

Name variation: Connors

Nothing is known about David's early life. According to various convict records, David was married to Margaret, and they had a son, John. No marriage has been found. A possible birth of John is recorded in the parish of Shandrum, Diocese Cloyne, County Cork: 12 December 1842, John, son of David Connors and Peg McCarthy.

David Connors, 35, was committed on 19 April 1850 for sheep stealing. He pleaded guilty at the June Kanturk Sessions and received 10 years transportation. He could not read or write. Almost a year later, on 15 April 1851, David was transferred to Spike Island Prison off the coast of Cork. At some stage, he was transferred to Mountjoy Prison in Dublin.

His two co-accused, Garratt Barry, 30, and wife Margaret Connors, 35, received the same sentence. Margaret was sent to Grangegorman Prison in Dublin on 21 August 1850 and then to Tasmania. Garratt Barry died in hospital on 17 November 1850.¹

A Kanturk correspondent writes to us that the potato disease is reappearing in that locality. The same correspondent adds—"Assistant Barrister Berwick opened the Kanturk Sessions last week. There were half-starved and half-naked persons on the calendar; twenty-one men sentenced to transportation, who seemed highly delighted at being removed from destitution."²

A newspaper 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 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.³

The *Phoebe Dunbar* arrived at Fremantle on 30 August 1853. During the voyage, David 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.

David Connors, 35, matmaker, married, can read-only, collected from Mountjoy Prison, where he was good, quiet, and well-behaved on the voyage. During his time in Fremantle Prison, he was very good or excellent.

He was described as 39, 5'6", with hazel eyes, black hair, a long face, a sallow complexion, middling stout, a labourer, and married with one child.⁴

¹ Cork County Gaol General Register 1848-1850, Book number 1/8/4, item 3

² Dublin Weekly Nation, 29 June 1850, p13

³ Freeman's Journal, 03 June 1853, p2

⁴ SROWA, ACC 1156/R6; ACC 1156/R18, Acc 128/1-32

He received his Ticket of leave on 9 August 1854. David began working for Mrs Jane Slade at Glen Avon in Toodyay in December 1855. She employed a number of men who had Tickets of Leave on her property. In January 1859, Jane Slade, 62, fell out of her gig and died about two hours later. Her son took over running the farm. Later in the year, on 18 June 1859, David Connors was reported to be in the service of Mr F. Slade for 30/- per month.⁵

In 1857, a letter was received at the Convict Establishment from Margaret:
4193. To Margaret Connors (Mrs), Tasmania, letter dated or sent 13 May 1857, received on 15 July 1857, enquiring for her husband D. Connors.

The letter may have been forwarded to David, as no reply has been found. However, the following day the Stamp Book records:

16 July 1857, T/760, 2429 D. Connors, to communicate with his wife, postage 2d.

It appears David, who could not write, did not have any contact with his wife. Another letter was received enquiring about Margaret's husband in 1858. The letter is not recorded in the incoming letters index. This time, the Comptroller General replied on 1 December 1858.

Memo,
Margaret Connor is informed in reply to her letter of the 2nd ultimo that her husband David Connors received a Ticket of Leave 9 August 1854 and has been in the service of Mrs Slade in the Toodyay district of this Colony since December 1855.

His character has been in every way satisfactory.

E.Y.W.H [Lieut-Col. Sir Edmund Yeamans Walcott Henderson, Comptroller General of Convicts]
Care of Mrs Peel, Colonial Hospital, Hobart Town, Tasmania:

Then in 1859, there appears to have been another letter from Margaret that was possibly forwarded to David to answer.

10 December 1859, 1910, D Connors, 2429, to write to his wife, postage 2d. ⁶

David received his Conditional Pardon in October 1860. He stayed in the Toodyay area in Western Australia.

While no death certificate is registered, his burial is recorded in FamilySearch.
David Connor, 60, died on 21 August 1875 and was buried two days later at the Catholic Cemetery in Toodyay.

Margaret Connor was sent to Tasmania per *John William Dare* with her ten-year-old son John, arriving on 22 May 1852. She was unfit for service as her left arm was shorter than her right arm, and she walked with a limp.

More about Margaret may be found on the Female Convicts Research Centre Inc. website.

<https://femaleconvicts.org.au/> She is ID 131955.

⁵ SROWA, Acc 1156/R6, Ticket of Leave Register

⁶ SROWA, Acc 1156/C40, image 191, Register of Letters Received by Comptroller-General; Acc 1156/S1-S3, Stamp Books (1857-1864); Acc 1156/C38, letter 902, image 202, Comptroller General Outward Letters.