

CRITCHES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HENRY & SARAH CRITCH

Henry (1825-1890) was the fifth child of William Critch and Margaret Brooker and was born in Dover, England in 1825. In 1844, at the age of 19, he joined the 35th Royal Sussex Regiment and was sent to Ireland. Two years later he married **Sarah Kennedy (1826-1887)** at Armagh Ireland.

Sarah was born in Nenagh Ireland to William Kennedy and Sarah Campbell and she had a brother John. Henry and Sarah's first two children, Margaret & William, were born in Ireland, Francis Henry in Portsea England, and the last 2, Sarah & Charles, in Chatham England. **Henry's** 21-year military career took him to Mauritius, India, and Burma.



For most of his overseas service **Henry** served as an Officer's Batman and was the recipient of many excellent testimonials. After his service in India he became an Enrolled Pensioner.

Enrolled Pensioners were soldiers who had served in Britain's wars and had been discharged with a pension for long service, good conduct, wounds, or meritorious service. Many of these Enrolled Pensioners were recruited to serve as guards on the ships that transported almost 10,000 convicts to Australia between 1850 & 1868 and many stayed on in Australia at the completion of the voyage. **Henry** was one of these.

On the 13th July 1867, **Henry, Sarah**, and three of their five children, Francis, Sarah and Charles, arrived in Fremantle aboard the *Norwood*. This marked the beginning of **The Critch Family Story in Western Australia**.

On the journey out, Sarah had served as a midwife on board the *Norwood* and on arrival was given a commendation by the Superintendent Surgeon, Dr W.M. Saunders. *Mrs Critch, the wife of Pte. Henry Critch of the Pensioner Guard aboard abovenamed ship has acted as a nurse at the four confinements which have taken place since leaving England and I have found her most useful and attentive and can strongly recommend her for such employment.*

On their arrival, the family settled in Fremantle and **Henry** was employed as a warder at the prison. In 1881 he was selected to guard the bonded stores and in 1883 was promoted to Corporal. They lived for at least some time in the Warders Barracks in Henderson St. In 1884 they were granted 2 acres of land in Thompson St North Fremantle in recognition of Henry's 7 years' service as an Enrolled Pensioner, however I have not been able to discover whether they ever lived at that address or what happened to the land.

Little is known of **Sarah's** life either before her marriage or after her arrival in Australia. According to her death certificate she died of 'drink debility' in 1887, so perhaps it wasn't a happy existence in this new country.

It seems that **Henry** may have had a problem with the drink as well as his name was mentioned on several occasions in the courts, for drunkenness. He died in Fremantle as the result of an accident (he had a fall and was hospitalised) in 1890.

Henry & Sarah's 5 children were:-

Margaret	1849 –
William James	1850 –
Francis Henry	1853-1930 married Ann Maria Kelly
Sarah	1860-1928
Charles	1862-1933

Margaret married **Edwin Thomas** a ship's steward in Fremantle in 1867. I cannot establish how Margaret arrived in Fremantle but she was married very soon after the rest of her family arrived on the *Norwood*. She and Edwin left WA and their first daughter Margaret Matilda was born in South Australia in 1868. It appears they then returned to England and had 6 more children - Henry, Edith, Frank, Grace, William and May.

William, it seems had left England about 1865, before his family left for Australia, but nothing is known of his whereabouts after that.

Francis married **Annie Maria Kelly** in Geraldton in 1883 – this is our story.

Sarah married **William Clifford**, a Customs Officer, in Perth in 1885 and her death certificate shows that although they had 4 children, only one child **Amelia** lived to adulthood, and she never married.

Charles remained a bachelor. After leaving school, he served his boatbuilders apprenticeship under General William Jackson and worked mostly in the north of the State as a boatbuilder and trader in such places as Shark Bay, Onslow and Broome. He died in an Old Men's Home (Sunset) in Claremont in 1933 at the age of 77.



The Norwood