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MANDURAH COMMUNITY MUSEUM

Tuckey Family

One of the most influential families to the early development of the Mandurah and Peel region was the Tuckey family. By late 1829 the widower, John Tuckey, along with his son, James and daughter, Charlotte (who married Thomas Eacott in 1839) left West Sussex, England to come to Australia. John Tuckey was an indentured servant to Thomas Peel and travelled to Australia with his family aboard Peel's passenger ship, the 'Rockingham'. They arrived in Cockburn Sound by 1830 and after a stay here, made their way on horse and foot with other passengers toward Mandurah.

Once they were in the Peel region, they began the arduous task of hand clearing the land allocated to them by Thomas Peel and establishing their residences. By 1834, John Tuckey had cultivated some small crops of wheat and vegetables, but the difficulty of life in the region saw many, including John's son James, leave in search of a more profitable way of life.

After running a ferry to transport passengers along the Mandurah coast from 1840 onwards, John Tuckey (senior) passed away in 1872. His wife had conducted one of Mandurah's first schools in her home during the 1860s until the development of Robert Mewburn's school.

James Tuckey, with his wife and five children, sailed to the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s and came back to Mandurah in 1862 with enough money to acquire land and purchase a small coastal vessel for trading. James' sons John jnr. and Charles Tuckey became involved in the Northwest Pearling industry in the 1870s, a profitable venture in which they became successful.

In 1880, John jnr. and Charles Tuckey used their earnings to establish a two-storey fish cannery, the Peel Inlet Preserving Works, opposite the Brighton Hotel site on the Mandurah foreshore. They purchased a 29-tonne schooner for coastal fishing, with mullet and herring being the main catch.

During this decade, Charles Tuckey established a small timber mill at "Millbrook" (Marrinup) and supplied local timber to Mandurah, Perth, and Fremantle via his boat.



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Tuckey Family cont'd

The brothers also introduced Japanese and Southern European workers to the area who worked hard in developing the fishing industry in Mandurah. Although the cannery relocated in 1905 and closed in 1914, the Tuckey family continued to influence the Mandurah region in the 20th Century, running a horse-drawn coach to and from the Pinjarra railway, encouraging tourists to Mandurah.

Their family store was located where the cannery once operated and continued to trade, although the shop changed from a general store to a tackle shop. The coach services to Perth and Fremantle were improved in the 1920s when Roy Tuckey successfully applied to have a petrol bowser installed in front of the family store, bringing more holidaymakers to the region.

The Tuckey family (especially Hobart Tuckey) was also very involved in the works of the Murray Road Board, having a significant influence on the development of roads and transport in the region during the early 20th Century. Heritage listed buildings such as Tuckey House, Wearne House and Eureka (Cooper's) Cottage have all been part of the lives of the descendents of John Tuckey and still stand in the Peel region today.

The Tuckey family came to the Peel Region right at the start of its development and became one of the most successful families in the area. They were very influential in the establishment of fishing and timber industries in Mandurah and also played key roles in the development of education, tourism, and transport in the region. Many descendents of John Tuckey have continued to work in these areas in the 21st Century.



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Time line

John Tuckey

1829

John Tuckey signed an agreement to be part of Thomas Peel's plans for a settlement on the Swan River in W.A. John was an indentured servant to Thomas Peel. He was a widower and travelled with his son, James (13 years old) and daughter Charlotte (11 years old).

1830

John arrived near Fremantle on the third boat to the colony - the '**Rockingham**'. The '**Rockingham**' had set sail in January 1830 and arrived in May 1830.

They dropped anchor off Garden Island and, as they disembarked, a wild storm began. The ship ran aground and the dinghies capsized as people were being ferried ashore. Whilst everyone survived, most of their belongings were lost or damaged and the stock ran off into the bush.

Shelters were constructed from what suitable material could be found at, what is now known as, Woodman's Point. Many of the migrants were released from Peel and settled in Perth, but John Tuckey travelled with Peel to Mandurah.

1831

John settled on a site, given to him by Thomas Peel to farm, about 2 miles north of the mouth of the Murray River. He had only cleared and sown ¼ acre by the end of the first summer. Fierce skirmishes with the local Aboriginals necessitated the stationing of six (6) soldiers and a lieutenant nearby.

1833

John applied to leave Peel's service and took up 50 acres of Peel's land grant, cultivating small crops of wheat and vegetables. A bullock helped clear the ground and a hand mill, ground the wheat into flour. They grew vegetables and vines and raised poultry and pigs.

At this time, Government troops participated in a punitive expedition against "troublesome natives". A serious incident, leading to many Aboriginal deaths, became known "**The Battle of Pinjarra**".

1836

John was one of four men in the Mandurah area, the others being T. Eacott, T. Watson and D. Myerick

1839

John's daughter - Charlotte - married Thomas Eacott.

1840

John's son - James - married Mary Anne Esther. They had four children - John Jnr, Charles, Matilda and Helen.



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John Tuckey cont'd

1852 - 1861

John (Snr) sold 20 acres of land and left for the Victorian Goldfields with his family. Matilda married John Wearne. Two of his grandchildren (James and Mary's children) also married while in the goldfields.

1859

John Tuckey (Snr) and family returned to Mandurah, with the exception of Matilda and John (Jnr).

1872

John Tuckey died.

