

Identity and cultural maintenance

5.1 General introduction

This chapter will examine the proposition held by historians such as Jane Beer that Scottish Highlanders attempted to maintain both the tangible and intangible aspects of their Highland culture and identity in Australia for a period of time following their arrival.¹ The chapter will focus on language maintenance and shift, marriage, religious belief and cultural organisations associated with the Highlanders, cognisant that "...intangible cultural heritage ...is constantly recreated by communities and groups, in response to their environment, their interaction with nature, and their historical conditions of existence."²

It will begin by exploring the theoretical understandings associated with contact between the new immigrant community and the host culture and known as 'acculturation'. The study will analyse the various roles played by religious and cultural organisations and individuals who assisted the Highlanders to maintain a distinctive Highland identity. The chapter examines William

¹ For definitions of the terms and examples of both tangible and intangible heritage see United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, <http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=2225&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL>, accessed 6 April 2005.

² Ibid.

Safran's key features and characteristics of a community living in the 'diaspora' as well as the debate related to the application of the term 'diaspora' to the British emigration experience. It will demonstrate that the term 'diaspora' could well be applied to Highlanders generally living in Victoria in 1852. The role and meaning associated with the various phases of integration and marked by acts such as movement within Victoria, settling and selecting land will also be analysed. Finally, the chapter will draw its conclusions regarding the impact made by religion, marriage, language and cultural organisations on identity and improvements to social and economic status in the new country.

5.2 Acculturation and its implications

Chapter three outlined the economic, political and social context created by the discovery of gold and within which the process of arriving and settling took place. This process along with its resulting impact on both the newly arrived immigrant group and the established community has come to be known more generally as 'acculturation'. It is not, however, a universally agreed upon process.

J. W. Berry in his understanding of the concept of acculturation argues that the term 'acculturation' needs to be examined from three broad dimensions. These dimensions are the need to understand the basic phenomenon of acculturation itself, the process through which acculturation occurs and the varying levels at which acculturation takes place.³ Berry claims that the acculturation process takes place over three phases; contact with another society, encountering conflict as a result of this contact and adaptation to the new situation. He also believes that the pre-contact period may also be of equal importance for some emigrants.⁴

Berry further claims that, through the process of acculturation, "one group comes to dominate the other and contributes more to the flow of cultural elements than does the weaker of the groups."⁵ His explorations and views provide a useful framework through which to help understand the actions and directions of the Moidart Households throughout this process. Berry also explains that the acculturation process occurs on two levels: "that of the group and that of the individual."⁶ This has implications for this research as I have used a case study approach and the nature of the 'case' in this research focuses

³ J. W. Berry 'The Acculturation Process' in Carolyn L. Williams, and Joseph Westermeyer, (eds), *Refugee mental health in resettlement countries*, Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, Washington, 1986. p. 26.

⁴ Ibid, p. 27.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

on three levels; the individual, the Household group and the larger cohort of Moidart immigrants generally.⁷

In the third phase of the acculturation process, adaptation, Berry notes that there are three possible ways in which new immigrants may respond. Firstly they may adjust or assimilate very readily and easily. Secondly, they may react or retaliate against perceived losses by establishing their own societies or by mobilising themselves politically. As a third response they may withdraw from the situation altogether by either returning home or by moving to live in a community alongside others who have shared the experience. In the case of the Moidart Households it is possible to find examples of individuals who responded in all of the above ways as has been shown in Chapters three and four and will also be demonstrated here in chapter five. These chapters all address elements of the contact, conflict and, to a degree, the adaptation phases of this process.

5.3 Acculturation and identity in the diaspora

Contacts and encounters experienced in the new homeland often challenge earlier or original constructs of both individual and collective identities and

⁷ See pages 14-18 of the Introductory chapter of this thesis for an explanation of case study terminology.

lead to new understandings of both the self and the group. Butler notes that “The word ‘diaspora’ is defined, at its simplest, as the dispersal of a people from its original homeland”, however the application of the term has been greatly complicated by a number of scholars such as Robin Cohen and others.⁸ Whilst the term ‘diaspora’ has been widely used to describe the outward movement of emigrants from Britain both Stephen Constantine and Eric Richards urge caution in applying this term to the British emigration experience.⁹ Richards argues that emigration from Britain took place over 400 years rather than in the form of a single exodus. He also questions the overall degree of compulsion associated with the departure of many British emigrants given that the term ‘diaspora’ is strongly associated with compulsion, exile and alienation from the home country. Secondly, Richards claims that it becomes politically problematic to include the Scots, for example, as part of ‘British emigration’ or within a ‘British diaspora’ as convention requires the separation of the distinct countries that comprise the British Isles despite a long history of peoples moving between these locations. This study has referred to the movement of Irish immigrants to Glasgow for example, and to Trevelyan’s fear of the ‘Celtic people’ migrating south into England in search of

⁸ This definition was developed by Walker Connor and quoted in K. D. Butler ‘Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse’ *Diaspora* Volume 10, Number 2, 2001, p. 189. See also R. Cohen, *Global diasporas: an introduction*, University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1997 pp. 180-184 and those listed in Footnote 9 below.

⁹ For a comprehensive discussion about the term ‘diaspora’ in relation to British emigration see E. Richards, ‘The British Diaspora in Wide-angle’ in Darian Smith, K, Grimshaw, P, Lindsey, K and McIntyre, S (eds), *Exploring the British World*, RMIT Publishing, Melbourne 2004, E. Richards, *Britannia’s Children*, Hambleton and London, 2004, S. Constantine ‘British emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880: From overseas settlement

employment.¹⁰ The views of Richards are largely shared by Stephen Constantine, however, Constantine claims that Scottish Highlander emigration does incorporate some features of a diasporic community because:

...their nineteenth century migration was prompted by cultural as well as, perhaps, economic oppression and the determination to preserve identities threatened by the English language or the Established Church.¹¹

This study has shown that the Moidart people were dispersed over time from their homeland to both Canada and Australasia. Whether the term 'diaspora' is appropriate in reference to Highland emigration can be tested by applying the following key features or characteristics developed by William Safran:

- 1) dispersal to two or more locations
- 2) collective mythology of homeland
- 3) alienation from hostland
- 4) idealization of return to homeland and an ongoing relationship with the homeland.¹²

to diaspora?' in Bridge, C and Fedorowich, K (eds), *The British World: Diaspora, Culture and Identity*, Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2003.

¹⁰ See Chapter two p. 132.

¹¹ Constantine, 'British Emigration to the Empire-Commonwealth since 1880:' p. 24.

¹² See William Safran in Butler 'Defining Diaspora' p. 191. Robin Cohen has 8 similar points in Cohen *Global Diasporas* pp 180-184.

At one level this research has identified many examples of the ways in which the Moidart people met specific examples of the above criteria in Victoria. The presence of extended Households along with anecdotal evidence of the struggles of individuals to accept their new condition and homeland, are evidence of both the dispersal and alienation elements of Safran's model. Further evidence of the feelings of alienation can be seen in the desire of many Households to live in close proximity to others in Belmont and at Little River. Their actions in establishing parallel structures within the Catholic Church also suggest the presence of a physical, social and liturgical alienation from mainstream Catholicism in Victoria. Both of these features will be analysed to a greater extent later in the chapter. Those who had responsibility for organising emigrations from the Highlands also recognised the pain associated with this 'dispersal' and became anxious that this should not deter people from emigrating in the future. A statement by the General Acting Committee of the Skye Emigration Society argued persuasively for the destitute people of Skye not to let this sense of loss stop them from leaving:

How many of the existing families in the land are there who have not sons and daughters, brothers and sisters in the colonies? Is it harder for you to leave your native land than it was for them? They have subdued

the feeling of pain, and so ought you, for you have stronger reasons for emigration than they had.¹³

Later, the chapter will provide evidence of Safran's key features which point to the reality of a Highland diasporic community, in Geelong and surrounding districts.

5.4 The contact phase

For the Highlanders in Victoria a range of environments, institutions, individuals and organisations all supported their attempts to maintain aspects of tangible and intangible culture and identity. As shown in chapter three the goldrushes physically separated many of the single men from their Households as they flocked from one field to the next in their quest for a fortune. Many however, were brought together as they worked and lived in 'mini' Highlander communities comprising men from the same district or township in Scotland thereby preserving both religious and linguistic traditions for a period of time. This can be seen in the case of the Muirlaggan miners from Lochaber who worked on the Ballarat fields. The presence of school-age children on the goldfields resulted in Highland religious institutions such as the Free Church

¹³ T. E. Fraser and E. Taylor, 'Statement by the General Acting Committee of the Skye Emigration Society' in W. B. Clarke, *"Araminta" Emigrant Ship 1852*. p. 8.

opening schools and employing Highlanders such as John McIver as teachers and community leaders.

Chapter three also demonstrates the desire by many squatters to employ entire Households on their pastoral runs resulting in several Households settling together in certain instances. Squatters from Highlander backgrounds like Niel Black ensured that Highland religious practices such as bible reading and the strict observance of the Sabbath were maintained amongst their employees. The examples of the Moidart Households in chapter four who settled and purchased urban house allotments in close proximity to each other created their own mechanism for maintaining their Highlander traditions in Belmont. This practice was also evident amongst the Highlander Households at Little River. Highland culture and language was also preserved within the three Households from Moidart and Skye whose members met initially on board the 'Araminta' and who later settled together as a small community amongst other Highland Households at Lake Bolac. The licensing of hotels to Highlanders also assisted in creating venues for socialising as a community. The naming of these establishments provides clear evidence of the creation of links between the original owner and the Highlands. 'The 'Argyl Arms Hotel' in Hamilton and the 'Commun Na Feinne Hotel' in Geelong all testify to this desire to maintain links.

