**Windsor and Richmond Gazette (NSW: 1888 - 1961), Saturday 4 March 1893, page 3**

Mr. Thomas John, senr., who resides with his son at Kurrajong, claims to be the oldest native now living. He was born at Pennant Hills, and remembers the time when the site where the town of Richmond is built was a forest of trees. In fact, he witnessed the felling of the first tree, and the subsequent laying out of streets. A diary of his personal reminiscences would be interesting.

**Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser (NSW: 1871 - 1912), Saturday 28 January 1899, page 210**

IN THE CENTENARIAN’s COUNTRY.

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Our next objective was Tom John, and as we rattled along in our sulky, despite the fearful dust, heat, and bush fires along our route, we could not help enjoying the cool fields of green maize stretching as far as the eye could see and fading into the blue haze of the mountains. The bridge over the river was hardly necessary on this particular day, as the Hawkesbury, where we crossed it, consisted of hot white stretches of sand and very little water, plainly showing the severity of the drought.

We found Mr. John's house a simple bushman's home, wherein he has lived a settler's life for over 70 years on a 100-acre grant made him by Governor Macquarie, watching the growth from its earliest infancy of the whole Hawkesbury district, and, for that matter, of Australia. We announced the purpose of our visit with some difficulty (as both Mr. John and his daughter are hard of hearing), but with the assistance of an old neighbour we finally succeeded in making ourselves understood. Here we encountered a strong rebuff as regarded the picture taking, as someone's previous experiments with the camera had called down the ire of his third and fourth generation. But after due persuasion the objectors relented and agreed to consider us more skilled than the objects of their indignation. We trust that results, as shown elsewhere, will render another visit on our part to the Johns safe. Mr. Thomas John was born at Pennant Hills on June 2, 1800, and his family of five children are all over 60 years of age. His sight is still good and his voice strong and hearty. Beginning to ply the veteran with questions on ancient history, he replied: “Aye, aye. There's not one alive I knew when I was a boy.” On asking who lived up here when he first arrived, he replied with great gusto: “No one; not a soul. I saw the first tree felled in Richmond and helped to cut the first roads when Captain Cox planned and surveyed the wild forest now known as Richmond.”

He tells a funny story of how they first found a track from Parramatta to Sydney. The river route had previously only been available. Dr. Harris was greatly plagued with rats and offered the boatman a pound if he would bring a cat from Sydney next trip. The boatman produced this luxury, and, unfortunately for the doctor, the expensive feline soon disappeared and turned up again in Sydney. Obviously, it had not gone by water, and this was held to prove that there was an accessible track by land, and we soon followed the cat's example, concluded Mr. John. The veteran is very proud of Governor Macquarie having given him a glass of wine from his own hand. Of the days when rations were short, he tells how a man walked 16 miles one night to steal a pumpkin from a garden he knew of, and after eating it said it was the sweetest morsel he had ever tasted. He had some thrilling experiences while walking from Richmond to Bathurst. While asleep in his camp one night he was awakened by the strange sensation of fingers feeling over him and hearing the native words “Cobo womo” (“great fat.” We don't guarantee the orthography), started to his feet in hot pursuit of this too affectionate native. Before we left we had the pleasure of hearing him recite several long verses of his own composition about times and people long since passed.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 2 June 1900, page 12**

A Pennant Hills Centenarian.

100 Years Old To-day.

Mr. Thomas John, a native of Pennant Hills, is 100 years old today. His birth dates back to June 2nd, 1800. He has resided at Kurrajong for over 60 years, and prior to this he was for a considerable time located at Richmond Bottoms. A married man, he reared a family of five: — Messrs. W. John (67) and Thomas John (60), of Kurrajong; Mrs. Taylor (Orange), Mrs. Gow (Dubbo), and Martha John, who resides with her father. All five are over 60 years of age. Mr. John's father died when he was 79. His remains being interred in St. Peter's C. of E. Cemetery; and he had a brother who attained the age of 84 years — so it will be noted that the whole of the members of the family were long-lived. Mr. John is still in possession of all but one of his faculties; he is quite nimble on his feet, but lacks the power to hear well, a defect which appears to be somewhat of a hereditary character. He has a good memory, a keen eyesight, and is able to perform, without any assistance, all dressing operations, and to move about the house and grounds without assistance. A chat about “the olden golden days” is productive of much information that is interesting, if not exactly new. Mr. John has a dear recollection of the sites on which Windsor and Richmond now stand being occupied by a dense bush; remembers the building of old St. Matthew's — a land mark for many miles around — and was acquainted with the overseer, Jones, afterwards killed at Kurrajong whilst shearing a sheep. John's father cleared the land where St. Peter's Church of England stands in Richmond; it was originally owned by a man named Pugh, afterwards murdered. Prior to this, a church was erected just opposite the site of St. Peter's, Walker and Jackson (the latter of whom subsequently committed suicide), being the builders. Altogether, Mr. John, when in a reminiscent mood, is very good company, and he enjoys a chat about old times with all the zest of man half his age. He has a pretty little home on the Kurrajong slopes, and takes an interest in flower culture, the cottage in which he lives being made beautiful by blooms of the choicest and most attractive character.

**Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate (Parramatta, NSW: 1888 - 1950), Saturday 1 September 1900, page 1**

BREVITIES.

Died at Kurrajong on Monday, Thomas Johns, a native of Pennant Hills, aged 100 years and 3 months.

**Hawkesbury Herald (Windsor, NSW: 1902 - 1945), Friday 24 June 1904, page 16**

Reminiscences of Richmond.

Thomas John, as I have stated, lived to be over 100 years old, and retained his mental faculties until the end. It was interesting to hear the old man relating his reminiscences of the early days. He claimed that his father felled the first tree in the forest where Richmond now stands. He had a brother William, who died at the good old age of 84 years, and a sister who was married to Dr. Lutrell, the first owner of Hobartville, Richmond, who, with her husband, left Australia many years ago to reside in England.

Mr. John had three sons and two daughters that I knew. One of the sons, James, died when quite a young man, the other two, William and Thomas, are still at Kurrajong, also one daughter. His brother William had two daughters, Mrs. Robert Pitt, late of Kurrajong, and Mrs. John McQuade, late of Windsor.

**NSW Births Deaths & Marriages**

Birth 1798 – George W. John, parents: John W. & Mary, district?

Birth 1803 – Elizabeth John, parents: John W. & Mary, district?

Birth 1805 – Elizabeth Roberts, parents: John William & Mary, district?

Marriage 1827 – Thomas John & Caroline Thompson, district?

Death 1858 – Edward John, (age 19), parents: Thomas & Caroline, Richmond

Death 1877 – Caroline John, parents: aged 77 years, Richmond

Death 1879 – Sarah John, mother: Judith, Richmond

Death 1882 – Charlotte John, parents: Charles & Mary, district of Richmond

Death 1900 – Thomas John, parents: John W. & Mary, district of Richmond