

John Morris, 122, *Hashemy*

Researched by Marcia Watson

John Morris was born about 1818 - 1820. According to Medical Register at Fremantle, he was born in Dumfries, Scotland. No baptism was found on Scotland's People between 1815-1825 in Dumfries, and no Moss, Mossy or Mossey.

Yorkshire, October 1848 - On Wednesday last, a man named John Morris or Mossey was examined at Ripon on a charge of robbing Wm Bland, of Kirkby Malzeard, butcher, of a pocketbook, which contained nine £5 notes and a cheque for £55. It happened that Bland had been at Masham fair, held a few weeks ago, and on his way home by West Tanfield, he was attacked by two men at a place called Lawn Bank, near Sleningford Mill. One of them seized him behind, and the other took his stick from him, with which he struck him on the forehead. The man who thus held him urged his companion to give him more when the latter kicked him whilst he was on the ground. A third man joined the other two, and the fellow who got the stick thrust his hand into Bland's waistcoat pocket and extracted his pocketbook. He then cried out, "Murder", when a man named Race came up upon him. To whom he described the usage he had received and who then accompanied him home to Kirkby Malzeard. When he arrived at home, he sent for a surgeon to dress his wounds. He identified the prisoner as the man who took the stick and pocketbook from him, and he (the prisoner) was consequently committed to York Castle for trial.

Another report said Bland's route was from Masham to Gatenby and Allerthorpe Hall, then to Tanfield. He had a beast with him, and a man looked after it on the road while he called at a public house at Tanfield. This was about twelve o'clock and left soon afterwards. Bland's injuries included a deep cut on his forehead.¹

At the Yorkshire Winter Gaol Delivery, York, commencing 9 December 1848: John Morris, *alias* Mossey, 29, was charged for that he, on 19 September, at North Stanley with Sleningford, assaulted Wm Bland and stole from his person £45 in notes and a cheque for £55. Mr Blanshard and Mr Liddell were for the prosecution; Mr Price defended the prisoner.

The prosecutor is a butcher at Kirby Malzeard. On the day in question, he had been at Masham fair, and when he was returning home and had got to Ripon side of Sleningford mill, he was attacked by two men, one of whom is the prisoner. Prosecutor was knocked down and robbed of the money charged in the indictment, and from information he gave to the police, they apprehended Morris, and the prosecutor identified him as one of the men who had assailed and robbed him. The prosecutor had his own stick taken from him and used to maltreat him.

Guilty – To be transported for 15 years.² *Alias* is sometimes reported as Massey in the newspapers.

Criminal Register, Yorkshire:

John Morris, 29, Read + Write – Imperfectly, Robbery and wounding in company, 15 years – an *aroneous* (*sic*) sentence.³

John was in York Castle until he was transferred to Leicester County Gaol. He was received At Leicester on 11 April 1849. The register says he was 29, a labourer – and has been once summarily convicted – "a very deep fellow". John was then transferred to Portland Prison on 3 May 1850 and boarded the *Hashemy* to travel to Western Australia on 19 July 1850.⁴

His description on arrival at Fremantle in October 1850 was:

¹ Leeds Intelligencer, 28 October 1848, p8; Yorkshire Gazette, 28 October 1848, p5

² Yorkshire Gazette, 23 December 1848, p8

³ HO27/86, p536

⁴ HO24/4/33

122. John Morris, 31, 5'1¼", brown hair, hazel eyes, round face, fresh complexion, sandy whiskers, no marks, a labourer and single.⁵

On 5 September 1850, John was confined for 24 hours due to insubordinate behaviour. Then, on 20 October 1850, insubordination, bread and water for three days (class reduced). One day forgiven.⁶

On 25 October 1850, the *Hashemy* arrived at Fremantle with 100 male convicts. Less than three months later, in January, five convicts and a warder were returning by boat to Fremantle from Perth. When they reached Rocky Bay, four of the convicts overpowered the warder. They robbed him and put him ashore under the cliffs of the Bay with the fifth convict who was lame. The warder arrived at Fremantle the next morning to raise the alarm. The four convicts, Henry Perkins, Thomas Corey Adams, William Hayles and John Morris, all arrived on the *Hashemy*.

The Superintendent of Convicts was still developing a workable sound system of dealing with convicts. Thomas Corey Adams had expressed a desire to instruct some of his fellow convicts in the art of navigation. He was encouraged, and among the convicts who derived the benefit of his knowledge were the three accomplices. These four men were permitted to be together and employed in the same occupation of sailmaking. This type of closeness was discouraged in other Australian states, and friends were quickly separated.

The authorities did not know if the escaped convicts sailed south or north or if they had provisions. Initially, the islands off Fremantle were searched, and later a boat was sent south to look for them. American whaling ships operated in the area, and it was feared the convicts would escape on one. The search proved fruitless.

