

THE O'CONNORS ON THE MEDWAY 1857

Passengers on the Medway

A search of Passenger Lists for the Medway has resulted in more work being required to clarify the nature of the immigration. On face value, it seems that the following O'Connors came as Unassisted Passengers:

Ellen (aged 54) – wife of Michael Connor and mother of Andrew

Ellen (aged 18) – daughter of Ellen and sister of Andrew

Andrew (aged 22) – one of Ellen and Michael's eight children

Marg(aret) (aged 21) – Andrew's wife

Michael (infant aged <1 year) – son of Andrew and Margaret

An extract of the actual handwritten ship's manifest, showing Family name, given name, ages (male/female married couple, then male/female singles, children under 12, and male/female infants):

Yet the above, together with three other brothers, also appear as Assisted Passengers on the Medway in 1857.

A separate part of the Manifest however shows just the other brothers:

Fenton (aged 19) – brother of Andrew

Michael (aged 20) – brother of Andrew

Patrick (aged 24) – brother of Andrew

And here is a copy of the handwritten Manifest showing them as Labourers/Irish:

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Note that these three brothers had each reduced their age down by around 5 years (real age is estimated based on Baptism records), possibly to make themselves more "attractive" as young, fit labourers. But generally, the Irish of this era, perhaps through ignorance, didn't place great store on such niceties as birth dates and ages.

The Medway was just one of a large number of boats bringing immigrants to Australia during and after the Gold Rush. For example, in 1857 alone, the year the O'Connors arrived, there were almost 30 boats carrying a total of nearly 10,000 immigrants with about half of the arrivals being Irish. There were also more than 80 deaths at sea on these voyages but thankfully only one on the Medway.

1857 - Shipping from UK to Victoria with Assisted Passengers

Victoria

Return of Ships and Emigrants dispatched by Public Funds to Victoria, in 1857, 1858, and up to the 31st March 1859.

Name of Vessel	Tonnage	Contract Price per Statute Adult	Date of Departure	Date of Arrival	No. of Days on the Voyage	Name of Surgeon Superintendent	Number of Emigrants				Number of Deaths on the Voyage					
							Adults		Children under 14		Total Souls	Adults		Children under 14		Total Souls
							M	F	M	F		M	F	M	F	
		£ :: s :: d	1857	1857												
Bee	1,352	13 : 02 : 00	14 Jan	18 Apr	94	James Sheridan Hughes	121	231	52	61	465	-	2	5	2	9
Sabrina	673	14 : 14 : 06	20 Jan	13 Apr	83	William Thomas Molloy	71	123	64	49	307	-	-	6	2	8
Grand Trianon	1,063	14 : 02 : 10	03 Feb	15 May	101	C.W. Kitching	108	210	48	50	416	2	3	5	3	13
Black Eagle	1,250	13 : 09 : 06	01 Mar	06 June	97	John Matthew Burke	151	206	58	66	481	-	-	1	1	2
Negotiator	1,017	13 : 07 : 03	03 Mar	03 June	92	John Findlay	113	204	35	34	386	No Deaths				
Castilian	1,064	13 : 05 : 00	11 Mar	10 June	91	Horatio Costerton	95	247	39	64	445	1	1	1	-	3
Tudor	1,064	14 : 11 : 03	28 Mar	30 June	94	Francis Nathaniel Greene	106	184	41	62	396	-	-	2	1	3
Carleton	1,057	14 : 17 : 03	02 Apr	09 July	98	John S. Ireland	93	217	42	46	398	No Deaths				
Lady Milton	903	14 : 13 : 06	12 Apr	13 July	92	William Rutter	128	168	37	27	360	No Deaths				
Persia	658	14 : 14 : 00	18 Apr	27 July	103	Francis Martin	65	130	32	33	260	-	1	3	1	5
Star of the South	1,253	14 : 09 : 02	24 Apr	05 Aug	103	William Henry Pearse	121	219	27	45	412	4	2	-	1	7
Maldon	1,187	17 : 05 : 03	02 May	28 July	97	Joseph C. Sanger	154	200	60	64	478	-	-	2	6	8
British Empire	546	18 : 05 : 00	14 May	02 Sept	111	Edward Govett	81	108	18	18	225	-	3	-	-	3
Talbot	847	17 : 19 : 00	21 May	25 Aug	96	Philip Beal	93	185	37	61	376	-	1	1	-	2
Hornet	1,285	17 : 09 : 00	23 May	02 Sept	102	John H. Brownfield	70	283	46	40	448	No Deaths				
Echunga	1,000	16 : 09 : 06	30 May	19 Aug	81	Alexander Cumming	97	213	19	26	355	-	-	-	2	2
Undaunted (S.S.)	1,245	17 : 03 : 00	04 June	20 Aug	77	J.E. Coward	55	271	52	42	420	No Deaths				
Chance	1,042	17 : 12 : 03	06 June	12 Sept	98	John G. Winstone	120	176	37	40	373	-	-	-	1	1
Hotspur	1,670	17 : 03 : 06	02 July	12 Oct	102	Andrew Sexton B. Gray	123	209	87	70	489	-	-	3	1	4
Jessie Munn	874	16 : 09 : 01	19 July	10 Nov	114	William Leahy Echlin	115	138	30	21	304	1	-	-	1	2
Mindoro	1,277	16 : 19 : 09	22 July	23 Oct	93	Arthur David White	166	206	40	39	451	1	1	1	-	3
Melbourne	594	15 : 18 : 09	28 July	03 Nov	98	Thomas Willmott	66	105	54	52	277	-	1	1	1	3
Victory	579	15 : 07 : 05	29 July	04 Nov	98	W. Smith	71	113	22	31	237	No Deaths				
Shalimar	1,402	14 : 19 : 00	15 Aug	11 Nov	88	George E. Farncombe Hatch	115	259	34	36	444	-	-	-	1	1
Ebba Brahe	1,756	14 : 13 : 08	22 Aug	08 Dec	108	George Anderson	150	200	44	46	440	-	-	-	1	1
Medway	653	16 : 04 : 00	16 Sept	19 Dec	94	J.S. Wilkinson	89	107	27	27	250	-	-	1	-	1
Almora	1,238	15 : 18 : 09	07 Oct	31 Dec	85	J.T.S. Jolley	142	102	37	50	421	No Deaths				
Display a menu					1858											

