

Mary Baker per *John Knox*

Mary Baker arrived in Sydney on the *John Knox* on 29 April 1850. She was the daughter of Edmond and Honora Baker, both dead, and her native place was indicated as Clonoulty, County Tipperary which is in the Cashel Poor Law Union so this would have been the workhouse from which Mary left for Plymouth in late November or early December 1849. The *John Knox* sailed from Plymouth on 9 December 1849. Mary's details on the shipping list indicated she was a house servant who could not read or write and she had a sister, Margaret Dolphin [Dollison] living in Sydney.

Like all the Sydney arrivals, Mary would have spend a few days onboard the *John Knox* before going to Hyde Park Barracks from where she would have been expected to be hired out. Unlike most of her shipmates, Mary had a relative in the colony and, on 2 May 1850, Henry Dollison applied 'for Mary Baker, orphan female per *John Knox*'.¹ Henry was obviously the husband of her sister, Margaret Baker, who had arrived in Sydney as a Bounty Immigrant per *Susan* on 25 March 1841 [see entitlement certificate shown on the left].² Margaret Baker had married ex-convict and coachman Henry Dollisson at St Andrew's Scots Church, Sydney, on 15 August 1842.

Background in Ireland

Although the shipping list of the *John Knox* listed Mary as aged 16 in 1850, making her birth year about 1834, a search of the baptismal records for Clonoulty, Tipperary showed that Edmond Baker and Honora Quinlan had five children baptised in the parish of Clonoulty and Rossmore, and Mary was the fourth of these, born or baptised in late 1827 as noted below:

- 1) Margaret born/baptised 10 January 1819
- 2) John born/baptised 27 February 1822
- 3) Thomas born/baptised 20 December 1824
- 4) Mary born/baptised 22 August 1827
- 5) Bridget born/baptised 31 January 1832

It is possible that the fourth child indicated in the baptismal register as Mary had died in infancy and that the couple had a sixth child, also named Mary, born about 1834 but no baptismal record of this was located.

Similarly Margaret Baker, shown as Mary [or Marg?], who emigrated on the *Susan* in 1841 was shown as aged 19 on the shipping list making her birth year about 1822 but she is noted in the Clonoulty parish register as born or baptised on 10 January 1819 so if this is the family their ages are somewhat out of kilter with emigration and baptismal records.

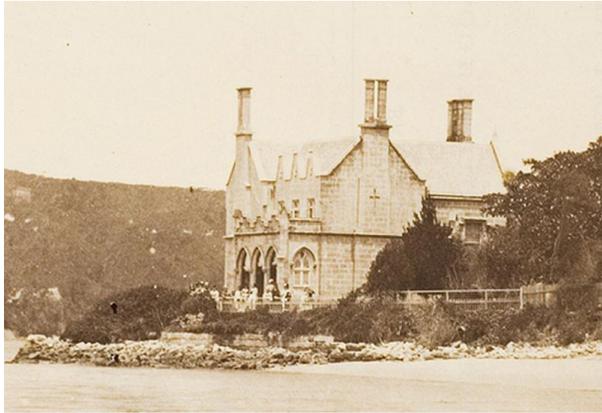
Mary Baker, the workhouse orphan immigrant, noted as Catholic and obviously from the Catholic parish of Clonoulty, married ex-convict and coachman, James Cook at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Sydney, on 29 September 1852 in the presence of Henry and Margaret

¹ SRNSW 4/4715, Register 2, No.542.

² Entitlement Certificate of Mary/Margaret Baker per *Susan*, departed Plymouth 12 Dec 1840, SRNSW 4/4879.

Dollisson, her brother-in-law and sister. The Cook family first lived in Pitt Street North in central Sydney where James worked as a cab proprietor. He is listed with his brother-in-law Henry Dollison [*sic*] as a hackney cab driver in 1852.

By 1854 James Cook was working as the personal coachman to Sir Thomas Mitchell at *Carthona* at Darling Point [picture below c.1870] when his second child, Alfred, was born there (probably in the coach house rather than the main house). Alfred Cook's baptism certificate states father profession as 'coachman to Sir Thomas Mitchell'.



Carthona is described by the Heritage Council as an 'impressive two storey mansion with cellars, of mannerist Tudor Gothic style. Built of sandstone, exterior there is a profusion of gabled slate roofs having castellated parapets and balconies dominated by tall Tudor chimneys. Ground floor windows are pointed Gothic style having three centred heads and fretwork while first floor windows are flat arched and shuttered'.³ It was built in 1841 by Sir Thomas Mitchell and it is believed that many of the keystones

of the doors and windows were carved by him. *Carthona* has had many residents of historical interest.

By 1860 the Cook family had moved to Mulgoa Forest near Camden and in 1861 were at Maryland Farm, Bringelly. The latter was the property of Thomas Barker who had settled there in 1859 with his new bride Katherine Heath Grey. Katherine gave birth there to the couple's only child Thomas Charles Barker on 20 September 1863. It would seem that James Cook was the coachman to Thomas Barker around this time and may have been introduced to him while working at *Carthona*, the property of Sir Thomas Mitchell with whom Barker had a known fiery relationship. The old coach house at Maryland Farm is still there [see poor quality image above , CHSO295, taken from 'Changing Faces and Places of Camden' website, 20 April 2013].



By 1863 the Cook family was back in Sydney living in Double Bay, Woollahra. Ryan Dudley's great-grandfather, Arthur Cook, was their youngest child, born at Redleaf, Double Bay on 23 August 1865. Arthur believes that James may have worked as the coachman to William Walker at this time and that the house is now the Woollahra Council Chambers.

It appears that after the death of James Cook in 1876, George and Arthur Cook may have become street kids. In 1880 Arthur was described as 'about 15 years of age, 5 feet 3 or 4 inches high, fair hair and complexion; dressed in dark brown coat, torn under the arms, dark moleskin trousers, torn at the knees, black hard felt hat, and blucher boots'. Very much the Artful Dodger in appearance is how he could be viewed.

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Ryan Dudley, great-great-grandson initially supplied these details to Trevor McClaughlin for *Barefoot & Pregnant? Irish Famine Orphans in Australia* and has provided most of the above material to updated Mary Baker's biography.

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carthona,_Darling_Point