

James Thompson Craig

James was the son of Samuel Smale and Mary Craig.¹ He was born in 1855 or 1856.

The first public mention of him was for his score in a cricket match.²

However, mostly he was in trouble. On 26 February 1873 (at 17), James was arrested. The news report³ said:

James Craig, York who is staying in Perth to finish his education was charged by Inspector Temperley with throwing stones in the Public recreation ground. The worthy Magistrate said it was most disgraceful for persons to be annoyed whilst enjoying themselves in the Public Gardens, and would punish to the utmost extent all parties found guilty of similar practices. Fined 40/ to be paid forthwith in default 14 days imprisonment. The fine was paid by a companion of Master Craig.

On 19 February 1877 (at 21):⁴

Police Constable Farrelly ... arrested Mr. James Craig for making use of indecent expressions (addressed to the police) opposite the York Hotel on the night of the 19th February. When arrested, he struck witness in the face, and they both closed together. Presently the defendant dragged Craig's arm away, and the witness fell down, and was stunned and rendered unconscious. When he recovered his senses, he found himself lying near the fence opposite the York Hotel, with Craig pressing with his knees on his breast. At that moment Sergeant Waldeck arrived on the scene, and by persuasion or force removed Craig, and said he would arrest him for the assault on the witness, which he did. The row was not over before the sergeant came up, as stated in his evidence by the defendant.

James was quite an athlete. At races in 1878, to celebrate the anniversary of the Colony held adjacent to the Mechanics Institute in York, James won the 200 yards flat race, the best hop, skip and jump for 10 seconds, and the 200 yards hurdle.^{5 6}

He was also involved with the Jockey Club at York, being "Clerk of Course" in September 1878.⁷

It appears that he was working at the Castle Hotel at least from January 1881.⁸

He became a member of the WA Turf Club in January 1883.⁹ He raced several horses around this

¹ There was another James Craig in Western Australia who was a warder in the Warders' Barracks, Fremantle: The Inquirer and Commercial News, 13 July 1881, p.3.

² Inquirer and Commercial News 15 June 1870, p.3.

³ Express 27 February 1873, p.3.

⁴ Western Australian Times 13 April 1877, p.2.

⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle 8 June 1878, p.2; also 3 June 1881, p.2

⁶ Also Inquirer and Commercial News 8 November 1882, p.5; The Herald 4 November 1882, p.2.

⁷ e.g. The Western Australian Times 6 September 1878, p.4; 17 September, p.1; 20 September, p.1.

⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 7 January 1881, p.1.

time, one called *Hermit* and another called *Flower of the Hills*.¹⁰ He won the “swimming horse race” at York in June 1883.¹¹

Around this time he was a witness in a court case against James Taylor who was charged with illegal gambling.¹² James Craig described himself in the following terms:

“I am of no particular occupation, but am reasonably well off; I live in York with my mother.”¹³

He went on to say he won some money from the defendant playing cards.¹⁴ He published an advertisement in August 1883:¹⁵

A Challenge!!!
I hereby challenge to back my dog
against any colonial bred dog in
the Colony, from £5 to £50, to catch the most kangaroo in a day.
JAMES CRAIG, York, August 2nd, 1883.

There was a published response:¹⁶

SEEING Mr. James Craig's challenge in your paper to run his dog for from £5 to £50, I am but a poor man but accept the challenge to run my dog for from £5 to £15, according to his challenge; the dogs to be hunted on foot, also on strange ground, say Cootes' on the Northam road, or from the Creek to Mr. White's Saw Mills. Each dog to kill his kangaroo.
JERRY NEEDHAM. Mr. White's Saw Mills, York Road.

What happened in this competition is not reported.

James Craig took a prominent part in the first Australian Rules football match “in these parts” in August 1883.¹⁷

In August 1883, James published an advertisement:

WANTED TO PURCHASE. 20 MARES, not under 14 hands 2 inches in height. Must be sound.
Apply to
JAMES T. CRAIG,
"Castle Hotel," York.

⁹ West Australian 26 January 1883, p.3.

¹⁰ West Australian 13 March 1883, p.3, 20 March 1883, p.3; Eastern Districts Chronicle 16 March 1883, p.3; Herald 17 March 1883, p.2.

¹¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 8 June 1883, p.3.

