

**To Columbia on the Tynemouth:
The Emigration of Single Women
And Girls in 1862**
JACKIE LAY

By 1850 England was experiencing a surplus of single, unemployed women. At the same time, her colonies, British Columbia and Australia in particular, were very much in need of domestic labour and wives. In response, a variety of disparate associations arose whose sole purpose was the exportation of these women to the colonies. Some societies helped to send female emigrants to the colonies to secure employment while other societies helped to send young female emigrants to provide wives for the men in the colonies.

In 1858, British Columbia had gold rush fever. Six thousand gold-mad miners, mostly single, flocked to British Columbia in the hope of becoming rich. From 1858 to 1863 relatively little family life existed in the colony because of the dearth of single white women.¹ During that time the marriage of a Native Indian woman to a white man was frowned upon by the Church but nevertheless, these marriages occurred.²

Since there were so many gold-mad miners in the colony, the Church of England felt that it was important to establish churches to help keep the English immigrants involved in a Christian lifestyle. One of London's philanthropists, Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, had donated £25,000 to the church which in turn was able to send one bishop and two archdeacons to Victoria to carry out the civilizing mission of the church.

Baroness Burdett-Coutts, a prominent figure in Anglican church society, helped establish church life in British Columbia and was also a strong influence in the decision to make George Hills the Bishop of Columbia. (British Columbia was referred to as Columbia then.) "Baroness Burdett-Coutts...had long held bishop Hills in her esteem and confidence, and it was understood that she was the moving cause of his far-off post of duty."³

Bishop Hills arrived on Vancouver Island at the height of the gold rush when hopeful miners disembarked at Victoria to stock up on the supplies they would need to have for their adventures in the gold mines of the mainland. Since the miners only used Victoria as a depot they were scarcely affected by the holy influences of the good Bishop. Therefore, the services of the church spread to the mainland, where Reverend Brown well knew the problems for the church in gold mining settlements.

Even though the church was available it was not being used. The conclusion was that without family life the church could not flourish. Such were sentiments of Reverend Brown:

Churches may and must be build, a faithful witness must be borne for holiness and virtue, but where there is no wedded life churchgoing must be difficult because morality is almost impossible.⁴

To solve his problem, Brown wrote a letter to the far-off Bishop of Oxford explaining the need for wives. As he tells the tale of the single men, he also requests the emigration of women:

Dozens of men have told me they would gladly marry if they could. I was speaking one evening on the subject of the dearth of females and mentioned my intention of writing to beg that a plan of emigration may be set on foot; whereupon one member of the company immediately exclaimed, 'Then Sir, I pre-empt a wife', and another and another, all round the circle of those listening to me earnestly exclaimed the same. Fancy the idea of pre-empting a wife! Yet I assure you this touches the root of the greatest blessing which can now be conferred upon this colony from home. Think of the 600,000 more women at home than there are men...⁵

On February 27, 1862 a regular meeting of the Columbia Mission Society took place in a London tavern, where prominent people gathered, including the Baroness Burdett-Coutts.⁶ The people involved in this meeting were members of the Columbia Mission Society which concerned itself with a the life of the Church of England in Columbia. During this meeting, Reverend Brown's letter was discussed and a solution was agreed upon, which led to the founding of an Anglican female emigration society called the Columbian Emigration Society.

In the speeches which took place discussing Reverend Brown's letter, two situations especially seemed to concern the Society. In the absence of marriageable white women, the men had established relationships with native women despite the disapproval of the Church which objected to the liaisons for a variety of reasons. In some cases they were concerned because there were no church marriages; in other instances they objected to mixed-blood offspring as well as illegitimate children. An excerpt from a speech presented at this meeting explained

There must be the dwelling-place of every deep degrading moral abomination unless you provide for an equality of sexes. You have to deal with a degraded people...who, under heathenism, have but a low squaw estimate of women, and yet you do to the native race a most deadly and irreparable wrong. In young colonies the more you degrade the moral senses, the more deadly injury do you inflect.⁷

Another Society concern was that London's workhouses and orphan asylums were becoming overpopulated with girls from twelve to fifteen years of age, who were orphans or whose parents could not afford to support them. The Society was worried about the future of these girls for whom employment was virtually impossible and for whom the possibility of prostitution was very real. Without marriage as an alternative to

the situation these girls were destitute. Not only was the Church fearful of the possibility of prostitution, but also it deplored the adolescents' pre-marital sexual experiences. The Society was concerned that leaving older girls in these institutions would encourage the younger ones to follow similar paths. A speech at the London meeting discusses the problem:

Consider the number of young girls there are in the various workhouses of this country. Look at the misery of their present life and the misery of their future. The reports of all the inspectors tell us that young girls in workhouses, on verging into womanhood and becoming acquainted with others of their own sex who are older and others of the sex which has driven them there, but too frequently become demoralized, to return as the wretched inmates of the asylum of their youth again, to hand over, as others did to them, the taint of evil....⁸

The speaker presumed that "they will naturally, by taking up of society, become wives and mothers in a Christian Land."⁹

After the news of the new emigration society spread, many rumours must have reached the church about the worthiness of its intentions because an article appeared in the *London Times* to explain its goals. The letter tried to explain the criteria the society would use in choosing females for emigration. The speech explained that because the society did not know exactly what Columbia offered, they could not ensure self-supporting women situations that would fulfill their expectations. The writer said, "We could not guarantee suitable homes on reaching the colony to women who should depend upon the use of their brains alone for support."¹⁰ Furthermore, the writer makes it clear that prospective emigrants would not include currently employed, educated and trained women. The writer said, "Nor does it seem desirable to withdraw from their sphere of valuable occupation in this country those women who have received sufficient education to place them in situations as teachers in families and schools at home."¹¹ Instead he declared the society's intention to send out to Columbia only the young and the desperate who he implied would accept without complaint whatever was offered:

Those who go out under the protection of this Society will agree to take service on reaching the colony in such situations as the Governor and Bishop and those acting with their authority may consider best suited to their several cases, and may have open and ready to give them occupation in a safe dwelling on their landing in Columbia.¹²

What this letter to the *London Times* does not make explicit is the hope expressed by Reverend Brown that these British girls would marry gold miners, thus establishing not only a family-centered existence, but also a nucleus of Anglican and English society. Thus, the Columbia Emigration Society was formed to send destitute girls to the colony.

