Section II

Community and Commonality:

The Growth of the Rocks as a Locale

'A report of the infant's death was shortly afterwards circulated throughout the neighbourhood.'

-report in Sydney Gazette
1808 on the death of a child in Cambridge Street.
Patterns of Occupation

The Rocks rapidly became a densely populated quarter of the town. By 1822 over twelve hundred people lived there, including the now ageing first fleeters, their children and servants, and successions of later arrivals, most ex-convict, at various stages of their careers. The most recently arrived were usually male assigned servants or labourers lodging with masters, mistresses or landladies. Socially and spatially, the Rocks and its immediate surroundings were vaguely arranged along the lines of rank and wealth. The minority of well-established wealthy merchants and dealers (both emancipists and free arrivals) lived around the wharf opposite the hospital in George Street. Free capitalist arrivals and hopeful entrepreneurs chose the northern extremities of George Street, and also Charlotte Place (now Grosvenor Street) to the south of the Rocks. A few sea-captains and merchants, landholders, clerks and clergies lived in the larger houses along the ridge in Prince Street, and a few more in Cumberland Street below.

But this separation was not complete. There were people of the poorest and humblest ranks also living in Prince and Cumberland Streets, particularly at the northern extremities, and also interspersed between the better houses in George Street and Charlotte Square (Fig. 40). The proximity of wealthy and poor suggests a ‘face-to-face’ society, involving not a kind of ‘democratic rubbing of shoulders’, but one in which all ranks could still observe each other in the street and were familiar with one another’s houses, dress and public behaviour.¹

¹ Karskens, Analysis of District Constable’s Notebooks; Blumin, Emergence of the Middle Class, pp24-25.
Fig. 33: Extract from Harper, ‘Plan of the Allotments or Ground in Sydney’ 1823. Known as ‘Harper’s Map of Sydney’, this map was produced at about the same time as the constables undertook their house-by-house survey. Gloucester and Cambridge Streets are marked in their present-day locations, suggesting that they were marked in later, since the names had not yet been reversed in 1823. The map shows the pattern of houses and streets running along the natural rock features in the lower streets. 

Source: AONSW Map No. SZ469.
Figs 34 and 35: Major James Taylor, 'The Entrance of Port Jackson, and Part of the Town of Sydney, New South Wales', and 'The Town of Sydney in New South Wales' 1821, two panels of a panorama of three (see Fig. 36) taken from points above and overlooking the Rocks, facing east.

Fig. 36: Major James Taylor, 'Part of the Harbour of Port Jackson, and the country between Sydney and the Blue Mountains' 1821, the third view in the panorama of Sydney (Figs 34 and 35), showing the largely still-wild rocky slopes down to Cockle Bay, and John Leighton's (alias Jack-the-Miller) windmills on the point.

Source: Published London, Messrs Colnaghi & Co, 1823.
Reproduced from Tim McCormick, *First Views*, Plate 169 p207.

Fig. 37: Major James Taylor, 'Parramatta River Sydney Harbour', c1819. This is the fourth, unpublished panel from the Taylor panorama, showing Fort Phillip and one of the windmills overlooking the Rocks. McCormick notes that 'it is believed...that the Fort never reached this stage of completion'.

From a distance, and at a quick glance, though, the Rocks had remained the 'other' side from the official, elite town, especially after Macquarie's embellishments on the east.\(^2\) Within the Rocks proper, the social profile had not changed markedly from the earlier years, though those who had not fallen victim to the 1810s depression, sickness or marital strife were now more comfortably settled. It was remarkably homogenous in that most inhabitants were convicts and ex-convicts. Those who had best succeeded among the various lower orders were the skilled men and women of steady marriages who had managed to secure licences and open hotels. Dealers and skilled artisans also prospered, while the Rocks continued to draw in labourers and tradesmen who moved about in search of work, and those in maritime callings. There were also large numbers in government employ, though for the main part in the lower official positions: constables, shipwrights, carpenters, stonemasons, quarrymen, a few clerks. The hangman, Thomas Hughes, detested by all, lived for a time in Essex Street.

Apart from an outcast like Hughes, though, there is little evidence that people within the lower orders sought to separate themselves spatially according to social standing. The comfortably established, respectable tradesman and his family had no qualms about residing next door to a man or woman of poor reputation who was constantly before the magistrate for drunkenness, fighting or thieving. Yet there were nevertheless patterns of association. People with similar experiences lived close together, like the group of freely-arrived settlers, including the Boultons and Hanceys in Cumberland Street, or some survivors of the Hillsborough voyage of 1799. These connections were overlaid by the time-of-arrival factor, for the occupation patterns show 'oases' of early arrivals in their generally detached houses, particularly in those first settled areas behind the hospital and south of Surry Lane back towards Church Hill. There was some clustering, too, of households of different types:

families, married couples, single women. A man’s trade or business or employment sometimes led him to reside alongside others in the same line. Hence constables, particularly long-serving ones, were neighbours, and butchers grouped together in Cumberland Street around Surry Lane. Irish households also clustered about the Surry Lane, the oldest road on the Rocks.

Physically, the Rocks had generally become more substantial. The earliest huts had been steadily replaced by houses of weatherboard, stone and brick, and shingled roofs with glass windows and proper fireplaces. Some of the new houses were generally aligned with the ‘line’ of the street while the older houses tended to be set back at odd angles, according to natural declivity or the owners’ fancy, or aligned more with one another (see Fig. 33). Many still maintained a watch over the water, facing east or north-east. Peter Cunningham thought the detached houses to be ‘the better sort’ describing them as ‘of white freestone, or of brick plastered and whitewashed, one or two stories high, with verandas in front and enclosed by a neat wooden paling’. Some houses and hotels fronted streets directly, others still had a front garden of vegetable beds, peach trees and wells, and a central path running from the front door to the paling fence.3

Significantly, the more recent houses did not differ stylistically from the earlier huts. Their facades were still symmetrically arranged, door in the middle, windows on either side, the house flanked by chimneys, and usually of two rooms (though ranging from one to four), sometimes with a central hall, and a skillion at the back. Conjoined houses (called tenements) were often built by earlier arrivals near their own houses specifically for letting. They were similarly neat and plain, with an orderly procession of door-window-door and with the

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3 Cunningham, Two Years, p31. At the Coroner’s inquest on Russerk, a ‘Native of India’, a witness named Sarah Pleasant said she ‘heard some groans and went up her garden and look[ed] through the palings’, 13 August 1810 4/1819 R2061 pp609, 614-16. In 1817 publican Andrew Frazier horsewhipped a man out of his house ‘to his gate’, Frazier, trial papers, 27 October 1817, CCJ COD 440 p133 AONSW.
Fig. 38: Reynolds' Cottage, 28-30 Harrington Street c.1830, elevation and plans. Named for the Irish ex-convict blacksmith William Reynolds, who is thought to have built the first four-room two-storey dwelling, the houses have been recently investigated and restored by the Sydney Cove Authority. Like the Glover cottages (Fig. 4) they demonstrate continuity of style in Rocks architecture over the colonial period to the 1830s. They would have originally stood alongside William Hawkins' house (Fig. 51).

profusion of cropped, steeply pitched hipped or gabled roofs that had characterised the Rocks from its earliest settlement (Fig. 38).

Yet there were still many open spaces on the Rocks, for streets widened and narrowed according to the position of the houses and gardens. A broad open space on a hill in Gloucester (now Cambridge) Street was the favourite gathering spot for Sydney people on days when hangings took place in the Gaol yard just below. Robbed of public executions and processions by the relocation of the gallows behind the closed doors of the gaol, people nevertheless eagerly came to watch and jeer from their own ground on the Rocks; the spot became known as 'Gallows Hill'. The houses thinned in number to the north past Argyle Street, and beyond them lay the lands of Merchant Campbell, with a steep and rocky descent to his Go-downs (Fig. 46).

\[4\] SG 18 April 1829.
The Constables' Notebooks

For some days in May 1822 one of Sydney's constables trudged northwards along George Street and then around the streets and lanes of the Rocks above, as far as Surry Lane, knocking at each door and writing down the names of all who lived within. For some reason he did not finish the census of the Rocks beyond Surry Lane, the main east-west dividing street of the Rocks. It was completed by another constable up to Charlotte Place nine months later, in August or September 1823.

The list is an invitation to explore a thousand or so human stories, often interwoven along the lines of marriage, calling, generation, and locale. We may gain a fleeting but intimate impression of the households by following the constables in their duty about the streets. The first constable began his task in George St just north of the old Gaol, at the corner of Surry Lane. George Street below the Rocks had remained the mercantile heart of the town, and was still a desirable place for the wealthy, well-off and well-known to live. Most of them were still in residence when they filled out the forms for the next census, in 1828. The widows Mary Reibey and Sarah Wills, once rivals in business, lived in the row of handsome two-storey houses facing onto George Street where it broadened in memory of the old marketplace near the Hospital wharf (Fig. 39). Reibey, whose wealth had allowed her to adopt and display habits of gentility, lived in a house that had been occupied by the failed dealer Michael Hayes. Sarah Wills was twice widowed, her second husband George Howe dead only a year before. She still lived with her sons in the house she and Edward Wills had bought, next door to her stepsons Robert and George Terry Howe. Opposite was the home of merchant Joseph Underwood and his young wife Elizabeth. The newly arrived

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Fig. 39: John Carmichael, 'George Street from the Wharf' 1829, the early hub of the town around the wharf, showing the handsome two-storeyed townhouses of wealthy and successful merchants Isaac Nichols, Mary Reibey and Sarah Wills. Mary Reibey's house was earlier occupied by Michael Hayes and his family.

Source: Reproduced in S. de Vries-Evans, Historic Sydney as seen by its early artists, Plate 40 p54.

Fig. 40: H. Stuart Wilson, 'Cumberland Street', c1880. A later view recording a little-changed streetscape, and illustrating the socially integrated nature of the early Rocks. The large mansion in the background was that of the wealthy Captain Joseph Moore and his wife Ann and family. They lived in Cumberland Street in this vicinity in 1822, and probably built this house soon after. It stands next to the street-fronting cottages (c1810s?) of much humbler folk.

Source: Reproduced in S. de Vries-Evans, Historic Sydney as seen by its early artists, Plate 21 p30.
entrepreneurs Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft shared a house nearby, and
pardoned architect Francis Greenway, his wife Mary and six children occupied the old house
that had been built for the surgeon of the first hospital. Successful Irish publicans and traders
Edward Redmond and his wife Winifred Dowling lived at their hotel, the ‘tactfully named’
Harp and Crown. Below the still fairly isolated, rocky northern end of George St, Merchant
Campbell and his wife, the painter Sophia Campbell, and their seven children still occupied
their 1800 bungalow house, its ‘gardens full of flowers and fruit trees’ near his wharf and
storehouse. They remained there until Sophia’s death in 1833.⁶

From Robert Campbell’s household the Constable turned back past the Dockyard, and then
west, climbing up the Rocks to the northern end of thickly populated Cambridge (now
Gloucester) Street, and made his way back towards Surry Lane. Two separate houses at what
was already known as ‘Bunker’s Hill’, a newly emerging, more genteel residential area, were
occupied by the Wharfinger George Panton, later the Post Master, and the then Master
Attendant of the Dockyard, John Nicholson. The Pantons and Nicholsons had much in
common: both arrived free four and five years before, both had entered the growing civil
service, and between them they had nine children of similar ages. But there was evidently
suspicion and acrimony between them, for in 1823, Panton accused Nicholson of involvement

⁶ Re Mary Reibey, ADB; Nance Irvine, Mary Reibey, Molly Incognito, Emancipist
Linda Young has researched Reibey’s determined cultivation of genteel habits, pers.
com., 1995. Re Sarah Wills, ADB: Clune, Bound for Botany Bay, pp103-121. Re
Edward and Winifred Redmond, ADB; Mary Lang, Home Was Here, Sydney, Library
of Australian History, 1987. Re Robert and Sophia Campbell, ADB; Joan Kerr and
Hugh Falkus, From Sydney Cove to Dunrobin: A Family Album of Early Life in
Australia, London, Victor Gollancz, 1982; Margaret Stevens, Merchant Campbell,
in smuggling, much to the latter’s outrage. By 1828, both had moved away from Bunker’s Hill and each other, the Nicholsons to Darling Harbour, the Pantons to Cumberland Street.7

Their neighbours to the immediate south and across Argyle Street were more typical of the earlier population of the Rocks. There were small groups of single women, clustered together. Some had children, many took in lodgers, usually young single men. The majority were free by servitude or held pardons or tickets, while a few were still under sentence, though living independently. There were small families of mother, father and child, and numerous childless couples, some of whom shared a name and many who did not. The midwife Ann Jones, herself with no children, lived here with Laurence Farrell. She and several of her female neighbours were at the same address six years later, although their husbands had died or gone away. Most of the others listed themselves as laundresses.

Irish Publicans Andrew Coss and Charlotte Belton of the Punch Bowl hotel were typical of the more stable Rocks people, anchored by a business, leases and the house where they brought up their three children (Fig. 59). Further along was a substantial L-shaped house, a small shop and a hotel built in a row by the much-married butcher George Cribb. He had been on the Rocks since about 1808 and had married the Rocks widow Sophia Blundell. She and her first husband Stafford Lett had built the low, plain, whitewashed Punchbowl hotel and sold it to the Coss’s in the early 1820s. By 1828 Sophia was dead, her five children dispersed, and George had vanished. Their premises had been long lost in a court case, and the house sold to newcomers.

