

Notes on William Murphy and Elizabeth Ellen née Seed

(Great-grandparents of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette Hay)

William Murphy born: 30 November 1834, Sheepmoor townland (but usually said to be Coolmine), Clonsilla parish, Co. Dublin, Ireland.

Elizabeth Ellen Seed born: 1849, Leitrim townland, Kilkeel parish, Co. Down, Ireland.

William Murphy arrived in NZ: 2 February 1863, at Port Chalmers, Otago, from Melbourne, in 'Saint Clair'.

Elizabeth Seed arrived in NZ: 15 March 1869, at Port Chalmers from Glasgow, in 'Edward P. Bouverie'.

Married: 26 July 1872 at Milton, Tokomairiro, Otago, NZ.

Children: Bridget (aka Eliza Jane, commonly called Jeannie), born 19 September 1873, Manuka Creek, Otago.

*Mary Seed, born 24 August 1876, Akatore, Otago.

Sarah Ann, born 5 December 1878, Akatore.

John William, born 23 June 1880, Akatore.

Annie Maria, born 6 July 1882, Helensbrook, Otago.

William Henry, born 31 May 1884, Milton, Otago.

James Seed, born 28 July 1889, Milton.

Esther Seed, born 6 November 1892, Milton.

William (Henry) Murphy died: 7 October 1907, Milton, Otago, NZ.

Elizabeth/(Eliza) Ellen Murphy née Seed died: 29 April 1924, Milton.

*Grandmother of Daphne, Laurence, Glenys and Lynette.

William Murphy's birth and parents

William Murphy was born on 30 November 1834, the third child of John and Sarah (Sally) Murphy of Coolmine (actually Sheepmoor) townland, in the parish of Clonsilla, Co. Dublin, not far from the city. No record seems to exist of the marriage of Sarah and John but it probably took place in 1828 or '29 in the Church of Ireland (i.e. Anglican) church of St Mary in Clonsilla parish, though John Murphy was Roman Catholic – and remained so all his life.

Of John Murphy's birth and parentage no trace has been found. Neither does there appear to be any record of Sarah's birth or any extant reference to her maiden

surname, however, there is persuasive circumstantial evidence that she was born a Smith [see end note 1].

John and Sarah Murphy had nine children, all but one christened in Clonsilla parish: John christened 4 July 1830, Rachel born 21 December 1832, William, then Anna Maria born 28 January 1837, Edward born 21 April 1839, Henry christened 25 March 1842, James born 21 July 1844, Jane(?) born 10 April 1847 and privately baptised in Castleknock parish, Eliza(?) born 24(?) June 1851.

John Murphy, the father, made his living as a farmer, leasing 19 acres of land from Alexander Kirkpatrick, the wealthy owner of Coolmine House. The substantial homestead on the Murphy property was still standing in 2000 but the farm land had been subdivided for housing.

John died on 8 January 1864 and was buried – designated ‘RC’ – in the Clonsilla Church of Ireland parish graveyard. The entry for his death in the civil register gives his age as 54, the parish register entry for his burial states that he was 61, and his gravestone says 56; it is difficult to say which of these is to be preferred. The cause of death is given as ‘Disease of heart’ from which he had suffered for some four years. He left assets to the value of about £300 – not an inconsiderable sum in those days.

Sarah survived her husband by many years, dying on 10 February 1890 aged 82. She also died of heart disease and of senile decay. Her estate was valued at £95. It is interesting to note that the newspaper notices of her death include the annotation: ‘American and Australian papers please copy.’ This can only imply that relatives of Sarah – children or siblings – were living in these countries. Why New Zealand is not mentioned is a mystery, but it is possible that Sarah had never heard that her sons had long since migrated from Australia to New Zealand, and that John had died in 1874.

William Murphy’s emigration – to Victoria and to Otago

The obituary for William Henry Murphy (*Bruce Herald*, 7 October 1907) tells us that

he left Dublin a youth of 18, in 1852, for Victoria, and followed mining there for about six years, and then came over to Dunedin and followed his luck all over the interior gold fields of Otago, starting with Gabriel’s and including Manuka Creek field. His success was varying. He was also employed rafting timber on the Molyneux [*i.e. the Clutha*] in the early days....

These statements are likely to be reliable as the informant was probably William’s wife, though the implication that William arrived in New Zealand in 1858 is doubtful as the rush to Gabriel’s Gully did not begin until mid-1861, and there is strong evidence, noted below, that William came over from Australia in 1863.

