Prayers and pastures: Moidart emigrants in Victoria, 1852-1920

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Deakin University

November 2006
Candidate’s Declaration

I certify that the thesis entitled: ‘Prayers and pastures: Moidart emigrants in Victoria, 1852 - 1920’

submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given.

I also certify that any material in the thesis which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by any university or institution is identified in the text.

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Date:
Acknowledgments

Completing this research has been reliant on the assistance of many people in both Scotland and Australia and would not have been possible without the assistance of staff at the National Library of Scotland, The National Archives of Scotland and the Scottish Catholic Archives. I also wish to thank the Moidart History Group and Jean and Patrick Lawson of Kinlochmoidart for their enthusiasm and encouragement shown to me on their trips to Australia.

I wish to acknowledge the assistance of staff at the Public Records Office of Victoria, The State Library of Victoria, The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, The Genealogical Society of Victoria and The Geelong Heritage Centre. Staff at the Archives of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne and St. Mary's Parish Office, Geelong, also contributed to the collecting of data and recorded information.

I wish to thank Associate Professor Michele Langfield of Deakin University for her meticulous annotations, friendship and guidance as my principal supervisor. My thanks also to Dr. Cliff Cumming who generously spent many hours sharing his knowledge and love of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland as well as his resources and to Dr. Gordon Forth and Dr. Joost Coté who provided advice and suggestions for refining and focusing the study particularly in the final stages.
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Abstract

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

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

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

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

¹ See the 1851 Census Returns for the Quoad Sacre parish of Aharacle, Parish of Ardnamurchan, General Register Office for Scotland, Edinburgh.
consequence of their migration. The role of religion in their departure, re-settlement and in the formation of a new communal identity in Victoria is a key theme throughout this study.

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

Altogether about five hundred persons left the district, the Catholic congregation of Moidart, which formerly stood at eleven hundred, being reduced to six hundred. One would like to be able to add that these Highlanders, thus cast upon a new world, with opportunities offered of realising a position which they could never have dreamed of at home, did well… but, unfortunately, many of them had not the moral courage to shake off certain habits which the smuggling days had
instilled, and continuing to indulge these under the burning climate of
Australia proved a deplorable bar to any real improvement.²

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

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

² C. Macdonald, Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds, The Mercat Press, Edinburgh (Reprint of
In 1852 a total of 7,127 Scots, many of whom were Highlanders, arrived at the four ports of Melbourne, Geelong, Portland Bay and Belfast (Port Fairy). One of the catalysts that precipitated this exodus was the destitution and social dislocation caused by the potato famine. The potato blight or spores of Phytophthora infestans arrived in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland in 1847 having been blown from Ireland across the Irish Sea.

i. Rationale

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

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3 E. Grimes, Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852, Return Number iii., VPRS189/10, Unit 14, File 1853/A577900, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
4 The scientific classification, Binomial name and a description of the method of infection as well as the conditions for spreading the spores are briefly outlined at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Potatoe_fungus> (Phytophthora infestans) (accessed 8 February 2006).
Episcopalian (Anglican) and Catholic traditions.\textsuperscript{6}

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

\textbf{ii. Discussion of terms}

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

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{6} See Prentis, \textit{The Scots in Australia}, p. 221.
\end{itemize}
communal relationships. Eric Richards, for example, uses a number of terms including ‘communal’, ‘kinship’, ‘group’ and ‘atomistic’ migrations.⁸ In a reference to the renowned emigration of Highlanders to Canada, Australia and New Zealand led by the Reverend Norman McLeod, Richards draws on the term ‘coagulated migration,’ a term which was originally used by T. C. Smout and Ian Levitt.⁹ Whilst it is difficult to select one term that encompasses all the core characteristics that united the participants in the three Moidart migrations, this study acknowledges that the majority of those who journeyed together were largely united by kinship, employment and economic class, township and religious faith.

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

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⁹ Ibid, p. 118.
Donna Hellier has a different understanding about the composition of the families in her research arguing that a nuclear family travelling for example with a married son, daughter-in-law and their child can be, in fact, broken down into two nuclear families.\(^{11}\)

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

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

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
\(^{12}\) The Household numbers used in Appendix A do not match those of the 1851 Census.
Firstly, some members of the house as listed on census night, did not accompanying the other members who left Scotland in this emigration. Those who remained included elderly parents, siblings of either parent prevented from emigrating due to infirmity or chronic illness and older or younger siblings who remained to care for elderly parents. The composition of many of the 37 Households on census night was radically altered by the decision by some members to emigrate. The physical separation of members had emotional and financial implications for those who remained as well as societal ramifications for the district.

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

In several homes the names of visitors who were residing in the house on
census night were recorded along with their relationship to the head of the Household but were not permanent residents and nor did they emigrate with the Household. Servants were also recorded as residing in the house but rarely accompanied the Household when they left. An exception to this was Jane McLean (Household 4\textsuperscript{13}) who was recorded as a ‘house servant’ in the 1851 census and was a sister-in-law of the head, John McIver. Other Households grew in numbers as new members were born after the 1851 census and prior to departure or during the voyage to Australia.

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

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

\textsuperscript{13} Refer to Appendix A for a comprehensive list of the members of each Household according to the 1851 census, passenger lists of the emigrant ships and including those born in Australia. The passenger lists were drawn up after their arrival in Australia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Models of familial relationships</th>
<th>Household number in Appendix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mother, unmarried daughters plus married son, daughter in law and children</td>
<td>18 and 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Two brothers and their respective wives and children</td>
<td>14 and 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Brother and sister in law with respective children</td>
<td>20 and 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Widow and children</td>
<td>21 and 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Widower and children</td>
<td>22 and 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Brother and his wife and family and widowed sister with her children</td>
<td>25 and 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Married son, wife and child plus siblings of married son</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Married sister, husband and children and female siblings of married sister</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Couples with no children</td>
<td>33, 35 and 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Widower and children created through the death of the wife and mother during the voyage</td>
<td>22 and 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Nephew in the care of an aunt</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: \[14\]

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

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

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

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\textsuperscript{15} For a critical assessment of the workings and final report of this Commission refer to chapter six, pp.384-386.
occupation, earnings and sustenance and who pays rent directly to the proprietor.\textsuperscript{17}

A ‘cottar’ was defined as one who:

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

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

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


\textsuperscript{17} Author Unknown, Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, Volume XXXII, 1884. p.3.
secondly, the Household migrated to Victoria in 1852. The Households were identified by referring to the 1851 Scottish census for the County of Inverness, District of Moidart and Parish of Ardnamurchan, the marriage register of the Catholic Parish of Mingarry and from the nominal passenger and disposal lists of the emigrant ships ‘Marco Polo’, ‘Araminta’ and ‘Allison’. The records of the Highland and Island Emigration Society were also examined to identify those Households who received assistance through this benevolent society. The research focuses on three generations in the case of several Households thereby making it possible to discern the difficulties and achievements of individuals over approximately 100 years. The evidence obtained through this investigation will generate additional understandings and insights into Scottish emigration and settlement in Australia for, as Eric Richards states; "The primary task, it is clear, is to put flesh on the statistical skeletons of Australian immigration".  

**iii. The research methodology**

A case study approach set in the wider colonial context will be used to obtain, collate, analyse and interpret data and information about the experiences of this
group of people. As Robert E. Stake explains; “Case study is the study of the
particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity
within important circumstances”.\textsuperscript{20} In this study the total group of 37
Households constitutes one example of a ‘case’. Each of the 37 Households,
however, also constitutes an individual case to be studied and analysed for its
own intrinsic worth. He has identified three purposes for case study research
naming these as ‘intrinsic’, ‘instrumental’ and ‘collective’.\textsuperscript{21} As this case study
will contain elements of all three types it is important to identify the main
features of each.

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

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\textsuperscript{20}Robert. E. Stake, \textit{The Art of Case Study Research}, Sage Publications Inc.,
\end{flushright}
\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid.
\end{flushright}
\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{22}Stake, \textit{The Art of Case Study Research}, p. 3.
\end{flushright}
and the year of their departure from Scotland and arrival in Australia.

Therefore it is possible to identify this cohort as a distinct ‘case’ and to develop a set of conditions that serve to include or exclude Households from the cohort. At the same time each Household contained elements that made it similar to, as well as unique and different from, the other Households. Studying each Household as an individual ‘case’ may assist in gaining a greater understanding of the impact of migration on the individual as distinct from the total group.

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

The third form consists of a simultaneous study of a number of individual cases. Stake calls this approach a collective study and is used when the
researcher is attempting to obtain a better understanding of a particular phenomenon by studying a number of cases at the same time. In this study the phenomenon under study is Highlander immigration experiences in Western Victoria in the nineteenth century.

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

Stake points out that any case study research requires the researcher to set boundaries that clearly establish both the dimensions of the case and the limits of the study. The boundaries set for this study include a period of time of approximately 100 years, the focus on a distinct economic and social class of immigrant from a shared geographic region in Scotland and the personal ‘shifts’ experienced in their economic and social status over time in Victoria.
Finally, Stake warns those involved in case study research not to attempt to make a study, both intrinsic and instrumental, serve too many audiences.\textsuperscript{24}

The spelling of the names of the townships involved in the study varies from one document to another and is determined largely by date and author. Originally written and spelt using Gaelic phonology, many spellings have now been revised and re-spelt using English phonology. When referring to a location in a document I have used the spelling as recorded in the source document.\textsuperscript{25} In all other cases when referring to townships I have used the conventional spelling of the location as recorded on the Scottish Ordnance Map with the exception of general references to the township of Scardoish where I have used the spelling ‘Scardoish’ as recorded in the Alphabetical List and Gazeteer in \textit{Moidart among the Clanranalds}.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{iv. Primary sources}

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

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24} Stake, \textit{The Art of Case Study Research}, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{26} Macdonald, \textit{Moidart: or among the Clanranalds}, p. 235.
\end{flushleft}
have been written in English. Therefore it is important to begin by recognising that the ‘Gaelic voices’ of the crofters and cottars involved in this study are largely missing from these English sources. It must also be acknowledged that the perspectives on the lives of the people as recorded by the compilers of these documents may have been subject to a certain Anglo-centric bias for as the Canadian historian Michael Kennedy reminds us:

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

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

27 M. Kennedy, ‘“Lochaber no more” A Critical Examination of Highland Emigration Mythology’ in M. Harper and M. Vance, (eds). *Myth, Migration and the Making of*
these two Estates has been confined to official government documents such as census records thereby limiting the research.

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

Information and data related to the Households and croft sizes has been obtained from the 1841, 1851 and 1861 Scottish census returns. The 1841 census is of limited value, however, as it excluded details such as the relationship of Household members to the head of the Household, the marital status of members and acreage details of crofts. The ages of some members of Households have been rounded off to periods of five years contributing to difficulties in later identifying Household members on passenger lists in 1852.
The 1851 census is particularly important as it provides information for each Household prior to leaving Scotland in 1852. It has also helped to locate each Household within the relevant crofting township as well as providing details of Household membership and relationship to the head, educational opportunities availed by the families, occupations of the heads of Households and, in certain cases, acreages of crofts. The range of information recorded by the enumerators varies and the resulting lack of consistency makes it impossible to compare or contrast townships.

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

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

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

The primary source documents related to the arrival and settlement in Victoria of these Households are also subject to the same range of prejudices, biases, misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Again, the vast majority of these
sources were recorded by English-speaking government officials, legal office staff and newspaper reporters. The documents include the nominal passenger and passenger disposal lists of the three ships, Colonial government reports, birth, death and marriage records, land selection applications, items of correspondence related to immigration, the work of the HIES in Victoria and education, probate documents and wills, newspapers, municipal records such as rate books and plans of subdivisions, pastoral family papers and records, cemetery records and church records.

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

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

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

The papers, diaries, Wages Books and manuscripts belonging to early pastoral families in the Western District have assisted in recreating the social and economic context of the time. The nature of the work undertaken by both men and women, the wages received and the rations provided helped to establish a secure economic foundation which later helped in the acquisition of land of their own. Land Selection Applications and items of correspondence held in Government Files reveal that the acquisition of land by most of the Households did not occur until the 1860s. The documents also provide evidence of the difficulties encountered by applicants in their quest to obtain a selection and
hold on to it by meeting the various Land Act requirements. Documents such as wills and probate records have established the degree to which Households were able to maintain ownership of their land and pass it on to the next generation. For those who settled in Geelong municipal rate documents and plans of subdivision for Kardinia Ward have been helpful in tracing the acquisition of a dwelling or land. Many of the Moidart Households who settled in Geelong chose to buy homes in McDonald, Belmont, Regent and Church Streets in Belmont whilst others settled in Chilwell and South Geelong.

An examination of birth, death and marriage records has yielded information related to religious identity, kinship and familial relationships in Australia as well as providing evidence of the high mobility of many Householders as they moved in search of employment and economic security. The accurate matching of names to individual Household members through the use of these records has been difficult to achieve and has proven to be problematic at times. Of the 37 Household groups 22 are named ‘McDonald’ (or variations in spelling of this surname such as ‘Macdonald’). Within these Households there were 27 males named ‘John’ and 15 named ‘Alexander’ with 28 females named ‘Mary’ and 18 named ‘Catherine’. This is further complicated by the fact that many of the Households contained children under the age of 14 at the time of arrival in 1852 and therefore many of the persons so named above, were of a similar age.
An examination of marriage register records for those who married in Geelong has shown that many who married within five years of arrival found spouses amongst single persons from other Moidart Households but that this pattern gradually changed amongst those born in Australia. Their arrival in 1852, however, predates many church and cemetery records. In addition, some early church records have been burnt in fires, misplaced or lost over the years.

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

v. Literature review

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

Before beginning the review of the literature it is important to acknowledge that all the literature and primary sources examined in this study have been published in English. This is an issue of particular concern to historians such as Kennedy who argue that the degree to which the authentic voices of the Gaelic emigrants can be found in English documentation is questionable. In his summation of much of the research conclusions and writings undertaken and
published in English in relation to the nineteenth century Highlander
emigration experience in the Canadian Maritimes, Kennedy argues for caution
in drawing any uniform conclusions concerning motivations for leaving and in
the resettlement experiences. He suggests that the sung poetry traditions of the
Gaels at this time reveals a range of perspectives related to emigration and that
these sources of “community opinion”\textsuperscript{28} have been largely overlooked or
totally ignored by historians particularly those not literate in Gaelic. Kennedy
strongly believes that:

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{28} Kennedy, “Lochaber no more” p. 270.
The impact of change has been a recurring theme within the extensive research undertaken by Devine for example.\textsuperscript{30} This study complements his research by investigating how these changes affected the lives of those who left Scotland as a consequence of these changes and by recognising that the cycle of change extended beyond the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with far reaching consequences for both the individuals involved and for Australia generally.

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

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

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., p. 272.
\textsuperscript{31} See Devine, \textit{The Great Highland Famine}, pp.58, 65, 262, 266 and 321.
distinct trans-Atlantic dimension highlighting the importance of the large numbers of Highland emigrants involved in the North American and Canadian experience. Their research is important for this study as it has enabled me to clearly identify the differences between the Australian and North American migration patterns and resettlement as well as the reasons for the eventual assimilation of Highlanders into Victorian society. It would seem that the historiography associated with Highland emigration to the continent of North America has been documented more fully than that related to the Antipodes.

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

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

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Donnachie notes:

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

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

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by describing the contribution of a representative group of ‘invisible Scots’ from working class backgrounds in the rural Highlands of Scotland.\textsuperscript{34}

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

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

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

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

\(^{37}\) Ibid, p.8.
Richards’ statement still largely applies. The records associated with communal immigrations to Victoria in general from the Highlands and Islands still remain to be located and documented. References to the district of Moidart as a source of one such communal emigration are rarely found in Victoria’s immigration literature ensuring that the contribution of this district remains unknown and unrecognised. By establishing a clear focus on the communal dimensions of immigration this study has recognised the significance and uniqueness of communal migration compared with that of individuals.

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

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38 J. Beer, ‘Scottish families in Victoria’s Western District: Highland and Island Emigration Society Emigrants to Portland 1852-75’, Unpublished MA Thesis, The University of
process of forming new families in Australia compared with Scotland, and the nature of the legacy left behind after death (in terms of land inheritance). Her study has many parallels with this research however, it once again draws on the isolated experiences of individual emigrants rather than following the same individuals throughout the three stages to support her claims and arguments.

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

M. D. Prentis, ‘Scottish Roman Catholics in Nineteenth Century Australia’, p. 64.

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

\textbf{vi. The research questions}

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

\begin{enumerate}
\item What were the economic, religious and social circumstances of the Households that led to their departure from Scotland?
\begin{itemize}
\item Who left and who remained and why, and how important was government policy in determining who left?
\end{itemize}
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{40} Prentis, \textit{The Scots in Australia. A Study of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, 1788 – 1900} Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1983.
• Was the society left behind strengthened or weakened by the group emigrations and were the effects desired by the policy makers achieved?

• To what extent was the individual’s decision to leave the result of thoughtful decisions about the future compared with a contrivance between the landlord and the HIES Committee?

ii. What factors influenced their reception, settlement and integration in Victoria and how was their sense of community maintained?

iii. To what extent were these Households able to select and hold land in Australia? What role did land ownership in Australia play in relation to improving their economic and social status?

iv. Were any cultural values and practices related to the use of land in Scotland transplanted in Australia? What might this suggest in relation to the ongoing shaping of their identity in Australia?

v. What roles did religion play in the life of the community and in the maintenance of their identity both in Scotland and Victoria?

vi. How were notions of cultural identity as held generally by the broader Highlander community in Victoria challenged or influenced by the migration process?
These questions are important because evidence related to the direct
direct experiences and contributions of working class Highlanders is largely non-
existent in terms of Australian migration studies although many generalisations
about this cohort can be found. One argument regarding the eventual fate of
Highlanders generally in Australia is outlined in the following statement by
Richards who writes:

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

Hellier in her thesis ‘The Humblies’\(^{42}\) also makes a similar claim in reference
to this transplanted culture stating:

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

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

\(^{42}\) D. Hellier ‘The Humblies: The emigration of Highland Scots to Victoria in the 1850s
and culture destroyed a strong cohesive bond between the Highland immigrants, it is equally true that their adaptability to the new Colony was a factor much in their favour.\footnote{Ibid, p.144.}

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

\begin{quote}
It may be concluded that contrary to Donna Hellier’s feeling that Highlanders assimilated only too well, real integration into the host community for the majority of Highlanders, due in part to initial feelings of alienation, failures in selection and consequent problems in the re-establishment stage, was probably delayed for some years, perhaps only appearing amongst the second generation of Highlanders.\footnote{Beer, \textit{Colonial Frontiers and Family Fortunes}. p. 77}
\end{quote}

vii. Structure

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

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

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

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

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

Chapter five investigates how the Catholic Highlanders within the broader Highlander community sought to maintain their identity in Victoria. It examines the influence and role of Father Ranald Rankin in Victoria and the corresponding ‘shift’ in their identity as Catholics following his death. The marriage registers of St Mary’s Catholic Parish, Geelong, will be analysed to provide insights into the role that marriage played in maintaining a Highland
Catholic identity and in creating opportunities for several Moidart women to improve their economic circumstances. This chapter draws upon evidence and conclusions related to the maintenance of their cultural identity contained in earlier chapters, including the effects of the gold rushes, opportunity to purchase township allotments in Geelong and the settlement of land in rural districts, the development of communal meeting forums such as cultural organisations, and the establishment of commercial businesses.

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

MOIDART, THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

1.1 General introduction

This chapter is concerned with the physical, social, economic and religious factors operating in the district of Moidart and on the two Highland estates of Lochshiel and Kinlochmoidart, in particular, in order to:

- Examine the circumstances under which people left Moidart to emigrate to Australia and Canada or to relocate to other parts of Scotland thereby providing a context within which to understand the reasons for this exodus.
- Develop a profile of the people in terms of those skills, attitudes, experiences and knowledge of the land and agriculture needed to overcome the difficulties they were forced to confront on a daily basis.

The 37 Households involved in this research lived in 14 small crofting townships or farms on the four estates of Kinlochmoidart, Glenmoidart, Moidart and Lochshiel. All Households, apart from one, belonged to the crofter or cottar classes with the exception of John McIver, a teacher at Glenuig.

1 It appears that there is discrepancy amongst writers in regard to the exact location of certain crofting townships in relation to particular Estates in the district. For example, Eilean Shona (or Island Shona) is recorded as part of the Lochshiel Estate in rental documents found in GD243 Lindsay WS, National Archives of Scotland, however Charles Macdonald, on page 255 of his book Moidart among the Clanranalds, records that the extreme eastern end of the Island, Shona Beg, was part of the Kinloch Estate. In another instance Roderick Balfour records Scardoish as part of the Kinlochmoidart Estate of William Robertson on page 557 of his article ‘The Highland and Island Emigration Society: 1852 – 1858’ rather than part of the Lochshiel Estate of Alexander McDonald. I have chosen to include both Island Shona and Scardoish as part of the Lochshiel Estate as recorded in GD243 as residents of both are recorded as having paid rents to the proprietor of the Estate. I am very grateful to Roderick Balfour for his assistance in locating the crofting townships within the appropriate Estate.
Crofters lived in ‘townships’ of between five and twenty allotments. A typical crofting township consisted of an area of land subdivided between the tenants with each tenant holding a small, separate acreage which, in the case of the Moidart townships, was usually turned over to the cultivation of oats, bere (or bear), a type of barley and potatoes.

According to the 1851 census, the size of the crofts in two of the townships in Moidart varied from between half an acre to twelve acres. Three of the crofts rented by tenants on the Moidart Estate of Dr Donald Martin at Glen Uig were less than six acres in size: Norman McDonald, John Cameron and John Mcdonald each worked five acres. Croft acreages were even less at Kylesmore on William Robertson’s Estate of Kinlochmoidart in 1851; Alexander McEachen, Alexander McDonald, Alexander McVarish, Angus McDonald and Donald McIsaac worked crofts of half an acre in size. All were inadequate in size to cultivate sufficient food for the Household for a year and to produce additional produce for sale at the same time. This fact was acknowledged in part of the testimony given at an Enquiry in 1883 into the economic and social living conditions of crofters and cottars throughout the Highlands and Islands.

When questioned about the desirable size for a croft in order for a crofter to become independent Rev. Charles Macdonald quoted; ‘eight or twelve acres of arable land and about six cows with their followers… And…about fifty

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2 See 1851 Census, Enumeration District two, p. 3 and Enumeration District six, p. 5.
3 A. Clerk, The New Statistical Account of Scotland, Parish of Ardnamurchan, Presbytery of Mull, Synod of Argyle, Volume 7 Edinburgh and London, 1845. This document provides a broad description of each parish of Scotland in terms of its physical, social, economic and religious dimensions. Each description was prepared by the minister of the parish. The description for the Parish of Ardnamurchan was written by the Rev. Archibald Clerk in 1838. These descriptions were eventually published in seven volumes in 1845. p. 151.
4 See Appendix A for Households 5 (Angus and Mary McDonald), 6 (Donald and Ann McIsaac) and 7 (Alexander and Flora McEachen), 8 (Alexander and Mary McDonald) and 9 (Alexander and Mary McVarish). Surnames used here are those recorded on the 1851 Census.
On the outskirts of this area lay the land used for grazing animals. In the case of Moidart the cattle belonged to the Argyleshire breed whilst the sheep were the black-faced breed. This area was used in common by all the tenants who were levied a rental usually based on the number of animals each tenant owned. Average rentals in the parish were one pound and fifteen shillings per head of cattle and three shillings and six pennies for each fully-grown sheep. Devine calculated the general rental cost for each tenant to use the common grazing land in the Highlands at approximately one pound sterling per cow per year.

There was a limit on the number of beasts that the tenants were allowed to possess and graze on the common land. The practice of calculating the number of stock each Household could own was known as ‘souming’. The total number of stock that could be owned by a township was calculated by the Factor and this was set out in a written agreement between proprietor and tenant. Each Household was then allocated their share and this was calculated according to the amount of rent paid and the ability of the Household to provide winter fodder for a particular number of animals. Charles Macdonald refers to the existence of written transactions between the proprietor and the tenants of two club farms at Langal and Dalnabrach limiting the number of cows in each village and where the crofters made effective use of the common hill pasture. Both Hunter and Devine claim that crofting, as a form of agriculture, was never designed to make Households self sufficient by working

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5 Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1884. Evidence number 33161, p. 2111.
7 Ibid.
the land. On the contrary, crofts were usually located on poorer, inhospitable land, often near the coastline, in order to force the Householders to seek additional work (and income) either in the form of kelping or fishing or agricultural work at busy times of the year from the landowner. This ensured that the landowner had a ready source of labour at his disposal and that his tenants contributed to the estate’s economy through other means.

The names of the crofting townships and the number of Households who emigrated from each of the four Moidart estates in 1852 are as follows:

**Kinlochmoidart Estate (a total of 14 Households emigrated out of 24 Households)**

1. Kylesmore (three Households out of eight)
2. Kinloch Moidart (six Households out of eight)
3. Shona Beag (one Household out of three)
4. Ardmolich (one Household out of two)
5. Eignaig (three Households out of three)

**Glenmoidart (or Lochans) Estate (One Household)**

1. Lochans (one Household out of four)

**Moidart (or Glenuig) Estate (Four Households)**

1. Glenuig (four Households out of 15)

**Lochshiel (or Dorlin) Estate (19 Households out of 67 Households)**

1. Scardoish (five Households out of six)
2. Blain (three Households out of 16)
3. Dalnabreac (three Households out of ten)
4. Eilean (Island) Shona (five Households out of 20)
5. Gaskan (one Household out of two)
6. Mingarry (one Household out of 13)
7. Langall / Dorlin (one Household created by marriage in

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1.2. Physical background

The district of Moidart lies within the civil parish of Ardnamurchan in the county of Inverness-shire in the Western Highlands of Scotland. The land and Estates of Moidart had traditionally belonged to the Clan McDonald of Clanranald. For 500 years the Clanranald lands and estates had extended across the outer Hebridean Islands of Lewis, North and South Uist, Barra and the inner Hebridean Islands of Tiree, Coll, Rhum and Skye. This also included lands in mainland districts such as Argyll, Morvern, Ardnamurchan, Moidart, Arisaig, Knoydart, Lochaber and Kintail. 

The terrain imposed many challenges for the crofters and cottars who managed to overcome these difficulties by utilising as much of the land as possible. According to S. Lewis in the Topographical Dictionary of Scotland, the district extended inland from the sea for some 25 miles and was approximately twelve miles wide. It was further described in the same publication as having light, shallow soil with only a small portion fit for superior husbandry. According to the 1845 Statistical Account the poor condition of the soil resulted in greater numbers of cattle rather than sheep being raised in the district. Lewis continued to describe the land in the following way: ‘near the coast there are

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11 C. Macdonald, Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds. This book provides a comprehensive history of the district of Moidart, its people and their heritage as descendants of Macdonald of Clanranald from the thirteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. It was written by Father Charles Macdonald who was the Catholic priest of Moidart from approximately 1860 to 1892.
13 Ibid.
many farms under good cultivation, within the first ten or twelve miles; but afterwards the pasture becomes coarser."\textsuperscript{15} These statistics indicated that only about half the district was accessible for cropping and cultivation, an important fact when considering the production of food crops to support the overcrowded population on the Lochshiel Estate in particular. The poor condition of the soils was noted as early as 1798 in the rental records for tenants at Scardosie on the Lochshiel Estate where the acreage was described as “sandy” and “being so enwashed by the sea that it is now barely 30 acres exclusive of rocks”.\textsuperscript{16} Most of the land belonging to the Lochshiel Estate in 1852 was only suitable for the pasturing of inferior sheep and cattle stock.\textsuperscript{17} Of the 7,216 acres of land that made up the Estate, 6,468 acres was used for pasture with only 218 acres under cultivation.\textsuperscript{18} In addition it contained large areas of moss land further reducing the amount of arable land for cultivation. As well as poor soil much of the district was covered in steep mountains and deep glens that also limited the land available for cultivation. The valley of Kinlochmoidart for example was described as follows:

At the head of Loch Moidart, which indents the western extremity of this district, the high bounding ranges which enclose the lake continue to run inland, and form the first part or opening of a valley, about seven or eight miles long. It is all good and productive arable, although still

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\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Tenants of Old Moidart, Scotland, as in the Judicial Rental of 1798, Number 452, \url{www.moidart.org.uk} (accessed 4 October 2006).
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 151.
capable of much improvement.\textsuperscript{19}

The people, however, made the most of their circumstances using their skills to cultivate as much of the land as possible:

Sometimes land on the steep sides of hills is seen diligently cultivated by the small tenants, which certainly no capitalist, from motives of profit, would crop.\textsuperscript{20}

Difficult terrain such as steep mountain slopes was cultivated through necessity and was the result of the need of the overcrowded population to obtain as much food from the limited land, chiefly in the form of potatoes.\textsuperscript{21}

The difficult terrain meant that, in some parts of Moidart, it was impossible to plough with the use of a horse and so the land had to be broken up with a sharp pointed spade.\textsuperscript{22} The people built ‘lazy beds’, creating narrow tracts of land in inhospitable places separated by ridges of earth in which they planted oats and potatoes. They were used to hard manual work often undertaken in gale force wind conditions that, apart from damaging the standing crops such as oats and barley prior to harvest in summer, also destroyed the winter grass and pasture. Loss of crops in this manner meant the loss of winter fodder for animals as well as income from the sale of excess grain.\textsuperscript{23} A lack of winter fodder resulted in the deaths of animals thereby reducing income gained through the sale of cattle.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, p.125.
\textsuperscript{20} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 151.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{23} For a description of the type of cultivation and agriculture practised by crofters in the Highlands and Islands see Hunter, \textit{The making of the crofting community}, pp. 113-119.
The strength of the winds also made travelling by sea and ocean fishing perilous. However, the physical terrain and remoteness of the district meant that the people were forced to travel frequently by sea on steamers in order to take up employment for part of the year in the south. However, it is equally clear from references to the perilous nature of the sea voyage in letters written home by Highlanders that the sea voyage was to be feared as it often took many lives. Highland newspapers such as *The Inverness Courier* published lists of births and deaths (along with the cause of death for example ‘fell overboard’) which occurred on emigrant ships. These appeared almost as a warning to intending emigrants. 24 The physical environment therefore placed severe constraints on the economy and this in turn heavily impacted on the lives of the people as will be demonstrated in the next section.

1.3. Economic background

The small tenants and subtenants on the various estates in Moidart and other districts contributed to the wealth accumulated by Macdonald of Clanranald. Macdonald estimates that Clanranald’s income ‘averaged from £20,000 to £25,000 per annum.’ 25 Although industry in general was lacking in the Highlands the ocean provided another source of income in the form of the harvesting and processing of kelp (seaweed) in order to produce glass and soap amongst other products. This became widespread and lucrative for many small tenants. 26 In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century kelp produced

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24 See an extract taken from a letter received by John McDonald of Scardoish from his brother who travelled to Geelong on board the ‘Araminta’ in 1852 and which was published in *The Inverness Courier*, 21 April 1853. In this extract he lists the names and the causes of death amongst the passengers and crew of the ‘Araminta’.


more income on average than did the sale of barrels of potatoes (at three shillings a barrel). When income from kelp sales began to diminish rapidly, estate debt levels continued to remain high. Consequently several of the Clanranald estates were sold to meet the debts incurred. Devine states that the sale of Clanranald’s lands ‘between 1813 and 1838 resulted in the emergence of nine separate owners in an area where there had previously been one.’

In a letter written by Hector Macdonald Buchanan to Reginald George Macdonald of Clanranald in 1810 he stated:

I have for my own exoneration written Clanranald on the subject of his expenditure and pointed out the inevitable ruin he is running fast to - no fortune can stand his Expenditure… Mr Anderson is in advance more than the kelp will bring, and 600 tons are stored that won’t sell at any price.

Devine states that by 1812 Clanranald’s debts had reached £100,000. The sales of the various estates also affected the future of the tenants in Moidart. In 1812 Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald in a letter written to Robert Brown, a Trustee of Clanranald, enquired about the proposed sale of land near the Kinlochmoidart Estate which included the farms at Lochans, Island Shona and the land between the Kinlochmoidart property and Lochshiel. Robertson-Macdonald was keen to obtain this land whilst Reginald George Macdonald

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27 Devine, *Clanship to Crofters’ War*, p. 65.
28 *Letter from Hector Macdonald Buchanan dated 1 December 1810 in which he refers to the increasing debt which the present Macdonald of Clanranald is amassing and warning him not to depend on income derived from the sale of kelp to meet this debt. Hamilton Papers, NRAS 2177, Bundle 1558, NAS, 1810 November - 1810 December.*
29 Devine, *Clanship to Crofters’ War*, p. 68.
30 See *letter from Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald to Robert Brown of 25 October*
was equally keen to sell the land expecting a large price for it as it was a
sudden and unexpected sale and would assist in meeting estate debts.

Despite its proximity to both the sea and lochs, fishing was an undeveloped
industry at this time:

The fisheries of cod and ling, and other fishes caught by the hook, on
the north coasts of the parish, promise, at some future period, to prove a
plentiful source of industry.\(^{31}\)

Robert Somers made a similar comment in relation to nearby Mull and Skye
when he wrote:

Fishing has in few instances been pursued as an occupation. It has been
merely regarded as an occasional and partial resource, by which they
might add a little variety to their miserable fare, and a few shillings to
their scanty incomes.\(^{32}\)

The value of this industry remained largely unrecognised in the district until
efforts to equip former crofters with the means to fish on a commercial basis
were realised by the new manager of the Eilean Shona property when he
purchased the property in 1853.\(^{33}\) The 1851 census contains entries related to
the fact that some residents living near the coast at Smirisary, Kylesmore and

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1812. Hamilton Papers reference NRAS 2177 / Bundle 1582, NAS, October 1812.
31 R. Somers, *Letters from the Highlands on the Famine of 1846*, The Melvern Press,
33 See a further reference in Chapter 6, pp. 393-394.
Scardoish worked as fishermen and boat builders. These included Hugh MacPherson, Smirisary who was a fisherman, James McDonald of Kylesmore, a boat builder and the heads of two Households at Scardoish, both by the name of Alexander McDonald and who were both salmon fishermen. The following comment, however, explains why combining farming and fishing often resulted in failure:

No two occupations can be more incompatible than farming and fishing, as the seasons which require undivided exertion in fishing are precisely those in which the greatest attention should be devoted to agriculture.

According to Somers, herring fishing was unpredictable with the herring season only lasting about three months (although people were not continuously engaged in fishing over that time). Fishing was a community act involving both crofters and cottars working together. If the catch was large enough they could earn five to six pounds overnight (the equivalent of wages received for labour on their crofts for one month). Herring fishing took place in the lochs overnight and three nights or more of successful fishing would earn enough money for cottars to pay the rent on the potato ground. Somers points out that:

By five or six months’ work, the diet of potatoes and herrings is procured, and everything made safe for the twelvemonth. Such is the

34 National Archives of Scotland, 1851 Census Returns, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA 1982 and Appendix A, Households 21 and 23.
system of life among the labouring population in the distressed districts of the Highlands.\textsuperscript{37}

The granting of rights to fishing in rivers on the two Estates was also seen as additional but lucrative source of income. A lease signed between Mrs Margaretta Robertson - Macdonald of the Kinlochmoidart Estate and Mr James Blackwood Gemmel of Glasgow in 1843, secured for Gemmel exclusive fishing rights in Lochmoidart at Kylesbeg, Craig Ardmolich and Kinloch for salmon, grilse and sea trout for the sum of ten pounds sterling per year. The lease was operative for nineteen years and gave Gemmel the power to prosecute anyone who was caught fishing at the above locations (except for the Robertson - Macdonalds!).\textsuperscript{38} Fishing rights were also granted on the Lochshiel estate as early as 1836 with fishing in the River Shiel leased at £130 per annum and shore fishing on Lochshiel leased at £20 per annum.\textsuperscript{39}

Agriculture remained the dominant occupation and work of the people as demonstrated through the various records kept during this time. The Statistical Account of 1791 included a detailed account of the occupations of the inhabitants at this time. There were approximately 60 farmers, one merchant, one shop-keeper, one smith, two house and boat carpenters, five male weavers and eight female weavers, one whisky house keeper, five tailors, one miller (but the mill was little used), six seamen owning five small vessels, 20 soldiers

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{39} Lindsays WS, GD 243 Catalogue, GD243/4/15/18 The National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.
in the army and one private teacher.\textsuperscript{40} The list of products grown, harvested or pastured in the district of Moidart and Arisaig in 1833 and recorded in the New Statistical Account and the Statistical Account of Scotland 1791-1799 demonstrates the degree of economic dependency on agriculture.\textsuperscript{41} Wool was sold at an average price of eight shillings per stone whilst the pasturing of sheep cost two shillings and sixpence per sheep and black cattle were pastured at one pound and ten shillings per beast. The pasturing costs per sheep in 1791 were two shillings increasing by sixpence per animal 42 years later. The number of sheep recorded in the district in 1791 was approximately 12,750 but by 1833 the number had risen to 60,000 demonstrating an increase in the capacity of grazing lands as well as the effects of the formation of large sheep farms in the district.\textsuperscript{42} Other products grown in the district included oats, hay, timber from woods and plantations, produce from gardens and orchards and herring fishing. In 1791 the district produced 4000 barrels of potatoes compared with 50,000 barrels in 1833. Three hundred bolls of oats were produced in 1791 whilst 2,000 bolls were produced in 1833.\textsuperscript{43}

Sixty years later it would appear that little had changed in terms of the dependence on agriculture. According to the occupations given by heads of Households in the 1851 Census, the economy of the district of Moidart was


\textsuperscript{41} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 155. This reference contains the average prices obtained for each product over the twenty-five years prior to 1833 as well as the average annual production.

\textsuperscript{42} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 155.

largely dependent on agriculture and primary production. Occupations listed for women included dairy-maid, woollen spinner, house servant, cook and dress maker while those for men included crofter, cottar, agricultural labourer, wood-cutter, ploughman, school-master, fisherman, carpenter, tailor, miller and boat builder. Occupations for children (16 years and under) were recorded as cow herder, scholar, scholar at home, herd boy, servant, house servant and ‘working at the croft.’

Twenty-five heads of Households involved in this research were recorded as crofter, farmer or cottar in the 1851 Census of Scotland or on the nominal passenger list of the three ships involved. The remaining heads of Households were identified as shepherd (three), agricultural labourer (one), farm servant (one), pauper (one), farm labourer (one), boat builder (one), tenant farmer (one) and two without occupations known as they married just days before their departure. Only the Household of the school master fell outside of an agricultural or fishing related occupation. Three heads of Households who were widows identified themselves as ‘crofter’ (two) and ‘farmer’ (one).

Although arable land was limited in the district attempts had been made for

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44 By 1861 the occupations listed in the census for the township of Dorlin on Lochshiel estate show a dramatic shift away from the predominance of crofting with only one resident crofting Household remaining out of nine dwellings. The rest were described as farmer, mariner, steward, gardener, housekeeper, road manager, and carpenter. All occupations were most likely associated with the new Dorlin House built as a new residence for the estate owner in circa 1864 according to Charles Macdonald. p. 220. This is in contrast with the 1851 census prior to emigration where the occupations of six of the eight Householders were crofters or cottars.

45 Refer to the 1851 Census of Scotland, enumeration districts for Moidart for a complete list of the occupations for the members of each Household. A copy of this census is held at both the Genealogical Society of Victoria and the State Library of Victoria.

46 See 1851 Census of Scotland, Enumeration District one, Household number 15, Glenuig, John and Marjory MacIver, Schoolmaster, p.6.

47 For an extensive explanation of the structure of Highland society at the time of the potato famine in 1846, see Devine, *The Great Highland Famine*. 57
many years to reclaim areas of land not in use. As early as 1843 the first page of the rental records containing a list of contents of the Lochshiel Estate refers to the fact that ‘The above table of Contents was framed above 30 years ago and considerable additions have since been made to the arable land.’\(^{48}\) The unusable land included 515.49 acres of mosslands at Blain, Mingarry and Langall.\(^{49}\) Correspondence of this time also referred to the endeavours of certain landlords to turn unproductive areas of land into land capable of being cultivated. Whilst travelling through the parish of Ardnamurchan in 1847 Robert Somers wrote of those areas of land that he viewed as unproductive. In his twenty-ninth letter, which was published in the North British *Daily Mail* in September 1847 Somers included a direct quote from *The New Statistical Account*. In this letter he described successful attempts made to turn some of this unproductive land (which consisted of three extensive moss flats which lay at the west end of Lochshiel) into arable soil for the growing of potatoes:\(^{50}\)

> With the help of a marly shell sand found in considerable quantities in the bed of the river Shiel, at the western end of this moss, and some seaware, good crops of potatoes have been raised, although the ground was not broke up until the previous winter.\(^{51}\)

This was part of the reclamation work undertaken by Alexander McDonald, proprietor of the Lochshiel Estate where about 30 English acres of mossland

\(^{48}\) C. Macdonald ‘Contents of the Estate of Lochshiel being part of the 27 merk lands of Moidart’ GD243/4/14/8, Lindsays Catalogue, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1843.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.


had been brought into cultivation.\textsuperscript{52}

In 1838 potatoes formed the largest food item produced in the district. The potato had been introduced into Scotland in the eighteenth century and had become a staple food. Devine estimates that many families lived solely on boiled potatoes for nine months of the year after other food sources had been exhausted.\textsuperscript{53} Potato planting began in March and continued until May. Somers estimates that:

\begin{center}
The labour of a man and his wife for two months will plant a quantity
sufficient, with the ordinary returns, to subsist a family of six for a
year.\textsuperscript{54}
\end{center}

The main source of fertiliser for the crofts was seaweed which was layered with the soil. The potato seed (saved from the previous year) was sown amongst the layers. The following account of the yearly cycle of planting in the district provides clear evidence that much of the land was overworked without time to lie fallow and rejuvenate:

\begin{center}
When the extent of their lands admits of it, small tenants, commonly
after potatoes, sow their land with bear, and then oats, - the soil, after
being well manured for the first, producing very good bear, and rather
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid. p. 153.
\textsuperscript{53}For a detailed description of the causes and effects of the potato famine of 1846 refer to Devine, \textit{The Great Highland Famine}, pp 33-56 and Devine, \textit{Clanship to Crofters’ War}, pp 146-176. He states in the introduction to \textit{The Great Highland Famine} that “The primary purpose of this book is to provide an account of the potato famine in the Scottish Highlands in the middle decades of the nineteenth century through a consideration of its origins, nature and effects” Introduction, page v.
inferior oats, which last, however, constitutes the best provender for cattle.\textsuperscript{55}

The entire acreage was therefore in continuous usage all year round. Cottars with very small patches of land had no choice but to grow potatoes for food only. Remarkably, the two Accounts show that productivity in many areas was increasing indicating that the farmers and crofters were skilful in the utilisation and care of the land and, despite a falling population, were able to increase productivity. In 1784 the population was described as above 1200. By 1791 the population had fallen to approximately 712 persons and 132 families following a large emigration. Unfortunately similar population statistics were not recorded in the New Statistical Account of 1845 for Inverness-shire and Moidart. The Account, does, however, refer to the people who had emigrated earlier from Moidart. These figures included 572 individuals who emigrated to North America in 1790 and 1791, the 13 families who emigrated to Canada in approximately 1833 as well as to the 100 individuals who emigrated to New South Wales, Australia, in family groups and as single emigrants in 1837-39.\textsuperscript{56}

The Reverend Archibald Clerk recorded in his Account of 1838 that apart from the high rent and lack of capital, there were other reasons why agricultural advancement and progress was not forthcoming. The reasons he noted were:

\begin{quote}
...the injudicious distribution of the bulk of the people; the want of leases on the part of the small tenants; their holding their lands in
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Somers, \textit{Letters from the Highlands on the Famine of 1846}, p. 161.
\textsuperscript{55} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 151.
common and not in separate lots; their constant practice of sharing their possessions with the married members of their families, to which no practical check has yet been given; the consequent inadequacy of the land held by each family for its support; and the miscellaneous nature of the employments by which they eke out a subsistence.  

