

EDWIN GATEHOUSE 1819 - 1867

I have been very lucky with researching my family history in that my ancestors from many generations were involved in such notable events that they were written about in the newspapers of the day, of which we now have access to. One that springs to mind is an advertisement in the Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855) Wednesday 6 July 1853, Page 2:

**Partnership Dissolved.**  
**N**OTICE is hereby given, that the partnership lately carried on under the firm "E. Lapidus and E. Gatehouse," has been dissolved by mutual consent.  
Fremantle, July 5, 1853.

E Lapidus was my GG Grandfather but who was E Gatehouse and why was the partnership dissolved? Two Ticket of Leave convicts they had only gone into business together four months ago, as per the Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855), Wednesday 2 March 1853, Page 1:

**MESSRS. LAPIDUS & GATEHOUSE**  
**B**EG most respectfully to announce to the public generally that they have taken the premises formerly occupied by Mr. John Armstrong, in High-street, Fremantle, where they intend carrying on the business of a General Store; and trust, by perseverance and strict attention to business, to obtain a share of public patronage.  
L. and G. further beg to draw the attention of the inhabitants of Fremantle and Perth to the list of articles below, which will be found of excellent quality and lowest possible price.  
A variety of muslin dresses, Hoyle's best ditto, iris robes (made and unmade), patent slippers, ladies' satin stays, grey ditto, white corded ditto; Hoyle's chints prints; some pieces of Psyche; robings, Wakefield's barége, (newest patterns) plain delaine dresses, rich printed calimere, embroidered cashmere robes, silk warp lustras, printed alpaca dresses; a variety of bonnet ribbons, nainsook muslin, book, ditto, Hutchinson's do.; fancy checks; muslin sleeves, velvet bracelets, do. do. bell shaped; worked cambric collars, habit shirts, ladies' neck ties, children's cambric caps, white cotton hose, ladies' Tuscan, straw, and other bonnets; calicoes and prints; ball and fancy head dresses, children's bonnets and socks, men's and boy's boots and shoes, trousers, vests, shirts, handkerchiefs, and many other articles of clothing, &c., &c. Always on hand. A variety of very cheap French flowers.

They were also accused of stealing "Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA:1848-1864), Friday 1 April 1853 Domestic Sayings and Doings": Note here that not only is Elias Lapidus and Edwin Gatehouse targeted but Elias' defacto Esther Israel and her sister and brother-in-

law Brina Israel and Theodore Krakouer were also searched by the police.

Both the Perth and Fremantle Police have been busy in ferretting out the receivers of stolen property. On Saturday last in Perth, an individual named Krakouer, a ticket-of-leave holder who kept a small drapery store opposite the Freemason's Hotel, and his wife and her sister, both emigrants by the *Travancore*, were arrested, and several articles of jewelry, and other goods supposed to be stolen were found in their possession; these people were remanded on Monday, but we understand there is little doubt of proofs of guilt being obtained. At Fremantle on Wednesday a t.l. named Lapidus, in partnership as a storekeeper with another, and three others were apprehended, and on the premises occupied by Lapidus being searched, a large haul of stolen property was made. Last week at Northam, Gatehouse, a ticket-of-leave holder and partner in business with Lapidus, was arrested on a charge of having in his possession a quantity of leather which had been stolen from the Convict Establishment.

Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA:1848-1864), Friday 8 April 1853  
Page 2 Domestic Sayings and Doings: The police had to advise that they did not find any stolen goods on the search of Elias and Edwin's store.

**FREMANTLE.—**On Saturday last none of the articles seized on the premises of Lapidus and Gatehouse, having been identified they were given up and Lapidus released from custody. In our report of the seizure we should have said the property was supposed to be stolen, and not that it was stolen.

But Elias and Edwin did not let this rest and in the same paper as above their Letter to the Editor of the "Independent Journal" was published (printed copy is not complete):

"Sir—Having observed a report in your journal of Friday last, calculated to throw a stigma upon our characters, and greatly injure our business, we feel it necessary to offer a few remarks, in order to remove any erroneous opinion which may have been formed, from such public report.

