



Peter Ireland was born in Cameron, Fifeshire, on 31 December 1814, to John Ireland, weaver, and his wife Janet Ireland. On 23 June 1838 Peter married Isabella Fairbairn, who was born in 1812 in the parish of Kilrenny, at Kingsbarns.

In 1839, Isabella Fairbairn Ireland gave birth to her first child, Peter, at Kilconqhar; he died in infancy. A second son, Thomas, was born in Cellardyke in 1841 followed by a first daughter, Jean (also known as Jane) born in 1843 at Carnbee.

By 1847, the Irelands had moved into St Andrews where Janet (later known as Jessie) was born, followed in 1849 by the birth of a second Peter. Then Isabella (later known as Annie) was born in 1851. Peter worked as a ploughman and agricultural labourer, but by 1855 life must have become increasingly difficult.

The family sailed from Liverpool in 1855. It was a difficult journey, they were lumbered with considerable baggage and they had five young children with a sixth on the way. They left with the realisation that they had said their final goodbyes to family and friends. They left on the *Ocean Chief* as bounty emigrants for the colony of Tasmania on the application of Thomas Johnston, a sheep farmer of Broadmarsh, Tasmania, just out of Hobart Town, over the Derwent River. The fare was £99, but the sixth child, James Tobin Ireland, was born at sea on 12 February, thus saving Peter £11. He was named after the ship's captain. A seventh child, David, was born at Bridgewater in 1860.

The Irelands remained for five years in Tasmania, before deciding to emigrate again, this time to New Zealand. They would have heard of the gold rushes in Otago from the trading vessels such as the *Don Pedro II* which plied between Hobart and Port Chalmers to supply materials for the miners and for the rapidly-expanding town of Dunedin.

The penal settlement in Hobart was starting to wind down and Peter might have thought to make some sort of a fortune to support his large but still quite young family. It is thought that Peter came from Hobart on the *Don Pedro II*, then sent for his family later. It is quite likely that he carried supplies to the goldfields, rather than working at goldmining, but the arrival date of the Irelands at Port Chalmers can only be estimated as 1861-62. The earliest references to Peter Ireland in Dunedin all point to him working first as a labourer and then as a carrier, living in and, we assume, working from Great King Street.

Peter's son Thomas married Agnes Louisa Carney in 1862. This was followed by Jane's marriage to John Louis Rees in 1863. On 27 July 1863, Peter Ireland paid £13 10s. for the section at Melville Street, currently number 11 Titan Street, from where he operated a carrying business until 1869. In 1865 the family witnessed the marriage of their second daughter, Jessie, to Alexander McLaren Brown at this home. Most of the Ireland children were married by Dr Stuart.

On 16 February 1869 Peter Ireland bought land on Mount Cargill for £100. The land was covered in native bush and required much breaking-in. The Ireland property, next to the Mount Cargill school which was built in 1869, rolled back from the entrance gate in a strip across the lower slopes of Mount Cargill. Even in the Irelands' time at Mount Cargill, the main road passed right by their farm gate and was to do so until the 1960s when the construction of the motorway diverted traffic inland. Some cobblestones survive in the large barn, which still stands. The stone fences on the property, clearly visible from today's motorway, were built by John Neill. The Irelands ran Ayrshire cattle and milked for the town supply and started to exhibit their stock at the annual Blueskin A & P Shows. Three sons, Peter, James Tobin and David worked on the farm.

Peter extended his farm on 14 August 1878 when he bought another section to bring his property up to 66 acres. By now he was ageing and starting to suffer from ill health. On 13 January 1880 he died at Mount Cargill, aged 64, of gastric cancer. It must have literally been quite a long haul down to Dunedin's North Cemetery for the burial. Isabella purchased a large white marble tombstone, engraved with the following: "I have loved you on earth; I will meet you in heaven". The farm was to pass on to the three younger sons and Isabella.

Peter and Isabella Ireland certainly moved around, not simply for work so that the family could be housed and fed, but increasingly in search of a better life. Hard, unrelenting labour was their life story and it is just one more example of the Scots empire-builders.

Their children were: Peter (1839, Kilconqhar); Thomas (1841, Cellardyke); Jean (or Jane) (1844, Carnbee); Janet (or Jessie) (1847, St Andrews); Peter (1849, St Andrews); Isabella (or Annie) (1851, St Andrews); James Tobin (1855, at sea, registered in Hobart); and David (1860, Bridgewater, Tasmania).

Peter is buried with his wife Isabella who died on 2 September 1896.

Prepared by the Historic Cemeteries Conservation Trust of New Zealand from a family history by Pauline Ireland-Kenny on www.northerncemetery.org.nz, the website of the Southern Heritage Trust