

March 7 2022

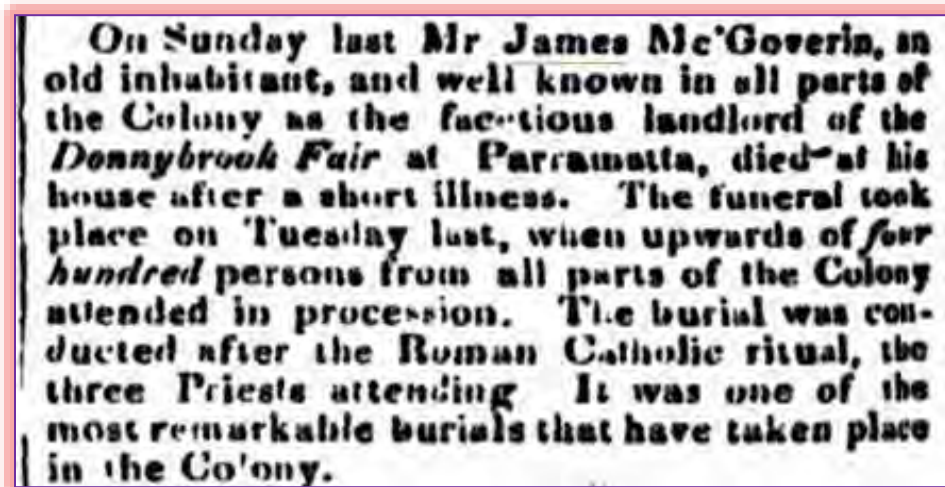
Hillas Family Chronicles

The Story of James *Mc'Goverin* of Parramatta
"The Facetious Landlord of the Donnybrook Fair"
and
Great Aunt Ann Hillas

By: Janet Fearby, Marcia Howe and Jane Knox

The story of James *Mc'Goverin*, an Irish Catholic convict, who arrived with a life sentence on the *Surry 2*, December 1816 in New South Wales, may never have been told had he not married our "great aunt" Ann Hillas in 1823 under the name Magauran and become a Publican of note.

*The Sydney Monitor (NSW 1828 - 1838) Saturday 23 March 1833 Edition:
AFTERNOON p 2 Article*



On Sunday last Mr James Mc'Goverin, an old inhabitant, and well known in all parts of the Colony as the facetious landlord of the *Donnybrook Fair* at Parramatta, died at his house after a short illness. The funeral took place on Tuesday last, when upwards of four hundred persons from all parts of the Colony attended in procession. The burial was conducted after the Roman Catholic ritual, the three Priests attending. It was one of the most remarkable burials that have taken place in the Colony.

"On Sunday last Mr. James Mc'Goverin, an old inhabitant, and well known in all parts of the Colony as the **facetious** landlord of the *Donnybrook Fair* at Parramatta, died at his house after a short illness. The funeral took place on Tuesday last, when upwards of **four hundred persons** from all parts of the Colony attended in procession. The burial was conducted after the Roman Catholic ritual, the three Priests attending. **It was one of the most remarkable burials that have taken place in the Colony**"

James *McGoverin*, as spelt in the notice of the *Sydney Monitor* on the **23 of March 1833**, has been a fascinating person to bring to life but to do so has taken many years of research. Because his name was rarely spelt the same twice in any official document or newspaper article, it is perhaps best to go with the simple initials **J.M** in the narrative, that he himself used in an ad that appeared in **1832 Sydney Gazette on the 16th February**. No doubt he was fully aware that he was known under several spellings of his name and wanted to be sure his message written on February 14 was clear.

“Mr. J. McGoverin, being about, through a bad state of health, to retire from business, particularly requests that all outstanding debts be immediately liquidated; also all accounts due by J.M are requested to be sent in for payment. Church-street Parramatta February 14, 1833”

The absence of a birth or baptism record from his birthplace in Ireland, makes any scholarly work impossible, but as he is part of our family heritage it is important that his story, as best that we can document it, be told. His story is also so intertwined with the history of the early days of Catholicism in New South Wales. **J.M**'s first child was baptized in **1823** by Father John Joseph Therry in *St. Mary Cathedral*, according to the attached baptism certificate(see attachment 4). **J.M**'s own Catholic funeral in March 1833 with “three priests” is claimed to be “one of the most remarkable burials that have taken place in the Colony” by the *Sydney Monitor* cited above.

In fact, **J.M** may well have had the first significant Catholic funeral in Australia if the newspaper article is correct, but that, of course, cannot be verified.

It is also thanks to the notice in the *Sydney Monitor* that allows us to connect the Publican of the *Donnybrook Fair* with the attached 1832 license of the *Donny Brook*, Church Street, Parramatta, issued to James *Maguaran* (sic) and thus the connection to *great aunt* Ann Hillas. (see attachment 12)

No official death certificate has been found for **J.M** or one that can be linked definitively to him. The exact date of death cannot be established either, as the **Sydney Herald** and **Sydney Monitor** state Monday March 18 1833 and Sunday, March 17, 1833

respectively. As the funeral was on Tuesday 19th March - St. Patrick's Day 1833 would be a good bet for his death.

The Sydney Herald (NSW : 1831 - 1842) **Thursday 21 March 1833 p 4**

Family Notices*

*Died – On **Monday**, at Parramatta, Mr. James McGoverin, an old and respected settler. His remains were committed to the earth on Tuesday, attended by one hundred and three couple of his relatives and friends”.*

At least there is evidence that this significant Catholic funeral took place on Tuesday March 19, 1833, the Feast of St. Joseph. After a thorough research unfortunately no gravestone or records of the burial have come to light. As he was buried either one day or two after his death it is unlikely that the gravestone would have been in place until a few weeks or perhaps months later. So without a correct burial name or exact date of birth no document can be authenticated as J.M's.

