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‘Poor prison flowers’: convict mothers and their children in Ireland, 1853-1900

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ABSTRACT

Pregnant women and mothers were among the thousands of individuals who were sentenced to at least three years’ penal servitude and admitted to the nineteenth-century Irish female convict prison. While some babies were born behind bars, others were permitted to accompany their convicted mothers into the prison after the penal practice of transportation had ceased. Other dependent children were separated from their convicted mothers for years, cared for by family members or friends, or accommodated in Ireland’s growing web of institutions. Using individual case studies, this paper focuses on convict mothers and their young offspring. It draws attention to the increasing restrictions on the admission of infants that were imposed as the nineteenth century progressed, the problems that children of various ages in the penal system seemed to pose for officials, and the difficulties faced by incarcerated mothers who wished to maintain communication with their offspring. This article argues that while there were benefits to parenting within the confines of the prison, sentences of penal servitude had a significant impact on the lives of dependent offspring by dislocating families, separating siblings, or initiating institutional or other care that broke familial bonds permanently. In so doing, the article reveals attitudes towards motherhood as well as female criminality and institutionalisation generally during this period and sheds light on an aspect of convict life unique to the women’s prison.

KEYWORDS: convicts, imprisonment, motherhood, nineteenth-century Ireland

Johanna Joyce pressed herself close to Anne Galvin as she passed her by on the street in Tullamore, King's County, on 28 March 1893. According to reports, twenty-six-year-old Joyce was 'the wife of a travelling tinker who ... discarded her on account of her violent temper and general bad character.'¹ Galvin felt her skirt twitch and, on checking her pocket, realised that she was missing ~~two and a half pence~~sixpence. At the same time, a policeman who happened to be nearby noticed that Joyce, a serial offender, turned sharply in an attempt to avoid him. His suspicions aroused, Constable Hogan grabbed Joyce and forced her to open her fist, revealing one and a half pence. When the case came to court, the judge acknowledged that little money had been stolen and that the copper coins found were inconsistent with the sum lost. Despite this, and the lack of direct evidence connecting her to the crime, Joyce, who did not have legal representation at the trial, was sentenced to three years' penal servitude in the Irish female convict prison in Dublin (see Figure 1). In response to Joyce's shrieks of horror as she was taken from the Tullamore court, the judge addressed the jury: 'I know what I'm about gentlemen; she'll be well taken care of by the nuns. It'll be a sort of Industrial School.'² Unknown to the judge, and possibly herself, Johanna Joyce was about two months pregnant.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

Between 1854 and 1882, the years for which figures can be gleaned from annual prison reports, the female convict prison, the destination for all women in Ireland who were sentenced to penal servitude for three years or more, admitted 3,740 women and 214 children.³ Annual reports for this period indicate that at least ninety-eight additional infants were born behind prison walls and remained therein for a proportion of their lives.⁴ Women's

biological capacity to bear children differentiated the female convict experience from the male equivalents. Staff members in the women's prison were thus responsible for the punishment and reform of inmates, as well as the maintenance of their new-born offspring. If suitable alternatives were unavailable, children of a certain age were also permitted to accompany their mothers to prison on conviction because nineteenth-century ideas about parenthood meant that responsibility for childcare was generally regarded as a mother's domain. These offspring caused further complications for prison staff. As highlighted throughout this article, the presence of children in the penal system was seen to disrupt efforts to impose discipline and initiate reform.

This article examines incarcerated motherhood in the Irish female convict prison from the end of transportation in 1853 to the turn of the century. In 2003, Judith Brink, whose imprisoned husband died behind bars, described inmates' family members on the outside as an 'invisible population ... which is doing time with prisoners serving sentences'.⁵ This article focuses on the babies born in the convict gaol, those who accompanied their mothers to the institution, as well as a section of that 'invisible population', the children who were cared for beyond the prison walls.⁶ It is divided into three sections. The first examines the view from 'above', highlighting the changes in penal practices relating to children implemented by legislators, prison staff and board members after the end of large-scale female transportation in 1853. The cessation of transportation focused attention on the penal system at home that was now responsible for the punishment and reform of convicted citizens. In Britain, Brixton Prison was hurriedly prepared for convict women.⁷ In Ireland, Grangegorman Prison in Dublin, which had been an exclusively female prison since the 1830s, was designated to receive Ireland's convict women and was supported by Cork Female Prison, Newgate Prison and several local prisons when numbers increased.⁸ In the late 1850s, Mountjoy Prison opened for the reception of Ireland's entire female convict

population, which remained consistently below the male equivalent throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.⁹ In later years, decreasing numbers of female convicts would mean that the cohort returned to Grangegorm (1883) before a subsequent move back to Mountjoy (1897). The latter two sections of the article incorporate the view from ‘below’, considering mothers and their children within the prison, and then the women convicts whose children resided outside the prison walls. While the convict mother’s voice is largely absent from the newspaper accounts and annual prison reports from staff and inspectors (published as parliamentary papers) utilised here, fragments emerge in individual penal files that have survived. These valuable sources are supplemented with correspondence between the staff at the female convict institution and the country’s exclusively-male prison department, and it has also been possible to cross-reference some with orphanage records and court depositions.¹⁰

This article focuses on the tension between convicts’ positions as prisoners and as mothers and the difficulties that this posed for penal authorities. It highlights how the desire for uniformity and regulation in the penal system manifested itself in the female convict prison as restrictions on contact between inmates and their offspring. Determined efforts to standardise practices and to facilitate the punishment and reformation of those housed within, meant that children were eventually removed from their mothers on reaching the age of twelve months. The article thus argues that the long-term incarceration of mothers with dependent children or pregnant women had a significant impact on the lives of their offspring. While there were some advantages to parenting within prison, case studies reveal that incarceration dislocated the family, separated siblings, or initiated institutional care that could break the familial bond permanently. It must be acknowledged, however, that convict mothers were not rendered insignificant. Although they lacked their liberty it should not be assumed that convict women lacked agency. Many actively directed the care of their children

to particular individuals or institutions from their positions of imprisonment. Poor or working-class women negotiated their survival and that of their families outside prison and thus continued to do so after incarceration. Therefore a close study of aspects of motherhood within the prison can shed much light on nineteenth-century mothering generally as well as family survival strategies. Lower-class women, who dominated the prison population, were familiar with institutional options for temporary relief, typically in the form of the workhouse but also hospitals, local jails, private institutions and, after the 1860s, industrial schools. In telling the underrepresented story of convict mothers and their children, this article also draws attention to the interconnectedness of some of Ireland's state and private institutions, and the increasing role of religion as the century progressed.

Regulating motherhood

A mother sentenced to penal servitude for three years or more had to decide the fate of her children. Some, like Mary Sheahan, 'the wife of a very poor labouring man ... [who] earned her livelihood by hawking fruit and vegetables', opted to leave their children with friends or relatives. Sheahan, who was breastfeeding an infant when she was convicted of assault in Gort in 1893, handed her child to her mother at the Galway local gaol before her departure for the Dublin convict prison.¹¹ When forty-year-old Catherine Maguire was sentenced to five years in prison for larceny, her Tyrone-based father took on the care of four of her six children.¹² Unsurprisingly in other cases, family members or friends were unable or unwilling to undertake the significant responsibility of raising someone else's offspring for the foreseeable future. Institutional care was thus the only alternative and, for some children, this institution was the prison where their convicted mothers were forced to reside. This section of the article focuses on the response of the male and female penal authorities to the infant

population and outlines the ways in which they sought to regulate the admission and exclusion of children. Arguing that the reception and care of such individuals became increasingly regulated as the century progressed, it demonstrates how the dislocation and separation of families was exacerbated by developing prison practices. It also, however, shows penal recognition of ‘convict mothering’, as aptly described by Joy Damousi.¹³

In his annual report on the conditions of prisons in Ireland in 1851, the Inspector-General, J. Corry-Connellan, acknowledged the presence of ‘very young children of female prisoners whom humanity forbids to separate from their mothers’. He explained:

Magistrates are sometimes in the habit of endorsing upon their warrants of committal an order for the admission of such infants, though without authority; but I should be very unwilling to offer any animadversion upon so merciful an irregularity, which is kindly tolerated by the Board of Superintendence.¹⁴