James Tuckey (1816-1895) and his children:

- **John (1842-1900)**
- **Matilda (1844-1924)**
- **Charles (1846-1912)**
- **Helen (1849-1887)**

1840

John's son, James had a boat which he used to transport wheat for local farmers. He also delivered butter, eggs and onions for John Sutton and returned with liquor for his inn.

1841

James married Mary Anne Esther. They had four children born between 1842 and 1849 - John (Jnr), Charles, Matilda and Helen.

1852

Tuckey family went to the Victorian goldfields. John (Jnr) married Eliza Hawley. They had 8 children between 1865 and 1888. Matilda married John Wearne. She had two sons, who both went on to become successful businessmen in Singapore.

1862

The Tuckey family, except Matilda and her husband, returned from the goldfields. John and Matilda Wearne stayed until 1870s. John (Jnr) and Eliza Tuckey moved into the small cottage next to the Brighton Hotel. Eliza had some medical experience and was often called on by members of the community. She became the area's unofficial school teacher receiving a yearly allowance for teaching local children.

Helen Tuckey married James Cooper.

Charles (16) and John Tuckey (20) dedicated themselves to farming.



James Tuckey and his children cont'd

1869

James Tuckey received the licence to operate the government ferry at Mandurah from a point close to where his house is. Due to its central position his house became the post office. It was also used for church services after Peel's temporary church burnt down.

1870s

Charles and John went to the North West to join the pearling boom. They had two boats and employed indigenous people as divers. Their job was to row the boat and hold its position so that the divers would surface near the boat. After diving they would clean and open the shells, then guard them. They worked for four or five seasons before returning to Mandurah and invested their profits in new enterprises, such as a C. Tuckey and Co.'s Peel Inlet Preserving Works. They built a two-storey fish cannery on the eastern foreshore opposite the Brighton Hotel site.

James Tuckey developed pastoral and tillage leases acquired in the district and was associated with his sons' pearling interests in the north. He still made trips to Fremantle.

1872

John Tuckey (Snr) died on 4th May, 1872, aged 83.

1878

James Tuckey was appointed receiver for any salvage found washed ashore from the '**James Service**' shipwreck. His son - Charles Tuckey - assisted with the search for survivors. The Tuckey's acquired a lifeboat from the wreck and renamed it, '**Ellen**'.

1880

Charles and John invested some of the money from pearling into a new venture, C. Tuckey and Co.'s Peel Inlet Preserving Works. Charles lived in Mandurah and managed the business. Whereas, John, left Mandurah and went into a seafaring partnership with a Fremantle merchant. He purchased a large boat and captained the ship which traveled the trading run between Singapore and Japan.

Initially, they tinned fish caught in the estuary. and then produced tinned fruit with fruit supplied from local fruit growers. They were awarded a government gratuity for the first 40 tonnes of fruit preserved in the colony and Charles became well known for persuading settlers to grow fruit trees. The factory bought peaches, pears, plums, apples, apricots, grapes and figs.

They won a number of medals for their preserved fruit and fish at the Perth International exhibition (1881), the Indian and Colonial (1886), the Melbourne Centennial (1888) and the Franco-British (1908).

The Tuckeys were a key employer in the area and employed twenty hands at times, including four tinsmiths. Some of them went on to run their own businesses.



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James Tuckey and his children cont'd

1883

In late **1883** John (Jnr) returned, with his own boat, to pearling, working out of Derby.

1884

John Tuckey (Jnr) took charge of the '*Comet*' and worked with Tuckey and Co. delivering goods between Fremantle and Mandurah for a few years.

Early 1890s

1893

John and Eliza's sons - Stephen and William - drowned near Rockingham when their boat, *Ellen*, capsized in 1890. Their elder brother, Charles had nearly drowned around the same place 18 months beforehand.

John Tuckey (junior) became a well known figure in the Singapore shipping community. He withdrew from the partnership in C. Tuckey and Co.'s Peel Inlet Preserving Works so he could settle in Singapore. He travelled to England, Scotland, Borneo.

Charles stayed on managing the company, but was continually frustrated by the sand bar closing over and restricting delivery and increasing costs. He requested help from the government outlining his own investment in the factory and generating prosperity in the area through local employment, but didn't receive any help. He moved the factory to Carrabungup where it operated until 1914. He also opened a timber mill at Marrinup.

1893

John and Eliza's son, Charles left for Singapore where his father was going to introduce him to maritime commerce. On his second trip out of Singapore he died of sunstroke. He had married Sarah Jane Green, only three years prior, and had two children young children.

1895

James and Mary Anne Tuckey died only months apart. Eliza Tuckey left Mandurah and went to join her husband in Singapore.





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Tuckey Family cont'd

Late 1890s

By the late 1890s imports of canned fish were increasing and local output was gradually declining. Charles Tuckey and family decided to get involved in the transport business and the tourist trade. He could see that the sandbar caused difficulties and lobbied for a railway be built connecting Fremantle, Mandurah and Pinjarra. The railway didn't go ahead so they started a road transport business. All of Charles' sons other than Melville were involved in transport at some stage.

Holidaymakers flocked to Mandurah in the 1890s and Charles seeing the opportunity converted the house he built into a hotel, the *Brighton*. Charles devoted his later years to farming interests and served on the Mandurah Agricultural and Progress Committee and the Murray Road Board.

1900s

From the 1900s the area started to thrive and it started a new era for the town and the Tuckey descendants.

John Tuckey (junior) died at sea and Eliza returned to Western Australia and settled in Peppermint Grove.

1907

Eliza Tuckey died.

1912

Charles Tuckey died.

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