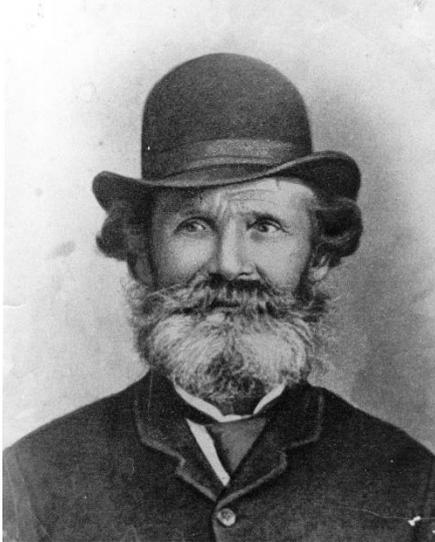


Aimable Ciril Dupérouzel and Julia Neagle

The Duperouzel family are very proud of their French and Irish ancestors who established their roots in York in 1858.



Our French ancestor, Aimable Ciril Dupérouzel, was the youngest of six children. He was born on 17 March 1831 in the small commune of Saint Aubin-du-Perron, Normandy, where his father Charles Dupérouzel worked as a '*journalier*', farm labourer, and his mother, Radégonde Félicité (née Fauny), as a '*domestique*'. Aimable was only a lad when he arrived in Jersey in the Channel Islands as he is recorded as living there in 1848. It is not known for certain why he left France but this was the period when many young men were leaving Normandy and Brittany in search of a better life. Little did he know that his destiny would eventually lead him to a new life in York, Western Australia.

Aimable married Elizabeth Susanne Ferey, a dressmaker, known as Betsy, from the Parish of Trinity, Jersey, on 9 March 1850. Their only child, John Aimable, was born on 15 August 1851 in the Parish of St. John. Following a series of offences Aimable got into trouble with the law in Jersey and was ordered to quit the island in November 1851. The family moved to the nearby island of Guernsey where John Aimable was baptised in the Parish Church of St. Peter Port in February 1852. Sadly, he died on 25 October 1854 aged three and is buried in Candie Cemetery.

After his arrival in Guernsey Aimable appeared in court on three occasions during 1855 and 1856 charged with relatively minor offences. However, when he was arrested on 5 August 1856 it was for a more serious violation of the law. Within four weeks of his arrest Aimable appeared in the Royal Court of Guernsey on 6 September charged with stealing a vast quantity of merchandise and other effects from Dumaresq and Turner, a drapery shop in the High Street of St. Peter Port. It appears Elizabeth made this material into clothes to be sold. The local newspapers, *The Comet* and *The Star*, printed full accounts of Aimable's trial on 8 September 1856.

Whilst awaiting trial Aimable made two ineffectual attempts to escape from Guernsey prison. His wife, Elizabeth, found herself in the same prison as Aimable having been sentenced to three days' imprisonment, with the last 24 hours in solitary confinement on bread and water, for having brought into the prison "*...a parcel containing a pair of trousers in which were some matches and tobacco for her husband, the prisoner Aimable du Pérousel...*". The Royal Court unanimously found Aimable guilty, and, with the exception of Aimable's lawyer, Mr. De Sausmarez, who voted for three months' imprisonment, adopted the conclusions for ten years' transportation!

Aimable was taken from Guernsey to England in November 1856 where he spent time in three prisons, Millbank, Pentonville and finally Portsmouth where he boarded the convict ship the *Lord Raglan* on 6 February 1858 bound for Fremantle, via Plymouth. Aimable was spared the misery of being assigned to a Prison Hulk for the last prison hulk, *Defense*, burned off the Woolwich Docks in July 1857.

On 1 June 1858 Aimable arrived in the Swan River Colony at Fremantle with 267 other convicts. Of the 10,000 convicts sent to Western Australia, between 1848 and 1868, only seven were recorded as being of French origin. Aimable was the only convict of French origin to be sent to the York Convict Hiring Depot. In 1859 Aimable received his Ticket-of-Leave when he was described as '*...the Frenchman grubbing for farmer James Draper...*'. In 1861 he was granted a Conditional Pardon and five years later received his Certificate of Freedom.

