

A SUPPLEMENT to BY DEGREES . . .

This Supplement is planned as an update to the original publication. Firstly, the charts have been expanded substantially; secondly, the history has been supplemented by ongoing research and information supplied by many family members.

The aim is a balanced publication but, if it should appear that more space in the text has been given to one family than to others, then it must be that some families are "hiding their light under a bushel" and recent news is not available from them. Some family branches are in a state of fast development and making progress in newsworthy directions, so their story is an essential inclusion.

In the main, the sequence has been retained as in "By Degrees . . .". Following a suggestion by Bernard Dunlop, we are trying to give more 'cross-references' to make it easier to follow the threads of our story. The number in a circle, indicated at the right here, will guide the reader from one page to the continuation of that family story in another section.

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JOHN POTASKIE - pre-1802

The central starting point of our history must be John Potaskie, whom we have documented from 27th March, 1802, the date of his conviction in England. The lack of detail of John Potaskie's life or background before that date has been a sad loss in the story presented.

The Rev. Don Hardy started on his search by a chance remark made by Vera [McDonald] Neal: "... he was a Polish Jew". How or whence Don's Aunt dredged this information is not known, but it certainly stirred Don's imagination. The following are extracts from some notes made by Don in March 1986, a few weeks before our First Gathering at Lara and less than twelve months before Don's untimely death.

Don wrote: "He [John Potaskie] was born at a time of violent and rapid political and social change" (estimating John Potaskie's birth as being in the vicinity of 1774). "With nationalistic uprising, deportation of thousands to Siberia and the partition of Poland between Russia, Austria and Prussia in 1768, there was feverish regeneration of Polish life - but this was extinguished by a second partition in 1793 (John Potaskie would then have been about 19 years of age). In 1795 the Polish nation suffered a third and final dismemberment. On top of these partitions, from 1792 to 1815 the vast upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars swept over Europe and Russia.

"The triple partition meant that the Jews, along with other Poles, became citizens of other nations, suffered under harsh and repressive policies with much dislocation of life and with great suffering. Families were driven to migrate and emigrate. More Jews left the land than stayed behind. Those who got away went in stages: first to Vienna or Berlin; then to England, France or America."

Don's notes - which have, for reasons of space, been cruelly decimated - led him to pose the following questions regarding John Potaskie:

Was he in fact of Polish Jewish origin?
When and how did he make his way to England - between 1795 and 1802? Perhaps 1798?
What about his marriage to Catherine Sullivan?
When did he become a Christian, if he had been Jewish? (His children were baptized and he was buried as a Christian.)

Is there any way in which missing details can be filled in?

Another of the family interested in the Potaskie name and story is **Michael O'Brien**, son of Sadie O'Brien of the Delahenty family, and a resident of Queanbeyan. Michael saw a musical program on SBS, which mentioned the name Potaskie. A check with the channel gave the fact that no tape was available, as it had been a re-broadcast of an old program; so we were at another dead-end. Michael had also found reference in the National Library of a present-day Pole living in Paris, with a name approximating Potaskie.

Research done with a foreign affairs agency in Poland confirmed our presumption that records in that country would not assist us greatly and were, in fact, virtually inaccessible.

In his methodical fashion, Don Hardy appended his notes with the name of the main reference he had used:

"God's Playground: A history of Poland".
Norman Davies, Columbia University Press,
1982, Vol.2: 1975 to the present,
esp. Chapters 9 and 11.

With the above background as a starting point and with a clue that Catherine Sullivan Potaskie was a "Connaught woman", some light may eventually be thrown on the lives of John and Catherine before the event in 1802 which changed the course of their lives.

DON HARDY

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While we are using the research done by Don Hardy, it is appropriate to mention the great loss we sustained by his death so soon after our First Family Gathering and after such a short illness. Don played a leading role in the organisation of our Gathering at Lara and co-ordinated the Ecumenical Service on that occasion. None of us, even those who only met Don at Lara, remain untouched by having known him.

To Don's wife, Beverley, his daughters and their families, to his brother Herbert and his wife Bay, we can only say our thanks for the time we had known Don and our hope that time has lessened the acute pain of loss.

