

Bridget and Mary Clarke
Per *John Knox* 29 April 1850 to Sydney

Orphan girls, Bridget Clarke aged 15 and her sister Mary aged 18 arrived to Sydney on the *John Knox*. Both were recorded on the shipping list as from as Menalty, County Meath which is almost certainly Moynalty in the Poor Law Union of Kells, County Meath. Their parents Michael and Mary were both dead. They could read but not write, were Roman Catholic and in good health.

Bridget married William Chadwick and Mary married Richard Smith. These men were partners in the timber dealing and sawmilling business of Chadwick and Smith, with branches in Liverpool St, Botany Rd and Parker St. The Chadwick and Smith partnership lasted till the mid-1870s, when Richard Smith probably died (this is to be confirmed).

Mary Clarke and Richard Smith were the first to marry—at St Mary's Cathedral on 9 August 1853. Their marriage was witnessed by Bridget and her future husband William Chadwick. Mary and Richard Smith had ten children, seven of whom lived to adulthood. Mary died, aged 58, at the home of her son at Pitt Street, Redfern on 19 November 1891. This son, who certified her death, knew her birthplace, her parents' names and the year of her arrival in NSW. She was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Waverley.

Bridget Clarke married William Chadwick on 9 August 1854 at St Andrews Church of England, Sydney. One of their witnesses was his business partner and brother-in-law, Richard Smith. William had arrived in NSW in 1848 as a young man from Bolton-le-Moors, Lancashire, England. His sawyer father had recently died, leaving his mother to care for her nine surviving children. William prospered in NSW and was able to send for his brother Robert, and later his mother and younger sister, apparently his only siblings to survive. He died at the early age of 39 in 1863, leaving Bridget with five children under the age of eight. William left a will valued at £700, but apparently his children did not fully benefit from the rewards of his timber business, which made their uncle Robert a very rich and successful businessman.

Bridget's sons managed successful careers, founding their own building society—the Equitable Permanent Building Land and Savings Institution. Bridget lived at Botany for many years and was living at Strathfield when she died in 1905 aged 67. Her sons had only vague notions about her background, but knew her maiden name was Clarke. She was buried at the Church of England section of Rookwood Cemetery

Information supplied in 2005 by descendant Kay Purnell in 2005