As for the three priests it is possible that one of them might have been the Rev. John Joseph Therry who certainly knew the family as he had been a sponsor/celebrant at the baptism of two of **J.M's** sons, Francis McGouvern the first born son of *James McGouvern* and *Ann Collis (sic)* at St. Mary's Cathedral on 3 November 1823 and third son, Joseph, son of James Magouverne and Ann Ellis (sic) per the documents attached (attachment 4 and 10) . Both baptisms registered in Births Deaths and Marriages No 430 Vol 125 and 790 Vol 128 respectively. There is even a possibility that the Rev. William Bernard Ullathorne OSB could have been in attendance at the funeral as he had just arrived in Sydney in February 1833 – although no known source that this was the case and again, such a record is unlikely to come to light. It is, among many other biographies and records that show Ullathorne in Sydney at the time including the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, by T. L Suttor. Regardless of whom the priests were, the “facetious landlord of the Donnybrook Fair”, by all accounts died a very popular and beloved man.



1816 Country Leitrim Ireland - James McGouran

So who was James M^cGoverin - the “facetious landlord of the Donnybrook Fair”?

The following references and documents hopefully help to shed some light.

In County Leitrim Ireland March 16, 1816 – a James McGouran was accused of “Administering Unlawful Oaths” and transported to Australia on a Life Sentence according to the Colonial Secretary Index, 1788-1825 NSW

Colonial Secretary Index Reel 6005

Colonial Secretary Index, 1788-1825 NSW **J. M** arrived as *James McGouran* on the *Surry* in 1816. On December 26 he was on “list of convicts disembarked from the *Surrey* (sic) and forwarded to Parramatta for distribution; listed as McGawran (Reel 6005; 4/3495 p. 410)

In the original entries on the *New South Wales, Australia Convict Ship Muster Rolls and Records (1790-1848) 1816 Surrey 1* the following details are shown:

Leitrim County – Among six men tried in Leitrim County in March 1816 for “Administering Unlawful Oaths” and receiving a life sentence. James McGouran, aged 23 transported to Australia leaving Cork on the *Surry* July 14, 1816.

In the New South Wales, Australia Convict Indents 1788-1842

Bound Indenture – 1814-1818

James McGouran – date of arrival December 20, 1816

Date of Conviction March 1816, Term Life, Native Place Co. Leitrim,

Calling, Labourer, Age 24, Height 5’7 ¼; Complexion; ruddy Hair: Dark brown, eyes:

brown, a column T.L is blank, assume this is Ticket of Leave a number in the last

column CP would indicate “complete pardon” shows Pardon No 52 1831. The Pardon was signed off in March 1831.

The Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser Saturday 21 December 1816 page 2 noted:

Sydney: Ship News – Yesterday arrived from Ireland, with 150 male prisoners, the ship Surry, Captain Raine – She left the Cove of Cork the 14th of July, and touched at Rio de Janeiro, where she left the Alexander, Capt. Hamilton, which vessel sailed from hence for England the 23rd of June last.

By the Surry has arrived Lieutenant Reveley, of the 46th Regiment, with a detachment of 29 men.

Both the spelling of Surrey and Surry are shown in documents..



Life in New South Wales.1816 to 1822

J.M is now in New South Wales ready to embark on his “Life Sentence” as a political prisoner for “Administering Unlawful Oaths” in Leitrim County. It is not known whether **J.M** could read or write but as the story moves on it is clear he may have been luckier than most in establishing an independent life for himself and ending up a wealthy, respected settler and property owner seventeen years later.

J.M to work for John Palmer according to the New South Wales Colonial Index

While the NSW Colonial Index records **J.M** on a *list of convicts employed by John Palmer*; in 1816 – 23., listed as *McGoveran* (Reel 6056; 4/1765 p.82) it has been difficult to verify exactly when he did start to work for John Palmer in Parramatta.



In the printed copy of the 1822 General Muster and Land and Stock Muster of New South Wales the name appears as James **Marganim**, Government Servant – arrived on the Surry as convict assigned to John Palmer at Parramatta. Apart from the misspelling of the name it states a 7 year sentence and not *life*. However, a thorough research shows of no other name that is even close in spelling or circumstances working for John or J Palmer arriving on the Surry in 1816. In the handwritten copy the name could be “Margaurin” (see attachment 1)



1823 May 5, Re permission to marry at Parramatta (Reel 6010 ; 4/3508 p. 244)

(see attachment 2)

As indicated earlier, being assigned to John Palmer made **J.M** luckier than most. Most likely this is where he met Ann Hillas who was working as a *servant* to J Palmer in Parramatta according to the same 1822 Muster. She is shown as being *born in the colony*. It is perhaps of important historical significance that daughters of free settlers were just as likely to be sent off to work as servants as were daughters of convicts. Many settlers did not have an easy life either, including Ann's father, John Hillas, who went through some very difficult economic hardships and political upheavals as expressed in a letter he sent to Walter Spencer Stanhope on 10th May 1810.

Transcription of this letter details the problems during the floods and the interim government between Governors Bligh and Macquarie when in fact John Hillas had been imprisoned along with four other "Baulkham Hill Settlers" including George Suttor in what became known as the "Rum Rebellion" on January 26 1808.

The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 3 December 1808

Bench of Magistrates

*Thomas Harley and **John Hillas** were brought before the Bench, to answer a charge of not attending a muster, nor did they send any account of stock, as the General Order had required.*

John Hillas assigned as his reason for refusing the Orders, his having taken an oath of allegiance to Governor Bligh and Thomas Harley pleaded his entire ignorance of the Order. The Bench cleared again and re-opening, John Hillas was sentenced to one month's imprisonment, and Thomas Harley discharged with admonition, to be more attentive in future to Colonial Regulations.

