

William Thomas, 109, *Hashemy*

Researched by Marcia Watson

William Thomas was born about 1820-3.

In January 1847, Leeds, Yorkshire:

Robberies – On Saturday, two men named William Thomas and William Tomlinson were brought up at the Leeds Court-House, and committed for trial at the sessions for stealing a copper “*refrigator*” from the Maux Arms public-house, Call-lane. ¹

The newspaper reported: Robbery from a Brewhouse.—We mention in our last that several brewing publicans had been plundered of refrigerators or cooling tubes; and we have this week the pleasure of adding that on Saturday last two fellows, returned from transportation, and well-known rogues named William Thomas and William Tomlinson, were committed for trial at the sessions, charged with entering the brewhouse of the Three Legs public house, Call Lane, by means of skeleton keys, and stealing a copper refrigerator. They had offered it for sale to a person named Barr, in Hunslet Lane, who very properly caused their apprehension. ²

Tomlinson and Thomas were found guilty and sentenced to 14 years transportation, as both had previous convictions for felony.

In April 1847. Convicts – The following prisoners were removed on Tuesday last from York Castle to Millbank prison, in the execution of their respective sentences: For fourteen years - Wm Tomlinson and Wm Thomas.³

William was received at Millbank prison on 6 April 1847, and transferred to Wakefield Prison on 4 October 1847. Fifteen months later, he was transferred to Portland Prison, arriving there on 13 December 1848. William was reported five times, between 31 March 1849 and 14 February 1850, for irregularity and disposed of as in Report Book and Misconduct Book.⁴ On 19 July 1850, he boarded the *Hashemy* for the voyage to Western Australia. The Prison Registers mention William was 24 when convicted, single, a shoemaker, could read imperfectly, and his previous convictions were – ‘twice of a felony, 18 times imprisoned summarily and transported for seven years.

Note: Too many people called William Thomas were convicted, and his previous conviction of transportation has not been identified.⁵

On arrival in Western Australia, he was described as:

109. William Thomas, 30, 5’5”, brown hair, blue eyes, an oval face, dark complexion, stout, no marks, a shoemaker and single. ⁶

Three and a half months after arriving, William received his ticket of leave on 10 February 1851. The following Prisoners having been allowed Tickets of Leave will pass from the Establishment this day, taking with them their Liberty Kit etc. William Thomas is to enter the service of Mr Jos Harris of Fremantle ⁷ However, in a list of ticket of leave holders assigned in the first half of 1851, it says: William Thomas, shoemaker, assigned to — Gilbert, shoemaker, in Perth district. Rate of wage was 30s per month.⁸

Note. The next William Thomas to arrive was in April 1854 per Sea Park. [Wm Caleb Thomas 2690]

¹ Leeds Intelligencer, 23 January 1847, p5

² Leeds Times, 23 January 1847, p4

³ Leeds Intelligencer, 10 April 1847, p8

⁴ Portland Prison. Governor’s Journal, 24 November 1848 to 9 August 1850. PCOM 2/354

⁵ HO23/14, p43; PCOM2/27, p52; PCOM2/383, p49

⁶ SROWA Acc 128/40 - 43

⁷ SROWA Acc 1156 SO1, p32

⁸ Further correspondence on the on the subject of Convict Discipline and Transportation. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of her Majesty. 30 April 1852, p196

Fremantle. 24 January 1852, Fremantle — William Thomas, a ticket-of-leave holder, absconding from his employer, ordered to return to his master .⁹

William returned to prison a few times over the next year:

- 8 March 1852 Received at Fremantle Prison from Fremantle
- 23 April 1852 Discharged from Associates R.... to North Fremantle
- 16 June 1852 Discharged to Guildford
- 14 March 1853, Perth William Thomas, charged with being drunk in the streets during divine service; fined 10s and costs.¹⁰
- 22 July 1853, Perth William Thomas, t.l., and John Ingram, t.l., were each fined 5s. and costs for drunkenness.¹¹
- 27 August 1853 Re convicted prisoner received at Fremantle, sentenced to three months for vagrancy.
- 19 September 1853 To Clarence in work party. The following re convicted prisoners are selected to join the Clarence Road Party tomorrow the 20th inst. They will be brought before the Superintendent this day at 12 o'clock. 25 Martin Stone*, 295 C Overton, 195 W Thomas, 313 Philip Dixon*, 222 W Kirkham*, 1256 Jno Smith. * will have their Irons removed.
- 20 September 1853 to Clarence
- 26 November 1853 re convicted prisoner discharged.¹²

His sentence expired in May 1862.¹³

Possible Death

William Thomas, aged 60, unknown parents, died 1882, registration No 11513

⁹ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 – 1855, 28 January 1852, p3

¹⁰ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 – 1855, 16 March 1853, p3

¹¹ Inquirer (Perth, WA : 1840 - 1855), 13 July 1853 p3

¹² SROWA Acc 1156 RD1 - RD2

¹³ SROWA Acc 1156 R21B