

A Midwife of Ceres

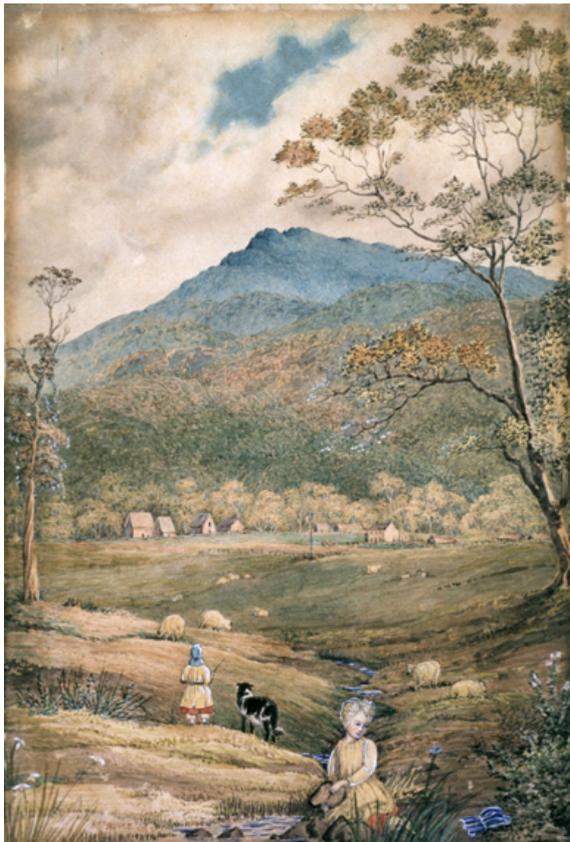
Elizabeth Frisby 1820-1866

Patrick Quinn 1796-1851

Elizabeth in Van Dieman's Land

Elizabeth was born in Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania) in 1820. Her mother was **Elizabeth Glithero** (alias Frisby), a 26-year-old convict who gave birth to Elizabeth soon after arriving in Hobart. The father is unknown, but it seems Elizabeth's mother became pregnant during her brief assignment in Sydney between January and August 1820. Elizabeth was usually known by her mother's alias Frisby (she used it as her maiden name on her first wedding certificate).

Her mother began living with ex-convict John Tamplin¹ in c1821 who was occupying and farming land at Bagdad in the Brighton District north of Hobart. Elizabeth grew up as part of the Tamplin family and eventually the young Elizabeth was to have seven half-siblings.



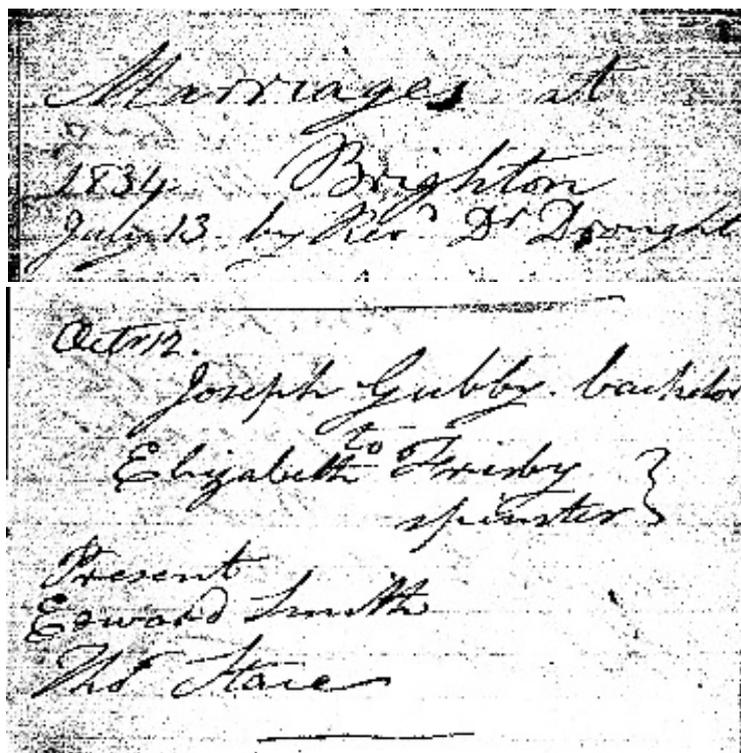
Broadmarsh, near the Blackbrush, where Elizabeth grew up in Tasmania in the 1820s. Watercolour by Mary Morton Allport
Source: trove.nla.gov.au

Teenage wife

At the age of 14 Elizabeth married Joseph Gubby, an Irish army pensioner, on October 12th 1834 at Brighton, Tasmania. In 1831 Joseph had elected to take a grant of land at the Blackbrush (near Bagdad) in lieu of an army pension and he arrived in Tasmania in 1832.

