

John Pidgeon, 132, *Hashemy*

Researched by Marcia Watson

John Pidgeon said his mother was Mary Richards, living in Kentish Town.

1841 census: The family probably lived at 6 Augusta St, Saint Pancras. ¹

William Richards, 50, carman, born in county

Mary, 40, born in county

John, 14, born in county

1851 census: 21 Upper Mansfield Place, Saint Pancras, St Pancras, London.² [now Holmes Road]

Mary Richards, Widow, 49, Laundress, born in Prestbury, Gloucestershire, and a servant.

The 1861 census shows, possibly the same Mary Richards, was born in Kentish Town, Middlesex.

John Pidgeon, 56th regiment, tried at Gibraltar for theft on 30 September 1848, sentenced to 14 years transportation.

Petition. ³ [spelling not corrected]

Received 8 January 1850

Horse Guards, 7 January 1850

Sir,

Having had the honor to lay before The Commander in Chief your letter of the 27th ultimo transmitting the application of John Pidgeon late of the 56th Regiment, a Convict under Sentence of transportation for having in his possession a Silk Handkerchief belonging to Captain Hague of the 67th Regiment, and requesting The Duke of Wellington to furnish The Secretary of State with his observations on the case, I am instructed, in returning for his perusal the proceedings of the Court Martial (Gibraltar 30 September 1848) which will at once afford Sir George Grey all the information His Grace possesses on the subject.

The Proceedings being in original I shall be much obliged to you if you will let me have them back.

I have the honor to be, Sir, Your most obedient Humble Servant,

Fitzroy Somerset

Cover: Horse Guards, 7 January 1850

Lord Fitzroy Somerset, Transmitting documents in the Case of John Pidgeon, a Military Convict

Nil. Return the Documents GG

Answered 4 February 1850

Received 18 December 1849

Sir,

I am very sorry to say i am a prisoner in the Pentonville Prison under going a sentence of 14 years Transportation for having a silk-pocket-handkerchief in my possession, not knowing the same to have been stolen, in which i came in possession of it on 27 September 48, when i was walking out on the Evening of the 27th after Parade and on my return to Barracks, i pick'd up a silk pocket handkerchief off the ground near the Spanish Chaple and i put it in my cap, it was about a 1/4 pass 8 O'clock, when i got to barracks i gave it to the Sergeant of the Company i belong to, and i told him were i pick'd it up and told him to give it to the Captain of the Company, and i was made a prisoner about an hour afterwards, and tried on the 30 September 48, which Sir their were no witness against me whatever only the Prosecutor to say it was his property, nobody saw me go out with any one, not in town, nor come in to barracks, and i think it very hard indeed, and i thank you Sir if you please to look at my case for me, for i think it not justice for sentence

¹ HO107/683/3, p11

² HO107/1498. P250

³ HO18/269

me so heavy which i am innocent of the robbery committed that night at Captain Hague Quarters of the 34th Regiment, which was done by another person and all stolen property found on him except one silkpocket handkerchief which i found about 40 yards from the house opposite the Chaple door, i had two witnesses the Sergeant of the Company and a full Corporal to say that i gave them the handkerchief and i ask for another Court Martial 3 days after i was tried for it, but they would not let me have it, because i spoke to late for it, i would be glad to serve in any Regiment in the service for my liberty if you please Sir, or lighten my sentence if it lays in your power i was in the Regiment 1 year 345 days. I am 3332 Private John Pidgeon R.B 56th Regiment Gibraltar

To the Right Honourable

Sir George Grey Bart

Secretary of State for the Home Department

Cover: 269/2

John Pidgeon, Gibraltar, Gen Court Martial, September 1848

"Having in his possession a Silk Handkerchief the property of Capt Hague". 14 years transportation, Pentonville

Q to Commander in Chief. HW

The prisoner asserts his innocence and prays that his case may undergo consideration.

Answered 4 February 1850.

Fellow convict John Sheen, 88, tried the same day for having the other items stolen from Captain Hague.

John Pidgeon, 19, single, read and write imperfectly, mat maker, was received at Millbank Prison on 24 October 1848 from Gibraltar. He was once previously tried by General Court Martial. John was transferred to Pentonville Prison on 23 April 1849. Here he was recorded as John Pidgeon (Richards underneath his name), 22 years old, could read and write, a soldier in 56th regiment, and the gaoler's report was good. Nearly a year later, he was removed to Portland Prison on 4 March 1850. He boarded the Hashemy on 19 July 1850 for the voyage to Fremantle. ⁴

On arrival at Fremantle in October 1850, his description was: ⁵

132 John Pidgeon, 24, 5' 7", sandy brown hair, dark blue eyes, round, fair complexion, well-set build, top of the second finger on left hand cut off, a labourer and single.

