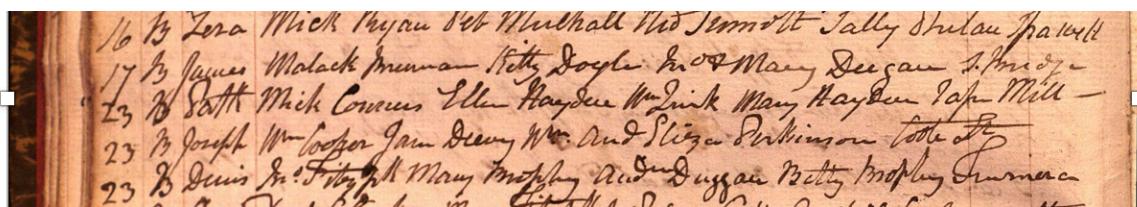


PATRICK O'CONNOR 1828 - 1881

Patrick O'Connor was baptized 23 November 1828 in Mountrath Co Laois Ireland, the fifth child of Michael Connor and Ellen Hayden.

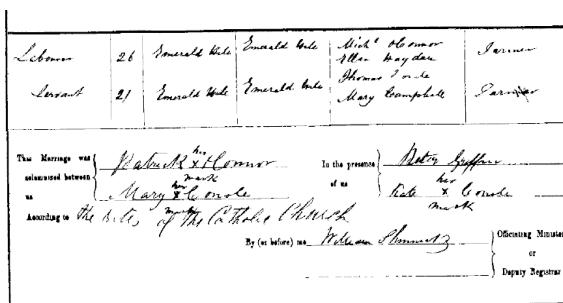
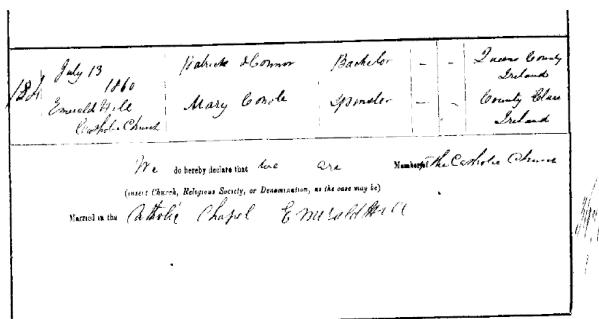


At the time of his baptism, the O'Connors were living at the Corn & Rape Mill at Woodbrook House near Mountrath. This mill had stopped by the mid 1800s and there are no traces of it surviving. Its location on what is now called the R430 has been verified based on its location on the 1830's map.

In Emerald Hill

Patrick arrived in Melbourne on the Medway in December 1857. He was with his brothers Michael and Fintan as well as his older brother Andrew who had come to Australia with his wife Margaret (nee Fynes) and child, Michael, as well as his mother Ellen (Hayden) and his sister Ellen.

Little else is known of Patrick's movements in Melbourne until his marriage to Mary Conole on 13 July 1860 at the Catholic Chapel in Emerald Hill.



They had six children but it was clearly a life of significant tragedy. Only one of the six children was alive at the time of Patrick's death, itself a significant tragedy. Two of them, Thomas, aged 6, and Sarah, aged 3, died on the same day in 1876 of scarlet fever. The children were:

- John Michael O'Connor, b. 1862 in Emerald Hill (Reg No 20494). Unable to find any further information or indication of what happened to John.
- Mary O'Connor, b. 1864 in Emerald Hill (Reg No 21662), d. 1867 in Emerald Hill (Reg No 1621).
- Ellen O'Connor, b. 1866 in Keilor (Reg No 21944), d. 1877 in Keilor (Reg No 4835).

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- Thomas O'Connor, b. 1870 in Footscray (Reg No 8714), d. 1876 in Footscray (Reg No 5501).
- Sarah O'Connor, b. 1873 in Footscray (Reg No 2478), d. 1876 in Footscray (Reg No 5500).
- Catherine O'Connor, b. 1876 in Footscray (Reg No 2699), d. 1878 in Footscray (Reg No 11332).

