

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

VOLUME 4 - NUMBER 4

October 2006



Desmond Kelleher's mission in Sicuani, Cuzco

**Editor: Edmundo Murray**  
**Associate Editor: Claire Healy**

**[www.irlandeses.org](http://www.irlandeses.org)**  
**ISSN 1661-6065**

---

Society for Irish Latin American Studies  
Maison Rouge  
1268 Burtigny, Switzerland





## CONTENTS

From Westmeath to Peru Full Circle: Memoirs of a Westmeath Missionary in Sicuani, Cuzco By Desmond Kelleher	201
Bernardo O'Higgins: The Rebel Son of a Viceroy. By Alfredo Sepúlveda	208
Conquistadores, Soldiers and Entrepreneurs: Early Irish Presence in Chile By Arturo Griffin Translation: Claire Healy	218
'Foreigners of this Kind': Chilean Refugees in Ireland, 1973-1990. By Claire Healy	223
<i>Sr. Hutchinson, otra vez, no dice V. nonsenses, no tonterrias</i> : A Bigoted Response to Thomas J. Hutchinson's 'Two Years in Peru (1873)'. By Edmundo Murray	231
From a Shipwreck to Macayadas: The Macays in Ecuador. By Carmen Dueñas de Anhalzer	238
From Ireland to South America: A Story of Departures, Separations and Reunions By Julia Boland and Marilyn Boland	241
The Irish in the Peruvian Andes. By Rosario Sheen	246
Review of Colleen Fitzpatrick's <i>Forensic Genealogy</i> . By Patricio MacDonagh	252
Review of Maxine Hanon's <i>Diccionario de Británicos en Buenos Aires</i> . By Edmundo Murray	255
Review of Moises Enrique Rodríguez's <i>Freedom's Mercenaries: British Volunteers in the Wars of Independence of Latin America</i> . By Karen Racine	261
Books Received	263
William Russell Grace (1832-1904), merchant in Peru. By Lawrence A. Clayton	264
Thomas O'Gorman (c.1760-?), merchant in Spain and South America. By Jerry W. Cooney	267
Clotario Blest (1899-1990), Catholic labour leader in Chile	269
Thomas Joseph Hutchinson (c.1802-1885), diplomat, physician and travel writer	272
Henry Hilton Leigh (d. 1910), landowner and pioneer cotton planter in Peru	275
John [Juan] Mackenna (1771-1814), general in the Chilean war of independence	276
Francisco Burdett [ <i>Frank</i> ] O'Connor (1791-1871), officer in the Irish Legion of Simón Bolívar's army in Venezuela	278
Ambrose [Ambrosio] O'Higgins (c. 1721-1801), captain-general of Chile, viceroy of Peru	280
William Smith [Guillermo] Payne (1870-1924), missionary in Argentina and Bolivia	282
Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1831-1886), Chilean writer, journalist and historian	284
Thomas Charles James Wright (1799-1868), founder of the Ecuadorian naval school	286



# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## From Westmeath to Peru Full Circle: Memoirs of a Westmeath Missionary in Sicuani, Cuzco

By Desmond Kelleher



Heading out of Sicuani to an outlying village up the mountain

Growing up in Kilbeggan, County Westmeath, my only early memory in connection with South America was hearing that a relative of our neighbours had an aunt, a nun, who had gone from Westmeath to a convent in Argentina many years previously. I was also told that there were a number of other people from Westmeath, Longford and Wexford who had migrated to Argentina. It is only in recent times that I have read about a Kilbeggan man named Duffy who also emigrated to Argentina many years ago. But my story relates to the Andean country of Peru.

### A chance meeting in Rome

I first heard mention of Peru in Rome in 1962. I was studying theology at the Carmelite International Theologate within a stone's throw of St. Peter's Square. The Vatican II Council convened by Pope John XXIII had brought all the bishops to Rome. Among them was a Carmelite bishop, Nevin Hayes, a native of Chicago and Bishop of the Prelature of Sicuani of the Department of Cuzco in Peru. He spoke to us as a student body and showed us slides of Sicuani. I was impressed, but did not for a moment consider the possibility of going there as a missionary priest. Bishop Hayes belonged to the Chicago Province of Carmelites, whereas I belonged to the Irish Province whose only foreign mission at that time was Rhodesia, present-day Zimbabwe.

I was ordained in July 1963 and returned to Ireland to my first assignment as a secondary school teacher at Terenure College in Dublin. I subsequently discovered that Bishop Hayes had spoken to the Irish Carmelite Provincial requesting help in his mission work in Sicuani. The Provincial then sent out a letter to all the Carmelite houses in Ireland inviting members to volunteer for work in Sicuani, Peru. I jumped at the

chance to work in Peru, together with six other Carmelite priests. For some reason I was more attracted to South America than to Africa. Then one day the Provincial called me aside and told me he would allow me to work in Sicuani. I had assumed that two of us would go, but the Carmelites in Zimbabwe were pleading for more men. The basis on which he allowed me to go was flexible: he said, 'Des, why don't you go for three years and see if you like it?' Little did I realise then that I was to spend thirty years of my life in Peru.

### Lima via New York

I left Ireland for Peru in October 1964 travelling via New York, where I visited my uncle Willie and his family in the Bronx. My father's brother from West Cavan had left his native place for Cobh, County Cork in 1924, without telling his parents or siblings. During the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921), he had been a highly regarded officer. He wrote a letter to his family from Cobh before boarding the ship for the USA, telling them in the letter of his decision, asking their forgiveness for not telling them beforehand as he had feared that it would break their hearts. Several times in the letter he assured them that he would only be away for a time and would return. He never did. Meeting him in the Bronx, I noticed that he had never lost his Cavan accent. I remember meeting other Irish people there on that occasion and hearing them express their anxiety about all the Puerto Ricans who were moving into the Bronx, which had been until then an Irish stronghold!

I arrived in Lima on 15 October 1964, the feast day of the Carmelite Saint Teresa of Avila. In Lima, I was received by the American Carmelites who had a parish, and a primary and secondary school in San Antonio, Miraflores, Lima. I immediately commenced an intensive four-month Spanish course in Cieneguilla, twenty kilometres outside Lima. I was in a group of some forty students of Spanish, priests and nuns from various countries, mostly the USA and Canada. We were all in the same boat, grappling with a new language with the frustrations that one experiences early on at not being able to say all that one wants to say. I remember a Peruvian friend saying to me one day early on as I tried to speak to him in my hesitant Spanish, 'Des', he said in Spanish, 'no te preocupes, poco a poco se va lejos' (don't worry, little by little you'll go far).

### My destination, Sicuani

Having completed that course, I set out for Sicuani in the Andes, travelling by plane to Cuzco on Saint Patrick's Day 1965. I was now in the 'navel of the world,' as the word 'Cuzco' signifies in Peru's native language Quechua. I downed a few Pisco Sours, Peru's typical drink, in honour of Patrick, and wondered what I was getting myself into as we travelled out the dusty dirt roads towards Sicuani through narrow adobe-lined streets, as darkness fell.

Sicuani, at 3,500 metres above sea level, lies two hours' drive directly south of Cuzco. In those days as a town it had a population of 12,000, but as a parish it had a number of outlying communities called in that area 'parcialidades,' where most of the population was indigenous. These people were referred to as 'campesinos', and were more at home speaking their native language Quechua rather than Spanish. I quickly saw the need for Quechua for myself so within a year I was off to Cochabamba in Bolivia for another four-month intensive course. I found it to be a very different language from Spanish, though not too difficult as regards pronunciation. The structure of the language posed problems however, a language of suffixes that are appended to the root word. With one long word you can say a lot!



Frank O'Hara, Desmond Kelleher, Ronan Lennon, Paul Graham, Michael Hender and hurlies in Rome, 1962

I engaged in a marvellous variety of work during my first eight years in Sicuani. I worked in the education of *campesino* leaders; I was chaplain in the local prison and hospital and eventually became more involved in youth work, even helping to start a Boy Scout group. I was always keen on sport and had regularly played football in Ireland and soccer in Rome. I got involved with local soccer teams in Sicuani and played for various teams over the years in spite of the altitude. The manager of our team used to say to me before mass on a Sunday, 'hurry up Father, we have a match after mass!'



Sicuani, Cuzco, 1965

### Church of the South Andes

On a pastoral level I consider myself very fortunate to have worked for seventeen years in that section of the Peruvian church referred to as 'la iglesia del Sur Andino', the Church of the South Andes. Between Dioceses and Prelatures, there were seven jurisdictions where the bishops, pastoral agents, priests, nuns and committed lay people all worked together with great enthusiasm. For years we followed an agreed pastoral plan for that whole region with a view to implementing Vatican II and Medellín. It was a very exciting, challenging, and at times difficult period in the

Peruvian church. Because these Bishops were outspoken in defence of the poor, and courageous in denouncing injustices and corruption, they experienced much criticism and constant attacks from both conservative elements of the Church and right-wing politicians. For many it was a prophetic part of the Church, for others who did not want to rock the boat it was looked upon as dangerous, left wing and too involved in what they would call 'politics'.

Then something very tragic happened. Within a few short years, four of the most conspicuous and courageous bishops of that region were all killed in violent accidents. They were the bishops of Cuzco, Ayaviri, Puno and Juli. To this day many people refuse to believe that their deaths were accidental. The truth is that from that point on the vibrant prophetic voice of the Church of the South Andes has been greatly silenced. It is replaced by rigid structures and pastoral guidelines imposed upon the region by bishops installed by Rome, most of them from Opus Dei and Sodalitium Christianae Vitae, the most conservative and reactionary elements in the Catholic Church.

I ministered in various parishes in the Prelature of Sicuani over the seventeen years I spent there. I got more at home with the Quechua language, understood the people more and more, particularly their customs and beliefs, loved their music and dances, their capacity to celebrate life in spite of harsh conditions and their constant struggle against adversity. I admired their willingness to share what little they had. I feel that I grew up there. I did not learn much theology during my four years in Rome. I did learn theology in Peru, in the South Andes.



Eating with Campesinos near Yanaoca, 1974

### Life changes

Then my life changed greatly. For a long time I had questioned the whole concept of celibacy in the priesthood. It all came to a head for me in 1981 when I decided to opt out of the ministry. With a heavy heart I left the South Andes and settled in Lima where I commenced work with a Peruvian NGO called Servicios Educativos Rurales (Rural Educational Services), an NGO dedicated to the rural population of Peru, the *campesinos*, the very kind of people I had ministered to previously. Now I would be working with them on a national level, obviously in a different role. This NGO had various areas of work; I began work in the Communications Area where we edited a magazine called '*Andenes*' in order to help the *campesinos* at a national level to be informed on the political, agrarian, social/economic and the cultural and ecclesiastical realities of Peru. I was responsible for a section of the magazine we called *Nuestras Costumbres* (Our Customs). In that section over the years we published the *campesinos*' own accounts of their customs, their *fiestas*, their agrarian rituals, their poetry, their stories and their legends. We also held annual competitions to invite them to paint and draw the reality in which they were living.



With Eamon de Valera and Fr. Killian Healy in the Carmelite Theologate, Rome 1961

I remember 1992, the year Spain celebrated what they called the 500th anniversary of the 'discovery' of South America. I think later they changed the wording of 'discovery' to 'el encuentro de dos culturas' (the meeting of two cultures) because of protests from South America against the use of the term 'discovery'. Not that a 'meeting of two cultures' pleased South Americans either, for they saw it more as an invasion or even as a genocide. On that occasion we invited the *campesinos* of Peru to paint or draw what they felt about the arrival of the Spaniards to their country and the consequences for themselves. I could safely say that it was the first time that native Peruvians had been asked to express their opinions on a topic that had such devastating consequences for them over the centuries. And express it they did, portraying graphically



the many forms in which the indigenous population have suffered exploitation and injustices to this very day.

### Governments come and go

In the thirty years that I lived in Peru, I saw several governments come and go. When I arrived in Peru in 1964, Fernando Belaúnde Terry was the democratically elected president. Four years later I was back in Ireland on my first holiday back home when one morning after breakfast a fellow Carmelite asked me, 'Des, did you hear, your president had been deported from Peru?' In the early hours of 3 October 1968, a bloodless military coup led by General Juan Velasco Alvarado surrounded the presidential palace. Belaúnde was taken out in his pyjamas and later that day sent on a plane to Buenos Aires. So began twelve years of military dictatorship.

The armed forces have always played a decisive role in Peru's political history. Since 1930 there have been four periods of military rule lasting a total of thirty years. For most of this century the military's political interventions were in support of the right, but during the Velasco government (1968-1975) a new current of reformist nationalism became dominant within the armed forces. The Velasco government implemented a radical programme which marked the first decisive break with the economic model imposed by the Spanish conquest. This involved ending the political domination and economic power of the oligarchy; the modernisation of the Peruvian state and a major expansion of its role in the economy; the search for a more equitable relationship with foreign capital; and major changes in land and property ownership.

Twelve years later, Belaúnde made a comeback when a more moderate General Morales Bermudez moved towards restoring democracy and allowed new elections, permitting Belaúnde to return again to popular acclaim. Belaúnde thus commenced his second term as president in July 1980 in a Peru that differed in fundamental ways from the Peru that he had left abruptly in 1968. The final years of his presidency were marked by the rise of *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) in 1980.



With Carmelite nuns at the  
Cieneguilla language institute, 1964

The return to constitutional rule was accompanied by the restoration of formal democratic freedoms but this in itself could not create a democratic society. The government showed no inclination to reform powerful institutions which were suffused with undemocratic practices and a traditional bias towards the rich and powerful. Current affairs programmes on television that were critical of the government had a checkered career, several being removed from the screen by the television companies themselves. During this period the radical subversive group *Sendero Luminoso*, whose ideological roots lay in a fundamentalist version of Maoism, developed their guerrilla war.

By 1984 real income per capita had fallen back to the level of twenty years before. While all but the small elite became poorer, impoverishment was concentrated in the sierra and coastal shanty towns. This has

been a constant reality in Peruvian history. *Sendero Luminoso* believed that the conditions for revolution existed and that the road to communism in Peru lay through 'a prolonged popular war'. Another subversive but less radical group called the Tupac Amaru Movement also initiated their military campaign in this period. The government's initial response to *Sendero* and to the Tupac Amaru Movement was to minimise the guerrilla threat, but their counter-insurgency policy soon hardened as a state of emergency was declared in five provinces, later to be extended to many more, and the infamous island prison El Frontón was reopened to hold *Sendero* suspects. *Sendero* extended their campaign over a much wider area, including the capital Lima. They destroyed pylons causing regular blackouts in the entire city.

We were living in Lima at that time. It was the first time I experienced collective fear in the city in the midst of blackouts, car bombs and selective assassinations. As popular unrest and social upheaval increased, so did government repression. Eventually Belaúnde handed over total responsibility for counter-insurgency to the armed forces chiefs-of-staff. This internal war was to continue until 2000, throughout the governments of Fernando Belaúnde (1980-1985), Alan García (1985-1990) and Alberto Fujimori (1990-2000). More than 69,000 people died or disappeared at the hands of guerrilla groups, paramilitaries and the armed forces during that internal war.



The author with his family in  
Bon Aires enroute to Peru, July 2006

### A family man

In the midst of all these changes and upheavals my own life continued to change. In 1990 I married a human rights lawyer called Patricia Abozaglo from Lima. We met at my workplace. Our two children Fiona and Patrick were born in Lima, Fiona in 1992 and Patrick in 1994. My work contract was coming to an end in 1995, so we decided to return to Ireland. Initially I was to study for a year in post-graduate development studies in Kimmage Manor, Dublin and at the same time to look around for job options. Fortunately my wife got a job with Trócaire right away and I got a teaching job in a secondary school in Dublin teaching Spanish, Irish and Religion. We had been in Dublin for four years when we went searching for a house which brought us to our present home in Maynooth, County Kildare, just a forty-minute drive from my birthplace, Kilbeggan, County Westmeath. So indeed I have come full circle. I am back here, from where I set out for Peru some forty years ago. Somewhat wiser I do believe. I am still teaching Spanish which I enjoy greatly. I love introducing people to a new language and opening up to them a whole new world of discovery.

### Latin American connections

Since we came back from Peru we have always kept in contact with Peruvians and other Latin Americans who live in Ireland - and there are quite a few. Over the years we have got together for many parties, and now each July we have quite a gathering in Dublin in Terenure College to celebrate Peru's national holiday on 28 July. I suppose it is something like the Westmeath/Longford Association that celebrates their connection with Argentina every year.

Many years ago I visited Argentina and spent a few days in Buenos Aires. I stayed at the Passionist priests' house. I remember at meal time hearing them switch back and forth in their conversation between Spanish and English. There was an elderly priest beside me and when he talked to me in English I could clearly hear his Westmeath accent. He told me that his father - or was it his grandfather - was from Moyvore in Westmeath. Another memory I have with an Argentinean connection is meeting an Argentinean priest in Cuzco years ago. He told me that his parish was in the south of Argentina and that most of his parishioners were of Irish descent. He told me how good they were to him. He invited me to go and visit him and I must say it is one of the regrets I have that I never did get to visit him and meet all those Irish Argentineans and hear their stories. So now you have my story, or at least a good part of it.

Desmond Kelleher

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Bernardo O'Higgins: The Rebel Son of a Viceroy

By Alfredo Sepúlveda



Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842), by Narciso Desmadryl  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

In the small hours of 9 July 1824, Bernardo O'Higgins, the man who had ruled newly-independent Chile with an iron fist, was recovering from malaria in Trujillo, Peru. He had relinquished power. His lifelong second-in-command Ramón Freire, who had served under him in almost every battle of the Chilean independence campaign, had banished him. It had been a bitter argument. The Chileans were on the verge of a civil war, and O'Higgins ultimately decided that there was no point in going to a war against Freire, who had become ruler of the southern province of Concepción.

Although it was not what he wanted, in January of 1823 O'Higgins surrendered power. It was a heated meeting with the Santiago leaders. Knives and swords were concealed among the audience, yet when Bernardo resigned, the small crowd roared in approval and saluted the brave men who had led the independence process.

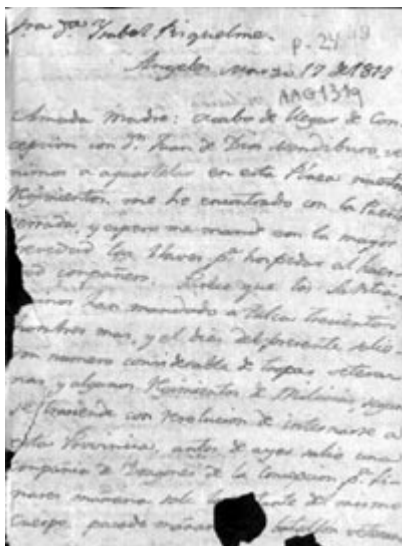
O'Higgins now found himself in Trujillo, Peru, experiencing a second exile. From Chile he had planned on travelling to Ireland, the land of his father Ambrose, a Sligo-born and Meath-raised man who at the age of thirty had gone to Spain, worked in commerce, travelled thence to South America, joined the Spanish Army in Chile and ended his eighty-year-old life as Viceroy of Peru. Shortly after leaving the Chilean port of Valparaíso, O'Higgins changed his mind. He disembarked in Callao, the main Peruvian port, and stayed in that country with his family: his mother, his half-sister and his two children, a boy and a girl.

He was not a stranger in that country. Along with the Argentine general José de San Martín, O'Higgins had set up a naval force that sailed from Chile and defeated the Spaniards in Peru. He was welcomed,

given property and a military title. However, the Spanish forces had re-taken Lima, and soon O'Higgins and his family were forced to flee northwards.

In Trujillo one day ran into another until O'Higgins received a letter. It was a warm-hearted message from Simon Bolívar, the leader of the South American independence process. He was seeking Chilean support, in the hope that O'Higgins few remaining friends in Chile might be interested in helping him to re-conquer Peru. 'A brave general like yourself,' wrote Bolívar, 'feared by enemies and experienced among our officers and leaders, cannot do anything more than give a new degree of appreciation to our army [...] I offer you command [...] appropriate to the distinction of any leader who wants to distinguish himself in the battlefield, a Colombian regiment under your orders must achieve victory.' (Valencia, 1980: 420) [1]

Still suffering the after-effects of his bout of malaria, O'Higgins gained a new lease on life. All of a sudden, the excitement of the battle was upon him once again. Respected by friends and foes alike in battle for his bravery almost to the point of insanity, O'Higgins did not excel in many other fields. He was not a gifted politician, nor was he a member of the colonial aristocracy who ruled the central valley of Chile and controlled Chilean politics. O'Higgins had not married, but briefly kept a lover who gave him a son and then left him. He lived with his mother and sister. Neither was he a brilliant strategist. 'General O'Higgins was brave to the extreme,' wrote José de San Martín, one of his closest friends, many years later. 'But his military knowledge was nil.' (Ruiz, 2005: 228) [2] In battle, he stopped being Bernardo and became General O'Higgins, a man who fought side by side with officers and peasant-soldiers alike, who was shot and almost died, who had undertaken the incredible crossing of the Andes from neighbouring Mendoza into central Chile.



Letter from Bernardo O'Higgins to his mother Isabel Riquelme, 17 March 1812  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

From Trujillo, O'Higgins departed in search of Bolívar's army, somewhere in the Peruvian Andes. The journey took him an entire month, during which the sick man crossed scorching deserts and high mountains on a trip that seemed to have no end. His ambition was to once again engage in battle against the detested 'godos' or 'sarracens' which was the derogatory title that the American independence fighters bestowed upon their foes-. When O'Higgins finally located Bolívar's army, he found that he had no place in it. Stunned, Bolívar gave O'Higgins the highest formal honours, but delegated to him only menial jobs. The General ended up as the special court-martial judge for Chilean volunteers. The rainy season was approaching and Bolívar did not plan on attacking the royalists. He suggested that O'Higgins return to Lima, which had by then been reconquered by the patriots. In the Peruvian capital O'Higgins learned of the battle of Ayacucho and the confirmation of Peru's independence. General O'Higgins was cordially invited to a celebratory banquet in Lima a few weeks later. He went as a civilian and declared that his days as a soldier were over. '*Señor,*' he toasted, addressing Bolívar, "America is free. From now on General O'Higgins does not exist; I am only Bernardo O'Higgins, a private citizen. After Ayacucho, my American mission is over.' (Valencia, 1980: 430) [3]

### From Chillán to Europe

Bernardo O'Higgins was born on 20 August 1778, in Chillán, a small village in southern Chile. His father, Ambrose Higgins, a Sligo-born 58-year-old military factotum in the service of the Spanish crown, was the most powerful man in what was known as 'the Frontier,' the region around the Bio-Bio river in southern Chile, no-man's land claimed by both the Spanish and the Mapuche. Though formally Ambrose's position was strictly military, by 1778 he had achieved renown in the eyes of the Spanish civilian authorities by defeating indigenous rebellions, and had been given *carte blanche* to operate in the region.

The previous summer, Ambrose O'Higgins had briefly camped on the estate of Simón Riquelme, a quiet, faint-hearted man who owned some land near Chillán. There he met and briefly courted Isabel, Simón's eighteen-year-old daughter. Soon Isabel was pregnant. It is possible that Ambrose had given Simón a promise to marry his daughter. The reason for a delay in the engagement was that as a European officer O'Higgins had to ask permission to marry a local woman.

Ambrose never fulfilled his promise; there are no records of the marriage, and he was soon thereafter to be found south of the border in a military campaign. He never saw Isabel again. Nor did he see his son. Isabel was hidden from public view, and the baby given to a local matron. Isabel was married shortly afterwards to an old friend of her father who died two years later. From that marriage a girl was born, Rosa.

The presence of the illegitimate child haunted Ambrose O'Higgins at first and later became an obsession. He soon took the baby away from Chillán and the Riquelmes, and put him in the care of a friend in Talca, some 250 km north of Chillán. Later the young Bernardo was sent back to Chillán, to a school run by the Franciscans for the Mapuche aristocracy. The monarchism of the priests in Chillán was in opposition to new ideas born of the French revolution, which, even in this remote part of the world, were beginning to wield influence. In Chillán Bernardo briefly saw his mother again, but was soon moved on again by his father, this time to Lima, the viceregal capital, where the young Chilean was educated at the best schools available. At one school, the Convictorio Carolino, Bernardo probably first heard the ideas of the European enlightenment: one of the priests, Toribio Rodríguez de Mendoza, was a remarkable enlightenment man, who believed in the power of mathematics and in the notion that he and his students were more Peruvian than Spanish. But yet again Bernardo had to leave, this time for a pressing reason. Ambrose had been nominated Viceroy of Peru, and an illegitimate son was not good for his reputation.

Young Bernardo then left for Europe. It remains a mystery whether Ambrose intended to place his son in the army, in a commercial company or to make him engage in further studies. At first he lived briefly in Cádiz, in the care of Ambrose's friend and former business partner Nicolás de la Cruz, a Chilean-born and extremely wealthy merchant. Then Bernardo moved or was moved to London for reasons unknown. We know for certain that he lived in Richmond-upon-Thames, in the 'care' of Spencer and Perkins, two watch-



Timothy Eeles's [Eales] Catholic school in Richmond  
(*Ejército de Chile*)

makers who may have had an entrepreneurial connection with De la Cruz. Only a handful of documents have survived from this period of Bernardo's life. We know that in the last months of his London life, he attended and possibly lived at a private Catholic academy in Richmond run by a Timothy Eeles or Eales. Tradition has it that Bernardo courted Mr. Eales' daughter Charlotte, but the relationship ended abruptly. His last months in England were chaotic. Probably because of financial problems, or Bernardo's hectic social life, the watchmakers stopped supporting him and kept De la Cruz' money to pay off his debts. O'Higgins was left penniless and had to live with friends.

During this time he got in touch with Venezuelan independence leader Francisco de Miranda, an experienced revolutionary who had fought against the English in the American Revolution and served under the flag of the French Republic. Miranda was trying to form a network of young South American revolutionaries.

De la Cruz finally got the young man back to Spain, but more complications followed. Bernardo tried to return to Chile but his ship was captured by the English and he ended up in prison in Gibraltar. Eventually

he made his way to Cádiz only to fall seriously ill with yellow fever. He almost died. By this time Ambrose had written to De la Cruz that he was no longer responsible for his son. It is to be supposed that Bernardo's affiliation with Miranda was by then known in Madrid. However, Ambrose died while Bernardo's answer was on its way to Lima, and surprisingly left his son a generous inheritance, 'Las Canteras,' a sizeable tract of land in Southern Chile on the frontier with the Mapuche lands where Bernardo had been born.

### From Landlord to National Leader

For a number of years, Bernardo was more landlord than revolutionary, although he continued writing letters to 'radical' friends he had met in Cádiz and who now lived in Buenos Aires. It was in those days that he befriended one of his most important mentors, Juan Martinez de Rozas, a former aide to his father and by then the most powerful man in Southern Chile, and a strong force in colonial politics. In 1811, Bernardo had to go to Santiago.

A few months before, due to Ferdinand VII's imprisonment in Bayonne, France, Santiago's aristocrats had formed a 'junta' that was to organise a National Congress that would rule *in lieu* of the captured king. Bernardo was sent as a representative of Los Angeles town to this congress. However, his role was small and menial. He served as a puppet of Martinez de Rozas. He subsequently got sick again and pretty much disappeared from local politics.



José Miguel Carrera (1785-1821)  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

In the first year or so of the Chilean independence process, Martinez de Rozas and his party were in conflict with José Miguel Carrera, a hot-tempered young aristocrat who defied the establishment and claimed power for himself. Carrera and his two brothers were more radical than Martinez de Rozas in terms of leading the revolution. Soon regional tensions between Santiago and Concepción were impossible to overcome, and Martinez and Carrera were on the verge of war. Though O'Higgins put many of his peasants at the service of Concepción's army, Martinez awarded him only a minor military position, probably because of his illegitimate origin. O'Higgins' health became increasingly problematic, and by the end of 1812 he had abandoned everything and moved back to his estate.

In 1813, Peru's viceroy had decided to crush the revolutions in his domains (although technically Chile was not part of the Viceroyalty), and sent a professional army to return the situation to the status quo ante. Bernardo joined the army under the command of Carrera. He had never received any professional training, but managed to obtain

advice from Irish-born colonel John Mackenna, also a former associate of Ambrose. Mackenna never trained O'Higgins, but in a long letter told him who to contact: 'any dragoon sergeant.'