The report which we allude to states, that, "at Fremantle on Wednesday, a t.l. named Lapidus, in partnership as a storekeeper with another and three others (Krakouer and Brina and Esther Israel) were apprehended, and, on the premises occupied by Lapidus being searched, a large haul of stolen property was made".

As to what such an avowal can be attributed, we cannot say. Not to ignorance, as the members of the police force were aware that no property found on the premises was identified as stolen property, and relative to the report advising three others being apprehended, was equally untrue, and without the slightest foundation.

A further report was made relative to leather stolen from the Convict Establishment, but we are happy to state, that although the strictest search was made amongst the property in the possession of Mr Gatehouse, nothing whatever was found to implicate his character, or justify the suspicion.

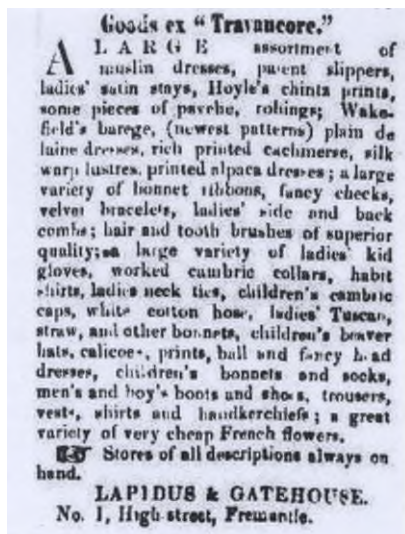
We sincerely trust that this public contradiction of a most cruel and unjust statement, may produce the desired effect, namely, to remove any injurious opinion from the public mind.

We are, Sir,

Your Obedient Servant,

LAPIDUS & GATEHOUSE"

Perhaps it was the constant Police presence that they decided to dissolve the business which seemed to be holding its own, they also purchased goods to sell from the "Travancore" the ship Esther and Brina Israel immigrated on as per below: Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855), Wednesday 6 April 1853, Page 3:



**Goods ex "Travancore."**  
**A** L A R G E assortment of muslin dresses, patent slippers, ladies' satin stays, Hoyle's chintz prints, some pieces of pascu, rolings; Wakefield's barege, (newest patterns) plain de laine dresses, rich printed cachemere, silk warp lustras, printed alpaca dresses; a large variety of bonnet ribbons, fancy checks, velvet bracelets, ladies' side and back combs; hair and tooth brushes of superior quality; a large variety of ladies' kid gloves, worked cambric collars, habit shirts, ladies neck ties, children's cambric caps, white cotton hose, ladies' Tuscany, straw, and other bonnets, children's beaver hats, calicoes, prints, ball and fancy head dresses, children's bonnets and socks, men's and boy's boots and shoes, trousers, vests, shirts and handkerchiefs; a great variety of very cheap French flowers.  
Stores of all descriptions always on hand.  
**LAPIDUS & GATEHOUSE.**  
No. 1, High-street, Fremantle.

After I saw the dissolution of their partnership I decided to research Edwin Gatehouse to find out what his story was and why he ended up as a convict in Fremantle Prison, I certainly wasn't disappointed.

Edwin Gatehouse was born c.1819 the son of Richard Gatehouse c.1780 Stonemason and Mary Gatehouse.



Mary Gatehouse

Edwin Gatehouse took on the trade of Shoemaker and on 13 April 1844 in the Parish Church of St Mary Lambeth Surrey, he married Elizabeth Forscutt a dressmaker. A daughter Elizabeth Rebecca Forscutt was born in 1844.

