

# The Knox Chronicles

## Joseph Knox and his Family

By  
**Jane Knox and Janet Fearby**



Knox Farm in Kirlish - Drumquin Co Tyrone Northern Ireland



Knox Home "Montargis" in Toongabbie NSW Australia

Contributions by:

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Based on original work

"The Knoxes and the Newcombes"©

**By Peter Knox**

## Introduction - Jane Knox

### Great Granddaughter of Joseph Knox

Jane Knox-Kieपुरa was born in Toorak, Melbourne, Australia to Peter Knox and Monica Knox (nee Newcombe) and grew up in England, Spain and Portugal. She moved to Washington D.C. USA in 1968 where she worked at the World Bank. In 1975 she moved to Paris, France returning to the United States in 1980. She lives in Manhattan and New Hampshire with her husband Marjan Kieपुरa.



*Photo of Jane Knox during trip to Drumquin in December 2006 . Knox homestead in background.*

Jane received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in International Studies, Magna Cum Laude, from Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. She now works as Vice President of an international aerospace company. As an avid researcher of her family history she was delighted to find that her cousin Janet Fearby shared the same passion. The initial goal was to complete Peter Knox's work that he had started in 1994 but was unable to finish before passing away in 1998. Since 1998 the internet has opened up whole new resources unavailable in those early days and Janet and Jane have pooled all their resources to complete the "Knox Chronicles".

Janet and Jane are related through their great-grandfather Joseph Knox. Joseph married Elizabeth Jane Drew, they had eight children. Janet's grandmother was Lilian Violet, the eldest child and Jane's grandfather was Errol Knox, the youngest. Pamela Knox O'Connor, Errol's daughter and sister to Peter Knox, has been the constant inspiration to complete the work. She has been tireless in her support. Janet Fearby's biography appears in these Chronicles.

*Joseph Knox was born in 1845, emigrated to Sydney, Australia in 1863. He married Elizabeth Jane Drew in 1870. He lived in Montargis, Wentworthville N.S.W. with his wife and family from the early 1890's until his death in 1919.*



*Photo leaving Silver Birch Hotel Omagh Co Tyrone*

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**Peter Knox** wrote “*The first identifiable Knox is my grandfather Joseph who was born in 1845 in Omagh, County Tyrone, in part of what is now known as Northern Ireland.*”

This was all the information my father had available, which had been passed on by Heather “Bill” Fearby, his cousin, the daughter of John Fearby and Lilian Violet (nee Knox). However, thanks to the great wealth of information available on the internet and through the incredible work done by the archivists in New South Wales, and Janet Fearby, co-author of these chronicles, we are able to give significantly more detail about Joseph’s origins and his life.



*Photos of Drumquin in the early days.*





*Drumquin Market Day - 19th Century*

## **Joseph Knox**

### **The early days in the hills of Drumquin, Co Tyrone**

Joseph Knox was born in 1845 in the midst of the potato famine, to Samuel and Margaret Knox (nee Frame). He was born in a small farming community in the Townland of Kirlish near Drumquin, Co. Tyrone, Northern Ireland. Drumquin is close to Omagh, which is the nearest major town. It appears he was the youngest of at least four children. It is unlikely that we will ever know the exact date he was born, it is even conceivable that he did not know this himself. Certainly the age he gave for himself at the time of the birth of each of his own children was inconsistent with his age at the time of his marriage. However, 1845 is the most probable year. We do know for sure he was born between 1844 and 1846. A brief glimpse into the life and world he was born to in Drumquin can be gleaned from the following account written by Lieutenant William Lancy in a letter to J. R. Ward in 1834.

This survey carried out by a young English army officer in 1834 paints a picture of Drumquin as a very poverty stricken place. This was of course before the terrible potato famine of the 1840's so one can only imagine the plight of the poor inhabitants by the time Joseph was born in 1845.

*“The northern, southern and western parts of the Parish are wild and mountainous dominated by a mountain range known locally simply as the Longfield Hills. There are several picturesque and wild glens, the principal one being Carrich-a-ness which is situated 2 miles to the west of the town of Drumquin. The other glen is situated 3 miles to the west of Drumquin and is called Slevin glen. There are numerous water falls which combined with the ruined bridge and the wildness of the glen, have a very picturesque effect.*”

*Two streams run through the parish, namely the Fairy Water and the Drumquin Water. The Parish is well served by fresh springs and if anything has too much water. The principal lakes in the Parish are Lough Bradan, Lough Lee and Lough Corr. The shores of these lakes are soft and boggy. Local tradition has it that these lakes are inhabited by wild horses.*

*The only road of consequence passing through Longfield West is the road from Londonderry to Enniskillen, which passes through the town of Drumquin.*

*Drumquin is a poor looking place; the houses mean and out of repair. It has a weekly market on Thursdays and a daily foot post but has no trade of any kind to enrich it.*

*The dress worn by the inhabitants differs in no way from that of the surrounding Parishes. Their diet consists principally of potatoes and porridge made of oatmeal and sometimes a dinner is varied by the addition of a little bacon or greens. Their manners are generally civil and obliging. They complain much of the short leases and high rents and with justice (or the lack of it), if we may judge from the squalid and poverty stricken appearance of many of them.”*

## JOSEPH'S PARENTS

Samuel Knox (born between 1800–1810) and Margaret Frame

All we know about Samuel Knox is that when Joseph Knox's brother, John Knox got married on 21st October 1862 at the Presbyterian Church, Drumquin to Elizabeth Mellon, Samuel Knox, his father, was listed as “farmer from Kirlish”. The witness was his cousin Andrew McCrea who may well have been his closest relative (and a grandson of Joseph Knox). By this time, great-grandfather Joseph had probably already set off to Plymouth to find his way to Australia.

