

## FRANCIS JOHN BLINCOE AND HIS FAMILY

Francis John Blincoe left England for New Zealand in 1841. He came from a family of shepherds and agricultural labourers who lived and worked in the area around Windsor, Eton and Clewer.

He and his family had been booked to sail on the London in the middle of the year but failed to do so, very likely because he was still in Reading Gaol! He was probably imprisoned for debt rather than for a criminal offence for the family's emigration had been recommended by their Methodist Minister. At any rate, on Census night in 1841 he was recorded in gaol and his wife Anne and their children were in the Windsor Union Workhouse. .... By the end of the year Francis had been released and a passage for the family had been secured on the Clifford sailing from the Port of London for Nelson in the north of New Zealand's South Island.

Francis was born circa 1789, but at the time of sailing he was recorded as being forty-five years of age perhaps, because he was about twice the average age of English male emigrants<sup>1</sup>. His wife Ann was born circa 1799 and her age was also under-stated as thirty-eight years. The six surviving children who accompanied them were Anne aged fifteen, Sarah thirteen, Francis eleven, John seven, William five and James aged only eleven months.

....Francis and Ann had another daughter, Emily, born in 1843; another son, born about 1848 was recorded in the Census of 1849, but does not seem to have survived.

As a settler ('squatter') in Nelson, Francis and his family lived at first in Nile Street where in 1845 he was recorded as a labourer and the eldest son Francis was in Haven Road working as a domestic servant. By 1849 the family was in nearby Selwyn Place and were tenants of a holding of four acres. Three acres were cleared and cultivated, half planted with wheat and half as gardens; they had four cattle and sixty goats. The house was of earth (presumably un-baked brick) and had a shingled roof.

From 1857 Francis and Ann owned a block of land in Kawai Street that passed to Francis junior when his father died in 1871.

Francis may have been a bit of a rough character, in 1845 he was fined 25s. for being drunk and £2 for assaulting one John Greenwood. In 1849 he was again fined 5s. for being drunk but complaints against him for cattle trespass (in 1846) and indebtedness (in 1848) were dismissed. When he emigrated he had been described as 'farmer, bricklayer's labourer', but he excelled as a gardener, a talent and enthusiasm that has been passed down the generations. ....

Pam Blincoe

Extract from a chapter written by Pam Blincoe descendant of Francis,