result of changing colonial government policy and occasional fiscal crisis. The longest interruption occurred between 1867 and 1873, but the scheme was also suspended for six months in 1881 (Figure 2, p. 260).<sup>28</sup>

The remittance process appears to have worked remarkably effectively for most Irish emigrants. Our sample suggests that on average, no more than nine months elapsed between the initial deposit being made in New South Wales and the emigrant(s)' final departure from a British port, usually Plymouth, but sometimes Birkenhead, Glasgow, Liverpool, or Southampton. After payment of the remittance deposit in Australia, either to the Colonial Treasury in Sydney, or to a clerk of petty sessions in the country districts, the depositor was supplied with a passage certificate. The depositors were then responsible for sending these to their nominees in

25. The range of values for each county was: Antrim, 0.40–21.01; Armagh, 1.67–56.84; Cavan, 8.50–191.89; Donegal, 5.03–89.33; Down, 0.36–12.69; Fermanagh, 9.43–214.75; Londonderry, 0.57–32.03; Monaghan, 4.86–27.68; Tyrone, 4.04–100.62; source as for note 20.

26. Robin F. Haines, "Nineteenth-Century Government-Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom to Australia: Schemes, Regulations and Arrivals, 1831–1900 and some Vital Statistics 1834–1860" (Flinders University Occasional Papers in Economic History, Adelaide, 1995), pp. 13–31.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–20.

Table 1. Sample parishes: ratio of total remittance emigration nominations 1858–1865 and 1875–1884 to parish acreage and population in 1851 and 1871

| Parish                   | Total nominations 1858–1865 | Total nominations 1875–1884 | Ratio nominations 1858–1865: agricultural acreage | Ratio nominations 1875–1884: agricultural acreage | Ratio nominations 1858–1865: census population | Ratio nominations 1875–1884: census population |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| <b>CAVAN</b>             |                             |                             |   |   |  |  |
| Baileborough             | 95                          | 87                          | 1:130   | 1:142   | 1:61   | 1:52   |
| Denn                     | 33                          | 44                          | 1:351   | 1:263   | 1:141  | 1:93   |
| Kildallan                | 29                          | 12                          | 1:413   | 1:999   | 1:111  | 1:198  |
| Killinkere               | 31                          | 40                          | 1:515   | 1:399   | 1:189  | 1:125  |
| Kinawley                 | 29                          | 40                          | 1:529   | 1:384   | 1:105  | 1:64   |
| Templeport               | 103                         | 81                          | 1:409   | 1:521   | 1:95   | 1:101  |
| Tomregan                 | 80                          | 27                          | 1:94  | 1:278   | 1:31   | 1:64   |
| <b>Cavan average</b>     | <b>20</b>                   | <b>15</b>                   | <b>1:661</b>                                      | <b>1:877</b>                                      | <b>1:241</b>                                   | <b>1:259</b>                                   |
| <b>(36 parishes)</b>     |                             |                             |   |   |  |  |
| <b>FERMANAGH</b>         |                             |                             |   |   |  |  |
| Belleek                  | 41                          | 14                          | 1:313   | 1:918   | 1:60   | 1:154  |
| Derryvullan              | 104                         | 106                         | 1:227   | 1:223   | 1:73   | 1:48   |
| Drumkeeran               | 199                         | 90                          | 1:136   | 1:302   | 1:33   | 1:56   |
| Enniskillen              | 105                         | 58                          | 1:252   | 1:456   | 1:130  | 1:196  |
| Magheracross             | 74                          | 19                          | 1:137   | 1:532   | 1:50   | 1:137  |
| Magheraculmonee          | 161                         | 142                         | 1:115   | 1:131   | 1:32   | 1:31   |
| <b>Fermanagh average</b> | <b>40</b>                   | <b>23</b>                   | <b>1:501</b>                                      | <b>1:886</b>                                      | <b>1:128</b>                                   | <b>1:181</b>                                   |
| <b>(23 parishes)</b>     |                             |                             |   |   |  |  |

Source: SRNSW Immigration Deposit Journals

the United Kingdom, in time for them to present the certificate to the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners in London within twelve months of its issue. In addition to the nominee's details (age, gender, occupation, address) and the names of any relatives already in New South Wales, the certificate also included similar details for depositors, and the name and address of a "person of note" in the United Kingdom, to whom reference might be made concerning the nominee. Duplicate records of this information were kept in Sydney in the remittance deposit journals.<sup>29</sup>

On receiving the passage certificate, the nominee was required to complete one of the commissioners' emigration remittance certificates, which confirmed the details of the people for whom a deposit had been paid. Countersigned by a surgeon or physician to certify the would-be emigrant's mental and physical health, and by a magistrate or clergyman to certify their moral character, the emigration remittance certificate was sent to the commission in London where, in the words of the 1856 regulations, it did no more than "bring the applicant's case fully before the Board".<sup>30</sup> If, finally, the application was approved at this stage, the applicant received an approval circular, which called for payment (of either 10 shillings or £1) for the bedding and mess utensils to be supplied on board ship. Only when this was paid did the applicant receive an embarkation order, naming the ship they were to join, and date and place of departure. On disembarkation in Sydney, the emigrants were subject to further official scrutiny. Crucially, for the purposes of this paper, this elicited additional information respecting their religion, literacy, and occupation, as well as the ship they travelled on, and the date and port of departure.<sup>31</sup>

The remittance application system was a complex, thoroughly bureaucratized affair. It deployed the elitist language of officialdom to describe emigrant requirements and selection criteria which themselves constantly changed in response to the evolving metropolitan-colonial discourse between London and Sydney. For intending emigrants, it represented a point of contact with a very different – and differentially empowered – cultural world and system of geographical knowledge to their own. It formed part of an externalized world of official knowledge and public representation, which was fundamental to a discourse of imperialism that both legitimized and constrained the emigrants' aspirations. Moreover, it was a system which, though subsidizing the

29. "Immigration Remittances, 18 September 1856", in "Copies or Extracts of any Despatches Relative to Emigration to the Australian Colonies", *Emigration: Correspondence Relating to Emigration to the Australian Colonies, 1857* (306), vol. 28, session 2, Irish Universities Press, *British Parliamentary Papers, Australia*, vol. 22, session 1857, pp. 553–563.

30. *Ibid.*

31. SRNSW: Immigration Department, Assisted Immigrants Inwards to Sydney, 4/4974, 4976, 4978–4981, 4984, 4986–4988, 4990–4991, 5000–5026, 5028; SRNSW: Immigration: Persons on Bounty Ships (Agent's Immigrant Lists), 4/4789, 4795–4798, 4808, 4812, 5031.

emigrants' achievement of their goals, nevertheless still imposed a significant financial burden upon them.

### MIGRANT "QUALITY"

Common sense suggests that by offering both the opportunity to emigrate, but strictly enforcing the choice of those permitted to go, all assisted schemes maximized the likelihood that applicants would represent themselves as favourably as possible to the Emigration Commissioners. The issue is relevant because of the continuing debate over the "quality" of assisted Irish emigrants, but it is difficult to determine whether intending emigrants habitually under-represented their occupational status or age in order to improve their eligibility. Contemporary opinion in Australia certainly alleged that this was so.<sup>32</sup>

Under the remittance regulations, the preference shown for different occupations in fact diminished over time. Initially, between 1848 and 1852, a standard age-related scale was imposed, whereby everyone in an eligible occupation aged under thirty paid £8, while all others paid £10. This attracted few applicants, and in January 1852 the regulations were revised to give greater preference to agricultural and pastoral labourers. If aged between fourteen and forty, these paid £4, half the fare paid by a "mechanic" of any age. After further revision in 1854, the occupational criteria were relaxed, and all wage-earners aged under forty paid £4, regardless of occupation.<sup>33</sup> Further adjustment in 1856 merely reinforced the now-primary emphasis on age, rather than occupation. "Mechanics of every description, and all other persons of the working classes, and (if married) their wives and families, and male and female domestic servants" were now eligible, but still paid the same fiercely ascending sliding scale: £2 for children below twelve years; £4 for persons between twelve and forty; £8 if between forty and fifty; and £12 for anyone over fifty.<sup>34</sup>

The remittance regulations thus discriminated much more severely on the basis of age, and for far longer, than they did in terms of occupation. If significant occupational under-representation did take place under the remittance regulations, it was most likely to have occurred prior to the early 1850s. From 1854, there was much more to be gained by attempting to under-represent the age of a teenage child, or an adult in early middle age. It is intriguing to note that the male occupational returns in the sample remain dominated by agricultural labourers (90 per cent), the *sine que non* for support, but only prior to 1854. This suggests that here we may have a genuine match between the life experience and skills of these sons of south-

32. McDonald and Richards, "Great Emigration", pp. 340–341.

33. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, Appendix 4, pp. 272–281.

