

## James McKean, 413, *Pyrenees*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Correct name: McKeon, McKeown

When compiling the printed lists of convicts from handwritten records, it appears McKeon was transcribed as McKean. All other records use the spelling McKeon or McKeown.

Baptism	~1829, County Monaghan, Ireland
Parents	Andrew McKeon and Jane
Parent's marriage	Ireland
Siblings	Alice (1825-1849), Sarah (1827), Thomas (1831), Andrew (1833), John (1835), William (1838), Jane (1840)
Wife	Ellen Robinett
Marriage	17 October 1854, St John's Chapel, Perth
Children	William McKeon (1855-1895), Ellen McKeon (1857), [The following children have the surname McKane] Margaret (1858), James (1859), John (1861), Alice (1863), Augustus (1865), Grace Ann (1867), Thomas (1870), Christina (1873), Isabella (1875)

On two records in Australia, James said he came from Carrick and Glasslough, Ireland. The towns could be Carrickmacross and Glaslough, both in Monaghan near the border with Northern Ireland, approximately 40km apart.

The McKeon family moved from Ireland to Liverpool about 1841; James was around 12 years old. On the 1841 census, Harrison Street, Liverpool, Lancashire; Andrew McQuen (*sic*) 39, shoemaker; Jane 39; Alice 16; Sarah 14; James 12; Thomas 10; Andrew 8; John 6; William 4; Jane 1. All were born in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1851 census, three children had died, Alice, Thomas and Jane, and James was in gaol. On the census, 12 Benjohnson Street, Liverpool, Lancashire: Andrew McKeon, 48, dock labourer; Jane 47, Sarah 24, hawker; Andrew 18; John 16, working in paint shop; William 13, scholar. Six visitors were living at the same address.<sup>2</sup> On the marriage of Sarah and the 1861 census, the father, Andrew, was recorded as a shoemaker.

The trial of James McKeon is not recorded in the newspaper. However, the Recorder made a statement:

Liverpool Borough Sessions. On Monday, 25 September 1848, the intermediate session for the trial of prisoners in the borough gaol commenced before Gilbert Henderson, Esq, the Recorder. In the calendar, the names of 119 prisoners charged with felony and 24 with misdemeanour were listed, totalling 143. Of these 58 can read and write imperfectly; 20 can read imperfectly; 55 can neither read nor write, and 10 can read and write well. The offences were of the usual character. The Recorder, in his address to the jury, alluded to the charges which had arisen from the loose and imprudent conduct of men with disorderly women, and the too careless exposure of shop goods at the various marts where such goods were offered for sale. At least one-third of the charges of felony brought before the court belong to one or other of these two classes.<sup>3</sup>

The Prison Registers show that James McKeown, 19, who could read and write imperfectly (could read according to another record), was a labourer, and was convicted at Liverpool Borough Sessions on 25 September 1848 of stealing 14 lbs of beef and 14 lbs of butter, and was sentenced to 7 years'

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<sup>1</sup> The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/557/2

<sup>2</sup> TNA, HO107/2185

<sup>3</sup> Liverpool Mail, 30 September 1848, p3. Two people called James McKeown convicted in Liverpool and sentenced to 7 years transportation, one in August 1848 and the other in September 1848. Both had been in gaol multiple times.

transportation. He was received at Millbank Prison on 3 January 1849 from Liverpool. James had been previously convicted and had been imprisoned 11 times, primarily for vagrancy. He was transferred to *Wye* hulk on 22 June 1849, but in the April-June Quarter of 1849, he was on the *Justitia* hulk. He boarded the *Pyrenees* for the voyage to Western Australia on 5 March 1851.<sup>4</sup>

**Petition.** Received 10 August 1850.

To the Right Honorable Sir George Grey, Bart.

May it please you, Sir.

The Humble Petition of Andrew and Jane McKeown of 63 Cavendish Street, Liverpool, in the county of Lancaster. Sheweth,

That your Petitioners have a son named James McKeown, who at the Liverpool September Sessions in the year of our Lord 1848 was transported for the term of Seven years.

