

## William James Seddon, 604, *Pyrenees*

Marcia Watson

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|-------------------|---|
| Baptism           | 10 October 1830, St James Church, Walton on the Hill, Liverpool, Lancashire   |
| Parents           | Samuel Seddon and Hannah Winkle   |
| Parent's marriage | 23 August 1824, Holy Trinity, Liverpool, Lancashire   |
| Siblings          | Mary (1825), Elizabeth (1827), Joshua (1829), Susannah (1832),<br><i>Charlotte? (1834)</i> , Samuel (1835), Ann (1837), Sarah Jane (1840) |
| Wife              |   |
| Married           |   |
| Children          |   |

William James Seddon is the second son of Samuel and Hannah Seddon. His father worked at Herculaneum Pottery in Toxteth Park, Liverpool. The company started in the 1790s and had several owners. In 1833 the company was dissolved and sold to new owners.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps this is why the family had relocated to Hanley, near Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire, by 1832. About two years later, they lived nearby at Burslem.

On the 1841 census, living at Haywood Place, Burslem, Staffordshire, were: Samuel Seddon, 40, a journeyman potter and his wife, Hannah. Children Mary 15, Elizabeth 13, Joshua 12, and William 10 were all apprenticed potters. Susannah 8, Samuel 6 and Sarah 1, made up the rest of the family. Hannah died, aged 40, at the end of 1841.

William James Seddon, 13, was convicted at Staffordshire County Sessions on 5 January 1846 for larceny. He was sentenced to 3 weeks imprisonment and to be whipped.<sup>2</sup> He was actually 16 years old. Then, at the Staffordshire County Sessions on 1 January 1849, William was convicted of shop breaking. With a previous felony, he was sentenced to 10 years transportation.<sup>3</sup>

A letter dated 9 February 1849 was sent to the High Sheriff of Staffordshire for the removal of William and other convicts to Millbank Prison.<sup>4</sup> William was received at Millbank on 27 February 1849 and was recorded as 17 years old, single, could read and write imperfectly, and a potter. He had three previous convictions – two leaving the workhouse with clothing and one in the workhouse.<sup>5</sup> He may have been in the Wolstanton and Burslem workhouse, at Chell, 3km north of Burslem.

About six weeks later, William was transferred to Parkhurst Prison on 22 March 1849. He was described as aged 16, although he was 19. He could read and write well, was a potter, convicted of breaking and entering a shop and larceny therein, and had been imprisoned three times. William boarded the *Pyrenees* on 13 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia.<sup>6</sup>

On arrival at Fremantle, he was described as:  
604. W.J. Seddon, 20, 5'9", light hair, blue eyes, long face, fresh complexion, stout, no marks, a baker and single.<sup>7</sup>

A little of William's life in Western Australia can be seen in the Mid West Convict Register.<sup>8</sup>

About nine months before his sentence expired, William unlawfully left Western Australia. The *R.M.S.S. Emeu*, arrived at King George's Sound in mid-March 1858, from Sydney and Melbourne, with mail and 120 passengers for England. The vessel sailed on 23 March 1858. Although the following letter refers to his travelling companion, it may give an insight into what happened to William.

The Colonial Secretary's Office in Sydney received a letter from Colombo, Ceylon.<sup>9</sup>

*Colonial Secretary's Office, Colombo, 19 July 1858*

*Sir,*

*I am directed by the Governor to transmit to you copy of a letter from the Police Magistrate of Colombo and of one from the Queen's Advocate, and to request that you will be good enough to take the instructions of His Excellency the Governor General of Australia in regard to John Gothard, the individual therein mentioned, who is at present detained in custody.*

*I have honor to be, Sir, Your Most Obed<sup>t</sup> Servant,*

*G F.....*

In Sydney, the Convict Department, noted on 20 October 1858:

It may be necessary to send copies of this to the Government of Western Australia, with a request, that they will communicate with the Colonial Secretary of Colombo, on the subject. Reference may however, be made to the Inspector General of Police, for enquiry of the prisoner in the "Eneu" which is now in Port. The minute on the first page to be now acted on - a copy of this report and of the enclosures being sent at the same time. 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Enclosed is a Memorandum of the Chief Officer of the S.S "Emeu"- of the escape of the man therein alluded to, from King George's Sound, with another individual named Sidon, who is no doubt also an escaped Convict from Western Australia.

Three letters were included in the communique:

**1. No. 88. Police Court, Colombo, 8 July 1858**

*Sir,*

*I have the honor to state, that on the 5th instant, a man calling himself John Gothard, gave himself up to me, at this Court, saying he is an escaped convict. He made a statement, which I took down on writing, thus: "My name is John Gothard. I am 27 years of age, and a native of Birmingham, England. I am an escaped Convict. I was transported for house breaking, about six years and seven months ago, to Swan River, Australia. I made my escape, and got off, concealed on board of the Steamer "Emu", and landed at Point de Galle, about twelve weeks ago. I came to Colombo about eleven weeks ago and have been in the Pettah Hospital for about nine weeks. I am now well. I cannot get any employment; I am starving; and I come and give myself up to Mr Dalziel the Magistrate. I was sentenced to be transported for ten years, by Mr Hill, the Recorder of Birmingham. I am willing to return to Swan River to serve out the term of my sentence."*

*Signed J Dalziel, J.P. / signed John Gothard*

*On the man's own admission that he is an escaped Convict, I committed him to the custody of the Fiseal, to Prison for further examination and pending reference to Government.*

*I have etc,*

*Signed J Dalziel, P.M.*

**2. Queen's Advocate Office, Colombo, 14 July 1858**

*Sir,*

*With reference to your letter No 140 of the 12th instant, I have the honor to state that the communication of the Police Magistrate should be transmitted to the Authorities in Swan River, Australia, and that John Gothard should in the meantime be detained in Custody. It must depend upon their reply whether he is sent on or released.*

*I have etc,*

*Signed Richard F Morgan*

3. *William Sidon and John Goden stowed themselves away on this ship - at - King Geo<sup>s</sup> Sound - on the 23 March last - & left at Pt de Galle. M Murphy, Chief Officer, S.S. "Emeu"*

No further trace of William James Seddon has been found.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herculaneum\\_Pottery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herculaneum_Pottery)

<sup>2</sup> HO27/80, p96

<sup>3</sup> HO27/89, p111

<sup>4</sup> HO13/96, p132

<sup>5</sup> PCOM2; HO24/4.

<sup>6</sup> HO24/15

<sup>7</sup> SROWA Acc 128/1-432

<sup>8</sup> <https://midwestwaheritage.com/resultmcr/?id=1866>

<sup>9</sup> NSW Archives, Index to Colonial Secretary Letters Received, Citation: [4/3386] Letter no 58/3752, Start Date: 01/01/1858