Now the war was for real. This was no longer a war between 'Chileans' and 'Spaniards,' but rather a civil confrontation between Chileans who did not recognise any authority from Lima and Chileans who supported Lima, aided by fresh troops from Peru and some Spanish-born officers. O'Higgins did not excel in the first stages of the campaign, although he did fight bravely at the disastrous siege of Chillán, where the patriots upheld their positions during a particularly rainy, cold and muddy winter.

The siege could not make Chillán surrender, dissipating Carrera's support in Santiago. Then came the battle of El Roble. In the middle of the fighting, Carrera fled while O'Higgins took command and surprisingly won the battle, allegedly shouting 'To die with honour or live with glory!' The Santiago junta took command of the army away from Carrera and gave it to O'Higgins.

In the battlefields things were a little more complicated. Carrera enjoyed a high level of support among his men, as did O'Higgins. Bernardo was now assisted by John Mackenna. Martinez had died in exile in Mendoza. O'Higgins met Carrera in Concepción, where Carrera finally surrendered the army command to Bernardo and left the city. However, en route to Santiago, the royalists kidnapped and jailed Carrera in Chillán.

Thus the road to victory was opened up for O'Higgins and his supporters. The war, a savage campaign fought mostly by poor peasants in rags with no option but to fight alongside their landlords, had left the land exhausted: no money, no food, no stock to feed the thousands of men in arms. Both sides signed a treaty by the Lircay river in May 1814 to end hostilities. O'Higgins was one of the signatories. In his prison cell Carrera cursed him.

### Feuds: O'Higgins and José Miguel Carrera

For years, Chilean historians were divided between those who supported Carrera and those who supported O'Higgins. The Irish-Chilean eventually won out. Santiago's main street is named after O'Higgins, as is the Military Academy, and an entire administrative region a few kilometres south of Santiago bears the name of 'Sixth Region of the Liberator, General Bernardo O'Higgins.' Bernardo's grave is situated in front of the Presidential Palace, while Carrera's skull has allegedly been recently discovered in the basement of a private house in Santiago.

The hatred between the two men was not extinguished by their deaths. Supporters of O'Higgins claim that the general was tricked by Santiago's junta, and that he actually wanted to keep waging war because by May 1814, he thought he could win it. Carrerians despise O'Higgins because he accepted as one of the treaty's points the restitution of the Spanish flag and the King's coat of arms. However the treaty included the liberation of all prisoners. Soon Carrera and his brother Luis were in route to Talca, where O'Higgins' army was located, instead of being shipped to Valparaíso as had been agreed. Carrera was now a bigger threat to the junta than the royalists, and in July 1814 he staged a new *coup d'état* that resulted in Mackenna being exiled to Mendoza as O'Higgins' ally.

O'Higgins decided to ignore the royalists in Southern Chile and moved the whole patriot army to Santiago, to defy Carrera. They clashed in the infamous and often forgotten battle of Tres Acequias, where O'Higgins was defeated, though he suffered only minor losses. While he was preparing to attack Carrera the next day, O'Higgins received a message. The Treaty of Lircay had been ignored by the Viceroy and a powerful army of professional soldiers fresh from Lima, as well as volunteers from Chile's southern and staunchly royalist provinces of Chiloé and Valdivia, had disembarked in Talcahuano, a few kilometres from Concepción. Carrera always thought that O'Higgins had had some sort of secret agreement with the Chilean royalists in order to attack him. But the Viceroy, who saw all supporters of independence as dangerous revolutionaries did not make any distinctions. The two men decided to put an end to their differences and prepare to battle the enemy, led now by a new royalist leader, General Mariano Osorio.

It was a weak alliance. O'Higgins agreed to renounce his position as Army commander and serve under Carrera. Preparations for the mother of all battles followed. The army was in a disastrous condition. Tres Acequias had destroyed most of the canons. Carrera raised a group of neophyte recruits, who in the space of a few weeks became officers. Most of the veterans had already died or



Battle of Rancagua, October 1814 in: *El ostracismo del general D. Bernardo O'Higgins*, by B. Vicuña Mackenna (Valparaíso, 1860).  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

deserted. The battle was to be in Rancagua, 90 km south of Santiago a strategic location for Central Chile. None of its resources had been touched by the war. The successive waves of patriot divisions sent to the war down south had still had their own resources when they arrived in Rancagua, and thus the city and its neighbouring farms had not been pillaged.

In the last days of September 1814, O'Higgins was sent to the city, although Carrera was not completely convinced of the location. He wanted to fight in Pelequén, a stretch of land comprising two mountain



ranges south of Rancagua. But the patriots had not had time to fortify the Pelequén hills, and therefore O'Higgins and Carrera's brother Juan José agreed to wait for Osorio in Rancagua.



Crossing of the Andes by San Martín and O'Higgins,  
by Martín Boneo (1865)  
(*Instituto Nacional Sanmartiniano*)

Osorio's forces were highly superior. The patriot forces held on for two days, until the royalists decided to set fire to the city. O'Higgins desperately called for José Miguel Carrera's division, still north of Rancagua. But Carrera either betrayed O'Higgins or O'Higgins did not understand the coded message Carrera sent him. From the bell tower of Rancagua's church O'Higgins saw Carrera's division advancing and then turning around and leaving. Carrera claimed that in the coded message he had told O'Higgins to leave, and as he approached the town he believed that he was leading his men to certain death. O'Higgins maintained that Carrera had compromised his forces by leaving.

Thousands of O'Higgins' men died that day. O'Higgins himself, in one of the acts of bravery for which he was famous, pushed forward with a few men and managed to escape.

What followed in Santiago was hellish. The patriots were defeated, the city ransacked, the public treasury lost. Most of the men committed to the cause of an independent Chile fled to Mendoza in Argentina. It was a disastrous exodus through the snow on a virtually unpassable track that even the mules found difficult to navigate. O'Higgins and Carrera would never again speak to each other, but would meet again in Mendoza, then under the command of José de San Martín.

### **Alliances: O'Higgins and José de San Martín**

From their very first meeting, O'Higgins and San Martín found in each other kindred spirits. O'Higgins was humble and well-mannered, and had no problem in acknowledging San Martín's authority on the eastern side of the Andes, unlike Carrera. Rivalries between the two Chilean factions came to a head in Mendoza. Carrera managed to keep a small army and stationed himself in a Mendoza neighbourhood. Carrera even took some police in Mendoza prisoner when they arrived to investigate a raucous and drunken 'meeting' between Chilean soldiers and beautiful *cuyanas*.

O'Higgins, on the other hand, was considered by San Martín to be the leader of the Chilean emigrés. The Argentine leader took O'Higgins' side, believing that the defeat at Rancagua was Carrera's fault. Mendoza was now in danger. The Viceroy could launch an attack on the United Provinces from Chile any minute.

The United Provinces had been trying to secure their position by attacking Peru from Bolivia, but had so far been unsuccessful. During 1815 and part of 1816, the governor of Mendoza tried to convince the authorities in Buenos Aires to organise the invasion of Chile. It was not an easy task and required something that had never been done in terms of military logistics, making four thousand men safely cross the Andes, properly dressed, armed and fed. It was a monumental job, and a very expensive one. With Supreme Director Pueyrredón in power in Buenos Aires, San Martín finally had real support. The expedition would cross the Andes in the summer of 1817.

The expedition was successful. O'Higgins commanded two battalions mostly formed by black slaves from Cuyo who would earn their freedom if they survived the fighting. The Army of the Andes crossed the mountains and on 17 February 1817, clashed with the royalists in Chacabuco, a few kilometres north of Santiago. It was a clear victory, but O'Higgins charged when he was not supposed to and compromised the whole operation. The royalist forces fled Santiago and then disbanded. Some went to Lima, some to Talcahuano. San Martín hesitated in pursuing them, leaving the royalists able to win back strength in Talcahuano.



Battle of Chacabuco, 1817  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

When San Martín declined the position of Supreme Director of Chile, O'Higgins stepped into the fray. But soon he left town and moved south to engage in war. O'Higgins attempted to manage state affairs as best as he could. He stayed at Concepción, which had been occupied by the Patriots, and participated, in the midst of the rainy and cold winter, in the siege of Talcahuano (as well as battling the Mapuche, who had allied themselves with the royalists).

During most of 1817 and the beginning of 1818, O'Higgins' job was waging war. He fought in the mornings and afternoons, then went home to Concepción. There he met Rosario Puga, a good-looking married woman, and they became lovers. The sexual mores of the colonial era were gone, and the war made possible this very unlikely union. Puga later bore Bernardo a son, Demetrio. [4]

After a failed attempt to take Talcahuano in early December 1817, and facing the arrival of new royalist troops from Lima and Spain, again commanded by Osorio, O'Higgins, on the advice of San Martín, who had managed to recover in Santiago, left Concepción. The strategy was one of terra nullius: the whole town of Concepción was evacuated and its inhabitants began a sorrowful journey towards Santiago. Meanwhile, O'Higgins managed to move the Army to Talca. There he engaged in a disastrous battle against Osorio. At first, the Patriots were winning. Then they stayed the night at a place called Cancharayada, but didn't suspect that Osorio would counter-attack. O'Higgins almost died that night - a bullet destroyed his right elbow.

There were rumours of a tragedy in Santiago, Mendoza and Buenos Aires. O'Higgins and San Martín were presumed dead, and many Chileans began preparing for a change of government. Then Manuel Rodríguez, Carrera's friend who ironically had served as a guerrilla leader and a spy for San Martín during the Spanish rule that followed Rancagua, threatened to stage a Carrera-sponsored coup. His famous *cri-de-guerre* 'Citizens: we still have a fatherland!' motivated the depressed patriots in Santiago. All this was more than O'Higgins could muster. On the verge of death, pale and sick due to loss of blood, he left San Fernando, where he was recovering, and in a hurried journey arrived in Santiago in less than two days. Exhausted, he got to the presidential palace and almost fainted. Rodríguez' coup was successfully quashed.

While O'Higgins was delirious, San Martín rallied a force of 4,000 to attack Osorio at Maipú. Now a Santiago suburb, Maipú was a war at Santiago's gates. The people began hearing the canons on the morning of 5 April 1818. A feverish O'Higgins heard them too. He instantly mounted his horse and headed to the battlefield. When he arrived, the fight was over and had been won by San Martín, and the two men embraced. It had been a massacre for Osorio. Almost all of his 5,000 men were either dead or captured. Spain would never again organise such a force to attack Chile.

### Supreme Director

Chilean independence was now complete, except for the southern region. Talcahuano, Valdivia and Chiloé remained royalist strongholds. Bandits roamed the countryside. O'Higgins tried to restore order and give some sort of national presence to his government. Although a theoretical democrat and admirer of the English monarchy, he soon decided that the best form of government in Chile at the time was a dictatorship. His dictatorship.

Tired of so many wars, most Chileans supported O'Higgins, and Carrera's support base disappeared. Two Carrera brothers, Luis and Juan José, who were held captive in Mendoza after they tried to sneak into Chile to overthrow O'Higgins while he was waging war in the south, were tried and executed. O'Higgins always claimed that he had pardoned the two men, but that the letter of clemency had arrived in Mendoza just hours after the Carreras died. Then Manuel Rodríguez, who had been offered a position in a foreign embassy but refused, was shot dead near Santiago. O'Higgins again claimed that he had no responsibility for the killing, which had been carried out by soldiers, but never fully managed to prove that he had not given the order.

At the beginning of his administration, the Lautaro Lodge, a clandestine Argentine pro-independence organisation to which O'Higgins had been affiliated in Mendoza, had some influence. Then internal quarrels among the 'brothers' led to its dissolution.



First Chilean armada in 1818, by Thomas J. Somerscales  
(*Memoria Chilena*)

O'Higgins greatest obsession was the building of a fleet that would sail to Peru and depose Viceroy Pezuela. However, Buenos Aires was in anarchy and therefore no more money would be forthcoming in the wake of the battle of Maipú. Moreover, San Martín had been ordered to return to Buenos Aires and fight in the civil war. He refused and instead stayed in Chile and began preparing the invasion of Peru.

O'Higgins decided that securing Chilean independence was more important than rebuilding the country, and understood that the existence of a Viceroy in Lima made matters uncertain. O'Higgins took out a British loan that seriously compromised Chile's finances and finally got together a force of twenty-five vessels commanded by Lord Thomas Cochrane, a British officer who had proven himself in the eyes of the Supreme Director by taking Valdivia, a Spanish stronghold in Southern Chile, some months before. Cochrane would sail to Peru and San Martín would command the troops in combat. The naval expedition sailed from Valparaíso on 20 August 1820, O'Higgins' forty-second birthday.

Meanwhile O'Higgins founded the Military Academy, the Naval School, a public market for Santiago, and instigated important developments in agricultural infrastructure. At the same time, he fought fiercely against Santiago's aristocracy and church, particularly on the issue of taxes. Santiago's archbishop was exiled.

O'Higgins had few close friends and most of the time he took refuge in the patio of the government house where he had a green parrot whom he used as a confessor. In 1821 his nemesis José Miguel Carrera, who had fought with the federal forces in Argentina's civil war, formed a gang of Chilean soldiers and indigenous peoples and began stealing from the *estancias* in Argentina. He was eventually caught in Mendoza and shot. O'Higgins was not directly responsible, but did not spare Carrera's life.

Rosario Puga had been acting as Bernardo's wife while still legally married to another man. The relationship did not prosper and Rosario was soon engaged to a supporter of Carrera and became pregnant. During all this time, O'Higgins' family was his mother Isabel and his half-sister Rosa, who lived with him in the government palace. Isabel and Rosa became social figures in the small Santiago world - Rosa was a patron of the arts, and engaged in the financing and production of many plays. When Puga left O'Higgins, she took away Bernardo's son Demetrio.

Problems with the aristocracy, the church, the Carrerians and the virtual bankruptcy of the government were exacerbated by an earthquake in 1822 and a controversial autocratic constitution passed by O'Higgins that same year. Ramón Freire, formerly his closest ally, suddenly rallied the province of Concepción against O'Higgins. Soon the province of Coquimbo followed. With civil war pending, O'Higgins resigned from government in January 1823 and departed for Peru with his family.

### Exile and Breakdown

As O'Higgins had informed Bolívar's guests at the banquet, after 1824 he had become a farmer, but was not very successful. He kept in touch with some friends, but his dreams of a political comeback were impossible to achieve. After briefly courting Mariscal Andrés de Santa Cruz, the ambitious Bolivian general who created the Peruvian-Bolivian confederacy and then went to war against Chile, O'Higgins descended into anonymity.

In 1842 he was finally re-installed in the Chilean rank of officer and was given permission to return. While Bernardo O'Higgins was preparing to board the ship, he fell seriously ill and died in October 1842.

His body was not brought back to Chile until 1869. His soul probably still haunts the Chilean countryside where he gave the best part of his life among the mud, horses and blood of so many battles.

Alfredo Sepúlveda

### Notes

[1] Un bravo general como usted, temido de los enemigos y experimentado entre nuestros oficiales y jefes, no puede menos que dar un nuevo grado de aprecio a nuestro ejército... Ofrezco a usted un mando... propio a distinguir a cualquier jefe que quiera señalarse en un campo de gloria, porque un cuerpo de Colombia a las órdenes de usted debe contar con la victoria.

[2] El general O'Higgins era bravo hasta el extremo, pero sus conocimientos militares eran nulos.

[3] Señor, la América está libre. Desde hoy el general O'Higgins ya no existe; soy sólo el ciudadano particular Bernardo O'Higgins. Después de Ayacucho mi misión está concluida.

[4] According to Pamela Pequeño's documentary *La hija de O'Higgins* (2001), Bernardo O'Higgins had a daughter, Petronila, by Patricia Rodríguez, his mother's nanny. As Ambrosio had done to him, Bernardo O'Higgins never acknowledged any of his children.

### References

- Amunátegui, Miguel Luis, *La dictadura de O'Higgins* (Madrid: América, 18?).
- Barros Arana, Diego, *Historia General de Chile* (Santiago de Chile: Rafael Jover, Vols. 8-12, 1884-1902).
- Carrera, José Miguel, *Diario Militar* (Santiago de Chile: Imprenta Cervantes, 1900).
- De Breffny, Brian, 'Ambrose O'Higgins: An enquiry into his origins and ancestry' in *The Irish Ancestor* 2:2 (1970), pp. 81-89.
- De la Cruz, José María *et al.*, *Recuerdos de don Bernardo O'Higgins* (Santiago de Chile: Andrés Bello, 1960).
- Donoso, Ricardo, *El marqués de Osorno don Ambrosio Higgins* (Santiago de Chile: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1945).
- Eyzaguirre, Jaime, *O'Higgins* (Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag, 1965).
- Hughes, Noel, *Bernardo O'Higgins - In Richmond?* (London: Richmond History, no. 18, 1997).
- León, Leonardo, *Reclutas forzados y desertores de la patria: El bajo pueblo chileno en la guerra de la independencia* in 'Historia' (Santiago de Chile), 35 (2002), pp. 251-297.
- Ruiz Moreno, Isidoro J., *Campañas militares argentinas. La política y la guerra* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 2005).
- Twinam, Ann, *Public lives, Private secrets. Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).
- Valencia Avaria, Luis, *O'Higgins, el buen genio de América* (Santiago de Chile: Universitaria, 1980).
- Vicuña Mackenna, Benjamín, *El Ostracismo del general don Bernardo O'Higgins* (Valparaíso: Imprenta y Librería de El Mercurio, 1860).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Conquistadores, Soldiers and Entrepreneurs: Early Irish Presence in Chile

By Arturo Griffin

Translation: Claire Healy

The first Irish people to travel to Chile were 'Guillermo' and 'Juan' from Galway, who arrived with Magellan's expedition, and discovered the strait that bears his name in 1520. The first Irishman to start a family in Chile was John Evans who bore the title of Captain. In 1737, he settled in the region of Chillán and married Manuela de Vizcarra, a lady who according to family lore was related to Pedro de Vizcarra, who had been Governor of the Kingdom. Evans dedicated himself to trade and cattle-breeding. He made a fortune and bought a house and land, and later, in 1754, a large estate between Longavi and Perquilauquén, close to where Parral is today. He was also the owner of some mountain land, known as the 'Cajón de los Ibañez,' (Evans' Chest) where there were thermal waters.

The *chillanejo* locals did not understand the name 'Evans,' or 'Ivans' as Don Juan would have perhaps pronounced it, and quickly hispanicised the surname to 'Ibañez.' Roa y Ursúa recorded eight children from the Ibañez Vizcarra marriage (Gonzalo Vial II), whose descendants constituted, one hundred years later, according to Vicuña Mackenna, 'a vigorous and numerous tribe' that 'conserved the characteristics of its founder.' In the following century, the son of the great-grandson of John Evans, Carlos Ibañez, was twice president of the Republic of Chile, 1927-1931 and 1952-1958.

The second Irishman to arrive in Chile was John Garland, a cavalry officer in the Military Order of Santiago, who had been a cadet in the Hibernia Regiment in Spain. In Chile, as Planning Engineer, he was the boss of his countryman Ambrose O'Higgins, with whom he shared his plans for the moving of Concepción to the place where it is currently situated, far from the dangers of the rivers and the sea. In 1764, Garland was named Military Governor of Valdivia and later Director of Fortifications. He died on a trip to Europe.

Another Irishman who arrived in Chile in those days was John Clarke, among whose descendants was the engineer of that surname who was involved in the construction of the trans-Andean railway. Thomas O'Fallon also arrived during this time, travelling from Ireland to Spain and thence to Chile. In Castro, he married a woman with the surname Cárcamo, of a family of landowners. They had at least one daughter, Josefa O'Fallon, who married Tomás Valentín O'Shee y Ramery. His father Edmund had been born in Dublin to a family whom the war and the Penal Laws had destroyed. Like many others, he had fled to Spain and wished to naturalise there, having provided proof of his nobility in 1721. The document states that 'there is no need for proof in the Kingdom of Ireland, as it is widely known that the reign of Henry VIII and the heresy in the kingdom, the rigour of established laws and the persecution of the natives who by Divine Mercy remain in the sway and obedience of the Holy



Francisco de Quiñones, Martín García Óñez de Loyola y Pedro de Vizcarra, in: *Histórica relación del Reyno de Chile* by Alonso de Ovalle (1646) (*Memoria Chilena*)

Roman Church, disloyally prohibit the sacred baptism, faith, sacraments, marriages and any legal proof of Catholic acts. He shows himself to be a true Catholic as his forebears were. The witnesses and documents presented here prove that the applicant is noble. There are houses and lands in Ireland that bear his name.' In Spain, Don Edmundo married Ana Catalina Ramery, related to María Luisa Esterripa y Ramery, wife of Luis Muñoz de Guzmán, the Santiago-born governor of Quito and later of Chile.

Turning now to the biography of Tomás Valentín O'Shee, who, similarly to other emigrants and according to Roa y Urzúa, 'was a cadet in the infantry regiment in Ireland of which many members of the Irish nobility were members. In 1774, he travelled to Spain and thence to the war in Italy, where he assisted in the siege and taking of Tortona Square. He was finally made Lieutenant in 1753 and fell prisoner during the bombardment of Placencia. He was rescued, and arrived in Barcelona where he studied mathematics in the Military Academy. He left for Ceuta which was threatened by the Moroccan Emperor and there he remained until 1759. He was made captain in 1767 and saw action in the wars against Portugal. He was among those who obtained rendition at the Almeyda Square. O'Shee then travelled to Peru where he was named *Corregidor*, a position that he held for seven years. Due to his actions during the English manoeuvres in the South Seas, he was brought before the Viceroy in Lima, who sent him to the islands of the Chiloé Archipelago in 1779 in the capacity of Commander. He served until 1784 and graduated as Lieutenant Colonel in December 1788. In 1790 he requested the government of Coquimbó and of La Serena. Ambrosio O'Higgins recommended the request.' O'Shee's principal residence was in Serena. In 1797, he asked the Court to promote him to Army Colonel, stating that he had served for a long time and that he was seventy-two years of age, and married with nine children. He died in 1801.

During those years another Irishman also arrived, the physician Dominic Nevin, who was a professor at the Royal University of San Felipe in Santiago de Chile. We must also mention William Knaresbrough, a Second Lieutenant in the Navy, married to Catalina de Gatica, a native of Chillán. The surname was hispanicised to Canisbro, which is the name borne today by his descendants.



Drivers of mining produce (1824), in: *Travels into Chile over the Andes in the years 1820 and 1821*, by Peter Schmidtmeier (London, 1824). (*Memoria Chilena*)

Ambrose O'Higgins, who arrived in Chile in winter 1757, was the most illustrious of the Irish in that part of the world. He was the son of Charles and Margaret O'Higgins and grandson of Seán O'Higgins of Ballinarry, in County Sligo. 'The life of his father,' writes Juan Mackenna to Bernardo O'Higgins in a letter of 20 February 1811, 'faithfully related, presents one of the most beautiful moral lessons in the history of humanity. I do not know of any better way of imposing upon young spirits the inestimable value of unbending

honour, of indefatigable diligence and unmoving firmness.'

However, there is very little that can be said with certainty about the infancy and youth of Ambrose until the first years of his maturity, because of a complete lack of sources. Equally, little is known about his private life. On the other hand, the trajectory of his public services, which 'constitute an eloquent lesson for statesmen,' benefits from a multitude of documents.

O'Higgins arrived in Chile for the first time in 1757, returned to Cádiz and then back to Chile in 1764. According to Roa y Urzúa he twice held a commission in the Military Service at Valdivia Square. He set up a project to render the Andes mountain range passable in all seasons, built six refuges and personally directed these works. He travelled from Chile to the Spanish Court where he had friends; with a licence to return to Chile in 1768. He served in the war against the indigenous people from 1769 to 1777 as

Dragoon Captain, Cavalry Captain, Lieutenant Colonel and Cavalry Commander, before being named Cavalry Colonel in 1777.

At the helm of a flying field of 500 soldiers, he was interned among the indigenous Pehuenches at the Antuco mountain range, and saw himself surrounded by far superior indigenous forces, but valiantly defended his post; on that occasion he received two injuries. O'Higgins later managed to defeat the indigenous people and served as Cavalry Commander and Brigadier General (*Maestre de Campo*). He subsequently managed to make peace with the indigenous people. Because of a great and deserved confidence in O'Higgins, the Captain General delegated to him his personal faculties.

While it was threatened by the possibility of an English attack, O'Higgins governed the province of Concepción in 1786. His record of services in 1787 began as follows: 'His homeland, Ireland: his status, noble; his health, moderate' (Governor and Captain General of the Kingdom of Chile. Royal *cédula* 1787). He was governor of Chile from 1788 to 1795. O'Higgins then re-founded the city of Osorno. King Charles III of Spain afforded him his own title in 1795, that of 'Baron of Ballinarry,' and later Marquis of Osorno. He was promoted to Viceroy of Peru in the same year. This was the highest position to which anyone could aspire in America. He died in Lima in 1801.

Notable during O'Higgins' years as Governor of Chile was the foundation of Combarbalá and Vallenar in the Andes, San José de Maipú, Parral and Linares and the Port of Constitución, and the repopulation of Illapel and Osorno. From his concern for people's well-being and facility of access and communication between people and regions stemmed the construction of the first pavements in Santiago and the drainage system for the Mapocho River, to prevent flooding. O'Higgins made great sacrifices in travelling by foot and on horseback from the Northern roads to the South, to familiarise himself with them. He also traversed the road between Santiago and Mendoza that crosses the Andes, and the road from Santiago to Valparaíso via Lo Prado, where a commemorative stone gave the year of this trip as 1795 and was recently reinstalled at the 'Plazoleta de Irlanda' in Santiago de Chile.

O'Higgins' preoccupation with defending the land from piracy along the coast and from invasions by the Araucanians inland led to his amicable relations with the indigenous leaders (*caciques*), which were cemented at the Parliament of Negrete. The Araucanians accepted the passage through Araucania of the Camino Real to Osorno, and the development of trade. Relations with the Araucanians were in fact so amicable that they were among the last defenders of the King in Chile during the wars of independence.

As governor, Ambrosio was also concerned that the accounts be set in order and be transparent, and in other matters, he sought to stimulate the creation of a Chilean merchant marine, to promote the fishing industry and the sugar cane plantations, and to develop mining. He founded the Institution of the Consulate in Chile, abolished the *encomiendas* (rights granted to Spanish colonial subjects to exact tributes, including labour, from indigenous Americans) and undertook a thousand other works in his indefatigable industriousness. In the midst of all this, his wife gave birth to a son, who would be a prominent figure during the wars of independence, Bernardo O'Higgins.

The illustriousness that both the Viceroy Ambrosio and his son the Liberator brought to the name O'Higgins left the rest of the family somewhat in their shadow. In fact a nephew also travelled to America, Demetrio O'Higgins (there are various men of this name in the family). He was a *Guardia de Corps* in Madrid in 1793 and in Peru he married Mariana Echeverría, with whom he had no children. As a widow she married José Bernardo de Tagle y Portocarrero, Fourth Marquis of Torre Tagle. An older brother of Ambrosio, William, migrated to Paraguay, and started a family there.

Six nephews of the Viceroy migrated to Spain, of whom two re-migrated to Chile. Among the sons of Ambrosio's brother Michael were Thomas, who died of yellow fever in Cádiz en route from Lima to Spain and was aided by Bernardo; Ambrose, who had no known descendants; and Peter, a cadet in the Hibernia Regiment, who died at a young age. Ambrosio's brother Thomas had four sons, William and Patrick, who were both cadets in the Hibernia Regiment and died in Spain fighting the French; Charles, who was in the Ireland Regiment in Spain and arrived in Chile as Grenadier Captain, working with his brother Thomas on the Quiriquina Island. He died without descendants.



Thomas O'Higgins was born in Ireland in 1773 and travelled to Spain to join the Ireland Regiment, like his brother. In 1790 he was named cadet and fought against the French. In 1794 he joined the Cavalry Grenadiers Regiment, and after the Peace of Basilea he arrived in Chile at the behest of his uncle, Ambrosio. In 1795 he was made Captain of the Frontier Dragoon Regiment; in 1796 and 1797 he was Inspector of Troops in Chiloé, Valdivia and Osorno and at the forts of Alcudia and María Luisa. His uncle, having become Viceroy, then called him to Lima as Captain of the Guards. He was governor of the province of Huarochiri, where he organised the Battalion of the Princess of Asturias.



