

The Baker roadblock

by James Michael Fleming

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My research into the family of William Baker and his wife Eliza Connor(s) hit a roadblock soon after I identified them as my ancestors in 1983. The informant on William's death certificate was not a family member, so vital information (like parents) was not supplied; and information about William's immigration to Australia was vague. Since he was also burdened with a common name, further research was postponed for nearly 40 years!



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Researching: Bowen, Flowerdew, Gardner, Gordon, Grady, Hanrahan, Jolliffe, Kemp, Kessey, Murphy, Poulton, Press and so many more!

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What we know

To overcome the Baker roadblock, a thorough knowledge of William Baker's known life in Australia is necessary, thus facilitating a proper assessment of any new clues that are found during further research. Accordingly, I assembled a summary of what is known from Australian records of his life and family.

Susannah Baker

The 1907 death certificate for my GG-grandmother (Susannah Press) states that her father was William Baker, a farmer, and her mother was unknown¹. The certificate for her 1866 marriage to David Press states that her parents were William Baker and Elizabeth Connor (although these details are written in a different hand to other details on the certificate)². Both certificates agree that Susannah had been born in about 1848. This is verified by her baptism record³.

Death and burial records

Susannah Press and her husband David are both buried in Jumper's Flat Cemetery near Rockley, NSW. Her parents, William and Eliza Baker, are also buried in that cemetery. Their gravestone (pictured below) reveals that William died on 28 January 1882 aged 83 years and Eliza died on 29 Jan 1876 aged 68 years. Their son William (who died on 28 August 1877 aged 29 years) is buried in the same grave plot.



Illustration 1. Baker family gravestone in Jumper's Flat Cemetery, near Rockley, NSW.

The gravestone information implies that William Baker had been born in 1799, his wife Eliza in 1808 and their son William in 1848.

Eliza's Death Certificate⁴ gives her age as 67 (rather than the 68 chiseled onto her gravestone), implying a birth year of 1808 or 1809. The informant was her widower, William Baker, who stated that she had been born in Dublin (Ireland) to parents John Connors (a stone cutter) and Margaret (whose maiden surname was unknown). Eliza had been in NSW for 44 years (implying that she had arrived in 1832). Their children were listed as Betsy (aged 36), Agnes 34, John 30, Susannah 27 and William 25. The family lived at Triangle Flat (which is near Rockley). The certificate also records that she was buried at Jumper's Flat Cemetery.

The Death Certificate for William Baker⁵ was informed by Arthur Wilkinson, his tenant at Triangle Flat. He stated that William was 83 years old (implying a 1799 birth year) and had been born in England, but he didn't know the names of William's parents. He stated that William had arrived in NSW "about 60 years" previously (circa 1822).

Wilkinson stated that William had 1 male and 4 female children living and 1 male and 1 female deceased. The deceased male was his son William (who had died in 1877). While Eliza's death certificate named three living daughters, William's states that he had two additional daughters, one of whom was deceased. **This begs the question whether William had two daughters from an earlier marriage, which we will tackle below.**

Marriage record

William and Eliza had married in the church of St Michael at Bathurst on 19 July 1844⁶, as illustrated below.

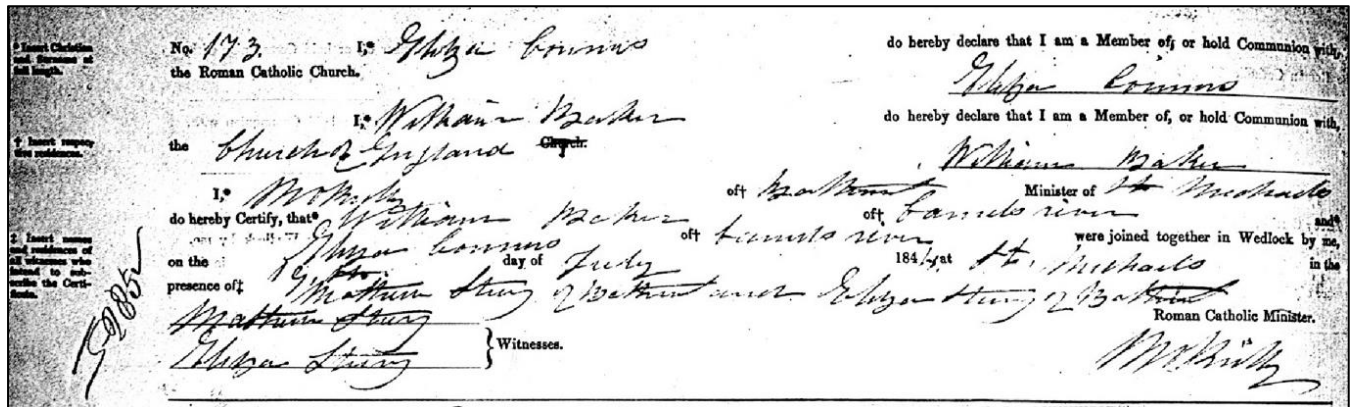


Illustration 2. Marriage record for William Baker and Eliza Connors in St Michael's church at Bathurst on 19 July 1844.

The marriage register records an address for both William and Eliza as "Camel's River"; a common misspelling of Campbell's River (which rises about 30 kilometers away near Mount David and runs past Rockley). The implied pre-marriage co-habitation could account for the fact that both their eldest two daughters (Betsey and Agnes) were born before the marriage.

Summary of William and Eliza

In summary, the records that unambiguously relate to William and Eliza Baker (parents of Susannah Press) provide the following information about their origins:

- that William was born circa 1799 in England (parents unknown) and came to Australia circa 1822;
- that Eliza was born circa 1808-09 in Dublin, parents John Connors (a stone cutter) and Margaret (maiden surname unknown) and came to Australia circa 1832;
- that they produced a family of two sons and three daughters between 1840 and 1848 on a farm situated at Triangle Flat (near Rockley); and
- that they married at Bathurst in 1844.

This would mean that William was 45 years old at the time of their marriage while Eliza was 35 or 36.

Further research

This research report focusses on the origins of William Baker; a separate report will be required for Eliza Connors. Research on William is difficult because both of his names are common; and the names of both his parents are unknown.

Before focusing the search on William's origins, I considered that there was more to be learned about his life in Australia that could inform the origins search. For example, **his death certificate states that he had more children than those that William had listed on Eliza's death certificate, implying that William had two daughters prior to meeting Eliza and, therefore, may have been married before.** (The Baker-Connor marriage record does not state whether he was a bachelor or a widower.) We also know that he farmed land near Rockley, so it is important to know when he first acquired that land.

Land records

William Baker and Eliza Connor were married at Bathurst in 1844. Their daughter Susannah was born at Campbell's River in 1848. When she married in 1866, the marriage certificate recorded that her father was a farmer at Dunn's Plains which is near Rockley, in the Parish of Irene within the County of Westmoreland. The earliest map of this Parish shows that William Baker had 95 acres and 3 roods of land on the southern bank of Campbell's River just downstream from its junction with Pepper's Creek, near Rockley. This land is now very close to Pennyfeathers Road.