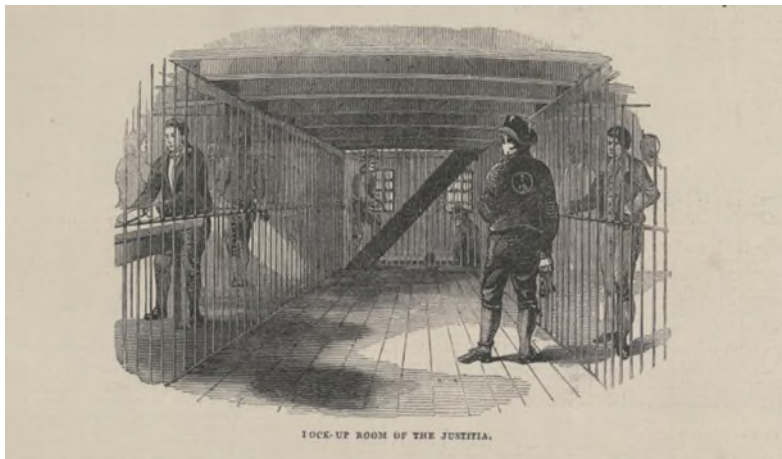
In 1846 James Towers, a boot and shoemaker, lived in Tottenham Court Road. He had two shops in Whitecross Street. In August 1846 he employed Edwin Gatehouse in one shop. It was his duty to attend to it, he had charge of the whole shop, and the property in it. He had the whole power of disposing of the property; he had to dispose of it in the best manner he could for the interest of

He had the whole power of disposing of the property; he had to dispose of it in the best manner he could for the interest This made them convenient temporary holding quarters for convicts awaiting transportation to the penal colonies within the British Empire including Australia Although introduced as a temporary measure the hulks quickly became a cost-efficient, essential and main part of the British Prison system.)

The Justitia began its life as an East Indiaman named Admiral Rainier, which the Navy bought and renamed HMS Hindostan. The Admiralty purchased her in 1804 for service as a 50-gun Fourth-rate. She was converted into a 20-gun storeship in 1811. She was renamed again in 1819 as Dolphin, and once more in 1831 as "Justitia" when she became a 260 ton prison hulk. She was finally sold in 1855. The 'Justitia' belonged to the shipowner Duncan Campbell, who was the Government contractor who organized the prison-hulk system at that time. Campbell was subsequently involved in the shipping of convicts to the penal colony at Botany Bay (in fact Port Jackson, later Sydney, just to the north) in New South Wales, the 'first fleet' going out in 1788.



National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Etching. *View of the Justitia Hulk with the convicts at work, near Woolwich. New Newgate Calendar or Malefactors' Register.* Size 177mm x 98mm. Accessed 4 June 2016. <http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/156989.html>



*Lock-up room of the 'Justitia',* from Pictorial Times, artist unknown, 1845, wood engraving. National Library of Australia: an9481784



*Prison-ship in Portsmouth Harbour, convicts going aboard,* Edward William Cooke, 1828, hand-coloured etching. Rex Nan Kivell Collection, National Library of Australia: an9058453

On 31<sup>st</sup> October 1848 Edwin was on the registry for Newgate Prison and on the July 21 1851 he was Prisoner#737 on the 916 ton ship Minden built at Sunderland in 1848 and employed as a convict transport, left Plymouth England bound for the Swan River Colony. She carried the fifth of 37 shipments of male convicts destined for Western Australia. The voyage took 85 days and the Minden arrived in Fremantle on October 14 1851 with 115 passengers and 301 convicts.



George Dance the younger. **Newgate Prison.** © Sir John Soane's Museum, London.

Colonial Times (Hobart, Tas: 1828-1857), Tuesday 9 December 1851, page 2

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA.**

The convict ship *Minden*, with 301 ticket-of-leave men, and a pensioner guard with women and children numbering 111 souls, had arrived. One convict died on the passage. She has made a quick passage of 85 days, having sailed on the 21st July. This vessel would be quickly followed by other government ships, as the local authorities had received intelligence that two companies of Royal Sappers and Miners, numbering 200 men, and two officers of the Royal Engineers, were to be sent there, the first detachment of 70 Sappers, and Lieut. Wray, engineer officer, being expected to arrive within a month. This was according to the report of Colonel Jebb, the inspector of prisons; but it was understood the governor's despatches from Earl Grey represented that one company of 100 men, with three subaltern officers, were to be sent—a detachment of 50 by the first ship.