Samuel Knox was an Ulster Scots whose forebears had settled in the area like so many others in the 18th century. Searching through the very scant records that still exist in Northern Ireland and our research, it can be concluded that Samuel Knox might well be the son of Joseph Knox and Isabella of Camus, Strabane. Strabane is located in the North West of County Tyrone and straddles the border with County Donegal. We do know for certain that Samuel Knox had at least one brother, who was older, called Joseph Knox. This Joseph had married a Jane Thompson. This is all clearly documented in the Australian records. The only other information we have so far is that both Samuel and Margaret were listed as “dead” by the time Mary, their eldest daughter, emigrated to New South Wales on the Fairlie arriving on 29th April 1863.

Joseph further certified this when he emigrated to Australia on the Ironside on February 9th 1863 arriving in Australia on May 9th three months later. However, despite checking on all available Knox records there are no match-ups with any Samuel or Margaret Knox who could be Joseph's parents. It is possible they died along with so many between 1845 and 1850. We are not able to verify where they were born, married or died.

## JOSEPH KNOX'S EARLY LIFE

It is clear that Joseph Knox grew up on the land. In fact there was a Joseph Knox, most likely an uncle to Joseph or possibly his grandfather, who had fourteen arable acres and six acres of bog that were leased by the Echlins. In the Tithe Collection Book for Longfield West, Townland of Kirlish, ref Fin/5A/204A dated 21st September 1826 the amount due was a tithe of 14 shillings 11 pence. Because it was so difficult to make a living from the land we see Joseph's older

brother learning the trade of a “shoemaker”. Perhaps where Joseph may have had an advantage over his parents was that in 1845, and certainly by the time he reached school age, Joseph was eligible for the National System of education, introduced in 1840.

On a recent trip to the Knox Farm in Kirlish from the main center of Drumquin I noticed it was a 15-20 minute drive by car along quite a steep hill. The trip by foot would be over an hour in good weather. I tried to imagine a six year old making this round trip every day in the bitter wind and rain. However, records reveal that Joseph Knox could read and write extremely well and had obviously received an excellent education.

The Knox family would have attended the Drumquin Presbyterian Church where his brother John Frame Knox got married. How else he spent his childhood is unclear. In those days children were often required to stay at home to help with the farm, especially during the harvest. There is no question that Joseph must have enjoyed very good health to withstand such a rigorous lifestyle. School, the Church and the farm probably dominated his life. Kirlish and Drumquin and the adjoining Townlands and Parishes were very tight-knit communities and it emerges later on in these Chronicles that the Knox cousins remained very close in their new homeland in New South Wales.

## JOSEPH KNOX’S SIBLINGS

We know that Joseph Knox had at least one brother and two sisters. This information is based on New South Wales Passenger Lists and N.S.W. Birth, Marriage and Death Certificates. The following is what we know about his siblings.

### Mary Knox

Mary was born c. 1839 in County Tyrone as stated in Australian immigration, marriage and death records. She emigrated to Australia on board the Passenger Ship the Fairlie arriving in New South Wales on 29th April 1863 (see Reel 2139, 2481). The Passenger List shows her age as 23, a “house servant” from Kirlish, County Tyrone. Unlike the rest of her family she shows her religion as Church of England and not Presbyterian. Her “state of bodily health, strength and probable usefulness” was listed as “good”. It stated she could “read” only, indicating that she was unable to write. She was “assigned” to her cousin, Andrew Knox of Charles Street Sydney who paid £3.00 as sponsor. (Joseph Knox was later living at 31 Charles St. so perhaps this was Andrew’s address). The other passengers on the Fairlie appeared to be predominantly female, including other young ladies from County Tyrone. There is no indication that any of them are related although there was a young lady sponsored by a McBaron who may have been related to Mary’s future husband. On the Passenger List, Mary indicates that both her parents were deceased.

Mary married John Baron (also listed as McBaron), a bachelor, on 4th February 1873 at Elizabeth Street, Sydney according to the rites of the Presbyterian Church. The officiating Minister was James Fullerton. She shows her age as 33 at the time of marriage and her birthplace as Ireland. No occupation is shown. John Baron was a farmer aged 39 from Ireland. The witnesses were Hugh McBaron and Margaret J. Bell.. It is strange that none of her immediate family were witnesses.

Mary died on 31st December 1896, aged 57 at “Fern Vale” near Robertson. Her parents are shown as Samuel Knox, farmer, and Margaret Fraim. It also shows that she had been 31 years

in N.S.W. and 35 years old at time of marriage (note age shown on marriage certificate as 33). Here the name Baron is shown as McBarron. Mary was buried at the Church of England Cemetery in Robertson by a Wesleyan Minister. Mary and John had no children.

It is not really known how close Mary might have been to her siblings. More research remains to be done on her early life in Australia.

### John Frame Knox

John Frame Knox was born in County Tyrone, Ireland c. 1841 to Samuel Knox and Margaret Frame. He married Elizabeth Mellon, daughter of William Mellon of Tullyard and Sarah Knox at the Drumquin Presbyterian Meeting House on 21st October 1862 – copy of this marriage certificate is available, as noted in Omagh Book 1 p. 58. At the time of his marriage he is listed as “shoemaker”. “John Knox full age, bachelor, shoemaker of Kirlish, son of Samuel Knox, farmer of Kirlish in the presence of Andrew McCrea and William Watson.” Andrew McCrea appears to be the brother of Ann McCrea married to a Joseph Knox, farmer, son of Joseph Knox of Slevin. Because of the close association with McCreas later on in Australia, there is a strong possibility that great-great grandfather Samuel had a brother Joseph (this theory is reinforced by Australian records) thus allowing for the possibility that our Joseph’s grandfather was Joseph Knox, farmer of Slevin.

