



Frances Wilson

Date of Trial:	17 October 1816
Where Tried:	York, Kingston upon Hull Quarter Session
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1795
Stated Age on Arrival:	23
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Stay and Mantua maker
Alias/AKA:	Frances/Ann Chick (m), Frances Milner
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	A filthy woman, delicate constitution and given to theft (nb referred to her as 'Miller')
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

The attention of readers of the *Hull Packet* of 30 July 1816 was drawn to the misfortune of John Grant whose house was broken into while he and his family were away in Hull.

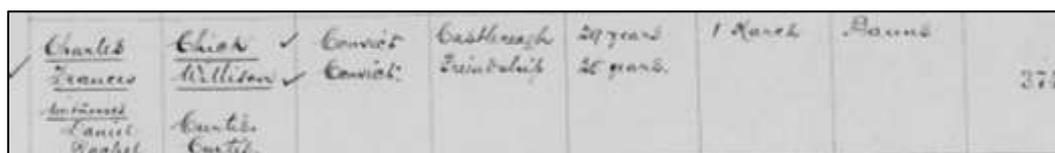
And on Thursday, Frances Wilson and Sarah Suddaby [were committed] for stealing a quantity of wearing apparel the property of John Grant, of Skidby. This last robbery was committed on Tuesday between the hours of two and five o'clock whilst the family were at Hull market. Part of the property was found upon the accused, the rest was in pawn. They are fully committed to take their trials at the next Quarter Sessions. <sup>1</sup>

Three months later the *Packet* was able to update its readers with the outcome of the trial held at the Hull General Quarter Sessions in October.

Frances Wilson, alias Milner, and Sarah Suddaby, for stealing various articles of wearing apparel, the property of John Grant and John Harman, two indictments, to be severally transported for the term of seven years.<sup>2</sup>

On arrival at Port Jackson on 14 January 1818 Frances found that she was to be sent on to Hobart, where she arrived the following month on 30 January on board the *Duke of Wellington*. Aged 23, she was a stay and mantua maker [dressmaker] by trade, and was able to both read and write – skills that could stand her in good stead in colonial society - and which certainly placed her a step above the 'servant' class. But whether she was able to put her skills to use is not known. Her scathing reference from Surgeon Cosgreave may have worked against her in seeking a favourable assignment. In what capacity is not stated, but the first colonial record for Frances finds her assigned as a 'Serv<sup>t</sup> to a Settler'. Subsequently she was employed at the Government Factory.<sup>3</sup> In 1823 she was mustered at Pitt Water which was where her husband was assigned.

It was on 1 March 1820 that Frances Willison [sic] and Charles Chick were married by banns at Hobart. Both were convicts, the bride having arrived per the *Friendship* and the groom per the *Lady Castlereagh*. Their respective ages were 25 and 29. The witnesses were Daniel and Rachel [sic] Curtis (née Francis).<sup>4</sup> This couple had married the previous year and were themselves convicts having arrived respectively per the convict vessels *Lady Castlereagh* and *Maria*.<sup>5</sup>



The *Lady Castlereagh* had departed England in December 1817 and arrived at Sydney on 26 April 1818. Thirty-nine convicts were landed there and the remaining 261, including Charles Chick and Daniel Curtis, were held on board pending being sent on to Van Diemen's Land, where they arrived at Hobart on 11 June 1818.<sup>6</sup> Charles Chick, was born about 1789 on the Isle of Wight, but it was as Charles Check that he, together with one James