In 1861 Aimable was working as a stablehand and labourer for S.S. Parker of Balladong Farm when he met Julia Neagle, a housemaid at the homestead. Julia was born on 14 November 1844, the daughter of Mary McCarthy and Maurice Neagle, a shoemaker from Tipperary, Ireland. Julia arrived in 1861 on board the *Dolphin*. She had come to York to join her sister, Margaret, who had arrived on the ship *Travencore* in 1852 and who later married a former convict, Richard Newport.

On 23 March 1863 Aimable Duperouzel, aged thirty two years, married Julia Neagle, aged eighteen, in the Church of St. Peter, Gilgering, near Beverley. The wedding service was officiated by the Rev. Frederick Lynch who, as Religious Instructor, had accompanied Aimable on the *Lord Raglan*, with his wife Margaret and two sons.

At this time Aimable's marital condition was described as widower and his trade as labourer. In depth research over many years has not revealed what became of Aimable's first wife Elizabeth Ferey.



The first of Aimable and Julia's children, Mary Jane, was born in 1864, and Aimable's rank shown on her birth certificate was recorded labourer. From 1881 his occupation had been elevated to that of farmer. Mary Jane married William James Pittard from Melbourne in 1888 and they had two daughters; John Aimable, who was born in 1866, sadly died suddenly from an attack of measles in 1884; Edward Charles, known as George, was born in 1868, and married Sarah Jane Willey from Beverley in 1895. They had ten children; Emily Jane born in 1871 married James Lauder Wansbrough in 1891 and they had three children; William James born in 1873, married Florence May Fisher from Noggerup and they had eight children; Julia Maud, born in 1876, married William Ovens in 1904 and they had eleven children and Louisa Margaret, born in 1881, married William Thomas Craig in 1914.

Letters, written and signed by Aimable in December 1864 when he was in Guernsey, were discovered in a dossier in Coutances in 1996. This was an exciting discovery for these letters were addressed to his brother Denis Jacques, who at that time was living in Jersey, and his sister Julie Françoise Dupérouzel in Coutances. They indicate that Aimable had returned to Guernsey from York towards the end of 1864 to collect his share of his mother's inheritance. His mother, Radégonde, had died on 12 March 1864. In addition, other documents, discovered as part of this large dossier, strongly indicate Aimable's family in France were under the impression that he had travelled to America in search of a better life. It appears his family in France were never told that he was transported to Western Australia as a British convict.

Following his return to York in early 1865, after having collected his mother's inheritance of 500 francs, Aimable is recorded as farming a plot of land south-west of York called Kokendin, later known as Wootaling, where that same year, he employed Ticket-of-Leave men. Their occupations are recorded as sawyer, herdsman, grubber, teamster and reaper.

It is highly probable that the French convict mentioned in Janet Millett's book, *'An Australian Parsonage, or, the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia'* is Aimable. In a passage on page 250 of her book regarding the need for a savings bank to encourage thrift among workmen she wrote:

A benevolent person whom we know proposed the establishment of a savings' bank for the shepherds, and endeavoured to induce an old colonist to assist him in the scheme, but only met the answer, 'Teach 'em to save their money? that's not what we want; if they once begin they will be our servants no longer!' And the stupid old man, who had himself begun life as a day labourer in England, could not be brought to see that to improve the conditions of individuals would help to enrich the community at large.

Good servants, however, who were bent on saving, could continue to put by money in spite of all disadvantages; and a French convict, who afterwards brought land and did very well, once brought to my husband as much as thirty-eight pounds of his earnings, with the request that he would take care of the sum for him. I was glad when the Frenchman carried away his bank notes a few weeks afterwards, for in Western Australia no one feels safe with money in the house or on the person, so that cheques are given for sums as low as half a sovereign.

In 1871 Aimable made his first application to the Crown for a Tillage Lease of 100 acres at Black Wattle Flats, Qualen, near Talbot Brook. Within a year Aimable employed James Fitton, a Ticket-of-Leave stonemason, to build a four roomed house. By 1891 Aimable had acquired a further 453 adjoining acres and become well established as a landowner, farmer, stockowner and horse dealer.