HOBART TOWN (1804) FIRST SETTLERS ASSOCIATION

The Potaskie/McDonald Family makes up a sizeable percentage of the membership of this Association, which issues a valuable newsletter each Quarter.

In February 1989, Brian and I combined a visit to our daughter in Tasmania with a trip to Hobart for the Foundation Day Celebrations - that year being the 185th Anniversary of Foundation Day on 18th February and our Catherine Potaskie was born on 17th February, the day before the landing and settlement at Hobart.

The 1989 Celebration was of special significance, being honoured by the presence of the Earl of Buckinghamshire - his secondary title being Lord Hobart (which he pronounces "Hubbett") - and his wife, the Countess Alison. They are a delightful couple who joined wholeheartedly in the friendly atmosphere of the event. After their return to the United Kingdom, we received a letter from the Earl for the copy of "By Degrees ..." which I 'just happened' to have with me. So the Potaskie-McDonald story is now in Lord Hobart's library.

The celebrations organised by the Association included a Formal Dinner at Hadley's Hotel on the Saturday evening, an Ecumenical Service at the Cathedral Church of St. David (Hobart) and their annual Wreath-Laying at the Memorial to the 1804 Pioneers at Sullivan's Cove (just near what we call Constitution Dock these days).

The Dinner gave the opportunity to meet the members of the Association and special mention is made of Joan Gray (Secretary) and Keith Little (Treasurer, who has since died). These two folk mentioned several of our members by name, although they had never actually met. The name "Potaskie" seemed to be remembered by anyone who had ever



seen or heard it. The same chord was struck at the Archives Office in Hobart - the name McDonald allied with Potaskie always brought recognition.

As well as the guests of honour, also present were the Bishop of Tasmania, a representative of the-then Premier Robin Gray and the Dean of Hobart. It was a real family gathering, with a mix and meet and chat atmosphere.

At the Ecumenical Service on the Sunday evening, a plaque was installed in the Cathedral to the memory of Rev. Robert Knopwood, Chaplain of the First Settlement (as also of the voyage from the United Kingdom), who had baptised Catherine Potaskie on board the "Ocean" before disembarkation. The address of dedication was most impressive and presented a vastly different picture of the man from that recorded elsewhere in history. Robert Knopwood's devoted service to people of all denominations of Van Diemen's Land was stressed, it being in the days of no transport except by horseback, no communication except by a physical presence and no filial support or backup in the discharge of his religious duties. His life after retirement was a lonely one, dogged by ill-health, but it was interesting to know that one of his frequent visitors during his final illness was the Catholic chaplain.

The wreath-laying ceremony was shared with the Governor of Tasmania, representatives of the Armed Forces, the Lord Mayor and other civic dignitaries, church leaders, school children and the general public, headed by the Hobart Town (1804) First Settlers Association.

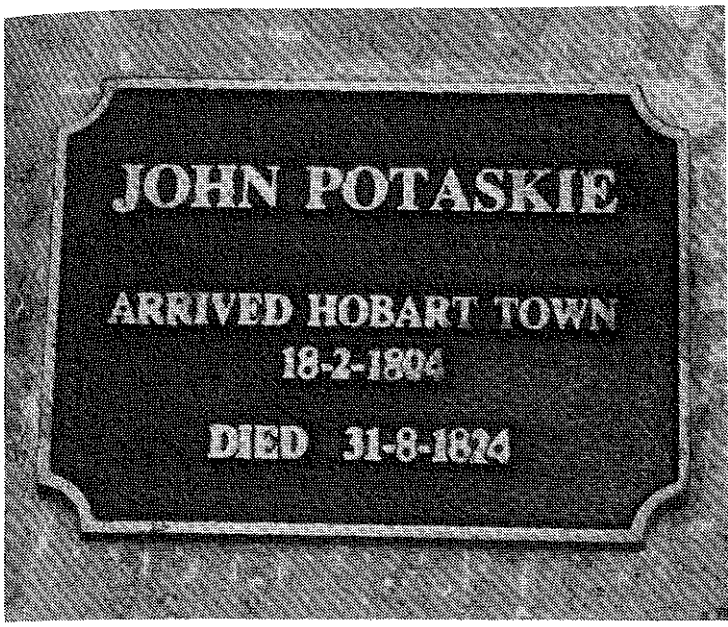
It was with very warm feelings of the welcome we had received from these Association members that we left Hobart to visit our daughter Margaret in Devonport.