At the back of his property, on Cumberland Street, George Cribb had built and let some houses. His tenants were the sorts of people the puritanical young Gazette editor Robert

7 See John Nicholson to Colonial Secretary, 1823, CSC R6057 p33a-b; HRA, Memorial of Mrs G Panton, 20 August 1829, Enclosure in Darling to Murray, 26 August 1829, Vol 15 p146-7.
Howe had in mind when he launched his tirades on the Rocks’ immorality and loose living. They included Mary Massagorra, separated from her husband John after she eloped with their servant. Her house was alleged to have been ‘frequented by infamous characters’. Another was John Seabrook, a conditionally pardoned waterman (arrived 1813), whose wife Mary had come out free to join him in 1817. They had no children, although a ten year old girl, Charlotte Byfield, lodged with them. By 1827 they had moved to Harrington Street below and ‘harboured a very young girl’, fifteen year old Charlotte Biggs (possibly Charlotte Byfield) and ‘encouraged her to habits of prostitution’ for their own profit. They also kept an unlicensed drinking house and were fined for harbouring runaway convicts. By 1828 they were living in George Street, John still in possession of his pardon in spite of their conduct.⁸

There were some old hands scattered along Cambridge Street, like the Irish barber Charles Bryan, who arrived in 1791, the constable and waterman George Atkinson, a First Fleeter, and baker George Talbot and Anne Armsden who both arrived in 1790. Ann had lived here with her first husband George Legg since about 1795. After he drowned in 1807 she married Talbot, another Rocks man, and they built a pair of simple semidetached stone houses at the corner of Cribb’s lane. In the house adjoining lived the blacksmith Edward Chanbells and his freely-arrived wife Mary. There daughter Honor had recently married, had a child and was living in a house directly behind her parents in Cumberland Street. Closer to the southern end there was a more pronounced group of earlier arrivals living close together. They included Hugh and Mary McAvoy (1803), the warring couple Thomas Crump (1794) and Mary Johnson and their eight children, Thomas Bristow (1798) and his lodger or partner Mary Long/Ward (1790) and many others. The well-known wealthy Scots publican, dealer and baker Andrew Frazier who had arrived in 1803, presided over a large household of fourteen persons, nine of them servants, one of whom, Ann Jones, was his lover. His

landmark Governor King Hotel stood at the corner of Cambridge Street and Surry Lane. Nearby, south and north, were smaller houses occupied by families, sailors and lodgers, some of them owned by Frazier.

The constables must have heard a great cacophony of accents and dialects on his survey, broad and flat, clipped and short, the lilting, singsong, raucous voices of provincial England and Ireland. So, in some houses he wrote down what he heard. Sarah Cloths of Prince St became Sarah ‘Clowes’, the way ‘clothes’ would have been pronounced. Winifred Dowling, the wife of Edward Redmond spoke her name with her Irish accent: the Constable wrote down ‘Develin’. Cumberland Street shoemaker Joseph Fenton became ‘Fanton’, similarly George Shirley in Prince Street was listed as ‘Sharley’. Searching for them in the 1828 census, we too are forced to speak their names out loud, as they did, to have some idea where they might be among the names of more standard spelling.

The first constable climbed down to Gloucester Street (now Cambridge Street), another fairly clearly defined street on the next rocky tier. The social and townscape configuration was similar, although there were fewer houses and people than in either Cambridge or Cumberland Street above. About a third of Gloucester Street’s women were Irish and most of them lived close together north and south of Cribb’s Lane, with another smaller group clustered near the northern end of the street. Patrick and Margaret Downey had three children, but by 1828 they and two children had vanished, probably dead, and two remaining children had been taken in by other Irish Rocks people, Elizabeth Porter of Gloucester Street, and publicans James and Sarah Byrne in Cambridge Street.

Other houses were shared among groups of men and women, such as the house near Surry Lane shared by convict servants William Green and Edward Abel, for some reason exempted from confinement to the Barracks. A group of six mainly ex-convict men lived near Cribb’s
Lane, and sailors on leave were found at lodging houses, again usually near hotels. As in Cambridge Street, the earliest arrivals tended to be grouped together in the southern portion, and more scattered along the northern side. At the southern end near Charlotte Place the Catholic blacksmith, publican and landowner William Davis (1802) and Thomas Prior (1788) were among the earliest Rocks grantees. They and their wives, and their neighbour the clerk Richard Calcott (arrived 1799) were a long-settled group still in residence in 1828. Calcott, like bucklemaker James MacNeale and dealer Thomas Wood, also of Gloucester Street, had arrived aboard the Hillsborough, and survived the horrors of that voyage as recorded by his shipmate William Noah. He held a beer licence from 1811, worked briefly as a constable, and acquired the licence to the ‘Good Woman’ public house from 1817. His two daughters Harriet and Louisa and various grandchildren lived in the Gloucester Street house with him. The daughters went on living on this land, later in separate houses, after his death until at least 1835.⁹

Further north were the houses of the District Constable William Thorn (arrived 1790) who at the age of about 56 had married for the third time. Sarah Roberts, a young colonial born woman of twenty six, bore him two daughters, but had vanished by 1828, and his young daughters were boarding with grandparents and friends.¹⁰ He lived close by his colleague, Constable James Wilbow, another 1790s arrival. Bridget Nowland, nearby, was one of the first Irish women to arrive in the colony, and although she lost her husband in a drowning accident, she managed to remain on the Rocks with her two sons. Her neighbours in 1822 were Andrew and Elizabeth Johnston, also Catholic, and their four children. Andrew was free by servitude, Elizabeth local-born. But by 1828 Andrew was in a road gang, serving a

⁹ Richard Calcott, Memorial, CSC F3002 4/1821 No 51; see Index to CSC 1788-1825, ML; Mutch Index; Robert Russell ‘Section 63, Parish of St Philip’ c1835, copy held in SCA collection.

¹⁰ Flynn, Second Fleet, entry for William Thorn; Thorn, Memorial, 1810, CSC F3009 4/1822 No 308.
Fig. 41: Joseph Fowles' drawings of Harrington and Jamieson Streets in 1848. This was the only part of the Rocks which Fowles included in his *Sydney in 1848*, perhaps simply because he himself lived in Harrington Street. On the corner of Harrington Street is the low, verandah'd house of the wealthy Catholic emancipist William Davis and his wife Catherine; St Patrick's Catholic Church, sketched in, was built on his land in 1840. The two hip-roofed cottages closer to the northern end belonged to Harriet and Louisa Calcott, the native-born daughters of Richard Calcott, a *Hillsborough* survivor, whose lease extended from Cambridge Street down to Harrington Street. The house begun by free settlers Thomas and Grace Boulton in the 1810s (see Fig. 42) stands in Jamieson Street.

Source: Joseph Fowles, *Sydney in 1848*. 
sentence for theft. His family, now with five young children, had been taken in by Bridget Nowland. Elizabeth worked as a laundress to support them.\textsuperscript{11}

It is difficult to imagine what Argyle Street must have looked like before it was eventually cut deep into the live rock by convict gangs in the 1840s and 1850s. Doubling back along Gloucester Street, the constable visited the group of only four houses perched at the summit near the intersection of Cumberland St. The people, two couples and two families, were all fairly recent arrivals (most between 1814 and 1821). Four were convicts still under sentence, who were permitted to live independently. Edward Clowder and Elizabeth Winfield were both convicts; he was Robert Campbell’s assigned servant. James Church, who arrived in about 1820 was assigned to his wife Dinah, as was Robert Woodley to his wife, Elizabeth. The Woodleys’ household comprised four male convict and ex-convict servants and lodgers as well as their own three children. By 1828 Edward Clowder and Elizabeth Winfield had moved to the better settled Cambridge St, and the Woodleys, who were bakers, lived in Pitt Street. These patterns and proportions are typical of the less-settled, less desirable parts of the Rocks. They were places where a convict/came free couple could quietly serve out a sentence, or where the recent arrivals who aspired to a business and a house in the town, in spite of their convict status, could gain a foothold in that increasingly difficult endeavour. They were the places, too, were the most obscure people lived, those who appear perhaps once or twice in written records and then move on and vanish without a trace.

Scrambling back down the rocky path, the constable turned down the ill-defined spaces of Harrington Street. It had grown haphazardly from the huts and houses that sprang up ‘behind the hospital’, that is, beyond the hospital’s rear garden, during the 1800s. Some of the ground here was open, sloping ground directly onto George Street, and hence some of its inhabitants

\textsuperscript{11} Bridget Nowland, Memorial, 1810, CSC F3007 4/1822 No 246; \textit{SG} 29 May 1808; Robinson, \textit{Women of Botany Bay}, pp91-92. She was listed as a dealer in 1828. Re the Johnstons, \textit{SG} 18 April 1827, \textit{Australian}, 20 July 1827.
gave their address as 'George Street'. Further south, behind the gaol, were rocky, uninhabitable precipices where the lines of Harrington and Gloucester Streets became intertwined. For the survey purposes, Harrington Street seemed to terminate at the none-too-secure gaol wall. The first constable thus recorded all thirty households in the street.

Here again the pattern of occupation was dominated by families comprising parents and children, with a few couples. There were no lodging houses, although three houses were shared. Thomas and Ann Whittaker's hotel, the Labour in Vain was at the centre of the row of houses, and future publican George Pashley Junior, son of the Rocks tailor George Pashley, lived next door with his Irish convict wife Joanna Barrett. Behind the old hospital site, in close proximity to the dockyards, wharf and the water, were the houses of harbour-men including long-time residents Daniel Cubitt and Maria Ann Cooke, and some of their twelve children. Cubitt, a former Gaoler and also publican of the Cat and Fiddle, had been Master of the Row Guard since 1820. His son Daniel worked alongside him in the Guard, but, being of aggressive and unreliable, he was soon dismissed. The shipwright Nathaniel Lloyd lived with wife Catherine Williams next door and the fisherman Charles King two doors up. All of them were long-time residents and all were still living there in 1828, a stable centre of the street, for by then almost everyone else had moved away. The other end of Harrington Street near the Gaol seemed, by contrast, to be a place for people who had fallen on hard times, or experienced some trauma in their lives. Here lived the ill-fated Irish Catholic dealer Michael Hayes with his colonial-born wife Elizabeth and their eight children. Next door was the widow Ann Holness who in 1813 had seen her husband William beaten to death by drunken officers in Pitt Street. She now lived with currier Joseph Salmon and in 1828 she was listed as Anne Salmon, with yet another man, labourer George Trants in Sussex Street. At the northern extremity of the street lived Elizabeth Tilley, an old woman who probably arrived
on the *Lady Juliana* in 1790. She could not remember any such details for the constable, and by 1828 had been placed in the Benevolent Asylum, still recorded by her name alone.  

When people spoke of the Rocks being the most ‘populous part of Sydney’, they were probably thinking largely of both Cambridge and Cumberland Streets. The constables recorded 66 households and the names of 263 people in the latter. Cambridge and Cumberland streets together housed 511 people in 126 households, almost 40% of the total Rocks population. Cumberland Street had a considerable variety of social ranks represented, including unskilled labourers and laundresses, several publicans, many butchers, shoemakers, and stonemasons. Many were established tradesmen with good businesses, comfortable houses and large families, and farms out on the Cumberland Plain. A schoolmaster named Daniel Thurston, whose publican brother William lived below in Cambridge Street, kept a little boarding school, and there were also a few clerks. Friends and shipmates, and people who arrived at similar times and from similar places and backgrounds tended to group as neighbours.

At the southern end, opposite the squat, stone St Philip’s (for which Cumberland Street was earlier known as Church Row) and up to Long’s Lane, were older style separate houses on large allotments. Some of the residents held leases from 1809, others lived here well before that - the house of ex-convict labouring plasterer Joseph Prosser and his old and crippled wife dated from before 1804. Waterman George Phillips (arrived 1801) and his wife, publican Frances Jackson (arrived 1804), had lived on the Rocks since at least 1806 and by 1822 shared the house with three adolescent children, one of them adopted. Thomas Dunne, another *Hillsborough* man, a long-serving constable, his wife Rose and their six children were

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held in some esteem by the constable, who gave their names prefixes ‘Mr’ and ‘Mrs’ and ‘Miss’. They were probably well-regarded in the community, except by those, like young Daniel Cubitt, who loathed the Irish. Further along the street another Hillsborough man, mariner William Sibley and his headstrong wife Elizabeth lived at Geranium Cottage, a neat, pretty house built as a result of William’s careful perseverance. The marriage was over by 1828, and the house sold off.\(^{13}\)

Next door to the Sibleys was the home of Jane Chandler and her family. She had been a widow with numerous children when her house here burnt to the ground in August 1814. Five months later she married the ex-convict stonemason William Chandler, and they built a new stone house, which comprised a single large room. Its front door was set on the north facade, facing the water.\(^{14}\) Another group of early arrivals shared one house at the street’s northern end. Waterman William Vaughan, Elizabeth Bickford, and tailor George Pashley and Louisa Kirby were among the ageing early arrivals, long settled on the Rocks. They had with them nine year old ‘orphan’ Thomas Condon whose mother was dead, and whose father, Rocksman Thomas Condon, had most likely been transported for attempted murder. Like other Rocks children, Thomas was not sent to the orphanage, but taken in by local people.

On the corner of Essex Street lived the two Lantaff sisters, Elizabeth and Ann, who had stood trial and were transported together in 1815, and now lived next door to one another on the Rocks. Elizabeth had married a successful butcher, James Thompson, and Ann a Catholic named Ambrose Bryan. These marriages seemed to have then propelled them apart. By 1828 Elizabeth had prospered: she was still with James, three children and numerous servants, but

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\(^{13}\) Re the Prossers see SG 1, 8 April 1804. The Sibleys’ Geranium Cottage was excavated in 1988, see Thorp, ‘Report on Lilyvale’.

\(^{14}\) Anne Gammon was also known as ‘Gabbage’ and ‘Gammage’; see SG 20 August 1814, and Mutch Index. The house is described in Thorp, ‘Report on Lilyvale’.
her brother-in-law was labouring out at Sutton Forest alone, for her sister and their two children had vanished.\footnote{Robinson, Women of Botany Bay, p299}

The Thompsons had with them an assigned servant, a butcher named James Cross. By 1828 Cross was their neighbour, for he married Elizabeth Rickers, a widow with six children who lived opposite the Thompsons. James Thompson had also taken one of Elizabeth’s sons as an apprentice. Another son, John, was also apprenticed to a butcher, Thomas Ceeney, who had married his sister Elizabeth. They too lived in Cumberland Street. Their siblings still lived in their mother’s house in Cumberland Street, but in 1828 James Cross was listed as the household head, not Elizabeth Rickers. It was in this way, through the meshing of neighbours, families, children and parents, old with new arrivals, through marriage, friendship, apprenticeships and so on, that the Rocks community grew. Yet, these important connections were completely masked in the 1828 Census, when many women took their husband’s names, while their own children were often listed as lodgers in their stepfather’s households.

