

Sarah O'Malley per *Pemberton* to Port Phillip 14 May 1849 from Limerick

[information written and researched by descendant, Helen Smith with assistance of
other descendants including Debra Vaughan]



If you left out the dates of Sarah's life, her story would read like the script of a modern day soap. Her life appears to be full of hardship, struggle, adventure and achievement, often against the odds. For us trying to discover, follow and interpret her life nearly one hundred years after her death you can add much intrigue. Words such as famine survivor, orphan, immigrant and single mother are but some of the key events that make up Sarah's story.

Sarah Matilda O'Malley is my great-great-grandmother and I first learned of her existence when I was required to make a family tree when in Grade 5. Among the stories my father was able to share with me for the project was one regarding Sarah and her husband Richard Smith. According to Dad, his great-grandparents Richard Smith and Sarah **Black** had lived in Portland where they had worked for the Henty family. I was highly excited by this as we had just learned about the Hentys and their encounter with Major Mitchell at school and I felt that my family had been part of a significant chapter in Victorian history.



Meeting of Major Mitchell and Edward Henty, Portland Bay, 1836

It was many years later that I revisited the story of Sarah and Richard. Whilst at the Victorian Public Records Office with Robyn Crocker, my old family tree project came to mind so I decided to look up some of the ancestors. I had quite a bit of success with some of the more unusual family names, finding Thomas Kinnane and Darby Fitzpatrick quite easily. Spurred on by this I tried the more common names. Thomas Caine, Margaret Reilly and Michael Kenna required a little further effort but by the end of our session I had found them. Sarah Black however was another story, I was unable to find a single thing and I had decided that Richard Smith would be like looking for the proverbial 'needle in a haystack' so I gave up and followed the other successful branches.

After exhausting the initial available leads, I again turned to Sarah and Richard. During a visit to my Dad's cousin, Marj Rankin, I was shown my great-grandfather Edward's marriage certificate [see below] which confirmed his parents as Richard Smith and Sarah Black. I decided to send for their marriage and Edward's birth certificate. Unfortunately there was no result for either request.

IN THE COLONY OF VICTORIA. [ORIGINAL CERTIFICATE]

SCHEDULE D.—28 VICT. No. 268.

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

District Morait No. in Register 33
 On June 27th 1848 at House of Bride's father, Woolthorpe
 Marriage by license was solemnized between ES according to the
forms of the Presbyterian Church
 Signature Edward Smith

DESCRIPTION.

Residence { Present Woolthorpe
 Usual Woolthorpe
 Age Twenty five
 Rank or Profession Labourer
 Condition Mar. & bet.
 If Widower { Former } Deceased in { Children _____
 Wife. } Living _____ Dead _____
 Birth Place Woodford Street
 Parents' Names and Rank or Profession { Father Richard Smith, Labourer
 Mother Sarah Black
 Signature Elizabeth Dorn

DESCRIPTION.

Residence { Present Woolthorpe
 Usual Woolthorpe
 Age Twenty four
 Rank or Profession Domestic duties
 Condition Spinster
 If Widow { Former } Deceased in { Children _____
 Husband. } Living _____ Dead _____
 Birth Place Moornt Edgerton, Brough
 Parents' Names and Rank or Profession { Father William Doyle, Labourer
 Mother Ellen Cobble
 Signature of Minister, Registrar-General, or other Officer. } Alexander Robb, Officiating Minister
 I, Alexander Robb, Presbyterian Minister
 do hereby certify that I have this day, at Woolthorpe
 duly celebrated Marriage between Edward Smith, of Woolthorpe
Labourer and Elizabeth Doyle, of Woolthorpe
 after notice and declaration duly made and published as by law required.
 Dated this twenty seventh day of June 1848.
 Witnesses { William Doyle
Elizabeth Davidson

By Authority: JOHN FRANKS, Government Printer, Melbourne. (B. 1848-27) (1848)