The research of historians such as Andrew Hassam has shown that many

nineteenth century passengers identified primarily as Scots, Irish or English rather than British on their arrival in Australia. This sense of national consciousness was sustained and preserved on board ship during the journey to Australia through the daily organisation and accommodation of passengers according to nationality, region, language background, class, gender, marital status and religion. Hassam, Patrick O'Farrell and David Fitzpatrick have all drawn upon the writings of immigrants undertaken during the voyage to form important conclusions about the nature and influence of the voyage on identity and culture. Hassam's research, using passenger diaries, has revealed how individuals from literate backgrounds understood themselves according to their class and how the organisation of space on board ship assisted in maintaining the social strata on board:

When an emigrant sailed to Australia in the nineteenth century, the space he or she occupied on board ship was not just a physical space marked out by decks and bulkheads, it was a social space which aligned the passenger with a certain social class.¹⁴

¹⁴ A. Hassam, 'Our Floating Home: Social Space and Group Identity on board the Emigrant Ship', *Working Papers in Australian Studies* University of London, 1992. p.1.

Patrick O'Farrell, however, through his study of letters written by Irish immigrants, concludes that for many Irish immigrants the physical voyage away from Ireland also included a degree of psychological and emotional 'distance' arguing that:

Early enthusiasm in the emotional atmosphere of leaving home on a strange and hazardous journey, gave way to indifference as the impending approach of the new life in Australia came to dominate the passengers' thoughts to the exclusion of all else. It was as if the hallowed religious aura, and the traditional sense of the sacred habitual to the old world, waned with nautical distance.¹⁵

Prentis points out that many Scots arrived with a strong sense of Scottish nationalism and identity. Although Scotland had politically united with England in the eighteenth century the fact that Scotland retained its own systems of education, religion and civil law and jurisdiction, all contributed to the maintenance of separate traditions and cultures amongst the Scots. This was largely due, in the opinion of Prentis, to the fact that:

¹⁵ P. O'Farrell, *Letters from Irish Australia, 1825-1929*, New South Wales University Press, Sydney, 1984. p. 31.

The Scots had accepted a union settlement with their southern neighbours in 1707 whereby they continued to worship, speak, be educated, married and divorced, policed, judged and locally governed in ways different from those of the English. Thus there continued to be a strong cultural affinity among Scots and a marked identity sustained not just by sentiment but also by a strong civic culture as well.¹⁶

Richards' understanding of the sense of identity as borne by newly arrived Highlanders in Australia, however, contains a stronger relational dimension arguing that this identity had its genesis within familial relationships which gradually extended to encompass broader notions of society and country as illustrated in Chapter one.¹⁷ This study largely supports his statement in that the evidence demonstrates that the central concept of the 'Household' as described in the introductory chapter as pivotal in Highland society, continued to remain important but was vulnerable and subject to changes in composition for many reasons in Victoria.

In the case of these Households it may be argued that their arrival in Victoria (Berry's contact period) did not involve the clash of two very different cultures. The chapter will, however, provide evidence of a certain level of antagonism towards the attempts by Scots in Geelong to maintain their

¹⁶ M. Prentis, 'Haggis on the High Seas. Shipboard Experiences of Scottish Emigrants to Australia, 1821-1897', *Australian Historical Studies*, Volume 124, October 2004. p. 296.

language and traditions. Cultural contact between the Highlanders and others from Britain and Ireland had many repercussions one of which was a decline of the dominance of Gaelic (and its subsequent replacement by English) amongst Highlanders in a relatively short period of time. Those advocating either assimilation or the need for the Highlanders to acknowledge and accept the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon culture in the Colony were strongly opposed to the establishment of cultural and political organisations such as the *Comunn na Feinne* Society which, translated into English means 'The society or meeting of young men or the brotherhood of Fingalians'.¹⁸

Faced with their minority status the Scots had several possible choices or ways to respond in this contact stage. Firstly, they could choose to 'disappear' culturally and to relinquish external cultural traits or aspects such as language and religion that set them apart from other communities. They could therefore choose to 'shed their Scottishness' and join the mainstream Anglo-Saxon society of the day. Many Presbyterian Scots did just this by changing their denomination and joining the Church of England and this situation will be further examined in the section related to marriage and social mobility. The Catholic Highlanders, however, defied assimilation into the dominant Irish Catholic community of the time choosing to retain their Scottish identity.

¹⁷ See Richards' quote in Chapter one p. 72.

¹⁸ *Comunn na Feinne source book and newspaper cuttings, 1843-1975 From the Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer Geelong Record Series 1075, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1843-1975.*

A second option was to exaggerate their Scottish and Highlander identity and nationality in order to maintain a sense of confidence and strength as a minority community. This can best be seen perhaps in the proliferation of Scottish organisations such as Caledonian Societies, St Andrew's Societies and Burns Clubs that sprang up across the Colony. The Commun na Feinne Society in Geelong was an organisational response on the part of a small group of Scots to form a society through which to promote their sense of identity and nationality to others in Geelong and district. This study will argue that this Society in particular played an important political and advocacy role on behalf of the Scots as well as an educational and social role.

Scottish cultural organisations in Victoria had a three-fold purpose. As well as providing opportunities for Scots to meet socially and venues for Scots to seek out other Scots for business purposes, many also had a benevolent purpose with part of their work financially supporting members of the Scottish community. The Royal Caledonian Society of Melbourne typified both these aims. Formed in April 1858 it was responsible for the organisation of several Scottish gatherings in the 1860s with the gathering in 1860 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground attracting twenty thousand people. Today its objects include: "to foster a taste for all Scottish culture including music and sport; to promote

brotherhood and good fellowship amongst its members; and to provide advice and assistance to Scottish folk from overseas.”¹⁹

As Cliff Cumming notes the formation of such societies and organisations provides evidence of the desire and determination of the Scots not to ‘disappear’ as a national group within the ethnically diverse society in which they found themselves:

Scots in Port Phillip were determined not to be submerged in the colony nor to be absorbed into some common migrant mass identity. They were determined, too, not to be regarded as anything less than equal with the other major national groups.²⁰

A sense of ‘Scottishness’ continues to survive today in Victoria in the form of Highland Gatherings in centres settled by the Highlanders such as Geelong and Maryborough, the continuing support of local pipe bands and through the many Scottish Clan Societies. As Paul Basu notes:

¹⁹ Author unknown (date unknown). The Royal Caledonian Society of Melbourne, <http://www.geocities.com/endeavour_uksa/caledonians.html 20059> (accessed 9 March 2005).

In spite of two centuries of movement and migration, a sense of belonging to a distinctively Scottish community is maintained in the diaspora by a powerful emotional attachment to an imagined homeland, the Highlands of history and myth and a celebration of tradition and continuity.²¹

5.5 The Catholic Church and its role in the adaptation phase

Marjory Harper has suggested that “Among the institutions which migrants transplanted or sought to re-establish, the most prominent were usually the church, the school, and the ethnic association.”²² Cumming, through his research on the Scots in the Port Phillip District between 1838 and 1851 concurs, claiming that the foundation of Scottish religious institutions such as the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland in the Colony affirmed a broad sense of Scottish national identity:

²⁰ Cumming, C 'Vision and Covenant-Scots in Religion, Education and Politics in Port Phillip 1835-51' Unpublished PhD Thesis, Department of Social Sciences, Deakin University, Geelong, 1998, p. 25.

²¹ P. Basu, 'Economic & Social Research Council funding application statement,' *Highland Homecomings research Project* 1998.

<<http://www.btinternet.com/~paulbasu/proposal.html>> (accessed 25.5.04).

²² M. Harper, 'Crossing the Atlantic: Snapshots from the Migration Album' in Barbara J. Messamore (ed), *Canadian migration patterns from Britain and North America*, University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 2004. p. 26.

As a visible and tangible institution it [the Presbyterian Kirk in the colonies] would, through its distinctive form of worship and its Scottish ministers and teachers, continue to call back to memory the clear message of the national religious distinctiveness of its members within a migrant community where Scots, and more importantly, Presbyterians generally would form a minority among several ethnically and denominationally distinct peoples.²³

Cumming concludes in his research that the process of establishing a religious community separate from the dominant community was about claiming a sense of religious identity as a minority group within Colonial society.

His conclusions can also be confirmed in the case of Scottish Catholics. The evidence suggests that the work of the Scottish Catholic priest Ranald Rankin contributed to the maintenance of an ongoing Scottish Catholic identity in Victoria separate from that held by Irish Catholics. Following their arrival several of the Moidart Households joined with other Catholic Highlanders to re-establish a Catholic community of their own. Rankin and the Little River settlement became the centre of this movement. This re-establishment process was begun within two years of their arrival. This desire on the part of the

²³ Cumming, 'Vision and Covenant' p. 47.

Highlanders to cement their religion in the new land so early in the contact period was in stark contrast to the response by some Catholic Irish at this time. Patrick O'Farrell claims that the voyage to Australia for many Irish Catholic immigrants; "...became a kind of pilgrimage – away from religion".²⁴ O'Farrell is of the view that "the length of the voyage disrupted previous patterns of life and eroded class and religious practices and collapsed old practices particularly in relation to religion and social authority."²⁵ Considering that the Highlanders were a minority group within three broad groups, the Victorian Catholic Church, the wider Scottish community and the broad Victorian community, the task of establishing a distinctively Highland community in these early years becomes even more difficult.