Again, as in Gloucester Street, Irish people tended to lived around Surry Lane, north and south, while another group lived at the northern extremity of the street.\footnote{The Irish households around Surry Lane included cooper John Murphy and his wife Frances, laundress Catherine Hinchey, Margaret Campbell, Margaret Doherty, and Ann Kennovan.} North of Cribb’s Lane were the houses of well-established trades and business people and their families: Thomas Boulton, a stonemason, like his father and his wife Elizabeth; carpenter Michael Hancey and his wife Hannah; another stonemason Richard Byrne (the constable spelt his name ‘Buine’) and his wife Margaret Kelly, and publican Judith Simpson and her adolescent sons, named for their different fathers.
Boulton and Hancey had both arrived as part of a group of free settlers aboard the Minorca in 1801, Boulton as a sixteen year old with his parents Thomas and Grace Boulton. The family built an elegant and handsome stone house in Charlotte Place, said to have been designed by Francis Greenway, which was sold to Sir John Jamison after the senior Boultons’ death in 1817 (Figs 41, 42). Thomas junior had married the daughter of a convict, Elizabeth Sandlands, and they and their fast increasing family moved to Cumberland Street next to Michael and Hannah Hancey. Both the Boultons and the Hanceys (Michael arrived with a brother, John) had been granted land in the district of Baulkham Hills, and they continued to be Rocks neighbours at least until 1828. Their part of the neighbourhood included five households of people who had either come free or were native-born, clustered together around Cribb’s Lane.

Prince Street was the highest and last major street before the constable turned his attention to the straggling houses on the shores of Cockle Bay to the west. Here the mixture of long-established and well-known tradesmen, long-serving constables, some unskilled men and women, and some recent arrivals, echoed the general Rocks pattern. At the Charlotte Place end, though, there were more ships’ Captains and their families, a large landholder, and recently arrived free settlers and public servants not found in the lower streets of the Rocks. Prince Street still boasted the row of detached houses standing on the ridgeline, silhouetted each day at sunset. One third of the residents were still living there six years later, a larger proportion than in other streets; Prince Street had fewer of the town’s drifters. The long-term residents included Thomas Colebrook and Elizabeth Wade and their five, originally six, children; one was drowned in their own well in 1820. Thomas was Constable in the district long enough to earn a pension for his old age, when he claimed, his body was ‘ruptured’ by

---

17 Boulton Family History, unpublished typescript courtesy of Bob Failes; see CSC Index 1788-1825; Thomas Boulton, Memorial, 1810, CSC F3001 4/1821 No 30; SG 18 January, 1 March 1817, 26 September, 28 November 1818; Mutch Index. For Boultons’ and Hanceys’ land grants, see Hills District Historical Society, The Beginnings of the Hills District, pp6, 62-64.
Fig. 42: John Hoskin, ‘Jamieson House, Jamieson Street, Aug. 1934’, a house of considerable architectural style begun for or by the free settlers Thomas and Grace Boulton. Boulton and his son Thomas Boulton junior were stonemasons, but the senior Boultons died in 1817, leaving the house unfinished. It was bought and completed by Sir John Jamison, while Thomas Boulton junior and his large family lived in Cumberland Street.

Source: Mitchell Library.
Figs 43, 44 and 45: Evolution of a streetscape: Prince Street in 1826, c1850 and 1853. A walled yard in the centre of the first view becomes the site for a three-storey terrace under construction in the second, and complete in the third. The new terraces of a modern city stand alongside detached and semi-detached cottages of the earlier period. Note the appearance of a paved footpath in the last view, and the contrasting looseness and undefined road spaces in the earlier views.

Sources: Augustus Earle, 'View of Port Jackson taken from Flagstaff, Sydney' 1826, ML SV1/1825-[1828]/1; Joseph Fowles, 'New Government House and Fort Macquarie from Princes Street' c1850, ML; John Hardwick, Princes Street in 1853, ML, reproduced from S. de Vries-Evans, Historic Sydney as seen by its early artists, Plate 24, p34.
the strains of clambering on and off boats. They lived next door to another long-serving constable Alexander Campbell.

Isaac Peyton still lived in Prince Street, with his daughter and son-in-law Andrew and Mary Goodwin at the corner of Charlotte Place. Peyton was a difficult man, given to schemes and litigation to profit by his neighbours and son-in-law. Despite his prospects, he had made a bizarre attempt to escape the colony in 1807 probably as a result of debts. His first wife Susannah Harrison left the colony in 1810 and never returned, and his second wife Ann Bligh simply left him. By 1828 his children had put him in the Benevolent Asylum, while they went on living in the house he had built in Prince Street.

Charlotte Place running downhill from St Phillips was rather like George Street in its social makeup. Relatively wealthy free immigrants, and well-off emancipists who had become well-respected in Sydney lived alongside households of assigned convicts. Importers J. Browne and Thomas Aspinall (both marked ‘Esq.’) were recent free arrivals, shared a house with their three servants, and operated business here at least until 1826. By contrast, two doors down a house was shared by four male servants, three assigned to a Mr McIntosh, while next door two single women shared the house with two single men, all of them convict servants of Mr Wemys. The eloquent emancipist teacher, storekeeper and brewer Richard Archbold and his family, had also settled here. For him Charlotte Place, like George Street, and to some extent Prince Street above, was a ‘good address’.

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That left only the steep transverse connecting lanes to record. These were transient places, for few of these people still lived here six years later. In Surry Lane and only five of the thirteen householders were even traceable. Two of those, Sarah Bird and Ann Paul had both moved to Cambridge Street nearby. The second constable almost forgot Essex Street, and surveyed it after he had completed several streets in other parts of Sydney. It had only ten households, all occupied by convicts and ex-convicts. They were mostly couples who had arrived during the 1810s, but of the ten pairs, only one was still together in 1828; again, none were still living in Essex Street. Interestingly, at least three, and possibly six or seven were Scots people, yet another regional group living, if only temporarily, close by one another on the Rocks.
A Statistical Profile

The constables had knocked at about 299 doors and written down the details of 1,290 people (Tables 1 and 2).\textsuperscript{20} It is no straightforward matter to estimate what proportion of the town this number constituted. Reverend Cowper thought Sydney had about a thousand houses and five thousand people in 1820; he was excluding the military and the convicts in the barracks. Bigge's 1820 count of the population of Sydney was much larger at 12,079, although 4,457 of these were convicts. The figure without the convicts (8,422) was still larger than Cowper's estimate because it included the 'districts immediately adjoining' Sydney, and may have also included the military. The Rocks thus may be said to have housed between an eighth and a quarter of the population of the town proper, probably closer to the larger proportion; and it boasted perhaps a quarter of its houses.\textsuperscript{21} It was also a well-defined place, contained and set apart by its location and topography and its knots of long-established houses and long-settled householders. But do the latter typify the Rocks? Or was the Rocks more characterised as the haunt of newly arrived convicts, the low, lawless place that Major Druitt described in 1819 and others usually assumed it to be?

In fact men and women still under sentence did make up over a third of the Rocks' adult population. Nearly 20\% of these were assigned servants but they lived mainly in the larger houses of their masters and mistresses in George and Prince Streets. Far fewer assigned

\textsuperscript{20} The number of households include 291 listed in street order, in addition to eight belonging to ordinary constables, who were listed separately; hence their addresses are unknown and their households have not been included in the street-by-street analysis of household types and individual status (Tables 5-11). This population figure (1,290) includes the constables but excludes those who moved from the north to the south part of the Rocks in the nine months between the first and second stages of the survey. This total has also been adjusted for the street-by-street analyses in order to include all known households; hence the total 1,280 shown in Table 6 includes the duplicated names, but excludes the address-less constables and their families.

\textsuperscript{21} Bigge, Report, p80; and Appendix, Reverend Cowper to Wylde, 16 February 1820, BT Box 21 p3944.
Fig. 46: Sophia Campbell, ‘Sydney in All its Glory’, 1817. The artist was the wife of the merchant Robert Campbell and she depicted the family residence at Campbell Cove in the foreground of this picture. Note the steep rocky slopes on the left.

servants were found in the streets of the Rocks proper, although some were servants to Rocks publicans and tradesman, especially in Cambridge Street. The few who lived neither with masters, nor in the convict barracks near Hyde Park, lived independently as lodgers in Rocks households, or in shared houses alongside the recently freed, seaman and a few native born. But these convict households were a small proportion of the whole, only 28 out of 299. Other non-assigned convicts still under sentence were allowed to live independently (7.3%), often with spouses who had arrived free with them, and to whom they were sometimes assigned. Others held tickets of leave which, similarly, allowed them to live in households usually with wives and families, and practice their trades or work for masters. These convicts lived much as their free and freed neighbours did, and, although their number were relatively small, they made up around 20% of Rocks householders (Tables 2 and 4).

**TABLE 1. HOUSEHOLDS AND POPULATION BY STREET* 1822/23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No. of Households</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No. of People</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Average Persons Per Household</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Street</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Street</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington Street</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Street</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Place</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Lane</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Street</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>291</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td><strong>1280†</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Cambridge Street is now Gloucester Street
  Gloucester Street is now Cambridge Street
  Prince Street is now the approach to the Harbour Bridge
  Charlotte Place is now Grosvenor Street
  Surry Lane is now the Cahill Expressway

† This total differs from the overall total (See Table 2) because the Constables, whose addresses are unknown, have been omitted; and duplicated names included in order to count households in each street.
**TABLE 2. ROCKS PEOPLE BY CIVIL STATUS 1822/23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convict</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket of Leave</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardoned (Absolute/Conditional)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free by Servitude</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came Free</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Colony</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>1290*</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This count includes the Constables and their families who are listed separately, not under street headings; it excludes names which were duplicated as a result of people moving from the north side to the south side of the Rocks in the interval between the Constables' survey.

The largest group among the adult population by civil status were the ex-convicts. Those who were free by servitude or pardoned made up 41.5% of the Rocks’ adult people, and half the householders (Table 4). Of the roughly 20% of adults who had arrived free, over half, most women, had followed a convict spouse to the colony. Thus civil status masks social rank: those who came free were often from the same social background, the lower orders, as the convicts.

**TABLE 3. ROCKS PEOPLE BY AGE GROUPS 1822/23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Adults:</strong></td>
<td>832</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents &amp; Children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescents (13-19)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (0-12)</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Adolescents &amp; Children:</strong></td>
<td>458</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>1290</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4.  ROCKS ADULTS BY CIVIL STATUS  1822/23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convict/Government Servant</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convict/Living Independently</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding Ticket of Leave</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardoned (Absolute/Conditional)</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free by Servitude</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came Free</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Colony</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The newly-arrived settlers, the would-be pastoralists and landowners, the merchants, the seacaptains who decided to settle, and the sprinkling of higher civil servants, churchmen, men of law, made up only around 10% of the adult population and they tended to live in the larger, better houses about the rim of the Rocks, along George Street, Charlotte Place, and parts of sea-breezed Prince Street. They were thus exceptional in a population dominated by those who either were or had been convicts, or were part of convicts’ families. So, in a way, the Rocks did continue to be the ‘resort of convicts’ although by 1822 most had served their time, and no longer considered themselves as such. Further, the designation ‘convict’ was used indiscriminately by the higher orders for bond and freed, old hand and new arrival, well-off emancipist householder and his or her lowly assigned servant. The term is thus too blunt to be of much further use, for it cloaks those significant distinctions. It will be seen too, that convict status generally had far less impact on the careers and fates of Rocks people than other factors: gender, rank, trade, patronage, inclination, and temperament.
### TABLE 5. ROCKS HOUSEHOLD TYPES BY STREET 1822/23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>HOUSEHOLD TYPE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Street</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Street</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington Street</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Street</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Place</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Lane</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle Street</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>139</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other striking feature of the Rocks' population was the large number of children, and hence, young families. There were 458 children and adolescents living on the Rocks in 1822 and they made up 35% of the total population; children under 13 made up 28% (Table 3). Cumberland Street alone was home to 105 children, almost half its residents. Most of the
Rocks' children were colonial born to convict and ex-convict parents, so that while the native-born proportion of the total population was over a third, only a small proportion of these were adults. Only around 7% (37) of Rocks householders had been born in the colony (Table 7). The Rocks' houses, streets and yards were full of babies, toddlers and older children, who lived mainly in family groups, usually with a mother and father. Almost half the total number of households took this form of mother-father-children, while another 9% were single-parent families (almost always a mother with children). Meanwhile, a substantial proportion of houses (20%) were occupied by couples with no children. Very few people lived entirely alone; those without partners (10% of households) often took in lodgers or servants. Only a relatively small number of houses (less than 10%) were shared by servants and unattached men and women, and there were only five lodging houses, two in Cambridge Street, and one each in George, Gloucester and Harrington Streets (Table 5).

**TABLE 6. ROCKS PEOPLE BY HOUSEHOLD STATUS 1822/23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Householders: Men</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Householders: Women</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live-in Servants</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodgers</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>1280</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, the population can also as characterized in terms of independent householders who made up 41%, their children, who made up 36%, and relatively small numbers of live-in servants (9.5%) and lodgers (13%). Women may be considered a strong presence on the Rocks, still making their homes there as they had done from the earliest years. They made up 38% of the adult population, but this proportion is relatively large considering that women only made up 11% of the convicts sent to New South Wales.\(^{22}\) Furthermore, although Rocks

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men outnumbered women at a rate of about 5 to 3 (515 men, 317 women), there were proportionally more female householders than male, for 85% of the Rocks’ women lived as independent householders, with husbands or without, rather than as servants or lodgers, compared to only 50% of men (Tables 6, 7 and 8).

### TABLE 7. CIVIL STATUS OF ROCKS HOUSEHOLDERS BY STREET 1822/23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>Convict</th>
<th>Ticket of Leave</th>
<th>Pardoned</th>
<th>Free by Servitude</th>
<th>Came Free</th>
<th>Born in Colony</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
<th>Total Householders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George St</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge St</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester St</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland St</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington St</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince St</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Pl</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Ln</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex St</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle St</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>65</strong></td>
<td><strong>203</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>531</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage Totals:</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.6</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A list drawn by Bigge in about 1820 showing all those who were ‘settled upon property of their own’ gives some indication of the proportion of Rocks people who ‘owned’ their property through purchase, lease or, very rarely, by grant. There were 92 such householders on the Rocks and in George Street below; thus they probably constituted about a third of the total number of households (Table 9 and Appendix 3). This was a higher proportion than estimated by Meehan, who reckoned that ‘nearly four-fifths of the whole are permissive occupancies’. The great majority were men (77 or 83%), of whom 55 were married. Despite
the high number of female independent householders on the Rocks, only fifteen women, four of them married, had secured such property rights in their own name.  

TABLE 8. CIVIL STATUS OF HOUSEHOLDERS COMPARED TO CIVIL STATUS AS A WHOLE IN PERCENTAGES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of Householders</th>
<th>% of Rocks Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convict</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket of Leave</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardoned</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free by Servitude</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came Free</td>
<td>21.1*</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Colony</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Among the freely arrived householders, over half had followed convict spouses to the colony.

