

## Catherine Eleanor Joyce c1831-1893

c1831 Catherine Eleanor Joyce born at Cong near Ballinrobe Co Mayo to Martin and Catherine Joyce.<sup>1</sup>  
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Catherine Joyce, 19, a house servant, from Ballinrobe Mayo, a Catholic, parents Martin and Catherine Joyce (both dead), arrived in Sydney NSW on 12 January 1850 on the Panama.<sup>3 4</sup>

Catherine Joyce was indentured to the Rev Joseph Oram of York St Sydney at 8 pounds for 1 year.<sup>5</sup>

The Rev Joseph Oram, a Wesleyan minister, and his wife Ellen were also on board the Panama as unassisted immigrants.<sup>6</sup>

In 1851 Joseph Oram was living in York Street Sydney. The owners of the property were the Trustees of Wesleyan Missionary Society. It was a brick house with a shingled roof. York Street was in Brisbane Ward.<sup>7</sup>

**1 Oct 1851** Catherine Joyce married Robert John Robinson at Clare SA.<sup>8</sup>

**8 Oct 1851** Catherine Joyce married Robert John Stewart Robinson at Clare Village, South Australia according to the Victorian birth certificate of their daughter Catherine Robinson.<sup>9</sup> However, no registration or parish record of the marriage has been located. Their marriage is supported by evidence presented in her husband's 1874 bigamy trial, whereby Father McGuinn testified to this effect. Father McGuinn was stationed in South Australia at the time of the marriage, according to the SA Biographical Index and other records. Catherine probably would have been about 7 or 8 months pregnant with their daughter Anastasia when she married.

**14 Nov 1851** Anastasia Robinson was born at Port Lincoln South Australia to Robert Robinson and Catherine Joyce.<sup>10</sup>

**18 Nov 1851** Anastasia Robinson was baptised at St Mary of The Angels Church, Port Lincoln, South Australia. Sponsor was John Noonan. Baptised by Bishop Francis Murphy, first Catholic Bishop in South Australia.

**c Jul 1856** Charles Edward Robinson born at Wedderburn Victoria (no birth/baptism record yet located, date given by sister Anastasia in a letter she wrote in 1927).

**15 Feb 1858** Catherine Stewart Robinson born at Mt Korong Victoria to Robert John Stewart Robinson a doctor aged 42 born Brussels Belgium and Catherine Joyce aged 23 born Ballinrobe Mayo Ireland.<sup>11</sup>

**cNov 1861** Agnes Helena/Eleanor Robinson born (no birth/baptism record yet located, date given by sister Anastasia in a letter she wrote in 1927).

**10 Feb 1864** Marea Stuart Robinson born at Common near Goondiwindi, Queensland, to Robert John Stuart Robinson a medical doctor aged 49 born Brussels Belgium and Catherine Helena Joyes, age 28, born Ballinrobe County Mayo Ireland.<sup>12</sup>

### **1 Feb 1865 Offences not otherwise described p40**

A warrant has been issued by the Sydney Bench, for the arrest of a man named Robert J S Robertson, and Catherine Robertson (his wife), wherein they are charged with having, near Burwood, on the 23rd ultimo, assaulted and beat Mary Bourke, their former servant. The former offender is 50 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, dark complexion, fair curly hair, blue eyes, slightly pockpitted, sometimes wears a slight moustache parted in the centre; calls himself a Doctor. The other is low and stout, dark complexion, eyes and hair; had with them three girls, aged respectively 3, 7, and 13 years, a boy 10 years of age, and a baby.<sup>13</sup>

*Nb the 3 girls would have been Agnes born cNov 1861, Catherine b 15 Feb 1858 and Anastasia b 14 Nov 1851, the boy would've been Charles Edward born c1855, and the baby would've been Moriea/Marea/Marie b 10 Feb 1864*

### **1 Feb 1865**

Empire

Wednesday 1 February 1865

DISTRICT COURT

MARIA BOURKE - The young woman who recently arrived in this colony, named Maria Bourke, and who lent all her money, and induced her brother also to lend his money to her master, J. S. Robertson, and his wife, is very anxiously inquired for at the Central Police Court. Robertson and his wife, who are charged with having cruelly beat and suddenly left Maria Bourke destitute, are now in custody, having recently been apprehended at Penrith.

### **3 Feb 1865**

Empire

Friday 3 February 1865

CENTRAL POLICE COURT - THURSDAY.

(Before the Police Magistrate, with Messrs. Levey, Thorne, Birrell, Smithers, and Dangar.)

Seven drunken, riotous, and disorderly characters, were discharged; as were J S Robertson and his wife, for an assault on Maria Bourke, who did not appear to prosecute.