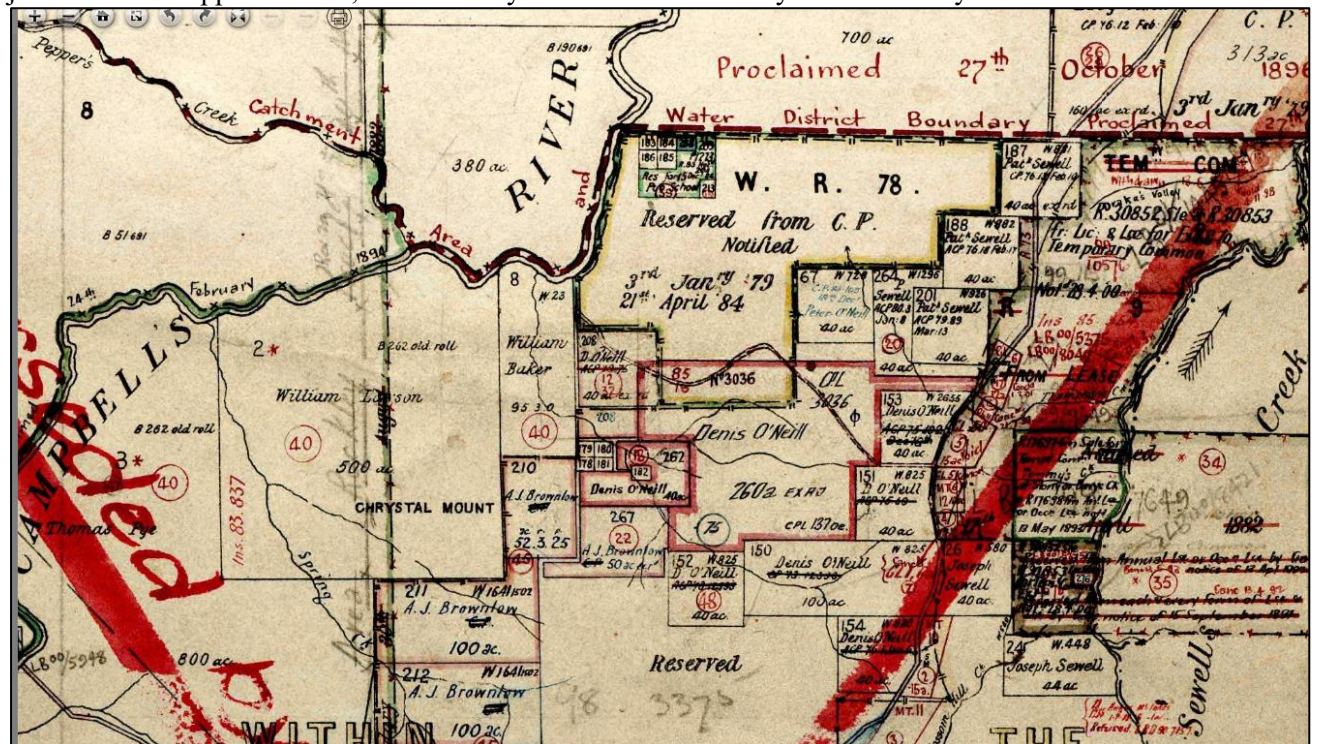


Illustration 3. Part of the earliest Land Titles map for the Parish of Irene in the County of Westmoreland

The map shows that this land was Portion number 8 and reference note W23 refers. Elsewhere on this map, W23 is revealed to be a number in catalogue W1502 (presumably used to advertise the land availability or acquisition). According to Terry Kass's book *Unlocking Land: A Guide to Crown Land Records held at State Archives NSW*, this refers to the Crown Plan number.

The system of early land records in NSW gives new meaning to the word "arcane". It took me three days to find anything more, but genealogists are nothing if not persistent! The breakthrough came in the Old System Grant Index published online by NSW Land Registry Services through the Historical Land Records Viewer. The index includes a reference to William Baker's 95 acres and 3 roods in County Westmoreland and provides as a reference "Serial Number 92".

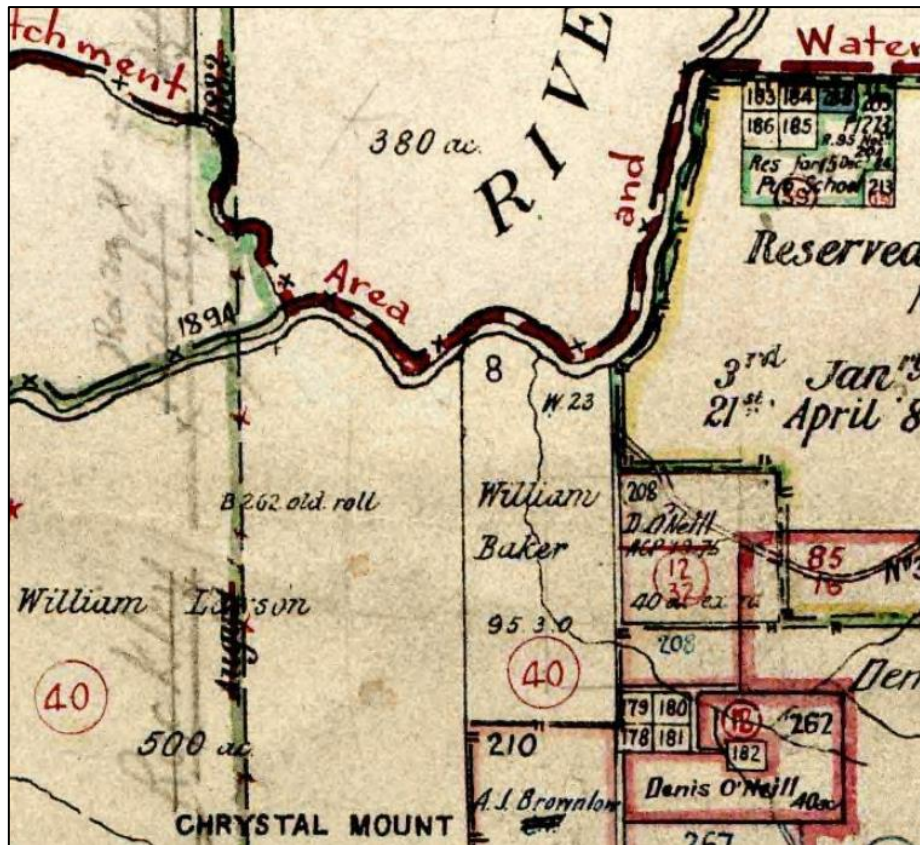


Illustration 4. Close-up view of William Baker's Land

The meaning of serial number 92 is not explained, but I found it, after much trial and error. Serial number 92 within the Grant Register Supplementary Index is presented by letter. Under letter B there is a reference to "Baker William 18". Again, unexplained.

It transpired that all this was a reference to serial number 92, page 18 of the Grant Register! That revealed a NSW Land Purchase Deed for this land, for which William Baker paid 320 pounds fifteen shillings and three pence on 28 January 1854.

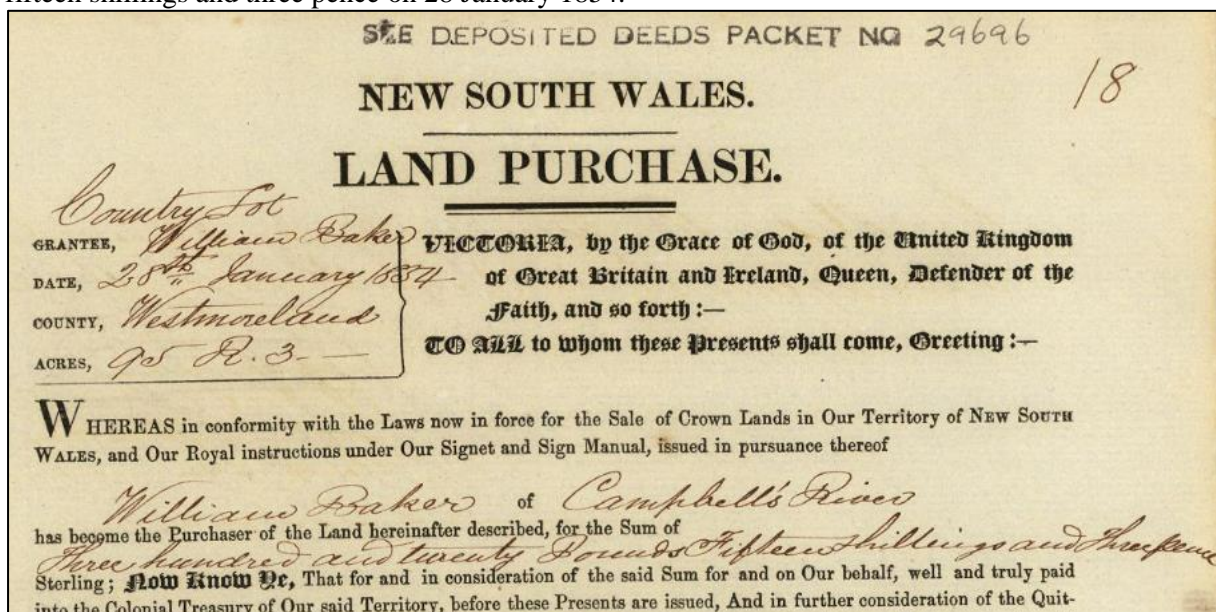
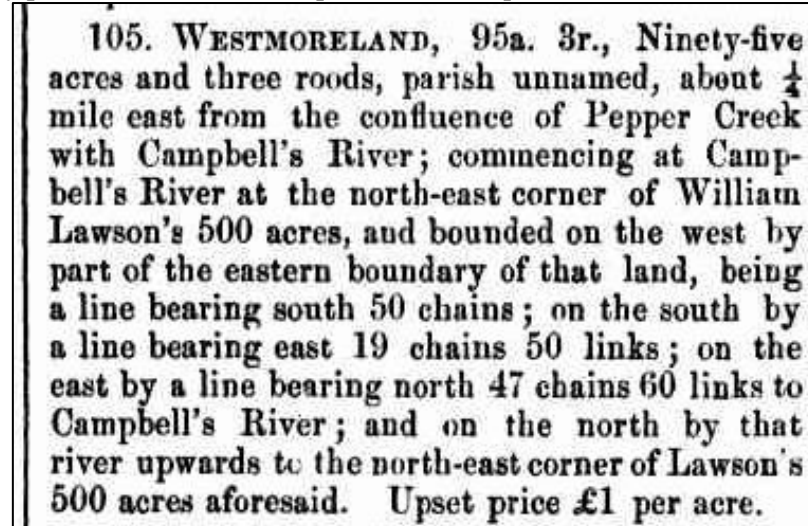


Illustration 5. Extract of the deed for William Baker's purchase of land at Campbell's River on 28 January 1854

The stamp at the top of the deed leads to Deposited Deeds Receipt Books number 29696 that contains a typewritten list of further deeds that relate to this land. This list states that William's crown land grant was not formalized until 28 January 1854 when it was "sold as Lot 105 in pursuance of the Proclamation of 15th June 1853". Unfortunately for me, that proclamation is, in fact, dated three days later, on 18 June 1853, resulting in hours of fruitless searching for a non-existent earlier proclamation. I eventually found it published in the NSW Government Gazette of 18 June 1853 on page 1002⁷. The proclamation by Governor Fitzroy offered specific portions of land for sale by public auction, with a deposit of 10% required.

