

JAMES AND ALICE RICE

This is the brief story of James and Alice Rice and their seven children, Patrick, Mary, Catherine, James, Thomas, Johanna and Alice, who came from Ireland to settle in Australia. They came on the ship "Airlie" out of Plymouth, England, and after a voyage of several months, arrived in Australia on the 12th of June, 1877, landing in Adelaide on the 25th of June.

There is not a great deal known about their Irish history. James worked on the railways and the family lived in various towns. They were at Tullamore, Offaly County (where Patrick was born), Kilkenny (where Mary was born), and some years in Borris, County Carlow (where James and Thomas were born - their baptismal records are in the parish church). While in County Clare, James worked at Six Mile Cross, a little south of Ennis, and later at Portarlington, Offaly County. This last town is on the main railway line from Dublin to Limerick, and is probably the one from which they emigrated. They definitely had an auction sale of their furniture and effects as the handbill announcing the sale was in the possession of the family for many years, but alas has been lost.

Two large wooden boxes, approximately 5' x 2' x 2', which held the family possessions during the voyage, are still in use today. Made by Patrick, one is used as a telephone seat by his great-granddaughter, Helen Kerr (nee Rice) of Sydney, and the other, used as a toolbox by his great niece, Christine Rice of Adelaide.

Much of the family information is hearsay from the memories of various members of the family. Tom Rice (son of Thomas) on leave during World War I, went to Ennis, County Clare, with information supplied by his father. Tom was at first taken for a "Black and Tan" (British soldier) - his was the first Australian uniform seen there. When they found he was an Australian, and of Irish descent, they couldn't do enough for him. They also invited his younger brother Jim, then in France with the A.I.F., to come there on his next leave, which he did. The inhabitants found them some Rices, (no relation) but the boys made many friends.

Eileen and Cliff Barnett visited Borris, County Carlow, in 1969, and saw the baptismal records in the local church. The strange thing was that the name of Rice was spelt "Royse", but the parents' names were correct, James and Alice (nee Nolan). The parish priest of Borris told the Barnetts that names were often spelt phonetically in those days.

Anne and Alan Rendell visited Kilkenny in their travels. They found some Rices whose property had been in the family for 200 years, but no connection could be established.

It is thought that one, or perhaps two, of James' brothers may have migrated to the United States about the same time. No contact was ever established.

In South Australia the family lived in Adelaide, Kapunda, Burra, Morgan and perhaps other places. James Senior never worked in South Australia. He was really near 60 years old then, not 40, having put back his age for purposes of emigration. He and his wife Alice went to live with their youngest son, Thomas and his wife, Mary, at Hemmington (Thebarton). James died there in 1894, and Alice died in Paterborough in 1906. They are both buried in Cheltenham Cemetery.

The following pages give a brief description of their descendants.