John and Elizabeth emigrated to Australia on the Peerless in 1866, arriving in New South Wales on 6th June 1866. He travelled with two infants Isabella, aged 2 (she became Eliza B or Lizzie B) and Margaret who was born on 16th June 1865 in Drumquin, Co. Tyrone, Ireland. He was listed as “shoemaker” from Drumquin, County Tyrone. His religion was listed as Presbyterian and records show that he could “read” and “write”. His wife, Elizabeth, could “read” only. They were both listed as aged 25. His parents, Samuel and Margaret Knox, were both listed as deceased. Elizabeth listed her mother (Sarah Knox Mellon) as deceased and her father, William Mellon as living in Tyrone. Most interesting of all is that he was sponsored by Joseph Knox of 31 Charles Street, Sydney, his brother. Charles Street was also the address of their cousin Andrew Knox. This is the area where Joseph Knox would later invest in real estate and no doubt where he was living when according to Peter Knox, he had his job as an upholsterer in the Civil Service Stores. John Frame Knox was listed as Bootmaker in Gladesville in 1890. He died on 25 September 1895, aged 55 years, in Camperdown, N.S.W.

### THE CHILDREN OF JOHN AND ELIZABETH

**Isabella** - (born c. 1864 in County Tyrone) aged 2 when her parents emigrated on the Peerless in 1866 (see reels 2140, 2484); see Lizzie B or Eliza B in later NSW death certificates. A great point of interest is the name Isabella which reinforces the possibility that she was named after her grandmother.

**Margaret** was born on 16th June 1865 - this is the first of many sad stories. According to her death certificate she died on 6th January 1886, at Hawlong Station. She was documented as Margaret Knox, female servant aged 20 years and the cause of death was accidental drowning. Her father was registered as John Knox, Shoe Maker. The certificate was signed by Joseph Lenox, who was apparently no relation. A Magisterial Inquiry was apparently held. Particulars of Registration, 9th January 1886, Hay. Margaret was buried on 9th January 1886 at Hay Cemetery by Geo. H. Harrison, Undertakers. At the time of her death she is shown as “unmarried”, place of birth was Ireland and she was listed as having lived fourteen years in

the Australian colonies. We still need to investigate and research the story of Margaret and the circumstances of her death. The above information was obtained from the official death certificate Registration No. 1886/006781. It is sad that she seems to have died without any family around her.

When Peter Knox was in communication with Heather Fearby, granddaughter of Joseph Knox, she related the story of Margaret drowning at Hay, believing Margaret to have been a sister of Joseph, not a niece. However, the evidence is now clear. She was the second daughter of John Frame Knox and Elizabeth Mellon Knox, who came to a very tragic end.

**Sarah Knox** was born in 1867 and died aged 9 months on 1st April 1868 at Campbell Street. The informant was Andrew Knox who registered himself as “uncle”, of Charles Street. This is strange, as we now know that Andrew Knox was a cousin, not an uncle. It is interesting to note however, that he was still living at Charles Street in 1868, unless it is a different Andrew Knox, who may well have been an uncle or great-uncle, since Sarah Knox’s grandmother was called Sarah Knox and may have had a brother Andrew. As mentioned earlier, this street seemed to be the Knox family headquarters in that period of time.

**Edith Rebecca** was born in 1869 - she married Charles Alfred Weston on 1st June 1893 at St. Paul’s Presbyterian Church, Balmain - a witness was our great-aunt Aurora Myrtle Knox, daughter of Joseph Knox and Elizabeth Jane Drew Knox. Edith died on 30 September 1943 at Morrison Road, Gladesville. Her five children were:

Charles	b. 1894
Gladys	b. 1896
Stanley A	b. 1897
Milton	b. 1898
Jean	b. 1902

**Emily** - born 1871 - died aged 16 months on 27th August 1872 at Belvoir Street, Strawberry Hills.

**Samuel Joseph** - born June 1873 - died on 21st August 1873 at Belvoir Street, Strawberry Hills.

**Louisa Jane** - born June 1873 - died 1873 (twin of Samuel Joseph).

**Emil** - born 1874 - died 1875.

**Amy** - born 1876 - died 1882.

**John Frame Knox** died on 25th November 1895 at Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown - his occupation was listed as “Bootmaker” and age given as 55 years, living 28 years in N.S.W. Both dates confirm approximate date of birth as 1840. He is survived by two children, Lizzie B aged 31 - see Isabella on the Peerless in 1866 and Edith Rebecca - born in N.S.W. in 1869. Informant of his death was his brother Joseph Knox. At time of death, he shows he married, aged 22, Elizabeth Melon (see below) - with one “1”. Certificate shows 1 male child, 6 females deceased - this is probably wrong as Margaret may not have been included and it should read 7 females deceased. However, there could also be a wrong entry and one Surname: Knox should read: Frame.

**Elizabeth Knox** (née Mellon) wife of John Frame Knox was the daughter of William Mellon of Tullyard and Sarah Knox. Her death certificate states that she was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, and that she had been in the Colonies 53 years - A curious entry states she was 30 at time of marriage making her 8 years older than John Frame. However, age given on the Peerless in 1866 is 25 years - same age as her husband. Elizabeth Knox died on 16th December 1918 at the home of her granddaughter Edith P. Weston at Reigate in Ross Street, Gladesville. She is buried at the Presbyterian Rookwood Cemetery.