In 1852 the Irish dominated the Catholic Church in Victoria. The Australian Catholic population was also largely Irish due to the transportation of Irish convicts. As O'Farrell notes "Of convicts transported to Australia up to 1868 30,000 men and 9,000 women came from Ireland."²⁶ Many single Irish women migrated to Australia in the 1840s and 1850s escaping the poverty and destitution of their homeland. As a result of assisted immigration the Catholic population continued to grow but with insufficient numbers of priests. In 1848 Victoria had only two Catholic churches but by 1861 it had 64. Although the

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 2

²⁶ P. O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian history*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1992. p. 2.

number of Catholic churches increased, Australia had only one priest for every 1,500 Catholics in 1850 and by 1860, there were 2,000 Catholics for each priest. Melbourne had a bishop and 14 priests in 1852²⁷ and, according to O'Farrell, "By 1858 the estimated Catholic population of Victoria was between 60,000 and 70,000 for whom there were thirty-six priests."²⁸ By 1870, there were 170,000 Catholics in Australia of whom an estimated 100,000 were born in Ireland.²⁹ Bishop James Alipius Goold, appointed Bishop of Melbourne in 1847, spent time in Ireland trying to attract priests to the Colony to meet the needs of his expanding community, particularly during and after the Victorian goldrushes. The first priest, Father Patrick Geoghan, an Irishman, was sent to Melbourne by the English Archbishop Polding of Sydney.³⁰

Although the Irish statistically dominated the Catholic Church the entries in the baptismal register of St Francis Church, Melbourne, between 1839-42, provides another perspective on the composition of early Catholic families. The entries include Scottish Highlander surnames such as Cameron, McLean, Kennedy, McDonald, Corbett, McIntosh and MacKillop confirming that

²⁷ Ibid, See pp. 87-88 for a statistical analysis of the impact of the growth of Catholicism in both Victoria and wider Australia.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 85.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ For an outline of the history and development of the Catholic Church in Victoria see W. Ebsworth, *Pioneer Catholic Victoria*, The Polding Press, Melbourne 1973 and M. Pawsey, *The Demon of Discord: Tensions in the Catholic Church of Victoria 1853-1864*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1982.

Highlanders were active members of the Victorian Catholic Church from its beginnings.³¹

5.6. A request for Father Ranald Rankin

Less than twelve months after their arrival in the Colony the Moidart Catholics responded to their minority status within the Church by joining with others to petition for a priest from Scotland who could speak Gaelic and to whom they could confess in their “native language”.³² Their action suggests a level of unease with the Irish nature of the Church. Secondly, it represents a considered wish by the people to maintain their Scottish Catholic traditions and links with their former Highland districts in Australia.

The task of obtaining a Scottish Gaelic-speaking priest was difficult, arduous and complex but perseverance won out. The process began on 8 August 1853 with the signing of the following petition in Melbourne by 118 people of Scottish origin:

We the undersigned natives of Scotland, numbering one thousand

³¹ M. A. Hall, *Roman Catholic Baptisms/Burials at St Francis Melbourne 1839-1842, Marriages at St James Cathedral Melbourne 1837-1891*, Box 114/1, Rare Books Section, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 1927. pp. 134-170.

³² A. Chisholm, ‘Petition to Right Rev. Doctor Goold’ OL/45/10, *Oban Letters*, Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, 1853. No page numbers recorded.

residing in the Colony of Victoria, feeling the want of a clergyman who can speak the Gaelic language, most respectfully and earnestly request of the Right Rev. Doctor Goold Lord Bishop of Melbourne, to apply to the Right Rev. Doctor Murdoch of Glasgow, for one or more priests, to whom we can confess in our native language, and we would, with due submission, suggest the name of the Rev. Ronald [sic] Rankin of Moydart, Inverness-shire, a clergyman known by many of the subscribers and who, they are satisfied, is well qualified to promote their spiritual interests and to render efficient services to religion in this important Mission. We agree to defray all the expenses that may be incurred.³³

It was signed and dated the next day by Archibald Chisholm, “Captain late of the Madras Army”.³⁴ The signatures included many of the surnames appearing in the St. Francis Church baptismal register.

The document provides important information about the Scottish Catholic community as well as other Scots in Victoria at this time. Signatories came from several Catholic Highland districts in Inverness-shire (apart from Moydart), including Lochaber and Arisaig. Other signatures were names of Irish extraction whose families may have migrated to Scotland. The presence

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Chisholm, ‘Petition to Right Rev. Doctor Goold’, page number unrecorded.

of these signatures of Irish extraction might be explained through the actions of Father Rankin. Rankin had compiled a prayer book in Gaelic and this book was distributed amongst both the Scottish Catholics in the Highlands as well as Irish Catholics in America. Reverend Eric Clancy, whose great grandmother was a sister of Rankin, draws on an article published in the *Catholic Penny Magazine* which explains the strong connection between the Irish and Scottish Catholic communities in terms of commonality of linguistic heritage:

If there be one thing more than another, which calls for the active co-operation of Irishmen in a particular manner, in favour of the Rev. Mr Rankin, it is that he has, with considerable pains and talents compiled a prayer book (the first of its kind) in the Gaelic language, entitled 'The Christian's Guide', published this year in Aberdeen, and not only circulated in the Highlands of Scotland, but also amongst Scottish and Irish Catholics in America. It is a curious fact, that from the affinity which the Gaelic has with the Irish language, many in the Highlands of Scotland can understand the latter.³⁵

Therefore there may have been a community of Gaelic speaking Irish Catholics in Victoria who were also eager to obtain an additional Gaelic-speaking priest. Further examination of the signatures on this petition provides new insights

³⁵ *Catholic Penny Magazine* No. 20, Saturday 28 June 1834 and quoted in Clancy, E., (unknown) 'The Rev. Ranald Rankin', Rev. Fr. Linane's priest Files, A-Z, Archives of

into the ways in which people identified as Scots in Victoria in this early contact period.

Two brothers, Allan and Donald McVarish signed the petition reverting to their former Moidart name of 'McVarish', before this was changed to 'McDonald' just prior to their emigration.³⁶ This may indicate some fluidity in names at this time or it may be evidence of a desire to return to the original name and a disassociation from the surname of the landowner and their removal from his estate. Rankin's cousin Donald and his son Angus who were both Presbyterians from Hamilton also signed. The petition included at least one signature from a member of the Free Church of Scotland, James Murray, who married a Catholic Highlander.³⁷ The names also demonstrate that all social classes were united by this cause as the petition was signed by members of the Scottish middle class including the MacKillop, Chisholm and Cameron families.

The signing of a petition such as this can be viewed from a number of perspectives. Firstly it can be seen as a political act, designed to claim a space

the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Melbourne.

³⁶ John Watts asserts that the name 'MacVarish' was a Moidart name and confined to Moidart until approximately 1800. Many surnames were changed to 'MacDonald' around this time by Estate Factors. See J. Watts (ed), *Moidart among the Clanranalds*, Birlinn Ltd, Edinburgh, 1997. p. 237.

³⁷ See Appendix A Household 21. James Murray married Catherine McDonald at St Mary's Geelong. Marriage register number 81, 7 June 1854.

or to retain a sense of ‘Scottishness’ within the overwhelmingly Irish Catholic Church in Victoria at this time. This included the explicit intention to maintain a distinct Scottish Gaelic identity into the future and strongly suggests that Gaelic was widely spoken and understood at this time. Secondly, obtaining the release of Father Rankin could be seen as a ‘good Scottish cause’, one that transcended both the denominational and linguistic barriers and prompted the Scottish community to rally together. It is also likely that Protestants from districts near Moidart also knew Rankin and supported his release. Signatories from members of both the Presbyterian and Free Presbyterian Churches demonstrate a desire by Protestant and Catholic Scots to work together for the common good on this task. Finally, this document appears to represent a sense of a transplanted Scottish nationalism in Australia with signatories representing many parts of the Highlands (and possibly Lowland counties as well). The petition is clearly designed to transplant distinctive elements of Highland Catholicism such as pastoral ministry and administration of the sacraments in Gaelic by a local and known priest.

Rankin was also keen to emigrate with his people. He wrote to Bishop Scott in Glasgow three months before the first Households left Moidart imploring the Bishop to allow him to accompany the people:

I implore your Lordship to make [exemption] of poor unworthy one, for the spiritual consolation of hundreds of Catholics about to emigrate, and those who have emigrated. I have a will, and a [turn] for the drugery required by people in their [...] Once more I cheerfully volunteer my service to those I pity most. The very thought of so many poor Catholics encountering so many dangers a simple prey to devouring wolves is to me unsupportable.³⁸

Rankin was the second Catholic priest to attempt to obtain permission to leave Scotland to accompany emigrants to Australia. Father Coll MacColl wrote in 1839 for permission to join the people from Arisaig, Knoydart and Moidart who had migrated to Australia.³⁹

The petition was not successful in obtaining Rankin's release, however, a second petition, this time sent to Cardinal Antonelli of the Holy See, resulted in Rankin's exeat or release from his diocese in Scotland. He arrived at Port Phillip on board the 'James Baines' on 23 October 1855.⁴⁰ Rankin wasted little time in reuniting with his family and former parishioners. Three days after his arrival in Melbourne in 1855 Rankin wrote to the Vicar General of the Catholic Diocese of Melbourne stating:

³⁸ Rankin, OL1/45/8, *Oban Letters*, 4 March 1852, p.2.

³⁹ C. McColl Letter to Bishop Scott, 21 March 1839, OL1/27/18, *Oban Letters Catholic Archives*, Edinburgh, 1839. pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ See 'The late Rev. Ranald Rankin', *The Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, 20 February 1863, Geelong. Page unrecorded.

I have the opportunity of going gratis to Kyneton, along with Mrs Captain Chisholm and son. My youngest sister and little nephew came along with me. I have a sister and family in Kyneton and another sister and family at Bendigo. Some of my former hearers reside at Kyneton and also my friend Captain Chisholm. This trip will enable me to find out some of the scattered Highland tribe.⁴¹

The “scattered Highland tribe” at Kyneton included Angus and Marjory MacDonald and John MacPherson, all from Moidart but not part of the 1852 emigrants in this study. Rankin’s early years in the colony were spent in a number of locations across the Western District. His first appointment was to the Parish of Geelong which included Colac, Ararat, Little River and the land between Geelong and Queenscliff where many Moidart Households were living in 1855.

