

‘When rolling seas shall no more divide us’

TRANSNATIONALISM AND THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHIES OF ULSTER PROTESTANT SETTLEMENT IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CANTERBURY*



WRITING TO HIS EMIGRANT SONS from Balloo in County Down in 1861, John McIlrath, a Unitarian tenant farmer, celebrated the arrival of their most recent letter in words that reveal the crucial importance of mail for globally scattered Irish families: ‘You may conceive with what emotion your letter was read. You have travelled over various regions and sea. Many perilous adventures and difficulties you must have had since leaving home. Little thought we at Christmas that Hamilton was on the sea again and you at the New Zealand digging.’¹ The brothers, James and Hamilton, had reached Port Phillip from Liverpool in 1861, working for several months on Victorian farms before they were lured to Otago and Canterbury by the dazzling prospects of gold and land.² Despite their restless mobility, the exchange of correspondence renewed the emotional connections with Ulster and provided reassurance for separated relatives. ‘We got Hamilton’s letter from Kyneton on the 22nd of january’, their father told them, ‘and directed me to him on the 23rd to the care of Mr Harper. Least it should not reach you we shall again mention that Aunt Sarah is no more. She was buried on Sunday 19th of january. The one from Melbourne we got on the 19th of February together with the Affectionate token to his Mother which she prizes Dearly.’ The quest for an elusive pile, however, elicited a blunt familial response: ‘Gold may be bought too dear and we advise you not to value it too highly’. The warning discharged, McIlrath constructed an appealing picture of well-being and companionship in Killinchy, where kinsfolk and friends ‘passed’ an evening party ‘as usual’. ‘We know little more to mention’, he confessed to James and Hamilton, ‘but hoping the time is not far distant when rolling Seas shall no more divide us and when you shall again breath the air of your *Native Home’s*'.³

John McIlrath’s sole surviving letter, with its poignant evocation of reunion, points toward the transnational dimensions of migration history.⁴ In recent years, scholars of the Irish abroad have extended their inquiries beyond the nation-state in an attempt to capture the kinds of interactions that took place across the axis of dispersion. New work in the field has demonstrated the value of transnational frameworks to the study of mobility and has greatly enriched our understanding and knowledge of Irish global history.⁵ Despite the increasing scholarly concern with cross-border spaces, however, some difficulties remain. First, as Kevin Kenny has reminded us, we should not underestimate ‘the enduring power of nation-states and the emergence within

them of nationally specific ethnicities'.⁶ At the same time, it is clear that the transnational sensibilities of particular migrant peoples have varied across time and from place to place, differences that can only be illuminated by comparative research. Second, we cannot evade the fact that in a great number of cases — including the Irish globally — transnational links weakened and often disappeared. Analyses, therefore, need to give sustained attention to change over time, otherwise they run the risk of obscuring the permanency of migrant settlement, the emerging commonalities between populations and the transformation of older social networks. A close engagement with the local geographies of migration, alongside far more critical appraisals of currently fashionable interpretive perspectives, is required.⁷

This article takes some small steps in this direction through the consideration of a single empirical case: the kinds of network connections developed by Ulster Protestant migrants in Canterbury during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with a particular focus on the rural districts of Lakeside and Killinchy.⁸ It begins by surveying the key features of the movement, then turns to a discussion of the transnational dynamics which operated in the region. The findings provide further support for the emphasis in recent studies on the role of spatially dispersed networks in shaping migrant social worlds,⁹ but also raise questions about the durability of transoceanic ties and their shifting relationship to local networks. Pushing beyond the initial period of settlement, the surviving evidence suggests that local affinities and affiliations became more important for Ulster Protestant men and women as social networks expanded and new orientations emerged, especially among younger generations whose members operated in ways that made them resemble their surrounding populations. Nonetheless, older ties co-existed with changing identifications and residual traces of an earlier transnationalism can be found in the present day.

The need to place migrant experiences in their wider global context has been fundamental to the study of Irish mobility, which varied considerably over time and space. Contrary to popular understanding, mass emigration did not begin with the Great Famine (1845–1850) but in the early decades of the eighteenth century when thousands of Ulster Presbyterians made their way to the American colonies.¹⁰ Irish overseas movement featured at least four subsequent chronological phases — pre-Famine, Famine, post-Famine, twentieth century — and each presents internal complexities for historians.¹¹ The magnitude of these migrations was remarkable in volume and intensity relative to the size of Ireland's population at any given point over the past three centuries. Since 1700 around 10 million Irish people have ventured abroad, forming a substantial element in migrant flows to North America, Great Britain, Australasia, Latin America, South Africa and the Caribbean. As Donald Akenson has observed, Ireland provided the 'foot soldiers of empire' and a 'globe-circling matrix' of educational, commercial, religious and political institutions.¹² An estimated 70 million people worldwide claim some kind of Irish identification, including over 40 million in the United States today who cite this category as their primary ancestry.¹³ Small wonder, then, that the entire modern era of Irish migration has been imagined, represented and framed as diaspora in contemporary academic and public discourses in Ireland

and elsewhere.¹⁴ Whatever its merits for historical research, there is no doubt that the concept of diaspora has spurred recognition of the ways that migrant networks have facilitated travel and communication, and shaped forms of consciousness, sociability and authority which transcend the nation.

The movement of Irish men and women to Canterbury formed part of the post-Famine dispersal of this sweeping global history. Between 1850 and 1914, more than 12,000 people reached the province from various ports in the United Kingdom and the Australian colonies.¹⁵ Some chose to settle permanently in the region; for others, it was a temporary staging post in their restless search for new opportunities. Whereas almost one-third of Auckland's population in the early 1850s was of Irish birth, census figures show that Canterbury's Irish-born component was a mere 4% in 1854; the most significant flows took place in the early 1860s and during the 1870s.¹⁶ The explanation for this 'lag effect' is twofold. First, the cost of travelling to the colony, which included the journey across the Irish Sea and onwards to Gravesend or London, was beyond the scant resources of most prospective Irish migrants. Few could afford the full fare of around £20 and there were no long-standing network links with Canterbury as there was with New South Wales and Victoria. Second, the Canterbury Association did not consider the Irish to be the most desirable settlers and worked hard to create an Anglican rural idyll.¹⁷ For John Robert Godley, Dublin-born but English-educated son of a wealthy landowning family, the 'ideal Canterbury' was imagined in terms 'characteristic of the Burkeian Anglo-Irish colonial visionary — the determination to create in the colonial world a society the reverse of Ireland, a society which reflected the lessons learnt from Britain's Irish mistakes, a dream capsule'.¹⁸ Yet the grand scheme that he pictured 'in the colours of a Utopia' took on a different complexion when 'managed in fact'.¹⁹ Successive provincial administrations and their recruiting agents did their best to impose 'quality controls' on assisted migration. But there was always strong competition for migrants from Britain, and increasing numbers of Irish passengers were sent out to the settlement to satisfy the relentless demand for labour.²⁰ Moreover, Canterbury attracted substantial streams from the Victorian goldfields, just as Godley had predicated in 1852, and hundreds more arrived after sojourns of varying duration on the Otago and West Coast diggings.²¹ Despite political concerns over their presence, Irish people were conspicuous in the migrant streams that flowed into Canterbury from the late 1850s through to the 1880s; they were a major source of its foundational settler population.²²

