

Conclusion

6.1 General introduction

This study has examined and analysed the lives of a cohort of adults and children in Scotland in order to identify the physical, economic, social and religious factors that contributed to their departure and to determine the factors that accounted for improvements to their economic and social status in Victoria. Importantly, the study has also examined the impact of this migration on those who remained in Moidart as discerning the impact of any emigration on the homeland is often a neglected area in migration studies.

The total sample group of 348 adults and children came from 37 rural, working class Highland Households in Moidart as well as those born during the voyage and in Australia. A total of 226 people migrated to Victoria. They were included in the study because they were resident in Moidart according to the 1851 census as well as members of the 1852 emigration.

6.2 Contribution of this study to the field

The significance of the study relates to the paucity of any systematic attempts to document the life experiences of nineteenth century working class Highlanders prior to leaving their Highland estates, during the voyage and following their arrival in the Colony. This is largely due to the fact that they left little in the way of personal writings such as diaries and items of correspondence which transcend all three phases. As established in the Introductory chapter much of the previous research and literature on immigrant Scots in Victoria has focused on prominent individuals from middle to upper class backgrounds. This is because their lives and contributions lay in the public domain resulting in the creation of extensive documentation.

By identifying the immigrants by name and documenting their experiences which span a period of almost a century and include three generations of family members, the study has redressed some of the depersonalisation associated with earlier research. The study has also ensured that the experiences of female emigrants (both single and married) have been included alongside those of the male labourers and diggers, shepherds and wool classers, a teacher and a priest.

The majority of Households in this study were Catholic in religious background rather than Presbyterian or Free Church of Scotland as in the case of the majority of Scottish immigrants arriving in Victoria at this time. Their Highland and Catholic backgrounds therefore make this group a 'minority

within a minority' which only added to their uniqueness and importance within the broader Victorian Scottish immigrant community.

A case study approach was selected as the research methodology because of the need to undertake this research at three distinct levels; that of the individual, the Household and the total group. Whilst every attempt has been made to locate each individual and Household in the Western District of Victoria (the major geographical focus of this research) the final data contained a limited number of individual persons and Household groups. The study has traced and incorporated the experiences of members of 29 of the 37 Households. The remaining eight Households may have moved to New South Wales to live with relatives who had arrived earlier in the 1838 and 1839 immigrations. Others may have returned to Scotland or migrated to another location such as Canada or New Zealand.¹

The research findings associated with each of the six research questions clearly indicate that many individuals and Households were able to improve their economic and social status and to achieve increased financial security. Evidence associated with house and land ownership, farming stock and

¹ There is an inscribed stone for an Alexander McDonald who emigrated to Australia on the 'Araminta' in 1852 with his parents and younger brother Roderick in the cemetery on St Finnan's Isle in Loch Moidart. It is not clear whether this is a tombstone or a memorial to Alexander. The cost associated with providing a memorial indicates an improved financial status within the family. See also T. Hearn 'Scots miners on the goldfields 1861-1870' in T. Brooking and J. Coleman (eds) *The Heather and the Fern* for an analysis of onwards emigration from Victoria to the goldfields of New Zealand.

property improvements and the possession of assets such as bank account balances and life assurance policies has been used to quantify and measure these positive changes.

6.3 Findings

The findings related to the first research question, which focused on the physical, economic, social and religious circumstances of the Households in Scotland, reveal that there were many contributing factors which led to this emigration. The study concludes that the connections between these circumstances and emigration were complex, interwoven, cyclical and present in Moidart without redress for many generations prior to this emigration. The conclusions reached for each of the set of circumstances will be outlined separately.

As explained in chapter one the mountainous terrain along with poor sandy soils prevented most of the land in the district from being fully utilised and isolated much of the agricultural endeavours, along with the population, to the confined western coastline of the district. The relatively small areas of land suitable for cultivation meant that all three estates were incapable of producing sufficient food for their respective populations as in the case of the Lochshiel Estate. Of its total acreage of 7216 acres only 218 acres were used for the

production of food. The seven townships or farms on this Estate in which the emigrants lived contained a total of 67 Households and 383 residents with the average number of persons in each Household being 5.7. This meant that an average of 3.2 acres was being used for food production for each of the 67 Households. This average is further reduced when the Households from other townships on the Estate, but not included in the study, are taken into account. The study has shown that despite certain actions that were taken by the landlord and financial outlays made in attempts to make additional land productive for the tenants, the arable acreage of the estate remained insufficient. The findings of the study confirm that it was impossible for the physical environment of the district to supply adequate quantities of food for the population.

The economic circumstances included the personal debts of the landowners, the presence of a large number of landless cottars on estates who could not pay rent for the house they occupied further depriving the estates of badly needed income, a lack of industry including an under-developed fishing industry in both the lochs and sea, an insufficient infrastructure on the estates in the form of roads and transport facilities and the depressed cattle market prices resulting in an inability of crofters to pay their rents. The evidence suggests that two differing attitudes were at play. On one hand evidence of a reassessment of rental values due to the depressed circumstances of the tenants suggested a degree of sympathy and understanding on the part of the landowners. But this

sympathy was overridden by the need to find alternative sources of income including rents for the leasing of lands for grazing sheep and which required the removal of the tenants from their lands at Portavata and other areas to Blain Moss to achieve this. In this way the nine households living at Portavata in 1841 were reduced to 4 by 1851 highlighting their vulnerability and economic and social uncertainty through the lack of a leasing arrangement. Although the correspondence reveals that Factors such as Coll McDonald of the Lochshiel Estate were fully aware of the implications of not providing leases, the evidence given at the British Government Inquiry of 1883 shows that leases in parts of this district remained non-existent 30 years later. Whilst Eric Richards, Monica Clough and James Hunter provide many reasons for treating the evidence given at this Commission with caution, it is possible to identify patterns of discontent and recurring themes within the testimony of those who appeared.²

