

### Snapshot:

- One of 30 orphans selected from Parsonstown Workhouse
- Arrived in Adelaide per Inconstant in June 1849
- 1<sup>st</sup> Marriage aged 21 to William Robinson from Ireland
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marriage aged 28 to Malachi Martin from Ireland
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Marriage aged 40 to George Ingham of Kingston, SA
- Went to the Coorong an isolated region of SA to run an inn
- First husband believed murdered
- Second husband charged with murder of Catherine's servant. Hung on Xmas Eve on the steps of Adelaide gaol.
- Lived to age 85, died in Adelaide, South Australia
- 6 Children, 19 Grandchildren

# **Orphan Profile:** Catherine Bracken from Lemanaghan, Offaly

# Early Life in Ireland

Catherine Bracken was born around 1830 in the small village of Lemanaghan in County Offaly (previously Kings County) about 26 kilometers north east of Birr (previously known as Parsonstown). The census for 1837 shows just 290 residents living in Lemanaghan.

The immigration record of Catherine's arrival in Australia does not provide any parental information, however later

## Parsonstown Workhouse

At some point in her early life Catherine was admitted to the Parsonstown Union Workhouse which was erected on a seven-acre site half a mile to the east of Parsonstown. The workhouse still exists today but has been renamed to Birr.

Designed for 800, the workhouse

documentation indicates her father was a Michael Bracken.<sup>1</sup>

There is a death record for a Michael Bracken on 24 April 1839, at Killaghintober, Lemanaghan.

If this is Catherine's father, she would have been aged nine at the time of her father's death.

There is presently no other details or information on the fate of Catherine's parents and siblings.

received its first admissions in April 1842.<sup>2</sup>

It is likely that Lieutenant Henry, the Government immigration agent would have visited the Workhouse sometime in January to approve girls selected for travel to Australia



Parsonstown (Birr) Workhouse, County Offaly

## Parsonstown to Plymouth Emigration Depot

The girls would most likely have departed Parsonstown for their journey to Dublin then Plymouth in early February

On arrival at Plymouth, the girls were provided with a warm bath and accommodated in the depot provided by the Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners for the reception of emigrants until their vessel was ready to take them on board. The surgeon superintendent Dr. Charles Watkins, would have examined and vaccinated each individual orphan as a precaution to guard against the introduction of sickness or infection. The girls then embarked the *Inconstant* where they remained a further 2-3 days whilst they became acquainted to the routine and arrangements on board.<sup>4</sup>

## The Voyage

On 15 Feb 1849, 186 female orphans from the Counties of Dublin, Kings, Queens, Westmeath, Limerick and Tipperary departed Plymouth on the *Inconstant*, a 588 ton barque built the previous year in Canada.

Under the command of Captain Culliton the *Inconstant* arrived at Port Adelaide, South Australia on Thursday 7 June, 1849 with the female orphans, 3 married couples and 8 children.

One month prior to landing, on 1 May 1849 the Surgeon Superintendant recorded the wonder of sighting a 40 foot *sea-serpent* that sailors on board with many years at sea, had never seen before.

From newspaper accounts, there were several issues arising during the journey between parties onboard.

In the midst of *landing his emigrants*, on 11 June 1849, Captain Culliton appeared in court against 12 of his crew whom he had confined on board and charged with *refusal and neglect* of work during the voyage.

Ten days later, on 21 June 1849 the Emigration Agent, Captain Brewer filed a report on the conduct of the Captain and Surgeon Superintendant.

A sub-matron, carpenter and boatswain had lodged a written complaint accusing the Captain of scandalous conduct toward the Surgeon and head matron.

According to a letter held in the South Australian Archives, the Captain had *knocked down and abused* the Surgeon, and had acted improperly with the Head Matron Mrs. Kate Moran by keeping company in her cabin.

When admonishing Mrs. Moran for her conduct she declared to the Surgeon that she loved the captain and that if he asked her to jump overboard she would.

On investigation, various parties provided Captain Brewer with conflicting accounts leading him to express difficulty in reaching a satisfactory conclusion. Ultimately, Brewer concluded the Surgeon had exhibited poor judgment in allowing the matrons to dine in the Captain's cabin thereby facilitating inappropriate relations. He recommended Dr. Watkins not be employed as a surgeon on future journeys.

