

## Chapter 5 - The Hawkesbury Connection

(1803 - 1813)

David Brown's eldest son, James, was inclined to be independent of the family in taking on the challenges that living in the Colony of NSW had to offer.

After a few years of helping his father with carpentry contracts and getting the Eastern Farms property established, James launched out on his own by working as a ships' carpenter for Henry Kable, settler, and shipbuilder on the Hawkesbury. It is probable that James took up with Kable about the time that his family were taken off government stores, in June of 1803.<sup>141</sup>

Until Governor Macquarie set about building roads with the convict labour, roads in the Hawkesbury region, like much of the colony, were almost non-existent, and horses and other beasts of burden were few. Transport of bulk commodities to Sydney from the Hawkesbury had to be by water. The isolation of the early settlement had occasional visits by government owned vessels. The Hawkesbury river was itself the highway. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the government permitted private individuals to build small trading vessels, provided they lodged a bond, and gave an undertaking not to trade outside New South Wales and its dependencies. Boat building became an important industry as there was a good supply of suitable timber and boats were needed for transport of goods, stock and people.<sup>142</sup> River trade expanded.

Fleets of various kinds of sailing craft: ketches, cutters, schooners, sloops, etc., plied the river taking goods to Sydney and returning with supplies for the settlers. It seems that from earliest times of river transport vessels would call in at farms along the banks of the river in pursuit of trade. By 1814 at Windsor, river commerce had grown enough to justify the building of a wharf to facilitate the docking of trading vessels.<sup>143</sup>

Most of the ships built in the Hawkesbury shipyards were small sailing sloops of up to 50 tons. They carried their cargoes of produce down the river to Pittwater where they would shelter, waiting for good weather before attempting to sail the 26 kilometres of open sea from Barrenjoey to Sydney Cove. These small ships often struck trouble, westerly winds driving them out to sea and sudden, southerly squalls carrying them up the coast with some being wrecked in the Newcastle, Port Stephens area.<sup>144</sup>

Henry Kable (an emancipist merchant) was one of the early settlers on the Hawkesbury – The Muster in 1806 states him to be 'Settler by grant and purchase' holding 215 acres. Aside from Henry Kable, quite a number of families became involved in the shipping trade and consequent ship-building on the Hawkesbury then, those of: Jonathan Griffiths, John Grono, Thomas Smallwood, Andrew Thompson, and Philip Thorley.

About 1800, Henry Kable had joined with James Underwood (another emancipist) in the shipbuilding and sealing business. Underwood was the shipbuilder, and Kable the 'ships' husband'. 'That is, he was responsible for the running of the vessels, engaging and paying crews, and ordering provisions.'<sup>145</sup> The shipbuilding industry in those days was very much dependent on employing men with relevant carpentry skills. At this time, after the government, the Kable and Underwood enterprise was the next largest employer of men, especially through their seal hunting enterprise.

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<sup>141</sup> The King Papers, Vol A 1976, 1805 report p107 revealed 732 days.

<sup>142</sup> Explore the Convict Trail: The Great North Road. Tourism NSW.

<sup>143</sup> Australians, Events and Places, p275.

<sup>144</sup> Hawkesbury Heritage.

<sup>145</sup> Hawkesbury Journey. p145.

Indicative of their enterprise is the following advertisement in the Sydney Gazette of Sunday, 26 February 1804:

**W A N T E D**

*TWENTY FOUR ABLE MEN, to proceed to the islands in Bafs Strait upon a Sealing Voyage, in the Schooner 'Governor King'; also Two ready, active Men capable of taking the Charge of a separate Gang each.*

*Persons at liberty to accept such engagement will receive a liberal Pay, and meet with every possible Encouragement.*

*Applications to be made to Mssrs. Kable & Underwood.<sup>146</sup>*

'Sealing was very profitable for Kable and Underwood who were the first in that field. Kable recruited the sealers, who worked in teams of about eleven. They were put ashore with provisions in Bass Strait, where they clubbed seals to death, skinned them and boiled down the carcasses for oil. The ship sailed away for other trading and came back months later to collect the skins, oil and sealers. It was a harsh lonely existence for the men but lucrative for the ship owners.' Between March 1803 and June 1804 Kable and Underwood's vessels brought back "28,282 skins, and 183 tons?????? 40 gallons of (sea) Elephant oil, and 220 gallons of Seal Oil, in procuring which 63 men, upon an average, have been employed".

'Simeon Lord joined with Kable and Underwood for a period in order to cunningly evade the trading restrictions of the East India Company and gain access to the lucrative London market, which was much more rewarding than selling in Canton.'<sup>147 148</sup>

On 14 May 1805 the Secretary's Office gave approval for James Brown and seven others not 'to leave the colony' but 'proceed to the Southwards'. The others listed were S. R. Chace, A. Evens, John Thomas, William Smith, William Hayes, and Andrew Downing.<sup>149</sup> Of note are William Smith and William Hay(n)es in the list, who like James, appear as being in Henry Kable's employ in the muster of the following year. The expedition 'Southwards' is more than likely to refer to a sealing expedition to Bass Strait often undertaken by Henry Kable's shipping interests.

