



Continuation from Introduction

The discovery of gold sent a shock wave through Colonial Australia. In 1851, Edward Hargraves convinced the people of Sydney that there was payable gold just outside of Bathurst in New South Wales. Within a month, 300 prospectors were in the area looking for gold. Soon payable gold was found in Victoria near Ballarat and Bendigo and people began streaming to the two gold fields, resulting in a gold rush.

Gold was also found at Rutherglen in Victoria, which was firstly called Wahgunyah established in the mid-1850s. Other Victorian gold fields regions were established at Beechworth, Castlemaine, Stawell, Maldon, Daylesford and Maryborough.

David Glen Hamilton (later to establish Clydeside Cellars) proposed that 'Seven Star' shout the bar and he could name the town after his hometown. Wallace was a native of Rutherglen, Scotland; and so for the price of a few beers, Rutherglen, Victoria was born. Ships crews deserted, leaving vessels stranded in port, shepherds left their flocks and government officials, clerks, teachers and policemen left their jobs in the excitement.

Changing Conditions in Scotland

In the period of 1832-46, there was a phase of industrial growth in Scotland which caused migration across the country. Of greater importance for Australia was the accumulation of business capital in Scotland which could be directed to establishing new businesses in Australia. Migration to Australia attracted families from all regions of Scotland. The availability of a free or assisted passages after 1832 to Australia encouraged a steady growth of emigrants.

After 1836, when economic conditions all over the country worsened, the Highlands were especially hard-hit, and it was partly due to this temporary economic set-back in the late 1830s and early 1840s that the flow of Scottish emigration to Australia from both the Highland and Lowland areas reached an unprecedented level.

“Poverty, famine and epidemics in Scotland in the 1820s and 1830s caused the first significant Scottish emigration to Australia. Victoria was the most popular colony in which to settle. Scottish squatters and rural workers established farms, and urban settlers worked as skilled artisans and professionals.

In the first Victorian census of 1854, Scotland-born people were the third largest group after the English and Irish, with 36,044 people. Within three years, a further 17,000 had arrived, many hoping to make their fortunes on the goldfields. Immigration assistance schemes also swelled the number of Scottish arrivals. By 1861, the Scotland-born population of Victoria reached 60,701 – the highest level it would ever reach.

Mining techniques – State Library of Victoria

As the gold rush declined, many Scottish immigrants moved on to farming, industry or commerce. Growing community organisations such as Presbyterian churches and highland societies provided a focus for social and cultural activities. “A text drawn from Origins immigrant communities in Museum Victoria Australia link on this migration page”

Large Scale Emigration to Australia after 1832

From 1840, the rate of Scottish families migrating to Australia continued to grow. In the early years prior to this date, the main settlement was in either Van Diemen’s Land or to Sydney Cove. Both were established as Penal Colonies. In later years, Scots settled in all Australian States – New South Wales, Tasmania (Van Diemen’s Land), Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia. The Northern Territory was established in 1911.

In 1839, the total number embarking in Scotland was 2,238—a seventh of the total number embarking in Britain for all the Australian settlements, including Van Diemen’s Land, Port Philip, South Australia, and Western Australia. Until 1843, when bounty emigration was suspended owing to the economic crisis in the Australian colonies, the Scottish emigration continued on a considerable scale. In 1840, over 1,600 assisted emigrants went out; and in 1841, a record year, no fewer than 4,376 assisted emigrants sailed from Leith, Dundee, and Greenock and its outports. In that year began the massive influx of Irish bounty emigrants (13,704) that lowered the proportion of Scots among the emigrants. “Text taken for the following web site- Large Scale Emigration to Australia after 1832 – ElectricScotland-Australia link on this migration page”

The Highland Clearances and Poverty in the Outer Hebrides

Poverty and Clearances in the Highlands and Islands caused a major disruption of the communities. Following the end of a Napoleonic war, the demand for kelp harvested in the Western Islands diminished and the clan chiefs replacing crofters for sheep which produced a greater income, therefore, many families left their homelands for other parts of Scotland, England or migrated to overseas countries.

