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**WILSON FAMILY**

**Papers, 1814-1944**

**Reel M940**

**Mrs Cecil Firbank  
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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The Wilson Family settled in Banffshire in northern Scotland in the seventeenth century. They were merchants and shipowners and their vessels traded with the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Spain and Portugal. Captain John Wilson (c. 1762-1833) ventured further afield, voyaging to Brazil and India. He married Barbara Grey (d. 1859). Three of their children emigrated to Australia.

William Wilson (c. 1806-1840) commanded his father's brig *Devoren*, which sailed to Sydney and Hobart in 1822. His brother John Wilson (c. 1808-1825), who possibly sailed on the same ship, worked in the Commissariat in Sydney in 1823-24. He died in the following year, soon after his arrival in Van Diemen's Land. Captain Wilson returned to Australia on the *Devoren* in 1824 and subsequently settled in Hobart. He married Grace Lord, the daughter of the soldier, pastoralist and merchant Edward Lord. Wilson had mercantile and pastoral interests, but appears to have had financial difficulties in his last years.

James Milne Wilson (1812-1880) left Banff in 1828 and joined his brother in Van Diemen's Land in December 1829. He worked in engineering and shipping and later acquired pastoral properties in Van Diemen's Land and the Port Phillip District. He leased the Cascade Brewery in Hobart for 14 years. In 1859 Wilson was elected to the Tasmanian Legislative Council and held the seat until his death. He served as a minister in the Whyte Ministry in 1863-66 and was Mayor of Hobart in 1868-69. In August 1869 he became premier and colonial secretary and held the posts until November 1872. He then became president of the Legislative Council. He was knighted in 1873 and made a KCMG in 1878.

In 1847 James Wilson married Deborah Degraives (1821-1897). She was the daughter of Peter Degraives (1778-1852), who emigrated to Van Diemen's Land in 1821. He was a prominent landowner and businessman and was part-owner and manager of the Cascade Brewery in Hobart.

# WILSON FAMILY

## Reel M940

### 1. Letterbook of John Wilson, April 1823-December 1824 (83pp)

Letters written in Sydney by John Wilson to his brother Captain William Wilson (Hobart), his parents John and Barbara Wilson (Banff, Scotland), his sister Jane Wilson (Banff), Rev. William Allardyce (Banff), William Allardyce (Hobart), J. Ogilvie (Hobart) and Walter Bethune (Hobart). They refer to the departure of Captain Wilson from Sydney, shipping arrivals and departures, the weather, financial transactions, the shipment of wheat, requests for clothes and other items, Wilson's employment in the Commissariat Department in Sydney and his relations with William Wemyss, the deputy commissary general, economic conditions in Sydney, convict society, dances, the discoveries of John Oxley at Moreton Bay, mutual friends, family news, the marriage of Jane Wilson, and Captain Wilson's return to Hobart (August 1824).

The final three letters in the book were written in Sydney in December 1824 by Captain William Wilson to his father, John Price & Co. (London) and James Love (Tooting, Surrey). They deal with the voyage of the *Devoren* from England, the loss of the ship's foremast, future movements and the possible sale of the ship, financial transactions, the possible transfer of John Wilson to the Commissariat in Hobart, William Wilson's visit to Van Diemen's Land and his engagement to Grace Lord.

### 2. Notebook of James Wilson, 1828-30

A small notebook containing very brief entries recording Wilson's voyage from Banff to Sunderland on the brig *Sisters* (Sept. 1828), from Sunderland to London on the *Devoren* (Oct. 1828) and from London to Hobart on the *Devoren* (16 July-25 Dec. 1829). It also records a voyage from Hobart to the South Seas whaler (1 June-3 Oct. 1830).