This study has established that the small tenant or crofting classes on the estates were more likely to emigrate than the cottar class due to their inability to contribute financially towards their fares or outfitting. Of the 37 Households only one Household was recorded as belonging to the cottar class in the 1851 census with the head recorded as both 'cottar' and 'carpenter' suggesting that his inclusion might have been due to his trade background. The research

² See E.

findings for farms where both classes were present such as Shona Beag, Scardoish and Eilean Shona show that those recorded as 'crofter', 'farmer', 'agricultural labourer' or 'shepherd' emigrated whilst the 'pauper' and 'cottar' class remained. How the departure of the crofter class assisted in providing the cottar class with economic opportunity or social advancement in terms of finding employment or acquiring land of their own is difficult to ascertain.

The findings emerging from an analysis of the statistics show that of the 226 individuals who left only 37 were aged 40 or above. Seventeen were males and 20 were females. This emigration therefore removed many of the younger members of wage earning capacity and those with the ability and opportunity to seek seasonal work away from the croft at certain times of the year or to combine two forms of work such as fishing and croft work. Therefore emigration deprived Households of a source of supplementary income and extra labourers.

The study reveals that amongst those who left there were 26 Households with children under the age of twelve. Three couples without children also departed for Victoria. Therefore the impact of this emigration was to remove many with familial links to others in the townships and who were of an age to build the social fabric of the community. Statistically, Moidart was swept clean of its children, young people and those physically able to work the land.

A comparison of the 1851 and 1861 census data clearly shows that emigration did reduce the populations of some townships although not necessarily the number of Households. According to the 1851 census for example, there were 20 Households on Eilean Shona. Seven belonged to cottars, one to the manager, ten contained crofters and two belonged to fishermen. Four of the ten crofter Households on Shona emigrated to Victoria in 1852, however, all cottar Households remained behind. Ten years later, according to the 1861 census, there were ten Households designated as 'farmer', three as 'agricultural labourer', one fisherman, one seaman and a shepherd. The remaining two were those of the manager and a mariner which meant a reduction of only two Households. By 1861 the term 'cottar' was no longer in use in the census. Of the seven, four were no longer present on the Island, one was renamed as 'agricultural labourer,' one Household head was by then a farmer and one a shepherd. A second Household by the name of McKinnon had been established and, like the first, was an 'agricultural labourer'. One 1851 'farmer' was recorded as an 'agricultural labourer' in 1861. On the night of the census in 1851 a total of 118 people were present in the 20 Households. In 1861 the number of Households was reduced to 18 with 93 persons present on census night.

The study has also shown that emigration did not always result in the redistribution of land amongst those left behind as can be seen when the 1851 and 1861 croft acreages are compared at Glenuig. In 1851 Households one,

two and three at Glenuig on the Moidart Estate were farming crofts of five acres. In the 1861 census all eight farmers at Glenuig were working crofts of two acres. This suggests that, although there were 14 Households in 1861 compared to 15 in 1851, the crofts left by four Households who emigrated to Victoria were not redistributed amongst those who remained to increase their holdings. The statistics show that the population of Glenuig was reduced from 98 in 1851 to 75 in 1861. Average Household membership in 1851 was 6.5 persons whilst in 1861 it was reduced to 5.3 individuals. In 1851 there were 13 farmers listed amongst the 15 Households. By 1861 there were six Households headed by a shoemaker, pauper, farm servant or general weaver. The composition of occupations had diversified suggesting less dependence amongst heads of Households on employment directly linked to the land. The presence of two paupers also suggests that destitution was a new reality for at least two Households on the Estate. Although the 1851 acreages were large compared with many other croft sizes recorded in the 1851 census these four Households all required financial assistance from the HIES and the proprietor in order to emigrate in 1852.

The research concludes that the nature of the relationship between landlord and tenant is difficult to ascertain with the evidence suggesting benevolence at times alongside economic expediency suggesting that the landlord needed to assume a number of different and difficult roles all of which were largely determined by societal, economic and religious requirements and allegiances.

Estate records show that landlords such as Alex McDonald of Lochshiel Estate spent money to drain the land to increase the amount of cultivatable land for his tenants and his successor. Lord Howard of Glossop also instituted new practices in regard to payments and usage of land to the benefit of his tenants. These instances are tempered, however, by the views of other proprietors such as the new owner of Island Shona Anthony Swinburne. His testimony at the 1883 Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland appeared to exude both ignorance and a lack of compassion in relation to the causes of the dire economic circumstances of his tenants and will be analysed later in the chapter.

