

James Squire/s – the remarkable life of Australia's first brewer

Timothy Squires (note the 's' on the end) was born in Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey, England on 8 December 1752 in West Molesay, Surrey England, married Mary Wells born 11 July, 1732 They had four children, all christened at Kingston-upon-Thames.

Timothy.....christened 5 December 1751

James christened 18 December 1754

Timothy christened 5 August 1759

Mary christened 22 February, 1764

Presumably, the first Timothy died in infancy, hence the second.

1774: For a highwayman James made a great brewer. First arrested for highway robbery in 1774, James fled the ransacked house – straight into several members of the local constabulary. (This was actually a lucky break. By escaping through the front door, which opened onto the highway, he avoided the more serious charge of stealing.) Though James was sentenced to be transported to America for seven years, he elected to serve in the Army and returned to Kingston as a free man just two years later.

1776: James married his local sweetheart Martha Quinton, and they had three children

- John... christened 16 August 1778
- Sarah.. christened 23 August 1780
- James. christened 2 May 1783

James was undoubtedly poor, as shown in the rate books for Kingston upon Thames with the entry "poor" against it. One can assume some compassion and indulgence was shown to those whose names were included in such entries.

He managed a hotel in Heathen (now Eden) Street, a popular haunt for highway robbers and smugglers.

1784: His next attempt at a life of crime was similarly successful. James stole five hens and four cocks from his neighbour's yard, just when the British Government needed people for the transported convict program. On 11 April 1785, he was sentenced to transportation for seven years at the General Sessions of the Peace for the Town & Hundred of Kingston-Upon-Thames, and was held at Southwark Gaol until the end of March 1787.

1787: James was released from Southwark Gaol to voyage to the British penal colony in Australia. Though James began his journey-13 May 1787- on the 'Friendship', he transferred himself to the 'Charlotte' in a reshuffle of the women passengers.

The Fleet consisted of eleven little wooden vessels,(none as large as a Manly ferry), and they carried 1473 people including 778 convicts, 192 of whom were women. 45 persons died and 7 children born at sea.

Two King's ships-*HMS "Sirius"* and *HMS "Supply"* convoyed the First Fleet which comprised 6 transports "*Alexander*", "*Lady Penrhyn*", "*Charlotte*", "*Scarborough*", "*Friendship*" and "*Prince of Wales*", together with store ships "*Borrowdale*", "*Fishburn*" and "*Golden Grove*". Combined tonnage of 3892 tons arrived Botany Bay 18-19 -20 January 1788.

They carried most things deemed necessary to form a colony including orange pips from which some of Ryde's early citrus orchards probably sprang. 500 head of livestock including 7 horses, 70 sheep, 1 bull, 1 bull calf and 5 cows.

Surgeon Worgan brought his piano and Ensign Ralph Clark, for whom the island of Port Jackson is named, packed an extra hairnet for his unruly locks

1789: One year after his arrival, James was hauled before the magistrate, charged with stealing 'medicines' from the Hospital stores where he worked, at Port Jackson. These medicines were, in fact, one pound of paper and horehound – a herb that imitates the tangy flavour of hops. Though James claimed the stolen horehound was for his pregnant girlfriend, he later revealed in a government inquiry that he began brewing beer on his arrival to Australia, which he sold for 4d per quart. Indeed, James was brewing beer for the personal consumption of General Grose and Colonel Paterson over that time. Perhaps that explains Squire's lenient sentence – though petty theft was often punished with execution, he was fined five pounds and received three hundred lashes, "one hundred and fifty now, and the remainder when able to bear it".

1790: Squire's girlfriend Mary Spence (born in Formby, Lan. England 1768) gave birth to a son, Francis Spencer, on 1 August 1790. Mary was forced to leave their newborn son behind when she was transferred to Norfolk Island. Unable to care for Francis, James enrolled him in the British Army at just 15 months of age. Francis was enlisted into the NSW Corps as a drummer, starting on the payroll on his seventh birthday. Francis died in Melbourne VIC 1851.

1790: James became the official guard to Governor Philip, who said he "felt safer with Squire than the Marines". When Governor Phillip pursued Bennelong along Manly Cove, James and another armed convict were charged to protect him. Governor Philip was painfully impaled

through the shoulder on a barbed twelve-foot spear and, while the other convict fled for his life, James held back the Aborigines until the Governor reached safety.

James and Bennelong struck up an unlikely friendship, until Bennelong's tragic drowning in a vat at Squire's brewery in 1813. Bennelong was buried on the grounds of Squire's property, where he had often wandered, and James had Bennelong's wife buried alongside him when she died years later. James also erected a plaque at Kissing Point to commemorate his dear friend.