A week after Brewer filed his report, the first mate and seaman were charged with mutinous conduct on the voyage.

A week on from that another seaman was charged with threatening the surgeon, leading the magistrate to remark *that everything on board the* "vessel in question" seemed in a state of disorder. What the cause was he could not say; but it was certainly so.

An orphan witness providing evidence to Captain Brewer's investigations was also declared insane.

It's feasible to assume from these accounts the journey of the *Inconstant* for Catherine and her shipmates, would have indeed been eventful.

Even the fate of the Inconstant was short-lived. In September, 3 months after arrival, the newly built ship embarked for Peru but ran aground on rocks in Wellington Harbour when stopping for water.

Unable to be repaired the ship was towed to the harbour in a sinking condition. After salvaging its cargo (which was eventually sent to Hobart for sale), the hull was purchased and converted to a wharf and warehouse and became known as "Plimmers Ark".

By the 1880s the 'ark' was consumed through land lock and commercial development, disappearing beneath the roadway. Parts of the old ship's timbers were exposed during later excavations for a new building. From some of the beams an oak a chair was made for the use of the Bank of New Zealand's Chairman. In 1997 the site was subject to a more recent dig by Wellington Council spending more than \$2 million on restoration work on the remains of the *Inconstant* since she was excavated from her old berth.

The *Inconstant's* bell was given to St Alban's church situated in Pauatahanui, where the bell still tolls to this day.

Sale of surplus supplies from the voyage of the *Inconstant*, at Adelaide on 28 June 1849

### On Thursday, June 28, at Port Adelaide.

SAMSON, WICKSTEED & CO., (Successors to Mr. John Bentham Neeles), Are instructed to sell, THE Surplus Stores and Fittings of the emigrant ship Inconstant. Also, to close consignments,

Ship fittings Pickles, pearl barley Jars of butter and tripe Mustard, in jars and bottles Rice, jams (assorted) Valentia Raisina Fine salt, in bags Split peas Filters, water casks Brandy, sherry and other wines

The remains of the *Inconstant,* converted to *Plimmers Ark*, at Lambton Quay on the Wellington waterfront



[Holmes, William Howard] 1825-1885 :Wellington Beach 1856. Ref: A-032-040. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <u>http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23065306</u>



Holmes, William Howard, 1825-1885 :Noah's Ark, Wellington. [1850s]. Ref: PUBL-0036-247. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <u>http://natlib.govt.nz/records/22675579</u>

### Arrival at Port Adelaide

On Thursday 7 June, 1849, the *Inconstant* arrived at Port Adelaide after a four month journey.

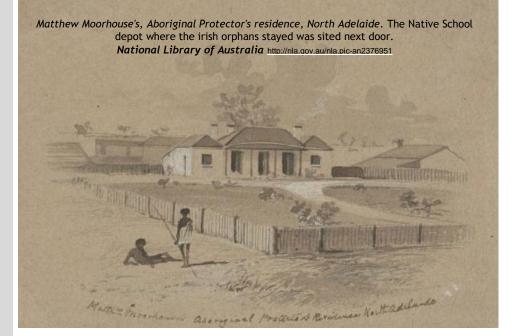
As was normal practice on arrival, Captain Brewer in his role as Emigration Agent, would have boarded the ship to examine the conditions and behavior of the orphans.

It appears the girls disembarked over a period of several days. Upon leaving the ship, the girls would have taken an eight mile trip to the Native School Depot.

Here, Mr. Moorhouse, the Protector of Aborigines, was directed to *receive, lodge, and ration such as are*  in want of refuge on their arrival. There is accommodation for one hundred; and at this depot, which is close to the Government House and park lands, the Irish orphan girls are lodged until provided with situations.

# It was reported locally that on Monday evening, 11 June 1849, *an*

extraordinary procession was seen on the North-terrace road. Ten drays fully laden with Irish female orphans and their luggage were seen moving along at a brisk pace towards the Native School Location, where it is understood they will find a temporary asylum. They all seemed warmly and comfortably clad, and excited much sympathy.



