

Snapshot:

- One of 40 orphans selected from Cashel Workhouse
- Arrived per Lady Peel in July 1849, Aged 18 both parents dead
- Married aged 20 to William Thompson of Liverpool, England
- Camped in tents with husband and family following construction of the Great Southern Railway through the Southern Highlands to Goulburn
- Lived in isolated
 Fettlers Hut just north
 of Goulburn
- Husband run over by train, accidentally killed whilst trying to remove fettlers trolly from track
- Lived to age 77, died in Alexandria, Sydney
- 11 children, 39 grandchildren
- Son Charles was first teacher in ACT, taught nearly 50 years (22 years at Hall School)
- Grandson Charles appeared in 1925 silent film Around the Boree Log filmed in the Taralga area

Orphan Profile:

Catherine Tierney from Cashel, Tipperary



Catherine Tierney

Photo believed to be of Catherine Tierney (age 55-60) provided by great granddaughter Mary Stanley (nee Whelan)

Family in Ireland

Believed to be born in Toureen, Clonoulty/Rossmore in 1831, Catherine was the youngest of six children (older siblings all born in Cashel, Tipperary) to John Tierney and Mary O'Carroll.

On her death certificate Catherine's

father was recorded as a weaver.

Cashel Workhouse



At some point during the height of the famine, Catherine was admitted to the Cashel Workhouse. We are not sure if she entered alone or with other members of her family. Completed in 1841, the workhouse had been built for a maximum of 700 inmates - yet at the time of Catherine's departure in March 1849, over 7130 inmates were housed there

It is believed that Catherine's admission details may still exist. Eamonn Lonergan's book on St Patrick's Hospital (the old Cashel Workhouse) refers to an admission register covering the year 1848. This register was provided to the Department of Health for the 150th commemoration exhibition in 1995 - however the register has since been misplaced.



Old Photo, Admission Building, Cashel Workhouse



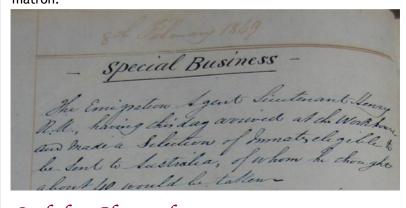
Entrance Gates, Cashel Workhouse Taken in 2005, Karen Semken

'Special Business'

We know Catherine was residing at the Workhouse on 8th Feb 1848 when the Colonial Immigration Agent Lieutenant Henry visited and selected 40 inmates for emigration to Australia.

The Minute book records details of Lieutenant Henry's visit including his instructions that an outfit 'according to the printed list of the Emigration Commissioners' be prepared 'without delay' under the direction of the matron.

Lieutenant Henry's system of selection was based on the personal appearance of the girls, and as they sat in the workhouse wards he simply picked them out at random. Given the numbers of inmates at the time and the Immigration Agent's random approach to selection, Catherine's inclusion in the Scheme seems incredibly fortunate. Whether she perceived it as such, we'll never know.



Entry in Cashel
Minute Book noting
Lieutenant Henry's
visit.

Photo taken 2005 by Karen Semken, Thurles Library

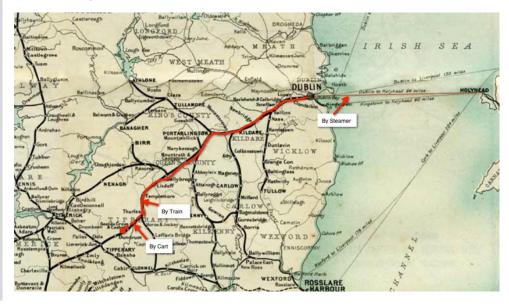
Cashel to Plymouth

On receipt of further instructions from Lieutenant Henry around the 1st March, the Cashel Committee resolved that 'conveyences be provided to carry the emigrants to Thurles on Wednesday morning the 7th instant at 8 o clock to be in time for the early train and that the Master and Assistant Matron be directed to proceed to Dublin in charge of them'.

A cheque was drawn for £16 to cover the costs of the emigrant's travel from Thurles to Dublin with the Master under instruction upon his return to 'submit to the Board a detailed account of the disbursements'.

The Matron having reported that the outfit was complete ordered 'that the boxes be packed and corded as directed by the Emigration Agent'.

