

John Finneran, 502, *Pyrenees*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Numerous different spellings of his surname in the records.

John Finneran was Irish, with a wife called Winifred and one child in 1848.

The first record found was his trial at the Lancashire August Assizes held at Kirkdale, 16 August 1848. John Finneran, aged 35, was indicted for stabbing Daniel Conner at Much Woolton, near Liverpool, on 12 July last.

On the day they and others, all Irishmen, had been at work for a farmer named Hume, at Speke, carrying hay. The Prosecutor had been on the rick, and the prisoner on the waggon, throwing up the hay, and the Prosecutor had suffered the hay to fall back several times, which irritated the prisoner, and he threatened to go up and kick the Prosecutor. Soon after they left work, and on their way to Liverpool, the prisoner told the Prosecutor he was ready for him, and after some words, he went and knocked the Prosecutor down, who got up and knocked the prisoner down. He got up again and they closed, and both went down and struggled together for some time, when the Prosecutor felt he was stabbed in the side, and became faint, and declared he would not fight any more, on which some of their fellows parted then. The Prosecutor bled a good deal, and was obliged to be supported home by two men and put to bed, to which he was confined for a week, and was unable to work for more than a fortnight.

The jury found the prisoner Guilty of the whole charge. The sentence was deferred. John was subsequently sentenced to 7 years transportation.¹

Petitions.

Received 3 November 1849. First application by John.

To the Right Honble Sir Geo Grey, Baronet, Secretary of State for the Home Department

The petition of John Finneral, late of Woolton near Liverpool, now a prisoner in the Leeds House of Correction.

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner was tried and convicted at the Liverpool Assizes in August 1848 for cutting and wounding a fellow workman, who was employed by the same master, and sentenced to 7 years transportation.

Your Petitioner deeply regrets, having in an unguarded moment, whilst under the influence of liquor, struck the Prosecutor, but assures you that it was only in self defence, the Prosecutor having struck him first and being also under the influence of liquor which had been supplied to them by their employer Mr Edwd Holme.

Your Petitioner begs to inform you that he was never guilty of any offence against the laws of his Country previous to this, and that he has always borne a good character for honesty and sobriety in proof of which he begs respectfully to submit the enclosed Testimonials for your inspection and approval.

Your Petitioner has a wife and child now deprived of their natural protection during his imprisonment and having already suffered 15 months (a considerable portion of which has been in separate confinement) imprisonment he trusts that you may be graciously pleased to take these matters into your consideration, and grant him such a commutation of his sentence as may seem necessary to meet the ends of justice.

And your Petitioner ever prays &c, John Finneral.

Petition was rejected.

Two letters were sent on John Finneral's behalf to his wife Winifred.

Wye hulk, Woolwich, 13 August 1850.

¹ Sun (London), 21 August 1848, p6. Liverpool Albion, 21 August 1848, p6

My Dear Wife, I was as pleased when I had your letter as any traveller in a desert could be, on finding a pool or spring of water. Thank you for so much domestic news. It reminded me of bygone days when you told me of Mr Richmond's son about being married. I hope it will please him to bless them, who alone can make them happy. I want you My Dear Wife to ask Mr Richmond if he will help you in getting up a petition praying Sir George Grey to give me my liberty in this country. It must be signed by Father Phillips, nr Ormby, Mr Nelson and my Prosecutor and all other persons Mr Richmond knows who have at all any influence. Tell them My Dear, that I will not abuse their kindness should it please God to deliver me from this place of punishment, and that it has taught had me, viz, the values of a good wife and home, and the utter forsaking Great Enemy drunkenness, which not only brought me here, but may move of my poor unhappy fellow prisoners. I trust my Dear that you will not leave one stone unturned in gaining your object. Give my kind love to Mt Richmond and family, Mr Holmes and family and Mr Holden and family, and to you Dear Wife and Child, I send more than I am able to express on paper. Hoping this may find you all in good health, I remain your affectionate Husband and Father. John Fenel.

Envelope: To Winifred Fenel (Mr Richmond's), Woolton Lodge nr Liverpool, Lancashire. Stamped Liverpool 17 August 1850.

Wye Hulk, Woolwich, 13 December 1850

My Dear Wife, I am much obliged to you for your kind attention and steady perseverance in trying to obtain for me, what I accidentally lost. Be sure and return all kind thanks to Mr Ormby for his kind feeling's towards me.

My Dear Wife I trust that things will soon take a turn in my favor as the time is uncertain when I may be called away for a foreign land. My time of probation is already finished and certainly before Xmas, if something is not done for me I shall be sent abroad. But leaving all in God's hands, the best to be done, with certainly be the issue I must assuredly, My Dear Wife (should the petition fail) return you more than thanks in what you have done and borne on my behalf. You have proved yourself a truly affectionate wife and as such you will be ever remembered by me, whether at home or abroad, if I am sent away. I will do my utmost to obtains to convey you and the Dear child to me. Remember me very kindly and.... many thanks to Mr Richmond and family and to Mr Holmes and family. And with every kind wish to you and the Dear child. I remain till the last, your affectionate husband, John Fenel. Please do write soon, and tell me all particulars. Give the Dear child six kisses for me.

Envelope: Winifred Fenel, Mr Richmond's, Woolton Lodge nr Liverpool, Lancashire. Posted 14 December 1850, received at Liverpool 15 December 1850.