This left me with one final avenue to explore. Family stories stated that Richard died as the result of a lightning strike. Edward's marriage certificate had recorded his birth place as Woodford Forest, an area between Warrnambool and Koroit. So I wrote to the local cemetery trusts for the burial of either Richard or Sarah. Finally, some success, no record for Richard but a Sarah Smith was buried in the Tower Hill cemetery near Koroit in 1914. Could this be the elusive Sarah? I sent for the death certificate and waited. The result was hopeful but far from conclusive. Sarah Smith was the widow of Richard and they had married in Portland and among their seven children was an Edward. All the dates fitted, you could think, success at last, but there was one problem. Sarah's family name was recorded as Goodchild!!! The informant was her youngest son Charles so you would think that he would be a reasonably reliable source.

| THIRD SCHEDULE. DEATHS in the District of WARRNAMBOOL | | | | | | THIRD SCHEDULE. in the State of Victoria, Registered by P. MACFARLANE | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|-----------------------|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| No. | DESCRIPTION. | | | (1) Cause of Death. (2) Duration of last Illness. (3) Legally qualified Medical Practitioner by whom certified, and (4) When he last saw Deceased. | Name and Surname of Father and Mother (Maiden Name if known), with Occupation. | Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant. | (1) Signature of Registrar. (2) Date, and (3) Where Registered. | IF BURIAL REGISTERED. | | Where Born, and how long in the Australian States, stating which. | IF DECEASED WAS | |
| | When and where Died. | Name and Surname, Occupation. | Sex and Age. | | | | | When and where buried. Undertaker by whom certified. | Name and Religion of Minister, or Names of Witnesses of Burial. | | (1) Where and at what (2) Age, and to (3) Whom. | Name |
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12) | (13) |
| 26 | May 1914 at the Warrnambool Hospital Age 82 Town of Warrnambool County of Victoria s.d. Goodchild | Dorcas Smith Warrnambool Australia | Female 82 Years | (1) Natural degeneration (2) Syncope 3 s.d. L. B. Dalry 4 26 th May 1914 | Severina Severina R.B. | 7800 | G. Smith Son of Deceased Yarrumuck | Local Registrar 27 th May 1914 Warrnambool | 27 th May 1914 Tower Hill Aurora | Severina England R. Davis Presbyterian Aurora 67 Warrnambool Victoria | Portland | about 1840 Mary Jane Severina |

I shared the information with my father who could remember that there was a Mary Jane in the family and that she had married a Vaughan. Mary Jane was one of the seven children on the certificate. I spoke to my cousin Marj again and she not only knew of Mary Jane, she actually knew some of her children. We went to visit her youngest son Charley. He told us the story of Richard's death by lightning strike and he also said that his mother Mary Jane had been invited to a historic celebration in Portland as her mother had been the first white woman to see a whale in the Bay. I rather doubted this as Portland had been a whaling station from the mid-1830s, about the time of Sarah's birth, and I was sure women would have been around and seen whales well before Sarah would have been old enough to make such a sighting.



I decided to have one last attempt to find Sarah and Richard and so I sent for their youngest child, Charles Clarke Smith's birth certificate hoping that the informant would be one of the parents and the information would be accurate. I would then know if Sarah's name was Black or Goodchild.

Imagine my surprise when, on opening the envelope, I saw neither name. O'Malley is recorded as the mother's name, and as the informant is Sarah herself, the information is almost certainly correct. Her place of birth is given as Derbyshire which is consistent with the information on her death certificate. This was a little perplexing as O'Malley is a very Irish name and I would have expected to see an Irish birthplace.

