

Michael Molony, 2474, *Phoebe Dunbar*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variations: Maloney, Moloney

Birth	About 1825 *
Parents	Michael Maloney and Catherine O'Neil *
Parent's marriage	
Siblings	
Wife	Mary Coffey/Coffee
Married	1858, Toodyay Roman Catholic Church
Children	Anne (1858-1881), John (1860), Thomas (1862), Margaret (1863), William (1868), Mary (1870), Ellen (1871)

* Information from Death Index and WA Biographical Index.

Nothing is known about Michael's early life.

The Potato Famine (1845-9) severely affected the western and southern parts of Ireland, and the effects were felt well into the 1850s. While no report has been found of the trial for sheep stealing of Michael Molony in 1849, the newspapers reported:

*There are no less than 786 prisoners in Ennis Gaol. Of these, 136 have been transmitted for trial to the Quarter Sessions of Six-mile-bridge, their general offences being petty thefts to which they were actuated by sheer starvation.*¹

Many of the previous convictions for sheep stealing resulted in sentences of a few months, but Michael received 7 years transportation.

Michael was transferred to Spike Island in Cork possibly in October:

*Thirty-five convicts left the jail this morning, and thirty-five more are to leave on tomorrow morning for Spike Island.*²

The Newgate Prison Register records:

Michael Molony, from County Clare, was convicted of sheep stealing at the Six-mile-bridge Quarter Session on 16 June 1849 and sentenced to 7 years transportation. Michael was 20 years old, 5'1½", with blue eyes, fair hair, fair complexion, single, could not read or write, was a labourer and Catholic. He was received on 18 December 1851 at Newgate Prison in Dublin from Spike Island in County Cork, where his character was described as bad. On 8 January 1853, Michael was transferred to Mountjoy Prison. He had not been convicted before.³ Michael boarded the *Phoebe Dunbar* from Mountjoy Prison, where his behaviour had improved and was now described as good.

The Freemans Journal reported the departure of *Phoebe Dunbar*:

Kingstown. 3 June 1853.- Wind N.E. by N. This evening, the *Phoebe Dunbar*, convict ship, was towed out of harbour, having on board two hundred and ninety-five convicts, chiefly young men; she took the northerly course, and while I am now writing (half-past nine pm) has cleared the banks. Should the wind remain in the present point, she will reach the Tuscar Light [Tuskar Rock Lighthouse] tomorrow evening. Heretofore convicts, when in harbour, were allowed to come on deck in squads, which enabled those remaining below to cleanse deck, &c., but this arrangement, conferring such benefits, has not been resorted to in the *Phoebe Dunbar*; since she received her human freight they have been stowed between decks. Yesterday, I was permitted to visit her interior, accompanied by her commander, seemingly a most humane man, who, I am disposed to think, may have perhaps exercised a sound discretion in deviating from former arrangements -such a number crowded below

¹ Tipperary Vindicator, 20 June 1849, p3

² Clare Journal and Ennis Advertiser, 29 October 1849, p2

³ Dublin-Newgate (Richmond) Prison General Register 1849-1858, 1/12/3, item 3

must be productive of the worst results. The unfortunate creatures, from their appearance, seemed perfectly resigned to their fate; many of them I observed reading their prayer books, and now that they have leisure time may, perhaps, be the means for mature reflection and a fixed determination to make amends for their past life. I cannot state whether there is a chaplain in charge. ⁴

The *Phoebe Dunbar* arrived at Fremantle on 30 August 1853. During the voyage, he was quiet and well-behaved. He was one of 40 convicts removed from the ship on the evening of 31 August and taken to hospital.⁵

Michael appeared to have grown 4 inches during his time in the Irish prisons. He was now described as 20, 5'5", with blue eyes, brown hair, an oval face, fresh complexion, slender, no tattoos, a labourer, and a single. Another record says he was a shoemaker.⁶

His behaviour while a prisoner was very good or excellent. On 25 October 1853, he was sent to Guildford Barracks. At some stage he was at York⁷.

Michael received a Ticket of Leave on 11 April 1854 and was granted a Conditional Pardon on 3 February 1855.

The WA Biographical Index:

MALONEY Michael. 1832 (expiree) Son of Michael. ? arr. Phoebe Dunbar 31.8.1853, Roman Catholic m 1.1858 (Toodyay RC) Mary CAFFEY 1834 (Irel). She arr. Victory 24.3.1854, she was listed by Salvado as being at Toodyay in 1854 working for the Thos Cook. She was also a cook at Dempster's homestead Buckland.

Labourer and small farmer in Northam-Toodyay area.

Employed 4 Ticket of Leave men between 1872-1874.

Michael Maloney died in 1907, aged 82, son of Michael Maloney and Catherine O'Neil, registered at Northam.

His wife, Mary Maloney, daughter of William Coffy and Margaret Kelly, died in 1919 aged 87, registered Victoria Plains.

MALONEY. — In your charity, pray for the happy repose of the soul of Mary Maloney, who departed this life on November 13th, 1919, at New Norcia, at the ripe old age of 87 years; fortified with all the rites of Holy Church.⁸

⁴ Freeman's Journal, 03 June 1853, p2

⁵ SROWA, Superintendent Orders, 1850 - 1854 (So1 - So3)

⁶ SROWA, Acc 128/1-32; Acc 1156/R18

⁷ York Ticket of leave register, p205 [not accessed]

⁸ The W.A. Record, 22 Nov 1919, p12