

Melton Family History Group Inc

A0030595D

Registered 6th Dec 1994

December 2021-January 2022

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| Meeting Times: | 6:30pm on the second Thursday of each month except for January |
| Venue: | Melton Library – McKenzie Street, Melton |
| Membership Fee: | \$25 per year payable July each year prior to August A.G.M. |
| Correspondence: | 17 Sutherland Ave, Melton Sth, Vic, 3338. |
| President: | Judith Bilszta |
| Vice President | Janeen O’Connell |
| Secretary: | Ian Bowey |
| Treasurer: | Deborah Slattery |
| Email: | sec.meltonfhg@outlook.com |
| Web site | www.meltonfamilyhistory.org |
| Committee Members: | Sue Morton and Pauline Stotten |

2021 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

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| 22nd December | Christmas break up to be held at the Melton Library at 10:00 am |
| 10 th February | Terry Fogarty on the Melton Aerodrome |
| 10 th March | T.B.A |
| 14 th April | T.B.A |
| 12 th May | T.B.A |

All dates and times are subject to change

Update: Cancellations due to the Corona Virus.

Our Annual General Meeting was held via 'Zoom' on Thursday the 14th of October. Many thanks to all who took the time and trouble to attend.

As no other nominations were received, all committee members retained their roles. Congratulations to all committee members.

As the planned sausage sizzle at Bunnings was cancelled due to government restrictions the organisers for activities at Bunnings has offered us the chance for an information table as soon as community groups are allowed inside their store again.

Our scheduled November meeting was postponed due a misunderstanding between the library and ourselves. A replacement extraordinary meeting was called for the following Wednesday the 17th of November. As this was the first face to face meeting since July, members present had many items to discuss. One item agreed upon was that due to so many cancellations we would not book a guest speaker for every meeting next year.

Exford School transcription from Trove, 5th Jan 1935

The Exford State School was crowded for the break-up gathering at which an entertainment programme was rendered by Misses M. Myers, N. Daniels, L. Winderlich Messrs Robt Butler and D. Cassidy, Barbara Butler and Stanley Winderlich. Every item was much enjoyed and all the performers had to respond to an encore.

The head teacher (Mr J. Fleming) gave an outline of the year's work and thanked the Committee for their assistance.

Knitted jumpers, fancy work, basket work and the children's work-books were on view, evoking general admiration.

Special certificates won in each grade were then presented. The long awaited Santa Claus made his debut and after a cheery word to the children presented each child with a gift and sweets from the well-laden Christmas tree provided by the Committee. With each gift went the promise that he would call on them again on Christmas morning. The room was then cleared and the children danced the first set. After which the adults took the floor. Peanuts and sweets were handed all round and later a bountiful supper was partaken of. The children were proved with soft drinks. Dancing continued until 2 o'clock and an exchange of season's greetings ended another happy break-up.

It has been rumoured that the Exford State School was likely to be closed to maintain another teacher at another school. The Committee would like it known that this is not likely to be as there are enough children attending the school to keep it open.

The above Trove article for Exford School is from Juith Bilszta.

The British National Archives sends me the occasional newsletter. This heart-warming but slightly sad story was in one such newsletter. I hope that you all enjoy reading it as much as I did. (Ian)

From the British National Archives:

A face through time: Further opening up our prisoner of war records

There are millions of stories, both personal and political, buried inside the hundreds of kilometres of files and documents held at The National Archives. The key to discovering and recovering these stories is a search of our catalogue, known, appropriately, as [Discovery](#). Discovery is at the heart of almost all research here and the best way to determine what we hold. It lists, in wildly varying degrees of detail, all the millions of records that we hold.

The catalogue is not static – we are enhancing it all the time to make information easier to locate. Projects are undertaken all the time to expand the descriptions and details we provide for documents, hopefully raising the chances of a successful match following keyword searches – the first step on many research journeys. These cataloguing projects involve close examination of the records. It is rarely possible to duplicate completely the text of a record, but we can try to improve identification by selecting key details to add into the catalogue description.

