

Baptism	23 January 1820, Habrough, Lincolnshire
Parents	John Overton and Elizabeth
Parent's marriage	1814
Siblings	Thomas (1815), Henry (1817), Elizabeth (1824), Sarah (1826), Hannah (1829), Susanna (1832), David (1834), Christiana (1839)
Wife	Mary Holmes (1826)
Marriage	19 June 1843, Normanby, Lincolnshire
Children	Sarah (1844), John William (1847)

Charles's father worked as a carpenter, or sometimes as a labourer.

Marriage: 19 June 1843, Normanby by Spital, Lincolnshire, by Banns.

Charles Overton, full age, bachelor, labourer, resides at Normanby, father is John Overton, a carpenter.

Mary Holmes, underage, spinster, resides at Normanby, father is Robert Holmes, labourer.
Both made their marks.

At the Lindsay Sessions, Kirton, 20 October 1843

Charles Overton, 23, can't read or write, larceny, 3 months.

Charles Overton, 23, was charged with stealing at Habrough one watch chain, one watch key, and one watch seal, the property of Robert Boynton.¹

Sarah Overton was born 22 February 1844 at the Caistor Workhouse, daughter of Charles Overton and Mary formerly Holmes. Charles was an agricultural labourer. Registered by the Master of the Workhouse. Charles was released from prison about the end of January.

Then, at the Lindsay Sessions. Spilsby, on 7 January 1845.

Charles Overton, 23, read and write imperfectly; larceny with prior conviction for a felony, 18 months.

Charles Overton, stealing from a dwelling house at Habrough, a pair of sheets and one blanket, the property of Nathaniel Wright. On the 16 November, the prisoner came to the Prosecutor's house, asked for a night's lodging, and was allowed to remain that night. The Prosecutor and his wife were from home for the next two days and left their house safe. On returning, they found it had been entered, eleven drawers had been broken open, and a pair of sheets and some blankets, with other articles, were missing. During the Prosecutor's absence, the prisoner was seen near the house, and the sheets and blankets found in his possession. The prisoner had been previously convicted of felony. Guilty – sentenced to 18 months.² His release from prison was at the start of July 1846.

John William Overton was born 1 May 1847 at Grimsby, son of Charles Overton and Mary formerly Holmes. Charles was a labourer. Mary Overton registered the birth on 31 May 1847

At the Lindsay Sessions, Kirton, 7 April 1848.

Charles Overton, 24, can't read or write, larceny, 1 month.

Charles Overton, 24, pleaded guilty to stealing, at Lea, a peck of wheat, the property of Francis Brocklesby. One month's hard labour.³

¹ Lincolnshire Chronicle, 27 October 1843, p1

² Lincolnshire Chronicle, 10 January 1845, p2

³ Lincolnshire Chronicle, 21 April 1848, p3

Murder near Keelby, Lincolnshire.

On Thursday morning last week, the wife of a labourer in the service of the Earl of Yarborough, at Brocklesby, was brutally murdered upon a footpath between the village of Brocklesby and Keelby. It appears that John Farrow, with his wife and two daughters aged 14 and 20, resided about half a mile from Brocklesby Hall. Their house stands in a field through which there is a footpath to the village of Keelby. Farrow went in the morning to his work at Brocklesby; and in the forenoon, as usual every Thursday, his wife went to "the shop at Keelby", taking with her a little butter for sale, an empty flour bag and some money, viz. two sovereigns, two shillings, a sixpence and a penny. This was about 10:20 am. She had proceeded about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile when, in a field near a gate where 4 ways met, she was assailed and murdered. Her pocket was torn from her side, its contents taken out, and the lifeless body left in an undisturbed state.

A violent death was not suspected. The missing money was supposed to be a tramp robbing a dead body. It was not until the body, which had been moved to her residence and prepared for burial, that the state of her head under the hair led to the suspicion of foul play. A post-mortem was ordered, and this was carried out at Brocklesby Hall, as the deceased's house was very small. Three Medical men made their examination on Sunday, and the evidence confirmed murder.