With Thurles rail station opening nearly 12 months before - it's fair to assume that this trip would have been one of many 'first' experiences for the girls. The route from Cashel to Dublin is illustrated below.



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Cashel to Plymouth, continued

There is no further information regarding the Cashel girls' journey to Dublin, but an insight can be revealed from the similar excursion taken by the orphan girls selected from the Carlow Workhouse.

There, a party of 22 girls also set out on the morning of 7th March, 1849 accompanied by the Workhouse Matron. The Bishop of Kildare, Dr. Haly also travelling to Dublin that morning, recalls encountering the girls at the railway station and was moved by their 'exemplary conduct, healthy appearance and cheerful disposition'. Anxious for their spiritual and general welfare he wished them well for their journey to Australia and commented the girls should be grateful to the Board of Guardians for their care and attention.

According to Eamonn Lonergan, once in Dublin the girls would have departed by Steamer from the North Wall in Dublin to Plymouth.



Pheonix Wharf - Part of Plymouth Emigration Depot

Plymouth Emigration Depot

Widely reported at the time, Surgeon Superintendent Strutt of the Thomas Arbuthnot provided a detailed report on conditions at Plymouth in relation to accommodation for the girls.

In a letter to *The Times*, on 22nd Mar 1849, an anonymous clergyman wrote about his inspection of the Emigration Depot at Plymouth, which included the Lady Peel:

I went on board the Lady Peel, a few hours after she had embarked 180 Irish girls bound for Sydney. I had, therefore, every opportunity of examining into every detail of their economy. I was most kindly assisted by every officer of Her Majesty's Commissioners whose duties were connected with the inspection of the ships and the embarkation of the emigrants. ...

I was much struck with the cleanly, healthy appearance of a cargo of Irish girls from

the "unions" on their way to Port Phillip and Sidney. They were nearly all Roman Catholics, and spending the Sunday on shore, went to mass: as they passed through the town, everyone was struck with their tidy, orderly appearance. I saw them the next day on board and was most pleased to find the pains taken to give them a thorough good outfit in every way



Pheonix Wharf – The only remaining building associated with Plymouth Emigration Depot

Sea Voyage

From newspaper reports it appears the ship had been expected to depart on the 28th February however it didn't leave Portsmouth until 14th March 1849. On arrival in Sydney it was reported that the ship had sailed 110 days but by 27th July 1849 this was corrected to 98 days.

The Surgeon Superintendents Report for the voyage of the Lady Peel has not survived.

There are however several surviving accounts from other Earl Grey Scheme ships to indicate what the journey may have been like. We also know from one

report of the ship being sighted and 'spoken to' on the 18th March at Lat 48 N., long 14 W, in the sea just south west of Ireland, at about the level of Paris.

In the days following arrival in Sydney, the ship's *Surplus Stores and Emigrants Fittings* were progressively sold. These included Cabin Bread, Ship Bread, Split Pease, Tea, Sugar, Rice, Butter, Raisins, Port Wine, Sherry, Brandy, Ale & Porter, Vinegar, Barley, Preserved milk & Tripe, also Water Closets, Water Cisterns, and One medicine chest, emigrants fittings and 100 tuns of Dantsic Oil Butts.

References:

A Workhouse Story – A History of St. Patrick's Hospital, Cashel 1842-1992,1992, Eamonn Lonergan

"A Visit To Emigrant Ships." Times [London, England] 22 Mar. 1849: 8. The Times Digital Archive. Web. 19 Nov. 2012.

A Winter Arrival

On Tuesday 3rd July, the Lady Peel arrived in Sydney Harbour with 29 crew, 174 orphans, 9 married couples and seven children; with local papers reporting the weather calm and a cool 60°F (15°C).

Upon arrival in Sydney, the colonial immigration agent boarded the ship to record the details of the orphans. A kitchen maid, who could neither read nor write, Catherine's 'native place' was recorded as Cashel, Tipperary with parents, John and Mary, both dead. A

brother John was 'supposedly living near Yass'. It is not known if Catherine ever met up with her brother - as no records for John Tierney have been found to date.

Of the 40 girls supposedly selected by Lieutenant Henry for the journey - only 36 appear to have arrived on the Lady Peel. It's possible that some decided not to take the journey or came on the later ship John Knox, which carried 22 girls from Cashel arriving in Sydney in April 1850.