Historians have demonstrated that Irish migration to Canterbury varied over time and in terms of class, gender, age, religion and regional origin. One of the most striking findings to emerge from detailed case study research into the Irish in the province is the preponderance of Ulster origins among the local Irish-born contingents from the beginnings of systematic colonization. Although the case studies used different sources and methods, they present a remarkably consistent picture of geographical bias toward the northernmost counties, with Antrim, Tyrone, Armagh and, especially, the east coast county of Down well represented.²³ Thus, Canterbury received a substantial and growing intake from Ireland's Protestant heartlands that stretched from Belfast to the Ards

Peninsula, south-west across the rolling countryside to north Armagh, and along the fertile river valleys of the Bann, the Lagan and the Foyle. Counties Antrim and Down were the most Protestant areas of Ulster throughout this period and, reflecting long-standing Scottish influences, Presbyterianism formed the largest denomination.²⁴ But Ireland's religious map was always complex and featured significant local variations in numbers and in the shades and textures of communal relations. There were sizeable minorities of Protestants in Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan until partition; poor Methodists and Catholics; patterns of accommodation as well as the jagged sectarianism so visible in the streets of Belfast and the 'old linen triangle' between the flashpoints of Tanderagee, Portadown and Lurgan.²⁵ Canterbury's Ulster migrants came from places characterized by distinctive cultural and social divisions. Many came from areas with strong traditions of Orangeism, a high proportion of people living in towns or cities, and an intense concentration of industrial centres.

The caprice of colonial politicians and their immigration agencies is the principal reason for the north-eastern orientation of Canterbury's Irish population. Scholars have uncovered substantial evidence to show that Canterbury directed most of its recruitment efforts toward parts of Ulster with non-Catholic majorities.²⁶ This region was viewed as a fertile source of hard-working Protestants, a preference that continued unabated when the central government took responsibility for assisted migration after 1870. Once started, migrant streams with links to particular neighbourhood and kinship networks were perpetuated by remittances, the nomination system and the exchange of mail across 'the rolling Seas'.²⁷ Such was the concern of Canterbury's colonial officials over Ireland that they responded cautiously to a request by Henry O'Brien, a Presbyterian minister from Cootehill, County Cavan, for the provision of assisted passages to some of his congregants. The agents relented, 'as we were short of people . . . Mr Selfe thought we might take a few good Ulster families. There will therefore be *three* Cavan families and *two* single women in the "Ivanhoe".'²⁸ The arrival of John and Mary Rountree with their children aboard the *Ivanhoe* in 1864 began a small stream of departures from Cootehill over the next 15 years.²⁹ These kinsfolk eventually settled at St Albans on the northern rural fringes of Christchurch, where they bought land and established farms.

Terry Hearn has shown that more than two-thirds of all the assisted Irish families arriving in Canterbury between 1855 and 1870 came from Ulster (69.8%). The north provided more than half of all single Irish men across the same period (55.9%) and 'a smaller but still significant' influx of single women (47.2%).³⁰ County Down constituted the most important source of all these groups. It supplied a quarter of assisted Irish family members (26.4%), about one-fifth of Irish single men (21.1%) and more than one-tenth of Irish single women (12.4%). Overall, 20.4% of all subsidised Irish arrivals in the period emanated from Down,³¹ with counties Antrim, Tyrone and Armagh also very prominent. For evidence of religious background, Hearn turned to a wider New Zealand sample taken from death registers and extracted the Canterbury data to demonstrate that only 42.3% were Catholic compared with 53.9% for the colony as a whole. The province, he suggested, seemed to have

‘deliberately set out to attract Protestants, especially among family groups, and to a considerable extent succeeded’.³²

Record linkages between death certificates and other nominal and literary sources provide an additional layer of detail to this picture.³³ First, it is apparent that Catholics (23.0%) were badly underrepresented in Canterbury’s Ulster intake relative to their population distribution at the Irish census of 1861 (50.5%), while the opposite was true for the Church of Ireland (39.5% and 20.4%). There was also a strong non-conformist element amongst the Canterbury migrants: Presbyterians were appropriately represented, but Methodists comprised about one-tenth of all the migrants, compared with only 1.7% of the population in the north of Ireland.³⁴ Equally surprising is that Anglicans — and not Presbyterians — made up the largest denominational category from Down and Antrim. Second, there were significant confessional differences in terms of class. Almost two-thirds of Ulster Presbyterians had fathers who were farmers; fewer Anglicans came from this stratum and they were much more likely than members of other denominations to have left white-collar households. Higher proportions of Catholics, by contrast, were the children of labourers or men working in pre-industrial occupations. Third, the provision of state funding was weighted in favour of Anglicans (Church of Ireland) and toward married couples, single women and those from north-eastern districts. Finally, many travelled independently from Great Britain and the Australian colonies. Like James and Hamilton McIlrath, they were often state migrants with prior colonial experiences for whom Canterbury became a viable option at a certain point in their lives.

The specifics of Ulster migration are much more complex if the analysis moves below county level. The surviving nomination deposit journal for Canterbury, for example, covering the years 1872–1874, points to the role of social networks in the negotiation and the organization of departures through the bureaucratized opportunities of the state-sponsored bills system.³⁵ Personal testimony of migrants surveyed by the Immigration Office in Christchurch over the same period reinforces the importance of social networks. ‘Some friends of mine had emigrated to Canterbury’, John Boal from County Down told local officials, ‘and I had heard they had done well there’. When asked about the promotion of assisted passages to the colony, his response echoed a common theme: ‘A great many have gone to Canterbury from near Belfast and they write home to their friends. I consider this the best way of promoting Emigration at home.’³⁶ Like other migrants, the young ploughman seems to have been well informed about prospects in the province. Boal’s remarks match what historians have discovered from personal letters: emigration was an ‘expensive, premeditated, calculated’ enterprise ‘involving a wider circle of interested relatives and the collection of extensive evidence concerning the available options’.³⁷

