

# SOUTH BEACH PIONEERS

The Pearse Family

L.G. McConachy, J.B. Morris, D.J. Robinson

Dedicated to Barry, Dave, and Heather, for their forbearance during the three-year compilation of this book PLUS Andrea & Stewart McConachy rebuilding the book to an Electronic Version on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2016

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# 'South Beach Pioneers'

The Thomas Pearse Family

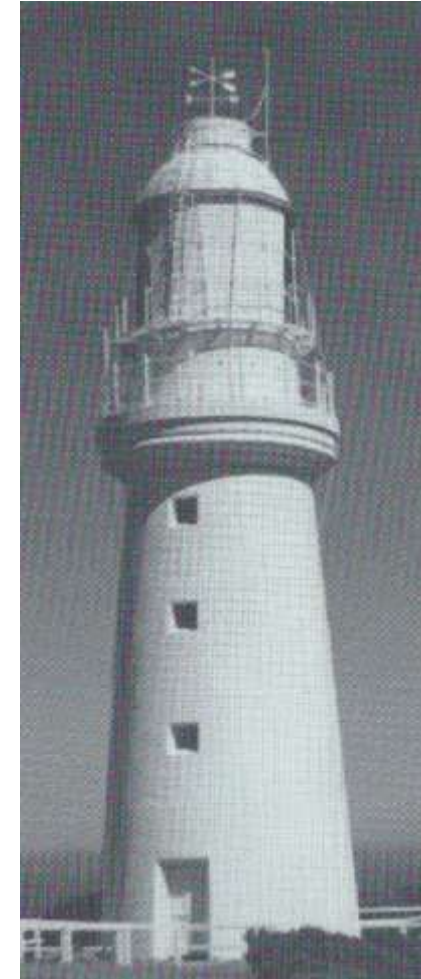


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**ORIGINAL COVER**

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Photograph showing Lighthouse and Memorial Cairn, Split Point, Aireys Inlet.

Photograph: L. Addison.

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## ORIGINAL TITLE PAGE

Left: Split Point Lighthouse; Centre: Memorial Cairn, and Right: Cape Otway Lighthouse

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*(First Edition)*

The Electronic Version will be continually updating.

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# INTRODUCTION

Unlike many names, the spelling of Pearse has remained constant for hundreds of years. Often the spelling of a name is changed for various reasons; the family may be illiterate; the spelling may have been simplified or they may not wish to be identified with a particular place or person. This has not happened to the name Pearse. Early Devon parish records clearly show the name as being spelt with an 's'.

Although our family is not the only Pearse family with this spelling, it is less usual than Pearce or Pierce. This spelling has assisted the family in continuation of contact for nearly one hundred and fifty years since arrival in Australia.

The Bark Hut at Aireys Inlet has remained a focal point for our Pearse family. After the family left Aireys Inlet in 1870, many of them continued to visit for holidays and picnics. The erection of the Pearse memorial cairn in 1960 led to a family gathering. The interest generated by this event provided impetus for similar gatherings. Firstly, the centenary of Thomas Pearse's death in 1962, then the restoration of the Bark Hut in 1981 and, thirdly, the rebuilding of the hut in 1985 and subsequent official opening in 1986. These gatherings have not only drawn people from all over Australia but they have maintained a sense of pride in our forefathers and a sense of belonging to the Pearse family. The bonds have strengthened in the publication of this book. *South Beach Pioneers*.

The book takes its title from the name our ancestors used to describe the location of Angahook Station. For a period of 20 years from 1852-1871, Tom and Martha, their daughter, Sarah, and son-in-law, Robert McConachy, lived and raised their families at South Beach. In addition, Tom's elder brother, William, and his wife, Lucy, lived at South Beach. William, their only surviving son, was born there in 1858. The Pearse family were the *South Beach Pioneers*.

## Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all those who contributed, encouraged and assisted in many ways during the preparation of this book. We make special mention of a few; Doris Buchanan, Dawn Curley, Jack Dinning, Jack Holmfield, Jan Pearse, Betty Scammell, Elsie Wearne and particularly Jim and Carolyn Pearse and Dick and Valmai Last, whose visit to Cheriton Fitzpaine in 1987 provided the material used in Chapter 1. Each of these people assisted in researching and assembling charts and records for their section of the family, resulting in a considerable reduction of our time needed for this task.

We also thank Norman Houghton for assistance with records of the Geelong district, Anglesea historian Keith Cecil, and the staff members of the La Trobe Library and Public Records Office.

We gratefully recognise the considerable contribution of Chris Bronner in converting the document into book format. His expertise has greatly enhanced the quality of this publication.

We are indebted to Eunice Burgess for undertaking the tedious task of proofreading the drafts.

## About those who compiled this book

The three people who compiled this book are: Lyle McConachy (*a great-grandson of Thomas Butson Pearse*) a farmer at Winchelsea, Janice Morris a teacher at Surrey Hills and Doreen Robinson who has a word processing business at Mitcham.

The three have worked closely together over past years and, while working on the history of the Bark Hut, they became engrossed in the Pearse family history.

The wealth of material available relating to the Pearse family, preserved both in Devon and Australia, has made this story live for the authors.

It is their hope you will catch something of their enthusiasm and that this book will serve as a lasting memory for all Pearse descendants.

This electronic version has been retyped by Andrea McConachy and images compiled by Stewart McConachy.

We would like to continue the '**growth**' of this book by you – our clan members providing your updates regularly so they can be included.

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# The Name PEARSE

The name Pearse is widespread throughout Southern England. Pearse is an old French form of Peter and became popular during medieval times, a period of French influence. Thus, we have Pierre, Piers, Pearse, and other derivations including Pearson, son of Pearse or Peter.

