

## Ernest Vintell, 9601, *Norwood*

Researched by Marcia Watson

Name variations: Vandill, Vandell, Vaudell, Vantell, Vautell.

Alias: Heges

**See:** Ernest Vantell (1830 -1925) (Reg. No. 9601) by Irma Walter (2022)

<https://www.harveyhistoryonline.com/?p=5604>

Additional information.

Born	~1834
Parents	Ernest or Andrew
Parent's marriage	
Siblings	
Wife 1	Esther Float
Marriage 1	8 August 1864, Parish of St John, St Pancras, Middlesex
Wife 2	Mary Jane Elizabeth Scott
Marriage 2	5 October 1872, Wesleyan Church, Perth, Western Australia
Children	Ernest (1874-1944) James <u>William</u> (1875) Charlotte (1877) Sidney Arthur (1880-1880) Gertrude May (~1881-1955)

Ernest claimed to be born on 24 August 1830 in Strasbourg, which was then part of France. The town was 3km from the German border. Other records give his birth about 1834. Ernest gave his father two different names- Ernst and Andrew.

His early life is a mystery; however, Ernest possibly arrived in England in 1861 per *Acacia* from Algiers. When the census was taken on 7 April 1861, the *Acacia* had just arrived at London Docks. On board were the Master and family, mate, cook, five seamen and one passenger: Ernest Wendnel, 27, unmarried, born in Germany.

The following year, at the Surrey Sessions, on 21 November 1862:

Ernest Vaudell, *alias* Hague, a **German**, fashionably dressed, was indicted for stealing a portmanteau and contents, valued £14, the property of Frederick Charles Bishop, at the London-bridge terminus of the Brighton and South Coast Railway. Several newspapers said he was Ernest Heges *alias* Vaudall or Vandall. Mr Robinson prosecuted, and the prisoner was undefended.

The Prosecutor, a gentleman connected with the Geological Society, said that on the 1st ult, he proceeded by railway to Brighton. He had a large portmanteau with him containing wearing apparel &c. worth about £14, and left it on the platform in charge of a porter at the London-bridge terminus. On his arrival at Brighton, his property could not be found, and a little while afterwards, a telegraphic message was received from London that the prisoner was in custody for stealing the portmanteau.

Inspector Carpenter, specially employed at the London-bridge terminus of the Brighton Railway, said that at about ten o'clock on the morning of the 1st ult, he saw the prisoner on the platform, smoking a cigar and looking about. Witness, thinking him to be a foreign gentleman, took very little notice of him then; but about ten minutes afterwards, he saw him go near the seats on the departure platform, and shortly after that, he saw the prisoner take up the Prosecutor's portmanteau, walk out of the station with it, and get into a cab, which was just about to drive off when the witness stopped it and asked the prisoner what he was going to do with the portmanteau. He said it was his property, and he was carrying it home. Witness, not believing his statement, took

him into custody and, in the course of the day, received information of the robbery. On the following day, the Prosecutor came up by train and identified the property.

The prisoner made a very rambling defence, pretending not to understand English, but the evidence was interpreted to him by one of the learned counsel.

The jury found him guilty, and the court sentenced him to 18 months.

Another newspaper account:

Ernest Vandill, 28, a **Swiss**. When he was in the cab, the policeman asked him where he came from, and he pretended not to understand him. When asked where the key to the case was, he said it was at his hotel in the Haymarket. In his defence, he said he mistook the portmanteau as his own. The jury did not believe him.

Inspector Carpenter then stated that there were four other charges of a similar character against the prisoner, and he had been frequenting railway stations for some time past, committing robberies of this description. <sup>1</sup>

Prison Registers record him as Ernest Vandell, 28, 5'4 " , brown hair, grey eyes, fresh complexion, Rigoletti and female on left arm, bootmaker, stealing a portmanteau, 18 months, weighed 9st 9lbs, could not read or write, Church of England, was born in F (presumably France) and released from prison on 19 April 1864. <sup>2</sup>

Four months after his release from prison, he married on 8 August 1864, Parish of St John, St Pancras, Middlesex, by Banns:

Ernst Vandell, 29, bachelor, boot maker, 70 Charlotte Street, father Ernst Vandell was an engine driver.

Esther Float, 20, spinster, 19 Cleveland Street, James Float was a bootmaker.

Witnesses Henry Float and Elizabeth May Wearing. Ernst and Esther both signed the register.

19 Cleveland Street is about a two-minute walk from 70 Charlotte Street.

1864. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of St John, St Pancras in the County of Middlesex								
No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
182	August 8	Ernst Vandell	29	Bachelor	boot maker	70 Charlotte Street	Ernst Vandell	Engine driver
		Esther Float	20	Spinster		19 Cleveland Street	James Float	boot maker
Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church, by <u>Banns</u> by me, <u>William Joseph Smith Curate</u>								
This Marriage was solemnized between us,		<u>Ernst Vandell</u>		in the Presence of us,		<u>Henry Float</u> <u>Elizabeth May Wearing</u>		

Although the register calls him Ernst Vandell, his signature looks like Ernst Vontell.

