

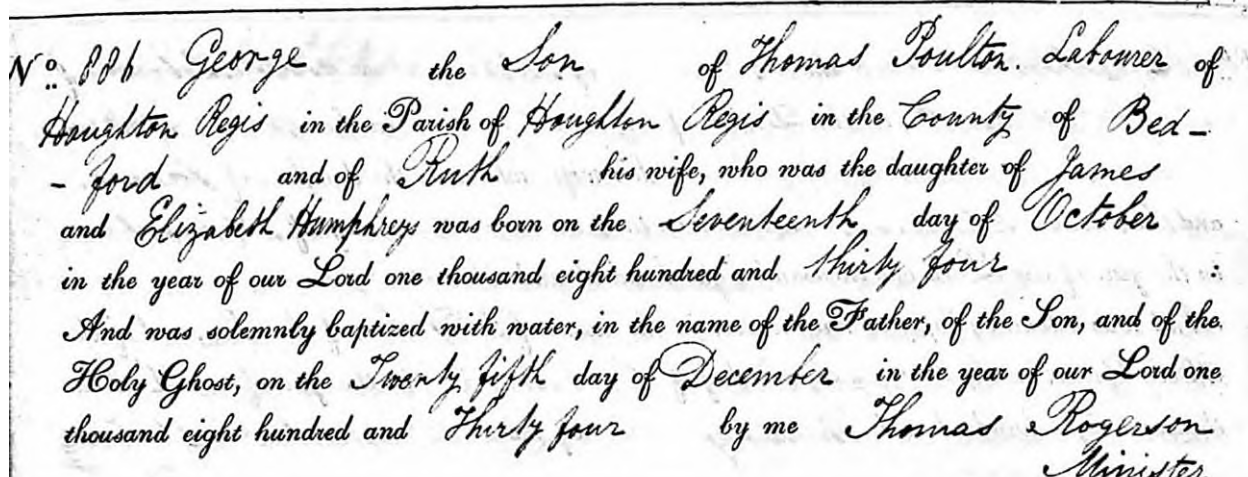
George Poulton, 3834, William Hammond

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variations: Potton, Potten, Polton

Born	17 October 1834, Houghton Regis, Bedfordshire, England
Baptism	25 December 1834, Houghton Regis
Parents	Thomas Poulton and Ruth Humphreys
Parent's marriage	27 December 1821, Houghton Regis
Siblings	David (1824-1847), William (1826), Mary (1827-1828), Joseph (1829-1837), Samuel (1831-1840), Elizabeth (1832-1833), Thomas (1837-1837)
Wife	
Married	
Children	

George Poulton was the family's only child to be baptised in the Wesleyan Chapel in Luton; his siblings were baptised at the Anglican Church in Houghton Regis.



No. 886 George the Son of Thomas Poulton. Labourer of Houghton Regis in the Parish of Houghton Regis in the County of Bedford and of Ruth his wife, who was the daughter of James and Elizabeth Humphrey was born on the Seventeenth day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty four. And was solemnly baptized with water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, on the Twenty fifth day of December in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and thirty four by me Thomas Rogerson Minister

When George was three years old, his mother died in the September quarter of 1837, aged 32.

Two years later, his father Thomas remarried a widow, Phoebe Burt née White, on 5 September 1839, at Houghton Regis. Her husband, Richard Burt, died in 1829. The Burt's had two children, Thomas, born in 1827 and Mary, born in 1829 and died in 1838.

On the 1841 census, living in Town Street, Houghton Regis were:

Thomas Poulton, 35, ag lab; Phebe Poulton, 35; William Poulton, 15; Thomas Burt, 14.

George Poulton, aged 6, does not appear on the census; he may have been missed when the census was re-written from the collector's books onto the forms now seen.

On the 1851 census, George is not living with the family. Thomas Poulton, 49, and his wife Phoebe, 46, lived in High Street, Houghton Regis. Thomas was still an ag lab. Son William Poulton, 26, a plaiter, lived next door with his aunt Sarah Goodwin, 62, and uncle Richard Goodwin, 74, a farm labourer. Sarah was the sister of Ruth Poulter.

George may be the George Poulter, 16, plaiter, lodging with David Inns and family at Folly Yard, off High Street, Houghton Regis. David Inns, 31, was a straw plaiter.

The following year, George had his first recorded encounter with the law. He was committed on 6 July 1852 for stealing one deal box, one plaid waistcoat, two neck handkerchiefs and one knife, the property of Richard Goodwin, most probably his uncle. George was described as:

Age 17, 5'2" tall, brown hair, hazel eyes, oval visage, scar on left wrist, freckled in face and on the forehead, a plaiter, he could read and was born in Houghton Regis.

