

Frank soon convinced Kitty to leave Wheogo and come away with him. But where to? Not anywhere in NSW and definitely not Victoria. Adelaide was a bit too close. Queensland was the most logical choice; far enough away from Forbes but still within Australia. Next question – which way to go? It would appear they decided the most logical route would be overland to Victoria, then take the first steamer to north Queensland. If they went northwards from Wheogo it would be double the overland distance compared to Victoria and would be through unknown territory for Frank. Of course, he knew southern NSW and central Victoria very well, well enough to find his way and well enough to avoid centres where he might be known.

Their probable journey followed the overland stock routes from Queensland and NSW towards the Victorian goldfields, through Narrandera and Deniliquin to the Murray River. The most direct crossing was at Moama then a straight run to Bendigo. But Moama was a very popular crossing place and would be crowded with people from the goldfields - too much chance that someone would recognise Frank Gardiner. So it would seem that they went west and crossed the Murray near Swan Hill as when Frank was arrested in Queensland he had with him the black thoroughbred which had been stolen from Tyntynder station near Swan Hill in late 1862.

From there the decision would be which Victorian port to embark from. Almost certainly not Portland as Frank was too well known there. Furthermore, he no longer had any family connections to Portland as Henry Monro had sold his stations in 1860 and returned to England. (He died at Malaga in Spain in November 1869, aged 59 years). Frank's two sisters, Archina and Charlotte, were both married and living in Sydney by that time¹.

Ports such as Warrnambool, Portland and Port Fairy had ships leaving regularly but these were only small coastal vessels on the Adelaide to Geelong run. It would be safer to board a larger steamer which would sail all the way to Queensland with only one or two stops - Sydney and Brisbane. Hence the most logical choice would have been Geelong or Melbourne, large cities where they would be relatively anonymous. They would also have to take on board Frank's horse, the *Darkie*. Travelling with horses, particularly good racehorses, wasn't unusual in those days.

They could easily blend into the crowds around the Melbourne docks, then it was simply a matter of finding the first ship to Queensland. There were numerous possibilities including the *Urara*, *Eagle* and *Wonga Wonga*, which all left Melbourne during the last months of 1862 carrying passengers and cargo to Sydney and Queensland.

¹ Christie family records