

The Sydney Morning Herald.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1853.

Sydney Morning Herald report from Tambaroora 8 September 1853

a party of Germans, who have commenced sluicing with very fair success, the former being supplied with 300 yards of hose for the purpose. A local celebrity, who answers to the cognomen of Frank the poet, has added his physical and poetical strength to the former, where his bones and sinews are likely to be of more service than his brains.

The Maitland Mercury

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1861.

Maitland Mercury report from Mudgee 7 September 1861

MUDGEE.

(From the Western Post, August 31.)

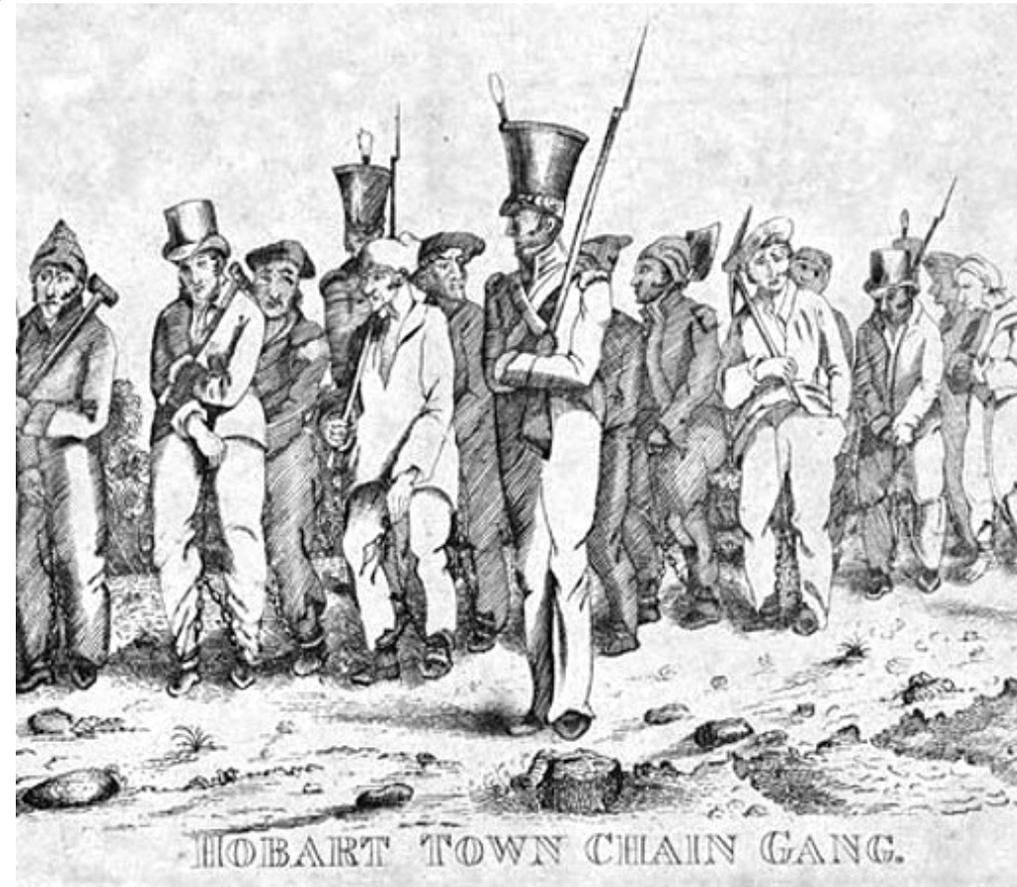
SUDDEN DEATH.—An inquest was held on the 30th, before the coroner for the district, on the body of Francis M'Namara, better known as "Frank the Poet." It appeared that M'Namara was a digger at Pipe Clay Creek. He had lately complained of a pain in the shoulder, and had been spitting blood. The medical evidence was to the effect that he had died from cold and inanition; and the jury returned a verdict according to that evidence.

The Argus.

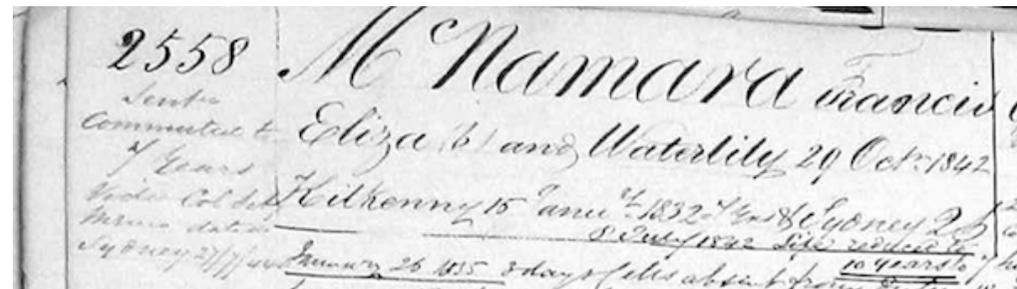
MELBOURNE, MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 1888.