Into Service

After a further 2 days stay on board the ship, Catherine and her fellow passengers were rowed from the midharbour moorings of the Lady Peel to the edge of the harbour where they would have walked up toward Macquarie Street with their trunks.

Their destination was Hyde Park Barracks, which housed the orphan girls until placed into service with prospective employers who came to interview them. Some of the girls were forwarded on 5th July to Depots in Bathurst and Goulburn.

Catherine stayed at the Barracks for 6 weeks, prior to being appointed into service - believed to be with James

Cummins, her second cousin who had written to the Colonial Secretary shortly after the ship arrived requesting the services of Catherine as a servant at the rate of £10 per annum. James lived at Brickfield Hill, situated near the 'old Mark Foys' where World Square stands today.

According to NSW State Archives, the original letter from James has been 'weeded' by an enthusiastic but nevertheless inconsiderate researcher and hence its contents and possible clues have been lost. It is not clear why it took 6 weeks before Catherine went into service given the early application by her cousin.

Applying for the services of Catherine Gerney het Karnet. The Sury Peel."

Marriage at St Mary's

Catherine is next recorded as getting married in October 1852 at St Mary's Cathedral to William Thompson of Liverpool, England. One of the witnesses to the marriage was Catherine Carroll, who may have been related to Catherine on her mother's side.

If the details on his death certificate are accurate - then William arrived in Australia in 1841 aged 14. There are no records matching his name/arrival year/age under the assisted immigrant schemes. If William was in fact a few years older and was not an assisted immigrant, then there are no clues to distinguish William from the 100s of 'Mr

Thompson' arrivals recorded in the immigration registers.

Descendant John Thompson has researched another possibility. A William Thompson, native of Liverpool was transported aged 14 in May 1838 per Minerva to Van Diemans Land. Freed in July 1847 there is then a record of a William Thompson, Seaman, departing Tasmania in Dec 1848 on the Shamrock for Sydney.

Whist the above timing fits, without further conclusive clues, the date and method of his arrival is yet to be confirmed.

Toward the Southern Highlands

Shortly after the birth of their first child John in Sydney in 1853, William Thompson secured a labouring job, building the recently approved Goulburn to Sydney Railway. The construction was widely reported in the papers with a workforce of hundreds of 'navvies' toiling at digging foundations, bridge building and tunneling with little more than a pick and shovel.

The family would have lived with fellow labourers, in tents pegged in virgin bush - periodically uprooting to follow the track as it evolved through the Southern Highlands.

We have records of the next 8 children being born at Sutton Forest which at the time encompassed the entire area between the Bong Bong River (a few kilometres north of Moss Vale) and Paddy's River (about ten minutes' drive

Goulburn

After completion of the Railway at Goulburn in 1869, William took a job as a Fettler living near the Goulburn rail station. In 1870-71, the Electoral roll records the family's abode as 'Railway Line Goulburn'.

William's work would have entailed hard physical labour replacing worn sleepers and rails, and shovelling ballast.

Each Fettlers gang would have been assigned a stretch of line up to 13 miles long, which was constantly checked for wear, tear and obstructions, using 'human powered' hand trikes or trolleys for transportation.

In April 1871, Catherine's eight year old son Patrick tragically died after drinking a pints worth of gin from a bottle Catherine kept in a box in an outhouse. Called home from work at 10am, William ('an abstainer') found his son lying on a stretcher speechless and senseless.

along the freeway south toward Marulan).

All children were baptized at St Pauls Presbytery in Moss Vale and their births registered at the Berrima Courthouse.

Two boys aged 5 weeks and 2 years died early from whooping cough and inflammation of the bowels. The final two children were born and baptised in Goulburn after the railway was completed in 1869.



Illustration of typical Fettler tents

The doctor stayed with Patrick until he died at 3am the following morning from congestion on the brain, caused by taking a quantity of gin in ignorance of the consequences. William indicated that Catherine occasionally gave way to drunkenness, which the Coroner AW Betts censured her for.

The inquest on Patrick was held at Albert Prior's house located in Grafton Street, otherwise known as the Carrier's Arms. As nearby pubs doubled as venues for inquests we can assume that the family had been living relatively close to the main Goulburn Station.

