

Edmond Keane, 2248, Robert Small

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variations: Edmund, Edward, Kean

Edmond's early life is a mystery. He was possibly born in County Tipperary; the Irish Prison records indicate his birth was about 1833.

The first record found for Edmond was on 1 June 1847 at the age of 15 when he was detained for robbing James Fitzpatrick of sixpence. Edmond was described as 15, with blue eyes, fair hair, a fresh complexion, Catholic, and cannot read or write. He was sent to the Carrick-on-Siur June Sessions, held on 19 June. No record of the outcome has been found.¹

Six months later, Edmond Keane was committed on 22 January 1848 at Clonmel on suspicion of an unrecorded offence. He was described as aged 15, 5'0", with blue eyes, brown hair, fresh complexion, Catholic, and cannot read or write. Edmond was discharged by the Mayor on 2 February.²

Later in the year, on 11 October 1848, at the Clonmel October Sessions, he was tried for stealing a coat, the property of John Fleming. Edmond Keane was found guilty and sentenced to 6 months with hard labour. His description shows he was now 5'1½". He was discharged on 28 March 1849.³

It wasn't long before he faced court again. Edmond Keane, 16 and now 5'2", was committed on 7 May 1849 for an unspecified crime. He was discharged by the Mayor on 9 May 1849, perhaps due to lack of evidence.⁴ The same day, Edmond Keane, was committed for stealing a shawl with Denis Lehan. He was to be confined for 48 hours and whipped. Discharged 11 May 1849.⁵

Six months later, the Clonmel Gaol Register shows Edmond Keane, 16, was committed 15 November 1849 for being idle and disorderly and concealed in the house of James O'Farrell for some illegal act. He had been twice in gaol before. Edmond was given a choice of either finding bail of £1 with two sureties of 10/- each to keep the peace or be confined for three months. He was discharged on 24 December 1849; presumably, a benefactor paid the bail, as often happened with young offenders in Ireland.⁶

Two weeks out of gaol, he was sentenced on 9 January 1850 for being a vagrant. He received one month of hard labour and was discharged on 6 February 1850. Although he was called Edward Kean, aged 17, in the register, his description matches earlier records.⁷

Once again, his freedom was short-lived. A newspaper reported:

A few mornings since, between the hours of three and four o'clock, Cummins, a watchman on duty at Bagwell Street, Clonmel, arrested two noted offenders named Edmond Keane and William Ryan (both boys), with two cows in their possession, which they after stealing from a farmer named Patrick Harney, near Two-mile Bridge. Evidence was sworn before the Mayor and Mr Ryan, and the young offenders were fully committed on 8 February 1850 for trial at the ensuing Assizes.⁸ Their trial was at the subsequent Quarter Sessions, not the Assizes.⁹

The Clonmel Gaol Register shows Edmond Keane, aged 17, 5'2½", blue eyes, brown hair, fresh complexion, Catholic, cannot read or write, was tried and convicted for stealing two cows, the

¹ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1845-1848, 1/7/2, item 6

² Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1845-1848, 1/7/2, item 6

³ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1848-1849, 1/7/4, item 2

⁴ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1848-1849, 1/7/4, item 2

⁵ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1848-1849, 1/7/4, item 2

⁶ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1849-1850, 1/7/5, item 3

⁷ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1849-1850, 1/7/5, item 3

⁸ Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier, 12 February 1850, p4

⁹ Findmypast, Clonmel Chronicle, 20 March 1850, p3

property of Patrick Harney at Clonmel on 10 April 1850. He was sentenced to be transported for ten years; he had been in gaol six times. Edmond was transferred to Dublin on 26 December 1850.¹⁰

According to the Mountjoy Government Prison register, Edmond Keane was aged 17, a labourer, and had been imprisoned three times for larceny. His behaviour and health were good while in the Prison. He had been received from the Tipperary County Gaol.¹¹