Argus report - Sydney to Brisbane train trip 23 January 1888

Grim memories these, and they are kept alive in such traditions, which some of the second generation still keep living. These will—at least, would 10 years ago—relate the doggerel rhymes of one Frank Macnamara, the convict poet, full of horror and blasphemy, yet not devoid, therefore, of some interest to those who seek after the quaint and grotesque and absolutely original in literature. But the train moves—or, at least,



Francis MacNamara 1811 - 1861
2011 - Bicentenary



*From Western Post 31 August 1861
Reprinted in The Empire 4 September 1861*

SUDDEN DEATH

An inquest as held on Friday morning, by W KING, Esq., M.D. Coroner for this District, at the Fountain of Friendship, on the body of Francis McNAMARA, alias HILL, better known as "Frank the Poet".

Robert WELSH having been sworn, said that the deceased had resided with him on the Pipe Clay Creek diggings. They came into Mudgee together on Wednesday, deceased left him, and promised to meet him by a certain time at Mr McQUIGGAN's. He then went to PHILLIPS', and found him in bed; he asked for some water; he was half drunk. He advised deceased to get up; he replied "Put your hand in my pocket and take out what is there". Had known him for eight years. He had a complaint which caused him to spit blood. He earned a great deal of money, and spent it very freely; had known him to obtain "hundreds a week" at Tambaroora. The wind used to annoy him very much in the hut in which he resided. He was no better for his visit to Mudgee. The day before they had been drinking together all day off and on.

John McDERMID deposed: That he had been working with previous witness since the end of last month; he came into Mudgee on Thursday to see what was keeping him and deceased. He met WELSH, who was nearly tipsy, in PHILLIPS' tap-room and said "You promised not to get drunk" He replied how can I help it, Frank is very bad. He then went to see deceased, who made no reply to a question he put to him respecting his health. Shortly after, he called WELSH and told him to get some money owing to him in Mudgee, and to give him (witness) half, and died directly after. He used to complain of a pain in his shoulder. During the time he resided with them his appetite was good. He had no effects, excepting some papers. He never cared for clothes. Arthur Thomas Piggott CUTTING, being duly sworn, stated that he was a duly qualified medical practitioner; he had viewed and examined the body and it was opinion that the deceased came to his death by the effects of cold and inanition. The jury found a verdict accordingly.

*"For three long years I was beastly treated
And heavy irons on my legs I wore
My back from flogging was lacerated
And oft-times painted with crimson gore"*

- 4 January 1840 50 lashes for mutinous conduct
- 8 February 1840 A Dialogue Between Two Hibernians in Botany Bay published in the Sydney Gazette under the name Francis MacNamara
- 30 May 1842 captured by sergeant Michael Doyle at the foot of Razorback: Francis McNamara, per Elisa; John Jones, per Lady Macnaughton; Edward Allen, per Asia; William Thomson, per do; William Eastwood, per Patriot. Capture of Bushrangers.
- 6 June 1842 Admitted to Sydney Gaol
- 8 July 1842 tried at Assizes of Sydney for being at large with fire arms on his person and sentenced to be transported to Van Diemen's Land for Life
- 11 July 1842 three month stay on Cockatoo Island awaiting transportation to VDL
- 14 October 1842 departs Sydney with 24 other prisoners for Van Diemen's Land
- 29 Oct 1842 arrival in Hobart per Waterlily
- 25 December 1842 meets bushranger Martin Cash in Port Arthur, entertains prisoners with his verse beginning with his introductory "crow"
- 25 Sept 1843 seven days solitary confinement for disobeying orders
- January 1847 receives ticket-of-leave
- September 1847 receives conditional pardon
- 21 July 1849 gains Certificate of Freedom
- 8 September 1853 reported in the Sydney Morning Herald at Tambaroora Hill End
- 1 March 1861 calligraphic work on Calf Family Record near Mudgee NSW
- 29 August 1861 death in Mudgee NSW
- 18 June 1862 Article with stories about Frank the Poet at Meroo - Bathurst Free Press
- 7 October 1865 Article about Frank the Poet extemporising verse in 1835 in Sydney Police Court published in the Bunyip South Australia
- Frank the Poet mentioned by Owen Suffolk in his autobiography Days of Crime and Years of Suffering serialised in the Australasian newspaper (1867)
- 24 December 1881 attribution of "Travellers Welcome" song to Frank the Poet in the South Australian Weekly Chronicle
- 1885 First publication of 'A Convict's Tour to Hell', in a booklet titled 'The Song of Ninian Melville' a poem by Henry Kendall
- 27 December 1900 A Convict's Tour to Hell: published in the Cumberland Times
- 1 January 1892 Victoria Museum - Frank the Poet - example of his penmanship
- 28 January 1893 Convict's Tour to Hell: cited by Telemachus in the Oakleigh Leader
- 12 December 1900 "Martin Cash" play includes Frank the poet as a character.
- 22 August 1903 attribution of 'The Poor Exile from the Shamrock Shore' in the Braidwood Dispatch and Mining Journal

