

The following fascinating story of Australian pioneer Ticket-of-Leave Yorkshire man, William Green, and his wife Ellen Norris an Irish Bounty Immigrant, is a very brief précis of comprehensive details taken from the **William Green Family History**. The story of William Green, and his wife Ellen Norris has been extensively researched and is most kindly donated to the MHS by **Ms Denise McAvoy**, a descendant of William and Ellen. The full history will be available in our library in the near future.

Although there is much detail available regarding the struggles and the pioneering lives of famous and well-known free settlers such as Dendy, Were, Moore and many, many, others, the following story gives a fascinating insight into the lives of those first settlers of our district that also managed to flourish not withstanding their totally different background.

### The Interesting Story of Convict William Green An early Brighton and East Brighton Pioneer

William Green was born in Yorkshire, England' in January 1808 at a time when the start of the industrial revolution was causing radical and devastating change to what had been the way of life in England for hundreds of years. By 1815 unemployment was rife following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, when army and naval recruits were discharged back into the workforce. This was a time when the increasing mechanisation of farm machinery, and changes to the laws around the holdings of the large, mainly rural, working population brought about complete poverty and displacement. Many of the unemployed turned to poaching and smuggling. William was the fifth child in Henry, and Anna Green's family. (Records show that Henry was a Labourer). No doubt the family lived "hand-to-mouth" at this time.

In 1832, at twenty-six years of age we learn that William is working as a Farm Servant In Yorkshire. In that same year he is convicted at York Lent Assize 1832, for the offence of "**Feloniously putting off Counterfeit Silver coin**". Court records reveal that Wm had "no education", and was married with one child. William was sentenced to be "**transported beyond the Seas for the Term of Seven years**". He was taken to the prison hulk, *Justitia*, at Woolwich where Wm. remained for nearly eleven months prior to his transportation.

On the 12th March 1833, William, and another 224 male convicts sailed aboard the convict ship *Asia*, Captained by Thomas Stead, for Sydney, NSW, Australia. At embarkation William is described as being 5'6" tall with a dark pallor, brown hair, a crooked nose and the mark of a burn on his throat. The voyage took 126 days, (18 long weeks at sea), the *Asia* arrived in Sydney in June 1833. Despite the fact that Surgeon Superintendent, Thomas Galloway was onboard, records show there were 5 deaths at sea. Nothing is known of convict William Green following disembarkation until four years later in 1837. At this time records show that Wm. was Assigned to **Edward John Eyre**, the well-known English land explorer of the Australian continent, and a colonial administrator who was to become a controversial figure later in his career.

**Briefly:** **Edward John Eyre**, was the third son of an English vicar, who had arrived in Sydney, Australia in 1832 at the age of seventeen years rather than join the army. He immediately sought to gain colonial experience in the management of sheep and cattle, initially living with William Bell at Cheshunt Park. Obviously, Edward was a hard worker as well as a quick learner because in the July of 1832, **before his 18th birthday, he owned his first flock of 400 sheep!** In 1834 Eyre overlanded 3000 sheep successfully to his newly purchased property on Mononglo Plains near Queanbeyan. Records show that William Green served as an Assigned Servant to Eyre at Molonglo, because when Eyre sold this property a dispute arose as the purchaser claimed that Eyre's servants, (naming Eyre's Assigned Convicts, including Wm Green), should have remained on the property. After a strong protest to the Governor, Sir Richard Bourke, the servants were returned to Eyre.

By 1837 Eyre had returned to Sydney where in partnership with Charles Sturt, (the explorer), he raised the money to overland stock to Port Phillip. Accordingly, in 1837 Eyre wrote to the Colonial Secretary seeking sanction to take his ten Assigned Convicts, overland to Port Phillip with his stock comprising of 78 cattle, 414 sheep, oxen and horses.