The York police files were a valuable source of information for revealing a number of instances involving Aimable and his neighbours during the 1870s and 1880s. A small selection of examples include: the use of insulting language outside the Craig Hotel in Avon Terrace; fighting in the street; charging a neighbour for the trespass of 700 sheep on his run; trapping people's horses for the purpose of getting their foals; suspected theft of a horse; charging a neighbour with allowing 22 head of cattle to trespass on his land.

In 1886 Aimable and Julia must have been delighted when the York Road Board approved their application, submitted two years earlier, for road access to York in order to avoid going many miles out of their way. It meant that Aimable and Julia were able to travel into York and go to the market via the shorter route. Aimable also loved to exhibit his horses at the York Agricultural Show.

Julia, who taught the children to read and write, was an excellent dressmaker, cook and cobbler. She was also very courageous and resourceful in having to cope with the long walk into York through some rough countryside, encountering unexpected meetings with local Aboriginal people. On one occasion when on her own and her children were very young, she was quite frightened by the surprise appearance of an Aboriginal person who was peering in at her through the window.

In the mid-1890s Aimable and Julia retired to their newly-built cottage at 46, South Street. This charming cottage has since been renumbered as 30. It is believed Aimable helped with its construction by fetching stone, using his own horse and cart, from the family farm at Qualen.

Despite all the development in York altercations between local inhabitants persisted. Even in the 1890s the lives of men who had been convicts were still tainted by their past. An example of this continuing stigma occurred in 1898 when Aimable charged the owner of the Castle Hotel, James T. Craig, with slander, having accused Aimable, following an altercation opposite the hotel, of being a horse stealer, a murderer, and that he poisoned people who drank at his hotel with poisonous liquor. This incident took place thirty-two years after Aimable had become an expirée. James T. Craig made a counter-claim. The case was heard in the Civil Sittings of the

Supreme Court in Perth and was reported in the Eastern Districts' Chronicle and in the West Australian newspaper. Aimable won the case and was awarded £250 damages.

Aimable Ciril Dup  rouzel died at his home in South Street on 10 December 1901, aged 70 years. Julia and six of their seven children survived him. Aimable was known locally as *'John, the Frenchman'*, probably because of his accent and his way of using the English language. It is not known how much English he actually spoke and whether he was able to fully describe his past experiences, if indeed he ever wanted to do so. It is not entirely surprising that the inscription on his grave headstone in the York Cemetery shows as *'Amiable Sierl Duperouzel, Aged 74 years'* is misspelt instead of Aimable Ciril Dup  rouzel, Aged 70 years. The surname Dup  rouzel lost the acute accent on the    but otherwise remained unchanged.

Julia died on 8 January 1926 and was survived by five of her seven children all with families of their own.



Julia and Aimable were married for thirty-eight years and their unbroken spirit enabled them to establish a farm from scratch in a foreign country and to raise a large family in the York district. Their descendants today, who have only known of Aimable's convict past since the early 1970s, are no longer tainted by the stigma of convict ancestry but instead are justifiably proud of their achievements. Aimable and Julia's grave is featured in the York Cemetery Historical Walk Trail.

Aimable and Julia's daughter, Julia Maud, affectionately known as *'Maudie'* was 94 years old at the time of her death in August 1970. Maudie was married to William Ovens and lived with their eleven children on their farm at Castle Rock. Maudie had a wonderful sharp memory and was immensely proud of her French ancestry. Had she known about her father's convict past she was able to keep this fact a secret and maintain the honour of the family.

The Duperouzel farm at Qualen continued under the stewardship of Aimable and Julia's son, George, who learnt his farming skills from his father and continued to work on the family farm with his brother, William James, until William moved to Arthur River in 1902 before settling and marrying in Noggerup, near Bunbury. Sadly, William pre-deceased his mother having been tragically killed by a falling tree when working as a sleeper cutter for Bunning Bros. Timber Mill in January 1921. His widow Florence was left to raise their eight children, all of whom were under the age of fifteen.

George, like his father, had a great love of horses and developed a reputation as a fine horse breeder. Many of his horses were sold to the Australian Army and some were exported to India. In 1907 George increased the size of the property by acquiring a further 302 acres on which he bred sheep and grew crops. George was a big man and a well-known character in the York district. He enjoyed playing cricket so much that he cleared some land on his property at Qualen to build a cricket pitch. The cricket pitch was situated less than two miles from the family farmhouse not far from the Talbot Road.