The presence of children in the penal system was not particularly unusual; prior to the end of transportation, children featured alongside women convicts in passenger lists.¹⁵ Experiences for such children could be quite varied, as Damousi has shown in her study of female convicts in Australia’s detention centres.¹⁶ Young children also accompanied their mothers to prisons in other countries during the nineteenth century.¹⁷

The 1850s witnessed significant change in the Irish penal system. Firstly, the punishment and reformation of convicts became a key concern after transportation ended in 1853 and authorities had to house convicts at home. Sir Walter Crofton adapted the marks system that had been developed to deal with transported convicts.¹⁸ Through their industry, schooling and good behaviour, convicts earned marks which enabled them to progress through a number of stages. Promotion to a higher level brought additional privileges, such as opportunities for more frequent visits and written communications, varied employment, contact with other inmates, and a different coloured uniform.¹⁹ Secondly, the penal system for

women was dramatically affected by the opening of Mountjoy Female Prison in Dublin in 1858. Unlike previous years – in which female convicts were dispersed between Grangegorman Female Prison and Newgate Depot in Dublin, Cork Female Prison, and numerous local prisons – the establishment of Mountjoy Female Prison meant that all of Ireland’s women convicts would now be housed in the same building. There their work activities, schooling hours, religious practice in the chapel, exercise regime in the outdoor yard, mealtimes and sleeping hours could be scheduled and regulated, and rules about clothing, behaviour, punishment and privileges could be uniformly imposed.

It is not surprising that the standardisation of punishment and reform in the 1850s resulted in efforts to regulate the admission of children. Helen Johnston makes clear that during this period neither babies nor children were permitted to enter English convict prisons and that pregnant women would be housed in local gaols until such time as their new-born offspring could be taken from them.²⁰ Such practices may have been desired in Ireland. In their first annual report published in 1855, the convict directors recommended that the admission of children above two years of age should be discontinued thereafter. This would have rendered the prison in line with workhouse practices that separated parents from children older than two years, but no such action was taken.²¹ In her annual report to the prison inspectors in 1856, Delia Lidwill, superintendent of Cork Female Prison, similarly argued that such children should be removed from the institution, acknowledging that ‘under that age, of course, it would not be practicable or right to separate the child from its mother’.²² Her recommendation having been ignored, Lidwill subsequently proposed that children older than four years of age be transferred from the convict prison to a reformatory.²³ Such first-hand accounts highlight the contemporary appreciation of the important role mothers played in the early lives of their offspring but the presence of babies and children also disrupted efforts to impose discipline and was thought to distract their mothers as well as

other inmates. In 1873, prison inspector Charles Bourke bemoaned that ‘the time of the mothers is entirely taken up with their children, who create great noise and disorder in the gaol, and prevent proper discipline and cleanliness being carried out.’²⁴ As Forsythe has pointed out in his study of women prisoners in England, ‘babies cannot be easily prevented from gurgling or mothers from speaking to them.’²⁵ Lidwill judged that the presence of children ‘occasions quarrels amongst the women themselves, and gives them a ready excuse for noise or disorder’.²⁶

Authorities also considered that the experience of growing up in prison could have a negative impact on a child. Although complaints were made about the noise that they created, children are largely silent in the prison documents. Their experiences are recorded by the staff around them and the visitors and inspectors whom they encountered. Marian Rawlins, superintendent of Grangegorman Prison, complained that ‘children are a great detriment to the discipline of the prison, and it is most injurious for them.’²⁷ Fears were expressed that the children housed within the prison walls were becoming overly familiar with the lives and actions of their criminal mothers, and that the desire to keep mother and child together could have negative consequences for society in later years. In 1854, Thomas Synnott, governor at Grangegorman, objected to the presence of twenty-eight children in gaol with their mothers, several of whom were ‘grown up and intelligent’. He suggested that these children be removed from prison to a school ‘where their moral as well as literary and industrial training would be properly attended to’.²⁸ Superintendent Lidwill shared this view:

when its [the child’s] intelligence begins to awaken, it receives ideas from the association with prisoners which certainly must tend to its demoralization. There are now in the prison children from four to five years of age, who are quite acquainted with the crimes of their mothers, of which they talk freely, and without any sense of shame or regret. After the children are able to walk, I set the women to work for some

hours every day; but as the mother returns to the child again at night, of course it is impossible to prevent the evil influence she can have on a youthful mind. As a general rule, the department of the nursery is the most troublesome in the prison, and it is almost impossible to maintain efficient discipline in it.²⁹

In 1859, by which stage Lidwill had been appointed superintendent of Mountjoy Female Prison, an infant school was established. A few years later, Fanny Taylor, an English nurse, editor, and later nun, described the ‘poor little creatures’ that she encountered on her visit to the infant school: ‘Some were sleeping in their cots, others toddling about the floor, others a little older learning their letters. They were clean and nicely cared for, and looked happy enough; many of them very pretty, and all with the innocent baby faces which appeal to every heart.’³⁰ Chaplain Luke Dempsey praised the school where ‘the little innocents will answer questions suited to their age with a precision and accuracy at once gratifying and astounding.’³¹ The repeated references to the ‘innocent’ children clearly denote that they were not viewed as inherently criminal. At a time when criminality was associated with ignorance, education was regarded as a preventative measure to ensure the morality and integrity of the next generation.

Nicole Hahn Rafter has argued that keeping mothers from their children was a way to enforce regulation and maintain discipline in women’s reformatories in the United States.³² This also seems to have been the case in the Irish convict prison. Schooling hours meant that children were separated from their mothers for much of the day. Lidwill, herself a widowed mother to four daughters who at this time ranged in age from approximately fourteen to twenty-three, expressed satisfaction with this arrangement because the ‘children are spared by that means from much of the evil they are too likely to derive from association with grown prisoners.’³³ The view that the children of criminals should spend little time with their mothers was shared by contemporaries. Taylor considered that the mothers of infants whom

she encountered on her visit to the prison were ‘Perhaps raging in some of the cells above, or in the “punishment cells,” tearing about like wild beasts’.³⁴ Separation from their criminal mothers, even for a few hours during the day, was thought to benefit the offspring.

Even after the establishment of the school, Lidwill continued her campaign to restrict the number of children permitted in the prison. Her efforts to remove toddlers and older children eventually proved successful. By 1865, the children in the school were so young that they did not require more than an hour and a half of education per day.³⁵ Four years later, in 1869, it was decided that all children of a ‘suitable age’, namely one year or more, would be transferred from the convict prison to family members, friends or institutions.³⁶ Babies born in prison and those who entered alongside their mothers thereafter would be removed from prison when they turned twelve months old. In that year, thirty-seven children were boarded-out to nurses, two children were taken by friends of their mothers, one child accompanied her or his Roman Catholic mother to a religious-run refuge, and another was discharged after the mother completed her sentence. By the end of 1869 only three children remained, a sharp contrast to the forty who were living with their incarcerated mothers at the beginning of the year.³⁷ While the number of babies did increase in later years (reaching a peak of thirteen in 1872), their age meant that schooling was no longer necessary.³⁸

Practices and developments in the female convict prison were in many ways adaptations of those imposed in the more populated male equivalents, ideas about masculinity replaced with contemporary views of femininity.³⁹ Therefore, the removal of children older than one year from their convict mothers seems at odds with the apparent desire to encourage and promote femininity. Emphasis was placed on cultivating ‘good’ citizens through prison work, religious education and practice, and schooling, but women were not encouraged to bring their children with them and those who did were eventually separated from infants older than twelve months. Zedner surmises that the nursery in the English local prison during

this period might have been expected 'to play a highly positive part in the process of reform: fostering responsibility and pride in prison mothers, whilst encouraging the remainder of the women to aspire to motherhood'.⁴⁰ This, however, was not the case. Evidently, practical concerns about the financial cost of maintaining children in prison, assumptions that children would distract their mothers (and others) from reformation, concerns that infants disrupted efforts to impose discipline, and fears that the above-quoted 'little innocents' would be influenced by the 'wild beasts', trumped desires to mould convict women into good mothers. The penal authorities were, as Reid has also argued in relation to nineteenth-century Australia, 'guided by pragmatism'.⁴¹ However, convict mothers were not entirely dismissed as irrelevant or insignificant in the lives of their offspring. The fact that babies up to the age of twelve months were permitted to remain in prison with their mothers is a clear acknowledgement of the value of the mother-baby bond and the contemporary view that a mother played an important role in facilitating a baby's survival. The remaining two sections of this article highlight the realities of motherhood for the women who were accompanied by babies to prison, the women who gave birth behind bars, and the inmates who mothered children on the outside. They also provide a glimpse of the experiences for babies housed in the gaol. It is argued that many of the decisions taken by the convict women and the penal authorities shaped the family structure, mother-child relationships, and the welfare and life trajectories of the children concerned.

