

**CATHERINE RIORDAN Irish Transportation Records CRF1842 R12**

To His Excellency Earl De Grey  
Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of Ireland

The Memorial of Catherine Riordan at present in the Jail of the County of Limerick under sentence of transportation.

Humbly Sheweth

That Memorialist was tried at the present Spring Assizes for said county for stealing Three sheep the property of John Moore of Cappa, was found guilty and sentenced to Ten years transportation.

That Memorialist thru' life has been a person of industrious habits who never before had an occasion to appear at a Bar of Justice, that she is the mother of Fourteen children, principally consisting of Females, unprovided for nine of whom are living and is in the Fifty-fourth year of her age.

That Memorialists husband is a sickly aged man unable to assist his helpless unprotected children, who will be cast abandoned on the world if Memorialist be separated from them. And in submitting her distress case with the annexed recommendation to Your Excellency she humbly begs leave to assert her innocence of said charge.

May it therefore please Your Excellency to take Memorialists case with the accompanying testimonials into your Excellency's humane and just consideration by commuting the sentence passed on Memorialist to such less punishment as to Your Excellency seem fit and as in duty bound. Memorialist will pray.

County of Limerick Jail  
9<sup>th</sup> March 1842

Catherine Riordan

We certify that Memorialist Catherine Riordan is a woman of industrious habits. We have known her for years and always considered her an honest well conducted person whose good name has never before been tainted with even the suspicion of crime, and we join in recommending that her case maybe taken into the consideration of His Excellency Earl De Grey by granting the petition of her memorial Given under our hands this 10<sup>th</sup> day of March 1842

*List of signatures*

*Note written up the side.*

Referred to Mr Nokes to ascertain whether the signatures are genuine  
Dublin Castle March 19<sup>th</sup> 1842

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Memorialist begs to remark that a memorial signed by several Jurors of the County of Limerick who tried this case has been signed by them and forwarded to the Hon<sup>ble</sup> Justice Torrens the Judge who tried same who it is hoped will gain your Lordship a favourable Opinion on Memorialist's case and humbly hopes your Lordship will make reference to him

Am Your Memorialist  
Will ever pray  
Catherine Riordan

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*Indecipherable note ending:-*

But if the part stated, in the report of 31 March, be true, there is not in my opinion any grounds for a mitigation of the sentence

*Signature indecipherable*

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County of Limerick  
Rathkeale March 31. 1842

The annexed memorial having been transmitted to me by Mr Nokes in consequence of all the signatures annexed purporting to be those of persons residing in Rathkeale I have made enquiry inspecting the Authenticity of the Signatures and have to report that I find them genuine.

At the same time I beg respectfully to state for the Information of his Excellency that I find several of the Parties signing were induced to do so more by the names they found already affixed than from any intimate knowledge of the Parties, and more by the respectability of their appearance than from a knowledge of the means by which they supported it. In proof of this one person who lived the nearest to them stated to me that he always considered that the Prisoner and her husband must be substantial farmers, whilst in fact they had no land at all – From the Impression I obtained when following up the case originally it would appear that Catherine Riordan had been following the trade of sheep and cow stealing for more than two years in this neighbourhood unsuspected and was a constant seller in the Limerick Market, tho' not under her real name. Her children, I learn, are most of them powerless, one in Service and the others able with the exception of two to support themselves.

Cattle stealing is very prevalent in the neighbourhood even yet, notwithstanding several minor convictions have taken place at the Quarter Sessions.

George Goold

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To Her Excellency the Countess De Grey etc etc etc

The humble Petition of Mary Riordan and Ellen Riordan, her sister, both of Bally William, near Rathkeale in the County of Limerick, most humbly

Sheweth: That your Ladyship's two youthful Petitioners have travelled on foot from their residence aforesaid, a distance of one hundred and eight Irish miles, to supplicate your Ladyship's gracious intercession on behalf of their poor afflicted mother who now lies in the Gaol of Limerick under sentence of Transportation for ten years upon a charge brought against her at the last Assizes in that City before the Honorable Justice Torrens, for stealing three sheep.