# Into Service, in want of washing skills....

Sympathy for the Inconstant girls didn't appear to last long. By 23 June 1849, Moorhouse is reporting to the Children's Apprenticeship Board that...

...they do not appear to be so suitable a selection as those by the Roman Emperor, one hundred and fifty of whom had been accustomed to farm work, milking, and washing, whereas thirtyfive only from the Inconstant could undertake such employments, and the remainder show no disposition to learn. Few of them know anything of washing, and this causes the colonists to be indifferent about hiring them - the Irish orphans being chiefly wanted for the country settlers...

Moorhouse however goes on to state that at the date of the report, 151 of the 195 girls had been hired.

It appears that Catherine went with a small group of girls to the Mount Barker region where she found employment in the Macclesfield area, 45 km south from Adelaide.



Port Adelaide. Photo: Jim Robinson

### Marriage at Mount Barker

In 1944, Coorong local, Joseph Hastings penned an unpublished manuscript 'Some early day tragedies on the Coorong' based on author's recollections, information gathered from residents in the Coorong and contemporary sources, including newspapers, police records and material in S.A. Archives.

According to Hastings, Catherine, who was apparently also known as 'Nellie', was considered the most beautiful girl in Mount Barker. When witnessing the marriage of fellow shipmate, Eliza Kelly on 27 January 1851 she was so

# The Coorong

152 kilometers from Adelaide, the Coorong is a long stretch of shallow salt water running parallel to the South Australian coastline separated by a barrier of complex sand dunes 1-2 miles wide.

Discovered by accident in 1837, the area became a major route between Adelaide and Melbourne for overland stock, mail, the telegraph line and chinese migrants travelling to the goldfields.

Halfway along this 145 kilometer stretch of wilderness, the Robinsons took over the running of an isolated tavern at Salt Creek.



Built around 1847, the Inn was initially run under government auspices as a public house and was the only stop between Wellington and Kingston.

In 1849 a correspondent to the South Australian lamented that the inn was so under provisioned he could only recommend that a *bonfire be made of the empty shell*.

The Robinsons appear to have taken over inn around 1851/1852 where they proceeded to 'upgrade' it to a Cobb & Co Coach stop, licensed inn and post office.

Set back from the overland track, with the nearest neighbour 6 miles away, the Inn was situated to the west of a swamp from which the Salt Creek flows into the Coorong. The property was still standing in 1966, when National Parks moved by the ceremony she agreed to marry her admirer William Robinson on the spot.

Though no primary records have been identified several descendants share the opinion that William Robinson had emigrated from Ireland. Robinson has been variously recorded as a sheep farmer and prior to his marriage, a butcher in the Strathalbyn and Macclesfield areas.

Following their marriage, William and Catherine moved further South to an isolated spot on the Coorong.

took over the property for the local ranger.

In November 1852, Robinson is mentioned assisting 44 passengers of the barque Margaret Brock, which was wrecked on a reef further south at Guichen Bay. After walking 46 miles, one of the more able passengers succeeded in reaching the Salt Creek Inn at half-past 10 at night. The next morning Robinson crossed the fast flowing creek with his horse and cart with provisions for the stranded passengers. The following day he returned with the females in the cart, and the rest of the party arrived in safety the same evening. The party remained at Salt creek 2 days whilst Robinson made arrangements for their transport to Wellington.

One month later, both Catherine and William are reported as confiscating a life-boat from natives who had sailed in to Salt Creek to sell cockles. They had apparently found the boat containing silk handkerchiefs and 3 dead white men, whom they buried in the sand hills. Robinson reported the boat find to the local police who then promised to investigate.

William Robinson was granted a Wine & Beer License for the "Salt Creek House" between the years of 1853 to Mar 1856

William and Catherine had three sons; John born 1851, William born 1852 and Richard born 1855.

## Death of Robinson

MYSTERIOUS CASE.—Information has been brought overland that a man, living at the Salt Creek, named Robinson, but better known by the soubriquet of "The Little Butcher," had been found in the bush some miles from his own house with his throat cut. No light has yet been thrown on the subject; but as to how he came to his death it is rumoured that some natives whom he had offended had threatened to do for him. The unfortunate man, who was well-known about Strathalbyn and Macclesfield, where he had formerly carried on business as a butcher, has left a wife and a young family to deplore his loss.