**I**t seems likely that it was while James was in the employ of Henry Kable, he applied for a grant of land. Not long after lodging his application James took up unofficial possession of 100 acres of land and was assigned a convict. At this time, young men turning eighteen were entitled to apply for a grant of land.

It is likely that James was already in possession of his grant of land at Cattai<sup>150</sup> when he went on the May 1805 assignment with Kable and Co. His land was at Little Cattai Creek, in the Hawkesbury River settlement area (Portion 39, Parish of Maroota), 50 kilometres northwest of Sydney Town, and just north of Windsor. This is based on his progress in clearing and cultivating the property assigned to him. It is evident in the August 1806 muster, that James began his occupation at least the year before ie 1805 or earlier, in anticipation of the grant being approved.

Other members of the Brown family would have been quick to inspect and advise on the acquisition and help as necessary.

**T**here is a question, as to when James and his brother, David junior, had learnt their trade as a carpenter? It is probable that they had both begun, if not completed this training in carpentry in Britain.

<sup>146</sup> SG 26 Feb 1804 p3c.

<sup>147</sup> Hawkesbury Journey. p145

<sup>148</sup> The 'Contest' was one of their vessels. It was registered in 1804 as running on Hawkesbury in 1804, and also did trade to Norfolk Island and New Zealand before being wrecked in 1807. Hawkesbury 1794 -1994. The first 200 Years of the Second Colonisation', p101.

<sup>149</sup> SG May 1805

<sup>150</sup> The name 'Cattai' is derived from an Aboriginal word of unknown meaning. It was applied to "Caddie Park", the homestead on "Cattai Farm", owned by the First Fleet Assistant Surgeon, Thomas Arndell. The homestead is now part of Cattai National Park. 'Cattai Farm' adjoined James Brown's grant. The name has been variously spelled as Caddie, Catta, and Catye. John Goldsmith an early settler in the area wrote that he had established a farm at 'Cat Eye' by 1805. Source: [Baulkham Hills City Council Origin of Suburb Names](#)

It is likely that James had completed his there. Apprenticeships began at a very early age at the time and could entail being indentured for seven years. Of note in this regard is James Chisholm whose trade was a tailor at 16 years of age when he joined the Army.

Whenever they served their apprenticeship, it would have been opportune for James (and possibly David) to take up labouring work on arrival in Sydney Town. At least for the brief time the family were waiting to be allocated their grant of land. For it was observed at the time:

*'The price of labour is very high, especially in the harvest, when men get from 15 to 20s per day; it was this extravagant price that induced so many of our men to leave the ship; to balance which many pay their men in property at the rate of 20s per bottle of rum, 10s per lb. of tobacco etc. etc.'*<sup>151</sup>

Able-bodied males of 14 and older would have had little difficulty getting work. These conditions appear to have lasted into the 'Bligh' governorship, and beyond.

James and David may well have been called on to assist their father in his Government sponsored role as carpenter.

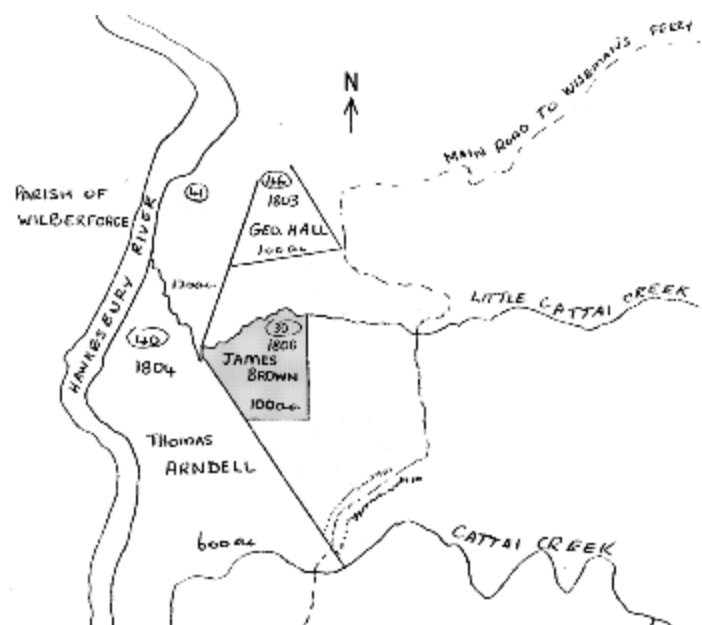
At Eastern Farms (North Ryde) there would have been more than enough work involved in establishing a new farm. In several Censuses in later years, David and his brother, Thomas, are recorded as labourers, which may well have meant farm workers. However, Thomas is likely to have been still a child at this time, and labouring for him is unlikely to have been far from the family farm. He is likely to have been of tender years when his sister, Mary, married in 1806.

'Labouring' work may have given David junior other skills useful for farming e.g. blacksmithing / farrier related work? (Thomas as a child could only have limited experience in these areas).

Their labours, when not working on the Eastern Farms property are likely to have included a great deal of carpentry work such as building houses, sheds, fences, and animal pens on James' Hawkesbury property.

