

## William Scully (d. 1885) Irish Journalist and Businessman in Rio de Janeiro

Scully, William (d. 1885), Irish journalist and businessman, owner and editor of the *Anglo-Brazilian Times* of Rio de Janeiro, and founder of the 'Sociedade Internacional de Imigração'. According to genealogical sources in Ireland William Scully was born in Buolick, South County Tipperary, into a family of minor Catholic landlords. The family hit hard times during the potato famine of 1846-1849 and William arrived in Brazil in the 1850s or early 1860s. In Rio de Janeiro he made his living as a calligraphy teacher. He married into an English Anglican family in Rio and then worked as a shipping agent for British lines. In 1872 he was the agent for the National Bolivian Navigation Company, which held a majority share in the Madeira-Mamoré Railway Company.

Scully's most important undertaking was the *Anglo-Brazilian Times*, which was published weekly from 7 February 1865 to 24 September 1884. The masthead described the *Times* as being a 'Political, Literary, and Commercial' newspaper, and among its intentions were 'to point out, and seek remedies for grievances and defects in the commercial and political intercourse of England and Brazil, and to promote a good understanding between the two countries' (from the first issue). The editor argued that Irish immigration to Brazil was a potentially viable means of upgrading the country's levels of economic productivity. As immigration and shipping businesses were complementary and beneficial to his interests, Scully both advertised Irish immigration in Brazil and promoted it in Great Britain.

The *Times* contained general Brazilian news and political comment, commercial reports, market prices, and maritime and immigration news. Although the paper received a subsidy from the Brazilian government, it was capable of criticism of the establishment. When the local aristocracy – of which Scully was disdainful – promoted restrictions on the immigration of Protestants, the editor of the *Times* spoke out in opposition. Scully's newspaper was also critical of the British Consul, claiming that he failed to assist destitute British subjects. However, the Legation believed that Scully had influence with the Emperor and noted that Brazilian newspapers reprinted articles from the *Times*, believing it to be free of political bias. Foreign papers, including the influential London monthly *Brazil and River Plate Mail*, reproduced articles from the *Times*.

The International Society for Immigration represented William Scully's material support to the Brazilian government. The first meeting was held in February 1866, and Scully strongly recommended that the society be independent of the government. The society was active for the next two years.

Although Great Britain forced Brazil to reduce their enslaved labour force from Africa, the Brazilian economy depended heavily on slaves. Arrangements were made for the slaves employed in the northeastern provinces to be transferred to the burgeoning coffee production zones, especially São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Plans for an increase in the employment of European immigrants began to multiply. However, Irish immigration was in Scully's words 'nipped in the bud' and was never successful in Brazil. The episode that marked its failure was the collapse of the Irish colony Príncipe Dom Pedro in Santa Catarina, which was suddenly deprived of funds and support between 1868 and 1869.

When the British minister William D. Christie published in London his *Notes on Brazilian Questions* (London & Cambridge: Macmillan, 1865), Scully had to appease most Brazilian leaders, and the Emperor in particular, by strongly criticising the way in which Christie expressed his views on the issue of slavery. The Irish newspaperman apparently considered it his mission to attempt to mend the badly damaged relationship between England and Brazil, to the point of verging on a pro-slavery stance, so as to dismiss the charges made public by Christie and thereby appease the Brazilian political establishment.

William Scully also published the guide *Brazil: Its Provinces and Chief Cities; the Manners and Customs of the People; Agricultural, Commercial and other Statistics, etc.* (Rio de Janeiro 1865; other editions in London, 1866 and 1868), as well as *A New Map of Brazil* in 1866 (drawn and engraved by George Philip & Son, Liverpool and London). The *Anglo-Brazilian Times* was published until September 1884, and William Scully died in Pau, France on 14 February 1885.

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**References**

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- Marshall, Oliver, *The English-Language Press in Latin America* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, University of London, 1996). See note 24 in p. 272.