Around 11 June, 1856, Malachi Martin, a coach driver on the Kingston to Encounter Bay run and frequent lodger at the inn, accompanied Catherine's husband William, in a search for clean-skin scrub cattle.

Martin later returned to the Inn alone claiming he had become separated from Robinson.

Several days later on 14 June, Catherine walked 5 miles to Sheeprug Wells to request help in a search for

### Solo at the Salt Creek Inn

Widowed, Catherine took over the running of the Salt Creek Inn.

To assist her, Catherine employed a servant, Jane McManamin who had arrived in Adelaide in 1855 with her sister Margaret from County Tyrone.

Several months after Robinsons death in October 1856, Catherine is mentioned in the press reporting the discovery of a bottle with an enclosed message; the incident revealing that she could read and most likely write.

In March 1857, a 'new' application for a Wine and Beer License was applied for by Catherine in her own name. her missing husband.

The local constable, a native known as Policeman Jack, found Robinson's body near a swamp, lying face down with his throat cut and a knife in his right hand.

Martin was arrested as a suspect but was not charged with the murder.

The verdict of the coroner was suicide despite Robinson being left handed having no blood on his hands.

DIRECTION OF CURRENTS. — The following has been forwarded to us by Mrs. Robinson, of the Salt Creek, Coorong, who writes under date of the 11th October. It is said to be a true copy of a paper found on the 8th inst., by Mrs. Robinson on the Coorong beach, enclosed in a bottle securely corked and sealed. The spot where it was found was immediately opposite the Salt Creek, in lat. 36 deg. 10 min. S., and long. 139 deg. 40 min. E. :— " Saturday (current paper), December 2, 1854.—This paper is thrown from the Government emigrant ship Marion, boand from Liverpool to Port Adelaide Richard Leighton, commander, and Dr. John McKenzie, surgeon-superintendent, in lat. 50 deg. S., and 111 deg. 10 min. E. ; distance made good since last Saturday (November 25) 159 miles. Left Liverpool on Sunday, August 27, 1854 ; all well on board. This paper is intended to test the 8th degree and direction of the ocean currents, and, if found, it is particularly requested it should be forwarded to the Admiralty in London, or else published in the nearest available newspaper, for the information of the public. Present wind N.N.W., strong, with fine weather, and temperature 56 deg. Fahrenheit.—S. B. Levin, religious instructor of the Government temigrant ship Marion." — Adelaid



### Marriage in Adelaide

Following the death of Robinson in 1856, the coach driver Martin had left South Australia for Sydney.

Two years later he returned to Salt Creek and moved into the Inn with Catherine confirming local rumours there had been an earlier liaison.

Aged 28, Catherine married Malachi Martin in Adelaide at St Patrick's Church on the 23 June 1858; almost two years to the day of her previous husband's death.

At this point Jane McManamin left the Inn, citing her dislike of Martin to local farmer Arthur Bradford who gave her a lift to a previous employer.

Malachi Martin was born in Ireland in 1831 to Michael and Mary Martin, and arrived in South Australia aged 9, with his family in December 1840. In July 1844, at age 13, Malachi Martin was charged with stealing a halfcrown and a ribbon from the postoffice at Encounter Bay where his father was post master.

According to one witness, Martin admitted to the theft offering him one shilling 'not to say anything'.

Martin was acquitted after his legal counsel argued there was no proof he had stolen the half-crown, the Judge agreed expressing hope that *the Post Office in future did not expose parties to temptation.* 

Two weeks later on 19 July, Martin's mother was reported drowned in a pond at their home in Willunga.

Heavily pregnant it was believed she *destroyed herself* from distress at her son's court case

### Disappearance of Jane McManamin

In 1860, Catherine gave birth to a daughter Theresa, at which point Jane McManamin returned to assist.

Two years later in February 1862 Catherine returned from a vacation in Goolwa to be informed by Malachi that Jane had unexpectedly left with a visiting shipmate to go and live with her sister in Robe.

Well known to local settlers as a respectable and frugal woman, several parties who knew Jane felt something untoward had happened. Her sister Margaret, who regularly corresponded with Jane, placed a missing persons advertisement and asked her previous employer Mr Carter to report her missing to the police.