Here he and Elizabeth had three children: Joseph (b. 1836), James (b. 1838) and Ann (b. 1840), but by 1842, the Pontville Muster (census) shows Joseph Gubby and his eldest son were living together at the Blackbrush without Elizabeth and the other two children.

It seems that by this time Elizabeth had left Joseph and taken her children James and Ann. It is not known where she was living.



Certificate of Elizabeth Frisby's first marriage 1834, to Joseph Gubby
Source: Archives Office of Tasmania

The convict Patrick?

Extremely little is known about who **Patrick Quinn** was. How he came to be in Tasmania is not known for sure, but having unclear origins always makes one suspect a convict history, especially back in the day when convicts were not considered 'Australian royalty' as they are today.

There are records of a convict Patrick Quinn arriving on the ship *British Sovereign* on March 17th 1841 transported for 7 years for larceny. He was 40 years old, a carter from Carlow, County Wexford, Ireland, a Roman Catholic, could read and write and was married. The record of this man describes a fairly harmless petty thief who stole some cloth. His time in Van Dieman's Land was spent on various work gangs and being continually punished for drunkenness. His physical appearance is described as:

'height 5'4 3/4"', complexion- fair, head- large, hair- dark brown, whiskers- reddish brown, visage- oval, forehead - high, eyebrows- brown, eyes- brown, nose- large, mouth- small, chin- double, face- wrinkled.'² The ship's surgeon's report describes his conduct as 'stupid, slow, orderly'.

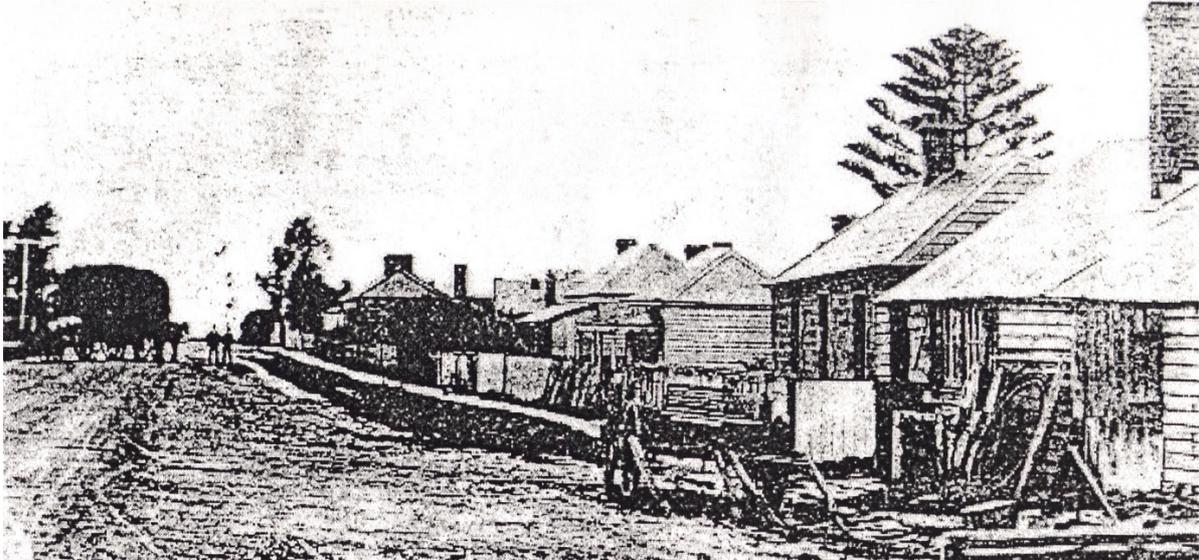
This Patrick's record shows that although he was granted his Ticket of Leave in 1845, he was constantly in trouble for being drunk and disorderly and was soon back in the prisoners' barracks or on work gangs until 1847. In May 1845 he was in Broadmarsh (Blackbrush), in the Brighton District where Elizabeth's family lived. I cannot say definitively that this is our Patrick - there are other Patrick Quinns in the convict records. But this one was in the right place at the right time for the birth of the first Quinn child, John b.1842.