### **Sarah Knox** (1843-1918)

Sarah Knox was born in Drumquin, County Tyrone, c.1843 to Samuel Knox and Margaret Frame - no record exists of her birth. She embarked on the Hornet, Passenger Ship, which arrived on 25th January 1865 in N.S.W. This is a very curious situation as there were two Sarah Knoxes from Drumquin, travelling together. Both were "house servants" and show their native place as near Drumquin. Sarah Knox aged 19 - House Servant - from Drumquin, County Tyrone, Ireland, daughter of Joseph and Jane Knox - father dead, mother living Drumquin - religion Presbyterian - could read - relative in Australia - sister Isabella Knox in Service in, Sydney. They were both sponsored it appears, by sister Isabella of Sydney. Sarah Knox aged 20 - ditto for everything - except that she could read and write. This scant information creates a problem - obviously one of the Sarahs is the daughter of Samuel and Margaret - sister of Mary, John and Joseph - and is remembered by the family as "Aunt Tare" who lived with Joseph Knox our great grandfather. It is interesting that different rules were applied according to ships. It didn't seem to bother anybody that there could be two sisters one year apart with the same name. The other Sarah, sister of Isabella and daughter of Joseph and Jane Knox (née Thompson) is also sister of Andrew and Samuel. An interesting note is that here again all the passengers on the Hornet appeared to be female. No mention is made of sponsorship fee. Sarah Knox (Aunt Tare) died on 22nd September 1918 aged 75 years - indicating date of birth as 1843. Her death certificate states she had been in the Colonies 52 years, confirming the 1864/1865 passage.

**Sarah Knox** (Aunt Tare) never married but no doubt worked very hard as she lived with her brother Joseph and one assumes helped her sister-in-law Elizabeth Jane bring up the eight children including our grandfather Errol. In 1884, Sarah is undoubtedly the "Miss Knox" who is the informant of her nephew's birth, along with her brother's mother-in-law, Mrs. Annie Drew.

During this time the Knox family was living at 95 Hereford Street, Glebe, where Errol was born. Soon afterwards the family moved to "Montargis" at Binalong Road, Wentworthville, Shire of Blacktown where Sarah died. Errol's father Joseph certified the death certificate. Sarah is buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery, Western Road in Paramatta. Unfortunately we do not have any photos of her that we know of. Cousin Margaret Alexander who is the daughter of Joseph Milton H. Knox, son of Joseph Knox, was our source of information about the existence of Aunt Tare. Up until then we had misidentified the witness on Joseph's wedding certificate as "Frank" and it was a while before we realized there was no brother Frank but a sister Sarah. We do not know why Sarah is buried at the Presbyterian Cemetery in Parramatta and not at Rookwood with her brother and cousins.

## JOSEPH KNOX SETS OFF TO AUSTRALIA

When Peter Knox wrote his account of his grandfather, he was not aware that Joseph embarked to Australia completely on his own accord. It emerges that Joseph Knox embarked on the Ironside on February 9<sup>th</sup> 1863 and arrived in New South Wales on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1863. His name appears on the Passenger Listing as John Knox, Bootmaker aged 22 years. Whether he deliberately assumed his brother's name, age and profession on the emigration we do not know. However, in the immigration the age appears as 18. Perhaps his cousin Andrew Knox had arranged sponsorship for John but in the meantime he got married and Joseph took his place. Joseph would have been on 18 or 19 when he set out, his sister had gone out a few months earlier, also sponsored by cousin Andrew Knox of 31 Charles Street Sydney. The "Particulars" of the Vessel showed the following:

Name of Vessel:	Ironside
Tonnage of Vessel:	898 tons
Number of Deaths on the Voyage:	1 Female (this was Mary Reidy aged 18)
Number of births:	1 female, 1 male
Date of Departure from Plymouth:	9 <sup>th</sup> February 1863
Date of Arrival at Sydney:	9 <sup>th</sup> May 1863
Number of days on Voyage:	89 Days
Contract price for Statute Adult:	£14.13.5
Master's Name:	Captain Cuthbert Vaux
Surgeon's Name:	J. P. Chunnell
The ship carried:	22 Males – Married 26 Females -Married 137 Males – Unmarried 127 Females – Unmarried

Including children and adults the total number of emigrants landed was 340. The Manifest reads: 340 Souls equal to 322 Statute Adults. It does appear that Joseph arrived as a Government Immigrant, albeit listed under the name of John showing his age as 18 – shoemaker from Kirlish on the Immigrant Documents but as 22 on the Emigrant listing of the ship. Most of the passengers appeared to have relatives sponsoring them in Australia and there were many passengers from Tipperary and Galway.

When Joseph Knox arrived in Sydney he was no doubt living with his cousin Andrew, who was listed as a Bootmaker, at 26 Charles Street in 1866. By 1868 Andrew had moved next door to 28 Charles Street.

The Children of Joseph and Elizabeth Jane Knox  
during the Montargis years



Ivy, Errol & Milton Knox  
Approx. 1895



Errol Knox  
Approx. 1902



Joseph Milton Knox  
Approx. 1902



Ivy Knox



Possibly John Calvin  
Approx. 1902



Joseph Knox Park, Pendle Hill, Sydney  
 Tom FEARBY, great grandson of Joseph &  
 Elizabeth Jane nee Drew



Janet & Tom FEARBY (great grandchildren of Joseph  
 Knox) on Knox Street, Pendle Hill, Sydney.  
 The street was named after Joseph Knox who had a  
 house and orchard running onto Knox Street.



Val FEARBY at Knox Park

Peter Knox, when writing his account of the family, had learnt through Bill Fearby that Joseph appears to have started work as an upholsterer when he arrived in Sydney and then switched to working in the grocery section of a department shop called Civil Service Stores in central Sydney.