He was referring to the dual economy that operated in the district, with many of the young men and women leaving Moidart each year in order to supplement their family income by taking up employment in the dye-works and other industries in and near Glasgow. Clerk was sympathetic to this situation noting that the dual employment interrupted the patterns of work of the rural population. At the same time, however, he acknowledged that this was an opportunity for the young people to gain further work and income and that the situation brought out the best in family members as they worked ‘cheerfully’ to support their kindred and family. It is interesting to note that Clerk recorded this information writing in the third person when referring to the people. This suggests that he did not feel part of this community. He was openly critical of the Highland practices related to the usage of land and to Highland Household values, clearly indicating that they were not part of his experience nor did he appear to understand or agree. Clerk favoured the runrig practice whereby land was held in separate lots rather than crofting. His criticism of the sharing of possessions with married members of the family clearly places him as an ‘outsider’ in this community and is difficult to

58 Ibid.
understand given that many Households included married couples and their children. Elderly crofters were dependent on the support and labour, especially of elder sons, and would not have survived without this assistance. Industrial employment or seasonal employment at harvest times on farms in the Lowlands was necessary to supplement that earned by working the croft.  

Archibald Clerk was convinced that major changes were necessary in order to improve the economic welfare of the small tenant farmer. Firstly, the holdings of the small tenant farmers had to be enlarged to the point where the crofter would have sufficient land to work for the whole year. Secondly, he wanted to see the practices of subdividing the croft amongst family members and of families holding land in common stopped. He also argued for the introduction of leases and for the breeding of better quality stock. If these changes did not result in real improvements he suggested that the government introduce sponsored emigration of the unemployed. Finally, if all else failed, the most powerful remedy to bring about improvement in his opinion, lay in “…the increase of the means of religious instruction and education”.  

Despite attempts to increase family income, poverty and destitution remained widespread in the district. Archibald Clerk was unable to calculate accurately the number of people in Inverness-shire receiving assistance and poor relief in 1838 as “there has not been as yet any roll of paupers, the collection at church being a mere trifle there” indicating the lack of money within Households. In other districts in the parish, however, he noted that the poor were supported by

59 See reference to this situation in Scottish Registry Office, Treasury Correspondence relating to Highland Destitution, HD6/2, Letter from Mr. May to Mr. Walker, 22 March 1847 and quoted in Devine, The Great Highland Famine, Appendices for Moidart and Arisaig, p. 321.  


61 Ibid. p. 161.
church collections and fines paid to the church session, resident proprietors and friends and neighbours. He made a special reference to the fact that those paupers recorded as insane and requiring medical treatment had this treatment paid for by a voluntary contribution taken up amongst heritors (legal landowners) according to the value of the rents received from their tenants.

Devine argues that there were three distinct groups of people who were most vulnerable in times of greater poverty and destitution: widows with families, elderly spinsters and the cottar class. In his opinion this was mainly due to the weaknesses of the Poor Law as it was implemented in the Highlands because it forced these groups of people to claim relief from agencies rather than through the official Poor Law. In Scotland the Poor Law was designed to provide assistance to supplement income. The distribution of this relief was arbitrary and varied from one parish to another. There was no requirement to assess legally which families needed assistance and it often discriminated against those people who were considered to be morally unfit for such assistance, such as single mothers. According to Levitt and Smout the largest number of registered poor occurred in those parishes where legal assessment of the poor took place. The decision as to how the money for poor relief was to be raised was left up to each parish. Methods varied according to factors such as the wealth of the parish, the attitude of heritors towards the poor, the availability of work for ‘poor’ people, the appropriateness and attitudes held towards the acceptability of begging and the amount of money that was considered to be adequate as poor relief. In Argyleshire, which in 1843 included Moidart, 47 per cent of parishes had voluntary assessment whilst 100 per cent had no requirement to assess legally. Only 13 per cent raised money for poor relief through voluntary contributions whilst 60 per cent raised poor relief through

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mortifications which were charges made by the parish for such things as the hire of mort cloths to cover a coffin as part of the funeral.\footnote{Ibid, p.195.}

As Devine points out cottars, widows and elderly spinsters were particularly vulnerable at times of great destitution and hardship. It was common for small tenant farmers to take back land given to cottar families in order to extend their own grain cultivation. This practice contrasts greatly with notions of crofter families supporting cottar families in times of need as explained earlier.\footnote{See pp. 67-68 of this chapter for an explanation of the nature of the dependency of cottar Households on crofter Households generally.} In some areas land proprietors felt little obligation to support cottars who did not pay rent and who often ‘squatted’ on the land. The plight of Households where the inhabitants belonged to two or more of the vulnerable categories can be seen in the example of Mary and Ann McDonald, two sisters who had never married and who lived on the Lochshiel Estate. They were both listed as cottars and paupers sharing a cottage without paying rent in Lord Glossop’s time as owner of the estate.\footnote{Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands) Return respecting CROFTERS and COTTARS on the Estate of Lochshiel in the property of Lord Howard of Glossop as at the 1st day of January ...(no year recorded although Lord Glossop bought the Estate in 1871) and reproduced in Cameron, Go Listen To The Crofters, p. 60.} In 1881 they were recorded as residents of the Langall Poorhouse, Ardnamurchan with Mary aged 62 listed as Head and Ann aged 70 as her sister and residing with their 14 year old niece who was recorded as an ‘idiot’.\footnote{P. Higginbotham, Census:Residents of Langall Poorhouse, Ardnamurchan, Argyll, Scotland. 1881. <www. workhouses.org.uk> (accessed 21 June 2005).} Four of the six residents of the Poorhouse of marriageable age were recorded as unmarried females whilst the fifth was a widow. All residents were female. This further supports Devine’s contention that the most disadvantaged group were elderly females who were unmarried and without children or extended family to care for them. This weighting of poverty amongst the population can be clearly seen in the following example of 1854. Of the 31 residents of the Lochshiel estate mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the...
Parochial Board of Ardnamurchan in relation to the reception of poor relief, 27 were women. Amongst the Householders who emigrated to Australia were four widows with families and one cottar family.

1.4. Social background

As D. A. Kent observes:

The Highlanders’ attachment to family was inseparable from an attachment to place and was one of the reasons, if they were obliged to emigrate, they determined to go together.

In 1852 society in Moidart, like the rest of the Highlands and Islands, was closely linked by kinship and land tenure and was hierarchical in its structure and organisation. This hierarchical structure was based on kinship ties and traditional loyalty shown to the Clan Chief by the other members of the structure namely the tacksmen, crofters and cottars. Under this system crofters and cottars on the Lochshiel Estate had no security of lease over their land and so the people were left at the mercy of the tenured land-owners and their Factors.

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68 See J. Dye, "Minute of Meeting of the Parochial Board of Ardnamurchan held at Shielbridge this Eighth day of August 1854." Original held at the Highland Council Archives HCA/CA/7/2/CO/7/3/2, Inverness and copy obtained from <www.moidart.org.au> (accessed 5 December 2005). All females referred to in the Minute were widows, widows with children, sisters/siblings or females where their marriage status is unknown.

69 See Appendix A for details of families 28 Mary Gillies, 25 Catherine McNeil, 23 Flora McMaster and 21 Mary McDonald and Family 20 Michael McVarish.


71 See page 66 for an explanation of the role of the Factor on Highland Estates.
Landowners or proprietors were at the top of the hierarchy and usually owned vast tracts of land which had remained in the family for many generations. Many of the proprietors were either absentee owners or owners who spent a great deal of time in the south of Scotland and in England. William Robertson-McDonald, proprietor of the Kinlochmoidart Estate in 1851,\textsuperscript{72} was an exception to the largely absentee landlord and lived on the Estate in Kinlochmoidart House (unlike his father Lieutenant Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald who spent considerable time in Edinburgh). Land-owner absenteeism meant that others were appointed to manage the Estates and to collect the rents. Known as Factors, they held considerable decision-making powers and could make decisions and implement change on behalf of the landowner.\textsuperscript{73}

Tacksmen were next in the hierarchical structure, leasing their land from the proprietor.\textsuperscript{74} They were the only people to hold land under lease and were often related to the proprietor. Leases were usually 19 years in duration, however leases in neighbouring Argyll varied from seven to nineteen years.\textsuperscript{75}

The small tenant farmers or crofters followed in the descending structure. They held small acreages of land for which they paid an annual rent to the proprietor of approximately £20 either in the form of labour or as money.\textsuperscript{76}

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{72} Refer to the 1851 Census of Scotland, County of Inverness, District of Moidart, parish of Ardmurcan, Enumeration District number (not recorded), Household number 19 “Kinlochmoidart House”, William Robertson, landed proprietor, p.8.

\textsuperscript{73} Robert Brown was a Factor on the Hamilton Estates and a trustee to Macdonald of Claranald. An examination of the contents of letters and other correspondence written by Brown or to Brown show that he was involved in wide ranging decision-making including the possible sale of lands belonging to the Kinlochmoidart Estate. He was also involved in meeting with business men on behalf of the owner of the Kinlochmoidart Estate, David Robertson-Macdonald. Source: electronic list of the Hamilton papers, National Register of Archives for Scotland, 2177/Bundle 1532, National Archives of Scotland.

\textsuperscript{74} Refer to chapter four in F. J. Shaw, The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland, John Donald Publishers Ltd., Edinburgh, 1980 for a description of the historical development of the role and identity of the “tacksman” from the sixteenth century in this part of Scotland.

\textsuperscript{75} Clerk, The New Statistical Account of Scotland, p. 152.

\textsuperscript{76} R. Balfour, ‘The Highland and Island Emigration Society: 1852-1858’,
\end{footnotesize}
is focused on the small tenant and on the following sub-tenant or cottar group.

The sub-tenants or cottars were at the bottom of the structure and, as they were landless, they were the most economically vulnerable of the four classes. Many cottars were tradesmen (carpenters, smiths, weavers and the like). As Devine explains, some cottars were given a small piece of land, “in the half-foot system by which the main tenant furnished a patch of land and seed corn”. In return, the cottar provided labour and shared the harvest with the tenant farmer. In reality, many cottars were “simply members of extended families living in separate Households but gaining a living from the same small area of land”. The following statement recorded in the 1841 census portrays the way in which one Enumerator understood the difference between a crofter and a cottar:

There are two classes of persons in this parish for which there are no particular instructions in the Schedule Book. I desired them to be entered as crofters and cottars. A crofter rents only a small piece of land insufficient to support himself and his family. Consequently he is obliged to take work from the farmer or the landlord to make up the rent. The cottars are mostly poor people unable to take any land. They have only a house and a garden from the farmer and take work where they can best find it.

It was a common practice when economic disaster struck for crofter families to share their resources with cottar family members. One example of this arrangement can be found in the cottar Household of Michael McDonald.

78 Ibid. p. 9.
79 1841 Census Returns, volume 505 Ardnamurchan, Edinburgh, 1983, Enumeration District 1, County of Argyll, NAS. This statement was recorded by the person appointed by the Sheriff or provost to collect the census details. In 1841 Moidart was located within the County of Argyll.
Michael’s occupation according to the 1841 census was ‘carpenter’, however, by 1851 he was recorded as a ‘cottar and a carpenter’. He and his family lived next door to Mary McDonald, a crofter and head of house in the crofting township of Scardoish. Michael was the brother of Mary’s deceased husband, John. It is informative to follow the plight of this family over fifteen years. In 1836 Michael McVarish was a crofter paying rent of five pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence. By 1841 he was a carpenter and by 1851 a cottar and carpenter. As this was an unusual occurrence with most people living their entire lives within a particular class, it is important to ask how this situation may have been brought about. In the case of Michael McVarish, this change of circumstance may have been due to his inability to continue to pay rent with eight family members to support during the famine of 1838. With his rent falling into arrears, the proprietor of the Estate may have removed him from the land he was renting. This would have forced him to take up a new occupation, that of carpenter. He may also have suffered an infirmity that meant he was no longer able to work the land in the same way and with his eldest child, a daughter aged only seven years, he may have been unable to pay his rent. Michael may have also worked next door for his sister-in-law and her family and, in return, may have been given a small portion of land to work for his own purposes.

Richards argues that despite these difficulties Highland families maintained a strong identity beginning with the Clan and including the extended family as well as the immediate Household and embracing a number of diverse aspects:

They saw themselves, first as family, though perhaps in a larger than usual sense, such as the Mackays, the Macdonalds or even the Smiths;

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80 See Appendix A, families 20 (Michael and Mary McDonald) and 21 (Mary McDonald and family).
81 See Lindsays WS GD243/4/15/18 for entry related to Michael McVarish and
second they were people of a township or a district, such as Strathnaver or Colonsay or St Kilda; then perhaps they thought of themselves as Highlanders or Islanders; they were also Scots and probably regarded themselves as British too.  

The 1851 census for the district clearly shows that many Households were composed of parents or grand-parents, married children, their spouses and children, unmarried siblings, one or two servants and visitors staying with the Household. The Household of John and Margaret McDonald of Scardoish (Household 21 in the 1851 Census and Family 17 in Appendix A) is an example of an extended family sharing the one home. John, aged 73 and Margaret, aged 65 had four sons whose ages ranged at the time of the census in 1851 from 35 to 18 and two daughters aged 24 and 22. Three generations lived under the one roof with one married son, Archibald, his wife, Catherine Corbett, and their infant son of three months. The eldest son often remained in the family home after marriage in order to work the croft with his parents. Catherine may have been the daughter of a neighbouring family by the name of Corbett who lived in the crofting township of Blain. With ten family members to support Archibald also worked occasionally as a salmon ‘fisher’ (fisherman) thereby supplementing the diet as well as income. A young nephew of John McDonald, Allan, was also resident in the house on census night. Even in his seventies John was still working as a crofter. As will be shown later the nature of this composition changed with the decision taken by some members to emigrate to Victoria.

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83  See 1851 Census of Scotland, County of Inverness, District of Moidart, Parish of Acharacle Quoad Sacre, Enumeration District (not recorded), Household number 21, Scardoish, John and Margaret McDonald, Crofter, p. 7.
84  Catherine may have been a member of Household six in Blain, Parish of Ardnamurchan according to the 1851 census for the district of Moidart.
Many Households also contained brothers and sisters of the head of the Household, as well as nephews and nieces and grandchildren residing in the house as a part of the extended family. The economic viability of each Household and crofting township was dependent on large family groups with two or three generations of men and women sharing the work on individual crofts as well as obtaining work outside the township or on neighbouring crofts. This organisation of labour will also be examined later in the thesis to ascertain whether or not there is evidence of any attempt to transplant this traditional Highland system to Victoria and to what extent it survived and fulfilled the needs of these Highland settlers in a new context. The structure of the Household, however, was not the only support on which these people depended. The social and spiritual network provided by the Catholic Church was also an important means of guidance, authority and comfort in these difficult times.

1.5. Religious background

The district of Moidart had traditionally been a Catholic enclave.\(^{85}\) In 1791 the Catholic population of Moidart was recorded as 693 out of a total population for the district of 712. The remaining 19 people consisted of two Episcopalians and 17 members of the Established Church. There were three Catholic priests also living in the district at this time. A seminary “taught by and for Roman Catholic clergy”\(^ {86}\) was located at Glenuig at a place named Samalaman. The New Statistical Account stated that “in the Inverness districts there are only

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\(^{85}\) C Johnson, *Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland 1789-1829*, John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, 1983. This publication comprehensively traces the history and development of the Scottish Catholic Mission between 1789 and 1829. However, the author acknowledges in the Introduction and on p. 3, that “the paucity of Highland source material has forced me to concentrate primarily on developments in the Lowland Vicariate.”

two denominations, that of the Church of Scotland, and of Rome. The former amount to 300, and the latter 2058". It went on to report that there were five Roman Catholic chapels and two priests under the jurisdiction of the bishop residing in Glasgow.\textsuperscript{87}

Catholic clergy had a long tradition of being involved in emigrations from Moidart. As J. M. Bumsted pointed out:

Roman Catholic clergymen played a major role in leading Highlanders to British North America, and the number of Catholic emigrants was always vastly disproportionate to their number in the Highland population.\textsuperscript{88}

Consequently when the potato crop failed once again in Moidart and in the neighbouring district of Knoydart in 1838-39, emigration from these two districts was supported by the Catholic clergy. In a letter written to Dr Andrew Macdonald, Bishop in Greenock in 1839, Fr. Coll Macdonald of Lochshiel, Moidart, requested that he be appointed to “superintend the Canadian Highland emigration”. He continued in the same letter to outline the plight of the people in his care. Referring to the proposed emigration he stated:

I really think it would benefit those who go and those who remain, for there are too many people in various parts. In the parish of Sleat in a population of 3000, 1200 have no land, but subsist as they best may.

\textsuperscript{87} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 160. 
The parish of Glenelg is worse. In Morar North there are several hundred without land, also in Knoydart ... I think it a philanthropic duty to send them to possess good land. I think religion is not adverse to the duty. Even if compulsion is necessary, which it will be.\(^{89}\)

The use of the word ‘compulsion’ in this statement indicates that Macdonald thought that the people would be unwilling to emigrate and pressure would need to be applied. This statement also indicates that emigration was not readily acceptable to the people as a preferred remedy to their difficulties.

Father Ranald Rankin of Moidart also wrote to Bishop Scott in 1839 about the destitution of the people and referred to a meeting with other priests “for the distribution of poor meal at Kenloch”.\(^{90}\) This reference to the importation and distribution of food in neighbouring Arisaig provides evidence of the existence of widespread hardship in several districts adjoining Moidart.

Hunter makes the point that it was virtually impossible for any crofter to provide a supply of food for a family for a year and, on neighbouring Skye, crofters were spending from eight to twelve pounds each year to buy meal, 50 years later in the early 1880s.\(^{91}\) A third priest, Fr Coll MacColl, wrote from the district of Arisaig in 1839 stating “I find that many of the people themselves would emigrate they being this year very scarce of potatoes and other provisions for their families.”\(^{92}\) He also referred to the efforts that the people


\(^{91}\) Hunter, _The making of the Crofting Community_, p. 114.

\(^{92}\) C. MacColl, Letter OL1/27/18 to the Roman Catholic Bishop Dr Scott, West
had made to pay their rent to the proprietor from money earned by herring fishing.

These letters strongly suggest that the Highland Catholic priests were keen for their parishioners to emigrate in order to improve their conditions. It is also important to note that the priests were keen to accompany the people. This was possibly due to a sense of duty and responsibility towards their parishioners as well as an attempt to ensure that the parishioners remained strong in their faith and didn’t ‘stray’ once away from the influence of the clergy. Several of the emigrants did in fact marry outside the Catholic Church following their arrival in Victoria or left to join other denominations. The desire may have also related to the fact that once a significant number of people had left the district there would be little need for the clergy to remain resulting in the demise of Catholicism in Moidart.

Despite the evidence of extreme poverty in Moidart, the Catholic population was also seeking to build a new chapel at this time. Father Macdonald wrote in the same letter; “All the good people of Moidart have set their hearts on requesting your Lordship’s assistance to get them a Central Meeting House, where all could be present every Sunday in the year”.  

This statement by Father Macdonald raises a number of issues. On one hand the statement illustrates the strength of religious feeling and commitment amongst the community following the difficult economic circumstances of 1838. Rents, for example on the Lochshiel Estate, were reduced for the majority of Households due to the famine that occurred in that year. The letter was also written

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Ibid., p. 2.
following an emigration of twelve families and a number of single people (approximately 88 people) to Australia in late 1838. This was a significant exodus from the district and the loss of so many people at the one time must have made other families question whether their future still lay in Moidart. But the sentiments expressed in the letter also strongly suggest that the remaining people did see their future in Moidart and not elsewhere, no matter how difficult the times. The building of such a public and important edifice as a meeting house, able to accommodate all the worshippers would have been seen as a symbol of stability and an investment in a future for those remaining in Moidart. If emigration had been their only recourse, would they have been so determined to build a new meeting house?

1.6. Education background

The provision of an adequate number of schools across the Highlands to meet the educational needs fell far short of what was required in 1838. Illiteracy was widespread and access to schools was an issue of great concern to the clergy of the district.

The New Statistical Account mentions only two schools in the Moidart district, Catholic and Presbyterian, one at Acharacle (an Assembly school at the church) and another at Kinlochmoidart. The Account raised the issue of the lack of schools and access to learning for scholars and stated, “It appears, therefore, that there are only seven schools on permanent foundation in the parish. Eight additional are required to render education accessible to all the inhabitants.” The Account also noted that the number of children between the ages of six and fifteen in Inverness-shire in 1838 who could not read or write
totalled 416 whilst the number above 15 was recorded as 892.\textsuperscript{95} The total number of children within these age ranges is not recorded so it is not possible to calculate the numbers attending the schools or the percentage of literate and illiterate students in the district.

The Catholic clergy also did their best to provide schools despite the difficulties in locating these schools in the most appropriate positions to enable the children of parishioners to attend. By January 1839 Ranald Rankin had established two Catholic schools in the Moidart district, one at Langal and the other near his home at Scardoish. He wanted this school moved to a more central location to allow more students to attend and was also concerned about the need to establish a school on Island Shona. Although there were 40 students in the two schools he too was greatly worried about the fact that many students were prevented from attending his schools because “the parents are miserably poor and cannot pay”, a further indication of the level of destitution existing in the parish.\textsuperscript{96} This sense of responsibility for providing access to education for his parishioners accompanied Rankin to Victoria and resulted in personal financial contributions towards the establishment of several schools in locations where he worked.

From letters written by Rankin both English and Gaelic were taught in his schools: “They are making great progress in reading English and Gaelic.”\textsuperscript{97} This statement suggests that students in 1839 were achieving some level of

\textsuperscript{94} Clerk, \textit{The New Statistical Account of Scotland}, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{97} R. Rankin, Letter OL1/28/4 to the Roman Catholic Bishop Dr Scott, West Shaw Street,
proficiency in two languages. The fact that English was taught in a Gaelic-speaking community would seem to suggest that, for Rankin, as for his counterparts in the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK), English would be an important acquisition for the future for the children of Moidart. The SSPCK was an organisation founded by the Gaelic Society of Edinburgh in 1709 to “civilise and christianise the Highlands by means of extending presbyterianism [sic] and opposing catholicism [sic].”

The Society was determined to eradicate the Gaelic language which it associated with backwardness and to replace Gaelic in schools with English. Rankin’s schools taught English for other reasons. He was preparing his students for a future which he believed lay outside of Scotland and where English would be necessary in order to achieve upward mobility. Despite their acquisition of English, however, the majority of school-age passengers were recorded as ‘unable to read or write’ (in English) on the passenger lists of the ships.

From correspondence written to the Catholic Bishop at Greenock in the 1830s it is clear that the priests were far more concerned about children having access to a school and education than about whether the school was supported by the Catholic Church or belonged to the Church of Scotland. Ranald Rankin reported to the Bishop in 1839 that the Assembly School at Kinlochmoidart

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was attended by five to six Catholic students and from four to five Protestant students. He described the situation for Catholic students attending this school in the following way:

The Catholic scholars are not obliged to learn by heart the protestant Catechism or psalms or paraphrases at the end of the new testament or any part of the Bible or new testament by heart or any protestant prayers. The society schoolmasters are obliged to say morning and evening prayers. Bishop Macdonald advises on that point that the Catholic scholars should say their own prayers while the protestant school master prayed in his own way.\textsuperscript{99}

Christine Johnson in her book \textit{Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland 1789-1829} claims that this was a view held by many Catholic clergy:

Clearly, Scottish Catholic priests were happy that Catholic children should be educated in Protestant schools, so long as they could receive instruction in their faith in Sunday schools or in classes held by the priests themselves.\textsuperscript{100}

Johnson also makes the point that the Assembly schools were happy to enrol all students regardless of religious belief as the salary of the schoolmaster was calculated according to the number of students enrolled and was therefore dependent on sufficient numbers of students. Rankin also noted that the

\textsuperscript{99} R. Rankin, Letter OL1/28/4 to the Roman Catholic Bishop Dr Scott, West Shaw Street, Greenock, Glasgow. \textit{Oban Letters}, Scottish Catholic Archives, Edinburgh, 1839. P.1

\textsuperscript{100} Johnson, \textit{Developments in the Roman Catholic Church in Scotland 1789 – 1829}, p. 227.
Assembly school at Glenuig had closed despite the high population in this area but that the proprietor of the estate, Dr Martin, intended to re-establish the Assembly school saying; “Dr Martin the proprietor of that part of Moidart is a good landlord but a great bigot. I know he will exert himself to get a protestant school in Glenuig very soon.”

Rankin had a Catholic teacher at Glenuig but was doubtful of his own financial ability to keep a Catholic school open. And so by 1851 the school at Glenuig had reopened with John MacIver as schoolmaster and Archibald Fleming was recorded as the schoolmaster at the school at Kinlochmoidart. From Rankin’s correspondence it would seem that education was much sought after by the Households and this may account for the fact that a Catholic school was opened in Belmont, Victoria in 1854.

Rankin was well aware of the impact that the depressed economic conditions in the district had on the lives of the people. How these conditions arose on the Estates and why the landowners made the decision to clear the people from their lands as their preferred remedy to solve their own economic tribulations is explored in the next section.

1.7. The economic circumstances of two Moidart estates

In order to understand the circumstances under which these Households emigrated to Australia it is necessary to briefly examine the ‘transformation of

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102 1851 Census Enumeration district one. National Archives of Scotland. See p. 6 for details of John MacIver and his family and p. 9, Kinloch Moidart for details of Archibald Fletcher. For an abbreviated history and overview of the sales and changes of ownership of the major estates of this part of Moidart see Macdonald Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds pp. 238 – 264.
103 The two estates are those of Lochshiel and Kinlochmoidart.
Gaeldom’ and the impact these changes had on the Western Highlands in the mid to late eighteenth century generally.\textsuperscript{104} Famine and destitution had been a part of the economic and social fabric of the Highlands for several centuries prior to this period.\textsuperscript{105} Devine identifies a number of major changes that swept through the Highlands at this time and each of these changes can be observed in relation to the two estates in this study as will be demonstrated later in this chapter. These changes included the demand by landlords for increased rents as land was turned over to large-scale sheep farming to meet the market demands for wool for industry in the Lowlands and England. Secondly the crofting system of land use replaced the traditional runrig system. Strips of land were merged to create small individual holdings as distinct from the traditional communal townships. This new system of land use brought about changes in the class structure of Highland society including the removal of the tacksman class and its replacement with a middle class comprised of sheep farmers from the south or from England. Thirdly, large numbers of people were displaced and moved internally from the glens of the estates to the coastal areas as sheep moved into the Highlands. Sheep displaced cattle as a major source of income. Devine points out that the cheviot breed of sheep in particular posed a threat to cattle-raising. Cheviots needed access to both the higher shielings in summer (where the cattle were grazed away from the crops growing on the lower areas) as well as to the lower areas of land used for arable purposes in order to

\textsuperscript{104} See Devine, \textit{Clanship to Crofters' War}, Chapter 3, pp.32-53 where he examines the social changes that swept through both the Highlands and Lowlands in the late eighteenth century and the effects of these changes. For an outline of the physical, social, and economic roles of the summer shielings in Highland society refer to A. Bil, \textit{The Shieling 1600-1840}, John Donald Publishers, Edinburgh, 1990.\textsuperscript{105} See T. M. Devine, Introductory chapter in \textit{Clearance and Improvement}, John Donald, Edinburgh, 2006, p. 3 where he lists dates from the 1690s onwards, of the so-called ‘Lean Years’ and ‘difficult times’, related to famine in Scotland.
survive the winter.\textsuperscript{106}

The impact of these broader changes continued to affect the economic circumstances of three of the Moidart estates in the early 1850s as is shown in this newspaper account. A report of a meeting held at the Fort William Court House and published in the \textit{Inverness Courier} in 1851 outlined the degree of destitution that existed across approximately 16 Estates in the four parishes of Kilmallie, Kilmonivaig, Ardnamurchan and Glenelg. The meeting was called to bring together “heritors, justices of the peace, clergy, merchants and others of this district in order to take into consideration the destitute state of many of the labouring population in the district, and the best means to be adopted for their relief”.\textsuperscript{107}

The meeting heard from the Inspector of the Relief Operations of the Glasgow Section of the Destitution Board. Letters from Estate proprietors were also read at the meeting. Importantly for this study the number of destitute families and individuals on the three Estates of Kinlochmoidart (proprietor William Robertson), Lochshiel (proprietor Alexander Macdonald) and Moidart (proprietor Dr Martin) were recorded in the article. They were listed as follows: Kinlochmoidart 21 heads of families with 164 individual family members; Lochshiel 93 heads of families with 464 individual members and Moidart with 33 heads of families and 164 individual members. The futures of 147 families were at risk of the decision making processes of a range of people from different backgrounds. The accompanying memorial or petition that was

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid., p. 36.
\textsuperscript{107} ‘Destitution in the Highlands - meeting at Fort William’ \textit{Inverness Courier}, Inverness,
also developed at this meeting stated that the population of the district was 11,000 with 8,000 belonging to the crofter or labouring class. The number of members of the cottar class was not recorded, a further indication of their lack of status in Highland society. The petition went on to state that 4,000 people were bordering on a state of famine whilst many hundreds were actually suffering from famine. The rental of the district did not exceed £34,000, much of which was taxed at seven and a half per cent for poor relief and, even at this rate, the tax was not sufficient to meet the needs. Those who worded the petition, whilst able to recognise that the distress was not the fault of the people, could not refer to or acknowledge the financial wastage and ineptitude on the part of the Estate owners, perhaps the true cause of this situation:

...the distress under which the people suffer has not been brought on by any misconduct of their own part, but is owing to an inscrutable visitation of Providence blighting the potato crop, which was their main stay of support. 108

The petition also stated that this situation had existed for the last four years. The three proprietors of the Moidart Estates were not present at the meeting but sent letters expressing their support. According to the authors of the petition, the situation of the people was blamed on the failure of the potato crop and not on the deeds of the owners or on inadequate agricultural practices or land tenure arrangements existing at the time.

1851. p 3.
108 Ibid
Those attending the meeting agreed that the resources of the district were inadequate to meet the needs of so many destitute families and that the government needed to act to retrieve this situation by:

...the reclaiming of waste lands, by facilitating emigration to the British colonies, by promoting works of public utility in the Highlands, or by any other means which their wisdom may seem to meet.\textsuperscript{109}

It was suggested that a railroad be built between Oban and the south as this would provide “work to the unemployed, and also tend to develop the resources of the country.”\textsuperscript{110} No doubt a new railroad would also be seen by the land owners as an important means of transporting guests and visitors to their Estates for sporting and fishing opportunities for which they received substantial amounts of money. The rental of the Mansion House of Island Shona for example, included shooting rights over a part of the property as well as “fish delivered by the tenants of the fishings.”\textsuperscript{111}

Of the three options put forward by those present at the meeting to address the hardship, the option of ‘facilitating emigration to the British Colonies’ was the one taken up by the three Estate proprietors. Removal of the people was the most expedient and “cost neutral” solution for each of these owners as all three owners failed to contribute their one third payment to the Society (see pages 230-231 for details of the unpaid costs).

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} C. Macdonald, ‘Contents of the Estate of Lochshiel being part of the 27 merk lands of Moidart’, GD243/4/14/8, Lindsays Catalogue, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1843.
Two years later and despite the removal of a large section of the district’s population in 1852, a meeting of the Parochial Board of Ardnamurchan held on the eighth of August 1854 was presented with a list consisting of the names of several of the poor of the parish. Of importance to this research is the fact that 25 of the names belonged to residents of the Lochshiel and Kinlochmoidart estates with 17 of these recipients residing at Moss on the Lochshiel estate where they had been forcibly moved.¹¹²

Whilst emigration may have alleviated the distress of the emigrant Households it was clearly not the solution to the ongoing distress amongst those who remained on the two estates. This general overview of the impact of social and economic change in the Western Highlands will now be examined in relation to the two Moidart estates in particular.

1.8 The Estate of Lochshiel

The lands of the Lochshiel estate lay between Loch Moidart and Lochshiel. In 1836 there were approximately 7,220 acres on the Estate of which 6,468 acres were used solely for pasture and grazing purposes. This left a mere 218 acres for the cultivation of potatoes and crops with the remaining 515 acres described as mosslands.¹¹³ In 1834 the estate’s income was derived from several sources. These included rentals of farms, fishing on the River Sheal, salmon fishing from the shores of Lochshiel and wood cut from pine and oak

¹¹² See chapter 6, pp. 390-391.
¹¹³ C. Mcdonald, “Contents of the Estate of Lochshiel being part of 27 Merk lands of Moidart”, Ref. GD243/4/14/8, Lindsays Catalogue,
plantations estimated at nearly 200 tons and leaving 400 standard oak trees of 40 years of age.

The new owner of the Lochshiel Estate, when it was first sold out of the hands of Clanranald, was Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale. He purchased it around 1811 and spent considerable money trying to improve the Estate by attempting to create additional arable land by reclaiming moss flats near Lochshiel for his tenant farmers. In 1838 John McLean (Tacksman of the farm of Glenforslan) and Alexander Stewart (Tacksman of the farm of Glenaladale) undertook a review of the levels of rents being paid in that year by the tenants on the estate. Their report contains information of interest to this study. Allan Mcvarish and John McPherson of Langall had a lease of 14 years on their land. All other residents were recorded as ‘tenants at will’. They also noted that two brothers, Alexander and Coll Macdonald who lived at Dalilea, had added an additional 30 acres of reclaimed waste-land which they had trench and drained at an expense of £700. They had also erected additional buildings for cattle at a cost of £40. These improvements were made possible because of Coll Macdonald’s income as a surgeon by profession. (He would later rent large tracts of land himself as Factor of the Estate from the proprietor, Alexander McDonald). In 1843 the Estate contained twelve crofting townships. The list of tenants in 1836 for example does not include the number of residents not paying rent so that the population living on the Estate was well in excess of the 51 Households plus that of the proprietor. Likewise the total number of individuals in each Household on the Estate is not given.

National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh. 1843.
Evidence given at the Deer Forest Commission meeting in 1892 included a detailed account of how the forebears of many of the families came to live on the Estate resulting in severe overcrowding. The enquiry took place many years after the events of 1838 and 1851 and was therefore a recollection of earlier events. Eneas R. Macdonell of Camusdarroch, Arisaig recounted to the Commissioners how, along with James Macgregor of Fort William, he was appointed a trustee of the Lochshiel Estate in the early 1850s. As a Trustee he was forced to decide the best solution for what was a very congested Estate in terms of population.

According to Macdonell, the history of this congestion had its beginnings around 1794. At that time his grandfather, Archibald Macdonald of Rudha, received rents in the form of labour from cottar families. When Archibald died around 1828 his son Gregor inherited the land. When Gregor Macdonald of Rudha was asked to increase his own rent, which had been traditionally paid to the owner of the land Macdonald of Clanranald, he was unable to pay and so the farm was taken from him.

Donaldson argues that, as the role of the Clan Chief changed from leader to landlord in the Highlands, an increased rent was often demanded from tenants as in the above case. Many tacksmen chose to emigrate rather than pay the increase forcing their small tenants to pay instead. Spiralling rents was a key emigration ‘push’ factor for the tacksman class in the eighteenth century.

\[^{114}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{115}\text{MacKenzie, The History of the Highland Clearances, pp. 271-272.}\]
Gregor Macdonald was forced to remove all the cottar families (subtenants) whose families had worked on the land for generations. He asked his brother, Alexander Macdonald of Lochshiel, to take the 37 families to live on the Lochshiel Estate in Moidart. If this narration was correct the Estate became home to an additional 37 poor families who would not be able to pay rent or to acquire land. Together with the 51 rent paying families already living on the Estate in 1836, (and possibly other existing cottar families), it is not difficult to see how it became impossible for such a small acreage to provide sufficient food and income for the population. Once again the harvest was devastated by blight in 1838 creating a famine.

Evidence given by Colin Nisbet, a crofter at Ardtoe, appears to corroborate that given by Eneas Mcdonnell. Examined in Gaelic, Nisbet stated:

They were not big crofts: the people were crowded into that place at the time the sheep farms were being formed. They were sent from the other end of the country and crowded in there.\textsuperscript{117}

Internal migration from one estate to another was only part of the migration experience of the Moidart people. Several hundred residents of the district were members of numerous emigrations organised in the late eighteenth century and were the result of several factors that operated to remove or ‘push’

\textsuperscript{117} Minutes of Evidence taken before the Royal Commission (Highlands and Islands 1892) Vol. 1. Forty-fourth sitting held at Acharacle, Ardamurchan on 22 May, 1894. Evidence (question 38.) given by Colin Nisbet, a crofter living at Ardtoue. Nisbet was appointed by the people of the district at a public meeting to answer questions regarding the large tracts of land that were under deer or game in the district and which could have been divided up into small holdings to increase the size of crofts.
the people off the land. Extensive sheep farms began to be established in West Inverness-shire in the 1780s by amalgamating small crofts and farms into larger holdings. Conversion of land followed attempts on certain estates to convert the religion of the people. The Catholic Laird John Macdonald had earlier organised the emigration of tenants from his Glenaladale estate in Moidart taking with him Catholic tenants from South Uist who were being persecuted owing to their religion. They emigrated to Scotchfort in Prince Edward Island (PEI) Canada in 1773. He paid their passages through the sale of his estates to Alasdair-an-Oir.\textsuperscript{118} Gordon Donaldson, in his book \textit{The Scots Overseas}, also refers to this particular emigration in the following way:

In 1771 John MacDonald, laird of Glenaladale in Moidart, bought land in "St. John's Island" (Prince Edward Island) for a hundred natives of South Uist, and in 1773 he sold his estate and himself joined those emigrants as leader of a party from Moidart.\textsuperscript{119}

A priest by the name of James MacDonald accompanied them and later, another priest who was the laird's brother, also joined them establishing a strong communal settlement based on religious affiliation. Land and religious conversion therefore both acted as strong 'push' factors in the case of the Moidart population at this time. Donaldson also noted that the flow of emigrants from Moidart to North America continued into the nineteenth century:

\textsuperscript{118} Macdonald, \textit{Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds}, pp. 213-214.
\textsuperscript{119} Donaldson, \textit{The Scots Overseas}, p. 63.
From 1790 onwards a number of people, variously estimated at up to 700 left Moidart, Arisaig, Ardnamurchan and Sunart, and around 1812 most of the Kinlochmoidart tenants are said to have emigrated to America.\(^{120}\)

In July 1790 two emigrant ships left Drimindarach for PEI. The first ship ‘Jane’ carried members of three Moidart families: John Campbell from Island Shona, Donald Adamson of Moidart and Roderick McDonald from Glenuig. The second ship ‘Lucy’ carried many more families including six families from Island Shona, five from Kyles, three from Glenuig and one from Kentra. In 1830 a priest by the name of John MacDonald led a group of Catholics (including some emigrants from Ireland) to Johnston’s River in PEI, however approximately 40 of the settlers disembarked in Cape Breton.\(^{121}\)

The resettlement of the Rudha people on Lochshiel estate provides evidence of a practice by which families were forcibly relocated and illustrating the high degree of vulnerability to which cottar families in particular were exposed. Balfour points out that a similar situation also applied to small tenant farmers as it was:

\[
\text{...not uncommon for tenants, some the victims of eviction others seeking to escape congestion, to establish a presence on the Estate of a neighbouring proprietor with the result that one proprietor’s difficulty...}
\]

\(^{120}\) Ibid, p. 67.
\(^{121}\) The passenger lists for the ‘Jane’ and ‘Lucy’ are part of the Oban Papers held at the Scottish Catholic Archives in Edinburgh and are published in L. H. Campey, "A Very Fine Class of Immigrants" Prince Edward Island’s Scottish Pioneers 1770-1850, Natural Heritage Books, Toronto, 2001. pp. 112, 114 and 147.
became his neighbour’s responsibility, often with dire results.\textsuperscript{122}

The results of this relocation had serious consequences for the inhabitants of the Lochshiel Estate. The overcrowded estate coupled with a further period of famine in the district in 1838 resulted in the first large emigration of Moidart people to Australia in 1838-9. This emigration may have created a social and kinship network into which the 1852 arrivals were welcomed although this study has been unable to establish familial relationships between the two groups of immigrants due to the lack of civil documentation. The emigrant ship ‘British King’ sailed from Tobermory on 28 October 1838 and arrived in Sydney Cove on 4 March 1839.\textsuperscript{123} On board were Highlanders from Moidart\textsuperscript{124} and Ardnamurchan, Skye, Coll, Tyree, Ulva and Gometra. There were eleven Catholic families from Moidart comprising 67 individuals although there were 88 Catholics in total. In addition, there were five single males and four single females also from Moidart and Catholic in faith. All eleven families bore the surname ‘McDonald’. The nominal passenger list recorded their occupations as farmer, farm labourer, house servant, shepherd, ploughman and dairy maid.\textsuperscript{125} On their arrival in Sydney, five of the families travelled south to Nimmitabel on the Monaro Plateau in the southern Alps.\textsuperscript{126} According to Sister Ursula

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{122} R. Balfour, Personal communication, 11 July, 2002.
\bibitem{123} N. McDonald, \textit{Burn to Billabong}, Portofino Design Group Pty Ltd., 1988. p. 13. This reference is a compilation of Macdonald family stories including several of the McDonald families who arrived on the ‘British King’ in 1839.
\bibitem{124} Sr. U. Smith, Personal communication, 22 July, 2002. Letter regarding the settlement of Catholic Moidart Highlanders on the Monaro. According this letter the Moidart people originated from Glenuig, Smissarry, Kinlochmoidart, Glen Moidart, Caolas Mor (also known as Kylesmore), Corran, Iirine, Ulgarry, Mingarry, Glenfinnan, Glenforslan and Killmallie.
\bibitem{125} C.W. Paton, Nominal Passenger List of the emigrant ship ‘British King’ Assisted (Bounty) Immigrants 1839, Archives Authority of New South Wales, Reel Number 1299, Assisted (Bounty) Immigrants, 1839, State Library of Victoria.
\bibitem{126} Author or editor unknown, \textit{Pioneers of Snowy Monaro prior to 1850}, The Snowy Monaro Family History Group. This book, now out of print, contains family lineages for the five
\end{thebibliography}
Smith, the five families settled there because they were invited by a Robert Campbell to work on his property. He had been born in Scotland and had received a grant of 4,000 acres in 1825. The 1838 people were assisted ‘bounty’ emigrants and were brought to New South Wales under the Bounty Emigration Scheme. Under this Scheme settlers like Campbell who wanted labourers could contract agents in Britain to find suitable workers. The settler paid a ‘bounty’ or the fare of the labourer and his family to Australia. On arrival the immigrants were examined by a Board and, if found acceptable as workers, the settler was entitled to reclaim the fare he paid from the Government of New South Wales. Campbell met the ‘British King’ in order to employ Highlanders to work on his pastoral runs near Cooma. This arrangement provides a clear example of the social network and structural theories of migration in operation. Most of these Households remained in the district continuing to work in the sheep industry. Other McDonald families travelled north following their arrival to the Clarence River district in New South Wales where they also took up farming.