TABLE 9. COMPARISON OF HOUSEHOLD OCCUPATION NUMBERS 1822/23 WITH HOUSEHOLD ‘OWNERSHIP’* NUMBERS c1820

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Households On Bigge’s List</th>
<th>Households on Constables’ List</th>
<th>% ‘Owned’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Street</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Street</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington Street</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Street</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Place</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>269†</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes occupants who had grants, leases or had purchased their properties

† This total excludes houses in Surry Lane, Essex Street and Argyle Street which were not included in Bigge’s list.

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23 See Bigge, Report, Appendix, ‘A Return of the Number and Names of Persons...residing and settled upon property of their own...’ ML A2131; and ‘Evidence of James Meehan’, BT Box 5 p2236.
Reputation and Representation

These broad outlines, characterised by a majority of independent householders, mainly families and couples, hundreds of children, small numbers of lodgers and servants, certainly suggest a Rocks far removed from its contemporary, and historical, image as the resort of vice and corruption. When Commissioner Bigge asked Major Druitt where convicts had lived before Macquarie’s barracks were opened, he replied immediately ‘They usually lodged on a part called the rocks’, adding that it was ‘a place of resort for a very bad description of persons’.24 Druitt, like others, thus considered it still an unsavoury part of the town, despite the confinement of unmarried male convicts to barracks. Should we then, armed with our numbers and percentages, our ‘facts’, simply dismiss Major Druitt and his ilk as hopelessly biased against convicts, and hence unreliable witnesses? This, too, would be unwise. The dysfunction between historical image and what we can ascertain of reality invites closer investigation.

Let us first examine the emergence and characteristics of the Rocks’ reputation for vice and corruption. Elizabeth MacArthur was probably expressing the distaste of the elite generally when she described the Rocks as ‘like a gypsy encampment’ and a ‘sink of evil’ as early as 1790. But as the Rocks grew, portrayals of it tended to be more matter of fact. George Howe, the Gazette’s first editor generally presented the area in a humorous way, particularly in terms of the drinking and fighting, the chaotic houses and streets, and its perilous steepness. But there was no sense here that the Rocks was unnatural, diseased or corrupt, or that it should not exist. Drinking and brawling were widely regarded as normal and natural parts of everyday life, and the Rocks was a ‘quarter’ of the town, essential to its wholeness.

24 Bigge, Report, Appendix, Evidence of Major Druitt, BT Box 1, pp23-36.
Peter Cunningham in his 1827 account wrote in this same, older, vein:

The portion of the town to the right [of Sydney Cove] is best known by the name of The Rocks, from the ridge whereon it is built being nothing more than a bare mass of white sandstone, often rising in successive layers (like steps of stairs) from the bottom to the top of the ridge. This is considered the ‘St Giles’, and the division of the town to the left the ‘St James’, portion of Sydney; most of the superior citizens inhabiting the latter, and the lower classes chiefly the former, thought the Rocks can undoubtedly boast of many handsome houses with highly respectable inmates.25

Interestingly, Cunningham could still interpret the townscape as falling broadly into two sides, the old division of east and west, reflecting the overreaching social division of higher and lower orders. And he correctly noted those ‘handsome houses’ and ‘highly respectable inmates’ although the word ‘undoubtedly’ is meant to suggest that he himself was not familiar with them. His references to ‘St Giles’ and ‘St James’, well-known parishes of London, were literary shorthand, quickly sketching out Sydney’s oppositional social character (St James signified ‘urbane respectability’, St Giles ‘dens of rascality and iniquity’).

The tone of the Gazette and its representation of the Rocks were in many ways reversed when George Howe’s son, Robert, became editor in 1821. Robert had arrived free as a child in 1800 and grew up in the town. He was ‘dissipated as a young man’ and fathered an illegitimate child in 1819, but in 1821 underwent a radical religious conversion. Thereafter much of his writing in the Gazette was stamped by fervent, sometimes pompous, evangelical Christianity, as well as signs of new affiliations and tastes in broader cultural terms. Although he knew and respected certain Rocks individuals, such as Andrew Frazier and others, he set about singling out the Rocks, in moral terms, as a den of depravity and vice. He was obsessed, for example, by the number of unlicensed drinking houses in ‘that Alsatia’

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25 Cunningham, Two Years, p29.
as he referred to it. Drinking itself he considered a moral disease which not only 'consumes the body, but effectually destroys the soul'...

The observations of Commissioner Bigge were similar. In his Report on the Judiciary (1825), he claimed that the Sydney generally was marked by the 'tranquillity of the streets...instances of open or public outrage were not frequent'. The Rocks was specifically mentioned as the exception to this, being 'chiefly inhabited by the most profligate and depraved part of the population', its disorderly character encouraged by the granting of 'permission for dances to be held at houses that were not licenced'. Archdeacon Broughton's 1830 tirade against the people of Sydney has been another major source of historical reputation. Here, however, the Rocks was held up as a typical example of the low morals of the lower orders generally. Having been resident in Sydney for some months, he concluded that 'The degraded state of morals...unhappily characterizes too great a proportion of the Inhabitants of this town', in other words, the lower orders. He had lived close to the Rocks, described as the 'most vicious and degraded parts of the community' and this had afforded me ample opportunity of observing the extent to which vice and profligacy prevail in that Class, by which the District called the Rocks is chiefly inhabited. The scenes, which fall under my notice, convince me that the greatest proportion of these persons are living in ignorance or disregard of all religion whatever; that prostitution, adultery, drunkenness and theft are their habitual occupations, and the only difference...between the Sabbath and other days is that, the people being then all at home and unemployed, there is a greater prevalence than ordinary of all sorts of disorder and wickedness...

ADB, entries for George and Robert Howe; SG 31 March, October 15 1827, 12 September 1828, 14 February 1829; report on death of Rocks woman Susan Sullivan 24 March 1825 after a drinking bout. 'And yet' observed Howe severely 'people delight in the pleasures of drunkenness'.

And so on for another two pages. Yet it is clear that at least some of these ‘vices’ were merely older, often pragmatic and widely accepted cultural habits practised by the lower orders. They had been transformed into wickedness, and the neighbourhood with them, by the perspective of evangelical Christianity.²⁸

What was the response of Rocks people themselves to such charges? In May 1826 the Gazette reported that the Kellys, a couple who kept an unlicensed drinking house, were arrested for harbouring runaway servants, assaulting constables, being constantly drinking and riotous, and keeping a ‘mere child’ for the purposes of prostitution. Kelly was ‘ordered to find security to keep the peace’ while his wife ordered to the third class of the factory. But in his haste, Robert Howe had got it wrong; he assumed and reported (perhaps intentionally?) that the Kellys’ house was on the Rocks. The next day he received a curt note from William Kelly of Cumberland Street:

Sir, a statement...respecting a person of the name of Kelly, a resident on the Rocks, being convicted of disgraceful conduct, and as there is no person of that name besides myself on the Rocks, I feel myself called upon to request that you will contradict such account, as it was a person of that name resident in Castlereagh Street.²⁹

William Kelly had arrived as a convict in 1819 and had been a printer at the Gazette office, first living with Sarah Wills and her family for a short time and then removing himself to lodge independently in Cumberland Street. He married Elizabeth Hayes, the widow of Michael, in 1826. His achievement of this kind of life - a town household and family - in so short a time was unusual, and by 1827 William Kelly obviously cared for his reputation. Perhaps it galled him that his old master Robert Howe should be so careless in his allegations. William’s letter was a personal defence in which his respectable character is assumed. It said nothing about the Rocks, apart from the fact that he lived there. There is no defence here,

²⁸ HRA. Archdeacon Broughton to Ralph Darling, 19 June 1830, Vol 15 725-728.

²⁹ SG 30 May, 8 June 1827; Mutch Index.
or for that matter anywhere else, by Rocks people of the ‘reputation’ of their neighbourhood. Although a distinctive neighbourhood with myriad connections and associations had emerged, Rocks people themselves at this stage had no sense of being a separate place in moral or cultural terms from the rest of the town.

Did those early critics themselves consider Rocks people as actually different, morally, from the lower orders of the rest of Sydney either? After all, tradesmen, labourers, publicans, lower public servants, householders, convict and free servants lived in similar patterns in most of Sydney’s other streets. There is little evidence to show that they were much different in outlook or behaviour from Rocks people. William Kelly placed his offending namesakes in Castlereagh Street, where fine residences and shops were being built, and genteel addresses advertised. There were, despite Bigge’s assertions, many incidents of public disorder, assaults, robberies, rowdy dancing and drinking parties, and ‘flash houses’ in other parts of Sydney. Why, then, was the Rocks nevertheless invariably singled out by people like Howe, Bigge and Broughton, and Alexander Harris and the Reverend Nathaniel Pidgeon after them? Why not, instead, Brickfield Hill? This was a place on the outskirts, just as old, but, by contrast, a far less settled, more rootless sort of place, with fewer family groups and married couples and many shared houses occupied by single men.

The answer lies in the complex interaction of townscape, early history, the quick, firm and polarised associations made in the minds of observers, and the way that the Rocks continued to draw in newcomers, drifters and strangers. It was the first part of the town seen by seamen and convicts as they sailed in and came ashore, its disorderly streets and jumble of houses -

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30 See Districts Constable’s Notebooks, CSC and analysis in Byrne, Criminal Law, p77. See series of CCJ and SQS records for locations of crime and disorder; for example see SG 25 September 1819 ‘low gambling and dissipation’ at the racecourse; Australian 29 September, 6 October 1825, pugilistic contests at Brickfield Hill and Cockle Bay; 27 March 1829, a ‘fatal squabble’ in Clarence Street.
31 District Constable Notebooks, CSC.
- drinking houses, bawdy houses, houses offering lodgings - signalled welcome, a familiar place in an alien land. It was probably the quarter that the convicts banished to Norfolk Island had in mind when they referred to Sydney as 'heaven'. From the perspective of those whose disapproval has been handed down as 'history', the Rocks was the obvious target, distinguished, again, by its physical, more than social, characteristics. It was easily locatable, finite, highly visible, marked off in the eye and the mind, the wrong side of a bisected town. It tumbled over the precarious rocky headland, its streets and lanes wild and disorderly. It loomed over Robert Howe's house in George Street, and he was stabbed one night in its streets. Here it was possible to point, as Broughton did, to the 'depravity' of the lower orders of Sydney generally. Brickfield Hill was largely out of sight, and the other streets of the east side of town extended out in an orderly fashion from the early official centre; were not so easily distinguishable from it. They lacked those clear boundaries, mostly trickling off to the south and east. The historical singling out of the Rocks does not mean that its people were 'separate' from the rest of Sydney, or that they were somehow socially or morally different. The Rocks was an integral, if distinctive, part of the early town, in an organic eighteenth century sense. It was not an aberration; rather, it represented the town of the lower orders.

The Culture of the Lower Orders

Clearly, William Kelly of the Rocks did not want to be associated with vice of this sort. Yet he and many like him lived on the Rocks which was well-known for bawdy houses, unlicensed drinking houses which attracted runaways and thieves as well as seamen and soldiers on their drinking sprees and itinerant tradesmen and labourers. Herein lies part of the resolution of the contradiction between the Rocks’ reputation and the solid evidence for comfortable, steady family life. It is clear that both types of life existed side by side there, often intermingling. It was difficult for elite and educated observers to see this: their unfamililiarity and disgust prevented it.

The other strand of resolution is that, from the elite perspective, the behaviour and cultural outlooks common among the lower orders were generally considered rude, lacking in gentility, order, self control and sentiment, and usually inherently immoral as well. Hence, any place inhabited by the lower orders became, by definition, disorderly and immoral, and the Rocks was the most visible of these. It is thus important to explore the culture of the lower orders, in order to discover what they understood by ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’, ‘moral’ and ‘immoral’ and so on. For if Rocks people clearly cannot be characterized as wholly degenerate and corrupt, a population of thieves and prostitutes, neither do they then, by default, become the opposite - paragons of industry, with moral feelings and sentiments much like our own. These questions are threaded through the succeeding sections about family life and work; here we examine common public and private behaviour.

33 For example, Mary Redmond, Mary Bryant, Catherine Byrne, Caroline Cochrane/Martin and Ellen Lindsay kept disorderly houses; Mary Robinson let out rooms in her house for casual prostitution; publican John Hull leased a house to three prostitutes, Margaret Shannon, Julia Bryant and Sarah Dorset. A man named Davey was one of the many who allowed convicts to gamble at his house, SG 2 April 1828. Byrne observes that ‘the numbers of households described as disorderly steadily increased’ in the 1810s and 1820s, Criminal Law and Colonial Subject, Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1993, p167.
Fig. 47A: 'Wesleyan Chapel, Prince Street'.

Source: J. Maclehose, Sydney, 1839, p.119.

Fig. 47: Sophia Campbell, 'Sydney Church and the Regimental Mile from the Main Guard' 1817. In contrast to the often stylised and heavily metaphoric works of other artists, Campbell had a keen and often humorous eye for the rather less dignified realities of everyday life in Sydney; she painted 'people doing things'. Here St. Phillips, the 'ugliest church in Christendom', stands in open, un Beautified ground, littered with cut stone and criss-crossed with dirt roads and paths. A soldier snoozes in a chair in the sun, a woman carrying a basket walks purposefully by, a man strides downhill.

Source: L.R. Curtis and Mrs M.A. Norman, Reproduced from Tim McCormick, First Views, Plate 155 p103
Public disorder was perhaps most clearly perceived in leisure activities which included gambling, drinking, dancing and singing through the night. It was manifested in the reports, if not the sight, of the mobs which gathered to watch and bet on cock-fights, bull-baiting and dog-fights, much as they did for hangings and floggings. Out in the streets of the Rocks, constables were frequently called to break up fights between drunken men or women, or between sailors and locals, and to deal with 'riots', the disorderly gatherings of mobs of onlookers, both men and women, eager to watch some action. The constables were usually abused, attacked and hit with stones during the fracas, eventually dragging off the struggling offenders to the lockups. During one such incident in 1828 the constable was unable to quell a riot, which was of such magnitude that he ran to the Magistrate for assistance. A party of military men was hastily despatched up to the Rocks, where they found a 'large concourse of people' gathered around James Murray 'stripped, and in the act of striking at some person'. Murray and his friend Tom Carr were arrested and locked up; both were drunk.  