There is no record of Elizabeth and Patrick marrying in the 1840s or at any time, and no record of Elizabeth divorcing Joseph Gubby. If Patrick still had a wife in Ireland, he

wouldn't have been able to marry Elizabeth. It is also not known exactly where the couple may have lived, however whilst in Tasmania Elizabeth produced four children by Patrick Quinn and they all bore his surname: John (b. 1842), Michael (b. 1843), **Mary** (b. 9/11/1845) and Jane (b. 1847).

Move to Ceres in Victoria

In about 1849, the Quinns crossed Bass Strait to settle at Ceres in Victoria with presumably six children (two Gubbys and four Quinns). Here Patrick and Elizabeth produced two more children: William (b.1849, dead by 1851), and Catherine (b. 1851).



Barabool Road, Ceres (date unknown) where the Quinns lived. Source: Marion Stainsby

Fatal road accident

Tragedy struck when on Friday June 6th 1851 Patrick Quinn was killed in an accident. The *Geelong Advertiser* of June 9th reported 'He was run over by a cart and leaves a widow and five children'. St. Mary's Catholic Church in Geelong issued the burial certificate that states he was a farmer from Barrabool Hills (Ceres) who was 55 years of age at death and was buried on June 7th 1851. Cemetery records show he was buried in the Roman Catholic section of the Geelong Eastern Cemetery.

The inquest into Patrick's death held at the *Wheat Sheaf Inn* reported that:

'whilst he was sitting in the front of a dray and being in liquor it so happened that he accidentally fell to the ground and the wheel of the dray passed over him. Witnesses were Jack Moloney – bullock driver of Mt. Moriac on whose dray Patrick was getting a lift from the *Rock of Cashel Inn*, Geelong; John Crow – farmer of Barrabool Hills who was following on horseback; and Michael Barefoot – labourer of Barrabool Hills who was also on the dray at the time. The accident happened about 7 o'clock, past the lime kilns and near Mr. Fisher's gate. Patrick was loaded onto the dray to be taken to his own house but he died on the way.¹³

On June 9th 1851 the inquest was reported in the *Geelong Advertiser* with a footnote:

'Death of Quinn. This unfortunate man whose death is revealed in this day's journal has left a wife and five children unprovided for. A subscription list has been opened and it is hoped that a fitting response will be given to this call of humanity.'

The five children would be Ann Gubby 11, John Quinn 9, Michael Quinn 8, Mary Quinn 6, Jane Quinn 4. William Quinn had died as a baby and Elizabeth was pregnant with Catherine. The eldest child, James Gubby was 13 and probably working. Elizabeth gave birth to Catherine five days after Patrick's death.



View of Geelong from Fisher's Hill Ceres c1908, near the location of Patrick Quinn's death in 1851. Postcard. Source: Picture Australia

'Her usefulness on interesting occasions'

By 1854 Elizabeth was living with another Irishman James McMurtery⁴, who had also been widowed in 1851. Elizabeth and James produced four children: Henry (b. 11/1/1854), George (b. 25/4/1856), Matthew (b. June 1858), and Elizabeth (b. 16/12/1863). The boys were also known by the name Quinn.

By 1861 Elizabeth's mother, Elizabeth Tamplin, who had recently been widowed, came over from Tasmania to live with them. Elizabeth Quinn was making a living as a dressmaker in Ceres at this time and is listed as such in the Geelong and Western District directory of 1861. Local records give evidence she was also frequently employed as a midwife in the area until 1866. A visitor to Ceres wrote in his diary of 1856:

'Across the road from the post office lives Mrs. Quinn well known in the village for her usefulness on interesting occasions, and rest assured, a rich harvest of such events there is in the Parish of Barrabool⁵ possibly referring to either the rapid population growth in the area, the large number of illegitimate births, or maybe pregnancy terminations.