In relation to the religious circumstances of the people in Moidart the study provides evidence of the influential role and degree of persuasion of the Catholic clergy in supporting emigration over several generations. Items of correspondence written by clergy from the 1830s onwards suggest that, in the main, they were concerned for the welfare of their parishioners, particularly in the new homeland. Faced with little alternative but to accept the inevitability of emigration they did their best to positively support and persuade their parishioners often leading to their own emigration as in the case of Father Ranald Rankin. A common religious faith shared by both landlord and tenants also appeared to result in greater harmony and a willingness on the part of the landowner to improve living and working conditions for his tenants. By 1852, however, the degree of destitution experienced by the people in the district

provided the ideal opportunity and rationale for the landlords, with the assistance of the clergy and the HIES, to intervene and reduce the population by emigration.

Research undertaken on the complex role played by the HIES in Scotland and Australia has revealed both positive and negative aspects in relation to the Moidart emigrants. On one hand the Society enabled many Households to travel as a unit with up to three generations. It provided funds to outfit the passengers as required by law and its infrastructure worked to benefit both individual emigrants on arrival in Victoria enabling the British Government to provide a source of labour for the struggling Australian wool industry in return for the production of wool and other products to support industries in Britain.

At the same time this study also concludes that the HIES clearly played a role in assisting the Moidart estate owners to remove their populations by providing financial support and the means of transportation thereby concurring with the conclusions reached by Devine and others in their views of the HIES. The evidence also confirms that the views of the founder of the HIES, Sir Charles Trevelyan, regarding Highlanders and Celtic peoples in general, appeared to permeate and influence the work of the Society. As shown in chapter two for example, his personal views about Highlanders underpinned the attempts by the Society to pressure the people of Skye in particular, to emigrate and so the HIES became an important means of 'pushing' people out of Scotland as well

as for 'pulling' people into Australia.

The research has examined the circumstances surrounding each of the three voyages and, in each case, has identified high levels of risk beginning with the dangers of contracting infectious and deadly diseases like measles whilst resident at the Birkenhead Depot. The risks continued through the perilous decision making of Masters such as James Forbes of the 'Marco Polo' which also had a devastating effect on the passengers. The study has shown that the emigrants travelling on the HIES ship 'Araminta' were subjected to high mortality rates, dirty, uncomfortable conditions, poor food and the irrational behaviour of the ship's surgeon all of which lay beyond their control. Very little provision was made for their comfort based on their Gaelic and Highlander background suggesting a degree of indifference by the Chairman of the Society, Sir Charles Trevelyan, in engaging the crews for his ships. Those on board the HIES ship 'Allison' fared little better with members of Moidart Households contracting and succumbing to typhus either during the journey or following their arrival.

Australian newspapers provide further evidence of the impact of Trevelyan's views regarding Highlanders. The active pursuit of Highlanders in Australia by HIES agents to reclaim their debts is in stark contrast to the indifference shown by the Society in pursuing the debts owed by Scottish landlords. The evidence also reveals levels of doubt as to the extent to which the recipients of this

funding understood the nature of the debt that they had incurred and of the obligation to repay the funds.

Finally in relation to the first research question, the degree to which the emigrants were complicit or involved in freely deciding themselves to emigrate is more difficult to ascertain. The available evidence and documentation needs to be interpreted and applied carefully to groups of emigrants rather than to the total cohort. The nature of their departure is complex with evidence of what appears to be “enforced removal” for some residents from their lands in the form of Estate correspondence. This is consistent with the testimony given at the Napier Enquiry which also stated that people were ‘sent away to Australia’. The writings of Charles Macdonald however, suggest that others, like the Kylesmore crofters for example, took advantage of the opportunity to leave and did so freely of their own accord. Apart from drainage works it is unclear as to what other options, apart from emigration, were considered by the landlords in order to retain the people on the estates however, the study concludes that much of the available evidence consistently points to emigration as the preferred solution by the estate owners.

The second research question marks the beginning of the major focus of the study and is related to those factors that influenced the reception, settlement and integration of the Moidart Households in Victoria. The study has identified a range of factors that affected their reception and integration with some

having clear links to their former lives in the Highlands. For those Households 'swept away to Australia' their success in Victoria was assisted by the opportunity to leave with relatives and neighbours from the same township providing them with security and confidence. Their arrival in the colony, coinciding with the need for vast numbers of employees with agricultural and pastoral experience, was countered by on-arrival factors including the attitudes and views held by government officials as well as those held by the Households themselves towards issues such as the desire to maintain Household unity where possible in obtaining employment. The documentation prepared by the Immigration Agent in Melbourne following the arrival of a group of Highlanders indicates that prejudicial attitudes remained an early obstacle for the Households. References in his official reports to Governor La Trobe reveal that he had little time or sympathy for Highlanders generally as well as for the HIES regarding their lack of English as one indication of their unsuitability as migrants.

In examining their pursuit of employment this study contradicts the views of Trevelyan and Grimes finding that the Moidart people as a group of Highlanders were not generally lazy or indolent as they had tried to portray. Their experiences in seeking and obtaining employment however, differed for family groups, single men and single women and were often due to employer attitudes and the shipping port of arrival. For single men other factors included the time of year of arrival and the corresponding demand for seasonal workers

such as shearers. An analysis of the employment experiences of single women concludes that the port of arrival largely determined the extent of available domestic service positions with private homes in Melbourne offering the greatest potential for employment. The decision to remain together placed some Households at risk of unemployment with some employers not prepared to pay the high wages or provide the rations needed by a large family especially one with very young children under employment age. Household groups containing parents and children of employable age were much sought after and high wages and rations were expended to secure their employment as a unit. The high number of Households who left the Emigration Depot to seek their own employment is a surprising discovery in this study and possibly suggests reunification with relatives or other acquaintances or a desire to try their luck on the goldfields. It should not be assumed that their actions were the result of failing to be offered employment whilst in the Depot and may in fact, be an indicator of increasing confidence and a determination to do well in their new lives in Victoria.