General Register:

132. John Pidgeon, 25, single, labourer, Church of England, private schooling, can read very well, is good at writing and fair at maths. Said his mother, Mary Richards, laundress, lives in Mansfield Place, Kentish Town, London

Attended Divine Service? Occasionally

Received Sacrament? Never

Habits? Sober and attentive to his calling

Intellect? Sound

State of Mind? Hopeful

Knowledge, Secular? Limited but has a tolerable knowledge of geography

Knowledge, Religious? Tolerable

Alleged Cause of Crime? Blames himself only

Name of Person referred to for Character, &c. William Scott Esquire, County Magistrate, Hammersmith, London. ⁶

⁴ HO24/4; HO24/16; HO8/105

⁵ SROWA Acc 128/40-3

⁶ SROWA Acc 1156 R21A

John appears on the Casual sick list, Fremantle Prison.⁷

		Complaint	Treatment
Pidgeon J	2 November 1850	Nyctalopia	Shade
Pidgeon	11 November 1850	Gum boil	
Pidgeon Jno	12 November 1850	Gum boil	Lanced
Pidgeon J	27 November 1850	Boils	Opening
Pidgeon J	13 December 1850		Op: medicine
Pidgeon John	14 December 1850		Infus Quassia
Pidgeon John	15 December 1850		Chalk mixture
Pidgeon John	16 December 1850	Discharged	Castor oil
Pidgeon Jno	18 December 1850	Gum boil	
Pidgeon John	17 January 1851	Inflame in back	Cold applic
Pidgeon John	18 January 1851		
Pidgeon John	19 January 1851		
Pidgeon John	20 January 1851		
Pidgeon	17 March 1851	Nil	Mix fever
Pidgeon John	18 March 1851	Sore throat	Liniment. Flannel

15 January 1851: ⁸

Copy of Comptroller Order stated Prisoner 132 John Pidgeon, having been tried before a Bench Magistrate for absconding from the Convict Establishment at Fremantle, has been sentenced to forfeit his Ticket of leave for such period as the Governor or the recommendation of the Comptroller General might see fit and to receive Corporal Punishment to the extent of 50 lashes.

On 19 March 1851, Prisoner 132 John Pidgeon, having been guilty of misconduct while under Punishment, tho indulgence granted of working about the yard is suspended, he will now, therefore, go under the regular discipline, and not allowed out of the Cell Yard without further order.⁹

Then on 25 June 1851, Prisoner John Pidgeon Reg No 132, having fulfilled his sentence of 6 months Imprisonment in addition to his original sentence, was allowed to rejoin the Barrack and have the same Ration &c as the other men. ¹⁰

John was entitled to a Ticket of Leave on 28 November 1851. He was not discharged until 4 March 1852 due to his earlier behaviour. Another register says he received his Ticket of leave on 26 March 1851.

Guildford, 22 September 1852: ¹¹

Henry Chambers and John Pidgeon, ticket-of-leave men, in the service of Mr Leeder of Redcliff, laid a heavy complaint against William Hokin and William Deacon, who had been working for the same employer, charging them with a most brutal assault, and with putting them in fear of death. The complainants bore no signs of any injury whatever, while the defendants had each a broken head, and the clothes of Deacon showed that phlebotomy had been practised on him with great success. The handle of a grubbing axe, sufficiently strong and heavy to fell an elephant, was produced, which had been used by Chambers to knock down the defendants. The Resident postponed the case to obtain the assistance of a second magistrate.

At Perth, on 27 September 1852, John Pidgeon, t.l.. out of the district without a pass, and about after hours; fined 5s and 3s costs. ¹²

John was in trouble again, at Guildford, on 13 January 1853, Guildford, when he was charged with entering the dwelling of Saunders with intent to rob.

⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 CS1

⁸ Idem, p29

⁹ SROWA Acc 1156 SO1-3, p34

¹⁰ Idem, p44

¹¹ Inquirer (Perth, WA: 1840 - 1855), Wed 22 Sep 1852, p2

¹² Inquirer (Perth, WA: 1840 - 1855), Wed 6 Oct 1852, p3

Mary Saunders said—On the day mentioned, I left my house for a short time, having first locked the door, and placed the key on the wall-plate. On my return, about 20 minutes after, I found the prisoner in my house, and asked him what business he had there. He said he thought I was a bed, and said I had better see that nothing was missing. He then went off through the bushes. He had unlocked my work-box, and turned out the contents in search for money." The prisoner had immediately absconded to Perth, and was there taken up for having no pass and returned to his district. He was sentenced to go to the depot for two months without pay.^{13, 14}

The following year, on 10 February 1853: John Pigeon, of the depot, stealing a silver hunting watch and three shillings and sixpence from the dwelling of D. Jones during the hours of divine service last Sunday; sentenced to three years at the Establishment.

