

John Tighe a man with a heart.

There has been some information available on John Tighe of Keelogue, although not much has been written about the devotion between John and his wife Margaret and their two daughters Honora and Mary.

Being convicted of manslaughter he was transported along with 217 male convicts on the *Parmelia II* which left Cork Ireland on 29 October 1833 arriving in Sydney on 2 March 1834. He received his Certificate of Freedom on 10 March 1841.

He wrote several letters to the Parish Priest in Riverstown inquiring about his wife and daughters. The Priest replied on behalf of his wife because most ordinary people were illiterate. It is known that his brother Hugh Tighe had gone to America and so did John's wife Margaret and daughters Honora and husband John McDonogh and Mary with her husband Michael McDonogh.

The ship *Carrington* of 581 tons under the command of Captain Charles Sumner sailed from New York arriving in Sydney on 13 June 1858. On board were Margaret Tighe, daughter Mary and son-in-law Michael McDonogh and their children Ann, Mary Ann, Margaret and baby John. John and Margaret Tighe were separated for a total of 25 years and yet the love and devotion between them never waned.

The following is a letter written to John Tighe in late 1849 by the Parish Priest. Sitting beside the Priest whilst the letter is being written is Margaret Tighe.

The society holds a printed copy of that letter which follows.

John Tighe

Your letter of the 20th March to Revd Mr Hester reached here this week. He had not been in his parish for the last five years. He is p.p. of Ardcarne, Co Roscommon near Boyle.

On receipt of your letter I sent for your wife as I was well acquainted with all your friends and family since I came to the parish, that is five years ago. Your two daughters are also alive - the eldest, Honora was married by me about three years ago to a young man John McDonogh of Drimshomagh - they have one child, a son, about two years old - the second girl, Mary has been living with her uncle, Patt McDonogh of Annaghcarty for the last three years. She is a very dutiful, industrious and becoming young girl - Your wife has been living in Annaghcarty as also Honora and her husband in a house belonging to Patt McDonogh her brother during the last year,

as the Landlord of Heapstown, Mr McTernan, obliged all the small cottiers to leave his land - your brother Hugh Tighe, left this country for America about twelve weeks ago - I read a letter from New York which came on yesterday to another parishioner of mine in which it was stated that Hugh Tighe landed there the day before that letter had been written.

Hugh often told me during the past year that he would strive to travel as far as you to Sydney if the Lord should spare him life. Your mother died about last April twelve month, your sister Nancy and her husband are still living at Heapstown, but in poor circumstances. Your wife got two letters from you since last Christmas and she got an answer written to them which was sent off by Hugh - I recollect the time Mrs Chisholme's letters arrived here for her to go as far as London - and to get a free passage from that to Sydney, the notice then was quite too short for her to be prepared, and in London time enough for the day appointed she would acquaint Mrs Chisholme of the fact, and afterwards there came a second letter from that lady ordering them to go to Dublin and take shipping, in the Waverley, in which she had procured a free passage for them. But it so happened that your poor wife, and all the family, were then in Fever, some of them recovering slowly and others only in the commencement of it. I wrote then to Mrs Chisholme stating their circumstances and since then no other offer has been made to them. They are quite surprised at hearing your letters were returned. They have been always desirous to go as far as you, if, by any possibility they could accomplish their wishes - there is nothing in this world would make them happy as to get an opportunity of going to you. They are now in very poor circumstances, you have heard of the great poverty and distress in this country for the last two years, but the present year appears to promise to be at least as bad for the poor people, as either of the last years - the potato crop is entirely blighted in this district and the accounts from all parts of Ireland as we read in the newspapers confirm the sad prospect.

If you could send a remittance of some money to your poor wife it would be indeed greatly wanted, she is very destitute of help and if you could make interest in that country to get their passage out here it would be considered the greatest blessing - your wife expected I would write a few lines from herself to you at the end of this letter, but I have not left myself any space - I remain your friend - Edward Feeny p.p.

I can inform you that your son-in-law, John McDonogh, is a well conducted, honest and industrious young man and very willing to work and earn for his family if there was any employment to be had in this country. He is a good husband and dutiful to his Mother-in-law, poor Mary would be very anxious to get as far as you, she begs of you to exert yourself if possible to get her out.

Direct your letters in care of Revd Edward Feeny, p.p. Riverstown, Co. Sligo, Ireland.

"P.S. Your wife is at my side while I write this letter: She requests me to send you her most affectionate love - she has never forgotten you an never shall - the children also have desired their fondest love to you".