In '...March of 1806 when the Hawkesbury farms suffered badly from particularly heavy rains. Crops were damaged, people rescued from trees and rooftops.'<sup>152</sup> Some seven people were drowned – reports suggest that under the horrific circumstances that prevailed

at the time, it was bordering on miraculous that the casualties were so small in number. Fortunately, '....being some months after the harvest, a large proportion of the grain produced on the Banks of the Hawkesbury had been removed to other parts, and was preserved'.<sup>153</sup> Whatever the loss of crops that occurred, it led to difficult circumstances for many settlers of that area. After the flood, wheat and consequently bread sold at exorbitant prices.



Portion 39, Parish of Maroota

<sup>151</sup> The Minerva Journal of John Washington Price 1799-1800.

<sup>152</sup> History of the Hawkesbury.

<sup>153</sup> SG 20/11/1808, 1c.

James was formally granted his 100 acres at Little Cattai Creek area just north of Windsor on 5 August 1806.<sup>154</sup> It was an acquisition that proved significant to the Brown family fortunes. Whatever its various disadvantages, the Cattai property put the Brown family on the Hawkesbury. The grant became known in the district for a significant part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as 'Brown's Farm'.

The Hawkesbury was to become the launching place for the family's expansion to the Hunter and beyond. The Hawkesbury was where many of their connections in the Hunter River area were first made. Cattai was to become a staging point to the Hunter and resting point at the end of a ride or cattle drive from the Hunter, over a long stretch of difficult country.

James may have been lucky to get his grant, for Governor Bligh arrived in the colony on 6 August that year. In the seventeen months of his rule, Bligh is said to have made only three land grants, the first of those was 790 acres to, Anna Josepha King, the wife of the previous Governor.

James' response to the 1806 Muster conducted in the Hawkesbury area on 19 August that year is a pointer to his being independent of the family at Eastern Farms and the Government. James had under cultivation: 5 acres of wheat, 1 acre of maize, ¼ acres of orchards and gardens, 89 ¾ acres of pastures, and 4 acres fallow.

His livestock consisted of 5 male and 5 female Hogs. He had 2 bushels of maize in hand. Neither James nor the one convict indented to him required victualling by the Government. The 'Remarks' entry: 'To be Granted Caddai Creek' indicate that at that time he was unaware that he had been granted the property.<sup>155</sup>

It is evident that James had achieved a lot in the clearing and cultivation of his property. To do this, he may well have called on and, got help from his brothers, David junior and Thomas. The development of his property also points to James having informal possession of it for at least a year.

It is known from the family of Robert Tolson who had possession of lot 39 March 1948 to March 1966, that northern 30 acres of the particularly fertile. He was able to harvest 7 crops of Lucerne in the one year. The southern 70 acres was not very good quality for farming purposes.

In the muster, James Brown, 'CF' (Came Free) is shown as 'Carpentér, and in Henry 'Kable's Employ'.<sup>156</sup> William Hogg of the Earl Cornwallis, a prisoner was shown as 'indented to James Brown'.

There are quite a few groups of people listed as being in Kable's employ. James and several others are entered twice. One other person of note is a William Brown, a convict who had come out on the Royal Admiral in 1800. William's name arises in close proximity to the family, from time to time, over many years.<sup>157</sup>

From the muster, it is evident that James developed his farm, and gained extra income at the same time through his trade skills as a ship's carpenter. He continued for some years, to gain employment in boat and ship building industry evolving at that time on the Hawkesbury.

**I**n August 1806, the Hawkesbury flooded for the second time that year. Crop growers of that region lost income, and the colony was put back on meagre rations.

Bligh was supportive of the Hawkesbury settlers, and they were supportive of him. In fact on 22 September 1806, just about every settler on the Hawkesbury was signatory to a letter of welcome by them to Bligh. James signature was in close proximity to Kable's and Underwood's.

<sup>154</sup> Lands Titles Office Ref:91M102(235) of 11 November 1993. Re Portion 39, Parish of Maroota 'Crown grant dated 5/8/1806 of 100 acres to James Brown'. Also William Blackman's letters, Applications for Land, AONSW reel 1095.refers.

<sup>155</sup> Annex B to 1806 Muster, Reference B0439.

<sup>156</sup> 1806 Muster, Reference A0487, and A0324.

<sup>157</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that he was related to David Brown.

Bligh encouraged grain growers, who then, were predominantly located in the Hawkesbury, by offering high prices, and impressing labour at low wages.<sup>158</sup> Bligh's support was at odds with power plays by the NSW Corps for monopolies on grain; feelings ran high. The situation fuelled the ensuing rivalry between Bligh and John Macarthur over the next several years.

Labour that did not comply with Bligh's imposition risked public derision in the stocks. This state of affairs may well have caused some dissatisfaction and inconvenience to David junior, who seemed to have taken advantage of the higher wages paid to labourers.<sup>159</sup>

**B**etween 1806 and 1820, James' neighbour, George Hall began a program of acquiring land in the Pitt Town and Cattai Creek regions. By 1820 the property he had at his disposal amounted to 850 acres. One of the acquisitions was a grant of 100 acres adjoining his Portion 46 granted in 1803. Hall had seven sons several of whom, like James' family, were to become very much involved in the settlers' expansion north to the Hunter, and beyond.