A rectangular box containing a printed proclamation. The text is in a serif font and describes a land lot with specific boundaries and an upset price.

105. WESTMORELAND, 95a. 3r., Ninety-five acres and three roods, parish unnamed, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile east from the confluence of Pepper Creek with Campbell's River; commencing at Campbell's River at the north-east corner of William Lawson's 500 acres, and bounded on the west by part of the eastern boundary of that land, being a line bearing south 50 chains; on the south by a line bearing east 19 chains 50 links; on the east by a line bearing north 47 chains 60 links to Campbell's River; and on the north by that river upwards to the north-east corner of Lawson's 500 acres aforesaid. Upset price £1 per acre.

Illustration 6. Official proclamation offering for sale William Baker's land in 1853.

It is clear from his marriage record and baptism records for his children that William had been living on this land for many years beforehand. That would explain the non-standard size of the lot.

Deposited Deeds Receipt Books number 29696 states that the deed of 28 January 1854 is number 147 in Book 17, but those numbers do not appear anywhere on it. A search for deed number 147 in book 17 finds a Conveyance made on 18 August 1849 that has no relevance to William Baker or his land. So, unfortunately, these land records have not revealed the crucial information sought – when William Baker first moved to his land at Rockley.

Earlier marriage

Given that William was about 45 years old when he married Eliza and his death certificate states that he had fathered two daughters before that, I decided to search for an earlier marriage. Since William had such a common name and the search period for the earlier marriage is more than twenty years, I restricted the search to the Bathurst District (LG). There were two possibilities:

- 1839 to Elizabeth Owens (number 3816); and
- 1843 to Margaret Rorke (number 3904)

The 1843 marriage involved the convict William Baker who arrived on the *Mangles* in 1833 (see candidate CV below). If the 1839 marriage does relate to our William, his wife Elizabeth nee Owens could be the 42-year-old Elizabeth Baker who died in the same year (398/1839) and the infant Elizabeth Baker who died that year could be her daughter (279/1839).

Children of William and Eliza

Based on Eliza's death certificate, we know that she and William had five children: Betsey c1840, Agnes c1842, John c1846, Susannah c1848 and William c1851. A search of the indexes of the NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages reveals the following baptism or birth records. I have highlighted the children of our William and Eliza in yellow. Note that the two in light yellow are known but are NOT in the indexes; I just added them in for completeness.

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Sort	Father	Mother	Child	Ye	District	Our nan	Our Ye
MA	William M	Elizabeth	Amelia	1824			
MA	William M	Elizabeth	Emelia	1825			
MA	William	Eliza	Richard	1831			
MA	William	Eliza	Richard	1831			
MA	William	Eliza	Richard	1831			
MA	William M	Elizabeth	John	1837			
MA	William M	Elizabeth	Sarah R	1840			
MA	William M	Eliza A	Thomas W	1844	Probably died before 1846		
MA	William M	Eliza A	Thomas W	1844	Probably died before 1846		
MA	William K	Eliza	Thomas W A	1846	Probably duplicate of William M		
MA	William M	Eliza A	Thomas W	1846			
MA	William K	Eliza	Mary A	1848	Probably duplicate of William M		
MA	William M	Eliza A	Mary A	1848			
MA	William	Eliza	Cathrine	1855			
MA	William	Eliza A	Male	1857	Molong		
MA	William M	Eliza	Male	1859	Orange		
MA	William	Eliza	Eliza	1862	Orange		
MA	William	Eliza	Martha J	1865	Orange		
MA	William	Eliza	Frederick J	1866			
MA	William M	Eliza A	George R	1867			
MA	William M	Eliza A	Caroline S	1868	Orange		
MA	William	Eliza A	Fanna A	1870	Orange		
OURS	William	Eliza	Eliza	1841		Betsey?	1840
OURS	William	Eliza	Agnes	1843		Agnes	1842
OURS	Not indexed	Not indexed		1846		John	1846
OURS	William	Elizabeth	Susannah	1848		Susannah	1848
OURS	William	Elizabeth	Susanna	1849		Susannah	1849
OURS	Not indexed	Not indexed		1851		William	1851

Note that young Eliza may have been known in the family as Betsey to distinguish her from her mother. Note also that there seem to have been two records of Susannah's baptism.

This research details up to 28 children who were born between 1824 and 1870 (recognising that some may have more than one baptism record). It seems very likely that the two William K ones are mis-transcriptions of William M.

There is no doubt that this MUST be more than one couple. The NSW marriage indexes reveal only two marriages of a William Baker to an Eliza between 1788 and 1850, both in 1844. **The second of these is OUR William and Eliza.**

Registration Number	Groom's Family Name	Groom's Given Name(s)	Bride's Family Name(s)	Bride's Given Name(s)	District	PDF availability
<input type="checkbox"/> 455/1844 V1844455 29	BAKER	WILLIAM M	MILLGATE	ELIZA A	CL	Unavailable
<input type="checkbox"/> 285/1844 V1844285 94	BAKER	WILLIAM	CONNORS	ELIZA	LG	Readily Available
<input type="checkbox"/> 258/1844 V1844258 94	BAKER	WILLIAM	CONNORS	ELIZA	LQ	Unavailable

Illustration 7. Index records of NSW marriages between William Baker and Eliza 1788 to 1850.


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William M Baker and Eliza A Millgate were married at Kelso in 1844⁸. It is possible that they are the parents of Thomas W (1844), Thomas WA 1846, Mary A 1848, Cathrine 1855, male 1857, male 1859, Eliza 1862, Martha J 1865, Frederick J 1866, George R 1867, Caroline S 1868 and Fanna A 1870.

Several of these children were registered at Molong or Orange between 1857 and 1870. An Eliza A Baker died at Orange in 1883⁹. The indexes reveal that there was a very large Baker family at Orange during and after this period. While a total of twelve children is quite possible, it would be remarkable for them to span a period of 26 years, so it is more likely that this is two separate families.

It seems likely that the four children born between 1824 and 1840 were a different family. There is no record of their marriage.

This research has confirmed what we already knew about William and Eliza's children but has not added anything new.



NEW SOUTH WALES

BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES REGISTRATION ACT 1995


DEATH CERTIFICATE

REGISTRATION NUMBER
1872/ 005719

Date and place of death	Name and occupation	Sex and age	Cause of Death Duration of last illness; medical attendant; when he last saw deceased	Name and occupation of father Name and maiden surname of mother	Informant
3 rd December 1871	Mary Anne Smith	Female	(1) Peritonitis (2) 3 days (3) J. W. W. W. (4) 3 rd December 1871	(1) William Baker (2) James (3) Elizabeth Common	James L. Baker Husband Molong

Particulars of registration	When and where buried; name of undertaker	Name and religion of Minister and names of witnesses of burial	Where born and how long in the Australian Colonies or States	Place of marriage, age, and to whom	Children of marriage
W. W. W. W. 3 rd January 1872 ORANGE	2 nd January 1872 Orange J. & J. W. W.	Dr. J. W. W. W. Presbyterian Dr. W. W. W. W. Dr. W. W. W. W.	New South Wales Water	(1) 15 years (2) 15 years (3) James Smith	Elizabeth 20 Catharine 18 Thomas 15 Mary Ann 13 Catharine 9 James 1

Before accepting copies, sight unaltered original. The original has a coloured background.



REGISTRY OF BIRTHS
DEATHS AND MARRIAGES
SYDNEY 21 Jan 2009

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of particulars recorded in a Register in the State of New South Wales, in the Commonwealth of Australia

Greg Cherry
Registrar

Illustration 8. Death Certificate of Mary Ann Smith nee Baker in 1872

Mary Ann Smith nee Baker

In April 2021 I received an email from Baker researcher Kim Davies who identified herself as the 3G-granddaughter of Mary Ann Smith who had died in 1871. Mary Ann's husband James Smith had provided the information on her death certificate¹⁰ that they had married at Carcoar when Mary Ann was 15 years old and that they had produced a family of six children. He also stated that she was 37 years old (born 1834) and that her parents were William Baker (farmer) and Elizabeth Connors. I could not find a baptism record that corresponds with these details.

