

# Annie Ripper (1862-1926)



Image of girls that may resemble Annie and Eliza

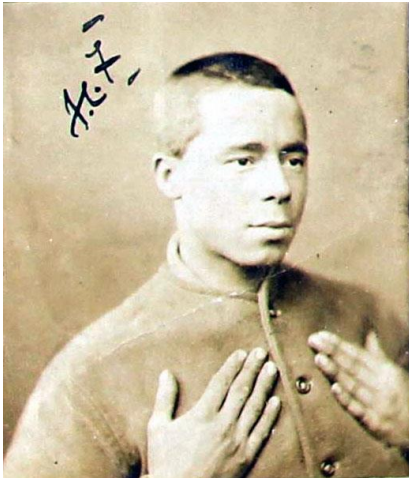
The mother of Annie and her sister, Eliza, died in July 1873 when they were 11 and 9 years old. Their father re-married in February 1876 and died just eight months afterwards in October. Annie and Eliza's stepmother had no further involvement with the family and the children were left to manage their own futures.

In November 1880 the girls rented a second floor front room of a squalid tenement near London Bridge.

Annie and Eliza worked as 'fur skin pullers' - pulling the skins off rabbits and other animals for the fur trade.

## 1881 census

Bridget	Wife	46		
Mary A. Cooper	Head	50	Laundress	Surrey South
Annie Ripper	Woman	22	Fur Skin Puller	" "
Eliza	Sister	18	"	" "
Sarah Collings	Head	47	Charwoman	Midd. City



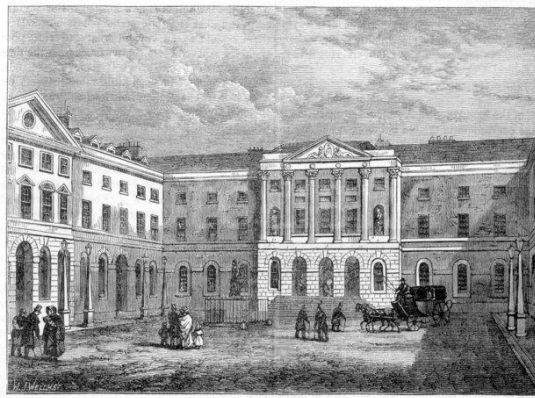
Frank Crook - prison photograph (1881)

**Francis (Frank) Crook had “kept company” with Annie for two years and they were very close until around November 1880 when the relationship ended acrimoniously.**

**Being homeless in December 1880, Frank called at Annie’s room looking for shelter and was allowed to “lie down before the fire all night” in Annie & Eliza’s room ...**



**... 24 hours later Annie was in Guy’s Hospital with her throat slit.**



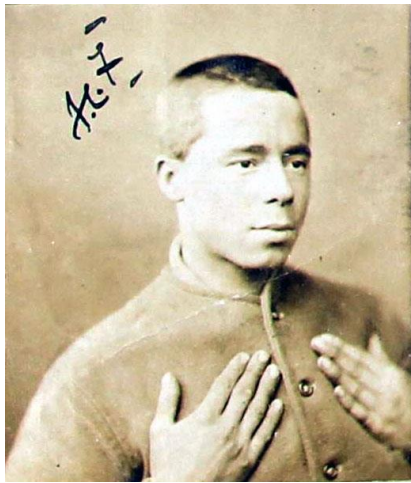
GUY'S HOSPITAL.

**Frank admitted the crime and gave himself up to the police.**

# 10TH JANUARY 1881

## The Proceedings of the OLD BAILEY

199. FRANCIS HENRY CROOK (19), Feloniously cutting and wounding Annie Ripper, with intent to murder her. *Second Count*, to do her grievous bodily harm.



**Frank Crook**



**Annie Ripper**

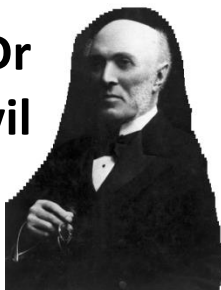


**Sarah Collins**



**Eliza Ripper**

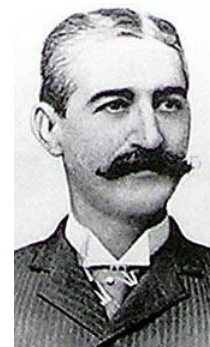
**Dr  
Bovil**



**PC Bowlett**



**Inspector  
Percival**



# FRANK CROOK'S TRIAL

A small play adapted from the transcript in *The Times*

## MR JUSTICE BOWEN

I am Mr Justice Bowen and we are here to try the case of Francis Henry Crook who is accused of breaking the peace on two counts. The first is that he is accused of feloniously cutting and wounding Annie Ripper with intent to murder her. The second count is to do her grievous bodily harm. Call Annie Ripper.

