

William Springett, 616, Pyrenees

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variation: Springate

Baptism	18 November 1818, St Peter Ad Vincula, Coggeshall, Essex
Parents	James Springett and Ann
Parent's marriage	
Siblings	James (1803-1831), Mary Ann (1806), Sarah (1809), Hannah (1812), Eliza (1815-1821), George (1818 – twin)
Wife 1	Rhoda Cheek
Married	19 September 1842, Coggeshall
Children	Emma (1842-1842), Mary Ann (1844-1863), George (1846-1846), William Henry (1847-1911) [Eliza (1851-1868) – unknown father]

William Springett appeared in court several times, sometimes facing summary charges.

At the Essex County Adjourned Sessions on 17 May 1836

George Springett, 18, and William Springett, 18, silk weavers, were indicted for stealing six pigeons, the property of Joseph Lewsey, at Great Coggeshall. The loss of the pigeons was fully proved, but the prisoners were acquitted, from a want of sufficient identification.¹

At the Essex County Sessions, on 3 January 1837

William Springett, 19, weaver, can't read or write, was charged with stealing a piece of beef belonging to O. Hanbury, Esq, at Coggeshall. Bill Ignored.²

In February 1837, William Springett and Robert Love were committed for stealing fowls and rabbits belonging to William Abbott and Charles White. George Threadum (by the same magistrate) to give evidence against Love and Springett.³

At the Essex County sessions, on 6 March 1837, William Springett, 19, who couldn't read or write, was sentenced to 6 months for larceny. Robert Love, who had been convicted previously of a felony, was sentenced to one year.

On 9 December 1837, William was summarily convicted of malicious damage and sentenced to 2 months in the House of Correction or pay 21 shillings.

On the 1841 census, West Street, Great Coggeshall: ⁴

James Sprigett, 60, ag lab, born in the county

Ann Sprigett, 55, was not born in the county

George Sprigett, 20, silk weaver, born in the county

William Sprigett, 20, silk weaver, born in the county

Eliza Gage, 20, at the silk mill

The following year, on 15 September 1842, William married Rhoda Cheek at Coggeshall. Her father was John Cheek, a labourer.

On 27 December 1847, William was summarily convicted of poaching and sentenced to 6 weeks in the House of Correction or pay 39 shillings.

From 1844 to 1848, a series of violent crimes took place in Coggeshall and the surrounding villages, which had the local inhabitants in fear for their safety. A group of up to fourteen men, known locally

¹ Chelmsford Chronicle, 20 May 1836, p3

² Essex Standard, 06 January 1837, p3

³ Essex Standard, 24 February 1837, p2

⁴ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO107/335/3

as the Coggeshall Gang, carried out the crimes. They had their headquarters at the Black Horse Inn in Stoneham Street. The landlord was William French, the half-brother of the leader of the gang, Samuel Crow.

William French benefited from the proceeds of the crimes by receiving stolen property from the gang. Crow was employed in driving post-chaises for innkeepers and gentry and was well known in the neighbourhood. Armed with pistols and cudgels and wearing masks, the gang operated mainly at night and terrorised the local inhabitants.

Discovery of a Gang of Burglars at Coggeshall. This newspaper report is from 1848:

At the assizes held last summer, at Chelmsford, a field gardener, named William Wade, was convicted of a burglary at Bradwell, a village near Coggeshall. Previously to his committal he had entered into a compact with those of his brethren in the craft, who were concerned in this affair, that, in consideration of their taking care of his wife, he would refrain from "peaching."

Unfortunately for themselves, however, his partners in delinquency, after a short time, neglected to fulfil their part of the contract, and the consequence was a full confession by the convict.

A meeting of Magistrates was thereupon convened, when, after the depositions of several witnesses, warrants were at once issued for the apprehension of the following parties, viz. William Ellis, **William Springett**, William Tansley, and Samuel Crow.

Ellis, having some suspicion that he might be wanted, left his lodgings at Rivenhall during the night, and on the appearance of the constables on the following morning was not to be found; he has, therefore, escaped for the present. **Springett**, who was employed in thatching, was apprehended on Wednesday afternoon at a farm in the parish of Feering, and Tansley, a labourer, was apprehended in Meeting Street, Coggeshall, shortly after the warrant had been issued. Samuel Crow, the well-known leader of the gang, has, up to the present moment, escaped the hands of the police.⁵

At the Chelmsford Assizes, on 5 March 1849.