Mary Ann could be one of William Baker's missing daughters. But she can't also be Eliza Connor's daughter, because she was not listed by William Baker on Eliza's 1876 death certificate (which states "none dead" in relation to Eliza's children). There are two possible explanations for the contradiction between the two death certificates. One explanation could be that Mary Ann was William's daughter from an earlier relationship and that she was subsequently "adopted" by Eliza when she started a relationship with William. This would explain why James Smith considered Eliza to be Mary Ann's mother. **Alternatively, Mary Ann Smith may have been a daughter of a different William Baker and a different Elizabeth Connors.**

A collection of William Bakers

I now moved on to the difficult task of identifying what William Baker had been doing prior to his marriage at Bathurst in 1844. I had previously experienced a similar genealogical roadblock with another family member: Patrick Tobin. I had broken through that roadblock by identifying every single person named Patrick Tobin who had been living in NSW at the time and then researched each systematically to eliminate them from my enquiries. I decided that a similar approach was required for William Baker.

While I knew that our William Baker was in NSW by 1844, I had little certainty about when he had arrived. His death certificate implies that he arrived around 1822, but the informant was clearly uncertain. I decided to start from 1788 and work up to 1844.

I identified my candidates using primary records indexed on the NSW Archives, Ancestry and FindMyPast sites.

Convicts

Most of the William Bakers who arrived in NSW before 1844 were convicts, 30 in total.

DA. There was a William Baker on the First Fleet's *Charlotte*. He was a marine who later moved to Tasmania where he died in 1836¹¹.

DB. A convict named William Baker arrived in 1790 aboard *Neptune*. He was living at Windsor in 1828 and he died there in September the following year¹².

C1. William Baker arrived in 1791 aboard *Albermarle*¹³.

C2. William Baker arrived in 1791 aboard *Atlantic*¹⁴.

C3. William Baker arrived in 1798 aboard *Barwell*¹⁵.

C4. William Baker arrived in 1791 aboard *Britannia*¹⁶.

CA. William Samuel Winsor Harris Baker arrived in 1811 aboard *Ruby*. He obtained a conditional pardon on 8 June 1816 that was replaced by an absolute pardon on 22 November 1817¹⁷. He is not recorded on the 1828 census, so he may be the William Baker who had died in 1824 aged 58¹⁸.

DD. Another convict named William Baker arrived in 1814 aboard *General Hewett*. He died in September 1832¹⁹.

CB. This William Baker arrived in 1816 aboard *Atlas*. He was granted a Certificate of Freedom on 1 September 1825²⁰. He was refused permission to marry Mary Ann Cotter in February 1829 but married Mary Shea later that year²¹. He was convicted of murder and executed at Sydney on 7 November 1840²².

CC. This William Baker (a Londoner who was born circa 1798) arrived in 1817 aboard *Morley* (1). He was recorded as employed by the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens on the 1828 census²³. He was granted a Ticket of Leave in 1835²⁴ and a Conditional Pardon on 1 July 1841²⁵. After stealing four mares in 1841 he became a bushranger who was ultimately recaptured in May 1844. In September that year he was sentenced to transportation for a further ten years²⁶.

CD. This William Baker (born circa 1794-98) was a waterman from Worcester who was tried at Nottingham in October 1818 and sentenced to transportation for 7 years²⁷. He arrived at Sydney on 26 June 1819 aged 25 aboard *Baring*²⁸ and was sent to Parramatta for "general distribution" on 3 July that year²⁹. On 27 August 1821 he was convicted of an offence by the Judge Advocate in Sydney and was sentenced to serve the remainder of his sentence at Newcastle, where he was sent three days later aboard *Elizabeth Henrietta*³⁰. He was recorded as a government servant at Newcastle on the General Muster of 1822³¹. He was removed from Newcastle to Port Macquarie by *Mermaid* on 15 Sep 1823³². At the expiry of his sentence, he was given a Certificate of Freedom on 9 November 1825³³. He was recorded on the 1828 census as a 30-year-old labourer who was in the service of Stephen Burcher at Liverpool and who was free by servitude³⁴. He served a four-month sentence in Parramatta Gaol from 5 February 1836³⁵.

CE. William Baker arrived in 1818 aboard *Morley* (2) having been tried at Maidstone³⁶. He was recorded at Port Macquarie on the 1828 census.

CG. This William Baker arrived on 30 January 1828 aboard the *Marquis of Huntley*³⁷. He was recorded on the census later that year as a 26-year-old servant of George Best at Seven Hills³⁸.

CJ. A William Baker arrived in 1827 aboard *Champion*. He was a wheelwright from Surrey who was at West Maitland in 1840³⁹.

CK. This William Baker was a servant from Cork who arrived in 1828 aboard the *Marquis of Hastings*⁴⁰. Later that year he was recorded on the census as a 26-year-old servant of F Flanagan in Pitt Street, Sydney. He was given a Ticket of Leave at Parramatta. He was later tried in the Yass district. He is almost certainly identical with the William Baker who committed suicide at Yass in 1842⁴¹.

CL. This William Baker arrived in NSW in 1828 aboard *Eliza*. He was given a Certificate of Freedom on 25 April 1834⁴².

CM. This William Baker arrived in 1829 aboard *Claudine*. He was given a Certificate of Freedom on 23 May 1836⁴³.

CN. This William Baker was tried at Lincoln Assizes in 1829 and arrived that same year aboard *Morley* (3). He was granted Tickets of Leave in 1843, 1845 and 1846 for the District of Windsor. He was recommended for a Conditional Pardon on 3 June 1846⁴⁴ and granted it on 30 Sep 1847.

CO. This William Baker was convicted at Dublin on 5 November 1828 of “felony money” and arrived on the *Guildford* in 1829⁴⁵. Despite being convicted in Ireland, the convict indents state that his native place was in Somerset⁴⁶. He was assigned to H Clements at Liverpool and recorded there on a Convict Muster in about 1829⁴⁷. He was granted a Ticket of Leave on 1 December 1833 (which gives his native place as Wellington in Somerset), but it was cancelled on 15 May 1834⁴⁸. This cancellation may have been the root cause behind his arrest on 2 June 1834 on a charge of deserting his assigned station⁴⁹. He was returned to Lieutenant Hanbury Clements. He was given a Certificate of Freedom on the expiry of his sentence on 5 November 1835⁵⁰.

CQ. This William Baker was tried at the Somerset Assizes and arrived in 1831 aboard the *Isabella* (although he is not listed in the indents). He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the District of Merton⁵¹. He was granted a Conditional Pardon on 11 December 1847⁵².

CR. This William Baker was tried at the Suffolk Assizes and arrived in 1832 aboard *Planter*. He was granted a Ticket of Leave⁵³ and recommended for a Conditional Pardon on 1 May 1843⁵⁴.

CS. This William Baker was tried at London and arrived in 1832 aboard *Portland*. He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the District of Maitland⁵⁵. He applied for permission to marry Eleanor Moore at West Maitland on 23 July 1840⁵⁶.

CT. This William Baker arrived in 1832 aboard *Hercules*. He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the Scone District⁵⁷ and given a Certificate of Freedom on 26 October 1838⁵⁸. In 1851 he went on trial at Parramatta.

CU. This William Baker was tried in Sussex and arrived in 1832 aboard the *Asia*. He was granted Tickets of Leave in 1838⁵⁹, 1839, 1841, 1842 and 1843 on the recommendation of the Patricks’ Plains and Singleton Benches.

CV. This William Baker was tried at the Somerset Assizes and arrived in 1833 aboard *Mangles*. He sought permission to marry Margaret Rorke on 9 Sep 1843⁶⁰. He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the Bathurst District⁶¹ and later a Conditional Pardon on 30 September 1847⁶².

CW. This William Baker arrived in 1833 aboard *Heroine*. He was given his Certificate of Freedom on 6 May 1839⁶³.

CX. This William Baker was tried at the Staffordshire Quarter Sessions and arrived in 1834 aboard *Henry Tanner*, aged 36 years. He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the Bathurst District⁶⁴ and later a Conditional Pardon on 30 January 1841⁶⁵.

CY. This William Baker was tried at Middlesex and arrived in 1834 aboard *Hooghley* (although he is not listed in the indents). He was granted a Ticket of Leave for the Williams River District⁶⁶ and later a Certificate of Freedom on 25 November 1841⁶⁷.

CZ. This William Baker was a stonemason who was tried at the Gloucester Quarter Sessions and arrived on 30 January 1835 aboard the *Bengal Merchant*, aged 26 years. He was granted Tickets of Leave for Muswellbrook and Moreton Bay⁶⁸ at various times.

C10. This William Baker was convicted at Gloucester Quarter Sessions and arrived aboard *Bengal Merchant* on 9 December 1836⁶⁹. He was a waggoner who was granted a Certificate of Freedom on 30 October 1843⁷⁰.