About three months after his marriage, at the Adjourned General Sessions, Clerkenwell, Middlesex, on 21 November 1864:

Ernest Vintell, described as a bootmaker, 38 years of age, was indicted for stealing a carpet-bag and other articles, the property James Nicholls. The prisoner, who is an **Italian**, pleaded Guilty. The prosecutor is a gas fitter, living Eynesbury, Huntingdonshire, and Saturday, 12 November, was on the platform of the Great Northern Railway, at about quarter to eight in the evening, and he left his

<sup>1</sup> South London Journal, 25 October 1862, p2; London Evening Standard, 22 October 1862, p2

<sup>2</sup> TNA UK, PCOM2/240

carpet-bag between two forms on the platform whilst he went to get a ticket. He was absent about five minutes, and when he returned his bag was gone.

On this night the prisoner went up to Chalkley, the cloakroom porter at the Great Northern Railway, and asked him about some luggage which he said was coming from Liverpool. He was referred to the parcels office, and in a few minutes he returned with a carpet-bag, which he left in the office and received a ticket for it. The actions of the prisoner, however, had not passed unnoticed; for William Ransley, a detective officer, watched him take the carpet-bag, and he afterwards deposited it at the parcels office.

Between eight and nine on that night, as George Wilson was driving his cab along Oxford-street he was hailed by the prisoner, who produced a cloakroom ticket, and he said wanted him to go to the Great Northern Railway and fetch a carpet-bag from the cloakroom on the arrival side. He was told to tell the gentleman there that he (prisoner) had got his boxes, and that he had found them at the house which he had been staying. The cabman went to King's-cross station, produced the ticket and obtained the bag, and drove back with it to the place in Oxford-street where he had left the prisoner, and gave him the bag. Immediately he had done so prisoner was seized by a police-officer, and Thorogood, an officer employed by the Great Northern Railway Company, received him into custody. Mr Lesley, instructed by Mr Wontner, who appeared on behalf of the Great Northern Railway Company, having briefly addressed the Court, said he should prove that the prisoner had been formerly convicted.

**Previous conviction:** Inspector Carpenter, detective officer to the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, said the prisoner was tried at the Surrey Sessions, on 20 October, for stealing portmanteau belonging to gentleman named Bishop, of the Ordnance Office, who was about proceeding the Brighton Railway to Hayward's Heath, and he was sentenced be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for 18 months. At the time he (Inspector Carpenter) stopped him with this portmanteau on the platform of the Brighton Railway, at London-bridge, he gave a false address, but the right one was subsequently found out, when less than six portmanteaus and several bags were found, the produce of robberies from different railway stations, amongst them the South-Eastern, the Great Eastern, and Brighton Railway Companies. The prisoner was tried at the Surrey Sessions three charges, but there were six against him. The Assistant-Judge said the prisoner was a most dangerous person to be at large, but the time was come when he should receive the fruit of his misdoing, and the sentence the Court upon him was that he be kept in penal servitude for seven years.<sup>3</sup>

The Prison Registers record that Ernest Vintell, 27, married, can read and write, was convicted on 21 November 1864 at Middlesex Sessions of larceny and received stolen property after a previous felony, and sentenced to 7 years. He was received at Pentonville Prison on 20 February 1865 from Clerkenwell House of Correction. His wife, Mrs Vintell, resides at 19 Cleveland St, Fitzroy Square. Ernest was Church of England, although later records record him as Roman Catholic. He was transferred to Chatham on 4 January 1866.

When Ernest arrived in Western Australia per Norwood in 1867, he was described as aged 33, 5'4½", with brown hair, grey eyes, square visage, a pale complexion, healthy, a tattoo on the left arm of a dancing girl beneath the word "Rigolette".

On Saturday, 5 October 1872, at Wesley Church Perth:  
Ernest Vantell, above 21 years, widower, boot and shoe maker, resides at Perth, father Andrew Vantell, engine driver.

Mary Jane Elizabeth Scott, under 21 years, spinster, resides at Fremantle, father James Scott, a warder who arrived with his family on the *Merchantman* in 1863.

Both parties signed the register. Witnesses were Thomas Barker and June Taylor.