## ANNIE RIPPER

I am Annie Ripper. I live with my sister, Eliza. The prisoner has kept company with me for two years until earlier this year. He used to come and visit us, and on 15th December he had no lodging, and I allowed him to lie down before the fire all night.

The next morning at 10 o'clock my sister and I were going to work. I told the prisoner that it was time for him to go to work. He said he could not go because he had the toothache, and wanted the fire lit. I told him I would not have it lit but he insisted on lighting it, and I threw some water over it and over him too from a milk-jug. I told him to go out, as I did not wish to keep his company any longer. He said he would go out when we came home at night. We then left, leaving him there.

We returned at a quarter to 8 o'clock at night; he was asleep before the fire, which was going out. My sister woke him up and I said to him "You have not gone out" and he said "No". I could see that he had been drinking, and told him he had better go. I noticed that a dress was missing and I asked him where it was. I told him if he did not tell me where it was I would get the police. He said nothing and he stood by the fireplace. I sat down and he came over to me and said "Annie, I want to speak to you". I said "I don't want to speak to you" and pushed him away, and told him if he did not go out I would fetch Mrs. Collins, the landlady, and have him ordered out, and that I did not wish to speak to him, as I had somebody else to keep company with.

I got up, he caught me round my waist and threw me down on some wood at the foot of the bed, and put his hand out as if to get a knife off the table, and I felt him draw a knife across my throat. I struggled and held the knife in my hand while he held it and asked him to have mercy on me. It cut my thumb. He said "I will," and put the knife down. My sister took me downstairs and I found my throat and hand bleeding. I was taken to Guy's Hospital, and remained there 12 days as an in-patient. I am an out-patient still. My sister found a pawn ticket. I went to the pawnbroker's with the police inspector and saw the dress there which I missed. I have not got it out of pawn.

**MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Call Eliza Ripper.

**ELIZA RIPPER**

I am Eliza Ripper. I am the sister of the last witness. The prisoner slept in our room on the night of 15th December, and we went to work next morning, leaving him there.

We came home at 7.45, went up into the room, but could not see him, as the room was in darkness. I went towards the mantelpiece to find a match, and kicked against him. I said, "Who is that?" and he said, "It is me". While I was lighting the lamp he said, "Annie, I want you". She said, "Wait a minute till Eliza gets a light". He got up and walked towards her, got hold of her round the waist, and threw her down against some wood and tried to strangle her. I screamed and said, "Frank, let her get up". He made no reply; he let her get up.

She looked over the line and missed her dress; she said, "Frank, where is my dress, you thief? If you don't tell me I will lock you up". He jumped up and rushed towards her, got hold of her the second time, threw her down, and fell on her. I saw him put his left hand into his left trousers pocket, and draw out a knife and put it to her throat. Before I had time to get her away he had her throat cut. He went to make a second attempt but she put up her hand and caught the knife, and in trying to get it away she cut her thumb. While I was pulling him off he said, "I will do the same to you".

I got him off; my sister crawled up, and I took her downstairs. She was bleeding from her neck and hand. I met Mrs. Collins on the stairs who assisted her, and she was sent to the hospital. I met a constable in the courtyard and sent him to the house. When I went back I saw a quantity of blood on the floor, table, and bed, and the prisoner was sitting on the bed.

**MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Call Sarah Collins.

**SARAH COLLINS.**

I am Sarah Collins and I keep the house where the Ripper girls live. On the morning of 16th December I heard a noise in Ripper's room, and saw the girls go out. After that I saw the prisoner twice, but not to speak to. He came in at 5.45, went upstairs, and lit the fire. He had said to me about 12 o'clock, "Mrs. Collins, did you hear the set to this morning?" I said, "Yes, Frank, I could not help hearing it".