Peter Knox wrote, “*On 13 June 1870, aged 25, he married my grandmother, Elizabeth Jane Drew. On the Drew’s side the links with Australia go back, through marriage, to the very early days of settlement there.*”

*Elizabeth’s mother, born Annie Reese, my great-grandmother, was born in New South Wales on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1821. She was of Welsh descent and must have been quite a character. Great-grandfather Drew took himself off to California to join in the gold rush there in the late 1840s. Apparently he sent one letter saying that he would be returning to Australia and was never heard of again. Annie worked as a midwife to bring up Elizabeth and her two brothers. They lived in Surry Hills close to the centre of Sydney. As she grew up Elizabeth worked for a dressmaker.*

*It was in Surry Hills at 13 Edward Street, that Joseph and Elizabeth set up home after their marriage in 1870. Grandfather Joseph seems to have prospered as the colony of New South Wales grew in importance and Sydney asserted itself as the main town in Australia. He used his knowledge acquired in the Civil Service Stores to set up his own grocery shop in Forest Lodge, still close to the city centre. For at least one year in 1871 they were living in Rose Lane, off Campbell Street in Sydney. We know this because that is the address shown where Lilian Violet was born that year. It is interesting to note that both Andrew Knox, cousin of Joseph and Andrew McCrea another cousin of both Andrew and Joseph were also living at Campbell Street, having apparently moved from Charles Street.*

*Miss Fearby reports “he must have done very well, as he bought seven houses in the locality of Surry Hills and rented them.” The properties appeared to be at:*

- 87 Hereford Street
- 111 Hereford Street
- 94 Hereford Street – Joseph Knox’s grocery shop.
- 10 Creek Street
- 12 Creek Street
- 167 Wigram Road
- 177 Wigram Road



Creek Street, Glebe

*By 1874 Joseph and Elizabeth were living at 95 Hereford Street in Glebe next to their grocery store. This can be gleaned from the birth certificate of their son John Calvin. The electoral rolls show this address in 1878 and they were still there in 1893 as indicated by the address written in the old hymn book of Lilian Violet Knox dated January 16, 1893.*

*Grandfather Joseph had ambitions beyond the grocery trade and in the early 1890's bought nine acres of land at a place called Wentworthville, close to Parramatta, 15 or 20 miles west of Sydney, and had an eight-room house built on the property, which he and Elizabeth called Montargis. This was no classic Australian weatherboard house with a tin top. It was built of bricks and boasted a slate roof. Joseph had done well. The location of Montargis is now 54 Binalong Road.*

*The first document we have from Montargis is the marriage of Joseph's eldest daughter, Lilian Violet Knox to John Thomas Fearby. This marriage took place on October 5, 1896 and was ministered by the Reverend John Paterson Minister of St. Andrew's Kirk Parramatta. His name appears on many later birth, marriage and death certificates of the Knox family. George Watson Drew, Lilian's uncle and Aurora Myrtle Knox, her younger sister were witnesses.*

*Joseph had planted an orange orchard and a vineyard. He farmed the land for a time and, according to Miss Fearby, made grape and orange wine, which he sold in bulk to a wine merchant. We assume he must have planted these orchards early in the 1890's because the second document we have from Montargis is from a certificate dated January 20, 1897 when Joseph got the results from "The Viticulturist", in Sydney for his Orange Wine.*

*As he grew older he worked the property less and lived off the rent of the shop and of the houses in Sydney.*

*Joseph and Elizabeth Knox had raised a large family - three sons and four daughters (the fourth son, Haldane Leslie Hillas died at 1 ½ years old). The sons were my uncles Joseph Milton Hoskings, John Calvin and my father Errol. The daughters were my aunts Violet, Myrtle, Renee and Ivy. My father was the youngest of the eight. In my early upbringing in Sydney, I knew all these uncles and aunts except for Joseph Milton, who died relatively young leaving a widow and a daughter, Margaret, much older than myself. We saw them only very occasionally.*

*This is how my father, Peter Knox, remembers his aunts and uncles.*

## **Violet**

*Violet was the oldest of the girls and, I suspect, my father's favourite sister. She married a farmer called Fearby and settled in Uralla in northern NSW. She had a son, Alan, and daughter, Heather (who provided the information about early family history). Alan became a farmer and had children, at least one of whom also farmed in NSW. Violet was very hospitable. My father spent holidays with her as a boy. My sister, Titia and I also went to Uralla for a holiday in the early 1930s.*

## **John Calvin**

*Always known to us as Uncle Cal, he belied his puritanical name and was a gentle character. A schoolteacher in the public (state) school system he was assigned to country schools and was a rare visitor. I cannot recall his wife but he had one son, named Errol like my father. Errol was deaf as a result of German measles as a young child and had impaired speech. To my knowledge he had no children.*

## Myrtle

*Myrtle was a soft, kindly woman. She worked in an office in Sydney and until she married, relatively late in life, always bought weekly comics for Titia and me. Her husband was a civil servant called George Walker. On marriage she moved from our neighbourhood and she and George lived in a small flat in the then respectable Kings Cross area. George loved Rugby League and until we moved to Melbourne in 1938 Titia and I occasionally had lunch with them and were then taken to a League match.*

## Renee and Ivy

*Renee (I believe she had a flower name like her sisters - Acacia) and Ivy were the two youngest sisters. I put them under the same heading because they lived together most of their adult life. They never married and, to my knowledge never worked. They must have inherited the income from the houses owned by their parents and they appeared to live reasonably well. They played bridge and gave tea parties. Ivy played golf and did most of the housework. Renee played the piano and read books aloud while Ivy prepared the meals. They had the top floor flat in a four-storey apartment block in Neutral Bay about half a mile from our house. On one side it overlooked Sydney Harbour. On the other it had a commanding view of the road. They were not close to my mother. However, they tried to be good aunts and my sister Titia and I sometimes went there for afternoon teas. Ivy encouraged my golf and initiated me to two or three courses.*

*In order to complement my father's work: the following is the actual information obtained from Australian records:*

**Lilian Violet** - born 28th April 1871 at Rose Lane off Campbell Street. She married John Thomas Fearby October 5 1896 at Montargis, Wentworthville. She died 4<sup>th</sup> September 1933. They had two children:

- i. HEATHER ORIEL FEARBY, b. 27 May 1899, Rocky River, Uralla; d. 20 Nov 1999, Gunnedah.
- ii. ALAN ROY FEARBY, b. 10 Nov 1901, Rocky River, Uralla, N.S.W.; d. 24 May 1973, Tamworth, N.S.W.; m. MILDRED JOSEPHINE COCHRAN, 10 Jul 1939, Danlo, Gunnedah; b. 13 Nov 1906, Gunnedah, N.S.W.; d. 12 Mar 1996, Gunnedah, N.S.W.

