

John Patience – Scindian convict #2

John Pashen/Patience was aged around 29 years when he and William Grabham, 28 years, broke into the house of John Stone of Hillfield, Dorset, an overseer of the local parish on 19 December 1847. (Modern day spelling of the village name is Hilfield).

The trial was described in the *Western Flying Post*, 18 March 1848:

“The Burglary at Hillfield

John Patience and William Grabham were charged with having, on the night of the 19th of December broken and entered the dwelling house of John Stone at Hillfield and stolen six five-pound notes, a number of gold, silver and copper coins, to the value of thirty pounds, a silver watch, powder flask and shot charger.”

In the testimony of John Stone jnr, the grandson of the prosecutor, it was stated that:

“Patience lives in Hillfield, witness had on the previous Wednesday asked him for some money which he owed to the parish.”

Was the crime a payback by Patience aimed at John Stone in anger? Did he ask Grabham to join him in the burglary? They had removed a pane of glass from the cellar window to get into the house so they clearly came prepared. The pair gave the house a thorough going-over with windows broken, doors unhinged and the hall doors blocked so that the owner John Stone could not enter when they were ransacking the bureaux containing the stolen items.

Following the successful robbery, the pair spent the next two days drinking and were apprehended two days later in possession of a great deal of money, (Patience had over £26 in gold alone), two powder flasks and a shot charger among other items, such as two purses and two watches, possibly also stolen. At trial, three months later, both were found guilty and sentenced to 14 years' transportation. Patience arrived in the Swan River Colony in Western Australia on 1 June 1850, aboard the first convict transport, the *Scindian*. Grabham was subsequently transported to Western Australia as convict no. 94 aboard the second convict transportation ship, *Hashemy*, arriving on 25 October 1850.

Patience spent time in Pentonville Prison before being transferred to Portland Prison on 9 August 1849 in readiness for transportation. The Portland Prison register records that he was visited by his mother-in-law, Susan Patience (name possibly incorrect?) and Charlotte Patience, his sister, on 11th January 1850. Records on arrival in Western Australia state that his father and friends were living in Hillfield, Dorset. The chaplain indicated that John had steady habits, and had been a regular churchgoer before the time of his misfortune. John was registered as convict #2 when he joined the cohort of prisoners aboard the *Scindian*. His physical characteristics were recorded as: height 5' 7", brown hair, grey eyes, oval visage, fair complexion, stout to middling appearance; Marks (tattoos) - C.P.E.P on right arm, JP on right hand.

On arrival in the newly-designated penal colony, the convicts found themselves in a small, under-developed outpost of the British Empire. There were no facilities to accommodate the prisoners so a warehouse on the Fremantle foreshore was modified to hold the men. The prison would later be built by the convicts themselves higher in the landscape, overlooking the ocean, its walls made of great blocks of locally hewn limestone. John would have been put to work at once in a road building party and almost a year after arrival, on 5 May 1851, was issued with his ticket-of-leave.

Patience was one of the convicts who in 1851 had been recommended by the Governor to have his family brought out (on the convict's payment of half the cost of the passage out, which John had been dutifully saving towards). Unfortunately for John, his wife Jane replied that she had married someone else and his young daughters Eliza and Charlotte remained with their mother.

Patience found himself stationed at the Lynton convict depot at Port Gregory on his ticket-of-leave and in 1852 accompanied the Assistant Surveyor, Augustus Charles Gregory, on his six-week expedition from the Geraldine Mine to the Gascoyne River in the north. In later correspondence Comptroller General Henderson stated that Patience believed he had been promised £5 remission on his passage money for taking on this work. Henderson stated that Patience was a deserving man and that he had long since paid the rest of the money for his passage out. (The practice of making the convicts re-pay their passage money out was discontinued in 1857.) Clearly Patience had demonstrated his value and won the high regard Henderson paid him. This became a distinguishing feature heralding good fortune for his future.