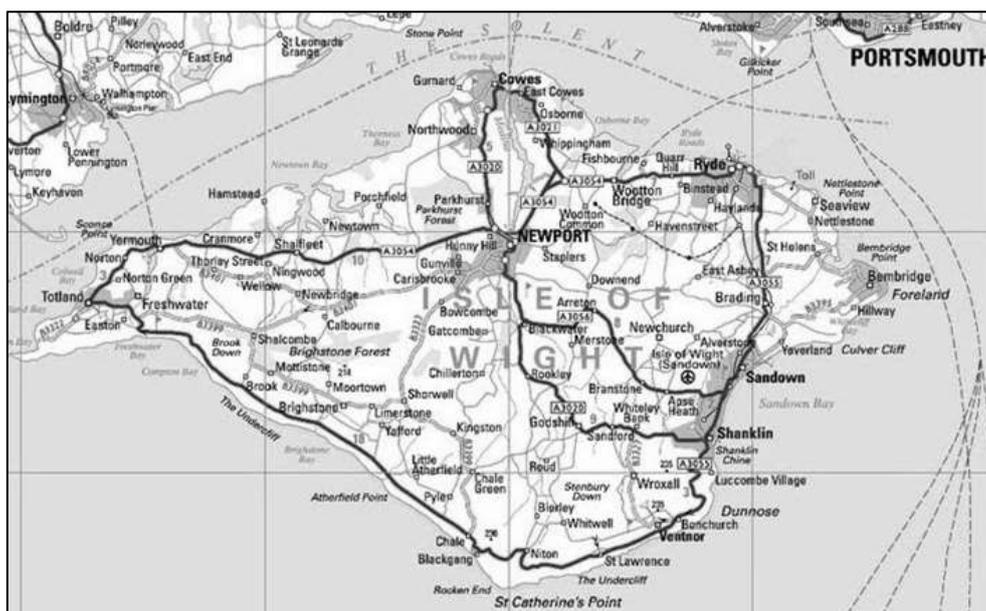


Young, was tried at the Winchester Quarter Sessions on 14 July 1817. They had been charged with 'stealing 6 cheeses, 4 sides of bacon, and other goods, the property of Wm. Way and Thomas Moorman at Newport', found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>7</sup> Charles was not unfamiliar with court procedures, having appeared before the bench two years earlier, as reported by the Hampshire Chronicle.

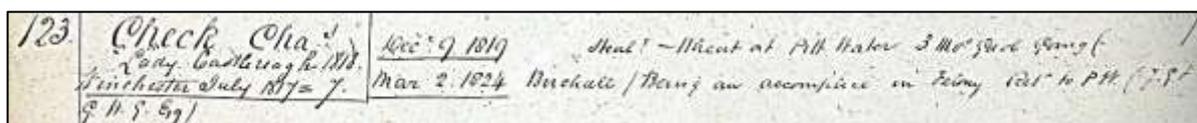
This week the following prisoners were committed to the County Gaol in this city: - *John Dowder* and *Wm. Chick*, charged with feloniously stealing and carrying away a £2 note and other effects the property of William Cook, at Newport, in the Isle of Wight; *Charles Chick*, *Elizabeth Snow*, and *Harriet Snow*, charged with receiving the same knowing the same to be stolen.<sup>8</sup>

Quite a family affair! The two thieves received a one-year prison sentence; the three fences were sent to prison for six months.

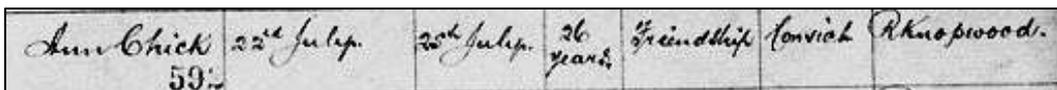
The spelling of Charles' surname has proved to be a bit tricky. In fact, 'Cheek' and 'Chick' (often used interchangeably) were most common in the historic region of Wessex, and particularly so on the Isle of Wight. Other variations (in addition to those 'invented' by faulty transcriptions!) include Cheak, Cheeke, Cheke and Chich.<sup>9</sup> From the birth records it is almost certain that Charles was baptised on 28 September 1788 at Binstead (near Ryde) and was a son of Peter and Hannah Cheek (née Sale [or Lale]), who were married in 1786 at Godshill (near Newport). Other children born to this couple were James, baptised 24 April 1791 at Binstead; William, baptised 6 May 1793, and Peter, baptised in 1798, both at Newchurch.<sup>10</sup>