McDonald families who settled in the Nimmitabel district, on the Monaro. It also contains information about the properties they selected and the work they undertook after their arrival.

127 Sister Ursula Smith, a member of the Sisters of Saint Joseph (a Catholic Religious Order founded by Mother Mary MacKillop) and working in Nimmitabel, has undertaken significant research in relation to the McDonald families of Moidart who arrived on the ‘British King’ at Sydney in 1839. Many of these families moved on to the Monaro Plain around Nimmitabel to establish farms. She, along with other residents in the district, is a descendant of one of these families.


A second emigration occurred in 1839 with the ship ‘George Fyfe’ arriving in Sydney on 23 January, 1840. On board were at least two Moidart families accompanied by other families from Ardnamurchan and Inverness-shire. \(^{130}\)

Individual Households also emigrated to Australia at different times between 1839 and 1855 adding to the Moidart community in Victoria. The Catholic marriage register for Moidart records that Archy and Ann Gillies who married in 1842 emigrated to Port Phillip in 1849. Other Households left for Victoria after 1852. The Household of Archibald and Allana McDonald and their five children from the Lochshiel estate and assisted by the HIES, sailed on the emigrant ship ‘Hornet’, leaving Liverpool on the 24 July 1854 and arriving at Geelong. John McDonald, Allan Stewart and Archibald McIntyre all residents of Kinloch, Moidart, signed Promissory Notes at Glasgow for loans of various amounts received from the HIES on 13 July 1854.

An examination of the records of rentals paid on crofts over a period of 20 years by the small tenants who lived in the crofting townships on the Lochshiel Estate provides background information through which the 1837-1839 emigrations to Australia can be viewed. \(^{131}\) It is important to note, however, that these statistics only relate to the small tenant or rent-paying residents and do not include the cottar or other non-rent-paying residents. \(^{132}\) Therefore the figures do not provide a comprehensive overview of the total population of

\(^{130}\) The ship ‘George Fyfe’, arrived in Sydney on 23 January 1840. Assisted (Bounty) Immigrants 1840, Vol. 30 Archives ref No. 4/4854. Reel No 1312, Archives Authority of New South Wales, Sydney.

\(^{131}\) See documents in the Lindsays WS Catalogue, Reference GD 243, The National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh. (Papers were deposited in the Scottish Record Office on indefinite loan in 1963 and 1980).

\(^{132}\) When the 1841 census is compared with the 1851 census (which identified cottar and pauper families), the comparison reveals a very different picture in terms of the total numbers of people living in the townships. See page 67 for T.M. Devine’s explanation of the term ‘cottar’.

91
each township or overall movements of people, especially the movement of cottar families.

Rental records from 1834 to 1851 show an increase of residents in four townships on the Lochshiel Estate (Dalnabreck, Mingarry and Blain and Briag). This may be the result of an agreement between Coll McDonald and an un-named lessee and explained in the following way:

I have entered into a most valuable arrangement for the property… I have let Blain, Briag, Mingarry and Portavate to one tenant as a sheep walk at one hundred and eighty pounds a year, and I am arranging to place about 20 Families on this land and to give them 5 acres of it at twenty shillings and a lease of 19 years so that at the end of 19 years each of those acres will be worth from one pound to two pounds.\textsuperscript{133}

In the same letter Macdonald also mentions that the rents of each farm were in arrears and, although he had foregone the rent due to low prices for cattle, he intended to collect the rent in 1844 by selling the cattle owned by the tenants. Tenants lived under the constant threat of eviction and the crofting society generally was vulnerable. Whilst the population of townships such as Cliff remained relatively stable other townships fluctuated in terms of the number of residents suggesting the possible relocation of tenants. The following table shows the periods of economic difficulty as well as those townships where rents were unable to be collected. It also demonstrates an overall increase in

\textsuperscript{133} Letter written by Coll McDonald to Adam (surname undecipherable) on 18 March 1844 re the current state of rents and plans for the four farms of Blain, Briag, Mingarry and Portavate. Reference GD 243/4/14/18, Lindsays WS Catalogue GD 243, The National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh.
the population across the estate with 67 Households paying rent in 1851 compared with 52 in 1836. This increase suggests that the estate was in fact overpopulated at the time of the 1849-52 famine.

### Table 1.1: Numbers of Tenants paying rent on each farm/township on the Lochshiel Estate between 1834 and 1851.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms/Townships</th>
<th>1834</th>
<th>1836</th>
<th>1838</th>
<th>1843</th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>1851</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Langall</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dalnabreak</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mingarry</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Blain and Briag</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cliff</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scardouish</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Portavate</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Island Shona - North</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Island Shona – South</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Island Shona – Total</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dalilea Farm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Dalilea tenants</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Source:** Lindsays WS Catalogue, GD 243, NAS
- * - No breakdown of individual tenants provided. Note that 1838 was a year of destitution resulting in a large emigration to New South Wales from this district.
- ** - Portavate combined with Blain and Briag (no breakdown of individual tenants provided)
- *** - Blain and Briag were recorded as Blain Moss
- **Note:** Rental figures are in Scottish pounds.

From statements made by Macdonald it seems that there were no leases between the owner and small tenants on the Lochshiel Estate. Macdonald acknowledged that the difficulties experienced by the small tenants were due
to “… the pernicious practice of not giving leases”\textsuperscript{134} Despite the good intentions expressed in the letter, however, this state of affairs continued until the Estate passed into the hands of another proprietor well into the late nineteenth century. The rental figures for Island Shona are also misleading in so far as, according to the 1851 census, most residents on this Island were cottars and so were not included in rental figures for this part of the Estate.

Provided that annual rents were paid when due (usually Martinmas and Whitsunday) it was the usual practice for the croft to remain in the hands of several generations of the same family. Records of rents paid for the family croft worked by the family of Mary McDonald (MacVarish) at Scardoish (Household 21 Appendix A) show that this croft had remained in the family for four generations. Rent payments were entered for heads of this family for 1836 - widow of John MacVarish, 1824 - Archibald MacVarish and 1748 - Katherine MacVarish.\textsuperscript{135} In this particular case, however, attachment to family and land was not sufficiently strong for the majority of the members of this family to remain. Two older members of the Household, a brother and sister of the mother (and both with a disability), were forced to remain in Scotland as neither was suitable or eligible to emigrate. This may indicate that, although allegiance to family and strong kinship ties existed, the family’s perception of the possibilities for their future proved to be a greater force, resulting in their emigration.

\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} I am grateful to Alasdair MacLeod, Archivist at the Highland Archives, Inverness, Scotland for obtaining this information in 1997 from the Glenalladale Papers in GD 243, Lindsays Catalogue, NAS. Pages unknown.
An examination of rents paid by Households in the years prior to emigration provides an insight into rental fluctuations according to economic circumstances and demonstrating the degree of difficulty for Households to hold onto their land in times of hardship. The following table provides an overview of the fluctuations of the annual rents paid by seven Households in the years prior to their emigration to Australia in 1852. Rents paid in Scardouish decreased between 1843 and 1851 as the community moved out of reasonably prosperous times into famine. This is also the case with Island Shona residents. In two other instances the rents paid by the two widows Catherine Kennedy (Household 25) and Flora McMaster (Household 23) differed from those paid by the other Households. It is not clear, however, what percentage of income this amount of rent represented in the case of the two widows and whether or not it is indicative of a more compassionate approach towards these two Households on the part of the Factor and proprietor.

Table 1.2: Examples of rents paid by individual Households living in crofting townships on the Lochshiel Estate between 1834 and 1851.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farm / Township and Family</th>
<th>1834 £</th>
<th>1836 £</th>
<th>1838 £</th>
<th>1843 £</th>
<th>1846 £</th>
<th>1851 £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dalnabreak – Angus McNiel. Family no.26**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4.0.0 Michael McNiel</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td>8.0.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>4.0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalnabreak – Catherine Kennedy – Widow of Angus Kennedy of Moss. Family no. 25**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.10.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mingarry – Flora McMaster – widow of John McMaster. Family no. 23**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>7.0.0</td>
<td>6.0.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6.0.0</td>
<td>3.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island Shona – South side. John McDonald. Family no. 14**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>8.11.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>6.6.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5.5.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fact that few rents are recorded for 1838 may indicate that the Households were too poor to pay rent or the result of a significant emigration of Moidart families to Australia due to severe famine and thereby removing many of the rent paying Households from these townships. By 1851, however, the Households were able to pay a reduced rent approximately twelve months prior to their departure as the economy of the Highlands began to slowly improve.

Table 2.3 shows the combined rents paid by the small tenants on the Lochshiel Estate over a period of 17 years. From these figures it can again be seen that rent totals underwent large fluctuations in some townships. Most notable are the townships of Mingarry, Blain and Briag, Scardouish and Portavate. Mingarry and Scardouish both show a severe decrease in rent totals in 1838. By 1838 rents were difficult to pay owing to the fall in cattle prices and a famine brought destitution to the families on the Estate. In response, it was suggested by the two tacksmen of the Estate that rents needed to be reduced. In the report prepared by McLean and Stewart it was suggested that, for example, the tenants at Mingarry (who were recorded as “Tenants at Will”) should have their rents reduced from seven pounds to six “owing to the fall in price of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Rent 1838</th>
<th>Rent 1839</th>
<th>Rent 1840</th>
<th>Rent 1841</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Island Shona – South side. Angus McDonald. Family no. 15**</td>
<td>* 11.8.0</td>
<td>* 6.6.0</td>
<td>* 5.5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scardouish – Mary McDonald and family. Family no. 21**</td>
<td>* 5.16.8</td>
<td>* 8.0.0</td>
<td>* 6.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scardouish – John McIsaac and son. Family no. 17**</td>
<td>* 5.16.8</td>
<td>* 8.0.0</td>
<td>* 6.0.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lindsays WS Catalogue, GD243, NAS.
* No individual family rents listed for the year.
** Family numbers correspond to numbering system used in Appendix A.

136 See chapter one, pp. 89-91 for further details regarding this particular emigration to the Colony of New South Wales.
cattle". Similarly, the Tenants at Langal who had agreed to pay £40 combined rent for the first seven years then £50 for the remaining seven years, should have their rent reduced back to £40. Similar recommendations were made for all the other townships on the Estate.

In the relatively prosperous years of 1843-46, the rent totals in these two townships again climbed but decreased again during the period of the next famine of 1850-52.

Table 1.3: Total of rents paid by each township on Lochshiel Estate (plus other sources of rent received) between 1834 and 1851.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Farms/townships</th>
<th>1834</th>
<th>1836</th>
<th>1838</th>
<th>1843</th>
<th>1846</th>
<th>1851</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Langall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dalnabreak</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35.10.0</td>
<td>32.5.0</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mingarry</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52.10.0</td>
<td>52.10.0</td>
<td>46.5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Blain and Briag</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72.19.6</td>
<td>72.19.6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>120**</td>
<td>50.79.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cliff</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.10.0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.10.0</td>
<td>15.10.0</td>
<td>16.10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Scardouish</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>59.10.0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>65.5.0</td>
<td>65.5.0</td>
<td>35.00.0* **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Portavate</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Island Shona House</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Island Shona – North</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>47.06.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>45.08.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Island Shona – South</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>64.11.0</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>52.08.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Island Shona</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Fishing in the river Shiel</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lindsays WS Catalogue, GD 243, NAS.
* - No amounts provided
** - Included rents from Portavate
*** - Included 10 from Dorlin in 1851

Rental amounts also appear to be disproportionate between the total amounts

Ibid.
paid and the total number of tenants contributing. This is demonstrated in the following table showing the total rental amounts paid by the group of tenants in each of three townships, on the Lochshiel Estate:

Table 1.4: Examples of the range of rents paid between townships / farms on the Lochshiel Estate in 1850-1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township / Farm</th>
<th>No. of tenants paying rent</th>
<th>Total rent paid per annum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Langal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Dalnabreck</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>£36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mingarry</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>£46.05.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Lindsays WS Catalogue, GD 243/4/14/29, NAS.

The difference in the rents might be explained by examining the amount of arable land and pasture available on each farm. Rents at Langal for example may have been higher due to the fact that the tenants rented approximately 718 acres of pasture in addition to 35 acres of arable land. One tenant paid £20 whilst the other two tenants paid ten pounds each. Mingarry also had 300 acres of pasture to rent plus a large number of tenants although nine out of the twelve tenants were paying the smaller rent of three pounds ten shillings in annual rent. Two tenants each paid seven pounds possibly indicating a larger holding whilst the remaining tenant paid one pound five shillings. Mingarry farm also contained 44 acres of unproductive moss land reducing the area of cultivated land. Pasture had to be shared amongst twelve tenants compared with three tenants at Langal.

Small arable acreages like these meant firstly that all available land was used to grow enough food to support the Households. Therefore there was little of the harvest left to sell for income. Secondly, small acreages usually meant that the whole acreage was in use all year round. There was no opportunity to rest the land in order for it to rejuvenate. Over-utilised land (even using seaweed as fertiliser) produced poor harvests resulting in food shortages often putting
Households at risk of starvation. Thirdly, small acreages meant that there was not enough work available to engage all the members of the Household. The crofts were worked largely by the head of house with the eldest son. It was therefore common practice for other members of the Household to look elsewhere for work at certain times of the year.

Proprietors and their Factors were always ready to maximise the income of the Estate by taking advantage of any improvements made by the tenants. Tenants who made improvements to their homes or holdings were often penalised through an increase in rent or by ensuring that any improvements made would eventually revert to the Estate. Coll Macdonald, in a letter written in 1843, stated that Allan McVarish and sons who had rented their land at Langal for fifty years and “have improved it considerably”\(^\text{138}\), would receive an increase in their rent of five pounds at Whitsunday. Similarly, two tenants at Scardofsie (Scardoish) had built a home which, at the end of the lease, would revert to the Estate. Consequently, the combined rent of all the crofters at Scardofsie was increased by six pounds. The three tenants at Dalnabreck had their rents raised from 25 shillings to two pounds because they each had a cow and stock.\(^\text{139}\)

Increasing the rents of the small tenants was not the only way of increasing income on Lochshiel. As referred to on page 92 of this study Coll Macdonald had entered into a “most valuable arrangement for the property”.\(^\text{140}\) He had let the four townships of Blain, Briag, Mingarry and Portavate to a tenant as a

\(^{138}\) C. Macdonald, ‘Letter to Dr. Macdonald’ Messrs Lindsays Catalogue WS, Ref. GD243/4/14/4, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, 6 March 1843. See letter which refers to changes to rents on Lochshiel Estate, the overcrowded conditions in the Highlands and a possible emigration to America of tenants from the Estate.

\(^{139}\) Ibid.

\(^{140}\) C. Macdonald Ref. GD243/4/14/18, Lindsays WS, NAS, Edinburgh, 1844. See letter which refers to the leasing of townships as a sheep run and the offering of leases for tenants following their agreed relocation to another part of the Estate.
sheep walk for £180 per year. He also wished to place 20 families on this same land and to give each family five acres to rent with a 19 year lease, at 20 shillings per year. His aim was to ensure that:

… in a few years every small tenant on the property will be on this land which the want of a proper tenure has hitherto made useless.\footnote{Ibid.}

The crofters would also be able to gather and sell seaware (kelp). This arrangement was one way of forcing the people to move towards the shoreline on part of the Estate in order to use the arable land more profitably for the grazing of sheep. The people, who had been without leases, would most likely have agreed to relocate in order to take up the land with the additional incentive of a nineteen-year lease. Under this arrangement the proprietor received two sources of income from the land; the rents of the crofters relocated to the newly leased land as well as the rent from the tenant who had leased the four farms as a sheep run. This arrangement provides a further example of the ways in which the vulnerable people without the security of a lease over their land were left to the discretion of the proprietors.

Finally, it is worth noting that income levels for the proprietor of Lochshiel did not vary greatly between 1834 and 1851, despite a decreased population due to the 1838 emigration and the economic difficulties faced by those who remained. The degree to which poverty remained entrenched amongst the residents on the Lochshiel estate, despite the clearance of a large proportion of
the population in 1852, can be seen in the township of Moss. It serves as one example where destitution continued well into the nineteenth century caused by relocation to inferior quality land and despite the efforts of successive owners. Nine years after the 1852 emigration the 1861 census recorded Moss as consisting of 15 Households of which six contained members who were officially recorded as a ‘pauper’. Of these six Households individual members of four of the same Households were recorded as recipients of Poor Relief back in 1854.142 Two owners of the estate, Mr Hope Scott and Lord Howard of Glossop who arrived later in 1871, both spent considerable money on the estate to try to improve the conditions by expanding the amount of arable land for use by the tenants. Despite these efforts, the plight of the tenants at Moss was referred to once again by Macdonald at the 1884 Enquiry when he testified that:

There is one part called Moss, and the people of that place are in an inferior position. I think they were drafted from other parts of the estate and put into Moss, for they were in very poor circumstances and had very little land…and since that they have extended, and their arable land has been much improved…but they have no hill pasture.143

And so emigration was to be the answer to overcrowding on the Estate. At the

142 See an extract of the 1861 Census of Scotland (Census of Fort William) compiled by John Dye (date unknown) for the Moidart Local History Group at <www.moidart.org.uk/justus/restricteddataset/1861.htm> (accessed 5 April 2005) pp. 1-20 and John Dye, (date unknown). ‘Minute of Meeting of the Parochial Board of Ardamurchan held at Shielbridge this Eighth day of August 1854’. Original held at the Highland Council Archives HCA/CA/7/2/2/CO/7/3/2, Inverness and copy obtained from <www.moidart.org.uk> (accessed 5 December 2005).
143 Report of Her Majesty’s Commissioners of Inquiry into the Condition of the Crofters and Cottars in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, with Appendices, British Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons. 1884. Evidence number 33163, p. 2111.
same time emigration was also seen as a means of assisting those to benefit by
sub-dividing the crofts and redistributing the land to enlarge their holdings.
Although they were tenants at will Coll Macdonald acknowledged that
forebears of the people had lived on the estate for several generations, however
this was not sufficient to entitle them to any tenure over their land. This also
strongly suggests that the estate owners and Factors felt very little compunction
to address issues of tenure or overpopulation. Emigration was viewed
favourably by this class however, as it released the owners from any need to
resolve these issues:

The people renting lots and crofts as in the case all over the Highlands
are Tenants at will, some of whom are on those farms for from one to
two hundred years, very few of them being strangers. They are
becoming too numerous over the Highlands, …There are some families
to leave Moidart alas, which will enable the proprietor to increase the
holdings of those who remain, as the population are increasing too
much.¹⁴⁴

Macdonald recorded that he had permitted 60 people from the property to sign
up for emigration to America. Again he was appeasing his own conscience by
relying on the adequacy of the social networks already established in America
as a means of supporting those who left and ensuring that they would do well.
It would also appear from his letter that land left by those who emigrated was
redistributed amongst those who remained:

... as they have relations in America, they will no doubt do well there,
and it will enable me to enlarge the holdings of some others.\textsuperscript{145}

According to Father Charles Macdonald, Alexander Macdonald, the owner of the Lochshiel Estate, was not able to maintain the Estate as a self supporting enterprise and various ideas were put forward to try to save the Estate culminating in the decision of 1852:

…to remove most of the population, and to place their holdings under sheep. In this way Dorlin, Scardoish, Portabhata, Braig and Mingarry were swept clean, the majority of the crofters being sent away to Australia, while a few migrated to the south, or got the offer of settling down in less favourable localities of the Estate.\textsuperscript{146}

1.9 The Estate of Kinlochmoidart

The economic situation of the Kinlochmoidart Estate in 1852 was similar to that of Lochshiel. The boundaries of this Estate included four crofting townships from where twelve Households emigrated. An early owner of this Estate was Mrs Margaretta Robertson-Macdonald, according to information and signatures contained in leases drawn up between the owner and tenants wanting to lease land on the Estate. Her husband was Lieutenant Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald. Their eldest son, William, was the owner of the Estate at the time of the 1852 emigration.

\textsuperscript{144} In C. Macdonald, op.cit. p. 3.\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.\textsuperscript{146} C. Macdonald, \textit{Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds}, p. 261.
As early as 1806-7, there are references to the fact that David Robertson Macdonald was reviewing the economic situation of the Estate and looking at ways to increase his income, possibly by renting the Estate to the highest bidder. At this time Estate Factors had a role in determining the value of the Estate in terms of the anticipated rent that might be obtained by leasing arrangements. In this case the Factor in 1806, Robert Brown, was determined to proceed with negotiations to lease the Estate without reference to the owner. In a letter written to Robert Brown, Robertson-Macdonald expressed his disappointment because Brown had not contacted him to discuss offers for the farms on the Estate:

…and the whole Rent of the Estate if let to the highest offers would fall very short of what you calculated it should amount to… The offers are as yet entirely from the old set who will wish to keep strangers at a distance in hopes of getting [Reginald George Macdonald of ] Clanranald’s lands and mine at a very low rent.  

Robertson-Macdonald was also interested in providing employment on his Estate. In a letter written in 1811 to Reginald George Macdonald to discuss “converting road money into labour at so much per day” he expressed his disappointment at not being able to meet with him. He had hoped that the road money for his Estate, and for the neighbouring Clanranald Estate, might be used to employ the small tenants to build a new road for the mutual benefit of both Estates.

147 See electronic list of the Hamilton Papers, NRAS 2177/ Bundle 1532. Letter from Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald to Robert Brown dated 8 July, 1806, NAS.
1.10 Leaving Moidart

Famine brought destitution to the Moidart district once again in 1847 and emigration was seen to be the answer being keenly supported by those in authority. In a strongly worded letter to the Catholic bishop written in January 1851, Eneas McDonell (a Trustee of the Lochshiel Estate) pointed out that he had received a letter from Father Ranald Rankin who requested that Eneas impress upon the bishop the need to organise a mass emigration to Upper Canada in order to alleviate the distress of the people of Moidart. Macdonell argued in his letter that emigration was:

...the only probable means of preserving human life threatened by famine and want in that impoverished and overpopulated district of the Highlands.\(^{149}\)

Macdonell also tried to describe to the bishop the deplorable conditions under which the people were living at this time owing to the failure of the potato crop in the autumn of the previous year:

When I tell your Lordship that the entire crop upon which the people depended failed in a most melancholy and complete manner last Autumn - that there are no resources in the district to feed the populations - that remunerative employment is not to be constantly

\(^{148}\) Letter written by Colonel David Robertson-Macdonald dated 7 September, 1811, Hamilton Papers reference NRAS 2177 / Bundle 1567, September 1811, NAS.

\(^{149}\) E. Macdonell, Letter OL1/45/1. Written to the Catholic Bishop at Greenock, Glasgow dated 26 January, 1851. Oban Letters. The content of this letter seems to indicate that it was written to support the request by Ranald Rankin to be allowed to accompany if not emigrate with his people in order to provide the people with a leader in whom they would have confidence and trust.
obtained, that there is not sufficient arable land to support so large a population - that for these and many other reasons it is evident that emigration alone is the only remedy in the present situation of the Highlands. 150

Unfortunately the bishop’s response to Macdonell’s letter is not known. It seemed, however, that he declined Rankin’s request to emigrate with the people to Upper Canada as Rankin wrote again on 4 March 1852 to “cheerfully volunteer my service to those I pity”. 151 This time Rankin offered to emigrate to the Colony of Port Phillip, Australia, with the Moidart people. In this letter he stated that “Aneas McDonell and Mr Robertson [of the Kinlochmoidart Estate] are assisting families who have not the means themselves”. 152 This was most likely a reference to the financial support which proprietors were obliged to pledge as their contribution to the work of the HIES. Rankin, however, was not convinced about the true purpose of the actions on the part of the proprietors. Referring to the actions of the Estate proprietors he claimed:

> It is now the grand maxim and panacea of Highland proprietors to clear the land of the poor people. The fare to Australia is now so cheap that they will do their utmost to take advantage of it. They will not send them to America as the passage money would come to three times the amount. 153

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152 Ibid.
This statement leaves little doubt that the choice of destination was primarily determined by economic and financial considerations and based on the cheapest fares available. In 1852 Australia received 44,763 immigrants from Britain which included the Moidart immigrants.\textsuperscript{154} Between 1851 and 1855, following the discovery of gold and the proliferation of emigration schemes offering assisted passages, 175,078 immigrants from Britain arrived in Victoria compared with 18,206 for the period 1846 to 1850.\textsuperscript{155}

The destinations of many of the Moidart emigrants were recorded by Father Rankin alongside their names in the Register of Marriages in the Parish of Moidart prior to his own departure for Australia in 1854. These entries show that at least 38 couples married between 1830 and 1852 (and their families), settled overseas either in Australia or North America or remained in Scotland but migrated internally to Fort William, Glasgow, Uist and Beauly.\textsuperscript{156} The majority who emigrated overseas travelled to Australia either in 1838-9 or 1852. Malcolm Prentis, in his study of Eastern Australia states that; "In summary, the bulk of Scots assisted immigrants came from the industrialised Lowland areas such as Glasgow and Clydeside, Edinburgh, Dundee, West Lothian, Fife and Stirlingshire."\textsuperscript{157} In the case of Victoria however; "a slightly higher proportion came from the Highlands" [than in the case of New South Wales and Queensland].\textsuperscript{158}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{153} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{154} R. F. Haines, ‘Nineteenth century government assisted immigrants from the United Kingdom to Australia: Schemes, regulations and arrivals, 1831-1900 and some vital statistics 1834-1860’, \textit{Occasional Papers in Economic History Number 3}, Flinders University, Adelaide. 1995, p. 47. \\
\textsuperscript{155} Haines, \textit{Emigration and the Labouring Poor}, p. 261. \\
\textsuperscript{156} R. Rankin, \textit{Marriage Register of the Catholic Parish of Moidart, Mingarry, Acharacle, Argyll}. Entries were obtained from the parish priest of Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Church, Mingarry, Acharacle, Argyll. The original document is held in the NAS, RH21/48/2. Moidart Marriage Register, 1830-1854. \\
\textsuperscript{157} Prentis, \textit{The Scots in Australia}, p. 75. \\
\textsuperscript{158} Ibid. p. 75.
\end{flushright}
R. A. Cage accounts for the large numbers of immigrants arriving in Australia from the industrialised Lowlands of Scotland by claiming that most of the growth in the Scottish urban population was the result of internal movement from the Highlands to Glasgow and other urban centres in the early nineteenth century. This internal migration coincided with an increase in immigration from Ireland.\textsuperscript{159} As the cotton textile industry was concentrated in Glasgow at this time and the industry was expanding rapidly in this period, Glasgow’s population doubled between 1801 and 1821 and doubled again by 1841. By the 1840s the cotton industry began to decline with the development of the steam engine and was replaced by light metal and machinery tool production which required fewer workers. This internal migration of workers from the Highlands to the south makes it difficult to accurately determine the geographic origins of Scottish emigrants. Many of the emigrants who had shifted earlier from the Highlands later emigrated from the south thus possibly inflating the overall proportion of emigrants calculated as originally from the south. The Moidart marriage register entries demonstrate that the permanent relocation of people from Moidart to the south was not a common practice and that the first place of settlement in Scotland for those people who left Moidart but who did not emigrate at this time, remained another Highland location.

The decision to emigrate resulted in an enforced change to the composition of the Household membership. Some members were either not eligible to emigrate or chose not to leave due to advanced age and infirmity. This resulted in the need for their children to make difficult decisions in terms of who should stay behind to care for these people and who should be free to leave the Household. Migration became the impetus for the creation of new Households.

Father Rankin accompanied the group of emigrants who sailed on the

‘Araminta’ at least as far as Glasgow where he married Donald Macdonald and Ketty (Catherine) Macdonald both of Scardoish on 15 June 1852 just five days before the ship ‘Araminta’ left Birkenhead. Donald and Ketty along with the two witnesses, brothers Ewen and Archibald Macdonald of Scardoish, were listed as passengers. The Moidart people became victims of the financial debts carried by the two estates and which had become ‘push’ factors whilst the financially cheap fares to Australia determined the country of destination.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has examined a range of factors which culminated in the forced removal of 37 Households from Scotland in 1852 and has categorised these under four broad headings; physical, economic, social and spiritual. The physical factors included insufficient acreages of cultivatable land to support a Household containing five to seven members plus servants resulting in small plots of land being overworked and incapable of producing the volume of food necessary for the survival of both the family and stock. The regularity of the occurrence of famine brought sickness, death and economic hardship and the unpredictable climate also contributed to poor harvests in certain years.

Downward market prices for black cattle created substantial economic hardship in the late 1840s. Monies received from the sale of these animals was used to pay the annual rent due to the proprietor for the croft meant that often payments could not be met and were insufficient in value to meet the large debts which encumbered many of the Highland Estates at this time. Tenants were dependent on the goodwill of their proprietor in times of destitution in order to maintain occupation of their crofts. Increasing prices paid for wool
required to meet the industrial needs of the factories of Scotland resulted in an increase in the value of land for the grazing of large flocks of sheep and therefore as a rental commodity. Large tracts of the already limited areas of land were required for sheep and so the people had to be removed from both the cultivated and grazing areas of the townships and farms to enable this arrangement to occur. Rents paid for grazing sheep far outstripped those obtained from the tenant farmers.

Although the Trustees of the Lochshiel Estate were not unsympathetic to the plight of the small tenants, they found themselves in a situation where they needed to make a decision about the economic future of the Estate. This decision had major social, economic and physical implications for the future of the tenants and sub-tenants. The Estate was clearly overcrowded with small tenants partly created by poor decision making on the part of earlier landlords whilst the Kinlochmoidart Estate contained a large number of cottar families particularly on Eilean Shona. Whilst the presence of the cottars may have provided additional labour this situation would have resulted in a shortfall in rent to the landowner further compounding the debts of the Estate.

The guidance and advice provided by the Catholic priests in the district regarding emigration played an important role in helping to sway the people towards accepting emigration as the only realistic option. From evidence provided by Eneas Macdonnell at the Deer Forest Commission Hearing in 1892 it appeared that Father Ranald Rankin also provided much needed
‘material support’ to the families to assist them to emigrate at the time.\textsuperscript{160} However, the nature of his support is unclear. It may have taken the form of financial assistance provided to help defray the costs of fares to Australia or possibly to Birkenhead, Liverpool. If this was the case Rankin may have approached a wealthy patron to obtain these funds as it would appear that the parish would be unable to provide this amount of money from its own resources. By providing spiritual and material support Rankin contributed to their eventual emigration and, ironically, became a ‘push factor’ himself.

The census returns for the decennial period of 1851 to 1861 for the Parish of Ardnamurchan within the Civil County of Inverness (which includes the district of Moidart) partly shows the demographic impact of emigration on this community. From a total population of 2,333 persons (1,108 males and 1,225 females) living in 396 inhabited houses in 1851 the population decreased to 1,917 persons (950 males and 967 females) living in 326 homes in 1861.\textsuperscript{161} The male population decreased by 158 and the female population by 258. This decrease within the female population might be explained by examining the nature of the gender imbalance in the Colony according to the 1852 immigration figures. The resulting outcomes of the determination of the Colonial Immigration Agent, Edward Grimes, to remove the obstacles preventing single women of marriageable age from immigrating, is reflected in the gender composition of single immigrants arriving on the “Marco Polo” (see pages 180-190 for an overview of the gender imbalance and the concerns of Grimes).

\textsuperscript{161} Census of Scotland 1861, Population Tables and Report. Civil County of Inverness,
The evidence leaves little doubt that the Households involved had little opportunity to change the circumstances under which they lived. The hardship imposed on their lives by the terrain, climate, repeated cycles of famine, the depressed economy and the stratification of Highland society were all too impenetrable. Many left the Highlands generally at this time under duress possibly taking with them feelings of great antipathy towards their proprietor as a result of their enforced removal, although not all Moidart emigrants left under these conditions. Charles Macdonald suggests that these feelings were present, however, in the case of individual Moidart emigrants who he claims, “…left the old country against their will.” The next chapter examines this emigration both in the context of overall British emigration to Australia as well as the circumstances surrounding the voyage of each group. The impact of this emigration on the district thirty years later is examined in further detail in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

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162 See Macdonald, *Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds*, p. 261 where he records that both the Glenuig and Caolas residents left of the own accord taking advantage of the opportunity to emigrate with others.

163 Ibid, p.262.
CHAPTER TWO

The journey to Australia

“Farewell, Clanranald, my heroes forever: Farewell each green
mountain, and sunny green glen; I dream of you still, and I wonder if
ever, I’ll sail down Loch Shiel to my haven again.”

2.1 General introduction

This chapter will begin with an examination of the history of Scottish
emigration to Australia from the late eighteenth century to 1852 and will
contextualise this history within migration theory. It will draw upon the
Moidart emigration experience in order to demonstrate the complexity of the
various migration theories and the difficulties associated with ascribing any
one of the theories to the Moidart migration to Victoria.

The names of the Moidart passengers on board the emigrant ship ‘Allison’
were listed in the existing records of the Highland and Island Emigration
Society (HIES). As extensive research has already been undertaken and
published on the formation, development and role of this organisation in
Britain, this study will largely examine the role of the HIES agents in Australia
following the arrival of assisted passengers. The views and attitudes of its

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1 This poem was written by M. Reid and published in the ‘Oban Times’ circa 1940s. The words
included above are only part of the first verse. It has been reproduced in full in the
unpublished manuscript written by Colin S. Macdonald of Canada and dated 1 October
1954. I am very grateful to Grahame MacDonald of Buderim, Queensland, Australia for
access to his copy of the manuscript.

2 See D. MacMillan, ‘Sir Charles Trevelyan and the Highland and Island Emigration
Society 1849-1859’, Balfour ‘The Highland and Island Emigration Society:
1852-1858’; and Prentis, ‘The Emigrants of the Highland and Island Emigration Society,
1852-1857’.
founder, Sir Charles Trevelyan, however, featured prominently in the documentation and correspondence of the time and provide a moral and ethical lens through which to view and understand the workings of the HIES particularly as they related to the journey, treatment and reception of the Moidart passengers and contributed to the ongoing disadvantage that accompanied the people. Finally the chapter will follow each of the three voyages to determine the nature of the hardships and deprivation endured by the Moidart people prior to their arrival in Victoria.

2.2 Scottish emigration to Australia 1788-1852

Scots were amongst those who accompanied Captain Arthur Phillip and the First Fleet in 1788. Vice Admiral John Hunter, born at Leith, Edinburgh, arrived on board the flagship HMS ‘Sirius’ and later succeeded Phillip as the second Governor of New South Wales. Major Robert Ross began his journey on the ‘Sirius’ but completed his journey on the convict ship ‘Scarborough’ as the Officer-in-Charge of the garrison of marines. He later became Lieutenant Governor of the convict settlement at Norfolk Island. As well as these early individual Scots Malcolm Prentis has identified five significant groups of Scottish settlers who arrived as pioneers in New South Wales from about 1790 to the early 1820s. Firstly, there were people who were transported as convicts and later emancipated. Secondly, a number of military personnel emigrated,

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became settlers and took up land. The third group comprised the civil officials who were given grants of land, and the fourth consisted of a number of prominent merchants who also received grants of land. The fifth and last group was made up of the free immigrant settlers with capital.\textsuperscript{5} Prentis maintains that this early emigration itself became a catalyst for generating opportunities for further emigration. As the land was developed and farmed, many of the new land owners began to look for skilled labour to assist them in their new ventures with sheep and so turned to the experienced shepherds and their families from the Highlands as a source of labour for the new estates.

David Macmillan states in his book \textit{Scotland and Australia 1788-1850} that “...before 1821 the Scottish element in the Australian population, apart from the official and military class, was numerically negligible...”\textsuperscript{6} According to Macmillan, the first applications from prospective Scottish settlers to Australia began to arrive at the Colonial Office in 1814 from “farmers or landholders, merchants or manufacturers, and military or naval officers, retired, “reduced”, or on half pay.”\textsuperscript{7} He explains this interest in Australia in terms of improved agricultural practices, amalgamation of small farms and increases in rent in Scotland.

Tenant farmers therefore began to look for land outside Scotland to rent. Some of these men were soldiers and military personnel returning to their communities following the Napoleonic Wars and were often men with savings or on half pay from their war service. Macmillan argues that many of the

\textsuperscript{5} Prentis, \textit{The Scots in Australia}, pp. 82-85
\textsuperscript{6} D. S. Macmillan, \textit{Scotland and Australia 1788 – 1850: emigration, commerce}
people seeking to emigrate were considerably wealthy although he acknowledges that others were seeking to emigrate because of bad debts incurred by borrowing money to finance improvements to their farms in the Highlands. The increase of population in the Highlands also contributed to the emigration movement. Between 7 June 1841 and 31 March 1851 (the two official Census dates for this decennial period) the population of Scotland grew by 268,558 people. The population of the Civil County of Argyll in 1851 was 89,298 persons. This high population figure resulted in overcrowding on the land and, coupled with the potato famine in the mid-1840s, led many people to be encouraged by Emigration Societies as well as organisations such as the Free Church of Scotland to leave Scotland.

The major emigrations of Scots from the Highlands to Australia in the nineteenth century took place over a span of 30 years between the 1830s and 1860s with the bulk of emigrants arriving in the 1840s and early 1850s. This time span includes both the 1838-9 and 1852 Moidart emigrations to Australia. In order to understand the complexities associated with Scottish migration generally and the Moidart experience in particular, it is necessary to examine several of the theories developed to explain the migration phenomenon.

2.3 Theories of migration

The reasons why people move and the underlying causes of migration have
come under scrutiny and analysis by historians, politicians, sociologists, demographers and economists each with their own specific interest in this area, however the long term impact of this process on those involved is often overlooked in favour of determining the short term effects of migration on the host society.\textsuperscript{11} As Roni Berger notes:

Immigration is not a single event of being uprooted from the culture of origin and leaving behind the homeland to face the challenge of assimilation into a new culture. Rather, it is a lifelong, multifaceted and multilayered, complex, and never-ending experience.\textsuperscript{12}

Many theories, approaches and models have been developed to explain and describe the various phases and dimensions of the migration experience. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller have broadly classified these approaches or theories in three ways:

\ldots a useful distinction may be made between three of the main approaches used in contemporary debates: economic theory, the historical-structural approach and migration systems theory (Hugo, 1993:7-12).\textsuperscript{13}

In discussing the history of the British emigration phenomenon for example, Richards refers to the ‘metropolitan’ and ‘provincial’ models of migration developed by Bernard Bailyn in relation to eighteenth century British emigration. The first describes the reasons underlying the movement of young males out of large British cities such as London whilst the second is linked to the migration of families from rural areas including the earlier movements of people from Moidart to the Canadian Maritimes.\textsuperscript{14} Other theorists include Borowski, Richmond, Shu and Simmons who have identified the following four major themes or theories in relation to international migration:

A. Push - Pull theory  
B. Social network theory  
C. Structural theories  
D. Involuntary migration\textsuperscript{15}

Castles and Miller contend, however, that several of these theories lie within their own three categories. They place the ‘push-pull’ theory for example, within their economic category and the ‘social network’ and ‘structural’ theories within their migration systems theory arguing that all migrations operate at two levels of complexity whilst interacting with each other:

\ldots[migrations] can be seen as the result of interacting macro-and micro-structures. Macro-structures refer to large-scale institutional

\textsuperscript{15} A. Borowski, A. Richmond, J. Shu and A. Simmons, ‘The International Movements of People’ in H. Adelman, A. Borowski, M. Burstein and L. Foster, (eds), \textit{Immigration and Refugee Policy. Australia and Canada Compared}, Volume 1,
factors, while micro-structures embrace the networks, practices and beliefs of the migrants themselves. These two levels are linked by a number of intermediate mechanisms, which are referred to as ‘meso-structures.’

When each of these four theories is applied to the 1852 emigration it becomes possible to understand that the causes were complex, intertwined and embedded in the history and landscape of the Moidart district and of the Highlands generally.

A. Push - Pull theory

Highlanders had been ‘pushed’ out of Moidart leaving in successive emigrations for over two hundred years and resulting in a population decrease in the district. In 1852 there were a number of ‘push-pull’ factors operating in both Scotland and Australia many of which had been present for several generations. These included overcrowded estates in terms of population as in the case of Lochshiel and the conversion of inadequate crofting acreages into extensive sheep farms such as with the farms of Blain, Briag, Mingarry and Portavate on the same estate. The economic difficulties experienced by the estate owners and the resulting widespread introduction of sheep by tenants who could afford to pay higher rents than the crofters could manage contributed to the need to remove the people. The conversion of lands into extensive sheep farms in West Inverness-shire began in the 1780s and


combined with religious persecution of Catholics around the same time, provided a catalyst for many of the first emigrants to leave Moidart for North America.\textsuperscript{18}

The mid-eighteenth century saw a long period of discontent in the Highlands following the Battle of Culloden. Traditional clan arrangements collapsed including the relationships between lairds, tacksmen and subtenants. This was accompanied by a new way of life infiltrating from the Lowlands into the Highlands.\textsuperscript{19} The recurring potato famines of 1837-1838 and 1846-52 also played a role in ‘pushing’ hungry and destitute people from their lands. With no funds to pay their annual rents due to a decrease in the market price of cattle at this time their ability to occupy and work the land became tenuous.