34. "Immigration Remittances", pp. 556–557.

west Ulster's closely tenanted agricultural landscapes, and the demands of a labour-hungry colonial economy. By 1858, there was no advantage for male emigrants in under-representing their occupational status. By contrast, 89 per cent of females in the sample claimed to be domestic servants, an occupational class specifically included in the 1856 revision. Quite what these occupational claims might have meant in individual cases is uncertain. Historians have long recognised the slippery and ambiguous nature of occupational labels, which might mask complex patterns of wealth formation and social mobility.<sup>35</sup> As Fitzpatrick notes, both of the categories mentioned here might cloak highly complex familial and economic relationships, involving diverse experience of outside paid employment, and very different levels of individual skill.<sup>36</sup>

The data on religious denomination preserved in the arrivals journals allows us to ascertain whether the remittance scheme mobilized separate patterns of response within the major denominational communities. Arguably, these data may be construed to have been among the most reliable of all, at least as far as discriminating between Roman Catholics and Protestants at the point of disembarkation was concerned.<sup>37</sup> Despite occasional clerical worries concerning the irreligious habits of some of their flock, the frequent references in shipboard diaries to the sectarian construction of religious observance en route to Australia, and the equally numerous personal affirmations of faith, suggest that, on arrival at least, the major denominational division between Catholic and Protestant Irish emigrant identities remained intact.<sup>38</sup> It seems reasonable to conclude that the emigrants' affirmation of denominational identity on arrival in Sydney accurately reflected the sectarian construction of the Irish emigration stream at its point of departure.

The information on literacy poses different questions. Haines argues

35. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, pp. 48–60.

36. D. Fitzpatrick, "Emigration, 1801–1870", in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland* 5, pp. 575–577; Eric Richards, "Migrations to Colonial Australia: Paradigms and Disjunctions", in Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History, History*, pp. 151–176.

37. There is some evidence from the arrival journals to suggest that in a minority of cases, stated Protestant denominational allegiances were unstable. For example, several migrants identified as "Church of England" on arrival, went on to be active in Wesleyan chapels, suggesting either clerical ineptitude in Sydney or post-arrival conversion. For example the Chittick family, who arrived on the *Samuel Plimsol* in 1880 from the parish of Drumkeeran, Fermanagh, were all recorded as being members of the Church of England; SRNSW 4/4805, 4/5016, 4/4592 p. 48. At least three sons were later active members of the Wesleyan circuits in and around Kiama; J.H. Chittick and B. Chittick, *Chittick Family History 1880–1980*, (Jamberoo, 1980), pp. 22, 34, 59.

38. See, for example, the diary entries of Dr Goold, first Catholic Bishop of Melbourne. These acknowledge the varied levels of attendance at mass, and widespread problems such as drunkenness among his flock; State Library of Victoria, MSS8890, MSB 11, Bishop Goold's diaries: entries for 23 May, 18 November 1853; 22 April, 8 May, 18–23 September, 6 October 1860; 28 March 1861; 22 March 1862. See also D. Charlwood, *The Long Farewell* (Warrandyte, 2000), *passim*.

that as “affection” replaced “selection” as the main driver of assisted emigration to Australia from the late 1850s onwards, i.e. as nomination in its various forms came to predominate, so the colonial governments’ earlier emphasis on scrupulously monitored standards of reading and writing declined. She suggests that this may have been reflected by the increasing numbers of young single adult Irish males making their appearance from the late 1850s onwards. Nevertheless, it is clear from Haines’s own figures that the level of functional literacy among assisted migrants from all parts of the United Kingdom was high in the late 1850s, and that the Irish rate was not significantly lower than that among emigrants from England or Scotland. If we accept the ability to read rather than write as the best measure of functional literacy among the working classes, then by this measure, literacy may have been running at around 79 to 80 per cent among United Kingdom-assisted emigrants, although admittedly with predictable occupational and gender differentials. The comparable figure for Irish emigrants was only marginally lower, at between 70 to 76 per cent.<sup>39</sup>

At face value, therefore, the Irish assisted emigrants appear to have been a surprisingly literate group, providing ample testimony to the success of the national-school system, introduced in the 1830s.<sup>40</sup> But there are other issues. Did the ability to sign an emigration form really indicate functional literacy of any meaningful sort? And how realistic was the colonial governments’ assumption that would-be emigrants completed their own applications? The existence, prior to 1865, of referees such as the Revd Charles Stack, Church of Ireland minister at Lack, Co. Fermanagh, who acted for over 130 nominees, including some from beyond his parish, raises the possibility that the popularity of such men may have been due in part to their willingness to provide material help with the application process. Intriguingly, such serial referees are less evident when the remittance system resumed in the late 1870s, which would be consonant with the idea of progressive improvement in rural literacy in Ireland during the nineteenth century.<sup>41</sup>

The deposit journals allow us to identify Stack and his fellow referees in some detail, and recover the local patronal networks utilized by emigrants in their response to the bureaucratic demands of the remittance system. The information provided by the deposit journals on the depositors and the nominees’ relatives already in New South Wales, informs our interpretation of these local geographies of emigrant departure with some understanding of the familial networks which may have encouraged them in the first place. Examples of these sponsorship networks are discussed

39. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, pp. 68–76.

40. D.H. Akenson, “Pre-University Education, 1782–1870”, in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland* 5, pp. 523–537.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 536.

below, and it is worth noting that the sample data provide ample evidence of the existence of the sort of chain migration which has been held to characterize Irish emigration practice.<sup>42</sup> Just over one-third (662) of the intending emigrants cited a close relative as already resident in New South Wales, the vast majority of whom also acted as their sponsors.<sup>43</sup>

Various sources of information sustained these chains, including the “emigrant letter”. Few letters have been identified for our sample, with the notable exception of the Fife correspondence published by Fitzpatrick, and the contemporary but less extensive Elliott letters concerning a disputed family inheritance in Ireland.<sup>44</sup> There were other important sources of information besides letters. Shipping agents, acting either on behalf of individual ship owners, the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission, or the colonial governments themselves, remained in Ulster, as elsewhere, the visible local advocates of the benefits of emigration.<sup>45</sup> In 1866, for example, the *Belfast and Provincial Directory* listed twenty-two emigration agents, located predominantly in Belfast and Londonderry, but also in Antrim, Ballymena, Ballymoney, Dungannon, Magherafelt, Moneymore, and Portadown. Included among them was D’Arcy Sinnamon, of Portadown, who advertised his services as “Government Agent for Queensland and New Zealand Emigration”, as well as for the Black Ball, White Star, Cunard, National, Anchor, and Black Star Lines to Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, and America.<sup>46</sup>

The activities of men like Sinnamon were supplemented by the publication of numerous Australian emigrant guides – frequently commercial in purpose but sometimes philanthropic and sponsored by charitable or religious organizations – as well as by recruitment tours conducted by independent and government-appointed speakers.<sup>47</sup> The effect of these could be prodigious. In 1848, the Revd J.D. Lang, Scots Presbyterian zealot and indefatigable promoter of Australia’s colonial interests, toured Ulster promoting his latest Australian colonization

42. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, pp. 70, 97; D. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration 1801–1921: Studies in Irish Economic and Social History 1* (Dundalk, 1984), p. 21; D. Hoerder, “Segmented Macro-Systems and Networking Individuals: The Balancing Functions of Migration Processes”, in Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History, History*, pp. 73–78; Richards, “Migrations to Colonial Australia”, pp. 172–173; S.A. Wegge, “Chain Migration and Information Networks: Evidence from Nineteenth-Century Hesse-Cassel”, *Journal of Economic History*, 58 (1998), pp. 957–986.

43. SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–459.

44. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, pp. 412–463. Elliott correspondence between Ann and John James Elliott, Broughton Village, and James Elliott, Cork, between 1876–1878. The original Elliott letters remain in the family of James Elliott in Belfast. Transcripts are in the Kiama Family History Centre, Kiama.

45. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, p. 272.

46. *Belfast and Provincial Directory* (Belfast, 1866), p. 38.

47. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, pp. 166–195.

scheme among local Protestants. Writing from Moneymore, County Londonderry, a local correspondent, J. Barnett, described the reaction in the neighbourhood to Lang's emigration tracts:

I mentioned to several friends here that I had had an interview with you and had been induced by your representation of the advantages and prospects of Port Philip to think seriously of going out there with my family and that it would be of the utmost importance if a large number of decent Protestant families could be got to emigrate in a body and sit down together as a colony. I distributed your tracts as widely as their number would permit and the result is that a considerable interest has been awakened and a goodly number set upon the "qui vie". In answer to questions put to me by various persons from day to day I can only say "Dr Lang will be here shortly and will tell you all about it". Reserve your enquiries for him. It does occur to me that not a few families from this locality would be cordially inclined to leave for Australia at once if they could only get their property disposed of [...].<sup>48</sup>

Two weeks later, Lang's continuing absence lent a tone of urgency to Barnett's correspondence:

I wish you to know that the interest in the Port Philip colony is increasing every day in this district [...] a large body of the very flower of the country are almost ready to start. That friend who occupies a public position in Moneymore and is a most intelligent clever pious man, is being applied to by individuals from day to day for information about the colony, and says that all that is wanted is that you should come and address them and a goodly number of the most eligible emigrants will be immediately forthcoming. I beseech you "come over and help us".<sup>49</sup>

It is doubtful whether all the "goodly number" finally left for Australia, and there is evidence that, elsewhere too, Lang's organizational ability as a sponsor of emigration sometimes failed to match his rhetoric.<sup>50</sup> Yet it is clear that the sort of enthusiasm he engendered on this occasion was real enough. Nationally, emigration to Australia might remain a minority preoccupation, but locally, it could temporarily assume much greater significance. What pattern did remittance emigration take in those parts of Cavan and Fermanagh where it was most pronounced?

