

Robert Wilson 6766

Robert Wilson was a native of Essex, born in 1836 to David Wilson and Maria Sarah Page. [Northam poacher]

He first came to the attention of the authorities when this article appeared in the Chelmsford Chronicle 2 July 1858:

“Robert Wilson, 21, hawker, Hannah Gage, 23, silk winder, and Major Andrews, 18, butcher, were indicted for stealing from George Allen 14s, 4d at Braintree on the 23rd May”

It seems Hannah Gage entered a pub frequented by employees of the Eastern Counties Railway Company to suss out some likely men with cash. She struck up a conversation with Allen and persuaded him to take a stroll in the evening air. Once outside her two companions attacked George Allen and relieved him of his ready cash. Having a previous conviction Wilson was given 3 years and the other two, 12 months each.

He spent time at Millbank, Pentonville and Portland where he was licensed on 4 February 1861.

Arriving back in Braintree he met up with Hannah Gage and they were married on March 12. Two months later his name again appears in the Essex Standard 24 May, with Josiah Nash, for breaking into a house at Felstead and stealing money and meat, for which he was given a 7 years sentence and this time was transported to WA on the *York* from Portland prison. Hannah appears in the 1871 census living with George Lindsell, fish monger, and an ancestry tree has her giving birth to 6 children with his surname.

In WA he spent his time in Fremantle until he received his ticket on 4 March 1864. The Toodyay register [SROWA cons 720/31] has him employed by John Sandilands (convict 1717), Thomas Wilding (convict 2956 1865 and lastly Robert Carter (convict 3180) to 1866 when he was granted his conditional pardon. He stayed in the Northam district working as a contractor sinking wells and fathered 2 children with Sarah Ann Carter in 1869 and 1872. At the christening of their second child Emily, when her marital status of being single was disputed by the cleric, she took Robert to York and married him.

Robert's brother-in-law William Lyon wrote a piece in 1910 titled “55 years ago” spread over two editions of the *Northam Advertiser*. Robert Wilson was a key witness to a murder by two escapees but was not very helpful, explaining to the judge that he was so drunk he could not remember anything. The details of the murder in William's article probably came from Robert Wilson.

Robert died in 1906 at Mount Dick where Sarah's brothers, Robert and Wesley lived. He was buried in the grave of his son Charles' twins who died at birth in 1903. His wife Sarah Ann is probably also buried in the same grave when she died 31 years later. She died as Sarah Ann Forward and certainly would have preferred being buried in one of the 2 Forward boys' graves for William was the father of her first child and Henry her last husband.