

## George Richardson – Scindian Convict #71

George Richardson was serving in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot of the Royal Fusiliers in the British Army when he was court-martialled in Barbados on 1 January 1848 for attempting to strike his superior officer. Later prison records reveal he had faced similar charges on six previous occasions. On this occasion he was sentenced to 14 years' transportation. His crime is described as "mutinous conduct" in his Wakefield prison records. He was transferred from Wakefield to Portland Prison on 19 June 1849 in readiness for transportation to Western Australia aboard the *Scindian*, the first convict ship sent to the new penal colony, arriving 1 June 1850.

George Richardson was 38-years-old, married and in addition to being a soldier he had the trade of saddler to his name when he was transported. His physical appearance was recorded as being: Height 5' 7 1/4", light brown hair, grey eyes, long visage, fresh complexion, healthy appearance. Not long after arriving in the Swan River Colony he applied to have his wife Eliza, of 19 Broughton Street, Salford, Manchester, brought out to join him. Research into his earlier life reveals that George and Eliza had a child, George Lofthouse, baptised in the parish church of Manchester on 22 August 1837. Sadly, George Jnr was buried in 1838. At this time Richardson's trade was listed as being a "private in the 7<sup>th</sup> Royal Fusiliers". On the application to bring his wife to the colony no children were listed, however elsewhere it is noted the couple had 2 children.

Richardson was released on ticket-of-leave in the Perth district on 1 April 1851. His entry in the Perth Ticket-of-Leave register records him as aged 39 years, employed by Charles Von Bibra in Perth, working as a saddler. Continuing his pattern of rebelling against authority, within less than a month, Richardson was summarily convicted of common assault, and an additional further aggravated assault and battery, and was sentenced to two calendar months imprisonment with hard labour for the first offence and then work in irons for 6 months on a road party as punishment for the second offence. Working in heavy irons on hard labour was a severe punishment and the heavy irons caused painful and lingering wounds.

Richardson's crime was reported by the *Perth Gazette* on 2 May 1851:

*"Last Friday, George Robinson, a ticket-of-leave holder, was sentenced by the magistrates of Perth to two months hard labour for committing an assault upon his master, who had discharged him for negligence. Whilst being taken to gaol, Richardson violently attacked the constable who was conducting him; for this he was again brought up, and very properly sentenced to six months in irons on some public work in the colony."*

Following his release, it appears he was returned to Von Bibra to do farm work from 5 February 1852. This lasted less than a week as the *Perth Gazette* of 13 February recorded another appearance before the courts:

*"11 February – George Richardson, ticket-of-leave, given in charge by Mr. Bibra, was discharged no prosecutor appearing."*

He is later noted as working for fellow ticket-of-leave man Matthew Porteous as a saddler, receiving £1 per week in wages between 6 August and 20 November 1852.

The *Inquirer* reported on several more incidents concerning Richardson:

*“22 June 1852 – G. Richardson, ticket-of-leave holder, contempt of court; admonished and discharged.”* (30 June 1852)

*“George Richardson, ticket-of-leave holder, charged with being drunk, and absent from his depot without leave. The case not being pressed by informant, the accused was dismissed.”* (*Inquirer*, 18 August 1852)

*“George Richardson, t.l., out after hours: fined 5s and 3s costs.”* (*Inquirer*, 2 December 1852)

In January 1853, he was cautioned by the court for having left his employment and not reporting it to the authorities, and then in October 1854 he was part of a group who got involved in a drunken row:

*“G. Richardson and E. Crew, ticket-of-leave men, charged with drunkenness, being out after hours, and beating another of the never to-be sufficiently-petted-up moral restraint gentry; they admitted to have been drunk and absent from their dwellings 12.30 a.m., on Monday, but denied having beaten anyone; the thrashed one soon after appeared, and was asked if either of the prisoners had struck him, he declared himself too conscientious to swear that either had, and on further question, admitted, that there had been a reunion on Sunday evening, of six or seven friends, who growing rather excited as the night wore on, had eventually forgotten harmony in a general row; the police constable who arrested them, said the uproar they caused was sufficient to alarm the whole town; they were fined 10s each, or in default, 10 days’ hard labour.”* (*Inquirer*, 25 October 1854)

Very little else can be found about George Richardson. It does not appear that his wife Eliza ever joined him in the colony. He is known to have worked for Samuel Pole Phillips in the Toodyay/Newcastle area during 1861 to 1862. His sentence expired in July 1864 and he was issued with a Conditional Pardon on 16 July 1864. A further record places him in the Vasse region where he worked and also employed a ticket-of-leave labourer at Lockville, Wonnerup in 1877.

The last record is his death reported in the *Inquirer*: *“G. Richardson, admitted in November, 1888, died from senile decay on 28<sup>th</sup> March last, aged 80 years.”* He had previously been admitted to the Mount Eliza Invalid Depot on 17 June 1884 and was likely in and out of the depot until his death on 28 March 1892 at the age of 80. He was buried at East Perth cemetery on 29 March 1892. The grave number is unknown.

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#### Sources:

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*Perth Gazette*, 13 February 1852, p 3;

*Inquirer*, 30 June 1852, p 3;

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Wakefield Prison Register, HO 24\_13, courtesy of Bevan Carter.