Government records reveal that once in the Colony, related Households often stayed together, buying houses and settling in the same or neighbouring streets to create a 'mini' Highland community in an urban setting. The number of Households who chose to remain in urban Geelong rather than move to rural areas is an important finding within this research given their previous agricultural experiences in the remote Highlands. This decision may be partly

explained through the opportunity to secure work on properties located on the outskirts of Geelong, which due to its size, meant that men could reside in Belmont but travel easily to neighbouring farms for daily work.

The study has found that Households sought employment through a variety of means. Some Households travelled inland from Geelong as a unit to accept employment. Some found work in road construction whilst others travelled widely and constantly to find employment often needing to move with young families to follow seasonal work. Patterns associated with the registration of the births of children demonstrate that high levels of family mobility existed, particularly amongst the second generation. Many Households stayed only one or two years in a location before moving on. Their constant pursuit of employment and their willingness to try their hand at a range of jobs is testament to their desire in some cases to change their social status and economic circumstances and typified by Alexander Macdonald on page 336. Many of the men turned their hands to managing hotels, fossicking for gold, labouring on railway line construction, classing wool, butchering and shepherding with the majority earning their livelihood through unskilled, manual labour before eventually acquiring land and homes of their own.

The third research question sought to establish the extent to which the Households applied for land grants and obtained Freehold ownership and whether this resulted in a shift in their social and economic status whilst the

fourth research question sought to ascertain the degree to which cultural values and practices from Scotland were transplanted in Australia, particularly in relation to farming practices. It has been found that a strong connectedness and relationship existed between land and culture with the analysis of land settlement uncovering examples of transplanted Highland agricultural and cultural practices.

An examination of land settlement has shown that the Moidart Households contributed to the establishment of a range of Highland settlement models across the Western District of Victoria and elsewhere. The study contains examples of models ranging from those of individual Households in relative isolation, to clusters of Highland Households with Moidart Households living alongside Households from different Highland locations, to specific communities composed only of Moidart Households. It has also documented settlements comprising siblings travelling and settling together away from the parental Household as well as first generation immigrant siblings initially settling together and with children in the later years of life.

The investigation undertaken on the settlement patterns in Belmont reveals that allegiance to other Households from the same Moidart estate and townships was one reason why Households stayed together. The settlement at Little River illustrates how a shared religious faith kept Households from Catholic districts in the Highlands such as Moidart, Lochaber and Arisaig together at least in the

early days. Communal settlements, as in the case of Sutherlands Creek, have demonstrated how a number of individual Highlander Households, some related and others not, settled alongside each other and no doubt shared labour and machinery although direct references and evidence of these practices no longer exists. Other Households settled individually in more isolated areas such as at Mount Egerton where siblings and parents selected and farmed adjoining allotments as one farm in order to turn leases into freehold. The study has also identified an unusual composite model with members of three Households (one from Moidart and two from Skye) who travelled together on the 'Araminta' settling together 16 years later in Lake Bolac, possibly reunited by land sales and employment opportunities.

As Rubinstein notes "The most effective way of measuring social mobility is to compare the occupation or wealth of the son ... with that of his father."³ In this study a total of 27 wills and associated probate documents belonging to 21 males and 6 females from both first and second generations of Moidart Households were examined. Of this sample first generation male heads of Households owned either real estate or land of substantial value and left this to their next of kin demonstrating that in all cases the person had achieved financial security and independence.

³ W.D. Rubinstein, 'Probate records and research into social mobility', *Australia 1888* Bulletin Number 2, 1979. p. 112.

All males who made a will were either retired or nearing the end of their working life at the time when the will was drawn up thereby demonstrating their abilities to remain employed over many years. The occupations of those who lived in Geelong were largely those of labourer or wool classer/sorter. In the case of those who lived in rural communities their occupation was recorded as farmer or, in the case of several members of the second generation, that of grazier, demonstrating their perceptions of achieved social and financial success and also indicating that those who claimed this term saw themselves as different to farmers, possibly due to the number of acres and large bank balances they had acquired. In the case of the first generation most males left the family home to their widow or unmarried daughters. Few left bank accounts or ready cash although insurance policies were valued and listed in several probate Inventories possibly indicating a desire to provide for family in the long term.

The search of legal documents located only six wills or probate documents related to Moidart women or their female descendants. All were second or third generation and all owned both personal and real estates. Three were widows and three were unmarried. The limited number of documents left by females makes it difficult to determine the degree of economic security obtained by women either through marriage or inheritance or to establish any patterns related to bequests of land or to real estate left by women to their families

or others. Definite conclusions are therefore not possible owing to the small sample. It has also proven difficult in the time available to identify marriages and to follow the economic successes of the majority of the women following their marriage.

Therefore the study concludes that the evidence related to the wills and probate documents of the sample group of 27 people is too small in terms of drawing any major conclusions regarding shifts or improvements to their social and economic status in Victoria and which could be applied to the total cohort. Further research is necessary in order to identify and obtain additional wills and probate documents particularly in relation to married women as the lack of documents related to this group constitutes a major gap in the research data. The evidence related to the 27 people, however, indicates that these individuals were generally successful in improving their economic circumstances and security as a result of acquiring land and/or real estate of their own. Evidence of the common practice of making a will by the majority of members of a Household was found in several cases. These legal documents, however, do not provide sufficient information to determine any shifts or changes to their social status or class except in one or two cases where the properties were comprised of many thousands of acres. The evidence is at times confusing and difficult to interpret with examples of people living in poor circumstances but leaving substantial amounts of cash or property to relatives.

