

Extracts from the Diary of Abraham James Hopkins Moody

[PRONI: T2901/4/1]

The family of Abraham Moody of Coleraine has been included because here is an example of a family where the key source is a personal diary. Abraham Moody, himself, was not listed in the 1901 Census Returns - he had died in 1899. His son John James was listed, living in Nursery Road [as it was called then] in Coleraine. Another son, Abraham, was listed in Waterloo Place in Londonderry with his mother and two sisters.

As the first paragraph of his diary states Abraham Moody was born in 1809 in the townland of Clooney (he spells it Cloney) in the parish of Magilligan or Tamlaghtard. He died in 1899 in No. 11 Church Street, Coleraine (today part of Moore's shopping complex) having been a grocer, provision merchant, etc. in that house and shop from 1853.

Unfortunately I do not have a photograph of the house and shop as it would have looked during the time Abraham Moody occupied it. After his death in 1899 the property was taken over by James Kennedy, builder, who refurbished it substantially. It was then occupied between 1903 and 1920 by Hill Bros.(Tailors). The renovation gave the building an Edwardian look. The photograph on the left, dating from c.1910, shows a three-storey bay window projecting from what had been Moody's house and shop. Before its renovation the front of the building would have looked more like the other Victorian houses in the row. The photograph on the right shows Moore's department store rebuilt after the bomb of 1992. Note that the style of the earlier building has been incorporated in the modern architecture. The house and shop on the corner in Moody's time belonged to H. & T. Bellas. If you go to the *Barony of North East Liberties of Coleraine* link in the right-hand menu in the CD, you will be able to find out more about the other shops and families in the street during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



As you will see when you read his diary his first business premises and home in the town were in Bridge Street. His diary will provide you with more information on the man and his family and provide various bits of information about Coleraine and further afield in the second half of the nineteenth century. Note that only extracts from the diary have been included. The full transcript of the diary is available in PRONI [T2901/4/1]. The diary has also been reproduced in *The Bann Disc, The Journal of the Coleraine Historical Society*, Vol. 13, 2007, pp. 51-60.

30th December 1828

I, Abraham James H Moody was born at Cloney in the parish of Magilligan on the 17th day of August 1809. I attended schools at intervals until the age of 12. Shortly after this I was sent to the Classics, my mother intending me for the Presbyterian ministry. However, from a want of a thorough knowledge of the languages and from delicate health I was suffered to remain at home, attending to the duties of a small farm held by my father and the grocery trade which my parents carried on in a country place.

By 1828 my family consisted of nine brothers and one sister, three sisters being removed by death and one brother. The last sister died of fever which I remember with regret at the age of 13. (must have been the year 1822). After her burial the majority of us took the fever. It was a time of severe trial but we all recovered.

1843

My second brother John took his departure to America and I, now 34, would need to look out for a permanent abode for myself. I took a house in Bridge Street in December 1843 and my marriage is to take place on 2nd January 1844.

1844

I was married to Elizabeth Shannon of Derrybeg on 2nd January 1844, came to Coleraine the next day and proceeded the day following to Belfast to purchase my goods. I opened a shop rented at £20 annually in Bridge Street on the Saturday following and took as my first day's sale on a market day £6. 12. 0. I should remark that I received £50 with my wife.

1845

My wife brought me a little favourite daughter, named Ruth on 15th August 1845.

1846

In July 1846 I was elected a Commissioner for the Borough.

1848/1849

My dear wife's health had been gradually declining since the birth of Ruth and she departed this earthly scene on 17th September 1848, of consumption.

I was cast again on the world but I was determined to take as my second wife Elizabeth Hopkin cousin to my former wife and on the 10th April 1849 we were married. I bless God that so far it has been a happy union. I received £50 with her as a dowry.

1850/51

My wife brought me a son on 6th June 1850. I called him John after his grandfather and added the name James.

My two brothers Henry and Solomon sailed on the ship "Sir Edmund Head" from Liverpool to Australia on 6th June 1850. I received word of their safe arrival 105 days later on 19th February 1851.

In January 1851 the gold mines of Australia were discovered. My brother John left Magilligan for Australia on 17th July 1851. He boarded a boat in Plymouth about the 22nd of the month. He was married about ten days before to Mary Campbell of Benone, who was born in Yorkshire.

My little daughter Ruth is improving in health but unable yet to attend school because of a delicate constitution. My infant boy is of buoyant spirits and healthy constitution.

1853

Birth of daughter Elizabeth on 6th March 1853. On 5th April 1853 I commenced to make improvements on a house in Church Street which I had taken from Mr Leckey, agent to the Richardson family at £28 per annum and to pay £1 yearly as additional for putting in a new front. I was to make all inside repairs which cost me about £40. On Thursday 28th April 1853 I removed my family to the Church Street house. I found my stock and cash to amount to over £550 exclusive of furniture, linens, bedding, etc. On 12th May I removed my business to the said premises trusting in God alone for success. 14th June business progressing favourably. From excessive pains in my limbs I feel my health not so good. 2nd August 1853 Coleraine cattle show held this day, my cow took the second prize and one I exhibited last year (not the same cow) took the second then and I got first prize in mangolds in 1852 and second in 1853. On Tuesday 1st November 1853 my brothers Samuel B. and Israel Joseph Moody left Coleraine via Belfast to sail to Liverpool per the Marco Polo for Melbourne. The vessel sailed out of the Mersey on Wednesday 9th November towed by two steamers down the river - booming of cannon and a band on board told of the departure of this far famed ship. She carried 620 passengers, 7025 letters and 2234 newspapers. 26th November 1853 I shipped 8 ploughs to Australia to the care of my brother H. B. Moody of Duckponds(?) Truro, Adelaide. The year 1853 has closed shrouded in a deep layer of snow; no such storm for over 40 years; mails detained for a week; markets very high.