ebook by mark gregory november 2011 updated July 2013

Frank the Poet : Francis MacNamara
see more at www.frankthepoet.com

- 1811 Francis MacNamara born in Cashel Tipperary (or Wicklow, or Cork)
- 14 January 1832 sentenced to 7 years transportation
- 18 January 1832 MacNamara's use of poetry in court reported in the Kilkenny Journal
- 10 May 1832, age 21, sailed from Cork on the prison ship Eliza II, trade described as Miner. Among his fellow prisoners for the journey were 43 Whiteboys
- 8 September 1832 arrived in Sydney, assigned as servant to John Jones of Sydney
- 3 January 1833 sentenced to 6 months gaol served in an ironed-gang on Goat Island
- 27 May 1833 returned to Hyde Park Barracks
- June 1833 absconded and sentenced to flogging, on 24 June received 50 lashes
- 1 July 1833 sentenced to a month on the treadmill for disobedience
- Absconded again recaptured and on 24 August 1833 was sentenced to 12 month irons
- 3 September 1833 sent to Phoenix Hulk on Sydney Harbour to serve his sentence
- 1 February 1834 flogged with 25 lashes for having a stolen shirt
- 3 March 1834 75 lashes for insubordinate conduct
- 25 August returned to Hyde Park Barracks
- 26 January 1835 3 days in the cells (solitary confinement) for being absent from duty
- 18 February 1835 25 lashes for disobeying orders
- 9 March 1835 100 lashes for obscene language
- 16 April 1835 12 months in irons
- 16 May 1835 36 lashes for insolence
- 8 June 1835 50 lashes for threatening language
- 8 August 1835 75 lashes for destroying a government cart
- 14 December 1835 50 lashes for refusing to work
- 16 March 1836 sent to Phoenix Hulk
- 25 March 1836 25 lashes for neglect of work
- 15 August 1836 10 days in the cells for being found drunk
- March 1837 2 months on treadmill for absconding
- 25 March 1837 refused to mount treadmill 50 lashes
- May 1837 returns to Phoenix Hulk
- 31 December 1837 presence on Phoenix recorded in muster for the census
- 1838 assigned to A A Co as shepherd on the Peel River and Stroud till October 1839
- 23 October 1839 Trimmingham manuscript written containing 4 poems: A Convict's Tour To Hell, A Petition from the Chain Gang at Newcastle, A Petition in Behalf of the Flocks and For the Company Underground
- 1 November 1839 Newcastle Gaol - sentenced 12 months in an Ironed Gang
- 9 November 1839 Forwarded to Sydney
- 5 December 1839 Discharged from Woolloomooloo Stockade sent to Parramatta Gaol
- 7 December 1839 Disposed of to Stockade Parramatta

CLARKE'S CREEK, MEROO

Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal Wednesday 18 June 1862

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT [Extracts]

FRANK THE POET.

The first duty appointed him was to drive off the cockatoos from a paddock of newly sown grain. Frank performed this duty in the following provoking manner ; he wrote out a number of threatening notices to the cockatoos, that they were prohibited from crossing the fence to the grain, and these notices he put at the tops of poles which he fastened at regular distances all round the paddock fences.

When asked by the "Super," what all those papers meant, he replied. "Did you not tell me to order the cockatoos off the ground ?"

Though reared in the Catholic faith, it was his delight to profess to be an unbeliever, for the sole purpose of mischief. He had every part of scripture at his tongue's end, and he scorned to have studied the Bible to justify himself as an adept at puzzling and irritating criticism ; and where he could take provoking liberties with clergymen, he was not backward in doing so. It was his boast that he had confounded two or three just after they had been preaching. On one occasion he obliterated a whole verse, and inserted in its place with his pen a sentiment utterly unscriptural. He did this so cleverly that it looked in no way different from the other print on the leaf ; and he had the audacity to assert in the face of a clergyman, that it was a part of the Protestant Scripture.

Frank was offensively eccentric in his manners, he never put a string to his shoes, assigning as a reason, "that God never made man to stoop to anything so low as his feet," he generally wore his small clothes inside out. Some times he was better employed, his penmanship seemed almost miraculous; and many persons who admired demonstrations of that kind, employed him to write on the blank leaves of prayer-books, bibles, and other valued books.

I am told he was the author of a published volume of sarcasm on the Government ; but, so far as I can learn, it was an imitation of that presumptuous and unpardonable part of Dante, in which he puts lately dead, yes, and living characters into hell, and assigns them horrible torments. To speak of such a state at all, as that of final perdition, except in religious teaching, and in the language of Scripture, is pitifully contemptible ; and to put living men into eternal torments is disgustingly malignant, and is only less revolting than artistic pulpit oratory on such a painful subject.

