

## James Brandon, 2497, per *Phoebe Dunbar*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variations: Bandon, Branden, Brandan

### Possible family:

Baptism	<i>3 July 1831, Six-mile-bridge, County Clare, Ireland</i> <sup>1</sup>
Parents	<i>Thomas Brandon and Bridget Corbet/Corbott</i>
Parent's marriage	
Siblings	<i>Anna (1829), Bridget (1834), Catharine (1837), Johanna (1843)</i>
Wife	
Married	
Children	

Nothing is known about James' early life, although he could read and write, which suggests the family lived in a town where he had access to education rather than a farm.

The Potato Famine (1845-9) severely affected the western and southern parts of Ireland, and the effects were felt well into the 1850s. While no report has been found of the trial for sheep stealing of James Brandon in 1849, the newspapers reported:

*There are no less than 786 prisoners in Ennis Gaol. Of these, 136 have been transmitted for trial to the Quarter Sessions of Six-mile-bridge, their general offences being petty thefts to which they were actuated by sheer starvation.*<sup>2</sup>

Many of the previous convictions for sheep stealing resulted in sentences of a few months, but James, with a previous conviction of larceny, received 7 years transportation.

James was transferred to Spike Island in Cork, possibly in October:

*Thirty-five convicts left the jail this morning, and thirty-five more are to leave on tomorrow morning for Spike Island.*<sup>3</sup>

Two Prison Registers for Newgate (Richmond) Prison in Dublin mention James.

He was received at Newgate Prison in Dublin on 18 December 1851 from Spike Island, where his character was middling. The Register records:

James Brandon, from County Clare, was convicted of sheep stealing at Sixmilebridge on 16 June 1849 and sentenced to 7 years transportation. He was aged 20, 5'1½", with grey eyes, fair hair and a fair complexion, could read and write, and was a labourer, Catholic and had a previous conviction for larceny. He was discharged on 5 January 1853 to Mountjoy Prison.

James was transferred back to Newgate Prison on 2 February 1853. He now had the skill of shoemaking. James boarded *Phoebe Dunbar* on 31 May 1852 for the voyage to Fremantle, Western Australia.<sup>4</sup>

The Freemans Journal reported the departure of *Phoebe Dunbar*:

Kingstown. 3 June 1853.- Wind N.E. by N. This evening, the *Phoebe Dunbar*, convict ship, was towed out of harbour, having on board two hundred and ninety-five convicts, chiefly young men; she took the northerly course, and while I am now writing (half-past nine pm) has cleared the banks. Should the wind remain in the present point, she will reach the Tuscar Light [Tuskar Rock Lighthouse] tomorrow evening. Heretofore convicts, when in harbour, were allowed to come on deck in squads, which enabled those remaining below to cleanse deck, &c., but this arrangement, conferring such benefits, has not been resorted to in the *Phoebe Dunbar*; since she received her human freight they

<sup>1</sup> Ireland Roman Catholic Parish Baptisms, County Clare, Diocese Killaloe, Parish Sixmilebridge.

<sup>2</sup> Tipperary Vindicator, 20 June 1849, p3

<sup>3</sup> Clare Journal and Ennis Advertiser, 29 October 1849, p2

<sup>4</sup> Dublin-Newgate (Richmond) Prison General Register 1849-1858, 1/12/3, item 3

have been stowed between decks. Yesterday, I was permitted to visit her interior, accompanied by her commander, seemingly a most humane man, who, I am disposed to think, may have perhaps exercised a sound discretion in deviating from former arrangements -such a number crowded below must be productive of the worst results. The unfortunate creatures, from their appearance, seemed perfectly resigned to their fate; many of them I observed reading their prayer books, and now that they have leisure time may, perhaps, be the means for mature reflection and a fixed determination to make amends for their past life. I cannot state whether there is a chaplain in charge. <sup>5</sup>

The *Phoebe Dunbar* arrived at Fremantle on 30 August 1853. During the voyage, his behaviour was "pretty good but very indolent".<sup>6</sup> James appeared to have grown 6 inches during his time in the Irish prisons. He was now described as:  
Aged 20, 5'7½", hazel eyes, brown hair, oval face, florid complexion, marks of Cross IHJ J.B. H on left arm, labourer and single.<sup>7</sup>

James stayed on board the ship until 20 September, when he was transferred to Fremantle Prison. The superintendent orders refer to him as "James Bandon, 2794, from Cork". James's behaviour in prison was very good, and he was sent to Guildford Barracks on 25 October 1853.

On 9 February 1854, James Bandon was admitted to the Hospital, complaining of pains in bowels and purging. A diagnosis of diarrhoea was made, and he was treated and discharged on 17 February.<sup>8</sup> He received his Ticket of Leave on 20 May 1854.

What happened to James after he was granted a Conditional Pardon on 3 February 1855 is unknown, although the WA Biographical Index has:  
BRANDON James b.1833 (expiree) Arr. 31.8.1853 per Phoebe Dunbar Fremantle Employed as Ticket of Leave labourer in 1864.

This is the last reference found.

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<sup>5</sup> Freeman's Journal, 03 June 1853, p2

<sup>6</sup> SROWA, Acc 1156/R18

<sup>7</sup> SROWA, Acc 128/1-32

<sup>8</sup> SROWA Acc 1156?M17-18