The interesting features of this incident was that it happened not at night, but in the daytime, and on a Monday (perhaps St Monday?), not Saturday or Sunday. And, further, the drunken pugilists and peace-disturbers were not the unskilled, drifting, recently arrived convicts one might expect, but skilled townsmen. Thomas Carr was a carpenter who had arrived free and worked at Thomas Street's shipyard in Sussex Street, while his companion James Murray was most likely an ex-convict painter, aged 30, who had arrived in 1821 and lived with another painter, Robert Mantles and his wife in George Street. In other words these 'riots' and fights

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34 SG 12 September 1828; see also 28 January 1828; and Australian 6 October 1825, an account of a boxing match 'near the old Government windmill in Cockle Bay' and 27 March 1829, brawls between civilians and soldiers. Paula Jane Byrne, Criminal Law, p242. For an account of pastimes such as cock-fighting, see Waterhouse, Private Pleasures, Section 1; and SG 1 January, 30 September, 25 November 1804, 11 August 1805, 16 June 1810.

35 For a discussion of the traditional custom of St Monday among working people, and its persistence, see E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', 72-77.
were not atypical incidents perpetrated by a small, lowly element in society, but rather common daytime, weekday events, probably witnessed, or even taken part in by those householders of the Rocks.

Carr and Murray were also outsiders, single men spending their Monday drinking at one of the many licensed and unlicensed Rocks houses. Like the groups of seamen and itinerant labourers, they were the people of the Rocks the Constables could not list, pin down on their sheets of paper during a census. They were part of the human tide constantly shifting in and out, yet invisible in the final count and calculation. But there is ample evidence, too, that men of the Rocks, as discussed in more detail in Section 4, irrespective of wealth or status, were also given to violent language and behaviour to express anger, or settle a score. Self-restraint and avoidance of violent behaviour were not considered as essential to a respectable reputation.

Elite men held higher expectations and deeper fears of women of the lower orders. They considered them ‘worse than the men’ because women were supposed to be better than men. Court evidence and newspaper reports show that many Rocks women liked to drink, could be violent, fought with each other in the streets, joined in the mobs that gathered to watch fights, and loved to annoy the constables. In other words their behaviour in some ways was not so different from that of men of the lower orders. George Howe reported the pugilistics of Rocks women, and men, in his gloriously pseudo-pompous style in 1803:

On Wednesday evening a Battle Royal was fought in front of the General Hospital, in which several persons of either sex were seriously engaged. A pair of Amazons at length engrossed the attention of the spectators...a Mrs Fido matched against a Scot, the latter of whom was finally declared triumphant, although she had...experienced many manual expostulations from the husband of her antagonist...
The husband was then punched in the nose by an onlooker, another ‘desperate tete-a-tete’ raged for twenty minutes until ‘the appearance of a number of Peace-officers put a period to the sport’. Fighting was public entertainment, sport, with both men and women participants and spectators, the lines between these latter blurred and overlapping.

These were not necessarily ‘deviant’ women, ‘bad’ as opposed to ‘good’. Ann Kelly, an Irishwoman convicted in Dublin who arrived on the Minerva in 1800 was the long-time wife of Cumberland Street baker Richard Campbell (arrived 1797). She was sent out to the Female Factory for 28 days in 1824 for being drunk and disorderly, ‘making away with her husband’s property’ and being ‘a pest to police’. Yet in 1828 she was still with Richard in Cumberland Street, one of that steady, settled core of Rocks people. Mary Goodwin (nee Brown) was fined for assault in 1813 and set in the public stocks for drunkenness in 1826. But she lived in the salubrious Prince Street with her husband William Goodwin, her five children, son-in-law Joseph Love and a number of grandchildren, another ‘good family woman’ who was still at the same address in 1828. Ann Chapman was in 1822 the ‘wife’ of a labourer William Maggs fifteen years younger than herself in Gloucester Street, and had moved with him to Cambridge Street by 1828. She too was arrested for drunkenness, for ‘making a great noise in Gloucester Street’ and on another occasion for assaulting a constable.37

Most sources confirm that Sydney’s people were not religious in terms of the established church. Orders commanding them to attend divine service and to observe the Sabbath by avoiding both work and carousing were routinely ignored, so that clergymen were invariably scandalised by the empty churches and the full taverns on Sundays. Grocott observes that this

36 SG 1 May 1803; see also 12 March 1803.

37 See CSC Index, entries for these women. Re Ann Kelly R6023 4/6671 p91. Re Mary Goodwin SG 16 December 1826. Re Ann Chapman, R6023 X820 p71; and cited in Paula Jane Byrne, Criminal Law, p161.
is not surprising, given the English lower orders’ indifference and apathy towards religion, which fell within the sphere of learning, wealth and power. Over forty percent of the convicts said they had no religious affiliation whatsoever. Compulsory attendance at divine worship, with sermons delivered in language and terms they could not understand, was regarded as part of their punishment. For convicts and ex-convicts with any prospects, material success, not spiritual well-being, lay at the forefront of their concerns and efforts, though some made their way up to St Philip’s occasionally to be married, to baptise their children, and for funerals (Fig. 46).38

Similarly, Catholics showed relatively little interest in religious observances and activities. Small bands of devout Catholics are said to have met in the houses of men such as William Davis and James Dempsey, yet these were described as comprising only a ‘few old men’. Occasionally petitions were submitted demanding Catholic priests ‘for domestic calamities and serious indisposition which constant visit us in this remote land’ by active Catholics including Davis and Michael Hayes. But as to the depth of religious feelings observance and fervour among the general populace, Waldensee has argued that Catholicism was more a ‘quietly accepted tradition, to a great extent bound up with Hibernicism...equally bound up with clannishness...it did not very often manifest itself ind demonstrations of religious zeal or even religious interest’. Although Catholics probably made up one quarter of the Rocks’ inhabitants, there was no church in the vicinity until St Patrick’s was built in William Davis’ rear yard in 1840 (Fig. 41). Like their Protestant neighbours, though, they did use the churches for baptisms, marriages and funerals, first St Philip’s and later St Mary’s.39

38 Alan M. Grocott, Convicts, Clergymen and Churches: Attitudes of Convicts and Exconvicts towards churches and clergy in New South Wales 1788 to 1851, Sydney, Sydney University Press, 1980, p2, and Chapters 2 and 3; Mutch Index, ML.

A simple Wesleyan chapel was built in Prince Street on the Rocks in 1820 by James Scott, with Robert Howe as its champion. Wesleyans had earlier had some success with the convicts because they ‘associated with them on terms of familiarity and equality’ and because of their educational endeavours. But by 1820 the missionaries at the Prince Street chapel considered Sydney people to be ‘sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death’ and harangued them on new cultural codes of abstinence, piety and the rejection of ‘vice’. Although a Bible Association particularly requested the attendance of the ‘Poor and Labouring Classes’ at the chapel, it was not well-attended, and the Wesleyans soon focused their attention instead on the children, in order to ‘snatch [them] from vice and infamy’.  

The culture of the lower orders has been well described as one of resistance through defiance and disorder. In this definition though, it still remains within the context of the authority of church, state and law. Yet plebeian society itself was not entirely chaotic, rootless or anarchic. There is also the dimension, more difficult to read, of unwritten rules, shared values, elements of commonality which provided cohesiveness.

One striking characteristic is immediacy of action and reliance on self and neighbours in practically all aspects of everyday life. When people were robbed, for example, they often followed clues, found the perpetrator and recovered the goods themselves, with help from friends. When they were injured or ill, they treated themselves using the sorts of home

40 Grocott, Convicts, Clergy and Churches, p80; SG 29 January, 20 May, 9 December 1820, 20 January 1821, 2 October 1823, 29 August 1828.

41 Waterhouse, Private Pleasures, Section 1.

42 This observation was made by Paula Jane Byrne in Criminal Law. Introduction, and p165; see also for example SG 30 April 1809, actions of Edward Wills to retrieve his stolen goods. The publican Andrew Coss heard a noise at four o’clock one morning, went outside and saw a convict carrying a trunk. He ‘challenged him and then followed him’, interrogated him, and then took him to the watchhouse. The trunk had been stolen from Captain Richard Siddons. See committal papers, 20 May 1816, CCJ COD 405B AONSW.
remedies often published in the *Gazette* (beef brine for rheumatism, for example, and home-made gargles and purgatives), calling on neighbours to nurse them. They regarded the hospital as a ‘slaughterhouse’, the resort of the poorest and most desperate, while doctors were widely distrusted. We have seen the way they built their own houses or huts according to their own preferences, though arranged, in common, to face the water. They organised their own working lives, often around the daylight hours, the seasons, or the tides. Their marriages and separations were also their own business. Unlike the deference of modern people to ‘experts’ in fragmented fields, it is clear that early Sydney people were largely unfamiliar with, or distrustful of the intervention of authority in the shape of constables, doctors, clergymen, surveyors and the like, in such fundamental aspects of their daily lives.

Another powerful common thread was spectacle: public display lay at the heart of commonality. We have seen that people gathered in noisy and unruly mobs to watch fights, to witness gestures of defiance or anger or some jealous lover’s revenge. They gathered quickly to exclaim in terror over a huge shark circling near the wharf, or to hear of a shipwreck recounted by a survivor, to watch the launch of a new vessel. Curious, interesting or affable objects were often put on public display: a child’s inscribed gravestone, a model ship.⁴³ Public spaces-streets, the marketplace-were also used by feuding people to vent anger in quarrels and blows, and such public exposure of conflict was mirrored in the public notices announcing the separation of husbands and wives. There was no sense of shame or unseemliness attached to such displays; on the contrary, the public eye was essential. The distinction between private life and public profile, fundamental to the modern sense of privacy, was thus absent.

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⁴³ *SG* 13 January, 17 February 1805, 13 July 1806, 25 January 1807. Marvellous stories were the staple fare of the *Gazette*. 
But the greatest and most dramatic public theatre was the exercise of the law, the area where immediate self reliance was forfeited in deference to the judge or magistrate. Court proceedings were ‘highly interesting to the crowded auditory’, human drama which might be edifying, disturbing or hilarious. People crowded into the courtrooms to view the accused and the victim, to hear the unfolding stories of the witnesses and to shudder at the verdict and sentence. Mobs jeered at the condemned in the carts trundling up to the hanging grounds. Later, when the authorities had become squeamish over these processions and ordered the hangings to be carried out behind the gaol walls, people nevertheless gathered to watch from Cambridge Street, and went away disgruntled if a last-minute reprieve was granted. They would also fill the rooms at the hospital to watch the dissection of the body of a criminal, and made grim fun of the rotting bodies strung up at the places where horrendous crimes had been committed. While governors’ orders were often ignored or forgotten, the acceptance of the rule of law, despite its brutality and its imperfect exercise, was a vital strand of cohesion.  

Commonality stemmed also from the sheer precariousness of life. For early Sydney people, the relationship of husband and wife, their children’s lives, a steady income, sanity, and good health could not be taken for granted, they were conditional upon luck, fate, acts of God. Rocks people were surrounded by evidence of disease, death or misfortune that could so easily befall them through accidents, a slip in judgement, occurrences beyond human control. In these circumstances, the logical relationship of cause and effect, the ideals of planning, order and control so familiar to their betters were not entirely relevant to them. Better by far for a man or woman to accept ‘the different stages and situations he has been destined to in

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this colony',\textit{45} to grasp any opportunity, in the hope of gain; and to endure times of trouble with pragmatism, and the resignation of fatalism.

Yet this precariousness did not preclude compassionate behaviour. Relationships between people were not entirely brutal, debased or lacking in human sympathy. Even for the poor, sick, aged and homeless, there were acts of pity and comfort, and attempts to alleviate distress from those of their own rank. Edward Hirard, a government servant, had suffered for many months from dysentery, and his neighbour Thomas Small ‘had seen death in his face for several days’. Small lent him money for beer and ‘asked him if I could do anythink for him’. Hirard knowing he would die, simply ‘thanked me and said no’. Thomas heard him ‘groaning all night till 12 or 1 o’clock, after that I heard no more’\textit{.46}

Death was a common companion in early Sydney, and when it came, the traditional acceptance of fate of the sort expressed in the death of Edward Hirard came to the fore. Once more, these were shared habits and attitudes. People were familiar with the signs (‘death was in his face’) and with the sight of dead bodies. The dying were not banished, but remained amongst them, and the dead were not immediately hidden away. Men towed in the bloated bodies of the drowned, no matter the condition, cut down and carefully lowered the hanged, hauled bodies out of the wells. Women laid them out, washed them, closed their eyes and bound up their jaws. Bodies on which inquests were carried out were left in situ (the drowned for example, were laid on the public wharf) or carried to hotels where the jury sat. Even epitaphs on gravestones, focused less on the hopes of everlasting life, than on tributes to a person’s life in this world. They dwelt on the frailty and helplessness of human

\textit{45} John Mollet, Petition for confirmation of pardon, 1810, CSC F3166 4/1847 p149.

\textit{46} Inquest on Edward Hirard, 1 January 1821, CSC R6021 4/1819 p303.
life, the inevitability, finality and capriciousness of death, and the loss and sadness of those
left behind.\textsuperscript{47}

Those who attended the dying, usually family members, friends, and neighbours, did not
really attempt to intervene in the process. They tried to make the dying person as
comfortable as possible, offering them warm wine, or milk mixed with ginger, putting them
in bed if there was one, placing warm bricks at their feet, and comforting them with their
bodies by lying down next to them. They hardly ever called a doctor until after the person
had died, (a typical example: ‘he saw a change in the deceased and that feeling his pulse had
ceased to beat, he sent for Dr Redfern’), usually to make sure he or she was really dead. So
death coming through disease, accident or old age was regarded fatalistically, as a natural
process, best left to run its course.\textsuperscript{48}

A death became disturbing and shocking where there had been obvious human interference,
and retribution was considered necessary in these cases. When an old man named John
Driver committed suicide by hanging himself in 1809, the Gazette reported the incident in
great detail and concluded matter-of-factly ‘the body was interred on Friday near the place
where the act was committed, and a stake driven through it’. Both place and body had been
contaminated by the act, and required drastic action to set them to rights. Suicides were not
given a Christian funeral, nor interred in the consecrated burial grounds. Some were laid at
isolated crossroads outside the towns, to signify their eternal exclusion.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47} SG 13 August 1827; for gravestone epitaphs see SG 5 May 1804; ‘Description of
Thomas Reibey’s Tomb’, 1811, ML Ar27; Joseph Arnold, ‘Epitaphs in the Church Yard at Sydney NSW 1795-1815’, 1815, ML A1849-2.

\textsuperscript{48} See series of Coroner’s Inquests CSC R6021 4/1819, ML and CSC 2/8286-90, R2232 and
R2233 AONSW; example from inquest on Edward Hall, 1817, R2232 p114
AONSW.