From Geelong Rankin was appointed to Portland where he arrived in May 1856. He continued on to work in Hamilton in June of the same year. Here he renewed his acquaintances with his cousin Donald Rankin, a Presbyterian who had married a Catholic and who, with two other relatives and their families,

⁴¹ Extract from a letter written by Rankin on 26 October 1855 and quoted in *The Rev. Ranald Rankin* by Rev. Eric G. Clancy, Archivist, Uniting Church in Australia, Sydney (not dated), p. 4 and courtesy of Rev. Fr. Linane’s *Priest Files A-Z*, Archives, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne. 321

had arrived together in Hamilton from Fort William, Inverness-shire in 1854.⁴² There were also other Catholic families from Lochaber living in or near Hamilton including the uncle of Blessed Mary MacKillop who lived at Dunkeld. Mary's father Alexander died later at Hamilton.

From Hamilton Rankin moved to Ballarat where he worked between November 1856 and February 1857 and where he again met former parishioners. Whilst living at Ballarat he celebrated the marriage of a former parishioner, Mary Kennedy of Moidart, and John McDonald of Arisaig, at Clunes on 27 December 1857 thus renewing his acquaintance with the McNeil and Kennedy Households.⁴³ It is also possible that he met with Ewen, Archibald and Sarah McDonald who were living at Learmonth near Ballarat at this time and had lived a few doors from Rankin at Scardoish in Moidart.⁴⁴

5.7 Rankin's role in providing education

Rankin also maintained his commitment to providing education for the students in his care in Australia and was instrumental in opening and personally contributing to the costs of several schools in the Geelong area. In September 1857, Rev. J. B. Hayes applied for funds through the

⁴² D. H. Rankin, 'Scottish Highlanders and early Victoria' *The Advocate*, 9 July 1964 Melbourne, page number unrecorded.

⁴³ I am grateful to Jan Cannon, Canberra, for information re this marriage record.

⁴⁴ See Household 21 in Appendix A.

Denominational Schools Board to open a Catholic school at Little River. Plans and specifications for the new Catholic school were submitted along with a subscription list of donations amounting to £149. Among the subscribers were Mr Chirnside, the owner of Werribee Station and a Presbyterian, along with the Scottish Catholic Households of Ewen and Donald Grant, Donald and John McIntosh, Ewen McDonald, Duncan Cameron and Ranald Rankin (who contributed three pounds).⁴⁵

Rankin also contributed towards the building and furnishing of Catholic schools at Kildare (three pounds) and Newtown (ten pounds). Whilst the subscription list from Kildare contained no Scottish surnames, the letter for the Newtown school contained a supplementary list of the names of students residing within one mile of the school. The list contained the names of five students named 'McDonald'.⁴⁶ A Catholic school was also opened at Sutherlands Creek where a large number of Highlanders were living. Of the 60 children engaged to attend the school at Sutherland's Creek, eight were named 'McDonald' and listed from number 45 to 52.⁴⁷ Rankin also applied by letter

⁴⁵ Letter from Rev. Bleasdale forwarding a list of subscriptions towards the erection of the Roman Catholic school house at Little River, amounting to £150 and specifications with architect's certificates. VPRS 61/P/0000, Unit 000019, Letter 58/872, Inward registered correspondence, PROV, Melbourne, 1858.

⁴⁶ Letter from Dean Hayes enclosing list of 86 children residing around the Newtown Roman Catholic school with list of subscriptions amounting to £491. VPRS 61/P/0000, Unit 000014, Letter 57/1517, Inward registered correspondence, PROV, Melbourne, 1857.

⁴⁷ Author unknown. List of sixty children engaged to attend the Roman Catholic school at Sutherland's Creek and stating that a subscription list will be sent as soon as the sum of £200 is collected. VPRS 61/P/0000, Unit 000014, Letter 57/1515, Inwards registered correspondence file, PROV, Melbourne, 1857.

for the salary for a sewing mistress at the Catholic school at Fyansford and £30 was sanctioned for this purpose on 6 July 1857.⁴⁸

His final appointment was to Little River in 1857 where he became the first and only parish priest. His mission at Little River extended north to Werribee and south to Steiglitz. He built a small residence and a stone church at Little River in 1857 and opened a school in 1858 along with a second school at Steiglitz. He lived out the remaining seven years of his life at Little River dying in 1863.⁴⁹ His coffin was carried by parishioners from Little River suggesting the continuing presence of a significant Scottish Catholic community in 1863.⁵⁰

Following Rankin's death in 1863 Goold requested Bishop Murdoch of Glasgow to send a replacement priest from Scotland.⁵¹ This request by Goold to Murdoch may have occurred for cultural, social and political reasons. Firstly, Goold was of the opinion that the Catholic Scots remained in need of a Gaelic-speaking priest which in turn strongly suggests that Gaelic was still widely used in this community and that little integration by the Scots into the

⁴⁸ Form letter from R. Rankin applying for a sewing mistress salary for the Fyansford Roman Catholic school, VPRS 61/P/0000, Unit 000013, Letter 57/1203, Inwards registered correspondence file, PROV., Melbourne, 1857.

⁴⁹ Author unknown, 'Memories and musings', *The Advocate* Melbourne 7 September 1950. pp. 4-5.

⁵⁰ Clancy, *The Rev. Ranald Rankin*, p. 5.

⁵¹ See M. M. Pawsey, *The Demon of Discord: Tensions in the Catholic Church of Victoria 1853-1864*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

wider Catholic community had taken place. Secondly, the political persuasion of the middle class Catholic Scots had remained sufficiently strong to persuade Goold of their continuing need of a priest of their own. A 'middle class' was largely missing from the predominantly working class Catholic Church created by the Irish immigrants and was in contrast to the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches at this time. Thirdly, Goold was in a difficult situation having met with much opposition from his Irish priests in terms of his decision making processes. He may have viewed the arrival of a non-Irish clergyman as a way of reducing this tension knowing that it was unlikely that a Scottish priest would support the sentiments of the Irish clergy in Victoria, given the historical tensions between both groups of clergy in Scotland. Under this arrangement Goold would receive an additional priest to meet the growing needs of his community but not another Irishman. Whatever the motivation, the request from Goold was rejected by Murdoch for as he stated in his reply to Goold:

I can procure very few students from the mountains as the population has been so reduced by emigration to Canada and Australia. The congregations are small: but they are far separated.⁵²

So began the assimilation of the Scottish Catholics into the predominantly Irish Church and the beginnings of the adaptation phase.

⁵² *Fr. Linane's Priests' files A-Z*, Volume 184, R5-R5A, Archives, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Melbourne.

5.8 Summation of Rankin's work and influence

Rankin's life had an impact on the lives of many people both within and across Scotland and Australia. Clancy notes that an obituary for a niece of Rankin who died forty years after his death and published in an Aberdeen newspaper stated:

Fr. Rankin is still remembered on the west coast for his gifts as a poet and preacher. His beautiful hymns, songs and witty sayings were familiar to her while her own recollections of Highland lore became more vivid as time advanced.⁵³

The impact of his work had far reaching consequences for his parishioners. Firstly his location and journeys enabled him to minister to these people in a language they understood. This was, after all, part of the original reason stated for his release from pastoral duties in Scotland in the petition.⁵⁴ In so doing Rankin played an important role in maintaining spoken Gaelic especially amongst the elderly and within the domain of the family and home. This must have been of particular comfort to many such as the elderly Anne McDonald

⁵³ Quoted in Clancy, *The Rev. Ranald Rankin*, p. 3.

⁵⁴ See pages 315-6 of this chapter.

who, according to Hellier, spoke only Gaelic all her long life.⁵⁵ A reference by Father Charles McDonald to the circumstances under which some members left Scotland suggests that some of the immigrants resisted total integration and possibly retained the use of Gaelic as a sign of this decision:

It must be remembered that several left the old country against their will, and these, in spite of every encouragement, never took kindly to the new one, and utterly failed in accommodating themselves to their altered circumstances.⁵⁶

According to an article in the *Geelong Advertiser* Rankin would preach in Gaelic as part of his visits to his parishioners, another method for assisting with language maintenance.⁵⁷ In an article published in *The Australasian* the following was said of Rankin; “At all times he preached first in English and then in Gaelic...At Geelong he translated into Gaelic ‘The Imitation of Christ’...Fr. Rankin died in 1863 and the Gaelic, too, died out with the old folk”.⁵⁸ Rankin was known and respected for his translations of religious documents from French into Gaelic and for his hymns and poetry. One such hymn is still sung at Midnight Mass at Christmas on the Isles of Barra, South Uist and Eriskay in the Outer Hebrides today. It was taught to the children of

⁵⁵ Hellier, ‘The Humblies’, p. 184.

⁵⁶ Macdonald, *Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds*, p. 219.

⁵⁷ Author unknown, *The Geelong Advertiser* 8 September 1928, Geelong. Page number unrecorded.