The other emigration society at this time was the London Female Middle-Class Emigration Society, formed in May, 1862,¹³ and operated by women such as Emily Faithful, Maria S. Rye, Louisa Twining, Jane Lewin and Bessie Parkes. The Society, a feminist organization, was formed for the emigration of "educated women", a very

different philosophy from that of her eventual partner, the Columbia Emigration Society. One of the supporters of the former society wrote to *The Times* that:

The mistakes of the day are the notions that education is to raise everyone in life, instead of being the great aid of life in every position of it; and that women are sure to marry, and therefore, they need not be fitted for the struggles of the single life.¹⁴

The female Middle-Class Emigration Society well knew the worries of the single life for women in an economy where working opportunities were limited and employment difficult. Since work existed in the colonies, the Society's main intent was to promote and assist the emigration of single, trained women giving them an opportunity to be self-supporting. This association must have had specific appeal for women who were conventional enough to require the proprieties of protection and supervision en route, but adventuresome enough to gamble the cost of their fare on a chance at bettering themselves in the thriving colony. The charges of the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society were women, not juveniles in the care of orphanages or workhouses. While the women needed their future employment to support themselves, they were neither destitute nor futureless.

The intent of the London Female Middle-Class Emigration Society was not to send wives to save the Christian souls of the Columbia gold miners. In a letter of the *London Times*, Emily Faithful referred to the workers of her society as seeking "teachers in public schools, schoolmistresses and private governesses".¹⁵ Furthermore, she outlined the working plans of the Society, chief of which were that it would act as an international employment agency for middle-class women. She requested that committees in the colonies "forward instructions as to the kind and number of educated women required, the situations vacant, or likely soon to become vacant".¹⁶ In the same letter three methods of financing the voyage were carefully described. "The home committee will endeavour to produce assisted passages...and...it reserves the right of determining how far it will assist candidates with money...."¹⁷ Women "with means of their own" were welcomed. Those women who borrowed money from the Society for their passage were expected to repay the loan. In contrast, the Columbia Emigration Society entirely paid for the fares of its charges.

The Columbia Emigration Society, in cooperation with the London Female Middle-Class Emigration Society, sent two groups of women to British Columbia. A group sailed on April 17, 1862 to Victoria, but little more than that is known. The main body of women followed on the S.S. *Tynemouth*, and it is popularly called the first brideship. Twenty women were sent by the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society and forty by the Columbia Emigration Society.¹⁸ Maria Rye wrote in the *London Times*, "a party of 20 women left this office for British Columbia on the 7th of this month in the *Tynemouth*. Forty more women were at the same time sent out in the same ship and under the same matron by the committee of the Columbia Emigration Society."¹⁹

Originally, according to *The Times*, the *Tynemouth* was supposed to leave London on May 24th and Dartmouth on the 28th, but with delays, it left with its 300 plus passengers on June 9, 1862.

Fredrick Whymper, writer and artist and a passenger himself, wrote about the passenger aboard the Tynemouth:

Our most noticeable living freight was, however, an 'invoice of sixty young ladies' destined for the colonial and matrimonial market. They had been sent out by a home society under the watchful care of a clergyman and matron; and they must have past the dreariest three months of their existence on board, for they were isolated from the rest of the passengers and could only look on at the fun and amusements in which everyone else could take a part.²⁰

Whatever the intentions of the Emigration societies, Mr. Whymper clearly believed the women were sailing towards weddings.

It took 99 days for the brideship Tynemouth to sail from Dartmouth, England to Victoria, British Columbia. The ship covered 17,000 miles at an average of 200 miles a day at a speed of 15 knots. The actual time spent at sea was 84 days since two stops made on the voyage, one at the Falkland Islands for repairs, restocking and refueling, and the other at San Francisco, took thirteen days and two days, respectively.

The two people in charge of all the women were Reverend William Richard Scott, who was responsible for the transporting of the women, and the matron, Mrs. James Robb, who was responsible for teaching the ladies all the arts of womanhood and keeping an eye on the women to protect them from the "lascivious attentions of the crew".²¹

With Mrs. Robb were her husband and three children, William, Jane and Jessie. With Reverend Scott came his wife, Helen and two children, B. Scott and Clemear Scott. The Scotts were on their way to the Sandwich Islands to do missionary work.

Three classes of passengers were on the ship, the majority being third-class which included the sixty women who lived amidships in an area dimly lit and poorly ventilated. This was a double burden because the women had to remain in this same area throughout the voyage and conditions only grew worse as the ship sailed on. Despite two mutinies and several storms, only one person died during the voyage: Elizabeth Buchanan. She died just before the Falkland Islands where she was buried.

Upon arriving at the Falkland Islands in August, 1862, the ship docked at Stanley Harbour to take on more coal and fresh water. When it was possible the passengers went ashore to shoot some game, but all they added to their larder were sea birds and fowl. However, the passengers in the care of the emigration societies were not allowed to go ashore. There is no stated reason for this but one would guess that Reverend Scott and Mrs. Robb felt that they could better protect their charges from possible harm if they remained on board.

Just before the California coast, the ship was forced to put up sail because the coal was starting to run low. In order to reach San Francisco, everything burnable was burned. As Fredrick Whymper wrote, "...the day before our arrival in San Francisco it was seriously contemplated to strip the second and third cabins of their berths and furniture".²² The ship reached San Francisco on September 9, 1862.