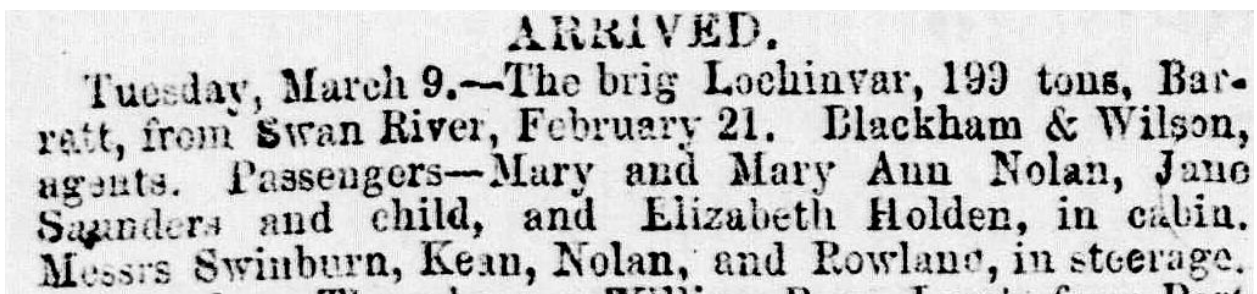
At some stage, Edmond was transferred to Spike Island Prison near Queenstown, Cork, in readiness for the voyage to Western Australia. The *Robert Small* arrived on 20 April 1853 from Deptford and, after embarking 309¹² convicts, sailed on 1 May. Six convicts died before the ship reached Fremantle on 19 August 1853, and several convicts were admitted to hospital over the next few days. Edmond was among the last 139 convicts to come onshore on 12 September 1853, suggesting he was in better health than many of his fellow prisoners.¹³

He was described as:

2248, Edmond Keane, aged 22, 5'5", blue eyes, brown hair, round visage, pale complexion, slender build, he was single and a groom. He now had tattoos of a cross on the right arm, I.H.S. and a cross on the back of his left hand, and a cross on his left arm.¹⁴

Edmond was discharged from Prison on 15 June 1854 to a Ticket of Leave and received a Conditional Pardon on 3 January 1857. No misdemeanours or prison sentences have been found for him. He appears to have taken the opportunity to create a better life for himself.

Edmond is believed to have left the state for South Australia on the *Lochinvar* as a steerage passenger named Kean, arriving in Adelaide on 9 March 1858.¹⁵



ARRIVED.
Tuesday, March 9.—The brig *Lochinvar*, 199 tons, Barratt, from Swan River, February 21. Blackham & Wilson, agents. Passengers—Mary and Mary Ann Nolan, Jane Saunders and child, and Elizabeth Holden, in cabin. Messrs Swinburn, Kean, Nolan, and Rowland, in steerage.

He appears to be Edmond Keane, 28, who married Bridget Roach, 24, at St Patricks Church, Adelaide, on 26 July 1862. He said his father was James Keane. They had four children:

Mary 1866-1949, Catherine 1869-1965, Edmund Thomas 1872-1922 and Michael James 1874-1927. The children appear quite religious, judging by death and memorial notices in the newspapers.

In 1903, Edmund Keane, a labourer, and Bridget E Keane lived in Ann Street, Stepney, an inner suburb of Adelaide.

Bridget Keane died on 2 August 1907, aged 70, according to her death certificate.

Edmond Keane died on 10 April 1909, aged 74. Both are buried in the West Terrace Cemetery, Catholic Western Ground, Row B, Site Number 152, in Adelaide,

¹⁰ Findmypast, Clonmel General Register 1849-1850, 1/7/5, item 3. Edmond was convicted with William Ryan, 16, who had been in gaol three times, and both were transported per *Robert Small*.

¹¹ Findmypast, Mountjoy Prison Convict Classification 1848-1850, 1/11/28, item 2

¹² TNA, HO 11/21

¹³ SROWA Superintendent Orders, 1850 - 1854 (So1 - So3), image 415

¹⁴ SROWA Acc 128/1-32

¹⁵ Adelaide Times (SA : 1848 - 1858), 10 Mar 1858, p2

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

BRIDGET KEANE,
DIED 2ND AUGUST 1907,
AGED 67 YEARS.

ALSO

EDMOND KEANE,
DIED 10TH APRIL 1909,
AGED 74 YEARS.

R.I.P.

ALSO

MARY KEANE,
LOVED DAUGHTER OF ABOVE
DIED 27TH OCT. 1949,
AGED 83 YEARS.

R.I.P.