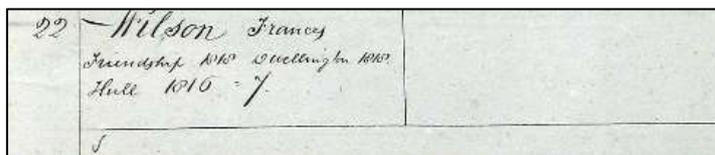
We learn a little more about Charles from the convict musters. He was a coal miner by occupation and on arrival at Hobart he had been assigned to the Gaol Gang at Pitt Water and subsequently was assigned to John Birchall, a Pitt Water settler.<sup>11</sup> It was at Pitt Water that Charles committed the only two offences documented on his conduct record. In December 1819 he was sentenced to 3 months in the Gaol Gang for stealing wheat. In March 1824, on the report of his master John Birchall, Charles was charged and found guilty of being an accomplice in a felony and returned to public works.<sup>12</sup>



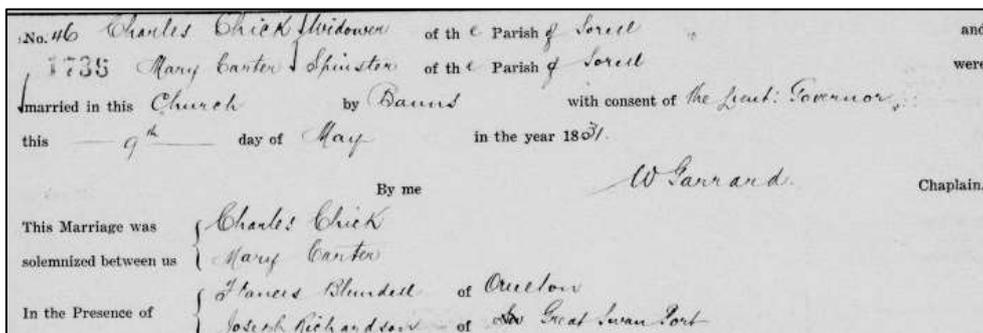
By the time of his second offence Charles was a widower. Registered under the name Ann Chick, Frances died, still under sentence, on 22 July 1822 and was buried three days later.<sup>13</sup>



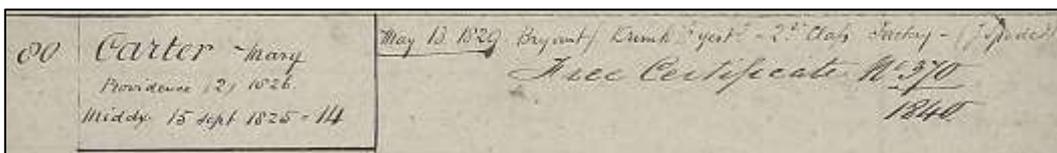
Frances, with her unblemished conduct record, was no trouble to the colonial authorities – no hint of being light-fingered as suggested by Surgeon Cosgreave. Indeed, she made little or no impact on the colonial society of the day.<sup>14</sup> Was her early death presaged by Surgeon Cosgreave’s allusion to her delicate constitution? No children have been found for Charles and Frances. Could she have died from pregnancy/birth complications?