This is also supported by the record for Sarah Anne's birth in November 1871, where the place of birth is noted as Shelly Street, Goulburn with a later living abode of Robert Street, recorded at the time of her baptism in January 1872. Both streets are close to the railway line and Albert Prior's premises in Grafton Street.



Location of (1) Shelly Street, (2) Robert Street, (3) Grafton Street – near The Carriers Arms,





Goulburn - 1870s

Goulburn, cont

Two years later in May 1873, Catherine and William had 'a few words together' resulting in Catherine tossing a 14lb bag of flour in to the fireplace at which point William threw a brush at her, hitting her in the head.

In front of the police magistrate, William declared they had been married one and twenty years, during eighteen of which he had never had an angry word with his wife until she had lately taken to drinking.

In response, Catherine confirmed she sometimes did take a drop too much; and added she had not been in the habit of quarrelling with her husband. She further stated I am abusive with my tongue to him at times; I was provoked on account of his hitting me with the brush; I gave him some impudence...

In what seems a ridiculous rationale today, Catherine acknowledged her husband would not have been provoked into an argument had she had the dinner cooked when he arrived home about mid-day.

It is hard to gage from the report what actually happened. The police officer refuted that Catherine was drunk when reporting the incident, finding her perfectly sober. The magistrate *felt sure* she had concealed a great deal of the truth and tried to shield her husband.

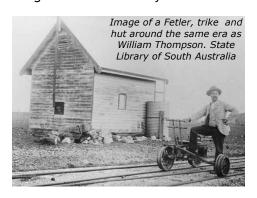
On account of William admitting the assault, and due to being provoked (by the uncooked dinner?), William received a 6 month bond to keep the peace and a 7 day gaol sentence that as the judge pointed out, would except for the provocation have resulted in him going to trial. Catherine would have been 5 months pregnant with Frederick at the

time of this incident.

At some point after 1873, William, Catherine and the family moved to the vicinity of Boxers Creek, Murrays Flat, Carrick and Towrang, about 12 kilometers north of Goulburn where the family would have lead a more isolated existence.

According to *On Wooden Rails**, life as a fettler more often than not, involved isolation, rough conditions and lack of amenities, with fettlers and their families camping by the line in tents or rough mobile dwellings and shanty camps.

This is likely to have been the case for the Thompsons' as youngest son Frederick was recorded as actually being born on the railway line.



Frederick, in later years told his children that his father use to periodically come along the track, and peer through a small window to make sure everybody was behaving!

Frederick also told his daughter Kathleen that when going to school, he decided to spend his train fare on sweets and ended up walking many miserable hours in the dark until reaching home at Carrick.



<u>Ref:</u> On Wooden Rails-150 years of Work on the NSW Railways http://rtbu-nsw.asn.au

Children:

- 1. William John b.1853 in Sydney, died 1910 in Liverpool
- 2. Ellen Mary b.1855 Sutton Forest, died 1928 Waterloo
- 3. John Thompson b. 1856 Sutton Forest, died 1924, Holbrook
- 4. James b.1858 Sutton Forest, died Age 2, Sutton Forest
- 5. Henry b. 1860 Sutton Forest, died Age 5 weeks, 1861 Sutton Forest
- 6. Patrick b. 1862 Sutton Forest, died Age 9, Goulburn
- 7. Mary Ann b. 1863 Sutton Forest, died 1935 Redfern
- 8. Edward, b. 1865 Sutton Forest, died 1934, Woy Woy
- 9. Charles William b. 1868 Sutton Forest, d. 1948 Manly
- 10. Sarah Anne b. 1871 Goulburn, d. 1933 Redfern
- 11. Frederick Thompson b. 1873, Railway Line, Goulburn. Died 1933 Fairlight

Children of Catherine & William

Catherine and William married in a Catholic ceremony at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

Interestingly, Catherine's surviving children seemed to marry within a variety of religious denominations.

Mary Ann, Charles, Sarah Annie and Fred all got married in catholic ceremonies. Ellen married in a Church of England ceremony, William in a Wesleyan and John in a Presbyterian.

Both Edward and Frederick worked all their lives on the railway.

Frederick started as a cleaner in 1890 at Goulburn station, worked his way up to Engine Fireman and then Driver. Frederick's only son Charlie also joined the railway and was the assistant stationmaster at Goulburn. On retirement Frederick and his family moved to Manly where six days later - Frederick died of a heart attack. The family believing that it had been the train's engine that had kept him ticking all these years.