**John Calvin** - born on February 4th 1874, Hereford Street Glebe, died 5 Feb 1935 aged 61, Dilah Creek, Dungowan Narrabri. Married Mary Isobel MacLean (McKean) 1902. He had one son, Errol Leslie who was born in Tamworth in 1902 and died 14<sup>th</sup> December 1969 at 124 Barwan Street, Narrabri.

**Aurora Myrtle** - born on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1876 and married Harry Charles Walker in Rosebery, Woollahra in 1931 (this appears wrong – it states she was 40 at time of marriage indicating she got married in 1916). She died on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1944 at Manly District Hospital. At the time she and her husband were living at Flat 2, Camberene, Victoria Parade in Manly NSW. They had no children. Myrtle was also known as Anora.

**Haldane Leslie Hillas** - born 15<sup>th</sup> January in Hereford Street Glebe, 1879 died September 30 1880, Hereford Street, Glebe aged 1 • yrs.

**Acacia Renée (Renée Acasia)** - born 15<sup>th</sup> July 1881 in Hereford Street, Glebe - unmarried, died 15<sup>th</sup> April Lanchester Private Hospital, Cremorne, aged 59 years – at the time sister Ivy and Acacia living at 4 Rycroft Hall Shellcove Road, Neutral Bay. Renée was also known as Bem.

**Joseph Milton Hosking** - born 27<sup>th</sup> February 1884 Hereford Street Glebe, died 12 Oct 1921 aged 37 years, “Omah” Rochester Street Homebush. Married Ida M. Dawson 1913. They had one daughter **Margaret Elizabeth** born February 15, 1917. Milton was also known as Milt or Stripes.

**Ivy Jasmine Gwendoline** - born 30<sup>th</sup> October 1886, Hereford Street, Glebe – 1886. Unmarried, died 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1959, 4/17 Shellcove Road, Neutral Bay. Ivy was also known as Dar.

**Errol Aubrey Galbraith** - born 25 June 1889 Hereford Street Glebe, Woodend, Victoria. He married September 4, 1919 Gertrude Mary, daughter of George Barnard Milbank Coore (see separate page). Brigadier Sir Errol Knox M.B.E died 17 October 1949. Errol was also known as Pinker, Knocker, Bill.

## JOSEPH AND ELIZABETH JANE KNOX AS PARENTS

*What sort of a family life did Joseph and Elizabeth Knox create for their children who grew up in the latter part of the 19th century? My father did speak occasionally of his boyhood and, although I cannot recall my aunts discussing their upbringing, their adult way of life provides certain pointers to the past.*

*One thing is clear. Joseph was a true product of the Presbyterian sector of Ulster and the Sabbath was sacred. I can recall my father, Errol, saying that he was not allowed to play on the grass on Sundays -- presumably because such pleasure distracted from strict observance of the sacred day -- and was not allowed to enjoy himself on Saturday evenings because “it was too close to the Sabbath.” Church going and biblical readings were a duty on Sunday. I am sure that Elizabeth was a good and virtuous mother. My father spoke fondly of her. However, it must have been a rather sombre house with strict rules.*

*Joseph and Elizabeth obviously saw to it that the family was as well educated as the state system of the day allowed. They must have encouraged study and a sense of discipline. The sons were all groomed for what would be called today “white-collar” jobs. The Knoxes did not aspire to being part of Sydney society but were well regarded in the Wentworthville area and neighbouring Parramatta. There was enough money for the girls to be able to develop desirable Victorian social accomplishments like music and embroidery. None of the family showed any great skill at sport and one must doubt that it was encouraged.*

*My father, Errol, was clearly required to work on the small farm. He must have enjoyed it because all his life he had a great love of working the land and, in the way of farmers, was quite skilled with elementary mechanics and could turn his hand to building a brick wall, working with cement or mending a car or yacht engine. One imagines that in the fashion of the day his sisters were made to work around the house. I never heard my father talk of holidays except to go and stay with his married sister Violet on her farm. He was not a strong swimmer and I do not think*

*that the Sydney surfing beaches played any part in his early life.*

*Joseph and Elizabeth were loyal subjects of the crown. My father told me how he was taken to the celebrations of Queen Victoria's jubilee. At the same time there is no indication that they had any close links with the "mother country." Joseph never went back to Ireland nor seems to have urged his children to do so. They seem to have very much identified themselves as Australians. My father told me that as a schoolboy he participated in the celebrations in 1901 when Australia shed its colonial ties and became an independent country within the British Empire. Except for him, none of the family left Australia and to the best of my knowledge, never even left New South Wales. Indeed, in many other ways my father, the last-born, differed from his brothers and sisters. Whereas they, with the exception of Violet, who married John Fearby, were content with a secure life style, conforming to the rigid social pattern set by the parents, Errol was a restless spirit, blessed with a first class brain, a depth of vision and a desire to see the world outside Australia.*

## THE MONTARGIS YEARS 1893 - 1925

Joseph and Elizabeth Jane Knox

Errol Aubrey Galbraith Knox - the early years

As Peter Knox wrote, Joseph Knox built Montargis at what is now 54 Binalong Road, Wentworthville in the early 1890's. Even though the family was still living at 95 Hereford Street in Glebe in 1893, Joseph's orchards may already have been bearing fruit by then. There are two reasons to believe this. The first evidence, as mentioned earlier, is that at his daughter, Lilian's, wedding on October 5, 1896 he refers to himself as an "orchardist" and by January 20, 1897, he received an official letter from the Department of Mines and Agriculture, addressed to Joseph Knox, Esq., Montargis, Wentworthville from the Viticulturist, who wrote a detailed analysis of the orange wine, "the analysis confirming the tasting as a good orange wine."