To enhance our understanding of migratory networks and explore how they changed over time, we need to draw closer to the geographical contexts of Ulster Protestant settlement in Canterbury. In the early twenty-first century there are still signs of Ulster’s colonial settlers in rural areas like Lakeside. The two-storeyed Lemon homestead, *Waterside*, for example, resembles smaller

country houses built in Down and Antrim during the nineteenth century.³⁸ There are also properties transformed from swamp to family farms in the 1860s by newcomers such as George McClure and the family of David and Mary Ann Moorhead, friends of the Balloo McIlraths.³⁹ Evidence of older practices reinvented on the ‘agricultural frontier’ is visible in the maze of ditches and sod banking that criss-cross the fields.⁴⁰

Personal and collective memories of origins and settlement are also still attached to particular places and things by the descendants of Ulster migrants. A line of eucalypts on Ridge Road personifies each of John McIlrath’s five sons. In a nearby field James Wallace built a cob cottage and farmed with his wife, Elizabeth, who made coffee for thirsty draymen on their way to Southbridge.⁴¹ But these stories tied to places, the stories that the cultural landscapes contain and can tell us, remain, for the most part, hidden. To reveal the meanings inscribed upon them requires a style of history ‘in the ethnographic grain’.⁴²

Fieldwork research in Ellesmere County and Flemington belies the claim that the Protestant Irish and their descendants merged ‘so successfully’ in their ‘new land’ that they suffered ‘a kind of cultural amnesia’.⁴³ Many of the descendants of Canterbury’s Ulster settlers have visited ancestral sites in Northern Ireland, in some cases making contact with their distant relatives or creating institutional linkages. Moreover, local families have preserved an impressive assemblage of material objects, photographs, letters and other forms of life writing that anchor oral narratives about the past. Yet, it is also clear that after several generations of intermarriage and civic integration the social fields of Canterbury’s Ulster migrants have become local ones and the transnational relationships they sustain emerge from the contemporary circulation of New Zealand peoples abroad. The residual traces of an older ‘colonial transnationalism’ remain, but these linkages no longer play a critical role in the everyday lives of Ulster Protestant descendants.⁴⁴

During the formative years of colonization, however, transoceanic networks constituted a dynamic element in the mobility and adaptation of Ulster migrants. Like the McIraths, many maintained ties with relatives and neighbours beyond the boundaries of the nation-state through the exchange of personal correspondence and newspapers, as well as through return migration and visits home. Letters carried remittances to support familial households, accompanied by the transmission of symbolic tokens such as photographs. Such tokens provided ‘consolation’ for separated kinsfolk.⁴⁵ At the same time, the written word enabled informal networks to mobilize resources for the organization of travel and ensured that prospective migrants were reliably informed about local conditions and the arrangements for their immediate reception. In Ellesmere County, as in other places of overseas settlement, this ‘complex system of personal relationships’ was central to the whole migration process, minimizing the risks associated with relocation and bestowing a valuable ‘form of social capital’.⁴⁶ For these Ulster Protestant men and women, the deployment of transnational connections was a creative response to their world and one that revealed their adherence to a moral code of obligations, entitlements and reciprocity prescribed by Irish society, at least initially.⁴⁷

The residential clusters that evolved among Ulster settlers from the 1860s

were the outcome of transnational activities based on ‘a complex grid of kinship and affection, consolidated by strategic marriages and the mechanisms of state migration’.⁴⁸ The final part of this article builds on and adds depth to our earlier work about these clusters.

Ethnographic and documentary evidence underscores the centrality of patronage in the network structure of Ulster movement.⁴⁹ In his work on London Irish networks and empire in the eighteenth century, Craig Bailey defines patronage as ‘a complex system of exchange between members of a group whose common bond is to remember the history of giving that connects them’. The system carries a certain degree of ‘risk and responsibility’, which can be safely managed by patronising ‘people who are known’, such as family and friends.⁵⁰ Lindsay Proudfoot and Dianne Hall have examined patronal ties in the context of nineteenth-century remittance emigration from south-west Ulster to New South Wales, while Jim McAloon has emphasized their importance for Scots in New Zealand’s colonial economy.⁵¹ The forms of collective action revealed by these studies varied according to time and place, but all demonstrated how patronage operated within migrant networks and shaped social relations across vast distances.

The flow of patronal assistance and encouragement facilitated by Ulster networks with links to Ellesmere County ranged from sponsorships through the nomination system to more complicated sequences. One of the best illustrations involves the ‘localised pulse of emigration’ from the vicinity of Killinchy, near Comber, in north Down.⁵² There were two main clusters of migrants on the expanding agricultural frontier from this area. The first developed in the early 1860s around the Killinchy district, named after its Down counterpart, where new arrivals followed the paths of William Shaw, George McClure and Michael Moorhead. A second contingent settled in Lakeside and Sedgemere, close to land purchased by James McIlrath in 1863. The scale and intensity of these connections was neatly conveyed to Irish readers in one of McIlrath’s letters home:

When we go to a Cattle show or any other gathering one almost forgets but that he is in Ireland. I was at one on Thursday last and there was any amount of people we all know such as WJ Alexander Cousin Robert W Cooper W Ledgerwood Lemons Brot[hers]. D Moorhead M Moorhead J Hewitt W Gebbie D McClure and Family from old Robert clarks, T Tompson Drumreagh, beside many others. I need not mention all seeming in good health and spirits. By the way I forgot William Adams David Adams. Not one of which has cause to regret leaving home.⁵³

News of ‘Killinchy people’ permeated the McIlrath correspondence and revealed the ways in which James acted as *pater familia* for new arrivals, providing work, social interaction and accommodation.⁵⁴ Other men — like William Shaw and George McClure — seem to have played a similar role within the network.⁵⁵ The most influential patronage, however, flowed from Crosbie Ward, owner-editor of the *Lyttelton Times*, and his three brothers, Hamilton, Edward and Henry, who were crucial in establishing the townland’s connections to Canterbury. According to local Irish and family tradition, their father, a local Church of Ireland minister, spoke resolutely in favour of

emigration to the province when he preached at Killinchy.⁵⁶ The significance of the patronal relationship was made clear in the words of James McIlrath, which showed the Wards the deference appropriate to the social gap between them: 'I was in Christchurch on the 1st of this month and received the parcel you sent, Mother, by M^r Ward ... Mrs Ward told me she had seen you and Father and that you looked well but Mr Ward said that he had seen so many he did not recollect seeing you. He says Ireland is still Ireland the only change being the Railway. I seen some of them that came with him Mrs Taylor for one and a young man by the name of Frew'.⁵⁷