After that he went out, saying, "She shall suffer for this," but he did not say who. He returned twice during the day. The girls returned at about 7.45, after which I was hanging up my clothes on the first floor and heard terrible screams for some minutes, and heard the sister say, "For God's sake, Frank, don't, you are murdering her". I said, "For God's sake, Frank, you are murdering those girls". I went on to the stairs; the door opened and the girls came down, and I caught Annie in my arms. She was covered with blood, and so was I. I took her down to the street door. I also heard Annie say, "Where is my dress off the line, you thief? You have stolen it". He said, "Yes, you bloody cow, I have pawned that out of revenge to you."

**MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Call Constable Frederick Bowlett.

**FREDERICK BOWLET.**

I am Constable Frederick Bowlet, number N244. I was in uniform when Eliza Ripper fetched me to 19 Margaret's Court. I met Annie Ripper in the courtyard on her way to the hospital. I went up to the second-floor front room. Mrs. Collins gave me a lighted candle.

The prisoner was sitting on the bed crying; he said "I have done it, and I am sorry for it; it was all through another chap that I did it". I said "Did what?" He said "Cut her throat, I suppose". I saw some blood on the floor and on the bed. I asked the prisoner how the blood came on the bed. He said "That is where I threw her when I did it".

I saw a few spots of blood leading to a knife, which was lying on the table. There were a few spots of wet blood on the blade and handle. I said "Is this the knife?" He said "Yes". Eliza Ripper came into the room, and he said to her "If I could get at you I would serve you the same as I have served your sister". I took him into custody, and told him it was for cutting his sweetheart's throat. He said "Yes, I know I did it, I am sorry for it".

**MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Call Inspector Charles Percival.

**CHARLES PERCIVAL.**

I am Charles Percival, Police Inspector M Division. On 16th December, about 7.45 p.m., the prisoner was brought to the station and charged. I cautioned him. He said "I did it; it was through jealousy; she wanted to get rid of me, and I could not live without her". I read the charge to him, and he made this statement, and signed it in my presence. I shall read that statement for you now, it says:

"I was called up at 10 o'clock this morning. When I got up Annie Ripper started calling me a thief, and then she told me I was to go out of the place, and find a lodging somewhere else. I told her I would not go out if I had paid for a week's lodging by buying the coals; I should not be in want of a bed for her; with that she picked up a milk jug, a glass one, and threatened to throw it at my face.

"I came home at 4 o'clock, and laid down in front of the fire. I was woken up by the sister. She said, 'Who is here?' I said 'Me.' She said 'Frank, where are the matches?' They went to look for them, when Annie began jawing. She said 'You have taken the dress, I will lock you up.' I said nothing, but took the knife off the table, and threw Annie on the bed. I was going to cut some bread when I took it up. I could not stand her jaw, and told her; that is all."

**MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Call Dr Henry Bovil.

### **HENRY BOVIL**

I am Henry Howard Bovil, house surgeon at Guy's Hospital. On 16th December I saw Annie Ripper when she was brought in. She had a wound on the right side of her throat, from the lower part extending to the side downwards towards the middle line to the chest, and then extending with a scratch across the chest. It was about four inches long, cutting through the skin, and then ran an inch and a half, and a scratch beyond. The upper part was about an inch and a half deep. It had cut slopingly through the skin. She was an in-patient until 28th December.

The wound might have been serious, but it was not, and she went on very satisfactorily. It might have been inflicted with a knife. The lower part of her left thumb was cut for about an inch and a half; such a wound might be inflicted by her putting her hand against the knife.

### **MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

Do you Frank Crook, the accused, have anything you wish to say?

### **FRANK CROOK**

I am Frank Crook, the prisoner and this is my defence. I was called up by Annie Ripper at 10 o'clock. I said that I should not go to work because my face was swollen. I went to light the fire to make my breakfast. She filled the milk-jug with water and threw it over me, and swore she would break the jug and cut me with it. I said nothing to her. She said "Go out of my place; I have had enough to do with you." I said I would not go home. She began swearing at me, and said "Go to your bloody old mother for a lodging."

They went out to work. The sister blamed me for threatening both their lives, and saying I would pawn everything in the place. When they came home I was lying down in front of the fire. I had bought a half-pound of steak and coals, and made a fire and cooked the steak. The bread was on the table, and she threw it at me. I went to cut some bread. She said "Ain't you gone?" I said "No." She rushed at me again, and clawed me down my face. The marks are on my face. I pushed her away but she rushed at me again, and caught hold of my waistcoat, which is all torn. I felt myself going and put my arm on the table.