### 3. Letters from Jane Wilson to William and James Wilson, 1824-34

Letters from Jane Wilson, later Jane Craigie, to her brothers in Australia, written from Banff, Scotland, and Midnapore, Fort William (Calcutta) and Barrackpore, India. (11 letters)

### 4. Letters from John and Barbara Wilson to William and James Wilson, 1827-49

The letters were written by John Wilson in Banff and London (1827-30) and Barbara Wilson in Banff (1827-49) to their sons William Wilson (1827-35) and James Wilson (1830-49). They refer to family news, mutual friends, shipping movements, cargoes and financial transactions.

#### 5. **Letters from Deborah Wilson to James Wilson, 1851-52**

Letters from Deborah Wilson in Hobart to her husband James Wilson in Melbourne (Dec. 1851-Aug. 1852) referring to Hobart news, the receipt of gold from her brother William Degraives, horses, their children, the wreck of a steamer at King Island, her sadness at her separation from James and her wish that she and the children join him in Melbourne. (4 letters)

#### 6 **Papers of Sir James Wilson, 1835-80**

The papers include letters, legal documents, speeches, printed items and photographs. They include:

George Nicol to Wilson, 11 Sept. 1835: business affairs; mutual friends; bequests to Capt. Wilson and his sister.

Francis Watkins (Parramatta) to Wilson, 2 Nov. 1835: refers to affairs of Capt. William Wilson.

William Wilson (Hobart) to Capt. Thomas Bateman, 7 July 1836. (copy)

Thomas Hewitt (Hobart) to Capt. Thomas Bateman, 10 Oct. 1836: requests return of *Cheviot* to Van Diemen's Land so its accounts can be settled.

Power of attorney from Capt. William Wilson to his brother James Wilson, 10 Oct. 1836.

Wilson (Bay of Islands, New Zealand) to Capt. William Wilson, 17 Nov. 1836: cargo of *Cheviot*; difficulties with Capt. Thomas Bateman.

Wilson (Hobart) to his mother Barbara Wilson, 17 Nov. 1838: sends exchange for £100; debts of William Wilson.

Francis Watkins (Parramatta) to Wilson, 7 Sept. 1842: family news.

Claud Allardyce (Portland Bay, Port Phillip) to Wilson, 21 Feb., 4 May 1847: property matters; Western District and Gippsland; litigation.

Wilson to Claud Allardyce, July 1847, 21 Feb. 1848, 5 July 1851. (drafts)

Commission of appointment of Wilson as a member of the Executive Council of Tasmania, signed by Governor Sir Thomas Gore Brown, 20 Jan. 1863. (manuscript)

Commission of appointment of Wilson as Colonial Secretary of Tasmania, signed by Governor Sir Charles Du Cane, 4 Aug. 1869. (manuscript)

Legislative Council of Tasmania. Governor's commission and instructions, 24 Aug. 1869. (printed)

Banquet for members of Intercolonial Conference, Hobart, 1 July 1870. (printed)

Wilson to Sir Charles Du Cane, 16 June 1870: articles in *Hobart Mercury*. (draft)

Wilson to Sir Charles Du Cane, May 1871: reservation of legislation; views of Attorney-General. (draft)

Sir Charles Du Cane [Adelaide] to Wilson, 12 June 1871: Intercolonial Free Trade Bill; voyage to Adelaide; Wilson to preside at meetings of Executive Council.

Tasmanian House of Assembly. *Votes and Proceedings*, 11 July 1872.

Wilson to Roland Davies, 22 Aug. 1872: work of Davies for Royal Main Line Railway Commissioners.

Speech of Governor Sir Charles Du Cane at opening of Parliament, 23 Oct. 1872. (printed with manuscript amendments)

Address of welcome by Wilson on the occasion of the visit of the Duke of Genoa to Hobart, June 1873. (manuscript)

Tasmanian House of Assembly. Correspondence relating to transit of Venus, 1874. (printed, 7pp)

Documents relating to the conferral of the KCMG on Wilson, May 1878.

Sir Frederick Weld (Hobart) to Wilson, 5 Jan. 1880: Wilson's health; affair of Colonel W.H. St Hill.