The ‘pull’ factors relating to the attractiveness of Victoria as a destination at this time were varied and differed according to the individual circumstances under which people left. For assisted immigrants these factors included high wages offered by a pastoral industry in desperate need of employees due to the many workers leaving in search of gold. This coincided with a time when British markets were in desperate need of Australian wool. The availability of financial and material assistance through the proliferation of emigration schemes such as the HIES also determined the new country of adoption and limited the choice of destination. The presence of extended family support networks established by earlier emigration to Victoria and New South Wales

\textsuperscript{17} See chapter 1, p. 92.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid., pp. 89-91 in chapter one of this thesis for further information on emigration to Australia from Moidart up to 1852.
\textsuperscript{19} J. Keltie, \textit{History of the Scottish Highlands}, Grange Publishing Works, Edinburgh. Volume 3, 1885, p. 34
and the lure of recently discovered gold, also assisted in drawing people to Australia.\textsuperscript{20}

Castles and Miller argue that this model as it operates in the twenty-first century has ‘human capital’ as its central concept as people arguably decide to emigrate if the process will result in a potential increase in wages. This interpretation could only be applied to those Moidart emigrants who chose to take advantage of the opportunity to leave voluntarily. They also claim that the ‘push-pull’ model is not able to adequately explain why a group of emigrants select one country over another.\textsuperscript{21} Those who travelled on HIES chartered ships were not at liberty to select their country of destination. This was decided for them. The extent to which members of the 1852 emigration might have selected Canada as their preferred destination given the established social networks created by previous emigrations is not clear.

**B. Social Network theory**

The Moidart emigrants who arrived in 1852 had very few social networks already established in Victoria from which to draw support. Those networks with direct links to Moidart and already in existence in Australia included the 1838-9 emigrants (who had largely settled outside the Colony in New South Wales) and individual Households who had arrived in Victoria prior to 1852. Therefore the Households were forced to either seek out other Highland communities in the Colony or, as the study will later demonstrate, to establish their own networks based on religion, language and common origins.

\textsuperscript{20} See chapter 1, pp. 89-91 regarding the 1838 Moidart emigration to New South Wales.
This was in direct contrast to the North American experience where established communities awaited new emigrants and ensured that close Gaelic-speaking, Highland enclaves continued to exist. Canada in particular, was a very attractive destination for many Moidart emigrants. In referring to the Canadian experience, James Cameron notes that:

In contrast to Scotland, the farms were larger, the standard of living higher, and the houses more substantial. Generally, a nuclear family worked the land within a homogeneous ethnic and religious community with kith and kin located near by. …By the 1850s, this transplanted Highland community…had experienced considerable demographic, economic, social, political and religious development; its pioneer phase was fading into the past.

The HIES assisted emigration scheme also played a significant role in helping to create an important social network in Victoria for post 1852 Moidart immigrants who arrived in 1854. Similarly, their Catholic identity provided a communal focus and created a new social network. The study will demonstrate that this social network operated on a geographical as well as communal level. Following his arrival in 1856, Father Ranald Rankin, their former parish priest in Moidart, was welcomed into a communal network of Households spread

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geographically across the Colony before settling into a small, cohesive Catholic Highland settlement at Little River.

The emigrants were also active in creating social support networks during their journey particularly through shipboard friendships which were renewed when families settled together in shipboard clusters in remote locations in the 1860s. At least one Household re-established contact with former acquaintances from Lochaber, a neighbouring district to Moidart through the resettlement process although the evidence for this being a planned reuniting on the part of the two Households is not available. Evidence of both these resettlement experiences will be presented in chapter four.

C. Structural theory

Structural theorists argue that global movements of people are supported or influenced by political and economic networks or legislative structures established between countries and constitute the macro-structures referred to earlier by Castles and Miller. In certain cases these structures are created by governments such as those which have emerged out of historical links between former colonies and colonial powers, as a result of relocating people to meet unmet labour needs or through investing capital as a result of international trade. The existence of these relationships often provides people with opportunities to live in another country but not always with equal opportunities and often this new arrangement is to the economic benefit of the host society.
rather than to the migrants themselves.

In other situations these structures are created by individuals or lobby groups holding political or economic power within society. Squatters like George Russell established agricultural companies such as the Clyde Company which employed Moidart Households providing evidence of the strength of such structural networks in helping to meet unmet labour needs in Victoria.

These structures were also sustained by the limitations placed on the occupations of the recipients of government funded fares. The choice of destination of Britain’s assisted emigrants was constrained by the limitation of publicly-funded passages to specific occupations, primarily to married agricultural labourers, shepherds, herdsmen and country mechanics, their wives and families, and to single female domestic and farm servants. An analysis of the occupations of the men and women arriving on the three emigrant ships, ‘Marco Polo’, ‘Araminta’ and ‘Allison’, demonstrates that these occupations were very well represented amongst the Moidart passengers.

D. Involuntary migration theory

This theory acknowledges that, for many of the world’s citizens including the Moidart emigrants the decision to flee their homes and country was one that was imposed upon them by the political, economic, religious or ecological


27 See the nominal passenger and disposal lists for each ship for the occupations of the immigrants arriving in Victoria. VPRS 7666, Inward passenger lists, British Ports, PROV, North Melbourne.
situations and circumstances in which they found themselves. Their very existence and future lives were dependent on the receptiveness and generosity of another country. Today people whose migration is imposed upon them include those who have been ‘stolen’ such as slaves or as forced labour and who enter the ‘forced migration systems’ forming an ever-growing community of ‘involuntary’ migrants around the world. The first British arrivals in Australia were the convicts (and the guards sent out with them), forcibly removed from Britain by the government thereby becoming a cohort of ‘involuntary’ emigrants. This theory also has relevance to the situation in which these Moidart Households found themselves in 1852. As shown in chapter one and in later chapters the combination of ‘push-pull’ factors and the presence of both macro and micro structures, all contributed to the difficulty of determining who in the cohort, left Moidart in voluntary or involuntary capacities.

2.4 The role of the Highland and Island Emigration Society (HIES) and preparing for the journey to Australia.

The role played by the HIES in the 1852 emigration is both complex and, to an extent, unclear but by applying the four migration theories outlined earlier to its work it is possible to identify a number of key roles played by this organisation.
Through the provision of funds to emigrants and by providing the means of transport the HIES was able to assist landlords wishing to rid themselves of small tenants. In this way the HIES became an important ‘push factor’ although as Devine notes; “The Society did not conspire directly with the landed classes but the emigration facilities it provided did facilitate evictions on some estates.”

Evictions were not the prime catalyst for emigration in all of the Moidart Households. The writings of Charles Macdonald suggests that those Moidart Households who received assistance from both the landlord and the HIES voluntarily chose to emigrate. This cohort included the four Households from Glenuig and the three Households from Kylesmor.

Macdonald is clear in his opinion that Households from other townships on the Lochshiel Estate however, were evicted from the land.

The rules of the Society were designed to enable extended families and groups of Households to emigrate with infants, young children and elderly parents as a unit, thereby making emigration an attractive proposition for young families to consider. This provided the Household with social cohesion and it was no surprise that many Households, related by kinship, opted to maintain this social cohesion by leaving and journeying together in extended family and township units. This same pattern of extended family and community migration can be found in the case of other emigrations of Highlanders organised by the Society.

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29 Macdonald, *Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds*, p. 261.
30 Ibid.
32 See extract from the Report of the Highland Emigration Society from its formation in April 1852 until April 1853 London and published in the Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 18 April 1854 (no page recorded) for reference to the emigration of entire families.
at this time including the departure of 36 of the 110 inhabitants of the island of St. Kilda who left in September 1852 bound for Melbourne on board the ‘Priscilla’. Group or communal migration was not a new phenomenon belonging only to the mid nineteenth century or to the HIES. It was clearly recognisable in examples of earlier emigrations such as the journey of a group of the Wester Ross emigrants who left for Cape Breton with their minister, Norman McLeod, in 1817. Thirty years later the group was forced through population congestion and a recurrence of famine, to leave for Australia where they unsuccessfully applied for land as community. They eventually settled at Waipu in New Zealand on land provided by the government.

Those who left under the auspices of the Society were better off in that there was greater likelihood of all members of the Household (including the very elderly and the very young) leaving as a unit. This was in contrast to those who left earlier in June on the 'Araminta' where several Households were forced to leave elderly and infirm members behind.

The HIES was formed at a time when both scarcity and abundance were operating as market forces in two countries separated by vast distances. In the Highlands and Islands of Scotland there was a scarcity of food and employment prospects but an abundance of labour whilst in the Colony of Victoria there was a scarcity of labour and an abundance of employment opportunities in the wool industry. The British textile industry required a

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steady flow of raw wool to feed the woollen mills. By taking advantage of the structural economic links established between Britain and Australia the HIES was able to disembark over 5,000 Highlanders in the ports in Victoria, Moreton Bay, Hobart and Adelaide thereby enabling large numbers of agricultural emigrants to be ‘pulled’ into Australia.

2.5 The role and philosophy of Charles Trevelyan

Trevelyan was Assistant Secretary to the Treasury at the time of the Irish famine, and as such, was responsible for the “administration of relief measures during the famine”.35 He was a man who held firm beliefs about the ‘correct role’ (in his view) for a government to play when faced with famine and destitution. In a letter to Sir Randolf Routh who was one of the Relief Commissioners at the time of the Irish famine, Trevelyan wrote:

Besides, the greatest improvement of all which could take place in Ireland would be to teach the people to depend upon themselves for developing the resources of their country, instead of having recourse to the assistance of the government on every occasion.36

This was a theme to which Trevelyan would return later when referring to the effects of the potato famine in Scotland. In his opinion (and in the opinion of the government as well) governments were wrong to assist the people in such a

34 F. McPherson, Watchmen against the world: the story of Norman McLeod and his people, Whitcombe and Tombe, Christchurch, 1962. See also pp.87-91 of this thesis for examples of earlier communal migrations from Moidart to North America and Australia.
35 Toibin and Ferriter, The Irish Famine, p. 68.
way as to ensure that they would become dependent on others rather than independent and looking to their own means for support. It was the role of government to ensure that the market forces of the day were able to operate freely especially when those forces included landlords and others involved in meeting the needs of industry in Ireland, England and Scotland. A reference in a letter from Trevelyan to Lord Monteagle, a landlord in County Limerick, elaborates on this view:

> It forms no part of the functions of government to provide supplies of food or to increase the productive powers of the land. In the great institution of the business of society, it falls to the share of government to protect the merchant and the agriculturalist in the free exercise of their respective employments, but not itself to carry on those employments;...  

Toibin and Ferriter, however, take an even stronger view regarding the possible source of Trevelyan’s beliefs. They point out that Trevelyan believed the answer to Ireland’s misery and destitution lay in the hands and actions of the landed proprietors and that a cure to this misery was available having been “applied by the direct stroke of an all wise Providence”. To prevent social revolution the proprietors should turn the land over to the cultivation of grain rather than potatoes in order to meet the ready market for grain in England.

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36 Ibid., p. 70.
37 Ibid., p. 71
38 Ibid., p. 72.
Professor Cormac O’Grada is of the view that Trevelyan regarded the Irish famine as a lesson in history for the people who, if they did not heed the signs and learn the lessons, would be doomed to relive the experience in times to come:

He (Trevelyan) saw the famine as a visitation of God, as a way of solving a very serious overpopulation problem and he believed that, by and large, the government shouldn’t intervene very much because, in the long run, that would make things even worse. If the Irish weren’t taught a lesson or didn’t learn a lesson in the late 1840s then who knows in the 1850s or the 1860s, the same was going to happen again and they would have to go through perhaps, even a worse catastrophe. That was the way Trevelyan thought…Trevelyan was very well intentioned but not a very humane man. His attitudes were responsible undoubtedly for lots of deaths.\textsuperscript{39}

2.6 Trevelyan and Scotland

The unsympathetic attitudes held by Trevelyan towards the Irish also became very evident in Scotland as he turned his interest and support towards the Highlands and Islands and the organisation of large-scale emigration in order to alleviate a similar situation brought on by famine. References contained in his letters suggest that Trevelyan remained unsympathetic to the plight of the people, especially those on Skye. In a letter written to his aunt he accused those who attempted to help the people on Skye of being part of the problem as, in

\textsuperscript{39} ‘The Great Famine – part three’, \textit{The Great Famine}, televised on 11 May
his opinion, their charity resulted in the people (the lower orders) becoming reliant and dependent on outside help. Of equal concern to him was the fact that as long as the people continued to receive this aid they would remain on Skye and not want to emigrate. He wrote in 1852, the year of mass evictions and emigration from Skye:

The only immediate remedy for the present state of things in Skye is Emigration and the people will never emigrate while they are supported at home at other people’s expense. This mistaken humanity has converted the people of Skye, from the Clergy downwards, into a Mendicant community; and its demoralizing effects upon the lower orders is extremely painful.\(^\text{40}\)

Trevelyan took every opportunity to publicly air his negative views about the Highlands whilst at the same time promoting the benefits to be gained through emigration by those whose lives had been spent in crofting and the raising of sheep. In an address given as chairman of the Highland and Island Emigration Committee, to the editors of the London morning papers and published in *The Inverness Courier* he alluded very clearly to his expectation that emigrants who were provided with this opportunity would agree to settle into farming rather than pursue other occupations or sources of income. In this way the public funds raised would be repaid through the labour of the emigrants in producing wool for British industries:

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\(^{2003}\), Channel 26, (television program). Directed by P. Lawrence, BBC, MCMXCV.  
\(^{40}\) C. Trevelyan, Letter from Trevelyan to Miss Neave (his aunt), HIES Uncatalogued Letterbooks Book, HD4/1-4, West Register House, NAS, Edinburgh. Trevelyan continues in this letter to ask his aunt to leave the people to themselves so that they will see the necessity of emigrating ‘instead of living in idleness and habitually imposing upon benevolent
As the Highlanders, who are all more or less accustomed to the care of sheep and cattle, will be accompanied by their families, they will be more likely to settle down upon the sheep farms than any other class of emigrants; and neither their language nor habits fit them for the active competition and sustained hard labour which would await them at the diggings.\textsuperscript{41}

Trevelyan was ultimately of the opinion that the Highlanders were incapable of fulfilling any employment position other than those related to agriculture. His ethnocentric attitudes led him to believe that they were inferior to the English. He strongly believed that the Highlanders were lazy and reliant on the benevolence of others for their very existence and that while this occurred they would never “see the necessity of emigrating and working for their subsistence.”\textsuperscript{42} Whilst Trevelyan saw the Highlanders as inferior to himself, speaking a language lesser in status to English and generally of an indolent character, it also appears that the members of the HIES Committee also shared a similar view when describing the emigrants to their agents in Australia:

Nearly all of them have been accustomed to pastoral occupations, and by their habits are particularly fitted for employment in the bush, especially in tending sheep and cattle.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} Details of points made by Sir Charles E. Trevelyan in a report titled ‘The West Highlands’ and published in \textit{The Inverness Courier} Inverness on 3 June 1852.
\textsuperscript{42} C. Trevelyan, Letter to Miss Neave, NAS, Edinburgh.
\textsuperscript{43} A. McLeod, ‘Instructions to the agents in Australia of the Highland and Island Emigration Society’ Geelong and Portland Bay Immigration Society records 1844 - 1854 MS 10000 and Highland and Island Emigration Society records 1852, State Library of Victoria.
Trevelyan was also convinced that, if the people did not accept and agree to emigrate to Australia, there was a greater danger pending in that the Highlanders might choose to migrate south to the manufacturing districts of England. He therefore saw himself and the work that he was undertaking as ‘saving’ England from an invasion of ‘Celts’ when he stated:

…our object was to prevent this Celtic population from either starving at home or pouring over upon our Manufacturing Districts where wages are already too much reduced by the competition of the Irish; and to direct it to Australia where pastoral labour is extremely wanted and highly productive.

His overall view of this emigration scheme was that it answered perfectly the needs of Scotland, England and Australia.

By September 1852 the HIES was forced to extend its work beyond Skye to all the districts of the Western Highlands for two main reasons. The work of the HIES was dependent on donations of money especially the promised one third cost to be borne by the proprietors. If a proprietor was willing to pay the one third cost Trevelyan was willing to include the tenants from the estate in the scheme, regardless of its location. Secondly, by the second year of its operation

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44 C. Trevelyan, Letter to T. W. C. Murdoch, HIES Uncatalogued Letterbooks Book, HD4/1-4, NAS, Edinburgh in which Trevelyan states that ‘We have now arrived at what we hope will be the final solution’ 1852.
46 See footnote 2 of this chapter in order to understand why this became a requirement of the new society.
the HIES was having difficulty finding sufficient numbers of people willing to emigrate as economic conditions began to slowly improve in Scotland. For these reasons Trevelyan turned his attention to assisting the landlords and tenants on three Moidart estates.

According to the manifest extract of the ‘Allison’, 47 seven Households or 53 people from the Kinlochmoidart Estate, four Households or 24 people from the Moidart Estate, and one Household of nine people from the Lochshiel Estate were assisted by the HIES in 1852. 48 As mentioned on page 91 of Chapter one, signed Promissory Notes show that the HIES continued to assist Moidart Households with the Households of Archibald McIntyre, Allan Stewart and John Macdonald, all from the Kinlochmoidart Estate receiving assistance to emigrate to Victoria in 1854. 49 The fact that the HIES continued to assist Moidart Households two years after the main emigrations of 1852 strongly suggests that economic conditions on this Estate had not greatly improved. An official list of persons who had received financial support from the HIES was drawn up in 1858 by James Chant using original documents but according to Balfour “It is so inaccurate regarding places of origin, ages and family relationships as to be incapable of meaningful analysis.” 50 According to this list, approximately 963 families or 4,910 individuals in total received financial support from the HIES. Balfour questions the accuracy of this total, however,

47 Extract taken from the Allison’ Manifest, http://C:\WINDOWS\Temporar y%20Internet%20Files\Content_IE5\LCY8WP3M\allisonO (accessed 18 February 2002.)
A copy of the manifest is held at the Public Record Office, Inverness.
48 See pages 151-2 for a list of the Moidart Households officially recorded as recipients of funding through the HIES.
stating “There is evidence to suggest that there were several contingents of emigrants assisted of whom all record had been lost by the time the Society’s list was compiled.” He considers that clerical errors and omissions occurred for a range of reasons and these resulted in discrepancies between the names entered on the Society’s list and those entered on the passenger lists of the various ships chartered by the Society.

2.7 The Birkenhead Emigration Depot

Following their voyage by steamer from Glasgow the shipboard journey to Australia for all three groups of Moidart emigrants began at the Birkenhead Emigration Depot in Liverpool, England. Like earlier emigrations to both Australia and Canada where the Moidart emigrants boarded their vessel closer to home (Tobermory in the case of the 1838 and 1839 emigrations to Australia on board the ‘British King’ and the ‘George Fyfe’), the emigrants were usually collected by steamer. This journey usually took them to Glasgow from where they boarded either a second steamer or a train to Liverpool. The journey by steamer was for some, their first encounter with ocean travel and with the uncomfortable and pitiable conditions on board ship that awaited them. Donald McInnes, an emigrant who travelled to Australia on board the ‘Marco Polo’ in June 1852, described the treatment he and forty-two other emigrants received on board the steamer from Glasgow to Birkenhead in the following way:

We got bad usage by the Princess Royal Steamer from Glasgow

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51 Ibid.
52 For a description of the establishment and operation of the Birkenhead Emigration Depot refer to K. Pescod, Good food, bright fires and civility, Australian Scholarly Publishing
without meat, drink, or seats - standing as sheep in a fold, and should I have my pocket full of gold I would get nothing to eat or drink below, because I was an Emigrant. We were in all well to 400 Scotch Emigrants aboard the said steamer, and we can all testify that our treatment was too cruel for Convicts.  

Hardship continued to affect the lives of the emigrants to the time of embarkation. In outlining some of the difficulties associated with preparing people for emigration from Birkenhead, the Surgeon Superintendent of the ‘Araminta’, Dr Alfred Carr, reported that “The Depot possessed no appliances for bathing the Emigrants or of cleaning their clothes.” The lack of such facilities was to prove perilous for the passengers on all three emigrant vessels. The filthy accommodation and bedding arrangements in the Depot later resulted in outbreaks of measles on board the ‘Araminta’ in particular, causing the deaths of many infants and young children during the voyage.

By 1852, the colonial government was concerned about the shortage of labour in the pastoral industry and lack of shearers for the October/November shearing season. The government therefore sought a massive increase in the number of immigrants required. In order to attract the thousands needed, the rules that had previously prevented families with large numbers of very young children from emigrating were relaxed.

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53 D. McInnes, HIES Uncatalogued Letterbooks Book, Gen Ref. HD4/ 1-4, West Register House, NAS, Edinburgh. In this letter Donald McInnes describes the treatment he received on board the steamer on route to Birkenhead and the grievances he bears about this treatment, 1852.

The revised rules allowed families to travel with up to four children under twelve years. Such relaxation of the previous rules was also recommended on the grounds that men with young children were less likely to desert to the goldfields on arrival. This caused an immediate increase in the numbers available as large families were common but they had not previously been acceptable.55

This change resulted in a large number of infants and small children under five years of age travelling on each ship and contributed to the high mortality rates on board each vessel. The three emigrant ships departed Birkenhead in June, July and September of 1852. Between them they carried a total of 1,612 passengers.

The largest national group of emigrants on board each ship was from Scotland supporting the fact that Scots were emigrating from Britain in large numbers at this time. In each case Highlanders outnumbered those from the Lowlands further indicating that economic conditions in the Highlands could not support the population.

Whilst the passenger lists for each ship confirm the presence of a majority of Scots on board each ship a closer examination of the composition of the Moidart passengers according to marital status, gender and age provides another dimension to the face of these emigrants. The majority of Households consisted of family groups, many containing three generations. As mentioned

above the presence of so many infants under the age of four years resulted in high mortality rates on board the ‘Araminta’ in particular, with an outbreak of measles that swept through both the infant and adult passengers.

The 28 single females over the age of 18 were also indicative of the Australian government’s desire to attract Households with females of marriageable age. Devine concludes that the HIES may have had alternative motivations in wanting to meet the government’s requirements: “It [the HIES] soon realised that the demand for unmarried women in Australia was so great that if it could provide a guaranteed supply its dealings with Australian business interests and colonial legislature would be enormously helped.”

Their presence on board was the result of a deliberate campaign to give priority to such families. A total of 105 children under the age of 17 also emigrated on these three ships. Again, their presence supports the view of people such as Charles Trevelyan, who regarded men with large families of young children as the most suitable type of emigrant needed in Australia. These family groups were to be encouraged and selected for emigration. They were less likely to move to the goldfields and more likely to seek employment in the pastoral industry where they were assured of a home, wages and rations for their family (as well as ensuring a steady supply of wool for Britain). The following table describes the composition of the Moidart Households on board each ship, which also illustrates the new emigrant profile established by the Australian government.

Table 2.1: Composition of the Moidart Households on board each ship according to marital status, gender and age.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition of the Moidart Households</th>
<th>Marco Polo</th>
<th>Araminta</th>
<th>Allison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Moidart Households on each ship.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of married couples or couples with children.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of single males 18 years of age +</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of single females 18 years of age +</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children 13-17 years of age.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children 5-12 years of age.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children 0-4 years of age.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12 arrived (4 died during voyage).</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nominal passenger and disposal lists for the ‘Marco Polo’, ‘Araminta’ and ‘Allison’.  

Each of the three voyages requires a deeper investigation of the experiences of the passengers and the negative impact that the decisions made by those in authority, either pre-voyage or during the voyage, had on their lives. Although there were similarities between the events that unfolded on board each ship there were also hardships and difficulties that characterised each of the three voyages.

### 2.8 The shipboard journey

Legislation designed to protect the conditions related to comfort and safety of the passengers on board ship at this time was slow to be passed and strict regulations designed to ensure reasonable standards of health and safety were not available to the 1838 Moidart emigrants. In 1842 a British Passenger Act

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56 Devine, *The Great Highland Famine*, p. 266.

57 Nominal passenger and disposal lists for each ship, VPRS 7666 Inward Passenger Lists-
was passed to regulate the minimum weekly food allowance that was required for each adult passenger resulting in improvements in the health and wellbeing of passengers.\textsuperscript{58} Between 1820 and 1850, Haines concludes that mortality rates on board ship fell dramatically to equal those rates of mortality on land in Britain.\textsuperscript{59} She suggests that this fall was largely due to William Redfern, the Assistant Colonial Surgeon whose report to Governor Macquarie in 1814 paved the way for the implementation of radical reforms on board convict ships. Haines points out that, as a result of these reforms:

\begin{quote}
… the monthly death rate of adult assisted emigrants bound for Australia declined from an average of 2.4 per thousand between 1838 and 1853, to an average of 1.0 per thousand between 1854 and 1892, matching adult death rates in England.\textsuperscript{60}
\end{quote}

Emigration to America at the same time was no less perilous but the distance between Britain and America was shorter. Therefore the voyage time was shorter, fares were cheaper and the destination offered a greater possibility of emigrants returning home at some point in the future. Haines again points out, however, that despite these ‘advantages’ death rates on the Atlantic journey were higher than those on voyages to Australia due to the implementation of a less regulated process by government officials.\textsuperscript{61}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{60} McDonald and Schlomowitz, ‘Mortality on immigrant voyages to Australia in the 19th century’, \textit{Explorations in Economic History}, 27, 1990, Table 6, p.96 and quoted in Haines, \textit{Life and death in the age of sail}, Introduction, p. 25.
\end{flushleft}
Each of the three voyages was catastrophic for the passengers involved. Yet despite these individual examples Haines reminds us that:

Nevertheless, life at sea, as on land, was appallingly hazardous for infants and toddlers, even on fair-weather voyages… When listening to the grief-stricken voices of deeply distressed parents, we need to bear in mind that numerous ships carrying large numbers of children suffered no deaths on board, or very few.62

This was not the situation, however, for those Households who embarked for Victoria on the first of the two HIES chartered ships in this study, the ‘Araminta’.

2.9 ‘Araminta’

The first vessel to depart was the ‘Araminta’ sailing from the Birkenhead Emigration Depot on 20 June 1852 and bound for Geelong in the Colony of Victoria. The ‘Araminta’ was the third ship chartered by the HIES to leave for Australia. The first two ships departed from Liverpool in January and May 1852 respectively. At the time of her departure there were 365 emigrants on board, the majority being Scottish Highlanders assisted by the HIES from the Isle of Skye. Amongst the rest of the passengers were 16 Household groups from Moidart.

The following table sets out the names of Households along with their

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township and estate in Moidart.

Table 2.2: Origins of Moidart Households on board the ‘Araminta’ by Highland estate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number in Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Estate</th>
<th>Crofting township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>John McPherson</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Ardmolich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Alex. McDonald</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Island Moidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Angus McDonald</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Island Shona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Angus McDonald</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Island Shona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>John McDonald</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Island Shona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Archib. McDonald</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Scardoish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Mary Cameron</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Scardoish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Michael McDonald</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Scardoish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Mary McDonald</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Scardoish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Roderick McDonald</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Gaskan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Andrew Grant</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Blain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Catherine Kennedy</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Dalnabreac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Angus McNiel</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Dalnabreac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Corbett sisters</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Blain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Donald McDonald</td>
<td>Kinlochmoidart</td>
<td>Island Shona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Donald McDonald</td>
<td>Loch Shiel</td>
<td>Dorlin/Langall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: General Register Office for Scotland 1851 Census Returns, Edinburgh. The spelling of place names in this case is taken from the census form, 1982.

Although it is not clear how the Moidart people on board the ‘Araminta’ were financially assisted to outfit themselves and pay their passage to Australia, a newspaper article published in August 1852 confirms that the HIES was active in the Moidart district as early as two months after the departure of the ‘Araminta’ and describes how those who later travelled on the ‘Allison’ were assisted by this organisation. Given that the ‘Araminta’ was chartered by the HIES with all passengers from Skye receiving assistance from the HIES it is therefore possible that those from Moidart who left on the ‘Araminta’ were also partly financed by the HIES. In the report published in The Inverness Advertiser a correspondent from Moidart wrote:

63 General Register Office for Scotland 1851 Census Returns, Edinburgh. The spelling of place names in this case is taken from the census form, 1982.
The only thing of interest taking place with us is the continuance of emigration to Australia. The rush to get off is steadily increasing - many who could not leave formerly through their inability to pay the Government deposits having been now aided by the London Society.  

Balfour suggests that this reference to the ‘London Society’ indicates that the Moidart emigrants on board the ‘Araminta’ were indeed supported by the HIES, although their names were not officially recorded on those surviving lists that make up the HIES records today. Secondly, the same source suggests that the emigrants on the ‘Araminta’ had financially contributed to their own emigration as far as they were able when it was stated:

It is affecting to pass through the districts of Moidart, Arisaig and Ardnamurchan, and to witness the numerous uninhabited houses surrounded by luxuriant crops of oats and potatoes which the emigrants have made over to the proprietor at valuation.

By making over these crops at valuation (and possibly contributing any income received from the proprietor towards their costs although this is unknown),

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64 See a report written by a Moidart district correspondent in the *Inverness Advertiser*, Inverness 24 August 1852. Balfour, however, has a wider interpretation of this report. He states in the notes section of his article ‘The Highland and Island Emigration Society: 1852-1858’, that ‘this reference lends weight to the contention that the hundred or so emigrants from Moidart aboard the ‘Araminta’ were in fact assisted by the Society.’ p. 531.

65 See the list of notes compiled by Balfour in his article ‘The Highland and Island Emigration Society: 1852-1858’ and published in *Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness* LV11 990-92, p. 563. These notes explain how the list of people assisted by the HIES came to be compiled. He also explains the nature of the many inaccuracies associated with this compilation and points out where the list is deficient in its information.
they would have complied with a major prerequisite of the HIES.

Four years of destitution and poverty on Skye and in Moidart ensured that the passengers were in a desperate situation on their arrival at Birkenhead. Alfred Carr, the Surgeon Superintendent of the ‘Araminta’ described the emigrants before they boarded in the following way:

When delivered into my charge at Birkenhead the emigrants with scarcely an exception were in a most filthy and disgusting condition, covered with vermin, infected with itch, and literally in rags; ignorant of the language and in fact more resembling brutes than human beings so far as the advantages derived from civilisation are concerned.67

He also stated that the passengers preparing to board the ‘Medina’ (also bound for Australia) at Birkenhead were of a more superior class and therefore it was necessary to board the ‘Araminta’ passengers first in case the ‘Medina’ passengers were infected with disease and vermin. Although already in a desperate situation the Moidart ‘Araminta’ passengers were further disadvantaged when the HIES agent employed at Birkenhead stole monies paid by the passengers to the Society. Without being able to replace the money stolen by the HIES agent (which should have been used to pay for the outfitting of the HIES funded passengers) the ship had no choice but to set

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67 See a letter published in W.B. Clarke, "Araminta" Emigrant Ship 1852, Self Published, Enclosure Number two. 1995. This letter contains a detailed description of the effects of measles and illness on board and of the perceived treatment the Doctor felt he had received from members of the Board after they had inspected the ship.
sail. This meant that many of the people were not properly outfitted for the voyage and did not possess the required clothing and utensils for the journey.

The presence of so many people from Island Shona and Scardoise from the two estates of Kinlochmoidart and Lochshiel on board the ‘Araminta’, requires further investigation. Their inclusion may have been the result of greater distress and impact from the famine in their townships. As stated in chapter one on pages 80 and 81 a total of 4,000 were bordering on starvation in 1851 out of the population of the district of 11,000. The Lochshiel Estate had the largest number of destitute Households with 93 families or 464 individuals in dire circumstances in that year. Therefore it is logical that the Lochshiel emigrants should be amongst the first to leave and to receive assistance from the HIES. Their inclusion may have also been the result of the willingness of the two landlords to contribute towards the cost as part of the HIES emigration scheme or because of the ability of the Households to sell their crops to raise their financial contribution.

The disadvantages that accompanied the Moidart people to Birkenhead continued throughout the journey. Misery caused by disease and dysentry continued during the whole voyage with a total of 27 deaths recorded. The first recorded death occurred on July 10 and deaths continued to occur every three to four days. Only five of those deaths occurred amongst people aged over four years. Roderick McDonald lost his wife Sarah as well as two young sons Donald aged three and Angus aged one. Others who died were John

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68 Letter written by Alfred Carr M. D. to Edward Grimes, Immigration Agent, Melbourne on 20 October 1852. VPRS 1189/PO, Unit 112, File 52/8389, PROV, North Melbourne. Page number not recorded.
MacPherson aged one, Flora MacNeill aged 15 months, Catherine McDonald aged 18 months and Misey McDonald, wife of James McDonald aged 28 years.\textsuperscript{70} All deaths were due to an outbreak of measles contracted from bedding in the Emigration Depot and resulting in death from dehydration and dysentery.\textsuperscript{71}

The passengers, used to the rigours and hardships associated with crofting life and lacking the necessary utensils, were totally unprepared for life on board ship. The surgeon’s report mentioned that the decks were used as toilets and water tanks used to store drinking water were used to wash clothes and were soon contaminated. Following their arrival in Geelong the passengers quickly became involved in negotiating employment and this aspect will be examined in chapter three. The ‘Araminta’ passengers were to disperse and travel to different locations soon after their arrival. The nature and impact of this dispersal will be examined and analysed in the next chapter.

\textbf{2.10 ‘Marco Polo’}

The ‘Marco Polo’ was the second ship to depart with Moidart Households on board leaving Birkenhead on 4 July 1852 fourteen days after the ‘Araminta’ and arriving fourteen days ahead of the ‘Araminta’, after a record-breaking journey of 68 days. It was the largest passenger ship at this time to leave

\textsuperscript{69} See family 22 in Appendix A.
\textsuperscript{70} A list of deaths that occurred during the voyage was included in a letter written to John Macdonald of Scardoish and published in \textit{The Inverness Courier} Inverness 21 April 1853.
\textsuperscript{71} For the reasons why measles took so many young lives and for the lack of immunity of Highlanders in particular, to measles and other infectious diseases see R. Haines, \textit{Doctors at sea: emigrant voyages to colonial Australia}, Houndmills, Basingstoke, 2006. p. 34.
Birkenhead for Australia and had been especially converted by her owner James Baines to carry large numbers of passengers on what he hoped would be the lucrative route to the Australian goldfields.

Once again the eight Moidart Households on board originated from crofting townships on the Loch Shiel and Kinlochmoidart Estates further depleting the populations of both estates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number In Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Estate owner and Estate</th>
<th>Crofting township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ranald and Ann McInnes</td>
<td>Mr W Robertson of Kinlochmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Egnaig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>John and Margaret McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Egnaig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>John and Marcella Macdonald</td>
<td>Mr W. Robertson of Kinlochmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Kylesmor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Peter and Ann McNeil</td>
<td>Mr Alexander Macdonald of Loch Shiel Estate</td>
<td>Blain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Susan McPherson and family</td>
<td>Mr W. Robertson of Kinlochmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Island Shona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Flora McMaster and family</td>
<td>Mr Alexander Macdonald of the Loch Shiel Estate</td>
<td>Mingarry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Donald and Catherine McDonald</td>
<td>Mr Alexander Macdonald of the Loch Shiel Estate</td>
<td>Dalnabreak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>John and Ann McDonald</td>
<td>Mr W Robertson of Kinlochmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Egnaig*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nominal passenger list of the ‘Marco Polo’ and Balfour, R. (2002). *John and Ann McDonald were married in February 1852 prior to leaving in

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June. John was from Egnaig and Ann was from Scardoise according to the Moidart marriage register.

The ‘Marco Polo’ left Birkenhead with undue haste and without proper storage of luggage thereby creating hardship for those on board. Trunks belonging to the passengers were stored for some time between the decks before being finally moved to the hold. This again used valuable space and made conditions for the passengers uncomfortable and restrictive. As well, many of the stores loaded in Liverpool, were mislaid during the voyage perhaps resulting in the passengers receiving inadequate food supplies or valuable medical stores not being available to treat the various illnesses which broke out on board. The written report provided by the Immigration Board following their inspection of the ship on its arrival in Hobson’s Bay on 20 September 1852 reveals a number of situations that placed the passengers at risk of death, injury and illness during the journey.\(^{73}\)

The ‘Marco Polo’ was legally permitted to carry 701 statute adults. Instead, the Emigration Officers at Birkenhead boarded 887 passengers (plus crew).\(^{74}\) This overcrowding necessitated the conversion of part of the upper deck of the ship into accommodation for the extra passengers thus limiting access to the deck for exercise and entertainment for other passengers and restricting their movement during the voyage.

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\(^{73}\) Report of the Immigration Board of Melbourne of 2 October 1852 following its inspection of the ship ‘Marco Polo’, VPRS 1189/P0000, Harbour Master’s Department, Unit 109, PROV, North Melbourne.

\(^{74}\) Balfour dated 11 July 2002 re. Moidart estates and including a draft map showing the approximate boundaries of the Estates of Kinlochmoidart, Loch Shiel, Lochans and Glenuig.
The course chosen by the Master of the ‘Marco Polo’ took the ship further south of the usual route after it rounded the Cape of Good Hope. Forbes was determined to break the sailing record for the number of days taken to reach Melbourne from Liverpool. To do this he had to steer the ship into the gale-force winds of the southern waters. This decision subjected the passengers to severe cold for which they were not prepared in terms of clothing and heating nor had they been warned of this prior to beginning the voyage. According to the report this course of action aggravated the illnesses on board and contributed to the high mortality rate in the latter part of the voyage:

The Master selected the great circle course between the longitude of the Cape and this port. The board doubt the propriety of this choice, unless the Immigrants are previously warned of the cold weather which they will experience, and proper precautions for their health are taken.\textsuperscript{75}

Although especially converted for carrying emigrants the ‘Marco Polo’ was in part, poorly constructed. The report refers to the ill fitting skylights and ventilation which no doubt allowed water to seep in during rough weather, contributing to the cold, miserable conditions and to the illness and deaths of passengers. These deaths included two married females, two male children aged ten and seven, 18 males and 16 females aged between one and six years of age and seven males and seven females aged less than one year. As the Birkenhead Emigration Depot was without a hospital in 1852, sick adults and

\textsuperscript{74} The number of passengers recorded on the nominal passenger list totals 887 or 7391/2 statute adults. Information from other sources such as the Log of Logs claims there were approximately 930 passengers on board (see Log of Logs, volume 2, p. 318).

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
children were accommodated in the regular quarters occupied by intending emigrants. The report states that a family with measles had slept in a bed the night before the passengers of the ‘Marco Polo’ were accommodated. This was the most likely cause of the outbreak of measles on board the ‘Marco Polo’ as well as the ‘Araminta’.

The experience of the ‘Marco Polo’ demonstrates the degree to which intending passengers were subjected to health risks beyond their control both in the Depot as well as sailing in conditions which placed their lives in peril. In the case of Captain Forbes his decisions were the result of a personal desire to break the current record of the number of days spent at sea between Birkenhead and Melbourne. Given that he continued to pursue this goal on the return voyage to Liverpool and in successive voyages post-1852 breaking records became a personal obsession but one that may have contributed to the spread of disease and incidence of deaths.

Following the departure of the ‘Marco Polo’ the last remaining group of Moidart emigrants departed in September 1852 on the HIES chartered ship ‘Allison’.

2.11 ‘Allison’

The ‘Allison’ was the third ship involved with this emigration and left Birkenhead for Melbourne on 13 September 1852. There were 184 adults and 105 children on board. Twenty Households from Inverness-shire and Argyllshire were assisted by the HIES. This included twelve Households from
Moidart and eight Households from estates owned by Sir James Riddell in Ardnamurchan, a district in Argyll separated from Moidart by Lochshiel. The Moidart Households included seven Households containing 53 individuals from the Kinlochmoidart Estate, one Household of nine people from Scardoise on the Lochshiel Estate and four Households of 24 people from Dr. Martin’s Moidart Estate. The HIES records show that eleven of the twelve Moidart Households received assistance. The Household of John Macdonald from Glenmoidart (Household 10) was listed in the HIES records but was described as “unassisted”. According to the ‘Allison’ Manifest Extract, John Macdonald “Received no aid. Mr Robertson guaranteed the third in this case”. Once again the majority of the emigrants on the ‘Allison’ lived on the two estates of Kinlochmoidart and Lochshiel with one Household from the Glenmoidart Estate and four from the Moidart Estate.

Table 2.4: Origins of Moidart Households on board the ‘Allison’ by Highland estate and crofting township.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number in Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Estate owner and Estate</th>
<th>Crofting township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>John and Flora McDonald</td>
<td>Colonel Ross of Glenmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Glenmoidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alexander and Flora McDonald</td>
<td>Mr W. Robertson of Kinlochmoidart Estate</td>
<td>Kinloch Moidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mary McDonald and family</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Kinloch Moidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Angus and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Kinloch Moidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Alexander and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Kinloch Moidart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76 List of Emigrants assisted by the Highland and Island Emigration Society, and who embarked on board the ship 'Allison' which sailed from Liverpool for Melbourne on 13 September 1852, Public Record Office, Inverness, 2002.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name and Family</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Donald and Ann McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Kinloch Moidart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alexander and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Kylesmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Ann McDonald and family</td>
<td>Alexander McDonald of Lochshiel Estate</td>
<td>Scardoish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Norman and Jane McDonald</td>
<td>Dr. Martin of the Moidart Estate</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>John and Marjory McIver</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>John and Mary Cameron</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John and Sarah McDonald</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nominal passenger and disposal lists of the 'Allison'.

All other passengers on board, with the exception of two, were also from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

The remarks entered by HIES authorities against the names of the Households record that in the majority of cases the members of the Households were healthy, well clothed and of respectable appearance. The highest valued Promissory Note was for forty-four pounds, two shillings and seven pence Sterling and signed for the Household of Norman and Jane McDonald (Household 2). The smallest amount was for five pounds, fifteen shillings and eleven pence Sterling for the three members of the Household of John, Sarah and John (son) McDonald (Household 1). The presence of Households from two additional Moidart Estates indicates that destitution had become more widespread in Moidart. If the Households from Estates in the neighbouring district of Ardnamurchan are also added to this total it becomes clear that

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78 See comments entered next to Households in the List of Emigrants assisted by the Highland and Island Emigration Society, and embarked on board the ship Allison which sailed from Liverpool for Melbourne on the 13th September 1852 Public Record Office, Inverness. 2002.
poverty and destitution caused by the famine had moved well beyond the Isle of Skye.