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Born in the Colony

At least two William Bakers were born in NSW before 1844.

BA. A William Baker (noted as “BC” – born in the colony) was recorded as a house servant to Thomas Evernden at Bartlett near Bathurst on the 1828 census⁷¹. His parents may have been:

- 1801 – Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Lewis;
- 1808 – William Baker and Mary Raycroft; or
- 1810 - William M Baker and Ann.

BB. This William Baker was recorded on the 1828 census as a ten-year-old who had been born in the colony, a son of shoemaker John Baker a of Kent Street Sydney who had arrived as a convict on *Recovery* in 1819⁷².

Came Free

Very few of the William Bakers who arrived in NSW before 1844 came free.

DC. A William Baker died in 1802, but it is not clear how he came to NSW⁷³.

FA. This William Baker was recorded on the 1828 census as the 6-year-old son of John Baker who had come Free on the *Frederick* in 1827 and was employed by the Australian Agricultural Company at Port Stephens⁷⁴.

FB. This William Baker was recorded on the 1828 census as a 20-year-old Settler at Mirandadale, Luskentyre⁷⁵.

FC. This William Baker was recorded as a soldier of the guard by Surgeon John Smith in his Journal aboard the *Marquis of Huntley* that arrived in 1828⁷⁶.

FF. William Baker was recorded on the index to the Settler and Convict List of 1822 as having come free in 1810 on the *Frederick*⁷⁷. However, that ship did not come to Australia until 1815 and 1817. This must be a mistaken reference to FA (see above) whose father came on the *Frederick*.

That makes a total of 30 convicts, plus 5 who came free and 2 who were born in the colony, thus bringing us to a total of at least 37 different individuals named William Baker who were in NSW before 1844. How do we identify which of these is our ancestor?

Elimination

Firstly, I attempted to reduce the list of possibilities by eliminating all of those that could not have married Eliza Connor in 1844 at Bathurst.

- **Deaths x 7** - We can eliminate DA, DB, DC and DD because they had all died before 1844. CA was not recorded on the 1828 census, so may been one of the two William Bakers who died in 1824 and 1825. CB was executed for murder in 1840. CK probably committed suicide at Yass in 1842.
- **Born in the Colony x 2** – We can eliminate BA and BB because our ancestor immigrated to NSW around 1822 (according to his death certificate); therefore, he was not born in the colony.
- **Arrived too early x 4** – C1, C2, C3, C4 (and DA, DB and CA) all arrived at least ten years earlier than the 1822 date indicated by the information on his death certificate.
- **Arrived too late x 10** – CR, CS, CT, CU, CV, CX, CW, CY, CZ, and C10 all arrived ten or more years after the 1822 date indicated by the information on his death certificate.
- **Still convicts after 1844 x 2** – CN, CQ (and CV) were all granted tickets or pardons after 1844 when our ancestor was married at Bathurst as a free man.

- **Incompatible facts x 2 –**

- Between 1841 and 1844, CC was a bushranger who was later captured, tried and given a further ten-year sentence that would coincide with the period when our ancestor's children were born.
- The existence of FF in the 1822 index is incompatible with the fact that the *Frederick* did not arrive in 1810, so FF is almost certainly the same person as FA.
- (Note also that CT went on trial at Parramatta in 1851 when our ancestor was working to support his family at Rockley.)

Shortlist

That leaves a shortlist of 10 cases that required further analysis: CD, CE, CG, CJ, CL, CM, CO, FA, FB and FC. These all arrived in NSW within 10 years of 1822 and are not known to have died before 1844 or to have been convicts post 1844. Following that analysis, I was able to eliminate several more.

CJ (*Champion* 1827) was recorded as 16 years old on the convict indents of the *Champion*, implying a birth year of 1811⁷⁸. That makes him about 13 years too young.

CG (*Marquis of Huntley* 1826) was closer to the right age (born circa 1803) but the convict indents for the *Marquis of Huntley* record that his Native Place was Wicklow, Ireland⁷⁹. Since our William Baker was English, we can eliminate CG from further enquiry.

FA William Baker was recorded as 6 years old on the 1828 census, making him far too young to be our ancestor (who was born ca 1798)⁷⁴.

FB William Baker was recorded as 20 years old on the 1828 census, making him about ten years too young to be our ancestor⁷⁵.

Since this further analysis has allowed us to eliminate a further 4 of the shortlist of 10 possibilities, we are now left with just six: CD, CE, CL, CM, CO and FC. Nevertheless, if some of the “known” information about our ancestor is wrong then it is possible that one or more of these have been wrongly eliminated. For example, if his death certificate age was incorrect or he had not been in NSW for “about 60 years” at the time of his death, then several of the possibilities have been eliminated on a false premise.

Last candidates standing

So, we have managed to cull our long list of 38 down to just 6 possibilities.

CD (*Baring* 1819) was a waterman from Worcester who was born circa 1794-98. He was last recorded serving four months in Parramatta Gaol in 1836.

CE (*Morley* 2 1818) was a blacksmith from Maidstone who was born circa 1793. That is five years older than our ancestor was said to be on his death certificate.

CL (*Eliza* 1828) was a 22-year-old farm servant from Winchester who had been convicted of housebreaking in Surrey and sentenced to 7 years transportation⁸⁰. He faced court in Sydney on 16 January 1829 charged with absconding from his assigned station. He was sentenced to receive 50 lashes at Parramatta⁸¹. He was granted a Certificate of Freedom on 25 April 1834⁸².

CM (*Claudine* 1829) was a carpenter from Bristol who was born circa 1811 (although a Convict Muster dated around 1829 implies a birth year of 1802). He was at Wellington NSW in 1828-1832 before he absconded from Mr J Thorp along with James Bryan,

William Christopher and Thomas Connor⁸³. He was given his Certificate of Freedom on 23 May 1836.

CO (*Guildford* 1829) was a ploughman from Wellington in Somerset who was tried at Dublin in 1828. He was granted a Ticket of Leave on 1 December 1833, but it was cancelled on 15 May 1834. He was given a Certificate of Freedom on the expiry of his sentence on 5 November 1835.

FC was recorded as a soldier of the guard by Surgeon John Smith on his Journal aboard the *Marquis of Huntley* that arrived in 1828. But this may have been a mistaken reference to convict CG who was on the same ship (and was eliminated earlier).

So, one of our six possibilities may be a phantom (a mistaken reference to someone else). The five remaining were all convicts. Once convicts had served out their sentence and obtained a Certificate of Freedom, subsequent records did not record their ship of arrival, making it difficult to associate such records with our six possibilities. For this reason, we cannot make much more progress using the approach that has got us this far.

The Wellington connection

Having narrowed down our list of possibilities, we are in a better position to assess any information that we can find from looking at other clues.

Isaac Baker

Fifteen years ago, I was contacted by “Scutts Family” who descends from an Isaac Baker who emigrated with his family to NSW in 1855 aboard the *Ascendant* and first settled at Rockley. This family had subsequently moved to Cargo during the 1870s. The researcher noted that the passenger manifest states that Isaac Baker had a brother named William Baker living at Campbell’s River near Bathurst (exactly where our William Baker was living). I offered some advice on options for further research, noting that the aim would be to find other evidence to confirm a link to our William Baker. I did not take any action myself because I was heavily involved in other genealogy projects at that time.

About the same time, I corresponded with researcher Robyn Rogencamp who passed to me a summary of Maureen’s research on the family of Isaac Baker. I have just re-read those emails and noticed that among this information was the following:

I have a copy of the 1851 census for Isaac's mother Elizabeth Baker who was living at Wellington, Somerset. She was shown as aged 78 and a widow. Her occupation is shown as pauper, former farmer's wife; and she was born at Milverton Somerset. Living with her was a son Robert Baker who was 48 (making him born circa 1803) born Thorne St Margaret who was unmarried; and occupation shown as labourer.

This is interesting because one of our six remaining William Bakers (CO, *Guildford* 1829) came from Wellington! This opens the prospect of finding evidence that links Isaac Baker to William Baker of the *Guildford*. So, I decided that now is the time to finally find out as much as possible about the family of Isaac Baker.

The passenger list for the *Ascendant* describes him as a 41-year-old wheelwright who had been born at Thorne St Margaret in Somerset⁸⁴. His parents are named as the late Samuel Baker and his widow Elizabeth, who was then residing at Thorne St Margaret.

Isaac’s wife Eliza (aged 40) had been born at Sampford Arundel (2.5 miles from Thorne St Margaret), daughter of William and Ruth Sheppard (both deceased). Isaac and Eliza were accompanied by their children: Elizabeth (aged 16, a general house servant), James (14, labourer), Emma (12), SarahA (8), Charles (2) and Frederick (an infant who had been born on the voyage).

The passenger list also records that Isaac Baker had “a brother W^m Baker residing at Campbell River near Bathurst”.

