

## John Spiller of Branscombe

My name is Jenny Paris and I am a direct descendant of John Spiller, b. 1832 in Branscombe, d.17 June 1920 in Redbridge, Hampshire. As you know he left the UK for Australia. He was my great-great grandfather. Here is the information that I have regarding John Spiller:

- 1832 - Born Branscombe, Devon
- 1832 - Baptised 23 Feb, Branscombe, Devon
- 1841 - Census, residence Hooknell Farm, Branscombe, Devon
- 1851 - Census, residence Hole Farm, Branscombe, Devon
- 1858 - Applied for passport
- 1862 - Married Emma Ruth Dunning (of Honiton, Devon) in Queensland, Australia
- 1865 - Planted the first sugar in Pioneer Valley, Mackay, Queensland, Australia with sugar bought from Java. Lived in Branscombe Plantation
- 1867 - Production of first sugar using a home-made wooden horse mill
- 1868-1870 More crushing of sugar
- 1871 - Appointed Magistrate of the Territory (Source: Queensland Government Gazette)
- 1871 - Produced sugar at New Pioneer Mill using an iron-horse mill to start and a newly ordered steam-driven mill.
- 1874 - Residence at Pioneer Plantation, Mackay
- 1877 - Had moved to Brandon, North Queensland, still producing sugar
- 1879 - Laid first tramway in the district to transport sugar from the plantation to the mill.
- 1880 - Returned with family to the UK for a year long holiday and to settle John Junior in Honiton Grammar School, High St, Devon
- 1880 - His first locomotive, named after his wife, was completed just after he left for England – used on both River Estate and Pioneer plantations.
- 1880 - The second tramway on River Estate plantation completed.
- 1881 - Left UK on 26 March on the Potosi, arr. 14 May in Sydney, NSW.
- 1881 - 26 Nov ‘christening’ of the ‘Emma Ruth’ steam train.
- 1883 - John’s mother, Ann Spiller (nee Griffin, b.1805), dies in England. He is now residing in Woolmer’s Cottage, Longford, Tasmania, Australia. The same year he sells the second Pioneer Mill in Brandon
- 1885 - Sells River Estate plantation
- 1891 - Census, back in UK – don’t know which year he returned. Residence Compton House, King’s Somborne, Hampshire. Has wife Emma, son John and daughter Susan Annie with him. No record of daughter Emma in UK or Australia.
- 1894 - Wife Emma dies intestate (sudden illness?)
- 1894 - Departs on ship ‘Pekin’ with daughter (most likely but could be niece Edith Mary, youngest daughter of brother William). Probably sorting out probate re Australian property. Returns to UK 5 July
- 1901 - no census record but probably in Norway as I have many photos of a few trips to Norway for salmon fishing.

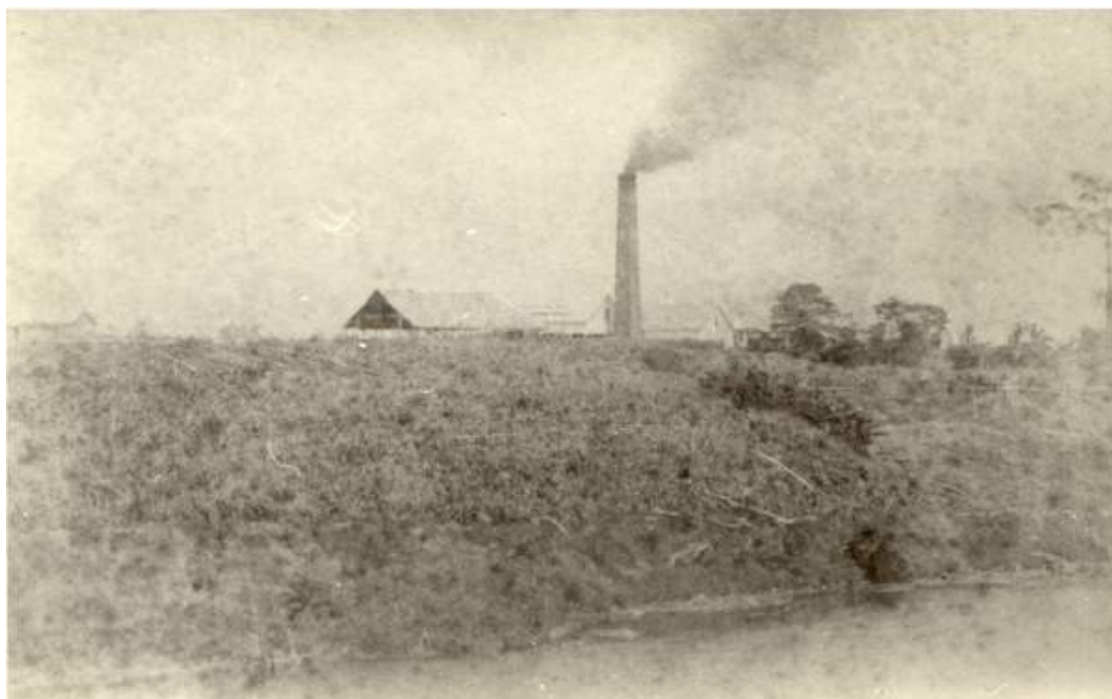
1904 - Residence at 'Uddens House', Dorset, probably rented 1904-1905. <http://booty.org.uk/booty.weather/musings/UddensCrossing.htm> . Demolished in 1955

1906 - Moved to Pamphill Manor, Dorset and resided there until 1915. During this time he travelled with his niece Edith on Kronprinzessin Cecilie to New York as well as taking trips to Norway. Pamphill is a Grade II listed building so has not been demolished.

1920 - He died in Redbridge, Hampshire and was resident in 'Clovernook'. This is all I know about Clovernook as I don't think it is there now.

When I started this tree I had only heard that one of my ancestors had been the first to plant sugar in Australia which it turns out is not quite correct. However, this region is by far the most important sugar growing region in Australia.

Regarding John's brother William, he married Mary Anne Dommatt in 1859, was living in Cullompton, Devon in 1861, in Sidford, Devon in 1871 and died in 1873, aged 37, in Devonshire. He and Mary Anne had 6 children, Ellen Ann b.1860 d.1925, Robert Henry b. 1863 d.?, George John b. 1868 d.1915, Cora Gertrude b. 1870 d.?, and Edith Mary b.1872 d.1934. John Spiller took Edith Mary under his wing as she was only one when her father died and was an orphan at age 6. Re the marriage document, Ancestry has the link as page 30a on one side and page 302 on the other. Page 30a is correct.



Branscombe sugar mill



The 'Emma Ruth', John Spiller's first steam engine



Grandfather Spiller





John Spiller Snr.



Pamphill Manor



**Uddens House** - picture taken circa **1938**: as published in "Ferndown, A Pictorial History", by Roger Guttridge & Audrey Greenhalgh: published by Phillimore, West Sussex.