

Acknowledgments

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Abstract

In 1852 thirty-seven Households emigrated from the district of Moidart in the North West Highlands of Scotland to the Colony of Port Phillip [Victoria] in Australia. Their working class Catholic background made this cohort distinctively different from the majority group of Presbyterian Scots in Victoria at this time. Until this study the contribution made by Moidart's emigrants to Victoria's Highland immigration history lay unrecognised and undocumented as had their place in Victoria's mid-nineteenth century Catholic narrative.

This micro-historical investigation documents the experiences of three generations, prior to leaving Scotland, on board ship and in Victoria thereby providing a longitudinal overview of the impact of migration. Its Victorian focus significantly expands and adds to the breadth of Scotland's Highland historiography and draws extensively upon both Scottish and Victorian research data and empirical evidence spanning approximately one hundred years. The study concludes that social and economic security in Victoria was achieved by many. As emigration also affected those left behind the study completes its investigation by briefly returning to Moidart in 1884 to ascertain the effects of this emigration on the people and their circumstances.

Introduction

On 20 June 1852 the 'Araminta', the first of three ships to carry a group of emigrants from the district of Moidart in the North West Highlands of Scotland to the Colony of Victoria in Australia, departed from Liverpool for Geelong. On board were the members of 16 Households. The 'Araminta', together with the emigrant ships 'Marco Polo' and 'Allison', brought approximately 226 individuals (from a total of 256 persons residing in 37 Households according to the 1851 census) to the Colony.¹

This micro-historical study investigates their experiences in two contexts. Firstly, it aims to determine the physical, economic, social and religious factors that contributed to the departure of the people from their crofting townships and estates in Moidart to assist in understanding the key motivating forces that led to widespread emigration from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland at this time. The major focus of the study however, is related to determining how well these immigrants fared in the second context, that of Geelong and the adjoining Western Districts in the Colony of Victoria and whether or not they were able to improve their economic and social circumstances as a

¹ See the 1851 Census Returns for the Quoad Sacre parish of Aharacle, Parish of Ardnamurchan, General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh.

consequence of their migration. The role of religion in their departure, re-settlement and in the formation of a new communal identity in Victoria is a key theme throughout this study.

Their Catholic background, compared with the Presbyterian backgrounds of the majority of Scottish Highlanders arriving in Victoria at the same time, makes this investigation one of particular significance for Victoria's immigration history. Until this study their story has remained untold and hidden amongst the statistical data that constitutes much of the Highland migration story in Victoria. The unknown nature of their fate in Australia coupled with personal negative perceptions regarding their abilities to do well in the Colony, are clearly illustrated in the following claim made by Father Charles Macdonald in his book *Moidart or among the Clanranalds*:

Altogether about five hundred persons left the district, the Catholic congregation of Moidart, which formerly stood at eleven hundred, being reduced to six hundred. One would like to be able to add that these Highlanders, thus cast upon a new world, with opportunities offered of realising a position which they could never have dreamed of at home, did well...but, unfortunately, many of them had not the moral courage to shake off certain habits which the smuggling days had

instilled, and continuing to indulge these under the burning climate of Australia proved a deplorable bar to any real improvement.²

This thesis aims to test the veracity of his statements. The following map illustrates the remote geographical location of Moidart in the north west of the Highlands of Scotland.

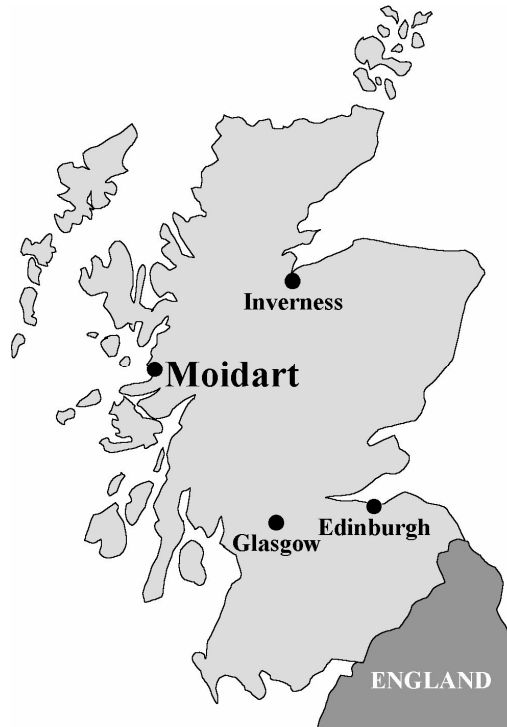


Figure 1: The location of the district of Moidart in the County of Inverness-shire, North West Highlands of Scotland.

² C. Macdonald, *Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds*, The Mercat Press, Edinburgh (Reprint of 1889 Edition) pp. 261-2.

In 1852 a total of 7,127 Scots, many of whom were Highlanders, arrived at the four ports of Melbourne, Geelong, Portland Bay and Belfast (Port Fairy).³ One of the catalysts that precipitated this exodus was the destitution and social dislocation caused by the potato famine. The potato blight or spores of *Phytophthora infestans* arrived in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in 1847 having been blown from Ireland across the Irish Sea.⁴

i. Rationale

Little research of any substance has been undertaken on the settlement experiences of working class Scottish Catholic families in the Colony of Victoria in the mid-1850s. The general literature regarding Scottish Catholic emigration to Australia has been largely written by Malcolm Prentis.⁵ According to Prentis, eighty-five per cent of Scottish assisted immigrants arriving in Australia between 1851 and 1900 were from Presbyterian backgrounds. The remaining 15 per cent included immigrants from

³ E. Grimes, *Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852*, Return Number iii., VPRS189/10, Unit 14, File 1853/A577900, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.

