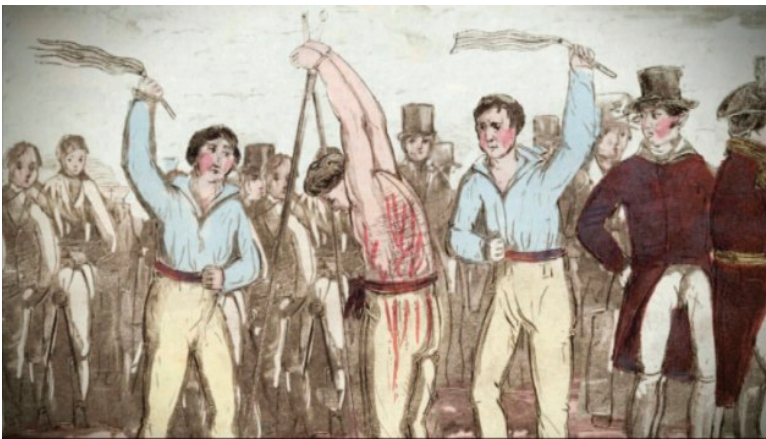




THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

Wiggie – the Convict from Wigan



Wiggie, arrived in Australia on the *Lady Kennaway*, departing England on 2nd June 1836, and arriving in Australia on 2nd February 1837. He would make his home in Stroud. This is his story.

Wiggie's real name was Emanuel Walker. Wiggie's crime was being caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. As B. Isaac has commented, 'When Wiggie was only a small lad, he and two others planned a small robbery on a store. They made a hole through the wall and Wiggie, being the smallest, had to go through the hole in the wall and pass the provisions out to his [accomplices]. He got the other fellows provisions out [but] as he was coming out through the hole with his own lot, a woman from the street saw him and reported it. So Wiggie was caught and deported to Australia under the lash, and the Authorities and flogger never needed much of a reason to use it'.

Emanuel Walker is listed on Jen Willetts' web site (www.jenwilletts.com) as being an employee or servant of the Australian Agricultural Company. The notes against his name suggest he was not a perfect convict. He was 'admonished and discharged on a charge of disobedience of orders and appearing at muster in a filthy state'. It seems quite incredulous to be charged for not doing as you were told and for being dirty!

Wiggie felt bitter towards the flogger. B. Isaac was of the opinion that 'if ever he got the chance, he would kill him'. He got his chance. As Isaac describes it, 'One day Wiggie came across the flogger between Booral and Stroud. He was off his horse, and lying drunk in the water table, so Wiggie went over with the intentions of killing the flogger'. But, 'there was a full bottle of whisky lying on the ground beside him, so Wiggie took the bottle of whisky, and his gold watch and chain, and let the flogger live'!

Wiggie spent the end of his life with Isaac's father's family at Riverside Booral. Isaac believes that he is buried in an unmarked grave in the cemetery at St Barnabas' Church of England, Booral, 'somewhere in the bottom right hand corner as you look towards Booral House'.

The majority of this information is from a letter from B. Isaac. The last comment from Isaac is very interesting.

Though this is only a small portion of one convict life, it is still a part of the early history of our area, and I feel, that unless someone passes these things on to someone else, it would not be long before these things would be lost forever.

The letter is dated 4th April 1985. Collecting local history was as important then as it is now.

I would like to thank B. Isaac for sending this information to the Historical Society as it gives an invaluable insight into the life of our convicts and our area. I would also like to thank the Stroud & Districts Historical Society for access to their files.

For the full version of Wiggie's story please go to:
<http://randrproperty.com.au/newsletters/volume33.pdf>

~ Sharon Burke 2014



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