A different version of the passenger list for the *Ascendant* records that the oldest four children had all been born at Bristol (Somerset), while Charles had been born at St Marylebone in London⁸⁵.

Four years earlier, this family had been recorded on the England census of 1851 living at 109 Edgeware Road, St Marylebone in London⁸⁶. All the details correlate to those recorded on the passenger list of the *Ascendant*. SarahA is revealed to be SarahAnn. Their household also included servant Isaac Wight, a 20-year-old carpenter from Wellington (Somerset).

Isaac and Eliza were recorded on the 1841 census living at Saint Augustine Place, Bristol⁸⁷. He was said to be a 25-year-old coach maker (which is consistent with his later trade of wheelwright) and she was said to be 20 years old. Their children Elizabeth (3) and James (1) were not living with them, and I could not find them elsewhere on the 1841 census.

Eliza Shephard had married Isaac Baker at Bedminster (Bristol) on 9 November 1837⁸⁸. The parish register entry confirms that Isaac was a son of Samuel Baker, Yeoman.

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
60	9 November 1837	Isaac Baker	of full age	Bachelor	Wheelwright	East Street	Samuel Baker	Yeoman
		Eliza Shephard	of full age	Spinster		Alens Square	William Shephard	Miner

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by me, W. Carter Junr Curate

This Marriage was solemnized between us, Isaac Baker and Eliza Shephard in the Presence of us, John Hanley and Benjⁿ John Poom

Illustration 9. The marriage of Isaac Baker and Eliza Shephard in the Parish Register at Bedminster, Bristol on 9 November 1837.

Isaac Baker had been baptised at Thorne St Margaret on 6 January 1815, a son of Samuel and Elizabeth Baker⁸⁹.

No. 11.	1815	Isaac	Samuel	Baker	of this	German D. Waller
	Jan ^y 6 th	Son of	Elizabeth			
No. 12.						

Illustration 10. Baptism record of Isaac Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 6 January 1815.

Samuel and Elizabeth Baker

To establish more facts about the family of Isaac's parents, Samuel and Elizabeth Baker, I researched baptism, burial, marriage and census records.

Children

I was able to find two other baptism records for Isaac's siblings. His sister Sarah Baker had been baptised on 23 October 1803, but this is only an index record that does not name the church⁹⁰. The youngest child of the family was baptised Ann Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 12 May 1816⁹¹.

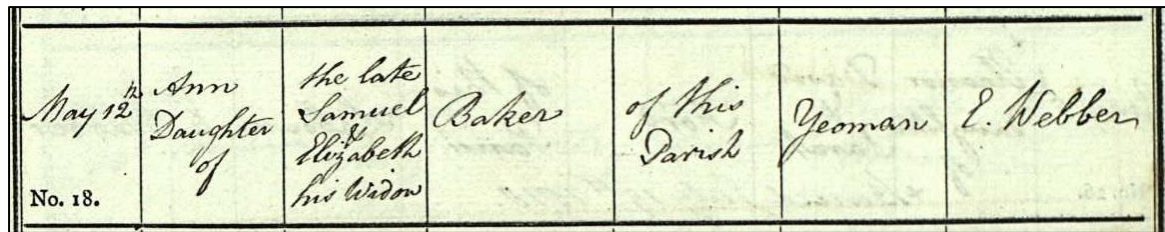


Illustration 11. Baptism record for Ann Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 12 May 1816.

Isaac, his brother William and their sisters Sarah and Ann must have also had a brother named Robert who was born ca 1809. He was to be recorded as the son of their widowed mother on the 1851 census (see below)⁹² and he was also recorded as living with her on the 1841 census (see below).

The siblings may have had another brother named Ephraim who was born ca 1804-1806 at Thorne St Margaret⁹³ and who was to marry Joan Hill at Wellington on 6 July 1837⁹⁴. He was a bachelor husbandman aged 33 whose father was Samuel Baker, farmer. The marriage was witnessed by Robert Baker (probably the brother mentioned above).

Samuel's burial

We know that Ann was the youngest child in the family because her baptism record refers to her father as "the late Samuel Baker" (see Illustration 11 above). In fact, he had been buried in the same church five months earlier at the age of 74 (implying a birth year of 1741)⁹⁵. As we shall see later, his wife Elizabeth was more than 30 years younger!

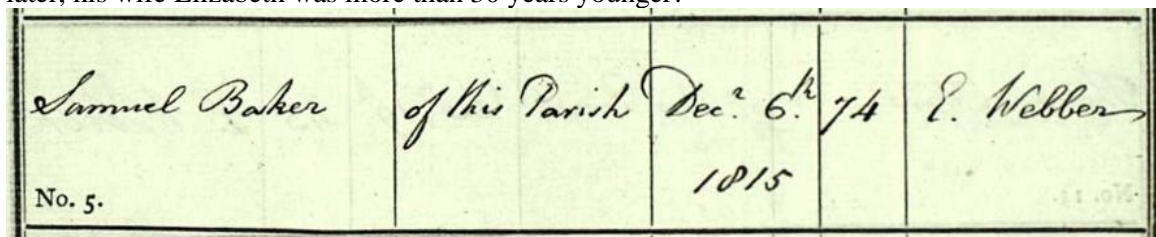


Illustration 12. Burial record for Samuel Baker at Thorne St Margaret on 6 December 1815.

All the 68 trees for this family on Ancestry have concluded that Samuel Baker was buried at Sampford Arundel on 17 January 1840. But, as the 1816 baptism record of his daughter Ann clearly shows, he had died 25 years earlier. This is a classic case of one person making a mistake and 67 others just copying it without question.

Marriage

The online indexes at Ancestry and Find My Past identify just two possible marriage records for a Samuel Baker and a wife named Elizabeth between 1793 and 1815. The second of these (to Elizabeth Hassell on 6 October 1815 at Bedminster)⁹⁶ can be disregarded because this Samuel Baker was an Attorney at Law rather than a Yeoman. He may be the one who was to die in 1840.

It is very likely that the other marriage does relate to our Samuel and Elizabeth because it was celebrated at Thorne St Margaret, where at least two of their children were later baptised. Samuel Baker married Elizabeth Chorley on 31 March 1793⁹⁷. He would have been 52 years old and she would have been just 14 (based on her stated age on the 1851 census record detailed below). The marriage was witnessed by William Hitchcock and Jonas Chorley.

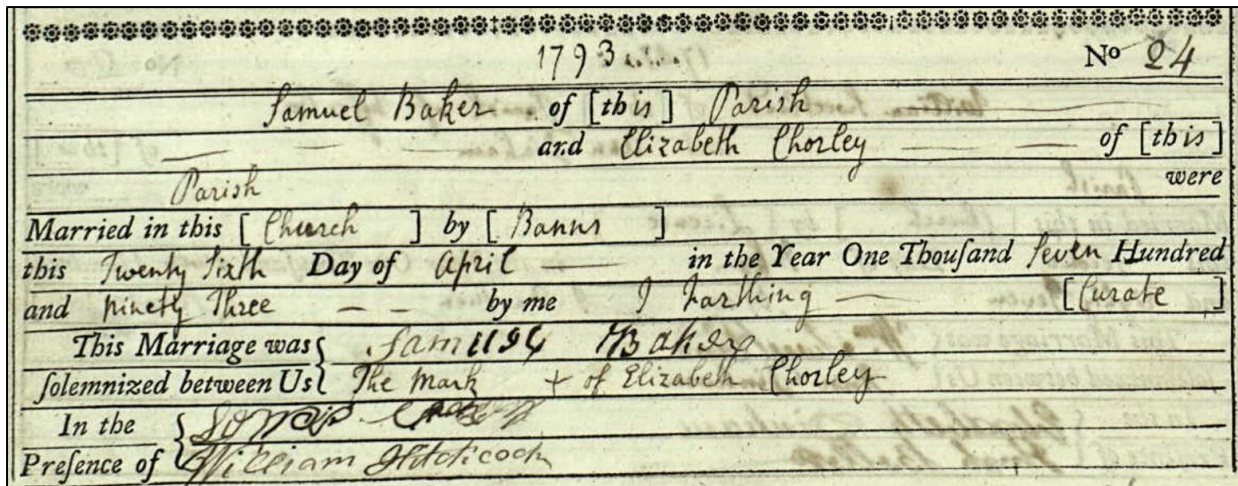


Illustration 13. Marriage record for Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Chorley at Thorne St Margaret on 26 April 1793.