The fifth research question examined the work and personal attributes of Father Ranald Rankin in an attempt to draw conclusions about the role played by religion in both Scotland and Australia. The evidence contained in chapters one and five leaves little doubt that Father Ranald Rankin played an important leadership and pastoral role, firstly by exhorting the people to leave in order to increase their opportunities to gain economic security and then, later in the Colony. Ironically, the care and concern shown by Rankin and other Catholic clergy over many years became an important 'push factor' in persuading and assisting the people to emigrate. Although the Moidart emigrants left without Rankin, documents referred to in chapter one clearly establish that the Catholic clergy were strong motivators of the people, although it has not been possible for this study to clearly ascertain their underlying motivations and purposes. Newspaper accounts of the day examined for this study leave little doubt that Rankin was a much loved and respected priest who, despite personal health problems, worked tirelessly and provided a unifying focus for Highlanders particularly in Victoria. The approaches made to secure a replacement clergyman from the Highlands following his death suggest that he had created a role within the community that was recognised as sufficiently important and needing to be maintained if possible. Conversely, the extent to which his presence in Victoria resulted in the creation of a small Highland Catholic 'ghetto' within the colonial Catholic Church preventing their full integration for many years after their arrival, is difficult to assess and this may never be fully understood or known.

The sixth and final research question was designed to determine how both the personal and communal cultural identity of Highlanders living in the Colony was affected by migration. The lack of primary and secondary sources directly related to the Moidart community resulted in the research for this question being focused more on the general Highland community in Geelong. The study sought to establish the role of the Commun na Feinne Society in Geelong and to establish its influence and relevance to working class Highlanders generally. Research using the Society's records indicates that much of the driving force behind its attempts to maintain Highland culture, language and traditions came from those Scots from a more privileged social, educational and economic background as well as those with political influence such as the squatters. The absence of working class Scots (particularly women) in the power and decision making structures indicates that Victorian societies such as this had their own social and economic class barriers which served to exclude the working class. Economic necessity, little surplus income to pay subscription fees, time needed to work long days to provide for young families, lack of proficient English skills and constant temporary resettlement to obtain seasonal employment in remote and isolated districts all prevented working class Highlanders from actively participating in the work of such Scottish cultural societies. The issues that brought together Scottish churchmen, bankers, merchants, architects, doctors and squatters were not those of the working class Highlanders and possibly, neither were the notions of 'Scottishness' as promoted by the

Lowlanders through the Society. The study has, however, acknowledged the important role played by the Society in trying to preserve and promote the literary forms and traditions associated with Gaelic amongst the children of Scots in the County of Grant including those who did not attend school. Its efforts in establishing the Highland Gatherings, however, were far more successful and long lasting.

In the final pages of this last chapter the study returns to Moidart to examine and draw conclusions concerning the impact of this emigration on the lives of those who remained behind. Whilst the intention of this study was primarily to establish how well the immigrants fared in their new adopted country, an important element of any migration study is to determine the social and economic ramifications for those who remained.

Much of the evidence related to Moidart in 1884 and presented in this section was derived from testimony given at an official Government Inquiry established to ascertain the economic conditions of crofters and cottars across the Highlands and Islands and set up in 1883.⁴ Thirty years after the time of immigration the context in which evidence was given had clearly changed with new proprietors on the Lochshiel Estate and on Eilean Shona. Both had improved the living conditions on their respective estates particularly in

⁴ See p. 387-388 for references to the criticisms of both the workings and findings of the Napier Commission.

relation to the condition of housing and greater employment opportunities and this will be examined later.

The examination of Government records and documents has revealed that the removal of the people had an unintended outcome for those left behind. It resulted in the removal of township names from official documents. Following the departure of four entire Households and several members of a fifth Household the township name of Scardoish ceased to exist in any later documents such as the 1861 census. The 1886 Victorian Ordnance Survey Map of Tobermory and Strontian also omitted this township clearly revealing that the actions of the proprietors also resulted in the loss of longstanding place names on government documents.

In 1883, thirty-one years after the departure of the Moidart Households the British Government undertook an Inquiry into the conditions and lives of crofters and cottars across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Known officially as the “Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices”, it convened 71 meetings at 61 locations and received testimony from 775 persons. Those who sought to appear before the Commissioners included ministers of religion, elected representatives of crofter and cottar communities, bankers, solicitors and Factors from estates. Historians, however, have questioned the provenance of much of this

testimony as well as criticising aspects to do with the organisation of the proceedings.⁵ Despite the various criticisms much of the testimony (gathered throughout the Highlands) relates to the advantages held by landlords and the disadvantages faced by crofters and cottars. Although there were some confusions of memory in regard to evidence related to events of the past the Commissioners also recognised a degree of authenticity in the information given when they stated: “It does not follow, however, because these narratives are incorrect in detail they are incorrect in colour or in kind.”⁶

This report is important for this research as it provides a valuable insight into the lives of the remaining residents although such evidence cannot always be taken at face value. The Minutes of Evidence provide valuable insights into the long-term effects and outcomes of this relocation for the district. Documents containing statistical information related to the circumstances of the people in 1884 were received from the Lochshiel estate, now owned by Lord Howard of Glossop and from Captain Thomas Swinburne, the new owner of Eilean Shona providing an overview of some of the conditions experienced by selected residents.

