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Alexander Thomas was baptised in Whitchurch in 1827 and the register describes him as the illegitimate son of Morgan Thomas of Cardiff and Joanna Harman of Whitchurch. Joanna married a John Thomas in 1834. (it is Wales)The 1841 census has Morgan Thomas in Cardiff with Gwenllian Thomas and son Daniel aged 20. 15 year old Alexander Thomas is in the Union Workhouse in St John Baptist parish as a pauper.

On 28 February Alexander and six others appear in the Swansea Assizes indicted with the wilful murder of a William Morrison on October 30 the previous year. Alexander and three others were found guilty of manslaughter and three others aiding and abetting. In a lengthy article in the *Morning Post* of March 6: "The disturbance appeared to have originated in a fight between the prisoners and some sailors. The cruel attack on Mrs Morgan seemed to have been from no other cause than her bringing out a lighted candle [to investigate] .. The deceased leaned over her for the purpose of lifting her up, When Meyrick seized him by the hair with one hand and his neckerchief with the other, Kelly also catching him by his hair. In this dreadful suffering the poor man endeavoured to rescue his landlady. When Griffiths and Thomas in the most brutal manner kicked him in the side, he reeled along the passage, and in a second or so fell dead." Alexander Thomas was sentenced to 15 years transportation.

During his stay in Fremantle prison he was forthcoming in answering the questions put to him. He is one of the very few the Chaplain makes comment in the prison Register (21A): "Of the few, of whom I cannot speak with some hope of an improved walk & of general good conduct in future- is this man. He betrays much levity in both manner and language on subjects- should afford grave consideration and affects much indifference about his future proceedings – however I hope he may amend in these respects.

"I regret to find that he & George Thompson (7) go out together to seek work not being engaged by respective masters - & much fear they will not improve each other. 29th May 1851."

This was written the day he received his Ticket of Leave with George Thompson. [R17]

Alexander was a boatman [Millbank] and it is probable an early employer was Samuel Caporn for in 1854 he married 17 year old Louisa in 1854 and by 1872 they had nine children all born in Fremantle. Certainly John Morgan Thomas' baptism in 1859 records Alexander living at Point Walter as a famer. "Lonely Graves records: "During this time Alexander worked at various trades, such as shipwright, gardener and farmer." [Vol3 p911]

He received his Conditional pardon 25 August 1860. [21B]

The same article also claims: He was a "member of the Panter expedition to the Glenelg river in 1864." He probably participated in other exploratory expeditions for the article also claims he "had an aptitude for languages and a working command of several Aboriginal dialects."

In 1876 Alexander's fifteen year old daughter Louisa married the entrepreneurial ToL man Daniel Marsh of Geraldton. Marsh coincidentally had been also indicted for murder and convicted of manslaughter. As a ToL man he had established a blacksmith's shop in Geraldton and in 1876 purchased a steam engine and had probably come to Fremantle to accompany it to Geraldton. The

Caporn family were in the hospitality industry and this is probably where the two met. Marsh returned to Geraldton with a wife and a steam engine and was followed by her parents with the younger members of the family; Rebecca married there in 1881 and William the youngest in 1899.

His death is not officially recorded but the authors of Lonely Graves found details of it in Nullagine Police Station records [SROWA Acc 430 1894]

Lonely Graves records: Alexander Thomas “died 7.11.1894 aged about 66 years – buried in a bush grave at Nullagine in the East Pilbaba district. A miner (ex shipwright) who had been ailing for about ten days, but kept working in the extreme heat. It is believed his death was caused through the effects of sunstroke as he only wore a small calico cap on his head during this time.

“Alexander did not leave a will. Neither did he express any desire as to how his property should be disposed. His property at Nullagine consisted of two loads of washdirt, mining implements, a small quantity of rations, cooking utensils and a Timor pony. The mining equipment was sold and realised the sum of six pounds twelve shillings and 6 pence. After deducting burial expenses his remaining assets were handed to his son Alexander Thomas (butcher of Roebourne). Louisa stayed in their home in Geraldton for about ten years before returning to Fremantle, where she lived in a little cottage in White gum valley.”[Lonely Graves]

(Obituary says North Fremantle; funeral left from Daughter’s house White Gum Valley)). [Geraldton Guardian 29 March 1910]

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Sources:

Coate, Y. and K., 2017, Western Australian Lonely Graves and Burials at Sea, Vol. 3, p 911;

Erickson, R., and O’Mara, G., Convicts in Western Australia, 1850-1887. Dictionary of Western Australians Vol. IX, p 543;

Fremantle Prison Convict Database;

Millbank Prison Register, PCom2_28 14317, courtesy Bevan Carter;

National Library of Australia, Trove digitised newspapers:

Geraldton Guardian, 29 March 1910;

State Library of Western Australia, British Library Newspapers Online:

Morning Post, 6 March 1848

State Records Office of WA: Cons 1156 R17, R21A, R21B, Cons 488-30, p 68, ltr 425; Acc 430 1894.