48. J. Barrett to John Dunmore Lang, 12 December 1848, National Library of Australia, MSS 3267: J.D. Lang Papers, series 1, box 4, folder J.D. Lang Correspondence 1813–1848, Convicts and Emigrants.

49. J. Barrett to John Dunmore Lang, 28 December 1848 *ibid.*

50. Andrew Pringle, Kilmore, to John Dunmore Lang, Sydney, 11 July 1850, National Library of Australia, MSS 3267: J.D. Lang Papers, series 1, box 1, folder Letters 1850–52, MS 158/195; G. Roward to J.D. Lang, Sydney, 10 February 1851, *ibid.*, MS158/205; John Tweedale, Geelong, to J.D. Lang, Sydney, n.d. but c.1850, *ibid.*, box 4, folder J.D. Lang Correspondence Immigration and Convicts 1850–69.

## SECULAR TRENDS AND LOCAL GEOGRAPHIES

Figure 1 identifies the thirteen civil parishes in Cavan and Fermanagh which recorded the highest incidence of remittance nomination relative to the size of their population and agricultural resource base. Three separate clusters emerge. In north-west Fermanagh, to the north of lower Lough Erne, Belleek, Derryvullan, Drumkeeran, and Magheraculmoney were at the core of a group of particularly nomination-prone parishes, extending across the glacial lowlands of the lower Lough Erne basin from Belleek in the west, to Brougher mountain on the Tyrone border in the east. To the south of lower Lough Erne, a second cluster consisting of Templeport, Kinawley, Tomregan, and Kildallan were located on the margins of the upper carboniferous limestone plateau around Cuilcagh, Ben Brack, and Slieve Rushen mountains. Finally, to the east, in north-east Cavan, a smaller cluster of nomination-prone parishes (Bailieborough, Killinkere, and Denn) existed in the lowland drumlin country between Bailieborough and Druminspick.<sup>51</sup>

Topographical descriptions of these and other parishes in Cavan and Fermanagh, written slightly earlier in the nineteenth century, provide one clue as to why the interest in remittance emigration may have been relatively pronounced in these localities. All are described in the 1830s in terms that emphasize either the relatively great extent of their poor soils, mountainous terrain, heath, and bog land, or else the fact that within them the limits to agricultural production had already been reached.

Thus in north-west Fermanagh, much of Drumkeeran was affected by “the opposing barriers of climate and poorness of soil”, while barely one-quarter of Enniskillen parish was described as “good”. The rest was either “inferior, bad, or [...] mountainous”. Magheracross included large tracts of “desolate and unattractive” land in the north-east of the parish, which was “almost one continuous plain of heath with here and there a desolate hovel [...] on the edge of a small patch of half cultivated land from which its inmates are enabled, with great labour, to raise a scanty supply of bad potatoes”. In Derryvullan, where much of the land was good, every part of the parish was cultivated, and emigration was “very prevalent, especially among the poor”.<sup>52</sup> To the south of lower Lough Erne, Templeport, Tomregan, and Kinawley are described respectively as “mountainous, wild and to a great extent waste”, “waste [...] or second rate in quality”, and “prevailingly mountainous, moorish, and repulsively bleak”.

More generally, the same topographers described this area as “barbarous [with] appalling conditions [...] where scarcely a crop is attempted, except

51. J.B. Whittoe, *Geology and Scenery in Ireland* (London, 1978), pp. 83–88.

52. A. Day and P. McWilliams (eds), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, vol. 4: Parishes of Co. Fermanagh 1, 1834–5, Enniskillen and Upper Lough Erne* (Belfast, 1990), pp. 41–86; *idem*, *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland, vol. 14: Parishes of Co. Fermanagh 2 1834–5, Lower Lough Erne* (Belfast, 1992), pp. 31–46, 62–69, 91–102.

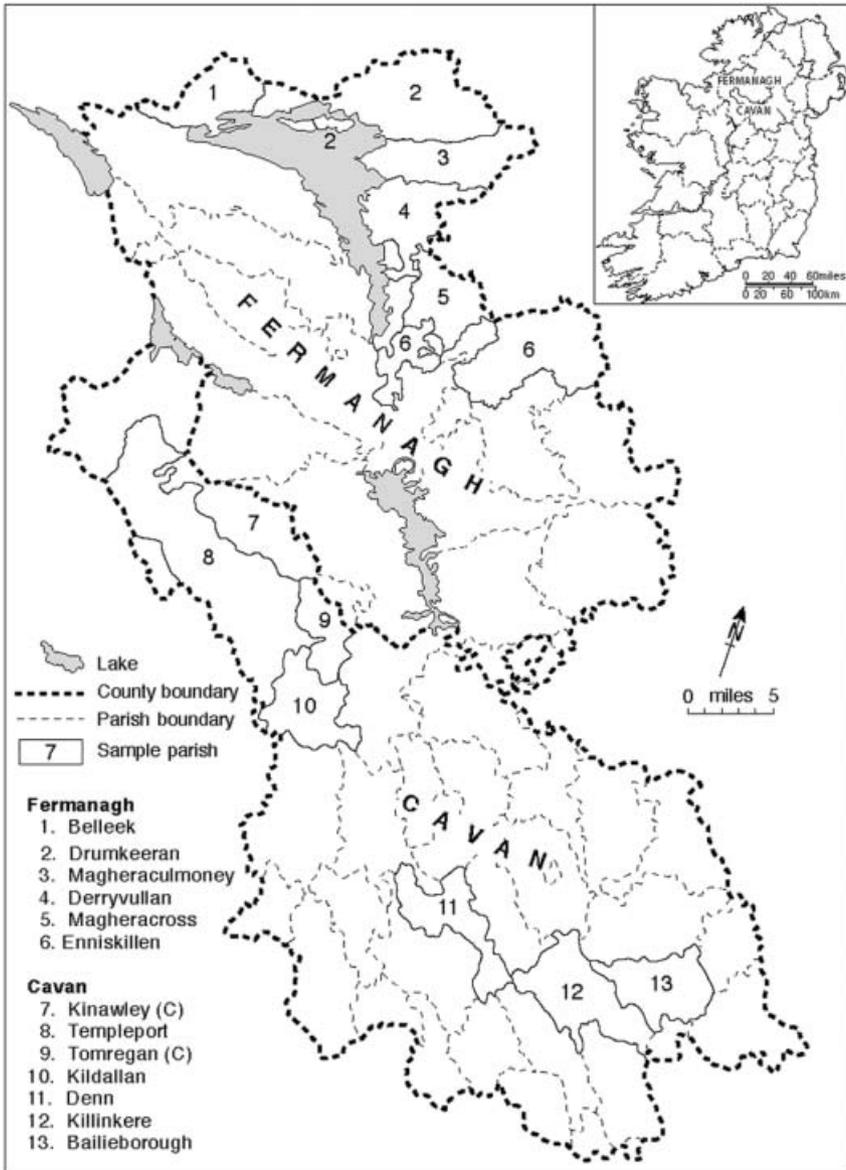


Figure 1. Location map showing the sample parishes in Counties Cavan and Fermanagh, Ireland. Cartographer: M.E. Pringle, School of Geography, Queen’s University, Belfast

potatoes and a kind of black oats [...] and where the miserable tenantry exist in penury, degradation, abasement and ignorance”.<sup>53</sup> North-eastern

53. A. Fullarton, *Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland* (London [etc.], 1844–1846), part 6, p. 551; *ibid.*, part 9, p. 376.

Cavan, where the third group of parishes is located, was “a prevailing expanse of cold champagne country, often bleak in aspect, freely interspersed with bog and naked waste of pasture [...]. Agriculture is in the most degraded state imaginable [...] nowhere in the world could it be worse”. Among this cluster, Denn was described as consisting of land “of so second-rate quality as to average only 23 shillings per Irish acre in rental”.<sup>54</sup>

Care is required in assessing these descriptions as a commentary on the conditions which might have promoted the impulse to emigrate. The topography and agricultural conditions were not uniformly bad even in the most “sable-coloured” parish, and in a few cases were no worse than in other parishes with lower nomination rates. Moreover, all three topographical accounts, the *Ordnance Survey Memoirs*, Lewis’s *Topographical Dictionary*, and the *Parliamentary Gazetteer*, were written in the immediate run-up to the Potato Famine of 1845–1849. They record the widespread evidence of the growing imbalance between population density and agricultural resources from an external, morally charged metropolitan perspective which equated cleanliness and domestic order with civic virtue. Finding neither, these accounts may have overemphasized the apparent evidence for the “degradation” of the peasantry, failing to recognize the kinship and other networks which supported local social and economic relationships.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, the consistency of these accounts of environmental hardship suggests that the sample parishes contained localities where the balance between population growth and resources came under particular strain in the pre-Famine period. Although the post-Famine decline in population would have released some of this pressure, the earlier conditions may have already helped initiate the migration chains which were in place in these parishes by 1858, and which continued to characterize their subsequent high rates of remittance nomination. While not conceiving the remittance emigrants from these places to have been the “shovelled-out paupers” of earlier emigration historiography, it is entirely likely that their emigration practices were given added impetus by precisely the sort of conditions of local overpopulation this conventional stereotype implies.