The Minden

## Prison Records:

Edwins physical description was he was married with 1 child was a salesman by occupation he was 5'4" with blue eyes and auburn hair, he had an oval face, fair hair, he had a stout stature and a scar on the little finger of his right hand. (Convicts to Australia)

Fremantle, as it is known today, officially 'began' in April 1829 when the ship HMS Challenger arrived in the waters off the Western Australian coast near the mouth of the Swan River and formally 'took possession' of the land which was then named "New Holland" for King George the 4th of England. Close thereafter Captain James Stirling (portrait below) arrived from England to begin the Swan River Colony of Perth (in 1829).

It was Captain Stirling who named the port settlement 'Fremantle' after Captain Fremantle, the captain of the HMS Challenger.

During those first 20-30 years life was very hard for the new settlers. The issue was one of fertility.

The Swan River simply winds through a sandy flat. Not only was the vegetation hard to clear, but once it *was* clear, it wasn't 'good earth', just lots of sand.

The reports received back in England were not good. Of course, people decided to migrate elsewhere which caused even more problems. Manpower was needed to build the vital communications, transport and administrative framework if the colony was to succeed.

The English ended the 'free' status of the colony for all intents and purposes before 1850. Between 1842 and 1850 two hundred and thirty four juvenile offenders were transported to Western Australia on seven ships, but assuming they apprenticed themselves to local tradesmen they were considered free.

The settlers were not happy about the proposition of turning the colony into a penal colony. They were concerned that that it was against the founding 'free' principles of the colony - what had been 'promised' to them in England. They opposed the arrival of convicts as they felt they would bring stigma and trouble.

There was a depression in 1843 which almost ended the colony forever, however at the suggestion of the York Agricultural Society in 1847;

"That it is the opinion of this meeting that, inasmuch as the present land regulations have entirely destroyed our labour fund, we conceive that the Home Government are bound in justice to supply us with some kind of labour, and after mature deliberations we have come to the determination of petitioning the Secretary of State for the Colonies for a gang of forty convicts to be exclusively employed in public work." [Wikipedia](#)

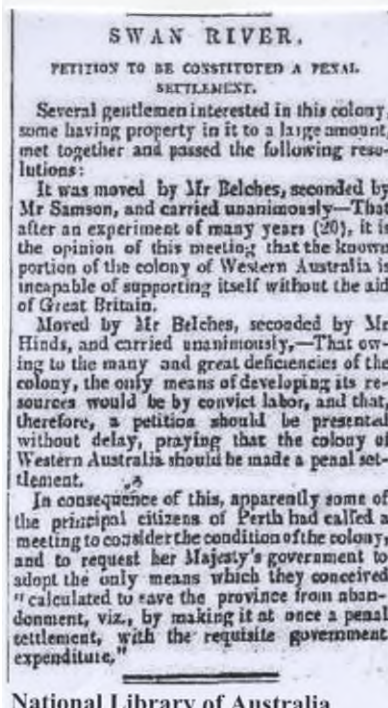


Swan River Settlement above Fremantle Prison below



The settlers were not happy about the proposition of turning the colony into a penal colony. They were concerned that that it was against the founding 'free' principles of the colony - what had been 'promised' to them in England. They opposed the arrival of convicts as they felt they would bring stigma and trouble.

Geelong Advertiser (Vic.: 1847-1851), Tuesday 10 April 1849, page 1



The decision, was made regardless of the public opinion or promise, and in November 1849 it was officially announced that The Swan River Colony had been 'constituted a penal settlement' to accelerate the economic growth.

The first 75 convicts arrived in 1850 on the 'Scindian' from Portsmouth to be followed by over nine thousand more convicts before 1868.