These records are all documented in the *Historical Records of New South Wales* Vol VI and Vol VII "*Settlers to Viscount Castlereagh*" 1809 and letters from *Bligh to Castlereagh*. His experience at the hands of the NSW Corps no doubt made John Hillas, sympathetic to his son-in-law. In addition, John Hillas was described as a "kind man" by Jonas Bradley, a friend and neighbour, in the famous 1839 Hillas v. Hillas in 1839 case following the death of John Hillas Sr. on Sunday March 19, 1837. Certificate - V18372428 21.

Hillas v. Hillas Bradley Testament The Australian (Sydney NSW: 1824-1848) Tuesday 23 July 1839 page 2. He would also wanted the best for the young couple no doubt.



Missing Baptism Certificates for children Ann and George Hillas.

It is possible that due to all the upheavals in their parents' lives between 1806 and 1809 no baptism certificate exists for Ann or her brother George. However, both ages can be determined by marriage and death certificates and the fact that in the case of Ann she was born at the time of the 1806 Muster taken in August and that she was 22 at the time of the 1828 Census allows a reasonable calculation of a birth between 1804-1806. The same follows in the case of George shown as 22 as well in the 1828 Census.

J.M was shown as only 30 in the 1828 Census but 24 in 1816, twelve years earlier. It is probable **J.M** was born circa 1793 so he would have been approximately twelve years older than Ann. It is also possible that the 30 in the 1828 Census should have read 36.



1823 - Ann and James were married on 2 June 1823 at St. John's Parramatta.

Groom: James Magauran – abode not stated. Bride: Ann Hillas – abode not stated.

Authority: Banns Registered: St. J. Parramatta, C. (attachment 3)

Clergyman – Not Stated` NSW BDM Marriages 3129 Vol: 3B

It is interesting that it is here that **J.M** uses the name *Magauran*, the name that Ann used in her own handwriting at the time of her second marriage in 1834. It is possible that the Reverend Thomas Hassall would have performed the Ceremony, he is listed as Curate in 1822-1824 in *A Short History of St. John's Parramatta* by James Jervis.

Thomas Hassall became the son-in-law of Reverend Samuel Marsden. However, no name is shown on the marriage certificate and the original record at St. John's Parramatta is not currently available.



1823 - J. M's first son Francis was born 1823 and baptised by Father J. J. Therry same year (see attachment 4)

The next big event in 1823 for James and Ann was the birth of their son Francis, the baptism record does not show his actual date of birth but he was baptized *Catholic* by Father John Joseph Therry on 3rd November 1823. In the Section *Where Ceremony Performed* it states *St. Mary's Cathedral*. It is interesting that Ann was happy to adopt her husband's Catholic religion for herself and her children.

While the Certificate number *V1823430 125* indicates the exact date of the baptism, it should be noted that in the 1828 Census it clearly shows Francis as being four years old. This would suggest he was probably born around October or early November 1823 at about the time the Census appears to have been taken. Francis Magauran (sic) died in Victoria on June 12, 1852 where his age was given as 28 which would also indicate he was born late 1823(see attachment 5). It has not been possible to prove the original entry at *St. Mary's Cathedral Registry* or establish if this registry exists. 1823 would have been among the early baptisms performed by Father Therry and whereas it says *St. Mary's Cathedral* there is nothing to show the actual place of ceremony. The sponsors shown on the Baptism Certificate are George C and Elizabeth Flintoff. George C Flintoff is listed as Protestant - Shoemaker in the **1828 Census**. The Census indicates he lives in the household of James Gurney and Terence McManus both Constables and both listed as Catholic. Elizabeth Flintoff is not shown in that household return or under the name Flintoff in 1828.



1823-1825 Musters - James McGouran shown as Government Servant to Ann Ellis or McGouren - see Carol Baxter - ed General Muster List of New South Wales 1823,1824,1323 (Sydney 1999)

31038 **McGouran**, James – Convict – Surry – 1816 Life Gov't Servant Ann Ellis or McGouren

The **1823-25 Musters** shows Ref.31038 James McGouran convict arrived on Surry 1816 with life sentence as *Government Servant to Ann Ellis or McGouren Parramatta*. Ann is listed as Ann McGourin, *born in the colony wife of James McGouran*



Married Life with Ann Hillas 1824-1828 – selling liquor without a license

The Colonial Secretary's Index shows that on July 17, 1824, Ann Magauran was fined for selling liquor without a license. On return of the Bench of Magistrates, Parramatta; appears as McGourin (**Reel 6023;4/6671 p.41**)

The New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Papers 1788-1856) Special Bundles 1794-1825 indicates:

(Transcription errors possible):

*Ann McGourin charged with selling Spirituous Liquor without a License. The Sentence of the Court Fined in the Penalty of 30 p (pounds) for a Breach of Government and General Order in that head. Under Remarks she is listed as the wife of **James McGourin**.*

Being in the liquor trade would not have been new to Ann as her father John Hillas was one of the first to establish a Pub, known as the *Stanhope Arms* in 1804 along the original Hawkesbury Road. **The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW: 1803-1842, Sunday 5 August 1804, page 3**

Sign of the Stanhope Arms, Hawkesbury Road,

“Begs Leave to acquaint his Friends and the Public in General, that he has laid in a Quantity of Salt, Butter, Cheese and Pickled Herrings. ALSO Spirits, Porter, Ale &c. for the Accommodation of Travellers who may please to call at his House.

And further to accommodate the Public, as Copper Coin might be found bothersome, they may be provided with Checks upon him to any amount at Mr S Lord's and Mr E Wills's at Sydney; Mr. J. Larra's , Parramatta, Mr. A. Thompson's and Mr T. Abbott's, Hawkesbury. He flatters himself that he will give every satisfaction to those who may be pleased to call for refreshments at his house and he will render every service to the Traveller in case of accident on the Road.

The greatest care will be taken of Animals of all descriptions that may require relaxation from fatigue.”

