

Corroborating information

There are a plethora of names for the individuals involved in this crime.

The majority of information is that the crime involved **Frederick Musson, Anna Maria Hillman** and **Elizabeth Lowke**.

1 I found a burial record at Merridale Cemetery, Wolverhampton dated 4th November 1875 for **Elizabeth Lowke**, aged 7, father William Lowke, Boatman.

2 Census records for **Frederick Musson**

In **1871** Frederick, aged 19, is in Leicester at the Grand Junction Canal Wharf, on the boat "Form and Thought". Also on board are Ambrose Rayson aged 30, Captain, from Foleshill and William Hampton aged 25 from Sandbach Cheshire.

In **1881**, Frederick is in prison at Carisbrooke, Hampshire, shown as a Boatman from Wolverhampton and aged 28.

In **1891**, Frederick is back in Wolverhampton, on canal boat "Florence". With him is his son, also Frederick Musson, Boatman, aged 18 and born in Wolverhampton. One of the reasons why Frederick Musson and Anna Maria Hillman took Elizabeth Lowke on to their boat was to look after their infant child – presumably Frederick junior.

3 I have not yet managed to find a single census record for **Anna Maria Hillman**, either before or after the crime. This is not uncommon with boatmen, who were often not counted. I have also not found a baptism record, but because families lived on the boats, their children could be baptised anywhere on the canal, so these can be difficult to find. I can however confirm that the Hillmans were a canal family, as there are burials of Hillman canal boatmen in Merridale, including a burial for Richard Hillman on 30/4/1863 aged 57 years, who died of dropsy. Richard's wife was called Maria.

4 Location of **Frederick Musson junior**.

In **1881** Frederick is living at 4 Ward Street in Wolverhampton with Edward Williams, shown as a Coal Boat Haulier aged 53, his wife Susannah aged 48, and their children Emma, Thomas, George and Mary. He is shown as a Nephew.

5 **Edward and Susannah Williams**

14th May 1863 Edward Williams aged 23 Boatman of Steelhouse Lane, Wolverhampton son of John Williams, Boatman

married

Susannah Musson aged 22 of Steelhouse Lane, Wolverhampton, daughter of Thomas Musson, Boatman

6 **Musson baptisms in Wolverhampton**

There are three children of Thomas and Sophia Musson baptised in Wolverhampton:

George Musson baptised 8/5/1841

Alfred Musson baptised 9/4/1846 buried Merridale Cemetery 20/9/1854 aged 8 years

Helen Musson baptised 11/11/1848

but no record for either Frederick or Susannah.

However, the marriage record of Edward Williams and Susannah Musson shows Susannah's father as Thomas Musson, therefore we have to assume that Frederick's father was also Thomas Musson.

7 Again, from the Edward Williams/Susannah marriage we know that Susannah was born c 1840, but not baptised in Wolverhampton. Some of the earlier census records show Susannah's place of birth to be Oxford. A search for Mussons from Oxfordshire turns up another, William Musson born c 1834 in Banbury, wife Martha, and children Mary, Harriet, William, Emma and

John. William Musson was also a Boatman. Some of the censuses show William Musson as born in Wolverhampton, and his wife Martha is consistently shown as born there. There is also a John Musson b c 1837 in Wolverhampton (again no baptism record). In 1891 John Musson was on board the barge "Cowslip" from Birmingham, in docks in London.

8 In 1871 [George Seymour](#) son of Richard Seymour and Mary Thompson, and half brother to John Seymour, married [Ellen or Helen Musson](#), daughter of Thomas Musson. From the information above, it seems likely that Frederick and Ellen were brother and sister. So Frederick Musson was the brother in law of George Seymour.

Odd bits of data

I think Elizabeth Lowke may have had a brother William born c 1871 near Birmingham (on the census, the location is shown as Mineth or Minneth, near Birmingham). Neither of the Lowke children was baptised in Wolverhampton. This William Lowke was also a Boatman. He married Harriet Lemm (the Lemms were also boaties) and they had a number of children.

Frederick Musson was still alive and well in 1911. On both the 1901 and 1911 censuses he is shown as a boatman, and in 1911 is on board the barge "Rachel".

The Mussons seem inclined to get themselves involved in crimes which are more extreme than the petty ones most boatmen indulged in! A William Musson was the cabin boy on board the barge when Christina Collins was murdered, and, in fact, was the only one of the crew found innocent of the crime. It seems more likely that this William Musson was a brother or nephew to Thomas Musson, as he was aged 14 in 1839 (dob c1825) as opposed to William, son of Thomas Musson (dob c1834).

Death records

Sophia Musson b c 1808 died 1868 in Runcorn

Thomas Musson b c 1808 died 1875 in Wolverhampton.