

## Private George Clark

By Daryl Nelson

These notes are a record of the Military Service of Private George Clarke from the date of his enlistment in 1822 at the age of 13 years and seven months until his medical discharge some 24 years later.

While it was common practice for a young man to put his age "up" to gain enlistment, it is highly unlikely that he would have claimed to have been younger than he actually was. Therefore we must assume George would have been born about August 1808.

He enlisted with Her Majesty's, Ninth Regiment of Foot on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 1822 at Southampton in the county of Hants, England. For the first 4 years and 4 months of his term he was classed as "under age". This period apparently did not count as part of his Military service.

George served abroad in three separate fields of action. His service record shows that he spent four years and seven months in the West Indies, however the start and finish dates of that posting are not recorded.

George's papers tell us that he married on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1828 but where he was at that time is not stated and to who is not known.

He was next posted to Mauritius from 29 April 1832 until 9<sup>th</sup> November 1835, when his regiment was transferred to the East Indies (Bengal). During this last tour of duty (Nov. 1835 – Sep 1845), George saw action in Afghanistan where he was wounded in the foot (27<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1842).

On the 10<sup>th</sup> September 1845 he applied to be medically discharged. He first reported sick with dysentery in January 1824 but it is not known where he was serving at that date. It is thought that George elected to have his pension paid in the town of Salford, Lancashire in England.

His daughter Mary is believed to have been born in Salford, England c1833, however this date has been calculated from her given age

at death and may not be entirely accurate. Mary is reported to have told her children that she was born in Manchester, so it is possible that George was returning there to his wife and daughter.

George's discharge was finally approved on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1846 and he was declared as "being permanently disqualified for Military Duty".

About 1848/49, George signed on as an Enrolled Pensioner Guard under a land grant for services scheme, guarding convicts being transported to Australia. He arrived in Fremantle, Western Australia per the *Scindian* on the 1st June 1850 as a widower, accompanied by his daughter Mary.

He took up his land grant in August shortly after arrival, being Lot 9 on the South Perth foreshore. This land along with 16 other lots in the same location was badly sited and the venture failed due in part to the poor condition of the soil.

His daughter Mary married John Crake a young sailor who took his discharge from the the *Scindian* on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1850. They married at St John's Anglican Church, Fremantle on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1851, just one year after their arrival.

Mary and John raised a family in Essex Street, Fremantle. This is thought to have been their only home and the rate books show this as Lot 178 in 1878.

John earned a living working as a boatman, ferrying passengers and stores to and from the ships at anchor in South Bay. After having 14 children they also occupied the cottage next door.

George re-married on the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1853 to Jane Wilson, the daughter of another Pensioner Guard. He died in Fremantle two years later on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1855.

**(Editor's Note:** Thank you Daryl (who is not a member of our group, for supplying the group with the copy of all crew on the *Scindian*.)