Corral, ca. 1859, in: *Fünfzehn Jahre in Süd-Amerika an den Ufern des Stillen Oceans*, by Paul Treutler (Leipzig, 1882) (*Memoria Chilena*)

In 1799, Thomas travelled to Europe. He returned to Chile and was governor of the Juan Fernández Island, and in 1811 of La Serena and Coquimbo. In 1822 he was named Mayor of Santiago. Thomas married Josefa Aldunate Larraín, niece of the Bishop of Santiago and Vice President of the First Governmental Junta in 1810, José Antonio M de Aldunate. The couple, who had no children, lived in a large corner house next to the consulate building where the Open Meeting (*Cabildo Abierto*) was celebrated in 1810. Thomas was the sole heir of his uncle the Viceroy, receiving extensive *haciendas* in Cauquenes, Puchucay and Quiriquina Island. He died in 1827.

Another Irishman who also arrived in Chile on the request of Ambrosio was Thomas Delphin, born in 1736. Delphin had fled to Spain and later fought in the war in Chile. He was named Lieutenant Colonel, later Colonel and in 1800 was called to Lima as advisor to Viceroy O'Higgins. He died in Concepción on 1 September 1807.

John Mackenna y O'Reilly was also called to Chile by the Viceroy. He was a maternal nephew of General Alejandro O'Reilly, born in Dublin in 1728, who commanded the Spanish troops in Africa and received the nobility title of *Conde* O'Reilly. John was born in Clogher, King's County (Offaly), in 1771. He travelled to Spain and fought in Africa and later against the French. He arrived in Peru in 1797 by request of Viceroy O'Higgins, who named him Governor of Osorno. In 1811 he was appointed Military Governor of Valparaíso, later Artillery Commander, Colonel and Speaker of the Governmental Junta. He was then confined for two years in the *Hacienda* of Catapilco, the property of his wife's family. He was married to Josefa Vicuña Larraín y Salas, whose family enthusiastically furthered the process of independence. His wife was the sister of the future first Archbishop of Santiago, Manuel Vicuña. Prior to the invasion of Antonio Pareja, Mackenna was sent to the South as Major-Chief-of-State, participated in various battles, among them that of Membrillar, was promoted to Brigadier General and Commander-General of the Forces of Santiago. He was killed by Luis Carrera in a shotgun duel in Buenos Aires. Mackenna had been a friend and confidant of Viceroy O'Higgins and later of his son Bernardo. Among his numerous and illustrious descendants is the historian Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna.

Stanislaus Lynch, John O'Brien and Charles Mary O'Carroll arrived in Chile with the liberating army. Lynch married María del Carmen Solo de Zaldivar in Chile and their son Patricio had a brilliant career, participating in the war against the Confederation, and later joining the British Navy. He was present at the attacks on Shanghai and Canton (Guangzhou). In the Pacific War, he was at the Battle of Chorrillos and Miraflores and was General-in-Chief of the Army during the Chilean occupation of Lima.

Two presidents of the Republic of Chile had Irish ancestry, Germán Riesco Errázuriz and Juan Luis Sanfuentes Andonaegui, as they were both descendants of Joaquín Antonio Pérez de Uriendo and his wife Inés Vicenta Ménendez y Valdés de Cornellana.

Many other Irish would settle in Chile after the Independence, including businessmen in search of fortunes, mining industrialists in the north and sheep-farmers in Patagonia, professionals, teachers, missionaries and physicians. They integrated into the Chilean society and contributed with their work and experience to building the modern country.

Arturo Griffin

Translated by Claire Healy

### References

- Vial Correa, Gonzalo. *Historia de Chile* (Santiago: Zig-Zag, 1981-2001).
- Vicuña Mackenna, Benjamín. *Historia de Chile* (1868).



## 'Foreigners of this Kind': Chilean Refugees in Ireland, 1973-1990

By Claire Healy

In the midst of 1970s Ireland, a country considered homogenous and mono-cultural, a small group of South Americans made their home, under a United Nations-sponsored programme of resettlement. Long before the era of mass migration to the country, beginning in the 1990s, but long after the first migrants sought refuge in Ireland in the seventeenth century, Chileans fleeing the aftermath of the Pinochet coup travelled to the island. This article examines the background to the settlement, the circumstances of their arrival, and the consequences of the move.

The first significant group of refugees to seek asylum in Ireland were the French Huguenots. Over 200,000 Huguenots left France in the late seventeenth century in the wake of widespread persecution and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which had granted them religious liberty. About 10,000 settled in Ireland, while 50,000 settled in England, and these French Protestants are said to have coined the term 'refugee' in the English language. These forced migrants gradually settled in the country, learned the language and intermarried with the Irish population.

Just two decades later, in 1709, the Irish House of Commons authorised the settlement of Protestant Palatines in Ireland. The Palatines were fleeing the conflict with the French in their homeland in the Palatinate (Pfalz) in present-day Germany. Over 3,000 Palatines moved to Ireland in that year, the majority of whom settled on the estate of Lord Thomas Southwell in Rathkeale, County Limerick. Similarly to the group of Chilean refugees who settled in Ireland over 250 years later, over half of the Palatine refugees were dissatisfied with the refuge provided in Ireland and re-emigrated to North America.

Few migrants sought refuge in Ireland during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Irish government was reluctant to accept European refugees. The Department of Justice particularly opposed the resettlement of Jewish refugees in the state. [1] In 1956, Ireland acceded to the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which had been ratified by the United Nations in 1951. The policy of accepting programme refugees in Ireland, despite its initial limited scope, was conceived of as an international response to crisis situations. The Convention defined a refugee as any person who,

owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. [2]



Residents Against Racism (RAR) protest in Dublin, 2005  
(Indymedia)

Under the terms of the 1951 Convention, this was to apply only to European people who were refugees because of events that had taken place prior to 1951.

The same year that Ireland signed up to the Convention, a group of 530 Hungarian refugees fleeing the Soviet invasion of Hungary were accepted into the country and accommodated in an army camp in Knockalisheen, County Clare. Many more Hungarian refugees received asylum in other European countries, and, curiously, also in Chile. [3] The Irish government made scant provision for their resettlement, beyond providing accommodation, food and 'pocket money,' [4] and considered their residence in Ireland to be temporary. Like the Palatines before them, the vast majority of the Hungarians in Ireland ultimately resettled in the USA and Canada. In 1966, the Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees extended the right to seek asylum to all nationalities, without geographical or chronological limitations. [5] However, there was no significant refugee migration to Ireland until the 1970s.

On the eve of Salvador Allende's ascent to power in Chile in 1970, the country was beset by chronic economic difficulties such as inflation and unequal income distribution. During his time in power, Allende implemented a policy known as 'la vía chilena al socialismo' involving the nationalisation of certain industries, reform of the healthcare system, agrarian reform and the redistribution of farms, and a programme of free milk for children. A visit by Cuban dictator Fidel Castro to Chile in late 1971 and rampant inflation in 1972 elicited domestic and international criticism for Allende's administration. This was compounded by a series of industrial strikes and a fall in exports. In June 1973, a tank regiment led by Colonel Roberto Souper led a violent but unsuccessful coup attempt. In August of the same year, the Chilean Chamber of Deputies accused the Allende administration of unconstitutional acts and encouraged the military leadership to reinstate the constitutional order.

On 11 September 1973, the Chilean military led by Commander-in-Chief Augusto Pinochet overthrew Salvador Allende's socialist government. Allende made his final radio speech to the people at eleven o'clock that morning, concluding with the words:

¡¡Viva Chile!! ¡¡Viva el pueblo!! ¡¡Vivan los trabajadores!! Estas son mis últimas palabras y tengo la certeza de que mi sacrificio no será en vano. Tengo la certeza de que por lo menos será una lección moral que castigará la felonía, la cobardía y la traición. [6]

A short time later, Allende died in the presidential palace, 'La Moneda,' which was bombed and burnt to the ground. [7] The Congress was dissolved and the National Stadium converted into a concentration camp for thousands of prisoners. All political activity was declared 'in recess.' [8] The coup initiated a spate of kidnapping, detention, torture and killing of Chileans by the state. Because of the secrecy surrounding such activities, and the fact that the locations of bodies were frequently concealed from their families, victims of this state terror became known as 'detenidos-desaparecidos (detained-disappeared).' [9]

As news of the coup in Chile reached the Republic of Ireland, a group of Irish people formed to lobby for the acceptance of a quota of refugees from the South American country. The group had the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who was then encouraging governments all over the world to accept those seeking refuge from the fallout of Pinochet's coup. Ireland and Luxembourg were the only remaining members of the European Union that had not accepted Chilean refugees. Local



Cuban postage stamp commemorating Allende's death  
([www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org))

support was also provided by Amnesty International and the Irish Order of the Franciscans. The Irish government of the time agreed to admit just twelve families under a special programme for refugees. The requests of Chileans for refuge were to be granted on the basis that they would otherwise have been imprisoned or suffered human rights violations because of their political beliefs. [10] Unlike the Hungarians in 1956, the Chileans were to be considered permanent settlers rather than temporary refugees. [11]

Unfortunately, relatively little is known about this group, as some of the files relating to the incident have been mislaid in government archives. [12] The one file that does remain originated in the Department of the Taoiseach (Prime Minister) and was released to the public in 2005. It is entitled 'Resettlement in Ireland of refugees from Chile' and is dated February to April 1974. Although a government memorandum indicated support for the project from all departments, the Fine Gael T.D. (member of parliament) and Minister for Justice Patrick Cooney voiced his reservations in relation to the settlement of the Chileans, stating that Ireland was not as 'cosmopolitan' as other Western European countries and that 'the absorption of even a limited number of foreigners of this kind could prove extremely difficult.' [13] Cooney substantiated his views by referring to the previous resettlement of Hungarian refugees in Ireland, claiming that they had 'failed to settle down' and had eventually re-emigrated to other countries. [14]

The most significant reason for the minister's reluctance, however, is revealed in the same letter, where Cooney stated that most or all of the group were refugees because they were Marxists, and that a significant proportion were 'activists.' He feared that they would engage in political agitation soon after their arrival in Ireland; 'they will not change their outlook on arrival in this country.' [15] He suggested that such left-wing activists would pose a far greater problem for Ireland than for other Western European countries because of the existence in Ireland of 'a relatively large and well-organised subversive group towards whom such persons could be expected to gravitate.' [16] Cooney proposed some form of screening programme to vet potential refugees. [17] This forced migration of refugees from Chile to Ireland was further complicated by Cooney's suggestion that some of the refugees were in fact non-Chileans who had sought refuge in Chile because it had a communist president. [18]

The Irish state played a minimal role in facilitating their settlement in the country, and for security reasons, the event received muted publicity due to the danger of releasing their names to the Chilean media. The resettlement was privately financed by the Committee for Chilean Refugees in Ireland and by religious groups. [19] The Chileans who had arrived seeking refuge in Ireland were housed in local authority houses in Shannon, County Clare, and in Galway and Waterford, and were allocated places on AnCo training schemes. [20] Many received training in metalwork. [21] After two years, the Committee for Chilean Refugees in Ireland ceased to provide direct aid to the community, ostensibly to promote personal autonomy. [22] It was only in 1977, three years after the arrival of the group in Ireland, that provisions

were made for teaching the English language to adult refugees, and even at that stage, only two hours' tuition per week were provided. [23]

In response to a parliamentary question in early 1977, a representative for the then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Garret FitzGerald, stated that the minister 'maintained an active interest in the welfare of the Chilean refugees in Ireland and the efforts made on their behalf.' [24] At that time, there were twenty-three Chilean heads of family living in Ireland; a total of ninety-four people. However, the representative underlined the fact that the Department of Foreign Affairs was not directly involved in providing assistance to the Chileans. Local and national authorities were providing assistance to the group and 'considerable progress has been made towards their integration here.' Nevertheless, three years after their arrival in Ireland, the Chileans who had settled in Galway were reported to be experiencing continuing difficulties in finding suitable employment. [25]



Protest against deportation by Chilean refugees in Canada, 1998  
(*Gunther Gamper*)

Little is known about the daily lives and achievements of the group during their residence in Ireland. Some are known to have continued third-level studies at Trinity College in Dublin. [26] One Chilean refugee, Maite Deiber, whose husband had been arrested and 'disappeared' during the unrest in Chile, went on to become conductor of the Trinity College Singers in Dublin in 1978. [27] Very few of the 120 or so Chilean refugees who arrived in Ireland in the early 1970s remain in the country. They experienced serious difficulties in finding employment in Ireland due to a lack of targeted language or training programmes to facilitate their integration into the labour market. [28] In the late 1980s, the Chilean government announced an amnesty for Chileans abroad who had been exiled by the coup, and many of the refugees returned.

Relations between Ireland and Chile are naturally influenced by the activities of Irish migrants in the region during the nineteenth century. While the most significant migration of the twentieth century between the two countries was the small-scale movement of programme refugees between Santiago and Dublin during the 1970s, during the twenty-first century Ireland is likely to be the destination for many more Chilean immigrants. On being awarded an *Honoris Causa* Doctorate by the University of Chile in 2004, the Irish President Mary McAleese commented on the continuing potential for cooperation between the Republics of Ireland and Chile: 'No es casual que Bernardo O'Higgins sea conocido como El Libertador. Estuvo entregado al espíritu de la libertad iluminada. Es mi convencimiento que Irlanda [...] cuenta con un socio legítimo en la República de Chile, con el cual estamos destinados a trabajar más estrechamente a fin de propagar aún más los frutos de ese espíritu de libertad a lo largo de América Latina y el mundo.' [29]

However, aside from the resettlement project in 1974, from the 1960s to date, Irish governments have remained remarkably silent in relation to dirty wars and 'disappearances' in Latin America, in contrast to many of the country's European neighbours. Although many victims of forced disappearances in Chile and Argentina had Irish names, - and therefore obvious Irish ancestry - diplomatic and consular services consistently refused to get involved. [30]

Most of the Chileans living in Ireland today are on short-term work permits or have married Irish people and settled here. In 2002, there were a total of eight Chileans working in Ireland on work permits and one Chilean architect on a work authorisation issued by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. By 2004, this number had increased to twenty Chileans on permits and two professionals on authorisations, and further increased to twenty-four Chileans working in Ireland on work permits and one

engineer on an authorisation in 2005. In 2006, however, just five work permits for Chileans were renewed, and six new permits and one authorisation were issued. [31]

Trade between Ireland and Chile has been growing significantly, and was valued at just under €74 million in 2002, a fourfold increase since 1990. Ireland is represented in Chile by an honorary consul, and general diplomatic representation is handled by the Irish embassy in Argentina. The Embassy of Chile in Ireland opened on 1 July 2002, and in October of the same year, the first ever resident Chilean ambassador in Dublin, Alberto Yoacham, presented his credentials to the President of Ireland.

In the years that followed the settlement of the Chilean refugees, many more people arrived in Ireland seeking refuge under UNHCR programmes, including Vietnamese (1979-2000), Iranian (1985), Bosnian (1992-2000) and Kosovar (1999) people in search of safety and freedom from persecution. Ireland is one of only seventeen countries in the world with a programme of refugee resettlement. In mid-2005, the Irish Minister for Justice announced that Ireland was to significantly increase its annual refugee resettlement quota from 10 cases - equating to about forty people - to 200 people per year. In light of the fact that Ireland recognised 966 asylum seekers as refugees and received about 70,000 immigrants during 2005 alone, [32] the resettlement quota remains modest. The implementation of further increases, however, seem likely, as Ireland continues to adapt and develop its policies for the settlement of those who seek refuge on the island.



Romanian refugees in Ireland, 2001  
(<http://www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2001>)

The twentieth-century settlement of refugees, and indeed other immigrants, in Ireland is a topic that has thus far received little attention in the field of academic research. This is despite the implications of Ireland's history of immigration for the future of the country. The examination of the small-scale settlement of these South Americans seeking refuge in the country may prove informative with regard to future resettlement projects, and sheds light on a little known connection between Ireland and Chile.

Claire Healy

## Notes

[1] Ward, Eilís, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers: 1922-1966' in: Lentin, Ronit (ed.). *The Expanding Nation: Towards a Multi-Ethnic Ireland: Proceedings of a Conference Held in Trinity College Dublin* (Vol. I. Dublin: The Irish Times, 1998), 41.

[2] Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950. Ch. 1, art. 1, A (2).

[3] UNHCR Records of the Central Registry, 20/HUN/IRE Statistics - Hungarian refugees in Ireland 3 April 1957; 20/HUN/CHILE Statistics - Hungarian refugees in Chile 30 December 1958.

[4] Ward, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers,' 41.

[5] Protocol relating the Status of Refugees, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 2198 (XXI) of 16 December 1966. Art. 1 (2-3).

[6] 'Long live Chile!! Long live the people!! Long live the workers!! These are my final words and I am certain that my sacrifice will not be in vain. I am certain that this will at least be a moral lesson that will serve to punish treachery, cowardice and betrayal.' Allende Gossens, Salvador, 'Mensaje al país' (Santiago: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, 1973). Available at: <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mChilena01/temas/dest.asp?id=allendemensajepais> (accessed 13 September 2006).

[7] Memoria Chilena, 'Bombardeo del Palacio de la Moneda' (Santiago: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, n.y.). Available at: <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mChilena01/temas/dest.asp?id=allendepalacio> (accessed 13 September 2006).

[8] Adapted from: 'Chilean Coup of 1973' in *Wikipedia - the free encyclopedia* on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chilean\\_coup\\_of\\_1973](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chilean_coup_of_1973) (accessed 1 August 2006).

[9] Bachelet, Michelle, 'Declaración del Día Nacional del Detenido Desaparecido' (Palacio La Moneda, Santiago, 30 August 2006). Broadcast available at: <http://www.presidencia.cl/> (accessed 13 September 2006).

[10] 'Chilean Political Refugees' in: *Dáil Éireann*. Questions. Oral Answers. Vol. 296 (27 January 1977).

[11] O'Doherty, Caroline. 'Chilean Refugees Feared as Communists.' *The Irish Examiner* (3 January 2005).

[12] Ward, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers,' 41.

[13] 'Resettlement in Ireland of Refugees from Chile' (February - April 1974) National Archives of Ireland, 2005/7/445, S 19123.

[14] O'Doherty, 'Chilean Refugees Feared as Communists.'

[15] 'Resettlement of Refugees Raised Deep Security Fears.' *The Irish Independent* (3 January 2005).

[16] Maguire, Siobhan, "Marxist" Chileans Denied Asylum.' *The Times* (London, 2 January 2005). Cooney is referring here to the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

[17] 'Resettlement in Ireland of Refugees from Chile,' (NAI).

[18] Maguire, "Marxist" Chileans Denied Asylum.'

[19] Ward, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers,' 43.

[20] AnCo was the precursor to FÁS, the Irish state's training and employment authority.

[21] Fanning, Bryan, Steven Loyal and Ciarán Staunton. *Asylum Seekers and the Right to Work in Ireland* (Research on behalf of the Irish Refugee Council, Funded by the Combat Poverty Agency Dublin, July 2000), 74.

[22] Ward, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers,' 43.

[23] Nolan, G., 'The Education of Refugee Children' (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Dublin University College Dublin, 1997), 90.



[24] 'Chilean Political Refugees' in: *Dáil Éireann* Questions.

[25] *Ibid.*

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] <http://societies.csc.tcd.ie/~singers/conductor/conductor.html> (accessed 1 August 2006).

[28] Ward, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers,' 43.

[29] 'It is not for nothing that Bernardo O'Higgins is known as The Liberator. He was dedicated to the spirit of enlightened liberty. It is my belief that Ireland [...] has a genuine partner in the Republic of Chile, with whom we are destined to work ever more closely in order to disseminate the fruits of that spirit of freedom ever more widely throughout Latin America and the world.' 'Address by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese at the University of Chile,' (22 March 2004).

[30] Thanks to Edmundo Murray for his comments on this subject.

[31] Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. *Work Permit Statistics* (2006). <http://www.entemp.ie/labour/workpermits/statistics.htm> (accessed 17 July 2006); *Ibid.*, 'Working Visas and Work Authorisations' 2000-2006. Private correspondence with DETE.

[32] Irish Refugee Council, 'Irish Asylum Statistics' (July 2006); Quinn, Emma. *Policy Analysis Report on Asylum and Migration: Ireland Mid-2004 to 2005* (edited by European Migration Network, Dublin: European Commission DGJFS and DJELR Ireland, 2006), 5. Statistics recently released by the Central Statistics Office in Dublin show that immigration during the year ending April 2006 increased further, to 86,900 people. Central Statistics Office, 'Population and Migration Estimates, April 2006' (Dublin: CSO, Sept. 2006).

## References

- 'Address by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese at the University of Chile,' (22 March 2004).

- Allende Gossens, Salvador, 'Mensaje al país' (Santiago: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, 1973). Available at: <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mChilena01/temas/dest.asp?id=allendemensajepais> (accessed 13 September 2006).

- Bachelet, Michelle, 'Declaración del Día Nacional del Detenido Desaparecido' (Palacio La Moneda, Santiago, 30 August 2006). Broadcast available at: <http://www.presidencia.cl/view/viewBuscadorVideosSegegob.asp?seccion=Videos&Opmenu=Multimedia&idMultimedia=145> (accessed 13 September 2006).

- Central Statistics Office, 'Population and Migration Estimates, April 2006' (Dublin: CSO, Sept. 2006).

- 'Chilean Coup of 1973' in *Wikipedia - the free encyclopedia* on [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chilean\\_coup\\_of\\_1973](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chilean_coup_of_1973) (accessed 1 August 2006).

- 'Chilean Political Refugees' in: *Dáil Éireann*. Questions. Oral Answers. Vol. 296 (27 January 1977).

- Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, adopted 28 July 1951 by the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Status of Refugees and Stateless Persons convened under General Assembly resolution 429 (V) of 14 December 1950.

- Fanning, Bryan, Steven Loyal and Ciarán Staunton, *Asylum Seekers and the Right to Work in Ireland* (Research on behalf of the Irish Refugee Council, Funded by the Combat Poverty Agency Dublin, July 2000).
- Irish Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 'Working Visas and Work Authorisations' 2000-2006. Private correspondence with DETE.
- —————, *Work Permit Statistics* (2006), available on <http://www.entemp.ie/labour/workpermits/statistics.htm> (accessed 17 July 2006).
- Irish Refugee Council, 'Irish Asylum Statistics' (July 2006).
- Maguire, Siobhan, '“Marxist” Chileans Denied Asylum.' *The Times* (London, 2 January 2005).
- Memoria Chilena, 'Bombardeo del Palacio de la Moneda' (Santiago: Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, n.y.). Available at: <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mChilena01/temas/dest.asp?id=allendepalacio> (accessed 13 September 2006).
- Nolan, G., 'The Education of Refugee Children' (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis. Dublin: University College Dublin, 1997).
- O'Doherty, Caroline, 'Chilean Refugees Feared as Communists.' *The Irish Examiner* (3 January 2005).
- Protocol relating the Status of Refugees, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 2198 (XXI) of 16 December 1966.
- Quinn, Emma, *Policy Analysis Report on Asylum and Migration: Ireland Mid-2004 to 2005* (edited by European Migration Network, Dublin: European Commission DGJFS and DJELR Ireland, 2006).
- 'Resettlement in Ireland of Refugees from Chile' (February - April 1974) National Archives of Ireland, 2005/7/445, S 19123.
- 'Resettlement of Refugees Raised Deep Security Fears.' *The Irish Independent* (3 January 2005).
- UNHCR Records of the Central Registry, 20/HUN/IRE Statistics - Hungarian refugees in Ireland 3 April 1957; 20/HUN/CHILE Statistics - Hungarian refugees in Chile 30 December 1958.
- Ward, Eilís, 'Ireland and refugees/asylum seekers: 1922-1966' in: Lentin, Ronit (ed.). *The Expanding Nation: Towards a Multi-Ethnic Ireland: Proceedings of a Conference Held in Trinity College Dublin* (Vol. I. Dublin: The Irish Times, 1998).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## *Sr. Hutchinson, otra vez, no dice V. nonsenses, no tonterrias:* [1] A Bigoted Response to Thomas J. Hutchinson's *Two Years in Peru* (1873)

By Edmundo Murray



Thomas Hutchinson decorated by the Union Masonic Lodge of Rosario for his work during the cholera outbreak, July 1867  
(*The Paraná, With Incidents of the Paraguayan War, 1868*)

When, in October 1870, Thomas Hutchinson was appointed British Consul at Callao, the port of Lima, he was probably preparing for his retirement in Wexford after fifteen years working for the British consular service. His projects for the most peaceful time of his life included writing numerous travel and exploration accounts, and perhaps visiting continental Europe. He could not foresee at that time that one of his books, *Two Years in Peru*, would elicit such a negative response in the Spanish-speaking world.

Thomas Joseph Hutchinson was born on 18 January 1802 in Stonyford, County Wexford. Although little is known of his childhood or his family - undoubtedly of Anglo-Irish background -, his parents may have owned a rural property in the parish of Kilsoran, near the major source area of nineteenth-century emigration from Wexford to Argentina. [2] In his formative years, he undoubtedly received a good education, which allowed him to travel to Germany and study to practice as a medical doctor. He graduated in 1833 from the University of Göttingen as a physician and surgeon. [3]

Hutchinson first went to West Africa as the *Pleiad's* senior surgeon, and served in this capacity on the 1851 exploration of the river Niger. His initial views on the possibility of educating the native population were later reviewed and he held extreme opinions on the African peoples. He was acknowledged by contemporary authors as 'knowledgeable but eccentric' (Burton 1863). Back in London, Hutchinson married his wife Mary, and in 1855 was appointed British Consul for the Bight of Biafra, based at Clarence Port, Fernando Po. [4] The family adopted an African child, Fanny Hutchinson, who lived with them for the rest of their lives. Hutchinson was dismissed in 1861 on the grounds that he was too partial to the interests of the merchants of Liverpool, being replaced by Captain Richard F. Burton (1821-1890), the famous explorer, linguist and travel writer. Hutchinson's attempt at being appointed to the consulate in Tenerife failed, and he was sent instead to the Argentine city of Rosario as British Vice-Consul. In 1867, he was appointed temporarily to the Montevideo consulate, where he owned the *Farmacia Británica*. Between 1870 and 1872 he was British Consul in Callao, Peru.

In 1874, Thomas Hutchinson retired from the Foreign Office and went to live in Ballinesker Lodge, Curraclloe, parish of St. Margaret's in County Wexford. From this base he travelled extensively on the

European continent and published several books. Then the family moved to Middlesex in England, and finally to Italy. Hutchinson died on 23 March 1885 in his house at 2 Via Maragliano, Florence.

He was a prolific writer, and his books of travel and exploration include seven works covering Africa, South America and Europe, and a few published lectures about ethnographic studies in Africa and the production of cotton and meat in South America. [5] While he was in Rosario, Hutchinson also edited a short-lived newspaper, the *Argentine Citizen*, which appeared weekly from 10 January to 25 April 1865, and was primarily concerned with encouraging immigration from Britain and Ireland and with British investment and trade (Marshall 1996: 17). [6]

His books were published in London and Liverpool, on which Hutchinson's eyes were set. However, his accounts of Africa and South America received no applause in the consular, business and scientific communities in England. And his readers in South America were none too impressed. In Argentina, President Bartolomé Mitre observed that Hutchinson wrote 'with neither order nor scientific method. Hutchinson is a character with a passion for travelling, and for travel writing. [...] According to Captain Burton, the famous explorer of Central Africa, his [Hutchinson's] books have not been too widely accepted in England. [...] In spite of my high opinion of Hutchinson as a person, my gratefulness for his consideration, and my respect for his untiring industriousness, I must say that his books, even if they do include some helpful information, do not broach any particular idea nor do they have any durable character. Without a doubt, his best work is an English-language statistical and trade newspaper that he published here.' [7]

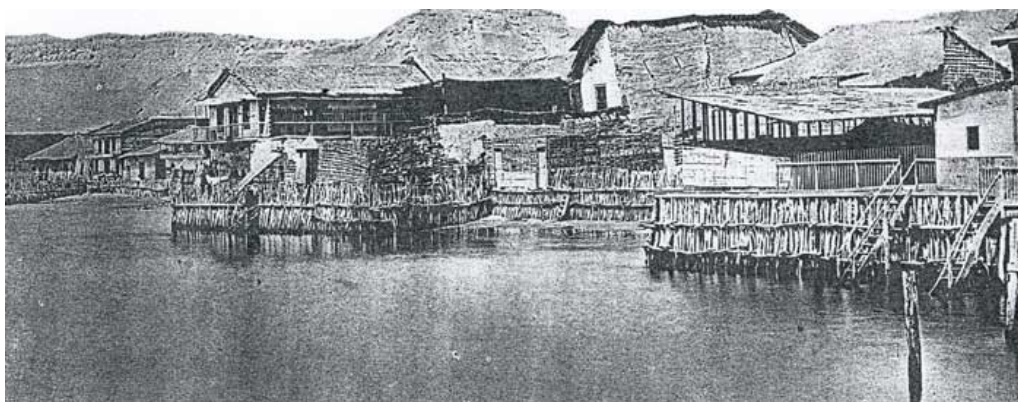


Miguel Lobo y Malagamba (1821-1876)  
(Museo Naval, Madrid)

In Peru, where Hutchinson spent the final stage of his career in the British consular service, *Two Years in Peru* elicited anger and negative reviews in the local press. But his worst critic was the veteran officer of the Battle of Callao, the Spanish admiral Miguel Lobo.

