

William⁷ Gascoine & Family Departure from Australia for S. Africa

Approximately 20 years after arriving in Australia, at the age of 49 William decided to go to South Africa at the time of the Boer war (1899-1902). It is not known what took him there, however it is obvious that there were good opportunities as a few years later William's son John Gascoigne (30yrs) and his wife Augusta Pfeiffer (26yrs) with their then four children Bertha (6yrs), William (Jack) (4yrs), Hector (Herby) (2yrs) and Victoria (Grace) (1yr) along with Charles Edward (26yrs) & wife Pearl Victoria Watts (21yrs) and their daughter Constance (3 months) arrived in South Africa from Australia on the 2nd October 1902.

The last four of John & Augusta's eight children; Vera (May) born 1904, Amy born 1906, Gertrude born in 1907 and Phillis born in 1910 were all born in Newcastle, Natal.

Charles & Pearl had two more children Henry born in 1907 & Majorie born in 1908 were also born in Newcastle, Natal.

William's wife Grace James and 2 daughters Ethel (22yrs) and Bertha (15yrs) and son William (17yrs) followed, arriving in Durban February 1903 All settled in Newcastle, Natal.

We know from birth records that sometime between July, 1908 and February, 1912 Charles and Pearl along with their then three children, Constance, Henry and Majorie left S. Africa and returned to Australia and settled back in Richmond, NSW where Pearl had been born and where all her family lived, so it is logical to assume that their return may have been the result of Pearl missing her family. Although according to Majorie, the reason why they returned was because Pearl did not like the baboons.

Following their return a further four children were born to Charles & Pearl, Edna born in 1912, Norman born in 1916, Florence born in 1919 and Leslie born in 1921.

According to first hand accounts from Edna who recalls William J. Gascoigne coming to visit her parents home in Richmond that he too returned to Australia, although we don't know when, nor do we know anything more about him, we have no record of him having married and having children.

We also know that Bertha, her son Frank and maybe her husband Thomas Whitley returned to Australia sometime after Frank birth in January, 1909. It is possible that Bertha returned at the same time as Charles & Pearl, if so then all of them would have returned sometime between 1909 and 1912.

It is known that Grace returned to Australia but we don't know when, it is assumed but not certain that she returned after the death of William in 1927. She died a year later.

John & Augusta and their eight children stayed on in South Africa, we know that both William and John had something to do with the railways, we also know that William was in the employment of the public works department under the Natal Government. He later resigned to take up farming until he died in 1927. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity. Mr. F. G. Butcher of the Holy Trinity Church officiated at the graveside.

Records show that John was a Civil Engineer and was one of the four Engineers who designed and built the Tweefontein Dam near Sabie in the Eastern Transvaal.

All of John & Augusta's eight children married. Bertha the oldest married Ernest Kelly and had one daughter; Valerie and settled in Jeppe, Johannesburg, The two sons William (Jack) and Hector (Herby) married the Dicks sisters Winifred (Winnie) and Mabel. Jack & Winnie had three daughters; Myrle, Daphne & Audrey. Herby and Mabel had two sons; Edgar & Clive, both families settled in Fishers Hill, Germiston. Jack & Herby started their own Electrical Contracting business. Victoria (Grace) married Thomas Conner and had three daughters; Kathleen, Frances & Ventry, they settled in Durban, Natal. Vera May married Scott Turnbull and they had one daughter; Felicity, they settled in Newcastle, Natal. Amy married Trygve Reinertsen they had no children, they eventually settled in Bergville in the Drakensberg mountains, Natal where they owned their own supermarket. Gertrude married Edward Mackinnon they had two sons; Gavin & Kenneth, they travelled extensively due to Edward being in the shipping business, amongst other places, they lived in Eritrea where Kenneth was born, Scotland and finally settling in Primrose Germiston, S. Africa. Phillis married Victor Jubber they had two sons and two daughters; Berwyn, Wynsom, Rohan & Athale, they settled in Florida, Transvaal.