The MS notes written by his daughter Sarah Ann Hamilton in 1951 tell that the first job William obtained in Melbourne was driving a hansom cab.

One day a man asked him to take the wife and two kids to a certain place. William said, 'I will take the wife but I do not know so much about the kids'. The man said, 'Here they are coming down the street'. The new-comer said, 'I see a woman and two children'. It was the first time he had ever heard children called kids.

The evidence for William's 1863 arrival in this country is a notice in the *Otago Police Gazette* of 20 July 1863 listing William Murphy as a missing person, with the following comment: 'With brother John arrived in this Province from Geelong by the 'St Clair' on 2 February 1863 with horses; supposed packing in the interior; requested to send their address to A.B., Box 67, Post Office, Dunedin.'

The 17 August issue of the gazette had a slightly different message: 'Supposed to have arrived in Province from Geelong by the 'St Clair' with brother John Murphy and one Richard Mighill or Mighall; brought some horses with them; supposed packing in the interior.'

Whether there was anything sinister in William's going missing is impossible to say; certainly there is no record of any police action being taken against him when he eventually surfaced. Sarah Hamilton takes up the story again (some punctuation added): William

came to N.Z. to the gold rush & went to Havelock Hill, Manuka Creek; he was joined here by his brother John from Wales England [?]. The brother died in 1874, got rheumatics working in sluicing claim at Havelock Hill.

William's elder brother John died in the Tuapeka Hospital, Lawrence, on 13 April 1874 and was buried two days later in the Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 6, plot 9/10, where later his nephews John and William were also buried. (The grave does not have a headstone, though there is a cement nameplate – no longer legible – on top of the low concrete surround).

Although there is, or was, somewhere in the Tuapeka district a prominence called Havelock Hill, the 'Havelock Hill, Manuka Creek' mentioned by Sarah Hamilton was, in fact, the Havilah Hill Gold Mining and Water Race Company's sluicing claim at Manuka Creek.

Also, William did not go to Manuka Creek immediately on arrival in New Zealand as Sarah's note would suggest, but moved there only after his marriage in 1872, by which time he had been in the country for more than nine years. This can be inferred from a court case reported in the *Bruce Herald* of 5 August 1873; evidence given in the case makes it clear that from at least October 1868 William was in Milton in a business partnership with Thomas Johnston, John Selkirk Capstick and another man, trading as sawyers, cutting and delivering timber. (John Capstick and William had withdrawn from the business in April 1869, but were being sued for £50 14s 1d for goods delivered to the partnership. The magistrate ruled against the defendants who were ordered to pay the sum owing plus court costs of £3 7s.)

More to the point, a report in the *Tuapeka Times* of 9 November 1871 states that a water race 'to the hills on Manuka Creek' and one being constructed by 'Coghill and party, to Havelock Hill...are tending towards completion'. So at that date even the most essential infrastructure for sluicing was not yet in place at Manuka Creek, and as late as April 1872 the paper was reporting that 'the sluicing claims at Manuka Creek are now in partial work – a further supply of water is required to start full operations'.

Of most interest, however, in that April issue of the *Tuapeka Times* is the following news item: 'We are informed Mr Wm Murphy has been appointed, by the shareholders, manager of the Havilah Hill Co.'s Sluicing Claim, Manuka Creek'. A coup for William – but all did not go well for the Havilah Hill Co.: in July 1874 the company and its Manuka Creek claim were sold for £57 (having been purchased for £935 only 27 months earlier), and in September of that year the company was declared bankrupt and wound up by court order. William Murphy – not long married and by now a father – was out of a job.

Married life

To go back a year or two: No doubt the Murphy brothers, as well as trying to make their fortunes in New Zealand, were keeping their eyes open for any young woman who might make a wife – at this time there were two adult men in the colony for every woman! As it happened, the unmarried Elizabeth Ellen Seed was working in Milton, and possibly getting a little desperate about her single state. (Elizabeth's older sister Jane had married George Capstick in November 1870.) Whatever the case, William Murphy and Elizabeth Seed met, and she at the age of 22 married the 37-year-old bachelor William (not 32 as he claimed on the marriage certificate). *[For the forebears and early life of Elizabeth Ellen Seed see separate essay.]*

The Intention to Marry form, completed by William on the day of the wedding, states that he, 'Miner', had been resident in Tokomairiro (the registration district) for six years (i.e. since 1866), but that Elizabeth had lived there for only four months. This raises the question of her whereabouts during the three years since her arrival in New Zealand. Presumably the sisters had at first stayed with their uncle John on his Tokomairiro farm, but neither employment nor marriage prospects would have been good there. It is relevant that Jane was married in Dunedin even though her husband was of a Milton family; this suggests that both sisters might have moved to the provincial capital soon after their arrival, finding there suitable work.