Burglary at Great Tey. William Springett was charged with being concerned in burglary at Mr Smith's house, at Great Tey. The evidence was as follows:

William Wade said on the night of 25 May, Tansley and I met at a plantation, when we were joined by Crow, Springett, and Ellis. We disguised ourselves and got to Smith's at 10 o'clock, and Crow made a hole in the wall, and all went in but Tansley. We got into the keeping room, and Crow opened the bureau and took some halfpence out. I, Crow, and Ellis went into old Smith's room and Springett into young Smith's. Mr Smith woke up, and Crow asked him for money, he said he had not got any. Crow stopped there, and we three out to another house. We took a bottle of beer from Smith's house, some tobacco, and some halfpence.

Samuel Smith, the prosecutor's son, proved that the robbery was committed, and identified Crow as one of the burglars. In cross-examining this witness, Springett made the admission that he did accompany the party to the home, although he said he never went inside. A verdict of guilty was instantly returned.⁶ He was sentenced to 7 years' transportation.

On 24 July 1849, the following prisoners, convicted at the Lent assize, were removed to Preston Gaol, Lancashire, the present place of reception before transportation (Milbank Prison) being rendered unfit for the purpose, owing to the breaking out of cholera:— William Tansley, Samuel Crow, and William Ellis (for Life); William Springett, William French, and James Everett (seven years), burglaries, etc., at Coggeshall.

Convicted at the same Assize were William Wass (15 years), arson at Aldham and Joseph Bryant (seven years), robbery with violence at Ridgewell, also came to Western Australia.⁷

⁵ Essex Standard, 08 September 1848, p2

⁶ Chelmsford Chronicle, 16 March 1849, p4

⁷ Essex Standard, 03 August 1849, p2

The Prison Registers show that William Springett *alias* Springate, 30, married, weaver, can read imperfectly, was convicted on 5 March 1849 at Chelmsford Assizes of burglary and sentenced to 7 years. He was transferred to Preston Gaol in Lancashire on 24 July 1849 from Springfield Gaol, Essex. After nearly 10 months at Preston Gaol, he was transferred to Portland Prison, Dorset, on 2 May 1850, arriving there the following day. From here he boarded the *Pyrenees* on 13 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia.⁸

William was assigned number 616 and issued a Ticket of Leave on arrival at Fremantle on 28 June 1851. He stayed on the ship until 18 July 1851, when the Superintendent's journal records "The following 23 men will be received from the ship *Pyrenees* and located in 3rd Division", including 616 William Springett.⁹

By December 1852, William had repaid £3.11.2¾ of his passage money.(£7)¹⁰
He received a Conditional Pardon on 23 April 1853, and his sentence expired in March 1856. William could now leave the colony, and he returned to England; the details are unknown.

Back in Coggeshall.

After William was convicted, Rhoda continued to live in Coggeshall.

On the 1851 census, Church Street, Great Coggeshall:¹¹

Rhoda Sprigett, married, 29, silk weaver, born Little Coggeshall

Mary Ann, daughter, 7, born in Great Coggeshall

William, son, 4, born in Great Coggeshall

Emily(*sic*), daughter, 1month, born Great Coggeshall She was called Eliza.

and a lodger and her baby.

William has not been found on the census in England, but he was back there before 1863.

The 1861 census, Robin Bridge Road, Great Coggeshall:¹²

Rhoda Sprigett, wife, married, 41, silk velvet weaver, born Little Coggeshall

Mary Ann, daughter, 18, working in Silk Mill

William, son, 14, working in the Silk Mill

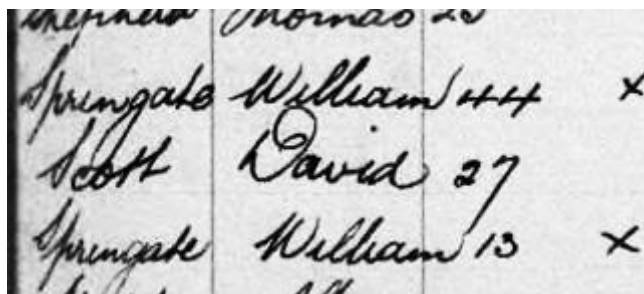
Eliza, daughter, 11, scholar

Children were all born in Great Coggeshall.

The Queensland Emigration Agency announced that Assisted passages, under new regulations, will be granted to Farm Labourers, Vine Dressers, Road Makers, Gardeners, Miners, Quarrymen, Blacksmiths, Bricklayers, Masons, Sawyers, Wheelwrights, Carpenters, Shipbuilders etc, for £8 each adult of 12 years and upwards sailing on the *Light Brigade*.