The escapees had headed northward in the whaleboat. They camped on shore each night and reached Shark Bay in about eight days. By coincidence, the *Hashemy* was at Shark Bay loading guano from tiny Sunday Island, 180 metres off the south-east coast of Dirk Hartog Island. The ship's mate noticed a European observing the working party and hailed him. The man said he had travelled by foot from Perth and swam across to the island. Fortuitously, some of the crew of the *Hashemy* recognised the man and detained him on board. The following day another runaway was found, both protested their innocence. Eventually, they confessed to escaping and admitted two other convicts were nearby. A search began and on being discovered the two convicts tried to flee in their boat. All four escapees were secured in irons on board the *Hashemy* until the authorities came to collect them.^{7, 8, 9, 10}

On 20 March 1851, the four captured convicts, John Morris, Thomas Corry Adams, Henry Perkins, and William Hayles, were brought before W. H. Mackie, Esq. and the Resident Magistrate at Fremantle, charged with stealing a whaleboat and sundry articles of public as well as private property. As it was not contemplated to send the prisoners out of the colony, the charge against them was confined to the simple larceny of stealing the whaleboat, to which they all pleaded guilty. They were sentenced to three years labour in chains, on some road or public work in the colony. This sentence is independent of the original one.¹¹

Note: Adams, Perkins and Hayles were all boatmen or seamen. Could Morris have been a seaman at some stage?

20 March 1851: The 4 Prisoners viz. John Morris 122, Thos. C Adams 131, Henry Perkins 140 and Wm Hailes 141 having been adjudged by the Magistrate to undergo a Punishment of Three (3) years Imprisonment in irons - either on the roads or on such work as may be ordered - ... missing line with straps &c and be put to such work as may be directed - care being taken that they are not left by

⁵ SROWA Acc 128/40 - 43

⁶ AJCP. CO18/58, p245

⁷ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 15 January 1851, p2

⁸ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 24 January 1851, p2

⁹ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 22 January 1851, p2

¹⁰ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 21 March 1851, p2

¹¹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 28 March 1851, p2

themselves for any time, and that they are allowed no communication, either between themselves or with other Prisoners. They will continue on a full diet & have the regular bed and Bedding.¹²

Casual Sick List, Fremantle Prison¹³

Morris John	15 May 1851	Constipation	Aper: Med	In cell at Fremantle
-------------	-------------	--------------	-----------	----------------------

John was issued with a Ticket of Leave on 17 December 1853 and released from prison the same day.¹⁴

He was admitted to Fremantle hospital on 8 June 1854 with neuralgic pain in his loins and was treated with opium. The pain turned out to be secondary syphilis when on 13 June, eruptions broke out on his face, trunk and one in his throat. He admitted to having a chancre on his genitals about four months earlier. John continued to be hospitalised, and the pain shifted to other parts of his body. From 24 June until his discharge on 28 June, he was given extra rations of chopped potatoes. He was discharged on 28 June.

Additional information from the medical record:

John Morris, 35, sailmaker. Fremantle. Good. Former patient. Native place Dumfries, Scotland.

Disease: Neuralgia lumborum.¹⁵

On 3 November 1854, John Morris, 36, TOL, admitted to hospital from North Fremantle. He was a Sailmaker, suffering from Lumbago. The record said he had suffered severely in the last two months: Diet Spoon, 1lb potatoes, ½lb bread.

On days 4, 5, 6, 7. Improved

8 November 1854 - Discharged.¹⁶

He was back again between 16 November 1854 to 24 November 1854, with Lumbago.

16th Under treatment in June last. Also, see 8 November. He is now admitted with general Neuralgia most severe across back. Treated with Puls jalap, calomel and wet sheet.

17th Much the same as on admission. Pains continue severe, wet sheet not applied from want of blankets (?). Treatment as yesterday. Diet was 1lb potatoes, 8oz bread and 1 pint of soup.

18th Applied wet sheet.

19th Much delivered from sweats.

20th to 23rd. Convalescent

24th Discharged.¹⁷

Conditional Pardon granted on 11 January 1859¹⁸

John Morris possibly died on 15 February 1887, at the Invalid Home Mount Eliza, of heart disease and dropsy. He was buried at the East Perth Cemetery on the same day. Their records say he was 68 years old (b.1819).

The newspaper, and death index, say he was 58 years old (b.1829). The paper also noted he was admitted to the Home on 20 October 1886.¹⁹

¹² SROWA Acc 1156 SO1, p34

¹³ SROWA Acc 1156 CS1

¹⁴ SROWA Acc 1156 R17

¹⁵ SROWA Acc 1156 M13

¹⁶ SROWA Acc 1156 M13

¹⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 M13

¹⁸ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

¹⁹ The Daily News (Perth, WA : 1882 - 1955), 15 February 1887, p3