Captain William Bligh (1754–1817)  
Governor of NSW.  
6 Aug 1806 to 26 Jan 1808

**T**he following account gives some insight into the use of road haulage between Sydney and the Hawkesbury and some of the hazards of conveying cargo by that route:

*'On Tuesday last a common carrier left Sydney for the Hawkesbury with a cart containing 60 gallons of wine, a chest of tea, and two bags of sugar, to be conveyed to be conveyed to the farm of Mr Thomas Biggers, but owing to the unaccountable imprudence of the driver, one single particle of the property was not received.*

*On his way through Parramatta he took shelter for the night in*

*a house near the lumber yard; wherein he tapped the wine hogshead, and soon became intoxicated, gave a loose to prodigality at his employers expense; and before he left Parramatta the next day the two bags of sugar were left. - With the remainder of the wine, and the chest of tea, he was reduced to prosecuting the journey; and proceeding nearly*

*to the second pond, was attacked, as he himself declared to a stockman, by several men who poored the wine onto the road, and breaking the chest into pieces, took the tea away in bags. But he was much inebriated when he gave his account, and had the appearance of being severely beaten.'*

*Sydney Gazette,  
Sunday, June 5, 1808*

**O**n 26 January 1808, soldiers of the New South Wales Corps led by Major George Johnston, in what is known as the "Rum Rebellion", deposed Governor Bligh. 'The overthrow on the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the colony, left the Hawkesbury settlers in a position of grave uncertainty.'<sup>160</sup> The Corps' commanders governed New South Wales from the time of the rebellion until the arrival of Governor Macquarie and the 73<sup>rd</sup> Regiment in December 1809.<sup>161</sup>

During the reign of the Rum Corps, General Orders were promulgated in the Sydney Gazette; Sunday, 13 November 1808 which instructed amongst other things that:

<sup>158</sup> History of the Hawkesbury.

<sup>159</sup> History of the Hawkesbury.

<sup>160</sup> Hawkesbury Journey, p70.

<sup>161</sup> In January 1808, a requisition from John Macarthur asked Major Johnston to assume control of the Colony. John Macarthur had obtained by way of endorsement the signatures of many colonists including First-fleeter, Joseph Hatton, who farmed at Kissing Point, not far from David's land, and a very shaky signature by a David Brown. Other aspects of the writing also make it unlikely to be James' father.

*The Settlers, and every other description of Persons occupying or cultivating Grounds, either by Grant, Lease, Rental, or Permission, are to attend, and will be Mustered by Lieutenant Governor Foveaux, at the following Times and Places; viz.*

*Those in Sydney, and its Districts, at the Secretary's Office, at Eight o' Clock in the Mornings of Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup>, and Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> instant.'*

.....

*' Those at Northern Boundary, Field of Mars, and Dundas, at the same hour on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup>. at Government House, Parramatta.'*

.....

*' Those at Caddai, Portland Head, and Down the River, at the same hour, on Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup>, at Caddai.'*

*' OFFICERS Civil and Military holding Grounds as above, are directed to give an account of their Farms, Stock, & c...*

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### Strange and Tragic

*'A few days ago a fine boy, about 12 years of age, hung himself on a farm, at Hawkesbury, and was found lifeless, though his feet were on the ground, his knees half bent. He has fastened the rope to the rafter of an out house, placed a looking glass before him, and was supposed to have thrown himself from a height between two and three feet, and that he could not recover from the violence of the fall.'*

*Sydney Gazette, Sunday,  
July 3, 1808*

Each one of these designated places of assembly, that is, Sydney, Field of Mars, and Caddai, should have implications for the Browns. Unfortunately, records of that muster are not available.<sup>163</sup> It is likely that this muster, more than others, was ignored by many of those expected to respond.

**B**eneath the muster notice is another from the Secretary's Office of 12 November 1808 concerning persons who 'advertise themselves as being about to leave the Colony (under the approbation of his honour the Lieutenant Governor)':

<i>' In the ELIZABETH, James Brown.'</i>
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With James coming and going from the colony, management of his Cattai property became increasingly left to his father and brothers. One can reasonably imagine that whenever the ship he was on docked at Sydney Cove, that he was prompt to call in at the Chisholm residence, at George Street.

*' The long and, at this time of year, very unusual continuance of bad weather, has as might have been expected. Been accompanied with the most painful apprehension for the fate of the whole Hawkesbury Settlement, upon the prosperity of which we so much depend.'*

*' On Sunday last the rise in the river was perceivably rapid; in the course of the day its perpendicular height was more than 20 feet from the usual level; but on Monday it fell*

*considerably. Since then alternative hopes and fears have agitated the minds of the settlers - but by accounts which came our way so late as Friday, we are relieved from anxiety.'*

*' The rains, accompanied with several heavy floods, have nevertheless done some damage, by beating down much of the forward wheat, a great part of which will be invariably lost'*  
*'To Providence that has averted a disaster that must*

*have once more plunged us into an abyfs of want, we cannot be sufficiently thankful. A heavy flood at this period must have been, if possible, more dreadfully felt than that of March 1806, ..... now when the grain is still standing in the field and ready for the sickle, every leaf must have perished, and the gladdening time of harvest have become a season of universal lamentation.'*

**Sydney Gazette,  
Sunday, 20 November 1808**

<sup>162</sup>SG 13/11/1808, 1a.

