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## 2. 6 THE GILMERS of MULLAGHANEE

Lil Hamilton's note said John Hamilton was one of seven brothers and he also had sisters but she did not know how many there were. We know that he was an uncle to the Gilmers as a clear statement from family. This is supported clearly by public references in New Zealand to "*Uncle John*" and indeed by the very close and formal business relationship that they pursued together. Perhaps the strongest reference is his Obituary in the *Evening Post* of 17 June 1911 which says: "*Deceased, who is an uncle of Messrs Hamilton and S Gilmer....*" This was published while Hamilton and Samuel were living in Wellington and both were very prominent citizens.

The conclusion is that **Margaret Dorothea** (Dolly) Hamilton who married Hugh Gilmer of Mullaghanee was John Hamilton's sister. Margaret Dorothea was born in 1815 in Castleblaney and died at the early age of 30 years in 1845. Dorothea has been a traditional Hamilton family name. John Hamilton's eldest daughter was called Dorothea and was known as Dolly and Samuel Hamilton named one of his daughters Anna Dorothea.

We do not know conclusively the relationship between John Hamilton and Andrew Hamilton but our conclusion is that their fathers were brothers and they were therefore first cousins. If this was the case then Hamilton Gilmer & Elizabeth Hamilton would have been second cousins. The subsequent events in New Zealand reveal a very close relationship between John Hamilton, the Gilmer brothers and also a very close relationship with Andrew Hamilton's sons. However, this does not necessarily mean that the latter were his nephews.

Hugh Gilmer's farm at Mullaghanee was on the South boundary of Andrew Hamilton's farm.



**2009 Gilmer Farm seen from Hamilton's Annalittin Farm House. The Gilmer home is nestled in trees to left of modern farm sheds. The new house of Peter Coleman (current owner) is on Gilmer land on South side of the main road to Dublin.**

The Tithe Applotment Books show that in 1829 the farm was leased by Hugh and Thomas Gilmore. It was 13 acres 3 Roods and 10 Perches or a fraction under 14 acres and was the largest farm in the Townland which in total had 131 acres. Thomas was Hugh's brother and he was also a witness at Hugh's wedding Ann Smith in 1846. The Blayney Rental Roll shows James as the lessee until 1830 with Hugh shown as lessee in 1831. We saw a number of inaccuracies in the rental rolls.

In 1833 Thomas took over the farm of Robert Gilmore at Annalittin and this was the year of Hugh's marriage to Margaret Dorothea. It is also possible that Thomas married at about the same time.

In 1861<sup>1</sup> Hugh Gilmore's farm at Mullaghanee, was leased from Henry T. Hope who had taken over the Blayney estate. The area of the farm shown in Griffiths Valuations was 16 acres, 2 Roods and 15 Perches. It had a Total Annual Value for rating purposes of 16 Pounds made up of 14 Pounds for the land and 2 Pounds for the buildings. Of the 30 Mullaghanee properties in the Griffiths Valuations there were only two properties with higher values.

Hugh and Margaret Dorothea Gilmer had six sons:

James Born 1834  
 George Hamilton Born 2 April 1838  
 Henry Born 12 May 1839  
 Samuel Born 1842  
 Robert Born 1843  
 John Born 1844

The eldest was named James after Hugh's father, and he stayed in Ireland having right to the family farm. The other boys all migrated to New Zealand. There is some conjecture over the name of the second eldest as to whether it was George Hamilton or simply Hamilton. There were many occasions on the West Coast and at Wellington when he was called and used the name of George and many when he used the name of Hamilton Gilmer.

We are also very aware of the Irish custom of using the second given name as the usual name of many people. This was certainly the case in the last two generations of the Australian Hamiltons.

When he married Elizabeth Hamilton in Ireland in 1871 the Marriage Certificate showed his name as George Hamilton Gilmer, and this gives weight to the view that this was his actual birth name.

James married Ann Jane Watson of Lanagaitagh on 5 April 1855 at St Maeldoids Church of Ireland Castleblayney. They had two children:

**Robert Ross** was born in 1861 and

**Abigail** was born in 1863.

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<sup>1</sup> Griffith Valuations

Both Robert Ross and Abigail migrated to New Zealand

Ann died and James married again to **Elizabeth Gamble** of Mulladuff, Creggan, Co. Armagh on 13 February 1867 at Frankford Presbyterian Church, Castleblayney. At that time, James was at Annadrummond, on the north side of the Dundalk Road from Annalittin. With Hugh remarrying and having a son, James lost his right to the family farm at Mullaghanee and he was now leasing his own farm at Annadrummond just across the Dundalk Road from Annalittin. He could well have been financially assisted by Hugh in obtaining this lease.