Morton Bay

[As sung by Simon McDonald in Creswick 1960]

I am a native of the land of Erin
I was early banished from my native shore
On the ship Columbus went circular sailing
And I left behind me the girl I adore

Over bounding billows which was loudly raging
Like a bold sea mariner my course did steer
We were bound for Sydney our destination
And every day in irons wore

When I arrived 'twas in Port Jackson
And I thought my days would happy be
But I found out I was greatly mistaken
I was taken a prisoner to Moreton Bay

Chorus
Moreton Bay you'll find no equal
Norfolk Island and Emu Plains
At Castle Hill and cursed Toongabie
And all time places in New South Wales

Now every morning as the day was dawning
As we rose from heaven fell the morning dew
And we were roused without a moments warning
Our daily labour to renew

For three long years I was beastly treated
And heavy irons on my legs I wore
My back from flogging was lacerated
And oft-times painted with crimson gore

Like the Egyptians and ancient Hebrews
We were oppressed under Logan's yoke
But a native black there lay in ambush
Did give this tyrant a mortal stroke

Now fellow prisoners be exhilarated
That all such monsters such death may find
And when from bondage we are liberated
From our former sufferings shall fade from mind

A Convict's Tour to Hell [arrival in Heaven]

I think 'tis high time to retire
And having travelled many days
O'er fiery hills and boiling seas
At length I found that happy place
Where all the woes of mortals cease

And rapping loudly at the wicket
Cried Peter, where's your certificate
Or if you have not one to show
Pray who in Heaven do you know?

Well I know Brave Donohue
Young Troy and Jenkins too
And many others whom floggers mangled
And lastly were by Jack Ketch strangled

Peter, says Jesus, let Frank in
For he is thoroughly purged from sin
And although in convict's habit dressed
Here he shall be a welcome guest

Isaiah go with him to Job
And put on him a scarlet robe
St Paul go to the flock straightway
And kill the fatted calf today
And go tell Abraham and Abel
In Haste now to prepare the table
For we shall have a grand repast
Since Frank the Poet has come at last

Then came Moses and Elias
John the Baptist and Mathias
With many saints from foreign lands
And with the Poet they all join hands

Thro' Heaven's Concave their rejoicings range
And hymns of praise to God they sang
And as they praised his glorious name
I woke and found 'twas but a dream

A Convict's Tour to Hell [excerpts]

When the Devil came, pray what's your will?
Alas cried the Poet I've come to dwell
With you and share your fate in Hell
Says Satan that can't be, I'm sure
For I detest and hate the poor
And none shall in my kingdom stand
Except the grandees of the land.

Who is that Sir in yonder blaze
Who on fire and brimstone seems to graze?
'Tis Captain Logan of Moreton Bay
And Williams who was killed the other day
He was overseer at Grosse Farm
And done poor convicts no little harm
Cook who discovered New South Wales
And he that first invented gaols

And all those fiery seats and chairs
Are fitted up for Dukes and Mayors
And nobles of Judicial orders
Barristers, Lawyers and Recorders
Here I beheld legions of traitors
Hangmen gaolers and flagellators
Commandants, Constables and Spies
Informers and Overseers likewise

Just as I spoke a coach and four
Came in full post haste to the door
And about six feet of mortal sin
Without leave or licence trudged in
At his arrival three cheers were given

Dancing singing joy or mirth
In Heaven above or on the earth
Straightway to Lucifer I went
To know what these rejoicings meant
Of sense cried Lucifer I'm deprived
Since Governor Darling has arrived
With fire and brimstone I've ordained him
And Vulcan has already chained him

Cyprus Brig

[As sung by Jack Davies in Hobart 1961]

Poor Tom Brown from Nottingham Jack Williams and poor Joe
They were three gallant poacher boys their country all does know
And by the laws of the Game Act that you may understand
Were fourteen years transported boys all to Van Diemen's Land

When we landed in this colony to different masters sent
For little trifling offences boys to Hobart Town gaol were sent
Now the second sentence we received and ordered for to be
Sent to Macquarie Harbour that place of tyranny

Down Hobart Town streets we were guarded on the Cyprus Brig conveyed
Our topsails they were hoisted boys our anchor it was weighed
The wind it blew a nor nor west and on we steered straight way
Till we brought her to an anchorage in a place called Research Bay

Now confined in a dismal hole those lads contrived a plan
To take possession of that brig or else die every man
The plan it being approved upon we all retired to rest
And early next morning boys we put them to the test

Up steps bold Jack Muldemon his comrades three more
We soon disarmed the sentry and left him in his gore
Liberty Oh Liberty it's Liberty we crave
Deliver up your arms my boys or the sea shall be your grave

First we landed the soldiers the captain and his crew
We gave three cheers for Liberty and soon bid them adieu
William Swallows he was chosen our commander for to be
We gave three cheers for Liberty and boldly put to sea

Play on your golden trumpets boys and sound your cheerful notes
The Cyprus Brig's on the ocean boys by justice does she float