That your Petitioners acknowledge the justice of the sentence passed upon him and though they cannot but admit that his former life has been one of a wild and reckless career yet they are inclined to the belief that the wildness has been caused by his being led into bad company and that the crime for which he has already suffered have been committing through the evil influence of his companions.

That your petitioners have four other children, none of whom have gone astray from the paths of morality.

That your Petitioners hope and trust that you will be graciously pleased to grant a mitigation of the sentence passed on their son, who they are sure has had such a lesson read to him this time, and from the example and training already had since his confinement that he will henceforth become a reforming member of society.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray etc.

Andrew McKeown and Jane McKeown.

Cover: James McKeown, 19, Liverpool Br Sessions, September 1848, Larceny, 7 years.

Prison report. Once before convicted and once acquitted. 10 times in prison for vagrancy.

The Rev A Hume. Transmit a petition from the prisoner's parents praying for his release on the grounds of youth and the severe punishment already suffered. He can have good employment if released. Answered 17 August 1850.

James was on the *Warrior* Hulk at Woolwich.<sup>5</sup>

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, James was assigned number 413, issued with a Ticket of Leave and a physical description was recorded.

413. James McKean, 21, 5'5½", dark brown hair, blue eyes, round face, fair complexion, scar on right arm, labourer and single.<sup>6</sup>

The Superintendent's journal records that on:

1 July 1851. The first prisoners will be received from the ship *Pyrenees* and located in Division No. 3. 50 men from the *Warrior* Hulk, including 413. James McKeown.

3 July 1851. The following men holding passes will be detached from the Establishment and proceed to North Fremantle Station tomorrow, 4 July. They will be arranged in the following order of messes, with a Boatswain to each. Mess No. 4 had a boatswain, orderly and six other convicts, including 413. Jas McKeown.<sup>7</sup>

Ticket-of-Leave-Men at North Fremantle Station in July 1851: 413, James McKeown, Labourer.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> TNA, HO24/4; HO8/100, 107

<sup>5</sup> TNA, HO18/284

<sup>6</sup> SROWA, Acc 128/32

<sup>7</sup> SROWA, Superintendents Orders, So1-So3, p46, 47

<sup>8</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

The Perth District Ticket of Leave Register shows:

James McKeon, 413, 21 years old, *Pyrenees*.

He was hired by W.A. Sanford on 26 January 1852 .... Wages £12 per annum.

Left on 11 February 1852 and entered the service of J.T. Rae Esq.

Left on 1 January 1853 entered the service of Mr Carr's service .... at £2 per month.

Left and entered with Mr Leeder on 1 February 1853.

Received Conditional Pardon on 20 February 1853 from Thos Yule, resident magistrate.<sup>9</sup>

By December 1852, James had paid £6 15s of his passage money with a 15s allowance, i.e. he had repaid his passage.<sup>10</sup>

Perth. 8 February 1853.

C. Wilton and James McKeon, t.l. men, charged with being out after hours, dismissed with a caution.<sup>11</sup>

Perth Police Court, 13 March 1854.

James McKeon, for assaulting J. Robinson, on the premises of Mr Leeder, was fined £2 and costs.<sup>12</sup>

James McKeon married Ellen Robinett on 17 October 1854 at St John's Chapel, Perth, Western Australia, according to the rites of the Roman Catholic Church, by Martin Griver. Both signed the Register. James was over 21 years of age, a servant residing in Perth, and he stated that his father was Henery McKeon, a shoemaker. Ellen was under 21 years of age, a servant residing in Perth, and she stated that her father was William Robinett, a ship master.

Other documents give different given names for both fathers – Andrew McKeon and John Robinett.

The couple left on the brig *Hamlet* from Fremantle on 13 November 1854 and arrived at Adelaide on 30 November 1854.<sup>13</sup>

Testimonial to the Captain and Owner of the Brig *Hamlet*.

We, the undersigned, Cabin and Steerage passengers per Brig *Hamlet*, from Swan River to Adelaide, are desirous of returning our most sincere and grateful thanks to the Owner and Captain of the above brig, for the extreme kindness to us all during the voyage; nothing being left undone or unprovided that was at all necessary for our comfort.

