

The Family History
Price, Martin, Cooper, Crisford, Merrick, Chapman, Yeo
&
A few others

Below, Ann (nee Cooper) Price and one of her youngest daughters.



The information in this book is organised around the Martin and Price families. Three children of Robert Martin Jr and his wife Mary Elizabeth (nee Merrick) married three children of William and Ann (nee Cooper) Price. As I come from this line and have more information about this line of the family this book concentrates on these two families and my own direct line in the Cobbora area.¹

Martha (nee Price) and her husband, Robert Cooper Martin moved to Cobbora shortly after their marriage in the 1840s and perhaps because they moved from the Windsor Richmond areas away from TB and other diseases they had big families that survived to adulthood. This is my family line.

¹ Three Price children married Crisford children and three did not marry. One Martin child, William, married Ann Naughton and the other two did not marry.

The story of the arrival of my family in Australia began in 1790 with the convict, Edward Merrick who sailed on the *Surprise*. The following year on Christmas Eve he married Mary Elizabeth Russell who came on the *Mary Ann* –(Third Fleet).

Next to arrive in 1798 on *The Barwell* were Charles Cooper (convict), his wife Else nee Davis and daughter Sarah. In 1804 the Martin family consisting of Robert the Elder, his wife Mary (nee Cooper) and small son Robert came on *The Experiment*. During the voyage their infant daughter Caroline died.²

In 1819 Robert Martin Jr ran off with Mary Elizabeth Merrick and married. Robert Cooper Martin, their first born child born a month after his parent's marriage, married Martha Price. This family settled in the Cobbora area.

Martha's parents were William Price (convict 1816 *Ocean*) and Ann Cooper - daughter of Charles Cooper and Else nee Davis.

Martha and Robert's daughter, Caroline Ann and son Edward married members of the Chapman family. This line began with Elizabeth Catlin (or Cattin) alias Cattell who as widow Callicot married William Garbutt. Both arrived as convicts in the early 1820s and were Cox's of Clarendon's convicts where they would have known William Price who also was assigned to Cox.

William and Elizabeth Garbutt had a daughter Hannah who was a widow Watts³ when she married Thomas Chapman. He arrived in Australia from Beneden in Kent in 1839. He was four years of age and the youngest of four children born to Thomas Chapman and his wife Mary Ann nee Clout.

Edith Roubina Chapman, daughter of Caroline and William Chapman in turn married Samuel Yeo, youngest son of Ann (nee Russell) and

² Caroline left with the family but did not arrive and one may presume she was one of the unnamed infants who died on the voyage. Another daughter, Martha set off from England with the family but apparently did not rejoin the ship after it put back to Cowes for repairs caused by a storm.

³ There is no information about her first husband. The marriage and death is not recorded in New South Wales BDM index.

James Yeo. This family lived at Dunedoo. My mother, Violet Ann Yeo was the eldest daughter of Edith and Samuel Yeo. She married in 1933 my father, Leonard Austin and I was duly born in 1937 (second child – my sister, Inez Edith died in 1934). Because this is my direct line detail of the Garbutt, Chapman and Yeo lines are included in the Chapter on Martha Price.



Above - Graves of Rebecca & Caroline Price at St Peter's Richmond.



Above - Merrick and Martin graves at St Peter's Richmond and below the grave of William Martin who died at Cobbora. His body was returned to Richmond where it is buried with family members. Nearby is the grave of Margaret, second wife of Robert Martin Sn.



There were some interesting *talking points* in the family history. They include the second marriage of Robert Martin the Elder who in his early seventies married Miss Margaret Henderson – a lady literally half his age. Remarriage was not unusual, but the age difference would have been noted. About a

month after the birth of their daughter, Johanna Henderson Martin, Robert the Elder died leaving much of his property to his second wife for life. From the few documents that have *surfaced* re this matter a letter written by William Thomas Price, husband of Caroline (nee Martin – daughter of Robert Martin the younger) on behalf of his wife and children gives a little insight to the family concerns. It is quoted in a later chapter. Robert Martin the younger was around fifty years of age when his half sister was born. He had run the Cobbora property for years – and his inheritance and that of his family was threatened.

Pressure was brought to bear – and Margaret Martin remarried to widower Stephen Field and gave up her interests in some of the property. Thus partly solving the family problem – for the Martin line anyway.

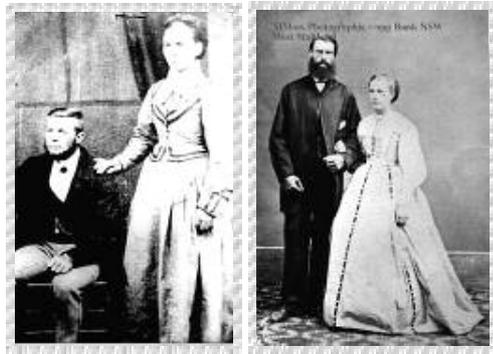
All we know about the first wife of Robert Martin the Elder is her name – Mary Cooper. What did she look like? Who were her parents – how many children did the couple have? Where were they born – all unanswered questions. We know that there were two daughters, Martha and Caroline – both names used by Robert Martin Jr for his daughters. We do know that it was the custom to name children after their grandparents and these names give some clues to earlier generations. By the time the third generation Australian born arrived the custom of naming children after grandparents and parents seems to have lapsed somewhat and the custom was not rigidly adhered to.

Incidentally it was the *norm* for those who *lost a partner* to remarry. The woman's role was focused around the running of the home and the raising of children. Men were the *bread winners* and both were needed to bring up a family. It was almost a necessity to have both parents.

The size of families is another point that one notices – many of the first Australian born Price, Crisford and Martin children had up to fifteen or sixteen children. Many of their *offsprings* died before their first birthday and the stress of having too many children too quickly and ill health took their toll on a number of the women who died in their forties and early fifties.