⁵⁸ Author unknown, *The Australasian* July 1933, page number unknown.

his parish in Moidart before he left in 1855 and most likely to those in Victoria following his arrival.⁵⁹ This act illustrates Rankin's desire to preserve and pass on both written and spoken forms of Gaelic to the next generation in Victoria. In contrast, the lack of Gaelic speaking clergy in both the Catholic and Protestant communities in the Highlands meant that English, by default, was used more frequently in services and gradually began to infiltrate into broader areas of Highland life back in Scotland:

What it [the increasing use of English in the Church], did lead to however, was the separation in the life and language of the Highlander between Gaelic as a church language and to an extent, in the home, and the increasing use of English in place of Gaelic in education and daily conversation.⁶⁰

Rankin's overall correspondence to his bishop in Scotland (as cited in this study) provides a valuable insight into the nature of the relationship established between himself and his people in Scotland. He saw himself very much as a shepherd with a continuing responsibility to follow and care for his 'flock' regardless of where they chose to settle. The reciprocal nature and strength of this relationship is also apparent in the special wording of the petition drawn up by his parishioners in Australia. It is important to note that the people did not

⁵⁹ For the history of this traditional hymn see Rankin's file in *Linane's Priest Files A-Z*.
⁶⁰ C. W. J. Withers, *Gaelic in Scotland 1698-1981*, John Donald Publishers Edinburgh,

want *any* Gaelic-speaking priest to be sent to them. They wanted Rankin in particular and mentioned him by name in the petition. In this way Rankin provided a direct link with their sense of homeland and identity. His choice of words when referring to the people as “simple prey to devouring wolves” in one letter was most likely a reference to his fear that the people were in danger of losing their faith or identity in Australia once removed from his protection. The words also provide an important insight into how he viewed his role as their priest in Victoria.

Tensions between Irish and Scottish Catholics in the Little River and Werribee districts continued well into the nineteenth century as demonstrated in the choice of a name for the new Catholic Church at Werribee, the building of which began in 1898. The Irish wanted it named after St Michael or St Joseph whilst the Scots argued strongly for St Andrew suggesting that nationalistic allegiances remained strong within both communities. The Scots eventually won the argument and the church was dedicated to St. Andrew.⁶¹ Highlander Catholic families continued to play an important role in the Catholic community of Little River with Ewen MacIntosh donating £2,300 towards the costs of building a new church in the early twentieth century.⁶²

1984. p. 173.

⁶¹ James (ed), *Werribee: The first one hundred years*, p. 4.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p.37.

5.9 The role of marriage in cultural maintenance

The research undertaken by Chris McConville on nineteenth century Irish Catholic domestic servants marrying in South Melbourne has shown that marriage was a means of shifting and improving the social and economic status of these women.⁶³ His research used the marriage records for the Catholic and Anglican parishes of South Melbourne between 1861 and 1891. McConville concluded that Irish women marrying in the Catholic Church were more likely to marry partners of a similar occupation to their fathers or of the same economic and social status as their fathers than those not marrying in the Catholic Church:

Comparing women in the Anglican and Catholic churches in South Melbourne, of the 519 Irish brides marrying in SS Peter's and St Paul's Catholic church, 400 had fathers who were labourers or farmers. In St Luke's Anglican church on the other hand, less than half the 75 Irish brides had parents working in similar positions and less than half were from the provinces of Munster and Connaught.⁶⁴

⁶³ C. McConville (ed), 'Catholics and mobility in Melbourne and Sydney, 1861-1891', *Australia 1888* Australian National University, Canberra, 1979.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, p. 62.

These findings suggest that by marrying in the Anglican Church it was more likely that working class Irish domestic servants could alter and shift their position in society. By marrying an Irish Catholic in the Catholic Church women usually married within their class and therefore were provided with very little opportunity to move upwards in terms of economic and social mobility.

An analysis of the marriages of the Moidart women marrying in St. Mary's Catholic Church, Geelong, over a similar period of time reveals a similar pattern. The occupation of many of the women was also recorded as 'domestic servant'. Between 1853 and 1884 there were fifty-one marriages at St. Mary's Geelong involving one or both partners either born in the County of Inverness-shire or in Geelong of parents born in Inverness-shire. As the County covers five districts (including Moidart) many of these marriages lie outside the scope of this research. Of these 51 marriages 29 involved one or both parties from a Moidart Household.⁶⁵ The average age of women marrying in Geelong was 24 whilst for men it was 28. The place of residence recorded in the register indicates that they were living in Geelong, Belmont, Chiswell or Sutherlands Creek and employed mainly as servants. The men lived in more distant locations from Geelong such as Burrumbeet, Skipton, Sale, Mortlake,

⁶⁵ See entries between 1842 –1884 in the marriage registers of St Mary's Catholic Church, Geelong.

Deniliquin (New South Wales) and Strathbogie where they worked mainly as farmers or labourers.

By examining the occupations listed for both men and women and for the father of the groom it is possible to discern a slight shift in the social status of women, however, the cohort under examination is numerically small. Between 1853 and 1861 the occupations of eight of the 16 brides was recorded as 'servant'. The occupations of the remaining eight were not recorded. This may indicate that these eight women were living at home as members of the Household or may have requested the priest not to enter their occupation. It may also have been the custom of certain clergy only to enter the occupation of the groom as the occupation of 15 of the 16 grooms was recorded. All male occupations were unskilled and included eight labourers or farmers demonstrating their dependence on the pastoral industry for employment. Other occupations listed were 'gold digger', 'shoemaker', 'carrier' and 'publican'. When the occupations of the father of the groom are examined all ten recorded were either 'labourer' or 'farmer' suggesting that the next generation of males was unable to move out of unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Females therefore married into a social and economic class similar to their own thereby maintaining their backgrounds.

Between 1862 and 1871 however, the occupations of the females recorded showed a distinct shift. Of the five brides only one was a domestic servant with

three others identifying as 'spinster', 'midfriend' and 'lady' and one occupation unknown. All five grooms were recorded as 'farmer', labourer' or 'gardener' indicating that males were still largely employed in unskilled or semi skilled work. Care has to be taken, however, in applying the term 'farmer.' In this study the term 'farmer' as used in the Victorian context, applies equally to those who selected relatively small acreages of less than 100 acres as well as to those who selected in excess of 300 acres.

The occupations of women marrying at St. Mary's continued to broaden between 1872 and 1881 with 'domestic servant' as an occupation still present but alongside occupations that now included 'nothing in particular', 'dressmaker' and 'weaver'. Five of the six grooms continued to be listed as 'farmer', 'wool sorter', and 'woolclasser' attesting to the fact that for men employment in the agricultural industry continued to remain dominant whilst women continued to find employment as domestic servants across the 30 year span.

Rankin officiated at many of these marriages indicating that he was seen by certain Households as integral to their desire to maintain a Scottish Catholic Highlander identity along with a continuing family relationship with the priest whom they had known for most of their lives. The degree to which he opted to officiate in particular at marriages involving his former Moidart parishioners is not known as the number of marriages he performed involving couples without

a Moidart connection has not been calculated in this study.

These records strongly suggest that one factor in the choice of a marriage partner on the part of a Moidart Householder was the desire to maintain links with another Moidart Household or with a potential spouse belonging to the same clan. This pattern provides evidence of a transplanted traditional Highland practice in Geelong as a similar pattern can also be discerned in the entries of the Catholic marriage register for Moidart. This register reveals that, of the 144 marriages that took place in Moidart between 1830 and 1854, the majority involved one or both parties from this district probably due to geographical isolation and little opportunity to meet and marry a spouse from outside the district.⁶⁶ Close familial relationships between marriage partners was also evident amongst Highlander marriages in Cape Breton, Canada:

Some Highland emigrants, to be sure, practised close cousin and brother-sister exchange marriages as a direct reaction to their radically changed circumstances.⁶⁷

This same practice can also be found within the Geelong marriages with sisters Margaret and Mary McDonald marrying brothers John and Charles

⁶⁶ Moidart marriage register 1830-1854, Reference RH21/48/2, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh. Page numbers unrecorded.

⁶⁷ J. Symonds, "Surveying the Remains of a Highland Myth" in M. Vance and M. Harper, (eds) *Myth, Migration and the making of Memory*, Fernwood Publishing, Halifax, 1999. p. 84. 334

McDonald.⁶⁸ Whether this was directly related to their new circumstances in Victoria or part of a transplanted cultural tradition is not clear.

It also possible to see another response emerging through later entries in the marriage registers. Gradually the number of inter-religious marriages and mixed-linguistic marriages involving a partner born outside the Highlands or outside Scotland began to increase suggesting an emerging assimilation with the mainstream community.

Female mortality, possibly occurring during childbirth, provided a catalyst for the remarriage of several males left with young families. Entries show that Alexander McDonald remarried in 1855 as a widower aged 34 with three children. Ewen Grant also had three children and had been a widower for three years before he remarried in 1857 aged 40. The two men married women who had not been previously married and both were aged 26. Alexander was born in Moidart and married a Moidart spouse whilst Ewen was from Inverness-shire and also married a partner from the same county. A lessening of a strong connection to both the Catholic Church and Moidart in terms of the choice of a marriage partner can be seen in the following example. John McDonald, a third generation member of a Moidart Household and born in Australia married Annie McDonald in 1881 at St. Mary's. He remarried in 1890 at St. Andrew's

⁶⁸ See marriage register numbers 69 (7 May 1854) and 140 (25 September 1855), St Mary's Marriage Register, Geelong.

Presbyterian Church being recorded as a widower aged 31 with one child living and two children deceased. His first wife had died in 1887. His remarriage was to a spouse with the surname 'Hammond' and so not identifiably of Scottish heritage.⁶⁹ Duncan McIntosh married in 1872 and, with eight children, remarried in 1897. His daughter Janet who had been his housekeeper, married four months later in the same year. Amongst the 51 marriages at St. Mary's five involved the remarriage of a widower with at least one remarriage of a widower at St. Andrew's. The records of St. Mary's contain only one remarriage of a widow for the same period of time.

Marriage also had a further effect on the composition of the Household membership in Victoria. In Scotland, young married couples continued to reside in the Household in order to provide labour for agricultural purposes and because the construction of a new home required finance and land, every acre of which was required to generate income and produce. The situation in Victoria, however, meant that many newly married couples separated from the Household and moved away in order to seek employment or fossick for gold. Duncan and Mary McDonald, for example, registered the births of their seven children in seven different locations.⁷⁰ The evidence demonstrating how separation from family and constant internal mobility may have contributed to

⁶⁹ St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Geelong. Marriage Register, Register Number 178, August 1870 - May 1904. Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong.