⁴ The scientific classification, Binomial name and a description of the method of infection as well as the conditions for spreading the spores are briefly outlined at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potatoe_fungus '*Phytophthora infestans*' > (accessed 8 February 2006).

⁵ See M. D. Prentis 'Scottish Roman Catholics in Nineteenth Century Australia' *The Innes Review* XXX111, 1982. pp. 58 – 70. Also D. Hellier 'The Humblies: The emigration of Highland Scots to Victoria in the 1850s via the Highland and Island Emigration Society' Unpublished MA Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 1983. p. 139 for a brief reference to the Catholic community at Port Phillip and at Little River. The thesis includes a case study of one Moidart McDonald family on pp 182-188.

Episcopalian (Anglican) and Catholic traditions.⁶

In the case of Victoria, Rowland Ward has noted that, according to the 1857 census of Victoria; "...nearly 16% of the population or 65,182 persons claimed to be Presbyterian."⁷ It was their Catholicism that set the Moidart Households apart from the majority of Presbyterian Scots arriving in Port Phillip at this time. By focusing on their Catholicism, this research makes an important contribution to the broad field of Scottish Highlander emigration to Australia. This micro-historical study is of further importance as very little research has attempted to draw conclusions concerning a cohort of working class Highlanders from the same Highland district in terms of their circumstances prior to departure and their lives and re-settlement experiences across three generations in Victoria.

ii. Discussion of terms

Historians of Highland emigration have developed different terms to refer to the many separate migrations that were characterised by close, cohesive,

⁶ See Prentis, *The Scots in Australia*, p. 221.

⁷ R. S. Ward, *The Bush still burns. The Presbyterian and Reformed Faith in Australia 1788-1988*, Self published 1989, p. 170.

communal relationships. Eric Richards, for example, uses a number of terms including ‘communal’, ‘kinship’, ‘group’ and ‘atomistic’ migrations.⁸ In a reference to the renowned emigration of Highlanders to Canada, Australia and New Zealand led by the Reverend Norman McLeod, Richards draws on the term ‘coagulated migration,’ a term which was originally used by T. C. Smout and Ian Levitt.⁹ Whilst it is difficult to select one term that encompasses all the core characteristics that united the participants in the three Moidart migrations, this study acknowledges that the majority of those who journeyed together were largely united by kinship, employment and economic class, township and religious faith.

The various compositions of Household memberships set out on page 11 in this chapter, illustrates the difficulty of finding one suitable term to describe all cases. Jane Beer has chosen to describe the families in her research as ‘augmented families’ and has defined this term as; “any group of related persons other than nuclear families or single adult siblings travelling together”.¹⁰ Beer’s definition is based on the format used by the Highland and Island Emigration Society (HIES) to record the names of assisted families.

⁸ See E. Richards ‘Leaving the Highlands: Colonial Destinations in Canada and Australia’ in M. Harper and M. Vance (eds) *Myth, Migration and the Making of Memory*, Fernwood Publishing, Halifax, 1999. pp. 116-118.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 118.

¹⁰ J. Beer, ‘Highland Scots in Victoria’s Western District’ in J. Beer, C. Fahey, P. Grimshaw and M. Raymond, *Colonial Frontiers and Family Fortunes - Two studies of Rural and Urban Victoria* The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1989. p.35.

Donna Hellier has a different understanding about the composition of the families in her research arguing that a nuclear family travelling for example with a married son, daughter-in-law and their child can be, in fact, broken down into two nuclear families.¹¹

Having considered the terminologies selected by Richards, Beer and Hellier to describe the composition of the families within their respective studies, I have elected to use the term 'Household' in this study to describe the group of people who travelled together from the same Household census number recorded by the Enumerator on the night of 30 March 1851 when the 1851 Scottish Census was taken.¹² This term includes both the emigrant members of the Household present on census night as well as members who were absent from the home but who later embarked with Household members from Liverpool.

The term 'Household' also has its own limitations and is in many ways, inadequate to describe the composition of the 37 groups of people involved. These limitations may be summarised in the following ways.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The Household numbers used in Appendix A do not match those of the 1851 Census.

Firstly, some members of the house as listed on census night, did not accompanying the other members who left Scotland in this emigration. Those who remained included elderly parents, siblings of either parent prevented from emigrating due to infirmity or chronic illness and older or younger siblings who remained to care for elderly parents. The composition of many of the 37 Households on census night was radically altered by the decision by some members to emigrate. The physical separation of members had emotional and financial implications for those who remained as well as societal ramifications for the district.

In other Households there were family members who were absent on census night and were therefore not recorded as members of the Household group. They were possibly visiting relatives or friends or employed as servants by another Household. Several of these people joined parents, brothers and sisters at Liverpool as their names were recorded on the passenger lists. The reunification of Household members was integral to ensuring a positive response by the people to emigration as well as a means of providing emotional support throughout the journey and additional financial support in the re-settlement process in the Colony.

In several homes the names of visitors who were residing in the house on

census night were recorded along with their relationship to the head of the Household but were not permanent residents and nor did they emigrate with the Household. Servants were also recorded as residing in the house but rarely accompanied the Household when they left. An exception to this was Jane McLean (Household 4¹³) who was recorded as a ‘house servant’ in the 1851 census and was a sister-in-law of the head, John McIver. Other Households grew in numbers as new members were born after the 1851 census and prior to departure or during the voyage to Australia.

Many of the Households involved in this emigration were related and therefore constituted an extended ‘family’ as understood and defined by kinship and clan membership within Highland society. Therefore the term ‘family’ is also not appropriate when referring to individual Households. Emigration, however, resulted in the creation of new Household groups with new familial relationships, roles and responsibilities as can be seen in the following table.

