



INTRODUCTION

Irish-born residents made up almost 17% of the Victorian population in 1854. This compares with 15% who were Scottish-born and 41% who were born in England. Roman Catholics made up 17.1% of the Victorian population. The statistics for Geelong are not very different as there were no enclaves in the district which were particularly Irish such as was the case with several other areas in Victoria.

A check through the names will show that the families represented here, came from a wide range of the counties of Ireland, but it will also be seen that the county of Clare is mentioned the most. This supports the fact that among all the Irish counties, Clare was the most important to Victoria. In some years almost one in five emigrants to Victoria came from Clare. Many of the early Irish families and friends in Geelong were cohesive as the records of St. Mary's Roman Catholic church show that they intermarried, sponsored baptisms and witnessed marriages, but it can also be seen from the small representation here that many immigrants married out of their own religion and chose partners who were not of Irish background.¹

This publication is by no means a complete list of all the Irish to come to Geelong and district, however it does demonstrate the wealth of information that is available for those researching in our region.

It has ended up with a far greater number of pages than first envisaged – basically it is far too large to print in hard copy! That problem has been solved with the decision to produce this e-Book on CD Rom. And of course one of the benefits of the e-Book produced in Adobe Acrobat format means that it is fully text searchable – hence the decision to not include an index in the actual publication. The book will however be indexed and added to the Geelong & District database freely available to search at www.zades.com.au.

Don't be disappointed if you don't find your ancestors in the 1700+ pages of this publication – the other references that are provided should be enough to encourage you to research in our region. You will also find a lot of help on the Geelong & District Mailing List which you can find on the web site above. There is a wealth of knowledge on that list which is full of very helpful researchers with interest in people and places of our region.

In this book we refer to "Geelong and district". In the very early years that really encompassed all areas to the west and north-west of Geelong and extending to the South Australian border. Once settlement had progressed in Port Phillip, the term Geelong and district for our research area refers to places within the arc from the Otways, north to just below Ballarat, and across to Werribee. [See map on the next page]

And before you ask – no, we aren't planning on producing an updated version of this book!

¹ Kranjc, Elaine & Phelan, Lorraine, *The Geelong Irish: a record of some 19th century families*, The Geelong Family History Group Inc, Geelong, 1991



Map showing rough area covered by "Geelong and district"