That the convict is the mother of fourteen children, of whom nine are now living with their father, who is an old man and bedridden, and whose grey Hairs are sinking into the Grave with sorrow in consequence of the unfortunate occurrence. She is of a respectable family and true; and Petitioners solemnly declare that if they had the faintest idea of their "mother's" guilt they would be far from undertaking so long a journey to do her the least service, but on the other hand, knowing her innocence and what she has already suffered being confined in Gaol three months before the Assizes they feel for her in their Hearts and Souls, and do humbly hope your Ladyship will participate in their feelings.

It would move the hardened heart to witness the lamentations of her poor husband and her children. The sheep in question were bought by her at the fair of Pallas-Kenry from a stranger whom she did not know, and he having stolen them, was the heartrending cause of the dreadful situation of the mother of fourteen children!

Petitioners, therefore, on the knees of their hearts, most humbly supplicate your Ladyship of mercy and compassion- One word and their poor mother would be restored to her family. They have travelled far on foot in the pleasing hope that their journey will not be in vain – and that God Almighty may bestow upon your Ladyship many long and happy days in this life and eternal felicity in the next, will be the constant prayers of your Ladyship's humble petitioners.

BallyWilliam, Rathkeale  
Co Limerick May 24 1842

Mary Riordan  
Catherine Riordan

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The humble Petition of Mary Riordan and Ellen Riordan, her sister, both of Bally William, near Rathkeale in the County of Limerick, write Your Excellency most humbly

Sheweth: That your Lordship's two youthful Petitioners have travelled on foot from their above mentioned residence to this great Metropolis, in order to cast themselves at Your Excellency's feet and to supplicate your fatherly tenderness in behalf of their poor mother who now lies in the Gaol of Limerick under sentence of Transportation for ten years upon a charge brought against her at the last Assizes in that City before the Honorable Justice Torrens, for stealing three sheep.

That their poor Mother is the parent of fourteen children, of whom nine are now living, she is of a respectable family and was always in good circumstances; and had Your Excellency's Petitioner the slightest idea of her guilt they solemnly assert they would not have set out on a journey of one hundred and eight Irish miles to supplicate the Royal clemency in her behalf but would leave her to her fate; but on the contrary they know their dear mother to be innocent and that she brought them at the fair in Pallas Kenry from a man who came not honestly by them by whose name she knew not.

That it would melt a heart of stone to witness the lamentations of her poor old bedridden husband, and nine children, when committed to gaol for this offence, three months before the Assizes, and where she now lies in a state of very bad health – but since her conviction no language could describe the unutterable anguish of this afflicted family.

Petitioners, therefore, on the knees of their hearts, most humbly supplicate your Excellency of Grace and Compassion. They have travelled a long journey to implore it and they humbly pray that they have not laboured in vain. Out of the treasure of your paternal goodness they fondly hope Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to extend the prerogative of mercy towards their poor mother by ordering such mitigation of her terrible sentence your Excellency will think proper.

And that God Almighty may bless your Excellency with long life and good health in this world and eternal happiness in the next, will be the constant prayers of your Excellency's petitioners.

BallyWilliam, Rathkeale  
Co Limerick May 24 1842

Mary Riordan  
Catherine Riordan

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The Memorial of Catherine Riordan of BallyWilliam near Rathkeale at present  
Under sentence of transportation in the County of Limerick Gaol

Most humbly shewth

That Memorialist was tried at the last spring assizes for the County of Limerick for stealing three sheep from John Moore of Lisbuy and found Guilty and sentenced to ten years transportation.

That Memorialist is over fifty four years of age, is the mother of Fourteen children principally consisting of females and nine of them are still living and having an unhealthy Father unable to labour for his family's support. Memorialist for several years was obliged to transact her domestic business and to attend at fairs and markets to dispose of her stock

That the sheep were not found in Memorialist's possession but she was arrested on the Information of one Denis Drinan to whom she sold them, but Drinan having died before the Trial Memorialist was thereby precluded from the benefits that would arise from his cross examination.

