

**Thomas Groves, 86, Hashemy**

Researched by Marcia Watson

Baptism	4 November 1821, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
Parents	John Groves and Ann Hart
Parent's marriage	19 September 1820, Cheltenham
Siblings	James and John (1824); Harriet (1826)
Wife	Frances Margaret Lewis
Married	1860, Fremantle
Children	Harriet (1859) Thomas Delward (1860) John (1862) Hannah (1866-1868) George (1868-1868) Frances (1869) James (1871) Christina Ellen (1873) Blanche Maude (1875) Hope (1877-1878) Robert (1881) Grace Gertrude (1884-1899)

When Thomas Grove was baptised, his father was a servant, and later, John was a labourer.

In 1841, the family lived at Sun Street, St Mary's, Cheltenham. <sup>1</sup>

John Groves, 35, labourer, born Halstead, Essex; Ann, 35, born in the county; John, 17; Harriett, 14  
Ann Groves was buried 14 August 1850, aged 54.

In 1851, John Groves, 56, widower, labourer and John Groves, son, 27, labourer, born Somerville Aston, Gloucestershire, lived at 39 Albert St, Cheltenham.<sup>2</sup> Thomas's father, John Groves, was buried 15 January 1859, aged 68. The parents are buried in the New Burial Ground, Cheltenham.

The first record of Thomas's life of crime is when he was in Prison on 15 August 1842 <sup>3</sup>

Prison register:

Thomas Groves, 20, dark brown hair, grey eyes, round face, blind in the left eye, dark complexion, pock pitted, a labourer, can read & write imperfectly, 5' 6½". Charged on the oath of Mary Pritchard of feloniously stealing at Cheltenham, on 11 August, 24 shillings and a box, the property of John Pritchard. Sentenced to four calendar months in the Penitentiary. He was sent to the Penitentiary on 20 October, behaviour orderly in Prison.

Thomas was discharged from the Penitentiary on 18 February 1843, orderly in Prison.

Then on 16 June 1843, he was in prison again.

Prison register:

105 Thomas Groves, 21, see 5 lent Assizes, 148 lbs, Charged on the oath of John Moulder with feloniously stealing at Cheltenham on 5 June 1843, a coat and hat, the property of the said John Moulder. Not guilty. Orderly while in Prison.

Prisoners confined in the House of Correction at Northleach on 6 January 1846:

36. Thomas Groves, 24, read & write imperfectly, rogue and vagabond, convicted 24 November 1845, 14 days hard labour.

Later in the year, on 17 November 1846.

<sup>1</sup> HO107/353/9. P38

<sup>2</sup> HO107/1973, p25

<sup>3</sup> Gloucestershire Archives; Reference: Q/Gc/5/7, Q/Gc/7/1, Q/Gc/5/7, Q/SG2/1841-1860, Q/Gc/6/1

Prison register:

Admitted on 27 November 1846. 1457. Thomas Groves, 12 Albert St, Cheltenham, labourer, 25, 5' 8", brown hair, brown eyes, round face, sallow complexion, lost the left eye. Charged on the oath of Robert Dyer and others of having at Cheltenham on 15 November 1846, feloniously broken open his dwelling house, and stolen a silver watch, a guard, two brooches, a tablespoon, two teaspoons the property. Acquitted. Discharged on 8 January 1847.

Native of Cheltenham, single, worked for Meddens, a bricklayer. 6 months before that for Gevennel, a bricklayer. "I go to St Mary's Church". Once before convicted. Orderly in Prison.

Then the following year, on 24 June 1847

Prison register:

Admitted on 24 June 1847. 1868. Thomas Groves, from Cheltenham, labourer, 5' 7¼", dark brown hair, dark eyes, oval face, fair complexion, very much pock pitted, has lost his left eye, large blister mark on the chest. Charged on the oath of Joseph Sims and others of burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of said Joseph Sims in the night of the 22 June 1847, and feloniously stealing 500 pence and 500 halfpence, his property.[£3 20d]. Charged with William Hodges. Not guilty (charged with William Hodges).

Native of Cheltenham, single, only work I have done since last here was two months for Mr Hunt, a bricklayer. Goes to no place of Worship. Bad behaviour in Prison. Once before convicted.