The temporal pattern in the sample remittance nomination was characterized by extreme annual variation, which was in part congruent with the two major post-Famine agrarian crises of 1860–1864 and 1877–1880.<sup>56</sup> Pronounced peaks occurred at both these periods in the total

54. *Ibid.*, part 4, p. 9.

55. For insights into the modern survival of such social networks in Fermanagh, see Henry Glassie, *Passing the Time in Ballymenone* (Bloomington, IN, 1995).

56. J.S. Donnelly, Jr, “The Irish Agricultural Depression of 1859–1864”, *Irish Economic and Social History Review*, 3 (1976), pp. 33–54; W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and Tenants in Mid-*

number of deposits and in the number of nominees who ultimately travelled. Following the scheme's temporary cessation in 1881, nominations recovered, but only to a lower level (Figure 2, overleaf). This congruity reinforces the impression already given by the circumstantial topographical evidence. Whatever the human capital represented by the emigrants, and however enterprising the individual emigration decision, the overall rhythm of nomination from these parishes remained highly sensitive to the vagaries of the local agrarian economy.

Other aspects of the overall nomination sample were more closely consonant with current understandings of assisted emigration in general. The gender breakdown among the deposit nominees suggests the existence of the sort of feminization process which is now held to have been a unique feature of Irish emigration.<sup>57</sup> Prior to 1863, the annual total of male applicants exceeded females by a sometimes substantial margin. In 1860, for example, the number of male applicants was double the female total, while in the late 1850s the male surplus was between one-third to one-half. From 1864 onwards, females outnumbered males, albeit marginally, in all years save 1879 (Figure 3, p. 261). There appears, therefore, to have been a slight but sustained shift in the pattern of gender application among the sample in favour of women when the remittance system resumed in the mid 1870s.

Why this sort of shift occurred is unclear. Conventional explanations have seen it as a consequence of technological advances in post-Famine agriculture in Ireland which led to the disentanglement and relative impoverishment of women within the agrarian sector.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, Ó Gráda points to the relative differential between female wage rates at home and abroad, and argues that women had more to gain from emigration than men – income, status, and enhanced marriage prospects.<sup>59</sup>

In other respects, too, the nomination sample accords with the broader demographic characteristics identified among assisted Irish emigrants by Fitzpatrick, Richards, and others.<sup>60</sup> Figure 4 (p. 262) depicts the combined age profile of the nomination sample, together with their gender breakdown. Three points are worth noting. First, the overall figures are overwhelmingly dominated by young adults (fifteen to twenty-eight years); second, depositors tended to send remittances for younger females

*Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), *passim*.

57. Ó Gráda, *New Economic History*, pp. 225–228.

58. J. Bourke, “Women and Poultry in Ireland, 1891–1914”, *Irish Historical Studies*, 25 (1987), p. 310; J. Lee, “Women and the Church since the Famine”, in M. McCurtain and D. Ó Corráin (eds), *Women in Irish History: The Historical Dimension* (Cork, 1979), pp. 37–45.

59. Ó Gráda, *New Economic History*, pp. 225–226.

60. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration*, *passim*; *idem*, *Oceans of Consolation*, pp. 6–19; McDonald and Richards, “Great Emigration”, pp. 337–355; P. O’Farrell, *The Irish in Australia* (Kensington, 1993), pp. 54–114; Richards, “Migrations to Colonial Australia”, pp. 163–164.

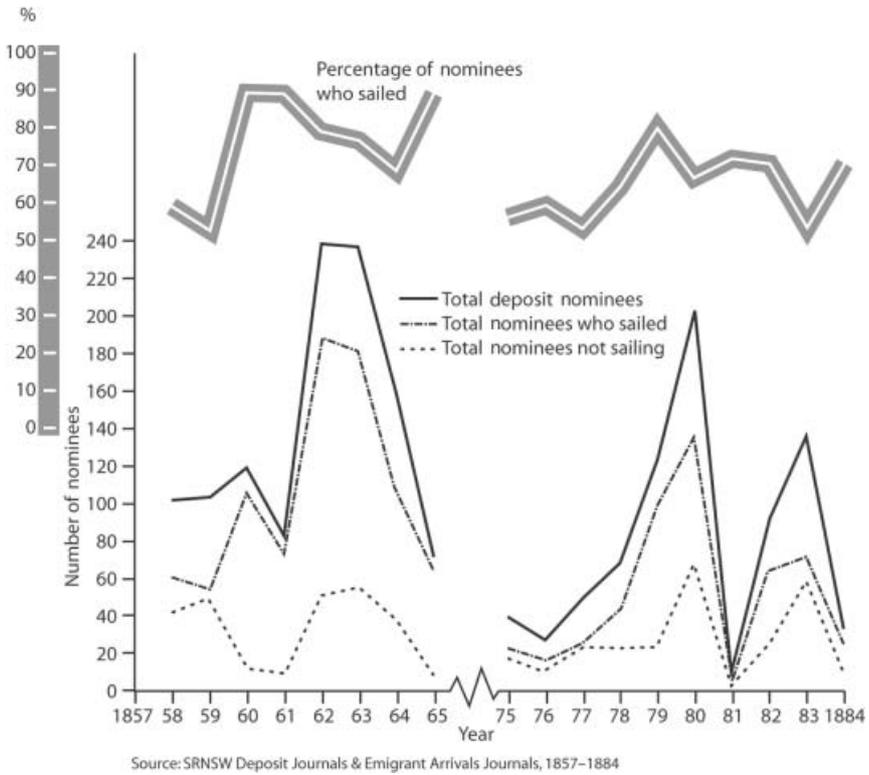


Figure 2. Percentage of nominees who sailed.

than males; and third, noticeable age-heaping occurred among nominees in their late thirties and late forties. The first two characteristics have been attested elsewhere. Fitzpatrick represents them as “an impressive concentration in the narrow age-band of those who had just entered the employment market and were about to enter the marriage market”, and as evidence of the “integration” of emigration within the rural Irish life cycle of both sexes.<sup>61</sup>

Of course, it is also worth noting that among remittance applicants, these age groups constituted the major beneficiaries of the differential emigration costs alluded to above, and this presumably encouraged their depositors’ applications. But what is also intriguing is that after 1852, people in their thirties also paid the same relatively low rate, yet relatively few among this decennial group were deposited for. If, in Fitzpatrick’s phrase, “emigration was a young person’s game”, this seems also to have been how it was viewed in Sydney.<sup>62</sup> There were exceptions, however. The

61. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration*, pp. 7–8.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

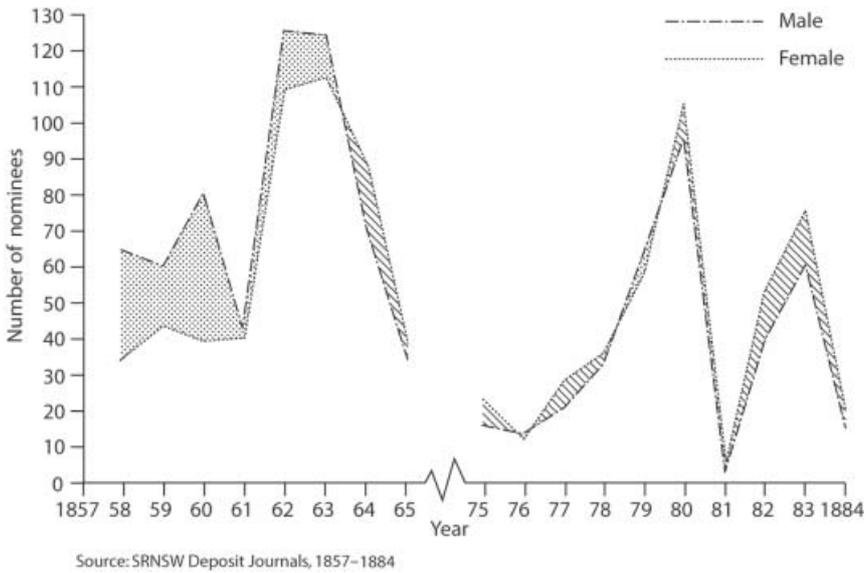


Figure 3. Gender breakdown among the deposit nominees.

slight but noticeable age heaping at ages thirty-eight, forty, and forty-eight suggests that some depositors and nominees were aware of the financial penalties which were incurred after 1856 by applicants in their forties and fifties. Either these minor peaks represented attempts to bring out relatively elderly relatives before they incurred the additional costs imposed by the next age category in the remittance regulations, or else they reflect deliberate age under-representation to achieve the same end.