| SCHEDULE A. | | | | SCHEDULE A. | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|-------------|---|--|--|--|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1871 BIRTHS in the District of <i>Tower-Hill</i> in the Colony | | | | of Victoria. Registered by <i>Christopher Norman</i> . | | | | | |
| CHILD. | | | FATHER. | | MOTHER. | INFORMANT. | WITNESSES. | REGISTRAR. | |
| When and where Born. | Name and whether present or not. | Sex. | When and where married. | When and where born. | When and where born. | Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant. | Names by whom certified. And Signatures of Clergy or other Witnesses. | When registered and where. | Signature of Deputy Registrar. |
| <i>4th November 1870</i> | <i>Charles Clarke Smith</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Richard Smith, Laborer, Victoria</i> | <i>Sarah Smith formerly O'Malley, 27 years, Derbyshire, England.</i> | <i>Sarah Smith formerly O'Malley, 27 years, Derbyshire, England.</i> | <i>after declaration made as by law required Sarah A. Smith mark brother Yarrambool.</i> | <i>none</i> <i>Wm H. Larren</i> <i>Wm Walsh</i> | <i>26th January 1871</i> | <i>Christopher Norman</i> |

1. **Allan Hugh BURDETT**
 A REGISTRATION OFFICER OF THE STATE OF VICTORIA, IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA, DO HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE IS A TRUE COPY OF AN ENTRY IN A REGISTER KEPT IN THIS OFFICE.
 OFFICE OF THE GOVERNMENT STATIST
 83/20016 mc MELBOURNE 31 March 1983

Following a discussion with Marj, who said she remembered her father speaking of the Goodchild-O'Malleys, I sent for the marriage certificate. It arrived and confirmed that Sarah O'Malley and Richard Smith did indeed marry in Portland in 1850.

PRESBYTERIAN MARRIAGES SOLEMNIZED IN VICTORIA IN THE YEAR 1850

I hereby certify that Richard Smith of Portland Bay New South Wales and Sarah O'Malley of Portland Bay New South Wales were joined together in Matrimony by me on the tenth day of October 1850 at Portland in presence of John Gamble and Jane Gamble both of Portland.

2457 Thomas Elliot Richardson
 Minister

This marriage was solemnized between us
 Richard Smith
 Sarah O'Malley

Witness
 J. E. Richardson

Witnesses
 John Gamble
 Jane Gamble

Witness
 J. E. Richardson

I then set about looking for the arrival of Sarah O'Malley. This did not prove to be all that difficult. I located a Sarah O'Malley of the correct age arriving in Port Phillip in 1849 on board the *Pemberton*. The record noted that she was to be employed by James Allison of Portland. The *Pemberton* was carried around 300 female orphan immigrants from Ireland and Sarah's birthplace is given as Limerick. So there is yet another twist in Sarah's story.

I was directed to *Barefoot and Pregnant* by Trevor McClaughlin which details the Earl Grey Scheme that was responsible for the emigration of over 4000 young Irish girls who had been orphaned by the famine. At last I felt much of Sarah's history had been revealed, but there were still many significant questions remaining. Why so many family names and why the discrepancies in birthplace? I noticed that when Sarah supplied her name, she always gave O'Malley. Black and Goodchild were given by her sons.

To date the conundrum posed by her birth place has proved impossible to solve. I wondered if Sarah had wished to distance herself from her Irish background. She was living in an area that was dominated by Irish immigrants and she had married an Englishman. Perhaps this caused her some difficulties.

While I still had loose ends in my quest to discover Sarah I had exhausted all the available resources. I felt that I had achieved quite a bit. Sarah's story had certainly become clearer. All this took place before the computer and internet explosion; most of the information was gathered by personal searching of records or via the post. Following my retirement I found that I had time to explore the ever-growing online resources in the family history area.

I decided to try a Google search for 'Irish orphan, Pemberton, O'Malley'. I was delighted when there were a number of hits. While the information did not add to Sarah's story, it did give me the email address of a person who was also researching Sarah. I made contact and discovered that we were both great-great-granddaughters of Sarah and Richard. Debra Vaughan, my new acquaintance, and third cousin, was Mary Jane's descendant. We swapped information and during our discussion, Debra mentioned two highly significant facts. Firstly she was able to shed some light onto the Goodchild surname. According to a story passed down in Mary Jane's family, on her death bed, Sarah had told her son Charles that her family name was Goodchild and that she had been born in England. Her father and his brothers had been killed fighting in the English army and her mother had died of a broken heart. Sarah was either in Ireland at the time or perhaps sent to Ireland to relatives and was in the Limerick workhouse when selected for the Irish Famine Orphan Scheme. I subsequently found that Henry's death certificate records Sarah Goodchild as his mother.

