

RESEARCHING MY CARROLL FAMILY

Submitted by Terry Carroll 16.2.2002

One day my daughter, Fiona asked me about my father and his parents. She had already been in contact with my mother and my wife's mother so, on reflection, I should not have been surprised by the question. The trouble was that my parents separated when I was about four years old and, from that time on, my contact with my father, and his family was limited. My reply was to ask her what she knew about my father's family and, when she answered that she knew nothing at all, I told her that she knew as much as I did.

That was how all this research started.

What I did know was my father's name and Fiona was able to find his birth on the South Australian Register. The birth certificate gave her my grandparents' names, Frederick Carroll and Emily Carroll nee Slate. Unable to pinpoint a birth for Frederick, Fiona began looking at the death records. I could not remember ever having seen my grandfather so we concentrated on those that were before 1933, my birth year. One was found in 1915 for a Frederick Terence Carroll, and since my name is Terence we thought this must be it. I must have been named after my grandfather's middle name.

We were wrong. Frederick Terence could not be my grandfather. He had died at the age of 21 and was not married. For a while Fiona concentrated on her maternal lines, then had a flash of lateral thinking. What if Frederick Terence was some other relation of mine? Perhaps my father had named me after his older brother?

His birthplace was given as Broken Hill so Fiona checked the NSW index. There it was: Frederick Terence Carroll born to Frederick Carroll and Emily Slate. As well as this was the birth of a sister and the marriage of his parents. Fiona was excited about this as the NSW certificates of that period held more information than South Australia's. However, the marriage certificate was a disappointment, as the birth information had not been completed. There was some additional information on Emily's family, but nothing about Frederick except his age, which indicated a birth year of circa 1863.

Fortunately I remembered a cousin, Ivor who I had seen from time to time in my teenage years, and was lucky enough to pick him out of the phone book on my first attempt. We had a good old chinwag and this sparked memories of dad and other members of his family, as well as some of the old family tales. Apparently Frederick had often said that he had been born in goal, lived in goal and never been convicted of a crime, although there seems to be some confusion about whether he was born in Fremantle or Sydney. The family called him "Pups", and his son, Frederick Terence, was called "Bubs".

Emily, his wife, was born in South Australia around the Burra area. Her father, said to be a hawker who supplied goods and chattels to other people around the country areas of South Australia, had supposedly been struck by lightning and killed while saddling his horse.

Another cousin, now living in Queensland, also added to the folklore. Marie told me that Frederick's family disowned him for marrying a Protestant, and from this it appeared that his parents were staunch Catholics. There was also a story that Frederick's mother had come out with her husband but died when the children were small, and her husband had moved to South Australia after her death.

We obtained the birth certificate of Marie's mother, Frederick's youngest child and the only one born after the date that South Australia began to collect more information on its birth certificates. We were lucky. The informant was Frederick himself, and his birthplace was given as Fremantle. Again his age tallied with a birth year of 1863.

Taking Frederick at his word, we turned to Western Australia to look for further information about him. We were in good shape to find his birth on the Pioneer Index, or so we thought. That was when I first learned to take ages and other "facts" with a grain of salt. Guess What? There was no Frederick Carroll on the Index.

I now believed that Frederick's father had been either a policeman or a warder because of the remark he's made about being born in prison and another family story, but this did not help much. An entry in

The West Australian Bicentennial Dictionary mentioned a child by the name of Frederick, being the son of Michael and Brigid Carroll, but born in 1858. Strangely it had the word "expiree" after Michael's name, which we knew meant convict, but it qualified the word with a question mark as if unsure. The same entry contained a death date for Brigid (1860), and a number of siblings. We found the death on the Pioneer Index with the minimum of information but none of the births.

Another entry had a number of collated incidents that involved one, or possibly more, Michael Carroll's: one who was a Pensioner Guard, the purchase of 10ha in Fremantle and a voyage on the Kestral to South Australia. This started our interest in Pensioner Guards.

Fiona found a microfiche with the early records of Saint Mary's, the Catholic cathedral in Perth. There she found the first two children that were listed in the entry. A call to the Catholic Archives revealed that Frederick Carroll had indeed been born and baptised at Saint Patrick's in Fremantle in 1858, and there were no other Frederick Carroll's in their records. We felt sure that this was my grandfather. In Broken Hill in the 1890's the men outnumbered the single women. All the records say that Frederick was 11 years older than Emily – maybe the actual 16 years age difference would have damaged his marriage prospects to a girl under the age of consent.

I called the Archives and found out that all the children of Michael and Brigid were baptised at Fremantle. Their baptism records also included the names of both Michael and Brigid's parents, and where they had come from in Ireland.

All seemed to be falling into place. The only Michael Carroll in Western Australia at the time of the baptism of the oldest child, Frances in 1851 was listed in The Veterans as being a Pensioner Guard. Another Michael Carroll, a convict, did not arrive until 1853. An annotation on Frances' baptism certificate stated that she had previously been baptised by an Anglican catechist and that her birth date was shown as April 24th 1851. This usually happened when a child had been born at sea, and if this were so then Michael and Brigid would have been aboard either the Mermaid or the Pyrenees, both at sea in April. Both Convict ships had landed in Fremantle in time for the Catholic baptism on the 27th July 1851.

It was at this time that a Special Interest Group of WAGS pertaining to The Enrolled Pensioner Force was about to spring into being. A notice of this was in WAGS "Western Ancestor", with a contact phone number. I attended the first meeting, along with many other people with the same interest, and thus The Enrolled Pensioner Force Special Interest Group was formed. It was due to this group, that the rest of my research into Michael and Bridget Carroll was able to proceed to its present state.

Michael did in fact arrive in Western Australia on board THE PYRENEES, which left England from Torbay, on the 30th March 1851, and after 90 days arrived in Fremantle on the 28th June 1851. He was a Night Warder until January 1852, but his lively-hood after that has not been established. He was assigned a land grant of 1 acre at Fremantle on the 20th November 1862, and applied for Full Title on the 7th September 1859.

Michael's wife Bridget was accidentally badly burned on the 19th December 1860, and after a night in terrible agony, she finally died on the 20th December 1860. Michael sold his interests at Fremantle, and on the 27th March 1861, he took his family to South Australia, leaving Fremantle aboard The Kestral, arriving at Adelaide, South Australia on the 12th April 1861.

A trip to visit my mother in South Australia, and a bit of research on the side should, I hope, reveal some more about Michael and his children's movements after arriving in South Australia. A previous trip allowed us to trace Frederick and Emily's movements around Adelaide after their return from NSW.

The military records of Michael, and his pension payment records, have helped complete a picture of my great-grand father in my mind, and I firmly believe that obtaining this information should be a priority for anyone researching a member of the Enrolled Pensioner Guard Force. It seems fitting to close with the information that Michael Carroll died on the 29th September 1877 in Adelaide, South Australia.