1854

Marco Polo arrives at Port Philip in 74 days and 12 hours; run aground; no lives lost; sailed with 717 souls (crew included) and brought into port 716. 7th December received from Australia a bill of exchange in the amount of £69. 4. 9 for my ploughs. 19th December my dear old father died, aged 81.

1855

On 11th January 1855 I made a will. I thought it prudent to do so in these eventful times when cholera rages in the borough. 16th February birth of a daughter Mary, baptised on 6th May by Reverend W. Richey. 4th July I was re-elected to the Town Commissioners for Coleraine. 11th June lost my prize Ayrshire cow in calving of inflammation.

1856

I was a juror at the Derry Assizes on 19th March 1856. 16th to 22nd April 1856 - a deputation to London to build a new town hall for Coleraine. 14th June Palmer was hanged at twenty past eight a.m. on circumstantial evidence but evidence was strong enough to show that he was a murderer of the deepest dye. 16th June Mrs Moody and my two little ones Elizabeth and Mary at Bolea this week, Ruth and John James at home with myself. 5th September took the ground floor of store belonging to John Given at £4 per annum. 8th September went to Glasgow to purchase goods.

1857

On 12th February Henry Bruce Moody returned from Australia to visit his native land. 4th June foundation stone of Coleraine Academical Institute was laid. I was present at the lunch. On 21st July 1857 the foundation stone of the new town hall Coleraine was laid (my name was engrossed on parchment and enclosed under the stone of both of these buildings). On Thursday 20th and 21st August brothers sold out stock, etc. to start to Australia. On 1st April 1857 Solomon Moody was married in South Australia to Charlotte daughter of N. Foot Esq. D.L. J.P. Thursday 17th September H.B. Moody was married to Margaret daughter of John Watson of Freehall; left Magilligan Friday 18th for Australia via Liverpool. William and David left on Monday 21st. 9th October - son, Marcus, born.

1859

July elected Commissioner for Borough of Coleraine. 7th February 1859 Commissioners took the town hall of the contractor's hands. Cost to date £4146. 19. 10. 5th October 1859 my dear old mother departed this life being 70 years of age (71 on her coffin). 27th November "Eagle" steamer lost from Glasgow to Portrush. I had £14. 6. 0. on board but not insured.

1860

15th January I received the melancholy news of my brother William's death from cholera on 11th January 1860 at Light, South Australia. Birth of a daughter Martha baptised by Rev. Fleming 6th January 1861.

1862

I have resigned being a Commissioner finding too many duties to attend to at my time of life and my health not as good as usual.

1863

29th January - this season so far stormy and wet, business bad and war still raging in America. 25th April birth of a son; baptised Abraham Hopkins by Rev. R.W. Fleming.

1865

2nd June my mother-in-law Mrs M. Hopkins died. 5th July 1865 birth of a daughter Annie Adelaine. 18th December my dear daughter Ruth left per rail via Belfast and Liverpool to sail by the "City of London" on the 20th for New York. On her arrival in New York she will marry Thomas D. McCarter son of Joseph McCarter, Coleraine.

1866

20th November passed up to Belfast with my son John James. He was introduced by the Mayor and got an appointment in the bank; first six months to be in Coleraine. My little family suffering much at the present from scarlatina. 26th November J.J. Moody entered into the bank in Coleraine. 2nd December birth of daughter Josephine Foot, baptised 24th February 1867.

1867

October John James went to the Head Office, Belfast

1868

8th June 1868 birth of daughter, Elvina Jane

1869

22nd May death of daughter Annie Adelaine by inflammation in the stomach.

1872

20th August. I, again, have to record after a lengthened period of declining health through which she never murmured, my beloved daughter Lizzy passed away at twenty minutes past eight o'clock in the morning, the family all gathered round her bed.....in her nineteenth year.....

1878

Another dear brother is gone, died at Gaulear(?) on Thursday 14th February 1878, Henry Bruce Moody.

1880

December, my son Alexander (Abraham Hopkins) entered the Ulster Bank.

1883

6th July my son Marcus left for London; sailed on 12th July at three o'clock p.m. for Adelaide Australia. Received a letter from the Cape dated 5th August written on board S.S. Orient. 8th August received postcard from London stating steamer had arrived at Adelaide on Saturday 25th August 1883. Marcus Hopkins and James McCloy sailed in the same S.S.

1885

October, my brother John died in Y.P. Australia.

1894

10th July 1894 my dear son Marcus died at Adelaide, Australia.

1895

Thursday 25th July 1895 dear Elvina left for Cromer.

1899

Abraham James Hopkins Moody died on 11th March 1899 aged 90 years. [Entry by one of his daughters]