

Thomas Trott – Scindian Convict #11

Thomas Trott was just 23 years of age, an unmarried boatman and mason when he was sentenced to 15 years' transportation. He was convicted in Boston, Lincoln for highway robbery along with two other men, one of whom was fellow Scindian convict #64, John Rasen. Their crime was described in the *Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury* on Friday March 12, 1847:

“Highway Robbery at Boston

Benj. Barker, 22, John Rasen, 20, and Thos. Trott, 24, were charged with having, on the 21st of November, assaulted Wm. Cammack, and stolen from his person, 9l. 10s. Mr Wildman conducted the prosecution, and Mr Denison, the defence. – On the evening named, the prosecutor, on his road from Boston to Tattershall with a cart, called at the Barge inn. After he had left and got about a mile on the road, he perceived Barker and Trott. Barker seized him by the collar, and Trott struck him on the head with a thick hedge-stake. Prosecutor fell upon his knees, and they pulled him down upon his back and kicked him. The third person took out his purse and money and ran away, and the other two followed. The prosecutors had known the prisoners for some time by sight, though he could not distinguish them by name, and from the description he furnished to the police, they were apprehended, the police being well acquainted with them, and knowing them to be part of what is called in Boston “the Sluice Rangers.” It was established in evidence that they were at the Barge inn of the day of the robbery, and that a person in the evening put his head and shoulders into the house and called out Barker and Trott, saying “Come, the cart has gone on.” Part of the hedge-stake, which broke with the force of the blow, was exhibited in court; a person residing near the spot heard Cammack call out “Murder,” and a few moments afterwards this person met the prosecutor bleeding very profusely. – Guilty. In passing sentence, the Judge observed that it was quite clear that the prisoners had been concerting the robbery of the prosecutor, and he was waylaid and attacked with considerable violence. Under these circumstances, he deemed it proper to mark such an act of deliberation and violence with severity. 15 years' transportation each.”

“The Sluice Rangers” was a name for followers or possibly players of the Ferriby Sluice Rangers Football Club, part of the Lincolnshire Football Association. No other reference has been found in the newspapers for Sluice Rangers other than related to this football club. Clearly, Trott, Rason and their co-conspirator Benjamin Barker (possibly related to Trott as his mother Maria's maiden name was Barker), had some association with the club and were known to police. The crime for which they were convicted was premeditated and violent and quite possibly a regular undertaking for Trott and his cronies. Trott was one of up to 500 convicts at a time incarcerated on the York hulk at Gosford before being transported. Benjamin Barker was transported to Van Diemen's Land.

When Thomas Trott arrived in Fremantle aboard the *Scindian* on 1 June 1850 he was described in Convict Establishment records as being 5 foot five inches tall, with brown hair, blue eyes, an oval-shaped face, having a brown complexion and of stout appearance. He was issued with his ticket-of-leave just six months later on 3 December 1850 and put to work in the Fremantle area.

A family story from Gillian O'Mara relates that Trott and Rasen were working together for Harbourmaster Daniel Scott at Fremantle when Trott “...saw his future wife arrive on the

Hashemy and told his mate that he would marry within the year.” This prediction came to fruition when Trott married Ellen Mary Meade on 25 August 1851. An Irishwoman born in Callan County, Kilkenny, 18-year-old Ellen had arrived aboard the *Hashemy* on 25 October 1850 along with her sister Julia and brother-in-law, Pensioner Guard, William White.

Thomas was reconvicted at Fremantle on 20 March 1854 for breaking and entering and spent another year in prison. After this, according to Gillian O’Mara: “*Thomas was one of three convicts sent to Irishtown to build the Anglican Church. As his occupation of stonemason was in demand in the colony he built their home in King Road Bunbury and settled there. Thomas built many things including the chimney at Parkfield School. He taught his eldest son William his trade and William went on to build the court house arches in Albany, these still stand today.*”

Thomas and Ellen Trott had a large family of nine children, four sons and five daughters all born in the Bunbury/Picton area over a twenty year period: William Hodson (1854-1920), Ellen Maria (1857-1924), Mary Ann (1859-1874), James (1862-1938), Eliza (1865-1964), Henry Thomas (1867-1943), Harriet Agnes (1869-1964), Caroline (1872-1961) and George Stephen (1874-death unknown).

Around the time Thomas Trott was getting settled down in Bunbury his younger brother James Trott arrived in the colony on 23 May 1855 aboard the *Stag* as convict # 3408. He had been convicted of rape in Lincoln in 1853 and sentenced to 15 years like his brother. At age 55 on 4 August 1884, James died while on his way from Kojonup to the Albany hospital, having been just released from police custody. At an inquest into his death, a post mortem found he had died of natural causes.

Trott’s sentence expired on 6 February 1863. He had four children at the time who were all safely installed in the house he had built for them in King Road, Bunbury. When his eldest son William finished school, Thomas taught him his trade and they worked together in a building and contracting business. William later worked along the Great Southern Railway line, where he built many public buildings, among them being the post offices at Katanning and Broomehill.

Thomas Henry Trott died at the age of 86 years on 6 May 1910 while sitting on the verandah of the home he had built in King Road, Bunbury. He was found by his granddaughter Rita, who, when she couldn’t wake him, ran from Rathmines to South Bunbury to fetch her Uncle Tom. Thomas’ obituary spoke of him being a well-respected member of the community and a respected pioneer.

Bunbury Herald, Saturday 14 May 1910, p 3

“LATE THOMAS HENRY TROTT.

Mr. Thomas Henry Trott, who died on Friday last at his home in King's road, Bunbury, was born in Lincolnshire 88 years back. He came to this colony when 28 years of age, and has resided here continuously ever since. Having spent a few years in Fremantle he married and settled in Bunbury, where he set up in business as a builder and contractor, which occupation he followed for a number of years. The deceased gentleman leaves four sons and four daughters, and, in all, 69 grand and great-grand-children, practically the whole of whom are

residents of Bunbury and district. The funeral took place on Sunday last, and was attended by a large number of relatives and friends.”

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