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The following is the news clipping identifying the arrival of the Medway on 19 December 1857:

Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957), Monday 21 December 1857, page 4

SHIPPING INTELLIGENCE.

HOBSON'S BAY.

TIDE TABLE THIS DAY.—Low water, 12.50 a.m.; high water, 6.50 a.m.; low water, 1 p.m.; high water, 6.15 p.m.

December 20.—6 a.m.: Wind S., light; weather fine.—5.30 p.m.: Wind E.S.E.; weather fine.

ARRIVED.

December 18.—*Alert*, brig, 171 tons, P. Patterson, from Cape Town 26th October. Passengers—cabin: Mrs. Stourbirt and child, Mrs. Brenneker, Miss Pousen; and five in the steerage. — Martin, agent.

December 19.—*Wanderer*, brig, 140 tons, J. B. Smith, from Sydney 13th inst. Passengers—cabin: Mr. and Mrs. Holloway and family, and two in the steerage. J. J. Clarke, agent.

December 19. — *Antelope*, Swedish barque, 400 tons, E. H. Halberg, from Valparaiso 19th September, via Tahiti 13th ult. Passengers—cabin: Messrs. Sullivan, J. Von Becherer, Stewart, Melchior and Co., agents.

December 19.—*Robin Gray*, barque, 291 tons, David Dick, from Dundee 8th August. Passenger—cabin: Mr. David Haggard. Graham, Sands, and Co., agents.

December 19.—*Storm Bird*, s.s., J. B. Sydenstr, from Port Albert. Wm. Bayles and Co., agents.

December 19.—*Medway*, ship, 651 tons, James B. Kennedy, from London, via Plymouth 17th September, with 260 Government immigrants; J. S. Wilkinson, Esq., surgeon-superintendent; W. P. White and Co., agents.

December 19.—*Hebe*, Dutch ship, 501 tons, A. H. Kiehl, from Haarlem 14th October.

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Interestingly, the passengers on the Medway were deeply impressed with the work of J.S. Wilkinson, the surgeon-superintendent, as evidenced with the following newspaper report.

Testimonial by Medway Passengers for the Surgeon-Superintendent From The Argus Friday 1 January 1858, page 1

SHIP MEDWAY.—At a Meeting of the Passengers of the ship Medway, from England, bound to Melbourne, Australia,

It was proposed by Mr. John Robert Osborn, from Bath, schoolmaster, and seconded by Mrs. Grace Lee, from Bristol, nurse—

"That an humble testimonial be presented to John Sebastian Wilkinson, Esq., the Government Surgeon-Superintendent, for his skilful and humane conduct to the emigrants during the voyage; his kind and indulgent manner, together with his gentle-manly bearing, having gained him the respect and affection of all on board. The fact of his skill in the adoption of sanitary measures for the prevention of disease, the extraordinary facility and promptitude with which any complaint that occurred during the voyage was met and treated, and no death having occurred from disease contracted on board the ship, must evince great care, talent, and experience."

It was therefore resolved—"That an humble testimonial of a case containing a silver knife, fork and spoon, elaborately chased, be offered to John Sebastian Wilkinson, Esq., in the hope that he will appreciate the motive and goodwill of those who have only a little to bestow; but at the same time that little is offered with every mark of gratitude and respect, whether in admiration of his professional talents, or his virtues as a man." 11