Edward joined the railway as Fettler and worked the tracks from Goulburn to Mitagong and Picton. Four months after Catherine died Edward transferrd to Hornsby-Gosford region and was promoted to Ganger. Edward retired in 1828, he never married and died in Woy Woy in 1934.

Eldest son William John was a labourer and remained in Goulburn most of his life but died in the Liverpool Asylum a year after Catherine in 1910 from sun cancer.

Son John married in Goulburn in 1880 and then disappeared after the birth of his 5th child. At his children's marriages from 1906 onward, John is recorded as unknown or deceased, although he is noted as living on Catherine's death certificate in 1909. Via Kim Blundell, the descendants of John have only recently discovered his fate. John, a rabbiter

died at Kanimbla Station, Holbrook in 1924 from cancer of the throat.

Daughters Ellen Mary and Mary Ann married two cousins of the Nettleton family.

Ellen Mary lived in the Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Bungendor regions. Ellen Mary died in 1928 at Waterloo.

Mary Ann lived at Cootamundra between 1893 and 1902 and thereafter at Waterloo in Sydney. Mary Ann died age 70 in 1935 at Redfern.

Daughter Sarah Ann or 'Annie' after marriage moved to Queanbeyan and then Picton finally moving to Redfern where she died in 1933.

Charles worked his entire life for the education service. He began teaching in 1886 at age 18 as a House to House Teacher at Naas and Gibraltar. This involved riding sixteen miles between these isolated schools (no school building existed) where children were gathered on designated days to be taught basic subjects.

Charles went on to teach at Claremont, Run of Water (renamed Yarra), Ginninderra and Gungahleen before settling at Hall school where he taught from 1911 to his retirement in 1933.

Charles was closely involved with the local community, Ginninderra farmers union and wrote regular articles and stories (especially nature stories) for the Queanbeyan Age.

Charles reluctantly retired on the day before his 65th birthday as required by the Education Department. He moved to Manly where died age 80 in 1948.

Charles has been widely written about in books on Canberra, Ginninderra and Yarra and Hall schools.













Final Years

Once again for the Thompson family, the coronial service of AW Betts was called upon. On 2nd May 1888, struggling to get his trolley wheels off the track in advance of an approaching train - William was accidentally killed.

KILLED.—A fetler named William Thompson was killed on the railway a few miles from Goulburn on Wednesday, May I. The deceased and a mate of his, Edward Blakeway, started for their work, going along the railway line on a trolly. They had proceeded about two and a half miles on their journey when they stopped, as they heard a train coming along. Both men immediately set to work trying to clear the line; and it was while they were so engaged that Thompson got caught by the approaching train, which passed over him, literally outting him to pieces. His soull was smeshed, his right leg broken, and other injuries were sustained. It was not in Blakeway's power to account for the deceased's having got in the way of the engine, as they saw the train some considerable distance away, and heard the whistle, which blew all the time. The fireman also endeavored to warn Blakeway of his danger by shouting to him to get out of the way; and everything that could be done was done by the enginedriver to stop the train, but this was impossible, as she was travelling at about twenty miles an hour, and had thirty trucks attached. Thompson was a sober man, and had had nothing to drink on the morning in question. He was 60 years of age, and left a widow and several children. At the inquests a verdict of accidental death was returned.

His body was taken to the nearby Cookbundoon Hotel for the inquest, the Coroner lambasted the railway for not finding more 'sedate employment for elderly men like Thompson'. He was 60 years old. A substantial headstone was paid for by his colleagues.

The Cookbundoon Hotel near the old Towrang Station – now a private residence. Photo taken by Gordon Thompson in 2002



We know Catherine was traumatised by this event from a letter written by her son Charles Thompson requesting additional leave from his teaching duties due to 'the present health of my mother preventing me leaving sooner'.

There is a newspaper account of local MP E O O'Sullivan successfully petitioning for compensation for the family in September 1888. It is likely the family would have been residing in railway property and with William's death they would have either been evicted or been facing eviction. The

compensation also included William's position being transferred to his son Charles Thompson.

However, Charles is noted as being a house to house teacher from 1886 at Naas and Run of Water and in December 1888 he was based at Yarra. It is more likely that Edward Thompson took over this position as his railway employment record commences on 28th May 1888 in the position of Fettler.

