

WILLIAM WILSON & THE O'BRIEN CONNECTION

An early Wollongong business man who has been rather neglected was William Wilson, brother-in-law of Henry O'Brien.

Alexander Stewart in his Reminiscences states that

. . . in 1837 Mr. Wilkinson [Rev.] left Wollongong and sold his cottage to Mr. Wilson, who purchased the Balgownie Estate¹

North of the Keira Estate was Mr. Buckland's estate, 1200 acres which extended from Fairy Meadow Creek to Angel's Lane (now Payne's Lane). The Buckland estate was afterwards sold to William Wilson, subdivided and sold in allotments. Balgownie and Mt. Pleasant townships now stand on what was Buckland Estate.²

The 1841 Census shows William Wilson as owning three properties, *Ellengowan* at Fairy Meadow, *Two Island Farm* and a house in Harbour St. Mr. William Croft, in his *Reminiscences of Port Kembla*³ states that his first recollection of Pt. Kembla nearly 60 years ago was that the Five Islands Estate was a cattle run in the hands of a Mr. Wilson who resided at Wollongong, in the now old brick cottage on the east side of Harbour St, opposite the end of Smith St "at that time Mr. Wilson had a considerable number of stock on the estate . . . the whole establishment being under the superintendance of a Mr. Nicholson. Though residing at Wollongong Mr. Wilson used to ride over almost daily to the Five Islands Estate."

The *Australian* refers a number of times to the firm "Wilson Bros" and also to a firm "Wilson & Hancock" which was disbanded in 1838⁴. Signatories to this notice of disbandment were Adam Wilson, William Wilson and E. . . Hancock.

William Wilson appears to have over extended himself for the *Australian* of 11 November 1842 lists Adam Wilson and William Wilson (Wollongong) on the list of insolvencies.

There are other references to him in the *Australian* including that in the issue of 24 April 1841 which states that he had given assistance to a boat from the *Thistle* at Wollongong.

William Wilson had married in Edinburgh Jane Riddell Farquarhson Cruden, aged 30, daughter of William Cruden, Captain in the Militia, and Elizabeth Sadleir Moody. Jane had been born at Winchmore Hill, Middlesex c.1802 and died at Monaltrie near Gundurimba on 26 January 1891. She is shown as having been in NSW 57 years.⁵

A Mr, Mrs & Miss Wilson are shown as arriving on the *Rifleman* on 13 May 1831⁶ - are these our Wilsons?

Six children were born to the Wilsons in Australia. Alathea Jane Riddell 1833, Elizabeth Sadleir Cruden 1836 and William R. F. [Riddell Farquarhson ?] 1837, all baptised in the Presbyterian Church, Sydney. These were followed by Theresa Ann S [Sadleir ?] 1839 and Mary Jane Brando 1841 both baptised at St. Michael's Wollongong followed by Henry O'Brien 1842, baptised in the Presbyterian Church Wollongong.

Obviously more research could be done on this family. Searching for the death certificate of William Wilson would be time consuming as there are many William Wilsons. The sudden cessation of references to William Wilson after 1842 may be a clue to his death date. I hope that some reader of this article will be able to contribute more information.

1. Reminiscences of Illawarra Pt. 22
2. Reminiscences of Illawarra Pt. 3
3. Illawarra Mercury 13/2/1897
4. Australian 7/9/1838
5. Death certificate (08214). Informant: Henry O'Brien Wilson, Braemar, nr. Casino
6. Australian 20/5/1831

ANOTHER WILLIAM WILSON OF ILLAWARRA

We should also remember William Wilson (1777-1852) whose death notice appears in the Sydney Herald of 5 October 1852:

DIED 22 Sept. 1852 aged 75 years WILLIAM WILSON at JOHNSTON'S MEADOWS, Illawarra. One of the first who took stock with his master to the district in 1817. An old & faithful servant, having lived in the service of Mr. D. JOHNSTON For 37 years.

Peter Doyle