In the struggle she said "Frank, have mercy upon me." I said "Well, I will; what have I done?" She said "He has cut my throat," and when I saw that I began to cry. The policeman walked into the room and said "Where has this blood come from?" I said "I suppose from my finger." He said "You have cut her throat." I said "I suppose I have."

This is how it was done. When she pulled me I went to put my arm on the table. Eliza Ripper says that I took the knife from my pocket, and the sister says I took it from the table. I felt myself going, and swung my arm round to put the knife on the table.

### **MR JUSTICE BOWEN**

You have been found NOT GUILTY on the first count of feloniously cutting and wounding Annie Ripper with intent to murder her. On the second count of causing her grievous bodily harm you have been found GUILTY. I sentence you to Seven Years' Penal Servitude.

**27 July 1881 - Annie Ripper had a son and named him Francis Henry Thomas Ripper after his father ... Francis Henry (Frank) Crook who was serving his prison sentence in Pentonville Prison. The following day Frank was transferred to Brixton Prison; it is not likely that these two events are related.**



**25 Dec 1884 - Annie (22) married James Barnard Secker (23) here at St Mary's Church in Lambeth. Three year old Francis was brought up as the son of James and Annie.**

**5 July 1885 to 2 February 1896 - Annie and James had seven children:**

**James (1885) | William (1886) | Ellen (1888) | Eliza (1890)  
| Annie (1891) | George (1893) | Mary (1896)**



## **Tragic events in the life of Annie:**

**1894 -Annie's daughter, Annie, died aged 2**

**30 October 1914 – Annie's son, James Barnard Secker, was killed in action at the First Battle of Ypres**

**8 May 1915 – Annie's son, William, was shot in the knee at the Second Battle of Ypres; he was disabled for the rest of his life**

**2 June 1915 – Annie's son, Francis, was killed in action at the Second Battle of Ypres**

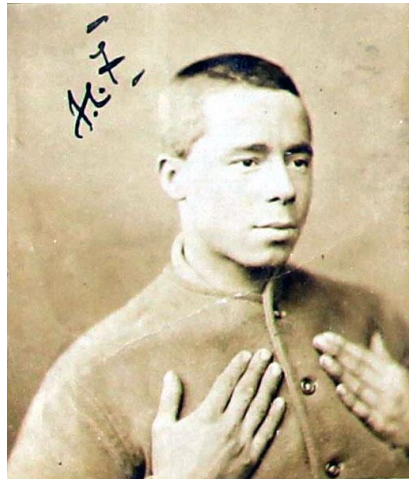
**2 November 1917 – Annie's son, George, was gassed at Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres**

**26 October 1926 – Annie died in the Camberwell Workhouse, her husband died 10 years later**

**16 April 1943 – Annie's grandson, Alfred Clark (RAF Air Gunner in a Lancaster on a bombing raid to Pilsen) was shot down and killed over Mannheim; Alfred was the son of Ellen (b1888).**



# Francis Henry Crook (1861-1890)



Frank Crook - prison photograph (1881)

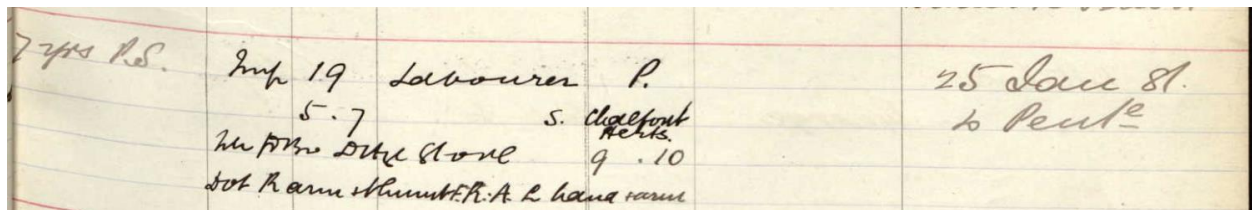
**Born in 1861 at home near West Hyde, where his father was a brass founder, on the border of Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, Francis was baptised at Chalfont St Peter Church in Buckinghamshire. The family moved to Southwark in the 1860s**

**In March and April 1878 at St Mary, Lambeth the banns were read for the marriage of Frank Crook and Mary Ann Day, a spinster but the marriage never took place.**

**Frank had a friend named Henry Pearl who was charged in 1879 with absconding from Mr. Fegan's Deptford Boys' Home, High-street, and stealing from there three pairs of trousers, two jackets, a vest, two shirts, two pairs of boots, two caps, and two pairs of socks, value £3. Frank admitted to "feloniously receiving" the clothing from the Boys' Home and they were each sentenced to three months' hard labour.**

In July 1880 at St Mary, Lambeth, the banns were published for the marriage of Francis Crook and Ann Ripper.

