

### John Jenkins, Jellore Street

The Jenkins household lived on Jellore Street in a stone/brick house. There was one female over 45, two males between 21 and 45 and one girl aged between seven and 14. One man and one woman were married, presumably John Jenkins and his slightly older wife. The Census states one of the men was born in the Colony and the other was a free person. One male was listed under 'Landed Proprietors, Merchants, Bankers and Professional Persons' the other a 'Mechanic or Artificer'.

There has been much written on the family history of the Jenkins family. Several websites provide information on John Jenkins, possibly the fullest is that by Chris Muller<sup>1</sup>. There is also a written family history by Ian McNeill.<sup>2</sup>

Jenkins had arrived in the colony in 1821, on board the convict ship *Speke*. In the previous year he and three others had appeared at the Kent Assizes charged with 'feloniously and burglariously' breaking into the dwelling of the widow Elizabeth King and stealing four beds, seventeen blankets, six counterpanes, eight pillows, four bolsters, one pair of snuffers and a pin cushion, all valued at forty-three pounds two shillings and sixpence. They were found guilty and sentenced to be hanged but in July 1820 these sentences were commuted to transportation for life. One of his accomplices, John Hollands, was on the same convict ship.

In the ship's list John is described as 5'4" (1.6m) tall, face florid, with brown hair and grey eyes and was a labourer. Mc Neill describes him as a farmer from East Malling in Kent.

The General Muster and Land & Stock Muster of NSW in 1822, lists John (A 11242) as being a Government Servant, employed by James Atkinson at Argyle. It was here, at Atkinson's Oldbury estate outside Berrima that, with the help of his employer, he successfully petitioned the Government to bring his wife and children to Australia.

Charlotte Elizabeth (nee Sulman or Surman) and their five children, aged between 2 and 14, arrived on the *Grenada* on 23 January 1825. The group included Thomas Perrin Surman, (born 1812), Mary Ann (born 1814) John (born 1816), Elizabeth (born 1818) and Francis (born 1820)<sup>3</sup>. Thomas Perrin Sulman was the illegitimate child of Charlotte but was adopted by John.

After their arrival John again successfully petitioned the Government, this time to be re-assigned as a servant to his wife. Being a convict, he could not own land but Charlotte, as a

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.myheritage.com/person-1000287\\_143868541\\_143868541/john-jenkins](http://www.myheritage.com/person-1000287_143868541_143868541/john-jenkins)

<sup>2</sup> Ian McNeill. " In Search of Our Colonial Heritage. A Story of John Jenkins and his Family. Unpublished manuscript. Copy in BDHFHS Archive Mittagong.

<sup>3</sup> <http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/SIRMAN/2008-08/1219320640> and corrected in Mc Neill biography

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free emigrant, was granted 60 acres of Sutton Forest. By 1828 the family had five acres cleared, five under cultivation and 30 head of cattle.

John received his Ticket-of-Leave on 5 August 1829 giving him some freedom provided he stayed within the district of Sutton Forest. He received his full pardon on 1 December 1838.

John built the first house in the new township of Berrima in 1835, a stone two-storey cottage on Jellore Street for a Mr Thomas Horton who had been granted land in Berrima in 1835. At some point the house was purchased by John and Jane Atkinson of Mereworth (brother and sister-in-law of James Atkinson).<sup>4</sup> There is evidence that, at the time of Census, the house was let by them to Francis Walsh Small (No 7 in the Census).<sup>5</sup> In April 1841 John Jenkins purchased this house for his family and it remained in the Jenkins family and was known as Square Vue (View) until 1965 (1950?) when it was renamed Berrima House.



Until his absolute pardon was granted John was obliged to stay in the Berrima district. This did not stop him investing in property further afield but he had to expand his land ownership through his sons. John and Francis, then aged 15 and 12, took up a run on their father's behalf in 1832. This was 'Tooyal', a station on the Murrumbidgee at Ganmain, north-east of Wagga

Wagga. In 1834, John sold two hundred head of cattle to his sons and was looking for more land. Eventually they were to own five stations in the Murray/Murrumbidgee area and become wealthy and prominent citizens. Francis married three times, the second time to Mary Ann Higgins the daughter of Berrima's postmaster, James Jerome Higgins (No. 18 in the Census), who died in childbirth. John married only once but had ten children

John and Charlotte's daughters, Elizabeth and Mary Ann also married. Mary Ann married James Garner an ex-convict in 1829 and at some time possibly owned or ran the *Traveller's Inn* on the Gunning Rd outside Yass.<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth married Henry T Williams in Berrima in 1832, had 11 children and eventually moved to Adelaide.

<sup>4</sup> Description of Berrima House – The house is situated on a half acre block which runs down to the Wingecarribee River. It is built of sandstone, quarried close to the site, with dressed stone quoins, and has the traditional 'four up/four down' rooms. The height of the door openings are approximately 6' 4" (190cm), which indicates the height of the average person in the early 1800s as compared to the present day. The original flagged veranda is supported by six timber columns with a barge board in a Georgian style. It has a simple and narrow boarded staircase, six-panel doors, simple timber fireplace surrounds with built in cupboards either side - all made from the local stringybark timber. The original twelve-pane windows have been replaced. The detached kitchen, wood shed, stables, laundry and earth-closet lavatory which were positioned along the eastern side of the backyard have all gone. An old cedar settee was situated on one side of the veranda almost from the time the house was built. It is claimed that the bushranger, Ben Hall slept on this settee several times during the 1860s.

<sup>5</sup> Newspaper article seen but not recorded.

<sup>6</sup> NSW State Records Publicans' Licenses

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The adopted son, Thomas Perrin Surman, married in Berrima in 1841 and was later with his step-brothers at Buckingong Station near Narrendra.

So, returning to the Census, who was in the household at the time? Presumably John, but underestimating his age – he was born in 1791 and would have been 52. He had no problem placing his wife, who was the same age, in that older age group. One biographer suggests the young female was the daughter of Mary (born in the colony) and the other male adult, a ‘Mechanic or Artificer’ was Thomas Perrin Sulman who arrived free. All these suggestions are possible but no proof is offered.

Exactly where the Jenkins were living at the time of the Census, other than in Jellore Street, is not known but several stone/brick houses of this period remain: Bryan McMahon’s *Berrima Inn* (1834), Joseph Levy’s *Victoria Inn* (1840), and the *First Bank Building* (1836).<sup>7</sup>

Assuming McMahon is at his inn (on the Census this is listed as being on the Market Place) and knowing that the only other household living in a brick/stone house in Jellore Street was the Frasers (No.12 on the Census) that leaves two buildings for two households. Which was which we cannot tell. It does suggest, however, that at this time the *Victoria Inn* was serving as a residence, an occurrence quite common for inns of this period



*Victoria Inn*

John and Charlotte, both born around 1780, had a long life together: Charlotte Elizabeth died in 1869, aged 80, and is buried in the cemetery at Bong Bong Church and John died in 1886, aged 97 and is buried in Berrima Cemetery.



SACRED / TO THE MEMORY OF / JOHN JENKINS / WHO DEPARTED  
THIS LIFE / 25TH AUGUST 1886 / AGED 97 YEARS / THIRD SON OF  
THE LATE / HENRY JENKINS / OF EAST MORLING (*sic*) WEST KENT /  
ENGLAND / Illegible

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<sup>7</sup> According to the NSW Heritage Register