JOHN HILLAS,
Sign of the Stanhope Arms, Hawkesbury Road,

BEGB Leave to acquaint his Friends, and the Public in general, that he has laid in a QUANTITY of SALT BUTTER, CHEESE, and PICKLED HERRINGS; ALSO SPIRITS, PORTER, ALE, &c. for the accommodation of Travellers who may please to call at his House.

And farther to accommodate the Public, as Copper Coin might be found burthenſome, they may be provided with Checks upon him in any amount at Mr. S. Lord's and Mr. E. Willis's at Sydney; Mr. J. Larra's, Parramatta; and Mr. A. Thompson's and T. Abbott's, Hawkesbury: He flatters himſelf that he will give every ſatisfaction to thoſe who may be pleaſed to call for Refreſhment at his Houſe, and he will render every ſervice to the Traveller, in caſe of accidents on the Road.

The greateſt care will be taken of Animals of all deſcriptions that may require relaxation from fatigue.

Names above most likely are : Mr. Simeon Lord, , Mr. Edward Willis, Mr. James Larra, Mr. Andrew Thompson and Thomas Abbott.

The *Stanhope Arms* was at the junction of what became the Old Windsor Road once the New Windsor Road was completed. John Hillas would go on to run the "Half Way House" which is part of a much larger story not relevant to **J.M.** Although John Hillas's role of Publican at the *Fruits of Industry* becomes relevant to **J.M** as the latter took over the license (licenses attachments - 8,9 and 11).



The Australian (Sydney, NSW : 1824 - 1848) Thursday 31 March 1825 p 1 Advertising - (see attachment 6)

In 1825 Ann and James appear to have applied for a liquor license as there is an announcement on **March 24, 1825 p 1 in the Advertising Section The Australian** listing the name McGovering Parramatta as being issued a license: **Colonial Treasurer's Office – March 24, 1825 Licenses for the Sales of Ale, Beer, and Spirits have been issued at this Office to the following persons:**

Among the many names was Hugh Kelly and as indicated above *McGovering*, Parramatta. Hugh Kelly, James *McGovering* and Ann would go on to have an important business relationship which is shown in this narrative. Hugh Kelly's life has been very well documented in many books including, Daisy Ardley (1993). *Kellyville The Pleasant Village*, and Father Marius Galea's History of Kellyville 1788-1983.

In November 1825 James McGoverin (Fiche 3292; 4/6974.1 pp.47, 72) was to be granted *A conditional pardon*; he appears as McGoverin. However, this did not happen until 1830 with final signature in 1831.



May 23, 1825 – the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser on page 3

reported the Court case involving a Thomas Radcliff who had been indicted for stealing 4 pieces of India print, of piece of handkerchief, a piece of long cloth and various other articles from the house of James McGoverin, at Parramatta on the 24th day of January. Ann Jones was also indicted for receiving the property knowing it to be stolen. After a lengthy process the Chief Justice issued a verdict of *Not Guilty*. He applied the law “*that if you do not establish the guilt of the principal, you cannot that of the accessory.*”

There were many fascinating Court Cases in those days which the newspapers reported in huge detail and where so much history can be found. However, there is nothing more than the name to make a possible connection to **J.M.** but added as part of the narrative for further research.



In 1826 Ann's brother John Hillas Jr. married Martha Pearce, - 2 October 1825

Church of England – Certificate details: Number 52 Vol 10 – Name shown: John Hilles (sic) Bride Martha Rearce (sic) Witnesses Matthew Pearce of Seven Hills, Charlotte Augusta Pearce of Seven Hills. Minister: Rev. Samuel Marsden -

Martha Pearce was a daughter of the highly respected Matthew Pearce of Seven Hills. This marriage would set the stage of the Pearce / Hillas dynasty and John Hillas Jr. would become the paternal figurehead of the Hillas family even though he was not the first-born son. It is thanks to a Pearce descendant, Mark Pearce, that so much of that side of the Hillas family history has survived and thus also the history of John Hillas Senior's two daughters, who otherwise might have been lost in the confusion of different last names being given to their children.

It must be emphasized though, that the history of the Hillas daughters was also passed down on the female side through "aunts" including through Elizabeth Reece who is mentioned as a ten year old *servant* in the 1828 Census in the McGouran household but who was, in fact, a niece to Ann McGouran being the eldest daughter of Ann's older sister Hannah. Elizabeth Reece would become the grand and generous "Aunt Betsy" who figures so much in the "Knox Chronicles". Elizabeth Reece was born November 18, 1818 and died a very rich lady as Elizabeth Spears of Gosforth. She had married twice.

The Executor to her Will was William Henry Hillas, a son of Mark Hillas her uncle and the oldest son in the Hillas family. Her estate was worth £9390.12. She was extremely generous to her sister Annie Reece Drew and Annie's daughter being an author's great grandmother Elizabeth Jane Drew Knox. It may be with this money that the family could purchase their home *Montargis* in Wentworthville, where Annie lived until her death in 1900 with the Knox family which included her eight grandchildren, the children of

Elizabeth and Joseph Knox. This is also how memorabilia survived from the very early days including a beautiful sampler from 1839 stitched by Ann Hillas's niece Mary Reece at age 14. (wills, birth marriage and death records all on file)



1828 – 7th April – James McGovern becomes Property Owner – NSW Land Grants 1788-1963 for James McGovern, Registrar General Deed 1822-1829 Transaction – Bargain and Sales – Parties James Dempsey to James McGovern (details on file)

There is an interesting sale in 1828 between a James Dempsey and a James McGovern. While no proof that this is the same James Dempsey who, according to the *Sydney Gazette 1 July 1820 p. 2* was part of the Committee along with Mr. William Davis, Mr. James Meehan, Michael Hayes and other to “consider and determine on the most effectual mode of opening a subscription to build a Roman Catholic Chapel in Sydney” nor indeed our **J.M**, there is definitely a possibility that they are indeed the same. The witness Joseph Lee is in fact also a witness in Ann's marriage to William Green in 1834 after **J.M** passed away. In the very authoritative book the “Unfinished Revolution” by Anne-Maree Whitaker, apparently James Dempsey would have been pleased to help **J.M** a fellow Irishman The author, writes “Dempsey is credited with the statement that *nothing on earth gave him so much pleasure as to have it in his power to oblige a Catholic, more especially if that Catholic should happen to be a United Irishman*”.