### MISSING FRIEND.

JANE McMANAMIN, lately of Salt Creek, Coorone, South Australia, you ore earnessly requested to write to your sister at Guichen Bay. Any person knowing where she is will oblige by informing the Proprietors of this paper.

At the same time, local Trooper Rollison reported his suspicions to his superiors in April. Jane had banked £50 of savings with Mr. Carter and this remained uncollected. Catherine and Malachi gave different accounts of Jane's destination, and some of Jane's possessions were seen being worn by Catherine (rings) and local aborigines (boots).

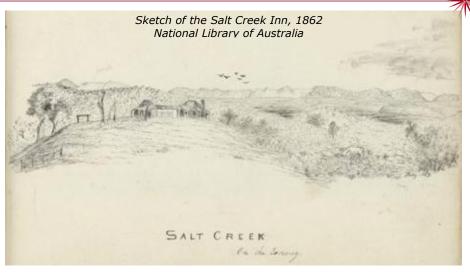
In response, the Adelaide Chief of Police sent an undercover man, Trooper J R Wakefield disguised as a labourer to the Inn to investigate.

Around the same time in an unrelated incident, another Trooper had employed a local black tracker 'Micky' to find a prisoner who had escaped from Wellington Gaol.

Mickey reported seeing something suspicious in the scrub near the Salt Creek Inn to another black named Jockey, who worked for the proprietor of the Coorong Inn at Woods Wells, William Allen.

On 29 May 1862, Jockey raised his concerns with William Allen and together they went on horseback to investigate.

Seeing crows flying overhead, Jockey headed toward an inaccessible spot about half a mile from the Inn where he found Jane buried in a wombat hole.



### Arrest of Malachi Martin

Following the discovery of Jane, William Allen immediately wired through to the Strathalbyn Police who sent a trooper immediately onto Wellington.

Coincidentally on the same day, Trooper Rollison departed Wellington to meet up with Wakefield in response to information he had sent him. At McGraths flat, Rollison met with Wakefield who informed him of the discovery of Jane's body by Allen and Jockey.

Both men departed at 4am the next morning to meet up with Allen and Jockey. On 31 May the party of four arrived at Salt Creek, arrested Malachi Martin and went to the scrub to remove Jane's body.

An inquest was held by the Stipendiary Magistrate Mr. Hughes, a coroner who had travelled from Wellington to Woods Wells. Martin was charged with the wilful murder of Jane.

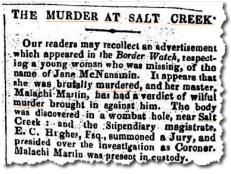
## Trial at the Supreme Court

On 2 December 1862, Malachi Martin and a German immigrant William Wilsen were brought to trial for the murder of Jane.

The Supreme Court in Adelaide thronged with crowds and the press reported that *no trial had excited greater interest*.

According to the prosecution, Martin had Jane's possessions, lived near to where the body was buried and had relayed inconsistent accounts of Jane's departure. Over the next 4 months Trooper Rollison gathered evidence and issued subpoenas- a painstaking process that involved searching the scrub and inn at Salt Creek, interviewing local aborigines, settlers and other parties who may have seen Jane around the time of her disappearance. The arduous task would have entailed traversing hundreds of miles of in hospitable country by horse between Wellington and as far as Guichen Bay.

Catherine was also interviewed by Rollison, notably contradicting her husband's account of settling up Jane's outstanding wages.



William Wilsen, carpenter and lodger at Malachi's inn was also brought to trial.

Wilsen claimed he had recently become engaged to Jane and some months later in a drunken outburst confessed he had seen the body of Jane at the Inn.

During the trial, Wilsen's defence lawyer shifted the blame toward Malachi; whose lawyer in turn duly pointed the finger back at Wilsen.

### Children:

- 1. John Robinson b.1851 in Salt Creek
- William Robinson b. 1852 in Salt Creek d. 1933
- 3. Richard Robinson b. 1855 in Salt Creek
- 4. Theresa Martin b. 1860 in Salt Creek
- 5. Catherine Ingham b. 1869 in Kingston
- 6. Mary Ingham b. 1870 in Kingston, died 1 year old

Note: no birth records appear to exist for the first four children. The details have been estimated from other records held by descendents.