But not all of these remittance nominees actually travelled to New South Wales. Overall, just over 70 per cent of deposits resulted in the nominee finally making the trip. If, as suggested here, locally difficult social or economic conditions helped prompt the initial decision to emigrate, or created the circumstances in which such decisions were widely taken and understood, final departure for the colony was governed by personal circumstances, the applicants' acceptability within the nomination system, their ability to fund any ancillary costs, and their awareness of alternative destinations. These factors were in part external to the immediate locality. There were also other reasons for the number of non-departures: personal or family illness, pregnancy, or death.<sup>63</sup>

Emigrants had to find, over and above their fare, the cost of an extensive

63. Haines, Kleinig, Oxley, and Richards, "Migration and Opportunity", pp. 235-263; R. Shlomowitz, "Coerced and Free Migration from the United Kingdom to Australia, and Indentured Labour Migration from India and the Pacific Islands to Various Destinations: Issues, Debates, and New Evidence", in Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History, History*, pp. 140-144.

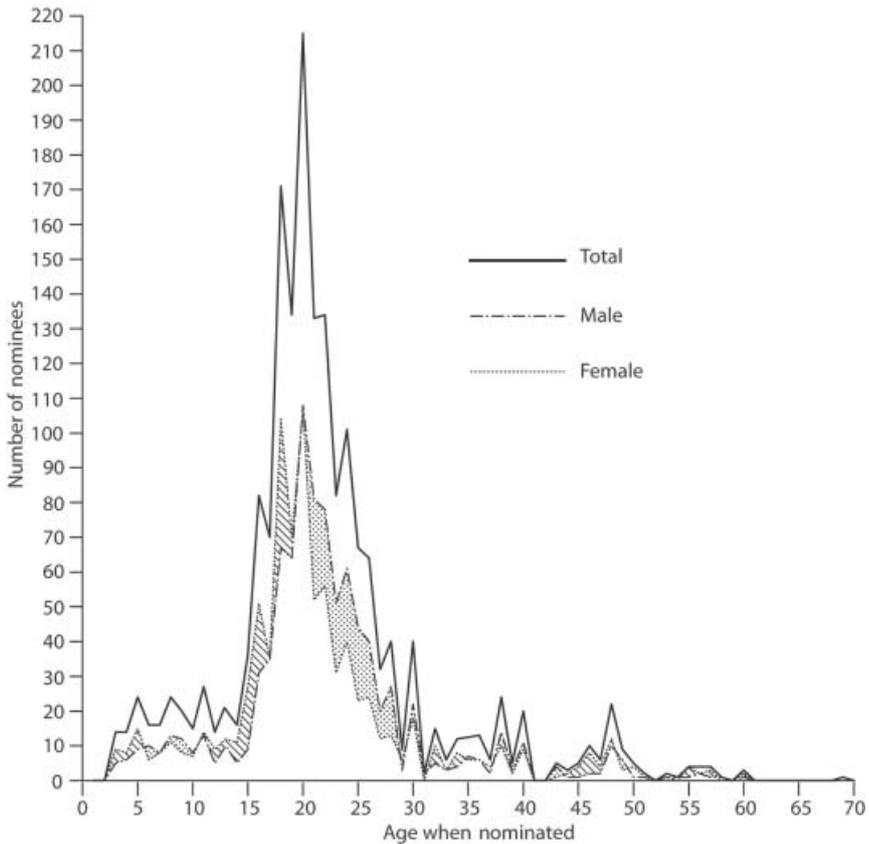


Figure 4. Combined age profile of the nomination sample, with gender breakdown.

and closely specified passage outfit, without which they would be refused permission to board ship.<sup>64</sup> In addition, they were also responsible for the cost of their journey from Ireland to the English or Scottish port of embarkation. Haines notes that by the 1850s these additional costs meant that the total cost which government-assisted migrants to Australia had to find was more or less equal to the unassisted fare across the Atlantic.<sup>65</sup> In these circumstances, it is easy to conceive how the choice of New South Wales might be vulnerable, from the emigrant's point of view, to very small shifts in the perceived marginal social cost of emigration to different destinations. These reasons help explain why no obvious spatial pattern is recognizable among the parish sample in the proportion of nominees who

64. "Immigration Remittances, 18 September 1856, IUP", *BPP, Australia*, vol. 22, session 1857, pp. 553–563.

65. Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, pp. 24–26.

finally travelled: all three parish clusters contain parishes with above and below average rates of travel (Table 2, overleaf).

#### SECTARIAN EMIGRATION?

The question remains of whether these overall patterns and trends were constructed in a specifically sectarian way, and if so, what this implies about the ways in which Ulster's ethnically and culturally divided communities responded to the opportunity to emigrate. Two conclusions suggest themselves. First, that the remittance scheme's requirement that each nominee supply a character reference appears to have activated patronal networks in Cavan and Fermanagh that mirrored existing local sectarian divisions. Second, that in over three-quarters of the sample parishes, Protestants were over-represented and Roman Catholics under-represented among the migrants.

Analysis of the names and occupations of the "persons of note" cited as referees by the 1844 intending emigrants in the sample indicates both the overwhelming localism and predominantly denominational character of their patronal networks in Ireland (Table 3, overleaf). The vast majority of nominees cited referees who lived in the same parish as themselves. In all but three of the parishes (Drumkeeran, Enniskillen, and Magheracross), these accounted for between 71 and 99 per cent of those named. Where extra-parochial referees were cited, they were generally either local aristocracy, such as the Earl of Belmore or the Earl of Erne; justices of the peace resident in a nearby town; or clergy with whom the nominee had presumably previously had dealings. Clergy constituted the single largest category: over half the nominated emigrants (54 per cent) cited priests or ministers as their main referee. In comparison, indisputably aristocratic or gentry referees were cited by barely 13 per cent of the nominees, although, given the ambiguous nature of some of these entries, this figure is likely to be an underestimate. The remaining referees are (to modern eyes) anonymous figures, whose local status can only occasionally be deduced from additional descriptions such as "merchant", "shopkeeper", or "farmer". When these figures are adjusted for the successful nominees' religious denomination, the proportion of clerical referees remains the same for Church of Ireland emigrants, but rises to 64 per cent for Catholics. By contrast, the proportion of successful Catholic emigrants citing gentry referees falls to under 10 per cent, but rises among their Church of Ireland neighbours to nearly 19 per cent (Table 3).

These comparisons provide a very crude measure of the local social relations which constrained and directed the emigrants' attempts to meet the bureaucratic stipulations of the nominated emigration scheme. But it seems clear that for nominees of all denominations, but particularly

Table 2. *Sample parishes: proportion of remittance nominees who emigrated, 1858–1865 and 1875–1884*

| Parish          | Total remittance nominees | Total remittance emigrants | Remittance emigrants as a % of remittance nominees |
|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| CAVAN           |                           |                            |  |
| Bailieborough   | 182                       | 140                        | 76.9   |
| Denn            | 77                        | 57                         | 74.0   |
| Kildallan       | 41                        | 30                         | 73.1   |
| Killinkere      | 71                        | 38                         | 53.5   |
| Kinawley        | 69                        | 44                         | 63.8   |
| Templeport      | 184                       | 144                        | 78.3   |
| Tomregan        | 107                       | 86                         | 80.4   |
| FERMANAGH       |                           |                            |  |
| Belleek         | 55                        | 39                         | 70.9   |
| Derryvullan     | 210                       | 151                        | 71.9   |
| Drumkeeran      | 289                       | 199                        | 68.8   |
| Enniskillen     | 163                       | 93                         | 57.0   |
| Magheracross    | 93                        | 78                         | 83.4   |
| Magheraculmoney | 303                       | 208                        | 68.6   |

Source: SRNSW Deposit Journals and Emigrant Arrivals Journals

Table 3. *Remittance nominees' referees: proportion of clergymen and proportion resident in the nominee's own parish*

| Parish          | % Clergy | % Resident in same parish |
|-----------------|----------|---------------------------|
| CAVAN           |          |                           |
| Bailieborough   | 62.0     | 93.0                      |
| Denn            | 55.0     | 86.0                      |
| Kildallan       | 41.0     | 77.0                      |
| Killinkere      | 60.0     | 86.0                      |
| Kinawley        | 62.0     | 97.0                      |
| Templeport      | 77.0     | 99.0                      |
| Tomregan        | 59.0     | 89.0                      |
| FERMANAGH       |          |                           |
| Belleek         | 51.0     | 72.0                      |
| Derryvullan     | 62.0     | 94.0                      |
| Drumkeeran      | 38.0     | 52.0                      |
| Enniskillen     | 41.0     | 60.0                      |
| Magheracross    | 60.0     | 67.0                      |
| Magheraculmoney | 61.0     | 91.0                      |

Source: SRNSW Remittance Deposit Journals

Catholics, the local clergy constituted the most obvious and immediate source of authority to whom they could turn. Moreover, these allegiances were structured along strictly sectarian lines: barely a dozen emigrants among the arrivals sample strayed beyond the confines of their own

denomination in their search for a clerical referee.<sup>66</sup> By contrast, figures of local secular authority, such as landlords, appealed to only a minority in both communities, but were still more than twice as likely to be used by Church of Ireland parishioners as Catholics.

These patterns are suggestive, but ambiguous. Were clergymen simply thought to be more approachable than a landlord or a justice of the peace? Or were there deeper motivations at work, particularly among the Catholic community, perhaps deriving from some atavistic sense of the greater moral legitimacy of their Church's authority, compared to that of the increasingly beleaguered landlord class? At the very least, the frequency with which emigrants of all denominations sought the support of the local clerical arbiters of their moral and spiritual world, suggests that they also acknowledged the legitimacy of the sectarian divisions this implied.

