

Joseph Baskerfield, 363, *Mermaid*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variation: Baskeyfield, Baskfield, Baskyfield

Baptism	15 April 1832, St John, Burslem, Staffordshire
Parents	William Baskerfield and Martha Sutton
Parent's marriage	7 September 1829, St John, Burslem, Staffordshire
Siblings	Sarah (1834), Eliza (1837), James Henry (1841), Edwin (1844), half-brother Henry Peaty (1850)
Wife	
Married	
Children	

Parents: William Baskerfield, bachelor and potter, married Martha Sutton by banns. William made his mark, and Martha signed the register. All their children were baptised as Baskeyfield.

On the 1841 census, living at Haywood Place, Burslem, Staffordshire were:

William Baskeyfield, 30, potter j; Martha, 30; Joseph, 9; Sarah, 7; Eliza, 4.

Joseph's father, William Baskfield, was buried on 31 May 1846 at St John, Burslem, aged 39. His mother, Martha Ann, married James Peaty in 1849.

In 1851, Joseph's family were still living at Haywood Place, Burslem, Staffordshire:

James Peaty, 45, Chelsea pensioner and coal wharf clerk; Martha A Peaty, 40; Henry Peaty, 1; and step-children Sarah Baskyfield, 17, (potter) baller; Eliza Baskyfield, 13; James Henry Baskyfield, 9, scholar; Edwin Baskyfield, 6, scholar.

Martha died in September 1851, and James Peaty married widow Ann Cooper in 1854; the youngest two Baskeyfield children were still living with him in 1861 – now called nephews.

In December 1848, there was a burglary at Burslem:

Last Tuesday night, the premises of Mr Berrington, grocer, in the Market-place, Burslem, were broken into by some thieves forcing in one of the panels of the kitchen door. Six boxes of cigars, about 12 lbs. tobacco, a quantity of tea, currants, bacon, and nearly 20s. in copper, were stolen from the shop. The police have since apprehended four individuals of the names of Joseph Baskeyfield, William Seddon, John Cartledge, and Benjamin Collins on suspicion of being concerned in the robbery, and on Thursday, they were brought before the magistrates at Tunstall. Collins was discharged and admitted evidence against the other prisoners, who were remanded for further examination until Tuesday. Three boxes of cigars and about 1½ lbs of tobacco (a portion of the stolen property) have subsequently been discovered, concealed in a "shord ruck" at Burslem, in a direction where one or more of the prisoners reside.¹

At the Staffordshire Epiphany Sessions, Shire Hall, Stafford, on 1 January 1850:

William Seddon, 17, John Cartledge, 18, and Joseph Baskeyfield, 17, were indicted for breaking into the shop Robert Herrington at Burslem. The prosecutor keeps a grocer's shop at Burslem. On the night of 14 December last, the shop was broken into by means of taking out one of the panels of the back door. The premises were locked up at about nine o'clock on the night of the robbery, with no one sleeping on the premises. On the following morning, the shop was found in a state of great confusion, and on examination 19s and 8d in copper coin, six boxes of cigars, 12 lbs of tobacco, 12 lbs. of tea, 21 lbs of bacon, and some other articles were missing. Richard Cooper, printer, had seen Seddon under suspicious circumstances near the premises on the night of the robbery, and through his information, they were apprehended. The most

¹ Staffordshire Advertiser, 16 December 1848, p4

material witness against them was Benjamin Collins, who had been apprehended as an accomplice but was afterwards liberated. He said he saw the prisoners in St. John's Market-place, near Mr Berrington's premises, about nine o'clock, on the night of the robbery. Baskeyfield had a pick under his coat, with which he said they were going to break into the shop, and asked him (Collins) to join them in the robbery, but he refused. He was at Byker's colliery engine early the next morning when the prisoners came to him and rattled money in their pockets and told him that they had robbed the shop. When Collins was with them in the lock-up, Seddon threatened to implicate him if he said anything about it.

The property was found the next day in an old shed, concealed amongst some broken saggars, and a pocket-handkerchief and knife were found on the premises of Mr Berrington and were identified by Collins as belonging to the prisoner Seddon.—The Jury returned a verdict of guilty. A previous conviction was proved against Seddon. The chairman sentenced them to be transported for ten years each.²

Joseph Baskeyfield, a potter aged 17, was sent from Stafford Gaol to Millbank Prison on 27 February 1849. A month later, he was transferred to Parkhurst Prison on 22 March 1849, and he boarded the *Mermaid* on 28 December 1850 for the voyage to Western Australia.³

On arrival at Fremantle in October 1851, his description was:

363. James Baskeyfield, 19, 5'5", light coloured hair, blue eyes, long face, fresh complexion, a diamond on fore-finger of the right hand, a labourer and single.⁴

General Register:

363. Joseph Baskeyfield, 19, single, a potter, Methodist, went to Sunday and weekday school, can read, his writing and accounts are fair. His mother, Martha Baskeyfield, now Mrs Peaty, lives in Burslem, Staffordshire.

Attended Divine Service? With tolerable regularity

Received Sacrament? Never

Habits? Never given to drink and was usually mindful of his work

Intellect? Sound

State of Mind? Hopeful

Knowledge, Secular? Limited

Knowledge, Religious? Limited

Alleged Cause of Crime? Bad advice and bad company

Name of Person referred to for Character, &c. Mr Baker overseer of works at Mr Adams, Greenfields, Burslem.⁵

On 16 April 1852, there was an unclaimed letter to the Post Office for Joseph. It was perhaps informing him of his mother's death.⁶

27 November 1852 at Perth Court: Joseph Baskeyfield, t.l., stealing a pair of boots at Mr Carr's, 18 months imprisonment.⁷ He was received at the Fremantle Prison on 30 November 1852 and discharged on 14 February 1854.

Joseph received a Conditional Pardon on 7 July 1855.

Co-accused:

William James Seddon went to Western Australia per *Pyrenees* in 1851, convict No 604.

John Cartledge went to Tasmania in 1852 per *Lady Montague* as a ticket of leave man.

² Staffordshire Advertiser, 6 January 1849, p8

³ HO24/15; HO24/4

⁴ SROWA Acc 128

⁵ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

⁶ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 23 April 1852, p6

⁷ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 2 December 1852, p3