When you are working on a project to catalogue records that contain details of very large number of individuals, inevitably you come across some interesting cases. The tantalising snippets of people's lives laid out on the page often make it hard to stay focused on the project, such is the temptation to chase after the rest of the story as a piece of it passes before you.

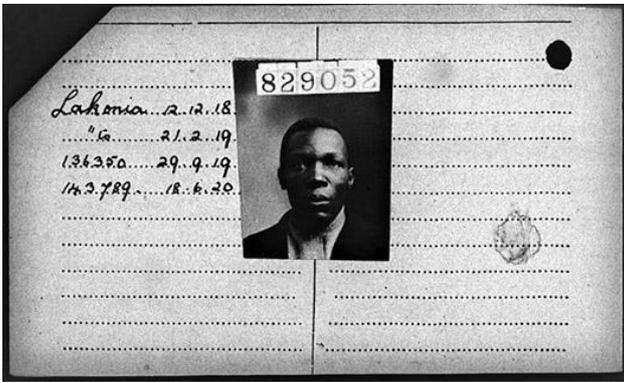
This is exactly what has happened to me during my work on a current project to open up the German-created prisoner of war record cards (WO 416) [described in a previous blog here](#). To date, with the dedication and support of 25 volunteers, we have catalogued more than 120,000 individuals on this project, with over 98,000 of these being made openly available for research. Within these we have found heroes, traitors, spies, unexpected numbers of civilians (including women) and stories crying out for investigation, worthy of years of research.

Every one of these individuals will, of course, have their own story, but the unfortunate truth is that it is the records that survive that will dictate how easy or hard it will be to uncover that story. Often, to reveal the fullest picture possible it is necessary to use multiple sources, some held by The National Archives but others held elsewhere. Much of what survives may only exist in the memories of loved ones, colleagues or other parties involved in the story.

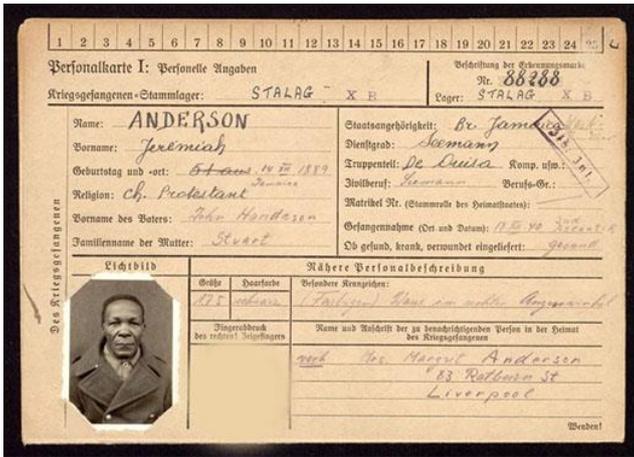
The individual who captured my imagination on this project is called Jeremiah Anderson, a merchant seaman. I am not sure exactly what made him stand out to me, but I think as much as anything it was just how he looked in his photograph. Many men's photographs appear to show any of a range of emotions from angry at being captured to happy to be alive, but in his photograph he looks more calm and focused. I adopted Jeremiah's story because of how he came across in his photograph but also because of what I was subsequently able to find out about him across the records, unfurling a story that, it felt, had been waiting 75 years to be told. His POW records are in [WO 416/7/200](#) and [WO 416/407/26](#).

We can link many of these POW records – particularly for the heroes, traitors and spies – to other records held by The National Archives. Fortunately for my interest in Jeremiah, among the most detailed records that we can link to, and one of the largest sets, are those of merchant seamen. We hold Merchant Navy service records and numerous other series of records for merchant seamen serving during the Second World War. For those who were in the military, their service records, to date, remain with the Ministry of Defence.

