

Ellen Collins was born in Bellewstown, Meath, Ireland around 1786. She worked as a domestic servant for Mr. Sweetman (a well-known brewer) in Dublin. She met and married Tobias Cody (of Kilkenny, Ireland) in 1809. He worked in Mr. Sweetman's stables. In 1812 she gave birth to a daughter, Anne Cody, in Dublin and she was baptised at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. In 1815 Ellen was convicted, tried and found guilty of theft of household articles belonging to her employer. She was initially housed in the old Newgate Prison, Dublin, awaiting transportation. In 1816, while still at Newgate, she gave birth to her second child on St Patrick's Day. She named the child Patrick and he was also baptised at St Mary's Pro-Cathedral. Ellen and Patrick were transferred to Cork where they eventually sailed on the 'Canada' in 1817. Fortunately there was enough room on board for Patrick and the other ten children belonging to the female convicts, despite efforts to leave them behind.

Upon arrival in Sydney Ellen and Patrick were housed at the old Parramatta Female Factory. In May 1818 Ellen married a ticket of leave convict named Edmund Buckley, the ceremony being conducted by Rev. Samuel Marsden. They leased land at Prospect, west of Sydney, and Patrick was educated. In 1828 when Patrick was 12 years old, the census showed them still at Prospect with seven labourers and servants in their household. There were no more children of the marriage. Ellen died in 1837 and was buried at the Devonshire Street cemetery in Sydney.

By the time of his mother's death Patrick was 21 years old and he joined his stepfather in the move south across the Monaro and into the High Country in Victoria. Along with other pastoralists the Buckley's were in search of new grazing land. After taking up land around Dalgety, Omeo and Benambra Patrick moved further south. In 1843 he took up a squatting run of 53,000 acres on Merriman's Creek near the present town of Seaspray, on the road from Sale to Port Albert. He initially named it 'Coadyvale', but renamed it later to 'Prospect'. He developed this property with stock and crops, built a homestead and contributed greatly to the townships of Sale, Woodside and Port Albert.

He was a staunch Catholic and contributed much to the development of the Catholic Church in the district. Patrick kept a comprehensive diary of his 29 years on this property and this document is invaluable for understanding the life and times of the early Gippsland squatters. Patrick didn't marry, although social occasions with his housekeeper's daughter, Eliza, featured often in his diary. He

died unexpectedly in June 1872, a very wealthy man, without having made a will. Patrick is buried in the Sale cemetery.

Following his death a worldwide search was conducted to find living relatives to Patrick. Commissions were set up in Ireland, New York, Newfoundland and Australia as many family members contacted the courts after seeing newspaper advertisements seeking beneficiaries. In the early 1880's, after almost ten years of litigation and investigation, nine living first cousins shared in the remainder of his fortune.

The child of a convict woman, both of them transported on the Canada in 1817, ultimately left a huge footprint on the history of Gippsland.

