WILLIAM J. HAMILL

An inquiry in the September 1985 issue of the Bulletin about "William J. Hamill" failed to produce any response, so the writer was left to follow up a hint from our Research Officer, Margaret McDonald, that Alec Fleming's notes on Pioneer Kerosene Works are in the City Library. Duly exhumed from the basement of the Kenny Street car park, Alec's folder yielded some useful newspaper references as well as a clear photo of an engraving of the works. The library staff also produced a clipping dated 1934 in which Old Pioneer mentioned that Hamill's widow, Isabella, was still alive at the age of 90. Old Pioneer also gave some other information which was later found to contradict what he had written in 1924! The earlier version proved correct. But he was right about the name (Isabella) and the 90th birthday.

To start with, even the spelling of the name Hamill had to be determined. David Heller's letter spelt it two ways, "Hamill" and "Hammil"; Alec Fleming had opted for "Hammil" but also mentioned three other spellings — "Hamil", "Hamel" and "Hammell"; and Old Pioneer used "Hamill". So, armed with these five different spellings and some newspaper background, the writer attacked the N.S.W. index to Births, Deaths and Marriages. The latter yielded no result, but Births and Deaths soon proved that Old Pioneer had won the spelling contest.

Out of the index came the names and year of birth of no less than 12 children of William J. and Isabella C., as well as a possible year of death for William J. "Possible" because his father's name was listed in the index as William J., even though David Heller had said his father's name was Alexander. The index listed his mother as Olivia, so off went another letter to Baltimore to ask David if Olivia fitted into the puzzle. Back came an affirmative reply, out of which tumbled enough Australian banknotes to pay for two death certificates and one search fee. Duly obtained, the two death certificates confirmed these were the people David Heller was looking for.

W.J.'s certificate said he was born in Baltimore, U.S.A., son of a flour miller names William J. Hamill, that he died at 100 Crown Street (Sydney) on 11th September 1897 at the age of 69, and was buried next day in the Presbyterian section of the Independent Cemetery at Waverley. The D.C. also lists the names and ages of 11 surviving (Australian) children out of a total of 13.

Isabella's certificate showed she was born Isabella Cummings Hunt in Cannonsberg, Pennsylvania. She died at 78 Highgate Street, Bexley on 20th August 1936 at the age of 92 and was buried in the same cemetery as W.J. At the time of her death there were ten surviving children, the eldest of whom was then 72 years of age.

Adding this local information to that already supplied from Baltimore, the story goes like this:

In 1864 William J. Hamill, oil refiner aged 36, ran off from Baltimore, Maryland, with his wife's niece, Isabella Hunt, aged 19, leaving his pregnant wife Sylvia (nee Hunt) with three other children and an oil refinery. By the time Sylvia secured a divorce on 22nd July 1865, William (presumably with Isabella and possibly son William A.) was at American Creek (now Mount Kembla) designing the Pioneer Kerosene Works, for we know that the equipment for the works was under construction by May of that year. Both death certificates show that William J. and Isabella were married in Baltimore, U.S.A., but this could only have been legal if he or they had returned to Baltimore after the date of the divorce.

The way of the historian is seldom simple. We have already been through five
variations in spelling, plus the error on W.J.'s death certificate re his father's name, but the data uncovered still leaves many loose ends. I will let readers reach their own conclusions after comparing the three sources of information listed in the table below:

CHILDREN OF WILLIAM JOHN HAMIL & ISABELLA CUMMINGS HUNT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age on W.J.'s D.C.</th>
<th>Age on Isabella's D.C.</th>
<th>Register No. from Index to B, D &amp; M.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William A.</td>
<td>31 (1866)*</td>
<td>72 (1864)*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice</td>
<td>29 (1868)</td>
<td>70 (1866)</td>
<td>(66) 16670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millard</td>
<td>27 (1870)</td>
<td>68 (1868)</td>
<td>71 05464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabella</td>
<td>26 (1871)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>(68) 4809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>23 (1874)</td>
<td>66 (1870)</td>
<td>73 05667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gertrude</td>
<td>22 (1875)</td>
<td>61 (1875)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter</td>
<td>21 (1876)</td>
<td>59 (1877)</td>
<td>76 04147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry C.</td>
<td>19 (1878)</td>
<td>57 (1879)</td>
<td>79 06358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George W.</td>
<td>14 (1883)</td>
<td>52 (1884)</td>
<td>84 02271**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reginald</td>
<td>11 (1886)</td>
<td>50 (1886)</td>
<td>86 03592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy H.</td>
<td>8 (1889)</td>
<td>47 (1889)</td>
<td>89 01574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman D.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>85 02775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisy G.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84 02272**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DEATHS

Daisy G.       | 83 02206
Daisy G.       | 84 02521

William J.'s death certificate listed "two females deceased". Isabella's death certificate listed "three females deceased". No mention is made of Norman on either certificate. Daisy G. does appear twice in the Deaths index as listed.

* Approximate year of birth deduced from age given in D.C. F.W.O.
** Presumably twins.

TULLIMBAR

The item in the October issue of the "Bulletin" in regard to the locality known as Tullimbah near to and west of Albion Park brings memories of my boyhood in that area and of Tullimbar, its school and its handful of residents.

As shown by the dotted line on my rough sketch it is the small area correctly described by Stan Thomas as situated adjacent to and west of Yellow Rock Creek and south of Macquarie Rivulet.

The school, built about 1880, suffered a number of closures and reopenings which I cannot enumerate but in the first decade of this century it was closed in favor of a school located about one mile east of the foot of Macquarie Pass due to a shift in child population from Tullimbar to Tongarra and the Macquarie Pass area. Finally closed 1920.

The teacher lived in the Tullimbar school residence and rode a bicycle each day about four miles to the Tongarra school.