Table 1: Models of familial relationships present within the emigrant Households.

¹³ Refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive list of the members of each Household according to the 1851 census, passenger lists of the emigrant ships and including those born in Australia. The passenger lists were drawn up after their arrival in Australia.

Models of familial relationships	Household number in Appendix
1. Mother, unmarried daughters plus married son, daughter in law and children	18 and 19
2. Two brothers and their respective wives and children	14 and 16
3. Brother and sister in law with respective children	20 and 21
4. Widow and children	21 and 23
5. Widower and children	22 and 24
6. Brother and his wife and family and widowed sister with her children	25 and 26
7. Married son, wife and child plus siblings of married son	17
8. Married sister, husband and children and female siblings of married sister	28
9. Couples with no children	33, 35 and 39
10. Widower and children created through the death of the wife and mother during the voyage	22 and 30
11. Nephew in the care of an aunt	40

Source:¹⁴

¹⁴ This data was collected by searching the 1851 Census Returns for the Parish of Ardnamurchan, General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh and the nominal and disposal lists for 'Araminta', VPRS 7666 Inward Passenger Lists-British ports 1852-1923, PROV, North Melbourne. Book 6, pp. 35-47, the 'Marco Polo', nominal passenger and disposal lists, VPRS 7666, Inward passenger lists-British ports, PROV, North Melbourne. Book 8, pp. 166-190 and the 'Allison', nominal passenger and disposal lists, VPRS 7666, Inward passenger lists-British ports, PROV, North Melbourne. Book 9, pp. 10-19.

Finally, the term 'Household' has been selected because it describes the direct link that continued between those who emigrated and those who remained. Although one impact of emigration was to remove some members from the house, emigration did not sever the relationship with the Household in Moidart. As will be demonstrated in the study, the concept of 'kinship' in Australia continued to include those in Scotland as well as those who dispersed to other parts of the world.

The terms 'crofter' and 'cottar' will be used extensively in chapter one therefore it is important to establish a clear definition of these two terms for the study. In 1883 the British House of Commons established a Parliamentary Commission to enquire into the social and economic conditions of the crofter and cottar classes of residents in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.¹⁵ As part of the establishment of the terms of reference, the members of the Commission began by defining the terms 'crofter' and 'cottar'.¹⁶ The term 'crofter' was defined as:

...a small tenant of land with or without a lease, who finds in the cultivation and produce of his holding a material portion of his

¹⁵ For a critical assessment of the workings and final report of this Commission refer to chapter six, pp.384-386.

occupation, earnings and sustenance and who pays rent directly to the proprietor.¹⁷

A 'cottar' was defined as one who:

...commonly imports the occupier of a dwelling with or without some small portion of land, whose main subsistence is by the wages of labour, and whose rent, if any, is paid to a tenant and not to a landlord.¹⁸

The official definitions and associated understandings developed by the Commissioners will therefore be used in this research.

Each Household has been included in this study for two reasons. Firstly, the Household was located within the district of Moidart according to the 1851 census (but scattered across different estates and crofting townships) and

¹⁶ A. D. Cameron, *Go Listen To The Crofters*, The Napier Commission and Crofting a century ago, Isle of Lewis, Scotland, 1986. p. 4.

¹⁷ Author Unknown, Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, Volume XXXII, 1884. p.3.

secondly, the Household migrated to Victoria in 1852. The Households were identified by referring to the 1851 Scottish census for the County of Inverness, District of Moidart and Parish of Ardnamurchan, the marriage register of the Catholic Parish of Mingarry and from the nominal passenger and disposal lists of the emigrant ships 'Marco Polo', 'Araminta' and 'Allison'. The records of the Highland and Island Emigration Society were also examined to identify those Households who received assistance through this benevolent society. The research focuses on three generations in the case of several Households thereby making it possible to discern the difficulties and achievements of individuals over approximately 100 years. The evidence obtained through this investigation will generate additional understandings and insights into Scottish emigration and settlement in Australia for, as Eric Richards states; "The primary task, it is clear, is to put flesh on the statistical skeletons of Australian immigration".¹⁹

iii. The research methodology

A case study approach set in the wider colonial context will be used to obtain, collate, analyse and interpret data and information about the experiences of this

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ E. Richards in 'Annals of the Australian Immigrant' in E. Richards, R. Reid and D. Fitzpatrick, *Visible Immigrants: Neglected Sources for the History of Australian*

group of people. As Robert E. Stake explains; “Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances”.²⁰ In this study the total group of 37 Households constitutes one example of a ‘case’. Each of the 37 Households, however, also constitutes an individual case to be studied and analysed for its own intrinsic worth. He has identified three purposes for case study research naming these as ‘intrinsic’, ‘instrumental’ and ‘collective’.²¹ As this case study will contain elements of all three types it is important to identify the main features of each.

According to Stake an *intrinsic study* is one where the case is studied because, in itself, it is worthy of study and because the researcher hopes to learn more about the particular case; “We are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case.”²² Therefore this form of study is not necessarily designed to provide the researcher with a greater understanding of a generic phenomenon or to contribute to the construction of theory. The 37 Households all shared a common experience in terms of their physical location in Scotland, their social, economic and to a large extent, religious backgrounds

Immigration, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989. p. 22.
²⁰ Robert. E. Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, Sage Publications Inc., Thousand Oaks, U.K. 1995. p. xi.
²¹ Ibid.
²² Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p. 3.

and the year of their departure from Scotland and arrival in Australia.

Therefore it is possible to identify this cohort as a distinct 'case' and to develop a set of conditions that serve to include or exclude Households from the cohort.

At the same time each Household contained elements that made it similar to, as well as unique and different from, the other Households. Studying each Household as an individual 'case' may assist in gaining a greater understanding of the impact of migration on the individual as distinct from the total group.