The second significant fact was that Sarah had owned land in the Yarpturk area. This news sent me searching the Public Records Office online data base of Wills. Imagine my excitement when I found that she indeed did leave a will. Her beneficiary was her son Charles Clarke Smith of Quamby via Woolsthorpe. He was to inherit all her estate, which included a small property in Yarpturk.

In the Supreme Court
OF VICTORIA.
(PROBATE JURISDICTION)

annexed Affidavit of Charles Clarke Smith
Sworn this *eighteenth* day of *June* 1914
Before me,
Richard Lappan
A Commissioner of the Supreme Court of the State
of Victoria for taking Affidavits.

IN THE WILL of SARAH SMITH - - - - -

late of Yarpturk - - - - - in Victoria Widow. - -
deceased.

INVENTORY OF ASSETS.

| REAL ESTATE. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|---|----|----|
| ALL THAT piece of land containing Nine acres Thirty one perches being part of Allotment Five of Section One Parish of Yarpturk County of Villiers on which is erected an old Four roomed Weather Board cottage Assessed by the Warrnambool Shire Council at Seven pounds per annum. | | | |

I was discussing this discovery with Robyn, who said that she was going to the Public Records Office and would look for the land records. What followed was the next big breakthrough in our search for Sarah. I say, 'our', as the group of amateur genealogists now trying to find Sarah included my sister Paula along with 'cousins' Marj, Jenny Horton, Marj's brother, Sid's daughter, Debra and her cousin Sandra Fitzgerald. Robyn, who had initially inspired my search, was still a keen member of the search team and it was indeed her efforts at the PROV that lead to our next giant step forward.

On her return home from the Records Office, Robyn rang to say she had an exciting discovery. Sarah did in fact have land which she had been granted in 1874 under 'The Land Act 1869'. Included in the large file was a document to convert the leasehold to freehold made in 1876. This gave a little insight into the daily lives of small land owners of the time as it gave a description of the land, fencing, pig sty, stock numbers, crop types and dwelling. While I was listening to this I was thinking that Richard must have died prior to 1874 or the land application would surely have been made in his name. Then Robyn announced that she had kept the best until last. On the final page in the file was the application form which stated that in 1871, Sarah was a seamstress living in Woodford and in the section to be completed by female applicants was written 'my husband has been away from me for thirteen years'.

SCHEDULE A.

APPLICATION FOR LICENSE UNDER PART II. OF "THE LAND ACT 1869."

I, Sarah Smith of Forest Resident do hereby solemnly place of abode and the occupation of the applicant.

and sincerely declare on oath, that on the 24 day of March 1871 at 4 P.m. o'clock, I placed conspicuous posts or cairns of stones with notices thereon, at the corners of the allotment for which I hereby make application under Part II. of The Land Act 1869, as more particularly described hereunder; that I have not taken up a pre-emptive right; that I have not selected under any previous Land Act or Acts the maximum number of acres allowed by this Act; that no selection made by me under any previous Land Act or Acts has been forfeited or cancelled for the evasion of the provisions of any such Land Act or Acts; and that the area I now desire to obtain would not, if added to the area already selected by me under any previous Land Act or Acts, exceed 320 acres; that I am not under eighteen years of age; that my husband has been away for one thirteen years

And I further declare as aforesaid that, with respect to this application, I am not an agent, or a servant of, or a trustee for any other person; that I have not entered into any agreement to permit any other person to acquire by purchase or otherwise the allotment in respect of which this application is made, or any part thereof, or my interest therein, or the usufruct thereof; that it is my intention to reside thereon if the application be granted to me.