### Invectives and Diatribe

On 8 October 1870, Thomas Hutchinson was appointed Consul at Callao, with a salary of £600, plus £385 allowance and outfit (FO 61/261). [8] On 1 March 1871 he sailed from Liverpool on the *Cordillera*, arriving at Callao on 22 April with his wife and daughter. Most of his reports include accounts about crimping at Callao harbour, a problem caused, he claimed, by Peruvian, Chilean, British and Spanish captains. Hutchinson's health was then failing and he was on leave for most of 1872 (FO 61/263). Back in England, he retired from the consular service on 24 February 1874 (FO 61/286).



Sea-shore view of Payta  
(Heliotype in *Two Years in Peru*)

*Two Years in Peru* appeared in London in 1873. The book was published in two volumes, and it is a compilation of Hutchinson's trips and archaeological explorations in the Andean country. The first chapters include accounts of the journey from Liverpool to Lima, with full descriptions of the Strait of Magellan, Tierra del Fuego and Punta Arenas, the indigenous people of southern Patagonia and Chile, the Chiloé archipelago, Valparaíso, Santiago, Iquique and Tarapaca, and of his arrival at Callao, a major port near Lima. In the chapters that follow, there are scientific deliberations, including medical, ethnographic and archaeological observations of places in central and northern Chile, present-day Bolivia and south Peru.

On Lima and its port, Callao, the author included reports and statistical information on trade, agricultural production, industry, shipping, railways and mining, as well as security, health, education, immigration policies, demographic information, local politics and even customs - among them the 'sleepiness' - of the Peruvian people. Both volumes are richly illustrated, including numerous pencil sketches by José Maria Zaballa and John Schumaker, and a number of heliotype pictures, a higher-resolution photographic technique which was pioneered in the 1870s in Lima by V.L. Richardson.



*Tapada*, a custom of Lima ladies  
(*Two Years in Peru*)

One of the accounts, in chapter 11, tells of the 'Bombardment of Callao by the Spanish fleet in 1866' (Hutchinson 1873: 223). In 1866, Spanish forces occupied the Chincha islands, major world producer of guano fertiliser. Peru, Ecuador, Chile and Bolivia united their forces against Spain in what was called the War of the American Union (1864-1867). In February a Chilean-Peruvian army successfully battled the Spanish armada in Abtao, and on 31 March the Spanish forces attacked Valparaíso in Chile. At noon of 2 May 1866 the Spanish ships, led by the iron-clad *Numancia*, began shooting at the fort of Callao. After fierce fighting between the invading navy and the Peruvian forces on land, the Spanish abandoned the battlefield and '2 de Mayo' is still celebrated as a Peruvian victory. [9] The commander who ordered the retreat of the Spanish fleet was rear-admiral Miguel Lobo y Malagamba (1821-1876), a seasoned naval officer with experience in Africa and America, who would consider Hutchinson's writings to be a series of *dislates* (nonsense).

In 1874, Miguel Lobo published *Un hijo de Inglaterra a quien le ha dado por viajar en las Regiones Americanas que fueron de España y por escribir sendos dislates sobre ellas y sus antiguos dominadores*. [10] Each of the seventy-seven pages of this book are dedicated to demolishing the information and ideas included in Hutchinson's *Two Years in Peru*. This long diatribe - without any division in chapters or even subtitles - was written to counter the neglect of the Spanish authors to defend 'the prestige of Spain and the historical truth regarding the conquest of America' (Lobo 1874: 5).

After ten pages including remarks about Hutchinson's ability as a travel writer, the author of *Un hijo de Inglaterra* focuses on linguistic criticism. When Hutchinson criticises the fact that the Spanish conquistadors changed numerous Inca place names, Lobo counter-attacks with the English-language toponyms that are frequent in the Magellan Strait and were named by English expeditions. Then he reproaches the consul's translations from Spanish into English, including that of *perder los estribos* as 'to get confused or embarrassed', which Lobo argues is enough to evaluate the bad translations in Hutchinson's book: 'we can certainly assume that our readers [...] will exclaim *ab uno disce omnes*' (13). [11]

Next in Lobo's condemnation is spelling, in particular the question of the 'ñ':

Of course the Spanish linguistic knowledge of Mr. Hutchinson [...] has nothing to do with the fact that, without the authorisation of the Spanish Academy - incidentally, an authorisation which no British authors seek - he omits one of the letters in the Spanish alphabet, the ñ. But, not content with this *ab-irato* banishment, it is also imposed upon the *r*, when two of them happen to be

unfortunate enough to occur together in a Spanish-language word. Therefore, instead of *Carrillo*, a Peruvian engineer, we see this name written, *ex-officio* by Mr. Hutchinson, with the nickname *Carillo*. And the delicious fish in the north of Peru's coast [...] that is known as *Mojarrilla*, is re-christened *mojarilla* (14). [12]

This apologia of the *ñ*, which is indeed justifiable from a purely linguistic point of view, is somewhat biased by the palpable intolerance of the author towards everything that is not Spanish. It would be worth attempting a comparison of this narrow-minded passage with the enjoyable 'La *eñe* también es gente' by the Argentine author María Elena Walsh. [13]

Also visible in Lobo's work is his vindication of the Spanish conquest of America. 'So all the South American histories say that in general the Christianisation by the Spaniards in those countries was limited to raising crosses on the hill tops, to building chapels in suitable places, and to changing the original place names to others with the names of saints! [...] So then it is nothing to succeed in propagating throughout the largest part of the New World a language that is one of the most beautiful languages, and with it, one of the most original and precious of literatures' (31). [14]

But the most important evaluation of *Two Years in Peru* by Miguel Lobo seems to be focused on an event that he witnessed first-hand, the attack on Callao by the Spanish fleet on 2 May 1866. All the details offered by Hutchinson are challenged by Lobo. When Hutchinson reports that the Spanish battleships 'had all got such a peppering' that at five in the afternoon they had to withdraw (Hutchinson 1873: II, 234), Lobo says instead that the officers were just following their orders (Lobo 1874: 71-73).



The battle at Callao, 2 May 1866

## Conclusion

Miguel Lobo's book abounds in bigoted interpretations of both British and Latin American cultures. His comments - though partially true in some aspects of Hutchinson's book - are guided less by a genuine defence of Latin American cultures than by an attitude of considering the Spanish culture superior to that of the British empire, which is typical of an obsolete way of thinking among Spanish officials in the second half of the nineteenth century. Lobo's beliefs draw on the imperialist approach to cultures different to one's own, in which the colonialist mind only perceives powerful enemies or colonised peoples.

Incapable of even a minimal recognition of Hutchinson's work, or at least an objective criticism of the book, in the closing paragraph Miguel Lobo scoffs at the way some English-speaking people pronounce words in Spanish: 'Sr. Hutchinson, otra vez, no dice V. nonsenses, no tonterrias' (77).

Edmundo Murray

## Acknowledgements

I am obliged to Edward Walsh of London for his generous hospitality and his expert guidance through the intricacy and formalities of the city's various libraries and archives. I am also grateful to Roberto Land-aburu of Venado Tuerto for sharing interesting information about Thomas Hutchinson with me, and to the genealogist Helen Kelly of Dublin for her research in Wexford archives.

## Notes

- [1] Scornful use of incorrect Spanish syntax and spelling by a native speaker of English (Lobo 1874: 77).
- [2] The county of birth may also have been Kilkenny. In this case, his father was Alfred Hutchinson [*Hutchenson*].
- [3] The year of graduation may be inaccurate. No records have been identified in the University of Göttingen of Hutchinson's studies or his thesis dissertation (thanks to Juan Delius and Ulrich Hunger for this information).
- [4] Present-day Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea.
- [5] A list is included in the Appendix following this article.
- [6] The complete collection of the *Argentine Citizen* has been microfilmed by Museo Mitre of Buenos Aires.
- [7] 'Hutchinson, Antigüedades del Perú. No conozco esta obra, ni necesito conocerla para saber que ha de contener muchas noticias de interés; pero redactadas sin orden ni método científico. Hutchinson es un original que tiene la pasión por los viajes, para escribir sobre ellos libros que han tenido poca aceptación en Inglaterra, según me ha informado el capitán Burton, el famoso viajero del Africa Central. Ha escrito sobre la expedición del Níger en Africa, de la que formó parte. Aquí ha sido, por algunos años, cónsul de Inglaterra en el Rosario, y ha escrito dos obras sobre la República Argentina, una de las cuales lleva mi retrato al frente. No obstante mi estimación por su persona, mi gratitud por su distinción y el honor que hago de su infatigable actividad, debo declarar que sus libros, conteniendo algo útil, no responden a ninguna idea, ni tienen un carácter durable. Su mejor obra es sin duda un periódico estadístico-comercial en inglés, que publicó aquí.' (Bartolomé Mitre to Diego Barros Arana, 20 October 1875, in Payro 1906: 197).
- [8] This income was subsequently increased to £900 plus £400 allowance after complaints made by Hutchinson (FO 61/274).
- [9] Independence from Spain was won in 1824 at the battle of Ayacucho, but Spain did not recognise the Republic of Peru until 1855. After the War of the American Union, the final peace treaty between Peru and Spain was signed in 1880.
- [10] Lobo's book title could be translated as *A son of England who took it upon himself to travel through the American regions that belonged to Spain, and to write nonsense about them and their former masters*.
- [11] Y ante semejante interpretación lingüística de nuestro británico viajero podemos presumir, sin miedo de equivocación, que nuestros lectores, concediéndonos les acompañemos en ello, dirán, refiriéndose a los conocimientos del idioma del mismo señor Hutchinson, *ab uno disce omnes*.
- [12] Por supuesto que la erudición filólogo-castellana del Sr. Hutchinson, cuya muestra, puede decirse, tenemos ya de cuerpo presente, nada tiene que ver con que sin permiso de la Academia Española (permiso, que, por otra parte, suelen para ello tomarse todos los escritores británicos), suprima una de las letras del alfabeto castellano, la ñ. Y no contento con este destierro *ab-irato*, impóneselo también a una de las r, cuando dos de ellas tienen la desgracia de figurar juntas en una palabra española; así es, que en vez de *Carrillo*, apellido de un ingeniero peruano, vemos a éste, *ex-officio* el Sr. Hutchinson, con el sobrenombre de *Carillo*; y al sabroso pescado que en la costa Norte de la República, teatro de las recientes andanzas de este señor, es conocido por *Mojarrilla*, bautizado con el nombre de *Mojarilla*.
- [13] Walsh, María Elena, 'La eñe también es gente' in Ministerio de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología (Argentina), *Efemérides Culturales Argentinas: María Elena Walsh*. Available online (<http://www.me.gov.ar/efeme/mewalsh/laenie.html>), accessed 21 August 2006.
- [14] ¡Conque toda la historia de América Meridional enseña, que en general, el cristianismo de los españoles, en aquellos países, redujose á levantar cruces sobre los cerros, á edificar capillas en adecuados parajes, y á cambiar los nombres primitivos por otros de santos! [...] ¡Conque no es nada el haber logrado

extender, por grandísima parte del Nuevo Mundo, una lengua de las más hermosas, y con ella, una literatura de las más originales y ricas!

### References

- Burton, Richard Francis (generally attributed to). A F.R.G.S. *Wanderings in West Africa: from Liverpool to Fernando Po* (London: Tinsley, 1863).
- Cutolo, Vicente Osvaldo. *Nuevo Diccionario Biográfico Argentino (1750-1930)* (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1968). Vol. 3.
- FO: UK National Archives (Kew), Catalogue Reference: FO (Foreign Office). Consul at Fernando Po: 2/13, 2/15, 2/16, 2/19, 2/25, 2/29, 2/35, 2/40, 84/975, 84/1001, 84/1030, 84/1061, 84/1087, 84/1117. Consul at Rosario: 6/236, 6/242, 6/247, 6/252, 6/259, 6/264, 6/270, 6/278, 6/286, 6/294. Consul at Callao: 61/261, 61/269, 61/274, 61/280, 61/286.
- Lobo, Miguel. *Un hijo de Inglaterra a quien le ha dado por viajar en las regions Americanas que fueron de España y por escribir sendos dislates sobre ellas y sus antiguos dominadores* (Madrid: Imprenta y librería de Miguel Guijarro, 1874).
- Marshall, Oliver. *The English-Language Press in Latin America* (London: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1996).
- Payró, Roberto (ed.). *Páginas de historia: Bartolomé Mitre* (Buenos Aires: La Nación, 1906). Online available (<http://www.e-libro.net/E-libro-viejo/gratis/paginas.pdf>), accessed 16 August 2006.
- Platt, D.C.M. *The Cinderella Service: British Consuls since 1825* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1971).

### Appendix

#### Thomas Joseph Hutchinson (c.1802-1885): a Bibliography

- *Narrative of the Niger, Tshadda, & Binuë Exploration, including a Report on the Position and Prospects of Trade up those Rivers, with Remarks on the Malaria and Rivers of West Africa* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1855). 267 pages. Dedicated to Macgregor Laird, Esq., Managing Director of the African Steam-ship Co. Part 1: chapters 1-6. Part 2: chapters 7-10. Addendum (corrigenda).
- *Impressions of Western Africa, with remarks on the Diseases of the Climate and a Report on the Peculiarities of Trade Up the Rivers in the Bight of Biafra* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans and Roberts, 1858). 313 pages. Dedicated to George William Frederick, Earl of Clarendon, HM's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Preface signed in the British Consulate, Fernando Po, 1 January 1858. Appendix A: 'Peculiarities of the Countries interior to Lagos', letter from Samuel Growther, a missionary of the Established Church, to Thomas Joseph Hutchinson, 10 September 1856 (Lagos). Appendix B: 'Opportunities for production and trade of cotton'. Appendix C: 'The Diseases of the Native Africans'. Descriptions of leprosy, yaws, crow-crow, elephantiasis, phagodermic ulcer, lethargy.
- *Ten Years' Wanderings among the Ethiopians; with sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Civilized and Uncivilized Tribes, from Senegal to Gabon* (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1861). 329 pages, with engravings. Dedicated to William Bingham Baring, Lord Ashburton, president of the Royal Geographical Society.
- *Buenos Ayres and Argentine Gleanings: with extracts from a diary of the Salado exploration in 1862 and 1863* (London: Edward Stanford, 1865). Map of the Argentine Republic within the 24<sup>th</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> parallels. 'Note: this map is chiefly copied from Dr. Herman Burmeister's. The course and neighbourhood of the Rio Salado are taken from Mr. Coghlan's map published in 1859. Additions and alterations have also been made by Consul Hutchinson.' Translated into Spanish by Luis Vicente Varela, *Buenos Aires y otras Provincias Argentinas, con extractos de un diario de la exploración del Río Salado en 1862 y 1863* (Buenos Aires:



Imprenta del Siglo, 1866), 296 pages, which was reprinted with preface and notes by José Luis Trenti Rocamora (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huarpes, 1945).

- *The Paraná; With Incidents of the Paraguayan War, and South American Recollections from 1861 to 1868* (London: Edward Stanford, 1868). 424 pages. Maps, illustrations and portrait of the author. Dedicated to Lord Stanley (Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs). Preface signed in 21A, Hanover Square, London. Appendix A: Argentine Measures compared with English and French. Appendix B: River Navigation. Appendix C: Argentine Seasons.

- *Up the Rivers and Through Some Territories of the Río de la Plata Districts in South America [Read at the 38<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 1868, of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Norwich, on the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, Section E, Geography and Ethnology]* (London: Bates Hendy & Co., 1868). 30 pages.

- *Our Meat Supply from Abroad: A paper read before the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, January 9<sup>th</sup> 1871* (Liverpool: David Marples, 1871). 16 pages.

- *Two Years in Peru, with Exploration of its Antiquities* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1873). Volume 1: 342 pages. Volume 2: 334 pages. Dedicated to Manuel Pardo, President of Peru. Map by Daniel Barrera and numerous illustrations. Appendix A: 'Remarks on a Collection of 150 Ancient Peruvian Skulls, presented to the Anthropological Institute', paper read by Dr. Busk, F.R.G.S, at the Anthropological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, April 1st 1873, among other papers. Appendix B: Professor L. Agassiz to H.M. Brent (U.S. chargé d'affaires in Lima), Callao 1 June 1872.

- *Summer Holidays in Brittany* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Riwigton, 1876). 232 pages. Map and illustrations. Dedicated to Mrs. S.C. Hall. Preface signed at Ballinescar Lodge, Curracloe, Wexford, 1 March 1876.

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## From a Shipwreck to Macayadas: The Macays in Ecuador

By Carmen Dueñas de Anhalzer

Legend has it that around the middle of the eighteenth century a shipwreck occurred in the Spanish Pacific, off the north-western coast of South America, from which a small number of survivors on a small craft managed to reach the shores of the Audiencia of Quito. They landed at Crucita, a fishing village on the northern coast of the Gobernación de Guayaquil. Among the survivors were a family who claimed to be Irish, consisting of a young couple and their infant son. They had lost all their belongings and salvaged only a briefcase well stocked with silver coins and some jewellery, yet they were fortunate enough to receive help from the local fishermen who escorted them to the neighbouring Spanish town of San Esteban de Charapotó.



*San Esteban de Charapotó*  
(Guía Turística Digital del Cantón Sucre)

Records of this tragic accident have yet to be located, together with the identity of the lost vessel which perhaps would shed light on the reasons why an Irish family was travelling in Spanish waters. The ship may have been on its way south, to Callao or Buenos Aires, where Bourbon reformism had recently allowed foreign merchants to operate, or perhaps north, on its way to Panama. So the question remains: what was an Irish family doing in the realms of the jealously guarded Spanish Empire, generally hostile to outsiders? We know very little about them except for the hispanicised name of the head of the family, Juan Nepomucemo Macay and that of his young son, Albert Macay, but we gather that they were well received by the Creole families in Charapotó, since despite the nature of their arrival they settled there and never left the town. This article seeks to trace the history of this family and some of its descendants and to investigate the ease with which they integrated into local society and participated in some of the most important political events in the early national period in Ecuador. The town of San Esteban de Charapotó was located a short distance from the harbour that bears the same name, at the edge of a beautiful, emerald-green valley, which is striking to this day, since the valley is surrounded by chalky, dry slopes, the result of climatic conditions brought about by the Humboldt Current as it flows from the Antarctic up the coast of South America. According to colonial records, by the 1740s San Esteban de Charapotó had only ten Spanish families (Alcedo y Herrera). In the following decades demographic growth changed the character of the town.

Charapotó attracted Creoles from other parts of the Audiencia and from neighbouring New Granada, as well as newly arrived Spaniards, more than likely also the result of Bourbon policies easing trade restrictions. The area was out of the reach of colonial control, far away from Guayaquil and Quito, centres of colonial government, and so it offered excellent opportunities to engage in trade unbeknownst to authorities. Furthermore, by the end of the century, a locally manufactured product was swiftly becoming the most important export commodity after cocoa in the coastal



Toquilla hats  
([Images d'Ailleurs](#))

region of the Audiencia: this was the *toquilla* hat, later misnamed the Panama hat. *Toquilla* hats were woven from the leaves of a native palm tree in nearby rural communities by men, women and children, following ancestral indigenous traditions. The *sombrero ordinario* had found an important niche in the Caribbean markets and the torrid valleys of Peru, and was much in demand in plantations to protect the enslaved labourers from the scorching sun. Of course there was also the 'sombrero fino,' so delicately woven that it could be folded many times without losing its shape, and which to this day carries a higher price. It was foreign demand for the *sombrero ordinario* which boosted the local economies, compensating for its lower price with the volumes exported. Sleepy towns like Montecristi, Jipijapa and Charapotó were abruptly awakened, as the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano would have it, under the magic touch of commerce.

The Macays fared well in Charapotó, more than likely engaging in the export trade. They married their children Albert and Ramona into prominent local families. In later generations, the name of the founder of the lineage - the survivor of the shipwreck - was always honoured: Juan Antonio Macay y de la Chica, the son of Albert Macay, Juan Antonio Macay y Ureta, his grandson, and Juan Francisco Macay Lozano, his great-grandson. Several of their descendants were sent abroad to further their education: Elio and Benito Santos Macay went to the Sorbonne in Paris to become medical doctors, while Juan Francisco Macay was listed by the British Census Commissioners in 1881 as a native of Ecuador and science student in London. Others attended schools in the United States of America. The reality was that Charapotó was more connected to the outside world than to elsewhere in the country.

The lack of roads made it easier to board a passing vessel and sail to distant lands than to visit cities like Quito, the capital of the Audiencia, and later the capital of Ecuador. Yet living conditions in the province remained extremely primitive, taking a heavy toll on well-trained young men returning to their native land. Several among them were not up to the challenge, succumbing to depression and even suicide.

After independence from Spain in 1822 and secession from Colombia in 1830, liberalism became the main contesting force in Ecuador, as was the case in other Latin American countries. Liberals sought to modernise the country by separating church from state, hoping to create a more secular society. They also wished to implement economic regulations more in accordance with the needs of the market. The struggle was particularly strenuous and protracted in Ecuador, where a *de facto* confessional state had been in existence since the early 1860s. Not surprisingly, Charapotó, along with other merchant towns in the province of Manabí, became strongholds for liberal ideas. This was particularly because the main *caudillo* (leader) of Ecuadorian liberalism, Eloy Alfaro, was a native of neighbouring Montecristi, and the second-in-command, Leonidas Plaza Gutiérrez, twice president of Ecuador once the liberals seized power, was a native of Charapotó.



Segunda María de la Concepción Santos Macay (1870-1955), Guayaquil 1896  
(Galería de Artes de Castillo y Alvarado)

Early on in the liberal struggle, Charapotó was burned to the ground by government forces as a reprisal for a liberal manifesto issued by Manuel Santos Centeno, a grandson of Ramona Macay. Another member of the family, Antonio Macay, was appointed by Alfaro 'Comandante de Armas de Manabí y Esmeraldas' in 1883, in one of Alfaro's many attempts to oust conservatives from power. Exiled in Panama during most of his adult life, Alfaro had sacrificed all of his resources and his family's well-being to the liberal cause, orchestrating military campaigns over and over until he finally succeeded in 1895. Fortunately for Alfaro he had a benefactor who looked after his every need, Jose Miguel Macay Lozano. *Pepito* Macay, as he was called, had left Charapotó along with other families when the town was destroyed by fire. He moved to El Salvador in Central America, where he acquired great wealth in the mining industry. A close friend of Alfaro, he looked after his every need, even bequeathing partial ownership of his mining venture to Alfaro so that he could enjoy a steady income to support his family. The only condition was that Alfaro cease his political activities, something that of course Alfaro was unwilling to accept (Santovenia 1943: 70-71). In his private correspondence Alfaro always spoke fondly of his friend and was greatly saddened when news of Macay's death reached him while campaigning in Esmeraldas (Andrade 1916).

The Macays were a prolific clan. As a quick search on the Family History webpage of the Church of Latter Day Saints shows, there are so many listings for the name Macay in Charapotó and its surroundings that the surname would seem to be indigenous to the province of Manabí rather than the result of a twist of fate earlier in the eighteenth century. Of course not all of their progeny was successful, in particular those who bore the stigma of illegitimacy. To this day one can find families bearing the name Macay in impoverished rural communities, leading a life no different from that of other peasants, their heritage betrayed only by their fair complexion and perhaps by blue eyes, a result of endogamous practices.

How did their contemporaries perceive these taller, often red-haired, sometimes blue-eyed neighbours? They highlighted their eccentricities, coining across generations a phrase for that purpose: *la macayada* (the Macay ways). And indeed tales of their sometimes odd behaviour would rival those of the mythical Macondo, as narrated by Colombian author Gabriel García Márquez. A scientist and inventor, formerly a student in London, spending the rest of his life in a hut on an isolated beach; a successful family man confining himself to a soundproof dwelling, plastered with *balsa* wood for that purpose, never to be seen again, even by his children who dutifully delivered his daily meals to his doorstep. Perhaps there was a trace of mental illness, also the result of endogamous practices. Or perhaps these were the consequences, to borrow the title of García Márquez' novel, of one hundred years of solitude.

Carmen Dueñas de Anhalzer

## References

- Alcedo y Herrera, Dionisio, *Compendio Histórico de la Provincia, Partidos, Ciudades, Astilleros, Ríos y Puertos de Guayaquil, en las Costas del Mar del Sur* (Madrid: Edición Facsimilar, n.y.).
- Santovenia, Emeterio, *Vida de Eloy Alfaro* (Havana: Editorial Trapecio, 1943).
- Andrade. Roberto, *Vida y Muerte de Eloy Alfaro* (New York: York Printing, 1916).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## From Ireland to South America: A Story of Departures, Separations and Reunions

By Julia Boland and Marilyn Boland



Matthew Boland (1840-1917) and Sarah Boland (*née* Monaghan), married in 1877

### Emigration

There is no known record of the birth of John Boland, but from the dates of birth of his children, he was probably born about 1805 or earlier. He is said to have married Margaret Kelly at 'Llemonahan' on 27 February 1832, and they had four children, James, John (*jun.*), Bridged and Mathew. Mathew Boland (1840-1917) was the first to travel to Australia on an assisted passage on *The Light Brigade* and arrived in Sydney on 21 May 1867. Mathew stated on the shipping list that his father was a farmer in 'Lumcloon,' Cloghan, in King's County (present-day County Offaly), and that his mother was dead.

When Mathew first arrived he went to work on the gold fields at Sofala near Bathurst and later moved to Molong district where he worked on the land for some time, before he was able to select a plot of land at Amaroo in 1870, which he named 'Calabash' after the hill on the plot which looked like a pumpkin. In 1877, Mathew married Sarah Monaghan, a native of Bathurst, Australia, and they had four children: William, John, Elizabeth Miriam Jane and Patrick (Percy), the youngest, born in 1886 and died in Santa Cruz, Bolivia in 1958.

### From Australia to Bolivia: The Adventure

On the first journey it is clear that Mathew Boland emigrated from Ireland in search of more prosperous climes. The second trip, by his son to America, is more difficult to explain. However, a hypothesis can be formulated thanks to information obtained in Australia. It was the youngest of Mathew's sons, Patrick James, that left the land of his birth. He was born in 1886 and known in Bolivia as Percy James Boland. The reasons why he changed his name from Patrick James to Percy James are not known, but it can be assumed that the change eased pronunciation of his name. What is sure is that the 17 March (St. Patrick's Day) was always a reason for a party in his house. These days, his descendants continue to celebrate that date with a gathering of all of the members of the Boland clan, currently over 120 people.

Percy's journey all the way to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was long and difficult. Only a great adventurous spirit could inspire and sustain such a trip, in view of the conditions of the period. In 1907, he arrived in San Francisco, California, after the 1906 earthquake, on a boat with a cargo of horses. The opportunity of work which existed in America was possible because of the combination of his experience in agriculture

and breeding at the farm in Amaroo, and his studies as a fitter and turner in Orange, New South Wales, equivalent to mechanical engineering today.