Back in Prison again, on 24 December 1847

Prison register:

Admitted on 24 December 1847. 2198. Thomas Groves, from Cheltenham, read & write well, 5' 7¼", dark brown hair, brown eyes, oval face, fair complexion, very much pock pitted, has lost his left eye, large blister mark on the chest. Charged with feloniously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of Henry Hall at Swindon on 23 December 1847 and stealing therein nine five-pound notes, one £10 note, thirty Sovereigns and other monies. Guilty. Transported for 14 years. Secretary of State's Order. Native of Cheltenham, single, since he left this has been working for Mr Hurst a Master bricklayer. "Church". Behaviour bad in Prison. Removed 24 April 1848.

His luck was about to run out in March 1848.

A young man of noted character, named William Hodges, apparently about 22 years of age, was brought up, charged with having, on the 23d at December last, broken and entered the dwelling-house of Henry Hall, a farmer residing Swindon, and with stealing therefrom, £86 in banknotes and gold and silver coin. It may be premised that a few days after the offence was committed, a notorious character named George Groves, who was taken at the time of the robbery, was committed for trial at the assizes, charged with being concerned in the robbery. The prisoner escaped at the time but was captured in London on Saturday last. None of the money was found upon Groves, and it is, therefore, presumed that Hodges had it in his possession at the time of his escape.

The first witness examined was the wife of the prosecutor, from whose evidence it appears that she left her house at ten minutes past eight o'clock on the night in question. She locked the door safely after her and put the key in her pocket. When she returned home at half-past nine, she found several of her neighbours in her house, who told her several robbers had broken in during her absence. Upon going to her bedroom, she found that chest where she kept her money had been forced open, and all the money was carried away. It consisted of nine £5 banknotes, and one £10 note, about £30 in gold, and £1 in silver coin amounting altogether to £86. Her boxes and drawers were all rummaged, but no other property was taken.

John Wilson, youth in the service of the Rev. S. Raymond of Swindon, deposed to seeing Mrs Hall go out, and shortly after, he saw the prisoner, whom he had known before, near the house, and another man (Groves) standing short distance off. Witness went into his master's stable but remained only about a minute. When he came out, he saw the prisoner and his companion standing close to Mr Hall's gate. Thinking they were up to no good, he went along to his brother's, about one hundred yards, and told him.

In company with another young man, named Francis Teal, and his brother, the witness returned to Hall's house, and they approached it, they saw the light in the upstairs window. When they got to the door, the prisoner and his companion rushed out and made off at full speed around the house, through the orchard, and over the hedge, closely pursued Teal and the two Wilsons. After crossing the hedge, the prisoner out off to the left and his companion to the right. Teal, in his evidence, deposed that they followed Groves, who took the right-hand direction. When the witness caught up with him, Groves turned around and struck him. He followed, however, and succeeded in holding him until assistance arrived, and he was given up to the police. The prisoner escaped. This witness also identified the prisoner.

P. S. Seyes deposed that he proceeded to Hall's house upon bearing the robbery, about ten o'clock on that night, and from the description of Hodges, he went in search of him but found him not at the place where he believed he at the time resided. The prisoner had not since been seen in Cheltenham, although frequently seen before that. Since the robbery, the witness had searched for him both in Birmingham and London. He succeeded in apprehending the prisoner on Saturday evening last, in a public house known Johnny Broom's, in Ayr-street, London. When informed of the charge against him, the prisoner said he knew nothing about it. This was the case against the prisoner, who made no defence. He was committed to trial at the assizes.<sup>4</sup>

At the Gloucestershire Lent Assizes, held at Gloucester, in April:

Thomas Groves, 23, and William Hodges, 23, were indicted for entering the dwelling-house of Henry Hall, at Swindon, on 23 December 1847, and stealing therein, about £16. Mr Phillimore conducted the prosecution, and Messrs. Cooke, Millman, and Vaughan defended the prisoners, whom it appears had been seen by a man named Simons on the 12 December, near Mr Hall's gate. They said they had forgotten something and must go back for it; they wished him "good night" and went through the Swindon churchyard.