\textsuperscript{49} SG 28 May 1809; Obed West, Memoirs, p30.
From the plebeian perspective then, those marks of disorder - drinking, fighting, sexual mores, violent behaviour, unruly mobs - were not laden with connotations of immorality, but were intrinsic to their way of life. Although the extremes, prostitution, excessive gambling, drunkenness and constant fighting, were not approved of, neither were they considered shocking, foreign or aberrant, but more as unwise excesses, met with a shrug or a shake of the head. By contrast, such 'unnatural' crimes such as infanticide, suicide, murder, buggery and bestiality were considered horrible and unnatural. They excited unease, moral outrage and disgust among ordinary people, who demanded expiation through public shaming and execution.
The Nature of the Rocks Community

There is a tendency for historical understandings, both popular and academic, to move pendulum-wise, from one interpretation to its opposite. Hence, in emerging historical revisions of the Rocks, the idea (or ideal) of ‘community’ looms large in opposition to the old corruption/slums/rats triad. Was the Rocks, then, a cohesive, close-knit community with warm-hearted inhabitants always ready to lend a hand? Was it a lost world where people enjoyed the things we think we are missing today? Historians of community warn constantly that the term is imprecise (Hillery found ninety-four different definitions), thickly overlaid with nostalgia which prefigures interpretations, and often rooted in fear of modernity and change. Yet the concept is nonetheless ‘fundamental and far-reaching’, and the exploration of what ‘community’ does and does not entail lies at the heart of understanding this aggregate of people and the extent to which locality created bonds between them.50

How might we define, hence recognise, a community? Several pointers may be drawn from an extensive, complex literature. MacFarlane observes three levels of perception: first, the ideal, or what the community ought to be; second, ‘what is thought does happen’, often the negation of this ideal; and third, the ‘behavioural or statistical community’. These three, which may be at variance, or may overlap, fit the various perceptions of the Rocks precisely: the ideal social order (the hardworking, deferential, orderly lower orders) of elite imagination were inevitably dashed by what little they knew and saw of the Rocks. Hence they portrayed

it as a perversion of society, expressed as the historical reputation for immorality and degeneracy. It is the third angle, the actual community, which is the focus here.\footnote{MacFarlane, \textit{Reconstructing Historical Communities}, p13.}

David Garriochn, in his exploration of the eighteenth century neighbourhoods of Paris found that locality itself played a large role in binding people with common local knowledge, shared names and places. Thomas Bender countered that such spatial location may or may not be an element of community. A ‘community’ can exist without being tied to one place. What is more significant for Bender is the ‘special quality of human relationships’ found in a community, defined as

a limited number of people in a somewhat restricted social space or network held together by shared understandings and a sense of obligation. Relationships are close often intimate, and usually face-to-face...There is a ‘we-ness’ in a community; one is a member. He observes, too, that a ‘sense of self and community may be difficult to distinguish’, suggesting that a community is not necessarily self-conscious, but taken for granted. Following on from this, Garriochn argues that members of a community will treat outsiders differently to one of their own number. The ‘unwritten rules’ of community, which do not apply to outsiders, are ‘an essential characteristic’.\footnote{Garriochn, \textit{Neighbourhood and community in Paris}, Introduction, p5 and Chapter I p16ff; Bender, \textit{Community and Social Change}, pp6-7.}

At the same time, paradoxically, community cannot be defined by social unity and harmony. Conflict, suspicion and hostility are also integral to its being, as J.A. Sharpe argued in his study of litigation in early modern English communities, although Bender adds that such conflict is ‘mediated by the emotional bonds’.\footnote{Bender, \textit{Community and Social Change}, pp8-9; J. A. Sharpe, ‘Such Disagreements Betwyxt Neighbours: Litigation and human relations in early modern England’, in John Bossy (ed.), \textit{Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West}, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp167-177.}
If these are the theoretical outlines, then the Rocks was a community, certainly by the 1820s, and probably earlier. The word ‘neighbourhood’ was used as early as 1808, for when a child fell down the Rocks ‘a report of the infant’s death was shortly afterwards circulated throughout the neighbourhood’. News carried by word-of-mouth, and the interest and concern over a local child’s death in themselves suggest communal networks. Yet, as Bender warns, the Rocks community identity was not self-consciously articulated. No-one said ‘I am a Rocks man/woman’, although they often introduced themselves by stating ‘I live on the Rocks’, the way the slighted William Kelly did.

There are two intertwined levels at which Rocks people were bound together. The first was the commonality of outlooks and behaviour, as outlined above, shared with the lower orders of Sydney generally. Then there were other dimensions which drew people together such as common trade or calling, similar time of arrival in the colony, and Irishness. At this level the Rocks serves as microcosm for the wider society. But at the second level, that of community, the Rocks emerges as distinctive, in that its people depended on many ways upon each other, and its social networks were clearly shaped by locale and proximity.

Local knowledge of familiar landmarks, as observed in Section 1, was one way of maintaining the upper hand over outsiders, and essential for the constant observations of neighbours, lodgers and strangers. Rocks people were indifferent or at best only partly receptive to official attempts to name their streets and lanes. They used their own relational system of names and landmarks to find their way about and exchange information.

Still more basic to the spatial dimension of community is continuity of inhabitation. The Rocks was not a fixed, unchanging, or isolated community; it was constantly awash with new faces, strangers, visitors, and drifters. But it had at its core clusters of people who had

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54 SG 25 September 1808. The child survived.
arrived on the early fleets, settled there in the 1790s and early 1800s, and were still in occupation in 1822. Although the comparison with the 1828 Census shows that over half the population was not even listed after only five to six years, of those who were traceable, nearly sixty percent were still living on the Rocks, and forty percent of those were at the same address. The Rocks thus possessed a stable population of familiar names and well known families which made community possible in the first place (Tables 10 and 11). There is some evidence that their children, reaching adulthood, also remained on the Rocks, or at least nearby in up-market Bunker’s Hill or over the ridge at Millers Point, not far from where they had grown up.

**TABLE 10. ROCKS PEOPLE 1822/23-1828: TRACEABLE AND UNTRACEABLE BY STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Traceable?</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convict/Government Servant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convict/Living Independently</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ticket of Leave</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>45.9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardoned</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free by Servitude</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>55.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Came Free</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Colony</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>206</td>
<td>47.3</td>
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<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td>Traceable:</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>% of Total:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Untraceable:</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>% of Total:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1285*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Excludes 5 persons whose status is unknown.
TABLE 11. MOBILITY/STASIS OF TRACEABLE ROCKS PEOPLE 1822/23-1828 
BY STATUS AND SHOWING LOCATION IN 1828

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>At Same Address on the Rocks</th>
<th>At Different Address on the Rocks</th>
<th>Sub-Total</th>
<th>At Other Addresses in Sydney</th>
<th>At Other Towns or in Rural Areas</th>
<th>In Institutions*</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convict/ Government Servant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convict/ Independent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticket of Leave</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pardoned</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free by Servitude</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Came Free</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in Colony</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As % of Traceable People</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* including the Benevolent Asylum, Orphanages, Hyde Park Barracks, the Female Factory, Road Gangs, Sydney Gaol, and places of secondary punishment, such as Newcastle and Moreton Bay.

The evidence for familiarity, mutuality and a sense of obligation within the Rocks may be found in many aspects of everyday life. Court and inquest reports are rich with glimpses of people meeting in the street, exchanging greetings or stopping for a chat, dropping in casually at each other's houses to eat, drink and talk, and to buy and sell. Rocks women sent to the Female Factory at Parramatta seem to have been or become close friends. Publicans' wives Jane New and Eleanor Frazier were confidantes there; Eleanor Frazier also became a sympathetic ear and drinking companion to her husband's ex-lover, Mary Jones. Men who were neighbours also formed strong friendships: the cabinetmaker and upholsterer George Woodford was 'in the habit of intimacy' with his Cumberland Street neighbour, the Master

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mariner Edward Edwards.\textsuperscript{56} The annotated Constable’s survey above reveals that orphaned or abandoned Rocks children were usually not sent to the orphanage. If there was no family in Sydney or elsewhere in the colony, they were often taken in and fostered by Rocks neighbours. Similarly, the aged were often found living with their families, or sharing houses with friends. Very few lived alone, and fewer still went into institutions such as the Benevolent Asylum. Those who married seem to have frequently chosen partners from the Rocks, and neighbours agreed to act as one another’s witnesses during marriage ceremonies, as well as sponsors for their children at baptism, and executors of their wills. If a Rocks person was arrested and charged, the guarantors who came to their assistance for bail and recognizance were invariably local people, usually publicans. When there were unusual circumstances in a Rocks death, an inquest jury was formed of local men. Hence parents who lost children, husbands who lost wives, and so on, gave their often grief-stricken and intimate evidence not before an impersonal, anonymous body, but their own neighbours.\textsuperscript{57}

The inquests often reveal community bonds between neighbours which were strongest in times of distress. When Hannah Hancey of Cumberland Street fell ill suddenly in 1824 she sent for her neighbour and friend Elizabeth Board. Elizabeth stayed with her until eleven at night, and sent her daughter to check on her in the morning. She was sent for again at ten and ‘on going in found her just Dying’. Another neighbour, Mary Cooper also called in that morning, and left her ten year old daughter with Hannah at Michael Hancey’s request. She too was

\textsuperscript{56} Inquest on Edward Edwards, 6 November 1818, R2232 p265 AONSW.

\textsuperscript{57} Orphaned or abandoned children fostered by Rocks people include Thomas Condon, Elizabeth Findlay, Ellen and Margaret Downey, Esther O’Hara, Mary Ann Lamb, Ann Buttey, Thomas Alford, and Rebecca Hooper; evidence of neighbours acting as witnesses and sponsors at marriages and baptisms from the Mutch Index and St Mary’s Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages 1820-1840s ML FM4/5270-71; see series of Court records in CJC and Court of Petty Sessions, AONSW; and Coroner’s Inquests.
called back to be with the dying woman. The neighbours probably washed and laid out Hannah's body and drew the shutters closed.\(^{58}\)

There is evidence of women helping one another out after the birth of a child, of opening their homes to take in a lodger they knew 'for charity'. The young convict butcher Robert Noble of Cumberland Street took pity on old John Rogers, a watchman at the slaughterhouse on Cockle Bay where Noble worked. Rogers was dismissed 'for repeated drunkenness' in 1817 and when he 'seemed reluctant to leave' they cut his hammock down. Noble asked the old man where he would go and he replied he 'did not know where to go'. This 'touched his feelings' and he told Rogers he was 'welcome to his house until he knew how to better himself'. But Rogers got drunk that night, tried to get into his hammock, fell and died later on the floor. His dog had to be driven away from his body with a whip.\(^{59}\) A defenceless cripple who was set upon and knocked down by a 'stout athletic ruffian' in Essex Lane immediately aroused 'the indignation of the mob'. The man was immediately surrounded by Rocks people, 'rather rudely handled' and chased off 'amidst shouts and execrations'.\(^{60}\)

By contrast, strangers to the Rocks were treated with suspicion or, at best, with indifference. Nobody mourned for murdered seaman Stephen Boylan, found face down in a pool of bloody water in 1804, nobody found his killer.\(^{61}\) The tale of Elizabeth Mandeville, well-illustrates Garrioch's point about the community's treatment of outsiders. Elizabeth Mandeville was a black woman who had arrived on the *Aeolus* in 1809, a Londoner tried in Middlesex the year

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\(^{58}\) Inquest on Hannah Hancey, 1 February 1824, 2/8289 p37 AONSW.


\(^{60}\) SG 30 January 1813.

\(^{61}\) SG 15 July 1804.
before. She had lived with her de facto husband Stephen Wain and their two young children on their small Hawkesbury farm. In January 1821, three weeks from giving birth to a third child, she and a neighbour left home with a cartload of wheat to sell in Sydney. A few days later, her neighbour returned home without her, having been unable to find her in Sydney.

Passing through Cambridge Street at midday, the surgeon William Bland saw a group of Rocks women gathered uneasily around a heavily pregnant women lying in the street. They said she was in labour, but he thought not, suspecting exhaustion. He said later

When I saw her in the morning I was afraid she would perish for want of attendance, and as the women standing about hesitated about taking her in, I said I would pay the expenses for any care of that sort...she appeared to have been drinking [but was] not intoxicated.

Elizabeth told the woman who took her that 'she had been drinking hard, that she belonged to the country...had received money for [the wheat] at the stores, bought necessaries, became intoxicated had been robbed and was afraid to return home'.

At ten o'clock the next day Bland heard that she was dead, but that her child was alive. He went back up to Cambridge Street and, in the house, 'performed an operation on the deceased' but found the baby also dead. By the time the inquest was held the following day, Stephen Wain had been told of her death and came, weeping, to give evidence. He told the assembled Rocksmen

She took no money with her for I was possessed of none or else she would...the neighbours reported...that she had had two glasses of spirits. She was ordinary sober, as good a woman as never broke bread at home - but two glasses would have had a great effect on her...Two men came and told me at the stores today that my wife was dead...as far as I have heard she had nowhere to go.
The coroner’s clerk noted, a little testily, ‘Here the witness wept as he has also done most of the time’. The coroner E. S. Hall found that she died of ‘exhaustion brought on by intoxication and want of nourishment’. But her husband was closer to the truth: ‘she had nowhere to go’, no friends, no town connections, for she ‘belonged to the country’. The Rocks women, opportunistic, suspicious and wary of strangers, would not take her in until payment was assured.\textsuperscript{62}

Here we must recognize, too, that ‘disagreements betwixt neighbours’, acts of callousness and individual self-interest also characterised this pre-modern style ‘community’ as much as those of England and America. A culture in which suspicion, angry confrontation and violent outbursts were generally considered natural must dispel images of utterly peaceful, harmonic human relations. Although they might be moved by pity and feelings of compassion for those less fortunate than themselves, Rocks people were also quick to anger, easily slighted and highly litigious. While many aspects of life were still integrated and organic, nevertheless, the Rocks had been founded on actions of competitive, possessive individualism, and the reverse side of a belief in fate and human helplessness was ruthless opportunism. Hence any pity Daniel Cubitt may have felt for his widowed neighbour Ann Williams and her six children was swamped by his desire for material gain. Bernard Williams was dead only a few days when Cubitt petitioned for his job as well as his house.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{62} Inquest on Elizabeth Mandeville, 31 January 1821, CSC R6021 4/1819 p435. Compare with inquest on Russerk, another stranger, who died of intoxication and cold outside the front fences of houses in Prince Street, though his groans could be heard by householders; p609, 614-616.