¹² Herald 27 January 1883, p.3.

¹³ Daily News 27 January 1883, p.3.

¹⁴ West Australian 30 January 1883, p.3.

¹⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle 10 August 1883, p.3.

¹⁶ Eastern Districts Chronicle 31 August 1883, p.3.

¹⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 17 August 1883, p.3.

In December 1883, James appears to have been employed as a bouncer at the Castle Hotel. He was the one who complained to the police about men loitering about the public house. In what appears to be the same night, James himself was charged with having made use of threatening language to PC Mansfield.¹⁸

An amusing incident occurred on 19 March 1884:¹⁹

“During the very hot weather with which we have been visited within the last few weeks, many of our townspeople have been in the habit of transferring their mattresses' to the outside of their dwellings and sleeping in the open air. Amongst the number of those who have indulged in these al fresco arrangements, is our friend Mr. James Craig, of the Castle Hotel, who has turned in nightly on a very comfortable sofa on the lower verandah of that establishment. Last Tuesday night, some little time after retiring, his slumbers were somewhat disturbed by sounds as of a person moving near his couch. On looking up he found it was a man who had evidently an eye to some valuables which Mr. Craig had deposited on the window sill before retiring for the night. On his moving the man ran off, but Mr. Craig was after him, yet was not fortunate enough to come up with him. He was, however, sufficiently near to recognise the vagabond, who, moreover, left behind him his hat, which was found to belong to a man named Thomson. This worthy was brought up at the police court on Wednesday morning, and rewarded with six months imprisonment for his good intentions.”

Two days later, on 21 March 1884, James broke his leg at Beverley.²⁰ He was reported as “rapidly recovering” on 1 April 1884.

In July 1884, James published the following notice:²¹

NOTICE

Required by the undersigned—A PARTNER to breed Native Dogs. Not particular as to what kind of dog, as long as they have BUSHY TAILS.

JAMES T. CRAIG. York, July 11th, 1884.

In July 1884, James left York for the Gascoigne where he was contemplating establishing himself in the hotel business.^{22 23 24}

In December 1884, it was announced that James would take over the running of the Settlers Arms from its owner Mr Feeney in Beverley,^{25 26} just ahead of the extension of the railway line to Beverley,

¹⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 21 December 1883, p.3.

¹⁹ West Australian 25 March 1884, p.3; Eastern Districts Chronicle 25 March 1884, p.3.

²⁰ Eastern Districts Chronicle 25 March 1884, p.3.

²¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 14 July 1884, p.2.

²² West Australian 22 July 1884, p.3.

²³ He left on 20 July 1884: West Australian 22 July 1884, p.2.

²⁴ He returned on 5 August 1884: Herald 9 August 1884, p.2.

²⁵ West Australian 16 December 1884, p.3.

²⁶ Eastern Districts Chronicle 5 January 1885, p.2.

which was anticipated to bring much custom to the hotel.^{27 28} The rent was being paid by Frank Craig.²⁹

In January 1885, he purchased the stallion Sir Garnet for £80.³⁰ Unfortunately, while James was leading the horse, it kicked another stallion of his brother Morton, War Cry, injuring its leg.³¹ James employed a number of indigenous but if they failed to come to work, he had them gaoled.³²³³

On 13 August 1885, he married Emily May Trigg.³⁴ They had their first child (Morton Trigg) on 3 March 1886.³⁵

Frank and James Craig provided food at the Settlers Arms to celebrate the opening of the York to Beverley line on 4 August 1886.^{36 37}

James Devine was a local drunkard.³⁸ On 26 November 1887, James Craig and James Devine had an argument at the door of the Settlers Arms Hotel. James said "Get out, you old B...." and thumped Devine twice, one blow to the eye and the other to the chest. Devine was lying by a bale of wool next to the bar door and could not get up. He was taken to York Hospital and died. On 6 December 1887, an inquest was held as to the death of James Devine, and the verdict of the jury was that James Devine met his death by a blow received from the hands of James Craig. James was arrested for the manslaughter of James Devine on 7 December 1887 and bail was refused.³⁹ The Jury found Craig not guilty.⁴⁰

In May 1889, James charged a "Chinaman" Ah See, a cook, from refusing to obey his master's orders (to light a fire and clean the copper).⁴¹

In June 1889, James purchased a block of land in Beverley close to the railway station with a view to building a new hotel there.⁴²

²⁷ Inquirer and Commercial News 7 January 1885, p.5.

