

Mary Christie Commits Bigamy

SMH
28 June 1861

To the Magistrates Court assembled at Goulburn on the 12th June, 1861.

Gentlemen,-I have received from the chief constable of Carcoar a summons to appear before you as a witness in the case, of the " Crown v. Mary Margaret Beattie, late Christie, James Christie and Margaret Christie to be tried at Goulburn on the 13th instant, with which I would willingly comply if I were in my power. While most, anxious to further the ends of justice in the above named case, I must, at the same time, plainly state I have not at my disposal the means to defray my expense from Carcoar to Goulburn and back again. The coach-hire alone would amount to about £16, while the time occupied ingoing and returning would amount to about a fortnight, during which my personal expenses would be not less than 15s per day. I know the consequences of not being present at Goulburn on the 12th June, and should the magistrates resolve upon the enforcement of them, I shall have to submit to a very serious hardship, I have already forwarded to Goulburn a copy of the entry made in the parish register at the time of the marriage of "Mary Christie and Harry Baily," and I will readily identify the persons should they be brought before the bench of magistrates at Carcoar where, it is supposed, the offence has been committed, or before another magistrates in whom presence I could appear without incurring a debt which it might take some years to pay off.

I am, Gentlemen, your obedient servant,

J. A. Burke.

The Parsonage, Carcoar, 4th June.

A warrant was subsequently issued for his apprehension. When brought before their worships at this place, the rev. gentleman stated that he was unable to walk, or ride on horse back, from Carcoar to Goulburn 'within a reasonable time, and Dr. Rowland, his medical attendant, certified to his unfitness to undertake so long a journey either by walking, or riding on horse back. The worships decided upon sending Mr. Burke to Goulburn by mail or some other suitable conveyance, admitting him out on his own bail until Monday. The hardship in this case is that Mr. Burke -will have to go to Goulburn either three or four times before this case can be settled, which will cost him a considerable sum. Surely if clergy men are liable to be taken to such distances from their homes they should be allowed their expenses. As the offence was committed in this district, people think the case might have been brought before the magistrates of this place.

SMH

Tuesday 18th June 1861

ACCESSORY TO A BIGAMY.-On Wednesday, at the Goulburn police court, Margaret Christie and Joseph Christie (mother and son) were charged with being accessory to the commission of bigamy by Mary Margaret Beattie, daughter of the first-named defendant. The defendants are settlers residing at the Lost River, near Wheeo. On the 6th June, 1859, Mary Margaret Christie was married to David Beattie, of Goulburn formerly a police constable; and it is alleged that, having separated from her husband, she, on the 6th October last, contracted a marriage with one Henry Bailey, the ceremony being performed at Carcoar by the Rev. Mr. Burke, the resident minister of the Church of England. It is alleged that the defendants were present on the latter occasion. Mary Margaret Beattie has not yet been apprehended. On Wednesday the Bench took the evidence of the Rev. W. Ross, who solemnised the first marriage, and of David Beattie, the husband. It was established from the evidence of these witnesses that the ceremony was performed on the day stated, that James Christie was present, and that the written consent of the mother was given to the clergyman. Beattie further deposed that an offer had been made to him to compound the present

proceedings, and that he had assented provided he got his property back.-The Rev. Mr. Burke, who had been duly subpoenaed not being in attendance, a warrant was ordered to issue for his apprehension,- Goulburn Herald.

SMH
5 July 1861

A brief but correct report of the hardship to which I have had to submit appeared in the Herald of the 25th ultimo, from the pen of your Carcoar correspondent, and I only wish to add that, having completed a very disagreeable and dangerous journey of 200 miles in the custody of policemen, I arrived in Goulburn on Saturday night, at half-past twelve o'clock, and on Monday, the 1st July, the woman, Margaret Christie was committed on my evidence for aiding and abetting bigamy, to take her trial at the Quarter Sessions to be held at Goulburn on the 12th August next. But why at Goulburn? The woman Margaret Christie resides on the Lost River, Wheeo, at a place not within the police district of Goulburn, and the crime has been committed in the district of Carcoar, how then has it come to pass that criminal proceedings have been initiated by the Goulburn Bench of magistrates? If the law sanctions any bench of magistrates to take cognisance of crime, irrespective of the place where it has been committed, and of the place where the criminals reside, and to compel the attendance of witnesses before them from one end of the colony to the other, no matter at what personal inconvenience and expense, then, in my opinion, the sooner the law is altered the better, for at present it tends neither to the discovery of crime or conviction of criminals.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

J.A. BURKE Parramatta, 4 July

SMH
20th August 1861

ACCESSORY TO BIGAMY--- Margaret Christie, charged with being accessory to bigamy, was tried at the Goulburn Quarter Sessions on Monday last, and acquitted on an objection taken by Mr. Walsh, in as much as she was indicted for being accessory before the fact, while the evidence proved that the prisoner was present at the marriage aiding and abetting.