The existence of these patronage and kinship networks did not mean that all Ulster migrants lived or stayed together in the same place. Some moved on to other localities in Canterbury, such as Flemington or Wakanui, near Ashburton; others chose destinations much further away. Mary Matthews, for example, from Ballyalloy (between Moneyreagh and Comber in County Down) accompanied her brother William to the colony aboard the *Indian Empire* in 1865. They followed the trail of their restless elder sibling, Robert, who spent time in Auckland and on the goldfields before he settled down at Lakeview Farm. Mary worked initially as a domestic servant, marrying Antrim-born Allen Bell within three years of her arrival. The couple established 'Glenfields' soon afterwards on land close to the Lakeside properties of Robert and William. By this stage, their widowed mother, Martha (née Caughey), and her youngest daughters Agnes (the future wife of James McIlrath), Harriet and Ellen, had reached the district, along with several other Killinchy migrants, on the *Blue Jacket* (1867).⁵⁸ The immediate circle was completed in the 1870s with the families of the two remaining sisters, Elizabeth Wallace and Margaret Patterson, their voyages prompted by the return visit of Robert Matthews to Ulster.⁵⁹ Mary and Allen Bell took up a larger farming enterprise at Otaio in North Otago later that decade, but hard times in the 1880s broke their resolve to stay and they moved to Taranaki, their children dispersing widely.⁶⁰ Several other family members made their way elsewhere. The youngest sister, Ellen, married in Southbridge and wrote to Lakeside from 'a very comfortable little house' at Makihihī; Harriet nursed Martha Matthews until her death in 1884 and left for Christchurch with husband John O'Hara Anthony; and the bachelors Robert and William sold up and tried their luck at Hook in South Canterbury.⁶¹ Despite these movements, bonds of affinity were maintained; the brothers even returned to live at Lakeside with kin and were buried in the Presbyterian section of the Ellesmere Cemetery. The tragic exception was the household of Ellen Clark (née Matthews). After she died in childbirth at Leeston in 1886, her husband, Henry, took three of their children to Australia and fostered out the two infant daughters, Amy and Ellen, neither of whom reconnected with their mother's family.⁶²

The busy network of neighbours and relatives from Killinchy was also geographically mobile. Of the first wave of migrants to Canterbury, several settled at locations other than Ellesmere. Robert ('Blue Gum') and Maggie Wilson, for example, arrived at Lyttelton aboard the *Charlotte Jane* in 1850 and found employment with the Wards on Quail Island. The Wards' patronage and connections provided opportunities for Robert to use his boat-building

skills and, within a few years, he and Maggie had acquired sufficient capital to purchase land at Styx, near Belfast, on the old North Road.⁶³ Robert's brother, William, the father-in-law of Hans Shaw (Ellesmere), also farmed in the district with his family.⁶⁴ The careers of more elusive expatriates such as Robert Hamilton — a relative of William's wife, Margaret — were 'impervious to research'.⁶⁵ Writing from Lakeside, James McIlrath reported similar cases to his family in Balloo: 'The young man Cuffy you enquire of I only seen once after we landed in Australia and never heard of him since. William Martin from Newtonards left where we were in Australia to go further up country. He was to write to me but I never heard of him since. If it would be convenient any time for any of you to get his address, if you could, and send it to me I would much like it.'⁶⁶ The search for other missing friends was assisted by news from Killinchy: 'You say John Oprey has come Home. Many a time I wondered where he had got to as I never heard a single word of him. You don't say if he done well or not but I suppose he did. We had Thomas Logan all night on Monday last, he is well.'⁶⁷ Some migrants left Ellesmere County and its large expatriate settlement. Hamilton McIlrath, James's younger brother, sold his share of their 100-acre property on Ridge Road for £350 and 'began for himself' at Thorndale Farm in Kowhai Pass, beneath the majestic Torlesse Ranges.⁶⁸ The circumstances surrounding his departure remain hazy, but we know that the two men and their colonial families stayed in close touch over the years.⁶⁹ 'We had a visit from Hamilton's second son (also Hamilton) and his sister last week', James told William McIlrath in his final letter to Balloo in 1900. 'They are all well. Hamilton himself and Mrs and two youngest, Frank and Olive, paid us a visit since I last wrote.'⁷⁰ Less than one year later, Eva McIlrath recorded an ominous diary entry about her father, James: 'Papa seriously ill and Uncle Hamilton arrived from Springfield'.⁷¹ Her anguished sister Agnes vividly described the last hours of his life to William: 'I was the last of us that Papa spoke to that night and I was the first into his room in the morning. When I spoke to dearest Papa and he made no answer, I got a terrible shock. I will never forget it, never.'⁷²

The balance between transnational and local social ties shifted decisively towards the latter from the early stages of settlement, without entirely diminishing the significance of far-flung connections.⁷³ Personal letters, family memory and various other forms of life writing suggest that in order to survive on the agricultural frontier, newly arrived men and women were impelled to work together with migrants from diverse Old World backgrounds and confessional affiliations. The diary of William Anderson, from Aughnacloy in southern Tyrone, and patron to an extraordinary family chain migration, captures the essence of neighbourhood co-operation that cut across ethnic and linguistic boundaries at Lakeside:

27 [December 1869] – Joseph gone to Ch[ristchurch] with a load of flax for Buttons. Robert went to Boggy Crak [Creek] & got 2 calves, 1 heffer & 1 bull at 13/- each. Me & J McIlrath & Matthews binding grass seed.

28 – Matthews, 2 men & James McIlrath binding ... John Skillin cutting grass. Joseph in town & took down 25cwt & brought up 32 Ditto cash to Joseph.

29 – Skillen & me putting up the wire between him & us. Summerville man cutting grass in the swamp 5 hours. Robert draining flax. Joseph came from town.

30 – Sum’iles man cutting grass in the swamp till noon & me at the wire with Skillen. R got 2 shoes on Boxer & 2 on Tom. Him & I & Summerville man binding grass. Joseph carting flax.⁷⁴

The gruelling task of carving out farms and profits from ‘this once waste spot’ forged relationships based on spatial proximity, as well as on the demands of blood.⁷⁵ Neighbours provided tangible support to one another during the annual cycle of sowing and harvests, in the construction of roads, buildings and bridges, and in the critical moments of death, birth and illness.⁷⁶ Lasting friendships were established in these contexts and conditioned the available marriage opportunities, as the union of James McIlrath and Agnes Matthews clearly showed. New social networks and sources of support developed around churches, schools and voluntary organizations.⁷⁷ As Louise Ryan has recently argued, such activities underline ‘the continued importance of propinquity’ in migration, especially in terms of practical assistance and ‘local knowledge’.⁷⁸

The transnational connections that played such a crucial role in the migration and adaptation of Canterbury’s Ulster migrants were not entirely superseded during the period under consideration. Yet these attachments had become ‘fewer and thinner’ by the early twentieth century, especially with the rise of the second colonial-born generation.⁷⁹ In some cases the transnational connections were eclipsed much earlier. In a revealing letter sent from Newtownards in 1892, for example, Robert Bell Caughey tried to reactivate contact with his separated relatives through Harriet Anthony (née Matthews):

A card of yours was left with me a few days ago which had been enclosed to a person here by some friend of yours in New Zealand. I do not know the persons name, but I said I would leave a few lines for you, which he will enclose in his brothers letter.

