

## John Osborne - Scindian Convict #72

John Osborne was a thirty-year-old sawyer and a single man when he reached Fremantle in June 1850. The Chaplain's register records "*His father and mother William Osborne & Mary Osborne live at Acerne near Southwell, Nottinghamshire.*"

The paper records his crime: "*On Monday last (25 October 1847), Mr. Inspector Caldwell, of Southwell, apprehended a man named John Osborne of Eakring, upon the charge of stealing a horse from Heckington, Lincolnshire, and a quantity of hams, bacon, cheese from a granary at that place. We understand that he has confessed to being concerned in breaking into the granary of Mr. Buckels, at Bilsthorpe some time ago, and stealing a quantity of bacon, &c. He was conveyed to Sleaford, where he was committed for trial.*"

When Osborne committed the crimes at Heckington and Bilsthorpe he was living at Eakring about a mile from Bilsthorpe. Heckington is 30 miles ESE from Bilsthorpe.

His trial was at the Kesteven Sessions, sometimes called the Sleaford Quarter Sessions. Quarter Sessions were Council meetings where the first item on the agenda was to appoint leading citizens of the town to judge the crimes committed in the previous three months. It was expected serious crimes would be passed to professional judges at the Assizes, but this often did not happen, as in this case.

It was reported thus:

*"Sleaford, Jan.6, 1848; before Charles Chaplin, Esq. (chairman), G.H. Packe, Esq., R.A. Christopher, Esq., M.P., C Allix, Esq., A. Peacock, , Esq., Major Ellison, Captain Peacock, Capt. Allix, the Rev. Ed. Fane, and the Rev. Ed. Trollope.*

*The Chairman took his seat at 10 o'clock, and the whole of the business was concluded by about 2.*

*Jn. Osborne, aged 28, was charged with stealing at Heckington, on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, a cart-horse, the property of John Potterton. The same prisoner was also charged with stealing at Bayard's Leap, on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 4 lambs, and other articles, the property of Mary Anne Restall. Guilty – 15 years' transportation."*

His prison records from Millbank, Pentonville and Portland had all mostly identical data: He was 28 at Millbank but 29 by the time he reaches Portland. The only other variation was his trade in Portland as soldier when it was recorded previously as labourer.

In Fremantle he stayed in the convict establishment until he was transferred to Perth depot as a ticket-of-leave man on 4 November 1851. From Perth he "entered the service of Thomas Potin? on 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. left on 17 Jany on his own account. Received Conditional Pardon dated 20 January 1855." The registers record his physical appearance as being: height 5' 9", light hair, blue eyes, oval visage, fair complexion, stout appearance.

The only census that exists, the 1859 one for York, has Osborne at York in that year.

While his death does not seem to have been recorded on official records there is an entry for his death at Newcastle 4 March 1870 in a convict Establishment register. There is no burial recorded at Toodyay. C. L. Anderson in his 1993 study 'Lincolnshire Convicts to Australia, Bermuda and Gibraltar', states that Osborne worked for himself as a sawyer and that he died at Fremantle rather than Toodyay. An examination of the original handwriting in the register reveals that it does look like the word Fremantle however, it is actually Newcastle. The register also interestingly notes that Osborne's Certificate of Freedom was destroyed on 7 March 1870, 3 days following his death. Perhaps to ensure that it could not be obtained and illegally used by another convict?

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### Sources:

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Erickson, R., and O'Mara, G., *Convicts in Western Australia, 1850-1887. Dictionary of Western Australians Vol. IX*, p 425;

Fremantle Prison Convict Database;

Millbank Prison Register, PCom2\_28, courtesy Bevan Carter;

Pentonville Prison Register, HO24\_90, courtesy Bevan Carter;

Portland Prison Register, PCom2\_383, courtesy Bevan Carter;

State Library of Western Australia, British Library Newspapers Online:

*Nottingham Review and General Advertiser for the Midland Counties*, 29 October 1847;

*Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, 14 January 1848;

State Records Office of WA: Cons 101 (York Census), Cons 128/1-32, Cons 1156 C21 p 157\_104, R17, R21A, R21B, Cons 1386/149.