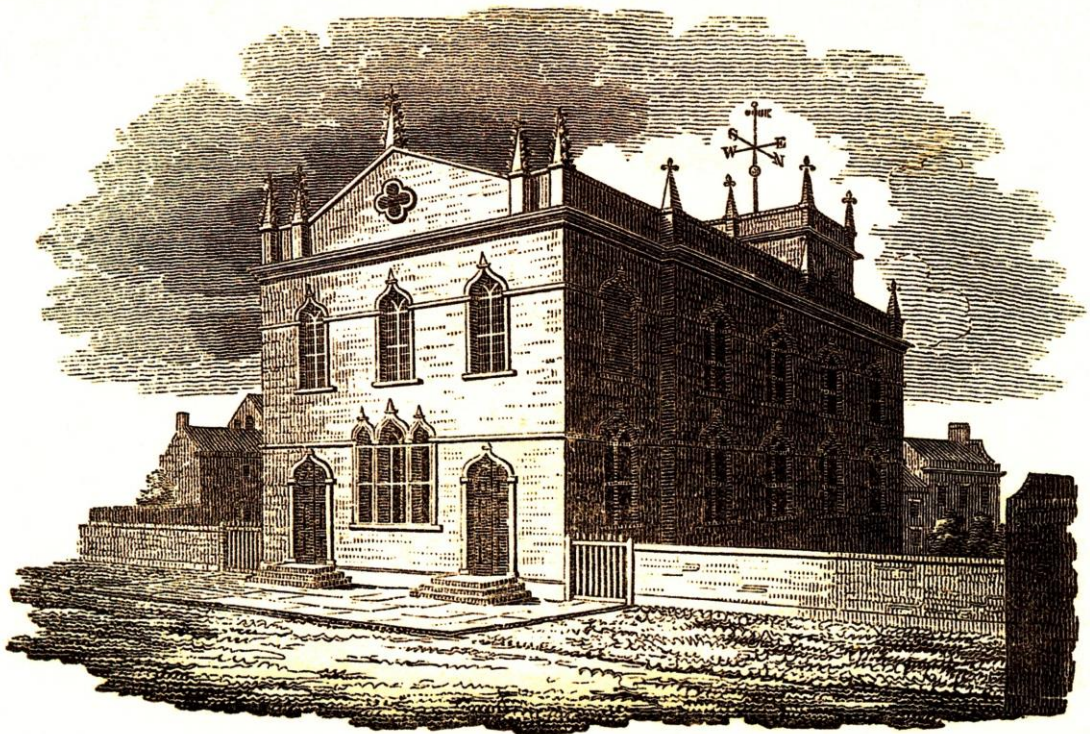


Chapter 2.12

**JAMES AND SARAH GOFFEY**

**1804 – 1870**



**ST. ANNE'S CHURCH.**

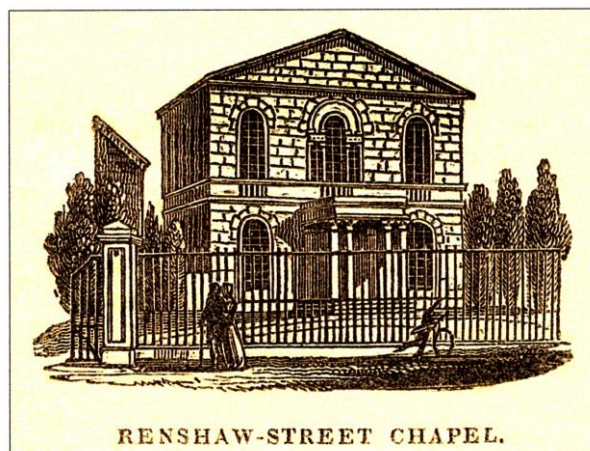
**St. Anne's Church, Great Richmond Street, Liverpool in 1815.** James Goffey and Sarah Templeton were married in this church on 11th May 1831. It was replaced in 1870 by a new church which was demolished in the 1970s. The site is in the city centre near the entrance to the Kingsway Mersey Tunnel.