The ship *Light Brigade* left London on 1 February 1863 for Moreton Bay, Queensland, arriving in the Bay on 18 May. On board were 411 immigrants and 18 cabin passengers, including William Springate, single, aged 44 and his son, William junior, aged 13, both in steerage.

Many immigrants were from the distressed districts of Lancashire and Coventry, and in many instances were in a very poor state of health previous to their embarkation. This may account for the large amount of sickness which they suffered during the voyage. The diseases which affected



Springate	William	44	x
Scott	David	27	
Springate	William	13	x

⁸ TNA, PCOM2/383; HO23/11

⁹ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p63

¹⁰ TNA, CO18/69

¹¹ TNA, HO107/1783

¹² TNA, RG9/1109

them were mainly rheumatism, catarrh, diarrhoea, and dysentery. There were also two cases of scarlatina. One adult and two children died of sickness during the voyage.

Letters of appreciation, dated 13 May 1863, were published in the newspaper.

The one letter, signed by W Springet snr said:

To Captain Henry Evans,

Dear Sir, We, the undersigned steerage passengers, have much pleasure in presenting to you a small token of our esteem and gratitude for your kind and gentlemanly conduct towards us during our voyage, and subscribe ourselves, Yours sincerely

Another letter, signed by both father and son, said:

To Captain Henry Evans.

Dear Sir,-We, the steerage passengers, beg most sincerely to congratulate you on our safe arrival at our destination. Though the passage has not been so quickly accomplished as we expected, in consequence of the light winds we have experienced during the greater part of our voyage, we have every reason to be satisfied with the sailing qualities of the Light Brigade, and are quite sure you have done all in your power to urge the good ship forward.

For your many acts of kindness during the voyage, we most heartily thank you, and wishing you every success in your future career of life, and health, happiness, and prosperity to you and yours.

We subscribe ourselves, yours most respectfully, etc. ¹³

Rhonda and the two girls, Mary Ann and Eliza, may have intended to join William once he was settled and had a home for them, or raised the money to enable them to join him. However, tragedy struck when Mary Ann, aged 19, died and was buried on 19 October 1863.

Then, Rhoda Springett died on 9 April 1865 of 14 days and encephalitis 4 days. She was 44, the wife of William Springett, formerly a velvet weaver, and died at Robins Bridge Road, Great Coggeshall.

Perhaps it was a condition of emigration that Eliza was baptised. On 21 December 1864 at St Peter Ad Vincula, Coggeshall, she added the name of her deceased sister to hers and became Eliza Mary Ann Springate. The register says her parents were William and Rhoda Springate.

Eliza left London on 16 May 1866 on the immigrant ship, *Eastern Empire*, to join her father and brother. The ship arrived on 14 September 1866 at Moreton Bay. She is recorded as Elizabeth Springet, 15 years old.

Free grants of land, valued at £30, were available to the immigrants.

Payment of Rents under "The Leasing Act of 1866".

The attention of Lessees of lands selected under the provisions of the leasing Act of 1866, is directed to the provision of the sixth clause thereof, which provides that, -"The rent for the second and every succeeding year shall be paid in cash in advance to the Treasury, in Brisbane, and in default of such payment in advance, the lease shall be forfeited, and the land and all improvements thereon shall revert to the Crown; but the Lessee may defeat such forfeiture by paying into the Treasury in Brisbane within 90 days of such original rent day, a sum equal to the annual rent, together with an additional sum equal to one-fourth part thereof by way of penalty". Local Land Agents were to receive and transmit rents to the Treasury.¹⁴

William leased 64 acres in the county of Pratten on 6 March 1867. The rent was £8 per year. The land was registered in Eliza's name.¹⁵

**acres. Purchased under the Leasing A
Eliza Springett, 64 acres, county of Pratto**

¹³ The Courier, 25 May 1863, p2

¹⁴ Queensland Gov. Gazette, 1867

¹⁵ The Brisbane Courier, 18 March 1867, p3

The Queensland PO Directory (Meyer) 1868 lists: Wm Springett, farmer, Talgai reef. Talgai is about 35km north-west of Warwick.

More tragedy struck the family in 1868.

"A very serious accident from fire, which nearly terminated fatally, occurred on Monday to a girl named Eliza Springett, about 17 years of age, residing at Talgai. It appears that she was in the act of lighting a fire when her dress was ignited by a spark. She was quickly enveloped in flames and was severely burned in various parts of her body. She was taken to the hospital, and she was at first despaired of, but she has since recovered a little and is now doing well".¹⁶

Eliza died on 17 February 1868.