An instrumental study on the other hand, is undertaken for the express purpose of contributing to the refinement of theory and for obtaining a greater understanding of the issue or phenomenon. In this form of case study the case under scrutiny is not the primary focus but is used as a vehicle through which broader understandings and insights might be reached. The group of Moidart Households may eventually be seen as typical of the range of groups who emigrated at this time or, may in fact, prove to be different in some way. An instrumental study therefore assists in furthering the understandings and insights related to emigration/immigration theory as they apply to Scottish migration.

The third form consists of a simultaneous study of a number of individual cases. Stake calls this approach a *collective study* and is used when the

researcher is attempting to obtain a better understanding of a particular phenomenon by studying a number of cases at the same time. In this study the phenomenon under study is Highlander immigration experiences in Western Victoria in the nineteenth century.

Whilst elements of all three approaches can be discerned in each chapter the research largely utilises the research methodology associated with the third or *collective* category of case study. It is the experiences of individual Households both in Scotland and Australia that constitute the main focus of this study. By maintaining a focus on separate Households and individuals the methodology assists in scrutinising the more broadly held generalisations and understandings about Scottish Highland emigration to Victoria and to possibly generate new directions for future research.

Stake points out that any case study research requires the researcher to set boundaries that clearly establish both the dimensions of the case and the limits of the study.²³ The boundaries set for this study include a period of time of approximately 100 years, the focus on a distinct economic and social class of immigrant from a shared geographic region in Scotland and the personal ‘shifts’ experienced in their economic and social status over time in Victoria.

Finally, Stake warns those involved in case study research not to attempt to make a study, both intrinsic and instrumental, serve too many audiences.²⁴

The spelling of the names of the townships involved in the study varies from one document to another and is determined largely by date and author.

Originally written and spelt using Gaelic phonology, many spellings have now been revised and re-spelt using English phonology. When referring to a location in a document I have used the spelling as recorded in the source document.²⁵ In all other cases when referring to townships I have used the conventional spelling of the location as recorded on the Scottish Ordnance Map with the exception of general references to the township of Scardoish where I have used the spelling 'Scardoish' as recorded in the Alphabetical List and Gazetteer in *Moidart among the Clanranalds*.²⁶

iv. Primary sources

Scottish primary sources of importance to this study include those prepared by estate managers, government officials and agents, and clergy. All documents

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Stake, *The Art of Case Study Research*, p. 135.

²⁵ 'Tobermory and Strontian', Victorian Ordnance Survey Map of Scotland, Sheet 52, Caledonian Books, Ellon, Scotland, 1886.

²⁶ Macdonald, *Moidart: or among the Clanranalds*, p. 235.

have been written in English. Therefore it is important to begin by recognising that the ‘Gaelic voices’ of the crofters and cottars involved in this study are largely missing from these English sources. It must also be acknowledged that the perspectives on the lives of the people as recorded by the compilers of these documents may have been subject to a certain Anglo-centric bias for as the Canadian historian Michael Kennedy reminds us:

...the chief forces for social conditioning ... would, for the most part, be of English origin and cultural orientation and would be operated primarily and in many instances exclusively by English-speakers, reflecting and imposing the values of a society which was not only non-Gaelic but overtly anti-Gaelic.²⁷

The range of sources containing direct references to the Households includes census returns, estate rental records, items of correspondence and Catholic parish records, however, all were prepared by those of a social class different to that of the crofter and cottar classes. Although the emigrants came from four Highland estates the majority of estate documents available for public scrutiny are those for Kinlochmoidart and Loch Shiel. Papers related to the Glen Uig Estate are in private hands. The fate of the papers belonging to the Lochans or Glenmoidart Estate appears to be unknown. Therefore the research related to

²⁷ M. Kennedy, ‘“Lochaber no more” A Critical Examination of Highland Emigration Mythology’ in M. Harper and M. Vance, (eds). *Myth, Migration and the Making of*

these two Estates has been confined to official government documents such as census records thereby limiting the research.

A further limitation has been placed on the scope of this research by the methods of access to these papers. As this documentation was obtained from Scotland via annotations in indexes and catalogues, the lack of on-site access to additional archival sources has limited both the identification and selection of primary sources. Those documents containing records of annual rentals paid by tenants (including rental fluctuations) have provided evidence of the impact of famine and economic depression on the lives of the Householders particularly in 1838 and from 1847 onwards. Rental records have also assisted in tracing Households as they moved from one township to another.

Information and data related to the Households and croft sizes has been obtained from the 1841, 1851 and 1861 Scottish census returns. The 1841 census is of limited value, however, as it excluded details such as the relationship of Household members to the head of the Household, the marital status of members and acreage details of crofts. The ages of some members of Households have been rounded off to periods of five years contributing to difficulties in later identifying Household members on passenger lists in 1852.

The 1851 census is particularly important as it provides information for each Household prior to leaving Scotland in 1852. It has also helped to locate each Household within the relevant crofting township as well as providing details of Household membership and relationship to the head, educational opportunities availed by the families, occupations of the heads of Households and, in certain cases, acreages of crofts. The range of information recorded by the enumerators varies and the resulting lack of consistency makes it impossible to compare or contrast townships.

The Statistical Accounts of Scotland published in 1795 and 1848 consist of a series of reports prepared by the Church of Scotland ministers for their respective parishes across Scotland. The 1848 account for the parish of Ardnamurchan covers that part of Moidart in which these Households lived and was prepared by the Reverend Archibald Clerk in 1838. Whilst important insights into Moidart community life may be gained through its study references to the Catholic and Episcopalian communities (outside of statistical information) are virtually non-existent making it difficult to obtain any clear understanding of the state of the Catholic Church in the Moidart district.