The child Percy Boland Rodríguez, supported by his father Percy J. Boland, on the mudguard of the first car that arrived in Santa Cruz.

An understanding of motors was very much in demand in those times. It was the era of the production and export of the first cars from the USA. That is how a new challenge emerged: that of accompanying the first cars that arrived in Argentina, in 1911. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the first car arrived in Santa Cruz. Sitting on the mudguard of the vehicle was the child Percy Boland Rodríguez, supported by his father Percy J. Boland.

Unfortunately very little is known of the period between his arrival in the USA in 1907 and his

ultimate settlement in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in 1912. It was in the latter region that Percy Boland left an enduring mark, where he settled, and where he died on 6 March 1958. The car trip from Buenos Aires, Argentina to Santa Cruz, Bolivia, took him six months. He was contracted to participate in this trip because he was able to fix the motor and produce parts if necessary. It is possible that this long and trying time was one of the reasons why he was reluctant to face the return journey. Or perhaps he fell in love with the place and its women, famous for their beauty...

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the population of Santa Cruz was about 18,300 inhabitants, and around 1922, it had reached 20,000, according to information published by the Society of Geographic and Historical Studies. The roads and paths leading to other departments in Bolivia and to other countries were not yet built, and it was a remote and inaccessible region.

Percy Boland arrived in a small town, a little village, markedly backward in comparison with the important cities of the high plains. It is possible that because of the isolation of the region, anyone arriving from foreign countries was held in high estimation, even more so if they were 'gringos' from the USA. Percy spoke only English and had lived in San Francisco, making it very easy to believe that he was a US-American citizen, also due to the fact that Australia was unknown to most people in Bolivia. The esteem in which foreigners were held facilitated his rapid integration into the highest echelons of *cruceño* society, intensified by the founding of a family and the arrival of his children.



Typical image of coaches in 1895. In the Santa Cruz of old, the main mode of transporting cargo was a coach drawn by oxen, even today they can be seen carrying agricultural produce from the countryside to the outskirts of the city.

### Percy's legacy in Santa Cruz

Like many descendants of Irish people who settled in remote regions of Latin America, Percy Boland was a pioneer. He developed activities that were hitherto unknown at those latitudes. In the period in which he arrived, Santa Cruz was a backward and isolated town. The eastern region, today the most thriving region in Bolivia, was overlooked by the central government in the West with regard to infrastructure and, above all, roads. It was only in the mid-1950s that the road to other important centres was completed and the work on the railway was finalised, connecting this region to Brazil.

Since then there has been a period of accelerated and progressive growth, and agriculture is prospering because of the commercialisation of produce. The isolation of the region was gradually alleviated due to the efforts of the inhabitants of Santa Cruz. It was necessary to form cooperatives to install electricity and a telephone service. An overview of the period highlights the significance of Percy's work. He is connected to factors that undoubtedly assisted in the progress and modernisation of the Department.

In the region, Patrick/Percy Boland founded:



First car repair shop and ice manufacturing plant in Santa Cruz.

- The first 'maestranza' (mechanics' workshop), five blocks south of the main square in Santa Cruz.
- The first ice factory, transforming habits and customs due to the torrid climate of the region.
- The first power plant, that began to function in 1923, from which extended the first distribution network, the installation of public lighting and the first domestic connections.
- The construction and administration of the first swimming pool in the city (Hawai Pool).

Finally, there are indications that he was involved in the construction of the first oil refinery in

Bolivia.

The town of the dusty streets was transformed into a modern urban centre, today considered the economic engine of Bolivia. Santa Cruz is the department that receives the largest amount of internal migrants from other Bolivian cities. Santa Cruz has its own particular way of life, developed throughout four centuries, in which Spanish roots, the influence of the tropical environment, the spirit of adventure and the perception that there was an unlimited land to be conquered, the familiarity and the simplicity of the customs and other diverse elements, all play a part in giving that unmistakable stamp to this part of the Bolivian nation.

### The first descendants of Percy

The second son of Percy was Percy Junior, faithful heir of the characteristic spirit and impetuosity of the Irish. He also contributed greatly to the community of Santa Cruz, as a gynaecologist and obstetrician, trained in La Plata, Argentina, and a graduate of Harvard, Boston in Public Health. He was also a founding and honorary member of the Bolivian Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the Bolivian Society of Public Health. He was named 'Master of Latin American Gynaeco-Obstetrics' in the Dominican Republic in 1984, and the maternity hospital in Santa Cruz bears his name. He was president of the Pro Santa Cruz Committee, the Santa Cruz Tennis Club and the Rotary Club. He founded the Youth Exchange Programme of the Rotary Club and was Governor of the 469 district of Rotary International. He was also Vice-Chancellor of the state university 'Gabriel René Moreno' and founded the Santa Cruz Federation of Professionals. Percy Junior died in Santa Cruz in January 1994.

Percy Junior's sister Nelly married at a young age, and was widowed shortly thereafter. She had one son and six grandchildren. She died in Santa Cruz in December 1996. Patsy married a colonel in the Bolivian Army. She had just one daughter, who had four children. She died in Santa Cruz in December 1989. Dolly married a well-known lawyer in Santa Cruz and had one daughter and four sons. She died in April 2006. Freddy, the youngest of the children, married young. He had two sons and two daughters. He had a successful career in insurance and died in Santa Cruz in November 1987. Nancy also married a lawyer in Santa Cruz and dedicated many years of her life to teaching in primary schools. She has two sons and two daughters. Nancy and her husband are now retired and share their time with their much loved nine grandchildren.

### **Journey from Bolivia to Argentina: Exile**

Percy's eldest son Hernán was attracted to politics from a very young age. At seventeen, he enrolled as a volunteer to fight in the Chaco War against Paraguay. He was taken prisoner, and his family took him for dead, but to everyone's surprise he returned home. Years later he received the Chaco War medal of honour, which filled him with pride. As an adult, he founded a local political party, the Workers' Union, with his friend Edmundo Roca, which was later subsumed into the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR), led by Víctor Paz Estenssoro. In Santa Cruz, Hernán was President of the Banco Agrícola, Chief of Police and legislator.

Bolivian history has a sad record of changes of government. In the past sixty years, from 1946 to date, there were 45 changes. Interim governments and military juntas were the most frequent. Constitutional governments that completed their mandate were a rarity. This helps to understand why Hernán fled to save his life after the fall of President Gualberto Villarroel, who was murdered and hanged in the public square of La Paz as a warning. Edmundo Roca, with whom Hernán had founded the Workers' Union, was murdered by violent groups who also looted his houses. In the midst of this situation and thanks to the aid of certain people, Hernán managed to escape to Argentina, a place to which his wife Raquel and six-month-old daughter Julia arrived some months later. All of their belongings had been robbed or destroyed and their bank accounts had been blocked.

However, despite these adverse circumstances, Hernán managed to find his way thanks to his diligence and his personality, which inspired affection and friendships at every step. Hernán worked as a foreign correspondent for the Santa Cruz newspaper *El Deber*. He finally abandoned politics and integrated into the Argentine community without difficulty, even though he always missed his native country to which he returned just prior to his death, at the age of sixty-two years. Political activity in a country convulsed by coups d'état and changes of government was what obliged him to live in exile in Argentina from 1946 until he died on 3 April 1976, just days after the fall of Isabel Perón and the beginning of one of the darkest periods in Argentine history when 30,000 people were *disappeared*.

### **Reunions**

After Percy had died, it was his son Percy who reinitiated contact with the Australian branch of the family, thanks to his job in charge of the Youth Exchange Programme of the Rotary Club in Santa Cruz and the work of another Rotarian in Australia whom he had informed of the nationality of his father. This person took on the task of tracing the Boland family in the region where they were said to have lived, Amaroo in New South Wales. He found their descendants in a city very nearby, Molong. The first contact was maintained in the form of a periodic correspondence even though they never got to know each other personally. Finally in 1997, three representatives of the South American Bolands, Martha and Marilyn (of Santa Cruz), and Julia (of Buenos Aires) returned to the places where their grandfather Percy had been born and studied, and met their Australian aunts, uncles and cousins. A couple of years previously, Julia had visited Tullamore, County Offaly and had met her cousin John Looby, a descendant of Bridged Boland and Michael Looby who had remained in Ireland. She was the first South American Boland to visit the places from which her ancestors had departed.

Julia Boland and Marilyn Boland

Translated by Claire Healy



## References

- *Chiquitos un paseo por su Historia* (Santa Cruz, Bolivia: Fondo Editorial APAC, 2004).
- Parejas Moreno, Alcides (ed.). *Santa Cruz: Tiempo y Espacio* (Santa Cruz, Bolivia: Cooperativa Rural de Electrificación, 2000).
- Prologue to John Boland's publication *County Offaly. Ireland. His Descendants*.
- Siles Salinas, Jorge. *Bolivia* (Barcelona: Ediciones Castell S.A., 1982), pp. 126-129.

## Acknowledgements

We are particularly grateful to John F. Boland of Australia and Percy Boland of Bolivia, who made it possible to tell this story. John, or 'Uncle Jack,' because he was interested in researching his own origins, resulting in a valuable and comprehensive publication of the results of his search. Percy, because of those twists of fate, was the one who united the two distant branches in Australia and South America, through a correspondence that he maintained for many years with his cousins in Australia. This sustained contact led to two of his daughters (Martha and Marilyn) and one niece (Julia), grandchildren of the first Percy, the Australian of Irish origin who settled in Bolivia, visiting Australia, the birthplace of their grandfather.

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## The Irish in the Peruvian Andes

By Rosario Sheen (\*)

### Origins

According to the coat of arms of the Sheen family, the name originates in the counties of Limerick, Kerry and Cork, in the southeast of Ireland, and it means 'little peaceful one.' It was probably with this peaceful vocation and an adventurous spirit that a young Irishman left his homeland in the opening decades of the 1800s and departed for South America. The exact date when the patriarch of the Sheens arrived in Peru remains unknown, but it is likely to have been subsequent to Peruvian independence (July 1821). The Sheens were the largest family of Irish origin in the Andean country.

My older relatives have told how the coastal city of Trujillo (now the third most important city in Peru, 557 km north of Lima) began to become familiar with a tall, robust and young visitor, with a pronounced foreign accent, whose main activity was commerce. He was William Sheen, who had arrived to the port of Salaverry, not far from Trujillo, and who was baptised by the Trujillians as 'el Gringo Sheen.'

His charisma won him not only clients, but also many friends. One of them once told him of the silver mines in Cajabamba, a province of the department of Cajamarca, located in the northern Peruvian Andes, and very well known for its gold, silver, copper and zinc reserves.

Yanacocha, the most important Peruvian gold mine is located in Cajamarca. Peru is the fifth most important gold producer of the world.

As a skilful and intrepid merchant, attracted by the promising future that the mines held, the *Gringo Sheen* left Trujillo and travelled on horseback to Cajabamba with a friend. There are no accounts of that journey, but it is most likely that William would have suffered from *soroche*, the altitude sickness that affects anyone who does not live in the Andes, especially those travelling from the coast. Cajabamba is located in the highlands, at 2654 metres above sea level (m.a.s.l) and to reach it one has to travel across areas and villages at up to 4000 m.a.s.l. However, any inconvenience that trip might have caused was undoubtedly compensated for by the beautiful landscape – similar to that of the Irish countryside - he saw on his way: green valleys, vast meadows, crystalline rivers, animals out grazing, rain followed by rainbows, and blue skies with white snow.

The two friends arrived safe and sound in Cajabamba. It is said that William was impressed with the bucolic landscape and the hospitality of the people. One of the first people he met was Mr. Escuza, a descendant of Spaniards and a member of the Cajabambian 'high society,' who owned some mines.



Patricio Sheen in Los Alisos farm, Contumaza  
(unknown photographer, ca. 1910)

William was fascinated with the idea of starting mining activities in the area, so he soon began to make plans with his friend from Trujillo. However, destiny would later alter those plans.

**Change of Plans**

After a short stay in Cajabamba, William returned to Trujillo to put his commercial activities in order. His plans for returning to Cajabamba were taking shape, both because of the mines and for other more influential reasons. One particular day, William informed his friend that he was ready to go back to Cajabamba, not exactly to search for mines but to ask for the hand of Florita, the beautiful daughter of Mr. Escuza, whom he had met on his first trip.

The return journey this time was faster. The *Gringo Sheen* already knew his way back and his heart was in a hurry. The engagement was quite formal and took place in front of the bride’s parents. My relatives have related how, before giving the official answer, Florita cited two conditions: that the only language to be spoken in the new home would be Spanish, and that the couple would live in Cajabamba. As love conquers all, there was no objection from the groom. Soon afterwards, the marriage took place in the Cajabamba cathedral. The information is yet to be confirmed, but this was probably during the 1830s or 1840s. That marriage set the scene for the numerous Sheen family in present-day Peru.

**The First Descendants**

Probably because he was captivated by the fertile valleys that looked like immense green carpets surrounding Cajabamba, William rejected his former interest in mining and decided to concentrate on agricultural activities. After the marriage, he bought a farm called *La Tambería*, situated in the adjacent valley of Condebamba. He then began a prosperous life as a farmer and a cattle-rancher.



The author in the valley of Cajabamba.  
*El Gringo Sheen* settled down in this region in the early 1820s.  
(Rosario Sheen, 1998)

Soon after, the first descendant was born. This was Thomas, who would become Mayor of Cajabamba, around the 1880s, during the Pacific War between Peru and Chile. Three more children joined the family: two boys and one girl. One of the boys was baptised with a typical English name, but in Spanish: Enrique (Henry). The next son was Antonio; and the girl was named Adelaida (the name of the wife of the British King William IV). These names would recur in the Sheen generations that followed.

The Sheen-Escuza children grew up surrounded by their father’s agricultural activities, and thus, since that early age, they were part of the *La Tambería* team. Adelaida used to accompany her mother at the farmhouse, and, occasionally, engaged in light tasks in the fields. The four children were to stay in Cajabamba to continue with their father’s business. Only two of the boys did this. The third inherited the adventurous blood of his father.

Thomas was the first to provide a further generation of Sheens. He married Juanita Galvez, a young lady from a very religious family, well known for their charitable activities. They had five children: María Antonieta, Artemio, Rosa, Florita and Ermancia. María Antonieta is recognised in local books and by the

Cajabamba people in general as a notable personality due to her virtue, her vocation for service and her dedicated work as a teacher. Antonio, William's third son, also married a Cajabambian lady, Julia Figueroa, with whom he had three children. William's only daughter, Adelaida, did not have descendants.

### **The Adventurer**

Enrique, William's second son, turned out to be the adventurer of the family and was somewhat rebellious. While still a teenager and after learning to work on the land, Enrique one day bade farewell to Cajabamba and hit the road on horseback heading southwest. This was some time around 1865-1870.

There is no clear information about his departure. We do not know if Enrique had already planned his destination or if he travelled with no particular course in mind, but determined start a new life on his own. Like any traveller, he surely hoped to find natural and human attractions on his way to his new home. Enrique found both things in the town of Contumazá, another province of the Cajamarca department, closer to the Peruvian coast. It is estimated that, at that time, the trip on horseback must have taken at least four to five consecutive days.

### **The Second Branch is Born**

Enrique's decision to settle in Contumazá led to another branch of the Sheens being based there. Enrique himself never knew of his contribution to the expansion of his family in Peru and with it the values of hard work, a vocation for service, perseverance and solidarity.

According to contemporary accounts, my great-grandfather Enrique was a handsome, tall and red-haired 'gringo' who impressed everybody, especially the young ladies, as soon as he arrived. One of those ladies, Manuela Leon, could not avoid falling in love with him and some years later married him. They had three children: Maria, Guillermo and Patricio, my grandfather. Like his father, Enrique and his family dedicated themselves to agriculture. He rented a farm where he grew mainly wheat, barley and beans, and worked that land until his death. His farming activities were upgraded with the acquisition of cattle. His sons later learned to master not only the harvesting of crops but also manual milk production.

Patricio was the strongest child and also the most sociable. He was the first son to get married and had the largest family among the Peruvian Sheens: a total of thirteen children (8 boys and 5 girls). He initiated his own economic activity by renting a huge farm called 'Los Alisos.'

Patricio Sheen not only cultivated wheat, barley, beans and potatoes but also engaged in cattle breeding and milk and cheese production, with the involvement of his children. At one time, he managed to hold as many as 200 cows. He created a form of rural factory where he prepared some of the most delicious cheeses in town. His relatives recall that any friend or neighbour that went to visit 'Los Alisos' could not leave the farm without receiving as a present a big piece of *Don Patricio's cheese*. The soft-ripened cheese became so popular that he began to sell it outside Contumazá and thus started a small business as a cheese merchant which later caused him travel to Trujillo and Lima.

Patricio was very strict with his children and also liked to share what he had with everyone. Among local anecdotes there is one that occurred in the first years of the twentieth century, around the time of the feast of the patron saint of Contumazá, Saint Matthew. It is said that once the celebrations were concluded, at the end of September, Patricio and his brother Guillermo showed up on horseback in the main square of town and surprised the people by announcing: 'The feast of our patron saint is over, now it is time for the Sheens' feast.' They then presented the neighbours with all the necessities for a good party: food, drink, music and even fireworks.

Patricio died in his native Contumazá in 1947. Francisco, his grandson, who spent some time with him in Lima the year prior to his death, remembered him as a strong and tenacious man who always missed his life in ‘Los Alisos’ - his friends, his crops and cattle and, of course, his soft cheeses.

While the above-mentioned events were taking place in Contumazá, in Cajabamba the Sheen family continued to increase: Artemio (William’s grandson) married Juana Murga and around the turn of the twentieth century, they started the fourth generation with their children Thomas Jr. and Juanita. Artemio’s sister Rosa married Genaro Cardenas and had five children (Fernando, Edilberto, Genaro, Rosa and Maria). Antonio Jr. (William’s other grandson) had eight children (Julio, Nereida, Walter, Copelia, Marco Antonio, Carlos, Guillermo and Antonio II).

The rapid expansion of the family makes it somewhat difficult to keep the information on the previous generations updated. For instance, it is not known when exactly *el Gringo Sheen* passed away, but we do know that longevity was – and still is - a family trait. His death probably took place between the 1880s and the 1890s.



Walter Sheen and his son Walter Jr., Trujillo (1946).  
(Author’s collection)

### The Return to Trujillo

Starting in the fourth generation, the Sheens began to leave the countryside. Possibly due to the proximity of the city, the majority of the descendants departed Cajabamba and Contumazá in the direction of Trujillo, seeking a better future and professional careers. Some of them remained in Trujillo, while others moved on to Lima.

Walter (son of Antonio Jr. and William’s great-grandchild) is one of the few that moved to the countryside of Trujillo, but this was in order to take up a post as bookkeeper in the renowned and extensive farm of ‘Casagrande,’ then the largest sugar plantation in the country.

Teaching was one of the favoured careers of the Sheens’ new generations. An example of this is Tomás Jr. (Sheen Murga), a hard-working teacher who was not only concerned with the teaching of moral values to students but was also a renowned activist supporting the social causes of the poorest people. He was also a political activist and once challenged the government of Army General Sanchez Cerro in 1931. Because of this he suffered political persecution until the dictatorship ended the following year.

Tomás Sheen Murga died at the age of 93, in 1990. Among his legacies, there is a unique project to promote the development of competencies among elderly people in order to enable them to participate in local and national development. The project, now called Association of the University of the Third Age, is run by his daughter Consuelo, a member of the fifth generation.

My father Antonio, one of Patricio’s thirteen children, also studied pedagogy just as his older sister Maria and younger brother Marco did. He left Contumazá after finishing primary school and went to study in Trujillo. He is now a retired eighty-year-old man and is as strong and healthy as his predecessors were at that age.

Judging by the comments of his former students and from what he told me over the years, I can tell that teaching was for him both a duty and a pleasure. He really enjoyed teaching, a sentiment that was even greater when he went to work in the country’s poorest towns.

A story frequently retold is one that took place in the late 1950s in the rural town of Zuñiga, in the valley of Cañete, four hours' drive from Lima. It was Confirmation time and the future Cardinal of Peru, Monsignor Juan Landazuri, was going to head the big ceremony. One day at school, Antonio noticed that a group of about thirty students of different ages looked worried and some of them particularly sad. Asked about the reasons for their concern, they told him that it was because they did not yet have a *padrino de confirmación* or Confirmation sponsor. My father then learned that each *padrino* would have to make a contribution of about five dollars per child to the local organisers of the ceremony to finance the normal expenses for those occasions. Antonio immediately put an end to the students' concern by gladly offering to be a *padrino* to all of them. They jumped with joy. The day of the ceremony, about one hundred children, accompanied by their respective *padrinos*, were ready to receive the sacrament of Confirmation from Monsignor Landazuri. When it was the turn of the thirty above-mentioned students, the proud teacher Antonio started to put his hands on the heads of the children – as tradition dictated - one by one. This situation surprised the future Cardinal who approached Antonio and, in a low voice, asked him what was the reason for this. When he heard that the teacher was the *padrino* of the thirty students, he smiled and gave him a friendly pat on the shoulder.

As a gesture of gratitude for his genuine dedication to his job and his students, the primary school where Antonio worked in Zuñiga has now been named: Antonio Sheen Morales.

### The Fifth and Sixth Generations

With the exception of a small group of descendants who still live in Contumazá, the fifth generation turned its back on agriculture and commercial activities. It is composed of professionals with diverse specialisations, such as medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, economists, business managers, psychologists, biologists, military officials, and also teachers.



Peasant girl in Cajamarca  
([Universidad Nacional de Cajamarca](#))

Some descendants of the fourth and fifth generations emigrated to the USA, Brazil, Venezuela and Ecuador. The members of the sixth generation range from the ages of five to forty- something.

There is no precise record of the current number of Sheen descendants in Peru, but there are probably several hundred. At present, most live in Lima, though another large group lives in Trujillo. Smaller groups are to be found in Contumazá, Cajabamba, Chiclayo, Piura and Pucallpa.

The vast majority of Peruvian Sheens are Catholic. Many are anxious to take up the tradition of

celebrating Saint Patrick's Day in March. I had the chance to be part of these impressive celebrations when I was living in New York, seventeen years ago. We are not lucky enough to drink delicious Guinness in Peru, but we did inherit a taste for good beer. Our national golden and *malta* (black) beers deserve to be enjoyed slowly.

As far as I know, no Sheen descendant has yet travelled to Ireland in search of our roots. I am confident that I will be the first one. Meanwhile, I hope this first attempt to chart the family history will encourage

others to assist me in completing the description of a history that began almost 180 years ago with the *Gringo Sheen*.

Rosario Sheen

### **Acknowledgements**

The article was completed thanks to the information provided by: Rosa Sheen-Saavedra; Francisco Marin Sheen; Gerardo Cárdenas Sheen; Consuelo Sheen-Morin; and María Sheen-Zavala. Some details remain to be confirmed.

(\* ) The author of this article is a member of the fifth generation of the Sheens. She is a social communication and business administration specialist, as well as a university professor. During 2003-2005 she served as Press Secretary for the Presidency of Peru (during the administration of President Alejandro Toledo) a post that allowed her to travel extensively around the country and meet several Sheen relatives scattered in different cities and towns.

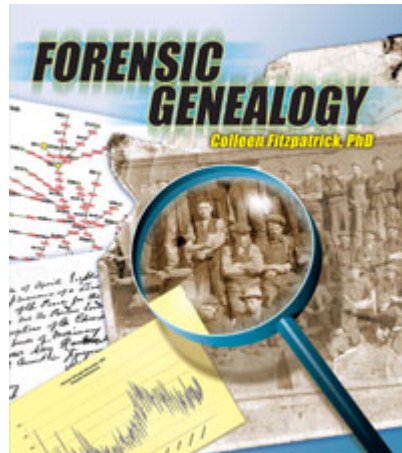
# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Review of Colleen Fitzpatrick's

### *Forensic Genealogy*

By Patricio MacDonagh



Fountain Valley, CA: Rice Book Press, 2005.

ISBN 0-9767160-03, 219 pp.

Illustrations, URL references, maps, tables, accompanying CD  
([www.forensicgenealogy.info](http://www.forensicgenealogy.info))

This book is an attempt to furnish the amateur genealogist with an array of tools used in forensic research, in order to enhance their capabilities of retrieving information in every type of material encountered. It has three main sections, referring respectively to the analysis of photographic material, generating databases of known and available data for research, and the use of DNA-related information in genealogical research.

The first section seeks to offer advice on how to obtain the most information possible from old photos, focusing in two principal methods of analysis:

One of the methods of analysis is the inspection of the material that contains the photo, and in that respect the book gives a brief outline of the early history of photography, starting with daguerreotypes, up to the middle of the twentieth century. Also included are valuable tips for dating, at least approximately, photographic material, with examples about how to obtain information from the details of the material that could easily be overlooked on a superficial examination.

The other method of analysis focuses on how to obtain the maximum information from the images themselves: Street names, brand names, styles of dress, traffic signals, car models or licence plates, even patches of snow in a photo, all this can contribute to finding out where your uncle lived during the roaring twenties.

This first section, referring to the analysis of photography for genealogical research, concludes with a case study in digital detective work, showing how to figure out the where, who, when and why from an apparently meaningless photo. It includes some material about how to deduce the year in which the photograph was taken, analysing how some objects project their shadows, and using certain concepts of cosmography and projective geometry in this process. This is accompanied by a prototype spreadsheet on the CD, so that readers may experience this process themselves.

This section, while containing much material of interest, is lacking in some aspects. When analysing a photo, it is assumed that the date of the copy is coterminous with the date that the photo was originally



shot. Another point is that there have been, and still are, many different types of photographic material and cameras, that only receive a brief mention. A similar comment relates to the analysis of the photographic paper used in the copies: it is centred on two brands of paper (Kodak and Agfa), without mention of other brands such as Ilford, Perutz and Ferrania. A very common material used, particularly between 1950 and the late 1980s, the diapositive, is similarly bypassed.

There is no mention of the possibility that one could be working with a falsified or altered photograph. Another point that might be commented upon is that mention is regularly made of technical aspects of digital photography such as contrast, gamma correction, and high resolution. The neophyte reader would benefit from brief explanations of such terms. Particularly conspicuous is the absence of face identification and recognition from the book.

The second section refers specifically to the use of databases, from different sources (city directories, seaman's protection certificates, fire victims, police reports, coroners' records, hospital records, BMD records etc.,) and how to combine them in what may be described as a genealogical process of 'data mining.'

Two distinct methods of research are also outlined in this section. The first is what Fitzpatrick describes as 'cultural profiling,' that is, establishing general or particular patterns of behaviour in a community from data in a given database, as a method of identifying different guidelines for analysis.

The second method of research is the recording in a database of data from various different sources. In the book, these are grouped into two different types: the periodical database, that is, a database that is compiled for specific periods (census, city directories, etc.), and events databases that contain records that are updated continuously, for example, BMD registers.

On the basis of numerous examples, Fitzpatrick demonstrates how to create your own databases from the given material, and how to process them (sorting by different criteria, rearranging the data, etc.). She also offers advice on creating a database of databases, that is, a database in which you may register which databases you have researched for each surname of interest.

The reader would benefit from a clear definition of what a database is, and the fact that databases are mainly used for transactions and 'data mining' processes. Fitzpatrick's information on commercial genealogy software is accurate, yet she neglects to mention that when data sources are mainly on paper or microfilm, extracting information can be a painstaking task. Furthermore, a spreadsheet does not strictly qualify as a database, due to its many restrictions in terms of size.

The third section, on the use of DNA analysis for genealogical research, is certainly the most innovative of the approaches covered by the book. It begins with a brief introduction to the fundamental notions of the constitution of a DNA molecule, the fundamental building block of life in all its expressions, and how it is present in the chromosomes and in the mitochondria.

A description of the principal terms used in DNA analysis is also provided, and an explanation of the differences between the forensic, medical and genealogical uses – and the extension – of DNA analysis.

Fitzpatrick subsequently provides commentary on Sykes' book *The Seven Daughters of Eve* and the conclusions which he arrives at on the basis of research on the Mitochondrial DNA (MtDNA) of the modern European population, and the detection of groups (haplogroups or clades, in technical genetic jargon) that share the same mutations of MtDNA.

In the pages that follow, there is a more technical description of the two principal avenues of research in DNA genealogical analysis: The paternal line, which is based on the markers found in the male Y chromosome, and the female line, based on the clades that are identified by the markers in MtDNA.