It appears that there are no existing reports or records documenting the voyage of the ‘Allison’ to Hobson’s Bay in Port Phillip. The ‘Allison’ was, however, turned back on arrival due to the presence of typhus on board and sent to the quarantine station at Point Nepean. Typhus resulted in seven deaths during the voyage (and a further six following their arrival at the Quarantine Station). The arrival and subsequent quarantine experiences of the passengers will be examined in chapter three.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has established firstly that ongoing difficulties continued to be encountered by the Moidart people especially during the voyage to Victoria and secondly, the HIES played a number of important roles in this emigration experience. The statement prepared by the General Acting Committee of the Skye Emigration Society (the forerunner of the HIES) in September 1851 strongly suggests that emigration was largely forced upon the people. Although the Society was keen to declare that it was not in favour of compulsory emigration it was determined that the people fully understood that the aid and relief given to them through parish and other charitable means was not going to continue. Neither should the people expect that this relief would be forthcoming in the future. It clearly placed the ultimate responsibility for the
choice to remain on Skye or to emigrate in the hands of the people themselves.

As evident in the following statement the Society declined to take any further responsibility for those who refused to accept the inevitability of emigration and who chose to remain on Skye:

…you are to consider what you are to do hereafter without this assistance, for every one of you must know that such relief is not to be expected again…But, whether you desire it or not, it cannot be looked for. Destitution…will be regarded in a different light, and those who wilfully neglect any means of escape that are offered to them, and choose to remain in circumstances for which destitution is inseparable, will obtain very little sympathy or assistance.  

These words clearly demonstrate their intention to apply pressure on the people to emigrate as the best solution to the problems faced by the people of the Highlands. The Committee challenged every person to consider it “his duty to endeavour to remove, to a country where his services would be valued and would readily procure for him, not only plenty of food and clothing, but the means of rising to a comfortable and respectable independence.”

Although these words were directed at the people of Skye it is not unreasonable to assume that the same sentiments were also later directed at the Moidart Households. Clearly the first Moidart emigrants had little choice but to emigrate for at the time of their departure in June they left behind bountiful

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crops ready for harvesting. If they had been given the opportunity to reconsider and change their minds and had remained in Moidart, the desperate times and shortages of food would have been overcome with the arrival of the harvest and improved economic conditions. Therefore the Moidart emigration can also be viewed as an example of the ‘involuntary migration’ theory as once the funds and structures were established the people were powerless to fight their emigration.

On a more positive note, however, the philosophy of the HIES enabled people to leave in Household groups and to emigrate with both very young children and elderly parents and siblings thus preserving the Household unit and providing family support groups and networks on arrival.

The HIES published a report titled *Report of the Highland Emigration Society, from its formation in April 1852 until April 1853* detailing its work in the first twelve months of its operation. Sections of this report were published in the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* in 1854. Clearly the Committee who wrote the report was of the opinion that the HIES played an integral role in colonising and settling people in Australia:

> The 2605 souls whose emigration is therein recorded are all members of the 380 families who are represented in the column of Married Adults. This is believed to be the nearest approach to ‘colonisation’ which has yet been attempted; each of the ships may be said to form a colony in itself; all the warm affections and hallowed sympathies of

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Ibid., p. 7.
home are there, and are borne by the emigrants to their new hearths in the land of their adoption.\textsuperscript{81}

The Society's report included high praise of its own achievements by comparing the emigration of the Highlanders and Islanders to the Irish emigration to the United States thereby focusing on the positive outcomes of emigration for all:

…nearly one fifth of the Irish people went forth, from misery and idleness, to competence and work, at the same time reuniting families that had been divided, and contributing to elevate the character, and improve the condition of those who remained.\textsuperscript{82}

The publication of selected extracts of the Committee’s report only served to politicise the work of the Society. These extracts conveyed an overall sense of great achievement for all involved in this undertaking. The omission of any references in the report to the tragic upheavals, distress, sickness and death experienced through the forcible removal of so many of the emigrants hid much of the truth regarding these emigrations. The report persisted in upholding and validating the way in which the HIES Committee undertook its work to the end:

\textsuperscript{81} Reporter unknown ‘Report, Society for assisting emigration from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’ \textit{Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer} 18 April 1854, page not recorded.
On the whole we may say that no more satisfactory report was ever printed; and that no benevolent association has, from equal funds, done more positive good...Such efforts carry their own reward, and, like mercy, are blessed alike to those that give and those that receive.\textsuperscript{83}

Although the views and attitudes of Trevelyan had no direct impact on the emigrants nevertheless the ideological environment in which the HIES operated was in some ways established by Trevelyan. Whilst his reasons for establishing the HIES might be questionable the outcomes for those emigrants who survived were clearly positive. The opportunity to leave behind the deplorable economic and social circumstances of their lives in Moidart may not have been given to them without this organisation.

Although new opportunities awaited them in Victoria, the recovery of the debt owed by these Households to the Society resulted in the pursuit of some assisted families by HIES Agents in Victoria. The recovery of this debt and the accompanying scorn and anger directed by other Highlanders in Geelong towards these debtors featured in meetings and newspaper reports. The lack of intent to pursue landowners in Scotland to recover the one-third debt promised to the Society as part of the funding arrangement also needs to be examined.

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
and will be further investigated in the next chapter.

Although Haines claims that mortality rates on voyages of emigrant ships had fallen by the 1850s and were comparable to those experienced on land in Britain, the three shipboard accounts in this emigration reveal the ongoing presence of a range of perils associated with the journey by ship to Australia in the early 1850s. In addition, intending passengers were also at risk of becoming the victims of theft, bribery and disease in the Emigration Depot prior to departure. Their naivety, lack of education, and dislocation from the familiar placed them at risk in these circumstances with many losing all their money by the time they were required to board. Fulfilling the material needs of passengers embarking on a three-month voyage became a livelihood for both residents and merchants in Liverpool and Birkenhead. Those who took financial advantage of the emigrants included the HIES Agents themselves. The voyage was filled with positive as well as negative elements. Time on board resulted in the creation of friendships between passengers that continued long after their arrival and settlement in Australia. For those travelling on the ‘Marco Polo’ the presence of passengers from several countries exposed the Highlanders to other cultures and languages thereby preparing the emigrants for a future existence that would be spent amongst people from many different nationalities, languages, political beliefs, Christian denominations and class backgrounds in Australia.

The voyage constituted only a small part (in terms of time) of the emigration process for these Households. The process of arriving and obtaining
employment placed significant strain on the members of the Households and is the focus of chapter three. The Agents of the HIES continued to actively pursue those who had received assistance and their actions will also be analysed in the next chapter. They encountered prejudice, dislocation from other Households and a reorganisation of the membership of the Household as members separated to accept employment in their bid to resettle and adjust to the new physical, social, economic and religious environments in the Colony. This adjustment was to continue for many years ensuring that, in many cases, the new immigrant was involved in a continuing process of cultural accommodation and shifts involving language, mores and social rules of the new host society. These adjustments will form the central focus of chapters four and five.
Early settlement and employment in the Colony of Victoria

3.1 General introduction

Although the long and difficult voyage to Australia for the Moidart Highlanders was over, for some individuals, their part in this story was to end relatively quickly after their arrival with death following the rigours of the voyage.¹ For other Household members and succeeding generations, the life journeys continued over many years. The focus of this chapter is the arrival and continuation of their journeys in Australia.

The chapter begins by outlining the importance and role played by the discovery of gold in establishing the social and economic contexts awaiting the arrival of the Moidart immigrants in 1852. The Moidart immigrants brought with them badly needed agricultural skills, experience and knowledge associated with the sheep industry at a time when the goldfields had enticed many of the labourers away from their employment on the land. Their arrival

¹ Five members of Moidart Households died during the voyage of the ‘Allison’: 2.5; 3.6; 3.8; 8.6; and 8.7 whilst two members died in quarantine following its arrival. They were: Household members; 9.8 and 10.2. See ‘Allison’, nominal passenger and disposal lists VPRS 7666 Inward Passenger Lists-British ports PROV, North Melbourne Book 9, pp. 10-19. and Quarantine Station Cemetery 1852, Friends of the Quarantine Museum, Nepean Historical Society Inc., 10 November, 2002.
as a communal group of immigrants did not necessarily mean that they would remain together in Victoria. Many of the married couples for example, arrived with young children to support and needed to move away from the other Households in order to obtain regular wages and rations rather than opting for the vulnerability and insecurity of the goldfields.

The chapter explores the arrival of each of the three ships in turn. Although there were similarities between the experiences on board the ‘Marco Polo’, ‘Araminta’ and ‘Allison’ there were also significant differences in the on-arrival experiences due to the port of arrival, time of arrival during the year, the effects of infectious diseases on board and quarantine requirements, local employment opportunities and the length of time spent in the Immigration Depots. Their initial employment experiences in and around Geelong are investigated as are the expectations of the HIES in relation to the employment of their funded immigrants. The work of the HIES Agents in Victoria to recover debts owed to the Society will be analysed alongside the attitudes and motivations of other Highlanders and government officials in pursuing this goal.

The search for employment created different stresses and outcomes according to age, gender, port of arrival and the location of employment. Each of these had the potential to change the composition of the Household. Several young women separated from their Household in order to take up a position in
domestic service. Other Households elected to remain together on arrival and
to seek employment as a Household unit. Many Households opted for the
security of regular wages and promised rations in exchange for their labour
whilst others left the emigration depots leaving no trace of their eventual
destinations.

3.2 Victoria in 1852

The economic, social and political aspects of colonial life largely created by
gold provided the emigrants with both opportunities and challenges with the
goldfields proving to be an attraction for many single male immigrants
including some from Moidart Households.

Although they had left Moidart their pastoral and agricultural skills were in
great demand enabling many to quickly find new employment opportunities as
demonstrated in the extract from a letter written home by a Highlander:

Since the Highland proprietors have turned the country into sheep-
walks, and will not let the people cultivate it then it is their duty to
assist them to remove to a country where they will be comfortable.

*Labour! Labour! Labour!* Is the constant cry here, therefore, we could
For some the high rates of wages received opened up additional opportunities. Writing to his mother Alexander Macpherson pointed out the differences in the amounts of money earned in Victoria compared with his earnings in Scotland:

…I have two hundred pounds in the bank, besides one hundred and fifty pounds more spent in travelling and provisions while there, and various other items. Now, all that I have earned by my own single labour in less than six months work, and not work harder than I often did in Scotland for one shilling and six pence per day.  

Evicting landlords such as Alexander Macdonald of the Lochshiel Estate held no further sway over his Households. Victoria offered new economic freedom and hope: “We are not ground down with poor rates, neither tolls or taxes worth mentioning. Ejecting lairds are not here; every farmer is his own landlord and Factor.” Victoria in 1852 was very different from the Scotland they had left.

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2 Letter from a Highlander in Australia to a friend back in the Highlands describing the opportunities for success for Highlanders, firstly in agricultural work in the Colony but failing that, on the goldfields. *The Inverness Courier*, Inverness, 27 January 1853, p. 3.

3 Letter written by Alexander Macpherson to his mother at Tongue and dated 1 August 1853 and published in *The Inverness Courier*, Inverness, 17 November 1853, p. 4.

4 Letter written by Mr A Walker to his father at Fyrish in the Highlands, dated 25 December 1852 describing the availability of abundant work on the land at high wages, the success
The Victorian diggings also provided an opportunity for Highlanders to meet again and to renew old acquaintances. Letters from Highlanders provide valuable insights into the ways in which the settlements on the goldfields contained and supported small groups of people from the same location in Scotland thereby assisting them to maintain kinship and communal relationships with each other. Gold brought people from the same district together in a way that working on isolated stations and properties could not. A miner from Ballarat wrote to his parents at Lochaber in the Highlands in 1852 stating:

I have seen all the Muirlaggan lads now at the diggings. Donald Mackillop, Duncan Mackillop, Donald Grant and Angus Rankin, are about three miles from here. They have done pretty well at the diggings; I saw them this morning.\(^5\)

Contact with people from the same community and language background also provided opportunities to use and maintain the home language. Communities of Gaelic-speaking people were present on the goldfields and the weekly

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5 Letter written by a Highlander mining at Ballarat to his parents at Lochaber, dated 7 November 1852 and published in *The Inverness Courier*, Inverness, 5 May 1853, p. 4. It is also interesting to note that the signatures of Donald and Duncan Mackillop and Angus Rankin all appear next to each other on the petition of 9 August 1853 to bring Fr. Ranald Rankin to Victoria.
Sunday service was one opportunity to use Gaelic, which helped to ensure that a communal sense of Highland identity and culture was maintained thousands of miles away:

There are hundreds of Highlanders here, and almost the whole of them doing well. I myself have got acquainted with very many from both Ross and Sutherlandshire. We have as large a Gaelic congregation as you have in Rosskeen.⁶

At the same time the cosmopolitan nature of the population on the goldfields also required the use of a common language helping to undermine any efforts to maintain immigrant national languages. Immigrant national languages and dialects began to be relegated to specific domains and for specific purposes thus reducing their overall dominance. English became the lingua franca of the goldfields thereby isolating the use of Gaelic and assisting in its gradual demise.

Gold brought people to inland locations such as Ballarat, creating the need for services and industry and people found employment utilising the skills they had brought with them. The Moidart people also benefited from this skilled labour shortage. A Gaelic school was opened by the Free Church in 1854 with

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⁶ Letter written by James Munro to his father Finlay Munro, Invergordon, Ross-Shire, 3 December 1853 and published in The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 2 March 1854, p. 6.
John McIver as teacher. McIver was a former teacher in Glenuig, Moidart and arrived with his Household on the ‘Allison’. He also worked as a Lay Missionary in Ballarat for three and a half years before the appointment of a minister of the Free Church in the district. By 1857 the community had increased to the extent that there were 71 students on average attending the Gaelic school each day and so it was thought necessary to build a second school to meet the growing needs of families.

The Surgeon Superintendent from the ‘Araminta’, John Alfred Carr, also found his way to Ballarat where he worked at a hospital on the goldfields amongst the miners and was present at the Eureka Rebellion in 1854. Political unrest was also appearing on the goldfields as people arrived from a range of different political environments and experiences. A letter from a Ross-shire emigrant who had been in the colony for about two years included a description of his disappointment after ten months on the goldfields with little success. He wrote in his letter that:

7 J. McIver, Letter to the Denominational Schools Board, Melbourne, VPRS 4826 Vol 2, Received letter Register for the Denominational Schools Board, other denominations June 1857 – December 1859, Ref. 1857/1736 PROV, North Melbourne. See also Household four in Appendix A.
9 Letter commenting on the desire of the people in Ballarat and Bendigo to obtain land for themselves and the problems associated with opening up the land to grow food to support themselves. The author also refers to the interference of the ‘Home government’ in stopping people from obtaining land and he questions to what extent the British Government
There is plenty of room in this country for all England and Scotland if they would only allow us to possess it free. The Home Govt interferes, but what does it know about our requirements? The people are getting restive on this point, and just now there is a great commotion amongst them at Ballarat and Bendigo. They want the land to raise food for themselves and others, but they cannot get it until the land-jobber and money-grubber come first, and they seldom do their part under 15 per cent profit.\textsuperscript{10}

However it is his references to the agitation amongst the miners and their desire for land of their own at this time which are of importance to this study. The clamour for land had begun and the impediments to obtaining land by those desiring to try their hand at farming were now beginning to be recognised.

### 3.3 The arrival of the three emigrant ships

The arrival of each ship was significant in its own particular way. The ‘Marco Polo’, became famous for its record breaking voyage in terms of time, the ‘Araminta’ for its high mortality rate and generally filthy condition on arrival and the ‘Allison’ because of the presence of infectious disease on board and its

\begin{flushright}
understands the needs of the people and society in Australia. \textit{The Inverness Courier}, Inverness, 15 February 1855. p. 5.
\end{flushright}
quarantining at Point Nepean. A range of schemes and funding sources enabled large numbers to emigrate from Britain to Australia. Emigrants had been either financially assisted by the Colonial government or through one of the many official immigration schemes operating at the time. These included benevolent societies or organisations which were established for this purpose (organisations such as the HIES and Caroline Chisholm's society ‘The Family Colonization Loan Society’) or had paid their own way as unassisted immigrants.¹¹

The numbers of immigrants arriving were rapidly increasing month by month:

Nearly 14,000 people arrived in Victoria by sea during 1851 and an average of more than 5,000 during each of the first five months of 1852. Nearly 13,000 landed in September alone, and more than 16,000 in October.¹²

As shown in these statistics the numbers of people who arrived in the month of October 1852 (including those on the ‘Araminta’) outweighed the total intake of emigrants in the previous year and swamped the pre-gold population. Before examining each ship, however, it is important to obtain a clearer profile of the

¹⁰ Ibid.
¹¹ For an overview of the major philanthropic organisations and shelter schemes operating in the colony in 1852 see chapter five in K. Pescod, A place to lay my head, 2003.
¹² Brown, Clyde Company Papers, Introductory Notes, p. 195.
overall patterns of immigration to Victoria in 1852. This can be found in a report prepared by the Victorian Government’s Immigration Agent, Edward Grimes. Colonial Immigration Agents such as Grimes were located at the major port of each colony.

Grimes prepared this annual report using the statistical data gathered during 1852. Data was collected on a range of issues and concerned both arriving immigrants and departing emigrants. However, before examining the content of his report it is necessary to consider the nature of the role of the Immigration Agent and the opportunity that the role afforded the holder to data and information. Access to this information could have placed the Agent in a position where he may have been able to offer advice or put forward persuasive argument to the Lieutenant Governor of the Colony regarding the entry of appropriate and inappropriate immigrants.

According to Haines the Agents:

…mustered the immigrants on arrival and received all of the passenger-related ships’ papers for processing and distribution to the various authorities. These officers also supervised payment of gratuities to matrons, school masters, and other emigrant supernumeraries who, on the Surgeon Superintendent’s recommendation, received a small payment for services rendered on board. Each Immigration Agent
recorded complaints and compliments about the ship’s crew and
enquired about the performance of the Surgeon Superintendent and
Matron.$^{13}$

The Agent was privy to statistical data concerning aspects of immigration such as numbers of assisted and unassisted immigrants arriving (and departing) and where they landed, their age, gender and family composition, their work skills, wages received and terms of employment, their religious persuasion, education levels and English language skills. In addition, the requirement to prepare and present an annual report to the Lieutenant Governor of the Colony provided the Agent with a vehicle through which he could choose to express his personal opinion on matters of concern. He could also use this medium to suggest a course of action to address certain situations. As will be shown later in this chapter Grimes did in fact use the 1852 report to express his views about the HIES immigrants in relation to various attributes concerning attitudes to work and previous employment experience. It was certainly a position of power and much influence within government circles of the day.

Grimes began his report by commenting on the discovery of gold as the major reason for a dramatic increase in both assisted and unassisted immigration to the Colony during this year. Reports published in newspapers in Britain such as

$^{13}$ Haines, *Emigration and the Labouring Poor*, p. 61.
the Liverpool Mercury ensured a steady stream of both assisted and unassisted immigrants to Victoria:

Men that were never worth five pounds in their lives are now possessed of fortunes, and the yoke is burdensome, and they scatter the money like chaff. The whole country for hundreds of miles is one immense goldfield.¹⁴

Many Highlanders found themselves dreaming of making a fortune in a short time on the goldfields and then returning home to Scotland as wealthy men:

I shall start next week for Bendigo diggings, with some shipmates. I intend giving them a good trial, say five or six months, and if lucky I shall come back with one thousand pounds; this is no romance.¹⁵

Others saw success on the goldfields as a means of providing the funds to purchase land of their own, something they could never consider back home. Some, like James Murray were able to send money obtained from the goldfields home on a regular basis to support relatives and family.¹⁶

¹⁵ Letter written by a recently arrived Highlander and published in The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 31 March 1853, p. 2.
¹⁶ James Murray married Catherine McDonald (Household 21). See reference to two sums of ten pounds sent by James via the Clyde Company to his mother in Helmsdale in 1851.
imbued many with an unrealistic sense of optimism but also with a
determination to make a fortune. Many letters from those on the goldfields
were later published in Highland newspapers, and despite heavy editing and
translation into English from Gaelic, became important ‘pull’ factors by
encouraging others to consider the merits of emigration and finding gold. A
letter written to a friend in the Highlands is filled with this kind of optimistic
thinking; “I will assist you to go to the diggings, where, I doubt not, you will
soon make as much as will enable you to buy or rent a farm of your own.”

The Returns for Unassisted Immigration show that 79,187 unassisted
immigrants arrived in the Colony in 1852. In addition to this intake a further 42
ships carrying 15,477 assisted immigrants “cast anchor in our waters in
1852”. This included 5,007 adult males, 5,345 adult females and 5,125
children. Melbourne received 7,877 people, Geelong 5,258 and Portland
2,342. Amongst the cohort of children Grimes calculated that the average
number of children under 14 years of age in assisted families was 1.6 and
estimated that the average cost of conveyance of each assisted statute adult in
1852 was £14.17.04. Of these 15,477 people 5,349 were from England, 3,001

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17 Letter from a Highlander to a friend back in the Highlands describing the opportunities for
success for Highlanders in agricultural work in the Colony or on the goldfields. The
Inverness Courier, Inverness, 27 January 1853. p. 3.
18 E. Grimes, Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852, VPRS 1189/10 Immigration
Agents Files, Unit 14, File 1853/A577900, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
from Ireland and 7,127 from Scotland. People were arriving from other parts of the world as well as from Britain:

Here you will find men of all colours, grades, and religions from all professions, trades, and callings, none too proud to dig. Gold has set the world agog; but how could it be otherwise, when you find such accounts as the following in our newspapers (‘blowing’, as the colonists call it):- ‘Come all ye whom poverty bows down with iron hand – come and be rich.’

Amongst these assisted immigrants were 3,665 agricultural labourers, 421 shepherds, and 2,297 female and 65 male domestic servants. The high number of immigrants from Scotland and from agricultural related employment confirms the dependence on emigration by Scotland as a major means of reducing its rural population. He notes that the proportion of Roman Catholics and Presbyterians who could both read and write was far lower than the proportion belonging to the Church of England. The proportion of statute adults who could neither read nor write out of the total number of adult immigrants was 11.3 per cent.

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21 A. Walker, Letter written to his father at Fyrish in the Highlands, dated 25 December 1852 describing the availability of abundant work on the land at high wages, the success of the Scots in the colony and the composition of the population on the diggings. The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 26 May 1853, p. 4.
His report also refers to 31,038 people leaving the Colony in 1852 either to return to other Australian colonies after trying their luck for a season on the Victorian gold fields or to emigrate to other countries where gold had also been recently discovered. However, numbers of immigrants arriving far outweighed the numbers of emigrants leaving.

In reading the annual report for 1852, it would appear that Grimes was an economic pragmatist who held clear views on who was and was not needed in the Colony. Grimes believed that unless an immigrant was employable and willing to work in the agricultural industry or in domestic service, he or she would be of little use to the Colony. A report published in *The Inverness Courier* in 1852 described the labour situation in Victoria in the following way:

> A commissariat officer, just arrived from Victoria, saw in several districts of that colony, sheep and cattle turned into the corn fields to eat down the crops, it being impossible to obtain labourers to reap them.\(^{22}\)

\(^{22}\) See the report titled ‘The West Highlands’ published in *The Inverness Courier*, Inverness, 3 June 1852, p. 3.
Grimes was convinced, however, that many of the immigrants were not prepared for what awaited them on the goldfields nor did they appreciate the huge task of finding suitable employment if the search for gold proved to be unsuccessful. He clearly saw society in terms of its class structure and he held concerns for those members of the ruling, educated class and the fate that might befall them once they realised how difficult the work would be. He could see that the work available was not suited to people of this standing and would only bring them unhappiness and displeasure. In his opinion the hardships that might fall on the ruling classes were likely to cause great misery, assuming that hardship never afflicted the working classes in this way:

…it is much to be regretted that a large proportion of the population, so introduced, is of a class utterly unfitted for the hard labour of gold digging, and who have entirely overrated the capabilities of the Colony for finding renumerative employment to persons of the educated classes, while the hardships which the crowded state of the City entails upon many of them will, I fear, be productive of much misery.23

By omission he did not appear to be concerned about people belonging to the working classes and what lay in store for them. Their reality seemed of little concern to him. After all, hard, manual, labouring jobs such as road building

and work in the pastoral industry, were all they knew and all that this class of people could aspire to in Victoria.

Workers were needed in all areas owing to a severe lack of infrastructure in the colony. In a letter written to his father back in the Highlands, a son wrote with great optimism about these opportunities in Australia and how working industriously would provide independence and freedom from obligation to others:

It is not the man of capital that is wanted in this country; it is the industrious, sober labouring man, and skilled mechanic. Let his calling be what it may, he will find on his landing on these shores that there is a demand for his labour at highly remunerative rates; and if steady, he will soon find himself in good circumstances – he will find himself not struggling with poverty, but able to enjoy the luxuries of life along with his toil, and shortly be so independent as to be master of his own time and under no obligation to any party.  

As will be shown later in the chapter even those passengers who arrived on ships carrying infectious diseases and who were placed in quarantine were offered work as they waited to be pronounced clear of infection. Male
passengers from the ‘Allison’ were offered work building permanent buildings at the Quarantine station but were not paid for this work. They went to extraordinary lengths to locate the appropriate government agency that had withheld payment. This was another example of Highlander solidarity and of determination not to be taken advantage of in the new colony.

Grimes was of the view that the economic success of the Colony lay in promoting pastoral production rather than through gold and argued that increased numbers of immigrants be sent to those ports closer to where agricultural workers were much sought after. Entry via these ports would force people to accept employment in the agricultural districts as they were too far from the goldfields to make this journey without earning additional money:

…I should be inclined to recommend that a larger number should be sent to Portland during the summer months than is at present the case, there is great demand for labour both there and at Port Fairy, and the distance from the goldfields compels the Immigrants to filtrate as it were through a large extent of country.

24 Letter written by Mr A Walker to his father at Fyrish in the Highlands, dated 25 December 1852 and published in The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 26 May 1853, p. 4.
25 See letter written by Dr Hunt of the Quarantine Station to the Colonial Secretary and dated 11 January 1853 where he requests that the passengers from the ‘Allison’ be employed at four shillings a day to construct permanent buildings at the Station. VPRS 1189, Unit 131, 53/439 PROV, North Melbourne.
26 Grimes, Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852, page number unrecorded.
Edward Grimes refers to the various ports of embarkation and to the advantages to be gained by different groups of immigrants at each. He advised that married couples and single men were best sent to Geelong, Portland and Port Fairy. These were the locations where there was a high demand for workers for the pastoral industry and, because of the great distance from the goldfields, most had to find employment for a while to raise sufficient funds to enable them to travel to the fields. This would also serve as a deterrent for men to leave employment on the land to search for gold. This appears to have been the case for those immigrants arriving on the ‘Araminta’. Melbourne, on the other hand, was the best port of embarkation for single women as there was a great need for domestic servants but a shortage of suitable women or women who were willing to voluntarily enter into service. This study will demonstrate that this was the case for many of the single females arriving on the ‘Marco Polo’ in Melbourne.

It was Grimes’ view that couples with young families were the ideal immigrants because he felt that the responsibility of providing for their family would prevent the men from going to the goldfields and would force them to find employment in the pastoral industry at least for a short while. Couples with young families were well represented amongst the Moidart passengers on all three ships.

As shown in the table on page 138 in chapter two each vessel carried a
significant number of passengers from Moidart. The presence of so many children sailing under the age of 13 is congruent with the objective of the Australian government to give preference to family groups. The marginal increase in the numbers of single men and women between the sailing of the ‘Marco Polo’ and the other two ships also supports the desire of the Australian government to give preference to families with single men and particularly women of marriageable age. The arrival of each ship in 1852 at the ports of Melbourne and Geelong and on different dates during the year meant that initial employment opportunities varied accordingly.

3.4 The arrival of the ‘Marco Polo’ and the initial employment experiences of its passengers

The ‘Marco Polo’ left Liverpool on 4 July 1852 and arrived in Hobson’s Bay, Victoria on 20 September 1852. She was owned by the Black Ball line and, according to James Baines, a co-owner of the ship, the ‘Marco Polo’ was “the largest vessel, and carrying the greatest number of passengers ever chartered by Government or despatched to Australia with passengers.” The eight Moidart Households among the 930 government-sponsored passengers were remarkable in that all the members of Households remained together following their arrival. Two other Catholic Households from Inverness also travelled on the ‘Marco Polo’ but, as they were unidentifiable as Moidart residents in the
1851 census, they have not been included in this study. The group of eight included two widows and their children. Four Households left to find their own employment in Melbourne. They may have had relatives already established in the Colony. The composition of the passengers on board from Scotland warrants attention. Of the three ships the ‘Marco Polo’ carried Scots from the most varied parts of Scotland. There were residents of Scottish towns and cities such as Edinburgh, Linlithgow, Stirling, Dunbarton and Aberdeen as well as residents from ten Scottish counties scattered across both the Highlands and Lowlands. Passengers also came from eleven Irish counties and ten English counties. All the single women on board were listed as ‘domestic servants’ in terms of occupation whilst the single men were all listed as either ‘agricultural labourers’ or ‘shepherds’. The average age of the Moidart single women was 19 whilst for the men it was 24.5 years.

**Table 3.2: First employment terms for the Moidart Households who arrived on the ‘Marco Polo’ in 1852.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number in Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Employment location on arrival</th>
<th>Wages offered</th>
<th>With or without rations</th>
<th>Number of terms in contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Flora McMaster and family</td>
<td>On own account to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Ranald and Ann McInnes</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Sixty pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>Six months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is notable that a very large number of the total number of passengers left to find their own employment in Melbourne. This may have been due to the desire to move to the goldfields as quickly as possible. The above table is representative of this situation. Many accepted employment in Melbourne despite their agricultural experience and backgrounds perhaps choosing to settle for the security of wages gained through the bountiful employment opportunities in a bourgeoning urban community.

The experiences of single women travelling on the ‘Marco Polo’ are similar in terms of those who accompanied them to Australia. The gender imbalance in

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28 ‘Marco Polo’, nominal passenger and disposal lists, VPRS 7666 Inward passenger lists-
the Colony continued to manifest itself in the official immigration statistics. According to the statistics for Unassisted Immigration in 1852, 62,906 men had arrived in the Colony compared with only 9,072 women. Although critical of certain aspects related to single female immigration, Grimes was also concerned about this imbalance. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary Grimes tried to address this issue by proposing that regulations prohibiting the immigration of single women be changed so that single women wishing to emigrate without parents or another adult relative would be accepted as an immigrant. In his view “…every possible obstacle to promoting Female immigration should be, as far as possible, removed.”

Single women were prevented from emigrating unless accompanied by parents or other relatives. This requirement meant that many women who wanted to emigrate were unable to for a range of reasons. In some cases it was because parents were unwilling to emigrate or were already in Australia. In other cases the single women were orphans.

The table on pages 184-5 provides a statistical portrayal of the single women immigrants arriving from Inverness-shire on board the ‘Marco Polo’. Moidart was only one district in the County to provide emigrants on this voyage.

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29 E. Grimes, Letter to the Colonial Secretary, VPRS 1189/P/0000, Inward Registered Correspondence (Colonial Secretary's Office) 1851-1863, Unit 113, File 53/B1909, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
Unfortunately it is not possible to determine the district of origin of the remaining ten emigrants however, the fact that they were all Presbyterian indicates that they were possibly from a Protestant district such as Ardnamurchan, Argyll or Suinart. Twelve of the 14 Moidart females were unable to read or write and none of the 14 was employed on arrival. Fifty-five single females or 48 per cent of the cohort found employment on arrival. All the Moidart women and nine of the remaining Inverness females identified their occupation as ‘domestic servant’. As many of the other single females on board who also identified in this way and were employed as domestic servants, it is unusual that not one was able to find employment in domestic service. The 1851 census records that all of the single females of Moidart Households on board the ‘Marco Polo’ were at home on the night of the census but does not record their occupations in the Household. Most would have worked outdoors on their family croft. It is therefore reasonable to assume that by identifying as domestic servants these women were attempting to find employment within the most available field of employment for single females in the Colony.

Their inability or unwillingness to be engaged as servants might be explained by the following: a lack of experience and skills as indoor servants, their inability to speak, read or write in English or a desire to remain with the
Household and to take their chance in obtaining employment with other Household members on a pastoral station.

Table 3.3: Composition of single females on board the emigrant ship ‘Marco Polo’ in 1852.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of single women by age, English literacy skills, religion, Scottish occupation and employment in Australia.</th>
<th>Total number in category</th>
<th>Total number from Inverness-shire in category.</th>
<th>Total number from Moidart Households in category.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total number of single women aged 14 years +</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>24 or 21% of total</td>
<td>14 or 12% of total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Total who could read and write</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total who could read only</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Total who could write only</td>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>Not recorded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Total who could neither read or write</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Religion : Church of England</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Religion : Presbyterian</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Religion : Roman Catholic</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Religion : Wesleyan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Religion : other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Average age</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Occupation is Scotland : Farm servant</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Occupation in Scotland: never in service</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Occupation in Scotland: domestic service</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Occupation in Scotland: dairy maid</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Occupation in Scotland: shop woman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Number and percentage employed on arrival in Australia.</td>
<td>55 (48%)</td>
<td>3 (2%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Number and percentage employed on arrival in Australia at city addresses</td>
<td>34 (61%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Number and percentage employed on arrival in Australia at suburban addresses</td>
<td>17 (25%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Number and percentage employed on arrival in Australia at country addresses</td>
<td>4 (7%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Passenger and disposal list for the ‘Marco Polo’.31

As to be expected, the majority of the total number of single female passengers on board found employment in homes or boarding houses in the city centre or suburbs. Of the 55 women 61 per cent found employment in the centre of Melbourne, 25 per cent in the suburbs with only seven per cent or four women in total accepting employment in country locations. This employment rate of

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93 per cent points to the advantages of arriving in Melbourne rather than Geelong for unskilled women hoping for employment in domestic service.

Barry Higman points out that domestic servants constituted a large proportion of female British immigrants arriving in Australia at this time:

Throughout the 1850s Australia took a large proportion of the total British emigration of domestic servants (and agricultural labourers)…The decade saw the largest inflow of assisted immigrants and domestic servants.\(^{32}\)

Forty per cent of the free and assisted migrants to South Australia at this time were domestic servants as were more than a quarter of assisted migrants to New South Wales. Seventy per cent of all domestic servants were Irish women.\(^{33}\)

For those single women who emigrated with family members from Moidart, employment as domestic servants in Australia must have been a cultural shock. Not only were they required to separate from their families in order to take up employment, the nature of their work meant that the skills acquired by working


\(^{33}\) Higman, *Domestic service in Australia*, p. 87.
as dairy maids and through outdoor agricultural work on the crofts were of little to no use. A whole new set of skills was required owing to the nature of indoor work including the acquisition of English.

These women were also arriving and seeking employment at a time when there were many complaints and negativity shown towards many domestic servants. Higman points out that this was largely a class driven discourse matched only by similar complaints levied at assisted immigration generally and stretching from the 1830s to the 1960s. The complaints and criticisms related to issues such as too few numbers, unsatisfactory quality and too many leaving their posts early to take up other employment or to marry. This may have been the situation for women involved in this research as the major occupation of the Moidart women at the time of their marriage was that of ‘domestic servant’. Many domestic servants worked in boarding houses set up to accommodate those on their way to the gold fields. For others it provided an opportunity to marry. A letter written by a woman to a friend in Inverness in 1852 illustrates the effects and opportunities provided by gold for some:

In shop windows everywhere to be seen gold and nuggets. As for females, their frail heads are about turned. No such things as servants; they are helps now. In the hotel with my decent Highland nurse, I was attended by two saucy housemaids in stiff petticoats. A lady has told
me that a servant of hers was sweeping the steps of the door one morning, when a man passed who said ‘My girl, if you marry me, I shall give you 500 pounds.’ He assured her he had it in his pocket. She then proposed he should accompany her to her father, to settle the matter. Off they went, and in three days were married; the 500 pounds paid, and she and her husband off to Port Phillip for more. So who can expect servants?  

The letter serves as a reminder of the expectations that women of class held towards single women of working class backgrounds in the colony. The letter conveys both her anxiety and observations about the changing nature of colonial society. Life as she knew it was turned upside down by gold: “Nothing now but princes on foot and beggars on horseback.”  

The issue of the selection and previous employment experiences of single women was of significant concern to Grimes as he made many references to the subject throughout his annual report. In Returns XXI and XXII he refers in particular to the 183 women who arrived on four ships during 1852 organised by the Fund for Promoting Female Emigration and, as mentioned earlier, was highly critical of the ways in which the immigrants were selected:

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34 Ibid., p. 85.
35 Author unknown. Letter dated 13 September 1852 and written to a friend describing some of the ways in which gold had impacted on the lives of single females in Port Phillip. The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 22 March 1853, p. 6.
36 Ibid.
…while one cannot but appreciate the kind and benevolent intention of the ladies and others of whom the Society is composed, it is impossible not to regret that they are so frequently subjected to imposition as, it is too evident has been the case…I regret to say that in every one of the ships I have inspected, there have been three or four girls, and in some instances many more, who have been drawn from the very dregs of society, and whose conduct has been quite sufficient to corrupt all the others. How these persons could possibly have obtained the certificates which I am informed, each candidate for Emigration is required to produce, is to me a mystery.37

His cynical reference to the backgrounds of the women and to the selection process reveals both his classist attitudes and his distrust in the ability of this scheme to select those women of good moral standing required by the Colony. He also questioned the relevance of the occupations of those selected to the needs of the Colony:

…the usual classes of girls selected by the Committee are not well suited to the wants of the Colony; there is no great demand for Nursery Governesses, Companions to Ladies, Artificial Flower makers etc. and

37 Grimes, Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852, page number unrecorded.
the consequent disappointment at being compelled to enter Domestic Service may have been one of the causes which prompted so many of these girls to follow the course they have pursued.\textsuperscript{38}

Again he reinforces his view that certain groups of immigrants were going to be severely disappointed in terms of what employment the colony was able to provide, especially those from educated ruling class backgrounds. His particular view of society emerges once more when he concludes that the worst possible fate awaiting these immigrants was to be forced to work as a domestic servant.

An analysis of the employment pattern of the single men who arrived on the ‘Marco Polo’, for example, reveals a different pattern. In this case the squatters largely overlooked single males as potential employees in favour of married couples largely without family. There were 106 single males listed on the nominal passenger list but only 38 were employed according to the disposal list. The overall data indicates that single males who were Scottish, Presbyterian, aged between 14 and 30 and were able to both read and write in English, were the most successful in securing employment.

\textbf{Table 3.4: Single males on the ‘Marco Polo’ and employed on arrival by national origin and reading and writing in English.}

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|}
\hline

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{38} Ibid.}
\end{tabular}
\end{center}
Although their occupations were listed mainly as agricultural labourers and shepherds most of those employed were hired by residents living close to Melbourne.

This overall situation however, was not replicated in the disposal and employment patterns amongst the passengers who travelled on the ‘Araminta’.

### 3.5 The arrival of the ‘Araminta’ and the initial employment experiences of its passengers

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The ‘Araminta’ left Liverpool on the 20 June 1852, its Master being Thomas Feran. There were 20 Roman Catholic Households in total including 17 from Moidart in Inverness-shire. Eight births were recorded, however 27 deaths occurred during the voyage largely from measles and diarrhoea. One man was lost overboard. The journey took 103 days and evidence suggests that it was a horrifying experience for all on board.

Following its arrival on 2 October 1852 in the port of Geelong, the ship ran aground off Point Richards and both passengers and crew worked together for a day to lighten the load in order to assist the tide to lift the ship off the sand bar. It finally arrived at Point Henry on 4 October 1852. The report prepared by the Immigration Board of Geelong following their inspection of the ship on 6 October 1852 contained a number of criticisms. These related to the state of the ship after four months at sea including the state of its deckings, toilet facilities and other fittings, the quality of the food, water and other provisions. Not one barrel of flour was found to be suitable for consumption and several barrels of biscuits were mouldy. The requisite number of livestock had not been placed on board at the beginning of the journey.

References were also made about the way in which the Surgeon Superintendent

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40 See the report prepared by the three members of the Immigration Board of Geelong; Charles Strutt, A. H. Baylie and Charles Friend who inspected the ‘Araminta’ on 6 October 1852 and published in W. B. Clarke, ‘Araminta’ Emigrant Ship 1852, pp. 20-22.
Doctor Alfred Carr had conducted himself during the passage. It would seem that the Doctor’s severe temper was of such concern to the Board that the report included the following reference to Doctor Carr:

...the Board feels unable to recommend that Dr Carr be again trusted with the charge of an immigrant vessel, unless as in this present instance the great majority of immigrants happen to be unacquainted with the English language. 41

This statement indicates that the Board was more relieved that the Gaelic speaking passengers were unable to understand and take offence at the comments and actions of Carr and thereby possibly avoiding complaints from the passengers. The comment disappointingly suggests that the Board would also have no hesitation in exposing future immigrants to Carr’s attitudes and behaviours provided they were from non-English speaking backgrounds. This further highlights the difficulties and barriers encountered by immigrants on board ship as a result of their economic and social class.