²⁸ The hotel was leased to Frank Craig for five years for a rent of £130 a year by Feeney in December under an oral agreement which was confirmed by a written agreement between Feeney's mortgagees in February 1885: West Australian 10 March 1886, p.3.

²⁹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 22 March 1890, p.2.

³⁰ Daily News 30 January 1885, p.3; Eastern Districts Chronicle 9 November 1883, p.3.

³¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 7 February 1885, p.3.

³² Daily News 28 April 1885, p.3; Eastern Districts Chronicle 2 May 1885, p.3.

³³ Eastern Districts Chronicle 15 August 1885, p.2.

³⁴ Rica Erickson, Dictionary of Western Australians, p.698.

³⁵ Daily News 15 March 1886, p.4.

³⁶ West Australian 7 August 1886, p.5.

³⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 7 August 1886, p.3.

³⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 2 October 1886, p.3.

³⁹ Inquirer and Commercial News 7 December 1887, p.5.

⁴⁰ Inquirer and Commercial News 7 December 1887, p.5; West Australian 8 December 1887; Daily News 9 December 1887, p.3; Western Mail 10 December 1887, p.32; Daily News 13 December 1887, p.3; Inquirer & Commercial News 14 December 1887, pp.2 and 6; Beverley Notes 17 December 1887, p.13; West Australian 22 December 1887, p.3; Western Mail, 24 December, p.16.

⁴¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 4 May 1889, p.5.

⁴² Inquirer and Commercial News 12 June 1889, p.7.

Unfortunately their first child was scalded to death when only little. Morton,

“a most intelligent child, of about 4 years of age, was with his younger brother, playing with their father on a bed previous to being bathed. During the progress of their play the bath, which was half full of boiling water, was brought into the room and placed near the bedside by the servant, who thereupon left, for the purpose of bringing in the required supply of cold water it to a proper temperature. While the girl was away from the room, however, the two little boys continued to play with Mr Craig, during which, unfortunately, the elder one, Morton, rolled over the bedside into the bath, the result being that his body was so terribly scalded that in removing his clothing portions of the flesh were found adhering thereto. Mr Craig and indeed the whole household, were, as might be expected, in a terror stricken condition for a considerable time after the accident occurred, and as no medical man is located in Beverley, it was ultimately resolved upon taking the little sufferer to York, which was done as speedily as circumstances would permit. Unhappily, however, although everything that surgical skill could accomplish was brought to the child, he succumbed to the shocking injuries received, about nine o'clock on Saturday evening”.⁴³

A different account of this tragedy appeared in the Eastern Districts Chronicle:⁴⁴

“A very sad accident occurred at Beverley last night. Mr James Craig’s eldest son about four years of age, shortly after tea had been prepared, in catching hold of the table-cloth, pulled the tea-pot on him the contents of which ran down the poor little fellow’s back, scalding him to a painful extent. So severely was the unfortunate child scalded that in cutting away his wearing apparel a quantity of flesh was removed. Dr McWilliams was immediately telegraphed for, who left York for Beverley with the greatest possible speed.”

Because the Settlers Arms Hotel was not near the railway station, James ran constant advertisements for the hotel, saying that every train is met. He also had a running dispute with the Station Master, as James believed that he was not referring arrivals to his hotel. “He [Drake Brockman] has always done his best to injure my business, and put people against me.”⁴⁵

On 26 November 1889, James and the Railway Station Master James Drake Brookman sued each other for using obscene and abusive language, each accusing the other of being a liar. Brockman also complained that James had shot his dog. Each of them was fined 5 shillings and ordered to pay their own costs. The Magistrate said that “such cases should be kept out of court.”⁴⁶

In January 1890, James was reported as intending to build a large hotel near the railway station in

⁴³ Daily News 16 September 1889, p.3.

⁴⁴ Eastern Districts Chronicle 14 September 1889, p.4.

⁴⁵ West Australian 27 November 1889, p.3; Western Mail 30 November, p.17; Eastern Districts Chronicle 30 November, p.2.