That Memorialist does not arraign the justice of her sentence, and most humbly begs leave to represent that she never before had an occasion to appear in a Court of Justice, That she is in confinement since the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1841 during the greater part of which she is under the care of the Gaol physicians.

May it therefore please your Excellency to take the case of Memorialist with the annexed Certificate and recommendation, which is signed also by the prosecutor John Moore, into Your Excellency's humane consideration by commuting Memorialists sentence as to your Excellency may seem fit and she will pray.

Catherine Riordan

We the undersigned Magistrates, Freeholders, Gentlemen be of the County of Limerick believe the above to be true and we join the prosecutor, John Moore, in recommending, that the case of Memorialist be taken into the consideration of His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant Given under our hands this 29 day of July 1842.  
County of Limerick Jail

John Moore  
The Prosecutor

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*(oval rubber stamp - document received at Chief Secretary's Office Dublin August [ ] 1842 )*

Riddlestown Park  
August 2 1842

Sir,

In the absence of the Lord Lieutenant [of Ireland] Earl de Grey, I request you will lay before the Lords Justices the sworn promisory Memorial in extenuation they may be pleased to take Petitioners Case into their humane consideration. The following circumstances induce me to join in the prayer of the Petitioner.

The Applicant is Mother of fourteen children, an old Woman, in bad health and in confinement since December last. Her Husband a very unhealthy poor man, and two unfortunate Children, confined to their beds, with sore feet and swollen legs from walking near 200 miles from home to Dublin Castle, and back, to present a memorial personally, from the effects of which [these] poor creatures are suffering for the parent shockingly tho' much better. The prosecutor signed the memorial requesting their Lordships etc will grant the request.

I have the Honor to be  
Your ob[edien]<sup>t</sup> serv[an]<sup>t</sup>  
Gerald Blennerhassett  
Dep[ut]<sup>y</sup> Lieu[tenan]<sup>t</sup> Co[unty] Limerick

The last off post of Memorial, declaring innocence, after a conviction, I could not certify, therefore have(not) done so.

G[erald] B[lennerhassett]

*(written vertically at left)*

W Connor

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Limerick, August 1842

Dear Sir

I have examined into the case of Catherine Riordan a convict in the County of Limerick Gaol; she is aged between 50 and 60 years, much worn having been the mother of several children; from which circumstances I would hesitate to certify that she was a fit subject to undertake a voyage which it is my duty to do as surgeon of the prison, as I would consider she would be an encumbrance on the voyage or after it.

I remain  
Your very Ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>  
James G Mc[.....]

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*(oval rubber stamp - document received at Chief Secretary's Office*

*Dublin, August 12 1842)*

8  
Riddlestown Park  
August 11 1842

Sir,

I beg leave to state for the information of Their Excellencies that I am more inclined to address them on behalf of six young Children, four younger than the two poor creatures that walked to Dublin and presented their memorial themselves at the Castle, the last child young and sickly, of the six.

This time I respectfully beg to say that there are circumstances in this woman's case that her attorney did not bring before [the] Judge, that might have altered their opinion and which, if is properly attested to, in Mr Goolds statement to Their Excellencies, namely, that of a person holding no land, but having stock at fairs, that is quite common here, jobbing on stock and grazing sheep, to keep the wool for frize and flannel, and then sell the sheep.

I have ascertained from two men that they have for the last three years taken sheep to graze from this Woman and then these have driven them to fairs and when not sold bring them back subsequently to the farmer.

I should not much count this unsworn information from the lower orders to a Co[unty] Magistrate, also I am [ ] into on the first principle, for I regret to say few of them can be believed on Oath.

I also beg to send the report of the Gaol Doctor.

I again beg humbly to submit this case to Their Excellencies for their humane consideration and to add a material point for these poor Children, the very bad health of their Father and that to my own knowledge.