Nine years after the death of his first wife Charles remarried, his second wife being Mary Carter. On 11 January 1831 Charles Cheek [sic] applied to marry Mary Carter. There being no objection the couple married by banns at Sorell on 9 May 1831.<sup>15</sup>



At the age of 23 Charles’ second bride-to-be had been tried at the Old Bailey on 15 September 1825, charged with, and found guilty of picking a crown piece and two half crowns from the pocket of tailor, David Williams, on 23 July for which she was sentenced to fourteen years transportation.<sup>16</sup> She left the Downs on Christmas Eve 1825 on board the convict transport *Providence* and arrived at Hobart in May 1826. Short – standing at just 5ft – with dark brown hair and brown eyes, this young woman who could read and write was a cook by occupation but admitted to having been ‘on the town’ prior to her conviction. Only one offence was recorded on her conduct sheet, charged on 13 May 1829 for being drunk which earned her time in 2<sup>nd</sup> class at the Factory. She qualified for her certificate of freedom on 15 September 1839 which was issued in 1840.<sup>17</sup>



Charles Check [sic] had received his certificate of freedom in 1824 and he continued to live and farm in the Pittwater district. But things did not go too well for him as he was he was declared insolvent in 1841.

In the matter of the insolvency of Charles Chick, of Pittwater, in the island of Van Diemen’s Land, Farmer. Notice is hereby given, that William Sorell, Esquire, Commissioner of Insolvent Estates for Hobart Town, hath appointed Wednesday the fourth of August now next, at ten of the clock, at the Court House, Hobart Town, for the hearing of the above-named Insolvent for an order of discharge. Dated this fourteenth day of July one thousand eight hundred and forty one.<sup>18</sup>

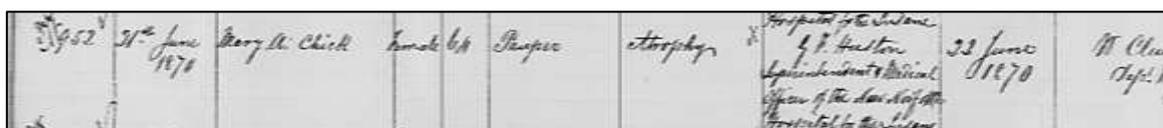
As noted above, no records have been located to indicate that Charles Chick was a father by his first marriage, and from subsequent records relating to his second wife, there were apparently no children from that marriage. So who were the Mr. Chick of Pittwater and his son of the following distressing account reported in the local press in June 1846?



*Accident* – On Monday week a dreadful accident happened to a little Boy, a son of Mr. Chick, of Pittwater, who was shot by another of about the same age, not knowing the gun was loaded. The poor little sufferer lost one eye, and part of the side of his face. By the kindness of Mr. Watson of Uplands, who happened to be near the Bluff Ferry, when the mother and child had crossed, they were immediately forwarded on to Hobart Town, for medical, and surgical assistance, there being at present no member of the profession resident, either at Sorell or Pittwater.<sup>19</sup>

The Chick family was facing more troubles by 1847, as evidenced by the legal case *The Queen v Chick*. This was an undefended action brought to recover from Charles Chick, the defendant, 947 days' maintenance, at 2s. per day, for his wife during a portion of which period (98 days) she was treated in the Colonial Hospital, and subsequently became an inmate of the Lunatic Asylum, New Norfolk, (849 days). When served with process, Chick had said that 'he might as well be fined £100 as £1, as he could not afford to pay it. The damages were, in fact, assessed at £104 2s.<sup>20</sup>

Having been pronounced 'of unsound mind' by a medical board, Mary Chick had been transferred from the Colonial Hospital to the New Norfolk asylum in 1844. Her medical notes state that she had been married for thirteen years, had no family [children] and that she was addicted to drinking. She presumably was released for a short time before, as a married woman aged 52 and described as a 'Convict Pauper', she was re-admitted to the New Norfolk Asylum on 13 October 1849.<sup>21</sup> The patient records reveal that Mary remained in the Asylum until her death on 21 June 1870.<sup>22</sup>



In dire financial straits, and with his wife now off his hands and being cared for by the Asylum, Charles Chick looked to the goldfields of Victoria to hopefully improve his lot. Two of the steerage passengers on board the *Yarra Yarra* when she left Launceston on 17 September 1852 were Charles Chick and William Chick (the latter being 'Native of VD Land').<sup>23</sup> The departure of this particular voyage caught the attention of the *Cornwall Chronicle*.