This technical section contains important information about the different companies that perform DNA analysis, the testing options that they provide, their costs and websites. There is also a list of the online databases that contain vast collections of genealogical DNA information, and to which you may submit your DNA results, hoping for a match.

The final topic covered by the book is how to cope with the search for the Most Recent Common Ancestor for any group of persons related either by the paternal line (using the Y chromosome markers) or the maternal line (using the MtDNA markers). This topic relies heavily on probability and statistical concepts,

such as confidence intervals, binomial and Poisson distributions and Bayesian hypotheses. If one is in possession of the DNA analyses of several persons who are presumably related, and follows the guidelines given in the book, including prototype spreadsheets for doing the necessary computations, it is possible to construct a cladogram, or a tree representation of the probable relationships between the different persons involved in the study. There will certainly be some surprises, such as illegitimate offspring and their descendant branch on the cladogram.

This avenue of research opens up a totally new and unexplored frontier, and the book suggests many ways of exploring it. However, it should be considered that DNA analysis is not cheap, with an approximate cost of US\$100–300 per individual. Another consideration is the reluctance that some relatives might have in submitting material for the tests, a point that Fitzpatrick does address. The other relevant caution on DNA research for genealogical purposes is that is strictly based on probability theory, in contrast to the methods used, for example, in paternity tests or forensic research.

The book is certainly innovative, and provides a wealth of guidelines for performing genealogical research. While certain topics would merit further research, the book provides comprehensive guidelines for amateur genealogists, and it may be hoped that such research would be included in a second edition of the book.

Patricio MacDonagh

Translated by Claire Healy

### **Author's Reply**

*Forensic Genealogy* is a practical guide that offers major innovations in genealogical research methods that anyone can apply. Although I am flattered that the reviewer treated it as an academic publication - it is not!

For example, my experience here in the US with identifying hundreds of old family photographs is that over 99% have been either on Agfa or Kodak print paper. As an optical scientist, I have used many different types of photographic films, plates, and print paper, but in writing *Forensic Genealogy* I included only those materials that the reader might encounter in analysing family pictures. I have not seen Ilford, Perutz or Ferrania used for family photographs.

The reviewer comments, 'Furthermore, a spreadsheet does not strictly qualify as a database, due to its many restrictions in terms of size.' *Forensic Genealogy* was intended for an audience more interested in new innovations in how to research their families than in precise technical definitions.

In the section about DNA, I was conservative on how technical to make it. The chapter is set up so that readers can read as far as they feel comfortable, without sacrificing information that may be important to them, although I could have loaded the book with a highly mathematical discussion. Our second book *DNA & Genealogy* covers this subject in much more detail, yet is still very readable.

In the eighteen months since the book was published, thousands of copies have been sold, yet I have not seen a single used copy on the market. The readers must like it.

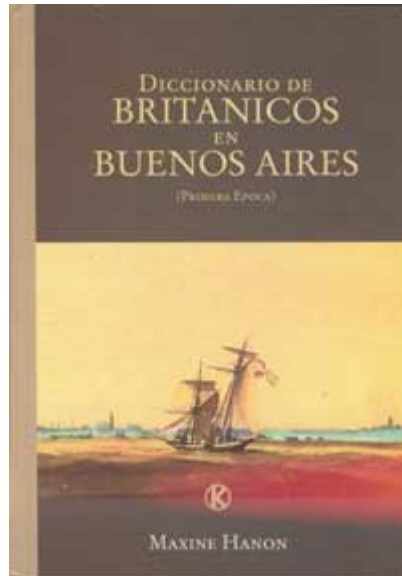
Colleen Fitzpatrick

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Review of Maxine Hanon's *Diccionario de Británicos en Buenos Aires (Primera Época)*

By Edmundo Murray



Buenos Aires: author's edition, 2005  
891 pages, 20.5 x 28.5 cm., hard-cover  
ISBN 987-545-339-0, US \$ 95.00  
Distribution by the author ([maxine@ciudad.com.ar](mailto:maxine@ciudad.com.ar))

Compared to other published works, dictionaries of biography present particular challenges to a team of highly specialised professionals, including contributors, editors and publishers. Contributors of entries are usually constrained by the relatively short texts they are required to write. Editors need to deal with style and, particularly, with scope, which is a constant restriction to their eagerness to cover the subject more thoroughly. Publishers who finance the project are faced with the technical burden of limiting the text length - and sometimes its quality - in order to keep the production expenses in paper and printing costs to budget. As a break with the norm, the *Diccionario de Británicos en Buenos Aires (Primera Época)* is the intelligent and dedicated work of just one person.

Maxine Hanon, an independent historian and lawyer practising in Buenos Aires, is not new to the research of the English-speaking community of Buenos Aires. She published *El Pequeño Cementerio Protestante de la Calle del Socorro en la Ciudad de Buenos Ayres, 1821-1833* (1998, co-authored with Jorge Alfonsín), and *Buenos Aires desde las Quintas de Retiro a Recoleta 1580-1890* (2000), as well as articles about colonial and post-independence Buenos Aires and its British residents, [1] including biographies of Santiago Wilde and John Whitaker. From the beautiful cover and back-cover aquarelle depicting Buenos Aires by Emeric Essex Vidal, to the detailed information about thousands of immigrants in Buenos Aires, Hanon's new book is an important addition to the bibliography on the British and Irish in Latin America, and a major reference work for researchers of the English, Irish, Scottish and Welsh in the city of Buenos Aires up to the fall of Governor Juan Manuel de Rosas in 1852.

The author excluded the British residents in other parts of the Argentine Republic from her study. However, it is important to mention that, at least during the first half of the nineteenth century, the city of Buenos Aires was the principal urban centre in the pampas. An important share of the total exports and imports of provinces like Buenos Aires (excluding the city), Santa Fe, Córdoba, Tucumán, and even countries like Uruguay and Paraguay, were transported through Buenos Aires. Furthermore, several landowners and merchants with land and businesses in those areas lived in Buenos Aires and only visited their estates occasionally. Therefore, the vast majority of the English-speaking landowners in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Santa Fe and others, and some in Uruguay and Paraguay, had temporary or permanent residences in the city of Buenos Aires.

Hanon's choice of the period up to 1852 - which she titled *Primera Época* - is also relevant. The arrival in Buenos Aires of a number of British immigrants in the closing years of the eighteenth century and up to the British military campaigns of 1806 and 1807 was the result of the growing British influence in the South American region of Río de la Plata at that time. Yet the most significant British presence began after the Treaty of Friendship, Navigation and Commerce signed by the two countries on 2 February 1825. This bilateral agreement allowed the legal residence of British subjects in Buenos Aires, as well as sanctioning their commercial and religious activities. In the subsequent period, during the extended rule of Governor Rosas, thousands of Irish, Scottish and English sheep-farmers, artisans and labourers were enticed by the opportunities in the pampas of Buenos Aires. After Rosas's fall in 1852, as Hanon rightly points out in her introduction, 'many other British landed in Buenos Aires to work in the railways, meat-packing plants, utility companies and large ranches. British settlements were established in Patagonia, Irish-owned palatial homes were built on Avenida Alvear, and football, tennis, polo, rugby began to be played [...] But that is another story' (15). After 1852, British and Irish immigration was significant both in magnitude and in variety of social origins and labour specialisations, therefore justifying the chronological framework of *Primera Época* in order to achieve a thorough coverage of persons and institutions before that year.

Strictly speaking, this book - a solid volume of about 900 pages - is more than a dictionary of biography, and with some alternative editorial arrangements it could have been categorised as an encyclopaedia of the British in Buenos Aires before 1852. It includes twenty-eight British institutions in Buenos Aires, three festivals - among them, a story of St. Patrick's Day in Buenos Aires - seventy-five emigrant ships from Britain and Ireland, and about 4,250 entries on British residents in Buenos Aires. [2] This amounts to well over a half of the 6,000-7,000 persons that some sources estimated as the English-speaking population in the country in the 1830s.

Additionally, there is a short but thorough introduction (7-17), in which the author summarises the formation of the British community and its different groups in the Río de la Plata from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, as well as an interesting discussion about the sources. To complete the references, the author included a timeline (19-20), details of the illustration by Emeric Essex Vidal (879), a list of people buried in the first Protestant cemetery (881-886), a bibliography, and tables with equivalencies and the currency exchange rates.

Although in many aspects this *Diccionario* is a pioneering work, there are three possible groups of precursors to Hanon in her research. The first group is dominated by journalists; Michael G. Mulhall initiated the cycle with *The English in South America* (1878), a collection of short biographies and records of British accomplishments on the continent. He was followed by his brother Edward T. Mulhall's *Saudades: a collection of obituaries from The Standard of Buenos Aires* (1923), Octavio Batola's *Los primeros ingleses en Buenos Aires* (1928), and the multi-authored *Antología histórica de Británicos vistos por ojos argentinos* (1941). In this first group is also included Andrew Graham-Yooll's wide-ranging work, particularly *The Forgotten Colony: A History of the English-speaking Communities in Argentina* (1981), *Small Wars You May have Missed* (1983) and *Así vieron a Rosas los ingleses, 1829-1852* (1980), as well as the three volumes of Emilio Fernández-Gómez's *Argentina, Gesta Británica* (1993, 1995, 1998). The second group are genealogists, led by the exceptional work of Eduardo A. Coghlan, whose 'great contribution' Hanon recognises (17). In her book, the Irish settlers' family background is frequently cited from Coghlan's two major works, *El Aporte de los Irlandeses a la Formación de la Nación Argentina* (1982) and *Los Irlandeses en la Argentina: Su Actuación y Descendencia* (1987), and in other cases from private publications of individual family histories.

Finally, the third group are academics. Although the author does not seem to have consulted any unpublished scholarly study - they are not included in the *Bibliografía General* (887) - there seems to be an indirect influence by Deborah Jakubs's PhD thesis *A Community of Interests: A Social History of the British in Buenos Aires, 1860-1914* (Stanford, 1986), and Patrick McKenna's M.A. dissertation *Nineteenth Century Irish Emigration to, and Settlement in, Argentina* (Maynooth, 1994).

In addition to these three groups, there are diverse identity paradigms of the British settlers outside Britain and Ireland. Among them, the case of the Irish and their *Irishness* is worthy of note. In some ways, with an excessive focus on the Irishness of the immigrants, Eduardo Coghlan (1982, 1987) and Patrick McKenna (1994) exclusively worked with people from that island, and sometimes fell into the anachronism of conceiving generalised Irish nationalism before the 1880s, thus failing to recognise the significant day-to-day social and business contacts with, and reliance of the Irish on, other English-speaking groups. Furthermore, these authors occasionally neglected to acknowledge *Irishness* among Irish-born immigrants who bore English names or who had religious backgrounds other than Catholic. Conversely, Hanon preferred to follow the same paradigm that Deborah Jakubs did in her thesis, that is, viewing the British as a community of diverse origins but with common interests. She explained that among the British she included 'the Catholic and Protestant Irish residents who participated in the community's life. At that time, they were all British subjects' (12). I believe that, confronted with the native population and in the peculiar situation of being foreigners in a new place sometimes perceived as hostile, the Irish in Argentina during this period were not only 'British subjects', but they actually considered themselves *ingleses* and thus much closer to the English, Scottish or Welsh than to the Creole, Afro-Argentine or Amerindian groups that populated Buenos Aires at that time.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is the author's very appropriate use of a variety of sources. Most notably, it is the first time that the records of the British Consulate in Buenos Aires have been used as a major primary source in a dictionary of biography. Among these records is the register of British subjects starting in 1824, including the immigrant's name, age, place of origin, occupation, year of arrival, family information and ship. Although this register is a significant source for the study of the British residents in Buenos Aires, until now it has been neglected by almost all researchers and scholars. [3] Other sources include baptismal, marriage and burial records from the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches in Buenos Aires, as well as sexton records and grave inscriptions in certain cemeteries of the city and in Montevideo, Uruguay. The *British Packet*, a newspaper published between 1826 and 1858, is another primary source repeatedly cited in this book. For the Irish immigrants, taking into account that Coghlan's genealogical catalogue (1987) did not include these sources, Maxine Hanon's work represents a significant improvement in our knowledge of their settlement in Buenos Aires. Furthermore, in several of the entries the author cross-referenced the information in the consular register with Coghlan's book, obtaining broader data. She also used documents held in the Archivo General de la Nación (National Archive) in Buenos Aires, other contemporary newspapers, and genealogical information. In all cases, the sources are meticulously referenced at the end of each entry. It is regrettable that some entries in the book do not include data from sources held in British and Irish archives, such as the baptismal, marriage and burial records in Catholic and Protestant parishes. However, it would be unfair to place this additional burden on the author, whose research is the work of a team of one, and who has not been supported financially by any university or academic institution to conduct research in distant archives.

For this same reason, it is difficult to find weaknesses in this book. Personally, I would have liked to see more entries on the *inglés borracho* (drunken Englishman) type, who is frequently mentioned in emigrant letters cited in other books. [4] Addiction to alcohol was not the exception among many British in Argentina. They were over-represented in crime statistics of intoxication, as well as in cases of insanity and scandal. Perhaps the omission of this type of biographical entry is a consequence of the contribution discourse which this book occasionally falls within. In the contribution discourse, the immigrants - and often also their historians - need to demonstrate that they are worthy of their new country and able to contribute to the larger society. From the first lines of the introduction - citing Guillermo Furlong, who cited Bartolomé Mitre - the author remarks that 'in every significant episode of the [Argentine] patriot epic there always was present a British resident as actor or witness' (7). Even in recognising that her book includes thousands of 'anonymous British immigrants', Hanon praises all of them as *intelligent* and *industrious* (7). In isolation, this fact is not disqualifying of her book. However it may have led the research

to disregard disreputable British individuals who evidently had nothing positive to contribute to the receiving society. A good balance between the *good* and the *evil* here and there could have painted a picture of this social group that would have been closer to the realities of human beings.

The other element lacking is assistance normally obtained from experienced editors and established publishers, especially in the tricky area of reference works. Repeatedly, the entries include the same ship description, captain, date of arrival and other data, as well as the details of the colonisation scheme in which the described person was involved. On a more typographic note, in this *Diccionario* running headlines - those single lines that top the pages and are used to help the reader find his or her way around in a book - are an uninformative repetition of the title, author and chapter, instead of the customary first and last entry in every page that we can find in other reference books. Recognisably, these are but minor issues and are relatively easy to amend in future editions.

I hope that Maxine Hanon's next book fulfils the hidden promise in the subtitle, that is, *Primera Época* (First Period). The logical second period could be between 1853 and perhaps 1929, the first year of the Great Depression, when thousands of British and Irish immigrants left Argentina and South America and returned to Britain and Ireland or re-emigrated to North America and other destinations. Furthermore, any kind of electronic media that could be appended to the book - for instance, a database included in a DVD or access to a website - would greatly ease its reading and the finding of individuals or places. Certainly, additional volumes including the other parts of Argentina, and possibly Uruguay and Paraguay, could greatly enhance the value of this work.

Maxine Hanon is to be congratulated for an outstanding and painstaking piece of research, which is already a basic reference for students of British and Irish migration to nineteenth-century Argentina up to the 1850s. I once read that in the personal library of the writer Jorge Luis Borges, books were not arranged by language or subject, but according to the possible affinity between their respective authors. In my own library (of course not as splendid as Borges's!) I had no hesitation in placing Hanon's *Diccionario* beside Eduardo Coghlan's *Los Irlandeses en Argentina*. Both books are stout in weight and format, and share thousands of persons, places and events, as well as their authors' sound research. Aside from discussing British or Irish identities, I indulge myself in imagining that Coghlan and Hanon - both lawyers by training - would have great conversations about documents and archives, as well as their common passion for historical research.

Edmundo Murray

### Notes

[1] Except where expressly stated, in this review I use the term 'British' to refer to any person born in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which existed from 1801 to 1921.

[2] I did not count the entries. The number of entries was included in a message from the author to the South American List, dated 26 July 2005.

[3] With the possible exception of Deborah Jakubs (1986), who used the Register's entries after 1860.

[4] Although they are from a later period, the following extracts from contemporary letters are clear regarding alcohol addiction among British immigrants. 'I don't know the reason but it is a fact that a great number of young men coming from Europe get lost here, they turn to drink and it is not from the natives they learn it, for it is scarcely ever seen in the respectable classes, amongst the poor "gauchos", yes, but "Ingles borracho" which means drunken Englishmen is a common saying here' (Sally Moore to John James Pettit, 25 November 1867, in Murray 2006: 101). 'I really think if someone else does not do it I shall write a letter myself to one of the English papers and try to do something to prevent young fellows without money coming out here, and going body and soul to the devil, it is wretched to see so many of them drink, drink, drink caña from morning to night...' (George Reid to his father, 16 May 1868, in Boyle 1999: 113).

## References

- Boyle, Valerie (ed.). *A South American Adventure: Letters from George Reid, 1867-1870* (London, editor's edition, 1999).
- Durán, Constanza. 'Editan un diccionario de la inmigración británica: Historias de ingleses en Buenos Aires' in *Clarín* newspaper, 12 August 2005.
- Hanon, Maxine. Communications to RootsWeb.com 'South American List' (SOUTH-AM-EMI-L Archives), 26 July 2005, available online (<http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/SOUTH-AM-EMI/2005-07/1122413779>), accessed 29 July 2006.
- Kiernan, Sergio. 'El que figura, es un inglés' in *Página/12* newspaper, 25 September 2005.
- Murray, Edmundo. *Becoming Irlandés: Private Narratives of the Irish Emigration to Argentina, 1844-1912* (Buenos Aires: L.O.L.A., 2006).
- Pereira Iraola, Susana. 'Británicos, con la patria al hombro' in *La Nación* newspaper, 14 September 2005.

---

## Author's Reply

I am grateful to Edmundo Murray for his insightful and generous review of my dictionary. I am also grateful for the honour of being placed in his library beside Coghlan. One of the many motives for this work is related to Coghlan. Many years ago, when I had not yet thought of dedicating myself to historical research, I remarked at the house of a few friends that I had an Irish ancestor and the Irish owner of the house immediately took out a book and told me: here they all are. My disappointment was great when I did not find my distant grandfather Thomas Whitfield, an Irishman, born in Kilkenny, who arrived in 1819. I subsequently found out that Coghlan had included very few Irish Protestants.

In 1994, I found Whitfield's will by chance in the National Archive and since then I have been trawling through hundreds of documents to find out all the details of this multitalented Irishman's life in Buenos Aires. I knew, through family lore, that he was a pharmacist and I discovered that he was the first 'inspector of pharmacies' of this city; I knew that he had constructed St. John's Anglican Church and I discovered that he had also constructed St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church; I knew that he had been a pioneer, together with his partners Peter Sheridan and John Harratt, in the breeding of merino sheep, and I was researching his lands, one by one; I knew that he had lived in a house in Recoleta, and I began to discover the secrets of that house. In my enthusiasm for knowing more, I searched for information on his friends and I wanted to know the histories, not only of this property but of all of the neighbouring ones, from the time that Garay founded Buenos Aires until the *belle époque*.

My secret tribute to this Irish grandfather that Coghlan had omitted was my book *Buenos Ayres desde las Quintas de Retiro a Recoleta* (Buenos Aires from the Houses of Retiro to Recoleta). The quantity of information that I was amassing on his 'British' friends, was the origin of the *Diccionario de Británicos en Buenos Ayres*. I have, among others, Irish, Scottish and English roots and here, in that first period, all of these people were, for the Creole people, simply 'inglés (English).'

In relation to the review, I would like to offer some clarifications. I regret my ignorance, but I am not familiar with the work of Deborah Jakubs and Patrick McKenna, and therefore these authors had no 'indirect influence.' The estimate that around 1830 there were approximately 7,000 English speakers includes North Americans, of whom there were many - many more in fact than is assumed. There are 4,250 entries in the dictionary, plus spouses, etc. Although many more people arrived than I included, I did not have sufficient information on them; some are in the references to families of the same surname. With respect to those that I did include, I know that many items of information are missing (particularly information from foreign sources): research is inexhaustible, but, after six years, I was frankly exhausted and had to bring it to an end.

I never intended that 'First Period' would mean 'First Part.' A second volume would be very arduous and would definitely require, in that case, a team of researchers, and funding. With regard to the problem of alcoholism among the immigrants, I certainly accept its validity, but I do not believe that it was a general problem. There are many more cases of industrious British people than down-and-out drunks. I do not

know if you read my description in *Instituciones* of the Buenos Ayres Temperance Society, founded in 1833. It is a hugely interesting topic that produced an enormous amount of polemic in the Buenos Aires newspapers. In *British Hospital*, I describe how in the year 1848, Dr. Mackenna 'drew attention to the depravity and drunkenness in the very depths of which a large portion of the labouring class of the British population in this city is sunk', and highlighted the fact that seven in ten people who died in the hospital were alcoholics. The topic of alcoholism, which is of course related to the dislocation and lack of protection that the immigrants suffered in this young and troubled country, merits deeper study.

In 1834, a British correspondent who wrote a series of articles in the *British Packet* on the education of foreign children in Buenos Aires, presents a shameful view, symbolised by dirty and ragged foreign children, aged between twelve and fourteen years, wandering the streets swelling the ranks of the street children. Among the reasons for this deplorable situation, he mentions the particular situation of the immigrants, 'the heterogeneous elements that form our foreign community. [...] Men of opposing principles and views, from all the corners of the world, mingle in a chaotic mass. Family ties, the local neighbourhood, the instinctive influence of habits and customs, respect for public opinion and all of the elements that operate in an ordered and long-established society do not exist. All of these benign influences,' he comments, 'are destroyed in the simple act of transplantation and the secret but powerful values of virtue, order and patriotism disappear forever. Freed from social restrictions, the Emigrant, in too many cases, becomes an adventurer, who only relates to those on whom he depends for his daily labours, completely indifferent to any consideration of character or reputation.' The correspondent concludes by affirming that in such circumstances, it is likely that some will neglect their social and familial responsibilities, and others will have recourse to drink and squander their lives. Obviously the topic could not be delved into more deeply in a dictionary of characteristics like mine.

Thank you again for your review.

Maxine Hanon

Translated by Claire Healy





**Review of Moises Enrique Rodríguez's  
Freedom's Mercenaries:  
British Volunteers in the Wars of Independence of Latin America**  
By Karen Racine



Lanham MD: Hamilton Books, 2006  
Chronological appendix, maps, annotated bibliography  
Volume I: Northern South America, 426 pages, ISBN 0-7618-3437-0, US\$ 58.00  
Volume II: Southern South America, 524 pages, ISBN 0-7618-3438-9, US\$ 58.00

This book is clearly a labour of love. Moises Enrique Rodríguez describes himself as an engineer who has led a 'double life.' He spent almost twenty-five years indulging his passion for history by researching the fascinating and diverse experiences of the 10,000 British volunteers who joined the fight for Spanish American independence between 1817 and 1824. These two volumes are the result of his long-standing interest in the stories of the many adventurers who left their country to cast their lot with the fate of unknown people living in a distant, and very different, land. The author has taken a biographical approach to his subject and, quite naturally, focused mainly on the military aspects of the British soldiers' and sailors' lives in Latin America. He has also included elements of diplomacy, intrigue, commerce and culture where they are relevant. Rodríguez has a pleasant and readable style and the book benefits from his evident enthusiasm for the subject.

Although it is not entirely true, as Rodríguez claims, that the presence and contribution of these British volunteers has been forgotten, he is correct to note that there have been few attempts to draw together the experiences of Britons in both the northern and southern Spanish American theatres of war, not to mention their contribution to Brazilian independence. To this end, the author has done a great service to scholarship by gathering together the stories of these people and making them available to the English-speaking reader in one monograph. Rodríguez plainly states that he is not a professional historian and makes it clear that his book is not intended to be an academic study drawn from archival sources; instead, he set out to satisfy his 'personal interest, curiosity, and manic Anglophilia' (I: 2) by telling a 'good yarn based on fact and not on fiction' (II: 921). *Freedom's Mercenaries* is based on a multitude of contemporary printed participant accounts, and dozens of secondary books and articles.

Rodríguez structured his book as a series of biographical chapters. Volume One deals with the British volunteers who fought in the wars of northern South America (present-day Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador

and Peru). These were the well-known, land-based military campaigns led by Simón Bolívar, José Antonio Páez, and Antonio José de Sucre. The British and Irish Legions began arriving in 1817 and included such famous or notorious soldiers, merchants and generals as: John Robertson, James English, George Elsom, James Rooke, John Devereux, Gregor McGregor, John Illingworth, and Daniel Florencio O'Leary. Readers curious about the activities of the Irish Legion in Colombia and Venezuela will want to pay particular attention to Chapter Ten, dedicated specifically to the Legion. The chapter opens with the siege of Cartagena in 1815, but its principal focus is the Irish Legion's military campaigns between 1817 and 1821, including their controversial mutiny at Riohacha in 1820. Rodríguez describes the Irish Legion's performance in Venezuela and Colombia as 'a sorry tale' and judges that they 'performed no deed of military value.' (I: 176). Nevertheless, he indicates that the presence of this unit engaged Spanish troops on the Caribbean coast which could otherwise have been used against Bolívar in other theatres of operation. He also recognises the contribution of former members of the Legion such as Francis Burdett O'Connor. The author concludes the chapter by hinting at the long-term influence of persons of Irish descent in the region's public institutions.

Volume Two treats of the experiences of the British volunteers who fought to liberate southern South America (present-day Argentina, Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Brazil) along with José de San Martín and Bernardo O'Higgins. The biographical chapters focus on the prominent and famous men who helped to found the navies of Chile, Peru, Argentina and Brazil: Lord Cochrane, William Miller, Martin Guise, Richard Vawell, William Brown, Walter Chitty and James Paroissien. The second volume also includes several chapters dealing with men of other European nationalities who also fought as mercenaries in South America - Germans, French, North Americans, Italians, Dutch and Swedes-, a chapter on merchants and bankers, a chapter on the diplomatic efforts of Foreign Secretaries Castlereagh and Canning to advance political recognition of the South American nations, and a chapter on British mercenaries in the Imperial Army of Brazil. Because of the tremendous variation in topics covered, this volume is less clearly focused on the subject indicated by the title, yet it does provide a panoramic view of the broad international spectrum of involvement in the Latin American independence movements.

Enrique Rodríguez first encountered the names and stories in this book as a child poring over his history textbooks in Colombia during the 1970s. Ironically, the trajectory of his own life has proceeded in reverse to the path of the men he has spent twenty-five years studying; Rodríguez crossed the Atlantic as a young man to study in England and then eventually settled in Switzerland where he works as a Manufacturing Systems Consultant for Nestlé. Nevertheless, Rodríguez's passion for historical research, reading and writing has remained constant, and one must admire the devotion of a busy engineer and family man who carried a project of this magnitude to fruition through his consistent efforts over two decades.

Karen Racine  
University of Guelph, Canada

---

### **Author's Reply**

I would like to thank Karen Racine for her very generous review, which I accept with gratitude, and Edmundo Murray for having commissioned the review to her. I am very flattered that my efforts have encountered such a positive response from a professional historian with deep knowledge of the period, whose book on Miranda I greatly enjoyed. [\*]

Moises Enrique Rodríguez

[\*] Karen Racine, *Francisco de Miranda: A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution* (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 2003).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Books Received

Taurozzi, Susana, *Los Pasionistas en Argentina y Uruguay: 100 años de historia* (Buenos Aires: Misioneros Pasionistas, 2006). 432 pp. ISBN 950-9070-02-5.

Palleiro, María Inés (ed.), *San Patricio en Buenos Aires: Celebraciones y rituales en su dimensión narrativa* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2006). 224 pp. ISBN 987-02-1338-3. ARS \$30.00

Cox, Maud Daverio, *Sueños, misterios y fantasmas de Buenos Aires* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Dunken, 2006). 152 pp. ISBN 987-02-1921-7

Landaburu, Roberto E., *Irlandeses en la Pampa Gringa: curas y ovejeros* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2006), 381 pp. ISBN 9500516357. ARS \$35.00.

