

John Curotta

Living in Pymont feels almost predestined.

My grandfather was born in Pymont in October 1883, some nine weeks after the family arrived in Sydney from London on the ship "Illawarra". His father Jacob Curotta came from Odessa but had lived in London, boarding with the family of his future wife, Rachel.

According to the baby's birth certificate, Jacob was 27 and Rachel 22 and the location given was Edward Street Pymont: this is now the eastern boundary of Star Casino and runs up towards Harris Street.

Jacob, who registered the birth, was described in immigration documents as being "illiterate in English". His Pymont-born son was named Harris.

They are next found at Wexford Street Sydney. This no longer exists. The tenements and shacks of the Haymarket and adjacent areas of Surry Hills were razed in the first years of the twentieth century to control the spread of the bubonic plague. Wexford Street would now be part of Wentworth Avenue.

My mother's grandfather John was born in Glebe in 1860. His father George Williams, from Cashel, Tipperary, was a quarryman.

John and his siblings became involved in the Stonemasons Union.

The youngest - Catherine - married Robert Chinchin, "one of the best known unionists in NSW", and a member of the Eight Hour Committee. They lived at 493 Harris Street Ultimo while her widowed mother, Margaret, lived in Quay Street.

John died in 1927, just one year before his son John Patrick, my grandfather, died of TB in Royal Prince Alfred Hospital when my mother was four years old. My student years were spent at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital.

After specialty training at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst and at The Royal Ear Hospital, London, my professional career in Ear Nose and Throat Surgery continued at Westmead Hospital and at The Children's Hospital, Westmead as Director of ENT Surgery.

John and Trish moved to Regatta Wharf in 2009.