The point is of some interest given the evidence that, in the earlier nineteenth century at least, denominational attachments among some migrants in Australia were decidedly loose and ambiguous, and certainly more so than the persistence of denominational identities on board the emigration ships would lead us to expect. As already noted, clerical letters and diaries sometimes lament the irreligious habits of many migrants, particularly those living in sparsely or newly settled districts, or later, in the 1850s, on the goldfields.<sup>67</sup> Others, such as that written in the 1840s by the Revd William Hamilton, Presbyterian minister at Goulburn, New South Wales, record the willingness of "Romanists and Episcopalians" to attend Presbyterian churches – and vice versa.<sup>68</sup> All of which seems to indicate a considerable change in *mentalité* on the part of some migrants at least, when compared with the high level of denominational adherence implied by the patterns of local patronage embedded in the sample emigration returns.

The evidence for the over-representation of Protestants among the remittance emigration sample is compelling. Table 4 compares the average percentage denominational breakdown of the population in the sample parishes between 1861 and 1881 with the denominational breakdown of the nominated emigrants who arrived in Australia from these parishes between 1858 and 1884. It demonstrates that in ten of the thirteen parishes

66. SRNSW: Immigration Department, Assisted Immigrants Inwards to Sydney, 4/4974, 4976, 4978–4981, 4984, 4986–4988, 4990–4991, 5000–5026, 5028; SRNSW: Immigration: Persons on Bounty Ships (Agent's Immigrant Lists), 4/4789, 4795–4798, 4808, 4812, 5031; SRNSW: Immigration Department, immigration deposits journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–459.

67. Usefully summarized for Protestant denominations in G.M. Griffin, *They Came to Care: Pastoral Ministry in Colonial Australia* (Melbourne, 1993).

68. Quoted in Lindsay Proudfoot, "Place and Presbyterian Discourse in Colonial Australia", in Lindsay Proudfoot and Michael Roche (eds), *Displacing Empire: Renegotiating British Colonial Geographies* (London, 2005), pp. 61–79.

Table 4. *Sample parishes: religious composition of total population and of remittance emigrants who left for New South Wales, 1858–1884*

| Parish          | Catholic<br>% of parish<br>population | Catholic<br>% of parish<br>emigrants | Church of Ireland<br>% of parish<br>population | Church of Ireland<br>% of parish<br>emigrants | Presbyterian<br>% of parish<br>population | Presbyterian<br>% of parish<br>emigrants |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| CAVAN           |                                       |                                      |  |   |   |  |
| Bailieborough   | 57.5                                  | 45.7                                 | 17.1   | 37.7  | 23.8                                      | 16.6                                     |
| Denn            | 91.5                                  | 89.5                                 | 6.7  | 7.0   | 1.7                                       | 3.5                                      |
| Kildallan       | 61.2                                  | 70.0                                 | 34.4   | 30.0  | 3.1                                       | 0  |
| Killinkere      | 72.8                                  | 26.3                                 | 18.2   | 42.1  | 8.5                                       | 31.6                                     |
| Kinawley        | 74.2                                  | 100.0                                | 21.6   | 0   | 1.0                                       | 0  |
| Templeport      | 90.9                                  | 95.8                                 | 8.7  | 4.2   | 0.1                                       | 0  |
| Tomregan        | 73.5                                  | 66.3                                 | 24.4   | 33.7  | 0.7                                       | 0  |
| FERMANAGH       |                                       |                                      |  |   |   |  |
| Belleek         | 82.8                                  | 73.7                                 | 14.1   | 26.3  | 1.9                                       | 0  |
| Derryvullan     | 44.6                                  | 25.5                                 | 49.4   | 73.8  | 1.1                                       | 0.7                                      |
| Drumkeeran      | 50.2                                  | 33.9                                 | 43.2   | 66.1  | 1.6                                       | 0  |
| Enniskillen     | 51.2                                  | 41.8                                 | 38.7   | 51.6  | 3.6                                       | 6.6                                      |
| Magheracross    | 36.3                                  | 11.7                                 | 49.4   | 88.3  | 1.3                                       | 0  |
| Magheraculmonee | 46.1                                  | 19.1                                 | 48.8   | 79.4  | 1.2                                       | 1.5                                      |

Source: Census of Ireland, 1861–1881; SRNSW, Emigrant Arrivals Journals, 1858–1884

in the sample, Church of Ireland members were over-represented among the successfully nominated emigrants, by a sometimes large margin, when compared to their proportion among the total parish population, whereas Catholics were similarly under-represented, albeit generally by a smaller margin.

In the adjacent parishes of Bailieborough and Killinkere (in south-east Cavan), the situation was made more complex by the only significant Presbyterian presence in both the parishes and emigration stream alike. In Killinkere, Presbyterians were grossly over-represented within the emigrant stream. In comparison, nominated emigration from the parishes in north-west Cavan (Kildallan, Kinawley, Templeport, Tomregan), was overwhelmingly Catholic (66 to 100 per cent) and more consistent with the Catholic majority in the population at large. In north-west Fermanagh, (Belleek, Derryvullan, Drumkeeran, Enniskillen, Magheracross, Magheraculmoney) nominated emigration was predominantly from the Church of Ireland (51 to 88 per cent), albeit with a large though variable Catholic minority, and an outright Catholic majority in Belleek (75 per cent).

But the predominant feature of these data is the consistency with which a greater proportion of the minority Protestant community in the sample parishes found their way to Sydney than their relative numbers would lead us to expect; and similarly, the widespread under-representation of the Catholic majority, save from the marginal mountainous environments of north-west Cavan. Thus, although remittance emigration attracted members of every denominational community in this part of south-west Ulster during the study period, proportionately Church of Ireland parishioners, but also in one parish Presbyterians, found it particularly expedient and practical to leave. How might this denominational difference in the local propensity to emigrate be explained?

#### EXPLAINING THE PROPENSITY TO EMIGRATE

Three possible explanations suggest themselves. First, that the two major denominational communities in this part of south-west Ulster were not equally well placed either to fulfil their procedural obligations under the remittance scheme or to bear the additional cost of travelling to the port of embarkation in England or Scotland. Second, that the two communities tended to perceive the advantages of emigration differently, in ways that reflected their varied and developing positionality within Ulster's divided society. And third, that their sponsorship networks in New South Wales were not equally active or successful in negotiating the complex bureaucratic procedures involved in remittance nomination.

The first of these possible explanations may be termed the "human-capital" model. Here, the argument is that the Catholic and Church of Ireland communities in the sample parishes were simply differently

Table 5. *Sample parishes: denominational breakdown of literacy and occupational characteristics displayed by remittance emigrants who left for New South Wales, 1858–1884*

| Category                                  | Catholic | % of total Catholic arrivals | Church of Ireland | % of total Church of Ireland arrivals | Presbyterian | % of total Presbyterian arrivals |
|---|----------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Literacy:                                 |          |                              |                   |                                       |              |                                  |
| Read                                      | 467      | 75.0                         | 525               | 82.5                                  | 35           | 74.4                             |
| Read and write                            | 377      | 60.5                         | 461               | 72.5                                  | 32           | 68.1                             |
| Neither read nor write                    | 89       | 14.3                         | 48                | 7.5                                   | 3            | 6.4                              |
| No data                                   | 67       | 10.7                         | 63                | 10.0                                  | 9            | 19.0                             |
| Occupation:                               |          |                              |                   |                                       |              |                                  |
| Labourer                                  | 297      | 47.7                         | 290               | 45.6                                  | 16           | 34.0                             |
| Servant                                   | 235      | 37.7                         | 183               | 28.8                                  | 11           | 23.4                             |
| Farmer                                    | 29       | 4.7                          | 93                | 14.6                                  | 12           | 25.5                             |
| Total emigrant arrivals from all parishes | 623      |                              | 636               |                                       | 47           |                                  |

Source: SRNSW, Emigrant Arrivals Journals, 1858–1884

equipped in terms of their disposable income, literacy, and other resources in such a way as to give many of the latter a greater prospect of success when negotiating the emigration bureaucracies and financing their decision to leave. That this may have been true to some extent is indicated by Table 5, which identifies differences in the occupational and educational attainment of the emigrants from each community. Members of the Church of Ireland and Presbyterians recorded notably better literacy rates than Catholics, both in terms of the numbers who could read and write and the proportion who could do neither. Moreover, both Protestant denominations recorded fewer people in the two lowest male/female occupational categories of labourer and servant, while a significantly larger proportion of Church of Ireland members arrived as “farmers” than from either of the other denominations. These data suggest that, as a group, Church of Ireland emigrants may have been marginally better equipped in terms of personal attainment to engage with the complicated emigration process than many of their Catholic neighbours, and may have had access to slightly more resources in order to do so.