And I make this solemn declaration on oath, conscientiously believing the same to be true, by virtue of the provisions of The Land Act 1869, and of the provisions of an Act of the Parliament of Victoria rendering persons making a false declaration punishable for wilful and corrupt perjury.

Signature—Sarah Smith
Occupation—Seamstress
Address—Woodford

Solemnly and sincerely declared on oath, at Warrnambool in the Colony of Victoria, this 28 day of March One thousand eight hundred and seventy one before me, James H. Carr one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in the Colony of Victoria.

| Situation and Area of Allotment applied for, if previously surveyed. | Description of the Land applied for, if previously unsurveyed, or forming part only of a surveyed allotment. | Report by Land Officer. | Report by District Surveyor. |
|--|--|---|---|
| County— <u>Willeroo</u> Parish— <u>Yarraport</u> Allotment— <u>5</u> Section— <u>1</u> Extent— <u>15</u> acres <u>0</u> roods <u>0</u> perches | <u>Previously Surveyed</u> | Date and hour of receipt of application <u>28th March 11 a.m.</u> Amount of fees deposited <u>2/0</u> <u>1/10</u> Date of transmission of application to District Surveyor <u>28/3/71</u> <u>Municipal</u> Land Officer. | Date when received from Land Officer Report— District Surveyor. |

Office Hours from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

The implications of those few words were quite profound. The first question was: who was the father of her last three children? A quick calculation based on the information on the forms indicated that Richard must have left in 1858 or thereabouts. Ellen, Henry and Charles were all born well after this. Perhaps the fact that both Henry and Charles have the second name Clarke could be a clue to their paternity. It would also suggest that the story told by many descendants that Richard was struck by lightning could indeed be a way of explaining his absence to children. If he had met such a fate, surely Sarah would have been listed as a widow.

I cannot begin to image what life would have been like for Sarah. When Richard left she would have been twenty-five years old. This was well before social security and I don't think having four children under seven would allow much time for work as a seamstress. You can only hope that she received some support from her neighbours and that the father of her last three children (whoever he was) supported the family.

Whatever her circumstances were, she was able to make the land application in March 1871. You would have to say that this was quite an achievement as she would have had children ranging in age from seventeen to four months. Perhaps the older three, John, Eliza and Edward would have been able to assist. However they would have almost certainly been working and may have left home. An additional burden for Sarah at this time was the death of her six-year-old daughter, Ellen in 1870.

While many questions still remain we felt that we had indeed achieved much in our quest to discover Sarah. Image my delight when, just before Christmas 2011 whilst searching The National Library's Trove site, I noticed that the Warrnambool newspapers for 1914 to 1918 were available. I immediately put in a search for Sarah Smith Yarraport and found a treasure trove.

YARPTURK. (From our Correspondent). June 5. DEATH OF TWO RESIDENTS. The hand of Death has been busy in our district, removing two well-known residents in Mrs Sarah Smith and Mr Daniel Sheridan, within a few hours of each other. Mrs Smith had a serious illness a few months ago from which she rallied wonderfully for one of her age. She reached her eighty-second mile stone on life's journey a few days before her death, but was taken ill again a few weeks ago and gradually sunk to rest. The remains were interred in the Tower Hill cemetery, followed by many who had known the deceased in the early days of the district. The Rev. Nairns of Koroit read the impressive burial service. Mrs Smith was a very early colonist and in her youth lived at Henty's Whaling Station, at Portland, when whaling was briskly carried on. There are few people living who witnessed those sights. It was the custom to reward the person liberally who first saw and reported a whale blowing in the bay and the old lady's eyes sparkled with pleasure as she related how on one fine day, when the people were busy at dinner, a whale suddenly spouted in the bay. Mrs Smith then a very young girl had taken a child on to the veranda to soothe the little one. Casting her eye over the bay the spout of a whale appeared. Could it really be true, or was she mistaken. Once again the young girl holding the child (which the wife of Mr Henty's partner had entrusted to her care) looked carefully. Yes, it was true. 'There it blows,' again and again. She rushed inside with the news. The dinner table was deserted. In a moment every member of the household was on the veranda. No more thoughts of the unfinished dinner. The men raced to the boats for dear life. Swiftly they go out over the surf and very soon the fight begins. It is a lucky chase. The monster, in a comparatively short time, is captured and the young girl whose keen eyesight first noted the sign, was rewarded with a new silk dress and a nice bit of cash besides.

