Abstract
One consequence of the Great Famine was the propelling of many thousands of single, able, and very talented Irish men and women on adventurous lifestyles in many different parts of the nineteenth century world. One such person was John D’Arcy who left his townland of Ballyhimikin in South Tipperary in mid-1849, accompanied by his sister Margaret and cousin Patrick. They arrived in Adelaide in August of that year staying with their bookseller brother Michael D’Arcy, former editor of the Sydney Morning Chronicle, and soon to be editor of the Sydney Freeman’s Journal.

The D’Arcy’s were strong farmers with some disposable income, that 5-10% of families that survived on 30 acres or more but who nevertheless did not own any land. The D’Arcy family - comprising at one time fourteen family members - rented 35 acres in 1831 and just over 100 acres in 1854 before the last of the brothers left Tipperary for New South Wales. Between 1846 and 1851 four family members died, and with ongoing harassment from the local landowner James Scully, life became increasingly untenable as friends and neighbours succumbed to disease and impoverishment.

On arrival in Adelaide in 1849 John D’Arcy with the aid of his brother purchased 100 acres of land, and travelled throughout South Australia over the next three months. However, with the glowing news on the discovery of gold in California he was one of 500 Adelaide men who set sail for San Francisco in January 1850. On arrival D’Arcy headed for Sacramento and then to the Sierra Nevada mountains with his Adelaide-Irish compatriot John O’Neil. Hard work, thrift, and a relentless work ethic saw D’Arcy make big money over 1850, several thousand dollars in the first months of diggings. His plan was to accumulate at least $6000 in the bank in San Francisco before deciding his future. D’Arcy stayed over two years in the Sierra Nevada, a place he described as the most beautiful country in the world, before heading for the Victorian goldfields where he spent two year at Beechworth and the Jim Crow, with a stint on the Turon in New South Wales. He returned to Ireland in 1854 to bring his sick brother David to Sydney and to dispose of the Tipperary farm.