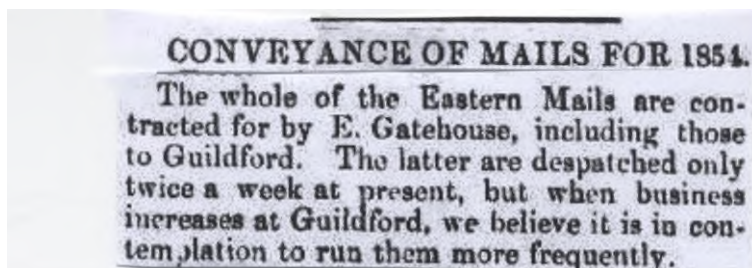


All of the prisoners were men, and all of them had almost finished their prison sentences. They were considered less-disruptive and more easily manipulated.

Elias Lapidus had already arrived on the Hashemy October 25 1850. It would seem that when Edwin arrived at the Swan River in 1851 where he gained his Ticket of Leave on October 14 1851 he met up and befriended Elias who received his Ticket of Leave August 10 1851 and his Conditional Pardon April 29 1854 with Edwin being a salesman and Elias a jeweller/hawker they went into partnership together in the drapery business. But Edwin had a dark secret, perhaps Elias was aware of it. Elias was a Jew who practiced the sacrament and could read and write, could he sense what was to come....perhaps the reason for the dissolution of the partnership in July 1853.

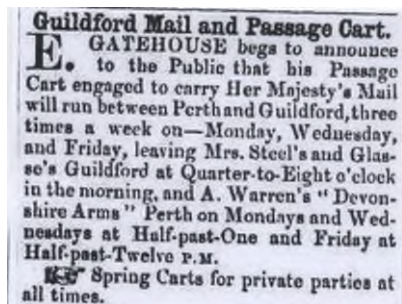
On October 31 1853 Edwin gained his Conditional Pardon and by November 18 1853 Edwin wins the contract of the Eastern Mails including those to Guildford.

Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA: 1848-1864), Friday 18 November 1853 Page 2.



And by Friday January 6 1854 he has established the Guildford Mail run and a Passage Cart.

Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA:1848-1864), Friday January 6 1854



Edwin was arrested on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1854 and was charged with unnatural offence—Death . He was reconvicted and was known as Prisoner#2931 he was sentenced in Perth to death later commuted to life imprisonment. He had committed the offence on an aboriginal, whose testimony they felt was inconclusive. He was sentenced to hard labour and to be held in leg irons for the first 12 months in solitary, the leg irons to be struck off on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1856. There was much public outcry:

Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855)Wednesday July 12 1854 Page 2

#### THE CONDEMNED CRIMINAL GATEHOUSE.

We understand that Edwin Gatehouse, who was condemned to death at the late sessions for an unnatural crime, is not to suffer the extreme penalty of the law for his offence, His Excellency the Governor having decided this important point by and with the advice of the Executive Council. This determination has, we believe, been come to from the fact that the only evidence affecting Gatehouse's life was totally and entirely that of an aboriginal native.

and

Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855) Wednesday July 19 1854 Page 2

#### Correspondence.

To the Editor of "THE INQUIRER."

SIR,—In your last week's paper I noticed a remark to the effect that Edwin Gatehouse's life had been spared in consequence of the evidence against him being solely that of an aboriginal native.

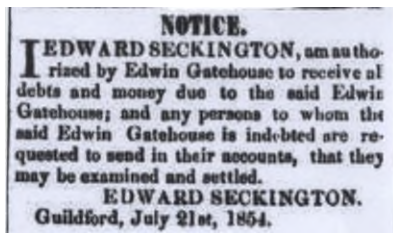
If such be the true reason for his commutation of sentence to transportation for life, I blush for the law, as administered in this colony, as I do not think that the reason quoted was sufficient to arrest the arm of justice. I have seen condemned criminals from among our native population, dragged off to the gallows, and there undergo the extreme sentence passed upon them, upon charges alone substantiated by their brother natives. Why the same description of evidence would not have been sufficient to carry out the same ends of justice in the instance alluded to I confess myself totally at a loss even to conjecture. It is not my intention to dwell upon the merits of this revolting case, but I merely express my belief that, had a white man's evidence corroborated that of the native, there would have been no doubt of the result to the criminal. How far this is just to the unhappy aborigines who have already suffered under such circumstances as I have alluded to, I shrink from deciding upon.