Talgai Goldfield, also known as Darkey's Flat and later Pratten, extended over 20,000 hectares, supporting both alluvial and reef mining. In 1864, the first noisy battery stampers, which crushed the ore, were operating. By November 1865, there were five public houses and a store. The following year, Talgai Goldfield consisted of 9 reefs, with a population of 350-400 miners, eight pubs (of which only two were licenced, the remainder were sly grog shops), butchers and a baker.

Although William is listed as a farmer in 1868, he appears to have also been a licensed victualler at some stage. (see dispute over the land in 1909)

William is listed in the 1870 Queensland Government Directory as owing £8 (5th year rent) on his leased property in January 1871. The following year, 1871, Robert Young is listed as leasing the property and owing rent in January 1872.

William returned to England between 1870 and 1873, but the exact date and ship are unknown. Perhaps his health was failing as he died in 1873.

William Springett, 54, velvet weaver, died on 18 December 1873, at Robins Bridge Road, Great Coggeshall, of disease of the heart, duration unknown, and Anasarca, 6 weeks. The informant was Mary Wood, Robins Bridge Road, who was present at the death. He was buried on 24 December.

Back in Queensland in 1905. A dispute over the land that was registered in 1867 to Eliza Springett. Government Notices. Transmission by Death. Real Property Acts of 1861 and 1877.¹⁷

Name of Deceased Proprietor.—Eliza Springett, spinster.
Date of Death.—February 17, 1868.
Name of Claimant.—William Springett, of Pratten, farmer.
Description and Situation of Land.—Portion 48. county of Merivale, parish of Pratten.
Estate Claimed to be Transmitted.—Fee-simple.
Particulars of Will or Otherwise.—Heir-at-law.
Date within which Caveat may be Lodged.—January 30, 1906.

In 1907, a Court Case over the land registered to Eliza Springett:

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/178246314?searchTerm=springett%20eliza%20pratten>

¹⁶ The Toowoomba Chronicle and Queensland Advertiser, 22 February 1868, p3

¹⁷ The Telegraph, 26 December 1905, p8

In February 1909, this notice appeared in the Queensland Government Gazette.

In the Supreme Court of Queensland.

In the Lands and Goods of William Springett (sometimes described as William Springate), late of Coggeshall, in the county of Sussex, in England (but formerly of Pratten, in the State of Queensland, farmer), retired licensed victualler, deceased, intestate.

NOTICE is hereby given that, after the expiration of fourteen days from the date of the publication hereof, application will be made to this Honourable Court that Administration of the Real and Personal Estate of the abovenamed William Springett, deceased, who died intestate, may be granted to William Henry Springett (usually known as William Henry Springate), of Pratten, in the State of Queensland, farmer, son of the said deceased. Any person interested who desires to object to the application, or to be heard upon it, may file a caveat in the Registry at any time before the grant made.

Dated this eighth day of February, 1909.

FLOWER AND BRENNAN,
Solicitors for the said William Henry Springett,
Warwick. 18

Later in 1909:
Government Notices. Transmission by Death. Real Property Acts of 1861 and 1877.¹⁹

Presumably, William's son was finally able to sell the land, as no further reference has been found.

Name of Deceased Proprietor.—William Springett, late of Coggeshall, county of Essex, England, velvet weaver.
Date of Death.—December 18, 1873.
Name of Claimant.—William Springett, of Pratten, farmer, as heir-at-law.
Description and Situation of Land.—Portion 48, county of Merivale, parish of Pratten.
Estate Claimed to be Transmitted.—Fee-simple.
Particulars of Will or Otherwise.—Heir-at-law.
Date within which Caveat may be Lodged.—December 7, 1909.

The Coggeshall Gang members who came to Australia.

William Wade was convicted on 18 July 1848 at Chelmsford for burglary and sentenced to 15 years. His sentence was reduced to 7 years' transportation after giving evidence against his fellow robbers. William was sent to Tasmania on the *Rodney* in 1850.

William Tansley, 4687, arrived on the *Nile* in 1858, having first spent 8 years in Gibraltar.

William Ellis, 1442, arrived on the *William Jardine* in 1852.

William French, 645, arrived on the *Pyrenees* in 1852 and returned to England in 1857.

James Everett, 615, arrived on the *Pyrenees* in 1851.

Samuel Crow, the ringleader, escaped from the police who went to apprehend him. He was a determined and cruel robber, according to the Prison Register. Samuel died on 7 March 1850 in Preston Gaol.

¹⁸ Queensland Government Gazettes, 13 February 1909, p357

¹⁹ The Telegraph, 1 November 1909, p3