

Acknowledgement to the Ballardong Noongar people who are the Traditional Owners of this Land and their continuing connection to land, waters, and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging and we extend that respect to other First Australians today.

The Ballardong people are a specific Noongar language group east of Perth. The Ballardong region includes the towns of York, Northam, Beverley, Goomalling, Cadoux, Koorda, Wyalkatchem, Cunderdin and Kellerberrin.

Content Warning Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that the following contains information of people who have passed, that may cause distress.

Many thanks and acknowledgement are extended to both Darryl Brady and Gail Pascoe *née* James who have conducted much research on this particular family's history and are the offspring of George Fisher and Sarah *née* Jordan (Fisher/Carter aka Stevens).

In 2023 this documentation was compiled by Glenys Newport

George Fisher and Sarah *née* Jordan (Sarah Fisher/Carter aka Stevens)

George Fisher was born in 1811 and Sarah Jordan circa 1813. The pair married during 1835 at the Holy Trinity Church Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, England. Their first four children were born in England; Eliza, George, Ruth & James.

Wiltshire is about 132kms SSW of London. The area is encompassed by hills and slopes. The Bradford town stands alongside the river Avon and the Kennet and Avon Canal.

Throughout the 1800s, the town was highly populated due to the thriving woollen textile industry. Thirty or so mills were

operational within the area. The canals were utilized for textile transportation as the trainline had not been built. According to UKs 1841 census George was a weaver.

On 27 Nov 1842 George aged 32, Sarah 28 and family left London on the *Success* travelling as free settlers. Eliza was 8, George 7, Ruth 3 and James 1.

The ship held vital cargo, on board were the settler's household goods, clothing, a required contingent of goods, such as, hoeing equipment, saws and livestock, which passengers needed to tend to throughout the voyage.



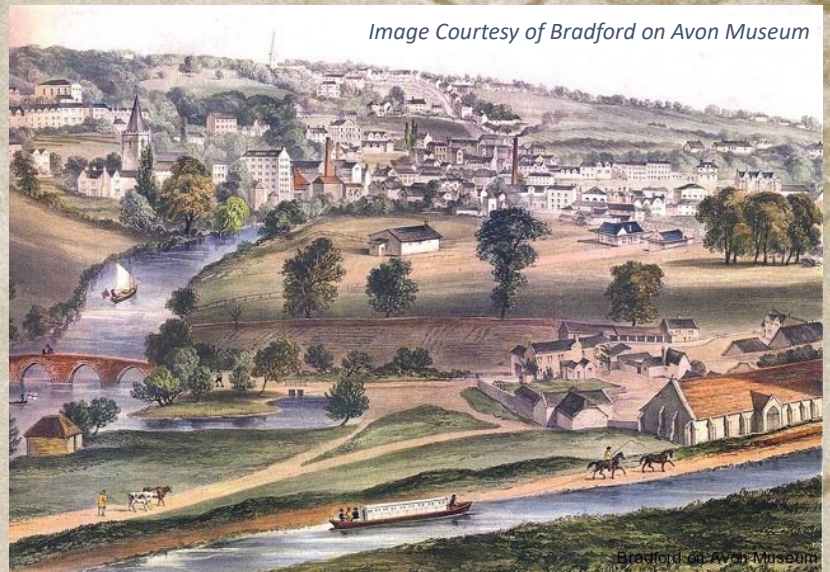
'The Embarkment' Image Courtesy Maggie Land Blanck Collection

As the Suez Canal hadn't been constructed, they travelled via west Africa but didn't stop at any ports. The journey would have been long and tedious taking almost 4 months.

Another family named Fisher from the same area was aboard the Success. William & Elizabeth Fisher both aged 35 with 7 children, of whom one seems to have been born during the journey. After residing in Middle Swan WA for a few years some of that family relocated to SA.

On 22 March 1843 along with 131 passengers they arrived at the Swan River Colony, disembarking at Fremantle. The Colony had been founded fourteen years beforehand.

Shortly after arrival the family spent 35 days in the immigration depot. That era was particularly difficult for WA due to the failed Australind Land Settlement Scheme which left approximately 440 migrants, stranded without means of an income.



Those stranded suffered intense hardship, yet were permitted to travel elsewhere. Finding both work and lodgings would have been difficult for George and Sarah as they would have needed to compete with those people.

WA suffered a depression and many of the original settlers left for the Eastern state's colony. The lack of capital inflow had caused WA's economy to stagnate, and little money was in circulation. The government employees had also been curtailed. The state was in need of people-power, and some settlers had started lobbying for convict labour. George eventually gained employment at Fremantle with Thomas Harwood. Harwood had been Fremantle's Head Constable for 2 years. He was the town's sole constable who'd acquired the extra role of weights and measures inspector, which required watching over local shop keepers, to ensure they weren't deceiving customers.

In 1845 the family were living in York where George worked as a labourer - until 1850. Situated within the Avon Valley, York is about 97kms east of Perth. Due to having a similar appearance to that of Yorkshire in England the town was named York and opened for selection within the Government Notice of Nov 1830. The following September the first settlers reached the district - that's 12 years before the Fishers arrived.

As York has such fertile soil the area became WA's first inland town. Due to the rapid expansion of the Swan River Colony, pastoral land further afield from Fremantle and Perth was sourced for growing cereal crops in order to sustain the population. The region was also utilized for sandalwood, horses, cattle, pigs, goats, and sheep.