From the very informative book "The Toongabbie Story" by Doris Sargeant we learn further about Joseph's interest in wine, and the book states that the "whole of his first vintage was acquired by a Co-operative Society in Sydney." Later on it was sold to a D.D. Henderson of Parramatta, a well known Parramatta Bowling Club personality." The "Toongabbie Story" further gives us a glimpse into Joseph Knox's skills in the Toongabbie Debating Society, which was "very active in the 1890's, frequently making journeys to surrounding centres to take part in debates." Mrs. Sargeant further reports that "he took a leading part in activities of St. Mary's Church as did his daughter, Ivy. Son Errol was noted for his work with the First Toongabbie Scout Troop. He became a Major in the First A.I.F. (Australian Imperial Forces)".

There are two references to Ivy Knox in "The Toongabbie Story." However, Ivy Jasmine was not born until 30th October 1886, so it is unlikely she was the daughter involved in the Debating Society – very likely this would have been her older sister Lilian Violet. Janet Fearby does not believe that either her grandmother or her sisters made the trip to Europe with a casket of oranges that was referred to in the book.

The reference to the Knox family worshipping at St. Mary's Church was also puzzling as they had always listed themselves as Presbyterian. However, Kevin Hilferty, an authority on New South Wales history, pointed out that there had been a Presbyterian minister at Toongabbie in the early days of settlement. Apparently there was no further presence until the early 1900's.

Perhaps that is why in 1896 when Lilian Violet married John Thomas Fearby at Montargis, the marriage ceremony was performed by John Paterson, Minister of St. Andrew's Kirk, Parramatta. Undoubtedly, though, the Knox family contributed greatly to Parish activities.

When Joseph Knox moved to Montargis with his wife and seven children (they had lost little Haldane Leslie Hillas aged 1 • years in 1880) they were quite a large household. The household included Joseph's sister Sarah, otherwise known as Aunt Tare and Joseph's mother-in-law, Annie Drew (nee Reece). Annie's husband George Drew had taken off to the goldmines in California in 1849 or thereabouts. Aunt Tare appears to have lived with her brother and sister-in-law from her early days of immigration in 1865.

Perhaps the photo of the three children Ivy, Errol and Milton was taken at their sister's wedding in 1896 at Montargis. Most of the current photographs available of the Knox and Drew family are all taken during those happy days at Montargis.

### THE 1ST TOONGABBIE BOY SCOUTS

We know that in 1908 the 1st Toongabbie was formed and Errol Knox, Joseph's youngest son had played a very large part. According to "The Toongabbie Story" The Scout Hall was in an old barn at Montargis and there were parades in Willmot's paddock. It states further "We were second only to Mosman Troop to form in Australia, and with them had the first Boy Scouts camp at La Perouse." In 1909 Errol Knox was the Toongabbie leader and Scout Master. From papers filed with the AIF, it appears that Errol Knox is listed at Sydney University Scouts for 2 years 6 months around this time.

There is a further reference to 'Knocker' (Sir Errol Knox) – that refers to the Toongabbie Boy Scouts in the famous book by Professor A.R. Chisholm-Australia, *Men were my Milestones. Australian Portraits and Sketches* - Melbourne University Press.

*In this book Chisholm writes - We went to a geology camp in 1908, under the command of W.G. Woolnough, and found ourselves allotted to the same tent. The scene of our geological searchings was along Barber's Creek, in a picturesque region not very far from Goulburn. The camp was one day divided into two parties. One explored the bed of the valley, the other scaled a razor-back mountain in search of fossils. The afternoon moved on towards its close, and Woolnough was becoming uneasy about the razor-back party, visible on the mountain-top but so far away that communication seemed impossible. Then Knocker stepped forward and took command as he had done before in the debating club. He pulled out a handkerchief, borrowed a second one, and began to semaphore. Fortunately, someone at the other end knew the code, and Knocker proceeded to pass on Woolnough's instructions. I did not know where he had learnt signaling; but I did know, from that hour onwards, that he was a man of action and a born leader.*

Peter Knox wrote of his father - *(Errol) must have been bright because after primary school he qualified to enter Fort Street High School, one of the two leading schools in the New South Wales state system. My father was proud of his association with this school which produced a number of prominent Australians. It was situated close to the centre of Sydney and the harbour.*

*Since the family by this time was living in Wentworthville it meant a long train journey to school. My father, who had a good sense of humour and a way with words, liked to recall that they had an*

*old Irish conductor who used to call out the names of stations "Road to Hell" (Rooty Hill), "Go to Hell," (Goats Hill) and "Went to Hell" (Wentworthville). Chisholm wrote of this time period: ...Somewhere towards the end of 1905 we formed, at Fort Street, a debating club, presided over by 'Sammy' Lasker, the deputy headmaster... That is the background on which 'Knocker' shot suddenly into my consciousness, to remain there for the rest of my life. I forget what the subject of debate was that day. But very vividly I remember a new boy - in short pants of course - who stood up boldly, advanced to the table, and said: 'Mr. Chairman, will you please read out again the subject of the present debate?' And while Lasker complied, the new boy stood there with folded arms, looking for all the world like a barrister getting ready to hurl a devastating question at a witness. 'Thank you, Mr. Chairman,' he then said. 'I wanted the exact terms, and now I wish to point out this...and this....and this'; and he proceeded to hammer the table and drive his points home with all the aplomb of an experienced orator. Knocker was always like that. It was not bumptiousness; simply an immense self-confidence, tempered, as I learnt later, by a patiently mastered and well concealed shyness.*