I presume you are the daughter of my late much respected Aunt Martha and sister of my dear cousin Robert Matthews. I have often wondered that Robert never wrote since he was here some years ago. It seems strange that on his return to New Zealand he did not let us know how all there were getting along. I dare say there have been changes in your family since Robert was here. Your Mother’s death and of cousin [Ellen Clark] was a further change for you all, as it will separate a link with the old country that could never be replaced.

Caughey’s optimistic reference to ‘a strong feeling of origin’ among ‘the old friends and their descendants who have left us here’ finds support in the McIlrath correspondence.⁸⁰ Writing in 1910, Matilda (Tilly) Thompson (née McIlrath), the eldest daughter of James and Agnes, confessed to her cousin Minnie that ‘[p]eople often laugh at me speaking of Home letters (because Ireland was not my home). *Father always talked of Ireland as “Home” and our family all do.* When I see them they always inquire if there are any letters from Home yet’: ‘You asked me about paying Ireland a visit. I should very much like to and would if so much briny ocean did not lie between. Eva always said she was going Home for a trip but now she is married and settled I do not

think she will ever be able to make the journey. However if there are anyone going from here I might be tempted so don't loose hope for we may meet yet. There are three young lady's went from our district in Feb and have not as yet returned⁸¹

For many Ulster Protestant migrants and their colonial-born descendants, transnational ties served an emotional purpose long after they had ceased to be a vital means of practical support. But the laughter which greeted Matilda's claim about 'Home' suggests that it was perceived as eccentricity by a new generation; that term, for all its ambiguity, now expressed an attachment to immediate family and a particular rural neighbourhood — Lakeside, Sedgmere, Killinchy, Doyleston — alongside self-understandings shaped by multiple and intersecting forms of connectedness.

In a very real sense, Ulster settlers constructed transnational social worlds through which they sustained relationships and influenced actions outside the borders of the nation-state. Yet, their main sources of support shifted over time from the network connections that spanned the oceans to those emerging within new localities.⁸² To capture the 'distinctive tonalities' of nineteenth-century migrant lives, then, we need to combine transnational perspectives with close attention to post-migration network structures. Such a task requires the imaginative exploration of local geographical contexts, and the tools of historical ethnography hold promise for its realization.⁸³ The best vantage point for the study of international migration is to be found in the intersections 'of global forces and local conditions, of the world and the village', the analysis of which involves 'continuous dialectical tacking' between local details and huge structures so as 'to bring them into simultaneous view'.⁸⁴ Migration histories of this kind challenge the idea that the nation-state is the primary level of analysis, but their true value has surely more to do with helping us understand and explain the varied ways that migrants remade themselves and animated the world around them.⁸⁵

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NOTES

*This essay forms part of a wider project funded by the Institute of Ulster Scots Studies (IUSS) at the University of Ulster. The authors would like to thank the IUSS for its generosity and the anonymous reviewers for their critical perspicacity.

1 John McIlrath to James and Hamilton McIlrath, 23 March 1861, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45.2, Canterbury Museum (hereafter CM). The editorial interventions in the transcripts of personal letters used in this essay are as follows: the introduction of sentence and paragraph breaks; clarifications rendered in square brackets; and missing letters or words placed in italics.

2 ibid.; James McIlrath to his family, 15 March 1861 (Port Phillip) and 21 April 1861 (Gisborne, Victoria); Hamilton McIlrath to his family, 17 November 1861 (Kyneton, Victoria), c.1861 (Kyneton) and 21 December 1861 (Melbourne), courtesy of Jenny Langford. Hamilton's two surviving Kyneton letters are incomplete.

3 John McIlrath to James and Hamilton McIlrath, 23 March 1861, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45.2, CM. This is the only letter from John that has so far been discovered.

4 For a useful introduction to the concept of transnationalism, see Steven Vertovec, 'Transnationalism and Identity', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27, 4 (2001), pp.573–82. On the comparative aspects of transnational migration, see the incisive work of Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration*, New Haven, Conn., and New York, 2000; and Ewa Morawska, 'Immigrants, Transnationalism, and Ethnicization: A Comparison of This Great Wave and the Last', in Gary Gerstle and John Mollenkopf, eds, *E Pluribus Unum: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, New York, 2001, pp.175–212. Following Morawska, we interpret transnationalism 'as a combination of civic-political memberships, economic involvements, social networks and cultural identities that links people and institutions in two or more nation-states in diverse, multilayered patterns. These cross-border connections are mainly constructed by international migrants, who create "new transnational spaces" that de-territorialize or extend (rather than undermine) the nation-states they link.' See Morawska, pp.175–6. The concept is particularly well developed within anthropology. See, especially, Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*, Amsterdam, 1994.

5 See, for example, Malcolm Campbell, *Ireland's New Worlds: Immigrants, Politics and Society in the United States and Australia, 1815–1922*, Madison and London, 2008; Enda Delaney and Donald M. MacRaild, eds, *Irish Migration, Networks and Ethnic Identities Since 1750*, London and New York, 2007; Lyndon Fraser, *Castles of Gold: A History of New Zealand's West Coast Irish*, Dunedin, 2007; Donald M. MacRaild, *Faith, Fraternity and Fighting: The Orange Order and Irish Migrants in Northern England, c.1850–1920*, Liverpool, 2005; Angela McCarthy, *Personal Narratives of Irish and Scottish Migration, 1921–65, 'For spirit and adventure'*, Manchester, 2007; Louise Ryan, 'Migrant Women, Social Networks and Motherhood: The Experiences of Irish Nurses in Britain', *Sociology*, 41, 2 (2007), pp.295–312.

6 Kevin Kenny, 'Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study', *Journal of American History*, 90, 1 (2003), p.135.