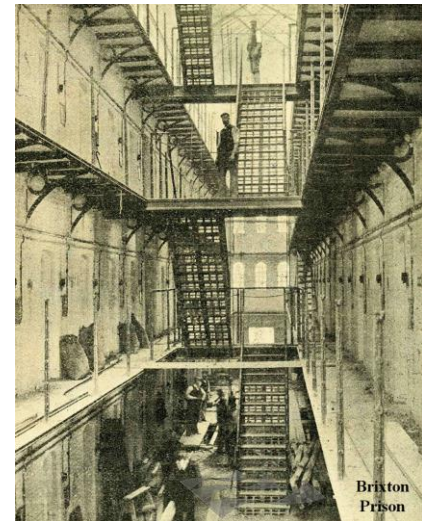
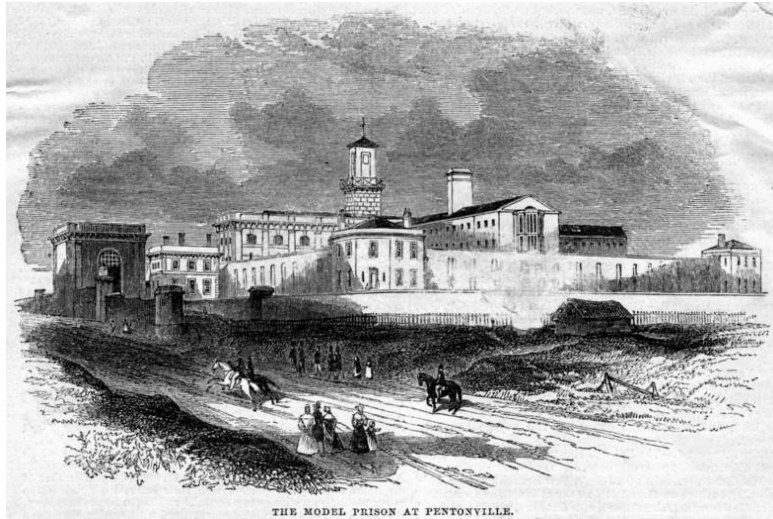
The marriage never took place but Frank and Annie's relationship continued and in late October 1880 they conceived a child who was to become Francis Henry Thomas Ripper, later Secker. Their tumultuous relationship came to an end shortly afterwards. The story of their argument in December resulting in Frank attacking Annie and cutting her throat is described above. Tried and convicted at the Old Bailey of wounding, Frank; was sentenced to seven years in prison and was held in Newgate prison whilst a more permanent prison place was found.



The committal prison record shown above describes Frank as he started his 7 years penal servitude (PS):

*education - imperfect (Imp) | age - 19 | , occupation - labourer | religion - protestant (P), i.e. Church of England | height - 5 feet 7 inches | marital status - single (S) | born - Chalfont Herts (sic) | complexion - fresh (Fsh) | hair - dark brown (DBr) | eyes - dark hazel (DHzl) | weight - 9 stone 10 pounds | identifying marks- dot on right arm and thumb [and] F.R.A or perhaps F. & A. on the left hand and arm [could this represent "F"rank and" A"nnie?]*

**Frank was transferred from Newgate Prison to Pentonville Prison on 25 January 1881 and then from there to Brixton Prison.**



**He was released from prison in or about early 1887. He met Emma Williams shortly after his release and they married in June 1887 in Bethnal Green when Frank was 26 and Emma was 18. At this time Emma was pregnant but may not have been aware of her condition.**

**Their daughter Emma was born in February 1888 followed by a son, George Francis a year later.**

There now follow some transcribed cuttings from contemporary newspapers that show how the family's fortunes changed as a result of Frank's extraordinary behaviour:

