

John Aspinall is the most common variation of his surname. He was born around 1799-1800, possibly in Wigan or the surrounding area. There are numerous people with the same name in the area.

On 9 October 1820, John Aspinall and Abigail Bamber of the parish of Wigan were married by Banns at Wigan, Lancashire. Both made their marks.

According to prison records, they had either no children or one child. None have been found.

The first record found for John was the Cheshire Adjourned Sessions at Knutsford on 10 August 1840: John Aspinall, 40, who could read and write imperfectly, was convicted of stealing one skirt, a bed-gown, a shawl, and a handkerchief, the property of Jane Marples at Stockport, and sentenced to 3 months' hard labour. According to later records, this is his only conviction for a felony, although he had six summary convictions.¹

On the 1841 census, Duke Street, Stockport, Chester: ²

John Aspinall, 40, spinner, not born in the county; Abigail Aspinall, 40, tenter, not born in the county. ³

In 1844, the newspaper reported a Robbery by a Charwoman. Abigail Aspinall was charged at the Borough Court with stealing a variety of articles, the property of the Rev. John Thornton of Greek Street, during a period when some trifling property had, at intervals, been missing. On Monday night, after she had done her work, she went upstairs to tea, leaving a basket in the kitchen. The errand boy examined the basket, which contained an old pair of cloth boots, a leaden tobacco box, some candles, potatoes and soda. Mr Thornton was apprised of the discovery; her movements were watched; and she begged for forgiveness. When taken into custody, a number of pawn tickets were found, and the articles were identified. Two cases were substantiated, and the prisoner was committed for trial at Knutsford.⁴

At Knutsford Quarter Sessions on 30 December 1844:

Abigail Aspinall, 43, who can't read or write, was convicted of stealing one pair of boots, one sack, one pair of socks, and two pounds of lead, as well as other articles, the property of the Rev. John Thornton of Stockport, and was sentenced to three months.⁵

There is no report of John's trial in the newspapers in 1849. The Prison Registers show that John Aspinall, 50, married, who could read, was a cotton spinner and was convicted on 11 April 1849 at Nether Knutsford of stealing a coffee mill, sentenced to 7 years. He was received at Millbank Prison on 8 August 1850 from Knutsford. Between 1849 and 1852, Shorncliffe Barracks in Kent housed prisoners from Millbank Prison due to a cholera outbreak. John was transferred from Shorncliffe to Portland Prison on 19 August 1850. He said his wife Abigail, resided at Newbridge Lane, Stockport, Cheshire. John boarded the *Pyrenees* on 13 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia. ⁶

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, John was assigned number 635, issued with a Ticket of Leave and a physical description was recorded.

635. John Aspernal, 50, 5'7½", **light blue (sic) hair**, blue eyes, oval face, fresh complexion, rather stout, heavily pitted with small pox, **very bald**, three teeth out of the right jaw, cotton spinner, married with one child. ⁷

¹ Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 14 August 1840, p3.

² The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/113/3. Abigail is often spelt Abigal.

³ A Tenter is a Fuller, who cleansed woollen cloth, or a person operating a machine or frame which used hooks (tenter hooks to be precise) in order to stretch cloth so that it dried even and square. The term can also be used to describe any factory worker who tended machinery.

⁴ Stockport Advertiser and Guardian, 20 December 1844, p3

⁵ Manchester Times, 04 January 1845, p6

⁶ TNA, PCOM2/383; HO24/4; PCOM2/30

⁷ SROWA, Acc 128/32

The Superintendent's Journal shows:

18 July 1851. The following 23 men will be received today from the ship *Pyrenees* and located in the 3rd division of the prison, including 635 John Aspinall.

21 July 1851. The four undermentioned men will proceed to the M.E.S. (Mt Eliza Station) along with the boat taking the men to Toodyay and will take their bed and bedding, including 635. **Joseph Aspinall**.⁸

On 28 July 1851, four men were shipped to Bunbury: Stein, Wright, Aspinall, and Richards.⁹

Applications for the wives and families of Ticket of Leave Holders (showing amount paid to Passage) during the half year ending on 30 December 1851: 635. John Aspinall, *Pyrenees*, £1.11.2.¹⁰

John Aspinall, on a Ticket of Leave, *Pyrenees*, applied for his wife, Abigail, residing at Stockport, Cheshire, to join him in Western Australia. The Referee written to was Mr J Snushels, Millgate Street, Stockport, on 17 August 1851, and a circular offering free passage.¹¹

The Magisterial sentences for the half year ending 31 December 1851 show 635 John Aspinall, drunkenness, at Bunbury, 7 days hard labour.¹²

It appears that John was sentenced at Bunbury for a crime necessitating his return to Fremantle Prison, where he arrived on 16 March 1852. He was discharged to North Fremantle Station on 25 June 1852.¹³

By the end of December 1852, John Aspinhall had paid £4.3.1. towards his passage money.¹⁴

A Conditional Pardon was granted on 4 December 1854.

At the Perth Police Court on 10 September 1855, John Aspinall was charged with being drunk in the streets and sentenced to 14 days' hard labour.¹⁵

As more records are indexed, more information on what happened to John may be found.

His wife in England.

Abigail Aspinall decided to call herself a widow by March 1851 and had no intention of reuniting with her husband. On the 1851 census, at 26 Stringers Street, Stockport, she was a housekeeper to William Hadfield, a 56-year-old widower, and a coal carter. Abigail Aspinall, a widow, 50, was born in Wigan. Living with them were William Hadfield, son, 23, dyer; John Hadfield, son, 18, shoemaker; William Gosling, grandson, 6; and a lodger.¹⁶

At the Manchester Cathedral and parish Church, on 2 October 1854, married by Banns: William Hadfield, 58, widower, carter, residing Garden Street, Salford, father James Hadfield, collier Abigail Aspinall, 51, widow, residing at 10 Walker Street, father Robert Bamber, crofter They both made marks.

Abigail Hadfield, Stockport, was buried 16 March 1859, aged 60, in the Parish of Portwood, Cheshire.

⁸ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p63, p65.

⁹ SROWA, Receipts and Discharges, 1855 - 1859 (Rd1 - Rd2)

¹⁰ TNA, CO18/69

¹¹ <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2054369427/view>

¹² TNA, CO18/69

¹³ SROWA, Receipts and Discharges, 1855 - 1859 (Rd1 - Rd2)

¹⁴ TNA, CO18/69

¹⁵ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 21 September 1855, p3

¹⁶ TNA, HO107/2157William