I am Sir  
Your M[o]<sup>st</sup> Hu[mb]<sup>le</sup> Ser[van]<sup>t</sup>  
Gerald Blennerhassett

*(written vertically at left)*

W Connor  
Ans[were]<sup>d</sup> case dep<sup>td</sup> / def[ende]<sup>d</sup>(?) aug 12  
L[or]<sup>d</sup> L[iutenant]<sup>t</sup> retain

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Riddlestown Park  
August 29

Sir,

These unfortunate little girls daughters of Catherine Riordan under sen<sup>t</sup> of transportation have just brought me a letter. They rec<sup>d</sup> from their mother stating she was to be put on board the Convict Ship this day. Lest there might be a mistake I take the liberty of reminding you of the letter I had the honor to receive by order of the Lord Justices from you of August 16. Whereon you mention, they have directed the examination of the sentence shall (be) suspended until his Excellency the lord Lieutenant returns to Ireland.

I am confident that this mistake lies at(the) woman's side, but I was so implored. by those children I cannot refuse troubling you again.

I have the Honor to be  
Your ob<sup>t</sup> serv<sup>t</sup>  
Gerald Blennerhassett  
Deputy Lieut Co Limerick

Permit me to request a speedy answer

*(written vertically at left)*

W Connor  
Ans[were]<sup>d</sup> case dep<sup>td</sup> / def[ende]<sup>d</sup>(?) aug 12  
L[or]<sup>d</sup> L[iutenant]<sup>t</sup> retain  
Sheweth benevolent and humane  
The Countess de Gray

That Memorialist was tried at the last spring assizes for the County of Limerick for stealing three sheep from John Moore of Lisbuy was found guilty and sentenced to transportation.

That Memorialist is over fifty four years of age, is the mother of fourteen children principally consisting of Females and nine of whom are still living- and having a Father unable to labour for his families support. Memorialist for many years was... domestic concerns and to attend at Fairs and Markets to buy and sell cattle. That the sheep were not found in the possession of Memorialistbut she was arrested on the deposition of one Denis Drinan a Victualler from the City of Limerick [.....] having died before the trial came on your Memorialist was thereby precluded from the benefit that would arise from his direct and cross Examination. That Memorialist does not arraign the Justice of her sentence but is humbly stating that she never before had an occasion to appear in a Court of Justice. That she was confined since the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1841during the greater part of which she was under the care of the Gaol physician and fear of her unprotected female children having travelled on foot from Rathkeale to Dublin a distance of 137 miles, to see the Lords Justices; and their Lordships having carefully considered their case. May it therefore please The Right Honorable The Charles de Grey to take the case of Memorialist and of her unfortunate female children into his Gracious consideration by using your powerful influence with his Excellency the Lord Lieutenant... with the Lords Justices to have Memorialist restored to the Bosom of her afflicted family and in humbly stating that a Memorial had been forwarded to the Lord Justice signed by John Moore, the prosecutor and recommended by the Magistrates.... of the County of Limerick, praying for a commutation of her sentence. Memorialist in the name of the Redeemer, most Respectfully and Humbly calls on your Ladyship to [.....] prayers of her [.....] and for which she and miserable family [.....] to Grant to Your Ladyship and all yours a continuance of health and of the other blessings Your Ladyship so deservedly enjoys.

Catherine Riordan

We the undersigned Magistrates of the County of Limerick believe the above to be true and we join the prosecutor, John Moore, in recommending , that the case of Memorialist be taken into the consideration of The Right Honorable, The Countess de Gray. Given under our hands this 4th day of October1842.

John Moore  
The Prosecutor

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Riddlestown Park                      April 22  
1843  
Rathkeale

Sir,

I have the honor to forward to you, requesting you will lay same before His Excellency Earl De Grey the humble petition of Eight Children and a sickly father on behalf of Catherine Riordan, confined for sheep stealing in Grange Gorman Lane Penitentiary; and in confinement since 1841 and brought from the hulk. Your respectable gentlemen & Magistrates in her neighbourhood thus have been applied to, have signed the Memorial of the Children for the restoration of their Mother and a further extension of her time at home

I have the Honor to be  
Your ob<sup>t</sup>serv<sup>t</sup>  
Gerald Blennerhassett  
Deputy Lieut Co Limerick