Back then, horse breeding was in high demand - called remounts. Along with farming, horses were bred, and sold off, transported either locally or to WA's north-west and some were sent to the British army in India. That entailed travelling by horse and cart to Fremantle along with six or so horses.

Image Courtesy of Australian Geographic



It was during mid-1830 that the vicinity of York was discovered by Ensign Robert Dale. Ensign aged 21 was sent on an exploration eastward of the Darling Ranges, whilst serving within the 63rd regiment.

The year the Fishers arrived was the same year the York Racing Club commenced. A couple of years prior York's Agricultural Society had been established.

One of York's most notable families was the Mongers. During 1836 Henry Monger Snr had arrived in York. Monger purchased 10-acres of land north of the town site, where the first house in York was constructed of wattle and daub. The following year he

opened a hotel and a few years later organized a building opposite to use as a store. In order to replenish store supplies, his wagons travelled to Guildford or Perth four times annually. Eventually, the Mongers built the grand residence named Faversham house.

Also, in 1836 there had been an escalation in violence between the colonial settlers and Ballardong Noongar people. Lieutenant Henry William St Pierre Bunbury of the 21st Regiment was sent to settle matters. The following year Bunbury returned, after the spearing of two young colonial settlers which had caused their death. In the ensuing violence both soldiers and settlers killed at least 18 Ballardong Noongar people.

George and Sarah went on to have five more children, born between 1845 and 1855: Mary, Mary, Sarah, Samuel & Harriet. The first Mary was their fifth child, the first child born in WA. Sadly, at the age of two Mary passed away. Hence, they named the following daughter Mary.

Image Courtesy of Harper's Weekly - 28 July 1883



The Fisher family have been described as having been the least wealthy family in York. They lived within a tiny hut, once situated behind where Avon Tce's current IGA supermarket is located. This information derives from a reliable family historian.

In 1851 a flour mill was constructed, and the following year a steam engine was organized to power the mill. A local settler named Solomon Cook an American born engineer made the necessary arrangements.

Due to the lack of labour farming became problematic for the community and particularly when it came time to harvest. Members of the York Agricultural Society, were most influential and after much lobbying, convicts were sent to relieve the labour shortages. An employment depot was organized in York for the ticket-of-leave men who started arriving as of 1851. The men cleared much land and constructed many of the early buildings, both Government and privately owned and within a short time-frame the township began to prosper and vast improvements could be seen. Over time York's population has continuously increased.



On 24 Jan 1855 George Fisher died and was buried at the Old Pioneer Cemetery. The following year Sarah married Henry "Harry" Stephen Carter - Feb 1856. Harry arrived in WA as Convict No. 1852 in Jan 1852. Throughout their marriage Harry and Sarah were known as Mr & Mrs Stevens - not Carter. Harry was a blacksmith and also a carter. He eventually became the local ranger and pound keeper. The pair had one daughter named Susannah. In 1879 Susannah married John Ashbolt and had a daughter named Lily. Unfortunately, in 1883 Susannah aged 23 died in tragic circumstances due to a burning incident. Lily was aged two.

On 23 March 1891 Sarah Carter (aka Stevens) died aged late 70s of a long illness and was buried at the Old Pioneer Cemetery.

In May 1902 Harry Carter (aka Stevens) aged 78-79 was knocked to the ground by a cow. He sustained head injuries and a few weeks later died at York hospital - 17 May 1902.

Many of the early settlers had streets named after them.

Fisher St York is located both south of the main town and Great Southern Hwy, and west of the Avon River.

George Fisher was born on 13 Dec 1811 and Sarah Mary Jordon circa 1813. The pair married 1835 at the Holy Trinity Church Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire, England.

George and Sarah's Children and Spouses

UK born children – 1835 - 1842

- Born 1835 Eliza Fisher and died 1904 – married 1856 George Trew
- Born 1836 George Fisher and died 1879 – married 1866 Fanny Louisa Hancock
- Born 1841 Ruth Fisher and died 1853 aged 12
- Born 1842 James Fisher and died 1899 – married 1878 Eliza Strange

WA born children – 1845 - 1855

- Born 1845 Mary Fisher and died 1848 aged 2 years
- Born 1848 Mary Fisher and died 1910 – married 1867 Richard Spanswick
- Born 1850 Sarah Fisher died before 31 Dec 1859 aged < 9 years
- Born 1852 Samuel Fisher and died 1931 - married 1876 Caroline Downes
- Born 1855 Harriet Hannah Fisher and died 1946 - married 1880 Henry Ashbolt

24 Jan 1855 George Fisher died aged 46 and was buried at the Old Pioneer Cemetery.

Henry Stephen Carter and Sarah Mary Carter *née* Jordan (formerly Fisher)

In Feb 1856 Sarah married Henry Stephen Carter (born 1823). The pair known as Mr & Mrs Harry Stevens had one daughter.

- Born 1859 Susannah Maria Carter died 29 March 1883 aged 23 – married 1879 John Ashbolt
Susannah died aged 23 due to a burning incident. Susannah and John's daughter, Lily was aged two.

23 Mar 1891 Sarah died aged 78 after a long illness (WAs BMD death registered as Sarah Stevens)

17 May 1902 Henry Stephen Carter (aka Harry Stevens) died of head injuries sustained from an accident involving a cow.

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Australind Land Settlement Scheme

[Australind Land Settlement | Monument Australia](#)

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Henry Stephen Carter (aka Harry Stevens)

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Sussanah Maria Ashbolt *née* Carter/Stevens

Burning Incident and Death aged 23 - 1883

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