7 Lindsay Proudfoot, 'Landscape, Place and Memory: Towards a Geography of Irish Identities in Colonial Australia', in Oonagh Walsh, ed., *Ireland Abroad: Politics and Profession in the Nineteenth Century*, Dublin, 2003, pp.172–85. Lindsay Proudfoot and Dianne Hall have used primary source materials held in Ireland and Australia to illuminate the lives of nineteenth-century migrants — Protestant and Catholic — in ways that might be fruitfully extended to other contexts. Their sophisticated techniques and emphasis on the micro-geographies of settlement is highly suggestive for New Zealand historians keen to build on the pioneering research of Alasdair Galbraith. See Lindsay Proudfoot and Dianne Hall, 'Points of Departure: Remittance Emigration from South-West Ulster to New South Wales in the Later Nineteenth Century', *International Review of Social History*, 50 (2005), pp.241–77; Alasdair Galbraith, 'The Invisible Irish? Re-Discovering the Irish Protestant Tradition in Colonial New Zealand', in Lyndon Fraser, ed., *A Distant Shore: Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin, 2000, pp.36–54; and 'A Forgotten Plantation: The Irish in Pukekohe, 1865–1900', in Brad Patterson, ed., *The Irish in New Zealand: Historical Contexts and Perspectives*, Wellington, 2002, pp.117–30.

8 The historiography of the overseas Irish has expanded rapidly in recent years and opened up new avenues of research. Yet, the experiences of non-Catholics have been difficult to integrate

into ‘the grand schema of the Irish diaspora’. As William Jenkins argues, ‘[t]he tendency has been to treat the (Protestant) host society to which so many immigrants flocked as a monolithic entity, one that allowed the Protestant Irish comfortable, and cultural, incorporation. That certain forms of “Irishness” or empathies with Ireland may have survived within such Protestant identities, in a way similar to Catholic ones, have either been summarily dismissed or understudied.’ William Jenkins, ‘Between the Lodge and the Meeting-House: Mapping Irish Protestant Identities and Social Worlds in Late Victorian Toronto’, *Social and Cultural Geography*, 4, 1 (2003), p.75; Enda Delaney, ‘The Irish Diaspora’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33 (2006), p.44. See also Donald Harman Akenson, ‘No Petty People: Pakeha History and the Historiography of the Irish Diaspora’, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, pp.13–24. Recent scholarship includes Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland’s Ulster Scots, America’s Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689–1764*, Princeton and Oxford, 2001; Donald M. MacRaild, ‘Networks, Communication and the Irish Protestant Diaspora in Northern England, c.1860–1914’, in Delaney and MacRaild, pp.163–89; Mervyn Busteed, Frank Neal and Jonathan Tonge, eds, *Irish Protestant Identities*, Manchester, 2008. The high proportion of Protestants in Irish migrant flows to New Zealand, suggested by earlier studies, is clearly established by Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland and Scotland, 1800–1945*, Auckland, 2008, pp.116–26. On Irish Protestants in New Zealand, see Galbraith, ‘The Invisible Irish?’, ‘A Forgotten Plantation’ and ‘New Zealand’s “invisible” Irish: Irish Protestants in the North Island of New Zealand, 1840–1900’, MA thesis, The University of Auckland, 1998; Brad Patterson, ed., *Ulster–New Zealand Migration and Cultural Transfers*, Dublin, 2005.

9 We conceptualize networks as transnational institutions that bind together migrants and non-migrants in areas of origin and destination through ties of kinship, friendship, neighbourhood and other types of affinity. See Lyndon Fraser, ‘Irish Migration to the West Coast, 1864–1900’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, 34, 2 (2000), fn.15, p.222. The literature on migrant networks over the past two decades is voluminous. See, especially, Monica Boyd’s seminal essay, ‘Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas’, *International Migration Review*, 23, 3 (1989), pp.638–70. The pioneering work on the role of social networks in shaping Irish migration to New Zealand is Lyndon Fraser’s *To Tara via Holyhead: Irish Catholic Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Christchurch*, Auckland, 1997. Subsequent studies have refined and extended this research. See, especially, Fraser, ‘Irish Migration’ and ‘Irish Women’s Networks on the West Coast of New Zealand’s South Island, 1864–1922’, *Women’s History Review*, 33 (2006), pp.459–75; Angela McCarthy, ‘“Bands of Fellowship”: The Role of Personal Relationships and Social Networks among Irish Migrants in New Zealand, 1861–1911’, in Delaney and MacRaild, pp.163–209; McCarthy, *Personal Narratives*.

10 See Donald Harman Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, Toronto and Belfast, 1996; Andy Bielenberg, ed., *The Irish Diaspora*, Harlow, 2000; Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History*, Harlow, 2000; Griffin, *The People with No Name*. We use the term ‘Ulster’ in this article to refer to the ‘historic’ nine counties: Antrim, Armagh, Cavan, Down, Derry/Londonderry, Donegal, Fermanagh, Monaghan and Tyrone. Counties Cavan, Donegal and Monaghan were included in the southern Irish state after partition in 1921. See Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster*, Belfast, 1992; Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798–1998: Politics and War*, Oxford, 1999; Richard English, *Irish Freedom: The History of Nationalism in Ireland*, Basingstoke and Oxford, 2007.

11 We are following Kevin Kenny, ‘Diaspora and Irish Migration History’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33, (2006), pp.46–51, and his comments on ‘the chronological scope’ of inquiry in ‘Diaspora and Comparison’, pp.143–5.

12 Akenson, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, pp.19–20, 22–23.

13 ibid., p.18. The estimate was made in 1990 by Irish President Mary Robinson. See Bronwen Walter, *Outsiders Inside: Whiteness, Place and Irish Women*, London and New York, 2001, pp.11–13. For an entry into the literature, see Walter, ch.1; Enda Delaney, Kevin Kenny and Donald MacRaild, ‘Symposium: Perspectives on the Irish Diaspora’, *Irish Economic and Social History*, 33 (2006), pp.35–58.

14 The seminal texts on diaspora are William Safran, ‘Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return’, *Diaspora*, 1, 1 (1991), pp.83–99; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass., 1993; James Clifford, ‘Diasporas’, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9, 3 (1994), pp.302–38; Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, London, 1996; Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*, Seattle, 1997. For an incisive critique, see Rogers Brubaker, ‘The “diaspora” diaspora’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28, 1 (2005), pp.1–19.