Day, Mark, *San Patricios: The Tragic Story of the St. Patrick's Battalion* by Mark Day (documentary, 49 minutes).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## William Russell Grace (1832-1904), merchant in Peru



W.R.Grace (1832-1904)  
(*Library of the Congress*)

**Grace, William Russell** (1832-1904), merchant, was born in Riverstown, near Queenstown (Cobh) in County Cork, Ireland on 10 October 1832, to James Grace and Eleanor Mary Russell. William was raised in the family home in Ballylinan, Queen's County (present-day County Laois). He became one of the most prominent businessmen between Latin America and the United States in the post-Civil War era and the company he founded, W. R. Grace & Co., developed into the leading commercial multinational linking the Americas through trade and commerce.

He left Ireland in 1846 bound for New York. The push factor was the famine afflicting Ireland in that era, while the pull factor was provided by the opportunities in the Americas. Grace eventually found his way to Peru in 1851 where his father invited William to join him in an agricultural enterprise. William, however, was no farmer. He gravitated towards Callao where he joined Bryce Brothers, a ship chandler and purveyor engaged in supplying the large international fleet taking guano off the Chincha Islands.

Hundreds of ships anchored off the Chinchas each year loading this rich fertiliser that was revitalising over-used lands in Europe and the United States, and the ships needed re-victualling and refitting for the long return voyage to the Atlantic via Cape Horn. William soon pitched in with his own ideas.

He decided to take an old hulk, stock it with provisions for sale and anchor it amidst the guano fleet. This saved the guano ships from having to make a separate voyage to Callao, the port of Lima, before returning to the Atlantic. The young entrepreneur put Bryce Brothers ahead of its competitors and William was on his way, quickly recognised for his talents and energies by the older Bryce brothers, and much appreciated by ship owners, captains, and masters in the guano fleet.

William was not only a talented young entrepreneur, but a gregarious and charming young man. He met Lillius Gilchrest, the daughter of George Gilchrest, one of the ship captains. Lillius was travelling with her father on these long voyages and after a courtship there amidst the most improbable circumstances of stinking dung consignments, William and Lillius returned to her hometown of Tennants Harbor, Maine, USA, and married on 11 September 1859. Their first child, Alice Gertrude, was born on 11 June 1860 on the storeship anchored at the Chinchas.

By 1862, the Civil War was raging in the United States and William had transferred himself to Callao to be closer to the commercial and political capital of Peru, Lima. He returned to Ireland in 1862, on the advice of doctors who told him that he did not have long to live, as he suffered from Bright's Disease. William had a wonderful homecoming in Ireland and returned to Peru via New York in 1863. He lived forty-one more years, confounding the doctors' diagnosis and embarking upon an immensely successful career not only as a pioneering entrepreneur spanning the Americas, but also being elected the first foreign-born Mayor of New York in 1880, launching a high-profile trajectory into US politics in the late nineteenth century.

In the meantime, William began inviting his younger brothers, cousins, and other family members, by blood or marriage, to join him in Peru to help operate the expanding business. The first of these brothers was Michael who came in the 1850s. Others followed as the company founded by William, W. R. Grace & Co., expanded the reach of its commercial activities to include not only Peru and the United States, but also Europe and other Latin American countries, especially along the west coast of South America in the 1870s and 1880s.

In 1866 William, a good friend of the Union in the struggle between the States, moved his growing family to New York, then emerging into a rising cycle of business expansion and prosperity as the commercial and financial capital of the United States. It was a natural move for William. He left his brother Michael Grace in Callao in charge of Grace Brothers (which absorbed the old Bryce Brothers) and from New York, while living in a fashionable neighbourhood in Brooklyn Heights across from Manhattan, William moved with the times. He had married a US-American girl, had developed close personal and business ties with North Americans while in Peru, and New York drew him like a magnet. The other pole of his growing business was Peru, and the biggest business in Peru at the time was building railroads, the apotheosis of modernity which had captured the imaginations of Peruvians.

At the centre of the railroad building fever in Peru was Henry Meiggs, a flamboyant, charismatic entrepreneur who had made and lost several fortunes all the way from California to Chile before showing up in Peru in the late 1860s. Once there he contracted for the first major railroads to be built in Peru. The Peruvian government indebted itself for over \$30 million to pay for the railroads, and Meiggs went to work. William met Meigg's purchasing agent in New York, Joseph S. Spinney, and through Spinney the flow of goods - locomotives, cars, ties, iron, lumber - began from the US to Peru, much of it transported through the Grace houses, on many ships chartered, or built and owned outright, by the Graces. Under William's guidance from New York, the houses grew from simple ship chandlers to purveyors of guano and nitrates, railroad supplies, and just about anything Peruvians and other Latin Americans needed. William hired a young American, Charles Flint, who became a master salesman, travelling into the interiors of Peru, Ecuador, and Chile, sizing up markets and measuring needs. Flint eventually broke with the Graces much later in his career, putting together the US Rubber Company after he and the Graces had diversified into the rubber business of Brazil and Bolivia in the 1880s.

Amidst this dramatic business expansion in the 1870s, William developed an affinity for his adopted city, and soon found himself in the middle of its politics, running for mayor in 1880 on a reformist Democrat ticket. He was elected in 1880 and again in 1884, each time for a two-year term. His career as mayor carried his attention away from Latin America for much of the 1880s. In the meantime, the other pole of his growing business, Peru, suffered a disastrous setback in its national destiny.

In 1879, Peru and Bolivia went to war against Chile. When the War of the Pacific ended four years later, Chile emerged victorious as a major power and Peru and Bolivia were humiliated, stripped of territories and saddled with a huge debt. The Graces had supported Peru in this war, buying and sending arms to the Peruvians and vehemently advocating the intervention of the United States to preserve the territorial integrity of Peru after Chilean victories. In New York, William presided over his growing family and the fortunes of the city, and when he left office in early 1887, he was a nationally recognised figure in US politics.

His business enterprises expanded even more in the closing decades of the century. The Grace Line was formally established in this period, and the line became the principal conduit of commerce, and later passengers, between New York and the west coast of South America for much of the following century.

With Charles Flint, William plunged into the rubber boom along the Amazon before Flint eventually broke with the Graces and pushed them out of rubber.

In 1898, William assumed the leadership of a powerful political and economic faction in the US desiring to build a trans-isthmian canal across either Nicaragua or Panama as a private venture. They eventually lost out to the Panama lobby and President Theodore Roosevelt's own vision of destiny, but when the Panama Canal was completed in 1914, one of the first ships to pass through was a Grace Line steamer, taking advantage of the new route to make connections between the US and South America even more rapid and efficient.

In his biography of William Russell Grace, Marquis James described him as follows: 'Billy was not tall for his age, but he was well set up and strong. He had blue eyes, tawny hair, and an excellent temperament for a first son, being a daredevil and a natural leader. He was hotheaded and a fighter. He taught John [a younger brother] to fight, so that the crippled boy could hold his own against most boys of his size who had sound legs.' (James:1993, p9) When comparing William to brother Michael, Marquis James wrote, 'William had the gift of leadership, the sounder judgments, the greater foresight. In making a decision, he bore in mind more factors. Though William fought it, the hot temper of his boyhood could still assert itself. He would blow up at Michael in a stiff letter ; then apologize for his language, though not his opinion. The younger brother would write that no apology was necessary.' (James: 1993, pp. 64-65).

Early on he had fallen in love with Peru and its people, and much of William's character comes through in this letter he wrote to his brother John in 1872. 'I like the Peruvians. I always enjoyed their society and I never looked upon them as more deceitful than [other] people [...] The English in foreign lands, I never liked; they are, in my experience, presumptuous and self-opinionated [...] I know [mercantile] houses in Peru that were in my time hated as haters of Peru.'

Not so William. He hired and promoted Peruvians who demonstrated the same work ethic he expected of his family and his US American and Irish subordinates. He imparted to his brothers, his nephews, and all who came to work for him, a devotion to learning the languages and cultures of the countries of Latin America. When he died on 21 March 1904 in New York City, he was remembered for weaving new and stronger ties between the United States and Latin America through his many enterprises, both private and public.

The *New York Times* wrote that 'even in this country of self-made men, of great business houses, and of great fortunes, the career of ex-Mayor William R. Grace was a conspicuous one. He developed markets, he established transportation lines, he embarked in mercantile ventures, and directed them with such skill that while he was building up a personal fortune he was also contributing to the expansion of this country and of other countries. Whenever he took an active part in politics, it was as a man of sound principles working in behalf of honesty and efficiency in public administration.' And the *New York Daily News*, as always with a penchant for the colourful, produced this epitaph: 'Romantic life story of an Irish lad who ran away from home to be a Robinson Crusoe, who twice became Mayor of New York and died a multimillionaire.'

That arguably was the embodiment of the American dream at the turn of the century, and the one for which William R. Grace's contemporaries remembered him best.

Lawrence A. Clayton

---

## References

- James, Marquis, *Merchant Adventurer: The Story of W. R. Grace* (introduction by L. Clayton, Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources Press, 1993).
- Clayton, Lawrence A., *Grace: W. R. Grace & Co., The Formative Years, 1850-1930* (Ottawa, Illinois: Jameson Books, 1985).



**Thomas O'Gorman (c.1760-?),  
merchant in Spain and South America**

**O'Gorman, Thomas** (c.1760-?), merchant in Spain and South America, was born in Ennis, County Clare, Ireland, some time in the late 1750s or early 1760s. At an early age he became one of the 'Wild Geese', going into the service of the French king in the Walsh Regiment. O'Gorman rose to the rank of Captain before abandoning his unit as the Irish regiments were disbanded in the wake of the French Revolution. By 1792 he was in the French Indian Ocean colony of Ile de France (Mauritius), where he married the young Marie Anne Périchon de Vandeuil, daughter of an important French colonial official.

O'Gorman then aided his father-in-law who had resigned his post and subsequently engaged in mercantile activities. O'Gorman's command of English served them well as Mauritius in the 1790s had become a bustling entrepot for foreign captains and traders, and particularly for North Americans. With the reversal in Franco-Spanish relations in 1797, a new trade between the Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata and French colonies in the Indian Ocean ensued. *Porteño* (Buenos Aires) merchants exchanged food and silver for slaves and manufactured goods, and O'Gorman was involved in that commerce.

The Irishman persuaded his father-in-law to take the drastic step of moving both families and all their possessions to the Río de la Plata. In Buenos Aires O'Gorman had a relative, Michael O'Gorman, who occupied the important position of *Protomédico* and who could vouch for the acceptance of the migrants. He could also call upon the goodwill of Casimiro Francisco Necochea, a *porteño* acquaintance involved in the Mauritius/Río de la Plata trade. In July 1797 the large party arrived at Montevideo. There O'Gorman and his father-in-law ingratiated themselves with authorities by emphasising their devotion to the Catholic religion and their distaste for the excesses of the French Revolution. Their request for residence was granted due to the fact that Necochea and Uncle Miguel had vouched for them. O'Gorman further requested naturalisation, stating that he was descended from the ancient Irish nobility, but was informed that that action would take some time.

The Irish immigrant then toyed with the idea of establishing a large sugar plantation in Paraguay, but investment in slaves and equipment required more capital than he possessed. Rather, O'Gorman found his vocation as a middle-man or facilitator for merchants of Buenos Aires as the neutral trade of 1797-1799 opened up new opportunities for those who discarded their traditional Cádiz/Río de la Plata commercial connections. Only a year after his arrival, O'Gorman received a commission from Francisco de Sar and Manuel de Sarretera to sail to the United States and there conclude the purchase of several North American ships as well as arranging for the cargo to be shipped south on various merchants' accounts, including that of Tomás Antonio Romero, the greatest merchant in the Río de la Plata. In Philadelphia he was informed that the neutral trade had been terminated, but he pressed onward with the enterprise. The ships and cargo arrived and the Viceroy approved the transactions, not wishing to alienate important merchants during an unstable period for the empire.

O'Gorman affiliated himself to a group of merchants who recognised the opportunities of free foreign trade and who were increasingly frustrated with traditional monopolistic mercantilist policies. Both legal licensed trade and contraband flourished and the Irishman was deeply involved in both. At the same time Madame O'Gorman, with typical Gallic vivacity, conducted what may be termed a salon at their Buenos Aires residence. There, French expatriates such as Santiago de Liniers, then an obscure French-born captain in the Spanish Navy who had minor business dealings with O'Gorman, associated with disaffected *criollos* and the occasional Yankee sea captain.

Following the temporary peace between Great Britain and Spain in 1803, Thomas O'Gorman embarked upon his most ambitious enterprise. Arranging a partnership with *porteño* merchants, he travelled to Great Britain and there, with the aid of a merchant relative, organised the purchase of a ship and British-made goods. Overcoming difficulties in Great Britain and receiving some financial aid in Spain from an agent of the *porteño* merchant Ventura Marco del Pont, he arrived in the Río de la Plata with a large cargo in early 1805. He was accompanied on the return voyage by a nephew, Edmund Lawton O'Gorman, and another fellow Irishman, James Florence Burke.

Burke was a secret agent of the British government, sent to Buenos Aires to assess the extent of discontent with Spanish rule. While there is no direct evidence that O'Gorman himself served as a British agent, he certainly provided Burke with information as to conditions in the Río de la Plata. Furthermore, the sudden resolution of difficulties O'Gorman encountered in Great Britain renders this even more likely.

In the viceregal capital Burke moved easily in *porteño* society, and at the O'Gorman residence and elsewhere succeeded in subverting a number of *porteños* before returning to report on conditions in the Viceroyalty. Edmund O'Gorman remained in the Río de la Plata until after the first British invasion in 1806. There he played an equivocal role. He did obtain for Santiago de Liniers a safe conduct into occupied Buenos Aires where the naval captain, outraged by the British invasion, recognised the enemy's weaknesses, and subsequently assumed leadership of the resistance to the British. On the other hand, during the same occupation Edmund O'Gorman acted as a commissioner for the enemy, as the British occupiers swept up the treasuries of various government organs.

Thomas O'Gorman was not in the Río de la Plata during the British invasions, but rather in Spain where, apparently acting for Ventura Marco del Pont, he obtained permission to charter Portuguese and North American ships out of Lisbon for the transport of goods of British origin to the west coast of South America. By this time his marriage had collapsed, and his wife, 'la Périchona', had begun her notorious affair with Santiago de Liniers, by then Viceroy of the Río de la Plata. The expedition to Chile and Peru was quite profitable for O'Gorman, but he never returned to the Río de la Plata. According to a few vague reports from Callao in Peru, he left the New World and rumour had it that he later died in Spain, spending his final days in poverty and almost deranged.

O'Gorman had left the care of his family to his French in-laws, and of course, to Viceroy Liniers. From his offspring emerged the Argentine O'Gorman clan, the most famous being his granddaughter, the tragic Camila, who was executed on Juan Manuel de Rosas' orders. As for an assessment of Thomas O'Gorman, he represented the entry of foreigners, particularly the Irish into the commerce of the Spanish American Empire in the final decades of its existence. With historical hindsight it is clear that this presence was one of the signals of the coming independence movement.

Jerry W. Cooney

---

### References

- Cooney, Jerry W. 'Commerce, Contraband and Intrigue: Thomas O'Gorman in the Río de la Plata' in *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 13:1 (Winter 2004): 31-51.
- Labougle, Raúl. *Máxima Périchon de Martínez, 1856-1919* (Buenos Aires: Imprenta López, 1935), 39-40, 173-4.
- Pyne, Peter. 'A Soldier under Two Flags. Lieutenant-Colonel James Florence Burke: Officer, Adventurer and Spy' in *Études Irlandaises* 23:1 (1998): 123-6.



# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Clotario Blest (1899-1990), Catholic labour leader in Chile



Clotario Blest (1899-1990)  
(Marcelo Montecino, 1988)

**Blest, Clotario** (1899-1990), Catholic labour leader in Chile, was born on 17 November 1899 at 48 Brasil Street in Santiago de Chile. He was the second of three children of Ricardo Blest Ugarte, an army officer, and Leopoldina Riffo Bustos (d. 1958), a school teacher. Ricardo Blest Ugarte was a first cousin of the writer Alberto Blest Gana, and grandson of the Sligo-born physician William Cunningham Blest (1800-1884), who arrived in Chile in 1823 and founded the first school of medicine in the country.

As a child, Clotario Blest, together with his mother, brother and sister, had to survive a difficult life, exacerbated by his father committing suicide at a relatively young age. His eldest brother died in Punta Arenas at the age of twenty-five while on service in the army, and his sister, a nun with the Buen Pastor order, died of tuberculosis in Santiago. The penury of Blest's infancy would strongly influence his life and ideas in the future.

Clotario Blest was sent to study at the public school in Almirante Barroso Street and then, with the aid of a scholarship, he entered the Catholic seminary of Los Angeles Custodios in Santiago. This was followed by studies of theology, law and chemistry at the university, together with systematic athletic activity. In 1918, Blest received the first of the minor orders and the following year he was transferred to the seminary of Concepción. However, problems arose with the director, who supported, and demanded his students to support, the political campaigns of the Conservative Party. Blest rebelled against this unjust requirement and was banished from the institution. 'Sometimes,' he used to observe, 'the priests do not understand Christ's message. They learn theology [...] What can they study about God? Nonsense. There is no other divine science than the life of Christ' (Salinas 1991: 6). Some progressive teachers however, like Fernando Vives Solar S.J. and Fr. Alberto Hurtado, had a significant influence on Blest's ideas regarding social justice for the labouring class.

The initial jobs that Clotario Blest engaged in after abandoning his studies for the priesthood were minor positions at a pharmacy and a law firm. Finally, in 1922, he was hired as an office cleaner by the Tax

Treasury in Santiago, where he would work for thirty-two years. Blest started his political life by joining Casa del Pueblo, a labour institution founded in 1917 to unite the Catholic unions. He was also active in the Union of Catholic Youth Centres (UCJC), Fr. Guillermo Viviani's Social Studies Circle 'El Surco', and the Popular Party. In Casa del Pueblo's headquarters, 208 Salas Street in the Vega Central quarter, Blest built the small chapel 'Jesús Obrero' - a name that would identify the progressive segments of the Catholic church in Latin America in the mid-twentieth century, in opposition to those of a reactionary background - for instance, Acción Católica - who used the emblematic 'Cristo Rey' as their trademark. The chapel was eventually closed by the Vicar-General of Santiago.

In 1927, Clotario Blest was appointed president of the UCJC, which opposed the official National Association of Catholic Students, supported by the hierarchy. In UCJC, a 10,000-member institution, membership was open to Evangelical and communist workers, a fact that was disapproved of by the bishops. For Blest, it was a time of intense social struggle, together with profound spiritual searching.

During this period, Blest started up a relationship with Teresa Ossandón, who was four years younger than him and a member of the Young Catholic Women's organisation. Two years later they decided to end the relationship and dedicate their lives to their mission. Ossandón joined the order of the Carmelites and died in 1989.

Between 1932 and 1939, Blest acted as president of the 'Germen' group, founded under the leadership of Fr. Fernando Vives. This organisation, whose emblem was a Christian cross with the communist hammer and sickle, published a newspaper and denounced the growing gap between the church and the poor.

In 1934, Blest worked at the Treasury office of San Antonio Port, and in 1949 he was transferred to San Miguel in Santiago. During this period union-bashing was prevalent among the governing elite, and legislation passed by the administration of President Arturo Alessandri prevented state workers from forming their own trade union. In order to evade this ban, in 1938 Blest and a group of labourers founded the Sports Association of State Institutions (ADIP), which would become the National Association of Fiscal Employees (ANEF) in 1943, uniting workers at the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Civil Records Office, Roads and other state offices. During the 1940s and 1950s Clotario Blest would successfully lead ANEF, achieving national prominence and challenging the government with frequent large-scale strikes, in particular the work stoppage at the Post Office and the state bank, and the teachers' strike of 1950 that brought down the national cabinet.

The most important organisation founded by Clotario Blest was the Workers Only Union of Chile (CUT) established in 1953, and led by Blest until 1961, when he resigned as a result of internal feuds among members. In the 1950s and 1960s he was repeatedly imprisoned - by his own account twenty-six times - a fact that only served to increase his prestige among labourers. He was often offered official posts and favours by private companies, privileges which he consistently rejected. When Braden Cooper, a US American mining company in Rancagua, presented Blest with a generous gift in cash, he refused it publicly with a strong reply, 'váyanse a la mierda [go to hell]' (Salinas 1991: 17). On 13 September 1954, in order to separate him from the trade union leadership, Clotario Blest was transferred to a Treasury office in Iquique, in the north of the country and far from the capital. He was therefore forced to retire from service.

Dedicating himself full-time to trade and political campaigning, in 1952 Blest chaired the National Command against the Military Treaty with the United States of America. Together with poets Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral, he joined the National Committee for Peace in Chile, a committee which supported global disarmament and rejected atomic weapons. In 1955 he was appointed member of the World Peace Council Assembly in Helsinki. His name became recognised in international circles for his demands for peaceful negotiations among nations, the solidarity of the Latin American peoples, and struggle against global financial bodies such as the International Monetary Fund.

Inspired by a deep-seated religious ethos and a strong affiliation with the poor, Clotario Blest was a firm supporter of the Catholic church's new approach to its flock. He worked together with communists and others who were officially atheist, including long-standing friendships with Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and Galo González, the secretary-general of the Communist Party of Chile in 1949-1958. He challenged the Chilean religious hierarchy, denouncing their close relations with the ruling class and the economic

powers. He received occasional support from certain bishops, like José María Caro Rodríguez, Archbishop of Santiago during 1939-1958. On 11 August 1968, Blest was among the priests and lay people of the *Iglesia Joven* group who peacefully occupied the cathedral in Santiago to protest against the methods of the traditional Catholic church leaders who neglected the poor.

In 1971-1973 Blest supported the elected government of Salvador Allende. After Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état on 11 September 1973, various diplomats offered him asylum in foreign countries but he did not accept. On 24 October 1973 his house was raided by the army. His property and books were confiscated and he was mistreated and abused. However, Blest was not arrested because of his international renown. He challenged the state terror of Pinochet's government while working at the Human and Labour Rights Defence Committee (CODEHS), which he had founded in 1970 together with students and workers. Clotario Blest was, according to General Pinochet, 'a Romantic' (Salinas 1991: 35).

Contemporary reports describe Clotario Blest as an ascetic and peaceful person, with blue eyes and of tiny, fragile build. He ate frugally and drank only water, and sometimes milk. He slept briefly on a bronze bed with a worn mattress, and worked intensively for long hours and with great energy.

From 1981, when the first constitutional government after the military regime took power, Clotario Blest worked to reorganise the trade union movement. He was appointed honorary president of the new CUT. However, his greatest concerns during his last years were of a spiritual nature. At home, he lived in abject poverty. In 1989, when he was hospitalised for acute malnutrition, he weighed just thirty kilograms. Without a suitable place to live, he was accepted into the infirmary of the Franciscan convent in Santiago. On his ninetieth birthday, he was presented with a Franciscan habit and appointed lay friar. He died on 31 May 1990.

Edmundo Murray

### References

- Memoria Chilena. *Clotario Blest Riffó (1899-1990)*. Available online <[http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mchilena01/temas/index.asp?id\\_ut=clotarioblestriffo\(1899-1990\)](http://www.memoriachilena.cl/mchilena01/temas/index.asp?id_ut=clotarioblestriffo(1899-1990))>, accessed 24 August 2006.
- Reyes, Sergio and Francisco Díaz. *Clotario Blest Riffó (Nov. 17, 1899 - May 31, 1990)*. Available online <<http://www.clotarioblest.org/>>, accessed 24 August 2006.
- Salinas Campos, Maximiliano. *Clotario Blest: Testigo de la justicia de Cristo para los pobres* (Santiago: Editorial Salesiana, 1991).
- Vitale, Luis. *Los discursos de Clotario Blest y la Revolución Chilena*. Available online <<http://www.clotarioblest.org/cb-vitale.htm>>, accessed 26 August 2006.

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Thomas Joseph Hutchinson (c.1802-1885), diplomat, physician and travel writer



Thomas J. Hutchinson (c.1802-1885)  
(*The Paraná, With Incidents of the Paraguayan War, 1868*)

**Hutchinson, Thomas Joseph** (c.1802-1885), diplomat, physician and travel writer, was born on 18 January 1802 - though the year 1820 is mentioned in some records - in Stonyford, County Wexford, probably the son of a minor landowner, Alfred Hutchinson [*Hutchenson*] from an Anglo-Irish family with a Protestant background. It is reported that he was sent to study on the European continent, and graduated as a medical doctor from the University of Göttingen in 1833. On 2 January 1836, he graduated from the Apothecary's Hall, Trinity College Dublin. By May 1843, Hutchinson was practicing as a physician and surgeon at Saint Vincent's Hospital, Dublin. In 1849, Thomas Hutchinson settled in England, where he worked in the Poor Law Union of Wigan, Lancashire.

In 1851, Hutchinson was appointed senior surgeon on board the *Pleiad*, for the expedition to the rivers Niger, Tshadda and Binue up to 1855, led by John Beecroft. In this capacity, Hutchinson conducted research on the use of quinine as a preventative measure against the effects of malaria. He insisted that, in small doses, quinine had a favourable effect in preventing fever. In the late 1850s, Bailey & Wills of Horseley Fields produced 'Dr. Hutchinson's Quinine Wine', marketing it to ship owners and crews.

On 29 September 1855, Thomas Hutchinson received his first appointment in the British Consular Service, as the consul for the Bight of Biafra. He married Mary, his lifelong wife, and on 29 December 1855 they arrived in Port Clarence, Fernando Po (present-day Malabo, Equatorial Guinea), formerly a Spanish dominion. Most of the business managed by Hutchinson in Fernando Po was related to British affairs in the region, which included chiefly the production and transport of palm oil and occasionally other products. He also represented, albeit unsuccessfully, a group of emancipated slaves and their families who wished to be recognised as British citizens, and was a constant arbiter between the ship masters and the local producers of raw materials. Furthermore, in 1858, Hutchinson obtained a tonne of seeds from the Manchester Cotton Supply Associations to undertake experiments on the continental coast of West Africa. In his affairs, he was frequently partial to the interests of certain Liverpool merchants, a practice for which he was reprimanded by the Foreign Office. Hutchinson remained in Africa until June 1860, when he and his wife returned to England for health reasons, together with Fanny Hutchinson, an African girl that they had adopted. On 9 July 1861 he was replaced by Captain Richard Francis Burton.

With friends and connections in the Foreign Office and various scientific and business associations, among them George William Frederick, Earl of Clarendon, and William Bingham Baring, Lord Ashburton, Thomas Hutchinson managed to balance his consular work and medical practice with exploration, travel writing and scientific research. From 1858 to 1867 he was Fellow of some important institutions, including the Royal Geographical Society, the Ethnological Society, the Royal Society of Literature and the Anthropological Society. During his long life, he was also elected honorary vice-president of the African Institute of Paris, an honorary member of the Liverpool Literary and Philosophical Society, foreign member of the Palaeontological Society of Buenos Aires, and founding member of the Society of Fine Arts in Peru.

Hutchinson's next appointment was as consul in Rosario, Argentina, on 12 July 1861, where he was also an agent for Lloyds. Thomas Murray, in his book about the Irish in Argentina, wrote that there were rumours in Buenos Aires 'that Hutchinson got his appointment and preference from the English Government for betraying his friends. He was an Irishman and was, it is said, one of O'Connell's secretaries' (Murray 1919: 310). However, this could not be definitively proven, as Hutchinson's connections and friends were the principal cause of his appointments in the consular service.

Between 25 November 1862 and 10 March 1863, together with the merchant Esteban Rams and with official support, Thomas Hutchinson organised an exploration from Rosario to the River Salado in search of wild cotton. As a result of this journey, he wrote *Buenos Ayres and Argentine Gleanings: with extracts from a diary of the Salado exploration in 1862 and 1863*, published in London in 1865. On Hutchinson's initiative, the governor of Santiago del Estero, Gaspar Taboada, began tests to produce cotton in his province.

During a cholera epidemic in Rosario in 1867, Hutchinson and his wife established a sanatorium in their house and rendered a great service to the poor of the city administering free medicines and clothing. The governor of Santa Fe province Nicasio Oroño gratefully mentioned Hutchinson's services in his message to the provincial parliament, and he was presented with a Gold Medal by the Union Masonic Lodge of Rosario in July of the same year. On 15 May 1867 he was appointed honorary member of the Argentine Rural Society.