<sup>163</sup> Descent, September 1999 edition, page 144 of volume 29, part 3 - From 1795 onwards, annual general musters appear to have been held. However only a few musters have survived. No muster lists have survived for the period between 1806 and 1811.

As James is arranging to depart Sydney on the ELIZABETH, the Sydney Gazette, Sunday, 27 November 1808 reported that:

<p><i>'By the FAVORITE' 'has arrived Mr Kable jun. From China by way of Penang.'</i></p>
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### *Across the River*

In this early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, settlers in the Cattai, and Portland Head (across river from Cattai) region of the Hawkesbury wanting to worship as Presbyterians, gathered under the shade or shelter of a tree, and sometimes a member's house. The first regular Sunday services were held at the homestead of Dr Thomas Arndell (neighbour to James Brown's Portion 39 grant) near the river, on the opposite bank to Portland Head.

In 1809, work on the Ebenezer Presbyterian Church at Portland Head was completed after two years of construction effort. Costing £400, it *'was a formidable task for a small congregation with limited resources. Some contributed the produce of their farms, some give their labour; the stones were brought from a neighbouring quarry partly in boats; others felled the timber and fashioned it for its particular purpose.'* George Hall (James' neighbour) swam his bullocks *across* the river in order to draw the material to the site.<sup>164</sup> John Howe, a notable settler, and later explorer, was also member of the founding congregation. The NSW Corps regarded the congregation with some concern as being potential organised opposition to their reign.<sup>165</sup>

The Ebenezer church was one of several places of worship the Browns chose to have their children baptised.<sup>166</sup> Given their proximity to the church, an easy boat ride across the river, the close involvement of their neighbours, and its association with Scotland, it seems likely the family attended more than the occasional service.

Another event that undoubtedly was noted by the congregation of Ebenezer, and others in the region, was the Hawkesbury rising above its normal level by more than 14 metres during May and August of 1809 bringing much devastation.

### *A New Broom*

On 1 December 1809, a letter was presented by Thomas Arndell (James' neighbour) to Colonel Lachlan Macquarie who had arrived to take up his appointment as Governor of the colony. It contained the signatures of 'settlers, residents of the Hawkesbury and its vicinity' welcoming him.<sup>167</sup> James' name, and that of Kable, Underwood, and Lord, and quite a few others are absent.

Macquarie began his term as Governor of the Colony of New South Wales on 1 January 1810. He was a career soldier, a Scot, and the sixth Governor of NSW. The Colony's population was estimated then to be 11,566.

With Macquarie's arrival, the exploitation and intimidation by the New South Wales Corps hierarchy of the Hawkesbury settlers ended. The settlers again had a stable and orderly government that was encouraging to their sense of industry and supportive in dealing with their plights.

<sup>164</sup> 'The walls were of solid stone, two feet thick, substantially and faithfully built like the men who built it. It has defied the weather for more than a century. This was the first Presbyterian Church erected in Australia. Also the first erected entirely by voluntary contributions, and is now the oldest church building in the commonwealth belonging to any denomination and still used for public worship.' The History of Ebenezer. p8.

<sup>165</sup> 'The NSW Corps officers ' who deposed Governor Bligh, believing that those settlers were friendly to the deposed Governor, issued instructions to the Military Commandant at Windsor to disperse or arrest the Ebenezer worshippers.' Accordingly, one Sunday morning, Lieutenant Bell, ' with a detachment of troops, marched out of Windsor and proceeded to Portland Head. Arriving there, they found the congregation engaged in worship, led by their Presbyterian Elder, James Mein, who also read a sermon.' Lieutenant Bell waited until the close of the service when he shook hands with James Mein and each member of the congregation, ' and declared that he would neither disperse nor interfere with them.' The History of Ebenezer. p4.

<sup>166</sup> David BROWN (III), son of David (I) Brown and Elizabeth McMahon, was baptised on 14 December 1828 at the Portland Head. Also two children of their son, John, were baptised there in 1850 and 1853.

<sup>167</sup> Hawkesbury 1794 -1994. The first 200 Years of the Second Colonisation', p28.

In December 1810, Pitt Town, near Cattai and the Hawkesbury River, and four other towns (Windsor, Richmond, Castlereagh, and Wilberforce) were planned and named on the initiative of Governor Macquarie.<sup>168</sup>

Many Hawkesbury farmers had signed a petition to the Governor seeking his help as they had never recovered from the 1806 flooding.

The Hawkesbury was the colony's 'breadbasket', and so Macquarie was at pains to assure them of his intention to assist them. He personally investigated their circumstances, and set in train measures to aid the development of the Hawkesbury area including the creation of the five towns.



Colonel Lachlan Macquarie  
(1761 – 1824)  
Governor NSW 1 January 1810  
to 1 December 1821.

The Browns maintained James' Cattai property through difficult, and for some, particularly costly times of the early settlement Hawkesbury.

Later they were able to take advantage of Government development and aid programs available when Little Cattai's value as a 'stepping stone' to the Hunter region became apparent.