**COLUMBIAN EMIGRATION SOCIETY.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.**

Sir, The committee of this society beg that you will kindly permit me to give some information to the public concerning our objects and plans of operation; your doing so will very much assist in bringing our correspondence within the limits of the field in which we think our organization may become most useful.

Reliable information has reached this country, through various channels, of the inestimable value which a carefully conducted stream of emigration of industrious women from Great Britain would prove at the present critical stage in the rapid progress of the colony of British Columbia; and this society has been founded for that purpose, in the first instance, of facilitating such an emigration, under the conviction that, in a commercial empire like this, it is an essential element in the sound growth of a new colony that the men who first open it out should be able to settle and surround themselves with the humanizing ties of family life.

Two principles will guide us in selecting women for emigration.

First, we could not guarantee suitable homes on reaching the colony to women who should depend upon the use of their brains alone for support, nor does it seem desirable to withdraw from their sphere of valuable occupation in this country those women who have received sufficient education to place them in situations as teachers in families and schools at home. Those who go out under the protection of this society will agree to take service, on reaching the colony, in such situations as the Governor and Bishop, and those acting with their authority, may consider best suited to their several cases, and may have open and ready to give them occupation and a safe dwelling on their landing in Columbia.

Secondly, it is not the wish of this society to unsettle or withdraw from their valuable duties the trained and efficient domestic servants who have good employment and ample remuneration for their important services at home. Floating between those two classes there are thousands of women whose hopes and prospects in this country are most dreary and painful beyond description; some are friendless girls between the ages of 12 and 15, who are in various institutions, such as 'Homes' and orphan establishments, who would be invaluable for some years as helpers in the families of the colonists, and who would in due time become part of the settled population; others have experienced the terrible blow of that death which removed their father from his post of usefulness, broke off their education and threw them to discharge various domestic duties in their widowed mother's house. Take the one instance in the following touching letter from the vast number of applications which are crowding upon us. A lady writes:

'Dear Sir,—In consequence of a letter I received from my cousin, Mrs. G—, whom I had requested to make some inquiries, through Mr. M'E—, about the emigration to British Columbia, I think it better to write you direct, as, perhaps, you will furnish me with the desired information. The family on whose behalf I make the inquiry, Mrs. M— and her five daughters, are exceedingly desirous of going out. Since the father's death, about three or four years ago, the family have been indifferently off. He had a salary from the Church Missionary Society, having been a catechist, and lost his health in India. He was a most respectable man, and the family very well conducted, but since his death times have been very bad with them, and they would now be thankful to go anywhere where they could find employment. Would you kindly tell me by what means it is proposed to send them out, and what money would be required on their part? I fear they themselves are very destitute, but friends might be found to help.

'March 25.'

'I remain, yours truly, 'L.B.'

Alas! such cases are known to us in great numbers. What a tale is revealed by another lady, who states that she knew of an advertisement for a nursery governess, offering 15£ a year salary, to which more than 450 applications were returned. Think of the anxious hearts whose wishes for employment were rendered sad and painful as, day by day, the postman brought them no reply. Multiply that advertisement by the numbers we see published every day, and reflect upon the multitude of such women who are literally 'dying out' in this country.

And, let it be remembered, such women cannot enter the society and atmosphere of our English kitchens, not from an unwillingness to work, but because they have not learnt that particular business. Moreover, if a benevolent lady should try one of them, either as waitingmaid or as a housemaid, there is an immediate conspiracy among the professional servants against the intruder, and in a few weeks, with a heavier heart than ever, she is again compelled to seek the shelter of her mother's house, all the worse in her reputation for having tried a servant's place and failed.

What useful labourers would those women become in Columbia, as they are virtuous and longing to be employed! If those who have the means would but contribute the funds with which we might bridge the ocean, in a short time many of those great sufferers would become happy and industrious settlers in this rising colony.

You will much oblige a large circle of friends by kindly publishing this letter and supporting an appeal.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,

JOHN GARRETT, Vicar of St. Paul, near Penzance,
and Honorary Secretary to the Society.
54, Charing cross, London, S.W., April 3.

Letter to the Editor: London Times, April 7, 1862.

