

Thomas Cover, 1156, Marion

Researched by Marcia Watson

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| Baptism | 9 August 1818, Haselmere, Surrey |
| Parents | Thomas Cover and Elizabeth Winchester |
| Parent's marriage | 4 November 1851, Frensham, Surrey |
| Siblings | Charles (1820), James (1822), George (1823), Stephen (1826), John (1827-1834), Reuben (1829), Jane (1831), Elizabeth (1834) |
| Wife 1 | Harriett Etherington (1823-1903) |
| Marriage 1 | 21 December 1844, Frensham, Surrey |
| Wife 2 | Mary Ann Steenson (~1828 – 1901) |
| Marriage 2 | 25 December 1856, St Peters, Melbourne |
| Children | Charles (1846) Charlotte (1848) Mary Jane (1857 - 1889) Thomas (1860 - 1927) Elizabeth (1861-1864) Samuel James (1863 – 1884) Sarah Ann (1866 - 1947) David (1867 -1956) William (1869 – 1870) |

The children of Thomas and Elizabeth Cover were baptized at Haselmere, Bramshott or Linchmere; however, the family lived at Frensham, Surrey, where Thomas was a labourer. The villages are quite close together.

On the 1841 census, living at Kingswood, Bramshott, in Hampshire:

Thomas Cover, 20, broom maker, not born in the county, was living with Henry Chandler, a potter, and his family. ¹

On 21 December 1844, at the parish church in Frensham:

Thomas Cover, full age, a labourer, resides in Frensham, labourer, father Thomas Cover, a labourer, married Harriett Etherington, full age, spinster, resides in Frensham, father James Etherington, a labourer. Both made their mark; witnesses were James Cover and Marie Belton

They had two children:

Charles, baptized 7 June 1846, son of Thomas and Harriett Cover, of Hindhead, broom maker, district of Shotter Mill, Frensham, Surrey

Charlotte, baptized 7 May 1848, daughter of Thomas and Harriett Cover, of Hindhead, labourer, parish of Frensham

On 17 March 1849, Thomas and his brother Stephen were charged on the oaths of William White and William Loveland with unlawfully, feloniously and maliciously shooting at them at Frensham. Thomas Cover, the younger, was 30, a labourer, and could not read and write. At the Kingston Lent Assizes on 24 March, he was found guilty and sentenced to 7 years transportation. ²

¹ HO107/piece 396/book 15/Folio 8, p11

² Calendar of Prisoners. Surrey Quarter Sessions at Newington Gaol. March 1848 to December 1853. Australian Joint Copying Project Reel M1834

He was transferred from the Surrey County Gaol, known as Horsemonger Lane, to Pentonville Prison on 27 September 1849. The register says he was 31, married, could not read or write, a broom maker, and his character was good. He was transferred to *Justitia* hulk on 26 July 1850.³

While in prison, Thomas petitioned for his case to be re-examined. The Petition was received on 16 November 1850.

To the Queens Most Excellent Majesty in Council.

May it please your Majesty

The Humble Petition of Thomas Cover late of Frensham in the County of Surrey Broom Maker a convict Prisoner under sentence of seven years transportation

Humbly Sheweth

That your Petitioner was tried convicted and sentenced to Seven years transportation at the March Assizes 1849 holden in Kingston upon Thames in and for the County of Surrey for feloniously shooting at William White the Prosecutor and with aiding and abetting others in the commission of the Crime with intent to do some grievous bodily harm and your Petitioner is now undergoing such sentence and is known by the number 640 on board the transport Hulk called "The Wye" lying at Woolwich.

That your Petitioner most humbly submits that he is advised that no sufficient evidence was adduced upon the trial against your Petitioner to establish any guilty participation in commission of the said offence for which your Petitioner was so tried and convicted.

And your Petitioner further sheweth that Amos Winchester a person who was also deposed to as being one of the party present at the time and in company of your Petitioner when the said alleged offence was committed was tried at the Surrey Assizes holden at Guildford on 5 August 1850 in and for the County of Surrey before Sir Frederick Pollock Chief Baron of your Majesty's Court of Exchequer of Pleas at Westminster upon the same charge and same evidence of the same Witnesses who deposed to the same facts against the said Amos Winchester as they had previously deposed to against your Petitioner and the said Amos Winchester was acquitted of the same charge by the Jury under the direction of his Lordship who stated that the evidence adduced at the trial of the said Amos Winchester was not sufficient to sustain the Indictment of shooting at the prosecutor and that there was no proof of aiding and abetting nor intention of the parties accused to do so in the common course of assembly but that there was some evidence to shew that the parties had assembled to go out and steal wood and kill game.

That your Petitioner has been falsely and wilfully sworn to and identified by the Prosecutor White and his witness Loveland as being one of the persons present at the commission of the said alleged offence from personal and vindictive motives and not for the purposes of public Justice.

That your Petitioner was at the time inhabiting a Cottage built on an encroached of the Manor of Pitfold.

That James Baker Esquire the Master of the Prosecutor William White was and is Lord of that Manor.

That within a few days after your Petitioner's conviction the Prosecutor White and his witness Loveland acting under the direction of their said Master went to and forcibly ejected your Petitioner's Wife and Family from their said Cottage so erected on the waste of Pitfold Manor and

³ HO24/16

to which your Petitioner conceived he had a title and then and there pulled down your Petitioner's said Cottage and levelled the Banks and Boundaries of your Petitioner's Garden with the Open Common And the said Mr Baker took possession thereof broke and destroyed your Petitioner's Furniture and threw the same on the Common and left your Petitioner's Wife and two children (one two years and the other ten months of age) houseless.

That your petitioner was at home in bed with his wife at the time deposed to and your petitioner was thereby deprived of all possible means of disproving the Prosecutor's statement.