### *James Brown's Departure*

In the Sydney Gazette of Saturday, 21 March 1812, James Brown's name is among a crew of 25 listed for the Brig 'Favorite.' The listing being in conformity of a legal obligation:

<b>CLAIMS AND DEMANDS.</b>	
<i>The following Persons being about to depart the Colony, request all those who have Claims on and Demands against them, to present the same to* themselves for Payment:</i>	
<i>* In the Brig Favorite,</i>	
<i>Captain Arnold Fisk</i>	<i>Mr. Robert L. Coz</i>
<i>Mr. William Ayton</i>	<i>James Peters</i>
<i>John Thomas</i>	<i>James Brown</i>
<i>Thomas Walkers</i>	<i>Charles Smith</i>
<i>Richard Ridgway</i>	<i>Henry May</i>
<i>Thomas Harper</i>	<i>Augu-one de Cruise</i>
<i>Juan Desar</i>	<i>Peter Dallin</i>
<i>Lawrence de Grass</i>	<i>Antonio Joseph</i>
<i>Davis Desilva</i>	
<i>J Roberts, Derrick Baddin, &amp; H.Marsh, Boys: Burialt Mamot, Chuta Mamo, Chack Marmot, Abdella and Ummiah Lascars.</i>	

The Favorite was an American big of 158 tons and had initially arrived in Sydney from India in June 1809 with a speculative cargo. She had been purchased about then by syndicate comprising: John Macarthur and three others, Macarthur's share being 12.5%. Captain William Douglas Campbell (1770-1827) held a half interest. Campbell's 'country ship licence' allowed the ship to work within the East India Company's area of India, China, and the South West Pacific.

On 6 April 1812 '*being about to depart this colony*' James made out his will, and power of attorney, in favour of his father, David. In the Power of Attorney, both James and his father are described as being 'of Sydney'. If age for qualification of his Hawkesbury land is any indication, James was probably about 25 years old at the time.<sup>169</sup>

His function aboard 'Favorite' was as ship's carpenter. The Favorite was bound for Calcutta.<sup>170</sup> It at times sailed back and forth between Sydney and Calcutta about four times a year. From 'Calcutta, if he

<sup>168</sup> Great Events in Australian History, Childs and Associates Publications P/L, p58

<sup>169</sup> Other estimates suggest 30 years old.

<sup>170</sup> Arnold Fiske as recorded as being a Captain of the Favorite about this time. Per Journal of William Lockerby. P88-96

was going there, James probably had an especially good chance of gaining working passage 'home' or to ports in South East Asia, on some other vessel. One legend suggests that he did not see the colony of NSW as being part of his future, and decided to return home to Britain.

John Bowman, eldest son of Honor and John Bowman of the Hawkesbury, had settled in Calcutta where he was Master Attendant of the Port of Calcutta. He "had previously been a captain the fleet of the East India Company". Perhaps the Bowman connection was a factor in James going to Calcutta?

One can imagine James saying his farewells to various members of his family prior to his setting sail for what was expected to be a long absence; his father, brothers, sister, Mary, her husband, and their son, his 6 year old nephew, Jas.

If in fact, James had decided to return home to the United Kingdom for good, it is strange that he didn't sell the property for whatever he could get for it to improve his financial security on arriving 'home', or give it outright to his father or brothers?

James may have come and gone from the colony on many occasions. However, only the 1805 and 1812 promulgations of his doing so have been found so far. Significantly, it is not until his departure in April 1812 that he saw fit to give his father power of attorney, and make a will. If James were truly leaving the colony with no intention of return it is unlikely that he would not have transferred or sold his property to his father outright, rather than bother with a will. These arrangements really imply an intention to return, but that there was something especially challenging, uncertain, or dangerous, about this journey.

Perhaps James was heading off to make his fortune in India, or for that matter China, Fiji and the Friendly islands (Tonga), destinations familiar to him through his connection with Henry Kable? The Brigs, Favorite and the Elizabeth are recorded as having been involved in trade in the Society Islands, the Friendly Islands (Tonga) and Fiji in the 1808-1816 date range. This involved the trade in 'mother-of-pearl' from the Society Islands and the already diminishing sandalwood resources of Fiji and trading it in south east China.<sup>171</sup> Macao and Canton are ports at which these ships are known to have called in China. This whole region could prove very risky – Cannibals and pirates being some of the biggest hazards, hence the need for East Indiamen trading vessels and alike to be well armed.

The Favorite sailed out of Sydney bound for 'Fiji and China'.<sup>172</sup> Its American captain, Arnold Fiske, was leaving behind his bride of ten weeks. On 25 May 1812, the Favorite called in at Moorea, Tahiti, and among other things delivered mail to missionaries from their friends in Sydney. The Favorite used the Island of Moorea as a base for its pearl fishing activities. As indicated by one of the Missionaries:

*'The favorite coming in and having a great quantity of sugar on board and being in need of some spirits as Capt Fisk could procure none in the Colony when he said, he brought a still with him and intended to distil his sugar in these islands and to leave his still here until he returned from pearl fishery'*<sup>173</sup>

The Favorite seems to have completed its pearl fishing activities, at least in those islands, and retrieved the still from the missionaries by the end of July 1812.<sup>174</sup> "The pearl shell was apparently sold in the Far East, almost certainly China and a general cargo for the Sydney market."<sup>175</sup>

**I**n the year that James Brown was leaving, a ferry service was commenced at Windsor, on the Hawkesbury, by John Howe, at the site of the present bridge. A ticket of leave man operated the boat for Howe. Previously a rowboat was the only means of crossing the river to the north side, and the farms of Wilberforce - Stock having to swim across.<sup>176</sup> Significant to the fortunes of the Browns and others,

<sup>171</sup> Journal of William Lockerby. p88-96

<sup>172</sup> It cost Garnham Blaxcell & Co, her owners, five shillings in clearance fees. HRA 1/7, p648. Brought to His Distress. P118

<sup>173</sup> History of a Tahitian Mission Davies p228.