Information related to the state of Catholicism in Moidart has been largely obtained through a series of letters known as 'The Oban Letters' held at the

Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh. Written by both clergy and lay persons over a period of approximately 30 years the letters contain many references to the economic plight of the district and the overall distress of the people. The correspondence of Father Ranald Rankin in particular is of vital importance to this investigation for, after encouraging and supporting many of his parishioners to emigrate to Port Phillip in 1852, he followed them arriving in 1855. The role he played in maintaining and supporting the Gaelic speaking, Catholic Highlander community in Moidart, Western Victoria and Geelong, is a major theme within this investigation.

Although the study draws upon many letters written by Highlanders from the Victorian goldfields it has only been possible to locate a single extract from a letter written by a Moidart emigrant and published in a Highland newspaper. Extracts from letters were used by Scottish newspapers in certain instances to promote their political views and biases about emigration from Scotland. Therefore the sentiments expressed in those published extracts included in this study, may have been selected for political purposes by newspaper editors.

The primary source documents related to the arrival and settlement in Victoria of these Households are also subject to the same range of prejudices, biases, misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Again, the vast majority of these

sources were recorded by English-speaking government officials, legal office staff and newspaper reporters. The documents include the nominal passenger and passenger disposal lists of the three ships, Colonial government reports, birth, death and marriage records, land selection applications, items of correspondence related to immigration, the work of the HIES in Victoria and education, probate documents and wills, newspapers, municipal records such as rate books and plans of subdivisions, pastoral family papers and records, cemetery records and church records.

The recording of the location and terms of their first employment on the disposal lists of the three emigrant ships 'Marco Polo', 'Araminta' and 'Allison' has been helpful in tracing their journey from the port of arrival. They record the discrepancies in wages and terms of conditions experienced by both Household groups and single male and female passengers. The records enable a comparison of both the opportunities as well as the disadvantages that awaited the passengers according to the port of arrival.

The Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer in particular, has yielded a rich array of newspaper reports, advertisements, birth, death and marriage notices, shipping news and letters to the editor. These items span a period beginning in 1852 and concluding in 1898 and provide a commentary on the social,

economic and religious life in Geelong and the Western District during this time.

Reports prepared by Government officials such as the Immigration Agent and the Agents appointed by the HIES to administer the work of this organisation in Victoria are a rich source of statistical information as well as providing insights into attitudes and personal views held by those involved. Likewise, items of correspondence received by government departments contain numerous perspectives on the prevailing immigration debates and concerns at this time including the selection and transportation of those immigrants considered to be 'appropriate'.

The papers, diaries, Wages Books and manuscripts belonging to early pastoral families in the Western District have assisted in recreating the social and economic context of the time. The nature of the work undertaken by both men and women, the wages received and the rations provided helped to establish a secure economic foundation which later helped in the acquisition of land of their own. Land Selection Applications and items of correspondence held in Government Files reveal that the acquisition of land by most of the Households did not occur until the 1860s. The documents also provide evidence of the difficulties encountered by applicants in their quest to obtain a selection and

hold on to it by meeting the various Land Act requirements. Documents such as wills and probate records have established the degree to which Households were able to maintain ownership of their land and pass it on to the next generation. For those who settled in Geelong municipal rate documents and plans of subdivision for Kardinia Ward have been helpful in tracing the acquisition of a dwelling or land. Many of the Moidart Households who settled in Geelong chose to buy homes in McDonald, Belmont, Regent and Church Streets in Belmont whilst others settled in Chilwell and South Geelong.

An examination of birth, death and marriage records has yielded information related to religious identity, kinship and familial relationships in Australia as well as providing evidence of the high mobility of many Householders as they moved in search of employment and economic security. The accurate matching of names to individual Household members through the use of these records has been difficult to achieve and has proven to be problematic at times. Of the 37 Household groups 22 are named 'McDonald' (or variations in spelling of this surname such as 'Macdonald'). Within these Households there were 27 males named 'John' and 15 named 'Alexander' with 28 females named 'Mary' and 18 named 'Catherine'. This is further complicated by the fact that many of the Households contained children under the age of 14 at the time of arrival in 1852 and therefore many of the persons so named above, were of a similar age.

An examination of marriage register records for those who married in Geelong has shown that many who married within five years of arrival found spouses amongst single persons from other Moidart Households but that this pattern gradually changed amongst those born in Australia. Their arrival in 1852, however, predates many church and cemetery records. In addition, some early church records have been burnt in fires, misplaced or lost over the years.

The Denominational Schools Board records have been used to identify the opening of Catholic schools in districts related to this research. The items of correspondence and Subscription Lists related to this process have also provided an insight into the degree of financial commitment and emotional investment made by parents and others involved with the establishment of a school within their community.

v. Literature review

Prominent historians in Scotland, Canada and North America, Australia and New Zealand have written extensively about the history and resulting effects of the Highland Clearances on their respective countries. This study has drawn

particularly on the research and publications of Thomas Devine, Marjory Harper, James Hunter, Malcolm Gray and Roderick Balfour in Scotland. The investigations and findings of North American and Canadian researchers such as Charlotte Erickson, Louise Campey and Michael Kennedy have also contributed to the study whilst Australian and New Zealand historians most cited include Eric Richards, Malcolm Prentis, Robin Haines, Andrew Hassam, Don Watson, Jane Beer, Donna Hellier, Gordon Forth, Margaret Kiddle and Tom Brooking. Some like Harper, Richards and Brooking have undertaken research that bridges the experiences of Scottish migrants on two or more continents. Harper for example has examined the Scottish emigrant experience and contribution in Canada and North America whilst the research of Richards has focused on the Highland Clearances in Scotland and the impact of this on Australian social and economic life. Brooking has documented the contribution of individual Scots and the impact made by Highlanders on the development and formation of broader society, individual communities and the English language in New Zealand.