In any case, and for whatever reason, Elizabeth had returned to Tokomairiro in April 1872 and was married in the home of 'R.W. Capstick, Milton' on 26 July 1872, by Rev. Francis Whitmore Isitt, a Methodist minister. According to Sarah Hamilton, the newly-married couple then went to live at Manuka Creek, where William, as we know, had recently been engaged by the Havilah Hill Co. to manage their sluicing claim.

William was not deterred by the Manuka Creek fiasco, but continued active and entrepreneurial, moving to the Akatore district between Milton and the coast. The following letter from him, received by the Tokomairiro Road Board (see *Bruce Herald*, 19 June 1877, p6), gives some flavour of the man:

Tokomairiro, June 13.

To the Chairman of Tokomairiro Road Board.

Gentlemen, -- Having gone to a great deal of labor in making a cutting and filling up ruts on what is called the Middle Ridge Before, a loaded sledge could not pass, and now I have made it that Mr Wilson's thrashing mill went that way up and down, and that will speak for itself. Although it is a dotted road [*i.e. not a legally defined roadway*], still it is the best road leading to Akatore Bush, and I suppose it will be used for years to come. It is not a benefit to one, but for all who live up there. Having done a good deal to the road I hope, gentlemen you will be kind enough to allow me a little for my trouble, no matter how small it will be thankfully received. – I am, &c.,

WM. H. MURPHY,
Settler, Akatore.

As the board had no responsibility for 'dotted' roads, and did not want to set a precedent, William's eloquent plea was turned down.

The next meeting of the road board received another letter from the irrepressible Mr Murphy, this time requesting permission 'to make a bridle track up Louden's Gully for myself and the public, this being the best and easiest track to Akatore'. This request, also, was turned down, which provoked William into writing a long and somewhat scurrilous letter to the *Bruce Herald* (7 August 1877, p5), followed by a further letter to the Tokomairiro Road Board:

Akatore, August 9, 1877.

To Chairman, Tokomairiro Road Board.

Sir, -- In reference to my application to the Board for permission to cut bridle track up Louden's Gully, I find that, in your letter to the Bruce County Council, you refuse to recognise the proposed place as a lawful roadline, and that you decline to take any responsibility in the matter. Under these circumstances, I have now to inform you that I shall proceed to cut the said bridle track without further reference to the Board, as I consider their disclaimer quite sufficient to bar any action against me, more especially seeing that the proposed track is a work of public utility, and will be supported by the population generally.

I have the honor to remain, sir,

Your obedient servant,
WM. H. MURPHY,
Settler, Akatore.

In another area of William's activities he was equally straightforward: in the 6 January 1893 issue of the newspaper the editor writes:

We have received from Mr Murphy, secretary of the late sports of the Caledonian Society, half a column of incoherent abuse about our report, which we unhesitatingly decline to publish. If the writer will air his grievance in respectful language becoming the columns of a decent newspaper we will print them.

Sometimes William's active nature turned literally combative. The *Bruce Herald* of 11 April 1884 reports an assault case in which William was the defendant. The newspaper's court reporter writes:

It appeared that the informant [*the victim*] ... broke down defendants fences across Johnston-street, for the purpose of taking in drays to remove the soil. Defendant at the time was away from home. On his return, he found the fences knocked down, and a number of cattle destroying his root and white crops. He was very angry. On going down the street shortly afterwards, he met the informant, and "let him have it." Defendant was very sorry for having "struck out," but the informant could have taken his horses and drays on to his land without knocking down his fences in the way he had done.

A fine of 30s, including costs, was imposed.

Children

The Murphy family lived at Akatore from about 1874 until late 1880 or 1881, then to Helensbrook for two or three years, before moving into Milton township for the beginning of the school year in January 1884.