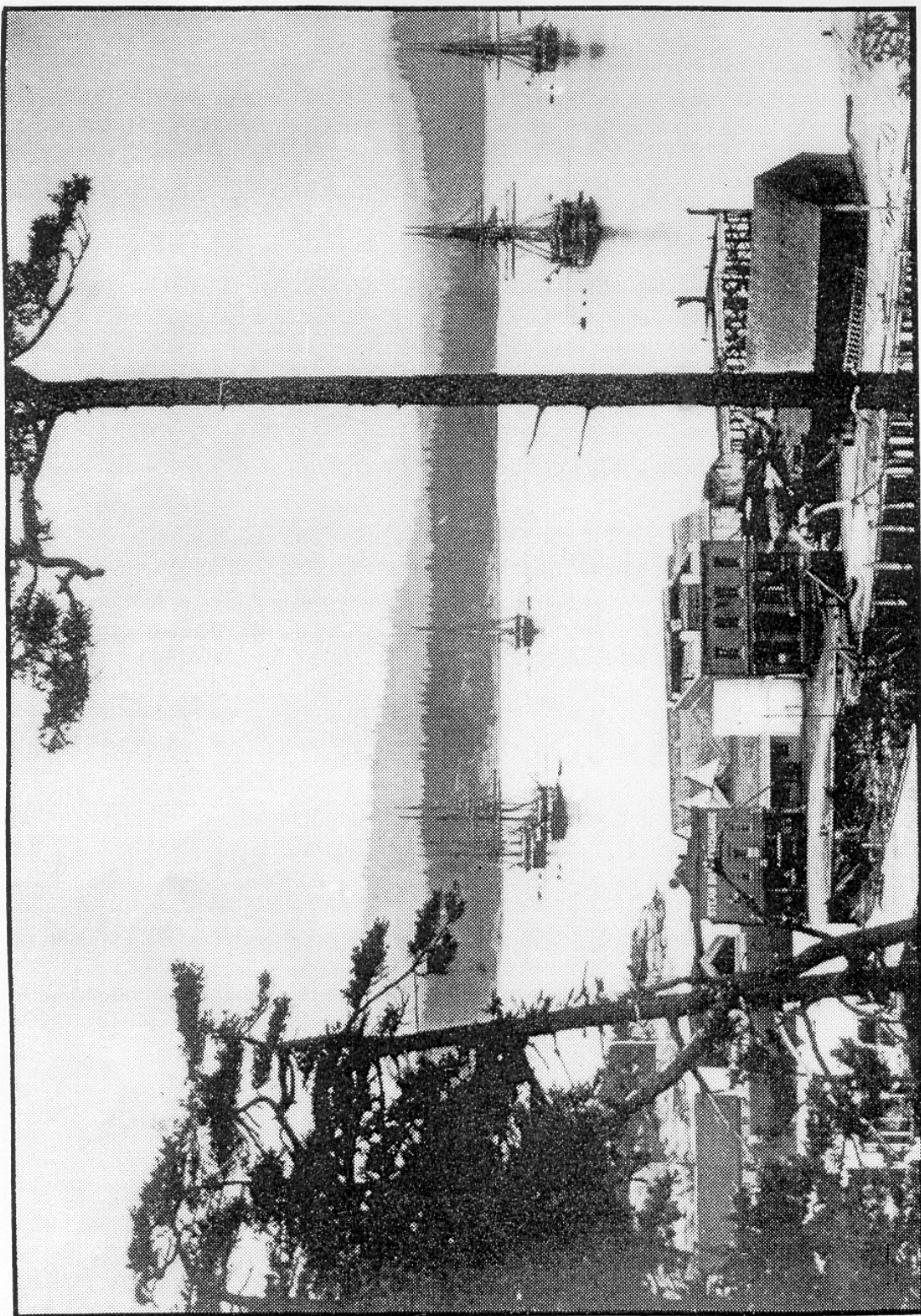
STEAM to the GOLD FIELDS of BRITISH COLUMBIA.—For VICTORIA, Vancouver's Island (calling if required at San Francisco), the iron screw steamship TYNE-MOUTH, A 19 years at Lloyd's, 1,650 tons register, 600-horse power indicated, ALFRED HELLYER Commander: will load at the Jetty, London Docks, leaving punctually on the 24th of May, and embarking passengers at Dartmouth on the 28th of May. This steamship, having been fitted with new engines and boilers, as well as all the most recent appliances for rendering her one of the finest passenger steamers afloat, offers a mode of transit to the above colony unequalled in speed and comfort as well as in economy. In order to ensure a rapid passage she will take only a very limited cargo, touching at the Falkland Islands for coals, fresh provisions, and water. The accommodation for the several classes is of a superior description, the dietary scale liberal, and every means will be adapted to promote the comfort of the passengers. For freight or passage apply to W. S. Lindsay and Co., 8, Austinfriars, or 54½, Old Broad-street, E.C.

(above) *Advertisement: London times, May 9, 1862*

(below) *Passenger List of the Tynemouth: The Colonist, September 19, 1862*

Samuel Aarons, Catherine A. Abington, Emily B. Abington, Wm. Allenborough, Richard Andrews, Elijah Anderson, R.H. Armstrong, Chas. M. Bainbridge, Albert Barnett, Harriet Barnett, George Barrett, Sarah Baylis, Fredrick Beaf, Chas. Bennett, Evan Benjamin, Edward Benson, Emily Berry, Henry Blacklin, William S. Bone, Alex Brown, Henry Brown, W. Brown, George Bruce, Henry Burgess, Herbert Burke, Thos. Burke, A. Burks, Geo. Burt, Stephen Burt, Thos. Burt, G.F. Burtow, James Bullock, Mary Butten, Frank H.C.B. Cave, G.C.B. Cave, George Henry Clapham, James Chaplin, Mary L. Chase, Eugene G. Chadwell, Matilda E. Coates, Henry Cogan, Edward A. Coleman, George Coleman, Emily H. Cooper, James Cooper, Harry Cooper, Marin Cooper, Thornbill Cooper, Margaret Crawle, Mrs. Francis Curtis, Isabel Curtis, Fredrick Dean, Mary Diviliy, Thomas Dis, William Dickens, George Dickinson, George Doughty, R. Drake, Chas. Dudley, Alfred Dunham, Edward Dunbury, John Dunn, Maria S. Duren, Joseph Eden, Thos. J. Edmundson, Fredrick J. Edwards, Amelia Eggington, Thos. Emanuel, K. Entwente, Eliza Jane Evans, Mary Evans, Patrick Faefarlane, Margaret Faussett, Jane Fisher, Joseph Fletcher, John R. Forbes, Henry Fowler, W.R. Galbraith, George Gardiner, Augustus S. Garrett, John H. Gay, Charles Getleff, William Reed Gibbon, Chas. B. Gibbs, Henry Gibbs, Minnie Gillan, John Gillany, Mary Ann Glover, Robert W. Glover, A. Goldscott, Wm. G. Goodwin, George Graham, Arthur R. Green, Chas. F. Green, Robert R. Greenslade, John Griffiths, Sophia Growing, Thomas R. Goosey, Mary Ann Hack, Mary Hales, Mr. Hales, Mrs. Hales, John Harman, Edward W. Hawkins, Thos. Hellings, Thos. Hellings, Charles Hiffe, George Hiffe, Theresa Hirsch, Mary Hodges, Georgina J. Holmes, Helen Holmes, Valentine Holt, George R. Hudson, John Huntes, George Hummu, Julia L. Hurst, Thos. Jackson, Chas. Jay, G.R. Jones, John Jones, John P. Jones, Joseph C. Jones, Lewis Jones, Mary Ann Jones, Thos. Jones, Thos. Jones, Ann Joyce, Mary King, Thomas King, Ann Knapp, James Knapp, Henry Knapp, Henry Knapp, Fanny Lane, Rich. Lane, Nathaniel Lauder, Robt. Lendbitter, Fredrick Lloyd,