The Description of the Property reads (**with possible transcription errors**)
*All that the said piece or parcel of lands lying and situate in the Town of Parramatta containing by admeasurement thirty eight rods bounded on the north by Pennant Street two chains five links, on the East by a line one chain Seventeen links; on the South by a line to the Windsor Road two chains nine links and on the west by that road one chain Seventeen links and all and Singular the premises comprised in the recited Deed poll relative hereto of the Second day of February one thousand eight hundred and twenty four, and in an Indorsement on an original deed poll of the thirtieth day of June one thousand eight hundred and twenty three and all and Singular the messuage tenement and premises Theron erected and built with the appurtenances thereunto belonging and all the Estate right title interest **possession?** claim and demand whatsoever of him the said James Dempsey of in and to the said piece or parcel of land and premises or any part or parcel thereof James Dempsey.*

The document is signed by James Dempsey in what looks like his handwriting.

The Cost was 295 pounds of lawful money of Great Britain paid by James McGovern.

What is interesting in this sale is that while it clearly says Pennant Street and a line to Windsor Road and that the property is in Parramatta, it is difficult to verify the location of this property on that basis.

The *Fruits of Industry* which became the *Donny Brook* was on the corner of Pennant Street (now Victoria Road) and Church Street in Parramatta as described later below but in 1828 road names may have been referred to differently.



Linking James Magauran through the 1828 Census to the Hillas Family

The 1828 Census was the first time that a complete account was taken of everyone living in the *Colony* as far as such a listing was possible. It is certainly remarkable that according to the ***Census of NSW 1828 – Revised edition with data from extant Household Return - 35,000 people edited 2008 by Malcolm Sainty and Keith Johnson*** 8,477 names were recorded as Catholic against a total of 36,517 – this suggests that almost a quarter of the population listed themselves as Catholic.

Amongst those registered as Catholics was the McGouran family, even though neither his wife Ann nor his niece Elizabeth Reece had either been baptized Catholic. On the other hand there were many names recorded as *Church of England* who later had Catholic burials.

An example is *Catherine Bradley* nee Condron or Spears, an Irish convict, “wife” of Jonas Bradley listed in the 1828 Census as Protestant but was buried in St. Matthews Catholic Church, on 22 Jan 1838. No marriage certificate has ever been found for Catherine or Jonas - see Hillas v. Hillas testimony by Jonas Bradley. *The Australian (Sydney, NSW : 1824 – 1848)* 23 July 1838 p 2 re Hillas v. Hillas.



The 1828 Census shows the Magauran family group as being:

McGouran, James 30 years, McGouran, Ann 22 years,

Reece, Elizabeth (Ann's niece and daughter of David Reece and Hannah Hillas) is shown as living as a servant aged 10,

McGouran, Francis 4 years and

McGouran, James Jnr 2 months.

Under James – **it shows surname McGouran, Government Servant**

Religion: Catholic, Arrived on the Surry 2 in 1816 with a life Sentence

Occupation: Dealer – Place of Abode Parramatta – other Surnames Magauran.

The Census also shows that Ann McGourin or McGoverin, the original spelling is not clear, is shown under column “Name of Proprietor or Tenant” as having five horses and 30 horned cattle. Certainly, James and Ann seemed to have been independently wealthy.

In addition, the census shows that a second son, James, had been born aged 2 months. No baptism certificate has been found for James Jr. although his death aged 27 in 1855 was recorded as Mr. James McGoverin aged 27 years *dying at his residence in Church Street Parramatta.*

James Jr. is buried at St. John's Cemetery, Parramatta Row 1 Plot 9 with his grandparents John and Barbara Hillas, his mother, Ann Green and his uncle Mark Hillas – his gravestone reads: Also James MacGauran their grandson who died January 30 AD 1855 aged 27 yrs. (see attachment 7)



On March 12 1829 the Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser page 2 records “A list of Persons to whom Licenses have been granted by the Parramatta Bench of Magistrates for the present year.

The Justices of the Peace in this case issuing the Licenses were:

A.C. Innes, John Palmer, William Laws, H. Letherbridge, G. T. Palmer and C. W. Wall Esq. (see attachment 8)

Amongst the 17 names in Parramatta was **John Hillers (sic), Industry** and outside the boundary was **Hugh Kelly, for his Bird in Hand.**

It is possible that the Pub called “Industry” or “Fruits of Industry”

was in fact the home of Ann and James and John Hillas might have obtained the license for his son-in-law as mentioned earlier– this is evidenced by James taking over the Pub

in 1831 (see attachment 11). It might have been the same “house” where Ann McGourin had been selling liquor without a license and then obtaining a license under the name McGovering. This theory is still being researched against other documents which has John Hillas Sr. living at Stanhope Farm in that time period, so it would have been a long way to travel every day to Church Street, Parramatta. Approximately eleven miles. Much of the information of ownership of property becomes part of subsequent Hillas family legal cases and is not part of this short history of **J.M** who had the grand Catholic funeral in 1833.



1830 License granted to John Hillas – *Fruits of Industry* Church Street Parramatta
(see attachment 9)

1830 was the first year where butts for licenses become available. John Hillas was issued License No 25 *per the Internal Revenue Office on 24th June 1830. “Licensed in Retail Wines and Malt and Spirituous Liquors issued in favor of John Hillas for the House known by the Sign of the **Fruits of Industry** Church Street Parramatta.”* Names of the Justices of the Peace granting the license were: Lockyer, John Palmer and Gregory Blaxland.

1830 was the year James McGouran was granted a Conditional Pardon but it was not signed off by the Governor until 1831.