⁷⁰ See registrations of birth for the following children of Duncan and Mary McDonald; John (registration number 10089), James (23634), Flora (23137), Ann (20364), Angus (2044)

shifts in their identity as Highlanders is not available. The high mobility evident in some families indicates that dislocation from family with the loss of support of the extended family was an inevitable part of the assimilation and adaptation process.

The marriage of Mary Macdonald (Household 7) and Alexander Macdonald at St. Mary's Church, Geelong in 1866 further exemplifies the degree of dislocation and disruption that characterised the lives of many of the Moidart people in Victoria. At the time of his marriage Alexander was a farmer at Wooroonoke managing 320 acres belonging to his mother and renting a further 320 acres of his own.⁷¹ Like other Highlanders his determination was matched by his willingness to relocate constantly in order to seek employment in locations as diverse as Barrabool Hills, Belmont, Magpie Lead near Ballarat, Leigh River, Batesford, Meredith and finally at Wooroonoke. His employment history saw him working as a butcher, store keeper, dairyman, inspector, rate collector and revenue officer. This marriage was significant for another reason. According to the same entry, Highland traditions were in evidence at their marriage with "...many of their friends attending in highland costume."⁷² At the same time this union provides evidence of at least one Moidart woman achieving a positive change to her social and economic status through marriage.

Sarah (13007) and Janet (17955) Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Melbourne.

The Moidart women were also seeking a change to their status through political means as well as through social and religious customs such as marriage. In 1891 a petition was circulated in major towns and centres in the Colony inviting women to support the granting of the right to vote. The Women's Suffrage Petition was signed by four women with the surname 'McDonald' and all living in Belmont and by one woman with the name 'McDonald' in Skene Street, Geelong.⁷³

5.10 Settlement, land and the process of adaptation

The settlement patterns associated with the Households are another source of information in regard to the ways in which cultural maintenance as well as adaptation took place. The Moidart immigrants settled in a range of locations stretching from Purnim in the west to Kongwak on the Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland in the east. This dispersal was due in part to the goldrushes, the absence of a pre-arrival centralised community and the need for high mobility to seek seasonal work in the pastoral industry.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Whitworth, *Victoria and its metropolis: past and present*, p. 284.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See the signatures belonging to Mary McDonald, Skene Street, Geelong, Ann and Sarah McDonald both of Church Street, Belmont and E. and K. McDonald, both of Belmont, Geelong. Author Unknown (1891). Women's Suffrage Petition, 1891. <<http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/Women'sPetition/pdfs/528.pdf>> (accessed 22 November 2005).

This is in direct contrast to the Canadian settlements of Scotchfort and Beaton Point on Prince Edward Island where many of the Moidart Households settled in a centralised, Gaelic speaking, Catholic Highlander community in the eighteenth century.⁷⁵ Tom Brooking points out that the clustering of Scots as found in parts of Victoria was not replicated in the New Zealand Scottish settlement experience. The situation in New Zealand was characterised by a higher level of dispersal and diffusion:

... and so their contribution in New Zealand has been more subtle and diffuse than in places like eastern Canada, or even Western Victoria in Australia...Gaelic-speaking Highlanders did not concentrate in distinctive settlements as they did elsewhere.⁷⁶

Despite the dispersed nature of settlement this study has demonstrated that for many Households, the act of settlement was a determined attempt to maintain elements of their communal identity. The evidence associated with patterns of communal settlement indicates that these settlements were founded on three major elements; shared membership of a crofting township, residence on a Moidart Estate or religious faith which united people from neighbouring Highland districts such as Moidart and Lochaber.

⁷⁴ See map for locations of settlement of the Moidart Households in Chapter four, p 245.

⁷⁵ Campey, *A Very Fine Class of Immigrants*, pp 23-31.

⁷⁶ T. Brooking, 'Sharing out the Haggis: the special Scottish contribution to New Zealand history' in Brooking, T. and Coleman, J., *The Heather and the Fern* University of Otago Press, Dunedin, 2003 p. 52.

One example of communal settlement based on the shared membership of a crofting township and estate can be found in three households from the crofting township of Scardoish, Moidart, who settled in neighbouring streets in Belmont along with four households from neighbouring Island Shona.⁷⁷ Shona was a short boat journey across Loch Moidart from Scardoish providing opportunities for close interaction between the two communities. Both communities were also located on the same estate in Moidart. It is also possible that the Scardoish Households were related as naming patterns amongst the children were very similar but further research is required to establish this fact. Two of the three Households also contained elderly widows who would have sought the company of each other in their re-settlement in Belmont.

In another example, three Moidart district households, but not from the same township, settled in Chilwell, Geelong. In the case of the Little River and Werribee areas people settled in a cluster of Catholic households from Moidart and the neighbouring Highland district of Lochaber. These settlements were an attempt to maintain a connection to each other based on a shared Highland cultural heritage and, in the case of Little River, their Catholic faith. Although life in Australia was different from that of Scotland the organisation of settlement in Victoria offered people the opportunity to maintain elements of

⁷⁷ See Households 17, 18 and 19 in Appendix A. The two widows were members of 18 and 19. Scardoish and Island Shona were separated by a short boat trip across Loch Moidart

their former life by transplanting these into their new environment. As Butler notes:

To some extent, diasporan representations of the homeland are part of the project of constructing diasporan identity, rather than homeland actuality.⁷⁸

The implementation of these new living arrangements in Victoria supports the fact that relationships with the homeland did not cease to exist following emigration. It was merely reinterpreted and a new model incorporating traditional elements and the continuing maintenance of relationships with other Highlanders was developed in the diaspora.

5.11 The role of cultural institutions and societies

Cultural organisations and societies also had a role to play in assisting some members of the Highlander community to maintain their sense of Scottishness in Australia. Like many immigrants the Highlanders in Victoria sought to ensure that their relationship with their homeland continued in a number of ways as noted by Butler:

therefore it is likely that these Households were either related or knew each other.
⁷⁸ Butler, 'Defining Diaspora', p. 205.

The relationship with a homeland does not end with the departure of the initial group. Not only does it continue, it may also take diverse forms simultaneously, from physical return, to emotional attachment as expressed artistically, to the interpretation of homeland cultures in diaspora.⁷⁹

The most significant cultural and political organisation for this research was the Comunn na Feinne Society of Geelong. This Society was formed during a meeting at the Geelong Gaelic School-House on 1 December 1856. It sought to provide and maintain a direct link between members of the Highlander community in Victoria and the Highlands of Scotland. As mentioned on page 307 the literal English translation of the Gaelic title of the organisation is ‘The society or meeting of young men or the brotherhood of Fingalians’. Fingal was the first of the great Highland chiefs mentioned in traditional literature.⁸⁰ The Society was based on a similar organisation operating in London which had as its main objective that of “assisting ‘Scots Highland’ [sic] and protecting them from being imposed upon as a good many Highlanders could not speak English”.⁸¹ The Geelong Society began with five key objectives; “to cultivate and preserve the Gaelic language and Highland Nationality, morality, philanthropy, archeology and whatever else might interest or instruct

⁷⁹ Butler, ‘Defining Diaspora’, p 205.

⁸⁰ Author unknown. Comunn na Feinne source book and newspaper cuttings, 1843-1975, Volume 1/1075, Geelong Record Series 1075, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong. Page numbers are not recorded in these volumes.

⁸¹ Ibid.

members”.⁸² During the years in which this Society existed many of the names recorded in reports of its meetings belonged to the Clan Donald, however, only one member of a Moidart Household has been identified as a member of this organisation.⁸³

The Geelong Society was important because its membership base reveals much about Scottish society at this time. A list of 65 early members (unfortunately not dated) reveals that the membership only included men and only males from a range of occupations but of similar backgrounds in terms of class. By broadly classifying the occupations of the 65 members into the four categories of professional, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled in the table below, the non-representation of members from unskilled backgrounds becomes apparent. It was therefore largely supported by middle and wealthy classes of Scotsmen to maintain a certain understanding and interpretation of a perceived Scottish identity which was based on class. In addition the majority of the members were from the Lowlands of Scotland raising important questions related to the objectives of the Society in terms of its desire to preserve Highland traditions and culture.

Table 5.1: List of occupations of early members of the Comunn na Feinne Society.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Account of the eleventh Highland Gathering, *The Geelong Advertiser*, 3 January 1871, 343

| Professional | skilled | Semi skilled | Unskilled |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Teacher | Land valuer | Merchant X 3 | Farmer |
| Engineer X 2 | Shipping agent | Hotel licensee X 16 | |
| Architect | Chairman, road board | Store keeper | |
| Doctor X 3 | Secretary, road board | Draper X 4 | |
| | Squatter / pastoralist X 5 | General furnishings | |
| | Printer / book seller | | |
| | Squatter's manager | | |
| | Wholesaler grocer X 3 | | |
| | Auctioneer X 3 | | |
| | Saddler X 2 | | |
| | Member of parliament | | |
| | Builder | | |
| | Customs collector | | |
| | Secretary, Geelong racing club | | |
| | Wholesaler X 2 | | |

Source: Comunn na Feinne source book and newspaper cuttings.⁸⁴

Whilst working class Highlanders may have supported the overall objectives of the Society, the omission of their names from the above list suggests that membership was either not a priority or possibly not financially available to them at this time. Struggling shepherds, woolclassers and labourers with large families to support would not have had sufficient income to pay a membership fee to join the organisation at this time.