## Chapter 2.12. James and Sarah Goffey

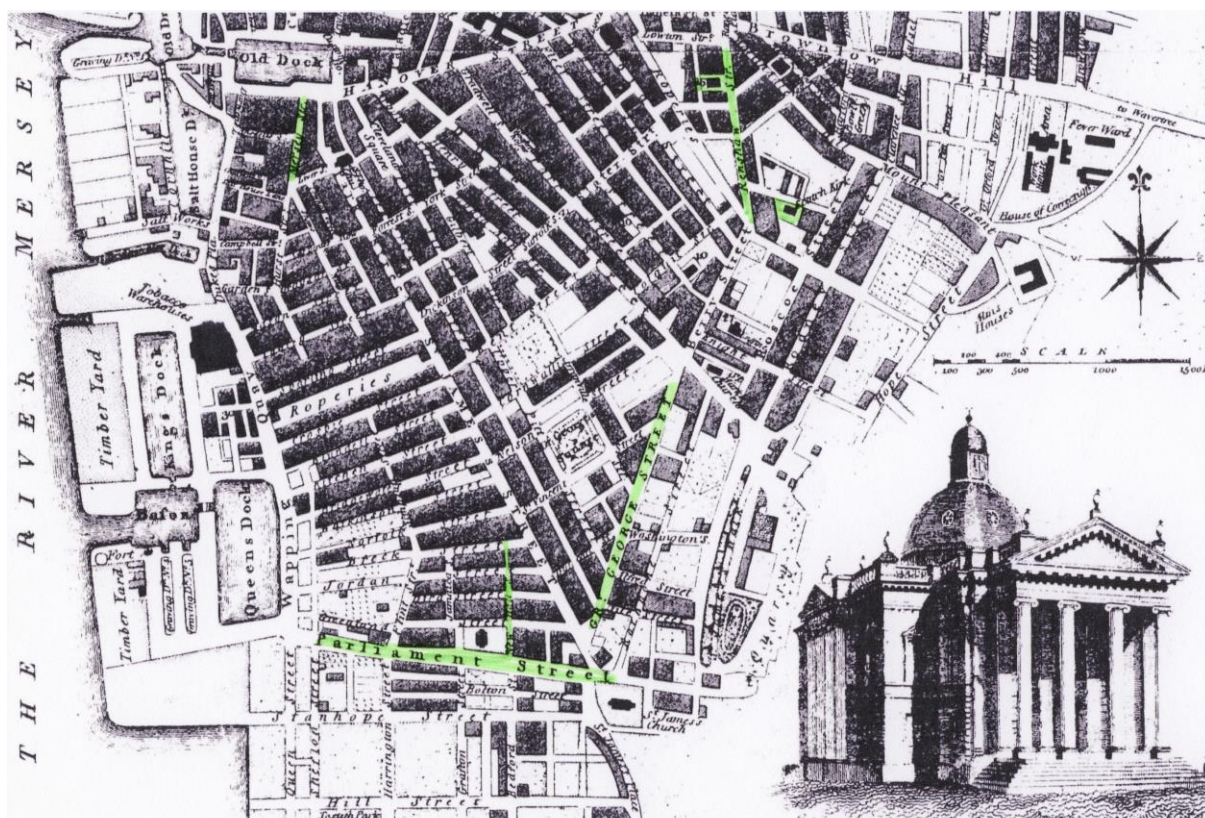
James Goffey, Harry Goffey's grandfather, was born on 20th February 1807 in Liverpool and was baptised exactly a month later at the Newington Congregational Chapel (pictured below) in Renshaw Street. He has the distinction of being by far the most highly documented individual in the Goffey family, on account of the large amount of data held by the Historical Manuscripts Commission in the archives of the Merseyside Maritime Museum at Albert Dock, Liverpool.

His wife, Sarah Templeton, was born in 1804 and was baptised at the Scotch Kirk in Oldham Street, Liverpool, on 10th April 1804. Sarah was the youngest of the four children of William Templeton; the 1796 Gore's Liverpool Directory shows only one William Templeton living in the city at the time, he was a tailor of 19, Mersey Street, Liverpool and has been assumed to be Sarah's father although this is not certain.

James and Sarah were married on 11th May 1831 at St. Anne's Church, Great Richmond Street, which was at the top of St. Anne Street, at that time on the outskirts of Liverpool. By an odd coincidence, Robert and Adriana Semple, having returned from the West Indies to Glasgow, had moved to Liverpool about six months earlier and Robert was running Semple and Co. from an office at 44, St. Anne Street.



James and Sarah appear in the censuses of 1841 and 1851 living at 21, Newhall Street, a side turning off Parliament Street little more than 300 yards from Head Street, Toxteth Park, the home of James's mother Mary and his sister Martha. Newhall Street is no longer a residential area; the turning from Parliament Street has been bricked up and the area given over to commercial premises. Presumably due to its proximity to the docks the area was badly damaged in the Second World War, but its now-haphazard mix of retail outlets, light industry and decaying Victorian warehouses must make it ripe for redevelopment as it is just across the road (Wapping Quay) from the bright new blocks of flats being erected around the old docks area. In the 1841 census James and Sarah are shown with their three eldest sons – James Jnr. aged nine, Thomas aged six and William three. Ten years later, they are shown with their five sons – James Jnr. aged 19 a baker's apprentice, Thomas aged 16 an apprentice attorney's clerk, William aged 13, Arthur aged nine and Alfred aged six, all three younger boys being identified as "*scholars*". Both James and Sarah appear in the Gore's Liverpool Directory of 1845, as incidentally do James's mother, Mary, and sister, Martha.