<sup>174</sup> History of a Tahitian Mission Davies p228 ...a little before the death of our three sisters. P154. July 28 . Mrs Henry, after a long period of ill health.....

<sup>175</sup> Brought to this Distress, p118, 119.

<sup>176</sup> The Hawkesbury Story. p166.

before that decade was out, Howe was to play a major part in the colony's rapid expansion, well beyond the crossing.

James' land at Cattai wasn't neglected by the Brown family at this juncture, if ever. Indicative of this observation is the following advertisement in the Sydney Gazette of 28 November 1812, some eight months after James' departure:

<p>'.. to be sold, 3 fine Mares, 3 years old, to be seen at David Brown's at Catye Creek. Credit will be given on approved security.'</p>
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The advertisement indicates that David senior (or David junior) had taken charge of the property. Perhaps it reflects what had been in place from not long after James had acquired the property and had spent much of his time at sea?

The possession of the '3 fine Mares' gives perhaps a pointer to the extent of the family's interest in horse breeding at the time, and over the succeeding years. No doubt horses provided another useful source of income.

Having sailed from Calcutta on 7 June 1813,<sup>177</sup> the Favorite returned to Sydney on Thursday, 9 September 1813, after an absence of 17 months. Among the sundry goods being transported in anticipation of the colony's needs were 143 casks of rum.

Coincidentally, very soon after, James' *Power of Attorney and will*, made just before his departure on the Favorite, 6 April 1812, were put into effect. It resulted in his land at Cattai Creek being transferred to his father. David's possession of the Cattai property became formalised in Lands Titles Office, 'Old Register 5' of 23 October 1813, reference No 272 which contains the following:

1111 *'Power of Attorney dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 1812, Between James Brown of Sydney, Mariner and Carpenter of the Brig "Favourite, and being about to depart this colony – Do make, ordain, constitute, and appoint Mr. David Brown of Sydney my true and Lawful Attorney &c - Executed in the presence of John Austin, Mary Mullet and James Bloodworth.-'*

1112 *'Will of Jas. Brown dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 1812 to David Brown his father – Bequeathed the whole of the property therein cont &c Executed in the presence of the above parties, and on the same sheet of paper.-'*

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It seems more than likely that Captain Fiske brought news of James' death or involvement in some incident that he was unlikely to have survived. Explanations such as 'missing presumed dead', 'washed overboard', or captured by cannibals all come to mind as probable scenarios. James' demise or disappearance may well have occurred in Calcutta? Whatever the circumstances, the presentation by David of a 'Power of Attorney' points to the absence of any formal or certain notification of James' death. It would have greatly simplified the tidying up his affairs.

One of the family legends says that having gone to India, James 'corresponded with the family' for some time 'but was then lost trace of'.<sup>179</sup> However, no 'direct' account of him since the Favorite set sail on 6 April 1812 has been found.<sup>180</sup>

The Favorite continued to ply the Sydney / South East Asian route for years to come. .

<sup>177</sup> Sydney Gazette, Saturday 11 September 1813.

<sup>178</sup> An intriguing piece of information by Miriam Chisholm re James c1958 is that 'his descendents have again been in touch with his family in Australia' Miriam Chisholm Papers NLA MS 6207 Series 3 Folder 4