Catherine remained in the Goulburn area with the last known record of her living at Carrick in the 1903 Electoral Roll for Werriwa (Towrang Polling Place) records. Her son Edward is also recorded on the same roll indicating they still may have been living in property associated with the railway.



Site of demolished Carrick Railway Station. Catherine's cottage would have been located in this area. Photo taken by Gordon Thompson 2002.

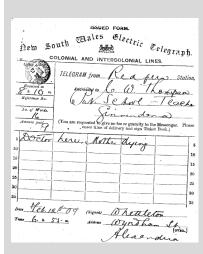
We know from the letters of Charles Thompson to the Education Department that Catherine had been unconscious in 1907 and so seriously ill, the Doctor declared he had 'given up hope'. At this stage Catherine was living at her daughters place in Alexandria where she eventually died aged 77 in February 1909 from a cerebral hemorrhage.

Catherine never got to share the grave with her husband at Goulburn as planned. Catherine is at rest at Rookwood Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

Several weeks after her death, one of her daughters placed the following memorial.... a long and saintly life, truly successful; she now is reaping her reward in heaven.



William Thompson's grave at Old Goulburn cemetery. Photo Karen Semken 2005.



Telegram to Charles Thompson advising the pending death of his mother, Catherine Tierney in Feb 1909



Family Legends

In researching Catherine, many tall stories yet unproven have been passed on by other descendants of Catherine and William.

They met on the boat and went to Carrick....

Grand-daughter Kathleen Hattrick (nee Thompson) born 1909 - the year Catherine died, believed that Catherine and William *met on the boat and went straight to Carrick*.

It is possible that William could have been on the crew of the Lady Peel, but this has not been verified as crew member names were not listed on the passenger list.

There was however, an emigrant on the Lady Peel passenger list, Mary Thompson who was from Wicklow 'near Dublin'. Mary was travelling with three daughters; her husband William Thompson supposedly living in Port Phillip. If this lady was related to the William that Catherine married, they may have met through this contact.

Either way, Catherine definitely did not go straight to Carrick, unless her assignment with James Cummins took her there.

The Tall Red Headed Tutor....

Ian Finlay, descended from Charles William Thompson had been told that William was a tall red headed tutor from Ireland who left the country because people in those times with an education were frowned upon and he felt there was more for him in Australia.

We know from the marriage entry and birth registrations that William could write. However all records indicate an association with the railways - not with teaching. It is likely that the 'tutor' reference may have been confused with William's younger son Charles who was a widely known teacher for nearly 50 years in NSW/ACT.

Re place of birth, William himself declared he was from Liverpool, England when registering the births of two of his children. In contrast Catherine stated that William was from Dublin, near Dublin or Ireland when she registered 9 of other the children's births. We would have to accept England then as the place of birth, unless of course there was some compelling reason for William to declare he was not from Ireland....

Son of an Irish Rebel hung at St Mary's...

Which leads to the next story.....Kim Blundell, descended from John Thompson recalls several versions of a story relayed by her relatives that the original name of William Thompson (or his father or grandfather) was O'Trace, McTrace or McLoud.

This ancestor was associated with an Irish rebellion or uprising and had to depart Ireland fast. He came to Australia and built a house (shack) at St Marys where he was eventually caught (by whom?) and hung from the roof of this house. The name 'Thompson' had been taken from a boarder.

Kim's grandmother use to point out this old shack to Kim when on the way to St Marys. Apparently the police at the time put his death down to suicide "but the family new better". There was mention of a son and another version of the story where William was hung in a stockyard in St Mary's.

We have been unable to find any records in the name of O'Trace or McTrace. Records in Coroners' inquests from hanging have been viewed but nothing appears relevant. There are no paper reports relating to an incident of this nature.

William Thompson (Catherine's husband) supposedly arrived in 1841 aged 14. This is the only clue we have for his arrival and it was provided by the informant on his death certificate who was the coroner (and not related). Neither parents details were provided.

Kim's tale seems unlikely but the lack of detail surrounding William's family and arrival in Australia doesn't exactly help us disprove it either.

Descendants Researching Catherine Tierney & William Thompson [@2012]:

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John Thomspon Cjjat[at]webone.com.au Descended from Charles W Thompson

Alfred Blakers Researching wife's ancestor Charles W Thompson