

Baptism	1 February 1813, All Saints, Leicester, Leicestershire
Parents	William Palmer and Sarah Draper
Parent's marriage	30 September 1798, Leicester.
Siblings	Mary Ann (1799-1802), Sarah (1801), William (1803), Thomas (1814), David (1817), Daniel (1819)
Wife	Frances Pegg
Married	25 December 1833, St Margaret's, Leicester
Children	Alfred (1834-1834), Martha (1835-1835), Mary Ann (1837-1853), Emma (1839), Alfred (1843-1848), Edwin (1845)

When Philip was born, the family lived on North Street, Leicester. His father was a framework knitter, the same occupation Philip later had.

His first appearance before the courts was in 1829.

Philip Palmer, 17, and Wm Jayes were charged with having, on 23 June, in the liberty of Leicester Abbey, stolen provisions belonging to Thomas Saunders and a waistcoat belonging to Thomas Burbidge. Jayes was found not guilty, and Philip received six calendar months of hard labour in the House of Correction.¹ Philip appeared several times in court over the next ten years, primarily for assault, and received fines or, in default, a few days in prison.

Philip married Frances Pegg in St Margaret's Church, Leicester, in 1833. The family initially lived on Goodacre Street, then Wheat Street, before moving to 23 Lewin Street.



Houses 17-23 Lewin St, Leicester.²

In May 1838, Philip Palmer, Wheat Street, was charged with breaking into Mr Pegg, Lewin Street's premises about four o'clock on Wednesday morning and stealing about 50lbs of worsted. The defendant was seen leaving the premises carrying a large box and was pursued towards Abbey

¹ Leicester Journal, 17 July 1829, p3

² <https://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/digital/collection/p15407coll5/id/1154/>

Meadow, crossing the water near Tumbling Bay. His pursuers succeeded in capturing him. He was committed to trial.

At his trial in July, Philip Palmer, 25, pleaded guilty to stealing a bag containing 70lbs of worsted, the property of John Pegg, who gave him an excellent character and said he would employ him again if permitted. Philip was sentenced to three months hard labour.³

One newspaper report expected him to be transported:

A Tory Witness - We have repeatedly hazarded the opinion that some gentlemen lately hired to swear anything to prop the dying cause of Toryism would in future rank with Pegg's "vagabonds", and this week has furnished a striking proof of the correctness of our observations. Mister Philip Palmer, of Wheat-street (one of the witnesses lately sent to London on the "fool's errand" projected by the Tories, who, by the way, have amply verified the proverb concerning "fools and their money" etc) having taken in into his head to break open the house of Mr Pegg, Lewin-street, on Wednesday morning and carry off a large quantity of worsted yarn, for which **he will most likely be sent abroad to visit his father and brother, these worthies having seen sufficiently patriotic to leave their country "for their country's good". - against their will. It may be as well to conclude our extract from the history of this respectable family, by stating that Mister Palmer's father had been expatriated - alias transported - twice, and his hopeful son seems likely to acquire as honourable a notoriety.** We wish the Tory "oath swallows" joy of their respectable associate, expecting their evidence will carry as much weight with it as Mister Palmer would.⁴

His father, Wm Palmer, 49, was convicted of stealing 72 pairs of stockings on 16 July 1824 at Leicester and sentenced to 7 years. William was 5'8", with a dark complexion, slender build, long face, hazel eyes, dark grey hair, and a wife and seven children. He has a mark on the left eye, part of the left ear cut, and a flesh wound on his belly and right thigh. He has been convicted of a felony before and has a bad character but was well-behaved in gaol. William, a framework knitter, was on the *Ganymede* hulk at Woolwich and was pardoned on 4 December 1830.

On 18 March 1837 at Leicester, William Palmer, 63, was convicted of stealing mutton and sentenced to 7 years. He was on various hulks at Chatham. In the March quarter of 1842, he was recorded as suffering from dropsy; he died on 3 April 1842 while still a prisoner.

In 1840, Philip was charged by John Gibbons with having assaulted him. Gibbons and two others were watching Mrs Warner's garden of the Abbey when five persons, one of whom had a bag of onions, were seen coming out of the garden. A scuffle ensued, in the course of which the defendant's party cut the complainant with a knife, wounding his right hand and cutting him near his eye. The onions were secured, but all the thieves escaped. Philip was later apprehended on a warrant. He said on the night in question, he was at home until nine at night and then went out to the market to purchase various articles and returned. The complainant was positive that Philip was one of the gang he had wrestled with, and he was committed to stand trial.⁵

At the Leicester County Sessions 18 October 1840. Philip Palmer, 28, read and write imp, was convicted of stabbing with intent to maim and sentenced to 2 years.