Notes

The seizure of convict ships by convicts happened a number of times. This particular event occurred in August 1829, and a manuscript in the Mitchell Library has a poem of 48 lines that commemorates the seizure. Titled 'Seizure of the Cyprus Brig in Recherche Bay'

Labouring With The Hoe

I was convicted by the laws
Of England's hostile crown
Conveyed across those swelling seas
In slavery's fetters bound
Forever banished from that shore
Where love and friendship grow
That loss of freedom to deplore
And work the labouring hoe

Despised rejected and oppressed
In tattered rags I'm clad
What anguish fills my aching breast
And drives me almost mad
When I hear the settler's threatening voice
Say Arise to labour go!
Take scourging convict for your choice
Or work the labouring hoe

Growing weary from compulsive toil
Beneath the noontide sun
While drops of sweat bedew the soil
My task remains undone
I'm flogged for wilful negligence
Or the tyrant calls it so
Oh what a doleful recompense
For labouring with the hoe

Behold yon lofty woodbine hills
Where the rose in the morning shines
Those crystal brooks that do distil
And mingle with those vines
There seems to me no pleasure gained
They but augment my woe
While here an outcast doomed to live
And work the labouring hoe

You generous sons of Erin's isle
Whose heart for glory burns
Pity a wretched exile
Who his long-lost country mourns
Restore me heaven to liberty
Whilst I lie here below
Untie this clue of bondage
And release me from the hoe!

To any rational being I appeal
Whether he's fit to cook a meal
For a vile caterpillar or a snail
Or a beast of prey
Men he has scoured in every gaol
In Botany Bay

I know the damned devils when they sit
To dine, will long for a savoury bit.
Now Duffy's just the person fit
To boil their kettles
To send him to the Bottomless Pit
To cook their victuals

But did he even touch our meat.
A furnace our coppers wouldn't heat
And every knife, fork, spoon and plate
Would cry out Shame
And in the midst of our debate
Would curse thy name

Or if Saints Matthew, Mark, John and Luke
With Moses who wrote the Pentateuch
Consented to make this flogger our cook
I'd say 'tis foul
If I wouldn't swear it on the Book
Hell seize my soul

Now sir, your petitioners great and small
On bended knees before you fall
Nor let us in vain for redress call
Drive Duffy away
And as in duty bound we all
Will ever pray

'Tis needless to say the prayer was granted

Notes

Captain Furlong was the superintendent at Newcastle Gaol and MacNamara's petition took the form of a hunger strike by prisoners praying the dismissal of a notorious scourger named Duffy from the cookhouse and appoint another cook in his place.

A petition from the Chain Gang at Newcastle to Captain Furlong

With reverence and submission due
Kind sir those words are sent to you
And with them a good wish too
Long may you reign
And like Wellington at Waterloo
Fresh laurels gain

Your petitioners are under thy care
In mercy therefore hear our prayer
Nor let us wallow in despair
But soothe each pang
But allow no flogger to prepare
Food for your gang

'Tis said that by your ordination
Our late cook lost his situation
And Duffy is in nomination
His berth to fill
But has not got our approbation
Nor never will

Your judgement Sire, put to good use
Nor burthen us with foul abuse
Full long we've drunk the dregs and juice
Of black despair
Yet we can find another screw loose
Or two somewhere.

Our jaws now daily will grow thinner.
And stomachs weak, as I'm a sinner
For Duffy is a human skinner
Most barbarous wretch
Each day I'd rather have my dinner
Cooked by Jack Ketch

It matters not whether salt or fresh,
Even his touch would spoil each dish
His cooking we never can relish
We'd rather starve
For be assured tis human flesh
He best can carve

The Ballad of Martin Cash [excerpts]

He left Port Arthur's cursed soil,
Saying "No longer will I toil",
And soon he reached the Derwent's side
In spite of all his foes.
He made the settlers crouch in dread
Where'er that he showed his head;
This valiant son of Erin,
Where the sprig of shamrock grows.

It was once when near the old Woolpack
His enemies they did attack;
The number being three to one,
They thought their prize secure.
But Martin to his piece did cling,
And three of them did quickly wing,
Saying, "Down, you cowardly dogs,
Or I nail you to the floor!"

It's loud for mercy they did cry,
But no one came to their reply,
While Martin, with a smiling eye,
Stood gazing at his foes.
Then through the bush he took his way,
And called on settlers night and day,
Did our valiant son of Erin,
Where the sprig of shamrock grows.

He's the bravest man that you could choose
From Sydney men or Cockatoos,
And a gallant son of Erin,
Where the sprig of shamrock grows.

Notes

From "The Adventures of Martin Cash" published in Hobart in 1870.
Martin Cash and Francis MacNamara had both been prisoners at Port
Arthur.

"Cockatoo" a name for anyone, like MacNamara, who had been a prisoner
on Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour.