Sarah Lovegrove, James Low, Alexander Lumsden, Isaac Lyons, Georgina MacDonald, Jane MacDonald, Janet MacDonald, Leonora MacDonald, Mary MacDonald, Sydney MacDonald, George B. Main, Thos. Marston, Ella McGowen, Kate McGowen, William Maildoon, William Minett, David Mitchell, Digby Mitchell, Augusta J. Morris, Emily A. Morris, Chas. Muntz, Jane E.V. Ogilve, Wm. Oughton, Chas. I. Palin, Charles Pardoe, Fredrick W. Parker, Henry D. Parr, Edward J. Passmore, Florence Passmore, Welhelmina Passmore, Thomas Pendlington, Sophia, Picken, John C. Pickles, Mary Ann Pickles, Robert Pigott, W. Platamer, George Poole, Robert Potter, Thomas R.H. Pritchman, Alfred W.N. Pullen, Emma Quinn, J. Rawe, Rhd. R. Rawer, Warner Raymond, Chas. E. Redfern, Reid, Richard Reid, Richard A. Reid, Mary Renes, Catherine A. Rendrich, Syndey Rennell, Reynolds, Eliza Reynolds, George Reynolds, Edward Richardson, Jessie Robb, James Robb, Jane Robb, Mrs. Robb, William Robb, Edmund Sadler, Bernard Sangevette, Jane Anne Saunders, Robert B. Sayers, Reverend Scott, B. Scott, Clemeear Scott, Mrs. Helen Scott, Henry Seaton, Jane Sentzenich, Sophia Shaw, Henry Short, Elizabeth Simpson, Joseph Simpson, Thomas P. Sickle, Charles Smallwood, Hibert J. Smirks, Augustas E. Smith, David Snock, Wightman Sooby, Edward Stambert, Morgon Steevelyn, William J. Stocker, Absolom Sutdeffe, Arthur J. Sutherland, Eliza Sutherland, Mary Sutherland, Arthur Taylor, William Taylor, John S. Tillam, Edward Thomas, Robert L. Todd, William Todd, Charlotte Townsend, Louisa Townsend, Henry Trent, Emma Helen Tummage, Robert Turnbull, Joseph Tweed, Horatio Varicas, Charles Varley, J.G. Vawdry, George S. Vicary, Allen Wakeman, Ellen Wakeman, Louisa Wakeman, Matilda Wakeman, Plowden Wakeman, Walter Wakeman, Lawson Ward, Wm. Ward, Fredrick K. Wallace, Henry Warne, John Webber, Alfred J. Welsh, Alfred J. Welsh, James Welsh, Julian Welsh, John B. Willford, J.H. Willis, William Weight, George Windle, John Webber, Henry Wiggins, F. Wessenberger, Berth R. Wilson, Florence M.B. Wilson, Fredrick Willdowron, Thos. White, Fredrick Whympier, G. Wood, James Wootton, Richard Yarthwoute, Joseph York.



Esquimalt Harbour in the early 1860's.

GOVERNESSES

GOVERNESSES with the following qualifications can now be supplied by the Committee of the Female Emigration Society, to respectable Families in the Colony:—

One competent to teach English, French, and German thoroughly, and the rudiments of Italian and Music; others, wholly or in part Music, French, Drawing, and a solid English Education.

One lady is a Medalist of the School of Design, London, for Painting and Drawing.

Applications to be made to the Committee, at the Barracks, James Bay, between Nine and Twelve o'clock in the morning.

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Advertisement: Victoria
Press, October 3, 1862

Arrival of the "Tynemouth."

PERSONS desiring GOVERNESSES or SERVANTS are requested to apply in writing to Mr. Graham, at the Immigration Office, corner of Fort and Broughton streets, stating the description of service needed, and the rate of wages offered. Fee payable to Office on engagement of a Servant to be \$10.

Office hours, from Ten to Four o'clock.