Does not a question, moreover, arise whether if the original sentence passed upon Gatehouse has been set aside from an unwillingness to abide by a native's evidence, the criminal should not altogether be liberated. He either *has* or *has not* committed the crime he was tried for, and, if there is a shadow of a doubt, he should have the benefit of it. But let not a sentence be commuted, solely because the native is deemed an incompetent witness in a case affecting the life of a white man, when similar evidence has already been known to execute a brother native.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
VON-OFFICIAL PROTECTOR OF ABORIGINES

His death sentenced was commuted to life imprisonment on June 12<sup>th</sup> 1854  
Fearing he would lose everything Edwin arranged for all his debts to be paid:

Inquirer (Perth, WA:1840-1855), Wednesday July 26 1854 Page 1:



The Remarks column on the Convict Department Records details his imprisonment:

12/10/1854 Bread and water 21 days  
04/09/1855 Bread and water 1 day and shut up 1 week  
22/07/1856 Bread and water 2 days  
21/10/1856 Returned to solitary confinement  
19/03/1857 Bread and water 2 days  
22/02/1860 his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Below is all the medical conditions and the occupations that Edwin worked at while in Fremantle Prison:

Convict Establishment, Fremantle Casual Sick  
Casual Sick Registers, 1858 - 1862 (CS6 - CS8)

21 April 1855 – Oesophagitis  
23 April 1855 - Oesophagitis  
7 June 1855 – Colonial Prisoner Cell – Placed under treatment in one of the new prison cells,  
Labouring under the ordinary symptoms of bowel complaint. Convalescent – Discharged  
2 July 1855 – Weak eyes – given a green shade  
31 July 1855 - Febricula  
19 September 1855 – Boil  
9 July 1856 – Shoemaking - Constipation (Cornified lungs)  
14 October 1856- Wishes to have his occupation changed has been 2 years in cell and 15 months  
Shoemaking. Recommend to have more active occupation Note: This man not  
Yet refused by Supt. A few days since without medical, prisoner particularly  
Wishes it. Supt will resolve issue. To join W. Tobin party as manual labour.  
Change in shop.  
23 February 1857 – Carpenters Labourer – Constipation  
13 April 1857 – Plasterer's Labourer – Indigestion  
26 June 1857 - Dispepsia  
31 July 1857 – Inside cell – Whitlow on thumb poltice  
2 August 1857 – Plasterers Labourer – Whitlow  
9 August 1857 – Plasterers Labourer – Whitlow  
3 October 1857 – Tailor - Constipation  
5 October 1857 – Tailor – Constipation  
6 October 1857 – Tailor - Whitlow Poltice Given  
8 October 1857 - Poltice given  
10 October 1857 – Tailor Poltice  
28 October – Tailor – Cell  
14 November 1857 Tailor Cell – Chronic Whitlow Poltice  
14 January 1858 - Constipation  
13 January 1859 – Carpenter – Dispepsia

14 January 1859 – Carpenter - Dispepsia  
 23 January 1859 – Carpenter – illness not recorded  
 6 March 1859 – Carpenter – Constipation  
 11 March 1859 – Carpenter – illness not recorded  
 15 March 1859 – Carpenter – Prolapsus  
 21 March 1859 – Carpenter – Illness not recorded  
 26 March 1859 – Carpenter – Prolapsus arn.  
 1 April 1859 – Hamorrhoids  
 4 April 1859 - Hamorrhoids  
 8 April 1859 – Carpenter - Hamorrhoids  
 21 April 1859 – Carpenter - Dispepsia  
 3 May 1859 – Working as a carpenter – Ringworm  
 8 May 1859 – Carpenter – Hamorrhoids  
 9 May 1859 – Carpenter – Illness not recorded  
 10 May 1859 – Carpenter – Illness not recorded  
 12 May 1859 – Carpenter – Absent  
 5 August 1859 – Labourer – Hamorrhoids  
 13 August 1859 – Labourer – Hamorrhoids  
 10 November 1859 – Labourer – Gastralgia  
 28 December 1859 – Labourer – Diarrhoea  
 19 February 1860 – Carpenter – Absent  
 20 February 1860 – Labourer – Gastralgia  
 2 March 1861 – Constable – Cough  
 13 July 1861 – Constable – illness not recorded  
 19 July 1862 – Note cannot be allowed at present to leave the colony.