Yesterday, the wharf presented an unusually animated appearance for some time prior to the departure of this fine steamer for Melbourne. Persons were to be seen laden with all sorts of utensils &c., necessary for completing an outfit for the diggings, hurrying on board, in order to safely deposit them. The steamer moved from the wharf at about two o'clock, carrying on board above four hundred passengers.<sup>24</sup>

The venture to the goldfields was quite an undertaking for a man of Charles' age and his career as a miner was brief. He died on 10 December 1853 at the Bendigo General Hospital (although the death was not registered until 1856 – see endnote).<sup>25</sup>

DESCRIPTION.		(1) Cause of Death, (2) Duration of last illness, (3) Medical Attendant by whom certified, and (4) when he last saw Deceased.		Name and Surname of Father and Mother if known, with Rank or Profession.
When and where Died.	Name and Surname, Rank or Profession.	Sex and Age.		
1853. December 10 <sup>th</sup> at Bendigo General Hospital.	Charles Chick. Gold Miner.	Male. 60 years	(1) Rheumatism. (2) Not known. (3) Edward Hunt M.D. (4) December 10 <sup>th</sup> 1853.	Peter Chick. Hannah Chick. Not known.

His death certificate records that he was a gold miner by occupation and aged 60 (not quite accurate) when he died. According to Edward Hunt, the certifying doctor (and the Informant), the cause of death was rheumatism,

but he did not know how long the patient had been suffering from this crippling disease which would have severely hampered Charles' mining activities. The death certificates of many miners who had found their way to Victoria, only to die there, often provide little more than their name and place of death. In contrast, Edward Hunt was surprisingly well informed when completing the certificate details. He knew, for instance, that Charles' parents were Peter and Hannah Chick, and that Charles had been born on the Isle of Wight, although he was not able to provide any more particulars about Charles' colonial life. Charles was buried at The Old Cemetery, Sandhurst.<sup>26</sup>

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Hull Packet*, 30 July 1816, p.3

<sup>2</sup> *Hull Packet*, 22 Oct 1816, p.3

<sup>3</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834 - 1819, 1820, 1821.

<sup>4</sup> Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO), Hobart marriages, 1820, RGD36/1/1 no 347. Raechel was also known as Mary Ann.

<sup>5</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical reports for Daniel Curtis and Mary Ann Rachael Francis.

<sup>6</sup> Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Lady Castlereagh 1818, [https://www.jenwillets.com/convict\\_ship\\_lady\\_castlereagh.htm](https://www.jenwillets.com/convict_ship_lady_castlereagh.htm). *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 4 Jul 1818, p.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 21 Jul 1817, p.4.

<sup>8</sup> *Hampshire Chronicle*, 8 May 2015, p.4.

<sup>9</sup> Origin of the Cheek & Chick Surnames, The Cheek Family of Alleghany County, NC, <http://www.moonzstuff.com/articles/cheeksurname.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Ancestry, England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1975. Ancestry, England Select Marriages, 1538-1973. At least one of Charles' brothers arrived in New South Wales as a convict – Peter – tried at Winchester in August 1824 and transported on the *Hercules*, arriving at Sydney in May 1825. Peter died at Ellalong, NSW in 1883 – BDA, Biographical report for Peter Cheek.

<sup>11</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, Tasmania 1817-1821. John Birchall, himself a convict, and free in 1818, was granted a block of land and subsequently, in 1819, bought more land Pitt Water, his farm being named Marsh Farm – Community Contributions, Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/birchall/john/107376>. In 1821 the district called Pitt Water was named Sorell.

<sup>12</sup> TAHO, Conduct Register, CON31/1/6 image 123.

<sup>13</sup> TAHO, Hobart deaths, 1822, RGD34/1/1 no 592.