John regularly received medical treatments at Fremantle while serving his three-year sentence.¹⁵

	Complaint
1 November 1853	To hospital
1 December 1853	Small abscess forming under each armpit. ... in cheek and Erysipelas. Discharged 24 December
2 February 1854	Sprained ankle, discharged 5 February
8 April 1854	Sore thumb
9 July 1854	Constipated
11 July 1854	Eruptions on hand
6 August 1854	Eruptions on chin
21 August 1854	Diarrhoea
17 October 1854	Injured foot
10 November 1854	Eruptions on face
26 November 1854	Constipation
13 February 1855	Favus on face and arm
15 February 1855	Favus on hand
20 February 1855	Ophthalmia
18 March 1855	Ophthalmia. Treat with green shade
9 April 1855	Ophthalmia
14 April 1855	Discharged
29 April 1855	Boil on neck
13 May 1855	Pustular eruption on face
16 May 1855	Skin disease
20 May 1855	Bowel complaint
29 May 1855	Favus on hand
8 June 1855	Admitted to hospital, remove to the new establishment. Pemphigus
14 June 1855	Chronic sores on hand
6 June 1855	Constipation
29 July 1855	Contusis

John suffered from some type of skin disease. Pemphigus is a rare skin disorder characterized by blistering of your skin and mucous membranes, and Favus is a superficial dermatophyte infection, a type of tinea.

The new prison at Fremantle was ready to take prisoners on 9 June 1855.

John received a pass from Fremantle on 29 November 1856 and a 14 day pass on 4 December 1856. On 9 December 1856, he began working for F Friend at 5s per day. [Frederick Friend, farmer, Toodyay]

¹³ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA: 1848 - 1864), 21 January 1853, p3

¹⁴ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 2 February 1853, p3

¹⁵ SROWA Acc 1156 M18

Then, on 22 April 1857, he was transferred from Toodyay to Fremantle by the acting Comptroller General.¹⁶

Back to prison! On 6 November 1858, the following Ticket of Leave holders received under Magistrate Sentence of re-conviction will be placed under regulated discipline:

132 John Pidgeon, 3 years hard labour.¹⁷

Fremantle prison, casual sick or in hospital.¹⁸

25 December 1858	Diarrhoea for 3 days. Discharged on 5 January 1859. 32 years old, tailor.
17 March 1859	Constipation Tailor
10 June 1859	Constipation
19 June 1859	Constipation. Tailor
22 November 1859	Cough Labourer
30 November 1859	Cough Labourer
26 December 1859	Diarrhoea Mason
27 November 1859	Cough
1 December 1859	Cough &c. Labourer
2 December 1859	Cough
4 January 1860	Dyspepsia
11 January 1860	Constipation
19 February 1860	Nil
10 December 1860	4pm. Incised wound of the head in consequence of a blow received, an hour ago, from a roof falling in – the wound is about 1inch long, skull not fractured. Discharged 13 December.
7 January 1861	About a week ago a small piece of grit struck the left eye. Since then the eye has become red, painful and intolerant to light. Discharged 7 February 1861. Ophthalmia. Sent in Invalid Depot, North Fremantle

21 July 1859. Petition.¹⁹

5 April 1861. Discharged to Ticket of leave

13 April 1861- An unknown Pidgeon sailed to Champion Bay per *Wild Waves*.²⁰

Midwest Convict Register says John was at Champion Bay.

25 March 1862- Conditional Pardon on receipt of Certificate.²¹

A Conditional Pardon was granted on 29 September 1862. John received his Certificate of Freedom on 25 July 1863.

John Pidgeon donated 2s 6d to the Lancashire Fund in May 1863. Captain Harvey collected the money at the Wanerenooka Mine.²²

He possibly left Western Australia, per *Falcon*, for Singapore on 21 May 1865. Passengers included a J Pidgeon.

See - Mid West Convict database for more information

<https://midwestwaheritage.com/resultmcr/?id=2523>

¹⁶ SROWA Acc 1156 R6

¹⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 SO7, p13

¹⁸ SROWA Acc 1156 M17, CS8-10, M32

¹⁹ SROWA Acc 128/38-39, reel FCN41

²⁰ The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 17 April 1861, p2

²¹ SROWA Acc 1156 S1-3

²² The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 27 May 1863, p4