

## The Lundie Brothers in Spain

---

- *Rev. John Lundie's brothers, James & Marshall, died in Spain.*
- *What were they doing there?*

**James** was 37 years old when he died in **Huelva** in 1890 and **Marshal** was 27 years old when he died in **Calañas** in 1884. Both

were Presbyterian ministers. So what were two Scottish Protestant ministers doing in Catholic Spain? The answer to this has been lost to family lore.

As two other brothers ultimately died from tuberculosis the assumption has been that they probably went to the drier climate in an attempt to regain their health. It would be helpful to know the cause of death, especially as both died so young, and so, with aid from my Spanish speaking friend, I am attempting to obtain the death certificates of these two people from the authorities in Spain.

However both of these towns are in **Andalucia** and both are close to the Rio Tinto mine which *"...the Spanish government finally sold the mines to a British syndicate in 1871 for a sum well below their real value. In true Anglo-Saxon style, the company's British managers soon had the mines running at full steam, making this one of the most important sources of copper and sulphur in the world. Also true to form was the way in which they built **Bella Vista**, a purpose-built village for British employees only. Known as the 'colonia inglesa', the British style*

*houses, neatly trimmed gardens, tennis lawns and social club of Bella Vista can still be visited. This 'British' village in the middle of the Andalusian countryside also features a **Presbyterian Church**"*

*Source:*

[http://www.andalucia.com/province/huelva/rio\\_tinto/home.htm](http://www.andalucia.com/province/huelva/rio_tinto/home.htm)

Here might be a reason for the Lundie brothers to be in this part of Spain. So I await the arrival of the death certificates to help solve this family riddle.

Further reading from this same website caught my interest, too, as it shows the importance of this mine on the "river of many colours" –Rio Tinto

*"Out of the midst of the surrounding greenery, the giant opencast mines of Rio Tinto create a surreal, almost lunar landscape. The removal of layer upon layer of soil and rock, in the search for iron ore, copper, silver and a host of other mineral ores, has tinted this part of the world in hues of dusty pink, brown, yellow, red and grey. So great is the scale of operations, that the depression created resembles a man-made crater that measures several kilometres across. From the edge of the 'crater', a giant space opens up before you, and the trucks at work far below appear toy-sized when in reality most are the size of a house.*

*Walls of terraced rock, streaked with the unusual colours of mineral ores create the impression of a natural amphitheatre of gargantuan proportions, that could easily be mistaken for the set of a Star Wars movie.*

Thanks to Lia Rodriguez Romero for her help with these and other Spanish resources.

*Rio Tinto is, however, more than an isolated cavity on the earth's surface. Its growth has consumed not only mountains and valleys but even entire villages, whose populations had to be resettled in specially built towns nearby.*



*More Great pictures -large ones if you click on them – at [http://www.igreens.org.uk/rio\\_tinto\\_mines.htm](http://www.igreens.org.uk/rio_tinto_mines.htm)*

*Named after the river which flows through the region-itself named for the reddish streaks that colour its water-Rio Tinto has become a landscape within a landscape. The unearthed minerals give the soil and waters of the region odd, otherworldly shades of blue, green, yellow, red and brown, so it is not unusual to see bright orange or green rivulets trickling past.*



*The predominant ores, however, are the ferrous ones, which oxidise when they come into contact with the air and colour land and river alike in shades of reddish brown. Even as far as **Niebla**, roughly 50 kilometres to the south-east, the waters of the Rio Tinto still flow past the town's ancient fortified walls in an eerie trickle of blood-red.*

*Reputed to be the oldest mines in the world, Rio Tinto has a particularly rich history. Their mineral wealth was already legendary in ancient times. According to myth, these are the fabled **mines of King Solomon**, and a section of the area is still known as Cerro Salomón today. The nearby villages of **Zalamea la Vieja** (now called **Nerva**) and **Zalamea la Real** are also named after the biblical king. It was tales of the Iberian Peninsula's mineral wealth that drew Phoenician merchants to its shores, laying the foundations for a succession of Greek, Carthaginian and Roman invasions. The Rio Tinto mines they worked so intensively were among the most prized rewards that control of Iberia yielded.*

*For all this, the region was inexplicably abandoned after the Roman era and in time was all but lost to collective memory, until it was rediscovered in 1556. It was, however, to take until 1724 for the mines to be reopened, and even then frustration and inefficiency dogged their exploitation...”*

Adding to my interest is that we have at least two family connections to the Rio Tinto company: my Uncle Frank [Francis GoodhopeThompson (1915-1999) ] worked for the company at the Phalaborwa mine, Eastern Tvl., South Africa and my own husband worked for them when they owned RTZ Ore Sorters in Johannesburg, Tvl., South Africa.

I'll let you know if the death certificates arrive and if they add to our collective knowledge about James and Marshall.

**For teachers and home-schoolers:**

*Here is a lesson plan for students to learn about the harsh conditions of the Rio Tinto “where the river is more acid than vinegar”*

<http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20020521tuesday.html>

For more family information look at the web page: [dvanzyl.homeunix.com](http://dvanzyl.homeunix.com)

I'll gladly supply the login information

© Veronica van Zyl 2008 E-mail: [vvanzyl@sympatico.ca](mailto:vvanzyl@sympatico.ca)