<sup>14</sup> TAHO, Conduct Register, 40/1/9 p.261.

<sup>15</sup> TAHO, Marriage Permissions, CON45/1/1, C-July 1830-Jan 1831, p.30. TAHO, Sorell marriages, 1831, RGD36/1/2 no 1736.

<sup>16</sup> *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 8.0, 20 November 2018), September 1825, trial of MARY CARTER (18250915-126). FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Prisoners on Orders, Middlesex. *Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser*, 19 May 1826, p.2. *The Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen's Land Gazette*, 23 Aug 1839, p.1.

<sup>17</sup> TAHO, Conduct Register, CON40/1/1 image 270. Female Convicts Research Centre (FCRC), Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database, Convict ID: 10435. *The Hobart Town Courier and Van Diemen's Land Gazette*, 23 Aug 1839, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> *The Cornwall Chronicle*, 17 July 1841, p.2.

<sup>19</sup> *The Britannia and Trades' Advocate*, 18 June 1846, p.3.

<sup>20</sup> *The Courier*, 13 Mar 1847, p.4.

<sup>21</sup> TAHO, HSD247/1/1 Patients Records – Admission Register, 1847-1854.

<sup>22</sup> TAHO, HSD246/1/2, folios. 33 & 129. HSD52/1/1, Patient Records-Case Books (Female); TAHO, New Norfolk deaths 1870, RGD35/1/39 no 377.

<sup>23</sup> TAHO, Departures, POL220/1/2 p.156. FMP, Victoria Coastal Passenger Lists 1852-1924.

<sup>24</sup> *The Cornwall Chronicle*, 18 Sep 1852, p.597.

<sup>25</sup> Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria (VIC BDM), Schedule B, 1856 Deaths in the Central District of Sandilands, 1856/1598. The entry for Charles Chick and the four others on the same page were registered by William Augustine Roche in 1856. However, the deaths occurred in 1853 (3) and 1854 (2). The deceased were all gold miners, all had died at the Bendigo General Hospital, all were attended by the same medical practitioner, all were buried on the same day that they died (which is unlikely), and all entries are written by the one person. Clearly this is a case of filling out and submitting forms some time after the event.

<sup>26</sup> A Government Camp was marked out on Camp Hill (now Rosalind Park) in Bendigo, by surveyor George Urquhart in 1852, to accommodate the headquarters of government officials and police who were to oversee the Bendigo Gold fields. The former Sandhurst Cemetery was located on the eastern side of the camp. In March 1854, an Act was passed that required cemeteries to be positioned one mile outside of a township. Therefore burials at Sandhurst cemetery ceased, and Back Creek and White Hills cemeteries were established. The former Sandhurst cemetery now lies under metres of fill under a carpark - Victorian Heritage Database Report, Former Sandhurst Cemetery, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/196132/download-report>.



## SOURCES

### Genealogy Websites

#### Ancestry

England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538-1875

England, Select Marriages, 1538-1873

New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849

New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834

#### Findmypast

England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935

Victoria Coastal Passenger Lists 1852-1924

### Other Websites

Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), <http://www.bda-online.org.au/>

Births Deaths and Marriages Victoria, <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/>

Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/>

Female Convicts Research Centre, <https://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/>

Free Settler or Felon? <https://www.jenwillets.com/>

LINC Tasmania, <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/>

Old Bailey Proceedings Online, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>

Origin of the Cheek and Chick Surnames, <http://www.moonzstuff.com/articles/cheeksurname.html>

Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office, <https://www.libraries.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/>

Victorian Heritage Database Report, <https://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/places/196132/download-report>

### Online Newspapers

#### British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Hampshire Chronicle

Hull Packet

Salisbury and Winchester Journal

#### TROVE

Colonial Times and Tasmanian Advertiser

The Britannia and Trades' Advocate

The Cornwall Chronicle

The Courier

The Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser

The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser

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