Mothering in prison

Mothers' views of prison regulations and practices regarding their offspring are largely absent from the historical record. The guaranteed shelter, meals and medical attention in the convict prison, however, must have eased the concerns of some mothers who experienced financial issues or abusive relationships on the outside. In purpose-built Mountjoy, nursing

mothers were facilitated in the prison hospital ward. When the female convict cohort was transferred to Grangegorman in later years, women kept their babies in their cells.⁴² Despite the restricted space, lack of freedom, and constant monitoring, the prison provided women with opportunities to mother their infants in a secure environment.⁴³ Childrearing without the need to work must have been an unusual prospect for some imprisoned mothers; Zedner has concluded that such women ‘often found themselves in a far easier position than women outside prison who were struggling to earn enough to support their offspring’.⁴⁴ While there is evidence to suggest that local prisons, like workhouses, were exploited by pregnant women and utilised as maternity hospitals, it is unlikely that the convict prison, where the minimum sentence was three years’ penal servitude, was routinely used in this manner.⁴⁵ It must also be acknowledged that some women might not have relished the opportunity to nurse their offspring or might have felt overwhelmed by the demands of incarcerated motherhood.

Despite the resources, a mother’s sentence of penal servitude could negatively affect the health or welfare of her children. Like those on the outside, children within prison were at the mercy of those charged with their care. In December 1867, inmate Maria Collins, a married woman without children of her own, lost her position as a carer in the nursery because she was caught physically abusing one of her charges.⁴⁶ In June of the following year, prisoners Margaret Power and Bridget Doran, who were similarly employed, were punished for ‘not attending to the children in the nursery’.⁴⁷ On the same day, however, Eliza Collins was put on a bread and water diet for forty-eight hours as punishment for ‘giving a parcel of meat to one of the nursery children’.⁴⁸ The records relating to the convict offspring population reveal that they were also vulnerable to health issues that affected other nineteenth-century Irish children. As in other institutions at this time, disease could spread quickly in the prison and have serious consequences despite the availability of medical care. Between 1854 and 1882, the years for which figures exist, sixty-six infant deaths occurred in

the women's convict prisons. A measles epidemic in 1856 affected all of the children in Grangegorman Prison. Twelve infants died in that year, the highest number of annual child deaths recorded between 1854 and 1882, and nearly half of the underage population at the time.⁴⁹ The vaccinated children in Cork Prison, which was being used as an auxiliary while awaiting the completion of Mountjoy, largely escaped a smallpox epidemic in the area in the same year.⁵⁰ Barnes has argued that children in Ireland's industrial schools were susceptible to disease because of the state of their health on entry.⁵¹ The same could be true of children admitted to prison.

While the presence of babies and children in the convict prison concerned officials, pregnant, recovering and nursing mothers also disrupted efforts to impose uniform treatment. Methods of punishing pregnant, post-parturient or breastfeeding mothers were restricted. Mary Lynch, who first entered the convict prison in 1882 when she was fifteen years old, gave birth to a stillborn baby on 8 January 1887, having become pregnant during the months that she spent on probation in Dublin. A little over two weeks later, Lynch was reprimanded for 'disturbing the quiet of the prison by laughing and talking in her cell'. She was isolated in the punishment cell for twenty-four hours but was not subjected to the punishment diet, presumably on account of her health.⁵² On 13 January 1892, convict Mary Connor, who gave birth on the day after her remand, threatened to choke herself or her baby before morning if she were not given medication to ease a pain in her side. She was placed in restraints and her son was taken away from her for four hours. She later expressed regret for her actions: 'I do not know what came over me it was a sudden fit of excitement.'⁵³ Less than a month earlier, a report about her behaviour, prompted by an assault that she committed on another inmate, noted that the prisoner was 'inclined to be troublesome'.⁵⁴ The chief warder explained that Connor 'has an infant at the breast 9 months old which makes it difficult to deal with her'. The fact that part of this statement was underlined in red highlights that it was a significant

consideration.⁵⁵ As punishment, the mother had to exercise in isolation rather than with peers for one week and forfeited marks. More common punishments such as close confinement in the penal cell, or a bread and water diet, could not be imposed.⁵⁶

Johanna Joyce, whose case was mentioned at the outset, gave birth to a son, Michael, on 16 November 1893.⁵⁷ Thereafter, she continued to breach prison rules as she had during her pregnancy. In August, prior to the birth of her son, the medical officer had deemed her fit for the punishment cell, restraints, and for a limited bread and water diet as punishment for breaking three panes of glass. In January 1894, however, when Joyce broke two panes of glass in her cell, the same doctor deemed her unfit for restraints or for the bread and water diet because she was breastfeeding.⁵⁸ Joyce claimed that she had lost her temper because her two-month-old son had kept her awake the previous night ‘and that is the cause I broke the glass, and I am sorry that I did not do more’.⁵⁹ On 2 July, she was accused of raising her voice, attempting to assault an officer, kicking a matron in the abdomen, and attempting to injure a third matron. Superintendent C.J. McCarthy had the eight-month-old baby removed from Joyce’s cell for several hours in an effort to ensure his safety. Although Joyce had cared for Michael in her cell since his birth, the prison authorities were ultimately responsible for his wellbeing. The staff evidently considered that Joyce’s violent outburst put the baby’s health at risk. Removing the infant was also considered a way to punish Joyce and a means to enforce discipline. This conclusion is further supported by the evidence that Joyce’s son was returned to her later that evening after she agreed to adhere to prison rules.⁶⁰

Some months later, on the morning of 26 October, Joyce was reprimanded for using abusive language towards a matron. In response, she broke six panes of glass in her cell window, two quart tins and a zinc chamberpot. The total cost of the damage was 2 shillings 9 ¼ pence. Again the infant was removed from Joyce’s cell and returned to her at the end of the day. Charles Bourke, the chairman of the General Prisons Board, directed the superintendent

to warn Joyce that ‘if she again misconducts herself the Board will consider the advisability of removing her child from her’.⁶¹ The threat of losing her infant, however, had little impact on Joyce’s behaviour. Days later she was in trouble again for cursing at a prison matron and ‘saying sooner or later she would take my life’, aggravating another inmate, using improper language towards the superintendent and for refusing to tie her cap strings.⁶² Bourke argued that Joyce ‘cannot be made subject to discipline as long as her child is with her.’⁶³ Joyce, however, claimed that she ‘has no friends who would be willing to receive the child’.⁶⁴ On 17 November 1894, Michael was removed from his mother’s care and taken to St Brigid’s Orphanage in Dublin.⁶⁵ At twelve months old, he would have been due to depart the prison but the evidence in this case suggests that the prison authorities were relieved that he was sufficiently healthy to be taken away from his badly-behaved mother. Studies of incarcerated mothers in modern-day prisons have found that behavioural issues can stem from the stress associated with separation but Joyce’s subsequent misconduct was not attributed to this cause.⁶⁶ Recent research has also found that initiatives to facilitate parent-child relationships have positively affected imprisoned mothers’ behaviour.⁶⁷ In contrast, the nineteenth-century authorities desired Michael’s removal so that regulation and order could be restored to his mother’s prison routine and she could focus on her reformation.

