



# Diaspora Stories

Ancestor's Name: CHARLES + MARY KEATS

Place of birth (if known): IRELAND

Your Name: SANDRA LOWTON (NEE KEATS)

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IN IRELAND

CHARLES + MARY ARE MY G.G. GRANDPARENTS, BORN 1811, APPEAR ON UK CENSUS LIVING IN HOLBORN, LONDON. I ASSUME THEY CAME OVER IN THE FAMINE. THEY HAD AT LEAST 4 CHILDREN AND LIVED IN EXTREME POVERTY, CHARLES WAS A SCAVENGER, ROADSWEEPER. DAUGHTER, CAROLINE WAS MY G. GRANDMOTHER, BORN ? 1858, SHE WAS IN SERVICE FROM AN EARLY AGE AND HAD AN ILLEGITIMATE SON WHEN ? 18, FATHER UNKNOWN. IT SEEMS THAT SHE STAYED WITH THE SAME FAMILY ALL HER WORKING LIFE, A RICH ROMAN CATHOLIC FAMILY, ALSO FROM IRELAND: JOHN KING, AN ARTIST, WITH 2 UNMARRIED DAUGHTERS. FROM BEING ILLITERATE WHEN HER SON WAS BORN, SIGNING HER NAME WITH A 'X', BY THE TIME THE LAST FAMILY MEMBER DIED IN 1896 (EMILY KING) SHE COULD READ AND WRITE <sup>AND</sup> WAS OBVIOUSLY A VERY TRUSTED MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD. SHE WAS JOINT EXECUTRIX OF FAMILY'S WILL AND INHERITED HALF THE RESIDUE AFTER BEQUESTS (ESTATE OF £40,000+). HER SON HAD PRE-DECEASED HER LEAVING HIS WIDOW TO BRING UP 8 CHILDREN IN POVERTY. CAROLINE HAD SET THEM UP ONCE BUT HER SON WAS A WASTREL. THEY ALL WORKED HARD AND MY FATHER (NO. 7) BECAME A PRECISION ENGINEER. CAROLINE REMAINED A MYSTERY WOMAN AND NEVER DIVULGED THE FATHER OF HER CHILD. SHE WAS ALWAYS CALLED 'GODMA' BY HER GRANDCHILDREN, PERHAPS REFLECTING HER UNMARRIED STATUS. SHE DIED IN 1946 A FORMIDABLE LADY. ANY INFORMATION RE KEATS OR JOHN KING WOULD BE MOST WELCOME.

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I agree to submit this story for publication by Skibbereen Heritage Centre.

Signed: *Sandra Lowton*

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