**The Sydney Monitor (NSW1828-1838) Saturday 19 March 1831 p.3 Advertising
Colonial Secretary’s Offices – Sydney March 18th 1831**

His Excellency the Governor has directed it to be notified that the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has signified His Majesty’s gracious approbation

and allowances of the CONDITIONAL PARDONS, respectively dated 11th March 1830 and granted to the undermentioned Individuals; vis McGowan James, Surry (2)

The document itself signed by the Governor Lieutenant General Ralph Darling gives the additional information that James had been tried at Leitrim County on March 1815 and transported on the Surry 2 in 1816– however, the original transport document says he

was convicted on March 1816. It states that he is 5'8" born in 1793 and that he had been given a "Life Sentence" for "Administering Unlawful Oaths"



1831 - 24TH May Baptism of Joseph at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

Rev. J. J. Therry (see attachment 10) 1790 Vol 128

In 1831 at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Joseph was baptised – the parents are listed as James Magourverne and Ann Ellis. Once again the sponsor is the **Reverend J. J. Therry** and in addition Bridget Lynch. The Baptism Certificate Number is 1790 128. The ceremony was performed in the St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church

The *Fruits of Industry* and Life as a Publican for James McGaurin begins

(see attachment 11)

On June 28th 1831 the license for the ***Fruits of Industry*** Church Street, Parramatta was issued to James *McGaurin*, - License No 0012 Citation NRS 14401 [4/62]; Reel 5049.

Perhaps no coincidence that this was the year that **J.M** had been issued his pardon.

(Documents on file)



1832 – *Fruits of Industry* becomes *The Donny Brook*

(see attachment 12)

James, by now, a man who was free and able to control his destiny decided to change the name of ***Fruits of Industry*** to a place which he would surely have known from his homeland in Ireland "**Donnybrook**". The Sign listed in the license was now "The Donny Brook" whose meaning, of course, is so well-known to those of Irish heritage and has recently become popular again as a benign synonym for "melée or fracas".

Whether he named it after the Town in Ireland or the famous song “The Donnybrook Fair” is not known but no doubt represented this larger-than-life personality, with so many friends. It appears that James becomes so famous as the Publican of the Donny Brook in 1832 – that in the same year according to the ***New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory 1832 p 36***, he had teamed up with Hugh Kelly of the ***Bird in Hand*** on the Windsor Road, to deliver the Royal Mail.

From Parramatta:

Sydney Royal Mail, sets out every morning from the Post Office at half-past 7 o'clock, changes horses at the Duke of Wellington, 8 miles distance, and arrives at the General Post Office at 10 o'clock; starts every Evening at 4, and arrives in Sydney at 6 o'clock. Fares – Five Shillings in, and three Shillings outside Proprietors, Hart, Martin, and James Watsford, Parramatta.

Windsor Royal Mail, sets out every day, Thursday excepted, from Mr. **McGoveras** Inn, Church-street at half-past 2 o'clock, changes horses at the *Bush Inn*, 9 miles distance at 4 o'clock, and arrives at *Blackman's Hotel*, at 6 o'clock.

Fares – Five Shilling in, and Three Shilling outside, **Proprietor, Hugh Kelly, Windsor Road.**

By 1832 we see **J.M** now a highly respected Publican entrusted with the Royal Mail. He and Ann have three sons and it appears from later legal cases, substantial property. His personality and Inn so famous that it was referred to by his name “McGoveras” – his fame was even still evident some seventy years later in 1901 when The Cumberland Argus picked up the story of the Old Donnybrook Hotel.

***The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW 1888 – 1950)
Saturday 14 December 1901 Supplement: The Cumberland Argus and
Fruitgrowers Advocate p. 21 Article***

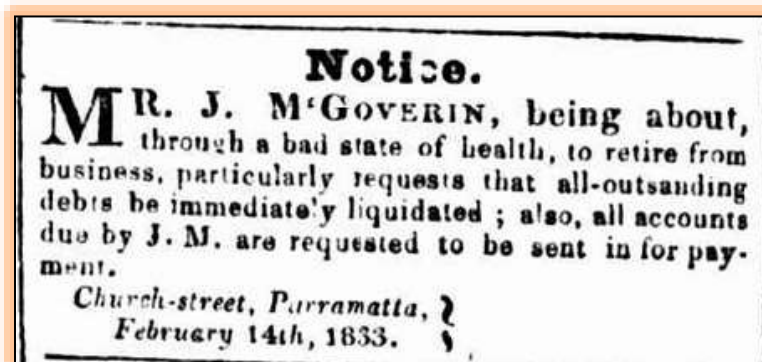


Donnybrook Hotel was a noted public house at the corner of Church and Pennant streets, opposite the old gaol green. In the early days it was kept by James McGoverin. At that time the gaol was opposite in Alfred Park, at the corner near the baths. The other portion of the green was the cricket ground, where all the great Cumberland matches were played, where Tom Ashby, Jimmy Folkes, John Booth, Charley Rutherford, Bob Dunn, Tom Wicks – all dead now – were the big guns. They played for so much a bat in the big matches, and it was all underhand bowling. At the old gaol the soldiers did duty instead of warders. Capitol punishment was carried out in the gaol yard.