On the night of the robbery, a boy named Wilton, in the service of the Rev. Mr Raymond, observed them near Mr Hall's house. He went for his brothers, and they returned with another man when the two men rushed out at the door of the house, and through the garden, over the wall of which they jumped and then separated, one going to the right, and the other to the left. The witnesses pursued them, and in Mr Surmon's Park, they captured Groves, who swore if they did not let him go, he would blow their brains out. A search was made for Hodges at his father's house in Cheltenham, but he was not found there.

Sergt. Seyes went to Birmingham and London for him and apprehended him on the 11 March, in the metropolis, at the house of Johnny Broome, the fighter. On telling him the charge against him, he said he knew nothing of it.

On Mrs Hall's return home, she found an entrance had been obtained into the house by picking the locks of the door, a chest in one of the bedrooms forced, and money to the amount of in cash and notes, as named in the indictment, stolen.

Superintendent Hambidge found a bunch of thirteen skeleton keys in Mr Surman's Park, where it was supposed Groves had thrown them, just before he was taken. There appears little doubt but that Hodges had the money with which he made his escape to London. Previous convictions were found against both prisoners, and they were severally sentenced to be transported for fourteen years.

These two convicts were the most daring depredators in Cheltenham, and Groves, in particular, has been three times tried for burglary, besides other offences.<sup>5</sup>

On 24 April 1848, the following transports have just been removed from the Gloucestershire County Gaol to Millbank: Thomas Groves, William Hodges and 18 others.<sup>6</sup>

Thomas Groves, 23, single, read & write well, labourer, was convicted 29 March 1848 at Gloucestershire Assizes of housebreaking &c, and sentenced to 14 years transportation. He had been once previously

<sup>4</sup> Gloucester Journal, 18 March 1848, p3

<sup>5</sup> Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette, 10 April 1848, p 2

<sup>6</sup> Cheltenham Journal and Gloucestershire Fashionable Weekly Gazette, 1 May 1848, p2

convicted and thrice acquitted. Received at Millbank Penitentiary on 24 April 1848 from Gloucester. After 8½ months, he was transferred to Wakefield Prison on 12 December 1848. Almost a year later, on 30 October 1849, he was removed to Portland Prison and boarded the *Hashemy*, on 19 July 1850, for the voyage to Western Australia.<sup>7</sup>

Thomas was sick on the voyage:

Folio 5: Thomas Groves, aged 26, prisoner; sick or hurt, ulcer; put on sick list, 12 October 1850, discharged 17 October 1850 well.<sup>8</sup>

On arrival at Western Australia, his description on arrival:

86. Thomas Groves, 30, 5'7", dark brown hair, hazel eyes, one deficient, round face, dark complexion, mark much with smallpox, one deficient eye, labourer and single.<sup>9</sup>

General Register:

86. Thomas Groves, 30 years the 19 June 1851, single, labourer, Church of England, went to school, he can read well, write tolerably and do a little maths.

Said his parents, John and Ann Groves, live at 36 Albert St, Cheltenham [39 Albert St, on 1851 census]

Attended Divine Service? Not regularly

Received Sacrament? Never

Habits? Not steady, addicted to drink & consequently neglected his work at times

Intellect? Sound

State of Mind? Means to be industrious, & avoid to company and drink.

Knowledge, Secular? Limited

Knowledge, Religious? Tolerable, knowledge of the Bible fair

Alleged Cause of Crime? Loose principles arising from loose company

Name of Person referred to for Character, &c. Does not refer to anyone.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas appears on the Casual Sick List at Fremantle.<sup>11</sup>

Groves T	16 November 1850		Eye water
Groves Thos	2 December 1850	Diarrhoea	Powder. Chalk mixture three times a day
Groves Thos	16 December 1850	Diarrhoea	Pilup Cal: J Jalap. Chalk mixture
Groves Thos	22 December 1850	Prickly heat	
Groves Thos	28 March 1851	Bad eye	Lotion
Groves Thos	9 April 1851	Sprained back	
Groves Thos	10 April 1851	Sprained	Discharged

Thomas was issued with a Ticket of Leave on 26 August 1851. He was granted a Conditional Pardon on 4 November 1854 and a Certificate of Freedom on 7 February 1865.<sup>12</sup>

In 1854, Thomas had a serious medical problem.<sup>13</sup>

Reg. No. 86 T.L. Thomas Groves, 33, previous occupation - mason, employment in Prison. Admitted into hospital on 17 August 1854. Health on admission: Bad

18 August: Chronic Ophthalmia. This man applied as a "Ticket of Leave man" for advice upwards of 6 months at this hospital for the same complaint but refused to come into hospital. Since then, he has been under the treatment of different practitioners, and he is now admitted with total and irreparable destruction of vision of right eye, and a highly vascular and chronic form of purulent Ophthalmia affecting the left. Spoon diet.