Mothering from prison

Lucy Frost has emphasised that sentences imposed on transported mothers greatly affected the lives of their children and future offspring.⁶⁸ Imprisonment in Ireland’s convict gaol could have similarly dramatic consequences, as this section reveals. It must also be acknowledged that the long-term incarceration of a father could have a devastating impact on the family because a lack of resources and child-minding options during this period rendered childrearing difficult for single parents who needed to work. The imprisonment of a mother,

however, was generally considered more destructive than the incarceration of a father. In addition to the numerous single mothers who were solely accountable for their offspring before incarceration, contemporaries generally regarded mothers rather than fathers as responsible for a child's day-to-day care. Views of motherhood and fatherhood may thus have meant that fathers were permitted or encouraged to have their children admitted to institutions on the incarceration of spouses whereas mothers who found themselves in the same position were not. Ireland was not unique in prohibiting children to accompany convicted fathers to prison.⁶⁹

Between 1860 and 1884, the years for which reliable figures exist in the annual prison reports, one child was removed from the convict prison by her or his father. Fourteen children left in the care of the mothers' friends, and two infants were taken from prison by a 'lady visitor'. Institutional care was common; eighteen children accompanied their mothers to a refuge on discharge or conditional release, ten were transferred to workhouses, five to industrial schools, and two to an orphanage. One additional child was relocated to the workhouse after the incarcerated mother's death in 1864. Catholic children without appropriate alternatives were transferred to St Brigid's Orphanage in Dublin and the vast majority of the eighty infants documented in the records as having been boarded-out to nurses likely took this route out of the convict prison.

St Brigid's Orphanage was established in 1857 as a boarding-out institution by Margaret Aylward, with the guidance and encouragement of Fr John Gowan, to rescue children 'from the fangs of proselytism'.⁷⁰ Catholic children were boarded out to Catholic families, allegedly 'for the most part ... good religious peasants in various country parishes', whose applications to foster had the support of their local priests.⁷¹ Rural locations were preferred, where the children would experience 'country life, the bracing air, the hard work going on around, very plain fare, some privations, the fireside talk, the village, the Sunday

walk to Mass, and the sharing in all the struggles and contrivances of the frugal, laborious peasantry to maintain life, to keep soul and body together'.⁷² Parish priests were expected to monitor foster children's care and progress, while the managers of the orphanage were supposed to inspect foster homes at least twice annually and financially reward or penalise parents for the level of care provided.⁷³ The instructions to St Brigid's Orphanage foster parents (particularly mothers) emphasised that their charges 'were taken either out of the hands of heretics, or from the imminent danger of falling into them ... Let the nurses [parents], therefore, be mindful that they are not working merely for hire, but that they are associates in great work of charity'.⁷⁴ St Brigid's Orphanage children were to reside in foster homes until the age of fourteen or fifteen and thereby avoid the institutional regime where the 'orphan is ever under the repressive grip of order and rule'.⁷⁵ In 1896, Gowan claimed that 548 of the 2,100 poor and orphaned children assisted had been adopted by their foster families.⁷⁶ In the case of children of convicts, however, the prison board would pay maintenance costs, which in 1892 was £7 10 shillings per annum, only for the duration of the mother's sentence.⁷⁷ The seemingly ideal conclusion was for the convict mother, reformed by years in the prison system, to be reunited upon release with her child who, in the interim, had been guided and instructed on moral matters by a foster family.

The network of industrial schools, established in response to growing fears about destitute children and juvenile offenders as a more effective alternative to the workhouse, offered an institutional option.⁷⁸ The Industrial Schools Act (Ireland), 1868, enacted for the admission of a destitute child under the age of fourteen years whose 'surviving parent' was serving a period of penal servitude.⁷⁹ Five children were transferred to industrial schools in 1872, seemingly in response to the Prevention of Crimes Act, 1871, which allowed for the admission of children of recidivist mothers who were under the age of fourteen years and 'have no visible means of subsistence, or are without proper guardianship'.⁸⁰ Numerous other

children were admitted directly on the mother's committal or subsequently via family members, friends or other institutions. For instance, an application was made in August 1882 to have John Driscoll admitted to an industrial school after he was found begging in Dublin. His twenty-four-year-old mother, categorised in her penal record as a 'prostitute', had been convicted of larceny and sentenced to five years' penal servitude in the previous month.⁸¹

Although modern views of Irish industrial schools are largely negative, shaped by disturbing survivor testimonies from the twentieth century, case studies examined for this research highlight that convicted women actively sought to have their children transferred from workhouses or family care to industrial schools. In January 1888, Margaret Reilly, who converted to Catholicism on entry to prison six months earlier, wrote to her mother instructing her to have her child transferred from the Cavan workhouse to an industrial school.⁸² Kate Kelly similarly sought to have her son and daughter admitted to an industrial school rather than remain in her mother's care.⁸³ Industrial schools were evidently admired because their emphasis on education, work, and discipline seemed to bode well for the future prospects of individuals, families and society generally. They relieved families of the financial costs of maintaining children of incarcerated mothers, seemingly without stigmatising inhabitants.⁸⁴ A writer in the *Connaught Telegraph* in 1884 considered, 'What a consoling thought it must be to the parents of those poor children, to know that the young creatures, instead of being famishing waifs, likely, in the natural course of events, to become public transgressors and thieves, will be transformed into useful and self-supporting members of society!'⁸⁵ David Stuart, the Church of Ireland chaplain in Mountjoy, insisted that convict mothers whose children were admitted to industrial schools 'are well pleased by this, and it has helped very much to induce them "to study to be quiet and to mind their own business."⁸⁶ Whether such transfers were encouraged by chaplains or other prison staff in individual cases, or by families' refusals to continue to maintain children, remains unclear but

the penal records reveal that at least fourteen convict women wrote to industrial school addresses between 1882 and 1900.

Modern studies have drawn attention to the distress and sense of abandonment experienced by children of incarcerated parents.⁸⁷ In the nineteenth century, the trauma of separation from a parent was compounded by the gender segregation imposed in Irish institutions that divided siblings. In May 1889, thirty-three-year-old Sarah Kelly was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for larceny. Kelly's removal to Grangegorman Female Prison left her seven-year-old daughter, Mary, and her twelve-year-old son, Charlie, without a mother. In September of that year, the children appeared together before the Dublin police court for having attempted to smuggle a piece of tobacco into the prison to their mother. Kelly's husband, Laurence Kavanagh, maintained contact with his imprisoned wife through visits and letters but was evidently not in a position to care for the children and it seems that the siblings, described as 'homeless and friendless', had resided in the workhouse since their mother's incarceration. On account of the fact that there were no vacancies in an industrial school, the judge before whom the children were tried sent them back to the workhouse to await transfer.⁸⁸ Evidently spaces opened. In January 1890, Kelly was permitted to write to the manager of the Greenmount Industrial School in Cork about her son. In June 1891, she wrote to her daughter in an industrial school in Armagh. Kelly's imprisonment split the family from one end of the island to the other. It is possible that mothers whose children were going to foster homes or institutions rather than to known relatives or friends found the enforced separation even more traumatic because the situation and surroundings that would greet their children was entirely unknown to them.⁸⁹

Close contact between incarcerated mothers and their children on the outside was not facilitated by the prison regime. While free transportation for children to visit incarcerated parents and more relaxed communication has been recommended in recent years, letter

writing and visits were restricted in the nineteenth-century prison.⁹⁰ In addition to literacy issues that required some convicts to have staff members read or write letters on their behalf, correspondence into and out of the prison was censored. Furthermore, only ~~these convicts~~ who were well-behaved were afforded such privileges. The writing and receipt of letters and visits beyond the regular intervals dictated by prison rules required approval from the prison board. For example, inmate Bridget Flood needed permission to write to her children on receiving word in April 1895 that her husband had died because she had availed of the opportunity to write a letter one month earlier and thus was not due the privilege for two months.⁹¹

Visits could take place at intervals of two, three, four or six months, depending on the prisoner's classification in prison.⁹² Travel costs and time constraints in nineteenth-century Ireland meant that a journey to the capital for a twenty-minute or half-hour inmate visit was not feasible for many families. It is also likely that some mothers did not want their children to visit them within the confines of a gaol because they felt a sense of shame at their position, the environment was not particularly welcoming to children, or because the experience could frighten their offspring.⁹³ Interactions during incarceration may also have been affected by relationships between mothers and their children before the sentence and lack of contact may be suggestive of pre-existing problems or tensions.⁹⁴ If surviving files reflect reality, more than 70% (173) of the 247 inmates who were released from prison between 1882 and 1900 did not receive a visitor during their incarceration. There is no evidence, for example, to indicate that Tyrone-born Mary Darby, convicted of murdering her toddler in 1866, received a personal visitor during the twenty years that she spent in prison.⁹⁵ On the other hand, Dublin-based Mary Enright was visited in prison by three of her seven children. Enright stole silk from a shop in 1896, a crime that seems to have been connected to her husband's position as a tailor who was 'constantly out of employment'.⁹⁶ If ages documented in the 1901 census

are accurate, nineteen-year-old Fanny was accompanied by her twelve-year-old brother when she visited her incarcerated mother. Later, Fanny took her then five-year-old sister to visit their mother behind bars.⁹⁷ Age restrictions were not imposed on visitors, as evidenced by the record that Louisa Hogan had a baby in her arms when she visited her imprisoned sister Catherine two days before Christmas Day 1890.⁹⁸