Tragedy Befalls *James McGoverin*

With a thriving *business* and opportunities it was a very tragic day to his friends and relatives when a notice appears in *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW : 1803 - 1842) Saturday 16 February 1833 p 1 Advertising*



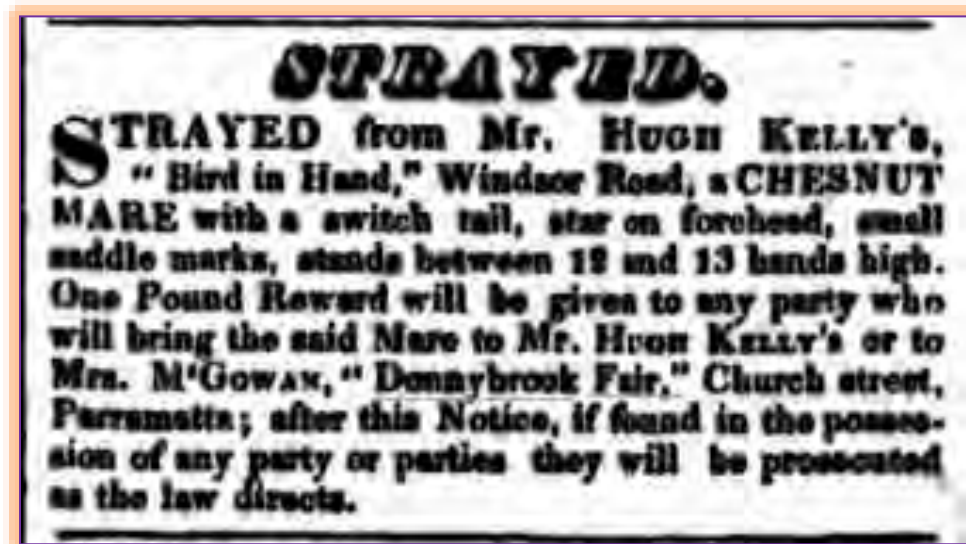
Notice: Mr. J. McGoverin, being about, through a bad state of health, to retire from business, particularly requests that all outstanding debts be immediately liquidated; also all accounts due by J.M are requested to be sent in for payment.
Church-street Parramatta
February 14, 1833

And so almost a month to the day after this Notice appeared James *Mc'Goverin* of Parramatta. "**The Facetious Landlord of the Donnybrook Fair**" passed away on March 17 or 18th depending on which paper reported the death.



After his death his widow, Ann, took over the *Donny Brook* license.(see attachment 13)
Clearly the business relationship with Hugh Kelly continued as demonstrated in

The Australian (Sydney, NSW : 1824 - 1848) Friday 18 July 1834 p 3 Advertising



Strayed from Mr. Hugh Kelly's "Bird in Hand" Windsor Road, a CHESTNUT MARE with a switch tail, star on forehead, small saddle marks, stands between 12 and 13 hands high. One Pound Reward will be given to any party who will bring the said Mare to Mr. Hugh Kelly's or to Mrs. McGowan, "Donnybrook Fair" Church street, Parramatta; after this Notice, if found in the possession of any party or parties they will be prosecuted as the law directs.



Mr. Hugh Kelly's own death was to be announced only one year later on the 21st of July 1835 – and a Funeral Procession was announced to the burial ground in Parramatta the following Friday from his residence on the Windsor Road.

Anne Magauran, as she called herself, married William Green in 1834- (see attachments 14 and 15) . Anne Green died in 1840 aged 36 (see attachment 16) although her gravestone says she died in 1841 aged 37 (see attachment 17). Her son Francis died in 1852 aged 28 in Victoria, his name at death, Magauran, her son James Jr. died January 30 1855 aged 27 years His name on the Hillas Grave at St. John's Parramatta, Row 1 Plot 9, is written as James MacGauran, grandson.

Her son, Joseph is listed in court documents in 1841 but not later ones. He was left an orphan at a very young age, 2 years old when his father died, and 9 at the time of his mother's death. However, in the **Sydney Herald Thursday 8 April 1841 p.3 Title Deeds** it would appear he is still alive:

Colonial Secretary's Office, Sydney 23rd March 1841 – the undermentioned deeds of grants of Town Allotments and Lands, executed in pursuance of reports made by the Commissioners appointed under the Act of the Governor and Council, 5th William IV., No 21, have been transmitted from this Office to the Registrar of the Supreme Court, to be by him forwarded through the Surveyor General to the Colonial Treasurer, by whom notification of their receipt at his Office, will be made to the grantees on application, vis: Date of decision, 11th January 1841, Date of deed 1st march 1841,

Date of decision, 11th January, 1841. Date of deed, 1st March, 1841. 805. James M-Gawran, Francis M-Gawran, Joseph M-Gawran, and Elizabeth Reece, 1 rood 3 perches, Field of Mars, Parramatta; originally granted to John Winter. Date of decision, 30th January, 1841. Date of deed, 1st March, 1841. 832, 833. Thomas

In 1864 the case continued in a Notice of Hearing NSW Government Friday 21 Oct 1864 and by then we know that Francis and James had deceased. Elizabeth Reece was of course still alive and lived on to relate so much to her sisters, nephews and nieces.



It is very difficult to end this narrative knowing that many questions remain open. There is always a temptation to continue researching and scouring newspapers, documents, genealogical websites and being fully aware there are so questions left unanswered and that information from newspapers can also be incorrect. However, having spent years collecting documents, books, studies on early Australian history, deciphering manuscripts and looking at faded maps it is time to share what is known about this fascinating “uncle by marriage” in the hope that it may be of use to future scholars and historians of early Australian Irish Catholic history and perhaps those of Publicans too!



17 Attachments:
<https://jmp.sh/sKdCMjc>

Authors and Researchers:

Janet Fearby, lives in Gunnedah, NSW and granddaughter of Lilian Knox Fearby. Janet has been an inspiration. She has generously shared early photos of the Hillas and Reece family – and owns memorabilia from the very early days passed down through Annie Reece, daughter of Hannah Hillas, Janet lived in Sydney during her school years with her Knox great-aunts who grew up with their grandmother Annie Reece Drew. Annie Reece at the age of 7 was sent to live with her grandparents John and Barbara Hillas and thus we can also call this an “Aunt’s Story” because so often it is through aunts and great aunts that stories and memorabilia are passed down.