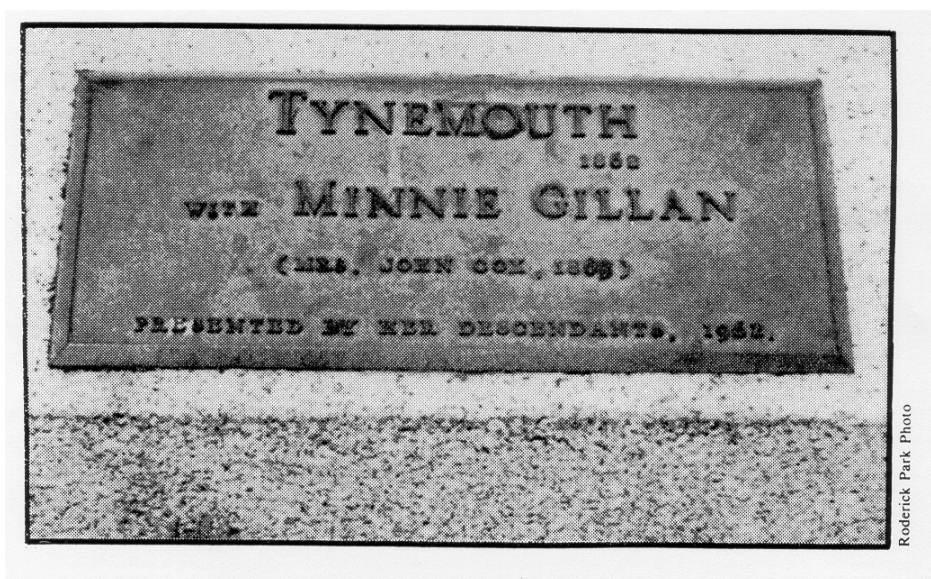
By order of the Committee,

J. C. DAVIE,
Hon. Sec.

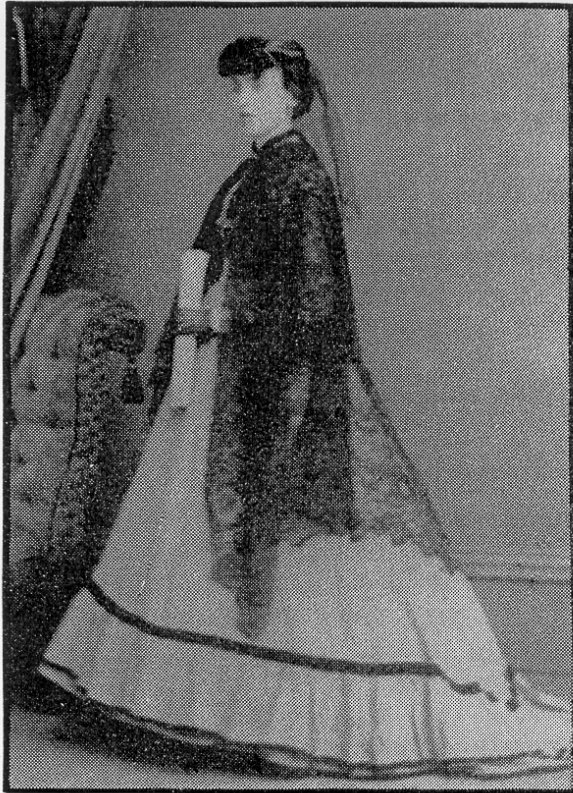
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Advertisement: Victoria Press
September 24, 1862

(below) Bronze Plaque, erected in memory of Minnie Gillan of the Brideship Tynemouth, by her descendants in British Columbia.



In Her Own Right



Mary MacDonald Leech



Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts

During the two days in San Francisco, again the women from the emigration societies were not allowed off the ship. Rumours appeared in the *Columbia Colonist* about the possibility of an agent being sent down to San Francisco to prevent the seducing of the cargo of women by the Californians. Whether or not an agent existed is hard to tell, but the *Colonist* seemed to think so. After seven more days of sailing, the Tynemouth finally landed at their destination in Esquimalt Harbour on September 17, 1862 at 8:00 p.m. with 272 passengers.

Once docked, the ladies remained on the ship for two more days. *The Colonist*, writing about the women, referred to them as the “60 select bundles of crinoline”.²³ The news of the arrival of the Tynemouth and her special cargo produced great excitement among the Victorians. In fact, a clothing store advertised the arrival of the ladies, stating:

The girls have arrived! Now is your change to get a fine suit of clothes to make a respectable appearance.²⁴

All shops and businesses in the town closed for the day to welcome the ship.²⁵ Crowds of settlers and miners tried to board the ship to see the women. In fact, a boat loaded with well-dressed men rowed out to the Tynemouth hoping to seek permission to board the ship to talk to the women. The captain, sensing that their intentions are not honourable, set the men away.

A number of articles appeared in the newspapers about the women. One of the few men allowed aboard was Amor de Cosmos, the editor of the *Colonist*. The *Colonist* described the women as “young ladies being between the ages of fourteen and some uncertain figure”.²⁶ The *British Columbian* noted that the women were between twelve and fifteen years old.²⁷ Obviously, the majority of these passengers seem now to be little more than children. The fact that they were considered adult illustrates how much times have changed and how few opportunities in education and employment existed for young girls.

The Press noted that “50 of the women on the Tynemouth had their fare paid for, and 10 paid for their own fare.”²⁸ It is easy to presume that those ten who paid their own fare were travelling under the aegis of the London Female Middle-Class Emigration Society. It would be interesting, but virtually impossible, to know their ages and the source of their funds.

On September 19 the women were brought from Esquimalt Harbour to Victoria Harbour. In Charles Hayward’s diary of 1862, he wrote, “Excitement in town owing to girls’ arrival.”²⁹ The Press, writing an article about the Tynemouth, noted:

Landed – The 60 female immigrants who arrived from England on the Tynemouth, were this afternoon brought from Esquimalt on the H.M. gunboat Forward which had been detailed for the purpose and landed at James Bay before the admiring gaze of some 300 residents. They will occupy marine barracks until situations are got for them.³⁰

In front of crowds of men the women were transferred to smaller boats and then were rowed ashore to find buckets of soap and water placed on the dock for them to do

their washing. The crowd was so curious that policemen and marine officers were kept busy protecting the women. After washing their clothes the women were lined up two by two to be marched through the glaring crowd to the marine barracks which became their home until they began their work as domestics or governesses.

Both the Columbia Emigration Society and the London Female Emigration Society expected a committee of respectable citizens to greet and provide for the female immigrants. While the members of the committee are easily known, its functions are more difficult to deduce. The committee members, male and female, were prominent members of the Church of England congregations and of Victoria society. The receiving committee included Captain Verney, Mr. Graham, J.C. Davie, Gilbert Sproat and Robert Burnaby, in addition to the ubiquitous Reverend Cridge, Dr. W.F. Tolmie and Archdeacon Wright.³¹ A Ladies Committee of Christ Church members was composed of Mrs. Douglas, Mrs. Nurries Margarets, Mrs. Alston, Mrs. Cridge, Mrs. Arthur Hillowes, Mrs. Rhodes, Mrs. Trutch and Mrs. R. Woods.³²

The committee provided a number of services. Under direction from Captain Verney, John Marshall, 2nd Officer to the *H.M.S. Grappler*, provided meals for the women while they were aboard the Tynemouth in Esquimalt Harbour.³³ The committee had also arranged for their shelter in the James Bay barracks. In addition to these direct services, the committee advertised in the local newspaper for employment for the immigrants. Immediately after their arrival, an advertisement in the paper requested people needing servants to apply to Mr. Graham of the Receiving Committee. Three weeks later, an advertisement by the committee specifically described the educational skills of a few women who are still unemployed.