Sarah Hamilton's MS continues (some punctuation added):

Their first child Eliza Jane (Jeannie) was born here [*i.e. at Manuka Creek*]. They then went to Akatore 7 miles from Milton; here 3 more children were born: Mary Seed, Sarah Ann [*the writer*] & John (he got killed by a fall from his horse in 1892 at age of 11 years when they lived at Milton). The family came to live at Milton a little out of town at a place called Helensbrook. Here Annie Maria was born. They then went to live in Milton where father did casual work. While at Akatore he worked in the 'Big Bush' felling timber for the saw mills at Milton for building houses in the new settlement. Three more children were born in Milton: Willie who died at the age 17½ yrs, James Seed died in the Influenza epidemic 1918 at age of 29 & Esther Seed died 1907 at age of 14 yr 8 months. We called her Tot. A few years before [*circa 1883*], father bought a coal and carrying business [*in Milton*] and worked this till his health broke down then Jim carried on. Altogether they had it for 35 years. Jim bought a Bookseller & stationer business in 1918 and only had it 4½ months when he died then I [*i.e. Sarah Ann*] carried it on for 20½ years then selling it to marry William Hamilton of Gore. [*William Hamilton, our maternal grandfather, was the widower of Sarah's older sister Mary. William died 19 days after marrying Sarah.*]

Further details about the eight Murphy children are provided by other family recollections and by official documents. Three of the children died before reaching marriageable age, two never married, and one (Sarah) married late in life; only two daughters (Mary and Annie) produced children of their own.

- **Bridget** (so in the civil birth register but christened **Eliza Jane**, and commonly known as **Jeannie**): born 19 September 1873, Manuka Creek, Tuapeka, Otago – the *Bruce Herald* reports this birth as of a son. Jeannie passed the third standard at Tokomairiro School; never married; died 11 September 1945, Milton, buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 14, plot 11-13. [See end note 2 re names and date of birth.]
- **Mary Seed (Polly)**: born 24 August 1876, Akatore, Tokomairiro, Otago; passed the fourth standard at Tokomairiro School; married William Hamilton, 24 August 1897, Milton; died 17 May 1937, Gore, Southland. [For her married life see essay on William K. Hamilton.]
- **Sarah Ann**: born 5 December 1878, Akatore; passed the sixth standard at Tokomairiro School; ran stationery shop, 122 Union Street, Milton, after brother James's death in 1918; married William Hamilton (her sister Mary's widower), July 1939; William died 19 days after the wedding and is buried in Gore Cemetery; Sarah later lived at 53 Baker Street, Caversham, Dunedin, died in Dunedin on 25 January 1952, and is buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 14, plot 11-13.
- **John William**: born 23 June 1880, Akatore; passed the third standard at Tokomairiro School; killed at age 11 in a fall from a horse, 2 February 1892, Milton, buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 6, plot 9/10. The *Bruce Herald*, 5 February 1892, reports:

... the horse stumbled and fell on his knees. The boy was thrown over his head, and when picked up it was found that he was dead, his neck being broken. His mother and two Salvation Army lasses were standing close by The funeral ... was very largely attended.
- **Annie Maria**: born 6 July 1882, Helensbrook, Tokomairiro, Otago; passed the sixth standard at Tokomairiro School; married John Robinson, 1908, Milton. Children: John Clarence (birth registered 1910); John died 28 May 1943, Annie died 28 May 1959, Milton, both buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 16, plot 94/95 (though the headstone is on the grave at plot 49/50).
- **William**: born 31 May 1884, Milton, Tokomairiro, Otago; remained in the infants class for five or six years at Tokomairiro School; died aged 17, 3 December 1901, Milton, buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 6, plot 9/10.
- **James Seed**: born 28 July 1889, Milton; passed the sixth standard at Tokomairiro School; never married; ran coal and carrying business after father's death, then 1 September 1918 purchased stationery shop; elected as a borough councillor May 1917; died aged 29 of influenza, 15 December

1918. His obituary in the *Bruce Herald* (16 December, p5) states that he was 'of a quiet and unassuming disposition, and devoted his spare time to study'. Buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 13, plot 11. (Plots 10 and 11 of Block 13 constitute one grave, bought by an unrecorded purchaser. It has a concrete surround topped by a metal bar. The left-hand half of the grave (plot 10) is occupied by the remains of Walter Henry Wood, aged 43, buried there in May 1903. W.H. Wood was a borough councillor and prominent businessman.)

- **Esther Seed (Tot):** born 6 November 1892, Milton; passed the third standard at Tokomairiro School; died aged 14, 2 September 1907, buried in Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 14, plot 11-13, by the Anglican priest.

It may be indicative of William Murphy's social aspirations that when reporting the birth of his daughter Mary he described himself to the registrar as 'Farmer' – at the time he was tree-felling in the Akatore bush.