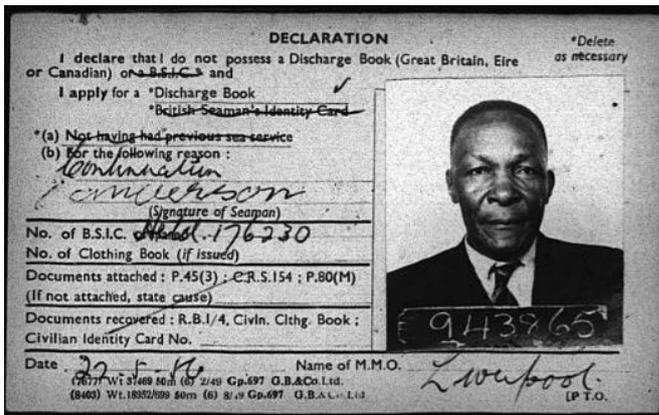
Once I started digging for other records, Jeremiah Anderson's photograph became a more significant factor in unifying what I found. His records actually extend beyond the Second World War, both back to the First World War and forwards towards the end of his career after the war. Across his recorded career the same focused face crops up several times, in 1918, 1940 and 1950.



CR10 card dated c.1918 for Jeremiah Anderson. Catalogue ref: BT 350



POW card for Jeremiah Anderson. Catalogue ref: WO



CR1 card dated 1950 for Jeremiah Anderson. Catalogue ref: BT 364

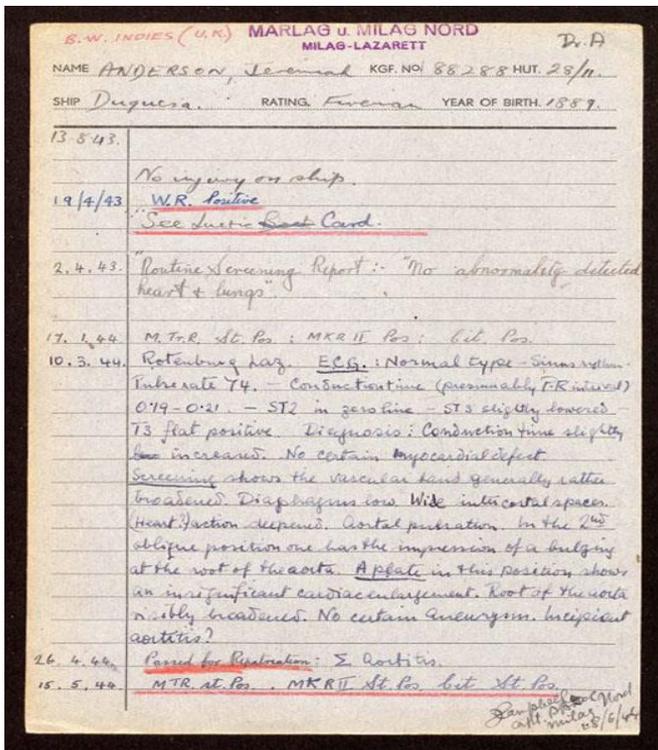
416/7/200

The sense I get is that merchant seamen are a less well-recognised part of the prisoner of war story. Many were captured throughout the war, often in far-flung corners of the world, before being brought to camps in Europe for captivity. Some were captured by raid ships seeking cargo such as oil; many were captured as survivors of ships attacked and sunk.

Working through the boxes of POW records it became apparent that, for each merchant seaman among the prisoners, there was a good chance that there would be two separate records. One would be in the main set of alphabetically arranged boxes and another in a set of special boxes holding cards linked to the medical status of some of the prisoners.

This medical form is believed to have formed part of an assessment made by the Germans about which men they were willing to exchange for prisoners held by Britain. Those not fit to work would be more readily exchangeable.

Merchant seamen, as civilians, were also more exchangeable, compared to military men. Jeremiah Anderson was one such man and was repatriated to the United Kingdom in January 1945, based in part on an assessment of his cardiovascular health when he was passed as suitable for repatriation in April 1944 due to aortitis, as detailed in [WO 416/407/26](#).