Those on the outside also faced difficulties maintaining contact with inmates. Young children might not have been able to write to their mothers and thus letters would have had to be sent through an intermediary. The ten letters that thirty-five-year-old Sarah Ann McCord penned from prison were directed to the workhouse at Lurgan where her only son resided. McCord, who had been imprisoned for throwing vitriol on the man she alleged was her child's father when he began a courtship with another woman, received ten letters in return from the workhouse master.⁹⁹ Although McCord insisted to police at the time of the crime that she did not regret her actions, some mothers must have felt guilt or shame since it was their wrongdoing that instigated the subsequent separation from their children.¹⁰⁰ There is no evidence in the case studies examined of direct communication between foster parents employed by St Brigid's Orphanage and incarcerated biological mothers. Several mothers, however, communicated with managers of the institution. Inmate Johanna Joyce wrote such a letter on 28 December 1894, one month after her son was taken into the nuns' care, and received a written reply five days later. Although the correspondence has not survived, the letters likely recounted the child's ~~whereabouts and~~ welfare.¹⁰¹

Regardless of whether they were with relatives or in an institution, the letters and petitions penned by incarcerated mothers confirm that they were not certain, or were not necessarily kept informed, of their children's whereabouts. Johnston has similarly concluded that British convict mothers' letters to church and legal authorities in the 1870s reveal their ignorance of their children's fates.¹⁰² On 3 May 1877, the superintendent of the prison wrote

to the manager of Artane Industrial School: 'I shall feel much obliged if you will kindly let me know whether the son of ... Honor Barret has been discharged from your school, and if not will you be good enough to send him to see his mother.'¹⁰³ According to the Dublin detective who made further enquiries, sixteen-year-old Patrick Barret left Artane on 28 April, bound for employment with a boot-maker on Aungier Street in Dublin City. He remained only one day, however, the owner not wishing to employ him and he returned to Artane temporarily. Patrick's age proscribed long-term re-admission to the industrial school but officials insisted that, had he remained, he would have been supported at the school until a new position could be found.¹⁰⁴ The police superintendent admitted: 'I can find no trace of him from the 30th of April, although enquiry was made from those who knew him before he was committed to Artane. He is not in any of the public institutions about the City, and does not appear to have fallen into the hands of the police. It is quite possible that he has joined some militia regiment.'¹⁰⁵

Changes in personal circumstances and Ireland's growing network of institutions also meant that children could be moved quite quickly or without their mothers' explicit permission. In February 1883, Mary O'Brien petitioned to write to a Belfast friend who had taken responsibility for her son. The prison board directed the superintendent Anne Sheeran to make enquiries on O'Brien's behalf and Sheeran thus contacted the friend, Ellen Cathcart.¹⁰⁶ The response from Cathcart explained that O'Brien's son 'is well and he is away a month ago to Dublin by the Rev Mr Deacon and Rev Mr Spencer to the Orphan School and for to make her mind easy for her child is well done for.'¹⁰⁷ Mary O'Brien was registered as a Roman Catholic on entry to Belfast Prison at the time of arrest but subsequently requested to be listed as Church of Ireland. When transferred to Mountjoy, she reverted to Catholicism.¹⁰⁸ Given that the men referred to by Cathcart were Protestant ministers, and the suspicions about proselytism that permeated Irish society at this time, it is unsurprising that

Superintendent Sheeran, herself a Roman Catholic, and the prison's Catholic Chaplain, Fr Walsh, followed up the case. In April 1883, Sheeran wrote to the Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast, where O'Brien had been incarcerated whilst awaiting trial, to inform them that the prisoner wished her child to be given into the care of the Catholic chaplain at the convict prison who would place him in an appropriate school.¹⁰⁹ Spencer, the Church of Ireland chaplain at the Belfast prison, explained that he 'brought the child referred to under the notice of the clergyman of the parish where he then lived and considered his duty towards him at an end.'¹¹⁰ Walsh evidently did not concede defeat; several years later it was said that 'with great difficulty he succeeded in rescuing him from Protestant hands' and the child was transferred into the care of St Brigid's Orphanage.¹¹¹ Such cases showcase the determined efforts on the part of religious individuals to 'protect' each child from adversaries and thus consolidate numbers.

The long sentences served by women in the convict prison meant that mothers missed out on developments in their children's lives. The situations and people to whom they returned on release were in many cases very different to those that they had left. The reunion of mother and child must also have proved unsettling for children who had spent years with foster families or in institutional care. Margaret Burke's son turned one year old around six weeks after he entered Mountjoy Female Prison on her conviction in July 1882. In line with practices at that time, he was removed from his mother's care and boarded-out by St Brigid's Orphanage. Burke would not see her son until her release five years later.¹¹² According to surviving evidence, the six-year-old was reunited with the biological mother whom he could not have remembered in March 1887.¹¹³

Some inmates were never reunited with their offspring. Twenty-nine-year-old Margaret Kelly had seventy-four previous convictions when she entered prison to serve a sentence of five years' penal servitude for stealing in December 1895. Kelly was around three

months' pregnant at the time of the crime and, according to a Dublin Metropolitan Police inspector, 'procures her livelihood by means of prostitution'.¹¹⁴ At ten past four o'clock on the morning of 10 May 1896, her son Patrick was born at Grangegorman Female Convict Prison.¹¹⁵ In accordance with practices in the prison by the late nineteenth century, he was accompanied to St Brigid's Orphanage by a prison nurse when he reached the age of twelve months. Described in the orphanage register as 'delicate' on arrival, he was boarded-out to a foster family in Clondalkin.¹¹⁶ Kelly's son was the usual age for admission to the orphanage but his removal from prison despite his ill-health may have been influenced by the imminent transfer of the female convict population from Grangegorman to Mountjoy Prison. The infant died just over two months after he was removed from his mother's care. Two days later, Mary Christian, who was present at the death, registered the cause as 'infantile convulsions from teething'.¹¹⁷ He was buried in Kilbride Churchyard in Clondalkin and his mother, imprisoned in Ireland's female convict institution, was duly informed.¹¹⁸ Women's grief at the deaths of family members is largely absent from the prison records. In a rare first-hand account from 1897, convict Lizzie Dinneen explained, 'I got a letter from home they are all well but the child he is dead since March ... I have fretted a great deal after the child's death but I am getting all righ[t] now.'¹¹⁹

Other children were essentially abandoned to the Irish institutional web, their convict mothers unable or unwilling to reassume their care on release. Margaret Brosnan, sentenced at the age of twenty-six to twenty years' penal servitude for manslaughter, gave birth to a daughter, whom she called Mary, in prison in February 1880.¹²⁰ Mary was removed from her incarcerated mother and spent the next nine years of her life in the care of four different families in Dublin and Kildare.¹²¹ In June 1887, she was sent to an industrial school in Cavan on a detention order until the age of sixteen.¹²² Margaret wrote at least two letters to her daughter at the institution and received one letter in response in the four months leading up to

the her release date. However, Mary had completed only one-third of the nine-year detention order when her mother sailed to North America on the *SS Vancouver* in 1890.¹²³ In another case, Lizzie Barr, whose husband Daniel was serving a three-year prison sentence for larceny since 1893, was convicted of manslaughter in Larne in December 1894. Lizzie, described as a ‘prostitute’ who had ‘been leading an immoral life since [the] conviction of [her] husband’, gave birth to a son in Grangegorman Prison on 14 July 1895.¹²⁴ Eleven months later, on 16 June 1896, James Barr was removed to St Brigid’s Orphanage because ‘the woman has no friends willing to receive it’.¹²⁵ Lizzie’s penal record reveals that she was visited in prison by her then-released husband on 5 March 1896 but there is no indication that Daniel also met the infant at this time.¹²⁶ It is apparent from the dates of Daniel’s arrest and Lizzie’s labour that James was not Daniel’s son. At the time of her arrest for causing the death of a friend’s husband whom she encountered in a brothel, Lizzie exclaimed: ‘Yous [*sic*] can hang me. By Jesus, I struck him with a stone and I’ll die for him and I’ll get out sometime.’¹²⁷ She was released in December 1896 and proceeded to Larne to be reunited with her two elder children who had resided in the local workhouse in the interim. However, Lizzie does not seem to have made any arrangements for a reunion with her prison-born son. In 1902, at the age of seven, he was transferred to an industrial school.¹²⁸ It seems that the child’s illegitimate status dictated his fate. It is unclear if Daniel ever knew that his wife had given birth during his prison sentence.

