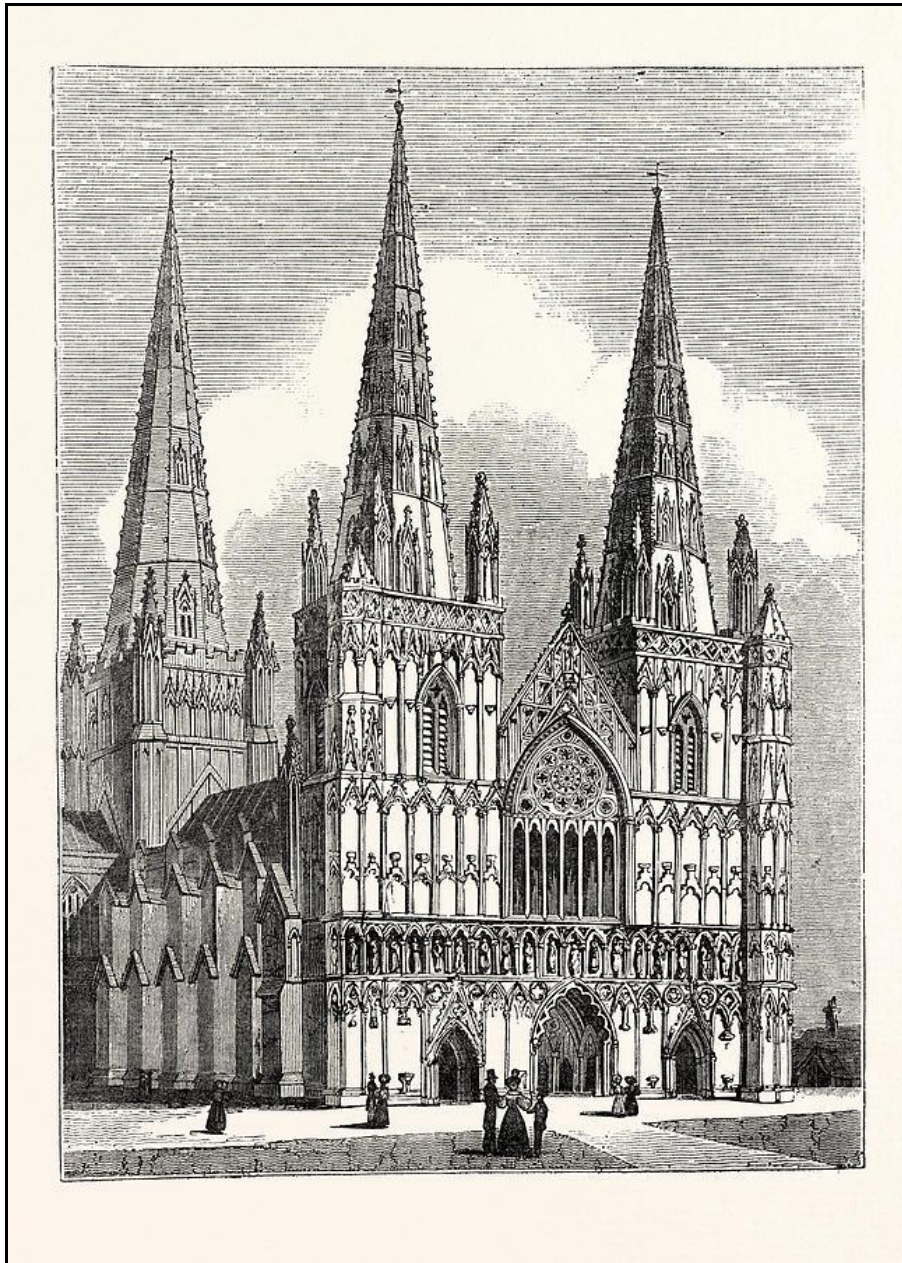


**A FELONY AND THE KIDNAPPING OF A
NINE WEEK OLD CHILD AT LICHFIELD BY
A YOUNG COLEORTON WOMAN
IN 1854**



BY SAMUEL T STEWART - OCTOBER 2021

A FELONY AND THE KIDNAPPING OF A CHILD AT LICHFIELD

FIRST NEWSPAPER REPORT - FELONY

From the Leicester Mercury - Saturday 4th March 1854

Emma Cashmore (servant, 19) was charged with stealing, on Jan. 10th, at Barkstone ([Barlestone ?](#)), four yards of calico, and one pair of scissors, the property of Jos. Mugglestone. Prisoner, a rosy-looking country lass, pleaded guilty to the charge, and was sentenced to **six weeks' imprisonment to hard labour.**

SECOND NEWSPAPER REPORT - CHILD KIDNAPPING

It will be noticed that there is some conflict in the reporting of this case in the Leicestershire Mercury and Leicester Chronicle

From the Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 12th August 1854

LEICESTERSHIRE ADJOURNED EPIPHANY SESSIONS

Emma Cashmore, aged twenty-three ([given as aged 19 in the Staffordshire advertiser & Leicester Mercury](#)), of Coleorton, Leicestershire, was charged at the Public Office, Lichfield, before the Mayor ([Mr. Thomas Rowley](#)) last week, with feloniously stealing a male infant, the child of Richard and Caroline Rabbage, of Beacon-street, Lichfield.