Marcia Howe is descended from John Hillas and Barbara Dealtry through her gt gt grandfather George Hillas, their third son born circa 1805 sister to Ann and brother-in-law to James Magauran. George is Marcia’s gt gt grandfather due to his son John Francis Hillas remarrying after the death of his first wife. From the second marriage her grandfather was born in “old” Tallangatta. The Hillas connection to Public Houses is an interest of hers which lead to the “Fruits of Industry” which became the “Donny Brook” and from 1840 known as the “Currency Lass”. The competitor public house to the “Donny Brook” owned by James Magauran (McGoverin) was the “Strong Man”, later known as the “Duke of Wellington” owned and run by William Burgin, an early former convict and father-in-law to George Hillas. Both public houses were situated on the same side of Church Street but on opposite sides of Pennant Street. In fact, Elizabeth Jane Drew Knox was born in the *Duke of Wellington*.

Jane Knox is descended from John Hillas and Barbara Dealtry through their eldest daughter and Jane’s gt gt gt Grandmother Hannah Hillas. Hannah married a John McCarty in 1811 but she had six children showing Welsh convict David Reece or Rees as *father* in the baptism certificates—including those of Elizabeth Reece (1818) and Annie Reece (1821) the latter being through whom Jane and Janet Fearby are descended. Hannah died as Hannah Brinkley 9 July 1838 aged 43, buried at Devonshire St Burial. When Sydney Central Railway was built on the cemetery grounds her unclaimed gravestone was transferred to Bunnerong. Hannah’s life had not been easy. Her daughter Elizabeth was sent off by aged 10 to live with her aunt Ann and uncle James Magauran listed in 1828 Census as *servant*, and her daughter Annie Reece was sent off by age seven to live with her grandparents John and Barbara Hillas, listed in 1828 Census as *lodger*. Annie Reece Drew died in 1900 at the home of her daughter Elizabeth Jane Drew Knox in Wentworthville, and son-in-law Joseph Knox where Jane’s grandfather Sir Errol Galbraith Knox grew up along with seven older siblings including Janet Fearby’s grandmother Lilian Violet Knox.

Authors:

Janet Fearby, Marcia Howe and Jane C. Knox © 2022

March 5 2022

Link to 17 Attachments in Chronological Order

<https://jmp.sh/sKdCMjc>

Sources and Endnotes

The authors hold copies of the Certificates, Musters, Publican licenses Census information and articles from the early newspapers

Abbreviations: BDM NSW Birth Death and Marriage certificates

All copies of BDMs, Muster/Census, Publican Licenses and other NSW State Record referred to in this Paper held in library of Jane Cecilia Knox – JCK Library
Certified Copy of BDM certificates indicates JK Library holds a copy that is certified as a true copy of particulars in a Register in the State of New South Wales

Copies held include by JCK include:

NSW Marriage Certificate – 3129 Vol 3B – James Magauran and Ann Hillas 2 June 1823 St. John's Parramatta, C. by Banns

NSW Baptisms – 430 Vol. 125, 3rd November 1823 Where Ceremony Performed: St. Mary's Cathedral

Francis – Father: James Mcgourvern, mother: Ann Collis

Ceremony Rev. J. J. Therry Roman Catholic Church

NSW Baptisms – 1790 Vol 128 24th May 1831 St. Ceremony Performed : Mary's R.C. Father: James Magouverne, mother Ann Ellis

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Census of NSW 1828 – Revised edition with data from extant Household Return 35,000 people edited 2008 by Malcolm Sainty and Keith Johnson

Pubs and Publicans in the County of Cumberland NSW to 1850

Compiled by Ken Knight and Allan Rost

Papers and Estates re: Elizabeth Reece Watson Gosford

Spears, Elizabeth Gosford Date of Death 1886 Item Z08611 [20/7010]

13402 Spears, Elizabeth late of Gosford Widow – leaves estate of £9391.00 pounds including:

“To my sister Ann Drew the sum of three hundred pounds for her own separate use...
To my said sister’s daughter Elizabeth Jane Knox the sum of three hundred pounds for her own separate use,”

Trove Newspaper Collection –

Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW: 1803-1842) 19 April 1817 page 1

(William Davis – The Blacksmith’s Arms – licensed Publicans keeping of Public Houses.)

The Australian (Sydney, NSW : 1824 – 1848) 23 July 1838 p 2 re Hillas v. Hillas

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WYAS: Bradford John Hillas

Ref: Sp Sr/6/1/141 – held in Bradford Archives Bradford UK

John Hillas to Walter Spencer Stanhope at Grosvenor Square,

10 May 1810 – transcribed regarding re NSW Corps. Bligh and Macquarie arrival

(It appears that JH’s father works for WSS at Cannon Hall Yorkshire)

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A10057 p 230 **Hillas**, Ann born in Colony Servant J. Palmer, Parramatta
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HASSALL, James S. In Old Australia: Records and Reminiscences from 1794 –p 89 re good relationship with Catholics pp 86 and 87 re: the Hillas family “I found the Hillases, when I came to know the family, nice kind people.” – note he is talking about John Hillas Jr. who married Martha Pearce.
The New South Wales Calendar and General Post Office Directory 1832 p.36
Jervis, James A.S.T.C F.R.A.H.S– A Short history of St. John's Parramatta
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Re John Hillas Sr. Map showing Hillas grant , pp 6 – Grants in the Parish, 48.62, 63 (Stanhope Arms),73 showing Meehan marked Road for Hillas Grant – 1804) p 78 showing Hillas adjoins Thomas Harley – There or Nowhere

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Previous Works on Hillas, Drew and Knox Family by Jane Knox

ebook – **The Knox Chronicles** – George Drew – Jane Knox and Janet Fearby
Contributors: Thomas Knox Fearby, Val Fearby, Kevin Hilferty and Pam Knox O'Connor A.M.
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Gives full details of children of Joseph Knox and Elizabeth Jane "Drew" Knox

ebook –**The Knox Chronicles – The Story of Hannah Hillas and Her Family**

Their journey from Yorkshire to New South Wales (in process of revision)

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