Milton

According to the *Cyclopedia of New Zealand*, vol.4, published in 1904, the township of Milton dates only from the year 1860, however, the massive influx of population into Otago generated by the discovery of gold about that time had such an impact on Milton that six years later it was proclaimed an incorporated town with its own mayor and council. From its beginning Milton developed steadily into the prosperous service centre of what became the fertile Tokomairiro district in Bruce County.

In the 1880s and '90s Milton had a fairly stable population of around 1,150. The district is said to have been somewhat isolated and generally conservative, but women's suffrage and with it the temperance movement were live issues at this time. In the early 1890s 'larrikinism' among the youths of the town was seen to be a problem.

By the beginning of the 20th century Milton, with a population now of 1,500, had 'many large and handsome public buildings'. It also prided itself on having two banks, its own newspaper, a post and telegraph office, a district high school, four hotels and a courthouse. It claimed to be 'one of the cleanest and most complete towns in New Zealand'! We are further informed that 'the roads around the town are level and excellent for cycling. The Tokomairiro river is well stocked with trout; and the neighbourhood affords rabbit-shooting for sportsmen.'

About half the population were Presbyterian by religious affiliation, and about a quarter Anglican, with the Methodist, Roman Catholic and Baptist churches also having significant though variable representation. William and Elizabeth Murphy were members, probably fairly nominal on William's part, of the local Anglican church until 1884 when William (but probably not Elizabeth) joined the newly established Salvation Army corps.

Land holdings

Before 1879 ownership of land was the sole qualification for the franchise. The 1871-72 electoral roll for the Bruce district (correct as at 1 September 1871) is the first on which the name of 'Murphy, William Henry' appears (he added the middle name to distinguish himself from another William Murphy in the town); his 'Place of abode' is stated to be Milton and his qualification as a voter as being his freehold ownership of 'Milton, section land'. Even before his marriage, therefore, William owned land in the township.

This qualification continues to apply until the 1880 electoral roll. However, from 1881 to 1890 he is listed on the rolls as having only a residential and not a freehold qualification. That he had given up his freehold in Milton at this time is corroborated by the fact that his name does not appear in the official nationwide *Return of Freeholders* of October 1882. Probably William had sold his land in order to buy the coal and carrying business that remained in the family until 1918.

The carrier business obviously prospered, as the 1893 electoral roll declares that 'Murphy, William H., Milton, carter' has the freehold of 'sects. 8 & 9, G.E. Brown's subdivision, Milton'. After William's son, James Seed Murphy, took over the business he is recorded in the 1911 electoral roll as 'coal dealer, Union St, Milton', where these sections were located.

Records held in the Dunedin office of Land Information New Zealand tell the Union Street story more fully (see Deeds Index N, folios 85 and 87, and Deeds Registers 94, folio 554 and 140, folio 547). G.E. Brown's subdivision was part of Section 102, Block XII, Tokomairiro Survey District. In March 1890, William Murphy purchased for £195 (funded by a mortgage) four adjacent ¼ acre lots (nos.8, 9, 22 and 23) from this sub-division, stretching from the Main South Road (later Union Street) through to George Street. On Lot 9 stood (or William built) the two-storeyed house currently designated 224 Union Street.

The family retained ownership of Lot 9 and the house until August 1923, more than 33 years, at which time the widowed Elizabeth Ellen Murphy sold the property and moved in with her daughter Sarah over the stationery shop at 122 Union Street where Elizabeth died eight months later. The Murphy's three other 'G.E. Brown' sections had apparently been disposed of earlier.

The Murphy family in Milton

School records indicate that the Murphy family were living 'near Spencer St' in January 1884 and for at least the next ten years, then two entries dated February 1898 give 'North end of town' and 'Johnstone St', as the family's place of abode. Johnson Street runs parallel to Spenser Street so these various addresses may, in fact, all refer to the same property.

Why they did not live in the house on William's Union Street property is a mystery – maybe it hadn't been built – though they eventually moved there. Annie Osborne Hay née Hamilton remembers that

Grandad Murphy and Uncle Jim had a carrying business for many years, when they lived in Union St. in that two-storeyed house; he owned most of the land around that house, and kept two working horses.... Grandma used to ride a horse side-saddle before my time – it was from that horse Johnny fell, and was killed... I don't think Grandma rode much after that.

All of the children attended an infants' school (Miss Davidson's) before going on to the Tokomairiro primary school, where their tenure ranged from a little over four years (Jeannie) to 10 years or more (Sarah and Annie), but none had any further formal education.