Other Pearse families in Victoria have also come from Devonshire or other southern English counties. Asa Pearse, his wife and children migrated from Devon on the vessel *Priam*, arriving in Australia on 25 August 1852. However, descendants of another Thomas Pearse from Cornwall probably belong to the largest Pearse family. His son, William, wife, Jane, and seven children migrated during the period 1852-1857. Any direct relationship with these families seems unlikely and would almost certainly be very difficult to trace.

Our family is descended from two sons of Thomas and Mary Pearse from Cheriton Fitzpaine, Devonshire: Thomas Butson Pearse, who came to Australia in 1841, and his elder brother, William Butson Pearse, who arrived in Australia in 1855.

## General Identification

To understand the generations of people mentioned in the text of this book, it is necessary to note the following generation identifications.

First generation ( <i>children of Thomas</i> ):	each has a chapter heading
Second generation ( <i>grandchildren of Thomas</i> ):	each has a heading as: <b>Ellen (McConachy) Pilley 1961 - 1931</b>
Third generation ( <i>great grandchildren of Thomas</i> ):	each is indicated by large bold type as <b>Ellen</b>
Fourth generation ( <i>great-great grandchildren of Thomas</i> ):	each is indicated by standard bold type as <b>Ellen</b> .

## NEW

The family tree is also in an electronic format and has been colour coded to represent each generation – this available at [www.themcconachyclan.com](http://www.themcconachyclan.com)

## OLD

The family tree chart for each line is at the end of the chapter. It is recommended that the text is read in conjunction with the family tree chart. The charts are compiled as at 30 August 1988. The charts are designed as a continuous line, one page following on from the next. The lines down the left-hand side of the page represent the generations. When you find your name, the lines on the left of your name show your direct lineage from Thomas Pearse. The names of brothers and sisters all touch the line coming directly under the names of their parents.

## The PEARSE Family – 100 years

1770	Captain James Cook charted the east coast of Australia
1771	Marriage of John Pearse the Younger to Hannah Anstey
1773	Birth of son Thomas to John and Hannah Pearse
1774	Death of John Pearse the Elder
1782	John Pearse returned as a land tax collector
1788	Colony of New South Wales officially proclaimed
1788	Death of Sarah, wife of John Pearse the Elder
1792	Marriage of Thomas Pearson and Mary Butson at Cheriton Fitzpaine
1802	Port Phillip Bay first explored by Grant
1806	Birth of William Butson Pearse at Cheriton Fitzpaine
1808	Birth of Thomas Butson Pearse at Cheriton Fitzpaine
1823	Thomas Pearse, Rector's warden, St Mary's Church, Cheriton Fitzpaine
1832	Marriage of William Butson Pearse to Mary Griffiths
1835	Melbourne founded on the Yarra River
1839	Death of Mary, first wife of William Butson Pearse
1841	Arrival of Thomas Butson Pearse at Port Phillip
1843	Marriage of Thomas Butson Pearse to Martha Sperring
1844	Birth of son George William, to Thomas and Martha Pearse
1846	Thomas Butson Pearse opened butchers shop, Geelong
1846	Birth of twin daughters Sarah and Elizabeth, to Thomas and Martha
1848	Completion of Cape Otway Lighthouse
1849	Birth of son Thomas, to Thomas and Martha
1851	Port Phillip District became the Colony of Victoria
1852	Thomas Butson Pearse purchased lease of Anglohawk Station
1854	Eureka Stockade
1855	Arrival of William Butson Pearse at Port Phillip Bay
1856	Marriage of William Butson Pearse to Lucy Preece
1856	Birth of son Herbert Franklin to William and Lucy at Cape Otway
1857	Birth of daughter Eliza Ellen, to Thomas and Martha
1858	Birth of William Walter, to William and Lucy at South Beach
1860	Birth of Charles Robert, to Thomas and Martha, at South Beach
1861	Birth of Ellen McConachy, first grandchild of Thomas Pearse
1862	Death of Thomas Butson Pearse at South Beach
1864	Death of William Butson Pearse at Ceres
1870	Death of Martha Pearse at South Beach



# The PEARSE Family Tree - Six Generations in Devon

(direct line shown in bold type)

– b.c.: (Birth certificate)

**Thomas PEARSE** – Gentleman of Morebath

b.c.: 1650 – d 1699

John Pearse – Gentleman of Morebath

b.c.: 1680 – d.c 1769

**Thomas PEARSE** – Yeoman of Washfield

b.c.: 1682

John Melhuish - of Morebath

(later Washfield)

m  
Carolina

Sarah MELHUISH

b 1717 Morebath

d 1778 – Stockleigh Pomeroy

Elizabeth  
1703 – 1715

Robert  
b 1709

Elizabeth  
b 1716  
(Washfield)  
m 1734 Brampton  
William Anstey

Mary

Thomas  
b 1711

Martha

William

**John PEARSE** (Elder) — m. 1737 Brampton  
b.c.: 1715  
d 1774  
Stockleigh Pomeroy

**Hannah ANSTEY**

b 1747 Washfield d 1789 Stockleigh Pomeroy

m Washfield 1771

**John PEARSE** (younger)

b 1738 Washfield d 1803 Stockleigh Pomeroy

**Thomas PEARSE**

b 1773 Stockleigh Pomeroy  
m 1792 Cheriton Fitzpaine

Robert  
1778

Elizabeth  
b 1780 – d 1782

Sarah  
b 1781  
m 1803 Morchand Bishop  
Ambrose Leach

**Mary BUTSON**

b 1775 – d 1827

John  
b 1792

Elizabeth  
1795

Maria  
1799

Robert  
1802

Anne  
1804

**William**  
1806

**Thomas**  
1808

Samuel  
1811

Henry  
1815

## **TO VIEW THE REST OF THE BOOK YOU NEED TO:**

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