Mrs Smith came to reside at Yarpurk Forest, when there was scarcely anyone else living in it. Not a fence, not a road, scarcely a bush track. There were no galvanized iron tanks in use! Water was carried in buckets from Yangery Creek, a long distance away, for household use. As neighbours settled around, the women folk would carry their weekly washing to the creek, make a day of it, and carry home the clean clothes. Forty years and more have made great changes, multiplied conveniences and comforts, and yet these early pioneers declared that in spite of difficulties there was a zest and enjoyment of life, a real pleasure in living which is often missing now. There are three sons of Mrs Smith living, one in Geelong; Mr H. Smith a well-known dairyman of Warragul Gippsland, and Mr C. Smith of Yarpurk. Mrs Vaughan, of Laang is a daughter.

[*Warrnambool Standard*, Saturday, 6 June 1914, p.3]

This was an unbelievable find as it both paints some vivid scenes from Sarah's life and clarifies the whaling story first told to me over twenty years ago. However in true Sarah style, it does end with a mystery. At the time of her death Sarah had four sons not three. Henry and Charles are mentioned, is it John or Edward that is not included in the obituary and is this an oversight or was there a family rift?

I guess this story is like all good mysteries, just when you think you have all the clues something else turns up. I forwarded a copy of this chapter to all the team and Jenny emailed back and suggested that a copy should be sent to Kathy Baulch at the Koroit Historical Society. This seemed like an excellent idea. Debra had often spoken

of Kathy as they were good friends and shared an interest in family history in the Koroit area.

This led to a number of email exchanges with Kathy that included the sharing of documents. The most significant of these were Henry's birth and christening certificates. In the column headed 'Father' on the birth certificate was the statement: *The Child is illegitimate. The husband having deserted the wife several years ago.* This confirms the information on Sarah's land application. However the christening certificate was the brightest jewel in the collection. In the column for father's name was Charles Clarke.

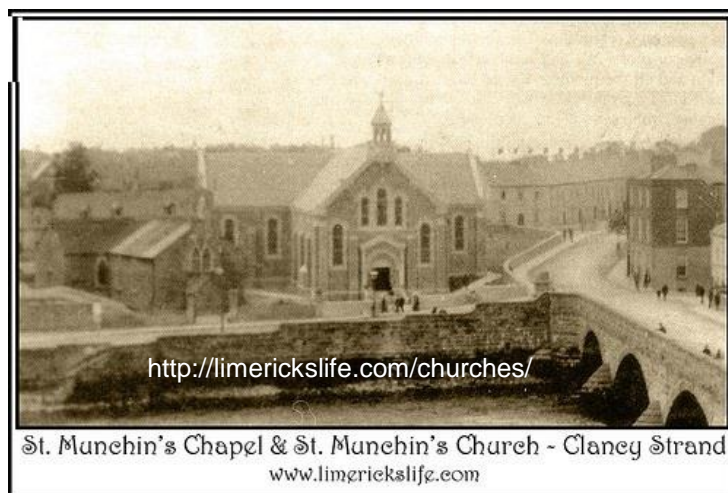
| When Baptized | Child | Christening Name of Parents | Surname | When Born | Residence | Occupation | By what Name Known |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------------|
| 732. 15 th May 1870. | Henry | Charles Sarah | Clarke Smith | 9 th December 1868 | Woodford Forest | Splitter | John |

At last confirmation of something we had long speculated about. Ever since I saw Charles' birth certificate, where his middle name was given as Clarke and Henry appeared as Henry Clarke, I had wondered if there was a Mr Clarke in the family story. This was long before we knew anything about Richard's desertion of his family.