Conclusion

Mothers and their offspring complicated the nineteenth-century Irish penal system. Staff in the women’s convict prison had to care for pregnant and breastfeeding inmates who at times thwarted efforts to impose a rigid system of discipline and punishment, and impacted on the preferred regimented daily routine. Children generated additional expense and provided the

prison authorities with extra mouths to feed and bodies to treat. In the early years, time in prison was thought to benefit the children. After her visit, Anne Jellicoe described the ‘little colony of infants, poor prison flowers, to whom even the air of a gaol is pure, if compared to that from which they have mercifully been taken’.¹²⁹ However, as the convict system developed, and as the infants within that system aged, critical voices came to dominate.

In many ways motherhood was regarded as a privilege in prison. Misbehaving convicts had their infants taken away from them temporarily, for the child’s protection but also as a means to impose control. In her analysis of twentieth-century Dwight Reformatory, where mothers could similarly retain their infants in prison until the age of twelve months, L. Mara Dodge identifies that ‘no one championed mother-infant bonding or the fostering of female convicts’ mother skills as central to their rehabilitation.’¹³⁰ Mothers in Ireland were recognised as playing an important role in their infants’ lives, as evidenced by the fact that they were permitted to mind babies up to the age of twelve months. Thereafter, however, despite the emphasis on reforming convicts through education, religion and discipline, and the gendered nature of such treatment, motherhood was not necessarily assisted by the prison regime. Damousi has concluded that nineteenth-century Australian convict mothers were not valued by the penal system. They were, ‘by definition bad mothers, who were polluted and diseased and had the capacity to contaminate their children’.¹³¹ The legislative changes that initiated a growth of industrial schools and facilitated the admission of children of convicts, and increased church wealth and breadth fuelled by fears about proselytising, eventually enabled the Irish prison authorities to rid the system of children over the age of twelve months and separate infants from their criminal mothers. In consequence, as Reid has argued in relation to childcare facilities established to aid the transportation system in Van Diemen’s Land, ‘Exceptions to the rules no longer had to be made where convicts had children to care for and families to maintain: punishment could, as a result, be more uniformly applied.’¹³²

Evidently the desire to impose uniform treatment and fears that prison-born or prison-reared children would follow in their mothers' criminal footsteps, trumped any aspirations to facilitate a mother-child relationship or encourage reformation through motherhood. While the authorities deemed it essential to keep children under the age of twelve months with their mothers, they did not identify a need to aid communication with older children by relaxing letter-writing and receiving rules or by increasing the number of permissible visits.

While a study of mothering in the convict prison reveals much about contemporary views of convict mothers, it also offers an insight into women's attitudes towards their offspring. Many in the sample were lower-class or poverty-stricken mothers, and a number were documented as sex-workers prior to incarceration. The records offer an unusual glimpse of a cohort that has left few first-hand accounts of motherhood. Unsurprisingly, the findings indicate the existence of a wide spectrum, from the resolute efforts to maintain contact with offspring despite years of separation, to the virtual abandonment of children, either as a survival strategy, a temporary measure, or because of a lack of interest. The evidence that many unmarried women were as likely as others to seek contact with their children offers an alternative perspective to recent studies of illegitimacy and infanticide that bring to light narratives of abandonment and death.¹³³ Such evidence demonstrates the myriad of contemporary responses to children born outside wedlock. Women who wanted to maintain a connection with their offspring, however, were sometimes confronted with an increasingly powerful administration that regarded them as unfit or underserving mothers. Such obstacles were not necessarily insurmountable. Lindsay Earner-Byrne has similarly argued that poverty-stricken twentieth-century mothers were not 'passive recipients of either advice or charity'.¹³⁴ Letters and petitions penned by or on behalf of convict mothers serve as comparable reminders that despite their positions behind bars, incarcerated mothers had some ability to dictate arrangements for their offspring and to direct their care. These women were

not, however, necessarily familiar with their children's day-to-day experiences. The movement of children from one institution to another, or from one carer to another, meant that contact with mothers was sometimes lost. Fears about proselytism, which fuelled much philanthropic activity concerning children during this period, thus proved beneficial to mothers attempting to restore contact with their offspring. Religious men and women within and outside the prison acted as intermediaries for incarcerated mothers, individual cases were followed up, and determined efforts were made to locate particular children.

In the twenty-first century women who are both mothers and prisoners continue to challenge the penal system. The desire to facilitate parent-child bonding conflicts with concerns about child safety, inmate discipline and financial costs. In Ireland, the majority of convicted women reside in the Dóchas Centre in Mountjoy, Dublin, which like its 1858 predecessor on the same campus, was purpose built and is female-headed.¹³⁵ Mirroring nineteenth-century practices, babies are admitted to Irish prisons alongside their mothers up to the age of twelve months. Specific spaces for babies, promoted by Superintendent Delia Lidwill in the 1850s as part of her quest to impose order and discipline in the convict prison, are generally encouraged and in 2013 a mother and baby unit for up to four mothers was established at the Dóchas Centre.¹³⁶ Yet much has changed. Innovative developments in some prisons around the world, influenced by the focus on children's rights, have resulted in parenting programmes, initiatives to relieve the financial burden of travel for face-to-face encounters, sleepovers, escorts for young children, child-friendly venues, the temporary release of parents for special occasions and audio-recordings by mothers to their children.¹³⁷ Concerns now focus on the potential of children of imprisoned women to commit criminal offences, not because they accompanied their mothers to prison but because of the strain and stress caused by parental separation due to incarceration.¹³⁸ It is now recognised, as has been argued here for the nineteenth century, that incarceration has a significant effect on offspring.

Indeed, research suggests that the incarceration of mothers continue to have a more devastating effect on the family structure than that of fathers.¹³⁹ Infants who accompanied their mothers to the nineteenth-century prison were removed from the homes and individuals, including fathers and extended families and friends, whom they had previously known. Although they were guaranteed meals and healthcare in prison, which might not have been the case outside, they were, as case studies have illustrated, vulnerable to abuse or disease. Often children who remained on the outside were similarly displaced, transferred to family members or friends, or scattered across various institutions. Separation from parents was compounded by separation from siblings but middle-class authorities seem to have considered institutional care and fostering preferable to placement with a potentially ‘immoral’ guardian, even if this guardian was a relative.

Twenty-two-month-old Michael, the son of Johanna Joyce, whose case was mentioned at the outset was returned to Grangegorman Prison from his foster home via St Brigid’s Orphanage on 21 September 1895 in anticipation of her release. The mother and toddler were discharged from Grangegorman two days later.¹⁴⁰ Joyce, however, did not manage to avoid further trouble. Just one week after her release, she was charged with disorderly conduct and sentenced to seven days in prison or a fine of five shillings. She chose the latter. Five days later, she was incarcerated in Tullamore local prison for one month with hard labour for being drunk. Three more charges of drunkenness in the town meant that she was back in the Dublin convict prison before Christmas to serve out her sentence, having broken the terms of her early release. On this occasion, Michael seems to have been left in the workhouse in Tullamore. Less than a month after her re-incarceration, on 11 January 1896, the prison doctor found that Johanna Joyce was pregnant again.¹⁴¹

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Caption for Figure 1:

Figure 1: Johanna Joyce on discharge from prison, 10 May 1896. Source: NAI, GPB/Pen/1896/62. Reproduced with the kind permission of Aideen Ireland and the Director of NAI.