The *Nepean Times* and *Windsor Richmond Gazette* particularly in the late 1800s and into the first few decades of the twentieth century described the dresses worn by the bride,

bridesmaids, mothers of the groom and bride and women guests in detail. When one examines some of the photographs taken in the mid to late 1800s of the women in the family one notes that the wedding dress was more functional than the later years and often the good dress was modernized with new cuffs and collars to keep it in good order. Some 19th century wedding dresses were black so that they could be worn later on occasions such as funerals. The practice seems to have moderated following the first World War when so many died and the practice of the set periods of mourning that included dress changed and in many cases the sad demise of a loved one was marked by the wearing of black arm bands.



Above left – wedding photograph of Caroline Ann Martin to William Thomas Chapman 19.6.1877 and right Mary Elizabeth Yeo and John Russell wedding photograph taken in the mid 1850s. Note the functional dresses.

Some mention is made in wills that indicate daughters and grand daughters were held in high regard. Also it becomes clear when reading a number of the early wills of for example, Robert Martin the Elder and William Price it becomes clear that these men wanted their wealth in the form of land to remain in family hands *forever*.

There are many articles in papers (weddings, obituaries etc) that reinforce the notion that a woman's place was in the home and here the skills of cooking, needlework etc were those that defined the good woman and good mother. Business was not a profession that women were expected to follow. One woman who did go into business was Mrs John Price (Elizabeth Jane nee Robertson) who after the death of her husband continued the family business – that of undertaking. The *Nepean Times* at that time contained a number of advertisements that noted

the arrival in Penrith of another firm owned by her nephews by marriage, Arthur and Nelson Price. I gained the impression that both Arthur and Nelson did not consider that Elizabeth Jane could or should continue with the business and they were there to take over!

Mary Elizabeth Russell who married Edward Merrick is another shadowy figure. We know a little about this lady from her trial documents. Her father was a weaver and at the time of her trial they lived in London. In his will Edward left property to her for her life and spoke of her as his *dear wife*. Amongst their children was one set of twins. These boys never married and were *simple* – probably caused by lack of oxygen during the birth? Perhaps the family twin gene in Australia started with this line?

Robert Martin was an illiterate tailor when he left England and died a rich landowner. Edward Merrick became the first police constable in North Richmond. William Price was a convict and died with the title of *Gentleman*. He became an undertaker, first and fourth postmaster and in time a wealthy man. Male members of his family took up public office that included the positions of Aldermen, Mayor of Penrith, and Wesleyan ministers. Forgotten – or simply not mentioned - within a generation of the arrival of our convict ancestors were the reasons why they came to the Colony of New South Wales. With the possession of property all became *law abiding pillars of society, well respected in their communities*.

The Price family in particular – according to newspaper articles – were Temperance – that is against the drinking of alcohol and one can but wonder if alcohol contributed to the events that led William Price being convicted of stealing and transportation to the colony. He certainly was an intelligent man – evidenced in the number of Memorials written by him on behalf of others. The Martin side was not so against the *demon drink* and I have heard a number of stories that

suggest that the drinking of the whiskey was enjoyed.

Another side to the family history is a darker one. Stories have been passed down of massacres of Aboriginal people – adults were shot and the babies thrown into the River. Oral history notes that there was a massacre on Cobbora Station. There are also stories of poisoned flour being put out for the Aboriginal people. Just what part our family took in these dreadful deeds is not known

The story that I have heard from several family branches is that following one massacre a boy was kept to help *Martha*. Which Martha? He used to say that when he grew up he would kill the family as they had killed his. There are two different endings to this part of the tale. One is that the young fellow ate green fruit and died and the other is that he crept up behind *Grandfather* with a tomahawk raised ready to strike – grandfather who was about to wash his hands in a basin of water glimpsed the act in the reflection in the water – grabbed his nearby rifle, turned, and shot the boy. There are also stories about an early Aboriginal line in the family. To date I have not found them but it is likely that this line does exist.

Time cannot be turned back to redress the wrongs. They were part of the times. The majority of my ancestors belonged to a time that did not give justice to all. With the exception of the Martin line they – the first Australian ancestors - were transported to these shores with little hope of ever returning *home*. There certainly was one law for the rich and another for the poor. Examples are readily found of this division – the failure of the 700 odd Spanish Gold Dollars – earnings of Charles Cooper who died in Java in August 1820 to arrive at their destination in Australia (stolen by someone in authority?); the difficulties that William Price had in obtaining title to the land given to him by Cox in lieu of cash (also given to Bowman at a later date) are but two examples.

That is all part of our story.



Above: Map showing land grants. Robert Martin's block is 56. Nearby blocks were granted to other people who came out free on the *Experiment* in 1804. Below: L-R – Violet Ann Yeo (my mother who married Leonard Austin), Uncle Percy Russell, Edith Yeo (nee Chapman, daughter of Caroline Ann nee Martin and William Thomas Chapman), Elva Yeo, Lola Yeo, Samuel Yeo (husband of Edith), Alfred Frederick (*Bill*) Yeo and the little girl, Audrey Yeo (born April 1926). Missing from the photograph is Alice Rita Yeo (*Rita*). The photograph was taken in the late 1920s at *Yeoville*, Dunedoo.



The following pages in this book detail a little about the lives of my ancestors and relations. Some information has filtered through to the present generations via articles in newspapers, wills, reminiscences and oral histories. I hope that others will contribute their knowledge to expand on the few details recorded in this document. During the process of collecting the information first published in 1990 I have met many relations. I sometimes wonder what the old *Grandfathers* and *Grandmothers* would think of us today.

Ann Gugler (nee Austin).