# Death of Martin

Due to the large amount of witnesses, the case extended to the following day and after an hour's deliberation the jury returned a guilty verdict for Martin and accessory after the fact for Wilsen.

Martin lodged an unsuccessful appeal and on 23 December 1862, two priests, Catherine and other relatives of Martin's family spent the day visiting him at the Adelaide gaol.

At 8am on Christmas eve, Martin was hung within the walls of the gaol, being the first person to avoid public hanging after recent changes to the law.

### Marriage at Kingston

It appears Catherine never returned to the Inn at Salt Creek. One month later the Commissioner of Public Works and a small party arrived at Salt Creek finding the inn locked up. They entered the house with a vigorous kick, noting the premises (consisting of a house and detached kitchen at the rear covered by a walkway) as fronting the Adelaide road on a most beautiful site with a majestic view of the Coorong.

We next find records of Catherine and her children living in Kingston, South Australia six years later. She appears to have met with a George Ingham whom she later married at age 40 on 22 April 1871.

INGHAM-MARTIN-On the 22nd April, 1871, at Kingston, by the Rev. D. Milne, George Ingham, of Kingston, son of John S. Ing- ham, Adelaide, to Mrs. Catherine Martin (widow), second daughter of Mr. Michael Bracken, chief manager to Doctor Hollo-		MARRIED.
Ingham, of Kingston, son of John S. Ing- ham, Adelaide, to Mrs. Catherine Martin (widow), second daughter of Mr. Michael	INGH	M-MARTIN-On the 22nd April, 1871,
ham, Adelaide, to Mrs. Catherine Martin (widow), second daughter of Mr. Michael	at l	lingston, by the Rev. D. Milne, George
(widow), second daughter of Mr. Michael	Ing	nam, of Kingston, son of John S. Ing
(widow), second daughter of Mr. Michael	han	, Adelaide, to Mrs. Catherine Martin
	D	low), second daughter of Mr. Michae
	Way	, Queen's County, Ireland.

George and Catherine had two daughters; Catherine Pauline Ingham

## Children

Little is known of Catherine's children. Aged 10 or 11, eldest son John was caught up in the Salt Creek trial - being required to give evidence to the court. In court documents, John's surname was referred to as Martin.

William Robinson became a well-known grazier and dairy farmer in the Meningie district. He was a noted amateur horseman winning many race meetings. He had 16 children and died aged 80 at Glenelg in 1933. His body was buried in the walls of the prison which is marked with an inscription MM. 24-12-1862. Wilsen was sentenced to four years gaol, to be served in Tasmania.

Martin had made no further public confession, and the press speculated his motivation to murder Jane was that she was owed 2 years wages and had possibly obtained evidence and/or discussed Martin's culpability in the murder of Robinson and possibly several others (facts which came to light during Trooper Rollison's rigorous investigation).

born 1869, and Mary Ingham born December 1870. Mary died 3 days short of her first birthday on 23 December 1871.

In 1878 George was a witness in a trial where he is described as a laborer in the employ of Mr. J. Cooke, of Kingston.<sup>N</sup>

By Oct 1886, George is recorded in the Government Gazette as a poundkeeper, licensed as salesman of cattle impounded in the district of Lacepede, Kingston.<sup>N</sup>

Three years later, in Jan 1899, George Ingham was re-appointed to the position of Ranger, Inspector of Slaughter-yards, and Inspector of Vermin.

In July 1908 George is reported as purchasing a crown lease allotment for £140, containing a stone and brick cottage.

Little is known of Richard Robinson, other than his early death at age 50 in April 1905. He is interred with Catherine at the West Terrace Cemetery.

At Kingston in June 1895, Theresa Bernard Martin, aged 35 married a John Hunter Lawrie and had three children.

Nothing further is known of youngest surviving daughter Catherine Ingham.

### At rest

Catherine and George were married for a total of 44 years until Catherine's death on 31 October, 1915. Catherine is buried in the West Terrace Cemetery, Adelaide, along with youngest son Richard who predeceased her in 1905.