Samuel and Elizabeth were married for 22 years but I could only find baptism records for three children: Sarah in 1803, Isaac in 1815 and Ann in 1816. I could not find any children's burial records that might apply. Nevertheless, as we saw above, they had at least two other sons: William (whom Isaac was to name as his brother residing at Campbell's River near Bathurst in 1855) and Robert (who was born about 1809). They may have also had a son named Ephraim. That is a total of six children over 22 years, but there were probably others. It is noteworthy that the online indexes for Somerset Baptisms start in 1813 but there are earlier records in existence that have not yet appeared in such indexes. For example, Sarah's 1803 baptism is known from a FamilySearch index record, indicating that a researcher transcribed it from the parish register many years ago. That register has not yet been indexed or digitized for online publication. It may contain baptism records for other children of Samuel and Elizabeth, including our William Baker.

Census records

We saw earlier that the passenger list for the *Ascendant* in 1855 stated that Isaac Baker's widowed mother Elizabeth was then "residing at Thorne St Margaret". The obvious first place to look for further information about her was the census that had been taken four years earlier, where we would expect to find her near Thorne St Margaret.

Given that she had been married in 1793 and had children born between 1803 and 1816 (if not earlier), we would expect her to be at least 72 years old in 1851. Nevertheless, given the uncertainty about Elizabeth's age, I cast my net wider and found that there are five records in the 1851 census that could relate.

1. The first can be ruled out because she was the wife of John Baker, a Thatcher living at Sampford Moor. She was to die on 3 September 1857 at Sampford Arundel, aged 80 years.
2. The second was the mother of John Baker, a Tailor at Higher Grenham, Ashbrittle, Wellington but she would have only been two years old when Samuel and Elizabeth Baker were married in 1793.
3. The third was the head of a household at Cottage, Hillfarance, Wellington; but she was even younger.
4. The fourth was a widowed head of a household at North Street in Wellington, who was a "proprietor of houses" who had been born about 1775 at Milverton (about 5 miles away). She had two daughters (Emma 1807 and Elizabeth 1816). But it is very unlikely that our Elizabeth Baker (a farmer's widow) would own several houses.

- That means that the fifth record is the most likely to relate to our Elizabeth Baker. It shows her to be the mother of Robert Baker aged 42 who was the head of the household at Holywell Lake Hamlet, Wellington⁹². Her birthdate of 1773 is about right and she was a “pauper, formerly farmer’s wife”. Robert was an agricultural labourer who had been born at Thorne St Margaret (2.5 miles away). Elizabeth had been born at Milverton (5 miles away).

Parish or Township of		Ecclesiastical District of		City or Borough of		Town of		Village of	
Wellington								Holywell Lake	
Household No.	Name of Street, Place, or Road, and Name or No. of House	Name and Surname of each Person who abode in the house, on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation to Head of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	Where Born	Whether married
					Male	Female			
86	Holywell Lake Hamlet	John Bridgford	Head	Mar	24		Carpenter	Walsbyrton, Leam	
		Ann do	Wife			25		Wellington, Somerset	
		William do	Son					do do	
97	do do	Robert Baker	Head	U	42		do Labourer	Thorne St Margaret do	
		Elizabeth do	Mother	Widow			Pauper formerly Farmer's Wife	Milverton do	

Illustration 14. Elizabeth Baker and her son Robert recorded at Wellington on the 1851 census.

This is the census record that had been identified as relating to Isaac Baker’s mother by the researcher quoted above.

I then sought Elizabeth and/or Robert on the 1841 census. There are six records that could relate.

- The first is the wife of John Baker, the thatcher of Sampford Moor, who was also the first of the 1851 census possibilities to be ruled out above.
- The second was born ca 1766 and was living with John Baker (presumably her husband) at Milway, Wellington along with Jonathan Cutler aged 11, Mary Cutler 8, Jane Bailey 8 and Ann Bailey 7. Given that she was probably married, it is very unlikely that this record related to our Elizabeth Baker.
- The third was born ca 1766 and lived in the household of John Baker (an agricultural labourer aged 40) and Ann Baker aged 45 (probably his wife) at Sampford Moor. Also in the household were Mary Baker aged 12, Eliza Baker 8 and Samuel Pain 5. This could be our Elizabeth living with her son, but we are not aware that she had a son named John.
- The fourth was born ca 1769 and lived at High Street Wellington with Anna Baker 40, Harriet Baker 25, John Craze 74 and Betsy Blackmore 20. Elizabeth was of Independent Means, so is unlikely to be our Elizabeth Baker. This is possibly the Elizabeth Baker who was to be recorded on the 1851 census as a “proprietor of houses” (number 4 above).
- The fifth was born ca 1767 and lived at Culmstock in Devon (about 5 miles from Wellington) in the household of William Brown (an agricultural labourer) and Elizabeth Brown (both aged 40). The Brown family children were involved in the weaving industry as was 10-year-old John Baker. This could be our Elizabeth Baker living with her daughter and son-in-law, but she is not known to have had a daughter named Elizabeth.
- Nevertheless, the sixth record is the most likely⁹⁸. She was born ca 1774 and was a washer woman and head of a household at Blackmore Place in Wellington. Also in the household was Robert Baker, an agricultural labourer aged 30, a clear link with the fifth record from the 1851 census discussed above. Also in the household were

The Baker roadblock

George Chapman aged 30, Sarah Pitts 15, Sarah Stellings 15 and Caroline Leach 15 (all weavers) – probably all lodgers. It was common for widows to take in laundry and lodgers.

do		Elizabeth Baker	17	Washing Woman	
		Robert do	30	do do	
		George Chapman	30	Woolen Weaver	
		Sarah Pitts	15	W Factory	
		Sarah Stellings	15	do do	
		Caroline Leach	15	do do	

Illustration 15. Elizabeth and Robert Baker at Blackmore Place in Wellington on the 1841 census

Elizabeth's death record

I next checked the 1861 census but could not find any likely records, so Elizabeth had probably died by then. So, I then checked several possible death records without finding the correct one.

1. The indexes at FindMyPast include several records that relate to the death or burial of an Elizabeth Baker who was born ca 1769-1777 and buried at Sampford Arundel on 12 September 1857. The indexes indicate that the death certificate is available from the General Register Office (GRO) on page 220, volume 5C in 1857 for the Wellington District. I obtained the death certificate, but it turned out to relate to the wife of John Baker (the thatcher) mentioned above as census possibilities 1 in 1851 and 1 in 1841.
2. There is an index record for Betty or Betsy Baker who was buried at Anglican All Saints, Nynehead (Wellington) on 1 June 1858. I searched the GRO index for this record and found it to be page 219 in volume 5C of 1858 for the Wellington District but this index indicates that Betsy was only 38 years old – too young to be our Elizabeth Baker.
3. The GRO index also includes a record (page 237 in volume 5C of 1854) for Elizabeth Baker of Dulverton, aged 90. I obtained this death certificate, but it relates to an "almswoman (who had) worked at agriculture" who died at Kingsbrompton on 2 April 1856 aged 90. The informant was Mary Govier, who had been present at the death. It is very unlikely that this death certificate relates to our Elizabeth Baker, although the likely burial record (6 Apr 1856 at Blessed Virgin Brompton Regis - <https://www.findmypast.com/transcript?id=BMD%2FNBI%2F14673691>) gives her age as 85, not 90. I found Mary Govier at nearby Wiveliscombe on the 1851 and 1861 censuses. She was 58 years old (1851) and married to James Govier with no-one else in the household. I found a likely record of James Govier's marriage, but his wife's maiden name was North. Also, she had been born at Wiveliscombe (both 1851 census and 1861 census), so it seems unlikely that she was a daughter of our Elizabeth Baker.

Summary of Isaac Baker's family

In summary, we know from the passenger list of the *Ascendant* that the parents of Isaac Baker and his brother William were Samuel and Elizabeth Baker; and that Elizabeth was widowed and living at Thorne St Margaret in 1855. It is likely that they are the Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Chorley who were married at Thorne St Margaret in 1793 and that they had a family of at least six

children including William, Isaac, Sarah, Ann, Robert and possibly Ephraim. Samuel died in December 1815 and Elizabeth survived him by at least 40 years. She was living with her son Robert at Blackmore Place in Wellington in 1841 and at Holywell Lake Hamlet in Wellington ten years later. She had died before the 1861 census was recorded.

Comparing the six candidates

I had now completed a reasonably exhaustive research process that was designed to establish as many facts about William and his likely family members as possible before moving on to a comparison with the six most likely candidates who were known to be in NSW in 1844 (as identified above).

Unlikely candidates

Candidate CD (William Baker of the *Baring* in 1819) was about the age indicated on William's 1882 death certificate but that is about the only criterion that fits with the facts about our William that we have established above. He was a waterman from Worcester (110 miles from Wellington), so he is a very unlikely candidate.

Candidate CE (*Morley* 2 1818) was slightly older than candidate CD. He was a blacksmith from Maidstone (189 miles from Wellington) so is also a very unlikely candidate.

Candidate CL (*Eliza* 1828), a farm servant from Winchester, was born about 1806 making him about the right age. He was granted a Certificate of Freedom on 25 April 1834. Candidate CM remains in contention.