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<sup>3</sup> Morning Advertiser, 22 November 1864, p7

**CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.**

3478

No.	When and where Married.	Name and Surname.	Under or above the age of 21 years.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
1031	On Saturday the 5 <sup>th</sup> October 1872 in Wesley Church Perth Western Australia	Ernest Vantell	above 21 years	Widower	Boat Stevedore	Perth	Andrew Vantell	Engine Driver
		Mary Jane Elizabeth Scott	under 21 years	Spinster		Newcastle	James Scott	Warder

Married in Wesley Church Perth according to the rites and ceremonies of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, by me after  
 Consent duly obtained and by me, after the duly made as by Law required. Thomas Rankin Wesleyan Minister.

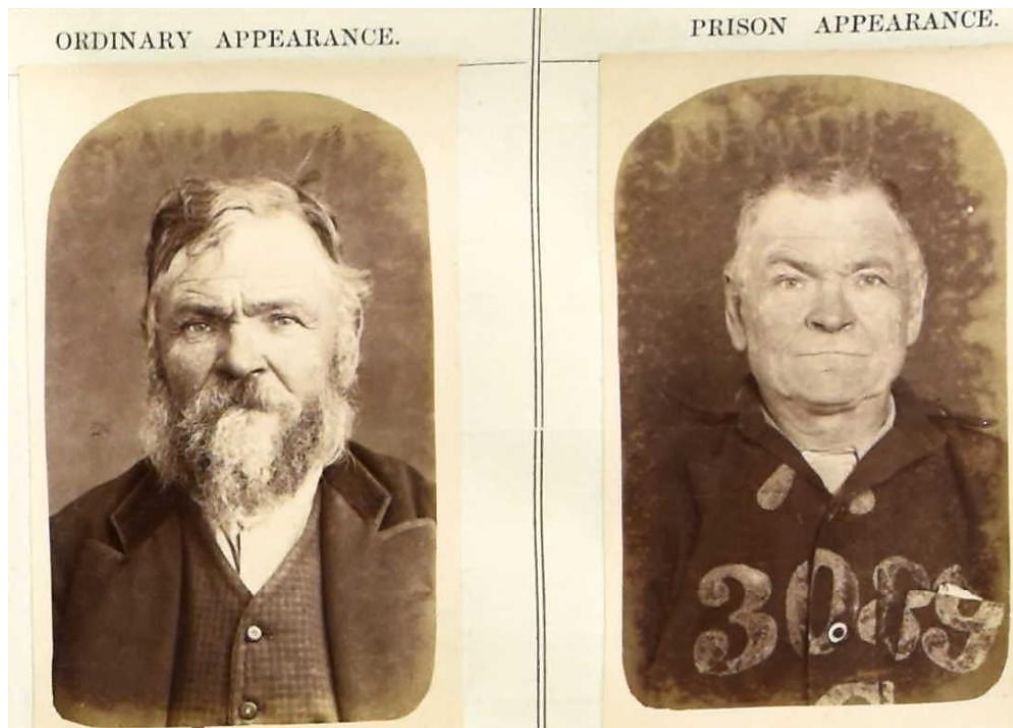
is Marriage was { Ernest Vantell } in the { Thomas Rankin }  
 mized between { Mary Jane Elizabeth Scott } presence of { Thomas Barker }  
 us, { } us, { John Taylor }

*Ernest Vantell*

There were early signs that the marriage may not have been happy. The following notice was placed in newspapers in March 1873:

NOTICE. The public is cautioned that I will not be responsible for any debts contracted by my wife Mary Jane Vantell, after this date. ERNEST VANTELL.<sup>4</sup>

The *Otway* left Perth for Adelaide on 26 October 1878. On board were Ernest, his wife, and his three children.<sup>5</sup>



Appearance in 1892.<sup>6</sup>

Ernest Vandell appears regularly in the South Australian courts. In later life, reflections of his earlier life appear in the newspapers. They are often contradictory and fanciful. Much of what he claims could have been gleaned from the news. An example of his claims:

An old and celebrated crime was recalled in the Criminal Court on Tuesday.

<sup>4</sup> The Inquirer and Commercial News, 5 March 1873, p3

<sup>5</sup> Adelaide, latest telegrams. Evening Journal, 26 October 1878, p2

<sup>6</sup> State Records of South Australia; Register of Prisoners-Yatala Labour Prison, 1854-1904; Series: GRG54/41

Ernest Vantell, who is 62 years of age, was charged with stealing, and after his address to the jury, he said, in reply to questions, that in 1864, he was a member of the smartest detective corps in Europe, in the French service. A gay Parisian, who held an office of great trust and responsibility, decamped, taking with him £4000 in cash. The defaulter was traced to London by Vantell and a fellow detective, and they arrested him there, but instead of casting him into gaol, the prisoner said, "We let him go and took the £4000 ourselves." For this, he was arrested and transported to Western Australia, the same year, for seven years. He had held the Legion of Honor, the Turkish Medal, and the order of the Medjidie. But he was stripped of all his decorations on conviction.

