

John PILGRIM (1838-1898)

John migrated to Tasmania on the 'Trade Wind' in 1858. John was described on ship's records as being aged 19, short figure, well looking young man, fresh complexion, blue eyes, light hair, could read and write and belonged to the Church of England faith. His occupation was a farm labourer.

John was sponsored by Askin Morrison of Hobart Town and discharged from the Quarantine Station at Impression Bay to him during the evening of 26 March 1858. Askin Morrison sponsored ten immigrants on the 'Trade Wind', seven of whom were from Essex; mainly from the Lamarsh area. They may have been related, for example, Robert Harrington and Charles and William Weavers were possibly cousins. Askin Morrison arrived in Hobart Town in 1828 with a quantity of merchandise which he sold advantageously. He made a selection of land at St Peter's Pass, near Oatlands, the same year. Through the years this property has remained with Morrison's descendants. As a landed proprietor Morrison is best known in connection with the Runnymede property, Prosser's Plains, Rosny at Bellerive as well as other property.



John was baptized on 22 July 1838 at the Holy Innocents Church in Lamarsh. John was the eldest son of eight children born to Thomas Pilgrim (1809-1879) and Mary Ann nee Harrington (1815-1876). All of John's siblings remained in England with the exception of the youngest brother, Frank, who migrated to Canada.

It is not known where John spent the first fourteen years after his arrival in Tasmania. As he was recruited by the Hobart Immigration Society and met by his sponsor, Askin Morrison, in the southern part of the State, it is likely John initially worked on one of Morrison's southern properties, such as 'Runnymede', an isolated but fertile valley, 32 kms east of Hobart, or 'Rosny' on the Derwent estuary and perhaps 'St Peter's Pass' in the Midlands.

John married Eliza Wadley on Christmas Day 1873. Eliza was born on 4 October 1851 at Little Hampton (near Longford) on 4 October 1851. Eliza was the daughter of William Wadley (1805-1875) and Sarah nee Bakes (aka Bates) (1812-1887). Her father, William, was an ex-convict who, along with his brother, Thomas, was transported for seven years for machine breaking. William was a participant in the "Industrial Revolution" commonly known as either "The Machine Breakers" and/or "Swing Rioters." William and Thomas were transported to VDL on the 'Eliza' arriving on 28 May 1831.

At the time of marriage to John Pilgrim, Eliza had a young daughter, Elizabeth (aged one) who was the daughter of Samuel Denman (1848-1919) but was raised as a Pilgrim; she knew John as her Father. John and Eliza had nine children – five males and four daughters. Three of the children died in infancy; one aged nine months with dysentery and convulsions, another, one month old, was said to have died with thrush. No records were found for another daughter, apart from her birth in 1879, and it is thought she too may have died at birth.



Cottage at 'Esk Farm' near Longford

On the birth registration for their children they lived at Bracknell, Bishopsbourne, Longford and Cressy. In 1884, John was at the 'Creekton' estate at Cressy; and at the 'Kinburn' estate also at Cressy in 1885. When the youngest son, Frank, was born, John was at 'Esk Farm', Carrick Road, Longford. His occupation was either a farm labourer or a ploughman.

The Pilgrim family in Tasmania has been identified as having Lynch Syndrome, also known as hereditary non-polyposis colorectal cancer (HNPCC). Lynch syndrome is an inherited condition of cancer predisposition caused by mutations in certain genes involved in repairing DNA damage, called "mismatch repair" genes. A number of the Pilgrim family, who undertook genetic testing tested positive for the syndrome. The Pilgrim family in Tasmania are the only known family to have this particular mutation. People affected by Lynch syndrome have a higher risk of bowel cancer, endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, cancers of the stomach, kidney, brain, pancreas and ureter (tube from kidney to bladder).

John died in 1898 at the age of 53 with Bright's disease of the kidney and Eliza lived another 44 years, she died in 1942.

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