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| Born | 30 December 1840 Honley, Yorkshire (surname Brierley), |
| Baptism | 26 September 1851 Honley, Yorkshire (surname Brierley) |
| Parent | Ann Brierley |
| Parent marriage | 28 February 1843, Kirkburton, Yorkshire, by Banns |
| Siblings | Allen (1844), Ruth (1848), Grace (1849), Hannah (1851), Emma (1853), <i>Tom (1855-1858)?</i> , Inkerman (1856), Ned (1858) |

Isaac was the illegitimate son of Ann Brierley.

Benjamin Sykes married his mother, Mary Brierley, at Kirkburton, Yorkshire.

Benjamin Sykes, full age, bachelor, resides in Hepworth, weaver; his father is Joshua Sykes, a weaver.

Mary Brierley, a minor, spinster, resides in Hepworth; her father is Isaac Brierley, a weaver.

On the 1851 census, Benjamin and Ann Sykes were Hand Loom Woollen Weavers born in Honley, where the family lived.

In 1859, Isaac Sykes, a simple-looking youth, was charged with obtaining goods by false pretences from Edward Beaumont, shopkeeper at Honley. The prisoner was a farm servant employed by Mr John Middleton of Honley. On the 4 November, he went to Mr Beaumont's shop and asked for some gunpowder and shot for Mr Middleton and was served with it. The next day, he called again at the shop and said Mr Middleton complained that the powder served before was not good and asked for half a pound of the best powder and a box of caps. On the 30 November, the prisoner called a third time and was supplied with powder and caps for Mr Middleton.

In January, Mr Beaumont took the account for 9/9 to Mr Middleton and, only seeing the prisoner, gave it to him to give to his Master, which he promised to do. Nothing more was heard of the matter until a few days since when Mr Middleton called at Mr Beaumont's shop. Beaumont mentioned the account to him, but he denied all knowledge of it. Mr Middleton stated that he gave no authority to the boy to procure the articles. Isaac has been in his service for 15 or 16 months, and he was sorry he could not give him a good character. The prisoner elected to be tried by the bench and pleaded guilty to the charge. He was sentenced to three months of hard labour in the House of Correction.¹

At the end of his sentence, Isaac joined the 84th Regiment on 16 May 1859 at Sheffield, number 664. No doubt he was strongly encouraged to join up by the authorities. Isaac was 18, 5'4¼", with grey eyes, sandy hair, a fresh complexion, a labourer and born in Hawby, Yorkshire.²

Isaac quickly discovered that army life was not for him. On 17 January 1860, he was court-martialled in Sheffield for desertion and losing necessaries. He was sentenced to 56 days and stoppages. Then, on 24 May 1860, he was tried at Sheffield for deserting again and sentenced to 168 days (24 weeks). His sentence finished in early November. He deserted a third time on 4 February 1861.

The newspaper reported that on 21 February 1861, Isaac Sykes was brought before Thomas Thornely Esq, charged with being a deserting from the 84th Regiment on 4 February at Salford. It appears the prisoner enlisted at Sheffield on 24 May 1859, during which period he deserted no less than six or seven times. Ordered to be sent to his Regiment at Salford Barracks.³

¹ Huddersfield Chronicle, 19 February 1859, p6

² TNA, Depot Description Books, 1803-1892; WO 67/15-20. 39th Foot, 40th Foot, 65th Foot, 74th Foot, 84th Foot

³ Ashton Standard, 23 February 1861, p3

The Army records say:

Isaac Sykes, No. 664, 84th Regiment, born Hawby [Hornley] Yorkshire, a labourer, was 19¾ years old, 5'6", with light hair, grey eyes, and a fresh complexion. He was court-martialled in Manchester on 25 February and received 168 lashes.

In March, the newspapers reported Isaac Sykes was charged with being a deserter from the 84th Regiment again. Three weeks ago, the Prisoner was apprehended as a deserter and ordered by Mr Thornely to be sent back to his Regiment in Salford, where he received 50 lashes. He was put in the hospital and remained there until 1 March, when he again absented himself. He was apprehended in Stayley on the 3 March. The prisoner denied being a deserter or absent without leave from his Regiment. He was ordered back to his Regiment.⁴

Note: No record has been found of him receiving 50 lashes, as reported in the newspaper.

He was court-martialled again on 14 March 1861 in Manchester for desertion. He was not so lucky this time and was sentenced to 6 years of penal servitude. The papers were laid before the Queen on 15 April 1861.⁵

Isaac spent three months in Manchester before spending two months in the Aldershot army camp, serving out the time of his desertion sentence from 25 February. He was transferred to the English Prison system on 31 August 1861 when he was sent to Millbank Prison. His date of conviction is sometimes recorded as 11 August 1861; however, his six years of penal servitude started after the desertion sentence of 168 days.

After three weeks at Millbank, Isaac was transferred to Pentonville Prison, where his behaviour was good. His last move was to Chatham on 12 May 1862. The register noted he had two letters D on his left side, indicating he was a deserter. On 20 June 1864, Isaac boarded the *Clara* for the voyage to Western Australia.⁶

The ship reached Fremantle on 28 August 1864. Isaac had grown and was now 5'9" tall. He was described as 19 years old, with brown hair, blue eyes, round face, ruddy complexion, middling stout, a vag st (vague stare?), Church of England, single and a labourer who could not read or write.

It was not long before he was in trouble again. On 23 August 1864, he was engaged as a general servant to Wm Kilner in Perth on a salary of 20/- per month. Six days later, he was convicted in Perth of uttering a forged cheque and sentenced to three months. He was sent to the Mt Eliza Depot.

After serving his sentence, Isaac was sent to York on 19 December, engaged for 4/- per day. Four days later, he absconded, was sentenced to one month, and returned to Fremantle Prison on 30 December 1864. On 25 January 1865, he received his Ticket of Leave and a pass to Guildford, where T.W. Harding employed him at 20/- per month.

The summer was sweltering, and five days later, Isaac died of sunstroke on 30 January 1865.⁷

⁴ Ashton Standard, 09 March 1861, p3

⁵ TNA, various Army records from WO 92; WO 86

⁶ TNA, HO24/9, HO24/1, PCOM2/45, PCOM2/2, HO8/159.

⁷ SROWA, various Convict records.