**8 Feb 1865** "Robert J S Robertson & Catherine Robertson (his wife), charged, on warrant, with assaulting Mary Bourk, have been arrested by Senior Constable Warren, Penrith Police. Remanded to Sydney, and discharged - the prosecutrix not appearing."<sup>14</sup>

**16 Sep 1866** Robert James Robertson (who later became a NSW politician) born at Booligal, NSW to Arthur Bell Robertson, a physician aged 52 born Fort William Scotland and Catherine Helena Joyse (or Joyce? – has been written over) aged 31, born Ballinrobe Ireland.<sup>15</sup>

### **21 December 1868**

The Argus

Monday 21 December 1868

"We understand," says the Bendigo Advertiser, "that information has been received of a most distressing calamity on the Darling by which it is feared the lives of a whole family have been lost. Dr Robinson, formerly of Booligal, went with his wife and family in a spring-cart on a journey to some place on the Darling, and took a short cut to reach his destination sooner. Nothing was heard of them until the dead bodies of Dr Robinson and three of his children were found by some travelers - want of water having evidently been the cause of death. Nothing has been heard of Mrs Robinson and the oldest daughter, about nineteen years of age, but hardly any hopes are entertained of their being found alive. This sad affair has caused a profound sensation in the district."

### **22 Nov 1873**

Manning River News

Bench of Magistrates

Special Court

Wingham, Monday, Nov 17 1873

(Before Joshua Cochrane, Esq, JP)

Robert John Robertson was brought up in custody of Constable Emerson, charged with unlawfully deserting is legally married wife Catherine Joyce Robertson, residing at Trunkey Creek, in the colony of New South Wales.

The prisoner pleaded not guilty.

Constable Emerson, on oath, deposed ?? arrested the prisoner now before the Court yesterday by virtue of a warrant from under the hand and seal of T Askell Smith, Esq, JP, where the said prisoner is charged with having deserted his legally married wife Catherine Joyce Robertson, residing at Trunkey Creek, and also leaving her without sufficient means of support. I read the warrant to prisoner at the time of arrest. In reply he said she was not his lawful wife, and – pointing to a female who was riding with him at the time – said that she was the only lawful wife of his. The warrant and other documents I now produce. As the principal witness resides at Trunkey Creek I pray for a remand to that place. Granted. Prisoner applied for bail. The application was adjourned till the following day.

### **13 Dec 1873 Manning River News**

News from Port Macquarie:

ROBERT JOHN ROBERTSON, who on the 18th of November last, was remanded from Wingham Court to Trunkey Creek, has, we are informed, been found guilty of the charge brought against him, and has been ordered to pay fifteen shillings weekly for the support of his wife. We may have occasion to allude to Mr Robertson again before long.

**6 Feb 1874** Robert John Stewart Robertson tried for Bigamy at Sydney Quarter Sessions.

Sydney Morning Herald

Saturday 7 February 1874

Court of Quarter Sessions

Friday

Before District Court Judge Meymott

**BIGAMY**

Robert John Stewart Robertson was brought before the Court on a charge of bigamy. Prisoner, who pleaded not guilty, was defended by Mr Windeyer. It appears that on the 6th of October last year, prisoner was married at Wingham, in this colony, to Elizabeth Hardy - his first wife Catherine Joyce, to whom he had been married at Clare, South Australia, being then alive. The marriage to the woman Hardy was proved by Mr Jasper Cray, the registrar of the district in which the marriage was celebrated. As regards the first marriage, the Rev D McGuinn, of Berrima, deposed that in 1851 he solemnised marriage between Catherine Joyce and a man whose appearance he could not recollect, but who signed the marriage certificate as Robert John Stewart "Robinson". Michael Wallace, a warder in Darlinghurst Gaol, produced a document purporting to be a power-of-attorney given by prisoner to a woman he named as Catherine Robertson, whom prisoner acknowledged as his wife; at this time (some twelve months ago) prisoner was undergoing a sentence at Darlinghurst Gaol. John Robson, who had been a fellow prisoner with prisoner in the gaol at Port Macquarie, said that prisoner had told him, in the course of conversation, that he had a wife and six children living at Bathurst; on witness being released, at prisoner's request he wrote to his wife at Bathurst. Mr SL Bensusan said that the signature on the marriage certificate was in the prisoner's handwriting, although he had spelt his name differently from his ordinary signature. A letter was produced in prisoner's handwriting, in which some female was addressed as "Dear Kate". The jury returned a verdict of guilty and prisoner was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Darlinghurst Gaol, with hard labour.

### **Empire**

**Saturday 7 February 1874**

METROPOLITAN QUARTER SESSIONS.

FRIDAY.

(Before Mr District Court Judge Meymott.)

Mr W J Foster prosecuted for the crown.

**BIGAMY**

Robert John Stewart Robertson was charged that he, on the 1st of October, 1851, at Clare, in the colony of South Australia, did marry and take to wife one Catharine Joyce, and that afterwards, and while he was so married, to wit, on the 6th of October, 1871, at Wingham, in the colony of New South Wales, he did feloniously and unlawfully marry and take to wife one Elizabeth Hardy, his former wife, Catherine, being still alive. Prisoner was defended by Mr Windeyer.