⁵ For an overview of these criticisms see E. Richards and M. Clough, *Cromartie: highland life, 1650-1914*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, 1989. pp. 312-320.

⁶ Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices, Session 5 February – 14 August 1884, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons Volume XXXII, p.2. 388

Table 6.1: Statistics provided to the 1884 Inquiry illustrating the state of crofting on Lochshiel Estate and Eilean Shona in Moidart.

Estate or land	Number of crofts	Average acreage of crofts	Annual rent including common land	Average number of persons residing on croft	Total numbers of stock kept by crofters
Lochshiel Estate	27	4.7	5.6.8	5	12 horses, 4 cattle and 6 sheep.
Eilean Shona	12	2.6	7.18.7	7	0 horses, 4 cattle and 33 sheep.

Source: Abstract of Returns, Inverness-shire (mainland, Western sea board).⁷

As these statistics do not include the cottar Households on Lochshiel or on Eilean Shona they do not present an accurate picture of the conditions experienced by the total population.⁸ The information, however, does demonstrate that the removal of the Households in 1852 dramatically reduced the crofting population of the two properties. The 1852 census for those crofting townships on the Lochshiel Estate contained approximately 70 Households including those of both crofters and cottars. According to the 1884

⁷ Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland Volume XXXII, Appendix B, 1884. p. 524.

⁸ Part of the Return respecting Crofters and Cottars on the estate of Loch Shiel on the property of Lord Howard of Glossop as at the 1 January (no year recorded) was reproduced in A. D. Cameron, *Go Listen To The Crofters*, p. 60. It contains the names of eight cottar Households on the estate.

abstract and supporting documents, the number of Households residing on the Estate totalled 27 crofter and eight cottar households or 35 Households in total.⁹ This was half the number present in 1852.

Other aspects had not changed. Testimony presented at the Inquiry at Arisaig by John Ranald McIsaac of Dalnabreck, Moidart, revealed that the crofters on the Lochshiel Estate were still without leases in 1884 and that this was of concern to them. The need and desire to issue small tenants on the estate with leases had been expressed by Coll McDonald in the 1840s but 40 years later the tenants remained insecure in their occupation of their crofts. The small tenants wanted a lease of nineteen years in order to obtain a certain security of tenure:

...we would like if we could get leases; we never asked them from the proprietor; we have perfect confidence in him, and we would never ask a lease as long as he and we live; but we don't know what may happen.¹⁰

McIsaac also spoke of the desire on the part of the township to obtain additional hill pasture and stated that the total number of stock kept at Dalnabreck was one horse, three cows and twelve sheep. He paid six pounds in

⁹ Ibid. Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners, p. 524.

¹⁰ Condition of the Crofters and Cottars Report, Volume XXXV, Statements 33201, 33207 and 33202, p. 2070.

annual rent for his croft in 1884 suggesting that rentals for crofts had not increased on the estate over this time.

Father Charles Macdonald, the Moidart Catholic priest living at Mingarry, also gave testimony at the Inquiry and spoke in very positive terms about how the new proprietor of the Lochshiel estate, Lord Howard of Glossop, had improved the circumstances of the small tenants on his estate. He described how a further 50 acres had been provided for cultivation for his 30 tenants. Glossop achieved this by providing each tenant with between ten and fifteen pounds for each new acre cultivated. Two crops were planted and harvested with all income being kept by the tenant. A small interest rate was then charged (on the capital expended) and extracted from any additional income gained from this land. In addition the tenants were allowed to increase their stock numbers as the amount of cultivated land increased. New homes had also been built on the estate costing £30 each and Macdonald gave a detailed description of the layout of the new houses compared to those formerly lived in on the estate. Croft sizes had also increased to between eight and twelve acres in all areas of the estate except Moss. Macdonald provided evidence of the fact that the population of Moss had been shifted internally to this location because “they were in very poor circumstances and had very little land” although their arable land had been extended to between five and six acres.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid, Testimony given by Father Charles Macdonald, Statement 33163, p. 2111.

Macdonald's testimony, however, also revealed that part of the solution to the problems on the estate lay in continuing the practice of seeking employment outside the district "...whilst the more active and industrious members of the family, when they came to a certain age, might go south and provide for themselves."¹² This reference suggests that more needed to be done to provide economic security for the tenants.

Of most importance to this research was the part of the testimony given by Macdonald in relation to the circumstances under which the people had departed the Estate:

There was a part of the hill called Dorlin, which includes Breack, Mingarry, and Blainard, in which there was a large population at one time this, of course was before my time and every one of these were removed. There was not a single tenant left on Blainard or Breack, or Port Aviort or Mingarry. I tried to ascertain what became of them, and I found a few of them had been sent down to the Moss; one or two were sent up to Laugal, but the majority, I think, were sent away to Australia.¹³

¹² Ibid, Statement 33134, p. 2109.

¹³ Ibid, Statement 33185, p. 2113.

This testimony confirms that the Households on the estate were subjected to either internal removal to other parts of the estate or were forced to leave Moidart altogether. Either way as Macdonald observes “every one of these were removed”.