<sup>7</sup> HO24/4; HO23/14, HO5/105

<sup>8</sup> ADM 101/32/6/1-6

<sup>9</sup> SROWA Acc 128/40-3

<sup>10</sup> SROWA Acc 1156 R21A

<sup>11</sup> SROWA Acc 1156 CS1

<sup>12</sup> SROWA Acc 1156 R21B

<sup>13</sup> SROWA Acc 1156 M13; RD1-2

19 August: no change since yesterday. Bowels well cleaned out before commencing the Calomel & Opium.  
 20 August: Considerable general improvement on eye. Mouth commencing to be touched.  
 21 August: Much the same as yesterday.  
 22 August: Profuse purulent discharge.  
 23, 24, 25, 26 August: Discharge less.  
 27, 28, 29, 30, 31 August: Convalescing.  
 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 September: Going on well  
 7 September: Both lids very granular, and upper one much ulcerated. Half diet.  
 8 September: Very much improved since the solid nitrate was applied.  
 9 September: Very marked improvement has followed the novel treatment adopted in fact, I have seen nothing equal to it in rapid improvement. Continue treatment.  
 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 September: Going on favourably. Continue treatment.  
 15 September: Discharged. Well.

Thomas Groves married Frances Margaret Lewis in 1860 at Fremantle.

Frances Lewis (15), a servant from Surrey, arrived in Fremantle per *City of Bristol* on 9 August 1857, with her were her parents, Edward Lewis (40) and Hannah (39), and siblings John (14) and George (11). Frances Margaret Lewis was baptised on 13 March 1842 at St Mary, Lambeth. Father was a labourer. Thomas and Frances had a large family, all born at Fremantle.

Thomas Groves died on 17 April 1887 and is buried at Fremantle (Palmyra) Cemetery. His death is registered as: Groves, Thomas Edward, 66, parents unknown, died 1887.

#### Death of wife.

Groves.—On 27 July 1920, at 34 East-street, East Fremantle, Frances Margaret, relict of the late Thomas Groves, of Fremantle, and mother of Mrs H. Wrightson, Mrs A. Fry, Mrs F. Knox, Mrs E. Mell, and Thomas John, Henry, James, and Robert Groves. Aged 79 years. At rest.

Funeral - Groves.—The Friends of the late Mrs Frances Margaret Groves, senior, relict of the late Thomas Groves, of Fremantle, are respectfully invited to follow her remains to the place of internment, the Congregational portion of the old Skinner-street Cemetery. The funeral will leave the residence of her son, Mr John Groves, No. 34 East-street, East Fremantle, THIS (Wednesday) AFTERNOON, at 4 o'clock, arriving at the cemetery at 4.13 p.m. No flowers by request. Arthur E. Davies and Co., Undertakers, Fremantle and Claremont. Tel. 223 Fremantle.<sup>14</sup> Memorial notices in newspapers in 1924, 1929

An old colonist passed away on 27 July 1920, at 34 East-street, East Fremantle, aged 79 years. Frances Margaret Groves, relict of the late Thomas Groves, the deceased lady was, much respected and esteemed. She landed in Western Australia in the ship the *City of Bristol* in 1856. She was born in Westminster, London, and married the late Thomas Groves in 1858, who predeceased her by 32 years. The old lady left four daughters and five sons, thirty-six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She was also foster mother for Miss Moore, daughter of the late William Dalgety Moore, who had five grandsons; fighting for George V. Three made the great sacrifice, and two have returned.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> The West Australian (Perth, WA : 1879 - 1954), 28 July 1920, p1

<sup>15</sup> Sunday Times (Perth, WA : 1902 - 1954), 15 August 1920, p7