Philip Palmer, 28, a prisoner, stocking-maker, born in the county, was in the House of Correction when the 1841 census was recorded. His family was at Lewin Street, St Margaret's, Leicester; Frances and the children lived with her mother and sister.

Mary Pegg, 50, was not born in the county; Mary Pegg, 20, was a seamer, not born in the county; John Pegg, 15, was a stacking maker, born in the county.

³ Leicestershire Mercury, 12 May 1838, p2; Leicester Journal, 06 July 1838, p2

⁴ Leicestershire Mercury, 12 May 1838, p3

⁵ Leicester Chronicle, 3 October 1840.

Fras Palmer, 25, seamer, not born in the county; Mary 5, and Ann [Emma] 3, both born in the county.⁶

Philip was again in court in 1846. He was charged by John Adams with an assault. The complainant said that on Tuesday, he went to work as usual and on passing a shop, Philip charged him and beat him several times. John Woolmer said that when Adams came into the shop, the defendant began calling him names and knocked him down several times before he could recover himself. Philip admitted striking Adams but pleaded in justification that the plaintiff had trampled his child's fingers and knocked it down in the dirt. Fined 5/- or ten days imprisonment.⁷

In 1848, Philip's luck ran out. At the Leicestershire Adjourned Epiphany Sessions, 10 March 1848: William Orton (43) and Phillip Palmer (36) were charged with stealing, on 23 February, at Birstall, four tame rabbits, a bill-hook, and other articles, the property John Cooper.—Seven years' transportation.⁸

Philip was received at Millbank Prison, from Leicester Gaol, on 17 April 1848. The register notes his wife as Frances 33, and children Mary Ann 11, Emma 7 and Edwin 2, who live at Lewin Street Wharf Street, Leicester. On 9 December, he was transferred to Pentonville Prison. From here, he embarked on the *Adelaide* on 24 July 1849 for Australia.⁹

The ship *Adelaide* went to Hobart with convicts destined for Port Philip; however, she was ordered to Sydney and arrived there with 289 convicts on 24 December 1849. Philip was sent to the Bathurst district with his Ticket of Leave.¹⁰

Indent from Pentonville Prison, sent with the *Adelaide*, said: Philip Palmer, 37, can read and write, was taught to be a tin plate worker while in prison, has three children – Mary Ann, Emma and Edwin, wife Frances, 34, live at 23 Lewin St, Leicester.¹¹

At some stage, Philip went to Victoria. This newspaper article gives some insight into what Philip did in Australia:

Philip Palmer, a man about 50 years of age (in appearance) and a decent exterior, was charged with having stolen nearly £300 in gold from Joseph Benjamin Ruddock, who described himself as a draper from Gravesend, Kent. The prisoner was brought up in the custody of Inspector Henry Murphy, who said from information he received, it appeared that on 24 May, a report of a robbery of nearly 300 in gold was sent to the police office in Dale-street. The prisoner had come from Australia in the ship *James Baines* and went with two fellow passengers to lodge in the house of Mrs Jones, 11 Hunter-street. On the morning of the 24th, the prisoner was missed from the lodging, and immediately after, Mr Ruddock missed his money, which consisted of sovereigns and was tied up in three canvas bags. Inspector Murphy went in search of the prisoner and went to Leicester on information he had received. He then went to the village of Cromford in the peaks of Derbyshire, he ascended a flight of 150 stairs to a house and saw the prisoner whom he arrested and secured with handcuffs. He then searched him and found some silver and two sovereigns in his pocket, and in the house, he discovered £192 in gold. He told the prisoner the charge on which he had arrested him, and the prisoner said the man (Ruddock) who charged him had not a shilling whilst he (the prisoner) brought home £300 from Australia and that the money was his own; he added that he had been robbed in Liverpool of the balance. The prisoner also said to the Inspector, "if I had five minutes' notice of your coming, you would have no more chance of getting in here than you would have had

⁶ The National Archives of UK (TNA), HO 107/604/9

⁷ Leicester Chronicle, 19 December 1846, p3

⁸ Leicestershire Mercury, 18 March 1848, p1

⁹ P The National Archives of UK (TNA), PCOM2/28, p174; PCOM2/62, p63, HO24/4; HO24/16

¹⁰ NSW Archives, 49/1329, received a Ticket of Leave in New South Wales, arrived per Adelaide 1849.