The poorest crofters were evicted and the main areas where this occurred were in the islands, particularly Skye, Mull, the Long Island and the mainland parishes of the Inner Sound. Almost all of these people were Gaelic speakers and had little skills in English. In the islands of Skye, Parbay and Berneray there was extreme poverty with the infection of the potato crop.

The Highlands and Islands Emigration Society was formed to assist the poverty stricken families migrate to Australia. Between 1852 and 1857 5,000 people sailed from Scotland under this scheme to Australia.

Stories of the voyage to Australia

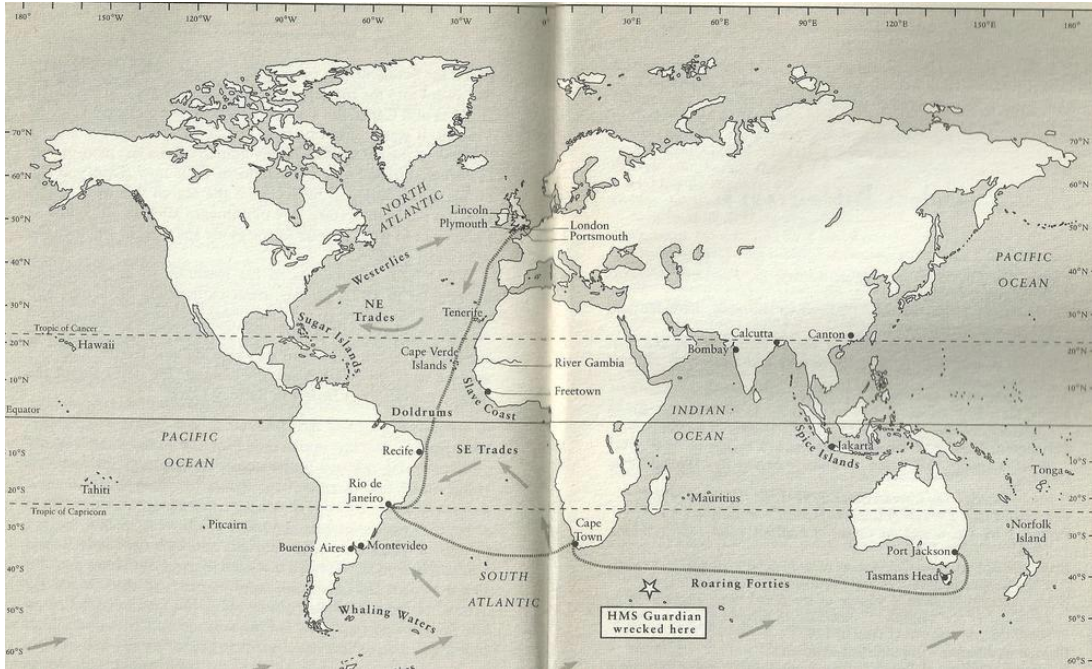
While many families may have records of their ancestors' voyage to Australia, there are two which are provided here. The first concerns the naval sailing ship HMS "Hercules" which was chartered by the Highlands and Islands emigration Society to bring families to Australia in 1853. "Details of the voyage can be found the Emigrants by the Hercules link on this migration page"



Another diary of the voyage of the sailing ship "Duncan" which sailed from Greenock to Sydney, New South Wales in 1838 with McNeil families can be found as a link on this migration page

The Journey by Sail to Australia to Tasmania and Queensland - Maritime Museum of Tasmania – The Journey-by Sailing Ship link on this migration page

Also watch the Queensland State Archives – Scots in Queensland youtube – link on this migration page



Early days at Port Melbourne

Settlement of families in Australia with the name of MacNeil, McNeill, McNeil, Neil, Neall, Neal and other variations of our clan names.

Research into the Australian census collections, records of marriages, births and deaths have shown that our clan families settled in all parts of Australia from Perth, in Western Australia to Townsville in the north of Queensland

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