Testimony was also given by Captain Thomas Anthony Swinburne, the proprietor of Eilean Shona. His information related largely to the amount of support that he had given to his tenants in order to establish a viable fishing industry to supplement income made through crofting. It appeared that Swinburne had provided his tenants with reasonable sized fishing boats and had outfitted these to enable the tenants to sail to fishing grounds beyond their normal reach. In return he had, at times, accepted part of the catch as payment and had also negotiated a reasonable price for the catch as well as employing people to salt and cure the fish for southern markets. In one instance he had provided a boat to a group of tenants too poor to pay anything in return. These actions suggest that Swinburne was caring of his tenants, recognising that the lands of his estate could only provide a limited income through crofting. His resourcefulness and generosity were recognised and appreciated by his tenants as will be shown in later testimonies. According to the proprietor there were two good sized tenancies and about ten crofters on his estate. When asked if they could exist purely from crofting he stated; “Scarcely from the land; some of them can make a livelihood by that; but they all do other work” confirming that, 30 years later, the tenants were still in an economically vulnerable

position and needing to leave their own crofts to obtain supplementary work.¹⁴

It was Swinburn's next comments that demonstrated his apparent lack of understanding of the true plight of his tenants nor did he appear to be unduly concerned. Asked by the Commissioners the reasons for the poverty of the crofters he answered:

...why are they so poor? – Because they have not had employment, or because the crofts are too small, or something of that sort. I don't know exactly the occasion of their poverty.¹⁵

He was, however, convinced of the benefits that had been brought about by his efforts to establish fishing amongst his tenants:

...There is a great deal of fishing to be done on this coast; I have gone into it largely myself, and I know that there is a great deal to be done. I have not sufficient capital to continue what I have begun, but there is enough work in that direction to employ all the surplus population on the west coast.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid, Statement 33247, p. 2113.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid, Statement 33257.

Religious belief continued to play an important role in the relationship between landlord and tenant according to the testimony given by the Church of Scotland minister of Arisaig, Reverend Donald MacCallum. According to MacCallum, when the religion of the landlord and that of the tenants was the same, positive relationships between both were more likely to be established and maintained:

The fact is, no doubt, that the mass of the people on this estate are Catholics. I can hardly think that this points to the cause of the practical antagonism to the people; yet I am told, on Lord Howard of Glossop's little property [Lochshiel Estate in Moidart], where the landlord and people are all of the one Catholic faith, things are managed in a totally different spirit; and we hear that the disputes on the Glen Uig [Moidart] and North Morar estates have been settled between the Catholic tenants and the Catholic Lord Lovat and Mr McLean.¹⁷

This evidence suggests that conflict and disputation in the past may have been partly the result of religious bias between the landlord and tenants on these Estates. Therefore religious conflict might be added as another 'push factor' operating in the case of the 1852 emigration, however, the testimony of Father Charles Macdonald presents a more generalised view of religious tolerance

¹⁷ Ibid, Testimony given by Reverend Donald MacCallum, Statement 32926, pp 2093-2094.

than MacCallum's:

...but at the same time I must say ever since I came to the country there has never been the slightest difference amongst Presbyterians, Episcopalians, or Catholics upon religious matters. There is a perfect *entente cordiale* in these matters.¹⁸

The minister was also concerned about the current structural relationships between landlord, tenant and use of land on an estate in the neighbouring district of Arisaig as well as in the Highlands generally:

...the present system of landlords, Factors, ground officers, consolidations, sheep walks, and small crofts, make up an incongruous mass, taken as a whole, which is utterly abnormal, and must give way to an arrangement more in harmony with the genius of the Highland people.¹⁹

MacCallum was also very clear about the fact that thirty years later emigration continued to be viewed by the proprietors as the answer to all their woes. In his

¹⁸ Ibid, Testimony given by Father Charles Macdonald of Mingarry Moidart, Statement 33193, p. 2113. [italics in original].

¹⁹ Ibid, Testimony given by Reverend Donald MacCallum, p. 2094.

view emigration served the needs of the proprietors rather than those of the emigrants. He therefore argued strongly on behalf of the tenants that monies used to pay for emigration would be better used on keeping the potential emigrants at home on the estates:

No doubt, the proprietors, past and present, desire above all things that they should be relieved from all further trouble by the people emigrating. This might suit the proprietors in one respect; but these people say, first, that there is plenty of land for them on their native shores; and, second, that it would be a wiser economy to give them the money which would be required to transport them, and that it would do much more good, as a help towards setting them up on farms at home. They say, further, that emigration is suitable for proprietors and capitalist farmers, who can settle down on stocked farms with houses ready for occupation, and not for poor people to be cast out and left to their own fate on strange shores without a penny in their pockets.²⁰

Finally, one of the most important points recorded in his summary demonstrates that evictions of people from their lands had continued as a practice since 1852 and therefore nothing had changed to improve the security of tenure over land for the small tenants:

²⁰ Ibid.

Evictions from better and more land to less and worse – sometimes to none; removals backwards and forwards, with their inevitable consequence of a feeling of insecurity.²¹

The evidence gathered shows that the people were still leaving their estates for the same range of reasons that existed from the mid-eighteenth century to 1852. The study has therefore confirmed that those factors ascribed by historians such as Devine and Richards to be the broad causes of Highland emigration were all present in the case of this particular emigration.