Elizabeth was an active churchgoer and attended Broomfield Presbyterian Church. We have a record of her presenting certificates in 1882 and also the admission to communion of her stepdaughter Abigail 29 April 1880.

James and Elizabeth had two children:

**Mary Dorothea** was born in 1872 and she was christened on 1 August 1874 at the Frankford Presbyterian Church. In 1900 she married John Hamilton (just to confuse us all) and they had six **Hamilton** children:<sup>2</sup>

**Andrew** born about 1902. In 1973 he was in Greytown NZ

**Alfred Edward** born about 1904. In 1973 he was a farmer at Skerries, Ireland

**James Gilmer** born about 1905. James was a farmer.

**Dorothy Elizabeth** Born about 1908 and married a Jenkins. She was a school teacher.

**Matilda** born about 1910

**John** was a farmer and occupied the home farm at Tinode, Kilbride, Co. Wicklow

Hugh's wife Margaret Dorothea died 1846. We are not aware of the cause but many people in Ireland died of Pneumonia. While this was around the time of the Famine we do not believe that the Gilmer's were affected by it.

Hugh remarried later the same year to Ann Smith of Tullyvin at St Maeldoids Church of Ireland Castleblayney on 5 December. They had two children;

**William** was born in 1854 at Mullaghanee, Broomfield. William took over the family farm in 1876 after the death of his father, Hugh. While not the eldest son he was the eldest of Hugh's living wife.

William visited and lived in New Zealand from late 1878 or early 1879 until early 1885. In 1881 he took over the license of the Royal Oak Hotel and on 9 June 1883 took over the license of Gilmer's Hotel at Greymouth then owned by Sam Gilmer. In 1882 the Annual Revisions show that James took over the farm but the bookkeeping usually followed well after the event. James' own farm was very close by at Annadrummond and he could easily have managed both.

William's health was a problem and he returned to Ireland in 1885<sup>34</sup>. While in New Zealand he sponsored the migration of his half brother James' children, Robert Ross and Abigail Gilmer.

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<sup>2</sup> 1911 Census & Letter to Juann Ryan

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Sam Gilmer

<sup>4</sup> Grey River Argus 20 May 1885

He paid 7 Pounds towards the fare enabling them to make the voyage.<sup>5</sup> They arrived in Auckland on the SS *Ionic* on 20 January 1885.

On his return to Ireland William married **Mary Anne Lockhart** in April to June 1886.<sup>6</sup> They had four children:

**Hugh** born 22 April 1887, Christened 29 April 1887 Church of Ireland, Broomfield

**Sam** born ???

**William** born 1887 ?

**Sarah Jane Lockhart** Born 1888 Christened 29 November 1888, Church of Ireland Broomfield.

**Margaret Ann** was the second child of Hugh and Ann Gilmer. She was born about 1852. Margaret returned to New Zealand with Hamilton Gilmer and his bride Elizabeth Hamilton in 1871. She attended Miss Greenwood's ladies boarding school in Wellington and died of Typhoid Fever on 6 April 1873. She was buried in Bolton Street Memorial Park, Wellington.

Hugh Gilmer died in on 10 February 1876. He is buried in St Maeldoids Church of Ireland Cemetery in Castleblayney. In 1910 his son Hamilton returned from New Zealand and placed a headstone on his grave. The grave is in a very prominent and noticeable position on a rise at the entrance to the cemetery. It is also very close to the tomb of Lord Blayney.

William died in 1891 at the very young age of 37 years and was buried at St Maeldoid's Castleblayney on 28 February. The farm passed to his widow Mary Anne.<sup>7</sup> About 1920 the rental Rolls show the lessee was Hugh Gilmore and in 1924 the farm passed to Edward Coleman. It is still in the hands of the Coleman family being owned by Peter Coleman.



**Hugh Gilmer's grave with Lord Blayney's tomb behind**

<sup>5</sup> Nomination dated 6 February 1884 held at IM12,no.656 National Archives Wellington

<sup>6</sup> Civil Registrations 1886 Vol 1 Page 507

<sup>7</sup> Annual revisions Books





**Hamilton, Henry, Samuel, Robert, and John Gilmer**

**Source: Tyree Studio Collection Ref: 44799/3 T1/2 Gilmer Group of 5 (Copy) Approx. 1894. The original was taken approximately late 1870, probably at Greymouth, and possibly by Ring Studio which was almost next door to Hamilton Gilmer's Hotel cnr Mawhera Quay & Tainui St.**