Clearly then the Society was not representative of Highlanders in the Western District generally. Its formation was driven by men from professional and skilled occupations and largely from urban regions. A further categorization of members in terms of income would further support this claim. Given the dominance of the pastoral industry in the Geelong region it is surprising that only one member appears to have had a small farmer background. The majority of members with a pastoral and agricultural background were from the 'squatter class.' Amongst the five squatters / pastoralists were John Bell of Bell Park and pioneer and landholder Alexander Thomson. Duncan McNichol who was manager for the squatter Niel Black, was also a member. Those with responsibilities for developing the Colony's infrastructure in terms of roads and the sale of lands were well represented but it was the dominance of members from commercial businesses that makes this composition of interest. Was this organisation set up for the benefits of contracting business as much as for the philanthropic, moral and educational objectives? Whatever the motivation for establishing the organization, cultural superiority as determined by the class of its members appears to have been one of its key features.

The notice inviting people to the inaugural meeting to form the Society in 1856 included the words "All true Britons are invited to attend".⁸⁵ What the words "true Britons" meant in this context is not clear, however, what is clear is that

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

the formation of such a group invoked a strong response in Geelong. Letters to the press challenged those who wanted to pursue notions of cultural separatism. The first letter to the Editor of the *Geelong Advertiser* on this topic was published in the paper on 5 December 1856 and referred to the meeting, in the following manner:

No one can object to their enjoying the pleasure of talking Gaelic, and even singing Gaelic, if they so please; but I cannot but fear that the attempt to keep up the Highlander may injure the Australian. We want to forget national differences and national grudgings, and to unite heart and hand in the service of our adopted country.⁸⁶

These sentiments challenged the Scots to leave behind all cultural attachments and any sense of longing for their homeland of the past. Others went further arguing that it was the duty of all Highlanders to acknowledge Anglo-Saxonism as the only tolerable cultural expression in the new colony:

... When will they [the Highlanders of Geelong] have the sense to recognise Anglo Saxonism as the only nationality to be tolerated in this land!...I would seriously recommend these 'children of the mist' to

⁸⁶ Letter written by "Civil", *The Geelong Advertiser*, Friday 5 December 1856, page number unrecorded.

learn to forget their past renown, and to accept the popular title, which right or wrong, is the boast of every Englishman.⁸⁷

These two letters are examples of evidence of a newly emerging sense of Australian nationalism and loyalty in the Colony and one that was set to challenge those who attempted to maintain or retain loyalties to former homelands. They express a level of indignation and frustration towards those who were seeking to transplant familiar customs and traditions. They also provide evidence of the existence of a non-acceptance of particular communities except on the terms of the writer. The second letter also contains references to the superiority of the 'Anglo Saxon' over the Celtic peoples maintaining the views and attitudes of Trevelyan, Grimes and others already encountered by the Households. The view that the Scots should consider embracing the Anglo Saxon culture of the English and England was once again clearly expressed in the following statement:

Indeed the few among them who pos[s]ess a spark of common sense, are so ashamed of their origin that they have long ago amalgamated with the all-absorbing mass of universal Anglo-Saxonism, compared with which all other races are but a drop in the bucket.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Letter written by "The Anglo Saxon", *The Geelong Advertiser*, Thursday 11 December 1856, page number unrecorded.

This letter led to a response from a Highlander in a letter published on 11 December 1856 in *The Geelong Advertiser*. The author set out a number of objections to these sentiments clearly indicating that the author was not prepared to abandon his Highland identity or to accept an alternative identity as an Anglo Saxon. Although elements of cultural superiority existed in both the Anglo and Celtic communities neither inhibited the attempts by the Highlanders to maintain and celebrate their cultural traditions.

Twelve months later on 1 January 1857 the first Highland Gathering sponsored by the Society was held. The Gathering consisted of Highland games, dancing and athletics events with the Society keen to ensure that all residents of Geelong understood that the games component was open to competitors from all nationalities within the colonies and ‘not exclusively to Highlanders’.⁸⁹ An analysis of the activities associated with the gathering provides evidence of the ways in which Scots from both the Lowlands and Highlands identified with Scotland. The following examples demonstrate that a range of cultural allegiances existed amongst the members of the Society indicating the beginnings of a gradual integration and merging of Scottish and Colonial cultures.

⁸⁸ Ibid, Letter of 11 December 1856.

⁸⁹ Comunn na Feinne, *Source Book and newspaper cuttings*, Volume 1.

The Society wanted to be seen as proudly Scottish by promoting an event that would 'showcase' the local Scots in a positive manner. Its strong message was that the Scots had well and truly arrived as a community, one that would be welcoming and prepared to make a contribution to the cultural life of the Colony. A report of the first 'Grand Highland Gathering' contained strong patriotic themes related to perceived Scottish character traits:

And a memorable day it was to a real Highland Gathering. The historical and traditional associates by which the Highlander is enveloped, give him a supremacy at such gatherings, which he has proudly and self-sacrificingly earned in the past.⁹⁰

Clearly one of the purposes of the day was to provide an opportunity to display historical traditions along with a strong, sentimental affiliation and empathy with the Highlands, its emblems and customs.

Secondly, the Gathering was designed for the Highlanders to exhibit their strength in numbers and to dominate the scene visually by dressing in Highland emblems such as the kilt made from traditional tartans. Although not mentioned in this report all competitors who wore Highland dress were granted free entry to the ground.⁹¹ The Gathering was also an opportunity to reinforce

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

the idea amongst the Scottish Highlanders that emigration to Victoria did not mean a foregoing of all the cultural emblems, practices and traditions of the Highlands. Finally, the Gathering was seen as an opportunity for non-Scots to gain a further appreciation of the chivalrous past and of the contribution of Scottish soldiers to the defence of the British Empire along with the continuing allegiance of the Scottish people, now living in the Colony, to the Queen. This focus may have challenged the Anglo-Saxon community by reiterating that Scotland was as much a part of Great Britain as was England and was just as willing to defend the Empire. Perhaps those Scots from middle and upper class backgrounds and who had achieved much socially and economically by aligning themselves with the monarchy and empire took umbrage at the thought that they were not as 'British' as the English.

A second report of the day focused on the dinner held that evening to celebrate the success of the first Gathering. Although the names were not recorded the order and wording of the proposed toasts drunk during the dinner provide a valuable insight into the allegiances of those present. The report begins with a reference to the carrying of the Society's flag to the dinner:

Between 6 and 7 o'clock pm, after the competitions had closed a sturdy and venerable Highlander of the Clan McDonald came forward as

bearer of the Society's flag from the platform on the grounds to the National Hotel.⁹²

This Clan member may have been John McDonald who acted as the Ranger for the Society.⁹³ The first toast was proposed to 'The health of Queen Victoria, and the British Empire' indicating that those present saw themselves as loyal subjects of the Queen and as members of the Empire. However, were these sentiments the same as those held by the working class Highlanders? The third toast was proposed to 'Stern Caledonia the land of the brave' ("Sir nam be ann na gleann a' na gairdeach" in Gaelic). Other toasts were drunk to individual members of the organisation according to the roles they played at the Gathering. It is surprising that a toast to Scotland by those belonging to a Scottish organization did not occur earlier in the proceedings, however, it has not been possible to discern whether or not the order of toasting had any cultural significance related to shifts in national allegiances. A further example of cultural integration can be gained from an examination of the crest of the Society and described in the following way:

...in centre an entablature representing a well-known incident from Ossian's Poem in the 3rd Book of Fingal surrounded with a wreath of Scotch thistles and supported on the left hand by a Highlander in full

⁹² Ibid.

costume, and on the right by an Aboriginal in the attitude of throwing his Boomerang.⁹⁴

This image pictorially linked Scotland and Australia by using images of the people and flora. The inscription on the crest is translated as ‘Pursue thou the Fame of the Fathers’ and was designed by Archibald Douglas, the President of the Society.

The Society was also involved in promoting education for those students under the age of fifteen and held annual competitive examinations in a range of academic areas including plain English, reading, writing, grammar and Gaelic Orthography as well as awarding prizes for both English and Gaelic poetry. The examinations were open to all students in both national and denominational schools (as well as those not in schools) in Geelong and in the County of Grant. Through these examinations the Society placed a strong emphasis on the acquisition of Gaelic literacy skills to promote the study of Gaelic as a written literary language. This was in contrast to Scotland where the 1872 Education Act made English the medium of all instruction in Scottish schools although census figures suggest that English did not replace Gaelic especially in Moidart. The 1891 Scottish census was the first to attempt to enumerate data on the use of Gaelic. The data received from Moidart and

⁹³ See *The Geelong Advertiser* Tuesday 3 January 1871 and John and Sarah McDonald, Household 1.

Arisaig indicated that of the 242 residents 97.5% spoke Gaelic with 92 residents speaking Gaelic only. All local people spoke Gaelic with many of those born in Moidart described as monolingual Gaelic speakers.⁹⁵ This data strongly suggests that those adult members of the 1852 Moidart Households who were born in Moidart, would have been predominately monolingual Gaelic speakers whilst school-age children had skills in reading both Gaelic and English (according to Rankin's correspondence regarding education in his schools on page 75). The oral Gaelic of the home was viewed by the middle and upper classes as inferior and only associated with people from working class backgrounds. Therefore the status of Gaelic needed to be raised from its association with the working classes by teaching and imposing its literary forms on the next generation in Australia in order to preserve and pass on the stories and mythology found only in the Classical Gaelic literature of the Highlands. Its validity as a language of status lay only within its literary forms and not as a means for daily communication. This view is supported by the following initiative of the Society.

The promotion of the study of Gaelic in Scotland was the subject of a meeting held in Geelong in 1875. Its purpose was to invite Highlanders to consider raising funds to support the establishment of a 'Celtic chair' within Edinburgh University and a committee was formed on 17 September 1875 for the purpose

⁹⁴ *Commun na Feinne Source Book* Volume 1.

of raising £100 amongst the Scottish and Irish Celts as a local contribution. What is not clear however, are the backgrounds of those who supported the establishment of the 'Celtic chair' and whether or not it was a political, social class, linguistic or academic issue or a mixture of all. It is highly improbable that this was an issue of significance for those Highlanders struggling to earn a living as shepherds, miners, domestic servants and labourers and very unlikely that they would be sufficiently motivated to contribute financially to this cause.

