

Jane Poole & James McManus

Jane Poole was only 16 when she was sentenced to death at Wells in Somerset in 1786. Her death sentence was reprieved to 7 years transportation and she sailed on the "Charlotte".

James McManus was a Marine who also arrived at Port Jackson aboard the "Charlotte" having transferred from "HMS Sirius" during the voyage.

Jane was one of 8 female and 6 male convicts aboard the Navy ship "HMS Supply" to sail for Norfolk Island in 1789 where she worked until 1792.

James travelled to Norfolk Island aboard the "Atlantic" in 1791 and was granted 60 acres and lived there with Jane Poole as a married couple.

They were believed to be married by Rev Richard Johnson in 1791 but no record survives.

James, Jane and their daughter Margaret are recorded as passengers on the "Atlantic" in 1792 bound for Port Jackson. On their return to Sydney James became a Private in the NSW Corp and they had another 3 children. James and Jane then farmed land at Mulgrave Place on the Hawkesbury and James was granted 65 acres in 1797 by Governor Hunter. James died in 1798 aged 28, so young after travelling so far and experiencing so much.

In 1800 Jane received a grant of 160 acres from Governor Hunter on the proviso the land was to be held in trust for James McManus's 3 children. At that time she owned 8 goats and had 8 acres ready for planting maize. Her household was herself, one male convict servant and 3 children – all supported on Government rations.

In 1802 Jane was recorded as living with Richard Ridge, 2nd Fleet convict on 250 acres on the Hawkesbury. Jane and Richard went from strength to strength and in the 1806 muster they owned and leased 305 acres of which 51 acres were sown in grain, one acre in potatoes and 205 acres utilised as pasture.

They also owned a horse, 2 oxen, 20 hogs and 19 bushels of grain in hand. In addition to Jane's children they supported 5 convicts and 1 freeman.

Jane and James' story is not unlike so many who helped settle our great land and they now have hundreds of descendants who are very proud to be part of that family.