Before beginning the review of the literature it is important to acknowledge that all the literature and primary sources examined in this study have been published in English. This is an issue of particular concern to historians such as Kennedy who argue that the degree to which the authentic voices of the Gaelic emigrants can be found in English documentation is questionable. In his summation of much of the research conclusions and writings undertaken and

published in English in relation to the nineteenth century Highlander emigration experience in the Canadian Maritimes, Kennedy argues for caution in drawing any uniform conclusions concerning motivations for leaving and in the resettlement experiences. He suggests that the sung poetry traditions of the Gaels at this time reveals a range of perspectives related to emigration and that these sources of “community opinion”²⁸ have been largely overlooked or totally ignored by historians particularly those not literate in Gaelic. Kennedy strongly believes that:

The selective and often inadequate interpretation of Gaelic history, and the exclusion of any sort of Gaelic voice from that historical discourse, present a very lopsided view of the Gaelic world and a serious obstacle to our understanding of its people and events.²⁹

This exclusion is acknowledged and recognised as a limitation in this study.

Much of the research undertaken on Scotland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has tended to focus broadly on the social, economic and political changes sweeping through both the Highlands and Lowlands and its resulting impact on the social, demographic and economic dimensions of Scottish life.

²⁸ Kennedy, “Lochaber no more” p. 270.

The impact of change has been a recurring theme within the extensive research undertaken by Devine for example.³⁰ This study complements his research by investigating how these changes affected the lives of those who left Scotland as a consequence of these changes and by recognising that the cycle of change extended beyond the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with far reaching consequences for both the individuals involved and for Australia generally.

Devine's research is also important for this study as he has gathered statistical information related to the County of Inverness-shire and the district of Moidart as part of understanding the impact of the Great Highland famine on various communities.³¹ In general terms the literature related to the effects of the famine and changes in Highland society is remarkable for its lack of references to Moidart. This omission may be due to its remoteness and the difficulties of the past associated with outside access due to the mountainous terrain. Therefore this study rectifies this omission.

The research of Marjory Harper, Charlotte Erickson and Louise Campey has a

²⁹ Ibid., p. 272.

³⁰ See T. M. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, emigration and the Scottish Highlands in the nineteenth century*, John Donald Publishers Ltd. Edinburgh, 1988, T. M. Devine (ed), *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*, John Donald Publishers Ltd. Edinburgh, 1992 and T. M. Devine, *Clanship to Crofters' War*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994.

³¹ See Devine, *The Great Highland Famine*, pp.58, 65, 262, 266 and 321.

distinct trans-Atlantic dimension highlighting the importance of the large numbers of Highland emigrants involved in the North American and Canadian experience.³² Their research is important for this study as it has enabled me to clearly identify the differences between the Australian and North American migration patterns and resettlement as well as the reasons for the eventual assimilation of Highlanders into Victorian society. It would seem that the historiography associated with Highland emigration to the continent of North America has been documented more fully than that related to the Antipodes.

A review of the current literature reveals a scarcity of references to Moidart as a district and distinct from Western Inverness-shire. The most comprehensive references to Moidart in the literature consistently relate to the eighteenth century emigrations to Canada and North America as well as to those who organised and led the emigrants.

A major criticism of the literature on the Scottish migration experience in Australia is that it has consistently focused on the achievements and contributions of individual Scots from a particular social class. As Ian

³² See for example M. Harper, *Emigration from North East Scotland*, Aberdeen University Press, 1988 and M. Harper, *Adventurers and Exiles*, Profile Books Limited, London, 2003. Also L. H. Campey, "A Very Fine Class of Immigrants" *Prince Edward Island's Scottish Pioneers 1770-1850*, Natural Heritage Books, Toronto, 2001 and C. Erickson, *Invisible Immigrants*, The London School of Economics and Political Science, London, 1972.

Donnachie notes:

Inevitably the story of the Scots in Australia...is dominated by the successes of the entrepreneurial minority. It takes little account of the majority of 'invisible Scots': the women, the criminals, the labourers, the domestic servants, the diggers, the outcasts, not all by any means failures but groups whose history is only just beginning to be investigated in both Scotland and Australia.³³

By concentrating on the 'entrepreneurial minority' the literature relegates the contributions of Scottish immigrants to Australian society to those made by middle and upper class individuals and therefore does not present an accurate portrayal of the reality of the overall Scottish contribution. Michael Fry's research focuses on Scots with a strong involvement in investment and enterprise in Australia, arguing that their contribution was largely made through administration. His focus on the achievements of the large Scottish investment companies again ignores the role and achievements of the working class Scot in favour of those who made a place for themselves in Australian history through their vast financial investments. This study will redress this imbalance

³³ I. Donnachie, 'The making of 'Scots on the Make': Scottish Settlement and Enterprise in Australia, 1830-1900' in T. M. Devine (ed), *Scottish Emigration and Scottish Society*, John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1992. p. 135.

by describing the contribution of a representative group of 'invisible Scots' from working class backgrounds in the rural Highlands of Scotland.³⁴

This distortion in the current literature can be found in Margaret Kiddle's pioneering research undertaken in the 1950s.³⁵ Whilst it contains a sympathetic view of the achievements of the wealthy and powerful Western District squatters it largely omits the struggles of Scottish shepherds, shearers, woolwashers, miners and domestic servants many of whom were Highlanders. Historians have described the contribution of these working class Highlanders by using collective terms such as 'the Highlanders' thereby denying this cohort an identity. Richards, however, acknowledges this omission and argues strongly for a more comprehensive approach that enables the historian to move beyond demographics and statistics and to learn about the lives of the people behind the graphs and tables. His studies of the experiences of the St. Kilda emigrants to Victoria and Highlander immigrants in South Australia support this argument. Richards argues that 'discrete items of information about individual migrants' need to be analysed in order to 'create longitudinal profiles of samples of the immigrant population'.³⁶

³⁴ M. Fry, *The Scottish Empire*, Tuckwell Press, East Lothian, 2001.