Candidate CM (*Claudine* 1829) was a carpenter who was born circa 1811 (although a convict muster implied that he was born ca 1802). He was from Bristol, just 55 miles from Wellington. He absconded from his assigned master, Mr J Thorp of Wellington NSW, along with James Bryan, William Christopher and Thomas Connor. When his sentence expired, he was given a Certificate of Freedom on 23 May 1836. It is possible that a newly freed convict could move the 176 kilometers from Wellington NSW to Rockley to establish a new life. It is also possible that his fellow-absconder Thomas Connor could have been related to Eliza Connors. So, candidate CM remains in contention.

There are no additional records about candidate FC. We know of him from a mention in the journal of the ship's surgeon of the *Marquis of Huntley* in 1828, who identified him as a soldier of the guard. We have already eliminated convict William Baker who came on that ship (candidate CG). He may be simply a phantom created by the surgeon's mistaken identity. Nevertheless, candidate FC remains in contention.

William Baker of the Guildford 1829

Candidate CO (William Baker of the convict transport *Guildford* in 1829) is the outstanding candidate. All the known facts about him are consistent with what we know about our William Baker and his family and there is significant circumstantial evidence that he is our William Baker.

He arrived in NSW as a convict aboard the *Guildford* on 10 July 1829. This was 52.5 years before the death of our William, which is quite a bit different to the "about 60 years in NSW" recorded on his 1882 death certificate. Nevertheless, the informant was not a family member and was clearly not sure about how long William had been in NSW.

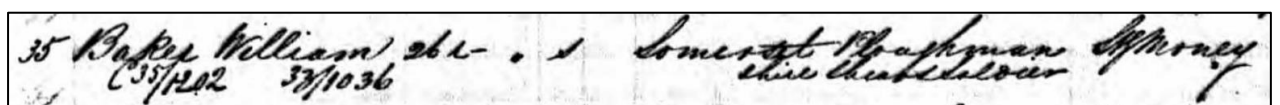


Illustration 16. Extract from the convict indents of the Guildford, 1829.

Guildford William had been convicted in Dublin on 5 November 1828 of “felony money” and sentenced to 7 years transportation. The convict indents for the *Guildford* say that he was 26 years old (born circa 1803) and a native of Somersetshire. He was a ploughman, an occupation that is consistent with his father being a farmer and his brother Robert an agricultural labourer.

The indents also include the words “shears soldier” in the occupation space. This may mean that he was also a shearer and a soldier. I was unable to find any evidence of his service as a soldier.

TICKET OF LEAVE.

No. 37/1036 1 December 1825.

Prisoner's No. —

Name, — William Baker

Ship, — Guildford

Master, — H. Wilson

Year, — 1828

Native Place, — Bellingham

Trade or Calling, — ploughman

Offence, —

Place of Trial, — Dublin

Date of Trial, — 5 November 1828

Sentence, — 7 years

Year of Birth, — 1803

Height, — 5 feet 9 inches

Complexion, — fair

Hair, — light brown

Eyes, — dark grey

General Remarks, — scar under left eye

Allowed to remain in the District of Liverpool

On recommendation of the Bench,

Dated 20 February 1833

Illustration 17. Ticket of Leave for William Baker (*Guildford* 1829)

Nevertheless, this occupation could explain his presence in Ireland (where English regiments were frequently stationed at this time).

The *Guildford* indents note that William was subsequently assigned to “H Clements, Liverpool”. This is confirmed by a subsequent Convict Muster dated “1828-1832”.

467/Baker Willm	26	...	H Clements Liverpool	26
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Illustration 18. William Baker on a Convict Muster circa 1829.

He must have been well-behaved because he was granted a Ticket of Leave on 1 December 1833, just five years after the date of his conviction. It allowed him freedom within the District of Liverpool, NSW. The words written across the document vertically read: “*Cancelled see (Cobscer?) letter No 34/290 15 May 1834*”. The reasons for cancelling his parole are obscure, but he was clearly displeased. He immediately absconded from his assigned station with Mr Clements but was arrested and returned there. His sentence expired on 5 November 1835 and he was given a Certificate of Freedom.

The Ticket of Leave gives his year of birth as 1805, two years younger than the *Guildford* indents imply. These dates are 5 to 7 years younger than his death certificate implies. It confirms that his Native Place was Wellington (Somerset).

Hanbury Clements

In leaving no stone unturned, I decided to research “H Clements” of Liverpool, to whom William Baker was assigned after he disembarked from the *Guildford* in Sydney in 1829. Hanbury Clements (commonly known as Henry) was an Irish aristocrat and Naval Lieutenant who first came to Australia in 1824 as captain of the convict transport *Ardent*⁹⁹. He later decided to move to Tasmania, so embarked his family aboard the *Letitia* (with himself as captain) in 1828. This ship was wrecked at St Jago Island in the Cape Verde Islands on 19 August 1828. There were no fatalities, though all property was lost.

Most of the passengers and crew of the *Letitia* embarked for Rio de Janeiro aboard another ship chartered by the British Consul for the purpose: the *Hesperus*. The Clements family completed their journey from Rio de Janeiro to Australia aboard the *Neptune*, arriving in Sydney in February 1829.

Clements was granted land at Liverpool and provided with convicts to work the land. He is recorded at Harrington Park and Drummond Ville (near Liverpool) before he moved to John’s Grove in 1834. He may have been a hard taskmaster because at least 14 convicts absconded from his employ between 1832 and 1836¹⁰⁰. William Baker, on the other hand, was granted a Ticket of Leave after just five years. It is possible that his skills as a ploughman and shearer made him too valuable to mistreat.

Clements was also granted land at Mount Lawson near Rockley before April 1835 (because an adjacent block of 1,040 acres was described in the NSW Gazette at that time as “commencing 1 mile south from Henry Clements’ 1500 acres”¹⁰¹). The Clements family settled permanently in this area, naming the property Summer Hill after their home in Ireland. It is shown on the earliest map of the Parish of Irene in the County of Westmoreland to be about 5 kilometers from William Baker’s land.

The short distance between the land owned by our William Baker at Rockley and the nearby property owned by Hanbury Clements provides very strong circumstantial evidence that he is the same person as the convict William Baker of the *Guildford* who was employed by Clements from 1829 at Liverpool. When we consider that both William’s brother Isaac Baker and *Guildford* William Baker came from Wellington in Somerset, there is no room to doubt that our William Baker is the one who arrived in Australia on the *Guildford* in 1829.

This suggests that William Baker had continued to work for Hanbury Clements even after his sentence expired in November 1835. It explains how he came to be at Rockley (after spending his first few years at Liverpool). It seems likely that William had moved to the Rockley area at the request of his employer, Hanbury Clements, at least six years before his daughter Eliza (Betsey) was baptised at Pepper’s Creek on 15 May 1841¹⁰².



Illustration 19. Map showing Hanbury Clement's 1500-acre property *Summer Hill* at Mount Lawson in the Parish of Irene, County of Westmoreland.

Conclusion

This research project has produced a broad range of evidence (both positive and negative) that, when considered together, enables us to form a hypothesis about the origins and life of William Baker before his marriage to Eliza Connors in 1844. In my judgement, the evidence (outlined above) for this hypothesis is very strong.

Hypothesis

The evidence in this research report is consistent with a hypothesis that our William Baker was a son of Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Chorley who were married at Thorne St Margaret, Somerset, in 1793. William was probably born around 1805 and had siblings named Isaac, Sarah, Ann, Robert and possibly Ephraim. After their father died in December 1815, their mother made an income by taking in washing and lodgers. William was initially a ploughman and shearer before joining the army.

While posted to Ireland in 1828 he stole some money, was arrested, tried, convicted and sentenced to seven years transportation. He arrived in NSW aboard the *Guildford* in 1829 and was assigned to Hanbury Clements at Liverpool. He was awarded a Ticket of Leave on 28 February 1833, but this was cancelled on 15 May 1834. He may have fathered a daughter named Mary Ann in 1834.

He had probably moved to the Rockley area by 1835 through his continued employment with Hanbury Clements, who had a property there named Summer Hill.

In 1841 his daughter Eliza (known as Betsy) was born at Peppers Creek to his de facto wife Eliza Connors. Another daughter (Agnes) was born in 1842 before he and Eliza married at Bathurst in 1844. John, Susannah and William were added to the family over the next seven years.

The Baker roadblock

Some elements of this hypothesis had already been adopted by many family researchers. There is popular support for the proposition that William Baker was a son of Samuel Baker and Elizabeth Chorley who were married at Thorne St Margaret in 1793, although no-one has previously published a detailed account of why they had come to that conclusion. Conversely, there is also popular support for the notion that Samuel died in 1840, whereas this research project has proved that he died in December 1815.

This research project has identified several new elements of the hypothesis about William Baker's origins. None of his siblings (aside from Isaac) had previously been identified. He had never been associated with William Baker of the *Guildford* before.

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