Joseph's partnership with James Horsburgh

In the summer of 1833 the shipwrights took over a yard in the east end of the Seagate formerly held by John Keay, and James went instead into partnership with Joseph Garland (b.1805), also at the Seagate. Garland, a native of Dundee, had begun as an apprentice at the Dundee Iron Foundry and then worked for shipbuilder Thomas Adamson before leaving to become a partner of the Shipwright Co in 1831. Among the achievements of Garland and Horsburgh were vessels built to order for the Dundee, Perth and London Shipping Co during 1834, Clyde and Mersey (both 91 ton smacks) which the Company needed built for its Glasgow trade. On 21 Dec 1833 the DPL took offers of tenders from four builders and, when the directors met 28 Dec 1833, they found that the lowest offer (£9 5s and £9 10s per register tons) for two vessels came from Garland and Horsburgh. The minutes state that "Mr Horsburgh was then sent for and having amended their offer to the effect of engaging both vessels at the medium of these rates, viz. nine pounds seven shillings per register ton" Horsburgh and Garland were hired (Garland and Horsburgh were paid some £850 for each vessel which, in today's money, would be equivalent to about £80,000 for both vessels). They also constructed the steam tug Industrien, with engines by the Dundee Foundry Co, built for Swedish clients and launched from their yard 16 March 1835. She was the first vessel built in Dundee for foreign clients. Industrien was observed on her trials speeding down the Tay in June 1835 and sailed for Sweden in July where employed on the Gotha Canal and later as a customs vessel in Finland. In May 1835 the press reported that while some boys were playing on a steamboat lying in Horsburgh's yard, one of them, David Whitton, aged about 14, fell into the hold and was so badly injured that he died the next day.

Garland and Horsburgh also introduced to Dundee in 1835 the building method called 'trussing' first employed by Sir Robert Seppings (1767-1840) for vessels at Chatham docks in England. As the Advertiser reported in 1835 "the planks in some parts are placed not exactly transverse with the timbers, but in a slanting position. It is found materially to add to the strength of vessels, and to prevent them becoming hugged or bent..." However, in September 1836 several of the shipbuilders were at odds with the Harbour Trustees over the construction of new patent slips and the transformation of embanked ground at the harbour. The dockside familiar to modern Dundee was beginning to take shape as the result of major new works but Horsburgh and other shipbuilders wrote a long letter to the Harbour Trustees complaining: "From the nature of the harbour works, there can now no longer be repairing slips, except on public ground. All the existing slips and other conveniences on private property are to be rendered useless by the dock walls..." They also complained that Thomas Adamson was to be granted the privilege of using the only slip that would be available for repairing vessels and "that this is unjust towards the other shipbuilders, by unfairly excluding them from the use of necessary convenience for their trade..." Having allowed their letter to be printed and circulated about the town Horsburgh and the others had annoyed the Trust. The new yard was let to Adamson in 1837.

At the beginning of that year it seems that James moved to a new yard in front of Foundry Lane, also called East Foundry Yard, off the Seagate. But the construction of Victoria dock directly in front of the yards running along Foundry Lane probably persuaded Garland and Horsburgh it was time to move on. Consequently they ended their partnership sometime between Apr and Aug of 1837: they had constructed 13 vessels ranging from the 69 ton smack Erin (1835) to the 307 ton ship Warrior (1837) as well as repairing others. For a list of all known vessels connected with James and his family please see Horsburgh Vessels for further details. Garland set up as a shipbuilder in Newburgh, Fife (1837-1846) and afterwards in Woodhaven. In Apr 1837 James Horsburgh and Joseph Garland launched their last known vessel together, Margery, and James remained at the yard off Foundry Lane (the site is now under a retail park and bus depot) where he built his own vessel,
the 59 ton schooner Mary and Rose (October 1837). However, probably towards the close of 1837, James removed from the yard and it was taken over by his old colleagues of the New Shipbuilding Co.

As a result of the 1832 Reform Act, and James's increased status and income, he had qualified as a voter by 1834. In the roll of parliamentary and burgh electors for that year James was listed as shipbuilder within the First Ward (comprising eastern sections of Dundee). He appeared again as a registered elector in 1835 and, in Aug 1837, the list of Dundee electors for the election of the Dundee MP reveals that James voted for the Liberal John Gladstone of Fasque. Along with increased status came responsibilities to the community and in the year 1835-36 James and Garland paid £2 2s towards the poor assessment for the parish of Dundee.


ROBERT, sloop 65 tons, built in Dundee by James Horsburgh & Joseph Garland, managers, Dundee New Shipbuilding Co in 1832 (their certificate 23 November 1832), for Joseph Swankie mariner in Dundee. Registered Dundee 26 November 1832. The Dundee Shipping Registers record that on 18 December 1832 by vendition Joseph and Robert Swankie sold this vessel to the Dundee New Shipbuilding Co in Dundee "and that this transfer is made only in security for the Payment of a debt or debts or by way of mortgage". The vessel was lost in 1833.

ROBERT & WILLIAM, brigantine 115 tons, built in Dundee by Garland and Horsburgh in 1836 (their certificate 4 July 1836), for Joseph Garland, Andrew Doig and George Scott junior in Dundee. Registered Dundee 5 July 1836. The Dundee Shipping Registers record that on 21 January 1839 Joseph Garland, shipbuilder, formerly of Dundee, and now of Newburgh, Fife, transferred his shares (21 in all) to Doig. Sold Southwold and Woodbridge.