In 1864 and until 4 June 1865, Hutchinson was also Acting Consul for Uruguay. In Montevideo, he owned the Farmacia Británica at the corner of 25 de Mayo and Ituzaingo. In October of 1870 the family left Rosario for England. The same month Hutchinson was appointed Consul at Callao, where he arrived with his family on the *Cordillera* on 22 April 1871. Most of his work in Peru had to do with shipping, in particular with the problems of crimping by ship captains. He also dedicated time to travel and to exploring vestiges and the burial grounds of the indigenous peoples previous to the Spanish conquest, an experience he recorded in *Two Years in Peru, with Exploration of its Antiquities* (1873).

Hutchinson resigned from the Consular Service in 1874, though he had been on leave and off-duty since November 1872. On 21 April 1874 he was granted a pension. The family went to live in Ballinescar Lodge in Curracloe, St. Margaret's parish, in County Wexford, where Hutchinson dedicated himself to writing about his travel experiences. He travelled through Germany and France, and in 1876 he published *Summer Holidays in Brittany*. Then he moved to Chimoo Cottage Mill Hill near Hendon in the English county of Middlesex, and finally to Italy. Thomas Hutchinson died on 23 March 1885 in his apartment at 2 Via Maragliano, Florence. He was survived by his wife Mary Hutchinson and their adopted daughter Fanny Hutchinson.

Wealth at death: £1,145-16s-5d (Calendars of the grants of probate, England and Wales, 2 May 1885, Ref. 95-96)

Edmundo Murray

---

## References

- Cutolo, Vicente Osvaldo. *Nuevo Diccionario Biográfico Argentino* (1750-1930) (Buenos Aires: Elche, 1968). Vol. 3.

- Hertslet, Edward (ed.), *The Foreign Office List (London)*, January 1877.
- Martín del Molino, Amador. *La ciudad de Clarence: Primeros años de la actual ciudad de Malabo, capital de Guinea Ecuatorial, 1827-1859* (Madrid-Malabo: Centro Cultural Hispano-Guineano, 1993).
- Murray, Edmundo. *Thomas Joseph Hutchinson (1820-1885), a Bibliography*. [LINK]
- Murray, Thomas. *The Story of the Irish in Argentina* (New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1919).
- Trenti Rocamora, José Luis. Preface to Thomas Hutchinson's *Buenos Aires y otras Provincias Argentinas* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Huarpes, 1945).
- UK National Archives (Kew), Catalogue Reference: FO (Foreign Office).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Henry Hilton Leigh (d. 1910), landowner and pioneer cotton planter in Peru

**Leigh, Henry Hilton** (d. 1910), landowner and pioneer cotton planter in Peru, was born in Old Ross, County Wexford, the son of John Leigh and Elisa Whitney.

Together with his brother John, in 1853 Henry Leigh emigrated to Chile and in 1855 to Paita, Peru. In Paita, Leigh was employed by British merchants, but when he settled in Piura, he opened his own business, H.H. Leigh & Co. Henry Leigh was the first to export cotton from Piura to Europe, and he established the first cotton press in the region.

In 1857 Henry Hilton married Carmen Cortés del Castillo. They had no children. She was a cousin of Miguel Cortés del Castillo, a hero in the Battle of Junín against the Spanish forces. In 1886, Leigh married his wife's sister Mercedes Jesús Cortés del Castillo and their children were George Edward, Benjamin, who was a doctor and lived in England, Federico, who was an engineer and lived in England, Carlos and Guillermo/William. They adopted Mercedes Leigh Cortés del Castillo.

One of Leigh's contributions to the production of cotton in the region was the creation of a new measurement, the *carga*. The market in Piura and the planters of the region used *carga* as the standard unit for growing and marketing cotton in the city. Henry Leigh also installed the first telephone line, from his house in Lima street to the 'Bigote' plantation. By 1910, he was one of the wealthiest landowners in Piura, as a producer of cotton and cattle.

In 1891-1905, Leigh was the first president of the Piura Chamber of Commerce and Production. He was a generous supporter of the Belén hospital, located in the Plaza de Armas up to the earthquake of 1912.

Henry Leigh died in 1910 in Santo Domingo (Piura) and was buried at the San Teodoro Cemetery.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Moscol Urbina, Jorge E., *Historia de la Cámara de Comercio y Producción: 100 años Conquistando el Desierto* (Piura: Cámara de comercio de Piura, 1991).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## John [Juan] Mackenna (1771-1814), general in the Chilean war of independence



**John Mackenna (1771-1814)**  
(*Narcisse Edmond Joseph Desmadryl, 1854*)

**Mackenna, John [Juan]** (1771-1814), general in the Chilean war of independence, born on 26 October 1771 in Clogher, County Tyrone, the son of William McKenna and Eleanor O'Reilly. John Mackenna went to Spain with his uncle Count O'Reilly, and studied at the Royal School of Mathematics in Barcelona. In 1787 he was accepted into the Irish Brigade of the Spanish army, and joined the army fighting in Ceuta in northern Africa. Lieutenant Colonel Luis Urbina promoted him to Second Lieutenant. In 1791 Mackenna resumed his studies in Barcelona and acted as liaison with mercenaries recruited in Europe. The following year he was promoted to Lieutenant in the Royal Regiment of Engineers. In the war against the French, John Mackenna fought in Rosellón under General Ricardos and met the future liberator of Argentina, José de San Martín. For his exploits in defence of the Plaza de Rozas, he was promoted to captain in 1795.

For the purpose of a new assignment, in October 1796 John Mackenna left Spain for South America. He arrived in Buenos Aires and then travelled to Mendoza and to Chile across the Andes. Once in Lima, the viceroy Ambrose O'Higgins appointed Mackenna as governor of Osorno. In this capacity, John Mackenna convinced the families of Castro, on the island of Chiloé, to move to Osorno to found a colony there. He built the storehouse and two mills, as well as the road between Osorno and present-day Puerto Montt. His successful administration provoked jealousy from Chile's captain-general Gabriel de Avilés, who feared that John Mackenna and Ambrose O'Higgins would create an Irish colony in Osorno. Both Irishmen were loyal to the Spanish crown, though John Mackenna had good relations with O'Higgins' son Bernardo, the future emancipator of Chile, and was also connected with the Venezuelan Francisco de Miranda and his group of supporters of South American independence. When Ambrose O'Higgins died in 1801, Avilés was appointed viceroy of Peru. It took him eight years to remove O'Higgins's protégé John Mackenna from Osorno.

In 1809 John Mackenna married Josefina Vicuña y Larraín, an eighteen-year-old Chilean woman from a family with revolutionary connections. The following year he was called to the defence committee of the new Republic of Chile, and in 1811 was appointed governor of Valparaíso. Owing to political feuds with



José Miguel Carreras and his brothers, John Mackenna was dismissed from the post and taken prisoner. He supported the faction of Bernardo O'Higgins, who appointed him as one of the key officers to fight the Spanish army of General Antonio Pareja. Mackenna's major military honour was attained in 1814 at the battle of Membrillar, in which the general assured a temporary collapse of the royal forces. He was appointed commandant-general by Bernardo O'Higgins, but after a coup d'état led by José Luis Carreras both were banished to the Argentine province of Mendoza. John Mackenna died on 21 November 1814 in a duel with José Luis Carreras in Buenos Aires.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Tellez Yañez, Raúl. *El General Juan Mackenna: Héroe del Membrillar (Ensayo histórico)* (Santiago: Alonso de Ovalle, 1952).
- Vicuña Mackenna, Benjamín. *La guerra a muerte: memoria sobre las últimas campañas de la Independencia de Chile, 1819-1824* (Santiago: Imprenta Nacional, 1868).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Francisco Burdett [*Frank*] O'Connor (1791-1871), officer in the Irish Legion of Simón Bolívar's army in Venezuela

**O'Connor, Francisco Burdett** [*Frank*] (1791-1871), officer in the Irish Legion of Simón Bolívar's army in Venezuela, later chief of staff to Antonio José de Sucre and minister of war in Bolivia. Francisco Burdett O'Connor was born on 12 June 1791 in Cork City, to a landowning Protestant family from England (originally named Conner), son of Roger O'Connor and Wilhamena Bowen, brother of the MP and Chartist leader Feargus O'Connor (1794-1855), and nephew of Arthur O'Connor (1763-1852), MP and hard-line leader of the United Irishmen, who was deported to France. Frank O'Connor's godfather was Sir Francis Burdett, a baronet and radical member of the English parliament.

In July 1819, the lieutenant-colonel of the Tenth Lancers Francisco Burdett O'Connor boarded the *Hannah* in Dublin together with 100 officers and 101 men of the Irish Legion in Simón Bolívar's army of independence. The commanding officer of the Tenth Lancers, Colonel William Aylmer, was also second in command of the Irish Legion. They arrived in September 1819 on the island of Margarita off the coast of Venezuela. No preparations had been made to receive them, and hardships were experienced by the men of the Irish Legion suffering the combined effects of the officers' lack of experience, scarce victuals, and deficiency of buildings. Many of the officers died and others refused to remain and returned to Ireland.

In December 1819 the Irish Legion was reorganised and O'Connor was appointed commandant of a regiment formed by mixed forces. In March 1820 the regiment sailed for the mainland to attack the city of Riohacha together with other units. O'Connor's lancers hauled down the Spanish royal ensign and raised in its place their own standard, displaying the harp of Ireland in the centre. When, on 20 March 1820, the enemy attacked the patriots near Laguna Salada, O'Connor's lancers were the only soldiers to rush out of their barracks and storm the royalist forces, forcing them to withdraw in flight. One hundred and seventy soldiers, supported by a company of sharpshooters and one small field gun defeated 1,700 royalists.

As the division was marching out of Riohacha the advance guard walked into an ambush. O'Connor was slightly wounded in the right shoulder when he and his lancers charged upon the enemy with a terrible 'hurrah'. After a mutiny, the Irish Legion was dispatched to Jamaica but some hundred of the lancers whose loyalty O'Connor had managed to retain disembarked again on the mainland and played an important part in the siege of Cartagena and the campaign against Santa Marta.

Bolívar had quickly developed a high regard for the young Irish colonel, whom he appointed chief of staff of the United Army of Liberation in Peru within six months of his joining it from Panama early in 1824. It was O'Connor who kept the patriot forces coordinated and supplied as they manoeuvred under Sucre's command in distinctly hostile territory to bring the last Spanish viceroy in mainland America to battle and defeat. At the battle of Junín in August 1824, O'Connor was chief of staff of the patriot army with 1,500 men against the viceroy's 7,000 troops and nine artillery pieces. The engagement was confined to cavalry charges and ended within an hour with not a single shot fired.

Once established in present-day Bolivia, almost fifteen years later O'Connor rejoined forces with Otto Braun, ex-commander of the grenadiers at the battle of Junín, to aid the Peruvian-Bolivian army. On 24 June 1838 they inflicted a defeat on the invading Argentine army at the battle of Montenegro (known as Cuyambuyo by the Argentines). The battle of Montenegro consolidated the present southwestern border of Bolivia as well as allowing O'Connor to retire from military service and dedicate himself to his farms.

From 1825 O'Connor regularly contributed to *El Condor* of Chuquisaca (Sucre). In June 1827 he published a proclamation encouraging Irish people to settle in the 'New Erin' of Tarija, 'where the poor of my flesh and blood will be received with open arms.' O'Connor's memoirs were published in 1895 by his

grandson Tomás O'Connor d'Arlach with the title *Independencia Americana: Recuerdos de Francisco Burdett O'Connor*. They are an essential contemporary account of the South American wars of independence.

In 1826 Francisco O'Connor was appointed military governor of Tarija. The congress of Bolivia awarded him 5,000 pesos as a 'liberator', but he himself never used that title despite the rare honour it bestowed. In 1827 he married Francisca Ruyloba, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a family of clerks and priests. Francisco Burdett O'Connor died in Tarija on 5 October 1871 at eighty-one years of age. An atheist while in Ireland, he became a devout Catholic in South America and died with the last rites.

Although only one of his children survived - a daughter, Hercilia - O'Connor d'Arlach is still a recognised family name in southern Bolivia, and one of the provinces of the department of Tarija carries the name of O'Connor.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Dunkerley, James. *The Third Man: Francisco Burdett O'Connor and the Emancipation of the Americas* (London: University of London, Institute of Latin American Studies, 1999). Occasional Papers N° 20.
- Hasbrouck, Alfred. *Foreign Legionaries in the Liberation of Spanish South America* (New York: Columbia University, 1928).
- McGinn, Brian. *Love and War Complicate a 19th Century Celebration: St. Patrick's Day in Peru, 1824* in: "Irish Roots" 1 (1995), pp. 26-27.

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

**Ambrose [Ambrosio] O'Higgins (c. 1721-1801),  
governor and captain-general of Chile, later viceroy of Peru**



**Ambrosio O'Higgins** (c. 1721-1801)  
(Diego Barros Arana, *Historia general de Chile*, 1999)

**O'Higgins, Ambrose [Ambrosio]** (c. 1721-1801), governor and captain-general of Chile, later viceroy of Peru, and probably the eighteenth-century Irish emigrant who attained the highest position in the Spanish empire. Son of Charles O'Higgins and Margaret O'Higgins of Ballinary, County Sligo, and later of Summerhill, County Meath. Ambrose O'Higgins was educated in Ireland, with an early instruction in mathematics, and later he was trained to become a surveyor or draughtsman.

O'Higgins went to Spain around 1751 and worked for the Irish merchant firm of Butler in Cádiz, on whose behalf he undertook a commercial journey to South America in 1756. He visited his younger brother William, who was living in Asunción, Paraguay, with a wife and two children. In 1761 Ambrose O'Higgins was back in Spain, where he joined the army as 'ingeniero delineador' (engineer draughtsman, with the rank of lieutenant). Three years later he was sent again to South America as assistant to the military governor of Valdivia, the Irishman John Garland. On his first journey across the Andes, O'Higgins conceived the idea of improving the route by constructing a chain of brick-built shelters, and by 1766 an year-round postal service was operating between the Atlantic coast and Chile. He returned to Spain and wrote the *Description of the Realm of Chile*, a memorandum containing recommendations about the indigenous population, agriculture, trade, and administration.

Again in Chile in 1770, Ambrose O'Higgins was named captain, lieutenant-colonel, and field-marshal. In the 1770s his troops were engaged in wars with the Llanos and Pehuenches, indigenous people of the region, and he was twice wounded. In 1780 he was appointed commandant-general of the Spanish army in Chile, defending the town of Concepción against the attacks of the British army. O'Higgins' highest titles were attained in 1787 as governor and captain-general of Chile, and in September of 1795 as viceroy of Peru. He was also granted the titles of Baron of Ballinary (of questionable Irish origin) and Marquis of Osorno by the King of Spain. Among his most important achievements was the abolition in 1789 of the

cruel 'encomienda' system, whereby landowners kept indigenous labourers in conditions close to slavery. He also pushed reforms in the Catholic church to benefit the poor, eliciting the antagonism of the reactionary Creole elite. He performed his duties as viceroy most ably for nearly five years.

Ambrose O'Higgins never married and his titles died with him. In his late fifties he had a romantic and illegitimate liaison with María Isabel Riquelme de la Barrera, an attractive eighteen-year-old Chilean woman from a well-known local family. Their son, Bernardo O'Higgins, was born in Chile and was educated by, but not with, his father, with whom he was never on intimate terms. Bernardo was a leading figure in the Chilean war of independence and is remembered as the emancipator of Chile.

Ambrose O'Higgins died on 19 March 1801 at Lima, Peru, where he was buried in the church of San Pedro.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Cayol, Rafael, *El Barón de Ballenar* (Buenos Aires: author's edition, 1989).
- De Breffny, Brian. 'Ambrose O'Higgins: An Enquiry into his Origins and Ancestry' in *The Irish Ancestor* 2:2 (1970), pp. 81-89.
- Donoso, Ricardo. *El Marqués de Osorno Don Ambrosio Higgins, 1720-1801* (Santiago: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Chile, 1941).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## William Smith [Guillermo] Payne (1870-1924), missionary in Argentina and Bolivia



William Smith Payne (1870-1924)  
(Ernest Moore, *Pioneer Work in Argentina*)

**Payne, William Smith** [Guillermo] (1870-1924), missionary in Argentina and Bolivia and founder of the first Evangelist church in Cochabamba, was born in Dublin, the second of four children. His father died when William was six years of age. When his elder brother moved to New York for employment, William Payne joined the railway company, where he was respected as a responsible and disciplined employee. Reportedly, his neighbours in Dublin used to say: 'Set your clocks on the hour. Here comes little William!'

At the age of sixteen, Payne was appointed superintendent of the Sunday school in an evangelical mission. His formal studies were at Wesley College in Dublin, and he was subsequently employed by a company that administrated properties. During a Dublin visit by John Henry Ewen, who had been on a mission in Argentina, William Payne was convinced to travel to the mission in South America. At the same time he met his wife, Elizabeth Milne from Scotland, and they were married in September 1890. The young couple travelled to Spain to observe the gospel methods used there and to learn the Spanish language. During their stay in Spain their first daughter, Margaret, was born. Later in Argentina, Lillian and Arthur completed the family circle.

In August 1892 the family arrived in Buenos Aires. First William helped out at the mission at Quilmes and then in the southern district of Tandil. Due to Elizabeth's bad health, in 1894 they moved to Córdoba. Payne went on horseback to visit small towns in the provinces of Córdoba, Santa Fe, Salta and Jujuy. Sometimes while he preached, he was pelted with stones, rotten oranges and other refuse. The Roman Catholic priests accused him and his companions of distributing false bibles, and many copies were confiscated and burned.

In 1902 William Payne established a mission in Cochabamba, Bolivia. In September of that year an enraged mob, instigated by the local clergy of Cochabamba, advanced to the Paynes' house throwing paving stones and shouting 'heretics, enemies of the holy religion.' Then they beset their house and made a kerosene bonfire in the street with the Paynes' furniture and belongings. This incident was the result of political feuds between liberal and traditionalist leaders in Bolivia. Paynes' house, including a gospel bookstore and lecture room, was on Comercio street in Cochabamba (present-day Nataniel Aguirre). William Payne registered before the Bolivian authorities as a member of the Canadian Baptist Mission, recently permitted to operate in the country according to the liberal laws of the Federal Revolution.

However, the bishop of Cochabamba Jacinto Anaya verbally attacked the mission through the pages of *El Heraldo* newspaper.

Payne replied that he was a photographer, preacher, and that he was trained in many trades unknown at that time in Bolivia. He added that he had been born in Ireland, that he was waiting for a shipment of bibles to be distributed in Cochabamba, and he would consult with his lawyer about his situation. The municipal council warned William Payne that he must refrain from celebrating faiths other than the Roman Catholic, but to no avail. The debate intensified and politicians in Cochabamba and La Paz defended their views for or against freedom of worship. Riots ensued and the police had to intervene. The affair ended with a constitutional reform that allowed freedom of worship and abolished the ecclesiastical privileges of the Roman Catholic clergy in Bolivia.

William Payne and his family returned to Argentina, where they settled in Córdoba. Elizabeth died in 1916. In November 1917 he married Marie L. Mohsler, who had been in the mission in Tucumán, and they settled in Jujuy. His second wife died in May 1921. His third and last marriage was to Constance Coomber, who had commenced working among indigenous peoples in northern Argentina and in southern Bolivia. William Payne died in 1924 in Jujuy.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Alba, Miguel, 'Las instituciones' in *500 años de cristianismo en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: CEHILA, 1992).
- García Mérida, Wilson, 'Recuerdos del primer vendedor de biblias' in *Revista de Domingo*, 11 June 2006 (<http://www.lostiempos.com>), accessed 13 July 2006.
- Moore, Ernest, 'Pioneer Work in Argentina - The Life of William S. Payne' in *Truth & Tidings*, May and June 1997 (<http://www.truthandtidings.com>), accessed 13 July 2006.
- Zamudio, Adela, *Quo Vadis?* poem published in *El Heraldo* (1903).

## Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1831-1886), Chilean writer, journalist and historian



Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna (1831-1886)  
(C. Gautiere, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile)

**Vicuña Mackenna, Benjamín** (1831-1886), Chilean writer, journalist and historian. Born in Santiago on 25 August 1831, son of Pedro Félix Vicuña and Carmen Mackenna, and grandson of General John Mackenna (1771-1814) of the war of independence.

Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna studied in Santiago, Chile, and joined the school of law in 1849. From the beginning of his career he contributed to *La Tribuna* newspaper, writing political articles. In 1851 he participated in Pedro Urriola's revolution against the government but was taken prisoner during the attack on the headquarters of the Chacabuco Regiment. On 4 July 1851 Vicuña Mackenna and Roberto Souper managed to escape from the prison disguised as women. In 1852 he lived in exile in the United States, and travelled from San Francisco through Mexico and Canada. A year later he studied agronomy in England, and then visited many parts of Europe including Ireland.

Back in Chile, in 1856 Vicuña Mackenna graduated as a lawyer from the University of Santiago. Although he did not practice as a barrister, his political and other writings were solidly based on legal knowledge. Together with Isidoro Errázuriz, in 1858 Vicuña Mackenna founded the newspaper *La Asamblea Constitucional*. He was expelled by the government and exiled to England, but was allowed to return in 1863. That year he began contributing to *El Mercurio* newspaper. In 1865 he was in New York as envoy of the Chilean government, and founded *La Voz de América* newspaper. Elected national senator for a six-year term, in 1872 Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna was also appointed mayor of Santiago. His political career was interrupted in 1875 when he was defeated by Errázuriz in the Chilean presidential elections. He dedicated his life to journalism and writing, and in 1880 edited *El Nuevo Ferrocarril* and *La Nación*.

Vicuña Mackenna's most important works are 'El sitio de Chillán' (1849), 'La agricultura aplicada a Chile' (published in London, 1853), 'Chili' (Paris, 1855), 'Tres años de viajes' (1856), 'Ostracismo de los Carrera' (1857), 'Historia de la revolución del Perú' (1860), 'Ostracismo de O'Higgins' (1860), 'Diego de Almagro' (1862), 'Historia de la Administración Montt' (1861/62), 'Vida de Don Diego Portales' (1861/62), 'Historia de Santiago' (1868), 'Historia de Chile' (1868), 'Historia de Valparaíso' (1868), 'La guerra a



muerte' (1868), 'Francisco Moyén' (1868), and dozens of other novels, history books, and political essays, the most popular being 'El Santa Lucía', 'La unión americana', 'El cambiazó', 'Seis años en el senado de Chile', and 'El 20 de Abril'.

Like his contemporary Bartolomé Mitre in Argentina, Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna represented the intellectual class of the South American landed elites. They initiated mainstream historiography in their countries, and selected and immortalised the national discourse that served those elites in envisioning a model of national values to be imitated by the middle and working classes.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Figueroa, Pedro Pablo. *Apuntes históricos sobre la vida y las obras de don Benjamín Vicuña Mackenna* (Santiago: Imprenta Victoria, 1886).

# Irish Migration Studies in Latin America

Society for Irish Latin American Studies

## Thomas Charles James Wright (1799-1868), officer in Simón Bolívar's army and founder of the Ecuadorian naval school

**Wright, Thomas Charles James** (1799-1868), officer in Simón Bolívar's army and founder of the Ecuadorian naval school, was born on 26 January 1799 in Queensborough, Drogheda, County Louth, the son of Thomas Wright and Mary Montgomery. In 1810 Thomas was sent to the naval college at Portsmouth, and two years later joined the H.M.S. *Newcastle* under the command of George Stewart. He sailed in that vessel to serve with the squadron under Borlase Warren, engaged in blockading the Atlantic coast of the United States. He was promoted and went home on leave in 1817. Dating from that time Thomas Wright seems to have been under the influence of the same radical and republican ideas that had inspired the French Revolution.

In November 1817 Wright enlisted as officer in the British Legion of Bolívar. He sailed on the brigantine *Dowson* with 200 other volunteers and valuable ammunition, and after a series of delays, dangers, and adventures landed on Margarita Island off the Venezuelan coast on 3 April 1818. Nine years later, Wright and another Irishman, Harris, were the only survivors of the thirty-two officers who had left on the *Dowson*.

At Angostura (present-day Ciudad Bolívar), Wright first met Simón Bolívar, for whom he quickly developed boundless admiration. His first action was at Trapiche de Gamarra on 27 March 1819. His victory there inspired Bolívar to undertake his audacious New Granada campaign and the march across the Andes.

Wright played important roles in the battles of Pantano de Vargas and Gamesa in July 1819, and in the decisive victory at Boyacá in August of the same year, after which he was promoted to captain. In 1820 he was sent back with his Rifles regiment to the coastal plain to operate in the jungle east of the Magdalena against the Spanish forces based on Santa Marta. The battle at Ciénaga de Santa Marta on 10 November 1820 resulted in the fall of this town. Conveyed by sea to Maracaibo, the Rifles participated on 21 June 1821 in Bolívar's decisive victory at Carabobo. Cartagena was taken and the Rifles were brought in boats up the Magdalena en route to Popayán. They formed part of the contingent led by Bolívar in the second of his legendary Andean campaigns. After winning the battle at Bomboná on 7 April 1822, Wright was twice mentioned in Bolívar's order of the day for his exceptional skill and courage. From February 1822 Wright was acting lieutenant-colonel, a rank which was confirmed early in 1823, when he was serving under Sucre, who joined forces with Bolívar at Quito, Ecuador.

Wright was sent to Guayaquil in order to improvise a naval force and patrol northwards between that Ecuadorian city and Panamá. In September 1824, after Bolívar's great victory at Junín and Sucre's at Ayacucho, the Spanish made their last bid to turn the tide and sent a fleet to break the republican blockade in the Peruvian stronghold of Callao. Wright had had a busy year assuring supplies by sea for Bolívar's and Sucre's armies. He had greatly impressed Bolívar, who had appointed him commodore of the Pacific squadron that joined the patriot naval force off Callao. Trying to force their way out, the royalist ships became closely engaged with the blockaders. The brigantine *Chimborazo* sustained three water-line hits and was in collision with the ship of the line *Asia*, but by virtue of his consummate skill Wright manoeuvred himself free and avoided being driven ashore. In January 1826 Callao capitulated and Spanish rule in South America was ended. Meanwhile Wright on the *Chimborazo* had ferried Bolívar from port to port all along the liberated Pacific coast as far as the Chilean border.

Thomas Wright settled in Guayaquil in 1826, and founded the nautical school that is still functioning there. In 1828 the Peruvian government sent the corvette *Libertad* to blockade Guayaquil. Wright had

studied intimately the unique swells and currents of the Gulf of Guayaquil and he used his knowledge to drive off the *Libertad*. Wright's *Guayaquileña* suffered sixty casualties out of the ninety-six men onboard.

Wright took part at sea and land in the fighting that ended with the delimitation of the Ecuador-Peru boundary, and he was specially commended by Sucre after the victory at Portada de Tarqui. Ecuador achieved independence on 8 August 1830, and Wright became one of the new republic's leading citizens. He married María de los Angeles Victoria Rico, the niece of Vicente Rocafuerte, president of Ecuador in 1835-1839 and 1843-1845. Wright converted to Roman Catholicism before the wedding. After María's death, Wright took her sister Pepita as his second wife. He was then commander of the Ecuadorian navy and governor of Guayaquil. His courage during a yellow fever epidemic in 1840 was remarkable.

A military plot in 1845 overthrew the liberal regime supported by Wright and he went into exile in Chile for fifteen years. In Chile he met and exerted a great influence upon the Ecuadorian exile Eloy Alfaro, who would be president in 1897-1913. Wright returned to Ecuador in 1860 and was involved in various liberal conspiracies against the despot Moreno. With his house still surrounded by police, Thomas Wright died on 10 December 1868.

Edmundo Murray

---

### References

- Cabezas y Cabezas, César, *Biografía del General Almirante Tomás Carlos Wright Montgomery, 1799-1868* (Guayaquil: IHME, 1944).

- Hasbrouck, Alfred. *Foreign Legionaries in the Liberation of Spanish South America*. New York: Columbia University, 1928.

- Ireland, John E. de Courcy. "Thomas Charles Wright: Soldier of Bolívar; Founder of the Ecuadorian Navy" in *The Irish Sword* Vol. VI N° 25 (Winter 1964), pp. 271-275.

- Wright, Eduardo, 'El General de División Tomás Carlos Wright' in *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas* 5:7 (Quito, 1937), pp. 412-414.