May it please your Majesty to direct an Inquiry to be made to the sufficiency of the Evidence adduced against your Petitioner at the trial in support of the Charge upon which your Petitioner was convicted and is now undergoing the sentence of the Law And to cause such other enquiries as to your Most Gracious Majesty may seem proper

And Your Petitioner shall ever pray &c Thomas Cover

Witness JW Littlewood, 2 Portsmouth Street, Lincolns Inn Fields.

The Petition received a "Nil" comment, i.e. no further action is required.⁴

Thomas was healthy, and his conduct was very good while on the hulk. He boarded *Marion* on 22 October 1851 for the voyage to Fremantle, Western Australia.⁵ On arrival, he was described as: 1156. Thomas Cover, 31, 5'7½", black hair, black eyes, a long face, a fresh complexion, was stout, had a scar on his left leg, was a labourer and married with two children.⁶

Thomas received a Conditional Pardon in April 1854 and, around this time, left Western Australia for Melbourne, his brother Stephen and wife may have gone with him.

On 25 December 1856, at St Peter's, Melbourne:

Thomas Cover, 29, bachelor, born Surrey, labourer, resides Flemington, son of Thomas Cover, labourer and Elizabeth Massage married Mary Ann Steenson, 28, spinster, born county Tyrone, resides Collingwood, daughter of James Steenson, farmer and Eliza Mullen. Both signed the register. Note: The mother of Thomas Cover was Elizabeth Winchester, not Massage/Message, and Thomas was 38.

By 1866, Thomas owned a wooden house on the east side of Elphinstone Street, Footscray. He worked as a carpenter, and at one stage, he also owned land on Nicholson Street, Footscray.

At the Footscray Borough Council meeting in July 1884, Thomas called attention to the impassable condition of Elphinstone Street, Upper Footscray. Nothing had been done in the locality for the past twenty years, and unless some improvements were speedily effected, his property would be damaged by the flood water, in which case he would hold Council responsible for damages. The mayor said the place complained of was opposite Perry's back gate. The case was a very deserving one. The matter was referred to the surveyor.⁷

Thomas was a witness at the hearing of a prisoner accused of theft.

⁴ HO18/110

⁵ HO8/110

⁶ SROWA Acc 128/40-43

⁷ Williamstown Chronicle (Vic. : 1856 - 1954), 5 Jul, 1884, p2

*Thomas Cover, an elderly man, stated that he saw the prisoner running along Fisher's fence and challenged him to stop, he surrendered, and the witness took him back to the house where a number of men were assembled. He believed the reason why the prisoner stopped when asked to do so was because he (the witness) had a double-barrelled gun in his hand. The gun was not loaded and had not been used for fifteen years.*⁸

His second wife, Mary Ann, died on 20 July 1901, aged 73, at Elphinstone Street, Footscray.⁹

Thomas died, at his residence on Elphinstone Street, on 13 January 1913. The death notice said he was 94½ years old and a colonist for 58 years, making his arrival in Victoria about 1854 or 1855, and he was born in 1818.¹⁰

First wife Harriett and children

In 1851, Harriett Cover (28) and her daughter Charlotte (6) were living at Linchmere, Sussex, with her mother, stepfather and brother Timothy Etherington (21).

Harriett's mother, Elizabeth Etherington, had married James Wheeler in 1845 at Linchmere. Charles Cover (4), Harriett's son, lived with his grandparents, Thomas and Elizabeth Cover, at Wagner's [Waggoners] Wells, Frensham, Surrey. Charles was still living with them in 1861.

In 1861, Harriett Cover (38), a widow, was living at Bramshott, Hampshire, with four daughters - Mary Cover (8), Elizabeth Cover (6), Ann Cover (4) and Tryphena Cover (1). All the children were born in Bramshott, and the girls' father is unknown.

Her daughter, Charlotte Cover (13), lived with relatives in Kensington.

In 1870, Harriett married John Pink, and in the census of the following year, John Pink (48), Harriett (48), her daughter Ann Pink (14) and William Pink (3) were living in Headley, Hampshire. Tryphena Cover was living with relatives.

By 1881, Harriett (60) was still living in Headley. With her were Tryphena Cover (21) and granddaughter Elizabeth Annie Cover (1), Tryphena's daughter. Tryphena married the same year, and no father if named in the marriage register.

In 1891, still living in Headley, Harriett (68) was now a widow and worked as a sorter at the paper mill. Ten years later, she was a rag sorter at the paper mill.

Harriett Pink, the first wife of Thomas Cover, died 14 May 1903, aged 79, of old age, and was buried 18 May at Headley, Hampshire

The grandfather, Thomas Cover, late of Whitmore Bottom Headley, husbandman, died 21 December 1870 at Whitmore Bottom. He left a will and estate valued at less than £100. The executors were Reuben Cover of Waggoners Wells near Shotter Mill Haselmere, a labourer, his son and Charles Cover of the Police Station, Pimlico, police constable and grandson.

⁸ Independent (Footscray, Vic. : 1883 - 1922), 1 January 1887, p3

⁹ Independent (Footscray, Vic. : 1883 - 1922), 27 July 1901, p2

¹⁰ The Age, 18 January 1913, p5

This is the last Will and Testament of me, Thomas Cover of Whitmore Bottom Headley Hants husbandman. I devise all that cottage and buildings, and about two acres of land adjoining situate at Whitmore Bottom and all other real estate (if any). And I bequeath all my personal estate to my son Reuben Cover and grandson Charles Cover (son of my son Thomas Cover), upon trust to sell and convert the same into money, and pay to my children:

Charles Cover, Reuben Cover, Jane the wife of William Coombs, Elizabeth the wife of Stephen Aldred and my grandson Charles Cover.

Signed 5 March 1868.