³⁵ M. Kiddle, *Men of yesterday: a social history of the Western District of Victoria 1834-1890*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1983.

³⁶ E. Richards, 'Annals of the immigrant' in Richards, E. Reid, R. & Fitzpatrick, D. *Visible Immigrants: neglected Sources for the History of Australian Immigration*, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989. p. 15.

Despite the breadth of general research very little has been undertaken on specific cohorts of Scottish emigrants in the Colony of Victoria in order to understand their lives prior to emigration, the effects of the journey and the resulting experiences following their arrival. Research that incorporates a longitudinal examination of the lives of a group of Highlanders in two countries constitutes a significant gap in this literature. As Richards notes:

...we are relatively strong on the institutional framework of the immigration system and on the evolution of policy in Australia and in London. We know far less about the specific flows of the people who came, about the mechanisms and outcomes of policies and about the composition of Australian immigration.³⁷

Whilst the research of family historians and genealogists has contributed important information related to specific families, the experiences associated with communal migrations requires further investigation in order to understand the individual experience in relation to the communal and so in the case of communal Highland immigration to Victoria, this study will argue that

³⁷ Ibid, p.8.

Richards' statement still largely applies. The records associated with communal immigrations to Victoria in general from the Highlands and Islands still remain to be located and documented. References to the district of Moidart as a source of one such communal emigration are rarely found in Victoria's immigration literature ensuring that the contribution of this district remains unknown and unrecognised. By establishing a clear focus on the communal dimensions of immigration this study has recognised the significance and uniqueness of communal migration compared with that of individuals.

A further gap in the literature appears when we note the omission of the contribution of Scottish Highlander female emigrants from working class backgrounds. Their inclusion in this study is important as the immigration of single women was determined by the Colonial government to be a priority within emigration schemes such as that operated by the HIES. This gender bias is partly addressed in Beer's study of 1400 emigrants from the Highlands and Islands who arrived at Portland Bay, and who were financially assisted by the HIES.³⁸ In her study Beer analyses the settlement experiences of working class families and includes the experiences of single and married females in terms of the Victorian rural context. Her analysis focuses on three stages of colonial settlement: the on-arrival employment experiences of the immigrants, the

³⁸ J. Beer, 'Scottish families in Victoria's Western District: Highland and Island Emigration Society Emigrants to Portland 1852-75', Unpublished MA Thesis, The University of

process of forming new families in Australia compared with Scotland, and the nature of the legacy left behind after death (in terms of land inheritance). Her study has many parallels with this research however, it once again draws on the isolated experiences of individual emigrants rather than following the same individuals throughout the three stages to support her claims and arguments.

Malcolm Prentis's work is of importance as he is one of the very few who has analysed the Scottish Catholic contribution to Australia in the 1850s. His publications also point out the unique features of Catholicism as practised by Scottish Catholics in Scotland (as distinct from that of the Irish Catholics in Scotland during this period). Prentis reminds us that the statistically small group of Scottish Catholics came from both the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland. He limits his profiles of individual Scottish Catholics, however, to those of social significance such as the MacKillops and Chisholms rather than drawing on the experiences of working class Scottish Catholics. By focusing on Catholic working class Households this study contributes to and extends the earlier research undertaken by Prentis. He does acknowledge, however, that Scottish Catholics in general made "contributions to their church and community in Australia, and to the wider community, probably out of proportion to their numerical strength".³⁹ His major study titled 'The Scots in

Melbourne, 1985 and J. Beer, 'Highland Scots in Victoria's Western District' *Colonial Frontiers and Family Fortunes*, 1989.

³⁹ M. D. Prentis, 'Scottish Roman Catholics in Nineteenth Century Australia', p. 64.

Australia' focuses not only on the emigration and immigration experiences of the Scots but also explores the contribution of Scots to education, religion, commerce, politics, law and journalism in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.⁴⁰

vi. The research questions

Research associated with Victoria's immigration history needs to move beyond recording the 'contribution of immigrant groups' approach used in the past and to ask different questions from those that point to Victoria as a 'beneficiary' of migration. Therefore the research questions in this study focus on the emigrants and relate to the economic, religious and socio-cultural dimensions of their lives in two locations as follows:

- i. What were the economic, religious and social circumstances of the Households that led to their departure from Scotland?
 - Who left and who remained and why, and how important was government policy in determining who left?

⁴⁰ Prentis, *The Scots in Australia. A Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 1788 – 1900* Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1983.

- Was the society left behind strengthened or weakened by the group emigrations and were the effects desired by the policy makers achieved?
 - To what extent was the individual's decision to leave the result of thoughtful decisions about the future compared with a contrivance between the landlord and the HIES Committee?
- ii. What factors influenced their reception, settlement and integration in Victoria and how was their sense of community maintained?
 - iii. To what extent were these Households able to select and hold land in Australia? What role did land ownership in Australia play in relation to improving their economic and social status?
 - iv. Were any cultural values and practices related to the use of land in Scotland transplanted in Australia? What might this suggest in relation to the ongoing shaping of their identity in Australia?
 - v. What roles did religion play in the life of the community and in the maintenance of their identity both in Scotland and Victoria?
 - vi. How were notions of cultural identity as held generally by the broader Highlander community in Victoria challenged or influenced by the migration process?