*A Petition from the A.A. Co. Flocks at Peel River
In behalf of the Irish Bard [excerpts]*

By permission of the great Esquire Hall
Being assembled here this day
Unanimously bleating all
For Him that's far away.

Our noble sires in the rich vales
Of Germany long sported
But we alas to New South Wales
By the Company were imported.

We were bourne across the Main
From Holland and from Russia
Some from Saxony, more from Spain
France, Switzerland and Prussia.

We, the prime of the Company's stock
Fat wethers, rams and ewes
None excepted, all the flock
Peel for the Poet's woes.

Oft he has charmed with his notes
The Plains of fair Killala
To him we owe our fleecy coats
Our flesh, our hides, our tallow.

He ever proved our constant friend
'Tis plain from our contrition
In his behalf therefore we send
The following petition.

For years on the Poet's lawn we've grazed
And leaped o'er many a hurdle
To you our voices all are raised
Most noble Ebsworth of Burrell.

To honour thee we never cease
With reverence most profound
How much more Sire, when you release
The Poet from underground.

Each morning when the watchful cock
Announced the approach of day
At the folds he was seen with his flock
Before Sol's glittering ray.

By the fair Peel's evergreen side
We feasted every day
Our wants there amply were supplied
Whilst our Bard's merry lay

On Being Sentenced to Transportation

I dread not the dangers by land or by sea
That I'll meet on my voyage to Botany Bay
My labours are over, my vocation is past
And 'tis I'll rest easy, and happy at last

The Poet's Introduction

My name is Frank MacNamara
A native of Cashel, County Tipperary
Sworn to be a Tyrant's foe
And while I live I'll crow

On Being Sentenced to Solitary Confinement

Captain Murray, if you please
Make it hours instead of days
You know it becomes an Irishman
To drown the shamrock when he can

Toast to Dinner

Oh, bull, oh, bull, what brought you here
You've ranged these hills for many a year
You've ranged these hills with sore abuse
And now you're here for poor Frank's use

another variant is

Oh Beef! Oh Beef! What brought you here
You've roamed these hills for many a year
You've felt the lash and sore abuse
And now you're here for prisoners' use

On Leaving Tasmania

Land of Lags and Kangaroo
Of possum and the scarce Emu
The farmer's pride but the prisoner's Hell
Land of B.... s Fare-thee-well

For the Company Underground [excerpts]

When Christ from Heaven comes down straightway
All His Father's laws to expound
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When the man in the moon to Moreton Bay
Is sent in shackles bound
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When cows in lieu of milk yield tea
And all lost treasures are found
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When the Australian Co's heaviest dray
Is drawn 80 miles by a hound
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When a frog, a caterpillar and a flea
Shall travel the globe all round
McNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When turkeycocks on Jews harps play
And mountains dance at the sound
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When Christmas falls on the 1st of May
And O'Connell's King of England crown'd
MacNamara shall work that day
For the Company underground

When the quick and the dead shall stand in array
Cited at the trumpet's sound
Even then, damn me if I'd work a day
For the Company underground

Nor overground.

Joined with the notes of the sweet thrush
With melody filled the air
Birds to him flocked from every bush
So sweet his carols were.

Our tender lambs with him would play
And in his bosom lie
To Hawks they's often fall a prey
But for his watchful eye.

He reared them with a father's care
And fed the sickly ewes
Whilst other shepherds gambling were
On cards and dominoes.

Our wily foes, the native dogs
He chased for many a mile
Saint Patrick never drove the frogs
So swift from the Western Isle.

The King of Thessaly's numerous flocks
Once Telemachus kept
And from coverts and caverns in the rocks
Bears, lions and tigers crept.

To hear the music of his lute
But our Bard's plaintive songs
Not only charmed the senseless brute
But gathered the birds in throngs.

Far from the Peel's evergreen plains
In some wild lone retreat
In bitter and heartrending strains
We'll mourn our patron's fate.

Our cries from the hills shall resound
To the extremes of the Poles
If our friend goes underground
At Newcastle to wheel coals.

Why should the poet be sent down
To toil in a coal pit
Such service best suits a clown
But not a man of wit.

We yet shall hear his merry songs
On fair Killala's plain
Kind Heaven shall avenge the wrongs
Of our much injured swain.

From the Trimmingham/Cameron MSS in the Mitchell Library

THE BUNYIP.

GAWLER CHRONICLE AND NORTHERN ADVERTISER.

The Bunyip, Saturday 7 October 1865 p. 4.

ON FREEDOM.
TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUNYIP.

Sir.-In the year 1835 an individual, whose name I will not mention, but who was designated as "Frank, the Poet," appeared at the Police Court in Sydney ; and being a most incorrigible offender-having, by various sentences, accumulated enough punishment to last the lives of three men-he was thus addressed by the presiding magistrate :-

MAGISTRATE-When do you think you will obtain your freedom ?
You are constantly appearing here and receiving additional sentences.

FRANK-That I can easily answer, your Worship.