The second marriage was proved by Mr Jaspar Cray, registrar of the district in which the marriage was celebrated. In reference to the first marriage, the Rev Denis McGuinn, of Berrima, stated that in the year 1851 he performed the ceremony of marriage between Catherine Joyce and a man whom he cannot now remember, but who signed the marriage certificate as Robert John Robinson. He had no recollection of the woman either, except from statements which she had made to him. A warder in Darlinghurst Gaol, named Michael Wallace, produced a written document, purporting to be a power of attorney, which prisoner had given to a woman named Catharine Robertson, and whom prisoner acknowledged as his wife. This happened about twelve months ago, when prisoner was undergoing a sentence in Darlinghurst gaol. John Robson, a person living at Port Macquarie, stated that he and prisoner were confined to the gaol at that place. They used frequently converse together, and prisoner often admitted that he had a wife and six children living at Bathurst. When he (Robson) was discharged from gaol, prisoner requested him to write to his wife at Bathurst and he did so. On a subsequent occasion, prisoner told witness that he would swear he was not married, as all the witnesses were dead and the priest had gone home. Samuel Levey Bensusan stated that the handwriting on the marriage certificate, purporting to be the signature of Robert John Robinson, was prisoner's, although the signature was not prisoner's ordinary one, the name being spelled differently. A letter, in prisoner's handwriting, was produced, in which he addresses some female as his "dear Kate," as if he were writing to his wife. - The defence was that the woman Catharine Joyce was married to a man named Robinson, that she left him and lived for several years with prisoner as his wife, and that upon his deserting her, she put herself forward as his wife. The jury, after about twenty minutes' consideration, found a verdict of guilty, and prisoner was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Darlinghurst gaol with hard labour.



↑  
Catherine

orphan : Catherine Joyce  
donated by Gabrielle Blackstock.

*Photo of Catherine Stuart-Robertson nee Joyce on view at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum, donated by descendant Gabrielle Blackstock. I think the photo would have been taken in the late 1880s or early 1890s with the women probably Catherine's spinster daughters Marie b1864 and Catherine b1858(or reverse) and her sons Charles Edward born c1855 and Robert James b1866.*



*Catherine's wedding ring and cross donated to the Hyde Park Barracks by descendant Gabrielle Blackstock*

**5 Mar 1893** Catherine Eleanor Robertson (nee Joyce) died aged 59 at Bourke, married at Clare, South Australia, aged 17, born Ballinrobe Mayo Ireland, to Robert John Stuart Robertson, parents Martin Joyce and Catherine Eleanor Higgins. Informant Marie Robertson, daughter. Witnesses were A P Robbins (?) and C Kable. Catherine had a Catholic burial in Bourke.<sup>16</sup>



*In fond memory of Catherine Eleanor Stuart beloved wife of the late Dr RJS Robertson, born at Cong, County Mayo, Ireland, died at Bourke 5th March 1893, aged 58 years.  
The Latin inscription on the base is Regina Sacratissimi Rosarii Ora Pro Nobis - Holy Mother/Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Pray for Us*

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## References

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- <sup>1</sup> NSW State Archives reference no 4/4919 reel 2461
- <sup>2</sup> Birthplace Cong County Mayo on Catherine's headstone in Bourke cemetery NSW
- <sup>3</sup> NSW State Archives reference no 4/4919 reel 2461
- <sup>4</sup> Vol 1 of *Barefoot and Pregnant* by Trevor McClaughlin
- <sup>5</sup> Vol 2 of *Barefoot and Pregnant* by Trevor McClaughlin)
- <sup>6</sup> Index to the Unassisted Arrivals NSW 1842-1855 [www.records.nsw.gov.au](http://www.records.nsw.gov.au)
- <sup>7</sup> [www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/assessmentbooks/CRS17\\_1851-1852/](http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/assessmentbooks/CRS17_1851-1852/)
- <sup>8</sup> Newspaper report on his bigamy trial in the Empire on Saturday 7 February 1874
- <sup>9</sup> Victorian birth indexes Catherine Stewart Robinson reg number 8530/1858
- <sup>10</sup> Baptism record in 1851 for Anastasia Robinson at St Mary of the Angels Church Port Lincoln SA
- <sup>11</sup> Victorian birth indexes Catherine Stewart Robinson reg number 8530/1858
- <sup>12</sup> QLD birth indexes 1864/C000463 Robinson Marea Stuart Robert John Stuart Catherine Helena Joyes
- <sup>13</sup> NSW Police Gazette 1865
- <sup>14</sup> NSW Police Gazette 1865
- <sup>15</sup> NSW birth indexes 5139/1866 ROBERTSON ROBERT J ARTHUR B CATHERINE H HAY
- <sup>16</sup> NSW death index 3496/1893 ROBERTSON CATHERINE E S MARTIN CATHERINE E BOURKE