There were also references to the state of the health of the immigrants on

41 Clarke ‘Araminta’ Emigrant Ship 1852 p. 22.
arrival and the general report contained the following comments about some passengers: “The Board cannot speak favourably of the cleanliness of some of the immigrants...as on inspection some of the immigrants were found to be swarming with lice.”42 However, given that the ship departed before the passengers were properly outfitted for the voyage, which meant that people did not have changes of clothes or sufficient articles of clothing, it is little wonder that many passengers were found to be infested at the end of the voyage. In a letter written by Mr A. Baylie, The Assistant Agent following inspection of the ‘Araminta’, the following statement is recorded: “...(a more dirty vessel than the ‘Araminta’ I have never inspected).”43

Apart from health concerns the report also contained a further reference to problems with communication on board.44 This would seem to indicate that the majority of passengers were Gaelic speaking with little or no understanding of spoken English. There was criticism of the Matron, Helen Elliot, a single female passenger and a dressmaker from Roxburgh who “owing to her ignorance of Gaelic proved of but small use.”45 The Immigration Agent, Edward Grimes also recognised the impact of an inappropriate appointment on the passengers and expressed concerns about the methods used to appoint

42 Ibid. p. 23.
43 Ibid. p. 24.
45 Ibid.
Matrons on government emigrant ships in England prior to departure. In a letter written to the Colonial Secretary in 1852 Grimes expressed his wish to see the appointment process discontinued. He was of the view that the appointment should be made by the Surgeon Superintendent of each ship who supervised the work of the Matron rather than by a Committee of Ladies:

I find that the Matrons of no less than nine Immigrant ships (as per margin) have been either dismissed during the voyage, or have been reported as incompetent for the discharge of their duties, and in almost every instance as I am informed by my predecessor these appointments are made by the Ladies’ Committee.\(^\text{46}\)

From the content of the report (and criticism of those without Gaelic) it is obvious that little provision or planning had occurred prior to the voyage in relation to the degree of interpreting that would be required. As a result it became necessary to employ three interpreters, one male and two female (the youngest female aged 14) during the voyage. Two of the three interpreters were paid £2 for their duties. Other passengers were also employed in a range

\(^{46}\) E. Grimes, Letter to the Colonial Secretary re The Immigration Agent offering certain suggestions respecting the appointment of Matrons on board Immigrant ships in England. One of the nine ships named in the margin of the letter was the ‘Marco Polo’. PROV, VPRS 1189/P/0000, Inward Registered Correspondence [Colonial Secretary's Office] 1851-1863, Unit 113, File 52/9330, PROV, North Melbourne, 1852.
of duties including School master, School master’s assistant, Schoolmistress, Matron, Hospital Assistant and Cook. Ewen McDonald (Appendix A, Household 20) was the only member of a Moidart family recorded as being employed and as a Constable was also paid £2. However, this payment was only received after the Surgeon had convinced the members of the Board that the constables had performed their duties to the best of their abilities but not as effectively as he had wished. Mr Strutt had therefore suggested that the monies be withheld from the constables. Whilst this would be a saving to the colonial government it removed a source of renumeration from a person at a time when all possible monies were required.

It seemed that there was significant tension between the Surgeon and the passengers on arrival at Geelong as the passengers “gradually lost all respect for my authority and eventually gave me great trouble in enforcing the regulations before they finally quitted the ship.” This view was later challenged by the presentation of signed addresses prepared by the passengers to Carr, Captain Feran and members of the crew. Thanks were expressed to Feran “for the kindness and good attention shown to us during the passage”, to Mr Carr “for his zeal and activity amongst the passengers” and to other officers on board “for good attention”. A public notice of thanks and gratitude from the

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47. For an outline of the duties performed by a constable during the voyage see Haines, *Life and death in the age of sail*, p. 45.
48. Clarke, ‘Araminta’ Emigrant Ship 1852, Enclosure two, page number not
passengers to several key personnel on board and listing the names of those who had signed was also published in the *Geelong Advertiser* on 12 October 1852. Why the passengers felt it necessary to thank both men publicly is not clear. It may have been due to a sense of loyalty to the surgeon whilst the ongoing difficulties between Carr and the Board continued with many of the passengers still on board. Without Carr’s medical skills it is possible that the loss of life may have been even higher and that the passengers were aware of lives saved rather than lives lost. It is important to note, however, that research undertaken by Alan Stoller and Roma Emmerson on the life and medical history of Alfred Carr following his arrival in Victoria led them to the conclusion that:

Dr. Carr would undoubtedly be classified as a paranoid schizophrenic in present-day terminology. It is of interest to note that he could, if kept off his delusions and not placed under stress, present a picture of sanity to the inexperienced observer and, perhaps even to his medical advisers who discharged him as being “cured” on several occasions.  

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49 See the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, Number 1907, published on Tuesday 12 October, 1852. No page recorded.

These conclusions present a frightening image of the behaviour and potential danger he posed to those on board ship. An entry in the records of the Ararat Asylum where Carr died in 1894 states:

Transferred from Yarra Bend 1.4.87 where he was admitted 28.5.66, formerly occupied as a surgeon, suffering from chronic delusional insanity, he is described as dangerous and destructive, and full of delusional ideas as to identity, power and position.\(^{51}\)

The physical voyage was therefore not the only part of the journey filled with potential danger. Danger was also present in the surgeon set in charge of the wellbeing of both passengers and crew. The impact of his behaviour on the welfare and health of his patients will never be known, however, his behaviour was of obvious concern to the Board of Inspectors resulting in their punitive action. At long last the Certificate of Arrival was signed by Edward Grimes, the Immigration Agent, in Melbourne on 2 November 1852.\(^{52}\)

The ‘Araminta’ was the first of two HIES chartered ships involved with this

\(^{51}\) Ibid.
\(^{52}\) E. Grimes, *Certificate of Arrival of the ship Araminta*, VPRS 1189/P/0000, Immigration Agent Files, Unit 112, Document 52/7708, PROV North Melbourne, 1852.
immigration to arrive in Victoria. The passengers on board this ship and other ships carrying Highlanders to Victoria quickly became the subject of many disparaging remarks and views held by Grimes. Grimes held particular views about Highlanders in general and coupled with the fact that he now also had to deal with the newly organised HIES, his association with the immigrants and the Society did very little to change his attitudes. He became very critical of both the organisers and the immigrants assisted by the HIES scheme. His criticism of Trevelyan and the other gentlemen involved related to the fact that:

In the first place the greater portion of these people arrived in the Colony before the receipt of any advices concerning them, and they were scattered over the length and breadth of the land before the engagements they had respectively entered into to repay a certain portion of their passage money, were received by me.\(^{53}\)

In relation to the immigrants themselves, Grimes reported that:

In the second place, most of these people are in a most deplorable state of ignorance and quite unacquainted with the English language and all

\(^{53}\) E. Grimes, *Annual Report upon Immigration for the year 1852*, VPRS 1189/10, Unit 14, 199
those who were questioned by me through an interpreter, not one appeared to be in any degree aware that he had entered into an engagement to pay anything at all. However desirable the System may be as a means of charitable relief, I scarcely look upon this class of immigrants as one that should be brought out at the expense of the Colony: very few of them are acquainted with agricultural or pastoral employment and from their indolent habits, I do not think they are likely to prove a very great acquisition to our labour market.  

Although there is no evidence to show that these views had any detrimental effects on the arrival and settlement of the Households, they nevertheless represent an unpleasant ideological environment into which immigrants were expected to settle. As the recipients of HIES assistance they had already experienced deprivation at the hands of the Society’s agents in Liverpool. They had also suffered as a result of the actions of landowners and were the subject of similar views held by both Grimes and Trevelyan. It would seem that his views including information about their ‘indolent habits’ were formed from interviews undertaken with the assistance of an interpreter. Apparently Grimes was not aware of their pastoral experience in Scotland and may not have fully understood how the Society was to be financially supported.

File 1853/A577900, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.

Ibid.
Although the views held by Grimes may have also been representative of those held by other Government officials there were countering views held by Scottish emigrants themselves and these positive views were included in their letters to family and friends at home. Letters written by emigrants stated that the Highlanders in particular and Scots generally were held in high regard in the colony because they persevered in difficult situations and were trusted. Many went on to succeed and to become both comfortable and financially independent and were much sought after to fill employment positions:

I could fill sheets of paper with accounts of the success of many of your countrymen in Port Phillip, who arrived in the colony penniless.

Highlanders here stand high, and are the most respected of our colonists, they are sought after with avidity to fill places of trust, and well they deserve the name they have. Indeed, Scotchmen in general have so conducted themselves that the very name is respected.55

A similar reference in another letter supports this view: “The Scots are a people who get on well here. Naturally quiet and persevering, they soon get into

55 Author unknown. Letter from a Highlander in Australia to a friend back in the Highlands describing the opportunities for success for Highlanders, firstly in agricultural work in the Colony but failing that, on the goldfields. The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 27 January 1853, p. 3.
comfortable circumstances, and often independence follows.” This view would seem to indicate that the Moidart Households would not only be well accepted, they would have few difficulties in finding work in the pastoral industry.

The arrival and early employment experiences of the immigrants on board the vessel 'Araminta' were very different from those on the ‘Marco Polo’. In a Supplement to the Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer published on 8 October 1852 wages paid in the pastoral industry in the Geelong area were listed as follows:

1. married couples as house servants for country hotels – 70 - 80 pounds per annum with rations;
2. married couples as house servants for home stations – 60 - 65 pounds per annum;
3. married couples for out stations – 50 - 55 pounds per annum with rations;
4. married couples for out stations taking two flocks of sheep – 60 - 65 pounds per annum with rations;
5. shepherds – 38 - 40 pounds;
6. shearers - 35 shillings per hundred sheep;
7. sheep - washers-25 - 30 shillings;

56 Letter written by Mr A Walker to his father at Fyrish in the Highlands, dated 25 December 1852. It describes the availability of abundant work on the land at high wages, the success of the Scots in the colony and the composition of the population on the diggings. The Inverness Courier, Inverness, 26 May 1853. p. 4.
8. hut-keepers - 30 - 35 pounds per annum; and
9. farm servants - 50 - 55 pounds per annum.\(^{57}\)

On 6 October 1852, a notice was placed in the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* by Charles Strutt, the Assistant Immigration Agent, notifying prospective employers that the families and single men on board would be ‘open for engagement’ on the sixth and that steamers would take interested employers to the ship. Single women could be engaged at the Depot on the following day. Alfred Carr noted in his report, however, that some passengers were reluctant to take up offers of employment as they felt that the wages offered by the prospective employers were not sufficient.

An article published in the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* implied that these immigrants were badly advised when it came to negotiating a reasonable wage. They knew, however, that labour was scarce owing to the gold rushes, and that this was a bargaining tool that they could use to their advantage:

> The emigrants from the Isle of Skye, on board the ‘Araminta’ know how well to place a high estimate upon the value of their services, for not content with the high rates of wages now current in the colony they

\(^{57}\) ‘Geelong Labour Market’ Supplement to the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, Geelong 8 October 1852.
are looking for an enormous advance upon these rates. The consequence is that many persons who went on board in the hope of obtaining servants, were obliged to return without them, the Immigrants’ demands being such as to stop negotiations at the outset. It is evident that they are victims of mischievous advisers.58

This report indicates that the immigrants were well informed about employment conditions possibly as a result of contact with local residents or information received from members of the crew who went ashore. Clearly these immigrants were aware of prevailing economic conditions and had a sense of their own value and worth to the Colony and they were prepared to journey to wherever they could find the highest wages. The squatters, however, were desperate to employ people who would be willing to work and stay on the land and they had a very pragmatic view of the economic value of immigrants such as these. The landowners were looking for a cheap source of labour and one that would remain in their employment as reliable employees. They did not want employees who viewed their employment as a means to the eventual acquisition of land of their own. The squatters may have reasoned that newly arrived immigrants from the remote and isolated Highlands and Islands of Scotland would be ignorant of the needs of the Colony and therefore would accept any employment along with the accompanying conditions and wages.

The immigrants’ lack of proficiency in English would possibly put these people at even greater disadvantage. Unable to read newspapers to obtain the latest information about wages and conditions of employment and with difficulties in communicating with others in English, the squatters may have thought that they had an ignorant but ready and accepting group of employees but this was not so as seen in the following example.

In a letter to William Lewis, the manager of the Terrinallum station (owned by the Clyde Company), A. C. Cameron wrote:

I have managed to make arrangements with my Highlanders at high wages, but for two months only; they are hard bargain makers but faithful servants.59

He was referring to two Moidart Households in particular. According to the Disposal list of the ‘Araminta’, Roderick McDonald had accepted prior employment with Mr Luck at Mount Moriac at £60 per annum for six months with rations. Obviously Roderick felt that he could find better wages for himself and his son Duncan with the Clyde Company at Terrinallum station. Angus McNeil (Household 26) also obtained his first employment contract with the Clyde Company. He was engaged by Donald Matheson at £50 for twelve months and sent to Terrinallum. According to Brown, Angus and Mary
McNeil and Roderick McDonald and son Duncan were all hired on October 7 1852 for two months at £85 per annum, and after a year at £70. On 7 December 1852, both Households were re-engaged at £95 for three months.\(^{60}\)

This example seems to indicate their new found confidence having left behind their former society with all its restrictions, poverty and lack of opportunity. Their arrival in Victoria offered a new beginning filled with new expectations, one of which was to own land of their own.

By October 1853 the goldfields were becoming less attractive and people began to leave in search of other forms of employment. Letters home now began to be filled with warnings about being too eager to leave Scotland and emigrating to Port Phillip:

\[
\text{I must, however, warn my fellow countrymen against being too rash in coming here. There will soon be a tremendous change in this country. The labour market is now well supplied, and hundreds of unsuccessful gold diggers are returning to Melbourne, and eagerly engaging themselves to employers. Wages have not as yet declined, but a change is expected in the present high rates, and that ere long. Common}
\]

\(^{59}\) Brown, *Clyde Company Papers*, p. 518.

\(^{60}\) Ibid.
labourers will find ample employment and renumerative wages for many years to come.  

Despite the insecurity and hard work the goldfields continued to be an attractive destination for at least one Moidart Household leaving Terrinallum. In a letter from Terrinallum Station in 1854 and two years after the initial employment of Angus McNeill and Roderick McDonald, the manager A. C. Cameron wrote:

My Highlanders are leaving, the one for Town owing to the Health of the Mother, the other for the diggings. No wages at present would induce them to stay, though I think their wages would bear an advance yet.  

By 1856 information provided in marriage and other registers shows that Catherine Kennedy (Household 25) and her brother Angus McNeil were settled in Clunes (a goldmining town near Ballarat) when Catherine’s eldest daughter Mary married John McDonald, a miner from Arisaig, Scotland. By 1880 John was a farmer renting 69 acres of land and paying rates on a home in Clunes. Perhaps he had found sufficient gold or other forms of employment to establish

61 Author unknown. Letter describing the social, moral and economic effects of gold on the colony and warning other Scots not to hastily leave Scotland as employment opportunities might change because of the high numbers of unsuccessful gold diggers returning to the city looking for work. Inverness Advertiser, Inverness, 11 October 1853, p. 6.
a secure life for himself and his family. Households took up short-term employment on the land for a while and then, with sufficient funds in hand, made their way later to the goldfields. Single men from Moidart were also drawn to the diggings after their arrival. Brothers, John and Charles McDonald from Moidart, were both recorded as ‘gold digger’ when they married in 1855 and 1854 respectively.

The initial offers of employment to the ‘Araminta’ passengers, including the conditions related to wages, with or without rations and the terms of contract and particularly for married couples can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3.5: First employment terms for Moidart Households who arrived on the ‘Araminta’ in 1852.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number in Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Recorded employment location on arrival.</th>
<th>Wages offered</th>
<th>Rations offered</th>
<th>Number of terms in contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>John and Catherine McPherson</td>
<td>Mt Moriac</td>
<td>60 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Alexander and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>Ballarat</td>
<td>60 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Angus and Ann McDonald</td>
<td>On own account to Geelong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Angus and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>Colac</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>John and _ _ _ _ _ Brown, Clyde Company Papers, p. 31.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name(s)</td>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>Disposal</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Archibald and Catherine McDonald</td>
<td>Colac</td>
<td>60 pounds</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Mary McDonald and children</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Michael and Mary McVarish</td>
<td>On own account</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Mary McDonald and children</td>
<td>Daughter Catherine, Corio Street Geelong</td>
<td>25 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Roderick McDonald and children</td>
<td>Terrinallum</td>
<td>85 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Andrew Grant and children</td>
<td>Moorabool River</td>
<td>200 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Catherine Kennedy and children</td>
<td>Barrabool, Ryrie Street and Fyansford</td>
<td>60 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Angus and Mary McNeil</td>
<td>Clyde Company, Leigh</td>
<td>50 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Margaret and Marjory Corbet</td>
<td>Both South Geelong</td>
<td>25 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Donald and Ann McDonald</td>
<td>Elephant Bridge with Donald’s father</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Donald and Catherine McDonald</td>
<td>Geelong</td>
<td>70 pounds</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Disposal List of the ship ‘Araminta’.

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In his Annual Report upon Immigration in 1852 Edward Grimes notes that the Port of Geelong received a greater proportion of immigrants than did Melbourne and Portland. Referring to the fact that 16 vessels landed passengers at Geelong in 1852 compared with 18 at Melbourne, Grimes acknowledges that:

By this it would appear that Geelong has received a larger proportion of imported labour than her size and population entitle her, but, being the centre of a large Agricultural and Pastoral District, and, as will be seen in Return No. 10, that in the average rate of wages received, and the length of engagements into which the Immigrants have entered, Geelong will bear a favourable comparison with the other Ports of the Colony.\(^{64}\)

Further on, in Return No. X of his report he states:

…the average rate of wages for Families, Single Men and Single Women ruled higher there than in either Melbourne or Portland, while the number of persons who refused to take service at Geelong and Portland will bear a favourable comparison with those who persued

\(^{64}\) Ibid.
[sic] a similar line of conduct in Melbourne; a fact to be attributed, I
presume, to the greater proximity of the latter city to the Gold Fields.65

The correspondence of one prominent Western District landowner suggests
that changes to agreed wages were determined case by case. Writing to his
brother George Cumming, (a squatter with a Run at Stoney Point, Elephant
Bridge) in March 1853 Cumming describes the difficulties associated with the
hiring of suitable men for the property. By 1853 many of the new immigrants
were single females again providing evidence of the success of the government
policy to attract single women in particular, to the Colony:

Now when I came down and up to within a month ago any number of
hands could be hired at the Depot. But they are not sending them so fast
now and, it is mostly single women that are sent…After a good deal of
trouble Father and Mother hired this family which I think will suit you
very well although young men would have been preferable. I send you
the Agreement. They were the only family in the ship worth having, the
rest all had large families of small children.66

65 Ibid.
66 Letter to George Cumming from his brother, Cumming Family 100 Letters and notes from three generations of Cummings 1850 – 1891, File GRS100/1, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1853.
Clearly this squatter was hoping to employ single men because of the costs involved in providing a family with sufficient rations and accommodation as well as wages. This fact was also referred to in an earlier letter dated 28 January 1853. In this letter Cumming refers to a request by a Mr Cole, an employee of twelve months, to have his wages increased. This request was rejected as the family was large (four members) and required a large amount of rations in addition to the wages. However, it was stated in the letter that if the employee remained in employment with the Cumming family he would continue to receive £100 a year in wages. This was made up of £60 for himself and his wife and £20 a year for each of the boys as this was the wage that he was engaged for and was the current wage at the time.\(^{67}\) In the same letter reference is made to the fact that there were “plenty of families to be engaged now”. Fluctuations in available labour occurred on a regular basis. This issue was also raised in earlier correspondence from another Western District property. Writing from the Golfhill Station at River Leigh in 1851, William Lewis, the manager, noted optimistically that there would not be a shortage of labourers in that year to harvest the crops because of gold:

The gold diggings at Mt Alexander are sti[ll] causing much excitement throughout the Country, but I believe the scarcity of water is beginning to be felt by the diggers. Many of the farmers are returning to the

\(^{67}\) Ibid.
harvest, so there is no great likelihood of the crops being allowed to go
to waste – a prospect which several held out for a time…The Ballarat
field is almost deserted.\textsuperscript{68}

In August 1852 Lewis noted in his correspondence that “Labour continues
exceedingly scarce throughout the country.”\textsuperscript{69} It also appeared that the numbers
of immigrants arriving in the colony each day ensured a steady supply of
sufficient labourers and agents working in Britain on behalf of some squatters
in Victoria were no longer required to sign up emigrants to work in Australia:

The lately arrived Emigrants have certainly been of much service to us,
but after the single men are despatched I beg that you will not send out
any more people unless we request you to do so. If the numbers arrive
which are expected here in the course of a few months there will be no
necessity for hiring servants for us in Scotland.\textsuperscript{70}

This situation assisted the successful employment of many of the Moidart
people when they arrived later in October and in February 1853.

\textsuperscript{68} Brown, \textit{Clyde Company Papers}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, p. 321.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
The research shows that single women (between the ages of 16 and 30) generally from Moidart Households were all accompanied by a parent or parents, and/or by older brothers or married sisters or other relatives. The following table includes examples of single women between the ages of 16 and 30 who travelled on the ‘Araminta’ and how they were accompanied to Australia.

Table 3.6: Sample of single females and adult Household members who accompanied them on the 'Araminta' in 1852.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of woman</th>
<th>Accompanied by father only, mother only or both parent/s</th>
<th>Accompanied by male sibling/s (either married or unmarried)</th>
<th>Accompanied by married sibling/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Margaret Grant aged 20</td>
<td>Father only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Flora Kennedy aged 19</td>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Margaret McDonald aged 17</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ann, Margaret and Catherine McDonald</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Janet McDonald aged 34</td>
<td>Mother only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Margaret and Marcella Corbet, aged 23 and 21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sister, Catherine Corbet married to Archibald McDonald.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Nominal passenger list of the ‘Araminta’. Not all single females from Moidart Households are included in this table.

The disposal list of the ‘Araminta’ reveals that all of the 24 single females...
from Moidart Households, for example, found initial employment in Geelong or journeyed further with their families. A total of 48 single women aged 14 years or more found employment leaving only eleven single females in the same age cohort who were either not employed or stayed within the Household with parents. When compared with the statistics for the other single female passengers from the ‘Araminta’ it would appear that the Moidart single females were no more disadvantaged in securing employment because of their inadequate English literacy, age, religion or previous occupation in Scotland.

Residents in the Geelong region and urban areas seemed very keen to employ these single women as domestic servants. Catherine McDonald (Household 15) was employed by Mrs Carmichael of South Geelong who, on the day of the arrival of the ‘Araminta’, advertised vacancies for customers at her boarding house in the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*.71

There were marked differences in the proportion of females to males living in Geelong and Melbourne, the two ports of entry for the Moidart Households, at this time. In his book *Madness rules the hour* Ian Wynd notes that the Victorian census of 1851 and 1861 show that in the case of Geelong the proportion of females to males was always higher than in Victoria as a whole. In 1851 the ratio of females to males for Victoria as a whole was

71 Advertisement for vacancies at a boarding house *The Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* Volume XL, 4 October 1852 Geelong, no page number recorded.
approximately two to three but in Geelong it was five to six. By 1854 following the goldrushes the Victorian ratio had increased to one to two whilst in Geelong it was nine to eleven. By 1857 it was almost one to one in Geelong and by 1861 Geelong had an excess of females over males. Wynd argues that the difference between the wider figures for Victoria and those for Geelong in particular may possibly be explained by the fact that Geelong was a more stable environment which “encouraged families to settle there, and that there was sufficient employment to keep them there.” This view is confirmed by examining the place of residence for single females marrying at St Mary’s Catholic Church in Geelong where the majority lived either in or close to Geelong and will be discussed in chapter five.

It would seem that in the case of these single females the inability to read and write in English was no barrier to employment. Of the 24 single Moidart women, 20 were recorded on the passenger list as unable to read or write in English. Of the remaining four, two could read only and two were recorded as being able to both read and write. Twelve women were employed in Households in Geelong or in the Geelong district whilst three individual women were employed at Colac (along with other members of her Household), Fyansford and […] Creek. Amongst these women the average wage received was £23 per annum with rations and an agreed initial period of employment of

72 I. Wynd, Madness rules the hour; the effects of the goldrushes on Geelong, Self published, Geelong, 1967. pp. 7-8.
three months. The oldest woman was aged 24 and the youngest of those employed was aged 14. Age did not seem to be a criterion which determined the rates for wages and neither was experience. A 15-year-old female received £25 per annum whilst a 21-year-old received only twelve pounds per annum. Perhaps levels of wages were determined by the bargaining power of individuals. Most women seemed to be employed in homes and guest houses in Geelong which were established to provide accommodation for men arriving to walk to the gold fields.\textsuperscript{74}

It was single females who were often forced to separate from the Household in order to accept work. Margaret and Marcella Corbet arrived with their married sister but were forced to accept work at different addresses in Geelong whilst their married sister travelled to Colac with her husband’s Household to take up employment. Other Households remained intact. Margaret, Mary and Catherine Grant stayed with their father. Single females in seven out of eight Households with employment age daughters aged 14 and above were separated from other members of the Household. As it was a common practice in the Highlands for Household members to work in neighbouring Households and on crofts for part of the year, and in some cases to journey to cities like Glasgow, the separation may not have been so dire and unexpected. It is interesting to note that of the

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid. p. 8
\textsuperscript{74} 'Araminta', nominal and disposal lists, VPRS 7666 Inward Passenger Lists-British ports 1852-1923, Book 6, pp. 35-47 PROV, North Melbourne.
two Households headed by single males (both widowers) all children remained within the Household rather than seeking employment.

The situation for single males is not as straightforward to interpret. A total of 47 single males aged 14 years or more disembarked in Geelong. Of these 41 were travelling with members of a Household. Fourteen of the men were from Moidart Households. The disposal list shows that 21 of the total number accepted employment whilst 26 were not employed at this time and left either with parents or journeyed on separately on their own account. Of those who were not employed, twelve were from Moidart Households which left only two of the Moidart men accepting employment. Eight of the single Moidart males chose to remain within a single parent Household. The single parent Moidart Households numbered five in total and included two male and three female heads of Households. This decision was possibly made in order to support the parent and to help the parent to provide for other members. It may also point to the economic dependence of the parent on a male child in these Households. Single males earned higher wages as pastoral workers than single females earned as domestic servants. Households could not have been maintained by the wage of a domestic servant. Secondly, the average age of the single parent heads was 50 years. Gaining employment at that age and as a single person would not have been easy and the presence of young single males as additional employees would have made the Household unit more employable. The sense of loyalty felt by single males to the Household would also mean that the
people involved were less likely to move apart and seek employment separately or to travel to the goldfields. Therefore, the commitment to ongoing employment with the same employer was easier to make and employers felt greater security with their employment. The same situation is not evident in the case of single females. In three out of the five Households four single females left the parent and siblings to accept work largely in Geelong. It is not clear, however, whether or not this separation caused the Household to remain in close proximity to Geelong to be with the daughter.

Finally, an analysis of the Household groups shows that there were 71 Households in total on the 'Araminta’, excluding single males travelling alone. According to the disposal list 47 Households received contracts with employers before leaving the emigration depot. The remaining Households either left of their own accord or had no information recorded against their names on the disposal list. Care needs to be taken, however, in assuming that all Households went to work for the employers listed on the disposal list. In the case of Roderick McDonald (Household 22), he is recorded as accepting employment at Mount Moriac. As shown earlier he did not take up this position and later negotiated a wage, rations and a three-month employment period for both himself and his son, with the Clyde Company at Terrinallum. Other Households may have also been engaged shortly after this list was prepared. The eventual destinations and experiences of the ‘Araminta’ passengers in acquiring land will be examined in chapter four.
3.6 The arrival of the ‘Allison’ and the initial employment experiences of its passengers

The emigrant ship ‘Allison’ arrived in Port Phillip on 20 December 1852 following a voyage lasting 98 days. The ‘Allison’ left Liverpool on 13 September 1852 for Melbourne, the master being Andrew Young Marshall. There were 307 ‘souls’ on board when she left Liverpool. These consisted of 193 adults (married couples, single men and women, and widows and widowers) and 114 children, five of whom were classed as infants. During the voyage two adults and twelve children under the age of 14 died, a very low mortality rate compared to other voyages. There were twelve Moidart Households on board. These Households are important to this study as they were the only Moidart Households in the three groups of emigrants whose names were officially recorded as receiving assistance from the HIES. On its arrival in Melbourne the ‘Allison’ and her passengers were inspected by the pilot and the Surgeon Superintendent, Charles Stilwell, reported that the ship was free of infection. However, by 27 December 1852, the Assistant Colonial Surgeon at Williamstown found two passengers infected with typhus and four
with typhoid fever and so the ship was placed in quarantine arriving at the Quarantine Station on the 2 January 1853.\textsuperscript{75}

One of the perils associated with ship-board travel was the high incidence of mortality due to outbreaks of contagious illnesses. A range of contagious illnesses such as measles, typhus and diarrhoea caused by contaminated food, swept through each of the three ships during their voyages. The 14 deaths on board the ‘Allison’ during the voyage were caused largely by dysentry and its effects and a further seven deaths mostly from typhus occurred amongst the passengers between 1 and 8 January 1853 whilst the ‘Allison’ was in quarantine.\textsuperscript{76} The placement of a vessel in quarantine meant that the passengers were not free to move into Melbourne or elsewhere to find work immediately. They were required to remain at the Quarantine Station until the Health Officer was satisfied that the risk of infecting others was no longer likely. This situation would usually place emigrants at a disadvantage as they would be prevented from seeking employment. However, in the case of the ‘Allison’ passengers, their time spent in quarantine afforded them the opportunity to gain their first paid employment due to circumstances operating at the time.

Accommodation at the Quarantine Station in January 1853 consisted only of

\textsuperscript{75} T. Hunt, Letter to the Colonial Secretary re the quarantine of the ‘Allison’, VPRS 1189, Inward Registered Correspondence, Colonial Secretary’s Office, 1851-1863, Unit 131, 53/880, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.

tents which were constantly blown over and saturated in wet weather. Dr Thomas Hunt, the Health Officer at the Station, wrote to the Colonial Secretary requesting that quarantined passengers be permitted to work and to be hired at four shillings per day. And so while the ‘Allison’ was in quarantine, Doctor Hunt organised for several of the male passengers to work on the station cutting wood and building fences and gateways as well as building more permanent stone buildings. Seven Moidart men participated in this work. This fact was restated in a letter written by John McIver, the teacher from Glenuig, Moidart, and a passenger on the ‘Allison’. As requested by Dr Hunt, the men were promised payment of four shillings a day for this work which they would receive from a government office in Melbourne once they were able to leave quarantine. However, after finally leaving the Station in early February 1853 they spent six days of fruitless searching in Melbourne for the money owed to them but were unable to secure their wages as the account had not been forwarded to Melbourne. Further in his letter to the Colonial Secretary on behalf of the people involved, McIver requested that this matter be further investigated and suggested that this request could be verified by contacting the Religious Instructor who had accompanied the passengers during the voyage.

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77 The Quarantine Station was known as the ‘Sanatory Station’ and was located at ‘Ticonderoga Bay’. Later its name was changed to ‘Quarantine Station’. It was sited at Point Nepean, Portsea and was officially closed as a quarantine station in 1980.
78 See Household four, Appendix A.
79 J. McIver, Letter to the Colonial Secretary, 16 February 1853. VPRS 1189, Inward Registered Correspondence [Colonial Secretary's Office] 1851 – 1863, B53/1773, PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
80 J. McIver, Letter to the Colonial Secretary, 16 February 1863, VPRS 1189, Inward Registered Correspondence [Colonial Secretary's Office] 1851 - 1863. B53/1773
This letter was signed by twelve men, all of whom had wages due to them according to the number of days that they had worked. Dr Hunt, in a letter to the Colonial Secretary, however, strongly objected to John McIver being paid as “the man John McIver was hired like the rest, but did nothing. I therefore object to include his name in the abstracts. The others wrought very indifferently, the time against their respective names.” Leaving the station to try to obtain their wages demonstrates the resolve of the twelve men involved and provides a further indication of the strong sense of community that continued to exist and bind these people together in Australia.

By April 1853 many of the passengers from the ‘Allison’ had left the Station to take up work in the neighbourhood much to the displeasure of Dr Hunt who conveyed this in correspondence to the Colonial Secretary stating that this had occurred in “direct defiance of my orders.” The Moidart Households who travelled on the ‘Allison’ left the Station and dispersed in different ways and directions. This dispersal can be seen in the following table.

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81 Ibid. The names of the Moidart men who were employed were: John McIver, Charles Macdonald, Donald McDonald, Alex. McDonald, John Cameron, Alex. McDonald and John McDonald. All except John McIver and Alex McDonald signed their names using a cross indicating “his mark”.

82 T. Hunt, Letter to the Colonial Secretary, VPRS 1189/P, Inward Registered Correspondence Colonial Secretary’s Office 1851 - 1863, Unit 131, 53/a5553 (53/3725), PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.

83 T. Hunt, Letter to the Colonial Secretary re passengers from the 'Allison' and 'Priscilla' leaving the Quarantine Station to find employment in the neighbourhood without his permission, VPRS 1189/P, Inward Registered Correspondence Colonial Secretary’s Office 1851 - 1863, Unit 131, 53/a5553 (53/3725), PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
Table 3.7: First employment terms for the Moidart Households who arrived on the ‘Allison’ in 1852.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household number in Appendix A</th>
<th>Name of Household</th>
<th>Employment location on arrival</th>
<th>Wages offered</th>
<th>Rations offered</th>
<th>Number of terms in contract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John and Sarah McDonald</td>
<td>On own account to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Norman and Jane McDonald</td>
<td>Ballandra</td>
<td>100 pounds</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>John and Mary Cameron</td>
<td>Stoneypoint</td>
<td>60 pounds</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>John McIver</td>
<td>Ballarat 1854</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Angus and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>Goulburn River</td>
<td>100 pounds</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Donald and Ann McDonald</td>
<td>On own account to Melbourne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Alexander and Flora McDonald</td>
<td>On gov’t roads</td>
<td>Ten shillings per day</td>
<td>Without</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Alexander and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>On gov’t roads</td>
<td>Ten shillings per day</td>
<td>Without</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Alexander and Mary McDonald</td>
<td>Goulburn River</td>
<td>120 pounds</td>
<td>With</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Two families travelled to the Goulburn River to take up twelve month contracts working on the land (Households 5 and 9 Appendix A). John Cameron went to work for Alex Cameron at Stoneypoint with a twelve-month contract (Household 3 Appendix A), and two McDonald families obtained work on the government roads at ten shillings a day without rations (Households 7 and 8 Appendix A). John McIver (Household 4 Appendix A) travelled to Ballarat and remained in the district until approximately 1861. Norman McDonald (Household 2 Appendix A) went to work on the land at Ballandra. The destinations of the various single members of the family of the widow Mary McDonald (Household 11 Appendix A) are not recorded.

There were 13 single women aged between 14 and 29 recorded as members of

Source: Nominal passenger and disposal list for the ‘Allison’

Moidart Households. Of these only three women were recorded as being able to read or write or both. The two who were recorded as being able to both read and write were the only two women employed out of the total group. This indicates that literacy was favoured by employers and a lack of literacy skills in English proved to be a barrier to gaining employment. Both were employed as domestic servants with one going to Richmond and the other to Bacchus Marsh. Their wages were £20 and £26 respectively and both were employed for three months with rations. It is highly probable that many of the other single women accompanied their parents and other siblings. There were two widows present in the Households. One accompanied her son and his family and they left on their own accord for Melbourne. There are no details available for the other.

A similar fate also awaited the single men from these Households. There were 13 single men aged between 14 and 54 from five separate Households. All except two were recorded as unable to read and write. All, save Charles McDonald aged 54 and from Household two, accompanied their parents and siblings. Charles left on his own account to try his luck in Melbourne.

Clearly then, the research strongly suggests that, in the case of this particular group of Moidart Households, the strong kinship ties meant that the members stayed together and chose to seek employment as a family unit. However, as demonstrated in the case of the two single women employed, it may have also
been the widespread illiteracy rate in English present amongst the single males that prevented them from obtaining work. Perhaps employers were seeking the most educated for positions from amongst the thousands of young people available for engagement. At the time when the ‘Allison’ passengers were finally freed from quarantine (early 1853), employers may have been able to ‘take their pick’ from amongst eligible employees and reject those who were not either literate in English or proficient speakers of English. It is also interesting to note the large number of Households (four out of twelve) who sought their own employment in Melbourne. This may have been the result of the quarantine experience in making them anxious to find employment quickly in Melbourne or to seek employment in rural areas. Those who had been quarantined may have been disadvantaged when it came to employment.

The wages paid to the ‘Allison’ families who took up positions on the land varied. They ranged from £60 per annum with rations for a Household with two adults and four children from seven years to an infant to £120 per annum with rations for a Household with two adults and five children aged from thirteen years to five years. Families employed along the Goulburn River were the highest paid families, perhaps because of the distance from Melbourne and the need to attract workers who would bypass the goldfields of Mt Alexander and Bendigo. Many of the ‘Allison’ passengers took up land in the Geelong district and their experiences will be further examined in the next chapter.
3.7 Trevelyan, the HIES and Australia

Following the arrival of HIES ships like the ‘Allison’, pressure was brought to bear by the Society on those who had received a loan prior to emigration and who had not repaid the loan. It appears however, that the perceptions of the work of the Society in assisting Highlanders emigrate to Australia was different in Australia from those held in Britain. In the period between 26 January 1852 and 14 April 1853, 17 HIES - chartered ships transported 2,605 passengers to Victoria, South Australia, Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales. Not all the colonies, however, appeared to support the efforts of the HIES or to welcome the Highlanders as potential settlers. Firstly, the colonial government of New South Wales was considering the adoption of its own self supporting emigration scheme in order to attract much needed labour to the pastoral industry. The scheme was designed to operate in a similar way to the HIES scheme and involved prospective emigrants in prepaying a sum of money determined by their eligibility and a promise to pay the balance on arrival. The government was hoping that the goldrushes occurring in the colony might also induce immigrants. Secondly, the preferred participants in such a scheme were not those targetted by the HIES. Indeed, the squatters and pastoralists of New South Wales seemed to question the suitability of “Scottish Celts” as desirable immigrants for the Colony. 85

85 Letter from Charles Nicholson Sydney to Trevelyan. Ref. GD371/233/4 NAS, Edinburgh, 1853. This letter contains references made by the Governor General to
Apart from setting in place mechanisms to pursue the loan defaulters it is difficult to identify the extent to which the Society considered the on-arrival needs of the emigrants apart from assisting families with their first contract of employment. Writing to Sir John McNeill in 1852, Trevelyan makes reference to a suggestion made by General Erskine, an Assistant Commissary who had recently returned from Port Phillip. Erskine suggested that the “leading Scotch Gentlemen at Melbourne, several of whom speak Gaelic”, should be asked to form a committee to assist the emigrants on their arrival.\textsuperscript{86} Trevelyan seemed to support this suggestion but made it clear that this committee was not to interfere with the work of collecting repayments from the emigrants. The collection of the repayment was of paramount importance to the ongoing work of the Society. The Society, however, assisted so many people to emigrate that it became difficult to locate many of these families and so in order to retrieve this money the Society appointed agents in each Colony.

Messrs Dickson and Gilchrist in Melbourne were appointed as agents for the Colony of Port Phillip. Their responsibilities and instructions as agents were set out in correspondence titled “Instructions to the Agents in Australia of the Highland and Island Emigration Society” and dated London, 15 April 1853.\textsuperscript{87}


\textsuperscript{87} “Instructions to the agents in Australia of the Highland and Island Emigration Society”,
The agents were requested to ensure that the families were looked after in terms of their initial employment. They were asked to contract the families with employers of good character and to try to ensure that the wages and conditions of employment were reasonable. Agents had the power to instigate legal proceedings if the repayment was not forthcoming. Once they received the payment or an instalment, the agent deducted five per cent for their own commission and to reimburse any outstanding legal or other costs. The rest of the repayment was forwarded to London. Copies of all Promissory Notes were sent to the agent who was required to record both the location and employment circumstances of each family when located and to forward this information to London. This aspect may have been self-serving on the part of the Society as it was in its interest to ensure that this happened in order for families to repay the loan.88

Tracing families following their arrival in order to secure their repayment to the HIES proved to be problematic for several reasons. Although the people had arrived during the gold rush in Victoria, the Society hoped that the vast need for shepherds, shearsers, wool sorters and other pastoral workers, along with the hard work involved in digging for gold, would prevent the men with families from leaving for the gold fields. It was easier to locate a Household where the head of the family had remained with the other members and not left

88 Geelong and Portland Bay Immigration Society 1844 - 1854 and Highland and Island Emigration Society Records 1852, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 1853.
in search for gold. Steady employment with regular wages as farm labourers meant that there was a greater chance of repayment compared with those who chose the unpredictable financial rewards associated with gold. Therefore it was hoped that the strong family and kinship bonds would be maintained in Australia and would ensure that family members would remain together. This view was again reiterated in the report published by the HIES following its first year of operation:

Love of home and family ties operate as a drawback to the allurements of the diggings…The Highland families have, with rare exceptions, settled on the sheep farms, to which all their previous habits inclined them.\(^8^9\)

Unfortunately, similar efforts were not put in place to ensure that the proprietors back in Scotland met their obligations in relation to paying the one third payment towards the emigrants’ costs. In a letter to Sir John McNeill in 1853 Trevelyan listed those proprietors who had not met their obligations and the list included the following proprietors of Moidart Estates. The list of names included W. Robertson Esq. (Kinlochmoidart Estate) who owed £110.8.1, Dr Martin (Moidart Estate) £74.6.5 and Alexander Macdonald Esq. (Lochshiel

\(^8^8\) See Balfour for an explanation of the purpose and role of Promissory Notes and of the Australian experience in re-claiming loans made to HIES emigrants, pp. 507-512.  
\(^8^9\) Report of the Highland Emigration Society from its formation in April 1852 until
Estate) who owed £31.11.1 ½. Although the success and viability of the Scheme also relied on the funds promised by the proprietors it would appear that Trevelyan, however, was not as committed to following up promises of outstanding funds from the estate owners as he was to pursuing the former tenant farmers in Australia.

By examining the disposal list of the ‘Allison’ it can be seen that of the twelve families assisted by the HIES, six left for Melbourne, three were employed on a twelve month contract by landowners and one was employed for a period of three months. Two other heads were employed to work on the government roads on a daily rate of ten shillings. It is not clear whether or not the HIES agents were informed about these employment contracts or knew of the employment destination of the immigrants. Haines points out that:

Poor communication between the Society and the colony meant, however, that it was often unclear to Immigration Agents which

91 Passenger and disposal list for the ship 'Allison', PROV, North Melbourne, VPRS 7310, Assisted Immigrants Book 9, 1852. pp. 10-17.
immigrants were HIES-sponsored, and they often dispersed before arrangements for future repayment could be made.\textsuperscript{92}

From these accounts it is possible that some Moidart Households may have ‘disappeared’ without the knowledge of the Agents as only three of the twelve Households were recorded as accepting employment in a known location for a period greater than three months.