\textsuperscript{63} SG 26 April 1822; Daniel Cubitt to Colonial Secretary 26 April 1822 CSC R6055 4/1760 p47. Disputes among Rocks people over land, boundaries and houses were very common, see for example Thomas Prior, Petition, 26 February 1824 CSC R6061 p200; Andrew Goodwin, Petition, July 1824, CSC R6061 pp198-99; William Hawkins, Memorial, February 1825, CSC 4/1842A p397; Edward Ewins, Petition 30 September 1818, CSC R6047 4/1741 p300.
Although the Rocks community was not characterized by the sort of constant riot or lawless mayhem that would destroy the social fabric, neither it cannot be described as truly peaceable. A certain level of violence was integral in social, and often personal relationships, and particularly in relationships between people and authority. People, adults and children, regularly witnessed the course and the effects of violence around them. A survey taken of male householders in the area in 1802 shows the early houses equipped with guns, swords, pistols and/or bayonets (see Appendix 4).\textsuperscript{64} The Rocks bristled with weaponry, with each householder ready to defend or attack as needs be. Men and women were quick to anger, and, although they were avid users of the courts, also engaged in direct, violent and public confrontation to resolve disputes. Even the highly respectable personage of Isaac Nichols could on occasion throw a punch at the nose of an offensive person in the public street.\textsuperscript{65} There is ample evidence that violence was used by men against women in the home, and sometimes in public, that women with grudges against their neighbours would attack them in the streets and occasionally inside the houses. Fighting, sometimes resulting in death, often erupted in pubs triggered by a remark, a smirk, a song. As examined in Section 3, violent men were not only found among the poor shifting unskilled and the desperate criminals, but among the respected and wealthy, the skilled and propertied.

Yet the occasions of violent or threatening altercations were often mitigated by what Bender called the ‘emotional bonds’ of community. A serious attack like the savagery of young Elizabeth Woodward on her neighbour, old Ann Chapman, resulted in a court conviction and sentence. But for smaller incidents, stone throwing, a few punches, or libellous remarks uttered in the heat of the moment (language was powerful: people were very sensitive to slights to their good name) the injured party often agreed to a settlement. This usually

\textsuperscript{64} 'Register of Arms Taken April 10 1802 - Maskeline and Banks Districts' CSC R6041 4/1719 pp85-6. See Appendix 4.

\textsuperscript{65} Papers from trial of Isaac Nichols for assault on David Dundas, 21 March 1809, CCJ 5/1150 R2652 p112 AONSW.
involved a public apology, phrased in the most abject terms. ‘The words were spoken by me in a passion’ said publican Catherine Doyle in her contrite apology to fellow Rocks publican John Hull, ‘for which I had no ground’.

Another, more dramatic dimension of such emotional bonds may be read in Thomas Condon’s attempted robbery and murder of his friend James Tunnicliffe. Condon, with an accomplice, successfully lured his victim over the Rocks to Cockle Bay, hit him over the head, seized him by the throat and rifled his pockets. Tunnicliffe passed out, but Condon could not bring himself to kill him. Instead he shook him awake and they went together to the house of a mutual friend, where he pretended they had both been attacked by four men. Tunnicliffe, shaken and bleeding, was more shocked by the betrayal and denial than the violence. He reproached Condon over and over again ‘Oh, Tom! I did not think you would have served me so!’ The ‘grounds of friendship’ that spared Tunnicliffe’s life sent Condon away, but by 1828 he was back on the Rocks, a waterman of Gloucester Street.

The paradoxical stresses and ties of the Rocks community are perhaps best exemplified in the experience of the considerable numbers of Irish there, and in the underlying confluence and conflict in the relationships between English and Irish people.

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66 SC 24-27 January 1827; 2 April 1826 attack on Ann Chapman.

67 Papers from trial of Thomas Condon and Dugald MacFarlain, 16 October 1819, CCJ COD 449 p89ff AONSW.
The Irish

By the 1820s about twenty-five percent of the Rocks population, including householders, servants, lodgers and colonial-born children, was Irish. If their children are excluded, the figure among adults alone is around 22%. Expressed another way, around 34% of Rocks households were Irish, this larger figure including the small but significant number of English/Irish marriages (Tables 12 and 13). From a list of property- or leaseholding individuals drawn up for Commissioner Bigge’s perusal in 1821, it appears that around 20% of those ‘settled on their own property’ were Irish, a little less than their proportion among Rocks adults.68

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>IRISH</th>
<th>TOTAL IN STREET</th>
<th>% IRISH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gloucester Street</td>
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<td>Prince Street</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Place</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Lane</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

68 These figures were estimated by cross referencing people from the District Constables’ Notebooks who arrived on Irish ships, (ships listed in Donohoe, Catholics of New South Wales, and Robinson, Women of Botany Bay) and who were Catholic, as listed in Donohoe and the 1828 census.
Were these Irish a distinctive group within the Rocks community? Or did they blend imperceptibly with their English neighbours, all trace of their own culture subsumed, lost? The lives of Rocks people were obviously inextricably bound up with the Irish among them. Irish voices and songs were familiar, they drank in Irish pubs, such as Alice Flynn’s St Patrick’s Inn, Patrick Cullen’s Ship Fame, later Andrew Coss’s Punch Bowl. There were Irish shops like those of Elizabeth Mulhall and Elizabeth Rafferty, Irish constables patrolling the streets, Irish servants, husbands, wives, friends. That the Irish seemed to blend in this way into the Rocks community makes discernment of a distinctive experience from their own standpoint difficult. They were great adaptors.

**TABLE 13. ESTIMATE OF IRISH HOUSEHOLDS* ON THE ROCKS BY STREET 1822/23**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STREET</th>
<th>IRISH HOUSEHOLDS</th>
<th>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS IN STREET</th>
<th>% IRISH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Street</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge Street</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Street</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumberland Street</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrington Street</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Place</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surry Lane</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essex Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argyle Street</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>291</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denotes husband and/or wife, or household head is Irish.

Patrick O’Farrell reviewed the wide range of experience and background among the Irish, the difficulty of generalisation, the easy traps into which the historian, searching for ‘Irishness’, may fall. (These include for example, the fruitless search for Gaelic culture in language, building styles; for defiant rebels transported after the uprisings to feed the radical nationalist
myth; even for battling, hard-done-by ‘Colleens’ who are the raw material for suitably feisty ‘Matildas’). O’Farrell concludes:

What was Gaelic continuous, what was preserved, nurtured, passed on, was not language, or modes of building, or curious folkways, but something more elusive, much less tangible, more central - mind-sets, mentality, values, mental furniture, ways of thought, attitudes, dispositions, slants and tangents.69

These shared ‘intangibles’ drew the Irish of the Rocks together. While their economic interests and aspirations, their houses, their language (apart from accents, and there was plenty of variety in Sydney’s accents anyway) and behaviour differed little from those of their English neighbours, there is clear evidence of close Irish association and networks within the Rocks community. As O’Farrell wrote simply and perceptively in another book, about Irish immigrants in quite another place, ‘they tolerated each other well enough. Yet, when it came to closer things - friendship, marriage - the Irish preferred their own, if they could.’70 This searching out of one’s own kind, especially in times of trouble or celebration, goes to the heart of their experience.

The distribution of Irish people on the Rocks shows some striking patterns of association. As Table 12 shows, their numbers were far less in the better, more prestigious streets (5% of people in George Street, 6% in Prince Street) where they tended to be the servants of dealers and merchants. Yet, these servants in Prince Street had not far to go to see and hear their countrymen and women. In Cumberland Street just below, almost half the people, and well over half the households, were Irish. In the succeeding three streets, Gloucester, Cambridge,


70 Patrick O’Farrell, Vanished Kingdoms: Irish in Australia and New Zealand, Sydney, New South Wales University Press, 1990 p30. There is evidence for the survival of the Gaelic language in more isolated areas. In 1824 Father Connelly requested ‘there would be sent to Van Diemen’s Land missionaries who were proficient in Irish’. ‘I am at a loss’, he wrote, ‘to know how I could hear confessions without knowing the language’. See O’Brien, Dawn of Catholicism, p173.
and Harrington, they made up roughly a third of the households, and between 22% (in Cambridge Street where there were fewer children) and 34% (in Harrington Street) of the population. As noted from the constables’ survey, there is also a clear pattern of clustering of the Irish households close together in each street around and northwards from the old east-west axis of Surry Lane.

Within the households, too, the Irish tended to draw in their own. Those who were well-off or in business took in Irish servants. The Coss’s, publicans in Cambridge Street, had Patrick Keelan; Richard Byrne, the stonemason, and Margaret Kelly of Cumberland Street had George Darby. Their lodgers also tended to be Irish - Thomas Ryan and Jane Maxwell shared their house with convict women Ellen Flaherty and Julia Bryan. When individuals shared a non-family household, Irishness again might draw them together, as in the house in Gloucester Street next to James Flynn’s (also Irish), which was shared by his convict servants Patrick Cubitt, John A’Hearne and William Dunn.

Perhaps a measure of underlying distrust and disdain from the English convicts and emancipists also encouraged the Irish to look to their countrymen and women, to ‘prefer their own’ in friendship, marriage, business dealings and connections. There were also connections of a more nefarious sort, like Mary Bryant’s recruitment of Irish women to help her swindle the Government storeman.

Living close together created the bonds of locale which overlaid, and melded with the older ties of origin. When the Irish woman Margaret Rafferty, who lived opposite the Dockyard, died in 1809, the executors she had chosen were Irishmen Edward Quin and the barber Charles Bryan.\(^7\) That they were also both Rocks men is evidence of those early neighbourhood connections. Irishness and neighbourly compassion moved Bridget Nowland

\(^7\) SG 2, 9 October 1803; 25 June 1809, 21 January, 16 February 1810.
to take her neighbour Elizabeth Johnston and her five children into her own home after the Irish Catholic Andrew Johnston was sent to a road gang in 1827.

Marriages and business dealings between the Irish were common: the saga of the Flynn, Murphy and Welsh families, all publicans, well-demonstrates the confluence of Irishness and neighbourhood. James Flynn arrived a convict in 1818 and shortly married a widow, Alice Murphy, less than two months after her husband Stephen died. The Murphys had been among the earliest Rocks settlers, and Flynn thus acquired their St Patrick's hotel in Gloucester Street. This hotel stood directly opposite William and Eleanor Welsh's Lord Wellington, across Cribb's Lane, and the Welshes were witnesses to the Flynn's wedding. Both Alice Flynn and William Welsh died in 1825 (William's executors were fellow Irishmen Thomas Dunne and Patrick Cullen), and six months after Alice's death James Flynn married Eleanor Welsh. Having thus acquired a second hotel, he leased the first to another ex-convict Irish couple, James and Sarah Byrne.⁷²

The Catholic wedding of Rocks widow Catherine Rourke to the shipwright Henry Simpson in 1803 suggests early Irish networks coming to the fore in celebration. The Gazette reported that 'a 'fidler [sic] with his merry crowd received a universal welcome' with the bride leading various dances, 'Country Bumpkin', 'Cheshire Rounds and Irish Trots'. The celebration appears to have continued from Saturday night over to St Monday, for two days later they gathered to perform 'a grand serenade of CULINARY instruments', clanging and bashing pots, pans, spoons and basins outside the house of the newlyweds, the din described as 'harmony little short of marrow-bones and cleavers'. In accordance with 'custom' they refused to go away until a 'fee' was paid 'which being complied with the YOUNG couple

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⁷² Mutch Index, ML; see entries for James Flynn, Stephen Murphy, Alice Murphy/Flynn; Australian 8 January 1824, 9 June 1825; James Byrne, Memorial, 5 May 1834, in Memorials forwarded by the Commissioner of Claims, CSC R1201 2/1783 No 581 AONSW.
were left to their domestic QUIET'. Here Howe, with his usual playful irony, was probably implying that the couple was not young, and that the Rocks, where they lived, was rarely quiet.\footnote{SG 15 May 1803.}

The Irish came together, too, for the other great human rite of passage, the funeral and wake. Here we must read through the thick lens of derision used by English writers, editors and later, reporters. Patrick O'Farrell recalls David Collins's accounts of Irish wakes of the 1790s, which dwelt on the bizarre and the foolishness of Irish folk-custom, and he concludes that the Irish wake was promptly privatised and modified. Perhaps so, but in the 1820s they were still being reported as distinctly Irish affairs. At the 1827 Rocks wake of Dennis O'Callaghan, his body was laid out on the table, surrounded by friends and family. His wife, Mary O'Brien, 'made everything genteel, and gave us plenty of the best Jamaica'. But when another woman Bridget Murphy entered and found no rum left she made a sarcastic remark about the corpse and then hit Mary O'Brien with a brick pulled from the fireplace. In court later, confronted with Mary's bruised face, Bridget pleaded that she had gone 'into the wake' (\textit{into}, like moving into a circle) where 'the devil a drop of rum was left, which so aggravated me, that I could not drink' "God be with Dennis" and I certainly lost my senses."\footnote{O' Farrell, \textit{Irish in Australia}, p27 citing Collins, \textit{Account}, Vol 1 pp143, 328; SG 13 August 1827.}

Although recounted in the customary farcical manner by the \textit{Gazette}, the importance placed on gathering together to farewell the dead person, who still lay among them, and on hospitality and conviviality is clearly evident, as well as the anger of Bridget Murphy at feeling left out of the circle and the ritual drinking. When women came together their relationship could often be ambiguous, swinging easily from support and consolation towards uneasy suspicion, arguments and violence. The other observation which may be made here
is the Irish mastery of language when facing magistrates and judges. Using words which may not have even been their native tongue, they often ran rings around their accusers, and deflated the pomp and seriousness of the proceedings with obfuscation or hilarious retorts and repartee. Irish publican John Hull, charged with abusing a soldier, said he had been at a wake to ‘drown dry sorrow’ and had ‘put an enemy in his mouth that stole away his brains’. The soldier had to admit that Hull was so drunk he ‘did not know what he was about’, and he got away with a small fine.\textsuperscript{75}

The Irish also become visible, and probably partly defined themselves, in terms of the suspicion, ridicule and bigotry of the English authorities and some of the people. The Irish songs sung in pubs are a good example. Philip Butterss has discovered that popular Irish ballads were ‘nothing like’ those of English origin. While English broadsheet songs tended to legitimise English law, the Irish ballads ‘lament for transportees who have been unjustly convicted’, celebrated successful escapes, and still more common, the ‘rebel song’ which dealt with those banished at various times after uprisings against ‘England’s hostile Crown’.\textsuperscript{76}

They had a great deal of potency, these songs; they were flashpoint where the underlying tension between English and Irish people came to the surface in the early Rocks. In 1814 a soldier named Connell sang ‘a crroppies song’ in the Rocks pub of Elizabeth Ryan. ‘Croppy’ was the colloquial, usually derogatory, name for the Irish, some of whom cropped their hair like French revolutionaries. Another soldier, Sergeant Morrow, objected to the song, but an

\textsuperscript{75} SG 26 April 1826. See discussion in Thompson, Making of the English Working Class, pp436-37; the Irish could ‘make magistrates dizzy with their blarney’. Hunter thought the Irish were responsible for a rise in the ‘shocking crime of perjury’ in 1798, HRA, Hunter to Portland 10 January 1798 Vol 2 p118. Byrne observes that the animosities between women were often played out in the courts, Criminal Law, p240.