¹¹ NSW Archives, 4/3315, letter No 56/2144.

of getting into Sebastopol, and if I had met you in the highway I would have shot you dead". Murphy then went to Leicester, and at 23 Lewin-street he got the prisoner's daughter, who gave him 20 sovereigns, saying her father had given them to her.

It appeared that upwards of seven years ago, the prisoner had been transported from Leicester for a burglary but had obtained a ticket of leave and went into the bush; he subsequently became a dragoon in the service of guarding the gold from the diggings to Melbourne and afterwards came home on the *James Baines*. Mr Ruddock said the prisoner occupied the berth opposite his in the *James Baines* on her homeward passage from Melbourne.

On their arrival there, they went to lodge at Mrs Jones', 11 Hunter-street. There were three of them. They arrived on 21 May and slept in the same room. About 4 o'clock on the morning of 24 May, the other man awoke Ruddock and called out that something was wrong as Bill (that was the name the prisoner went by on shipboard) was gone. He at once got up and found his money gone. The three canvas bags, in which the gold was, were found on the floor. There were three sovereigns found on the prisoner, and Ruddock identified them as part of those he had lost, with respect to one with a peculiar mark on it.

The morning before the robbery, the prisoner gave a girl into custody in Gascoyne-street on a charge of robbing him of £4, and he stated to the officer that he had not a farthing of money more, and in proof, he pledged his watch in Scotland-road for 10s on the same morning. Mrs Jones, the keeper of the lodging house, and her mother were examined, and the policeman's statement was corroborated. The prisoner was committed to trial.¹² He was charged with stealing £280

Philip Palmer, 44, married with 2 children, weaver, larceny in a dwelling house to the value of five pounds and having been previously convicted of a felony, committed 12 June 1855 and convicted on 23 July 1855 at Liverpool General Quarter Sessions. He spent 1 month 15 days at Liverpool and was then transferred to Preston Gaol on 22 August where he spent 8 months 21 days. On 15 May 1856, he was sent to Portsmouth. Philip was being subjected to molestation because of having been cited to give evidence in the trial of George Chibb or Chubb and was moved to the *Defence* Hulk on 8 September. He had a visit on 30 July 1856; unfortunately, the register does not record who visited him.¹³

Philip Palmer arrived in Western Australia per *Clara* on 3 July 1857. The last trace found of him was in Albany when he received his Certificate of Freedom on 18 January 1870. He was aged 58.

His wife and surviving children:

1851 census, 23 Lewin Street, St Margaret's, Leicester.
Francis(sic) Palmer, head, married, 33, framework knitter, born Chelsea Middlesex; M.A. Palmer, daughter, 14; E. Palmer, daughter, 12, E. Palmer, son, 5. The children born in the county.¹⁴

Frances Palmer, 39, died 20 August 1855 at 23 Lewin Street, St Margaret, Leicester, wife of Philip Palmer, a stocking framework knitter, died of Phthisis pulmonalis of 1 year; the informant was Ann Pegg of 25 Lewin Street, possibly her sister.

Alfred Palmer died on 24 March 1848 of measles, just after his father had been sentenced to 7 years transportation. The informant was Mary Pegg of 13 Lewin Street.

Mary Ann Palmer, 16, died 11 August 1853 at 23 Lewin Street St Margaret's, Leicester, daughter of Philip Palmer, a framework knitter, died of Phthisis Typhus fever of 9 days; the informant was Frances Palmer of the same address.

¹² Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, 20 October 1855, p1

¹³ The National Archives of UK (TNA), PCOM2/107

¹⁴The National Archives of UK (TNA), HO 107/2088

Emma Palmer 22, spinster, residing at Wheat Street, married George Maine, 24, shoemaker, residing Millon Street on 26 December 1860. Her father was Philip Palmer, a framework knitter. Her husband died in 1870, leaving her with 5 children.

Edwin Palmer, 22, bachelor, a tailor, residing at Upper Conduit Road, married Mary Ann Brown, 23, residing at Upper Kent Street on 7 June 1868, St George, Leicester. Edwin's father was named as Philip Palmer, a framework knitter.

Edwin and Mary had six children, four alive in 1911.