¹ National Archives of Ireland (subsequently NAI) General Prisons Board, Penal file (subsequently GPB/Pen) 1896/62.

² *King's County Chronicle*, 2 April 1893.

³ The total number of children is undoubtedly an underestimate. In his annual report for Cork Female Prison, Francis Hogleve explained that his new position as governor of Spike Island Prison rendered him unable to access accurate figures for Cork: BPP, *First Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1854; with Appendix*, 1854-55 (1958), xxvi, 88.

⁴ There is no evidence to suggest that any were conceived within the system. Damousi encountered cases of conception in the Australian penal system, which caused additional issues for officials: J. Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* (Cambridge, 1997), chapter 5.

⁵ J. Brink, 'You don't see us doin' time', *Contemporary Justice Review*, 6, 4 (2003), 393-6.

⁶ While the exact ages of children quantified in women's penal files are often unknown, it must be assumed that a not insignificant number were dependants.

⁷ N. Davie, 'Business as usual?' Britain's first women's convict prison, Brixton 1853-1869', *Crime and Misdemeanours*, 4, 1 (2010), 37-52.

⁸ R. Lohan, 'The Management of Female Convicts Sentenced to Transportation and Penal Servitude 1790-1898' (M.Litt., Trinity College Dublin, 1989).

⁹ T. Carey, *Mountjoy: The Story of a Prison* (Cork, 2000).

¹⁰ Correspondence is largely restricted to the period after 1877 when all of Ireland's local and convict prisons came under the control of the GPB.

¹¹ NAI, Governor of Galway Prison to GPB, 29 October 1893, GPB/Pen/1898/118.

¹² Maguire's other daughter was married and her son was in service: NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1883/32.

¹³ Damousi, *op. cit.*, 113.

¹⁴ BPP, *Thirtieth Report of the Inspectors-General on the General State of the Prisons of Ireland, 1851; with Appendices*, 1852 (1531), xxv, 33.

¹⁵ D. Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), 125-6; K. Reid, *Gender, Crime and Empire: Convicts, Settlers and the State in Early Colonial Australia* (Manchester, 2007), 144; J. Williams, 'Irish female convicts and Tasmania', *Labour History*, 44 (1983), 10-11.

¹⁶ Damousi, *op. cit.*, chapter 5.

¹⁷ For example, S.C. Craig, 'A historical review of mother and child programs for incarcerated women', *Prison Journal*, 89 (supplement), 1 (2009), 35-53; E. B. Freedman, *Their Sisters' Keepers: Women's Prison Reform in America, 1830-1930* (Ann Arbor, 1984), 69, 96.

¹⁸ P. Carroll-Burke, *Colonial Discipline: The Making of the Irish Convict System* (Dublin, 2000).

¹⁹ When the convict prison system was taken over by the GPB in 1877, the concept of a classification system remained.

²⁰ H. Johnston, *Crime in England, 1815-1880: Experiencing the Criminal Justice System* (Abingdon, 2015), 131. Babies left English prisons at the age of nine months after 1900 (M. Higgs, *Prison Life in Victorian England* (Stroud, 2007), 100).

²¹ V. Crossman, 'Cribbed, contained, and confined? The care of children under the Irish Poor Law, 1850-1920', *Éire-Ireland*, 44, 1&2 (2009), 40; BPP, *First Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1854; with Appendix*, 1854-55 (1958), xxvi, 16.

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- ²² BPP, *Third Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1856; with Appendix, 1857* (2214), xxiii, 155.
- ²³ BPP, *Fifth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1858; with Appendix, 1859* (2531), xiii, 90.
- ²⁴ BPP, *Fifty-Second Report of the Inspectors-General on the General State of the Prisons of Ireland, 1873; with Appendix, 1874* (C.966), xxix, 168.
- ²⁵ B. Forsythe, 'Women prisoners and women penal officials, 1840-1921', *British Journal of Criminology*, 33, 4 (1993), 531.
- ²⁶ BPP, *Third Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1856; with Appendix, 1857* (2214), xxiii, 155.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*, 147.
- ²⁸ BPP, *First Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1854; with appendix, 1854-55* (1958), xxvi, 76.
- ²⁹ BPP, *Third Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1856; with Appendix, 1857* (2214), xxiii, 155.
- ³⁰ F. Taylor, *Irish Homes and Irish Hearts* (Boston, 1867), 57. S. O'Brien, 'Taylor, Frances Margaret [Mary Magdalen] (1832–1900)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/48525>) (accessed 13 September 2015).
- ³¹ BPP, *Sixth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1859; with appendix, 1860* (2655), xxxvi, 73.
- ³² N. Hahn Rafter, 'Chastizing the unchaste: social control functions of a women's reformatory, 1894-1931' in S. Cohen and A. Scull (eds), *Social Control and the State: Historical and Comparative Essays* (Oxford, 1983), 300-1.

³³ BPP, *Sixth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1859; with Appendix, 1860* (2655), 65. I am grateful to Myles Shorthall and James Murphy for details on Lidwill's life.

³⁴ Taylor, *op. cit.*, 57.

³⁵ BPP, *Twelfth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1865; with Appendix, 1866* (3745), xxxviii, 51-2.

³⁶ BPP, *Sixteenth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1869; with Appendix, 1870* (C.108), xxxviii, 31.

³⁷ This figure includes two babies who were born in the prison in 1869. Two additional children were admitted to prison in that year.

³⁸ BPP, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1872; with appendix, 1873* (C.731), xxxiv, 31.

³⁹ Forsythe, *op. cit.*, 528.

⁴⁰ Lucia Zedner, *Women, Crime and Custody in Victorian England* (Oxford, 1991), 146.

⁴¹ Reid, *op. cit.*, 92.

⁴² NAI, Eliza Rothe to GPB, 23 July 1883, GPB/Pen/1889/64.

⁴³ T. Pösö, R. Enroos, and T. Vierula, 'Children residing in prison with their parents: an example of institutional invisibility', *Prison Journal*, 90, 4 (2010), 526-7.

⁴⁴ L. Zedner, 'Wayward sisters: the prison for women' in N. Morris and D.J. Rothman (eds), *The Oxford History of the Prison: The Practice of Punishment in Western Society* (New York, 1995), 343.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 350.

⁴⁶ NAI, Penal record of Maria Collins, Series 6/1869.

⁴⁷ NAI, Penal record of Bridget Doran, Series 6/1870; NAI, Penal record of Margaret Power, Series 6/1870.

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- ⁴⁸ NAI, Penal record of Eliza Collins, Series 6/1869.
- ⁴⁹ BPP, *Third Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons in Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1856; with Appendix, 1857* (2214), xxiii, 151.
- ⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 160.
- ⁵¹ J. Barnes, *Irish Industrial Schools, 1868-1908: Origins and Development* (Dublin, 1989), 109.
- ⁵² NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1987/85.
- ⁵³ NAI, Mary Connor's statement, 13 January 1892, GPB/Pen/1894/148.
- ⁵⁴ NAI, Thomas Stringer to GPB, 17 December 1891, GPB/Pen/1894/148.
- ⁵⁵ NAI, A.J. Newell to county inspector, 11 July 1891, GPB/Pen/1894/148.
- ⁵⁶ For punishment practices see E. Farrell, "Having an immoral conversation" and other prison offenses: the punishment of convict women' in C. Brophy and C. Delay (eds), *Women, Reform, and Resistance in Ireland, 1850-1950* (New York, 2015), 101-18.
- ⁵⁷ NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁵⁸ NAI, Medical certificate, 25 January 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁵⁹ NAI, Johanna Joyce's statement, 25 January 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁶⁰ NAI, C.J. McCarthy to GPB, 3 July 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁶¹ NAI, Record of prison offences, 26 October 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁶² NAI, M.J. Byrne to C.J. McCarthy, 5 November 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁶³ NAI, Charles Bourke to C.J. McCarthy, 6 November 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ⁶⁴ NAI, C.J. McCarthy to GPB, 6 November 1894, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
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⁷² M. Russell, 'St. Brigid's Orphans', *Irish Monthly*, 4 (1876), 453-4.

⁷³ *ibid.*, 454; Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, op. cit.*, 70-1; J. Prunty, *Dublin Slums 1800-1925: A Study in Urban Geography* (Dublin, 1998), 243.