But it is important not to read too much into these differences in “human capital”. We have already noted the ambiguity of occupational categories such as these and the difficulty in determining the reality behind such claims to literacy. Thus, it is also possible that the larger than expected proportion of local Protestants in the remittance emigration sample reflected more intangible factors, which bore on the way members of each denominational community saw their present position and future prospects in Ireland. What these factors may have been is difficult to determine in aggregate, since by definition they are likely to have been subjective and personal. Moreover, the sort of local sources which might have provided some insight into migrant *mentalités*, such as local newspapers, parish vestry minute books, or the referees’ own correspondence, have either failed to survive or are generally reticent on this point.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, it may be significant, for example, that at this time the position of the Church of Ireland as the established church *in* Ireland was coming under increasing threat. This culminated in its disestablishment in 1869, a move which has been represented as a political sop by Gladstone’s

69. See Public Record Office of Northern Ireland [hereafter PRONI], Church of Ireland parish of Belleek, vestry minutes 1822–1912, T.679/65, 257–258; microfilm 1/270. PRONI Church of Ireland parish of Derryvullan, list of poor, 1823–1827, microfilm 1/34. Church of Ireland parish of Enniskillen, vestry minutes 1731–1920, microfilms 1/94 and 110. PRONI Church of Ireland parish of Magheracross, vestry minutes 1847–1966, microfilm 1/78; T.679/37. PRONI Church of Ireland parish of Magheraculmonee, vestry minutes 1763–1887, microfilms 1/67–68. PRONI D.209, microfilm 431, “Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet”, 1808–1833. PRONI D.1373/1/1, “Enniskillen Chronicle”, 1864–1868. PRONI D.1373, N/16/1, “Enniskillen Advertiser and North West Counties Gazette”, 1864–1868, 1871–1872. PRONI D.1199, D. 1379, “Lisbellaw Gazette”, 1879–1901. PRONI microfilm 149, “Tyrone Constitution”, 1848–1899.

government to pacify nationalist sentiment in the wake of the 1867 Fenian rising.<sup>70</sup> Leading Fermanagh figures, such as the Earl of Belmore, deplored the move as weakening the Church throughout Ireland.<sup>71</sup> If this sense of disempowerment permeated more widely through the Church's membership in Cavan and Fermanagh than simply its politicized social elite, it may well have contributed to feelings of marginalization that were specific to the Church's membership. Hoerder has argued that churches were central to the maintenance of migrant community identities, through their role as social locales and as sites of self-defining spiritual rituals that were indispensable in structuring individual and family life cycles.<sup>72</sup> In similar vein, the minority Church of Ireland communities in Cavan and Fermanagh may have "read" the weakening of their Church's constitutional position in Ireland as tantamount to a weakening of their own situation there also.

Contemporary agrarian politics are likely to have exacerbated any such feelings. As rural prosperity turned to crisis in Ulster in the late 1870s, the earlier easy social and political alliances between tenant farmers of all denominations gave way to an agrarian radicalism that was increasingly Catholic and nationalist in tone. Similarly in the 1870s, home rule resurfaced as a live political issue, once again rousing Protestant fears of "Rome rule".<sup>73</sup> In these circumstances, the existence of a disproportionately large number of Church of Ireland parishioners in south-west Ulster who opted for emigration to the "English dominions" of Australia hardly appears surprising. One successful Church of Ireland emigrant (from a neighbouring parish in adjacent Donegal), articulated the point with precision. Speaking at a public meeting in Broughton Creek, New South Wales, in April 1868, following the attempted assassination of the Duke of Edinburgh in Sydney by an alleged Fenian, Adam Boyd commented that:

He hoped there would be no party troubles in this country. He had known a good few of them at home and had seen the awful effects arising from them. He

70. R.V. Comerford, "Gladstone's First Irish Enterprise, 1864-1870", in Vaughan, *A New History of Ireland* 5, pp. 442-444; K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 239, 273-274, 286, 318.

71. 4th Earl of Belmore to the Lord Primate of Ireland, 29 December 1869, "Register of Private Correspondence, 1868-1871", Belmore papers, PRONI D/3007/L/1/40.

72. Hoerder, "From Migrants to Ethnic", pp. 247-248.

73. J. Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast, 1992), pp. 358-380. For a Fermanagh example, see the Revd John Flanagan's *Ireland; Her Past Glories and Trials, and Probable Future* (Dublin, 1820). Flanagan was the Church of Ireland rector at Killeevan, an active Orangeman and a polemicist. In this book he postulated a future for Irish Protestants in which they had to choose between "fighting for their faith", "emigrating as a body", or suffering persecution at the hands of a resurgent Roman Catholic Church; quoted in Séamas Mac Annaidh, *Fermanagh Books, Writers and Newspapers of the Nineteenth Century* (Enniskillen, 1999), p. 32.



Figure 5. “Self-defining spiritual rituals”. Built in 1864 a few miles outside Kiama, the Anglican Church of the Resurrection at Jamberoo quickly became an ideological battleground between the minister, the Revd Philip Bailey, and his partly Irish congregation. Ecclesiological symbols introduced by Bailey were stolen and destroyed, while his lectern, nicknamed “St Patrick” in honour of its “Romish” associations, was also removed.

*Photograph by Dianne Hall; used by permission*

had always been in Ireland a good subject of the Crown of England and when he was about leaving and thought where he should go to, he made up his mind that wherever the Crown of England had dominion that was the place for him and his children. He had advised all true and loyal Irishmen to come to this country telling them there was here freedom for all more than they could make use of [...].<sup>74</sup>

Despite comments such as Boyd’s, the evidence supporting these “human-capital” and “positionality” explanations for the greater propensity by members of the Church of Ireland to emigrate is, at best, circumstantial. Accordingly, it is possible that their numbers may also have reflected the relatively greater efficiency and activity of their sponsorship networks in New South Wales. In short, a disproportionately large part of this community may have left the sample parishes simply because, as a group, they were given a greater opportunity to do so by friends and relatives who were already successfully established in the colony.

74. *Kiama Independent*, 2 April 1868.

Implicit in this argument is the idea that different Irish denominational groups may have experienced different levels of economic success in Australia. Despite the circumstantial evidence provided by contemporary Australian objections to the perceived poverty and inappropriate skills of assisted (Catholic) Irish emigrants, this is hard to test in any conclusive way.<sup>75</sup> What is clear is that if a rural background, marginally lower literacy skills and occupational status *did* act to hinder specifically Catholic Irish advancement in New South Wales – highlighting the broader issue of Irish indigeneity's engagement with modernity – then they certainly did not deter Irish Catholics from emigrating to the Australia. Between 1846 and 1891, when the number of Irish-born living in the colonies rose from c. 46,000 to 228,000, the proportion of Catholics rose from c.55 per cent to 80 per cent.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, the pattern of sponsorship displayed by the Cavan and Fermanagh sample does provide some evidence for the ways in which remittance emigration might have favoured Protestant communities. The scale of this sponsorship varied enormously. Over 86 per cent of the 613 sponsors who deposited remittances for the 1844 intending emigrants did so for fewer than five nominees. Just over half of this group deposited for only one.<sup>77</sup> Drawn from all three major denominational communities, these depositors generally sponsored near-relatives, predominantly siblings, nephews, or nieces and their families, rather than more aged parents.

Typical of them was Thomas Hill, a farm labourer and member of the Church of Ireland, who left Aghaleague in the parish of Magheraculmonee in 1879, aged twenty-two. Sponsored by (the now anonymous) J.W. Smith, and with a reference supplied by George Chitterick, postmaster at Ederney in the same parish, he left Plymouth on the *Camperdown* in September of that year. Three years later, and by now living in Sydney, Hill sponsored his younger brother and sister, John and Sarah, to make the same journey. Respectively three and five years his junior, they travelled together on the *Northern Monarch*, which left Plymouth in September 1882. Both were also members of the Church of Ireland. John claimed to be a farmer, and Sarah a domestic servant. No mention is made of their parents, and none of the three made any further attempt to sponsor other friends or relatives to Australia.<sup>78</sup>

This sort of “one-off” sponsorship was chain migration at its simplest, and might vary simply in the number of nominees involved. At the other

75. Usefully summarized in Patrick O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia, 1788 to the Present* (3rd edn, Sydney, 2000), pp. 54–114.

76. Proudfoot, “Landscape, Place and Memory”, pp. 172–175.

77. Calculated from SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–4598.

78. Thomas, John, and Sarah Hill, deposit identity number 1604, SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–4598.

extreme, three individuals in the sample, Patrick Freehill, George Gray, and John Hudson Keys each nominated between twenty-two and forty-nine individuals in the late 1850s and early 1860s, in a pattern which seems to have had as much to do with recruiting new labour for the colony as bringing out immediate relatives. This was not particularly unusual within the remittance scheme as a whole. Writing in 1863, Sir Roger Therry, the Cork-born New South Wales Supreme Court judge and legislative counsellor, noted that remittance emigration enabled:

[...] the master-mechanic to keep pace with the demands of his industry, by the introduction of persons belonging to his trade. The wealthy squatters and landowners of the Colony have acted extensively on this system. By it, they import the labour they require for extending their operations in the vast interior of the country [...]. The late Mr. H. Osborne, of Illawarra, who was the master of many sheep and cattle stations, assured me that he had practised this system with great satisfaction and for many years. By its operation he brought out the families and friends of most of those who were in his employment.<sup>79</sup>

What Therry's comment does not reveal is that like the "late Mr Osborne" himself, many of the people he and his brother, Alexander Osborne, brought out to their properties were from west Ulster. Their presence around Kiama, in southern New South Wales, gained it a reputation as a bastion of Irish Protestantism and Orangeism. As O'Farrell observes, however, this reputation masked a more complex reality, in which Kiama's mixed denominational profile, its "landlord"-dominated tenurial structure, and dependence on an unusually closely-settled agrarian hinterland, all combined to recreate the sort of culturally-divided, intimate agrarian society its predominantly Irish population would have been familiar with.<sup>80</sup> But there is little doubt as to the importance of the Osborne brothers' role in helping to mould this cultural environment, however contested it may have been. Both were members of the Church of Ireland and minor Anglo-Irish gentry.