Mr Connors *written along the side*

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Limerick 30 April 1843

Dear Miss Edwards

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I cannot allow another post to pass without addressing you on one of the most painful subjects that ever presented itself to my notice. On yesterday Cap<sup>t</sup> Blennerhassett the Deputy Lieutenant of this county directed my attention to a family of nine of the most helpless emaciated looking poor wretches I have ever seen in my life. The mother of these poor creatures who was there entire support was committed for sheep stealing in

the year 1841 – My reason for writing you is that an opportunity might occur that you can bring this subject under the notice of Her Excellency who is so [.....]for kindheartedness and humanity who might interfere with His Excellency on their behalf. The mother is to be transported in a few days, so that there is no time to be lost. His Excellency is perfectly conversant with everything connected with this most unfortunate wretch, her name is Catherine Riordan – the entire family of nine are perfectly helpless, with an old infirm dying father – if anything lies in your power I feel satisfied that you will exert yourself - in saving in all chances a helpless wretches from prostitution, since this mother confirmed they have been entirely depending on the bounty of providence – I really would not trouble you with this affair did I not feel so deeply impressed with the helpless condition and ultimate ruin of these poor wretches – When they had their mother she was always able to work out by her industries a scanty support for them. – but they are now perfectly destitute. I shall not apologise to you for the liberty I have taken as I am perfectly convinced had you seen them as I have done you would feel as I do

I remain  
Dear Miss Edwards  
Yours very sincerely  
*Signature*

Letter addressed to  
Her Excellency  
The Countess de Gray  
The Castle Dublin

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Four of the Children are under the prescribed age and as a matter of course would be allowed to accompany their Parent – if they were to present themselves in time at G G lane

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*(oval rubber stamp - document received at Chief Secretary's Office Dublin, May 1 1843)*

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Riddlestown Park  
Rathkeale  
April 30 1843

To  
His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant [of Ireland]  
etc etc etc

I trust Your Excellency will pardon the liberty I take in thus addressing you, and for again troubling you so soon after receiving an answer, in the case of Catherine Riordan. When I was joined in the Memorial by so many Dep[ut]y Lieutenants, Magistrates, Clergymen and County Gentlemen to Your Excellency, I am emboldened once more, humbly to address Your Excellency in her behalf.

I also beg to state that I would be joined by hundreds in my application to Your Excellency had I time, that have witnessed the misery of the unfortunate family.

With the greatest respect I humbly take leave to state that the unfortunate woman, has suffered nearly two years imprisonment already, and was led to think from general opinion, that after being once brought back from the convict ship last year, that she would never undergo the sentence of transportation, but that probably there would be a commutation of her sentence, into imprisonment at home.

Your Excellency's humane offer of permitting the young Children under 9 years (of which there are four) of accompanying her, would have been at one time considered a great Boon, but that day day (*sic*) is gone by when was merit [ ] to accomplish that, but they now have not the means of even going to Dublin, and I am sorry to say may be in rags, from their Father's bad health, and unable to work at his trade.

If Your Excellency would be graciously pleased to imprison her at home, for any portion of the term Your Excellency would think fit, It would be confer[ing] an everlasting obligation on us all, satisfy the ends of justice and relieve the minds of these unfortunate Children and their Father.

If Your Excellency was to witness the heart rending scene of this poor family you [would have] sympathy on their behalf .

As I so well know, my addressing Your Excellency in this manner is out of rule(?). I hope Your Excellency will pardon the Liberty, but having read that the female convict ship had arrived, I dreaded loss of some one of the Creatures that walked to the Castle to present their Memorial some time since, has left them so poor(?), we cannot find out whether she is living or dead.

I have the Honor to be

Your Excellency

With the highest form of respect

Your most Ob[edien]<sup>t</sup> Humble Sub[jec]<sup>t</sup>

Gerald Blennerhassett

Depu[ty]<sup>y</sup> Lieu[tenan]<sup>t</sup> Co[unty] Limerick

His Excellency The Lord Lieutenant [of Ireland]

etc etc etc