In 1855 the difficulties associated with obtaining the repayments were discussed at a meeting held at the Gaelic church in Geelong.\textsuperscript{93} At this meeting it was claimed that out of approximately £8,000 expended by the Society only £1,500 had been repaid by assisted immigrants. Speaking about this state of affairs Lachlan McKinnon informed the meeting:

\textit{…that a great many of these persons had repudiated the obligation altogether, and had resorted to the most mean and contemptible shifts to evade the payment of their debts to the society.}\textsuperscript{94}

McKinnon was speaking as the chairman of a group of Highland men who had formed a Committee in Melbourne in an attempt to reclaim monies owed to the

\textsuperscript{92} Haines, Emigration and the Labouring Poor, p. 237.
\textsuperscript{93} Author Unknown ‘Highlanders and Islanders of Scotland’ The Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, Saturday, July 21 1855. page number not recorded.
Society. The Committee was composed of men who appeared to belong to a social class outside that of the majority of Highlanders and was based on the fact that they spoke Gaelic. One such member, Mr Lachlan McKinnon who was the Chair of the Melbourne Committee, was unable to address the meeting in Geelong in Gaelic as, “…although he could understand the language conversationally, it was so long since he left home that he could not deliver an address in it.” This suggests that in his case McKinnon had assimilated into the mainstream English-speaking culture which, in turn, may have impacted on his views about Highlanders from a more inferior social standing. Those present at this meeting expressed their anger towards the defaulters by passing a lengthy resolution which stated in part:

…conduct of such individuals of our countrymen in this colony as refused to fulfil their obligations to that society in repaying advances made to them as individuals and families, by which they were enabled to emigrate to this country.  

The meeting strongly condemned those who had brought dishonour and shame...
on their homeland by refusing to acknowledge and pay their debts. It also expressed its concern that this situation had been taken up by the English press with *The Times* reporting that “…the character of the Highland population for high honesty was gone, and quoted the position of the Highlanders in Australia as proof of the assertion.”

The meeting was important in that at no point were the economic circumstances and abilities of the Households to repay the loan raised by those present. Its total focus was on how to save the image and character of the Scottish community in Victoria. It also appears from a further statement by McKinnon that none of the Households involved was present at the meeting. Those who were present were exhorted to “…use their influence with such of the defaulters as might come within their observation, as it was only in this way they could advance the objects of the meeting that night.” There was also an attempt to embarrass the defaulters into paying by claiming that “…those who were repudiating their just debts to this benevolent society, were doing a great injury to the suffering poor at home.”

On 2 August 1852, Trevelyan wrote to Thomas Dickson and John Gilchrist reminding them that the viability of the Society was dependent on their ability to retrieve the monies owed:

97 Ibid.
…it must never be lost sight of that the continued power of our Society to benefit the Colony and the distresfed [sic] population of the North West of Scotland will depend upon the punctual realization and remittance of the sums which we have advanced to the Emigrants and for which the respective Heads of Families have given their Promissory Notes.¹⁰⁰

The letter followed on to state that "... the return of the manner in which the Emigrants are provided for will be published in this country for the information of their friends."¹⁰¹

Trevelyan was keen to promote the positive outcomes and benefits of the scheme to both the emigrants and to the colony. By the end of 1852 economic improvements in the Highlands slowed the rate of emigration and Trevelyan was finding it difficult to fill his ships. In an attempt to increase numbers he decided to publish a collection of letters written by the emigrants detailing the positive outcomes which emigration had brought to their lives. By collecting and publishing these letters, Trevelyan hoped that others in Scotland might be

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⁹⁸ Ibid.
⁹⁹ Ibid.
¹⁰⁰ Letter from C. E. Trevelyan to Thomas Dickson and John Oswald Gilchrist, VPRS 1189/P0, Unit 112 File 52/8076, PROV, North Melbourne, 1852.
persuaded to emigrate thus further promoting the scheme through a chain migration process and ensuring its viability, as well as possibly promoting his own role within the Society. In a letter to Thomas Fraser, Trevelyan stated:

I have already commenced the preparation of a printed collection of Letters from Highland Emigrants to Australia, and I shall be obliged to you for any which you think ought to be added to the series.¹⁰²

Trevelyan was reliant on the HIES agents in Victoria for copies of letters. He wanted to publish these letters for a range of reasons and he was very careful to select only those which would further his purposes. Letters that slighted the Society, made reference to the adverse effects of the voyage or mentioned any negative experiences on arrival in Australia were not selected. Selected letters needed to be suitable for his purposes:

The letters that have been received from the Emigrants by the ‘Georgiana’ from Skye are on the whole highly satisfactory - So far as we can judge from these communications they appear with few exceptions to have accepted service from the settlers at rates of wages

¹⁰¹ Ibid.
¹⁰² Letter from C. Trevelyan to T. Fraser, HIES Uncatalogued Letterbooks, Book 3, HD4/1-4, West Register House, NAS, Edinburgh, 1853.
exceeding what we have anticipated and such as can leave no doubt of their ability to fulfil their obligations to us.  

Trevelyan was particularly interested in those letters which contained references to the high rate of wages received by emigrants as this would serve as an inducement to prospective emigrants. High wages would also ensure that emigrants were able to repay the loan relatively quickly.

In June 1853 Grimes prepared a statement which recorded information about the initial periods of engagement and average wages obtained by immigrants arriving on five HIES chartered ships in 1852. The five ships involved were the ‘Araminta’, ‘Georgiana’, ‘Flora’, ‘Miltiades’ and ‘Chance’. The first three ships arrived at Geelong whilst the remaining two arrived at Melbourne. All five ships arrived over a period of 42 days between 1 October and 11 November 1852. His statistics are recorded in relation to three separate groups

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104 Statement prepared by E. Grimes showing the periods of Engagement and the average Wages obtained by Immigrants introduced in ships partly occupied by Emigrants under the auspices of the Highland and Island Emigration Society during the period from the 1st October to the 11th November 1852. It is important to note that the statistics for the ‘Araminta’ recorded by Grimes in this document do not equate with my calculations. This discrepancy between both sets has occurred through a different interpretation of the term ‘single’. Only males and females recorded as ‘unmarried’ and listed separately from their family, have been counted by Grimes. VPRS 01189/PO, Unit 114, File (number not recorded), PROV, North Melbourne, 1853.
Grimes has not identified whether or not his figures only relate to HIES sponsored passengers or to all passengers on board in each case.

For each group he recorded how many immigrants were not hired and those who hired but did not provide officials with details and the period of engagement (three months or less, six months or less and more than six months). He also recorded the average wages with rations for each group. An examination of these statistics show that wages obtained by families were highest for those arriving on the ‘Araminta’ (£85), for single men (£77) for those on the ‘Georgiana’ and £25 for single women who arrived on the ‘Flora’. All three ships arrived at Geelong confirming the view that employment for males in particular, in the pastoral industry in the Western District, was to be lucrative for those arriving at the port closest to the location of employment. The reason for such high wages for males on the ‘Araminta’ may have been due to changing demands based on seasonal work. Shearers were needed in the district particularly around October and November when the ‘Araminta’ arrived. According to Grimes only 14 single men from the three Geelong ships failed to engage on arrival. Lowest wages for families were paid to those who arrived on the ‘Chance’ at Melbourne (£60) whilst for single men the lowest wage was £23 for those immigrants on the ‘Araminta’. 
Geelong also contained many boarding houses for accommodating men on their way to the Ballarat goldfields. These were a source of employment for many of the single females. The wages for single women did not vary a great deal between the highest and lowest average wage with the lowest wage being twenty-one pounds and five shillings for those women on the ‘Georgiana’. Arrival in either Geelong or Melbourne made little difference to the wage amount but it appears that single women were paid a slightly higher wage as domestic servants in Melbourne and were therefore economically better off by arriving at the larger city. Engagement figures for single women overall, however, tell a different story. The majority of single women on the ‘Araminta’ were engaged and only twelve single women who arrived on the other two Geelong ships failed to be employed. In contrast a total of 51 single women who arrived on the two Melbourne ships failed or refused to become employed despite the slightly higher wages offered.

Despite the high wages offered to families in Geelong 28 families on the ‘Araminta’ did not accept employment however, 40 did with most contracted for six months or less in terms of the period of engagement. A combined total of 99 families and 92 single males from the two vessels arriving in Melbourne were unable or refused employment on arrival at Melbourne. It is possible that many of the single men travelled from Melbourne to the goldfields whilst some of the families may have obtained employment outside Melbourne in the
pastoral industry at a later stage.

**3.8 Conclusion**

The on-arrival experiences of the passengers on board the three ships in 1852 were subject to the effects of a range of ‘local pull’ factors operating in Victoria at this time. In 1852 the Colony of Victoria received large numbers of assisted, and a growing number of unassisted immigrants keen to try their luck on the goldfields. Mining was proving to be a great distraction to men previously content to work for regular wages and conditions in the pastoral industry and landowners and squatters were experiencing difficulties in attracting and retaining reliable workers.

Although workers were sorely needed in this industry, the range of conditions and wages on offer to single men and male heads of Households varied greatly between the Port of Melbourne and the Port of Geelong. The three ships arrived within a short space of each other, however, fluctuations between the wages and terms of employment on offer to passengers on the three ships, were already evident. At times those Households willing to travel inland and prepared to by-pass the goldfields could look forward to an offer of high wages, with rates often over £100 per year. This appeared to counter the view that single men were the most sought after group as they had no dependents
to house, clothe and feed and were therefore cheaper to hire. But single men were highly unreliable and, without the need to provide for dependents, were able to move freely in search of higher wages or to spend their money earned on the land to search for gold. At other times, however, it was the single men who were in highest demand with evidence of wages on offer outstripping those offered to families. Despite this the nature of the tasks and the seasonal working requirements involved in working with sheep both in the Highlands and in Victoria must have provided the males with a sense of continuity, ability and confidence in their work. This, however, was not always the case for single females.

Evidence gathered from the disposal lists of the three ships strongly suggests that single females appeared to be the most vulnerable group in terms of employment. Evidence shows that in many cases, they were forced to separate from the Household within days after their arrival in a foreign country in order to accept employment as domestic servants. In some cases sisters were required to accept employment in separate homes. Wages on offer were not high but appeared to remain consistent for domestic servants. The evidence in terms of the cultural adjustment required of single females in working as domestic servants is not available but it can be assumed that for those women who were used to the outdoor work associated with cattle and cultivation in crofting communities this change must have been challenging. The voyage would have done little to prepare these women for the adjustment needed to
move from outdoor work to indoor employment. The opportunity to learn new
household skills and to apply these in middle class surrounds (compared with
the interior, furnishings and layout of a blackhouse on Skye for example) must
have filled these women with great anxiety. Separated from those they loved
and from all they knew there would be very little in terms of previous
experience, language and social graces to bring to their new roles.

Little is known about those Households who either chose not to have their
employment conditions recorded or who left the emigration depots or
quarantine station of their own accord. It is highly likely that these Households
had relatives already in the Colony or elsewhere in Australia and left to reunite
with family and friends.

As shown in this chapter several initiatives were put in place by the HIES to
recover loans made to immigrants although it is not clear if any Moidart
Households were pursued over outstanding debts. The work of the HIES agents
in pursuing those who had signed Promissory Notes in Scotland was reinforced
by the application of moral pressure extruding from meetings presided over by
clergy and others from social classes different to those of the immigrants. The
perceived unwillingness of some to repay the loans was viewed as casting a
slur on the good name and reputation of the wider Scottish and Highlander
community in Victoria. This was particularly so following the reporting of the
situation in newspapers in Britain.
The following chapter will demonstrate that settling in the Colony was to prove difficult for many and their lives were characterised by levels of high mobility as they moved across the Colony in search of work or fortune. Others experienced success through their work and amassed sufficient income to select small parcels of land which they held individually or communally as a Household. The importance of land with its social, psychological, cultural and economic dimensions is the focus of chapter four.
CHAPTER FOUR

The struggle for land

4.1 General introduction

This chapter will establish the degree to which the Moidart Households were able to overcome the many obstacles and hardships encountered as they sought to obtain and retain a home, allotment or selection of their own in Victoria. It will follow individual Households as they strove to select land in rural Victorian counties or to purchase township allotments in Geelong and establish how the social and economic circumstances of the local communities in which they settled either assisted or hindered these endeavours. Members of the first and second generations of the Households settled individually or in clusters in various locations within the Colony as shown in the following map.

MAP 4.1: Settlement locations of many Moidart Households in Victoria.
By focusing on the 42nd Clause of the Amending Land Act 1865 and Section 49 of the Land Act of 1869 in particular, the chapter will demonstrate that few of these Households were able to select land, however, before the 1860s and for reasons that will be explained. The chapter will examine their struggles to hold the land successfully beyond the life of the original selector and test the conclusions drawn by Jane Beer in her research on the Portland Bay Highlanders that:

Numbers strove to acquire land but few sustained viable land holdings, the object of their early hopes. Few left property to pass to descendants.¹

Don Watson also supports this finding arguing that:

Small farmers would have to wait almost two decades for the Selection Acts to grant them access to the land; and few of them ever saw a return on the great labour they put into clearing marginal hill country. Nor, for the most part, did the succeeding generation.²

Evidence surrounding the possible transplantation of farming practices from the Highlands to Victoria will also be examined. Geoffrey Serle suggests that

ownership of land contributed to an improved social status; “Land, more than anything else, signified new social status, was the hallmark of success;…”

Therefore the chapter will determine whether or not the evidence is sufficient to draw any conclusions about the Moidart settlers regarding improvements to their economic and social status through the ownership of a home and land.

In order to set this enquiry into the context of the time, the chapter will begin by briefly summarising the history of occupation and settlement of land in Victoria by the early squatters and pastoralists between the late 1820s and 1855, the year when the Colony of Port Phillip was granted constitutional government.

### 4.2 Early Scottish settlement in the Colony of Port Phillip

Scots were amongst the early pastoralists in Port Phillip. George Russell was appointed manager of the Clyde Company in 1837 and was one of the early settlers from Van Diemen's Land. He brought a large amount of capital with him and selected his run at Leigh (Shelford) after exploring the lands around Geelong by foot and which he named ‘Golfhill’.

Another Scot by the name of Aeneas Ranaldson MacDonnell arrived in Gippsland in 1841 having been forced to sell his inherited estate at Inverie, Knoydart in Scotland because of debt. He arrived with the expectation of

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recreating the traditional clan system and way of life in Australia and bringing with him:

…a number of Clansmen, shepherds and agriculturalists, as well as a splendid stock of Scottish sheep and cattle and farm implements. The Chief’s intention was to found a settlement and return to Scotland to arrange for the whole of his Clan and dependants to join him.  

He and his labourers worked hard to create a flourishing dairy herd and to establish a butter and cheese-making industry in Gippsland. But this endeavour failed, as, according to Watson, “Glengarry and his clansmen failed to transplant” and he returned home to Scotland in 1842.

By the mid-1840s there were 282 pastoral runs in the Western District alone. In 1850 the Separation Bill was passed in Britain. This Bill proclaimed Port Phillip a colony in its own right, separate from New South Wales. Port Phillip had prospered during the preceding years due largely to the expanding wool industry.

As Serle has noted:

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5 Margaret Kiddle provides a detailed description of the family life of George Russell prior to his emigration to Van Diemen’s Land in Men of Yesterday chapter 2, ‘Men of the Old Country’, pp. 14-27.


8 Watson, Caledonia Australis, p. 175.
…almost the whole district was divided into nearly one thousand runs whose boundaries were unfenced and unsurveyed. Wool and wool products, worth almost one million pounds a year, amounted to more than 90 per cent of Port Phillip’s exports.¹⁰

Much of this income was derived from the wool industry in the Western District and exported via the port at Geelong. David Wild notes that “In 1851 the wool exported from Geelong was valued at £150,000.”¹¹ According to Wild the first sheep were brought to Geelong from Van Diemen’s Land by Thomas Manifold in 1836.¹² The Manifolds were one of many Scottish farming families who took up land in the Western District. Kiddle maintains that “…at least two thirds of the pioneer settlers of the Western District were Scottish. Nearly all these were Lowland farmers.”¹³ Prentis, however, disagrees noting that Victorian squatters of Scottish origin came from both the Lowlands and Highlands of Scotland with evidence of squatters from Highlander backgrounds employing other Highlanders on their runs.¹⁴

This study confirms the research of Prentis in relation to the Scottish geographic origins of the squatters in Victoria. By 1852 there were a number of Scottish pastoralists and landowners living in the Geelong district including George Armytage on the Barwon River, Thomas Manifold on the Moorabool

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⁹ Kiddle, Men of yesterday, p. 44.
¹² Ibid, p. 27.
¹⁴ Prentis, The Scots in Australia, pp. 94-5.
River and Thomas Chirnside at Werribee.\textsuperscript{15} An examination of the surnames of those who engaged Moidart immigrants includes the Scottish surnames of McCallum, Wallace, Cameron and Campbell. Other surnames of Scottish origin recorded on Disposal Lists include those of McLean and McPherson.\textsuperscript{16} Care must be taken, however, in assuming that these names were necessarily those of the actual employer as many squatters sent their pastoral run managers to the ports to hire labour on their behalf. Additional research is therefore required on these lists to accurately identify and separate the name of the squatter from that of his manager as well as his Scottish background including his Highlander or Lowlander origins.

4.3 The impact of the various proposals and Land Acts on land selection 1855-1864

On the 23 November 1855 the Colony of Port Phillip was given its new constitution and the following year elections were held to form the first representative government in the history of the Colony. The first parliament was opened on 21 November 1856 and wasted little time in addressing the question of land ownership. The demand for land by small selectors soon became the downfall of successive governments as they strove to ensure that the ownership of land was equitable for all. Several schemes were developed in an attempt to address this inequity.

\textsuperscript{15} See the ‘Marco Polo’, nominal passenger and disposal lists for examples of names and home locations of Western District squatters and landowners. VPRS 7666 Inward passenger lists-British ports, PROV, North Melbourne. Book 8, pp. 166-190.

The first was developed in December 1856 by the Surveyor General, Captain Andrew Clarke, who brought forward a new proposal following the 1847 Orders-In-Council. The main elements of this proposal included a division of Crown Lands into the three classes of town, suburban and country. The land in each class was to be sold by auction only and at a set minimum price of eight pounds for town land, one pound ten shillings for suburban and one pound for country acreages. Where there was an authorised occupant of country land, the occupant would be able to rent the land at two pence an acre. The Governor could issue leases for other land but only at public auction where all interested selectors could openly compete for the lease. An annual licence could also be given to selectors to occupy Crown Lands for purposes other than pastoral or mining and licences could also be given for the purposes of mining minerals other than gold and silver. These licences were to be issued at public auctions only. Squatters or ‘pastoral occupants’ were to be given a seven-year lease of their lands with the right to renew the lease automatically for another period of seven years.17

There was an immediate outcry against this proposal from both the squatters and selectors with selectors condemning the idea of sale of land by auction as they were without the means to buy land using this method. They demanded that the land be sold without prior surveying and that deferred payment for the land be introduced.

17 The term ‘pastoral occupants’ was used in the book, *Victoria the first century*, p. 127 as an alternative term for ‘squatters’, perhaps alluding to the writers’ respect and admiration for the achievements of this group of settlers.
The Nicholson Act was passed by both Houses of Parliament in September 1860 and operated between November 1860 and June 1862. This was the first of a succession of Land Acts in Victoria and under this Act the selector could purchase up to 640 acres each year at auction and was required to build and reside in a residence on the land. As Kiddle notes, although selectors had the opportunity to acquire holdings of up to 640 acres, these small grants were not sufficient in acreage in the Western district to extract the profits needed to offset the costs associated with the required improvements to the land:

In these areas large acreages were necessary – not the 640-acre blocks actually granted. If the hypothetical Hamilton sheep farmer who was able to make a precarious profit of seventeen pounds, ten shillings on his 640 acres had instead been given a few thousand acres, his costs of fencing and other improvements would not have been greatly increased.

This Land Act failed in its attempts to unlock the lands as most land put up for sale under this Act was bought by the squatters.

The Duffy Land Act followed in 1862. Ten million acres were to be designated for agricultural purposes and at least four million of the ten were to be surveyed and made available for selection in allotments that varied from

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19 Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, p. 266.
20 For a list of the obstacles for small selectors created by the government in relation to
between 40 to 640 acres. This Act failed disastrously for two reasons. The Duffy Act only prescribed the erection of a house or hut on the land and not residency. The squatters circumvented this requirement by erecting portable houses on the land and then moving these houses from one holding to the next. The squatters also used ‘dummies’ to bid on their behalf. ‘Dummies’ were often the employees of the squatter, friends of the squatter or family members. ‘Dummies’ were used to make a bid on behalf of the squatter for a selected acreage. In this way, the squatters ensured that their current acreage was retained.²¹

4.4 The struggle between squatter and small selector

The inequity of the land selection process between the squatter and small farmer can be seen clearly in the case of the district of Rothwell (later renamed Little River) near Geelong. In 1861 the population was said to be four persons and one inhabited dwelling but by 1865 the population of Rothwell was dramatically increased due to the fact that the “…the sale and leasing of land in the vicinity led to the establishment of a farming community, and by 1865, the population of the area was said to be 1,500, and the number of dwellings 160.”²² This sizeable population, however, was largely unable to secure any land of their own. Through the land sales and leasing arrangements, the small selectors and farmers held only 10,000 acres collectively while five squatters held 80,000 acres between them in the area.²³

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²¹ this Act see Kiddle, Men of Yesterday, pp. 264-273 and Powell, The Public Lands of Australia Felix, pp. 88-118.
²² Ibid pp. 243-5.
Many Highlander families settled in this district and so it is of no surprise that with so many small farmers from Moidart and Lochaber living in the Rothwell district agitation for the establishment of commonage or common grazing land in Victoria began in this area. The designation of a common area of land for grazing purposes was part of the traditional crofting practices of the Highlands. The small farmers argued that the farming land at Little River was of such poor quality that the income made through cropping was insufficient and that common land was necessary to raise animals for sale to provide a supplementary income. As in the Highlands these farmers were faced with the difficult task of cultivating inferior quality soil and reliant on access to common grazing land to acquire additional income from the sale of their stock. This was not possible if the squatters in the district continued to run their flocks of sheep on the commons thereby forcing the farmers' cattle to starve. A Land Convention held in July 1857 supported the move by the Rothwell farmers to create areas of commonage. Three conditions related to future land sales were put forward by the participants. Firstly, they demanded that there be free selection of land in all districts at one uniform price without auction. Secondly, all unsold land should be amalgamated to create an open pasturage for the people to use free of cost and, finally, “no new pastoral tenancies be created when the land occupied under licence was resumed by the Crown.”24 By September 1857 the Bill was ready to be read for the third time. The Bill, however, failed to open up the land to the selectors as the squatters manipulated the details to ensure that they retained ownership of the land.

22 Wynd, So Fine a Country, p. 126.
23 Ibid.
24 The Historical Sub-Committee of The Centenary Celebrations Council, Victoria the first century, Robertson and Mullens, Melbourne, 1934. p. 128.
In 1858 farmers in the Little River district formed the ‘Little River Farmers’ Association’ to "protect farmers' commons from the depredations of Squatters Grant and Chirnside". The Association was actively involved in fighting for the rights of farmers over pastoral tenants in relation to the use of gazetted land set aside for commonage purposes. At the same time a new proposal which included commonage rights was developed for consideration by the next Parliament by John O’Shanassy in 1859. Its main elements included the creation of farm lots of no more than 320 acres to be made available for sale at one pound an acre. All town land was to be sold by auction and, once again, it was proposed that all unsold land was to be used as free commonage. Towns and goldfields were to be given use of any adjoining crown land as common pasturage and, importantly, all pastoral tenants were to receive an annual licence only, to hold their land. These proposals were rejected.

Writing about the appropriate use of commonage in 1861 the Geelong Advertiser noted that a meeting had been called at Little River in order to protest about re-leasing of commonage land in the Counties of Bulban and Wordi Youang back to the previous occupiers Messrs Grant and Chirnside. The government official who re-leased these lands argued that Grant and Chirnside had a right to the land as it was not part of the Farmer’s Common. The assertion that the land had been re-leased was later proven to be incorrect and the right of access to commonage by the local farmers was acknowledged and confirmed. This was achieved by referring firstly to information provided

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25 Wynd, So fine a country, p. 80 and Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer 23 October 1858 and 26 April 1861 (no page numbers recorded) for references to the Little River Farmers’ Association.

26 See The Historical Sub-Committee of The Centenary Celebrations Council, pp. 128-9.
by the Government Surveyor Mr Skene and secondly, through a meeting held
between a deputation sent by the Little River Farmers’ Association and the
President of the Government Department of Land and Works. The deputation
included two Lochaber Scots by the names of McMaster and Macintosh. Their
political activism was indicative of a new awareness and willingness to
fight issues of perceived injustice via government authorities and to overcome
the resistance of the pastoralists. Their actions may have been perceived as
foolhardy, as several of the people involved were employed by the Chirnside
family at Werribee. 

In contrast to the situation in Scotland, the Little River farmers were not
prepared to put up with the actions of the landowners and they fought for
rightful access to the land. Their determination to win demonstrates that the
former crofters of Moidart and Lochaber no longer saw themselves as ‘victims’
and dependent on the goodwill of the proprietors. Victoria provided a new
sense of autonomy and independence free of the traditional Highlander
relationship between small tenant and landowner. The resistance continued and
in 1859 the farmers met to “recommend the cessation of further licensing of
Crown lands to squatters, so that the farmers could use the unsold or waste-
lands to graze their cattle.”

27 Correspondent un-named for article titled ‘Little River Farmers’ Association’ Geelong
Advertiser and Intelligencer 26 April 1861. Page number not recorded.
28 Ibid.
29 See list of employees entered in the Wages Book (Box 2417) by Robert Chirnside. Three
members of the McIntosh family from Little River are included amongst the names. R.
Chirnside, Papers and records, Manuscript 11127, Boxes 9, 25/4, 3/1, 24/9 and 24/10.
Australian Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, 1830-1902.
30 K. N. James (ed), Werribee: The first one hundred years, The Werribee District Historical
Finally the Government responded to the agitation of the farmers and on 8 March 1861 proclaimed the Little River Farmers’ Common. The Common consisted of 20,000 acres of unsold land and was available for the grazing of animals of farmers living within five miles of the boundary of the Common. The successful outcome resulted in additional commons being established at the You Yangs and at Fyansford. Each common was governed by a committee of management who decided the rate of the fees to be paid for use of the common. The creation of the official, government sanctioned Common at Little River, however, did not end the conflict between the farmers and squatters. The squatters continued to graze their sheep on the common land and increased the anger of the farmers by impounding their cattle.

On one occasion the cattle were impounded by Donald McDonald, a Highlander who worked on behalf of Robert Chirnside to impound cattle he found trespassing on Chirnside land:

…114 of Mr Lascelles’ cattle being found trespassing on Mr Chirnside’s river I hereby release said cattle by giving an order on Mr Lascelles for one shilling p. head.

Witness my mark

Donald McDonald

R. Chirnside Witness

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31 Ibid. 1862 Diary, 11 August 1862, Werribee. Diaries of Robert Chirnside, Box 2/9. In this case, however, I am unable to identify Donald McDonald as a Moidart Householder.
The agitation of the farmers increased and the government finally prohibited the pasturing of the squatters' sheep on the Common in August 1861. The difficult relationship between farmer and squatter at Little River and ensuing struggles continued well into the next decade further provoked by the action of the Chirnside family to enclose public roads on their Run thus preventing local access to the roads. The long struggle and agitation eventually resulted in the granting of common land as part of the land reform that occurred through the Duffy Act of 1862.

One important similarity between the Colony and Scotland may be found in the understandings demonstrated by the farmers as to how best to farm and use the land for maximum production. According to Kiddle, many people in the Colony lost the lease of their land because they did not understand how to manage the land, especially in times of severe drought or in areas where the soil was deficient in minerals:

Many bitter years passed before those who granted the lands realized that not only larger acres were often needed, but that farmers had to be told how best to use their land. 32

At the same time the farmers, recognising the deficiency of the soil on many of the acreages, utilised skills and knowledge to improve their substandard soil. One Highland agricultural practice cited by Wynd refers to farmers incorporating seashell into the soil as fertiliser (as they did in the Highlands and at Moidart). According to Wynd, a farmer by the name of Michael
Cummins was the first to use seashell from Corio Bay as fertiliser on his land. Other farmers at Duck Ponds (today known as Lara) supplemented their incomes by baling seaweed and selling it to upholsterers in Melbourne thereby recognising the value of a product once gathered on the shores of the Highlands as a new source of potential income in Victoria. Although there is no evidence to support the claim that these practices were directly transplanted from the Highlands, the presence of many farmers of Highland origins farming in these localities lends weight to this possibility. Once again this demonstrated the resourcefulness of the Highlanders:

In 1874 thirty-five bales were despatched from the Duck Ponds station (the consignment fetched two pounds, ten shillings a bale) while someone else was using a small vessel to take seaweed direct to the capital.

These actions demonstrate that the farmers did not acquire land holdings in ignorance and are an example of the adaptability and resourcefulness of these farmers in their new environment.

Selected land in Australia could be paid off under conditions related to residency and improvement unlike the situation in Scotland where land was continually rented regardless of how well the crofter may have improved the productivity of his croft. The small selector in Australia had to bear all the costs himself if he chose to make swamp areas, or other unproductive parts of

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32 Ibid.
33 Wynd, So fine a country, p. 56.
34 Ibid, p.84. See also the Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer 5 March 1874 and 3 September 1874.
his selection, productive. All this increased the costs and financial burden.

4.5 Household settlement in the County of Grant

Of all the counties in the Colony in which land was selected by the Moidart Households, the County of Grant is possibly the most important. The County contains approximately 50 parishes of which the three rural parishes of Yowang, Kerrit Bareet and Ballark and the urban parish of Barrabool (covering Belmont in Geelong) are the most significant for this research. Eleven Households either lived at some point or eventually settled in this County – seven in Barrabool, two in Kerrit Bareet and two in Yowang. The Orders-in-Council signed in 1847 divided all the lands of the Colony of New South Wales (including the District of Port Phillip) into three types of districts; settled, intermediate and unsettled. The county of Grant fell into two district types; settled and intermediate, as part of Grant lay within Geelong and part outside the township.

The strong kinship networks that continued to exist in Australia can also be seen in the many Household members who chose to return to Grant following the death of a partner to live out the remaining years of their lives close to relations and friends. Mary McDonald (daughter in Household 23), for example, returned to live in Geelong residing firstly in Waterloo Street and later in Wellington Street for a total of 37 years following the death of her

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35 For a comprehensive description of the contents and effects of The Orders-in-Council, see Chapter 1, ‘The Orders-in-Council’ in Billis and Kenyon Pastures new pp. 8-14.
husband Archibald (son in Household 21) at Burrumbeet in 1889 where they were living.  

The analysis of the experiences of the Moidart Households in the County of Grant will be undertaken in two parts: firstly the experiences of those Households who settled in the urban parish of Barrabool followed by the experiences of those who chose to settle in the rural parishes of Yowang, Kerritt Bareet and Ballark.

4.6 Settlement in the urban Parish of Barrabool  
(Belmont) Geelong

Geelong, as the major port serving both residents and industry in the Western District, was in the midst of a population explosion at the time of the arrival of the Moidart Households in 1852. According to Wild, ‘Geelong’s population…increased from less than 9,000 in 1851 to more than 23,000 by 1854.’  

This increase resulted in the erection of 2,000 houses in Geelong in 1854 alone bringing the total number of houses to 5,949 of which it was estimated that 865 were empty. Wild concludes that this population growth and the accompanying increase in the construction of buildings, was largely due to employment generated by the wool industry:

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36 In the Will and Codicil of Mary McDonald late of Wellington Street Geelong West in the State of Victoria Widow deceased, VPRS 28/P3, Unit 1620, File 206/635, PROV., Melbourne.  
37 wild, The tale of a city Geelong 1850-1950, p. 16.  
If Geelong had not been the centre of a wool growing district, the end of the first gold fever would probably have reduced our town to the dimensions of a fishing village.\textsuperscript{39}

Within two years of their arrival several Moidart Households were in the position to purchase land and a ready-built house in Belmont. In 1852 the area known as Belmont was part of the Parish of Barrabool. A significant proportion of the land in Belmont was privately owned by Dr. Alexander Thomson.\textsuperscript{40} In 1854 much of his land at Belmont was offered for public sale. The land had been subdivided into lots and was described in the following way by the auctioneer, J. B. Hutton:

Firstly, the township of Belmont, on which 24 cottages have recently been erected, the greater number having four rooms and a hall, and others of two rooms each; also 150 building allotments fronting the principal street of the same town, through the centre of which runs the main Government road to Colac.\textsuperscript{41}

The description in the newspaper continued by stating; “all the new houses erected thereon are on good sized allotments of ground.”\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
Entries in the 1854-5 rate books for the Kardinia Ward, Borough of South Barwon, reveal that five Moidart Households bought allotments and homes in Regent and Church Streets in Belmont. Both streets were part of the Thomson estate. All were weatherboard cottages comprising one, two or four rooms.\textsuperscript{43} An analysis of the descriptions of these dwellings described in wills and probate documents, reveals that most dwellings comprised two or four rooms suggesting that they were most likely to have been purchased as part of this sale.

According to rate book entries many of the original owners were still resident in these streets 20 years later demonstrating their ability to both find and hold ongoing employment with sufficient levels of income to support family members as well as pay rates.\textsuperscript{44} Maning and Bishop described Belmont and Marshalltown in 1882-3 as ‘small townships on the River Barwon, the residents of which find employment chiefly in the industries located on the river.’\textsuperscript{45} The rateable value of each house was calculated according to the number of rooms. The rates on the home of John and Mary McDonald (Household 16) of Regent Street, a weatherboard house of one room, were assessed at £16 annually.\textsuperscript{46} John was required to pay this amount in two instalments of eight pounds each. John and Mary lived at this same address for approximately 50 years managing to pay annual rates during this time. Allan

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{44} See the Borough of South Barwon Rate Books 1863/4 - 1872/3 Film box 767, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong for evidence of the continuing ownership and occupation of homes beyond 1854-5.
\textsuperscript{45} F. B. Maning and W. Bishop, \textit{Geelong and Western District Directory for 1882-83} Self Published, 1883. p. 4.
\textsuperscript{46} Ward number 2087, Regent Street, Belmont. \textit{Rate Book for the Kardinia Ward} Borough of South Barwon 1854-5, Film 34, Reel box 981, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1854-5.
and Mary McDonald’s (Household 19) home of two rooms was assessed at £26. They too, lived at this address until their deaths in the mid-1890s. If these Households did purchase their homes in Belmont at the 1854 sale this would suggest that Household members had worked hard managing to achieve financial stability within two years of their arrival suggesting that home ownership was a high priority.

In 1898 the Roslyn Estate at Belmont was subdivided into six-acre blocks and offered for private sale. The accompanying map for this sale recorded allotments three, four and five as being owned by a John McDonald.48

Whilst the above examples of household ownership demonstrate a degree of stability other Households were more mobile and moved addresses several times in Geelong during their lives. In 1854-5 Michael and Mary McDonald (Household 20) purchased and settled in a two roomed, weatherboard house in Marshall Street, Chilwell. This was a significant achievement for a man who had emigrated as a cotter from Scotland and therefore without financial means. In addition he and Mary arrived with a family of seven children aged from one year to sixteen years in age. Unlike many of the other males Michael was aged 50 years on arrival. According to the Kardinia rate records Michael was paying annual rates on this property of £26.49 At the time of Michael’s death in 1874 the family was living in Austin Street, Chilwell. Mary was still living at Austin Street when her daughter Flora died in 1877. When Mary died in 1898 she was

47 Ibid, Ward number 2125, Church Street, Belmont, 1854-5.
48 A. L. Campbell Roslyn Estate, Belmont. Plan of subdivision part of crown portion 9, Parish of Barrabool, 1898.
49 Ibid, Ward number 1881, Marshall Street, Chilwell, 1854-5.
living at 42 Kilgour Street, Geelong.\(^{50}\) Her daughter Catherine remained at this address until her death in 1925. This mobility may have been due to Michael’s occupation as a carpenter and difficulty in obtaining ongoing, secure employment owing to his age.

An analysis of the pattern of settlement in Belmont demonstrates that two Households who lived next door to each other in the crofting township of Scardoise purchased allotments next door to each other in Church Street.\(^{51}\) Other Households settled in the same street or in adjoining streets. Eight households named McDonald settled in Regent Street, six in Church Street and four in Belmont Street all between 1854 and 1861. Those who settled in Church Street included Households 14, 18, 19 and 29. Regent Street became the home of Households 16 and 20 whilst Households 11 and children from Household 29 moved into Belmont Street.\(^{52}\) There are several reasons that may explain this settlement pattern. The Households had only been in Geelong for two years to this point. Close, familial relationships were still seen as an important source of cultural and linguistic support. The opportunity for Households to select and purchase ready built homes and to live in close proximity to each other replicated the organisation of dwellings in crofting townships and the opportunity to continue to live in this way must have been a great enticement to settle together. Of further interest is the fact that, apart from

\(^{50}\) Births, deaths and marriage entries, *The Geelong Advertiser* 26 September 1898, Geelong.

\(^{51}\) Adjoining Wards 2124 and 2125 in Church Street were owned by Allan ‘Cliff’ McDonald and his wife Mary and Allan ‘Ban’ McDonald and his wife Isabella. Both Households were originally from Scardoish, Moidart although they left at different times and travelled separately to Australia. It is unclear from the rate book entries as to which Household lived at which Ward number.

\(^{52}\) See, Borough of South Barwon 1854-5, *Rate Book for the Kardinia Ward*, Film 34, Reel box 981, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong as well as probate documents and Wills for each Household.
the Moidart homes, many of the other residents in these streets were most likely of Highlander descent. Residents with the surnames Robertson, McLean, McKenzie, Cameron and McKinnon were also living in Church Street in 1854-5.\footnote{Borough of South Barwon 1854-5, \textit{Rate Book for the Kardinia Ward}, Film 34, Reel box 981, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1854-5.} An examination of Wills and probate / administration documents confirms that these close familial relationships extended over a period of years with the majority of Household members leaving both real and personal estates to parents, siblings or children. The home at 42 Kilgour Street in Geelong was occupied first by the widow of Michael McDonald, Mary, and following her death, then by her daughter Catherine, her granddaughter Maggie and finally by grandson Archibald. However, this familial sequence of occupation was not always the case. Allan McDonald (Household 11) left his home in Church Street, a block of land and personal estate to the parish priest of St Mary’s Catholic Church in Geelong “to be distributed by him in charity as he in his own unfettered discretion shall deem advisable.”\footnote{Borough of South Barwon 1854-5, \textit{Rate Book for the Kardinia Ward}, Film 34, Reel box 981, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1854-5.}

Not all Households were able to settle with financial security and independence. For one Household in particular, life in Belmont was difficult and lived out in poverty. Archibald and Catherine McDonald (Household 17) settled in Hovell Street, Belmont. Thirteen years after their arrival Archibald died leaving a young family in destitution:


Senior Const. Harkins No. 544 reports for the information of the Superintendent that a man named Archibald McDonald aged 45 died at

\begin{flushright}
Borough of South Barwon 1854-5, \textit{Rate Book for the Kardinia Ward}, Film 34, Reel box 981, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong, 1854-5.
\end{flushright}
Belmont this morning destitute [and] his family are unable to defray his funeral expense. They have been receiving aid from the poor box at South Barwon for some time past. The Deceased is a Scotchman and a Roman Catholic.\textsuperscript{55}

This appears to be a different situation in the case of their children. In 1887 Donald Thomas McDonald, a son of Archibald and Catherine who was employed as a currier, died at aged 28 leaving an allotment of land at Lorne and a personal estate to be shared amongst his mother and siblings.\textsuperscript{56} Two other sons, Alexander and John, acquired freehold land in Belmont and Lorne, the Belmont allotment containing a seven-roomed weatherboard home owned by John. At the time of his death in 1910, John left three properties (including two houses) in Belmont to his widow including a mortgage on one home and a bank overdraft. His brother Alexander lived in one property rent -free as did a son of John in the other. John was living in McKillop Street at the time of his death but curiously this residence was not listed as part of his estate. This evidence of incurred debt (£376 in total) alongside rent-free residency for family members suggests that ensuring familial security remained a high priority for this Household 58 years after their arrival.\textsuperscript{57}

\textsuperscript{54} In the Will and unadministered Estate of Allan McDonald late of Church Street Belmont in the Colony of Victoria, Labourer deceased, VPRS 28/P, Unit 895, File 70/366, PROV, North Melbourne.

\textsuperscript{55} S. C. Harkins, Applications to the Superintendent Geelong Police Department for Pauper Burials December 1856-February 1892, Volume 1, Numbers 1-160, Geelong Family History Group, Geelong, 1865.

\textsuperscript{56} In the Estate of Donald Thomas McDonald late of Belmont near Geelong, in the Colony of Victoria Currier deceased intestate, VPRS 28/P/0002, Unit 000431, File 35/395, PROV, North Melbourne.

\textsuperscript{57} In the Will of John McDonald late of McKillop Street, Geelong, in the Colony of Victoria, Wool-classer, deceased, VPRS 28/P/3, Unit 148, File 116/798, PROV, North Melbourne.
This may have been of greater importance to the second generation who had greater earning capacity. Investment in real estate became a practice that was evident in several Households. Ownership of real estate represented security, a state of independence free from landlords and permanence, something that was not possible in Moidart. It also provided a means by which individual members could invest their finances to provide for elderly parents and siblings at a later stage.

By 1863 the entries in the Kardinia Ward rate books began to include the occupation of the owner of each dwelling. In the case of the Moidart Households the main occupation listed was that of ‘labourer’. Other residents in these streets included a quarryman, cowkeeper, contractor and carpenter. In the main the Highlanders continued to work in unskilled occupations unable to change this to any great extent but managing to achieve economic security for themselves and their children. It is interesting to recognise that the male heads of seven Households managed to adapt to employment in an urban rather than rural setting.

The evidence suggests that successive generations in the one extended family were often financially successful. John’s nephew Alexander (son of Donald and Anne – Household 29) also acquired land which he held as three vacant allotments; two in George Street, Belmont and one in Belmont Street,

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58 See entries for seven Moidart Households in Hovel, Church, Belmont and Regent Streets Belmont where all occupations listed for each owner is that of “labourer”. Borough of South Barwon, Rate Books 1863/4 - 1872/3, Film box 767, Geelong Heritage Centre, Geelong. pp 1-19.
Belmont.\(^5^9\) He was employed as a wool classifier and left a real and personal estate valued at £1,637 reflecting a life of hard work and thriftiness in savings. Upon his death all assets were distributed within his family amongst his siblings, nieces and nephews.