About the 'Bookseller & stationer business' mentioned by Sarah Hamilton, Annie Hamilton, Sarah's niece, records that 'it was a two-storeyed brick shop in the main street of Milton, two doors from the S[alvation] A[rmy] hall, and it is still there Grandma [i.e. Elizabeth Ellen Murphy née Seed] died there, and we spent many holidays there too'. The shop with its upstairs flat was still standing (**three** doors north of the SA hall) and in good repair in 2010.

Councillor Murphy

From 1891 to 1896 W.H. Murphy was secretary of the Tokomairiro Caledonian Society. However, of more significance in indicating William's standing in the community was his election to and long service on the Milton Borough Council. The *Bruce Herald* of 20 December 1892 carries the following report:

Nominations were taken at the Courthouse on Saturday last for the office of Councillor for East Ward of the Borough of Milton, rendered vacant by the election of Mr Bastings to the Mayoralty [sic]. Mr William Murphy, proposed by T.M. Baldwin and Mr G. Reed, being the only candidate nominated, the Returning Officer, Mr Brookes, declared him duly elected.

On being re-elected in 1905, at the age of 70, William claimed, according to the *Bruce Herald* of 28 April 1905, that 'he had fought right and left for the ratepayers during the past 15 years' – a slight exaggeration, '12 years' would be more accurate.

His obituary says that, as councillor for the East Ward, William 'was known for the patient attention he gave to its wants'. He resigned from the council only during the last year of his life after more than 14 years of service.

The Salvation Army

No doubt the Murphys' life would have proceeded uneventfully in this small provincial backwater if the Salvation Army had not come to town. The Army weekly *The War Cry* of 19 July 1884 thunders '**Siege of Milton and BATTLE OF TOKOMAIRO**'; 'War was declared here on Thursday' the report begins and gives a blow-by-blow account of the 'battle', concluding with:

Sinners trembled beneath the power that was brought against them. The devil raged, and by the time we had finished his position in the hearts of the people was weakened, and he shall shortly lose them altogether. As it was,

one of his big soldiers deserted him, and came over on the Lord's side, and after a few more battles great victories for God will be the result.

Lord, save the people!

Staff-Officer LAWRENSON

That 'big soldier' was none other than William Murphy! The next week's *War Cry* continues the saga: '**War at Milton**'

.... In the afternoon, rapt attention as all the new converts spoke of the great things God had done for them.

No.1 said he used to spend Sunday in a public-house playing cards, but now he is a new creature in Christ Jesus.

The War Cry of 26 June 1886 in a report from Milton Corps tells us, amongst other things, that 'the Hallelujah coal merchant is praising God for taking the desire for drink, smoking, and every sin completely away'.

An item in the *Bruce Herald* of 8 December 1869 suggests that there was possibly good reason in his past life for William's remorse: the paper reports that a William Murphy had been charged with being drunk and disorderly, and fined 10s.

After two years William was still going strong with the Salvationists. *The War Cry* of 8 Sept 1888 reports the fourth anniversary of 'the Milton Militants': '....Brother Murphy, the first Army convert in Milton, brought down the house with his past and present experiences.' And the issue of 1 December of that year mentions that 'Brother Murphy, the Hallelujah Irishman, ... is still to the front, praising the Lord with all his might'.

Not only William, but his five daughters also became Salvationists: a photograph in *The War Cry* of 20 February 1904 shows the Murphy sisters all in uniform, with the caption: 'They are capable lasses, can sing well, lead meetings, sell *War Crys*, and can always be relied upon to do their share of the fighting!' Whether William's wife Elizabeth ever became a Salvationist has yet to be determined.

In 1889 William Murphy is still making the news: the *War Cry* of 9 March of that year, under the headline OTAGO BATTLES, includes the information from Milton Corps that:

the irrepressible Brother Murphy was well to the front, took up the collection, lent valuable aid in begging for it, and sang a song of thanksgiving after it was done. He's a jolly chap, is Murphy, and a rale [*sic*] Salvationist too.

However, the next mention of William in *The War Cry* is somewhat less appreciative. The issue of 28 December 1889 contains the report of a tour made by the Southern Musical Troupe, which included a stop at Milton.

Here we drop across Brother Murphy, who kindly offered to take our brass instruments to Henley, where we are in for a meeting. We were glad of the offer, so went forth, boarded the train, and arrived at our destination.... Time rolls on, and we find it is soon meeting time....