It is interesting to note that the committee charged future employers a ten dollar fee.³⁴ This may have been to cover expenses or to guarantee the respectability of the family. The servants themselves could expect to earn between fifteen and thirty dollars a month including board. If Reverend Matthew Macfie was right there were plenty of "respectable" families. He said,

Respectable females, neither afraid nor ashamed to work as domestic servants are greatly in demand. Strong and active young women, qualified to serve as efficient cooks and housemaids would have no difficulty in obtaining from 4£ to 5£ per month and board. So much is the want of this class there that if 500 girls of good character and industrious habits could be sent out in detachments of fifty in each vessel and intervals of a month, they would be absorbed almost immediately on their arrival.³⁵

On Sunday, September 21st, some of the women went to church and the following day ten were sent to New Westminster.³⁶ Reverend Scott, who had accompanied the immigrants on the Tynemouth, spoke from the pulpit in Christ church. He urged them to remember their religious duties and under all circumstances to conduct themselves so as to be a credit to their mothers, from whom many were separated forever. He exhorted them to rely on a Kind Providence for aid and comfort when beset by sin and

temptation.³⁷ It was an emotional occasion for everyone since the paper reported that “the poor girls wept freely and there was scarcely a dry eye in the congregation.”³⁸ Charles Hayward wrote in his diary that Reverend Scott hoped the girls would soon be comfortable as English wives and mothers.³⁹ Obviously, no matter what the temporary employment was, these people were expected to marry soon. Of the women who went to New Westminster, it would be interesting to know if any went on to the gold fields to supply the ‘pre-empted’ wives for the congregation of Reverend Brown.

Before the main group of ten went to New Westminster on September 22, two girls from the Tynemouth were reported as having been sent there on September 19 aboard the *Enterprise* to Mrs. Mary Moody whose husband, Colonel Richard Moody, was in command of the Royal Engineers.⁴⁰ Since Mrs. Moody’s cousin, Louisa Twining, was a conspicuous member of the London Female Middle-Class Emigration Society, it is no surprise that Mrs. Moody, mother of five children, had made an early application for domestic help. While Mrs. Moody had requested a young girl so that she could be assured of a servant for some time, she obviously found the choice of the committee inappropriate. She returned the child to the Committee because she “was too young, too small and incapable of sewing.”⁴¹ She had to be replaced by an older woman.⁴²

What became of the new citizens of the colony? We know little more about them than whom they married. Minnie Gillan went to New Westminster where she married John Cox and had thirteen children; Emma Quinn married James Ellan, a royal Engineer of New Westminster. Jane Saunders was employed by Mrs. W.P. Sayward Wignall and later worked for Mrs. John Chambers. She married Samuel Nesbitt, a Victoria baker.⁴³ Mary MacDonald who married Peter Leech, who had discovered the Leechtown gold, later became the organist of Christ Church.⁴⁴ The *Colonist* recorded many of the marriages of the other Tynemouth women:

Jane Eliza Victoria Ogilvie & Francois Chappron
Mary Cooper & Francois Fabre
Augusta Jane Morris & William Bentley⁴⁵
Emily Anne Morris (Mrs. Joseph Farr) remarried D.C. McGillivray⁴⁶
Emily B. Abington & John Tragur
Mary L.L. Chase & R.H. Mack
Julia Louisa Hurst & Thomas Robert Mitchell
Sarah Baylis & Jonathan Hay Brown
Mary E. Evans & Edward Johnson
Isabel Julia Curtis & Thomas George Askew⁴⁷
Mrs. Francis Curtis & Jules Boucherat⁴⁸

Many a tale existed about these young women. One told of a man who, hearing of the docking of the Tynemouth, walked all the way from Sooke to get a bride. Supposedly, when the women were lined up, he reached out and grabbed a young girl to whom he was married three days later. While there is no record of the marriage in the newspaper, the story was verified by Mrs. Robb, the matron aboard the ship.⁴⁹

Historical records often include the Townsend sisters as members of the cargo of women. However, both Charlotte and Louisa have adamantly denied that they were part of the sixty women who came to Victoria under the protection of the emigration societies. Nevertheless, their fates may well resemble those of the other trained women. They came intending to be teachers, but instead were governesses.⁵⁰

Charlotte worked for the Pidwells, the Pringles and the Rhodes before marrying Mr. Mallandaine, while Louisa married Mr. Alfred Townsend {sic}.⁵¹ Charlotte could recall years later that

From the moment of landing I was disappointed.
So was my sister.... I saw nothing beautiful
about the new country.... I use to cry myself to
sleep every night.⁵²

Unfortunately, the women of Tynemouth, many of who were probably sisters if the passenger list can be relied upon, have left us no conspicuous written records of their sentiments or experiences. Of course, many of the destitute child-women would have had little schooling so naturally they would not have kept written records of their lives. Until further research among scattered family collections reveals more about the Tynemouth women, we have only male commentaries on the success and failure of this emigration experiment. Fredrick Whympers said:

Every benevolent effort deserves respect; but, from a personal observation I cannot honestly recommend such a mode of supplying the demands of a colony. Half of them married soon after arrival, or went into service, but a larger proportion quickly went to the bad and from appearances, had been there before. The influence of but a few such on the more respectable girls could not have been otherwise than detrimental.⁵³

Reverend Macfie was critical of the women who remained single:

There was too little care exercised in the selection of them by those directing the movement and some, in consequence, turned out badly. But all who conducted themselves properly have had offers of marriage, and most of them have long since become participants of conjugal felicity.⁵⁴

The *Robert Lowe* was another ship which brought 36 girls from England to Victoria in January, 1863 for the same purposes as the Tynemouth. Just before the arrival of this ship an article appeared in the *Colonist*:

We hope the committee in charge will make better arrangements for their landing than that in the case of the Tynemouth which exerted so much dissatisfaction amongst the young people who came by her. There is not the slightest necessity for any parade (as was done with the Tynemouth girls) about so simple a matter as the landing of a few passengers, and we almost cannot conceive of anything more heartless or ill-conceived than to have poor young strangers, we don't care of what sex, subjected to the rude

gaze of a motley crowd of roughs, who instead
of running about idle, should be engaged with
the shovel and axe earning an honest living.⁵⁵

These brideships were only two of many experiments in sending young women from England to Canada. As the century moved on, increasing numbers of organizations sponsored larger and larger projects. By the turn of the century and even until the twenties, women's organizations, like the YWCA, regularly included committees for welcoming friendless girls.