He was about 32 years of age at the time, and after serving three years in Western Australia, H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh secured his liberation, his behavior having been all that could be desired, and also presented him with £20. Prisoner said he acted as servant to Marshal MacMahon during the time he was campaigning, and the Governor of Western Australia, ascertaining that he was an excellent French chef, secured his services at Government-house. It was the tempting menu that he placed before the nautical Duke which led to the Prince taking an interest in him, and eventually assisting to make him a free man. Then he found his way to the Eastern colonies, and finally landed in Queensland, where he was engaged by the police as a revenue officer. Leaving this after many adventures, he settled in South Australia, worked steadily, but after the lapse of so many years he appeared in the Criminal Court, and his history was made public.

Vantell, whose life has been a stirring and eventful one, will now have a season of rest and a time for meditation, as, being found, guilty, his Honor sentenced him to 12 months.<sup>7</sup>

And:

Mr Ernest Vantell, of near Angara-street, Adelaide, a colonist of 52 years, completed his 89th year on Sunday. He was born at Strasbourg, which then was part of France, on 24 August 1830. At the age of 22, he was conscripted into the French Army, and two years later, saw active service in the Crimea. He was in the battles of Alma and Balaclava, Inkerman, the siege of Malakoff, and the taking of Sebastopol. Before the French reinforcements reached the British Army (of which he was a member), the great charge of the gallant 600 had taken place at Balaclava. At the conclusion of the campaign, he returned to France and, after a few years in London, left for Australia. He arrived at Perth in the sailing ship Norwood, in charge of Captain Bristol, in 1867. This was a convict ship and she carried 365 prisoners for Western Australia. He was the cook on board. He later served a few months in a similar position at Government House, Perth, in the regime of Governor Hampton. He then entered business in Perth as a bootmaker, but nine years later, he left for South Australia and found employment in the boot factory of Messrs. D. & V. Murray, Weymouth Street. After 21 years of service with that firm, he received 12 months' appointment as an Excise officer at Brisbane because of his ability to speak German. Afterwards, he re-engaged with his previous employers at the Unley factory for a few years. During the past decade he has carried on a secondhand dealer's business. He claims to be the oldest member of either the French or English armies who fought in the Crimea who now resides in Australia. He received the badge of the Legion of Honor and a Crimea medal.<sup>8</sup>

Death certificate: Ernest Vantell, died 2 March 1925, age 95, died at Magill, no relatives recorded even though his married daughter Gertrude lived in South Australia. Ernest Vautel buried on 6 March 1925, in the Old Catholic section of West Terrace cemetery, Adelaide  
When Ernest died there was no acknowledgment of his death in the newspapers, unlike many other Crimean War veterans.

### **What happened to the family of Ernest Vantell.**

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<sup>7</sup> Weekly Times (Melbourne, Vic. : 1869 - 1954), 11 June 1892, p22

<sup>8</sup> The Express and Telegraph , 26 August 1919, p1

Wife 1. Esther Anne Float.

Her husband was sentenced to transportation a few months after their marriage in 1864. By 1871, Esther was the 'wife' of George Michael Schram, although no record of a marriage has been found. She and George had four children – Catherine Ellen (1870), Emily Florence (1872), George Michael (1874) and Esther Edith (1883).

George Schram died in 1912, at the age of 78.

Esther Ann Schram was buried on 17 November 1927 at Camden, London, at the age of 83.

Wife 2. Mary Jane Elizabeth Scott.

Mary returned to Western Australia with her surviving children – Ernest, William, Charlotte and Gertrude.

According to South Australian Police Records, her son Ernest Vandell, aged 9, resides in Carrington St Adelaide, schoolboy, father William (Ernest written above) and mother Mary Vantell, father a labourer, Wesleyan, was sentenced to Reformatory Hulk until sixteen years of age, for stealing 50 yards of Cashmere value 50/-, from a shop. He was released on 15 September 1885 and left the colony per *S.S. South Australian*. The ship arrived at Fremantle on 21 September with 29 in steerage and about the same number of passengers.

Mary Jane Vantell married Richard Cowl at Fremantle in 1890. Richard was a lumper or labourer at Fremantle.

She died on 22 June 1915, aged 57.

COWL. - The Friends of Mr. Richard Cowl, of Norfolk street Fremantle, are respectfully invited to follow the remains of his late beloved wife, Mary Jane, to the place of interment, the Congregational portion of the Fremantle Cemetery. The funeral is appointed to leave Messrs. Arthur E. Davies and Co.'s Private Mortuary Market street, Fremantle. THIS (Wednesday) AFTERNOON, the 23rd instant at 2.30 o'clock.

Richard Cowle, aged 84, died on 30 January.1933.