⁴⁶ West Australian 27 November 1889, p.3; Western Mail 30 November, p.17; Eastern Districts Chronicle 30 November, p.2.

Beverley but had abandoned the idea.⁴⁷

In February 1890, James was summoned for assaulting A E Lampe at Beverley. He was fined but the Magistrates thought the case was trivial and should not have been brought.⁴⁸

The dispute with the station master grew into a larger fight because Drake Brockman withheld consignments sent to the Settlers Arms Hotel. James sued the Commissioner of Railways for damages for detaining cases of whiskey and was successful.⁴⁹ The Commissioner of Railways did not pay and so James sent in the Bailiff (Joseph Pyke) to collect the debt and Pyke seized “the till, office furniture and other chattels”. The debt was paid by the Railway Station Master, who by then was Mr Hague, giving a cheque drawn on his personal account.⁵⁰

James and May ran the Settlers Arms Hotel in Beverley from 1885 until the lease expired in December 1890⁵¹. All the contents were sold at auction on 27 December.^{52 53} By then, there were four hotels in Beverley.

On 25 February 1891, while riding to a fire at his brother’s residence, James met with a nasty accident. The horse fell and James was thrown violently to the ground, escaping serious injury, but the horse was severely cut in the hind legs.⁵⁴

James’ next reported occupation appears to be grubbing jam trees.⁵⁵

In April 1891, James sued a Chinese employee who had been given leave and then not returned. Fee Ah Kee (or Phu Ah Chin) was employed as a waiter and cook at the Settlers Arms. James stopped running that hotel and argued that he considered the defendant a “general servant” and wanted him to help grubbing jam trees. He was fined £5 and appealed, and won on appeal.⁵⁶

James and May lost another infant, Irene Ethel, on 10 December 1891 from bronchitis.⁵⁷

In May 1892, James became landlord of the Imperial Hotel.^{58 59}

James was summoned for permitting disorderly conduct but the case was dismissed.⁶⁰

⁴⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 25 January 1890, p.4.

⁴⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 1 February 1890, p.5.

⁴⁹ Daily News 10 October 1890, p.3.

⁵⁰ Daily News 19 December 1890, p.3; Inquirer and Commercial News 19 December 1890, p.5.

⁵¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 3 January 1891, p.5.

⁵² Eastern Districts Chronicle 20 December 1890, p.6.

⁵³ The hotel was taken over by Mr J Joyce: Eastern Districts Chronicle 3 January 1891, p.5.

⁵⁴ Eastern Districts Chronicle 28 February 1891, p.5.

⁵⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle 25 April 1891, p.6.

⁵⁶ WA Record 30 April 1891, p.9; 16 July 1891, p.8.

⁵⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 12 December 1891, p.6.

⁵⁸ WA Record 12 May 1892, p.8.

⁵⁹ Also in May 1892, the Craig family applied to bring a number of lots of land under the Transfer of Land Act: Eastern Districts Chronicle 21 May 1892, p.3.

⁶⁰ Eastern Districts Chronicle 16 July 1892, p.5.

On 6 January 1893, the licence to the Castle Hotel was transferred to William Thomas Craig^{61 62}.

On 21st January 1893, the licence to the Imperial Hotel was transferred to James Thompson Craig.⁶³
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In March 1893, James sued the members of the Salvation Army Band for damages for “causing great annoyance” by playing their instruments in Avon Terrace. They were ordered to each pay 1 shilling, and costs.⁶⁵

In September 1893, James was involved in another accident. A horse attached to a carriage in which he and Alex Monger were driving, bolted off from the Imperial Hotel and galloped through Avon Terrace at a terrific pace, resulting in the two occupants being thrown out. In one account, one of the wheels passed over James’ shoulder, and he “received a severe shaking”. In another, he received slight abrasions of the skin.⁶⁶

James was constantly in trouble. On 25 November 1894, James was charged with making use of obscene language at the Imperial Hotel and fined 20 shillings.⁶⁷ He was summoned for using insulting language against Mrs Priest on 15 June 1895.⁶⁸ He was summoned for riding on a footpath and fined.⁶⁹

In March 1896, the licence to the Castle Hotel was transferred to James.⁷⁰

In June 1896, he was charged with disorderly conduct and making use of threatening language. He was described as having a “violent temper”. Charges were dismissed but James was cautioned. The Magistrate considered the actions of the Police in arresting James were unnecessary.⁷¹

In June 1896, James was reported to be suffering from typhoid fever.⁷²

In November 1896, James was charged with assaulting Charles Farmer by striking him in the face, and was fined 5 shillings.⁷³

James’ occasional abusive behavior was however to prove expensive. In 1898, Aimable Duperouzel bought proceedings against James for slandering him in Avon Terrace opposite the Castle Hotel. In

⁶¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 7 January 1893, p.7.