The Chairman (Mrs. Jean Haigh) introduces the Lord Mayor of Hobart (Alderman Doone Kennedy), as she lays the City's floral tribute. The photograph above was taken at the end of the ceremony.



JOSEPH POTASKIE

- HIS TRIAL AND SENTENCE



JOHN POTASKIE - His Memorial

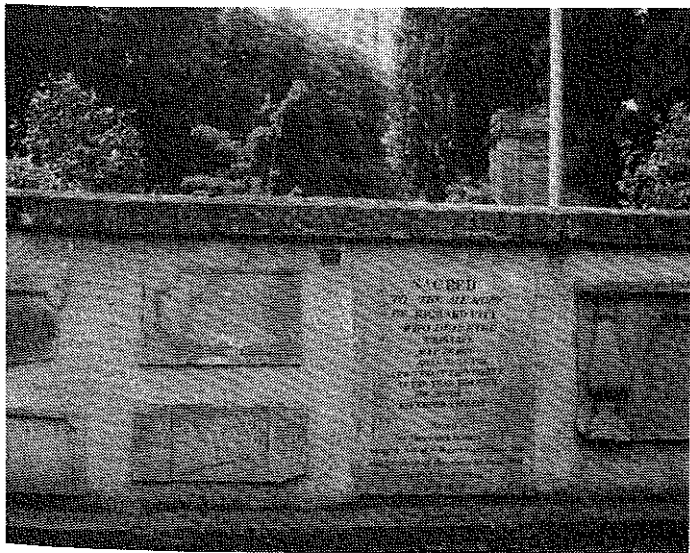
Although there was evidence of a stone having been on John Potaskie's grave in St. David's Churchyard, nothing remained of it when it was decided to mount surviving stones in the wall which now surrounds the Memorial Park to the 1804 Settlers. We did discover, however, that some Sydney First Fleeters who had died in Tasmania had been commemorated by small bronze plaques on this wall (erected during the 1988 Bi-Centenary Celebration) and, to us, this represented an injustice that the 1804 Settlers were not represented better.

Having met the Lord Mayor of Hobart we commenced correspondence with her (Alderman Doone Kennedy) and with the Town Council which, one year later, resulted in the erection of a bronze plaque which will perpetuate the name of John Potaskie as a member of the foundation settlement of Hobart Town in 1804.

The above photograph is a little smaller than actual size; the plaque is mounted in the appropriate section among his fellows' stones. It is the maximum size permitted by the Hobart Town Council. These two photographs were provided by Ian and Dorothy Chatwin (descended from Hanna (Anna) Potaskie.

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Before its erection, we were able to have the blessing of both the Catholic and Anglican Churches on the plaque, in memory and thanks for and from the Potaskie/McDonald family.



The Bi-Centennial Celebration in 1988 saw a flurry of publications and one which included reference to John Potaskie, Catherine and their son Joseph was "Convicts Unbound". Written by Marjorie Lipping, it is a story of the convicts on the "Calcutta" to Sorrento in 1803. An impressive production and the result of many years research, it was not all soundly based. In all there are about eight errors in references to the Potaskie family and our substantiation of these was submitted both to the author and publisher, without response. Our refutations are lodged with the State Library in Melbourne and other libraries which house our "By Degrees ...".

Reliance in "Convicts Unbound" was placed on the "Reminiscences of John Pascoe Fawkner" who, as a child, came to Sorrento with his parents and was also on the "Ocean" to Hobart. In the Reminiscences, published many years later, he referred to the birth of a son to the Potaskies, which we know to be incorrect as we are descendants of that child, Catherine, who married Edward McDonald in 1824.