By June 1859 a special meeting of the Society was held to discuss a possible change of name from 'Comunn na Feine Society' to 'Scottish Society'. This was an important stage in the history of the group as it represented an awareness of some members of a possible conflict brought about by the Lowlander, English and Irish backgrounds of some members and the Society's name:

Some discussion ensued as to the desirability of retaining for the society its present distinguishing epithet "Highland" or the more comprehensive one "Scottish". Some speakers argued that although Comunn Na Feinne professed to be a Highland Society, still it was largely composed of Lowlanders, and that Englishmen and Irishmen also contributed to swell its ranks. To this the President replied that it

⁹⁵ Alba 1891: Gaidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile No. 002 for Area: Muideart (Moidart) p. 2. www.linguae-celticae.org/dateien/1891_GLP_002Miogharraidh.pdf (accessed 28

so happened that they were exclusively Highlanders who initiated the society, and if they thought it proper to enlarge its basis it should not therefore forfeit its Highland character.⁹⁶

It was resolved to keep the original name but the debate clearly points to a dilemma. The fact that it was largely composed of Lowlanders suggests that Scots from all backgrounds were in need of a Scottish organisation to which to belong. The presence of English members may have been due to links forged between English and Scottish landowners and their families. The inclusion of Irishmen was possibly due, in part, to the linguistic links between the two Celtic and Gaelic speaking communities. At a St Patrick's Day dinner held in 1860 it was reported that a representative of the Comunn na Feinne Society referred to this relationship by way of returning thanks for a toast offered by the chairman:

John Maxwell returned thanks on behalf of the Comunn Na Feinne and rejoiced to see a kindly feeling existing between the two societies. Both institutions were in accord in the spirit in which they were founded, and he trusted that a feeling of good fellowship would long be maintained between them.⁹⁷

November 2005).
⁹⁶ Ibid.

Of interest is the fact that the admission of women to the Society was never publicly discussed according to the Minutes of meetings.

5.12 Letters as expressions of identity and culture

Letters written by the newly arrived immigrants have provided historians with valuable insights into the initial responses and attitudes of those during the contact period. An extract from a letter written by Angus McDonald aged 55 and en route to Colac only days after his arrival, to his brother John in Scardoish and published in the *Inverness Courier* in 1852, reveals how he saw the physical attributes needed by new settlers:

It is murder to bring old people out here; nothing will do but a strong family of men who can stand fatigue and keep sober. A man with a weak family had better stay at home, as he will not get an employer to support them for him; and suppose he did get one pound per day, he could not keep them in life in the town.⁹⁸

This letter contains both a sense of foreboding as well as a reflective comment on the reality of life in the Colony. Angus had quickly learnt the value and

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Letter written by Angus McDonald (Household 15) to his brother John McDonald, at Scardoish, Moidart and published in *The Inverness Courier* Inverness, April 21 1853. Page number unrecorded.

spending power of the pound in Australia and he used his correspondence to warn others in Moidart about the type of workers and families needed in order to do well within the depressed economic conditions of the time. He and his family were forced to travel from Geelong to Colac to accept employment and to receive sufficient wages and rations to support an entire Household. By 1853 the Colony was experiencing a depression which resulted in many immigrants being unable to find ready employment particularly in urban areas. He warned against the emigration of the elderly and those with family members unable or unwilling to work.

Letters received by immigrants from the homeland were also important in the messages they conveyed. Through his reading and study of letters written between Ireland and Australia David Fitzpatrick warns that such letters need to be analysed carefully taking into account "...factual content or revelation of mentality, literary form, cultural significance, or familial function...".⁹⁹ He argues that those who remained in Ireland following the famine reinvented their image of Ireland as home in order to make sense of all the changes that were taking place in their own lives. By also referring to these changes in their letters to Australia the authors fulfilled another purpose:

⁹⁹ D. Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995. p. 26.

Their attempts to describe and analyse Irish conditions also served to discourage those in Australia from lapsing into a static notion of the homeland, formed before emigration and at a risk of being sentimentalised in retrospect.¹⁰⁰

Fitzpatrick also makes a distinction between analysing letters published in newspapers or by organisations and those of a more personal nature arguing that those published in the public domain have often undergone ‘editorial excisions’ and therefore do not always retain their original intention or content.¹⁰¹ The letter written by McDonald was published in the public domain. It is therefore not possible to determine what parts have been changed or removed as a result of editorial intervention.

5.13 Identity and culture through death and cemeteries

This chapter has provided evidence of a continuing sense of ‘belonging to a particular place’ held by the Moidart Households through relationships built on communal places of settlement, membership of cultural organisations, allegiance to clan and kinship patterns via marriage and commitment to religious faith. The evidence also shows that following their deaths, their choice of a final resting-place was often largely determined by kinship and

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 535.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

patterns of extended family interments over many generations as evidenced in the Eastern cemetery, Geelong.

Research undertaken on graves and tombstone inscriptions in the Kyneton cemetery, revealed the names 'Moidart', 'Inverness-shire' and 'Scotland' as the place of birth on several tombstones. The act of recording the place of birth indicates that, for the Highlanders, even in death they wanted to be remembered and recognised as belonging to a particular place. In the case of the Moidart people this may also be linked to a longstanding tradition in Moidart where successive generations were traditionally buried in Clanranald soil on St Finnan's Isle in Loch Moidart, Scotland. Maintaining kinship and clan relationships in Australia following death therefore can be viewed as a continuation of a cultural and religious practice.

5.14 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the various means by which Scottish Highlanders in general attempted to maintain aspects of their Highlander identity in Victoria and to determine the degree to which the Moidart Households as Highlanders were also involved in this quest.

Firstly, it has shown that the shipboard journey played an important role in sustaining this culture and collective identity through the organisation of passengers and the designation of space according to class. The journey for some however, also marked the beginnings of a dismantling of their Clan and previous identity as several arrived having their former names of McIsaac and McEachern (as recorded in the 1851 census) changed to that of 'McDonald' on the nominal passenger list. The petition to Bishop Goold however, shows that the names of several signatories had reverted to their pre-emigration surnames possibly indicating that these earlier changes had been imposed by others against their will.

The working class Highlanders established their own ways of preserving those cultural elements of importance to themselves following their arrival. An examination of the patterns of settlement and mobility amongst the first generation has revealed that kinship bonds, continuing association with Moidart neighbours from crofting townships and farms in Moidart as well as religious faith, all assisted in preserving language and culture at least in the early stages of settlement. Where Households settled alongside relatives and other Highlanders in both urban and rural locations, settlement appeared to be of longer duration, however, Land Act requirements, selections only suited to grazing and not to cultivation and economic constraints all made rural life difficult. The evidence related to settlement at Sutherlands Creek, Little River and Mt. Wallace has shown that many siblings chose to remain within the same

districts as parents thereby continuing to farm collectively across combined acreages. Other evidence points to the fact that siblings kept in close contact once they left the Household following marriage and often settled together in the same district or moved together interstate. This was so for Norman and Ann McDonald who settled with Ann's sister, husband and family at Skipton.

The chapter has established that religious faith became a bridge between the old and the new worlds, particularly following the arrival of their parish priest from Scotland. His arrival also ensured, however, that the Highlander Catholics remained separated from the mainstream Catholic community in the Colony. This is not to suggest that Rankin actively worked to keep his people isolated from the mainstream church. Rather it suggests that his presence and constant travelling to meet with his parishioners across the Colony provided an opportunity to hear and use the language and to maintain contact with each other. He acted as a conduit through which communication and a sense of continuity between Scotland and Australia continued to exist. Had Rankin not followed his people to Australia their separation from the mainstream church would have been impossible to sustain. Without a Gaelic speaking priest assimilation with the mainstream Catholic Church would have occurred more rapidly particularly as so many Households and individuals dispersed across the Colony leaving little option but to join the local Catholic community if they wished to participate in its life.

Marriage was also an important means by which Clan identity, language and religious affiliation for those of marriageable age on arrival was preserved, however, its capacity to maintain this role decreased particularly amongst the younger members of the second generation and within the third generation.

Cultural organisations and groups also played an important role in maintaining a distinctive Scottish presence within Western District society. Many of the initiatives designed to maintain a form of cultural identity as Scots in Australia, however, had little to do with working class Highlanders in general. As seen in the case of the Commun na Feinne Society, notions of 'Scottishness' in Victoria were largely developed and promoted by the educated, literate Lowland Scots from middle to upper class backgrounds and occupations. These notions were constructed through a strong association with the emblems, symbols and customs of the Highlands thereby indicating the strong cultural association, affiliation and identification by all Scots to the tangible culture of the Highlands. Whilst this organisation did much to transfer, establish and maintain certain cultural practices those Highlanders of working class backgrounds were only able to participate in these activities at a very superficial level such as through the Highland gatherings and sporting events. The Highlanders had no option but to acquire both oral and written English language skills if they were to contract business and participate in land dealings in the Colony. English was the language of most public domains in the Colony relegating the use of Gaelic to the church and home domains with

anecdotal evidence suggesting that gradually Gaelic was spoken only by the first generation and often away from the presence of younger children.

By reflecting on the evidence above, the chapter concludes that certain aspects of intangible and tangible Highland heritage, identity and culture continued to exist, although in a modified form, within the Households and the scattered Highlander communities across the Western Districts of Victoria for many years. In the main the evidence does not exist to enable historians to quantify how long the strong cultural traits existed or when they began to disappear. Gradually, however, many of the traditional Highland practices and traditions as well as the language were lost or abandoned as a result of integration with the mainstream community and dispersal across the Colony by the successive generations that followed the first arrivals.