On his release from Fremantle he worked as below:

30 June 1863 – Labourer at 5/- per day for T Clinch at Toodyay  
 31 December 1863 – Labourer at Toodyay for W Pradbuy  
 30 June 1864 – Labourer at Toodyay  
 31 December 1864 – Saddler @ 14/16 for the Mission Church Toodyay  
 30 December 1865 - Labourer  
 31 December 1865 – Labourer 4/- per - James Clinch at Victoria Plains  
 30 June 1866 – Labourer - James Clinch at Victoria Plains  
 31 December 1866 – Labourer

After this Edwin moved and set up his own business as a general servant carpenter, and worked for himself, but he came to a tragic end on March 16 1867 while working for Mr James Clinch of Berkshire Valley who was one of the early settlers having arrived around 1840 from Chosley in Berkshire.



James Clinch

Edwin was working on James Clinch's threshing machine and accidentally made a false step. One foot was smashed very much in the drum when in motion and he had to undergo amputation.

Convict Establishment, Medical  
Medical Registers by Patient, 1857 - 1872 (M4 - M6)

“Edwin Gatehouse TL per Minden

Injury to Foot

Date: February 1<sup>st</sup> 1867 7.00 am

E Gatehouse is admitted with an extensive injury to right foot. He states that when at work at a thrashing machine, he slipped and his foot when amongst the beaters this occurred on the morning of 29<sup>th</sup> February 1867 about 100 miles from here. There is now an irregular wound extending from the right side of the ankle across nearly to the big toe. The tendons are exposed and nearly all the soft parts torn away. Complains of great pain all around the foot, was in good health at the time of accident tongue clear, pulse soft and 85 – Rather thirsty bowels not opened since it happened and there is a good deal of heat above the wound in the leg and the wound is full of dirt and wheat chaff.

7.00 pm Bowles freely moved, otherwise the same.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> 7.00 am

Still a good deal of pain swelling slightly increasing bowels freely moved, has slept well there is a very slight thin discharge from wound.

February 3<sup>rd</sup>

Swelling of leg increasing, tongue furred Pulse 95 very little discharge

February 4<sup>th</sup>

Has leg pain but swelling still increasing but not so hot as yesterday, sleeps pretty well all night otherwise much the same.

February 5<sup>th</sup>

Complains of great pain about the foot there is sloughing of tendons, though only a thin scanty discharge. Bowels confirmed, leg much in the same state only skin more red and tense.

February 6<sup>th</sup>

Has slept well, bowels moved, tongue moister, has very little pain, leg looking slightly better, Bowels moved yesterday.”

Rest of pages missing but injury ended up with foot being amputated. He died from the effects of the accident and died at the age of 48.

**VICTORIA: PLAINS.**

*(From our own Correspondent.)*

The well-known Edwin Gatehouse, whilst attending Mr. James Clinch's threshing machine accidentally made a false step. One foot was smashed very much in the drum when in motion; he had to undergo amputation, but has since died from the effects of the accident at Newcastle. He leaves his money and effects to be divided between James Clinch, the Catholic Mission, and J. A. Wroth.

Carter King, in the employ of James Clinch, carelessly sat his little boy of only 3 years old, on the cart in front of a load of firewood; and on crossing a brook the little fellow was thrown off and killed.

Mr. J. M. Butler's sheep realised 9s. 6d. per head on an average. Horses £3 per head.

Did Elias know the truth about Edwin..... I guess I'll never know.