Received 18 January 1851. The second petition was by his wife, Winifred. It was accompanied by several letters or testimonials

To the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

The humble petition of Winifred Fenelon wife of John Fenelon, who was tried at the Liverpool August Assizes 1848, charged with stabbing Daniel Connor, and sentenced to be transported for seven years.

Your Petitioner begs to state that she is left totally destitute with one child entirely dependent on her for support and she humbly trusts on inquiry you may find such mitigating circumstances in his case as may induce you to recommend to Her Majesty a considerable mitigation of his sentence. Your Petitioner respectfully begs to draw your Honourable attention to the highly respectable and very influential signatures attached to this petition and as in duty bound your Petitioner will ever pray etc

Winifred Fenelon, Roderick Street, Woolton near Liverpool

We, the undersigned, beg respectfully to recommend to your merciful consideration the case of John Fenelon whom we have known for a long time, and whom we believe to be an honest, peaceable, well-disposed and sober man. Signed by 25 men.

Cover. 2nd application.

A Lancashire Magistrate forwarded a petition praying a mitigation of the prisoner's sentence in consideration of his good character, the severe punishment already undergone and the extenuating circumstances of his offence (see enclosed letter of the Supt of Police). His wife is a well-conducted woman & he could obtain immediate employment if released. Nil. Answered on 29 January 1851.

Winifred's petition was accompanied by several letters from the Governors of Kirkdale and Leeds Gaols, who said his conduct was good, the Superintendent of the Prescott Constabulary and others. The Letter from the Superintendent at Prescott Constabulary to Robert Nelson, Esq, J.P. says:

"Finneran was much the weaker man was getting the worst of the battle (I think) did unfortunately struck Conner with a small knife on the right side, the wound was not a dangerous one"

"he is a hard working, honest man. He is very much superior to the general Class of Irish labourers and is in possession of the highest certificates as to his conduct and character from several Gentlemen in Ireland with whom he had lived for a considerable time"

"many farmers near Woolton who will gladly give him Employment".

In another letter, John Ormby, says the wife is an industrious, fine woman, and I have found work for her in my garden at 1/- per diem, which keeps herself and child above 4 years old. ²

The Prison Registers show that John Finneran, 35, married with one child, can't read or write, servant, was convicted on 16 August 1848 at Kirkdale of cutting and wounding, and sentenced to 7 years. He was received at Leeds Prison from Kirkdale Gaol on 8 March 1849. John, who had not been previously convicted, was transferred to Wye hulk at Woolwich on 24 December 1849. He boarded the *Pyrenees* on 5 March 1851 for the voyage to Western Australia. ³

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, John was assigned number 502, issued with a Ticket of leave and a physical description of him was recorded.

502. John Finneran, 35, 5'6", dark brown hair, hazel eyes, long face, fresh complexion, stout, two scars on left side of face, servant, married, one child. ⁴

The Superintendent's Journal shows:

14 July 1851. The following 44 men will today be received from the ship *Pyrenees*, and located in 3rd Division, including 502. John Finneran.

15 July 1851. Two men, 501 John Taylor and 502 John Finneran, will this morning proceed to North Fremantle Station (missing part of page). ⁵

Ticket-of-Live-Men at North Fremantle Station, includes 502, John Finneran, Servant (in-door) and care of horses. ⁶

He worked for John Gregory, at Barndon's Hill, from 21 August 1851. Wages were £1 per month.

Earlier, In May 1851, John Gregory had placed this advertisement in the newspaper.

The undersigned has on sale at his Nursery, Barndon's Hill, Guildford Road, a quantity of healthy and vigorous worked Fruit Trees, of the following varieties, and comprising the best sorts of each: Apple, Pear, Quince, Medlar, Peach, Nectarine, Apricot, Plum, Mulberry, Guava, Date. Hop Plants. A large quantity of Young Olive Trees. Cauliflower and Cabbage Plants always on hand.

JOHN GREGORY. Barndon's Hill, April 17.⁷

A few days after arriving at Barndon's Hill, on 27 August 1851, John was discharged for improperly absenting himself from work. He was arrested on the complaint of John Gregory and discharged

² The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO18/262

³ TNA, HO8/107, HO23/3, PCOM2/322

⁴ SROWA, Acc 128/32

⁵ SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p58, p59

⁶ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

⁷ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 16 May 1851, p4

from his service with a reprimand. On 2 September, he was directed to return to the Mill Depot (Mt Eliza Depot). Fellow convict from the *Pyrenees*, Henry Cook, 457, began working for John Gregory on 4 September 1851.⁸

By 31 December 1852, John Finneran had repaid £4. 11. 8¾ of his passage money.⁹

His sentence expired on 5 August 1855. John was free to leave the country.

No further information has been found on John Finneran.

There is a Winifred Fineran, 38, lodger, born in Ireland, washerwoman, at Ashton under Lyne on the 1851 census, who may be John's wife. However, the census was taken on 31 March 1851 only two months after her petition. Ashton under Lyne is about 70k from Woolton where she was living in January and there is no sign of a child on the census.¹⁰

⁸ SROWA, Perth Ticket of Leave Register, CONS 1386/1, p97, p103

⁹ TNA, CO18/69

¹⁰ TNA, HO107/2233, p14