⁶² Police Gazette 1 February 1893, p.21.

⁶³ Police Gazette 1 February 1893, p.21.

⁶⁴ See advertisement Eastern Districts Chronicle 20 October 1894, p.6.

⁶⁵ Inquirer and Commercial News 31 March 1893, p.15; Eastern Districts Chronicle 1 April 1893, p.5.

⁶⁶ Daily News 13 September 1893, p.2; Inquirer and Commercial News 15 September 1893, p.19; Eastern Districts Chronicle 30 September 1893, p.7.

⁶⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 1 December 1894, p.7.

⁶⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 29 June 1895, p.3.

⁶⁹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 31 August 1895, p.6.

⁷⁰ Southern Cross Herald 20 March 1896, p.3; Northam Advertiser 21 March 1896, p.3

⁷¹ Eastern Districts Chronicle 13 June 1896, p.3; WA Record 27 June 1896, p.10.

⁷² Daily News 19 June 1896, p.2.

⁷³ Eastern Districts Chronicle 7 November 1896, p.4.

the presence of a number of witnesses, Craig stated that the plaintiff was a convict and had been sent out to this country for thieving that instead of being called a retired farmer and horse dealer, he ought to be called a retired horse stealer, that he had set fire to and burned other people's land, and that he had mares which had four foals a year. Judge Onslow expressed disappointment at "see[ing] the charge of being a convict hurled against a man who had lived for 40 years as a well-conducted person." Duperouzel was awarded £250 in damages.⁷⁴

On 14 September 1898, James was summoned by Alexander Broadbent for assaulting him in the Castle Hotel billiard room.⁷⁵

In October 1898, James was summoned for allowing an unlawful game to be played on his licensed premises.⁷⁶ Despite all these transgressions, his licence was renewed in December 1898.⁷⁷

In June 1900, and again in September 1901, James was summoned for assault, the latter time an employee SM Bennett who was employed as "boots" at the Castle Hotel and would not get up early. The assault was described as "most brutal". He was fined and cautioned about the danger of losing his temper.^{78 79}

In October 1901, James purchased the Castle Hotel for £3,000 after it had been submitted to auction.⁸⁰

James accidentally drowned in a shipwreck in 1902⁸¹ and after this time, the Castle Hotel was run by May.⁸² May applied for a licence for the hotel on 5 November 1902.^{83 84}

Rob Garton Smith
President
The York Society (Inc)
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⁷⁴ Duperouzel may have been motivated by the fact that James Craig had sued G Duperouzel in February 1898 to recover £43. There had also been long standing trouble between the two families. J Morton Craig charged Julia Duperouzel with using insulting and abusive language to her in January 1873, and she was fined 10 shillings. However, James' brother, "Willie" Craig married Sally Duperouzel: Dr John Boyd Craig: Heir Line, pages 19 and 20.

⁷⁵ Eastern Districts Chronicle 17 September 1898, p.3.

⁷⁶ Eastern Districts Chronicle 15 October 1898, p.3.

⁷⁷ Eastern Districts Chronicle 10 December 1898, p.2.

⁷⁸ Eastern Districts Chronicle 16 June 1900, p.2.

⁷⁹ Northam Advertiser 11 September 1901, p.3; Eastern Districts Chronicle 14 September 1901, p.3.

⁸⁰ Eastern Districts Chronicle 5 October 1901, p.2.

⁸¹ Northam Advertiser 10 September 1902, p.3.

⁸² Dr John Boyd Craig: Heir Line, page 16.

⁸³ Eastern Districts Chronicle, 8 November 1902, p.2.

⁸⁴ Emily May Craig was granted letters of administration of the estate of James Craig (worth £150) in 1903: Daily News, 21 May 1903, p.1.