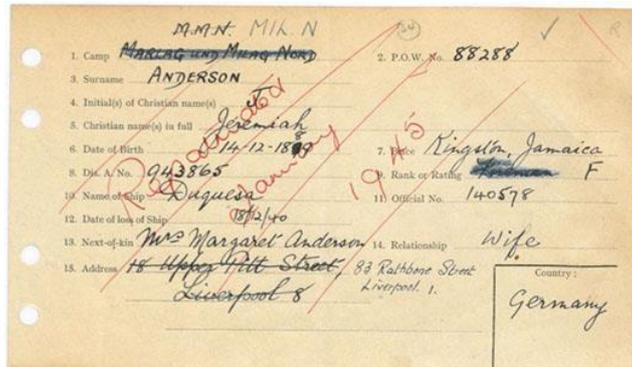
POW card, medical, for Jeremiah Anderson. Catalogue ref: WO416/407/26
 These records, and others found online, revealed that Jeremiah was a migrant from Jamaica who settled in England many decades before the Windrush Generation of the 1950s and 1960s, whose story we more commonly associate with Jamaican immigration to the UK.

Born in 1889, it is unclear from my research when he came to England, but he was living in Liverpool by the end of the First World War and had married Margaret Ann O'Shaughnessy there in May 1918.

I found records for Jeremiah in [BT 350](#), which is like an identity card from around 1918; [BT 364](#), which is an accumulation of various card types from across his career, and further records showing the issue of campaign medals for service in the First World War ([BT 351/1/3108 Index of First World War Mercantile Marine Medals and the British War Medal](#)).

The medal card shows his address as 18 Upper Pitt Street, Liverpool, when they were issued in August 1919. Margaret's home at the time of their marriage was also Upper Pitt Street, but the number is not given on the marriage record so I can only speculate that they remained in what had been her home. This street was at the heart of Liverpool's Chinatown but was also a magnet for seamen from across the world due to its closeness to the docks.

They were still living at 18 Upper Pitt Street in September 1939, when the [1939 Register](#) was created for the issue of war-time identity cards and ration books. This address also appears on merchant navy records created in the early 1940s, around the time of his capture, found in BT 382/28 (his service record) and BT 382/3232 (a record sheet recording his capture), before being updated to a new address.



Jeremiah Anderson – MN POW sheet. Catalogue ref: BT-382-3232

The area around Pitt Street was badly bombed in 1941, which may explain why Margaret is recorded at a new address in Jeremiah's prisoner of war and service records; this new address at 83 Rathbone Street is consistently seen in records through to 1955. It is only a short distance from the old address in an area now redeveloped next to Liverpool Cathedral.

He does not have appear to have been issued with medals for the Second World War ([BT 395](#)), but some of the qualifying criteria for these medals could exclude those captured early in the war due to nothing other than failing to meet a minimum time at sea.

The records located in BT 364 show that Jeremiah Anderson joined the *Duquesa* on 8 June 1940 and was captured on 18 December 1940, and this was not his first voyage of the war – he had joined the *Richard de Larrinaga* on 29 November 1939 (this was itself later lost in May 1941). This should have qualified him for some medals – the War Medal (1939-1945) only requires a minimum 28 days at sea – so my guess is that he simply did not claim those he was entitled to.

The *Duquesa* is an example of how complicated matters could be. At the time Jeremiah was captured, it was in the South Atlantic (actually just south of the Equator, south west of Freetown, Sierra Leone) but it was not lost at this time; that occurred in 1941 while in use by the Germans.

At the time of capture, Jeremiah was part of a group of around 600 prisoners drawn from the crews of several ships attacked by raiders including the German heavy cruiser *Admiral Sheer*. The *Duquesa* was better kept afloat since it was refrigerated and filled with meat and eggs from South America. It was also used in an attempt to lure Royal Navy ships into a trap as they tried to rescue it, designed to allow other German ships to move more freely in the North Atlantic.

