

Sergeant John Flynn

Some Descendants of Sergeant John Flynn

Two veterans named John Flynn served in Western Australia as members of the Enrolled Pensioner Force. The soldier of direct concern to us may have arrived on the 'Sea Park', April 6, 1854. This John Flynn was born in Ireland in about 1809 and served first in the St Helena Artillery, then in the 39th Regiment of Foot. He became a military pensioner at some unknown date and was at Tralee in County Kerry when included in an Enrolled Pensioner Force draft, November 1853. His stated rank was Colour Sergeant (1).

After arriving in the colony he emulated quite a few other EPF men by obtaining appointment to the Convict Establishment without the sanction of his commanding officer, July 1854. Regrettably things did not work too well and he was fined several times for various offences, including gossiping with prisoners and returning to duty when under the influence of alcohol. He was dismissed in March 1855: an 'indifferent officer' according to Superintendent Thomas Dixon (2).

Fortunately, John Flynn was able to find employment as a tailor. Less fortunately, he died in February 1859, leaving a wife Ellen (nee McCarthy) and several young folk to fend for themselves. His son Timothy, aged scarcely 16, was already employed by the Convict Establishment and he looked after his widowed mother and three sisters. Timothy Flynn had a rather successful career, despite his Fenian sympathies (3).

His brother-in-law Thomas Carroll, the son of an Irish carpenter named John Carroll, also attracted considerable interest from the local establishment, but for very different reasons. According to his WA Police Record of Service, Thomas was born in Dublin in about 1844 and had served previously in the British Army. D J Barker indicates in his classic work

Warders and Gaolers (4) that he appeared in WA as an EPF man, but explicit evidence is lacking and Carroll's behaviour reveals he may simply been a military pensioner rather than a member of the Force. He is not listed in Broomhall.

Carroll had been a trooper in the 11th Hussars (Prince Albert's Own - a very prestigious unit) and worked as a Temporary Assistant Warder in WA from May 1868 until July of that year, when he tried to rejoin the regiment. That effort failed and he obtained a position as an Assistant Warder at Fremantle Prison in November.

It would be pointless to delve too deeply into his brief career in the Convict Establishment. Barker has provided the florid details. After a complicated series of difficulties, including insubordination and misuse of alcohol, he ended up being brought before the local court by the police and fined for disturbing the peace in Fremantle. That did not quite finish the business. Several offences later, November 1869, a weary but sympathetic Superintendent of Fremantle Prison (Henry Lefroy) gave him a hint and Thomas Carroll resigned. Lefroy was kind and described him as an "active young man and generally...well conducted."

Poor Thomas Carroll tried in vain to win back employment in the Convict Establishment and even returned to England to apply once more for the 11th Hussars. No luck. Fortune then smiled upon him in July 1870. Superintendent Gustavus Hare of the WA Police put in a good word for Carroll and recommended him as a potential recruit. That comes as no surprise: Hare was a former army officer like most other colonial Chiefs of Police, who in general tended to look rather kindly on veterans (5).

The Colonial Secretary accepted him as a suitable man for the WA Police. And so he proved to be. Thomas Carroll served for 28 years and earned a fine reputation. He was

rewarded for zeal and perseverance in tracking down and arresting escaped convicts and a burglar and received two promotions, ending up as a Lance-Corporal.

In the course of working at Hamelin (Port Augusta) for ten years he also carried out the duties of Customs Officer. Surviving records indicate that he was an efficient and well organized man when carrying out his various tasks: visiting local settlers and sawmills; checking out incoming cargos and jetty work; recording shipping in the area. He resigned in December 1898 and received 350 pounds as a gratuity (6).

While serving in Perth decades earlier, he went to Fremantle on October 11, 1872 to marry Ellen Flynn, the daughter of EPF man John Flynn. This was only three years after future police officer comrades apprehended him for carousing in the middle of the town....An interesting point about the marriage celebrant: Father Patrick McCabe was the priest who assisted the Fenian political prisoner John Boyle O'Reilly make his famous escape from WA in 1869 (7).

Thomas and Ellen Carroll became the parents of a family of seven. Two sons also became policemen. One was Constable John Thomas Carroll, who served for six years in the 1890s.

The other emerged as a very distinguished police officer in the post-World War 1 years. William Carroll (1877-1961) joined in 1897, served right throughout the State and reached the then exalted rank of Inspector of Police in 1935. He was placed in charge of the Kimberley and Great Southern police districts in turn and ended his career in glory as the senior officer in his family's old stamping round – Fremantle itself, during the period 1939-1942 (8).

Notes

(1) Broomhall, F.H. *The Veterans* (Hesperian Press, 1989), B98-99; Erickson, R. *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australians*, (University of Western Australia Press, 1988), Vol.2, D-J, p1081

(2) Barker, D.J. *Warders and Gaolers* (Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc, 2000), p74

(3) *Bicentennial Dictionary* (1988), Vol.2, D-J, p1082

(4) WA Police Record of Service of Thomas Carroll, no.3; Barker (2000), p32

(5) Police Register entry of July 1, 1870; Barker (2000), p32; Conole, P. *Protect and Serve* (Western Australia Police Service, 2002), p57

(6) WA Police Record of Service of Thomas Carroll, no.3; SRO Acc 695, AN 5/Hamelin, Item 1, Occurrence Book, 12/12/1891-23/9/1899, entries for November 1898

(7) WA Marriage Certificate 3483 of 1872; Barry, L. *The dramatic escape of Fenian John Boyle O'Reilly* (National Gaelic Publications, WA, 2008), Ch.4, *passim*

(8) *Bicentennial Dictionary*, Vol.2, D-J, p483; WA Police Records of Service of John Thomas Carroll, no. 179 and William Carroll, no. 389

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