Meanwhile, inquiries were instituted, and suspicion attached to a labouring man named Charles Overton, who was apprehended on Sunday last and is now in custody, charged with the offence. He is a married man with two children. He was formerly a labourer of fair character, but having become a poacher, has been in prison twice for that offence and once for burglary. He was released from prison in January ⁴, and was immediately taken into the service of a farmer at Brocklesby, professed penitence, was treated well, and went on right for some weeks. But a circumstance which gave offence to his employer having arisen, he was discharged, and has since found only precarious and occasional employment. He is a member of a family which for ages has been in the service of the present Lord Yarborough and his ancestors, the grandfather of the prisoner, who is a carpenter at Brocklesby, having died a few years ago at the age of 101, his son and father of the prisoner, having succeeded to the same office, died about three years ago, and a brother of the prisoner, one of numerous family, being at present employed in the same capacity. His brothers and sisters are, we believe, nearly all employed by farmers and tradesmen in neighbouring places.

The deceased was buried on Monday. The same day, at 10 a.m., the coroner and jury re-assembled at Brocklesby Hall. The prisoner was removed in custody.⁵

Trial: A man named Charles Overton, bad character, was suspected of the murder, and was taken into custody. It was proved that he had changed two sovereigns at different villages the afternoon of the murder; and that the day after he underwent a mock trial at a village ale-house, and his drunken companions pretended to find him guilty of the murder.

The Coroner's Jury had no other evidence before them to implicate Overton than his changing of the sovereigns, and they returned an open verdict; but the supposed murderer was detained in custody, and subsequently committed by the magistrates, on a charge of stealing a gun, and also on a charge of stealing the furze-bill with which the murder is believed to have been effected.

At the Kirton Lindsay sessions, Overton was found guilty of these two charges and sentenced to 14 years' transportation. On receiving the sentence, he addressed the bench, saying, "Thank you; I never thought I had long to live."⁶

The Prison Registers show that Charles Overton, 28, married with 2 children, can't read or write, labourer, was convicted on 6 July 1849 at Kirton Lindsay of felony (2 indictments) after previous convictions and sentenced to 2 terms of 7 years transportation. He was received at Wakefield Prison on 14 August 1849. According to the register, he had been convicted once for felony and once for

⁴ Appears to be a summary conviction.

⁵ Sheffield Independent, 05 May 1849, p5; John Bull, 07 May 1849, p14

⁶ Bell's New Weekly Messenger, 22 July 1849, p2

poaching. On 2 July 1850 he was removed to Portland Prison. On 28 December 1850, he boarded *Mermaid* for the voyage to Fremantle, Western Australia.⁷

On arrival at Fremantle, Charles was described as:

295. Charles Overton, 31, 5'5", dark brown hair, grey eyes, long face, sallow complexion, black whiskers, left arm, C.O.M.O.C Overton, in full William Wilson, Thomas Beaufort, Mermaid, a woman; cut middle finger, cut on 4th finger of right hand, two moles left side, farm labourer, widower, 2 children.⁸ No evidence of his wife dying has been found.

Charles received a Ticket of Leave on 4 December 1852, and was discharged to the Perth district:

6 December 1852, worked for John Dobson of Perth

15 February 1853, employed by William Butcher

14 March 1853, employed by Mr Stotter, at 4/- per week.

Charles was reconvicted and sent back to prison, arriving on 26 August 1853.

On 19 September 1853, 6 prisoners were selected for the Clarence Road Party, including Charles Overton. They left Fremantle Prison the following day. The depot was located in the Clarence district (modern-day Naval Base/Kwinana), south of Fremantle.

By 1855, he was living in the York district.

York Police. 9 June 1855. Charles Overton, t.l., assaulting an Aborigine; fined £1.

York Police. 31 July 1855. 31. C. Overton, t.l., neglecting to send in his half-yearly return; reprimanded.

He was still in York when the census was taken in 1859. A Conditional Pardon was granted on 4 June 1859.

No further trace found.

⁷ The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO23/14; PCOM2/383

⁸ State Records Office of Western Australia (SROWA), Acc 128/1-32