The emigration scheme was apparently successful from the point of view of some of the colonial residents. After all, they received their wives and much needed domestic help. Other residents had a chance to begin families and develop their roots in the new colony. It is doubtful if the exporting of these emigrants received much pressure in the unemployment situation in England. London continued to have a persistent female unemployment problem and an overpopulation of young girls in workhouses and orphanages. We have none of the women's personal opinions on whether it was worth it. Their stories would make the most interesting reading and together could provide fascinating insights into the status of women in gold rush society.

Footnotes

¹ F.W. Howay, *British Columbia, From Earliest Times to the Present*, Vol. II (Vancouver: S.J. Clarke Publishing company, 1914), p. 113

² *Ibid.*

³ Frank A. Peake, *The Anglican Church in British Columbia* (Vancouver: Mitchell press, 1959), p. 27.

⁴ "Columbia Emigration Society", *British Columbian* (New Westminster), June 21, 1862, p. 2.

⁵ Peake, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

⁶ Vancouver School of Theology, Anglican Archives, *Columbia Mission, 1860 – 1870*. City Meeting, 1862, p. 37.

⁷ "Columbia Emigration Society", *op. cit.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ "Columbia Emigration Society", *The Times* (London), April 7, 1862, p. 6

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ James A. Hammerton. *Emigrant Gentlewomen* (London: Croom Helm Ltd., 1979), Bibliography.

¹⁴ Letter on the Subject of Female Emigration, *The Times* (London), April 28, 1862, p. 5.

¹⁵ "Emigration of Educated Women", *The Times* (London), December 4, 1861.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Helen and G.P.V. Akrigg, *British Columbia Chronicle, 1847 – 1871* (Vancouver: Discovery Press, 1977), p. 256.

¹⁹ "Emigration of Women", *The Times* (London). January 21, 1862, p. 12.

²⁰ Fredrick Whympier, *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska* (London: W. Clawes and Sons, 1868), p. 22.

²¹ Akrigg, *op. cit.*

- ²² Whympers, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
- ²³ "The Tynemouth at San Francisco", *The Colonist*, September 17, 1862, p. 3.
- ²⁴ File on the *Tynemouth*, article by Edgar Fawcett on the Tynemouth. (PABC).
- ²⁵ Harry Gregson, *A History of Victoria, 1842 – 1970* (Victoria: Victoria Observer Publishing Co., Ltd., 1970), p. 63.
- ²⁶ "Wouldn't Let Them on Board", *The Colonist*, September 19, 1862, p. 3.
- ²⁷ "The Tynemouth and her Cargo", *British Columbian* (New Westminster), September 24, 1862, p. 3.
- ²⁸ "Arrival of the Tynemouth", *The Press* (Victoria), September 18, 1862, p. 3.
- ²⁹ Diary, Charles Hayward, September 21, 1862. (PABC)
- ³⁰ "Landed", *The Press* (Victoria), September 29, 1862., p. 3.
- ³¹ "Brides Broke Wife Famine in 1862", *The Colonist*, September 16, 1862, p. 2.
- ³² Letter, Reverend E. Cridge to Sir James Douglas, July 14, 1863. (PABC)
- ³³ "Immigration Committee", *The Press* (Victoria), September 23, 1862. p. 3.
- ³⁴ "Arrival of the Tynemouth", *The Press* (Victoria), September 24, 1862, p. 3.
- ³⁵ Matthew Macfie, *Vancouver Island and British Columbia* (London: Longman, Green, Roberts and Green, 1865), pp. 496 – 497.
- ³⁶ "To Be Forwarded", *The Press* (Victoria), September 21, 1862, p. 3.
- ³⁷ "The Tynemouth at San Francisco", *The Colonist*, September 16, 1862, p. 3.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*
- ³⁹ Diary, Charles Hayward, September 21, 1862. (PABC)
- ⁴⁰ "To Be Forwarded", *The Press* (Victoria), September 21, 1862, p. 3.
- ⁴¹ Jacqueline Gresko, "Two Women on the frontier" (Saskatoon: unpublished, 1979), p. 22.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*
- ⁴³ "First Brides to Come Here", *Vancouver Province*, Saturday Magazine, September 16, 1944, p. 3.
- ⁴⁴ Harry Gregson, *A History of Victoria, 1842 – 1970* (Victoria: The Victoria Observer Publishing Co. Ltd., 1970), p. 59.
- ⁴⁵ Nancy de Bertrand Lugin, *The Pioneer Women of Vancouver Island* (Victoria: The Women's Canadian Club of Victoria, 1928), p. 160.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷ Elizabeth Forbes, *Wild Roses at Their Feet* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), p. 111.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Mrs. Francis Curtis was widowed while living in Britain.
- ⁴⁹ Lugin, *op. cit.* p. 156.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 149.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.* pp. 150 – 152.
- ⁵² *Ibid.* p. 150.
- ⁵³ Whympers, *op. cit.* p. 23.
- ⁵⁴ Macfie, *op. cit.* p. 497.
- ⁵⁵ File on *Tynemouth*, *The Colonist*, "Second Brideship", James K. Nesbitt. (PABC)

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