Lady Weld (Hobart) to Wilson, 24 Feb. 1880: thanks for gift; Wilson's health.

Drafts of speeches by Wilson.

Portrait photograph of Wilson.

Mrs Duff Ross (Huntly, Scotland) to Lady Wilson, 12 March 1894: her connections with Allardyce and Wilson families.

Photographs by J.W. Beattie of a house.

## 7. **Miscellaneous papers of the Wilson Family, 1814-94**

The papers consist of letters, legal documents, verse and printed items. They include:

Letters of introduction for William Wilson of the ship *Devoren*, 1818.

German documents relating to the *Devoren*, 1827.

Capt. William Wilson (Hobart) to Piesse & Co., n.d.: news of the death of his father; debts; financial proposals. (incomplete)

Bell (?) (Calcutta) to Jane Craigie, 20 Sept. 1834: visit of his wife and children to Van Diemen's Land; his health.

Bell (?) (Calcutta) to William Wilson, 23 Sept. 1834: thanks for hospitality of the Wilsons to his wife.

Francis Watkins (Parramatta) to Mrs Wilson, 16 Oct. 1834: thanks for letter; mutual friends.

P. Neill (?) to William Wilson, 20 May 1836: returns engraving of Wilkie's *The Blind Fiddler*.

William Bethune (London) to James Wilson, 20 July 1841: straitened circumstances of Wilson's mother.

William Degraives (Melbourne) to James Wilson, 3 Nov. 1849: business affairs; brewery; departure of employees for California.

Barbara Wilson (Banff) to her nephew, 8 Sept., 22 Sept. 1853: visit of Degraives to Scotland; inquires after Claud Allardyce; thanks for specimens of gold.

Agreement signed by crew of ship Melbourne on voyage from Hobart to Melbourne, 2 Jan. 1857.

E.P. Wilson (Salt Lake City) to ?, 2 Sept. 1882: voyage to New Zealand, Hawaii and United States; impressions of America.

Mary Finlayson (Huntly, Scotland) to Lady Wilson, 18 Oct. 1893, 26 Feb. 1894: seeks aid; in service with Mrs Wilson for 18 years; thanks for gift.

Copy of inscription on tomb of Christian Wilson (d. 1823) and John Wilson (d. 1833)

Verse

Program of Newtown Races, 17 March 1841.

Programs of Hobart Regatta, 1 Dec. 1838, 12 Dec. 1876, 1 Feb. 1879.

## **8. Correspondence of the Allardyce Family, c. 1828-50**

The Wilson and Allardyce families were related. The Allardyce Family were based in Aberdeenshire. William and Claud Allardyce emigrated to Van Diemen's Land at about the same time as William and James Wilson settled in the colony.

The correspondence includes letters of Rev. William Allardyce (Rhynie, Scotland) to his mother [1828], William Allardyce (Banff) to William Wilson (1835), Ann Allardyce (Cromarty) to William Wilson (1835), Francis Allardyce (Aberdeen) to Claud Allardyce (1837), Francis Allardyce (Rhynie) to Claud Allardyce (1838), Nancy Allardyce (Rhynie) to Claud Allardyce (Hobart), James Wilson (Hobart) to Rev. William Allardyce (Rhynie), (1839, draft), Claud Allardyce to James Wilson (1841), William Allardyce to James Wilson (1847) and William Allardyce (Rhynie) to James Wilson (1848, 1850).

There is also a copy of the will of William Allardyce of Blair, Van Diemen's Land, 26 September 1842.

## **9. Histories of the Wilson and Degraives families, c. 1935-44 (2 vols.)**

The two typescript volumes, with manuscript amendments, were probably written by Ada Wilson, the daughter of Sir James Wilson. The first typescript (93pp) mainly deals with the Degraives Family, including Deborah Degraives who married James Wilson. The second typescript (67pp) deals with the Wilson Family, in particular Sir James Wilson.