

# JOHN SULLIVAN, EPF MAN AND POLICE OFFICER

Four individuals named John Sullivan were active in colonial Western Australia either as military men or law enforcement officers or both. Two of them have been the source of great confusion, and in some highly regarded sources (1) their careers and life stories have been partially combined into one. Thanks to the painstaking work of Thelma Stonehouse, a particular source of confusion has been removed. Here are the results, and we can thankfully confirm the existence of a John Sullivan who certainly was an Enrolled Pensioner Guard and a police officer – albeit one whose career ended suddenly and badly.

John Sullivan number one was born in Ireland about 1821 and joined the British army as a private in the 10<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot at an unknown date. He served in both the Sikh Wars of 1845-1846 and 1848-1849; it can be assumed he was injured or incapacitated by illness seriously enough in the second war to warrant a military pension. John arrived in the colony as a member of the Enrolled Pensioner Force in June 1850 or later, but before November 1851. John probably married Bridget Foley before leaving the 'old country'. The couple had between six to eight children in WA (2).

John joined the colonial police as a constable on November 22, 1851. He served in the Swan valley. He impressed his superiors enough to gain promotion to sergeant on July 23, 1854, with the task of taking charge of the police at Toodyay on January 1, 1855. As soon as Sullivan arrived disaster struck. He was suspended for falsifying returns and alleged fraud two days later. John Sullivan number one was removed from the Police Force as of January 4, 1855 (3). The final outcome of the scandal is not yet known, but John Sullivan was living back in Fremantle in 1856, when his son John the Younger was born. The older Sullivan continued to serve in the EPF, although how he supplemented his pension is also unknown; he acquired further property in Fremantle in the early 1880s. He was present at the famous Diamond Jubilee banquet in 1897 and died later in the year (4).

Here are the other unrelated John Sullivan's:

John Sullivan number 2: the subject of the fine study by Thelma Stonehouse. Born 1819/1820, died 1901. A former Irish police officer who was a member of the WA Police Force from 1856 until 1878. His career was also pretty 'colourful'; he served as a warder on two occasions, was dismissed and restored to the police once and removed for the second time and final time for being drunk on duty (5).

John Sullivan number 3: born about 1832, a former soldier in the Sixth Dragoon Guards who became an Assistant Warder in England and served in the same capacity in WA from 1866 until his resignation and departure in 1870. He was never a member of the EPF or a police officer (6).

John Sullivan number 4: served as a private in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Regiments of Foot and arrived in WA as an EPF member on the Norwood, July 13, 1867. After that, this fourth John disappears from view (7).

- (1) For example, Moran, K.J. *Sand and Stone*, Part 1, (Frickers, Perth and London, 2000), p125.
- (2) *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, Vol.IV, R-Z, p2980 – the entry was probably the original source of the confusion in identity.
- (3) WA Police electronic listing for his joining and leaving dates; Bentley, M., *Grandfather was a Policeman* (Hesperian Press, 1993), pp25, 40, 46; Bentley, M., Research Notes (Battye library Collection) *sub* John Sullivan.
- (4) Broomhall, F.H. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, 1989), B269.
- (5) Stonehouse, Thelma, 'A forlorn character', in Morling, L.A. *Family Reflections* (Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc, 2004), pp132-137.
- (6) Barker, D.J. *Warders and Gaolers* (Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc, 2000), p197.
- (7) Broomhall (1989), B270.

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