Mention is also made in "Convicts Unbound" to Joseph Potaskie and three companions being hanged for "robbery and rape". After conviction in Hobart Town, these men were sent to Sydney for sentence and we reproduce here a clipping from the "Sydney Gazette", 17th March, 1821.

SATURDAY, FEB. 8.—This day the Court assembled at one o'clock; when the following prisoners that had been convicted and remanded for sentence, were placed at the bar, and the following sentences pronounced.

Of Death on—William Franklin, for highway robbery, and levelling a pistol at Roger Gavitt, a constable, with intent to prevent legal apprehension;—James Turner, for a rape; Joseph Potaskie, Robert Hunter, Edward Brady, and James Flinn, for Mr Thrupp's robbery; John Oliver and William Smith, for cattle steal-

Perusal of this report shows that the 'rape' interpretation was a mis-reading which omitted the ";" in "James Turner, for a rape; Joseph Potaskie, ... etc.". The sentence was no happier, but the memory of Joseph Potaskie need not be sullied by the rapist connotation. Perusal of the 17-page report of the Hobart Trial would indicate that Joseph did not behave in a violent manner, either to Mrs. Thrupp or her possessions - beyond stealing them!

We are, however, indebted to John Pascoe Fawkner for his passing reference to Catherine Potaskie as a "Connaught woman". This Connaught reference is the only clue we have as yet regarding the possible birthplace of Catherine Sullivan Potaskie. Vague it may be, but it does narrow the field for that enthusiastic researcher who undertakes to follow it up.

Section of Wall at St. David's Memorial Park, ← Hobart, showing John Potaskie's memorial in position, just below coping.

ELEONORA POTASKIE

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With Anna Potaskie's date of birth provisionally accepted as 8th April 1811 (although not completely proven), it could be that Eleanora was born between 1804 and 1811. It is also possible, of course, that other children were born in that time gap. In a routine search through various sources, Betty Miller found a report of a minor court case involving John Potaskie concerning an indebtedness of £29.14.6 (the judgment eventually going against John Potaskie). However, the more interesting point was a scribbled notation on the same paper - "**William Potaskie**" - concerning another case which was later dropped, the other party in that instance being a "Bernard Watford". So we now have a "MYSTERY MAN" to join Eleonora under the heading of "MYSTERY WOMAN".

As most readers would know from "By Degrees", the existence of Eleonora was found in a record of baptism of Edward McDonald on 24th November 1829 when she was co-sponsor with William Connor (later husband of Anna Potaskie). The only other reference to Ellena (as it was then spelt) was another

baptism in 1834 (not a McDonald baptism) and we do not have a reproduction of this entry. A search of birth records proved unsuccessful, but not surprising as we do not have a record of Anna's birth either.

Death registrations in Tasmania until 1900 were similarly unhelpful, even though the search was made under the name Potaskie, and later for any given name which looked or sounded like Eleanora, allied with any surname. Eleonora still remains a "mystery lady".

When it was found that Anna's daughter Eliza migrated to New Zealand with six children, a similar search was made in the hope that an aunt would have been a great help on the voyage and afterwards in New Zealand. Some death and cemetery records were searched in New Zealand also, but Eleonora has maintained her silence.

The existence of Eleonora still provides a challenge and the resolution of this problem would give great satisfaction.

1829
Roman Catholic Church Hobart

nov. 3 3129 ✓	Baptizata est margarita Parentibus Woods Sponsore. Patris	atbarina
nov. 3 211	Baptizatus est: Thoma Birch et Catharina	Parentibus: Thoma Birch et Catharina
nov. 3 211	Baptizatus est: Maria Munnsey (dicta Roman Jones decess. doctis).	
nov. 24 3132 ✓	Baptizatus est Edwardus: Parentibus Edwardo McDonnell et Catharina Potaski Sponsibus Gulielmo Connor et Eleonora Potaski	

Extract from Baptism records, Roman Catholic Church, Hobart, 1829, showing William Connor and Eleonora Potaski as sponsors at the Baptism of Edward McDonald.