Who was Charles Clarke? The only additional clue gleaned from the certificate is that his occupation was a splitter. Kathy searched local rate books and found a number of likely contenders.

The uncovering of Sarah's story is punctuated by many fascinating twist and turns. At times I felt the chapter I wrote should have been called, 'Sarah's Never-ending Story'. Just when it appeared that we had exhausted all genealogical avenues and I was about to complete the task of documenting our findings something new would turn up. However I truly believed that the discoveries relating to her son Henry marked the end of our journey. So with all stories finished and the final proof reading over we were ready to print.

Paula and I were planning to investigate printing options during her holidays in July 2013. This activity was put on hold following an email from Sandra Fitzgerald in June announcing the discovery of an Irish record that stated a Sarah and Mary O'Malley were baptised in St Munchins, Limerick on 16 May 1829. The girls were the children of Kennedy O'Malley and Martha Mary Goodchild. This was indeed an exciting find. It made a link between the Goodchild and O'Malley names in Limerick at about the time of our Sarah's birth. Goodchild is not a common name anywhere and certainly not in Ireland.



St. Munchin's Chapel and Church,
Limerick City
The chapel to the left was built in
1799

Given Kennedy's unusual Christian name I decided it would be worth trying a Google search: 'Kennedy O'Malley Limerick' produced a large number of results. I was immediately struck by the fact that there were quite a number of people interested in him. Reading these piqued my curiosity. Phrases such as:

'... he could sign his name ... Mealey is how he spelt it ... however in various records ... it is spelt Meally, Mealley, O'Mealey...'
'... met Martha Mary Goodchild ...'
'... had previously lived in Limerick-on-Shannon ...'

Surely this Kennedy Mealey and Martha Mary Goodchild from Limerick must be the couple whose daughters were baptised at St Munchins Limerick.

This information was only the beginning of my excitement. There were many references to Kennedy's military involvement. Could this be a further link between our Sarah and the Goodchild/Mealeys?

Among the posts were:

'... he enlisted in the British Army ...'
'... served in the 21st North British Fusiliers from 1833-1839 ...'

A search of the British Military Records proved that these claims were indeed true.

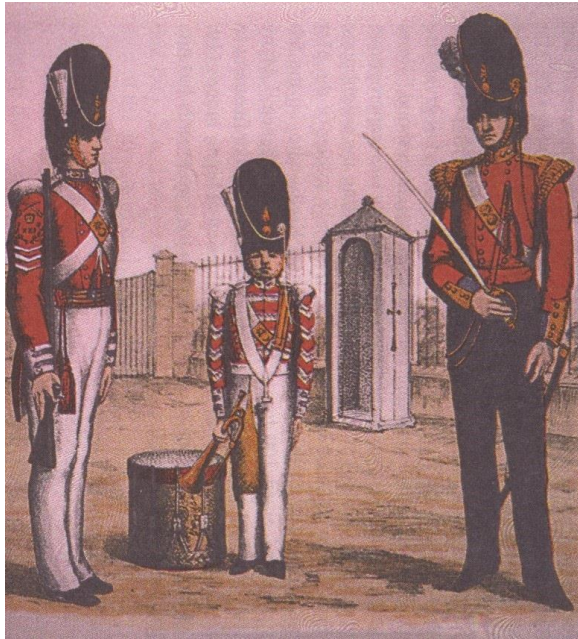
Kennedy Mealy alias Kennedy Mealey
Born Doonaas, Clare
Served in 21st Foot Regiment; 51st Foot Regiment
Held by: The National Archives, Kew

Perhaps we had found the source of Sarah's story that she had been orphaned following her father's death, whilst engaged in military action and her mother's subsequent death from a broken heart. However closer inspection of the posts and Kennedy's military records did not support this story.