George died in 1941, aged 73 years. He was survived by his wife Sarah and six of their ten children. Their son George, born in 1899, married Eunice Brand in 1928 and had four children; Alexander, known as Alec, was born in 1901, joined the WA Police Force in 1924 and married Agnes Mary Hevron in 1928 and had five children; Julia Maud, was born in 1904, married Roy MacLachlan in 1923 and had seven children; Anna, known as Ruby, was born in 1906, married Sam Bartlett in 1927 and had four children; Louisa, known as Alice, was born in 1913, married Stephen Hawkins in 1937 and had five children and Lindsay, known as Ted, was born in 1916, married Mildred Reynolds, known as Tot, and had five children. George and Sarah's eldest son, James Ross, who was born in 1897, volunteered in the AIF in WWI and was assigned to the 51st Battalion. He was killed in at Mouquet Farm, near Pozi  res, Somme, France, in August 1916, aged nineteen. He has no known grave. Elise Maud, born in 1895, died in 1905; John Aimable, born in 1908, died an infant in 1908 and Thomas Frederick, born in 1909, died in 1911, aged two. Sarah survived George by fifteen years.

Ted worked on the family farm before enlisting in WWII as a Trooper in the 10th Light Horse Regiment in York in 1939. In 1941 he married Mildred Hope Reynolds, affectionately known as *'Tot'*, who came from a large farming family in Meckering. They had five children: Gary was born in 1943; Jan was born in 1945; Clive was born in 1947; Bruce was born in 1950 and David was born in 1959. After completing his military service Ted returned to manage the farm and made a number of improvements over the years including the building of a second home, the erection of out-buildings and water dams. The generators which supplied power to the farm were replaced by the installation of an electricity supply in the late 1960s. Ted, like his brother, Alec, and their father, George, enjoyed playing cricket. Ted was a gifted cricketer and hockey player who played for the York Cricket and Hockey Teams for many years, participated in the Country Week cricket and hockey competitions and gave back to the local community in a variety of capacities. Ted died in 1979, aged 62, at which point the farm passed to David, Ted and Tot's youngest son.

David Duperouzel is proud to continue to farm the original land acquired by his great-grandfather over 150 years ago.

Aimable Ciril Dupérouzel and Julia Neagle

Sources:

Extensive family research world-wide was carried out by William Thomas Duperouzel and his wife, Janet Patricia Duperouzel, from 1971. The numerous sources are too many to list here as they are well documented in the family book '*Petrocellum*' which also includes seven family trees.

Further reading:

Petrocellum A Global History of the Families Dupérouzel / Duperrouzel, by William Thomas Duperouzel, published in April 2003, ISBN 0-9544314-0-5

SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE The Story of 4783 Private James Ross Duperouzel 51st Battalion Australian Imperial Force, by William Thomas Duperouzel, published in April 2003, ISBN 978-0-9544314-1-9

SUNSET OVER MOUNT DOURAKING Janet Millett and the Rev. Edward Millett Pioneers of York, Western Australia, by William Thomas Duperouzel, published in June 2019, ISBN 978-0-9544314-2-6

Police Sergeant Alexander Duperouzel South Perth Police Station 1948-1952, by William Thomas Duperouzel, published in December 2022 [Police Sergeant Alexander Duperouzel and Family at South Perth Police Station, 1948 -1952 | William Duperouzel](#)

AN AUSTRALIAN PARSONAGE or, the Settler and the Savage in Western Australia, by Janet Millett, published in 1872

The Brand on His Coat Biographies of some Western Australian Convicts, by Rica Erickson, published in 1983, ISBN 0-85564-223-8

Web site of William Thomas Duperouzel, www.duperouzel.org

The Duperouzel Family In Australia, by Lynette Ann Mitchell (née Duperouzel), published in August 1994, ISBN 0-646-18825-9

FOUR JULIAS: One Hundred Years in York, by Susan Ovens Groom, published in 1993, ISBN 0-646-14838-9