These questions are important because evidence related to the direct experiences and contributions of working class Highlanders is largely non-existent in terms of Australian migration studies although many generalisations about this cohort can be found. One argument regarding the eventual fate of Highlanders generally in Australia is outlined in the following statement by Richards who writes:

Conditions in Australia were unsuitable for the full transplantation of Highland society, so, perhaps after a single generation Highlanders assimilated with colonial society with relatively little cultural resistance.⁴¹

Hellier in her thesis 'The Humblies'⁴² also makes a similar claim in reference to this transplanted culture stating:

While it may be plausibly argued that the loss of their distinct language

⁴¹ E. Richards 'Highland and Gaelic Immigrants' in J. Jupp (ed), *The Australian People an encyclopedia of the nation, its people and their origins*, Angus and Robertson, North Ryde. 1988, p 769.

⁴² D. Hellier 'The Humblies: The emigration of Highland Scots to Victoria in the 1850s

and culture destroyed a strong cohesive bond between the Highland immigrants, it is equally true that their adaptability to the new Colony was a factor much in their favour.⁴³

By examining both the urban and rural experiences of the Moidart Households this study will question the basis for such assertions as those forwarded by Richards and Hellier by also investigating a contrary conclusion drawn by Beer who notes:

It may be concluded that contrary to Donna Hellier's feeling that Highlanders assimilated only too well, real integration into the host community for the majority of Highlanders, due in part to initial feelings of alienation, failures in selection and consequent problems in the re-establishment stage, was probably delayed for some years, perhaps only appearing amongst the second generation of Highlanders.⁴⁴

via the Highland and Island Emigration Society', Unpublished MA Thesis, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 1983.
⁴³ Ibid, p.144.
⁴⁴ Beer, *Colonial Frontiers and Family Fortunes*. p. 77

vii. Structure

This study has been organised in a series of chapters that outline the important stages in the emigration process for the Household groups. It spans a period of approximately 100 years in order to include three generations of Household members.

The first chapter begins by examining the Highland district of Moidart in terms of its physical, social, economic and religious environment. The research will examine the poor physical dimensions and limitations of the district in terms of its soil, climate, areas of cultivated land and outmoded agricultural practices in general. The restrictions imposed by the stratified nature of Highland society, the dependence of the crofter and cottar on the landlord, and the structured workings of a Highland crofting community are all analysed. The chapter will also focus on the religious environment and analyse the role played by the clergy in advocating emigration as a solution to the hardships of Moidart. In addition, it will investigate the reasons why people migrated prior to 1852 to identify any parallels between the previous emigrations and the 1852 experience by drawing on the Moidart migration experience in both Canada and Australia. Finally the focus will move to the two estates of Loch Shiel and Kinlochmoidart to determine the extent to which those decisions which lead to this emigration were made by the landowners, the governments in Britain and

Australia and private emigration societies.

Chapter two briefly describes the formation of the Highland and Island Emigration Society including the possible motivations of Charles Trevelyan for its establishment. The study follows the journey of the Moidart people as they travelled south to Birkenhead, Liverpool, via Glasgow establishing that disadvantage continued to accompany the people to the point of departure and would later put at risk, as well as end, many lives during the voyages to Australia. By tracing the journeys of the three emigrant ships, the 'Marco Polo', 'Araminta' and 'Allison' from Birkenhead to Victoria, this chapter highlights the resilience and strength needed by the Highlanders to survive the difficulties encountered during each of the three voyages. It will demonstrate how the attitudes of agents and government officials often opposed the acceptance of Highlanders generally as suitable immigrants for Victoria.

Chapter three examines the economic, social and political contexts created by the discovery of gold in Victoria and how these local contexts affected the Households as they settled into their new lives. The Households faced a range of difficulties imposed by circumstances such as the port of arrival, time of arrival during the year, their health status on arrival, gender, age and marriage status. These challenges are explored by analysing the experiences of individual members of Households as they negotiated their first wages and

conditions of employment in Australia and by following individual Households as they moved across Victoria in search of economic stability.

Chapter four examines the processes and outcomes associated with the applications to select land across the Western District. This is important as selection and eventual freehold ownership of land was a key indicator for gauging economic success. It aims to identify those issues that made selection possible at particular times. Many Highlanders selected land together or in close proximity to each other and so any meaning in relation to this practice for both individual and group identity will also be examined. Evidence related to the attempted transplantation from Scotland of traditional practices and methods of sharing and working the land is examined. The inter-generational ownership and working of the land will also be analysed as a means of creating financial success.

Chapter five investigates how the Catholic Highlanders within the broader Highlander community sought to maintain their identity in Victoria. It examines the influence and role of Father Ranald Rankin in Victoria and the corresponding 'shift' in their identity as Catholics following his death. The marriage registers of St Mary's Catholic Parish, Geelong, will be analysed to provide insights into the role that marriage played in maintaining a Highland

Catholic identity and in creating opportunities for several Moidart women to improve their economic circumstances. This chapter draws upon evidence and conclusions related to the maintenance of their cultural identity contained in earlier chapters, including the effects of the gold rushes, opportunity to purchase township allotments in Geelong and the settlement of land in rural districts, the development of communal meeting forums such as cultural organisations, and the establishment of commercial businesses.

The concluding chapter will address the major thesis or argument set out at the beginning of the Introductory chapter, by revisiting each of the research questions in turn. It will draw together and analyse the findings of each chapter and present the overall conclusions reached through the study. As part of the first research question the chapter will return to Moidart 30 years after the time of departure to review the effects and impact of this emigration on the lives of those left behind. Finally, it will identify and suggest areas for possible research in the future.