**Islington Gazette - Thursday 10 October 1889**

***"A MISSING HUSBAND.***

***Mrs. Emma Crook, 14, Arundel-road, Kingsland, came before Mr. Marsham, at Dalston Police-court, on Monday afternoon, and asked assistance in finding her husband, Francis Henry Crook, aged 28. a labourer, who had been missing from his home since the previous Tuesday. There had been no quarrel, and reason why he should absent himself from home, and at present she (applicant) and her two children were penniless. The Magistrate said no doubt the Press would assist, and the following description was given :—5 ft. 7 in. high; fair, medium-coloured hair and moustache; scar back of head; dressed in corduroy trousers, black coat and vest, long brown overcoat, and hard bowler hat. He was last heard of at Chelmsford."***

**Daily Telegraph & Courier (London) - Friday 7 March 1890**

***"DALSTON —Scene in Court - Frank Crook, aged 30, was charged before Mr. Lushington with assaulting his wife, Emma Crook, who resides at Halliford-street, Islington. — Prisoner, being brought into court, looked round and saw his wife, and immediately made a rush to her and barked hideously like dog. The gaoler and his***

assistant, with several other officers, seized the prisoner, and the wife fled from the court. — Inspector Thurston, J Division, said that between one and two o'clock that morning Crook brought to the police station, he having confessed to throwing his wife into Regent's Canal. He gave very circumstantial account of meeting his wife in King Henry's-walk, Islington, and striking her because of some alleged intimacy with a man Saunders. He then followed her, he said, as far as the Whitmore Bridge of the Regent's Canal, when he seized her by the throat and threw her over into the water. He saw her hands go up, and then she sank. He did not attempt to save her. On this statement Inspector Thurston caused the canal to be dragged for three hours, but with no result, and then it was ascertained by Detective-sergeant Nursey (who had meanwhile been making inquiries) that the prisoner's wife was safe in her lodgings at Halliford-street. The accused had on a previous occasion assaulted his wife, and been bound over to keep the peace. — Owing to the prisoner's violence, he was removed whilst his wife gave evidence, she said she was 20 years of age, had been married three years, and had two children. After being bound over to keep the peace towards her, her husband went home and sold all the things, and had been drinking since. — The accused was again put in the dock, and, in reply to the magistrate, said he did throw his wife into the canal - he saw her go down — and it was only her evil spirit that had been there that morning. — Mr. Luahington ordered him to be taken to the cells to be seen by a medical man ; and directly

*Dr. Jackman, the divisional surgeon, made his appearance, the prisoner renewed the horrible barking, which was heard all over the building. Crook, who had for some minutes been talking rationally to the gaoler, then suddenly became silent, sullenly refusing answer a single question.—After a careful examination, the doctor came back to the court, and gave his opinion that the man was not insane. He thought there was little delirium tremens and good deal of temper. — Prisoner was remanded in custody for week."*

**Islington Gazette - Friday 14 March 1890**

**"EXTRAORDINARY DELUSIONS,**  
*Frank Crook, aged 31, a carman, was charged, on remand, at Dalston Police-court, on Thursdsy, with an assault on his wife, Emma, who resides at Halliford-street, Essex-road. When first before the Court, the prisoner behaved in a most extraordinary manner, and said he had killed his wife. A certificate was now put in from the prison surgeon, to the effect that the prisoner is insane, and he was ordered to be removed to the workhouse. Prisoner expressed himself as still of opinion that he had killed his wile, and said had a big knife with which to "settle" a man he is jealous of. He also says he is expecting a large fortune. Prisoner was taken to the workhouse in a cab".*

**From the Lunacy Patients Admission Registers we learn:**

***89885 | Crook, Francis H | male | admitted 15 Mar 1890 to Banstead Asylum | discharged 17 May 1890 | Recovered***

**Frank had only been free as a “recovered” man for a month when he next fell foul of the law:**

***Criminal Lunacy Warrant and Entry Books***

***"Francis Henry Crook | convicted of making threats | convicted on 18 Jun 1890 at North Honour Police Court | certified insane on 25 Jun 1890 and confined in Pentonville on 28 Jun 1890 | removed from Pentonville to Hanwell Lunatic Asylum"***

**Lunacy Patients Admission Registers:**

***95713 | Crook, Francis H | criminal male | admitted 30 Jun 1890 to Hanwell Asylum | 17 Sep 1890 discharged released***

**No further life events have been identified, except his probable death:**

***Name: CROOK, FRANK***

***Age at Death (in years): 35***

***1890 July / September Quarter in WANDSWORTH***

**There are no reports in newspapers regarding this death.**