- 15 *Census of New Zealand, 1854–1921.*
- 16 Phillips and Hearn, p.60; *Canterbury Gazette*, Vol.1, 1 July 1854, p.ix; Phillips and Hearn, pp.64–68; 116–26.
- 17 On nineteenth-century migration to Canterbury, see R.H. Silcock, ‘Immigration into Canterbury under the Provincial Government’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1964; R.L.N. Greenaway, ‘Henry Selfe and the Origins and Early Development of Canterbury’, MA thesis, University of Canterbury, 1972; K.A. Pickens, ‘Canterbury 1851–1881: Demography and Mobility. A Comparative Study’, PhD thesis, Washington University, St Louis, 1976; K.A. Pickens, ‘The Origins of the Population of Nineteenth-Century Canterbury’, *New Zealand Geographer*, 33 (1977), pp.69–75; Charlotte Macdonald, *A Woman of Good Character: Single Women as Immigrant Settlers in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand*, Wellington, 1990; Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*. See also Edmund Bohan, ‘*Blest madman*’: *FitzGerald of Canterbury*, Christchurch, 1998.
- 18 Patrick O’Farrell, ‘Varieties of New Zealand Irishness: A Meditation’, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, p.29.
- 19 John Robert Godley, ‘Farewell to the Canterbury Settlement’, in Cherry A. Hankin, ed., *Life in a Young Colony: Selections From Early New Zealand Writing*, Christchurch, 1981, pp.280, 281.
- 20 Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*, pp.32–48.
- 21 Godley, in Hankin, ed., p.282; Provincial Secretary to Marshman, 24 January 1863, ICPS 647/1863, Archives New Zealand, Christchurch (hereafter ANZ-CH).
- 22 Provincial Secretary to Marshman, 12 February 1863, CP607d/13, ANZ-CH; *Canterbury Gazette*, Vol.10, 3 June 1863, p.75; Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*, pp.38, 58.
- 23 See Silcock, Tables 7 and 8; Pickens, ‘Canterbury 1851–1881’, Table 1/50, p.222; Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*, Table 1.2, p.37.
- 24 See W.J. Vaughan and A.E. Fitzpatrick, eds, *Irish Historical Statistics: Population, 1821–1971*, Dublin, 1978; Myrtle Hill, ‘Religion and Society: Protestantism in Nineteenth-Century County Down’, in Lindsay Proudfoot, ed., *Down: History and Society. Interdisciplinary Essays on the History of an Irish County*, Dublin, 1997, pp.489–522.
- 25 S.J. Connolly, *Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, Dundalk, 1985; K. Theodore Hoppen, *Ireland Since 1800: Conflict and Conformity*, London and New York, 1999, pp.77–86; Marianne Elliot, *The Catholics of Ulster: A History*, London, 2000, Map 8ii, pp.xli, 344–61.
- 26 See Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*, pp.32–48; Galbraith, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, pp.41–47; Ciara Breathnach, ‘Recruiting Irish Migrants for Life in New Zealand 1870–75’, in Laurence M. Geary and Andrew J. McCarthy, eds, *Ireland, Australia and New Zealand: History, Politics and Culture*, Dublin and Portland, 2008, pp.32–45; Phillips and Hearn, pp.58–59, 116–26.
- 27 John McIlrath to James and Hamilton McIlrath, 23 March 1861, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45.2, CM.
- 28 Ottewell to Provincial Secretary, 26 January 1864, ICPS 906/1864, ANZ-CH.
- 29 Descendant information, Christine Barbour; G.R. Macdonald Files, 149, 389 and R400, CM; Register of Births, 1856/1878, 9/1879, 232/1881 and 352/1881, Registrar General’s Office, Christchurch (hereafter RG). The *Ivanhoe* was quarantined on arrival. Emigration Commissioners inspected the vessel and found that it was dirty and ‘excessively damp ... owing to the effect of a previous cargo of sugar and molasses’. Emigration Commissioners’ Report on Ship *Ivanhoe* 1864, CP57 ICPS 1776/1864, ANZ-CH; *Lyttelton Times*, 23 June 1864.
- 30 Terry Hearn, ‘The Provincial and Gold Rush Years’, Table 42, p.77, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/node/370>; Hearn, ‘Irish Migration to New Zealand to 1915’, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, pp.62–64. See also Pickens, ‘Origins’, pp.69–75.
- 31 Hearn, ‘Irish Migration to New Zealand to 1915’, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, p.78. Hearn’s analysis is based on three random samples comprising 6029 persons taken from the Canterbury assisted passenger lists for the years 1855–1870.
- 32 ibid., p.79; Pickens, ‘Canterbury 1851–1881’, Table 1:21, p.192.
- 33 This paragraph summarizes statistical findings from Sarah Dwyer and Lyndon Fraser, “‘We are here like so many on the cockle beds’: Towards a History of Ulster Migrants in Nineteenth-Century Canterbury”, in Patterson, ed., pp.115–30. The analysis was based on a prosopographical study of 247 Ulster-born women and 252 men whose deaths were registered in Christchurch between 1876 and 1900.
- 34 This pattern reflects a much broader trend. See Phillips and Hearn, pp.94–95, 125.

35 See Im 10/1, Archives New Zealand, Wellington (hereafter ANZ-W). The surviving register begins in February 1872 and runs until mid-January 1874. More nominations were sent to Ulster than any other Irish province and Protestants used the bills system to the same extent as Catholics. See Fraser, *To Tara via Holyhead*, pp.47–48, and ‘Irish Migration to the West Coast, 1864–1900’, pp.212–14.

36 Punjaub, Immigration Office, Christchurch, 1 November 1873, Im-CH 2/1, ANZ-W.

37 David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Migration to Australia*, Melbourne, 1995, p.534 and passim; Angela McCarthy, *Irish Migrants in New Zealand, 1840–1937: 'The Desired Haven'*, Woodbridge, 2005.

38 See Lois McCormick, *The Lemon Family: Pioneers of Killinchy, Canterbury, New Zealand*, Christchurch, 1998.

39 On McClure, see *The Cyclopedias of New Zealand, Volume 3, Canterbury*, Christchurch, 1903, p.704. He accompanied the Moorheads to Lyttelton aboard the *Matoaka* in 1860.

40 The drainage and clearance of the wetlands ‘was one of the more graphic examples of dispossession of Ngai Tahu, whose rights to the produce of the swamps had formed a crucial part of the guarantee of mahinga kai in Kemp’s Deed’. See Jim McAloon, *No Idle Rich: The Wealthy in Canterbury and Otago, 1840–1914*, Dunedin, 2002, p.19.

41 Murray Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake and the Sound of the Sea*, Christchurch, 1998, p. 40.

42 Cohn, p.49; Alan Mayne, ‘Goldfields Landscapes: An Anthology’, in Keir Reeves and David Nichols, eds, *Deeper Leads: New Approaches to Victorian Goldfields History*, Ballarat, 2007, pp.13–20.

43 Galbraith, in Fraser, *A Distant Shore*, pp. 49–50; Donald Harman Akenson, *Half the World from Home: Perspectives on the Irish in New Zealand, 1860–1950*, Wellington, 1990, pp.84–85.