We also beg leave to call the attention of other passengers to the admirable sailing qualities and splendid accommodation which the said brig affords.

Wishing you a speedy return and prosperity in all your undertakings,

We remain, kind Sirs,

Your ever grateful

To A Cornish, Owner; and Frank Collis, Master. Brig *Hamlet*, Port Adelaide, 29 November 1854.<sup>14</sup>

G. M. Bongias	Edwin Ashton
Jas. J. Wright	Thos. Hart
Wm. E. Roberts	Chas. Skinner
Mary A. Roberts	Robt. Marshall
Eliza Satchwell	Geo. Holder
Wm. and Mary A. Ward	Catherine Hollinsworth
John O'Connor	Ann Austin
Mary Bourke	Margaret Maher
Stephen Henrietta	Mary Ann Riam
A. Hong (Chinaman)	Bridget Cuncaannon
John and Fanny Dalston	Julia Scott
Benj. and Cath. Giddess	Charles Seaward
Donald McIntosh	Mary Newham
Jas. McKeon and wife	Wm. Chas. Newham
John Giles	Mrs. Scarce.
Jas. Gledhill	

Note: There were several convicts on this voyage.

<sup>9</sup> SROWA, Perth TOL Register Cons 1386/1, 1851 - Aug 1854, p202

<sup>10</sup> TNA, CO18/69

<sup>11</sup> Inquirer, 23 February 1853, p3

<sup>12</sup> Inquirer, 22 March 1854, p3

<sup>13</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 17 November 1854, p2; Adelaide Times, 1 December 1854, p2

<sup>14</sup> South Australian Register, 1 December 1854, p1

James and Ellen's first child, William McKeon, was born at Norwood, Adelaide, on 15 August 1855. It is unknown where the second child, Ellen, was born, but by 1858, the family were in Victoria. The change of surname from McKeon to McKane coincides with moving to Victoria and joining the Police. Or perhaps it was an attempt to hide his convict past.

James joined the Police Force in Victoria by 30 March 1858, when the birth of Margaret McKane was registered at Swan Hill. According to the certificate, James and Ellen were married in Perth on 17 October 1853. James was a Police Constable, and they had one male and one female child. No further trace has been found of Margaret, so presumably she died young. Unfortunately, the certificate is of very poor quality, and the date and place of birth are unreadable.

In May 1858, the Police were raising money for the Indian Relief Fund, and James seems to have raised 12/10.<sup>15</sup>

**SWAN HILL.**  
William Murray P 16 L1, James Wilson P 2 10s, James  
M'Kane P 12 10s, William Fudger P 4 10s. Total, L2 10s. P  
M Cobham L2, H J Gillman L2, John Dorey L1, Geo Grahame  
L1, Miles A Lyons L1, Joseph Baker 10s, John Kelly 10s, W H  
Calcutt 10s. Total, L8 10s.

26 May 1863, Swan Hill Petty Sessions.

Complainant, James McKane, accused John Montieth of abusive and threatening language while in the execution of duty. Adjourned. On 1 June 1863, John was fined 1/-, each party to pay their own costs.

Then, John Montieth, licenced publican, accused James McKayne (*sic*) of a violent assault. Dismissed, each party to pay their own costs.<sup>16</sup>

In 1863, their daughter Alice was born at the Kerang Police Station on 13 June 1863. The birth was registered at Swan Hill by letter from the father on 20 June. On the certificate, James stated that he was 34 years old, born in Carrick, Ireland, and was married on 17 October 1854 at Liverpool.<sup>17</sup> The place of marriage is another attempt to hide his convict past.

16 November 1863, Swan Hill Petty Sessions.

The Police accused James McKane, Mounted Constable of Police, with neglect of duty as a Constable in giving evidence (re Police v. Hosie, selling spirituous liquor to Aboriginal Natives) at the Court of Petty Sessions, Swan Hill, on 13 August 1863. Adjourned. On 18 November 1863, the case had been dealt with.