6.4 A new theory of migration to explain the Scottish experience

Although many of the aspects of the theories related to the causes and effects of worldwide migration were present in this emigration experience, the study concludes that no one particular theory is able to adequately explain or account for all aspects of this migration in itself. Chapter one identified a range of 'push' factors and influences in Moidart. Chapters two to five highlighted and outlined the various 'pull' factors that brought the immigrants to Victoria. Elements of the structural theory of emigration for example, are found in

²¹ Ibid.

explaining the origins of this migration. The emigrants left at a time when Britain needed to supply rural Australia with a much needed labour force in order for Australia to supply Britain with the raw materials needed for industry.

Members of extended Household groups left Moidart and travelled in kinship, township and religious groupings and settled with their compatriots in Victoria. The phenomenon of 'colony' migration possibly provides the closest explanation for what was happening in the case of this emigration and was clearly in the minds of those working for the HIES as shown in chapter two.

An examination of earlier but similar emigrations of Highlanders to Canada also provided evidence of the leadership provided by Catholic priests or Presbyterian ministers.²² Although this element is not unique to Scottish emigration any future research on Scottish emigration might benefit by continuing to focus on the functions, duties and responsibilities discharged by these men in both the immigrant and host communities. In the case of this study there is no evidence to suggest that the Moidart immigrants ever intended to establish a religious settlement or that those immigrants who settled away from their compatriots were encouraged by their priest to return to resettle within the quasi Scottish Catholic community of Little River. The findings of this study point in particular to the need in the future for a broader

²² See for example, references to the 1772 emigration of Catholics from South Uist, the 1786 Catholic emigration from Knoydart and which were both led by priests and the

understanding of the symbolic significance of the roles of religious leaders or clergymen within the wider emigration phenomena. This particular leadership phenomenon also crosses into the emigration historiography of other national groups and communities and examples can be found in both Welsh and German (Moravian) emigrations at this time.²³

6.5 Directions for further research

This research has made a valuable contribution to the field of Scottish emigration to Victoria by detailing many of the actual events and circumstances surrounding these Households throughout the emigration process.

In the case of the Lochshiel Estate any further examination of statistics or information related to movement and relocation of people will need to take

Presbyterian emigration initially to Nova Scotia led by Reverend Norman McLeod in M. Harper, *Adventurers and Exiles*, pp. 338-349.

²³ See A. F. Hughes in Jupp (ed.), *The Australian People*, for examples of Welsh settlements in Western Pennsylvania and Tennessee in the United States and Patagonia in Argentina and all led by Welsh clergymen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. pp. 739-739. See also a reference to the Rev. Michael Jones and his leadership amongst the Welsh in Patagonia in M. Langfield 'The Welsh Patagonian Connection' in *International Migration Quarterly Review*, Volume 36, Number 1, 1998, p. 68. For a Victorian example of religious leadership and the development of a community see 'The Krumnow settlement,' *Hamilton Spectator* Tuesday 16 November, 1880. p. 4, column 1 <<<http://members.datafast.net.au/boram/krumarch.htm>> (accessed 20 June 2005).

account of a range of factors. Firstly, they must be examined in the context of an improving economic situation in the Highlands from 1852 onwards. This is an important consideration as many people chose to remain in Scotland thereby thwarting the attempts of some landlords to rid themselves of their surplus population. Secondly, they need to be scrutinised according to the impact of the sale of the estate including the views and attitudes of the new landlord, Lord Howard of Glossop, towards the small tenants and cottar Households. Evidence presented at the 1884 Inquiry suggests that there was a radical change in both attitude and spending by Lord Howard in an attempt to raise the living conditions of his tenants but, not at the expense of providing these people with the security of a lease over their lands.

Thirdly, the statistics also need to take into account attempts made to improve the fertility of the estate lands and to increase the size of the crofts to make them more economically viable. Further research will assist in discerning the fate of the crofts and grazing lands left behind by the Households who emigrated. It is important to identify the degree to which the use of this available land post 1852 increased or diminished the levels of poverty in the district in order to elaborate on this research.

Further research also needs to be undertaken in relation to the on-arrival experiences in Victoria to compare the wages and conditions offered to passengers on other immigrant ships arriving in the same period as the Moidart

immigrants. This would assist in determining whether or not there were any other factors that may have advantaged or disadvantaged the Moidart immigrants in employment. Additional data collection carried out month by month between the arrival of the 'Marco Polo' and the 'Allison' may reveal seasonal or colonial economic factors that might have influenced or impacted on levels of employment, wages, conditions and the terms of employment. There is a general need for more detailed studies of particular immigrant groups.

In conclusion, this research has wider applicability than that pertaining to Scotland and Australia. The cycle of life and the cycle of emigration share certain parallels as well as differences. The usual life cycle begins at conception and ends with death. The emigration process metaphorically reverses this cycle. The decision to emigrate instigates a death and grieving process that continues throughout life. In many cases, however, the immigrant becomes a participant in the act of rebirth in the land of adoption. This cycle of life and death and the reversed death to life experience can be recognised in this example. The arrival of Rankin resulted in a spiritual and cultural rebirth amongst the people whilst his death represented the demise of their identity as a separate Scottish Catholic community. At the same time it symbolised their rebirth into the mainstream Catholic community. The migration process therefore clearly involves cycles which move people between death-grief experiences whilst opening opportunities for participation in rebirth. Such was

the cyclical experience of many emigrants who arrived in Victoria at this time.