At the end of 1853 Patience is again mentioned in official records as he had married a young woman, Ellen Carroll, and the Establishment realised that he was already married. It seems this issue passes investigation because Patience remains married and sadly for him Ellen died in childbirth in November 1854 at the age of 22 years. She and her stillborn child were buried at Ajana, a location north of the Northampton township. Patience clearly wanted to settle down as on 14 November 1857 he married sixteen-year-old Anne Criddle.

John Patience had worked for The Cattle Company or Lockier Burges as a ticket-of-leave man and had clearly again won high regard for his reliability, becoming an asset. In later years Burges made it possible for Patience to acquire land on the Greenough Flats. In January 1860, William Criddle, Patience's father-in-law, purchased half of Lot 23, 12 hectares on the Greenough Flats, and John Patience purchased the other 12 hectares of Lot 23, for 33 pounds. The Cattle Company then granted Patience Lot 63, reward for his hard work. It adjoined his half of Lot 23, on Phillips Road, where he and wife Anne built their home named 'Rock of Ages'.

Their limestone block home was built on a stony ridge at the south end of their property. The choice of this location was their saving grace when the Greenough River flooded in 1862, washing away the houses of many other farmers, including the Criddles. The next few years saw the region hit by repeated disaster with more floods, fires and crop disease. The Criddle and Patience families managed to survive the difficult times when many others walked away. Patience could supplement his income with his profession of bootmaker, something he likely learned during his time in Pentonville Prison.

John and Anne Patience had six children born at Greenough between 1859 and 1870; two sons and four daughters, most of whom married and stayed on there. The children were:

Joseph John Criddle, born 27 November 1859, died 4 December 1935, Greenough (BDM WA reg no 8); married Elizabeth Barnden in 18 July 1883 in Greenough had 14 children between 1883 and 1904 (Marriage notice in *Victorian Express* 25 July 1883).

Isaac Criddle, born 19 November 1861, died just days short of his 17th birthday on 6 November 1878 from a gunshot wound inflicted by his friend John Solomon Cook when they were skylarking around on Guy Fawkes night near Maley's Mill, Greenough; Cook was found not guilty of manslaughter.

Annie, born 14 December 1863, Greenough, died 29 January 1947, Geraldton; married Francis Gow Armstrong in 1896 in Greenough;

Elizabeth, born 21 July 1866, died 10 July 1951; married John Solomon Cook in Greenough in 1889 (the man who accidentally shot and killed her brother Isaac).

Susannah, born 7 June 1869, died 11 August 1923; married George Cook in 1891 in Greenough.

Hannah, born 23 August 1870, died 1958 in Perth aged 87 years (BDM WA regn no 333); married Walter Henry Ing at Day Dawn in 1895 (BDM WA regn no 10).

According to family history research and information found on Ancestry trees, John's English daughters, Eliza and Charlotte, both married and remained living in the Dorset area. According to the 1871 English Census, Charlotte was widowed and residing and working as the Head Nurse of the Female Ward at the Dorset County Hospital in Dorchester.

In 1868, John Patience was listed as being at a public meeting of landowners in Greenough, gathered to elect a committee to advise on public expenditure on roads, bridges etc for approval of Governor. (*Perth Gazette*, 16 October 1868).

The *Herald* newspaper of 16 January 1869 advised:

"To be let on lease

359 acres of agricultural land on the Lower Greenough Flats, the greater portion in cultivation. A small cottage and well of water on the property, now in the occupation of Mr. John Patience, possession will be given on 1st April next. Application to be made to Alfred Hillman Esq, St George's Terrace Perth"

After a long illness, John Patience died the following year of consumption, on 24 September 1870, in Greenough. John is buried at the Bootenall cemetery, behind St John's Church. Little remains of the cemetery today but a plaque has been placed to name those who rest there; John at Anglican/Wesleyan location X2 and his son Isaac at location 112. John's wife Anne, aged only about 29 years at the time of his death, subsequently married fellow Greenough resident, Thomas Harrison Turner. Harrison was also a convict and had been a close friend of John's especially during the final stages of his illness. He became a defacto partner to Anne about a year after John's death and after having three children together between 1872 and 1877, the pair married in May 1877.

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Sources: With grateful acknowledgement of the research and references for Mid-west convicts from Diane Evans and Sue White

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