Henry Osborne was born in Dromore, Co. Tyrone, and arrived in New South Wales in 1829, when he obtained a grant of c.2,600 acres in the Illawarra. This formed the nucleus of the much larger estates he ultimately acquired there by the 1850s. His elder brother, Alexander, had his similar land application rejected in the same year, and he continued to serve as an emigrant ship's surgeon until 1835, when he retired to New South Wales with his family. A year later, after purchasing various lands in the Illawarra, he was asked by Governor Bourke to undertake an emigrant recruiting tour to Ulster. Over the next three years, in a programme which foreshadowed Dunmore Lang's apparently less successful activities in

79. R. Therry, *Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in New South Wales and Victoria* (London, 1863), p. 415.

80. O'Farrell, *The Irish in Australia*, pp. 81–82.



Figure 6. Orangeism in Kiama. The grave of William Clark, Fermanagh-born member of the Orange Order. Replete with Orange symbolism, the headstone was erected by fellow members of Clark's Orange Lodge, LOL No. 12 (Kiama), in 1894.

*Photograph by Dianne Hall; used by permission*

Ulster in 1848, Alexander Osborne was responsible for sending three emigrant ships from Ireland, the *Lady McNaughton* in 1836, the *Adam Lodge* in 1837, and the *Susan* in 1839. He was personally involved in selecting the emigrants for the last two of these, most of whom came from west Ulster.<sup>81</sup>

At least three-quarters of the twenty emigrants from the *Susan* who

81. Alick Osborne, "Journal of Occurrences Connected with Emigration, 8 July 1836–17 July 1837", SLNSW MS D248.

settled in Kiama were members of the Church of Ireland from Magheraculmonee and Drumkeeran, but they represented only the latest group to arrive in a pattern of path dependency that linked these parishes to the Illawarra. Prominent among them was the Armstrong family of Pettigo, led by the patriarchal figure of James “Bedad” Armstrong, who had arrived to join Bedad’s son-in-law, Joseph Vance, in taking up clearing leases on Henry Osborne’s Garden Hill property.<sup>82</sup> Consequently, when George Grey eventually arrived in Kiama after landing with his brothers at Sydney in 1841, he encountered a community which had already established strong links with his fellow Protestants from Magheraculmonee and the surrounding area. Gray appears to have wasted little time in utilizing these networks. In 1843 he leased 1,200 acres on James Robb’s Riversdale estate on a seven-year clearing lease, subletting the land to twenty-four tenants of his own, mainly his own relatives who had come out with him in 1841, or other earlier migrants from Drumkeeran and Magheraculmonee. Grey appears to have acted very much as an Irish “middleman” in the venture, and when the lease expired in 1850 he had sufficient funds to lease another property from his kinsman, James Mackay Grey, and subsequently make repeated land purchases in Kiama and the nearby township of Gerrigong between 1851 and 1854.<sup>83</sup>

Grey’s increasing prosperity was matched by his growing social status. A substantial benefactor to the local Anglican church at Kiama, he also entered local politics, standing as an anti-free-trade candidate in the election of 1859.<sup>84</sup> It was presumably these same agricultural interests which led to his involvement in remittance sponsorship. Between 1857 and 1864 he nominated at least thirty people from Drumkeeran and Magheraculmonee; all save two were members of the Church of Ireland, and all possessed agricultural or domestic skills and minimum levels of literacy. Two-thirds finally made the voyage.<sup>85</sup>

The final destination in Australia of many of Grey’s nominees is unknown. As Wegge notes, “chain migrants are linked by ties in the home country [...] (they) do not necessarily have to end up living together in the adopted country”.<sup>86</sup> Thus, although Kiama provides ample evidence of

82. Ian C. Young, “The Armstrong Story”, *Khanterintee*, 32 (1998), pp. 3–7.

83. A. Cousins, *The Garden of New South Wales: A History of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven Districts* (first publ. Sydney 1946, 2nd edn Wollongong, 1994) p. 236; F. McCaffery, *History of Illawarra* (Kiama, 1924), pp. 116, 219.

84. *Kiama Examiner*, 28 May 1859, cited in Paul Moffitt, *Illawarra Ancestors*, (Trinity Gardens, n.d.) p. 50.

85. Abstracted from SRNSW Immigration Department, Assisted Immigrants Inwards to Sydney, 4/4974, 4976, 4978–4981, 4984, 4986–4988, 4990–4991, 5000–5026, 5028; SRNSW: Immigration: Persons on Bounty Ships (agent’s immigrant lists), 4/4789, 4795–4798, 4808, 4812, 5031; SRNSW: Immigration Department, Immigration Deposit Journals, 1853–1900, 4/4576–4598.

86. Wegge, “Chain Migration and Information Networks”, pp. 957–986.

Hoerder's contention that chain migration "channelled migrants into particular segments of the receiving societies", they did not necessarily stay there.<sup>87</sup> In the case of Kiama, there is evidence that significant numbers of the Ulster migrants subsequently moved, first to other places in the Illawarra, and then further afield, to Sydney or the Lismore district of northern New South Wales.<sup>88</sup> In moving in this way, these emigrants did no more than reflect the structural unevenness of the developing colonial economy, and the consequent rapid shifts in the pattern of employment opportunities. But as the activities of men like Alexander and Henry Osborne and George Grey make clear, in the case of Kiama, "economic" emigrants such as these made decisions and imagined worlds that were inflected from the start with a denominationalism which had its roots in Ulster's divided society.

### CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to recover and explain some aspects of the detailed local geographies created by one particular form of nineteenth-century emigration to Australia within a relatively restricted area of south-west Ulster. This was a regionally distinctive part of modern Ireland, where local socio-economic rhythms and practices differed significantly from those elsewhere. The utility of the exercise lies in the uniquely comprehensive archival record which survives for this remittance emigration, which allows for a much more thorough interrogation of the local circumstances surrounding these movements than is possible for the much larger contemporary transatlantic flows to North America. In short, the data on which this paper is based has permitted a deep understanding of the movements of a few (to Australia) rather than a superficial reading of the movements of the many (to North America).

The number of migrants involved in the study is small in comparison with the overall migrant flow from the broader region during the period of the study, and this inevitably places significant constraints on the inferences that can be drawn from these data. But by concentrating on localities in that part of Ireland where the nominated remittance-emigrant flow to Australia was proportionately most numerous and involved a relatively wide cultural spectrum of rural society, it has been possible to

87. Dirk Hoerder, "Segmented Macrosystems and Networking Individuals: The Balancing Functions of the Migration Processes", in Lucassen and Lucassen, *Migration, Migration History*, pp. 73–84.

88. Many families moved from the Kiama region to the Lismore region. Among them were George Grey's sister, Jane Hetherington, and her son Christy; *Illawarra Pioneers Pre-1900* (Wollongong, 1988), p. 74. Also the family of Matthew Dorrrough, who arrived from Strabane in 1842; all his adult children and their families moved from Dapto in the Kiama region to a farm near Lismore in 1888. See Gordon Dorrrough, *From Dapto to Dunmon* (Wollongong, n.d.).

demonstrate the local diversity of emigration practices and the disproportionate response exhibited by the local denominational communities to the opportunity to emigrate.

This constitutes the most significant outcome of this study. While remittance emigration certainly appears to have been sensitive to changing patterns of local environmental opportunity and hardship, this paper has shown that the major denominational communities in the sample parishes responded in different, if parallel, fashion to the highly bureaucratized opportunities it offered. Would-be emigrants sought recognition and support primarily from figures of clerical authority within their own denominational community; Roman Catholics in particular were likely to eschew secular figures of authority such as landlords. More than anything else, the hitherto unsuspected propensity among Church of Ireland parishioners in the study area to become remittance emigrants provides us with an apt reminder that, embedded in the overwhelmingly Catholic national pattern of Irish emigration to Australia, were countervailing local impulses and flows which point up the too-often unrecognized cultural and ethnic heterogeneity of the Irish migrant stream. Explanations for these local impulses have been sought in terms of current theories concerning the “first socialization” of these emigrants prior to their departure from Ireland, and, by way of example, in their “second socialization” in New South Wales. Contrary to the expectations of nineteenth-century Irish-Australian nationalists and later commentators, not all the Irish who landed on colonial shores were Catholic, and nor were those Protestants who did likely to conform to the rhetorical expectations of Irish-Catholic political and social aspirations in Australia.