A search of the records of the North British Fusiliers showed that during the dates relevant to Sarah's story, Kennedy's regiment was serving in England, Ireland and Australia. The 21st Foot was stationed at Windsor when he married Martha Mary Goodchild at Winchester on 23 June 1828. The regiment was posted to Ireland in

October of that year. In May 1829 Sarah and Mary were baptised at Limerick. In October 1831, the 21st Foot returned to England prior to their departure for Australia.

Kennedy arrived at the Swan River Colony with his wife, Martha on the *Jane* in September 1833. His hospitalization in January 1843, at Albany, marked 'the beginning of the end' of his time in the colony. Following his release he was sent to Tasmania per the *HMS Fly*. He was found to be unfit for military service, returned to England and was discharged at Chatham on 16 August 1844. The report stated: 'He labours at present under mental derangement which it is stated in a medical case, was induced eighteen months since, by habits of intemperance'.



The uniforms worn by the men of the 21st Regiment at the Swan River Colony would have been similar to these. [Conquest and Settlement]

The final reference located about Kennedy, related to his death. It stated he was buried in the Mt St Lawrence Cemetery, Limerick on 15 September 1882, aged 74 years. His former residence was given as the Asylum.

| Mount St. Lawrence Cemetery Register | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|--------|-------|------|---------------|
| Sexton's Number | Reg'd No. | Lat | Long | Name | Ages | | | | | Residence |
| | | | | | Adult | Children under 12 | | | | |
| | | | | | years | years | months | Weeks | days | |
| 10,024 | 15 | 53 | ya | Malley Kennedy | 74 | | | | | Asylum |

I now turned my attention to Martha. One Internet searcher had mentioned that Kennedy's wife and children stayed in Western Australia. A Google search unearthed the following:

- Mather Mary Goodchild was born on 11 August 1804 in England.
- She married Kennedy Maley in England.
- She died on 16 March at Greenough, Western Australia, aged 98. **What year?**

Geoff Blackburn's book, *Conquest and Settlement* lists Sarah and Kennedy's identified children as:

- Elizabeth born Perth on 15 December 1833.
- George born Perth on 21 April 1836, died at Albany in 1852.
- John Stephen born at Albany on 5 April 1839.

Both Elizabeth and John and their families played a significant role in Western Australia's development and there are many references to their exploits.



The question remains: are Kennedy and Martha Mealey/Maley, Sarah Matilda O'Malley's parents? Irrefutable evidence that connects them will be difficult to find. The location, date, names and military connection provide compelling but not conclusive proof.

Questions remain: why didn't Sarah and Mary accompany their parents to the Swan River Colony? There are a number of possible reasons for this action. Perhaps they were considered too small to make the voyage to a colony that had only been established three years before the arrival of the 21st Foot Regiment. Financial or health concerns could also have been factors.

The story that Sarah related on her death bed could have been invented as a way of explaining the absence of her parents. Sarah's guardians may have fallen victim to the famine leaving her to seek support from the workhouse.

If Sarah is Kennedy and Martha's child it would mean that mother and daughter were raising families, as single mothers, on opposite sides of the continent, totally oblivious to each other's situation. A further fact to consider is the possibility that Kennedy and Sarah were both in Limerick following his discharge and before Sarah's departure for Port Phillip. If this were the case it is unlikely that they met, as such an encounter would have provided Sarah with the facts relating to her abandonment.

Like many of the mysteries woven through Sarah's life story this will probably join the list of unanswered questions, but does that really matter? The quest to uncover her story has been a great one and it is refreshing to be able to celebrate the life of an immigrant who became a great Aussie Battler.



Sarah's headstone in Tower Hill Cemetery, Koroit, Victoria

Reference:

Blackburn, Geoff, *Conquest and Settlement: The 21st Regiment of Foot (North British Fusiliers) in Western Australia 1833-1840*, Hesperian Press, Carlisle, W.A. 1999, pp.1 & 311.