The prisoners were sent off to Europe while the ship remained in the Atlantic serving to resupply various German ships so they could remain at sea without risking returning to German-held ports. Crews captured by the German raiders could be moved from one ship to another, often also captured ships, before they reached Europe – all the while at risk of the worst the war and the oceans could throw at them. One of Jeremiah's prisoner of war cards suggests he was in Bordeaux by 7 April 1941.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Befangenenlager: <i>Sup 3 8</i> | Staatsangehörigkeit: <i>England</i> | Nr. der Liste: <i>538</i> |
| Befangenen-Nr.: <i>88288</i> | <i>Jamaika</i> | Seite der Liste: <i>1</i> |
| Name: <i>Anderson</i> | Truppenteil: <i>Seemann</i> | Beruf: |
| Vornamen: <i>Jeremiah</i> | Komp. usw. <i>Regiment</i> | Religion: |
| Geburtsort u. Geburtsort: <i>51 Jahr</i> | Matr. Nr. | Dienstgrad: <i>Seemann</i> |
| Vorname des Vaters: | Ort und Tag der Befangennahme oder Internierung: <i>18.12.40</i> | Verwundungen, Verletzungen oder Tod: |
| Familiennamen der Mutter: | wann und von wo zugegangen: <i>7.4.41 in Bordeaux</i> | |
| Name u. Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person: | | |
| Aufenthalt u. Veränderungen: | | |

Second POW card for Jeremiah Anderson.
Catalogue ref: WO 416/7/200

The remainder of the information found in BT 350, BT 364 and BT 382 waits to reveal Jeremiah's peace-time service by detailing the names or Official Numbers of ships he served on from the *Laconia* from December 1918 to the *Ramon de Larrinaga* from January 1939, and on after the Second World War to his final engagement on the *Maria de Larrinaga* ending in July 1955.

The last entry in his service record (BT 382/28) is of him being discharged at his own request in October 1955 following a period in Sefton General Hospital. He died in 1957.

The various records we hold for merchant seamen are described in our guide to [Merchant seamen serving since 1918](#).

Supplementary details were obtained from other records as indicated and marriage records made available online by Liverpool City Council via [Ancestry](#). Ship history information was obtained from various sources online.

In these uncertain times of lockdown we all need a little bit humour to brighten our day. I came across the following article in the October edition of the Rasper Church Magazine in Sussex. I wrote to the Nick Flint the Church Rector and requested permission to include this article in our next newsletter. Nick was happy for his story to be included, provided he was credited with the story. Hopefully it will bring a smile to your faces. (Ian)

How the Christian Faith Came to Sussex

Let me tell a tale of not just once, but twice or more upon a time that happened here in the Kingdom of the South Saxons. Close to the sea and covered in forest the land was home to a proud people. The greatest boast of this small kingdom was that it contained an unbelievably huge amount of ...MUD. Yes - the South Saxons had the thickest, squishiest, yuckiest, squelchiest, deepest, muddiest mud of any kingdom.' Quite a boast!

King Splat was the muddiest king in history. There was nothing he and his people liked more than to be stuck in the mud, stuck in their ways, doing what they had always done in the way they had always done it.

In the cold bleak north the fame of this kingdom came to the ears of Bishop Wilfrid. He had been told that theirs was the only kingdom in these islands that had yet to hear the stories of Jesus and he decided that he must visit them himself.

Having been told that the roads into Sussex, where indeed any existed, were a peril in which man and beast could easily be stuck and fall prey to bandits, Wilfrid decided to sail by boat to the Sussex coast. As he stepped ashore it was clear to Wilfrid that all was not as it should be. He was met by King Splat's once most proud warriors Splodge and Gloop. They were thin and weak with hunger.

No rain had fallen for three years, no crops had grown, they told him. All Wilfrid could do was fall on his knees in prayer for the desperate plight of this once proud people. Immediately he did so he felt as though tears of compassion had risen to his eyes. In fact, the eyelids of his upturned beseeching face were being wetted with the first drops of rain to fall in three long years. The tears of heaven mingled with those of the saint. He opened them to be greeted with the joyous smiles of Splat, of Queen Squelch and the Prince and Princess, Little Ick and Plop. So, for Sussex and its people there was a new creation as when God had first made man from the brown earth.

But surely there was a long wait to the harvest you will be thinking? A little rain could not mean instant salvation for the starving which is why Wilfrid, putting episcopal decorum to one side, at once doffed his mitre and showed the South Saxons how to use it as a net to catch a harvest of fish from the sea.

On that final note, let me wish each and every one a Merry Christmas and safe and Happy New Year, from all committee members.

Ian