Newspaper Report of Patrick's death

Patrick was a gatekeeper on the railways at Footscray. Tragically, he was killed by a train on 5th December 1881 and it was reported in the Argus (Melbourne, Vic), Wednesday 7 December 1881, page 9:

Alarmed by the unusually long whistle of the Sandhurst train which leaves Melbourne at 3 35 p.m., Constable George ran, on Monday day, to the upper railway gates at Footscray, and found that Patrick O'Connor, who was in charge of the crossing, had been run over and killed. O'Connor was decapitated, and his body carried a distance of 20 yards up the line. Deceased was about 45 years of age, and had spent the greater part of his life in the railway service. He leaves a widow and a grown-up son.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

Mr. William Mitchell, J.P., held an inquiry yesterday evening at the Courthouse Hotel, Footscray, into the death of O'Connor. The following evidence was taken :

William Trott, engine driver of the 3.35 p.m. Sandhurst train, from Melbourne, deposed-The signals along the line up to O'Connor's gate were all right, and tended to show that the line was clear. Could see No. 2 gate 150 yards off, and perceived them shut across the line. Immediately let off steam, applied brakes,

and sounded the whistle. Was within 15 or 20 yards of the gates when O'Connor rushed from the direction of his box. The train having come to a stand, witness went back and found the body of deceased 12 paces behind the brake-van. The brakes used were Woods' con-tinuous brake. The train was going at the rate of 20 miles per hour when he applied the brake.

Edward Caaey, fireman, corroborated Trott's testimony, and added that the sand box was also used to stop the train. Thomas Holland saw the accident from Nicholson-street, about 20 yards away. O'Connor had his back to the train, with his hand on the gate, when he was struck by the engine and knocked down.

Thomas Johnston, stationmaster, whose attention had been attracted by the unusually long whistle, described the appearance of O'Connor after the accident. Deceased was a very exact man, and paid the most minute attention to his duties. Had never seen

PATRICK O'CONNOR 1828 - 1881

O'Connor under the influence of liquor. A verdict of accidentally killed was returned. No blame was attached to anyone. It transpired during the inquiry that the deceased was employed from 6a.m. till 8 p.m. The accident occurred during the calm between the two storms.

Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), Wednesday 7 December 1881,

ANOTHER GATEKEEPER KILLED.

Alarmed by the unusually long whistle of the Sandhurst train which leaves Melbourne at 3.35 p.m., Constable George ran, on Monday, to the upper railway gates at Footscray, and found that Patrick O'Connor, who was in charge of the crossing, had been run over and killed. O'Connor was decapitated, and his body carried a distance of 20 yards up the line. Deceased was about 45 years of age, and had spent the greater part of his life in the railway service. He leaves a widow and a grown-up son.

MAGISTERIAL INQUIRY.

Mr. William Mitchell, J.P., held an inquiry yesterday evening at the Court-house Hotel, Footscray, into the death of O'Connor. The following evidence was taken:—

William Trott, engine driver of the 3.35 p.m. Sandhurst train, from Melbourne, deposed—The signals along the line up to O'Connor's gate were all right, and tended to show that the line was clear. Could see No. 2 gate 100 yards off, and perceived them shut across the line. Immediately let off steam, applied brakes, and sounded the whistle. Was within 15 or 20 yards of the gates when O'Connor rushed from the direction of his box. The train having come to a stand, witness went back and found the body of deceased 12 paces behind the brake-van. The brakes used were Woods' continuous brake. The train was going at the rate of 20 miles per hour when he applied the brake.

Edward Casey, fireman, corroborated Trott's testimony, and added that the sand box was also used to stop the train.

Thomas Holland saw the accident from Nicholson-street, about 20 yards away. O'Connor had his back to the train, with his hand on the gate, when he was struck by the engine and knocked down.

Thomas Johnston, stationmaster, whose attention had been attracted by the unusually long whistle, described the appearance of O'Connor after the accident. Deceased was a very exact man, and paid the most minute attention to his duties. Had never seen O'Connor under the influence of liquor.

A verdict of accidentally killed was returned. No blame was attached to anyone.

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