

The Criminal Career of Moses Pearson.

I have been looking at the family of Alan's 4x great grandmother Lucy Freeman, nee Kitteridge (1767-1849). Her parents were Vernon Kitteridge and Susan Barker, but her mother died soon after her birth, and her father married again in 1773, to Jane Green. They went on to have at least six children, all half siblings to Lucy, the second youngest being Clara (1786-1860). She married John Pearson in 1805, in Ashdon, a village near Saffron Walden, Essex, after which she moved to John's home in neighbouring Hadstock. Between 1807 and 1831, John and Clara had nine children, although two died in childhood and another as a young man. The last child born to them by several years was Moses, to be seen on the 1851 census for Hadstock as a twenty year old labourer living with his parents and older brother Peter, all with his widowed sister Sarah and her young children. The census states that Sarah has been allowed to live where she is by the parish, and that her 65 year old father is working on the roads, often a job given to the unemployed. Most of their neighbours are paupers.

The next official mention of Moses is on 6th January the following year at the General Quarter Sessions at Chelmsford, Essex, where he is convicted of larceny and sentenced to three months in prison. He appears at Chelmsford again, at the Assizes, on 11th February 1853, where he is charged with burglary, and noted he has a former conviction for felony, and sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment. Ancestry does not show Moses on the 1861 census, but this could be because he is in the army, as suggested by the following article in the Police Gazette for Friday 28th August 1863:-

'Absconded from Littleport, near Ely, Cambs, on the 18th instant, charged with breaking into the cottage of Joseph Sparrow, labourer, Littleport, and stealing the following articles of Wearing Apparel: a dark velveteen frock Coat, with dark buttons, and four pockets outside; a snuff coloured ditto, two pockets outside, and two inside; a pair of black cord Trousers, open at the bottom with three glass buttons; a black cloth Waistcoat, light coloured back and sleeves, coloured buttons, and cuffs turned up; a red and dark plaid silk Handkerchief, and two cotton ditto. MOSES PEARSON, of Hadstock, Essex, 31 years of age, 5 feet 8 or 9 inches high, pale face, dark hair and whiskers, has lost a nail from one of his fingers, very recently; dressed when last seen, in the stolen waistcoat and trousers, brown billycock hat, and lace-up boots, very much worn. The two coats have been recovered. He has been traced to Hadstock, and was last seen there on the 21st instant, he is in the habit of frequenting low lodging houses, and talks of the service, having been in the army. Information to be given to Mr. Superintendent William E. Lantsbury, Ely, Cambs, who holds a warrant for his apprehension, or to Captain Foster, Chief Constable, Marsh, Cambs.'

Moses must have been caught because the last entry for him is on 19th October 1864, at the General Quarter Sessions at Ely, Cambridgeshire, where he is charged with housebreaking and larceny, and it is again noted that he has previous convictions for felony. He is sentenced to seven years of penal servitude.