MAGISTRATE-I rather think it will be a most difficult matter for you to do, as it is almost beyond calculation.

FRANK-Not so, your Worship; for if you will allow me I will tell you.

MAGISTRATE-Well, when ?

Frank's statement was as follows, and only now sees the light for the first time : -

When Sydney town, of high renown,
Goes to the Windsor races ;
When the Surrey hills, and Barker's mills,
Do visibly change places.
When New South Wales is blessed by God-
Which I think will never be-
And branches new grace Aaron's rod,
That day I will be free.

When Rossi-Bowman, and such men,
Show to poor convicts justice ;
And when the world is taxed again
By Caesar, famed Augustus ;
When David's bear and Balaam's ass
Dine with King Solomon's bee ;

Tyranny for a time did cease,
Blood speedily gained a restoration,
And McIntosh his venom traced.
Inhuman sights they did exhibit
As evil Morrison had done before,
The bloody triangles and the bleeding gibbet
Could not daunt the boys from the Shamrock shore

I sometimes ponder in silent sorrow
For my poor brethren's hardships - how hard they fare ;
For the cities of Sodom and great Gomorrah
To this cursed colony could not compare.
Those cities were cancelled by a conflagration,
Never to be inhabited or rebuilt any more,
This wants a similar visitation
To avenge the boys from the Shamrock shore.

You seem annoyed at my recital,
Of a poor bushranger's tale of woe.
A valiant outlaw is my real title,
Until the fatal bullet lays me low.
Through the forest echo with pistols loaded,
And girded round with the bayonets bare,
Like an Arabian Steed through the forest bounding
Goes the poor exile from the Shamrock shore.

Notes

This ballad was published in the Braidwood Dispatch in 1903 as part of an article about Jack Donohue.

The article mentions "Francis McNamara better known as Frank the Poet" and attributes this ballad to him. It doesn't seem as well crafted as MacNamara's other ballads and displays little of his famous wit. It does show how well known the poet and his works had become. It sings well to the tune(s) for "Morton Bay."

The "evil Morrison" is most like Major Morriset who also appears in "A Convict's Tour to Hell"

*Then Major Morriset I espied
And Captain Cluney by his side
With a fiery belt they were lashed together
As tight as soles to upper leather
Their situation was most horrid
For they were tyrants down at the Norrid*

The Poor Exile from the Shamrock Shore

[Published in the *Braidwood Dispatch*
Saturday 22 August 1903 p. 2.]

One evening late, as bright Sol was declining,
Creation gilded with his last rays,
And the feathery tribes through the groves were chiming
Their warbling notes in melodious lays,
By the limpid Hunter as I was seated
No great distance from Newcastle shore,
I heard a voice that thrice repeated,
"I am a poor exile from the Shamrock shore."

My bosom flowing with fond emotion,
By nature I was prompted to rise
To participate in that sad devotion
And re-echo feebly their mournful cries.
My sunburnt shoulders displayed more lashes
Of barbarous flogging ; no shirt I wore ;
No tattooed savage displayed more gashes
Than the poor exile from the Shamrock shore.

My head is hoary, my forehead's wrinkled,
With the palsy in every joint ;
With convict's blood the ground is sprinkled.
The tyrants call it Limeburners' Point.
The servile soil that we are treading
Was trod together by our brethren's gore ;
They expired like martyrs, no torture dreading,
Says the poor exile from the Shamrock shore.

I have read in the Bible of King Herod's slaughter,
Bethelam, indeed, was a most awful sight,
And how King Pharoah in the Nile's deep water
Drowned many a true-born Israelite,
The crimsoned Isle and the raging bayonet
Are renowned in Scripture by deeds of gore ;
They were excelled by Morrison, and I'll maintain it,
And so can many from the Shamrock shore.
I have witnessed Morrison's disembarkation.

And when Lord Farnham goes to mass-
That day I will be free.

When horses all wear Hessian boots,
And mountains are brought low ;
When bullocks play on German flutes,
And lilies cease to blow.

When geese like Presbyterians preach,
And truth is proved a libel ;
When heaven is within our reach,
And Deists love the Bible.

When Britain's isle goes to the Nile,
Or visits Londonderry ;
And the Hill of Howth goes to the South,
Or to the County Kerry ;

When Dublin town, of good renown,
Pays a visit to the Dee ;
And when millstones on the ocean float-
That day will see me free.

Magistrate-That is about the time. Take him away for another twelve months
C. L.

Notes

John Meredith and Rex Whalan write about MacNamara's many punishments in 1835 including one 12 month sentence:
For Assaulting a constable on April 16th, the young Irishman was awarded 12 months work in irons, but this did little to quell his spirit, for exactly a month later he was flogged again. On this occasion it was 36 lashes for "refusing to work and insolence". [Frank the Poet p. 6.]