<sup>179</sup> Miriam Chisholm Papers NLA MS 6207 Series 3 Folder 4

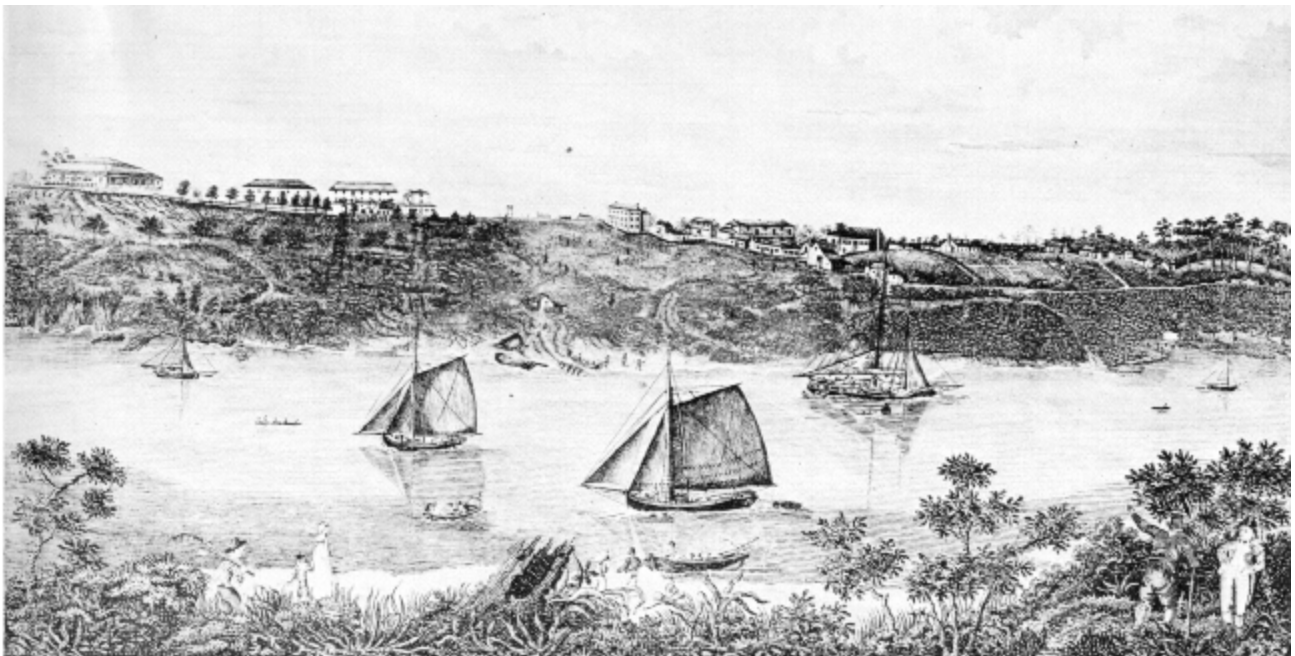
<sup>180</sup> James may have gone to India because of the Bowman connection with it. Note that James Chisholm let his 14 year old son, by Mary Brown, go of on an excursion to Calcutta in 1820 in the care of a family friend Captain Siddons, per Chisholm family history.

It is evident that the Browns, and David snr in particular, had ‘ kept an eye on’ , and worked Portion 39 at Cattai, albeit at a distance from the Eastern Farms property and Sydney Town. Their later correspondence to the Governor concerning the quality of land at the Hawkesbury, and their inclination to investigate and acquire land, suggest this. He had assistance of his two remaining sons to do so until it was advantageous for some of the family to move there, some six to seven years later? Ultimately, the land passed into the possession of his son, David junior.

The 1814 General Muster of October/November lists David senior as ‘ Cabinet Maker’; note, not ‘ Settler’ , nor ‘ Landholder’ ; also ‘ F’ (Came Free), and ‘ Off’ (stores<sup>181</sup>). It also lists his sons, David Brown junior and Thomas Brown, as labourers and “Off” stores, indication that they were doing farm work at Eastern Farms or Cattai.<sup>182</sup> A year later, David junior declared his occupation as ‘ Carpenter’ . But it is not until 1820, when he applied for land at the Hawkesbury, that evidence of Thomas' occupation is encountered.

It appears that for the first twenty years in the colony, David junior, initially laboured on the property at Eastern Farms/Kissing Point and Cattai, assisted his father in carrying out his various government carpentry contracts, and at the family workshop at his Erskine Street grant backing on to Cockle Bay. In the last six years of that period, David junior managed the farm, and also, it seems James’ grant of land at Cattai Creek. David junior’ s brother, Thomas, would have laboured on the farm (when not learning the trade) for some six years of his youth, and gone with his father to work in carpentry workshop at Cockle Bay, and continued on there, eventually to take it over. Thomas was described as being 'bred a carpenter'. Though, it is a term that is just as likely to apply to his two brothers. Much of the labour at Kissing Point is likely to have been about felling and sawing cedar, which proliferated in the area at the time.

Presumably, David junior and his brothers would have worked on the family properties at Eastern Farms, Little Cattai Creek, and Erskine Street when they couldn’ t get better wages elsewhere, or they needed to fit in with pressing farm production needs.



‘ ’ A View of Part of the Town of Windsor Drawn and Engraved by P. Slager & published by A West Sydney 1813

David senior’ s formal acquisition of James’ Cattai property coincided with the family’ s establishment of a Dwelling and Carpentry and Cabinet-making workshop at Cockle Bay, at the end of what became known as ‘ Erskine Street’ . It was strategic location for industrial and trades people to establish their

<sup>181</sup> Census entry No 4807.

<sup>182</sup> Census entry No 4810

businesses. Recent archeological evidence suggests that this was due to the convenient harbour access for receiving and shipping materials and products. (See Chapter 7 – Transition, ‘Erskine Street’).

### *The Expanding Frontier*

Once the way over the Blue Mountains, had been found in 1813, Governor Macquarie appointed William Cox to build a road to the west. With the assistance of Hawkesbury settler, Thomas Hobby, and 35 convict tradesmen and labourers, the road was built. Work began in July 1814 and 100 miles to Bathurst and was completed in February of 1815. The event generated considerable excitement and hope in many of the ordinary citizens of the colony, especially those of the Hawkesbury, for opportunities to acquire workable productive land. However, Government policy was too often to frustrate their ambitions.