\textsuperscript{76} Philip Butterss, ‘Convicted by the laws of England’s hostile crown: popular convict verse’, in Oliver MacDonagh and W.F. Mandle, Irish-Australian Studies, Papers Delivered at the Fifth Irish-Australian Conference, Canberra, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, 1989, pp 7-24; these refs pp8-14.
Irish woman, Eleanor Irwin, who was there with her husband, insisted that it be sung again, joining in the singing herself. The chorus now louder, more raucous, Morrow objected again, to which Eleanor Irwin retorted that 'although she was not a croppy's wife, she was a croppy's sister'. Morrow then declared haughtily 'You are no society for me, take yourself away and walk'. Enraged by this insult, Eleanor Irwin picked up a bayonet and stabbed him in the stomach. The confusion in the evidence mitigated for the Irwins; they were convicted of killing and slaying, rather than murder, and sent to Newcastle for two years. The angry words, the taunting songs, the eruption of violence, the extraordinarily volatile atmosphere of the public houses seem to have been common in encounters between soldiers and the populace, men and women, Irish and English.77

Some Irishmen, including Thomas Dunne, Thomas Lynch, Arthur Martin, and Joseph Welsh, were appointed constables and this could be another source of festering resentment. Thomas Dunne investigating a 'violent disturbance' on the docks one night found Daniel Cubitt junior in company with some sailors, 'in a state of intoxication'. Dunne told them all to go home, and when Daniel refused he remarked that 'it would have been much better for him [Daniel] to be at his duty than to be in the company of drunken sailors'. This unleashed young Daniel's considerable powers of insult. Seizing the ageing constable' stick, he roared that Dunne was a 'damned scoundrel' who had been trying to injure both him and his father for a long time, and it was a pity 'that any bloody Irishman should hold a situation - for they would eat the flesh of any Englishman's bones'.78 Evidently Daniel Cubitt had been brought up on the idea that their Irish neighbours in the Rocks, like Dunne, were 'bloody croppies', treacherous, inferior, undeserving of public office. There was something wrong with the world when an Irishman could order an Englishman to be about his business. Clearly, for

77 SG 25 June 1814; case cited in Byrne, Criminal Law, p246. O'Farrell explains the term 'croppy', Irish in Australia, p27.

78 Evidence of Thomas Dunne, 6 April 1822, CSC R6054 p41.
people like Daniel Cubitt junior, and those who bristled at ‘croppy’ songs, the tension and loathing remained not far below the surface of everyday life, and was easily brought to it by drink.

The gaunt walls of Fort Phillip rising from the highest point of the Rocks were material reminders of the authorities’ fear of Irish treachery, for it was built as a direct result of the Irish rebellion of 1804. Some of the Rocks’ men, including publicans Joseph Morley and Samuel Thorley, the well-off watchmaker John Sparrow, tailors John Mollett and George Pashley, the waterman George Atkinson, and several others, were among those free householders ‘possessing property and good characters’ who volunteered for the Sydney Loyal Association formed in fear of Irish insurrection in 1800. While the rebels of 1804 were pursued and captured or slain on the road to Windsor, the Loyal Sydney men were placed ‘in defensive positions’ around Sydney in case of attack.79

How did this overt loyalist stance, this willingness to bear arms against the Irish, affect everyday neighbourly relations of the Rocks? Here are some paradoxes: George Atkinson lived next door to the inoffensive, quiet Irish barber Charles Bryan in Cambridge Street for many years. Did he ever go to Bryan for a haircut? Or were their relations always surly and suspicious? When John Sparrow’s faithful servant died of snakebite in 1803 he buried him with great care and dignity, as a good master should. The servant’s name was Francis MacNamara, an Irish Catholic. When the failing Irish dealer Patrick Shannon stood trial in 1807 for stealing, John Mollett was among the friends who stepped forward in his defence. George Pashley’s son, also George, married an Irish convict named Johanna Barrett, from

Cork, who bore his four grandchildren and brought them up in their pub in Surry Lane. George Pashley junior also had the apprentice carpenter Owen Lynch lodging with him. Owen was the son of Irish constable Thomas Lynch. Thomas Moore, the well-respected Master of the Dockyard, was a Lieutenant of the Sydney Loyal Association. Yet he had also given the Irishman Edward Redmond his start in the colony, taking him on as a servant and introducing him to its property market, and in later, wealthier years acting as his benevolent patron.\(^80\)

Another, perhaps stranger confluence of Irish and English on the Rocks, was the marriage of Thomas Dunne (*Hillsborough*, an Irish Catholic) and Rose (or Rosetta) Bean, the Protestant daughter of a free settler named James Bean. The Bean family had arrived on the *Buffalo*, also in 1799, and were farmers near Prospect. In 1803 a band of escaped Irish convicts attacked the Bean’s house, and two of them brutally raped seventeen-year-old Rose in front of her mother. Lynette Silver has remarked that, among those civilian volunteers who actively pursued the Irish rebels along the road to Windsor less than twelve months later, James Bean ‘had more of an axe to grind than most’ because of this incident. Yet, in October 1804, only six months later, Rose married the Irish Catholic Dunne, fourteen years older than herself, in St John’s at Parramatta. It was a successful marriage: their six children were born between 1809 and 1820, Thomas became the Chief Constable, the family lived on the Rocks in Cumberland Street, and were still together in 1828. What, then, was the axe that James Bean had to grind? Did it not concern those perceived as brutal banditti, out-laws who offended and outraged by their transgressions, far more than their Irishness? Thomas Dunne,

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\(^80\) Re Atkinson and Bryant, the Pashleys and the Lynchs, see District Constable’s Notebooks, 1828 *Census*, Mutch Index, ML; Re Sparrow and MacNamara, *SG* August 2, 16 1807. Re Edward Redmond and Thomas Moore, see Redmond, Memorial, February 1810, CSC F3167 p188, and Lang, *Home Was Here*, p12ff.
irrespective of his Irishness and his religion, was obviously considered a suitable husband, a steady provider, and so he proved to be.  

There is another dimension of the Irish of the Rocks, the stories of those who acquired wealth and a measure of respectability and thus, to some extent, set themselves apart from the far larger numbers of the Irish lower orders. The combination of Irish affinities and association with fairly peaceable co-existence, if not partial subsumption, into the English society is, again, well illustrated by the lives of the one-time rebels, Michael Hayes and Edward Redmond. They and men like them profited to varying degrees by their enforced emigration. Taken suddenly out of the context of maddened and disintegrating Ireland, they turned quickly to making money in New South Wales through dealing, pubs and land in precisely the same way that the English emancipists did. Hayes had the most promising start, but Redmond was far more successful. Their compatriot William Davis of Charlotte Place outlived them both to see the gothic stone St Patrick’s built on his land in 1840. 

The attitude of the Governors, particularly King, towards these rebels had been deeply polarised. While on the one hand their Irishness and their crimes were frightening, on the other, they also included men of some rank and education. Others possessed useful trades and abilities, and a Governor with any good conscience or sense of humane social propriety could not send such men to the miserable outstations, to the ‘grubbing hoe or timber carriage’. It was the latter impulse, that concerning rank, which largely prevailed. They were pardoned, allowed to set up businesses and live independently, and given land. And they, as

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81 Silver, *The Battle of Vinegar Hill*, pp64, 97. Rosetta probably met Thomas when he was working for the Reverend Rowland Hassall at Parramatta; Hassall was a friend of the Bean Family; see SG 25 September 1819 and Hassall to W. Kelley, 17 November 1802, Rowland Hassall Papers, ML A859 p85. Rosetta Bean was mentioned as already living on the Rocks in 1804, so she may have been with Thomas before they were married; see SG 17 June 1804.

a whole, and much to the chagrin of those historians seeking the heroic rebel alive and kicking in early New South Wales, took ‘the quiet path’ and went their separate ways.83

For all that, the Irishness of Redmond and Hayes remains readable, in glimpses and glances, words, actions and associations. This did not rule other cultural attributes, such as sense of rank, education, and religiousness. Edward Redmond was an unlettered man who had been arrested at the age of about twenty-two in Kings County during the 1798 uprising. He was among the rows of convicts on the Minerva’s deck from whom ‘General’ Joseph Holt carefully stood apart in 1800, and by 1803 had acquired a house in Essex Lane, flanking the gaol, which he opened as the Foul Anchor Inn and from which he carried on his dealing. He lived with a ‘lovely and virtuous’, and also educated Irish woman, Winifred Dowling, from about 1804, producing two daughters Mary and Sarah, as well as caring for the son of her first marriage, John. The distinctly maritime Foul Anchor became the more agrarian Wheatsheaf, and then the supremely loyalist Harp and Crown, a hotel ‘conducted with great propriety’. When Edward and Winifred married eventually in St Philip’s in 1811, their witnesses were the Irish Rocksman from the Minerva, Edward O’Hara, and Ann Leonard. Edward’s business partner was also an Irish Rocksman, Patrick Cullen (Atlas 1 1802), with whom he held the lease on the Sydney tollgate; they hired one Michael Dwyer to man the gate.

The Redmonds continued to amass capital, land and acquired another hotel licence. When Joseph Holt and Sir Henry Brown Hayes departed the colony for Ireland in 1812, the Redmonds attended the large dinner party held at Patrick Cullen’s house to farewell them. But, as successful emancipists, they were also present at the Anniversary dinners held by Isaac Nichols which celebrated loyalism, raised their glasses to King and empire, and saw

83 HRA. Hunter to Portland. 12 November 1796, Vol 1 674; 20 March 1800, Vol 2 475; O’Farrell, ibid.
themselves as on par with their English counterparts, and hence separate from the Irish lower orders. Both Redmonds, like Michael Hayes and William Davis, were active in the building of the Catholic chapel, St Mary's, of which Hayes was so proud. Again, although this expressed their distinction from Protestants, it still fell within the ambit of 'civilizing' influences, in step with authority rather than posited against it, yet another sign of respectable and responsible social behaviour.

Perhaps the evidence which best expresses the Redmonds' ambivalence over their Irishness and Catholicism is the their treatment of their daughters after they married. Mary Redmond married an Irish Catholic emancipist named Roger Murphy in 1828. Murphy, then a lawyer's clerk, and a later a 'prosperous businessman' was 'one of the most important Catholic laymen in Sydney'. Sarah, the younger daughter, married Captain John Scarville, a handsome, well-connected Protestant Englishman, whom she met at a ball at Government House in 1828. (The sisters' emancipist pedigree was ignored for that event in the dearth of acceptable young women in the colony.) Edward Redmond immediately selected the best and most accessible of his lands, at Killarney Chain-of-Ponds at the Hawkesbury, and built the newly-wed Scarvilles a fine stone house. They raised a large family and became prominent and well-known in the district. Meanwhile, Mary and Roger Murphy were given Redmond lands at Bingham in the Abercrombie Ranges, which was 'rugged and inaccessible'. The Irishness and Catholicism of Roger Murphy was seemingly less important to the Redmonds than the rank, prestige and connections brought on them by the English Protestant John Scarville.84

Michael Hayes came out of the Irish middling orders. He was in his own time a modern man, one of those at the forefront of the spread of Catholicism of the sort posited against the

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84 ADB entry for Edward Redmond; Lang, Home Was Here; Mutch Index ML; Redmond, Memorial, 7 February 1820 Wentworth Family Papers, ML A764 p65; Waldersee, pp84, 193-94.
old Gaelic world of belief and ritual. He also had a deep respect for education, particularly with regard to clergy, and he despised the colonial Protestant clergy because they were ‘composed of Tradesman such as smiths, shoemakers etc that does no know a word of Greek or Latin, nor speke good English’. Hayes thus shared a clear sense of rank, and its appropriate arrangement, with his English contemporaries. He and his sort probably looked down on the lowly peasants and unskilled, unschooled and superstitious among his compatriots as much as the English did, though he exhibited none of their mockery and derision. His experience in colonial dealing, and the outlook shaped by it was also shared with his contemporaries.

Streams of Irishness are nevertheless threaded through Hayes’ lyrical letters of later life. Such lyricism is also commonly found in the petitions of Irish convicts. He named his children for his Irish siblings, and lamented his separation from Ireland, a grief which Bigge observed in the Irish generally. He was hurt when his family failed to pass on news. ‘I beg you will write to me constant’ he wrote to Richard reproachfully ‘you have not informed me you are ordained in the Wexford convent’, and he asked to be remembered to ‘the old friars’. His moods and emotions often dwelt on despair and sorrow, and guilt at the ‘clouds of sorrows and difficulties that must have attended my poor injured family’.

After Hayes died in 1825, his family soon split up, although, significantly, they remained on and around the Rocks. His daughter Mary married an ex-convict publican and by 1828 they were living in Charlotte Place with her two sisters, Eliza and Ellen, and a baby, also Eliza. Elizabeth Hayes married another Irishman, the printer William Kelly in December 1826. He was a Protestant. They lived for some years in Cumberland Street, and then moved to Essex Street, closer to the Gazette office. Michael’s sons Richard and John Hayes, both carpenters, lived with them, and Richard later married and settled in Prince Street. They were all listed
as Protestants in 1828. What, then, survived of Michael Hayes in his own family? Not necessarily Catholicism, for all his energy and devotion; not education, nor dreams of return to Ireland, but, rather, the bonds of family, the Irishness in association and marriage; and the binding ties of their neighbourhood, the Rocks.

85 ADR entry for Michael Hayes; Hayes, Letters to his family, ML A3586; Mutch Index ML, St Mary’s Registers of Births, Deaths and Marriages; SG 13 October 1805, 23 March 1806, 23 July 1811, 1 July 1820, 15 September 1825; District Constables’ Notebooks; 1828 Census. Bigge remarked of the Irish that ‘their separation from their native country is observed to make a stronger impression on their minds...’, Report, p9.