1791: James began a stable relationship with Elizabeth Mason(also known as Morris)born 1759 in Bartholomew, London, England and arrived in Sydney on the ship "Mary-Ann" 9 July 1791 with 3rd Fleet. They had seven children. All the while having a longstanding affair with his live-in housekeeper, Lucy Vaughan-Harding.

Elizabeth gave birth to the following children:

Pricilla born 29 May 1792 in Sydney and died 1862 in Ryde

Martha born 2 March 1794 Kissing Point, died November 1814 Concord

Sarah born 7 August 1795 in Kissing Point, died 23 May 1877 Kingston Sydney

James born 17 November 1797 Kissing Point, died 3 July 1826 Kissing Point

Timothy born 1799 Kissing Point, died 3 July 1826 Kissing Point

Elizabeth born 16 May 1800, died 12 May 1830 Sydney

Un-named child born 1802-died ?

Mary-Ann born 1804, died 1 September 1850 Ryde

1795: When James was granted thirty acres at Kissing Point on 22 July 1795, he noticed other emancipists had not claimed the nearby land. Displaying his resourcefulness as the father of Australian brewing, James marched them into the Colonial Secretary's office to claim their land grants and then purchased each property for one shilling. By 1806, the Squire Estate stretched across one thousand acres, from the current Gladesville Bridge to the Ryde Rail Bridge and from the harbour to north of Victoria Road.

1802: The revelation that the British Army was trafficking in rum created uproar in the fledgling colony. Governor King was gravely concerned about the corruption spread by rum, and he began to officially endorse the brewing of beer. English hops and brewing equipment were regularly transported on convict ships at the government's expense; in fact, HMS Daedalus delivered an entire cargo of hops plants for Squire's farm.

1805: After three seasons of toil, James successfully grew the first Australian hops plants. The following summer, Squire attended Government House with two vines of hops. Governor King

was so pleased with the flavour and quality that he "directed a cow to be given to Mr Squire from the Government herd".

1806: Squire's brewery was built on the shores of Parramatta River at Kissing Point. James then opened the Malting Shovel Tavern, almost halfway between Sydney Town and Parramatta – the ideal location to entice thirsty passengers from vessels along this busy thoroughfare. Ryde historian Philip Geeves wrote, "Sailors of many nations who were vague about the locations of Nineveh or Babylon could find their way to Squires in a thick fog".

1807: As the nineteenth century gained momentum, Squire's enterprises did likewise. As well as brewing, farming and running a tavern, James had a bakery in Kent Street and often supplied meat to the colony. In contrast to his convict past, he also accepted the role of District Constable.

Known as the Patriarch of Kissing Point, James acted as banker and philanthropist to his poorer neighbours. Colonial artist Joseph Lycett explained, "Had he not been so generous, James Squire would have been a much wealthier man".

1816: James maintained an affair with his live-in housekeeper Lucy Vaughan-Harding over many years, and moved into her private residence in 1816.

1822: Squire's death on 16 May 1822, aged 68, was marked with the biggest funeral ever held in the colony. His headstone at St John's Cemetery, Parramatta spoke elaborately of his achievements:

"He arrived in this Colony in the First Fleet
And by Integrity & industry,
Acquired and maintained an unsullied Reputation,
Under his Care
The HOP PLANT was first Cultivated
In this Settlement, and
The first Brewery was erected,
Which progressively matured to Perfection.
As a Father,
A Husband, a Friend, and a Christian
He lived Respected and died Lamented".

James may well have preferred the epitaph on another gravestone at Parramatta:

"Ye who wish to lie here, drink Squire's beer".

1823: Squire's brewery continued to successfully operate under his son James, producing about 100 000 gallons a year, until his death in 1826.

1828: The brewery was briefly re-opened by his daughter Mary Anne's husband, Thomas Farnell, until his ill health forced the brewery to close in 1834.

1877: Squire's grandson, James Squire Farnell, became the first Australian Premier of New South Wales.

Today: The Malt Shovel Brewery has held several reunions for the descendants of James Squire at Kissing Point, celebrating the family's history and, of course, the James Squire beers.

Fellow emancipist and artist Joseph Lycett wrote of him, "He was universally respected & beloved for his amiable & useful qualities as a member of the lower class of settlers. Had he been less liberal, he might have died more wealthy; but his assistance always accompanied his advice to the poor & unfortunate & his name will long be pronounced with veneration by the grateful objects of his liberality".