### 4.7 Settlement in urban parishes in Geelong other than Barrabool

Other Households settled in neighbouring areas to Belmont. John and Isabella McDonald (Household 1) lived across the Barwon River from Belmont in Bellerine Street, South Geelong. Bellerine Street was also the home of Angus McDonald. It is not clear whether or not there was any relationship between these two Households and whether the two families lived at the same address. John McIver, a teacher at the Gaelic schools in Ballarat and Geelong lived in Geelong.

Single females from Moidart Households also acquired property and financial security of their own as the following example demonstrates. It also shows the degree to which women were concerned about the security of younger female members of their extended family by the way in which real estate was passed on between female family members on occasions avoiding the patriarchal mode of inheritance usually present amongst these Households. For example, Flora McDonald left two four-roomed weatherboard houses to her mother on her death; one in Fyans Street and the other in Waterloo Street. As mentioned

\(^{59}\) In the Will and Estate of Alexander Joseph McDonald late of Belmont Street, Belmont near Geelong in the State of Victoria Woolclasser deceased, Probate Jurisdiction and Consent of
earlier Mary McDonald (daughter of Household 23 and married to son of Household 21), returned to live in the Parish of Moorpanyal, Geelong, following her husband’s death. Mary lived in Waterloo Street with her daughter Flora and then later moved to Wellington Street in West Geelong. This move may have been precipitated by her daughter’s death in 1916. Mary left this inheritance from her daughter Flora in two equal parts; one half to her sister Catherine Kennedy and the second half to her seven nieces. Her sister predeceased her and so the Will was altered to give Catherine’s share to her three children Sarah, Annie and John Kennedy in three equal parts. To do this the properties in Waterloo and Fyans Streets were both sold with Catherine’s children each receiving £115. Mary’s nieces each received £57 from the estate. The estate was sold and the two properties moved out of the family’s ownership. It is not clear how Flora acquired this real estate or why her mother Mary was living at a third address when she died. Mary’s niece was renting the Waterloo Street house and the other home was also being rented as the Inventory for Mary’s estate records the collection of outstanding rents on both properties. Of interest is the fact that Mary’s estate paid outstanding nursing fees for her niece renting the Waterloo Street house.

Several members of the Moidart Households became licensees of hotels in Geelong. Donald McDonald (Household 14) was also a Licensee and held the license of two hotels in Geelong before he took up farming at Connewarre. He held the license of the Belmont hotel (later called the Racecourse hotel) from 1894 to 1901 and then took over the license of the Caledonian hotel (later
known as the Good Woman hotel) in Little Ryrie Street between 1902 and 1906 when he moved to the farm. A relation by the name of Allan McDonald (Household 14) was living as a resident in the hotel at the time of his death in 1906 again showing the strong kinship relationships that existed well after the arrival of the Households in 1852. No doubt these two licenses provided Donald with the financial means to purchase land. At the time of his death Donald left a farm of 240 acres with an eight roomed, weatherboard home, stock, machinery and sheds. His estate also contained three allotments of land, two of which were in Belmont (including one in Church Street) and the other in O’Farrar Place, Geelong. Roderick McDonald (Household 18) was the licensee of the Star hotel (Rising Sun hotel) in 1889-90 when the license was transferred to a Rose McDonald. It is possible that the Licensee of this same hotel between 1860 and 1863 by the name of Allan McDonald was Roderick’s father.

Many of the Households elected to remain in Geelong and purchase an allotment and dwelling in an urban setting. The following section of the chapter will demonstrate how those who settled in rural parts of the Colony and selected land under the Grant Land Acts encountered many hardships as they strove to generate sufficient income from their minerally deficient and inadequate acreages.

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61 In the Will of Donald McDonald late of "Oaklands Farm" Conewarre, in the State of Victoria. Farmer deceased. VPRS 28/P/3, Unit 312, File 126/233, PROV., North Melbourne.
63 Twenty Moidart Households owned one or more dwellings either on their selected land or in Geelong by the mid-1860s.
4.8 Land settlement by the Moidart Households under the 1865 and 1869 Land Acts

Application documents to select land were completed by the members of at least thirteen Households under both of the Grant Land Acts of 1865 and 1869. A search of the original applications made by members of Moidart Households for crown selections reveals that the majority of the applications, however, were made in the late 1860s to early 1870s under the 1865 Land Act. No doubt many of the younger men involved had made small fortunes on the goldfields or in other fields of employment and were eager to use the money to purchase a small holding of their own.

An examination of the contents of these applications shows that by the time they were able to purchase the land as freehold, many had met the fencing requirements, erected a dwelling, dug wells and cleared and cultivated part of their acreage as required by the 1865 Act. Several holdings also increased dramatically in size and value when the selections of the second generation were added to the initial Household grant.

4.9 Land settlement within the rural parishes of the County of Grant

The members of several Households managed to select land in parishes within

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64 The Households for which I have found evidence of Crown Grant applications are: Households 5 (4 individual applications), 6 (4), 11 (1), 14 (2), 15 (1), 17 (2), 18 (1), 20 (1), 21 (2), 22 (2), 25 (4), 29 and 31 (1). Many of these same Households also had erected a dwelling in compliance with the Act.
the County of Grant some under both the 1865 and 1869 Grant Land Acts whilst others took up land solely through the 1869 and later Acts. Their experiences, the difficulties encountered and resultant outcomes are described in relation to the legislated conditions imposed by both Acts in the following section of the chapter. As can be seen in the following table, land or housing was obtained within nineteen parishes with the majority of purchases taking place in Belmont, Geelong.

Table 4.1: Moidart Household land selections or real estate purchases by Parish, number of selections and Land Acts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of selectors</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Number under the 1865 Land Act</th>
<th>Number under the 1869 Land Act</th>
<th>Total number of selections or home purchases in parish</th>
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<td>Moorpanyal</td>
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<td>Kerrit</td>
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<td>Ballark</td>
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</table>

*Source: Municipal council rate books, parish maps, wills and probate records.*
Several of the heads of Households were advanced in age on their arrival in Port Phillip and so taking up a selection of their own was only possible when labour was shared between members of the Household. This was the position for Donald McDonald (Household 6), his wife Anne and their sons Ewen, John, Donald and Angus who arrived on board the Allison. Father and sons were successful applicants under the two Land Acts of 1865 and 1869.65

A crown grant of 20 acres was obtained by Donald McDonald at the age of 59 at Mt Wallace, between Mt. Egerton and Gordon, in the Parish of Kerrit Bareet, on 7 June 1865, (allotment 17 of section 13) under the 1865 Act.66 Application forms reveal that sons John and Ewen also selected adjoining allotments 15 and 16 to their father’s on the same day with all three allotments totalling approximately 60 acres. Hellier claims that “Donald and his sons worked the land as it had been worked back in Scotland, sharing common grazing lands and supporting unmarried sisters.”67 Ewen and an Angus McDonald (see footnote 55) selected three additional allotments at Mt Wallace the following year, possibly adding a further 58 acres of land to the estate.

65 Donald and Anne also had a son named Angus who was a twin of Ewen. Their sister Margaret married an Angus McDonald (son of Household 17). An Angus McDonald also selected land at Mt Wallace (allotment 25, section 13, Parish of Kerrit Bareet) adjoining that selected by Ewen (allotments 26A and 26B, section 13, Parish of Kerrit Bareet). Both selected their land in 1866. I am not able to determine from the correspondence files whether the Angus involved is the brother or brother-in-law of Ewen. See pages 290-291 in this chapter for further information related to Angus and Margaret McDonald.
66 Application under the 42nd section of the Amending Land Act 1865, correspondence file 65/1276, Donald McDonald, 7/6/1865, VPRS 624 Land Selection Files, Section 42, Land Act 1865, PROV., North Melbourne.
In 1865, in an effort to thwart the squatters, James MacPherson Grant, the Minister for Lands, introduced a new Land Act. Thirty-six Land Offices were set up across the Colony to deal with the applications. The plans of each area opened for selection were published and 140,000 copies were sold at sixpence per copy by December 1865. It was doomed to failure because the conditions placed on the poorer selectors were too demanding. These conditions included five-year leases with an annual rent of two shillings an acre, residency by the selector on the land for a period of three years and improvements to the land in the form of the clearance of vegetation or fencing for example, to the value of one pound per acre. At the end of three years, however, the lessee had the right to purchase the land at the price of one pound per acre.

By the time Donald McDonald applied to purchase his selection as freehold in 1871 he had built a house and resided on his land for the required three years, erected three chains of three-railed fencing and 25 chains of log fencing and built stock yards. He had also managed to clear and cultivate 15 of his 20 acres thus fulfilling the requirements of the 1865 Act. At the time of his death in 1876, eleven years after selecting land and at the age of 70, his land and chattels were valued at £170 in total. This was a great achievement for a man who had arrived in Australia aged 46 and with a wife and eight children all under the age of 18 to care for.

Donald’s son, Duncan also selected land in 1865 and followed up this selection with a further application in 1873 under the 1869 Act. Duncan’s experience is

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of interest as it involved difficulties faced by many selectors in relation to the original surveying of the land and the quality of the soil and illustrates why so many selectors abandoned their land shortly after taking it up.  

Firstly Duncan was able to place posts with the notice of intent to select on this allotment of land in 1873 because the original selectors (Thomas Herring and Margaret Scott) did not pay the survey fee and declined to take up the selection. Their selection application was therefore cancelled providing Duncan with this opportunity. Secondly, Duncan’s application to purchase the land was held up as he refused to pay the survey fee as well, believing that the survey itself was defective and the fee excessive. Correspondence attached to his file states that, following a meeting with himself, the contract surveyor and a Land Office official at Geelong in November 1874, the surveys undertaken on this and adjoining allotments were indeed found to be defective and, accordingly, the survey fee was returned to Duncan McDonald.

The diagram of the land selected by Duncan showed that most of it was swamp, suitable only for grazing and unsuitable for cultivation of any kind. Duncan was successful, however, in turning his swampy selections into land suitable for grazing sheep but others were not so fortunate:

In the case of inferior land selected people soon abandoned it – unable to cultivate it and the squatter’s sheep and cattle feed over it. He has no

69 In the Will of Donald McDonald late of Egerton in the Colony of Victoria (Statement of Assets and Liabilities), VPRS 07591/P/002, Unit 000038, File 17/210, PROV, North Melbourne.

70 See correspondence and notes attached to Schedule 1, Application for License under Part 11 of “The Land Act 1869” by Duncan McDonald, VPRS 625/P/0000, Unit 000012, Correspondence file 74/608/19.20, December 1874, PROV, North Melbourne.
Like Duncan, many selectors fell victim to the impoverished condition of the soils. Such was the degree of concern about the selection of inferior land that a suggestion was put forward to Victoria’s legislators in 1870 to partition off the inferior parts and to reserve these as commonage until all superior lands had been selected. Perhaps this Household was successful in obtaining and holding land because of the number of working age sons within the family and the fact that labour was pooled enabling the Household to overcome difficulties and to enable the large tract of land to be fenced, grazed and cultivated. Their skills and experience in working with sheep no doubt assisted them to manage this form of farming. Eldest son Duncan applied later for another selection at Kongwak (near Mornington) whilst retaining his Mt Wallace selection. This application will be examined in the next section of the chapter.

Individual Household members became financially successful in other work earning the means to either select an initial grant or add further acreage to land already held under earlier Acts. This was the case for John McDonald (Brother of Donald McDonald - Household 29) who was the Licensee of the Royal Crown Hotel in Ballarat when he applied for a License in 1866 for 42 acres in the Parish of Ballark, under the Land Act of 1865. He made a further application in 1871 under the 1869 Act for 31 acres of unsurveyed land. This second application was for an allotment adjoining land he already held under

71 Author unknown, Settlement under the 42nd Clause of the Amending Land Act 1865 by a special reporter of the Argus LT 824.V66 (V.83) Rare Books Section, State Library of Victoria, Melbourne, p.3.

license under the 1865 Act and was granted in 1873.  

In May 1869 Grant brought in an amending Act which came into force on 1 February 1870. The major difference between the two Acts was that under the 1869 Act the maximum holding size was reduced from 640 acres to 320 acres. Powell suggests that this decision was deliberately taken by the squatters and other members of the Legislative Council in order to perpetuate what he calls ‘the agrarian myth’. The worth of any selector was to be judged by his ability to plough the land rather than to use it for grazing purposes. The squatters hoped that many would be dissuaded from selecting if hard, physical labour was required in order to retain ownership of the selection. A permanent residence had to be constructed on the land whilst the land had to be cultivated and improved. If these conditions were met, the selected land could become freehold after three years on payment of 14 shillings, or after seven years, on the payment of two shillings an acre. Any monies paid were deducted from the standard purchase price of £1 per acre.

John McDonald clearly met the conditions of the 1869 Act as by 1876 he had cultivated 25 acres of his land growing wheat and oats and harvesting 16 bushells to the acre. He had built a five roomed weatherboard home valued at £150, erected 15 chains of post and wire fencing along with 66 chains of log fencing and had dug a well. In addition he had planted trees and a hedge on the

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73 See VPRS 624 Land Selection Files, Section 42, Land Act 1865, VPRS 627/P/0000, J McDonald, File (Lease number) 11891/31, PROV, North Melbourne.
75 See *Victoria the first century* pp. 132-133, for the effects of this Act, its failure and the need for further amendments. Overall, the Land Acts failed to unlock the land and it was not until the end of World War One that many large properties were opened up with 1,750,000 acres settled by 10,000 returned soldiers.
land. All these improvements were valued at approximately £320. John appears to have been very successful as he also held 13,000 acres under a squating license between Cobden and Warrnambool and a further 48 acres as freehold at Mt Wallace that was also under cultivation. John McDonald typifies farmers in the 1860s in so far as most cultivated land in the Western District was being used for producing grain crops and fodder for stock as “…four basic crops had then reached substantial significance. These were wheat, oats, hay and sown grasses.”

Sutherlands Creek, in the Parish of Yowang, became the home of several McDonald families although not all families were related. The evidence suggests that initially two brothers, John and Angus McDonald from Kylemore Moidart, settled here together with their families. John and his wife Marjory arrived on the ‘Marco Polo’ whilst it appears that Angus was already settled. James, a married son of Angus, arrived separately with an infant daughter having lost his wife during the journey on the ‘Araminta’. He also settled in the district. All of these Households raised several children, many of whom later married and also settled in the area.

The Household of Angus and Mary McDonald (Household 5) arrived on the ‘Allison’ adding a fourth but unrelated McDonald Household to the district. This case is important for this study as it contains the land selection details for

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76 See VPRS 625 Selection Files, Sections 19 and 20, Land Act 1869, VPRS 625/P/0000, Unit 000419, J. McDonald, File (Lease number) 30824/19, PROV, North Melbourne.
78 Letter dated 30 May 1949 and written by J. McDonald in reply to an unnamed priest who wrote to enquire about the McDonald families of Little River. Rev. Father Linane's Priest Files A-Z, Archives, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Melbourne.
two generations of male members of the Household. The achievements of the various members of the Household serve to illustrate the degree to which the work of two generations brought financial security to the members of a third generation. It also demonstrates the extent to which the composition of the familial Household changed as the children married and left the Household and district in search of their own economic security.

Angus and Mary McDonald raised four sons and two daughters on a small selection in this area with sons John, Roderick, Ronald and Donald all acquiring holdings of various acreages of their own. Daughter Kate lived in Kilgour Street, Geelong. John and Margaret McDonald (a daughter from Household 20) purchased 35 acres in the Parish of Yowang (portions 37 and 40) and raised ten children. On his death, John left 14 acres to his brother, seven acres to his sister and 14 acres to his son Alexander, all valued at five pounds per acre.\(^79\) He also left a personal estate of £62.\(^80\) Arrangements made for the financial security of his widow and other members of the family are not recorded.

Son Roderick and daughter-in-law Mary spent many years living and working in many different parts of the Colony. Marrying in Geelong in 1857 their children were born in Geelong (1858), New South Wales (1860), Sutherlands Creek near Geelong (1861-1865), Lake Bolac (1868-1872) and Berrigan, New South Wales in 1874 where they eventually settled naming their property ‘Glen

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\(^{79}\) See the three passenger lists and membership of Households 5, 34, 38 and 41 in the Appendix.

\(^{80}\) In the Will of John McDonald late of Sutherlands Creek in the Colony of Victoria farmer deceased – Account, Affidavit of Executor and Statement and Affidavit, Document 49/4, PROV, North Melbourne.
Moidart’ after that part of Moidart where Roderick had lived. Roderick and Mary gradually acquired large acreages of land spread across different parts of New South Wales. On his death Roderick left several thousand acres within the Parishes of Warragubogra, Berrigan, Gereldery, Osbourne in the County of Denison, as well as land situated on the Bygalore Station near Condobolin, to his children and to the Catholic Church.

Ronald and Susan McDonald selected 308 acres in the Parish of Darriwell. Prior to this Ronald had also spent some time in New South Wales possibly working with his brother Roderick. On his return he married Susan, daughter of James McDonald. Both were living at Sutherlands Creek. At the time of Ronald’s death Susan was left to raise three infant daughters. She also became the Executrix of the estates of her uncle, Roderick and her father, James. James left an estate of a half share in 37 acres of land in the Parish of Yowang. This land was left firstly to his brother Roderick and then, on his death, to Susan.

The remaining son Donald also held land at Sutherlands Creek where he farmed. His holdings consisted of approximately 157 acres held in three allotments and valued at the time of his death at approximately £1,000. His occupation was listed as ‘grazier’ rather than farmer indicating a perceived

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81 Ibid.
82 Both Roderick McDonald (Household 5) and Duncan McDonald (Household 6) named their respective properties “Glen Moidart.” Both Households originated from the same crofting township of Kylesmore, Moidart which was located on the Glen Moidart Estate.
83 In the Will and Codicil of Roderick McDonald late of Berrigan in the State of New South Wales Grazier deceased., Copy Probate 23 No.2145 Folio 401 1909, Harold P. Whitty, Berrigan. Eggleston and Eggleston, Bank Place, Melbourne, VPRS 7591/P/2, Unit 433, File 111/519, PROV, North Melbourne.
84 In the Estate of Ronald McDonald late of Sutherlands Creek in the Colony of Victoria Farmer deceased. Intestate, VPRS 28/P/2, Unit 448, File 63/56, PROV, North Melbourne.
85 In the Estate of James McDonald late of Sutherlands Creek in the Colony of Victoria, Farmer deceased. Intestate, VPRS 28/P/2, Unit 540, File 74/576, PROV, North
social and economic shift. In addition he held bank savings of £357. The property was left to his wife Flora and on her death to his nephew Donald.

4.10 Rural settlement outside the County of Grant

Several members of the Households also took advantage of the opportunity to acquire land through the application and ballot process settling outside the boundaries of the County of Grant.

Through the land sale at Ararat in August 1866 twenty-two agricultural areas were opened up containing 19,490 acres in 1,878 allotments. Eighty-five people selected land whilst a further 531 took out leases on land in the district.\textsuperscript{86} James Murray, a Highlander from Sutherlandshire, and his wife Catherine McDonald (daughter of Household 21) selected five crown land allotments of two acres each at Lake Bolac in the Parish of Parupa, County of Ripon at this sale. At the time of her marriage in 1854 Catherine was a domestic servant whilst James had previously worked for the Clyde Company, as a miner on the Ballarat goldfields, a publican in a Skipton Hotel and as a carrier.\textsuperscript{87} Before selecting land in Lake Bolac James had worked as a fencer in the district thereby earning the capital needed for their application. Following the initial grant James made three further selections in 1876 when a further 45 acres were leased, another twelve in 1882 and a further four in 1884 totalling approximately 70 acres. James and Catherine were a part of a large Scottish

\textsuperscript{86} Author unknown. Settlement under the 42nd Clause of the Amending Land Act 1865 by a special reporter of The Argus page unrecorded.
and Irish settlement in Lake Bolac. An *Argus* reporter made the following comments on settlement at Lake Bolac in the mid 1860s:

In the Ararat district and around Lake Bolac, for instance, I found agricultural settlement going on briskly, substantial fencing accomplished, houses in course of erection, and crops giving a promise of abundance – for the season, fortunately, has been favourable to the farmer. These settlers were, for the most part, men who had been farming on their own account, either as tenants or as owners of their own land, who preferred to let their own acres, and to create new homes for themselves under the Land Act; or they were diggers, who had been very lucky in mining; or tradesmen, who had done well in business. It was curious, too, to note how the Celtic passion for the possession of land showed itself in the numerical predominance of Scotchmen and Irishmen among the selectors over their English and Welsh cousins.  

George, a son of James and Catherine, worked the farm with his father and continued to add further acres when he inherited the farm with his sister Mary in 1912. Catherine’s two brothers Ewen and Archibald and her sister Sarah lived at Learmonth where James and Catherine also lived for some years. Archibald worked as a labourer whilst Ewen worked as a carpenter. Sarah’s
husband Patrick McGrath worked as a blacksmith.90

Following his employment with the Clyde Company at Terrinallum, Roderick McDonald (Household 22) selected land as leasehold at Mortlake in the Parish of Toorak, County of Hampden. His daughter Jane lived in Mortlake, son Michael worked as a Station Manager at Darlington whilst his eldest son Duncan also farmed in the Mortlake district. It is possible that this Household had a certain connection to the Scottish district of Lochaber as Jane’s Will was witnessed by brother and sister Donald and Eliza McMaster from Lake Bolac whose parents emigrated from Roybridge near Fort William.91 This provides a further insight into the close Highland connections between families that continued to exist in these small Western District townships. Roderick left his property to sons Michael and Duncan.

The Parish of Darkbone in the County of Kara Kara lies near St Arnaud. Michael Kennedy (son of Household 25) and Catherine McMaster (daughter of Household 23) selected 20 acres for which he applied to purchase as freehold under the 1869 Land Act.92 The License was originally granted in 1879 and his application to purchase was approved in 1885. Michael stated that his reason for wanting to convert his land from leasehold into a freehold was “That I may raise a sum of money on the above to carry me through until next harvest”.93 His request illustrates the financial burden carried by many selectors as they

90 Lake Learmonth General Cemetery, Number 184, Instructions for the burial of Patrick McGrath (brother-in-law of Hugh and Archibald McDonald of Learmonth), 1902.
92 Michael Kennedy, Land Selection Files, Land Act 1869, Section 49, VPRS 439/P, Unit 256, File 466/49, PROV, North Melbourne.
waited for their selections to return a financial reward. Unfortunately many were unable to wait from one harvest to the next for this return to occur and lost their selections in the process.

Apart from the financial outlay required to fence and make improvements on the land selectors like Michael were required to outlay significant amounts of capital throughout the selection process. Firstly he had to pay to have his selected piece of land surveyed and a plan drawn up at a cost of two pounds and thirteen shillings. Secondly, he had to pay one pound for his Certificate of Registration required before a selector could legally forward his application to purchase the land. Thirdly, he was required to sign a declaration to say that he was prepared to relinquish his selection at a later stage if his land was required for mining purposes. In Michael’s case his selection did lie within a designated mining reserve. This meant that in 1879 he had to apply for a Goldfields Residence and Cultivation License.\textsuperscript{94}

According to his file, Michael paid his annual rent from August 1879 to August 1885. Although he had fulfilled all the fencing conditions on three sides of his land and enclosed the fourth with a shared fence with his neighbour, his application to purchase was held up because a rental installment of two pounds two shillings and sixpence had not been paid in June 1884. He was officially recorded as in arrears. Following payment of the rental arrears, further rent totalling ten pounds, the purchase money of ten pounds, the Certificate of Registration fee of one pound, the Grant fee of one pound and

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid. 
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
one shilling and the Assurance fund fee of ten shillings, the land finally became the freehold of Michael and Catherine in September 1885 owing to Michael’s determination and savings.\textsuperscript{95} Later the family moved to Little River where they again selected land and Michael continued to farm.

Catherine Kennedy’s sister Anne (daughter of Household 23) married Norman McDonald and together they applied for an 80 acre selection at Spring Hill, a small settlement five miles east of Skipton in the Parish of Skipton, County of Hampden in 1871.\textsuperscript{96} Their first rent of four pounds plus the one pound application fee was paid in January and the lease was drawn up in May. Norman was employed as a shepherd when the application was made. To their great credit the couple were in a financial position to apply to convert their lease to freehold ten years later which they did at Smythesdale in 1881 where they paid the outstanding balance of four pounds. Added to the £76 they had paid in rent over the ten years their selection cost them £80 or one pound per acre, this being the standard price.

One requirement necessary to convert leasehold to freehold was for a mounted constable to visit the allotment and write a report on the improvements made and the residency requirement.\textsuperscript{97} In the case of this couple the mounted constable’s report noted that over the ten years, the land had successfully been enclosed by 100 chains of fencing made up of 60 chains of top rail and two wire, 20 of post and four wires and 20 of log and brush. In addition, twelve acres of land had been cleared by grubbing trees, eight acres had been

\textsuperscript{95} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{96} Norman MacDonald, VPRS 625/P/0000, Unit 123, File 6751/19.20, Selection Files,
cultivated and a dam had been constructed. It was noted that no buildings had been erected, however the constable explained that Norman was now employed as a boundary rider on a nearby station located one and a half miles from his land. The family was poor and Norman was not able to leave this employment to reside on his land. It might also be assumed from this that, as a boundary rider, Norman would have spent long hours if not days away from his land and therefore much of the physical work in planting and harvesting would have been undertaken by Anne, while also caring for a large family. The report also noted that no cultivation had been undertaken in the first year, however in the second year, three acres had been prepared to grow carrots, potatoes and a third crop (undecipherable in the original document). This had cost the couple 20 shillings per acre but had returned 25 bags of carrots and one ton of potatoes. In the third year they had sown eight acres of wheat. The achievements of this Household are noteworthy and indicative of the range of skills that these Highlanders possessed and of their ability to cultivate the ground in such a way as to receive good harvests as a result of their hard work. As Claude Notman notes in reference to Spring Hill:

…most of the blocks were of eighty acres, which on second class country were not nearly sufficient to sustain the occupants. In the course of time each farmer sold out and gradually the population of the district dwindled until few traces of the old settlement remained.
Duncan McDonald (Household 6) whose selections in the County of Grant are mentioned on pages 275-7 in this chapter also selected land outside the County of Grant. This selection comprised 700 acres at Kongwak, in the Parish of Wonthaggi North on the Mornington Peninsula and was taken up under the Land Act of 1884. The history of this selection is again of particular interest for two reasons. Firstly, Duncan also named his property ‘Glen Moidart’ after the land he had left in Scotland thus creating and maintaining an important link for himself and his family with his former home in Moidart. Secondly, this selection experience is important as it illustrates the precarious nature of holding land under these Land Acts and how easily land could be forfeited by not fulfilling the requirements of these Acts. Firstly, McDonald applied for a License under the Land Act of 1884 at Geelong for 750 acres at Kongwak. In this case there was another late applicant, David Henry McDonald who successfully argued against Henry being considered as an applicant and against a proposal to split the allotment into two halves thereby becoming the successful lessee. His problems, however, were not over.

By 1886 this selection was under forfeiture because only 15 acres had been cleared, no one was residing on the land and the land was not being used in any way. In April 1890 Henry Batley of Korrumburra applied by letter for

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101 Duncan McDonald, VPRS 5357/P/0000, Unit 003336, File 10626/42.44 in VPRS 624 Land Selection Files, Section 42, Land Act 1865, PROV, North Melbourne.
102 See footnote 82 on page 281 for information about the two properties named “Glen Moidart”.
103 See correspondence containing details of possible forfeiture of this land in VPRS 5357/P/0000, Unit 003336, File 10626/42.44 in VPRS 624 Land Selection Files, Section 42, Land Act 1865, PROV, North Melbourne.
104 Ibid. See letter dated 22/10/1885 on file 10626/42.44.
forfeiture of the selection. McDonald appealed against the claim by letter in July 1890, where he explained that he had cut 25 acres of grass and had employed labourers to do this work for him. He received £50 for the grass but the wages of the labourers had cost him £112. In addition the failure of crops (presumably on other allotments that he owned) meant that he did not have the finances to make the necessary improvements. McDonald managed to successfully claim against the forfeiture and to retain ownership of the Lease. The correspondence file for Duncan McDonald states that in 1893 Duncan was a farmer at Mt Wallace (Parish of Kerrit Bareet) leasing 222 acres for cultivation and dairying and, under the Land Act 1890, was leasing a further 500 acres for grazing purposes in the Parish of Ballark. By all accounts Duncan McDonald was a very successful land-owner.

This example also highlights the levels of literacy in English required in order to argue by letter. In Duncan’s case he arrived in Victoria aged 17 years. He therefore completed his education in Scotland. His ability to communicate in written and spoken English with government officials and agents about complex issues such as these demonstrates that he had acquired a relatively high level of competency in written as well as spoken English. It is highly probable that an inability to maintain written communication with government officials on the part of selectors contributed to the loss of some selections.

Whilst many Households established a stable home environment in which to

105 Ibid. See letter dated 16/4/1890 on file 10626/42.44.
106 Ibid. See letter dated 16/7/1890 on file 10626/42.44.
107 Ibid. See examples of his letters in File 10626/42.44.
108 Unfortunately the abilities of passengers to read or write in English are not recorded in the 'Allison', nominal passenger and disposal lists, VPRS 7666 Inward passenger lists
raise families, the lives of other Households were characterised by high
mobility with families moving constantly to secure employment opportunities.
Many of the males tried their hand at whatever work was available
demonstrating that they were not the idle and lazy figures the Colonial
government feared. Their abilities to learn new skills and their willingness to
travel great distances made them in fact ideal employees. When one source of
work ceased they were only too ready to move on in search of an alternative
and were keen to establish themselves with the necessary tools and resources to
work for either themselves or for others. The two Households of Angus and
Mary McDonald (Household 15) and Archibald and Catherine McDonald
(Household 17) are typical of those who journeyed to several locations before
finally settling on selections of their own. Within days of their arrival in the
Colony both Households journeyed with their respective families to Colac to
accept their first employment on Australian soil with a Mr Lyons who may
have contracted them to work for a squatter in the district.\textsuperscript{109} Angus and Mary
McDonald (Household 15) later moved to settle at Penshurst where their
daughter Ann married John Cameron, a member of a well-established family
who had settled on the land in that district. Sons Allan and Angus took on
labouring and farming work in the district.

The following example of Angus McDonald (brother of Archibald of
Household 17) well illustrates the high degree of mobility endured by many
men as they strove for economic independence. Angus led an itinerant life
accepting employment in different parts of Victoria. After working for a short

\textsuperscript{109} Disposal List of the ‘Araminta’ VPRS 7666, Inwards Passenger Lists-British Ports
time at Colac with his elder brother Alexander and sister Marjory, he left for the goldfields in 1853 fossicking at Ballarat, Daylesford, Geelong, Frenchman’s Gully, Rokewood and Smythe’s Creek. He then worked building the Melbourne to Geelong railway line followed by a year shepherding for a butcher at Clunes. He left Clunes for Happy Valley but later returned to work bullock teams that he owned in the Clunes district. He then selected 20 acres of land at Mt Egerton and in 1878 selected 262 acres in the Goulburn Valley. Eventually the farm fell into debt, however, and was lost to the family. Like many of the men in this study he married another member of a Moidart Household, Margaret McDonald (Household 6) at Little River in 1862.

Much of the evidence in this chapter has been derived from probate documents and wills. I have been able to successfully locate the wills or probate documents for 31 members of 12 Moidart Households. This largely excludes those women who married post arrival and whom I have not been able to trace. There appears to be a pattern associated with the making of wills within particular Households. In Household 5 for example I have identified wills from five members, in Household 6 from three members and in Household 17, four members. The existence of such documents is evidence of the desire of those with land and possessions to ensure that these are passed into the safekeeping of other family members.

The contents of such documents also testify to the economic success of many individuals in overcoming a range of obstacles and barriers to achieve

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1852-923, Book 6, PROV, North Melbourne, pp. 35-47.
110 R. P. Whitworth, *Victoria and its metropolis: past and present, Volume 2: The Colony*
economic security in Victoria and elsewhere. Most of the assets listed in the Inventories, however, relate to land. In some cases substantial bank savings were left to descendants or family members. In isolated cases farming implements and stock constituted the only things of value remaining. Few homes contained any furniture of substance with most furnishings valued at less than ten pounds. Only one will bequeathed the assets of the owner to be distributed outside the family.\(^{112}\) As mentioned earlier, Allan McDonald directed that all personal and real estate be left to the Parish Priest of St. Mary’s Church Geelong for distribution at his discretion. In all other cases beneficiaries included spouses, children, siblings and nieces and nephews.

4.11 Conclusion

In many ways the findings of this chapter are paramount in determining the degree of economic and social success or otherwise of the Moidart Households in Victoria. Evidence of land selection and the ability to hold land and pass it on to the next generation were strong indicators of a ‘shift’ in the economic standing of members of the Households.

Government land records examined in this study have shown that many members of the first generation were successful in selecting small acreages of land or a township allotment and house. As shown in the chapter members of the second generation were also able to purchase selections with examples of two or three brothers successfully selecting adjoining allotments in order to

create a farm with sufficient acreage to make it economically viable. No doubt they also pooled their labour to work the land as a Household. In the case of urban allotments there were examples of strong kinship relationships at play with parents in the financial position to purchase additional properties for children and siblings who often inhabited the dwelling rent free. This indicates that the Household was financial and not dependent on rent. Nor did it have to place members of the Household in a position of owing money to support the Household or repay the mortgage. These Households were, however, in the minority. Evidence exists for eleven Households who managed to purchase one or more urban allotments in Geelong.

Other Households provided this study with evidence of two generations with the financial means to invest in real estate. Father and son Angus and Donald McDonald (Household 14) eventually owned three houses and two vacant blocks of land in the two parishes of Barrabool and Corio in Geelong as well as a farm of 240 acres in the parish of Conewarre.

The living arrangements of people at the time of their death were also not indicative of their economic successes in life. Allan McDonald, for example, died as a boarder at the Caledonian Hotel in Geelong leaving both real estate

112 See In the Will and unadministered Estate of Allan McDonald late of Church Street Belmont in the Colony of Victoria, Labourer deceased, VPRS 28/P, Unit 895, File 70/366, and VPRS 7591/P/2, Unit 286, File 70/366 PROV, North Melbourne.
113 See brothers Ewen File 4579/31, John File 4519/31 and Donald McDonald File 4518/31 (Household 6) in the Parish of Kerritt Bareet, County of Grant, VPRS 627/P/0000, Unit 00045, PROV, North Melbourne.
114 See the Will of Angus McDonald late of Belmont in the State of Victoria, labourer deceased - Inventory. VPRS00028/P/0002, Unit 000634, File 85/540, PROV., North Melbourne and In the Will of Donald McDonald late of “Oaklands Farm” Conewarre in the State of Victoria Farmer deceased. VPRS 28/P/3, Unit 312, File 126/233, PROV, North Melbourne, 1902.
and a bank account containing over £900 to nieces and nephews.\textsuperscript{115}

The research has shown that those who settled in Geelong, however, were able to obtain a dwelling and an allotment within two years of arrival possibly due to the regular wages received as labourers and opportunity to purchase at an earlier date compared to rural land sales.

The research has also uncovered the struggles of many of the Households both to select land and to turn their selections into Freehold. As shown in the examples included in the chapter much of the land selected was unsuitable for cultivation forcing selectors to pursue grazing activities which, in the case of the Moidart people, was a familiar form of farming and land use. Others struggled to retain their selections under the weight of repayments to banks, meeting the requirements of the Land Acts and because of poor seasons as in the case of Michael Kennedy on pages 283-4. For single males the opportunity to save financially by shepherding, labouring or via the goldfields prior to applying for a selection may account for why so many of this cohort were in a financial position to bid at auction at land sales in the mid-1860s. Records of land ownership, including Applications for Licenses, wills, probate documents and rate records, exist for at least 40 individuals from 21 of the 37 Households. Given that it has not been possible to trace the members of nine Households following their arrival, evidence of land ownership at some point exists for approximately 75 per cent of the Households. Further examination of the records, however, is necessary to ascertain the length of time that the land

\textsuperscript{115} In the Will of Allan McDonald late of the Caledonian Hotel, Little Ryrie Street, Geelong, retired labourer deceased. VPRS 28/P3, Unit 2108, File 235/792,
remained in the hands of the original selector and its subsequent fate.

The acquisition of land became an important symbol and indicator of economic success in the new land. In some cases land also played a cultural role whereby owning and working the land together became a means through which the traditional Household unit of the Highlands remained cohesive. In other situations the composition of the Household unit was changed as younger members left to obtain work and ultimately to select land of their own.

Land, however, was not the only means through which the Highlanders sought to preserve their identity and cultural traditions. The transmission and transplantation of culture occurred on many levels. The next chapter will examine the numerous ways in which the broader Scottish community in Victoria attempted to maintain and preserve its cultural identity and traditions.
CHAPTER FIVE

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

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. 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.

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.” 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.” This has implications for this research as I have used a case study approach and the nature of the ‘case’ in this research focuses

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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 Trevelyans’s fear of the ‘Celtic people’ migrating south into England in search of

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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.

employment. 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.

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.

10 See Chapter two p. 132.
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.\textsuperscript{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

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.  

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:

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.  

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. 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

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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’.  

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.  
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.”

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.

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:

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.  

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.” 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:

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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.  

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

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

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\(^{24}\) Ibid.

\(^{25}\) Ibid, 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 1852\textsuperscript{27} 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.”\textsuperscript{28} By 1870, there were 170,000 Catholics in Australia of whom an estimated 100,000 were born in Ireland.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, See pp. 87-88 for a statistical analysis of the impact of the growth of Catholicism in both Victoria and wider Australia.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid.
Highlanders were active members of the Victorian Catholic Church from its beginnings.\textsuperscript{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”.\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{quote}
We the undersigned natives of Scotland, numbering one thousand
\end{quote}

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

\end{footnotes}
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 Moidart, 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 Moidart), 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 cooperation 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

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. 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. 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.
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, 

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

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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. Bleasedale 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.
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 Scotsish 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.  

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. 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.

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. 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”. 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

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56 Macdonald, Moidart; or Among the Clanranalds, p. 219.
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{59} For the history of this traditional hymn see Rankin’s file in Linane’s Priest Files A-Z.
\textsuperscript{60} C. W. J. Withers, \textit{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

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. 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’, ‘midifriend’ 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.\(^6^6\) 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.\(^6^7\)

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

\(^6^6\) Moidart marriage register 1830-1854, Reference RH21/48/2, National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh. Page numbers unrecorded.
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

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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. 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. The evidence demonstrating how separation from family and constant internal mobility may have contributed to

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. 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

⁷² Ibid.
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. 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 diffusional:

… 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.

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.

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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.
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. 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

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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.\textsuperscript{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.

\textbf{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:

\begin{verse}
\end{verse}
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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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”.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{79} Butler, ‘Defining Diaspora’, p 205.
\textsuperscript{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.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
members”. 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.

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.

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82 Ibid.
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”. What the words “true Britons” meant in this context is not clear, however, what is clear is that

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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.\(^{88}\)

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’. 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.

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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.  

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. 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.\textsuperscript{92}

This Clan member may have been John McDonald who acted as the Ranger for
the Society.\textsuperscript{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:

\begin{quote}
...in centre an entablature representing a well-known incident from
Ossian’s Poem in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Book of Fingal surrounded with a wreath of
Scotch thistles and supported on the left hand by a Highlander in full
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid.
costume, and on the right by an Aboriginal in the attitude of throwing his Boomerang.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{93} See \textit{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. 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

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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

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95 Alba 1891: Gaidhlig (Scottish Gaelic) Local Profile No. 002 for Area: Muideart (Moidart) p. 2. wwwlinguae-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.\(^{97}\)
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.  

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

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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:

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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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.

\subsection*{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

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p. 535.
\textsuperscript{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.
CHAPTER SIX

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.  

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.

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. ³³ 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

³³ 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.

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\(^6\) 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.
Table 6.1: Statistics provided to the 1884 Inquiry illustrating the state of crofting on Lochshiel Estate and Eilean Shona in Moidart.

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

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

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. 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

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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. 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.

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

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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

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.”\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid, Statement 33134, p. 2109.  
\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{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:

\ldots 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.\textsuperscript{15}

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

\ldots 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.\textsuperscript{16}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid, Statement 33247, p. 2113. \\
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. \\
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid, Statement 33257.
\end{flushleft}
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.\(^\text{17}\)

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

\(^\text{17}\) 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.\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{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. 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

\footnote{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.  

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

\[\text{Presbyterian emigration initially to Nova Scotia led by Reverend Norman McLeod in M. Harper, Adventurers and Exiles, pp. 338-349.}\]

\[\text{23 See A. F. Hughes in Jupp (ed.), The Australian People, for examples of Welsh settlements in Western Pennsylvania and Tennessee in the United States and Patagonia in Argentina and all led by Welsh clergymen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. pp. 739-739. See also a reference to the Rev. Michael Jones and his leadership amongst the Welsh in Patagonia in M. Langfield 'The Welsh Patagonian Connection' in International Migration Quarterly Review, Volume 36, Number 1, 1998, p. 68. For a Victorian example of religious leadership and the development of a community see 'The Krumnow settlement,' Hamilton Spectator Tuesday 16 November, 1880, p. 4, column 1 <http://members.datafast.net.au/boranu/krumarch.htm> (accessed 20 June 2005).}\]
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.
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8. Appendix A: Total cohort of Household members according to the 1851 Census \footnote{This list includes \textit{all} people residing in the house on the night of the 1851 Census. The data has been entered according to the surname, given name, gender, age, relationship to head of Household, occupation and farm or township in Moidart according to the Census. Where a person's age is not recorded it indicates that the person was either born on board ship or in Australia. The Household numbering system was developed for my data base and does not correspond with the Household numbering system used in the 1851 Census.} and including those born / died on board ship and those born in Australia.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Family name</th>
<th>Given name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Relationship to head of household</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Farm or township</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>head</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>farmer 5 acres</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>wife</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>son</td>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Donald</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>Agricultural labourer</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Kennedy</td>
<td>Flora</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>servant</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>house servant</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>head</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>farmer 5 acres</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
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<td>2.2</td>
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<td>Jane</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>wife</td>
<td>M</td>
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<td>McDonald</td>
<td>Catherine</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>U</td>
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<td>U</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
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<td>McDonald</td>
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<td>daughter</td>
<td>U</td>
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<td>2.8</td>
<td>McDonald</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>brother</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>mason</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
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<td>Cameron</td>
<td>John</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>head</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>farmer 5 acres</td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>wife</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td>Glenuig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Cameron</td>
<td>Marion / Sarah</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>daughter</td>
<td>U</td>
<td></td>
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