**Detail from the 1807 map of Liverpool.** Showing locations mentioned in this chapter, including New Hall Street, Parliament Street, Renshaw Street, Mersey Street and the Scotch Kirk. St. Anne Street and St. Anne’s Church can be seen on the full map at the end of this chapter.

James spent all his working life as a mariner, as far as we can tell on the West Africa run from Liverpool to and from the area of modern-day Nigeria around the Bonny and Calabar Rivers. His career started aged 19 as a mate on the brig *Jane* in 1826. It should be noted that in 1839 James did not have his Master’s Certificate; but it was common practice for a ship to be under the command of a “Flag Captain” - an unqualified Master - provided there was a subordinate certificated Master on board to satisfy the regulations, sign the log book etc. James’s first voyage in command of a ship was as a flag captain in 1839 on the brig *Gannet* (290 tons, owners name: Hamilton, Capt.: J.Cooper) on a trip to Bonny. There is a letter from his sister Martha to James written on 12th September 1839 in the Merseyside Maritime Museum which describes the departure of the *Gannet* from the quay at Liverpool; this is described more fully in Chapter 2.13.

James saw further service in the barque *Cora* in 1843 and 1849-50 and in the barque *Snowdon* in 1844-45 and 1846-47. Finally, after thirty years’ service as an apprentice mate and master, James was given his Master’s Certificate in 1851 and he made a series of trips from Liverpool to West Africa as master of different vessels, all of which are listed in Lloyds Register as being registered in Liverpool, owned by Wilson & Co., and engaged on the Liverpool-Africa run. James is only listed as the certificated Master for the *Tapley* in 1855-6:-

Liverpool – Bonny - Fernando Po – Liverpool	<i>America</i>	1852
Liverpool – Calabar – Liverpool	<i>Petrel</i>	1852

Liverpool – Calabar – Liverpool	<i>Africa</i>	1853
Liverpool – Calabar – Liverpool	<i>Tapley</i>	1853
Liverpool – Calabar – Liverpool	<i>Elizabeth Bibby</i>	1854
Liverpool – Bonny	<i>Tapley</i>	1855-56

James died aboard the *Tapley* in the Calabar River on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1856, was buried by the crew the following day on Snake Island and his worldly goods auctioned off among the crew as was the custom. Chapter 2.13 describes these events in more detail. While James was always very careful to keep a daily journal while on board, and the Merseyside Maritime Museum hold many of his notebooks, it is apparent that James fell ill on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1855 while the *Tapley* was anchored off Cape Palmas, the southernmost point of the Ivory Coast. His journal, which had been written daily since leaving Liverpool on 24<sup>th</sup> October, ends abruptly with no explanation on that day. The official ship's log book records his death on 16<sup>th</sup> January 1856 from exhaustion after an illness of 12 days and further attributes his death to "intemperance".

**MASTER'S CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE.**  
*(Issued pursuant to the Act 13th and 14th Vict., cap. 93.)*

N<sup>o</sup>. 71.366  
 Seventy-One Thousand Three Hundred and Seventy Six

James Goffey  
 Born at Liverpool County of Lancaster in the year 1804  
 Has been employed in the Capacities of Ship Mate & Master 31 years in the  
 British Merchant Service in the Trade Trades

Bearer's Signature James Goffey  
 Granted by the REGISTRAR GENERAL OF SEAMEN, LONDON. By order of the BOARD OF TRADE.

W. W. W. Registrar.

Issued at Liverpool  
 this 14 day of April 1855

\*\* Any Person Forging, Altering, or Fraudulently using this Certificate, will be subject to a Penalty of FIFTY POUNDS, or THREE MONTHS' Imprisonment with or without HARD LABOUR; and any other than the Person it belongs to becoming possessed of this Certificate, is required to transmit it forthwith to the REGISTRAR GENERAL OF SEAMEN, LONDON.