44 On ‘colonial transnationalism’, see Paul Spoonley, Richard Bedford and Cluny Macpherson, ‘Divided Loyalties and Fractured Sovereignty: Transnationalism and the Nation-State in Aotearoa/New Zealand’, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 29, 1 (2003), pp.27–31.

45 See Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, passim.

46 Enda Delaney, ‘Transnationalism, Networks and Emigration from Post-War Ireland’, in Delaney and MacRaild, eds, p.278.

47 ibid., pp.276–96; Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, ch.17.

48 Dwyer and Fraser, in Patterson, ed., p.128.

49 The significance of local patronal networks in migration streams from south-west Ulster to New South Wales is convincingly demonstrated by Proudfoot and Hall, pp.241–77.

50 Craig Bailey, ‘Metropole and Colony: Irish Networks and Patronage in the Eighteenth-Century Empire’, in MacRaild and Delaney, eds, p.18.

51 Proudfoot and Hall, pp.241–77; Jim McAloon, ‘Scots in the Colonial Economy’, in Tom Brooking and Jennie Coleman, eds, *The Heather and the Fern: Scottish Migration and New Zealand Settlement*, Dunedin, 2003, pp.87–102, and *No Idle Rich*, pp.37–38. See also Malcolm Campbell, *The Kingdom of the Ryans: The Irish in Southwest New South Wales, 1816–1890*, Sydney, 1997, especially chs 2–4.

52 Proudfoot and Hall, p.246.

53 James McIlrath (Lakeside) to his brother William, mother and father (Balloo), 21 December 1872, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, 1993.45, CM. ‘We are all here like so many of the cockle beds, you seldom ever saw anyone leaving satisfied before the tide came and swept all before it, so it is here. Few, if any, care for leaving while the opportunity offers of doing well but let the tide turn and I will not say all but a great many will turn their thoughts for Home. For my part I should hear of Ireland being a little more quiet as I fancy it is a dangerous places betimes.’

54 The best documented case was Maggie Auld, whom McIlrath retrieved from Rangiora, where she had been wrongly sent by ‘Mrs Smyth who takes care of the newly arrived girls until they find a situation’. See James McIlrath (Lakeside) to his family (Balloo), 11 January 1876 and 30 April 1877, courtesy of Jenny Langford.

55 *The Cyclopedias of New Zealand, Volume 3, Canterbury*, Christchurch, 1903, pp.703–704.

56 Descendant information, Jenny Langford.

57 James McIlrath (Lakeside) to his family (Balloo), 12 March 1864, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45, CM.

58 See Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake*, ch. 7.

59 Im-CH series 4, ANZ-W.

60 Martha Matthews to her children, 9 December 1879, courtesy of Nancy McMillan.

- 61 Ellen Clark, née Matthews (Makikihi) to Martha, Robert and William Matthews (Lakeside), 7 July 1878, courtesy of Nancy McMillan.
- 62 Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake*, p.41.
- 63 Register of Deaths, 314/1890, RG; Will of Robert Wilson, CH 1930/1890, ANZ-CH; G.R. Macdonald Files, W.603, CM. Wilson's estate was worth £3050 at his death in 1890.
- 64 Register of Deaths, 557/1888, RG; Will of William Wilson, CH 1652/1888, ANZ-CH. Both William (d. 1888, £1000) and Robert Wilson (d. 1890, £3050) settled sons on land at Mt Grey Downs.
- 65 Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation*, p.151; Register of Births, 1578/1878, 400/1879, 736/1883, 627/1885, RG; Wise and Company's New Zealand Directories, 1884, 1887 and 1890.
- 66 James McIlrath (Lakeside) to his family (Balloo), 1 December 1863, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45, CM.
- 67 James McIlrath (Southbridge) to William McIlrath (Balloo), 5 September 1869, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, 1993.45, CM.
- 68 ibid.; Hamilton McIlrath (Kowhai Pass) to William McIlrath (Balloo), 7 October 1868, courtesy of Jenny Langford.
- 69 ibid.; James McIlrath (Southbridge) to his parents (Balloo), 27 August 1870, courtesy of Jenny Langford; Descendant information, Margaret Baylis; Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake*, ch. 8.
- 70 James McIlrath (Lakeside) to William McIlrath (Balloo), 13 November 1900, courtesy of Jenny Langford.
- 71 Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake*, p.54.
- 72 Agnes McIlrath (Lakeside) to her uncle William McIlrath (Balloo), 1 August 1902, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, ARC 1993.45, CM. James McIlrath died on 9 July 1901.
- 73 Our thinking here is deeply indebted to Louise Ryan, 'Migrant Women'.
- 74 Diary of William Anderson, 27–30 December 1869, courtesy of Gilbert Donaldson.
- 75 James McIlrath (Southbridge) to his family (Balloo), 27 June 1873, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, 1993.45, CM.
- 76 See, especially, the Diary of William Anderson, courtesy of Gilbert Donaldson.
- 77 These patterns of local support are well documented in Patterson, *In Sight of the Lake*, and match the findings from our ethnographic fieldwork and primary research. They are clearly apparent in William Anderson's diary, which reveals a wide array of social interactions based on local ties, and equally evident in personal letters, in obituaries and in social events reported by the *Ellesmere Guardian*.
- 78 Ryan, 'Migrant Women', p.309.
- 79 Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK*, p.185.
- 80 Robert Bell Caughey (Newtownards) to Harriet Matthews (Christchurch), 7 May 1892, courtesy of Nancy McMillan.
- 81 Tilly Thompson (Killinchy, Canterbury) to her cousin Minnie McIlrath (Killinchy, Down), 11 December 1910, Hazel Edith Conway Papers, 1993.45, CM.
- 82 Our findings support Fraser's humane skepticism about 'ethnic group frames' for understanding the experiences of Irish migrants in New Zealand. See Fraser, *Castles of Gold*, pp.17–20; 70–78; 154, 156.
- 83 See Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*, New York, 1983; Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History*, New York, 1985; Marilyn Silverman and P.H. Gulliver, eds, *Approaching the Past: Historical Anthropology Through Irish Case Studies*, New York, 1992.
- 84 Geertz, p.69.
- 85 Nina Glick Schiller uses the term 'methodological nationalism' to critique the assumption that the nation-state is 'the natural social and political form of the modern world'. See 'The Centrality of Ethnography in the Study of Transnational Migration: Seeing the Wetlands Instead of the Swamp', in Nancy Foner, ed., *American Arrivals: Anthropology Engages the New Immigration*, Santa Fe and Oxford, 2003, pp.112–15.