

OUR MATERNAL ANCESTRY

THE BRENNAN, CARROLL, HARTIGAN SIDE

Our maternal origins in Australia began in 1862 with the arrival in Sydney of the Brennan family from Cloneen, parish of Clough, Kilkenny Ireland. It was a sad beginning as our great-great grandfather Michael Brennan died on the voyage out to Australia. Such a difficult start continued to affect their lives.

Michael and Mary Brennan's journey to Australia was paid by Mary Cantwell (nee Brennan –probably a cousin) whose husband James Cantwell had been transported for illegally swearing oaths in 1831. After he was transported Michael and Mary Brennan cared for Mary Cantwell and her children. When James Cantwell was freed after serving his time Mary Cantwell and the children followed him to Australia. Michael and Mary Brennan then followed the Cantwells sailing in 1862 aboard the Abbysinnian. The idea was that the two families would farm together. Michael died of pneumonia during the voyage aged 48 leaving Mary aged 41 with nine children and another born shortly after the family arrived in Sydney.

The Cantwells for reasons unknown were not able to support the Brennan family so the children were turned into service leading to a break in relations between the two families. (Source Allycat & Brennan Cantwell families)

(At the end of this account see the extraordinary coincidence linking the Brennan and Hinchey families).

The following are the names and ages of Michael and Mary Brennan's children: Mary 18,(our g grandmother) Patrick 16, Elizabeth 14 (married Edmund Cahill,) Catherine 12, Edward 10, Ellen 8, Margaret 6, James 4, Martin 1. Jeremy (also known as Mickey) was born soon after arriving in Sydney. After his mother's death he was cared for by his sister Mary and lived with the Carrolls in 7 London St Enmore.

On a recent visit to Morpeth (2014) Cec Clare and Marg visited the museum there and asked if they had any information about the Brennan family. Nothing was found. However after telling the people there about the story, one of them showed us a framed photo on the wall depicting the hotel that was opposite the museum. She said there was a story that the owner of the hotel Mrs Anderson had given some work to a widow with many children. It seems very likely it was our poor gggrandmother Mary Brennan. Clare has posted a photo of the hotel that was subsequently burnt down some time later after Mary had died aged only 54.

The eldest daughter, Mary, our gggrandmother married James Carroll who was born in Templemore Tipperary Ireland in 1839. They moved to Sydney where James was a bootmaker. The Carroll children were:

Michael (known as Black) (father of Eileen); Patrick (Patsy) d1939; Mary (our grandmother)b 1875, married William Hartigan 1906 , d 1937. (Parents of Mary (Molly) b 1907, Kathleen (Tatty) our mother b 1909 married Michael Hinchey 1937, d 1972, Josephine b 1914, d2008? William died in infancy, James died in infancy, Margaret (Peggy) died aged 3, Cecilia b 1821);

Kate d1872; Peter b 1867 died same year; Thomas d1938; James b 1886 d 1928; Ned married Agnes O'Connell (Parents of Eddie, Archbishop James, Isobel, Agnes(Betty); Elizabeth (Lizzie) b1882 d 1958; Catherine(Kit) m Frank Mullen, (parents of Mary, Denis, Joseph and Kathleen).

Younger descendants of William and Mary Hartigan (nee Carroll) can be seen on the Hincheyne family tree.

Brennan Hinchey Connection

When doing some family research on the arrival of Michael Hinchey noting the date and ship on which he arrived, I began to have a strange feeling that the other side of my ancestors the Brennans had come on the same date and ship – quite an eerie feeling! Sure enough on further searching I found it was true. They would not have known each other.

The Brennans came to Australia on the *Abbyssinian* arriving in Sydney in 1862. On board also in the single men section was Michael Hinchey, our other greatgrandfather. As both were Catholics it is possible that when Michael Brennan died and was buried at sea our other ggrandfather Michael Hinchey may have been present at the service or at least have known about it. On landing in Sydney both went their own ways – the Brennans to Morpeth and the Hincneys to Shark Creek near Maclean.

About 70 years later after grandmother Mary Hartigan (nee Carroll, greatgranddaughter of Michael and Mary Brennan) and some of the Hinchey clan settled in Sydney, our mother and father Kathleen Hartigan and Michael Hinchey met on Newtown Bridge and married in 1937. And the rest as they say is history! How extraordinary life journeys can be.

If anyone has further information on the original Brennan family and their experience in Morpeth NSW I would be grateful to receive it to add to the family history.

Passenger lists from the *Abbyssinian* showing both the Brennans and Michael Hinchey are included in the photo gallery.

Margaret Hinchey RSM February 2015.