If this poem was written in 1835 it predates a very similar petition/poem in the Trimmingham manuscript, "For the Company Underground", by four years. The closeness of the two compositions is remarkable and the fact that this "only now sees the light for the first time", thirty years after it was composed on the spot and four years after MacNamara's death suggests that his verse quickly spread orally rather than in print. It could have been titled *On Freedom* like letter to the editor, but I have chosen to echo the poem by titling it "The Day I Will Be Free". It has lain hidden in the *Bunyip* for 148 years, freed it seems by the digitisation of newspapers in the electronic revolution.

*A Dialogue between two Hibernians in Botany Bay
Published in the Sydney Gazette 8 February 1840*

Musha welcome to Botany, Paddy my dear,
Yer the last man in Ireland, I thought of seeing here.
By my aunty Kate's side, you are my cousin jarmin.
And wid you I oft went to hear Father Mike's sarmon.
But how did this lagging of yours come to pass,
I'm inclined to think you neglected the mass
And robbed your poor soul of felicity's joys,
By joining yourself to the cursed White Boys.
The sea sickness, Darby, has made me so weak,
That I'm hardly able at present to speak.
From wearing the darbies, my limbs are grown feeble,
And all the blame lies on the Man of the People.
Cursed Daniel O'Connell the great Agitator,
Is in my opinion a double faced traitor,
From his seditious harangues had I kept away,
I ne'er should have visited Botany Bay.
But tell me Darby, do you enjoy good health :
I heard when at home you possessed immense wealth.
'Twas the common conversation each night round the hearth,
That the Governor puts all his countrymen in berths.
And they all flock round him like terrier dogs,
His first breath, like ourselves too, he drew in the bogs.
And the English assail him with vociferations,
For putting his countrymen in situations.
Places and offices of the greatest trust,
But Darby, my friend, you know it is but just,
For never was a Paddy yet born of a mother,
That would not fight till death in defence of another
So we care not for Atheist, Jew, Christian, or Turk,
So long as we're back'd by our countryman Bourke.
Musha Darby, my friend, aint the sea mighty deep,
Rather than be a sailor, I'd enlist for a sweep,
For sweeps can repose on their soft sooty pillows,
While mariners are tost up and down on the billows.
But if ever I return from cursed New South Wales,
I'll tell the ould people some wondertul tales,
Describing the elements and waves in commotion.
And the curious animals I've seen in the ocean,
How black whales and sperm in droves gathered round us.
Spouting water on our decks, sufficient to drown us.
How sharks followed after us like peelers and swaddies.
Auxiously waiting to devour the dead bodies;
How the dolphin changes al colors when dying;
How I've seen heaps of fish in the elements flying.
Well I know they'll pitch myself to the dickens,
When I tell them about Mother Carey's fine chickens,

I'll tell the Mahers, McNamaras and McCarty's
All about iron gangs and road parties,
How famous the hulk is for chaining and gagging,
How the penal men are used, when doing their lagging ;
I'll them about delegates, cooks, mates and victuallers,
And give them a letter on Dungaree settlers.
Now Darby, since you're going to ould Ireland back,
Give my loving respects to my young brother Jack
And pay the same tribute to Shamus my brother,
The same give to my affectionate mother.
And dont forget to tell my dear daddy,
That I'm still his dutiful darling son Paddy,
And likewise Darby, tell my sister Onagh
That I saw the big fish that swallowed up Jonah.
Forget it not Darby, a fool can think of it,
Says you, it is the same beast, wolfed the poor prophet.
Give my love to my sweetheart, Mary,
The star of Hibernia, the pride of Tipperary
Tell her that tho' twixt us there is a great barrier,
I may yet see the day that Pauddeen can marry her,
Yerra, well I know, that my neighbours and cousins,
Will all gather round you in scores and in dozens.
And when you have told them all about lagging,
Musha Darby, tis yerself will get many a naggin
Yerra then Darby, you'll be in clover
And when all the hugging and kissing is over,
Stroll down to Maushe Counel, that lives in the moor,
And planted in the thatch, just over his door,
You'll find seven muskets and an old pike,
Deliver them yerself to ould Father Mike.
To the right owners let his reverence return them,
If he refuses to do so, my honest friend, burn them,
Only for the muskets, well may I remark,
Poor Paddy to-day wouldn't be in Hyde Park.
Tell the boys to beware of the great instigator,
Daniel O'Connell, the great agitator
The poor Paddys can't comprehend what he's doing
Damn him for evr, 'twas he wrought my ruin.
Tell the boys to desist from killing peelers and arson,
But cheerfully pay the tithe proctor and parson;
Why should they, Darby, be left in the lurch,
You know they're the heads of the Protestant Church.
To protect them, faith I'd spill my blood every drop.
And not only the tenth, but the half of my crop,
I'd freely give them without hesitation.
To free me from Botany and vile transportation.
I'd forsake the chapel, and ould Father Mike,
The caravats, shillelagh and Ribbonman's pike;
I'd make peace with my God, live in charity with men,
Musha Darby, Botany Bay wouldn't catch Pat again.