George Ingham died three years later in Adelaide on 3 February 1918 aged 78 and was buried in the West Terrace Cemetery. In March 1918, George's estate was proved at a value of £1250.

# Portrayal of Catherine

Such was the notoriety of the Salt Creek Murders in South Australia, the event has rarely been out of the press.

In 1862, the discovery of Jane's body, the subsequent inquest, trial and the hanging of Malachi Martin were widely reported in the colony.

In later years, Coorong locals who knew the Martins reminisced (often inaccurately) about the event. One recalled seeing Martin in the dock, *a dark black bearded man with a sullen aspect* and another remembered knowing Catherine when she was *in her 90s*, unaware and seemingly surprised that she had been the wife of Martin.

The 1898 obituary for undercover man Wakefield declared ...his name was brought into great prominence by a clever capture of Martin whom he watched in disguise until he had sufficient evidence to bring home the crime to him.

Similarly, the 1902 obituary for tireless Corporal William Rollison states ...he was well remembered by old colonists in connection with his clever arrest of the notorious murderer Malachi Martin.

Even 50-60 years later, debates between parties who claimed to h Written By: Karen Semken – Dec 2012



**Headstone, West Terrace Cemetery** In Memory of Catherine Ingham, died 15 October 1915, Aged 80 years, *also* Richard Robinson died 13 April 1905, aged 50 years.

know *what had really happened* were printed in editorial columns. In each case, many of the facts stray markedly from contemporary reports of proceedings in 1862.

In the 1930s-50s - several dramatic articles portrayed the events under the banner of *the dangers of the Coorong occurring in days of old*. Many of the facts presented are speculative and fictionalised.

There is very little mention of Catherine reported in the press in 1862. As years have passed, Catherine's role has come to the forefront and unfortunately the presentation put forward by authors has been unflattering.

Without a diary, or other direct evidence it is difficult to know whether Catherine was complicit in any aspects of the events or just naively caught up in dramas with consequences beyond her control. Certainly in 1863, the police records make it clear there was no case for Catherine to answer to.

Nowadays, descendants like Dawn Ralfe (who is writing a book on Catherine) and Jim Robinson, prefer to focus on and admire the fortitude of Catherine who in her long life suffered the hardship of famine, life in a difficult and desolate part of the world, the dramatic deaths of two husbands, and loss of two children who pre-deceased her.

### Descendants Researching Catherine Bracken[@2012]:

*Dawn Ralfe Dandhralfe[at]xtra.co.nz Descended from Theresa Bernard Martin* 

Jim Robinson Jimrobin3[at]gmail.com Descended from William Robinson

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#### Disappearance of Jane

- *I. Border Watch*, 23 May 1862 (Missing Friend)
- 2. The South Australian Advertiser 6 Jun 1862 (Inquest)
- 3. South Australian Register 22 Oct 1897 [Trooper Wakefield]

#### Arrest of Martin

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The South Australian Register 21 Aug 1862, Police Courts, (Arrest)

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#### **Marriage at Kingston**

1. Doolette, Peter (1997) *Murder, Mishap & Misfortune: A select history of the Coorong, pg 107* 2. Border Watch, 6 May 1871 (Marriage Announcement)

### Children

2. *The Advertiser*, 23 Sep 1933 (Obituary)

#### At Rest

### 1. Chronicle 23 Mar 1918

### **Portrayal of Catherine**

- 1. Border Watch, 1 Oct 1898 (Description of Martin in the Dock)
- 2. Chronicle 21 Aug 1947, (Acqaintance of Mrs Martin)
- 3. South Australian Register 26 Sep 1898 (Death of Wakefield)
- 4. The Advertiser, 31 Mar 1902 (Death of Inspector Rollison)
- 5. The Register 21 Jan 1919, An Oldtime Tragedy (Debate about facts)
- 5. The Register 23 Jan 1919, Makachi Martin the Murderer (Debate about facts)
- 6. The Register News Pictorial 7 Feb 1931, When Travellers Feared the Coorong Malachi Martin's Terrible Crime
- 6. Chronicle 30 Nov 1933, An Almost Forgotten Crime
- 6. The Mail, 8 Dec 1951, Our Strange Past