ANNA (HANNAH) POTASKIE

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A lady with seventy children and grandchildren ceases to be a complete mystery. Our 1987 publication shows Anna the mother of two Connor sons (and perhaps there was a third son) and four Gateland children. Documentation of the marriage of Anna Potaskie and William Connor cannot be traced, nor can any record of sons Patrick and John other than their baptism. It is likely they did not survive to manhood, but Dorothy Chatwin has traced a death in the Launceston area towards the end of the century which could well be another son, older than the other two.

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Anna's marriage with James Gateland was registered as 1st May 1843 and her age 30, the two years discrepancy with our eventual calculation of her birth date as 1811 being "good enough" at this time. No birth record of the eldest child, Eliza, can be found but Ian Chatwin (her great-grandson) gives the date as 25th April 1844. However, more of Eliza later.

After Eliza, Anna and James Gateland had three sons. The two older boys, James and Joseph, were apprenticed to the "Launceston Examiner", but both died while teenagers. Third son, Thomas, died even younger, at two and a half years of age.

James Gateland (who sometimes used the name "Gatehouse" which was a well-known name in Tasmania of a number of successful business people) left Tasmania on 23rd March, 1852, on the ship "Halycon" for Victoria and he is known to have spent some time, unsuccessfully, on the Victorian goldfields. He died in Melbourne in derelict conditions in 1861, at the given age of 52, with no indication of names of his parents on the registration of his death. At that time, Anna would have had sons James and Joseph still alive, but she was deprived of their support soon afterwards, in 1863 and 1867.

Age, especially old age, is a good topic for the media and the last century was no different. An extract from the Launceston "Daily Telegraph" referring to a number of people claiming to be the oldest inhabitant of Tasmania, says that Anna was born at Kangaroo Point, near Hobart, on 8th April, 1811. There seems no reason to dispute this, although neither can it be proven.

Anna's obituary in the "Launceston Examiner" on 20th July 1900 is a mixture of fact and fiction. Her age is given as 96 which would check with the age of her older sister Catherine. The reporter then went on to compound one inaccuracy with another and continued: "Her father was associated with one of the Imperial Regiments that came out to the capital in the early days". Well, that is a matter of interpretation.

Anna's long life (even if not quite 96), with all its convolutions, could never be called dull. Neither could she be labelled unsuccessful. She had six or seven children and she married her daughter well and, we hope, happily. She also had two sons who achieved apprenticeships, no doubt also quite an achievement in that period of Tasmanian history.

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Eliza Gateland married in 1861, on 25th April, her seventeenth birthday, Ebenezer James Dawson, a successful small businessman. In little over a decade they were the parents of eight children, two of whom lived only a matter of days.

When Mrs. Eliza Dawson sailed on the "Albion" from Melbourne in October 1873, for New Zealand, she was accompanied by Grace, William, Minnie, Cis, Eva Elizabeth and Harry and we assume her husband made the migration ahead of her. The family entered New Zealand through The Bluff, the port of Invercargill and was in little over another decade added to by another six children, making a total of twelve surviving from the fourteen born to this couple. Ten of these offspring married and between them accounted for fifty-six grandchildren; of the other two, one (Gertrude) was a nurse and the youngest - a son - died at Gallipoli.

Ian Chatwin's grandmother was Ethel Rose and, shortly after his marriage in 1964 to Dorothy Leggett, a young Englishwoman, the couple moved to Victoria. Ian is now a successful electronics engineer and the designer of advanced electronic equipment, including a revolutionary timing device for the motor-raceway. We are fortunate that Ian brought Dorothy into the family because she (like a number of our other relations) has a bent for research and we look forward to publication of the historical novel which she is basing on the story of Ian's ancestor, Hanna Potaskie.

The name "Potaskie" may not have been perpetuated but, thanks to the research done by the family in the last few years, the memory of the couple who were forced into migration to this country will now remain a vivid part of our lives and gives our families a multicultural heritage from almost two hundred years ago.

Ebenezer Dawson had a twin brother, William Charles who married Elizabeth Crow on 25 December 1860 at Launceston. They remained in Launceston and produced a family of fourteen children, the last in February 1881. William died in June of that year, leaving his widow with 14 children between 20 years and 4 months of age.



ELIZA and EBENEZER DAWSON