

## JAMES HEATH (1803-1885)

### Emigrant family open first post office in Werribee

James Heath was a gardener by profession. Before he emigrated in 1863, he and his wife Sarah lived at Leyton in Essex, England.

They were much older than any other migrants on the ship *Princess Royal*. James was 59 and Sarah was 55. They had had 11 children.

One son, Richard Heath, had come to Australia much earlier in 1855 on the ship *Medway* sailing from Plymouth with his wife and family.

Richard settled in Werribee where he opened the first post office in 1858. When district land grants were made available, Richard bought Lot 4 at Wyndham on 29 September 1859. Richard and his wife, Rebecca nee Lowe, also had 11 children.

The post office and attached house was a busy place. His brother Thomas Heath became Commission Heath of the Bacchus Marsh Water Trust.

After James' elderly parents died, he joined his son Richard and family in Werribee.

James died in 1885 at the age of 83. He spent his final years with his family close by. His wife Sarah lived to reach 97 and she died at son Richard's home in Brunswick. She had been in Australia for over 40 years at the time of her passing.

Both James and Sarah were buried at Werribee Cemetery.



#### Find out more

Frazier, E.J. & Watson M.B. *Victorian Post Office Curiosities: a treasure from the archives*, [2015]

James, K.N. (ed) *Werribee: the first one hundred years*, [2008]

Hocking, G. *Wyndham Our Story*, [2013]



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Jan is a professional historian who has worked across the fields of heritage, education and tourism. She has taught at several universities, including Monash University where she delivered the master of public history course. She is also a former Chair of the Heritage Council of Victoria. Jan was appointed to The Greater Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust in 2010.



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