*From Fort Street High he went to Sydney University to do a general arts course. I know from a story he used to tell that one of his subjects was philosophy. English must have been another because throughout his life he could quote at length from various Shakespeare plays. He had a strong memory. He stayed at University for two years and then abandoned his course in 1910 to go into journalism. I do not know the background to this decision. He was an impatient man and quite probably was bored with being a student and anxious to make his way in the world. Perhaps he needed to make money. His parents by this time were running down their farming interests and living off their investments in property.*

*He worked on newspapers in Sydney for three or four years. Then early in March 1914 he went to California sailing on the Ventura to San Francisco to work there for the Hearst chain. This was a period in his life about which he often told us stories. I think he liked the United States and the exciting future it offered. He might have stayed there if the First World War had not broken out. Early in 1915 he returned to Australia and in July enlisted as a private in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF).*

*He was commissioned in September and in January 1916 embarked for Egypt, a training ground for the Australian forces overseas. From Egypt he went to France where, in January 1917 he joined the Royal Australian Flying Corps. He had always been fascinated by flying from its infancy - he was always forward looking and embraced new idea with enthusiasm - and had witnessed some of the first attempts at flight in Australia. His bad eyesight debarred him from becoming a pilot but he told me he did some flying on observation work. Essentially, however, he was an administrator and served as a recording officer and as an adjutant. He was gassed and also hospitalised for appendicitis. As indicated above it was while he was recovering in England that he met my mother. By the end of the War in November 1918 he had become a major. He served until July 1919 with the British Army of Occupation on the Rhine. For his war work he was twice mentioned in despatches and awarded the MBE.*



Errol Knox - 1918

## THE WAR YEARS AT MONTARGIS

While Errol was at war – Joseph received several letters regarding his son’s health problems. Joseph always acknowledged and replied formally, although he must have been extremely anxious about his son’s safety.

Sadly it appears that after Errol left for the war he never saw his father again, nor his aunt Sarah who died at Montargis September 22, 1918 aged 75. Joseph Knox died shortly after his sister, aged 73 years at Montargis on February 6, 1919. On September 4, 1919 Errol married Gertrude Mary Coore in Storrington England. He had met her while recuperating in hospital. They returned to their new life in New South Wales.

Errol’s mother, Elizabeth Jane Drew died at Montargis on February 23, 1925, shortly thereafter Montargis was sold.



The door on 111 Hereford Street, Glebe  
It could be one of Joseph Knox’s houses.  
The houses were sold in the early 1960’s  
to wind up Joseph’s estate.



House on Wigram Street, Glebe  
Possibly one of Joseph Knox’s houses.  
Photo by Janet Fearby



Wigram Street, Glebe  
Could be on of Joseph Knox’s houses.



111 Hereford Street, Glebe which could be  
one of Joseph Knox’s houses.

## Janet Patty Fearby

Janet Patty Fearby was born on August 8, 1940 to Mildred Josephine (nee Cochran) and Alan Roy Fearby and had a brother, Thomas Knox Fearby, born January 4, 1942. Her early schooling was by Correspondence. She writes “ Our lessons came from Sydney. I went away to Boarding School, May 1949. I could not wait until I went away, BUT OH!! WAS I HOMESICK AT NIGHT for the first term. I had never been away from my parents at all. I stayed with Dar (Ivy Knox, my father’s aunt at Neutral Bay), from 1953 until I left school at the end of 1957. I went home to my parents, as I had been away for so long. We lived on our property until the 1970s when we moved into my mother’s sister’s house which is mine now. My father, Alan Fearby, died on 24th May 1973. Tom was married then but he came out and did the farming and cattle work. At that time the cattle prices had dropped and were very low. We joined the Junior Farmers. Tom won the NSW P&O trip to the UK in 1968. He was joined by the other 5 state winners on the Arcadia and then came home on the Oronsay. We put exhibits up at the local show and also at the Royal Show in Sydney. I have seen a number of droughts and floods in my lifetime. We reared many pet lambs and calves over the years. I loved being home with my family and I have no regrets. I have looked after Mummy and Heather of the later years. My mother was crippled up with arthritis but Bill had really good health, except the last 10 yrs of her life when she got dementia. She was in the Gunnedah Nursing Home for about 4 years. She had her 100th birthday at the Home. She received a letter from the Queen, our Prime Minister, the Governor of NSW, Governor General, our State and Federal Members of Parliament. Dar still came and stayed with us, after we left school but I think she fretted because she did not have me staying with her. She became ill and Bill (Heather) Fearby looked after her until she died in June 1959. We let the flat go but in away it was sad, because it was so handy to public transport”.

Janet is an avid researcher of her family history and has contributed enormously to these chronicles by providing photos, original texts and has spent hours in libraries pouring over family documents.



Harold Alexander behind his wife Margaret nee Knox (Daughter of Joseph Milton Knox) and her 2nd cousin Janet Fearby.  
Margaret turned 90 on 15-2-2007.



Joseph Knox  
1845 - 1919



Montargis, Home of Joseph Knox



Joseph Knox's house, Montargis, Pendle Hill  
Build in the early 1890's



Montargis, Home of Joseph Knox

Pictures at Montargis



Annie Drew - Great Great Grandmother



Elizabeth Jane Knox -  
Great Grandmother



Elizabeth Jane Knox (nee Drew)



Elizabeth Jane Knox  
1846 - 1925



Elizabeth Jane Knox (nee Drew)

## THE KNOX CHRONICLES WILL BE CONTINUED ...

This will include a full account of Errol Knox's war years, his marriage, family and work.





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