At his trial on 16 July 1852, he was sentenced to three months of hard labour at the New House of Correction, Bedford. George was discharged on 15 October 1852.¹

Then, on 7 March 1853, George was committed for, on the 4 March 1853, feloniously and burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling house of Thomas Poulton at night and stealing 4 shillings and sixpence the property Thomas Poulton. The Morning Herald gave a detailed account of the trial:

George Poulton, aged 18, was charged with having feloniously and burglariously broken into the dwelling-house of Thomas Poulton at Houghton Regis and stolen 4s 6d. It appeared that on the night of 4 March, the prosecutor, who is the father of the prisoner, went to bed at ten o'clock, having fastened up his premises and made them safe. He had then in the house a few shillings in money, which were deposited in a salt cellar in the cupboard, which was the place where the prosecutor's wife, not the prisoner's mother, usually kept any money she had. On the window sill of the keeping room, there was also left a knife with a black handle, the property of a boy named Sharp, who resided with the prosecutor. When the prosecutor, who rose as the clock was striking six on the morning of 5 March, came down, he found that a pane had been taken out of the window of the keeping room, and it afterwards was noticed that the knife was gone, that the money was gone from the salt-cellar in the cupboard, and that there were marks of a naked foot soiled from contact with the moist ground on the window-sill and a table near it, and corresponding footmarks on the ground outside the window, where was found a piece of rag, which appeared to have been worn between a boot and a stocking.

On investigation, it was ascertained that the prisoner had been in the tap room of a public house on the morning of 5 March, between seven and eight, and had left behind him the knife of the boy Sharp. There was also found on him a piece of rag of the same pattern and substance as the rag left beneath the window of the prosecutor on the night of the 4th, and it was also shown that the two pieces of rag corresponded exactly with a third piece produced by a woman, who deposed to having given to the prisoner some time before a large piece of the same rag.

The prisoner had on a pair of boots but no stockings. He had long ceased to reside with his father but had been seen in the neighbourhood of his father's house on the night in question, and neither at the trial nor before the magistrates disputed that. The Prisoner, who was not assisted by counsel, in his defence, pretended that he had not done what he was charged with. The Jury returned a verdict of Guilty. The prisoner was then given in charge to the Jury on a previous conviction and found to be the person therein named. The Lord Chief Justice, in passing sentence, adverted to the previous conviction and to the fact that the prisoner had driven his own father to throw him off and, finally, to prosecute him and ordered the prisoner to be transported for ten years.²

The description of George is similar to that taken the year before:

Age 18, 5'2½" tall, dark hair, grey eyes, fresh complexion, round visage, red scar on the left cheek from a burn, curly hair, a straw plaiter, can read, born in Houghton Regis where he resides.

¹ Bedfordshire Gaol Index, BLARS QGV10/3; Bedfordshire Mercury , 24 July 1852, p1

² Morning Herald (London), 15 July 1853, p7

George, convicted on 13 July 1853, and transferred to Millbank Prison from the Bedford County Gaol on 14 September 1853.³

He spent about three weeks in Millbank before being transferred to Pentonville Prison on 7 October 1853. His conduct was good while in prison. George was then sent to Portland Prison on 13 February 1855.

George Poulton arrived at Fremantle on 29 March 1856, per *William Hammond*. His description has changed little from the ones taken at Bedford Gaol:
Age 22, 5'2½", brown hair, hazel eyes, oval visage, fresh complexion, middling stout build, freckled, scar on the right arm, straw plaiter and single.

He was sent to Freshwater Bay Depot on 23 May 1856. George appears to have been well-behaved. He received a Conditional Pardon on 13 May 1859, followed by a Certificate of Freedom on 12 July 1863.

The *Wild Dayrell* arrived from Singapore on 21 March 1865, on her way to Melbourne. She carried, among other cargo, 4700 kegs of gunpowder and consequently was "moored" some distance offshore. Two days after arrival, on 23 March, a boat belonging to the *Wild Dayrell*, left the South Jetty with a crew of four men in the late afternoon; a fresh breeze was blowing at the time. Having reached a short distance from the ship, a gust of wind caught her, and she capsized and sank almost immediately. Three of the unfortunate men drowned before any assistance could reach them; a fourth man swam to the *Nile* and was taken on board in an exhausted state. No traces of the three lost bodies or the boat have been discovered.⁴

With some of the crew drowned, George Poulton signed on as a seaman. The *Wild Dayrell* left Fremantle on 12 April 1865 with a cargo of 300 bags of flour, 10 casks of fish, 5 loads of timber from Fremantle; and 54 casks of rum, 4700 kegs of powder, the original cargo from Singapore.⁵ She arrived at Hobson's Bay, Victoria, on 28 April.

The following day, at the Williamstown Court:
George Poulton, a seaman, was charged with being a prisoner of the Crown illegally at large in Victoria. Detective Ennis stated that the prisoner was arrested on board the schooner *Wild Dayrell*, on her arrival in Hobsons Bay from Swan River and that he was transported from England in July 1853 for 10 years and came out in the ship *William Hamlin*. The man had been free one year and nine months, but the laws of this colony prohibited his coming here till he had been free three years. The prisoner was remanded till Tuesday next and ordered the captain and agents to enter into a bond of £100 to take the man away with the vessel when she left.⁶

The *Wild Dayrell* sailed on 3 June 1865 for Camden Harbour, near the Mitchell Plateau, in North Western Australia, presumably with George on board.⁷ She made a second voyage to Camden Harbour in August, and sailed to Colombo later in the year. The ship arrived back at Sydney on 26 February 1866, and George Poulton is not listed as a crew member.

No further trace of him has been found.

³ Bedfordshire Gaol Index, BLARS QGV10/3.

⁴ The Inquirer and Commercial News (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), 29 Mar 1865, p2

⁵ The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times (WA : 1864 - 1874), 14 Apr 1865, p2

⁶ The Herald (Melbourne, Vic.: 1861 - 1954), 1 May 1865, p3

⁷ Bendigo Advertiser (Vic. : 1855 - 1918), 5 Jun 1865, p2