

<https://crimeanwar-veteranswa.com/stories/from-pensioner-to-gentleman/>

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This article first appeared in the *EPG Gazette*, Vol. 6, No. 4, October 2005.

Recently while looking at the 1880 rate book for Fremantle I carefully recorded all the pensioners who were named as occupying or owning rateable property in the town. After finishing I was checking the index to see if I had missed anyone when I came across the name William Wilson, pensioner. Knowing I had not recorded anyone of that name I checked back and saw that William Wilson, gentleman, was the occupier of lot 189 Norfolk Street Fremantle and there were six cottages on the allotment, furthermore, he was also the occupier of 197 Suffolk Street Fremantle an allotment having a value of £100. The owner of both properties was Mrs Wilson, estate of Mrs Ware. *The Veterans* confirmed William Wilson was indeed a pensioner having served with the Rifle Brigade.

Now who was Mrs Ware and where was Mr Ware?

I had a look at the Probate Indexes in the SROWA¹ but failed to find a will in the name of Ware, however in the CSO Subject Files I did indeed find references to a Charles Ware. Charles was recorded as a carpenter and also as a builder holding mortgages over land in Cantonment Street, Cockburn and 196 Suffolk Street, Fremantle. Charles Ware had drowned in the Swan River near Fremantle WA on 15 March 1875.

On-going to the Pioneers' Index I found a marriage between Charles Ware and Bridget Hartigan born 1848 in 1872 at Fremantle.

The Bicentennial Dictionary was even more illuminating as it had Charles Ware born 1823 (England) expired 24.10.1850 per *Hashemy*, also his marriage in 1872 to Bridget Hartigan who had arrived on the *Strathmore* in 1869. Charles was listed as a brickmaker, carpenter and contractor. He had employed nineteen ticket-of-leave men including five carpenters, two quarriers, a mason, a lime burner, a painter, a plasterer and an engineer.

The Convicts in Western Australia 1850-1887 also listed convict number 138 Ware, Charles, has having been convicted in Exeter for highway robbery with violence for which he received a sentence of fourteen years. He received his ticket-of-leave on the 10.11.1851 and his conditional pardon on the 18.11.1854. Unfortunately, Charles died in 1875 and is listed in the Pioneers' Index as Charles Weir.

The bereaved Bridget lost no time in marrying William Wilson the same year and again, her surname was recorded as Weir. William, living comfortably on the income derived from his wife's inheritance, must have decided he conformed to the definition of a gentleman.

There were a series of mortgages taken out on the properties this time using the correct names of William Wilson and his wife Bridget (late Bridget Ware) widow of Charles Ware.

William died in 1881 and perhaps it was just as well as he would have been bitterly disappointed to lose his status as 'gentleman' as fate had not finished with Bridget. Her first husband, Charles, having died intestate a claimant to the estate turned up, one George Sevier of Portsmouth who claimed he was the brother and 'heir at law' to Charles Ware.

It now appeared Charles Ware's name was really Charles Sevier one of ten children of Moses Sevier and Hannah Deacon. As this was prior to the introduction of the Married Women's Property Acts, Bridget was dispossessed of her fortune being awarded, as dower or widow relict, one hundred and fifteen pounds and having the outstanding mortgages repaid. What happened to Bridget we do not know she appeared to have disappeared from Western Australia so perhaps she returned home to Ireland.