'Where's Brother Murphy?' 'Oh, he's not arrived yet.' Well, patience is a virtue, so we wait a while. We did wait, but no Brother Murphy and no brass, so we have to depend entirely on our vocal powers.

We never do hear the reason for Brother Murphy's delay.

But what do we make of the following item in the *Bruce Herald* of 23 January 1891 (p3):

MR W.H. MURPHY was nominated to the office of vestryman of St. John's on Wednesday evening, and was earnestly entreated by all present including the Chairman, to accept the nomination. He, however, resolutely declined, characteristically remarking that it took him all his time to collect what was owing to him for coals, and he could not afford to also collect for the church.

William, a closet Anglican! (Or was he there with his Anglican wife?)

William's position as a borough councillor must have made for some awkward moments in council meetings when complaints were made of the Army breaking bye-laws, and being a nuisance on the streets of the town. No comment by Cr Murphy is recorded in the *Bruce Herald* report (14 July 1893) when the subject was first discussed by the council. In later meetings William did his best to protect the Army, but as the Salvationists fully intended their street meetings to be a nuisance to certain citizens of the town, e.g. publicans, and were deliberately holding the meetings in defiance of the law, there was little William could say in the Army's defence. His tactic seemed to be to attempt to delay or moderate any action the council might want take against the Army.

After Salvationists were twice prosecuted by the council, but continued their street marches and meetings anyway, albeit with reduced bellicosity, the matter seemed to fizzle out towards the end of 1893. As Michael Hay summarises in his essay published in *Building God's Own Country* (2004): 'The Council accepted that a Salvationist playing a musical instrument in the Borough of Milton had to be tolerated if he did not cause a nuisance. The Army had defended its right to conduct outdoor meetings but agreed to avoid creating a nuisance.' A report from Milton in *The War Cry* of 3 March 1894 mentions in passing that 'it was a nice sight last Sunday to see him [*Cr Murphy*] at the head of the march, leading his little boy by the hand, singing the praises of God'.

A Salvationist no more

In May 1901 it was the corps Harvest Festival that benefited from William's exuberance, and his generosity, *The War Cry* reporting that the sale of goods 'was a bit stiff, until Brother Murphy, Brother Harker and Sister Day began to buy'. But the report of the Harvest Festival the next year suggests that all had not gone well within the ranks for at least two of the big spenders: '...special thanks', it says, 'to Brother McGregor and **Mr** Murphy and Mr Harker...!' William was no longer a Salvationist. What had happened?

A court case reported in the *Bruce Herald* of 10 November 1903, though occurring after William's excommunication, might – or might not – give a pointer. The headline reads: **Cases of Sly-grog Selling at Milton.** It needs to be explained that Milton had become 'dry' from 30 June 1903, on which date all licences for the sale of liquor in the district had been cancelled. In the case before the court, William Murphy is called as a witness for the prosecution, having apparently, after 30 June, bought beer from the defendant, the ex-licensee of the Royal Hotel. It is unclear from William's evidence or from that of his companion whether William drank any beer on that occasion, but it seems certain that beer was supplied and that it was paid for by William. This was enough for the magistrate to convict the defendant. Whether it is enough to convict William of violating his teetotal and prohibitionist principles is doubtful; it could well be argued that by procuring the conviction of a sly-grog seller, William was upholding the community's desire to ban liquor selling within the borough.

For whatever reason, William's death in 1907 went unreported in *The War Cry*. Milton Corps's No.1 convert, who had staunchly stood by his comrades for more than 17 years, had deserted the cause; his name could no longer be mentioned amongst the faithful.

Death and burial

The borough council meeting of 10 April 1907 received a letter from William apologising for his absence and stating that, owing to the state of his health, he did not intend to offer himself for re-election at the impending elections. The minutes record that:

It was unanimously resolved that the Clerk forward the following resolution to Cr. Murphy: That the Council place on record its appreciation of Councillor Murphy's lengthy and valuable services to the Borough and regret that the unsatisfactory state of his health will prevent him again offering himself for re-election at the forthcoming municipal elections. While trusting that Cr. Murphy's enforced retirement may only be of a temporary duration, this Council extends to him its deepest sympathy in his affliction with the fervent wish that his declining years may be full of peace and comfort.

Through the wooden phraseology one can sense a genuine respect and even affection for this irrepressible and at times irascible old man.