NO. OF REGISTER TICKET. 217,047

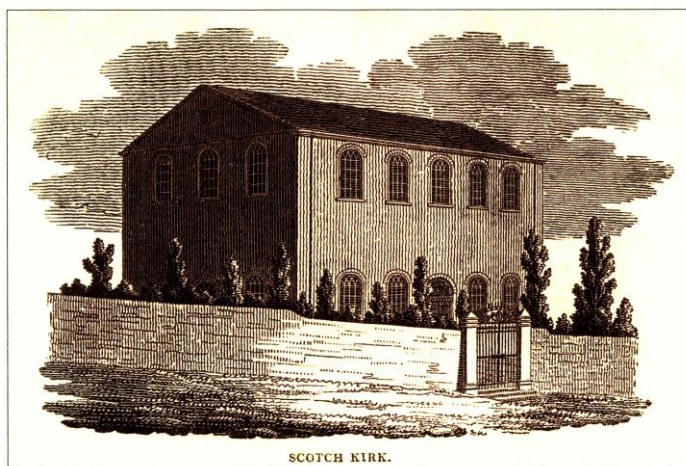
**James Goffey's Master's Ticket, No. 71366.** Missing for 123 years after James's death, this ticket, shown approximately 2/3 full size, was given to the Merseyside Maritime Museum in 1979 by an unknown donor, believed to be William Goffey (1884-1979).

There is however a very strange aspect of the story of Capt. James Goffey. My father's generation, or at least the children of Harry Goffey, were brought up believing that their paternal great-grandfather had been a naval architect based variously in Leith or in Glasgow. My father went so far as to request searches by the Glasgow Record Office and to enter into correspondence with the Institute of Naval Architects where no trace of a James Goffey could be found. This story was even embellished with details, such as the oak dresser that my

parents had in their house which had reputedly been a present to James on his retirement as a naval architect. Did the manner of James's death, or his intemperance, lead Harry Goffey to airbrush him from the family history? It is difficult to believe that Harry did not know the real story; how could James have been a naval architect in Glasgow, or Leith, when the railway had not been built, yet his mother, his sister and his wife and five sons had all lived in Liverpool all their lives? Did Victorian/Presbyterian social conventions make it impossible to admit of a drunken sailor in the family?

We do not know much about Sarah's family, although Templeton is a Scottish name, being found predominantly in south-west Scotland. Her baptism in the Scotch Kirk, Liverpool, (pictured right) soon after it opened

tends to add some support to the possibility that her family came from Scotland. After the death of James in 1856, census records show that by 1861 Sarah had moved to 4, Blackburn Street, Liverpool, with her four younger sons. The eldest son, James Jnr., had married in September 1854 and the Blackburne (with an e) Street address appears on his marriage certificate so it seems that the family had moved from Newhall Street some time between 1851 and 1854, i.e. before James died. Chapter 2.11 elaborates slightly on the odd situation that Sarah's income was to increase on the death of her mother-in-law Mary Goffey in 1864 following the sale of the leasehold of 21 Newhall Street, although Sarah had clearly not lived in the house for at least a decade.



The whereabouts of Blackburn Street in the 1850s is not clear as it cannot be found on a map. There is a Blackburne Place on the 1848 map which is still there today - it is a turning off Hope Street just south of Falkner Street. However Blackburn Street features in every census from 1841, while Blackburne Place does not get a mention until 1901 when both Blackburn(e) Street and Blackburne Place are listed. In the Enumerator's preamble to the 1861 census Blackburn Street is recorded in the Mount Pleasant Registration District, a small area bounded by Falkner Street, Upper Parliament Street, Percy Street and Catherine Street, i.e. the area in which Blackburne Place is situated. There seems little doubt that Blackburn(e) Street and Blackburne Place were adjacent, if not synonymous, in the mid-nineteenth century.

Sarah died of bronchitis at 100, Falkner Street, Liverpool, on 12th March 1870 at the age of 66 and her passing is recorded in a lugubrious poem by Thomas Chapman, father-in-law of her son Thomas (see Chapter 2.18), in his book *Namby Pamby or a Hotch Potch of Poetic Tit-Bits*. This book also contains other poems about Thomas Goffey's daughters. Sarah must have moved out of the house in Blackburn Street to live in Falkner Street, a stone's throw away, some time between 1861 and 1870. By 1871 the house in Blackburn Street is listed in the census of that year as uninhabited. No will has yet been found; no doubt with a son

(Thomas) being well established by 1870 as a successful solicitor in the city, Sarah would have received the best legal advice on how to minimise her debts to the Inland Revenue and it is entirely possible she could have done this in a way that made a will unnecessary.

No will has yet been found for James either. This is more problematic, firstly because he died before central registration of wills began in 1858/9 and secondly because he died abroad. Even if he died intestate, there should be records of the administration of his estate if there was a debt to the Inland Revenue.

