

SYKES, William

Original letters found in 1931 at Toodyay Gaol when the complex was being partially pulled down. They were discovered in a kangaroo skin pouch in a nook of a wall in one of the cells. They were handed to what was then The Historical Society of WA and later became The Royal WA Historical Society.

The letters were written from the perspective of Myra Sykes to her husband, William, who was transported to the Swan River Colony as a convict in 1867. Myra lived in poverty in the Sheffield area, raising four children without her husband. She was largely illiterate. It was thought other people must have scribed the letters on her behalf. The letters range from the period 1867-1879.

William was born about 1827 in Yorkshire, England. He married Myra in 1853 and they had five children. William worked as a puddler (iron worker) and was found guilty of manslaughter. He was transported on the Norwood in 1867 and died in 1891 in Toodyay. The family was never reunited.

The letters have been transcribed, reprinted and further information provided in *Unwilling Emigrants*, by Alexandra Hasluck (994.1 HAS).

See CSO File 551/91 re report of his death and petition for his return to England

MN	ACC	meterage / boxes	Date donated	CIU file	Notes
613	564A	1.5 cm	October 1953		
SUMMARY OF CLASSES					
FILES					

REQUEST THIS NUMBER	DATE RANGE	DESCRIPTION
		LETTERS
ACC 564A/1	1867	To William Sykes at Portsmouth Prison from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/2	15 March 1867	To William Sykes at Portsmouth Prison from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/3	19 March 1867	To William Sykes at Portsmouth Prison from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/4	8 April 1867	To William Sykes at Portsmouth Prison from Myra Sykes

REQUEST THIS NUMBER	DATE RANGE	DESCRIPTION
ACC 564A/5	13 July 1867	Brief notes of the voyage to WA on the convict ship <u>Norwood</u> arrived Fremantle No name, probably by William Sykes
ACC 564A/6	20 September 1868	To William Sykes at Western Australia from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/7	4 November 1869	To William Sykes at Western Australia from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/8	11 April 1875	To William Sykes at Western Australia from Myra Sykes
ACC 564A/9	20 October 1875	To William Sykes at Western Australia from son William
ACC 564A/10	19 January 1876	Envelope to William Sykes, Newcastle, Western Australia. Stamped Rotherham JA19 76
ACC 564A/11	26 January 1876	To the Hon. Acting Comptroller General at Western Australia from William Sykes
ACC 564A/12	14 May 1879	To William Sykes, well sinker, at Western Australia from James Ward
ACC 564A/13	[?1870s]	To William Sykes at Western Australia from Myra Sykes Mentions daughter Anne had a baby
ACC 564A/14	9 March [?1889]	To William Sykes at Western Australia from Myra Sykes Mentions son Alfred to have a baby
ACC 564A/15	5 March 1890	Envelope to Newcastle Toodyay Western Australia. Stamped MR 5 90 Greasboro [Greasbrough] Partial envelope, no name
		<i>The lists below were probably items sent to William Sykes when he was being transported to the Swan River Colony in 1867</i>
ACC 564A/16.1	[1867]	List of articles sent in box. Food to William Sykes
ACC 564A/16.2	[1867]	List of articles sent in box. Food to William Sykes
ACC 564A/17.1	[1867]	List of articles. Clothing to William Sykes
ACC 564A/17.2	[1867]	List of articles. Clothing to William Sykes

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