

## James McCann, chain bottomer

James MacCann and his much younger and possibly second wife Mary came to Settle from Roscrea which is between Limerick and Dublin in the centre of Ireland. At the time of the 1841 census they lived at the Folly in Settle, known at that time as 'Folly Hall' with John Morgan and Thomas Flanagan, also from Ireland.

James MacCann was a 'chair bottomer'. Otherwise known as a 'caner', this was a skilled occupation, making the seats for chairs out of woven cane. If they followed the usual routes, they probably came over from central Ireland via Liverpool. As well as our tenants at the Folly, there were another 19 Irish people staying in Settle in the 1841 census, most of them living together in Upper Settle in lodging houses. Most were professionals and skilled labourers, with several land surveyors, silk mercers (merchants), tea merchants, stonemasons and joiners. Perhaps they were related to each other or from the same part of Ireland?

Folly Hall	1	James MacCann	75	Chain Bottomer		1
		Mary Do	50			1
		John Morgan	60			1
		Thomas Flanagan	60			1

The Irish Potato Famine between 1845 and 1849 killed over a million people. The potato blight compounded existing issues and disputes between landlords and tenants. Perhaps the McCanns got out while they could.

The advent of steam ships at the beginning of the 19th century provided a quick and easy route for Irish emigration to the UK. As this transport became more popular, prices dropped to the extent that it was feasible and common to cross the Irish Sea for seasonal work, mainly by unskilled workers who would accept unpopular and lowly paid work. Some moved to the UK and then moved onto the United States. The Irish who were living in Ulster tended to sail to Scotland, those in the south and west of Ireland sailed round to the south coast of England and South Wales. Those from central Ireland would have sailed from Dublin or Cork to Liverpool, and then onto the North West of England, with Liverpool being most popular. In the 1841 census some 413,000 Irish born people were living in England, Scotland and Wales, and this number doubled over the following 20 years, in some part due to the Great Potato Famine. The majority of Irish emigrants were working class labourers so it's fair to say the Irish visitors to Settle in 1841 were not typical Irish travellers. The chances are they were travelling to try and find work anywhere and stopped in Settle to try their luck. None of them stayed in Settle, apart from James of course.

The people of Settle treated 'foreigners' such as the Irish and Scottish with a degree of caution. In 1823, William Paley's diary recorded the fear he experienced when two Scotchmen stayed in the Black Horse Inn at Giggleswick where he resided with *John Waller*.

Nov. 5. Mathew Boys called on his way to Bradford to learn wool combing but fear he has not capacity. I bought his watch. Captain Wilson's Lady and son came after him. They are much bothered as the new servant was gone when they got up. Two Scotchmen stayed all night—I was afraid but got no harm.

James died In April 1842, aged 73 and is buried in the unmarked grave *Ancient EX7*. Mary went to live in Skipton and was joined by a daughter *Anne Theresa*.



## *Settle Graveyard Project*

*This account has been compiled as part of the Settle Graveyard Project which has recorded gravestone inscriptions, updated church records and researched the lives of those buried. It has been written in good faith with no offence intended. If I have inadvertently included errors or breached any copyright I apologise and would welcome corrections.*

*Life stories can be found on [dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle graveyard project](http://dalescommunityarchives.org.uk/settle-graveyard-project). The 'Old Settle' family tree on [ancestry.co.uk](http://ancestry.co.uk) includes the families buried in the graveyard. The project is ongoing and welcomes queries and information on [settleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:settleresearch@gmail.com). Latest news and events are on the Facebook page 'Settle Graveyard Project'.*

*The life stories of people with italicised names have been researched as part of the graveyard project*

*The diaries of William Lodge Paley with the kind permission of the North Craven Buildings Preservation Trust*