⁷⁴ *St Brigid's Orphanage, 46 Eccles Street (under the care of the Sisters of Faith) Instructions to Nurses* (Dublin, 1899), (Congregational Archives, Holy Faith Sisters, Glasnevin, Dublin, hereafter CAHFS).

⁷⁵ M. Gibbons, ‘Margaret Aylward (1810-1889.) (Foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith)’, *Irish Monthly*, lv, 647 (1927), 255; Prunty, *Margaret Aylward, op. cit.*, 65.

⁷⁶ Gibbons, *op. cit.*, 256.

⁷⁷ CAHFS, Register of St Brigid’s Orphanage, 1892, vol. 5.

⁷⁸ Barnes, *op. cit.*, 13-16; Buckley, *op. cit.*, chapter 4; M. Raftery and E. O’Sullivan, *Suffer the Little Children: The Inside Story of Ireland’s Industrial Schools* (New York, 2001); J. Robins, *The Lost Children: A Study of Charity Children in Ireland, 1700-1900* (Dublin, 1980), 301-6.

⁷⁹ 31 Vict., cap. 25, s.11. For a discussion of the act, see Barnes, *op. cit.*, chapter 3. For the similar British act of 1866, see Johnston, *op. cit.*, 131, 145; H. Shore, ‘Punishment, reformation, or welfare: responses to “The problem” of juvenile crime in Victorian and Edwardian Britain’ in H. Johnston (ed), *Punishment and Control in Historical Perspectives* (Basingstoke, 2008), 168-9; Zedner, *Women, Crime and Custody*, 148. The Habitual Criminals Act, 1869, extended the terms of the Industrial Schools Act, 1861, to dependent children of twice-convicted women (32 & 33 Vict., cap. 99, s.16).

⁸⁰ 34 & 35 Vict., cap. 112, s.14.

⁸¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 15 August 1882.

⁸² NAI, Petition record, GPB/Pen/1889/75.

⁸³ Kelly’s mother refused to hand over Kelly’s daughter (NAI, GPB/Pen/1888/31).

⁸⁴ The response of imprisoned mothers reflects attempts by non-imprisoned families to have children placed in industrial schools (Barnes, *op. cit.*, 65-67).

⁸⁵ *Connaught Telegraph*, 9 August 1884.

⁸⁶ BPP, *Nineteenth Annual Report of the Directors of Convict Prisons for Ireland, for the Year Ended 31st December, 1872; With Appendix, 1873* (C.731), xxxiv, 35.

⁸⁷ Tuerk and Loper, *op. cit.*, 27.

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- ⁸⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 September 1889.
- ⁸⁹ P.J. Baunach, *Mothers in Prison* (New Brunswick, 1985), 99.
- ⁹⁰ K. Celinska and J.A. Siegel, 'Mothers in trouble: coping with actual or pending separation from children due to incarceration', *Prison Journal*, 90, 4, (2010), 468.
- ⁹¹ NAI, Petition record, GPB/Pen/1895/139. Permission was granted.
- ⁹² NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1895/31.
- ⁹³ Celinska and Siegel, *op. cit.*, 451; O'Malley and Devaney, *op. cit.*, 3.
- ⁹⁴ C. Swanson, C.B. Lee, F.A. Sansone, and K.M. Tatum, 'Incarcerated fathers and their children: perceptions of barriers to their relationships', *Prison Journal*, 93, 4 (2013), 457.
- ⁹⁵ NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1886/58.
- ⁹⁶ NAI, Maurice Ahern to Chief Inspector O'Reilly, 23 April 1896, GPB/Pen/1900/12.
- ⁹⁷ NAI, Census of Ireland, 1901, Dublin, 46/9 (<http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>).
- ⁹⁸ NAI, Visitor record of Catherine Hogan, GPB/Pen/1892/91.
- ⁹⁹ NAI, Record of letters written and received, GPB/Pen/1898/117.
- ¹⁰⁰ Baunach, *op. cit.*, 122.
- ¹⁰¹ NAI, Record of letters written and received, GPB/Pen/1896/62.
- ¹⁰² Johnston, *op. cit.*, 131.
- ¹⁰³ NAI, Anne Sheeran to the manager, Artane Industrial School, 3 May 1877, GPB/Pen/1882/13.
- ¹⁰⁴ NAI, Matron Hooper to Anne Sheeran, 4 May 1877, GPB/Pen/1882/13.
- ¹⁰⁵ NAI, John Malone to John Barlow, 27 June 1877, GPB/Pen/1882/13.
- ¹⁰⁶ NAI, Petition, 8 February 1883, GPB/Pen/1884/175.
- ¹⁰⁷ NAI, Ellen Cathcart to Anne Sheeran, 18 February 1883, GPB/Pen/1884/175.
- ¹⁰⁸ NAI, J. Leslie Bells to Anne Sheeran, 3 January 1883, GPB/Pen/1884/175.
- ¹⁰⁹ NAI, Anne Sheeran to governor HMP Belfast, 13 April 1883, GPB/Pen/1884/175.

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- ¹¹⁰ NAI, Rev. John Spencer to Anne Sheeran, GPB/Pen/1884/175.
- ¹¹¹ CAHFS, Register of St Brigid's Orphanage, vol. 4.
- ¹¹² NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1887/57.
- ¹¹³ CAHFS, Register of St Brigid's Orphanage, vol. 4.
- ¹¹⁴ NAI, John Lowe to DMP Chief Inspector, 26 December 1895, GPB/Pen/1899/28.
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- ¹¹⁶ CAHFS, Register of St. Brigid's Orphanage 1897, vol. 6.
- ¹¹⁷ NAI, Death certificate of Patrick Kelly, 30 July 1897, GPB/ Pen/1899/28.
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- ¹¹⁹ NAI, Lizzie Dinneen to Denis Dinneen, 10 November 1897, GPB/Pen/1900/6.
- ¹²⁰ NAI, Penal record, GPB/Pen/1890/28.
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- ¹²⁶ NAI, Visitor record of Lizzie Barr, GPB/Pen/1896/132.
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- ¹²⁹ A. Jellicoe, 'A visit to the female convict prison at Mountjoy, Dublin', *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* (1862), 439-40.
- ¹³⁰ L.M. Dodge, *Whores and Thieves of the Worst Kind: A Study of Women, Crime and Prisons 1835-2000* (DeKalb, 2002), 245
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¹³² Reid, *op. cit.*, 145.

¹³³ E. Farrell, '*A Most Diabolical Deed*': *Infanticide and Irish Society, 1850-1900* (Manchester, 2013); C. Rattigan, '*What Else Could I Do?*' *Single Mothers and Infanticide, Ireland, 1900-1950* (Dublin, 2012); L. Ryan, 'The press, police and prosecution: perspectives on infanticide in the 1920s' in A. Hayes and D. Urquhart (eds), *Irish Women's History* (Dublin, 2004), 137-51.

¹³⁴ L. Earner-Byrne, *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-60* (Manchester, 2007), 60.

¹³⁵ Women convicted in the province of Munster inhabit a sex-specific section of Limerick Prison (Irish Penal Reform Trust (hereafter IPRT), 'Prison Facilities in Ireland' www.iprt.ie/prison-facilities-in-ireland [accessed 17 September 2015]).

¹³⁶ IPRT, 'Position Paper on Women in the Criminal Justice System', 10, www.iprt.ie/files/IPRT_Position_Paper_on_Women_in_the_Criminal_Justice_System.pdf [accessed 17 September 2015]. Its benefit is limited given that the prison can house 105 women.

¹³⁷ O'Malley and Devaney, *op. cit.*, 3-5.

¹³⁸ Centre for Social and Educational Research, Dublin Institute of Technology, 'Parents, Children & Prison: Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Children', 11-14, www.dit.ie/cser/media/ditcser/images/Parents-Children-Prison.pdf [accessed 17 September 2015]; 'We risk creating the felons of the future', *The Independent*, 22 September 2012, www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/editorial-we-risk-creating-the-felons-of-the-future-8163731.html [accessed 17 September 2015].

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www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/mothers--prison-thousands-of-children-being-brought-up-by-their-grandparents-8153540.html [accessed 17 September 2015].

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