

Nothing is known about John Murphy's early life. There is no report in the newspapers of his trial. However, Hugh Morgan was tried for a similar offence at the same time and sentenced to 7 years' transportation; they may have been partners in the crime. Both men arrived in the *Pyrenees* in 1851.

At the Chester County Sessions, 16 October 1848: John Murphy, 20, imp, fraud, 7 years.¹

The Prison Registers show that John Murphy, 20, single, who could read, was a smith's labourer, Catholic, was convicted on 16 October 1848 at Knutsford of obtaining money by false pretences and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He was received at Millbank Prison on 9 January 1849 from Knutsford Prison. John had been convicted 13 times, 12 times summarily and once for aggravated misdemeanour. On 3 May 1849, he was transferred to Pentonville Prison. After about 7 months, he was transferred on 27 December 1849 to the *Justitia* hulk at Woolwich.²

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, John was assigned number 499, issued with a Ticket of Leave and a physical description was recorded.

499, John Murphy, 24, 5'6½", dark brown hair, dark eyes, long face, sallow complexion, stout and robust, marks on left side from cupping, scar on foot, labourer, single.³

The Superintendent's Journal shows:

14 July 1851. The following 44 men from the *Pyrenees* will be received and located in 3rd Division, including 499 John Murphy, from the *Justitia* hulk.

15 July 1851. The following men will be in readiness first thing tomorrow morning to proceed on Ticket of Leave to Mr Grey, Peninsula, Perth, including 499. John Murphy. They will be taken up at Mount Eliza Station and proceed with their blankets, bed, smock and belt (rest of page missing).⁴

The Perth District, Ticket of Leave Register shows:

John Murphy, 499, 24 years old, arrived *per* the *Pyrenees*.

Hired by Henry Gray of Perth, Boatman, on 16 July 1851.

26 July returned by Gray to Mill Depot.

Wages £1 per month.⁵

In the year ending 31 December 1851, 499 John Murphy was under Magisterial sentence for disobedience at Toodyay and fined.⁶

He returned to Fremantle Prison on 29 November 1851 with two other convicts from Toodyay who were also fined (447 Pledge and 450 Newton). On 9 December 1851, he was discharged, with no destination stated, but was probably sent to North Fremantle Station.

On 19 January 1852, he was received back at the Prison from the North Fremantle Station. Then, on 20 May 1852, he was sent to the Melville Station.⁷

By the end of December 1852, John had repaid £5. 7s. 2¼d of his passage money.⁸

These two reports in the newspapers appear to be 499 John Murphy:
Guildford, 22 June 1853.

¹ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO 27/84, p130

² TNA, HO24/4; HO24/16, PCOM2/29

³ SROWA, Acc 128/32

⁴ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p58, p59

⁵ SROWA, Perth TOL Register Cons 1386/1, p37

⁶ TNA, CO18/69

⁷ SROWA, Receipts and Discharges, 1855 - 1859 (Rd1 - Rd2)

⁸ TNA, CO18/69

James Ives, Joseph Linsley, John Murphy and John Cummins,⁹ ticket-of-leave men, were charged with stealing seven pound notes from the person of Amos Settle. The prosecutor, a ticket holder, had gone to Guildford intending to pay the balance of his passage money, and getting tipsy, lay down by the kitchen fire at the Guildford Hotel, having the notes in his trousers pocket; three of the prisoners were in the same room, and on his awaking, he found the money gone. A man in Mr Lee's employ, who was sleeping nearby, heard a conversation between the prisoners which led him to believe that they had taken the notes. The Resident deemed the evidence insufficient, and the prisoners were dismissed.¹⁰

His Conditional Pardon was signed on 6 January 1854.¹¹

Fremantle, 8 April 1854.

John Murphy, c.p. was charged with assaulting the police in the execution of their duty. It was shewn in the evidence that, on the previous night, constable Heverton had entered Mr Patterson's taproom to announce that it was 10 o'clock, and time to close. The defendant was delivering a lecture on boxing to a select audience, and wishing for a subject on which to illustrate some peculiar hits, when the policeman made his appearance, and was at once made an example. A reinforcement of one policeman came up, proceeded to escort the professor to the station house, which he earnestly deprecated, as (he said) his efforts were merely for the benefit of science. His remonstrances were seconded by an occasional shower of stones, thrown by those sympathisers who followed, some of which inflicted wounds and bruises on the police. The Bench, on full consideration, sentenced him to a fine of £5, or, in default, to three months imprisonment.¹²

Note: 499 John Murphy was the only person of that name with a Conditional Pardon in 1854.

John left Fremantle on the *C.W. Bradley* on 10 March 1857, for Adelaide. The vessel arrived on 21 March with 14 other convicts, and possibly one convict crew member. She returned to Western Australia, departing on 4 April 1857 for King George's Sound.¹³

What happened to John after he arrived in South Australia is unknown. There are numerous people with the same name everywhere, making it difficult to trace him.

⁹ James Ives 1915; John Cummins 1958, Joseph Finsley 1181

¹⁰ Inquirer, 13 July 1853, p2

¹¹ SROWA, Acc 128/38-39, Conditional Pardons

¹² Inquirer, 19 April 1854, p3.

¹³ South Australian Register, 25 March 1857, p2