1866 - a bad year

In January 1866 Elizabeth's eldest daughter Ann Gubby married Charles Armistead. Her marriage certificate has **John Hurley** as a witness. But the remainder of that year proved to be very sad. Elizabeth's mother died in March (of old age), and in May, James McMurtery died as the result of an accident. He must have had the same problem with

alcohol as Patrick Quinn. According to the inquest into his death, James was 'found lying on the floor with his face buried in a pillow on which he had been lying whilst in a state of drunkenness and that (he) had thus suffocated.'⁶ He was buried in an unmarked grave in the Geelong Eastern Cemetery.

Then, on June 23rd Elizabeth herself died of typhoid (called colonial fever) at the age of 46 years. In August her youngest child, Elizabeth McMurtery also died of typhoid, aged 3 years. Elizabeth was buried with her mother Elizabeth and then joined by her daughter Elizabeth in an unmarked grave in the Anglican section of the Highton Cemetery at Geelong. Interestingly the undertaker for Elizabeth Quinn was **Absalom Scholes** whose daughter **Mary Elizabeth Scholes** was to marry Elizabeth Quinn's grandson **Thomas Hurley**.

Elizabeth's 13 children

The research concerning all of Elizabeth's children is far from complete. Below is what I know so far:

1. Joseph Gubby died in Vic. c1871.
2. James Gubby died in Geelong c1906
3. Ann Gubby married Charles Armistead in 1866 and lived around Boonah/Deans Marsh area. They had eight children. She died in 1903.
4. John Quinn married Ellen Dunleavy in 1864 in Inglewood and died in WA.
5. Michael Quinn was a dairyman and lived in Ceres.
6. Mary Margaret Quinn married John Hurley in 1864, had two children and died at Ecklin South in Vic.
7. Jane Quinn, a servant married John Wood, a butcher in Geelong in 1867. They had five children.
8. William Quinn died when an infant.
9. Catherine Quinn married James Fleming, a carrier of Batesford in 1869.
10. Henry McMurtery/Quinn, died 18/5/12 age 52 at Junee Cottage Hospital NSW, unmarried invalid pensioner.
11. George McMurtery/Quinn, a drover and labourer married Sarah Green in 1879 at Birregurra and had ten children, three not surviving infancy. George died in 1934.
12. Matthew McMurtery/Quinn married Julia Cusack in Albury and had eight children. He died in 1932.
13. Elizabeth McMurtery died aged 3 years in Ceres.



Left: Elizabeth and Patrick Quinn's daughter Catherine (1851-1933) who married James Fleming. Source: Kay Goddard-Haines

Far left: Elizabeth's first daughter, Ann Gubby. She was photographed in profile because she had markings on the left side of her face. Source: Hazel Spence

Ann Hurley

2020

See my story **A New Life at Ceres** for more about their daughter Mary Margaret Quinn.

hurleyskidmorehistory.com.au

Notes:

¹ Also spelt Templing, Templeton and Tampling

² *Convict Records* CON33-1-7 - Archives Office of Tasmania

³ *Victoria, Australia, Coroner Inquest Deposition Files, 1840-1925* (Ancestry.com)

⁴ Also spelt McMurtrie, McMurtray and McMurtry

⁵ *Ceres – A Brief History of the Village and it's People* - Ceres Community Association Inc. (1997)

⁶ *Inquest Deposition Files* 1866/504Male - Public Record Office of Victoria

Other resources:

Coulston, Jennifer - Quinn/McMurtery descendant

Geelong Advertiser - Vic.

Geelong family History Society Vic.

Genealogical Society of Victoria

Goddard-Haines, Kay - Qld., Quinn descendant

Highton Cemetery Vic.

Hurley, Dorothy - Hurley researcher and descendant (1906 - 1990)

Jennings, Pam - Geelong Cemeteries Trust

Kelynack, Jenny - Vic., Tamplin relation

McAdam, N.S. - Vic. historian

Spence, Hazel - Vic., Glithero descendant

Stainsby, Marion - Highton Vic., historian

Stephenson, Barbara - Sorrento Vic., Hurley relation

Victorian Birth, Death and Marriage certificates

Victorian Digger-Pioneer Index.

Victorian Government Gazettes

Wilmott, Eril - Vic., Quinn descendant