The family were in Raywood, 110km further south from Kerang, by the time Augustus was born in 1865. James was a storekeeper in Raywood when Grace Ann was born on 3 December 1867. Ellen was the informant, and she said she and James were married in Liverpool.

26 March 1867, Raywood Petty Sessions

James McKane accused John Lionel of owing £5.5s for goods sold and delivered. Adjourned for the issue of the first summons.

24 March 1868, Raywood Petty Sessions.

James McKane was charged with having an unregistered dog and fined 5/- with 5/- costs.

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<sup>15</sup> The Age, 12 May 1858, p3

<sup>16</sup> Public Record Office of Victoria, Petty Sessions Records, 1854-1922

<sup>17</sup> Birth certificate of Alice McKane, 1863.

Bankrupt. On 22 June 1868, James was declared bankrupt, and creditors had until 7 July 1868 to prove they were owed money. One debt was proved against James McKane, of Raywood, storekeeper.<sup>18</sup> A certificate of discharge was granted on 18 August 1871.

James had a position as a Herdsman with the Raywood Council in 1873. The notice in the newspaper doesn't specify why he was suspended.<sup>19</sup>

James appears to have been a farmer or perhaps had a few cattle. When Ellen died a year after the birth of her 10<sup>th</sup> child, the death certificate says she is Ellen McKane is the wife of a farmer. Ellen was aged 42, suffered from pneumonia for 12 days and was last seen by a doctor 4 days before she died. She was buried on 21 August 1876 at Raywood. Her parents were John Robinett, a ship's captain, and Anne, whose maiden name is unknown. Ellen was 19 when she married in Liverpool and had been living in Victoria for 23 years.

The informant was her son, William (21), who listed his siblings as follows: Ellen (19), James (17), John (15), Alice (13), Augustus (11), Grace Anne (9), Thomas (7), Christina (3) and Isabella (3).

Death Notice. On 19 August 1876, at Raywood, of pneumonia, Ellen Robinett, the wife of James McKane, a native of County Wicklow, Ireland, aged 43 years. Wicklow papers, please copy.<sup>20</sup>

Death Certificate: James McKane, gardener, 76, died on 18 November 1904 at Harmsworth Street, Collingwood, of senile debility and cardiac failure, unknown parents. The informant was Christina Brown, 69 Harmsworth Street, Collingwood, granddaughter. [Ellen Brown living at the same address].

James was born in Monaghan, Ireland, married Ellen Robinette, unknown date or place and was buried in the RC section of Woodend Cemetery on 19 November 1904. He had been in Victoria for 55 years, from 1849, which is incorrect.

His children were listed as William (deceased), Ellen (47), James (45), John (43), Alice (41), Augustus (39), Grace (37), Thomas (35), Christina (32), and Isabella (30). The death notice said, 'late of Raywood'.<sup>21</sup>

Obituary. The remains of Mr James McKane, father of Constable McKane, of this town, were interred in the Woodend cemetery on Saturday last. Mr McKane, who was 76 years of age, died at Collingwood. He was at one time in the service of the Police department. The funeral was conducted by Mr D. M. Simpson.<sup>22</sup>

**RAYWOOD BOROUGH COMMON.**  
**NOTICE.**

**P**ARTIES DEPASTURING CATTLE upon this Common, are informed that the Herdsman, James M'Kane, has been Suspended from his Duties by the managers; and that he is not in future to receive any further money as fees or in any other form, as connected with the Borough Common, until further notice.

By order.  
GEO. MAKIN, Town Clerk.

Council Chambers, Raywood,  
1st September, 1873. 3471

<sup>18</sup> The Argus, 27 June 1868, p7; The Argus, 8 July 1868, p6

<sup>19</sup> Bendigo Advertiser, 2 September 1873, p3

<sup>20</sup> Bendigo Advertiser, 30 August 1876, p2

<sup>21</sup> The Woodend Star, 26 November 1904, p2

<sup>22</sup> The Australasian, 3 December 1904, p59. The Constable is John McKane; his brother William was also a Constable.