Six months later, on 7 October 1907, William Henry Murphy died aged 73; his burial is recorded in the register of St John's Anglican church, Milton. The newspaper obituary states that William 'had been ailing for more than a year' and died of 'a weak heart, aggravated by an attack of bronchitis'. It is sad to read, also, that, 'at his written request', the funeral was to be a private one – possibly to ensure that no Salvationists (other than his own children) would be present.

William made his will on 23 May of the year he died, making his wife sole executrix and leaving all his possessions to her. Elizabeth's signature on the 'affidavit of death and executrixship' is in a very unsteady hand.

Elizabeth survived her husband until 29 April 1924, dying at the age of 75. Her estate was valued at a very respectable £1,454/6/10. She and William are buried together in the Fairfax Cemetery, Milton, Block 14, plot 11-13, along with three of their five daughters. Elizabeth, like William, was buried an Anglican.

End note 1: Who was Sarah (Sally) Murphy?

The first christening recorded in the Clonsilla parish register is in 1830 and the first marriage in 1831 – too late for a record of Sarah Murphy's birth or her parentage, however the newspaper notice and the civil register entry for her death both give her age as 82 (though the church burial register says 84); as she died on 10 February 1890, an age of 82 would make her year of birth 1807 or possibly 1808.

And who were her parents? Circumstantial evidence points to her being the daughter of John Smith and Rachel née Borbridge, to whom a marriage licence was issued in 1807 and who subsequently farmed 57 acres in Sheepmore townland (often considered part of Coolmine), near to John and Sarah Murphy's farmlet.

The evidence is as follows:

1. The name 'Sarah Smith, Coolmine' is included in a list of Clonsilla parish confirmations carried out by the Church of Ireland bishop on 5 June 1824. Thus a person of that name did exist in the right place and of the right age and denomination to become our Sarah Murphy.
2. The first son born to John and Sarah Murphy was named John, and the first daughter Rachel. While the name 'John' could have been given after the boy's father, it is more likely to be after a grandfather, and 'Rachel' is very likely to be after a grandmother. Also, names given to other Murphy children – Jane, Edward, Eliza – match names of Smith family members (though these names are fairly common).
3. Of the 15 people named in the Clonsilla baptism register as sponsors (godparents) of various of John and Sarah's children, 10 are Smiths, including John Smith (three times) and Rachel Smith.
4. Thomas Smith of 'Springlawn', Coolmine, Blanchardstown, is named (along with William Mackey, Sarah's son-in-law) as an executor of Sarah Murphy's will.

End Note 2: Names and Date of Birth of first Murphy child

The MS notes made by Sarah Hamilton née Murphy include the following story about the naming of William Murphy's first child.

When the Murphys lived at Manuka Creek & their first child herald[ed] its arrival the husband [i.e. William] set off on horseback for Milton a good few miles from Manuka Creek to bring the doctor. Later another man followed also on horseback to say the child had arrived [and] not to bring the doctor [as] all was well. The new father was 'toasting' this firstborn with Granny Capstick & she said when you are in Milton why not register the baby & save you coming back all that distance & said call the child after her 'Bridget', & he not knowing whether the baby was a boy or a girl did so (fun [sic] if the child had been a boy[!]). When he got home & told the new mother what he had done she said I am not going to call my baby 'Bridget', & the child was afterwards christened by Rev Issit 'Eliza Jane', Eliza after her dad's sister & Jane after her mother's sister. The name was never altered at the P. Office & when Jeannie went to get her birth certificate one time they said there was no Eliza Jane Murphy born on 19th Sept but there was a Bridget Murphy born 21st Sept. She neither liked Eliza Jane or Bridget & told me one time when she died to put only 'Jeannie' in [the news]paper. When she died I did so & the doctor rang up when filling up his papers to see why she was called by 3 names, 'Bridget' & 'Eliza Jane' & Jeannie, & we told him 'Bridget' was done in nonsense the day she was born but she was christened 'Eliza Jane' & we called her Jeannie.

This story rings true except for the matter of the date of the birth. The civil register entry gives the date of birth as 12 September (not 21st as the story above has it – an impossible date as the birth was registered on 20th). However, if the story is true, it is more likely that the date of birth was 19 September (maybe William was still a little befuddled when he told the registrar it was 12th); the 19th would make sense of William leaving home to get the doctor, being overtaken and told that the child had been safely born, then going on to Milton and registering the child on 20 September. Also, from the family story it is obvious that Jeannie herself believed that her birthday was on 19 September. The evidence, then, is strongly in favour of 19th, which becomes the preferred date despite the '12th Sept' of the official record.