The mother deposed that the child had been nursed for three weeks by Lucy Whitby, to whom she delivered it on Friday morning, July 28, and Elizabeth Whitby, widow, of Frog-lane, deposed to the child being brought to her house by her daughter, who had been nursing it.

The prisoner came to her house on Thursday night, and slept there ?? She nursed the child for an hour and a half on Friday morning. About twelve o'clock, the prisoner wanted to put on his hood and shawl, and to take the child out a walk with the witness's daughter and another little girl named Rushton. They went out, and witness did not see the child again, until Monday morning. Witness did not ask the prisoner to take the child out.—Lucy Whitby, aged ten years, said she had nursed the child three or four weeks, and took it to her mother's on Friday morning. The prisoner requested to hold the child; and at twelve o'clock she asked if she might take the child out for a walk. Witness's mother complied, and they went on the Birmingham road as far as the new militia barracks.

On the child beginning to cry, witness took it from prisoner, fell asleep, and they sat down. Prisoner afterwards asked witness to go home and fetch some food for the child, promising to give her some gooseberries when she came back. The two children went for the food, leaving the prisoner sitting down on the road-side with the infant on her lap, but on their return she was gone. They went every way searching for her from one o'clock till seven in the evening, but could not find her, and information was then given to the police.

Mr. Bergen stated that on Saturday he proceeded on the one o'clock train to Walsall, and, subsequently, to Burton-upon-Trent; where, in the course of the afternoon, he saw a "breaksman" named Geary; in consequence of information given him by this man, he called on Inspector Anderson at Burton, gave him a description of the child and of the woman, and instructed him to proceed to "Wooden Box" ([Woodville](#)) in search of the prisoner. By this means he traced the prisoner to her whereabouts.

Mr John Anderson said that he traced the prisoner along the road with an infant in her arms, from Burton to Coleorton, in Leicestershire; there, he found the prisoner and child in bed between twelve and one o'clock on Saturday night. In answer to the charge of stealing the child, she told witness she had found it; but her father and mother told him in her presence, that she had said it was her own child. (She seems to have invented a new "dodge," stealing the child for the purpose of fathering it upon a swain who had "kept company" with her six months ago).

Witness brought the prisoner and child to Lichfield on Sunday and delivered the little infant to its mother.—The prisoner would have had "lynch law," without judge or jury, had prison walls not secured her from the hundreds of sympathising mothers outside, who then clung to their infants ten times closer, because they never had lost them. Her criminality was fully proved and she was committed to the quarter sessions. The Court was crowded to excess (Birmingham Mercury).

MEANING OF WORDS USED IN PREVIOUS TEXT

BREAKSMAN (BRAKEMAN)

Operated brakes on the train.

WOODEN BOX

Wooden Box was the original name for the tiny settlement which developed into the town of Woodville. Its name developed from a shelter structure/ box on the Burton to Ashby turnpike road which was used by the toll-collector to collect tolls from the passing traffic. It may well have resembled a sentry box with a seat inside. In 1774, the Derby Mercury reported that the box had been broken open by villains who burnt it to the ground when they could find no money inside. After a suitable clay for making earthenware pottery was discovered a substantial pottery industry grew up which was the start of the development of the town of Woodville, but that is another story.

SWAIN

A male lover or admirer.

LYNCH LAW

The administration of summary punishment, especially death, upon a suspected, accused, or convicted person by a mob acting without legal process or authority.

THIRD NEWSPAPER REPORT - CHILD KIDNAPPING

From the Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 5th August 1854

CHILD STEALING

On Saturday last, information was given to Mr Anderson, Police Superintendent at Burton-upon-Trent, that a child had been stolen from Lichfield, and on making immediate inquiry at the Railway Station he found that a young woman, with an infant, had shortly before come from Lichfield by a goods train, and was supposed to have gone towards Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Mr Anderson lost no time in setting off in pursuit of the suspected person. On reaching Woodville, he was joined by P. C. Rhodes, and they ascertained that a young woman answering the description of the fugitive had been seen in that neighbourhood a day or two before, without a child. On reaching Ashby, and calling upon Mr Thos. Price, the parish constable, they found that they were upon the right scent, he having overtaken the woman with the child going towards Loughborough, in the former part of the day, and given them a lift in his light cart, setting them down at Coleorton. The three officers immediately set out for the latter place, and soon found the woman at the house of her father, a labouring man named Richard Cashmore. She had gone to bed with the baby, but was quickly roused from her slumbers by the unwelcome visitors. Her name is Emma Cashmore, about 20 years old. She bears a very bad character, and has been several months absent. On reaching home, on Saturday night, she told her mother-in-law ?? (the father not having arrived) that the baby was her own, that it was seven weeks old, and she was confined in Lichfield Union Workhouse. She further stated that a young man of Coleorton, who had "kept company" with her, was the father of the child, and he must either marry her or pay for the baby, as she meant to swear it to him. She was of course immediately taken into custody, and conveyed to Ashby, where the officers engaged a fly to shelter the poor little innocent from the night air; and at two o'clock on Sunday morning, this artful and audacious hussy was safely lodged in the Burton lock-up. The parents of the child are working-people, residing at Lichfield. On the day the infant was stolen, its mother was out haymaking, and had engaged a girl to nurse it during her absence, who was walking out with the child near the town, when the prisoner met with her and asked her to go for some ripe gooseberries, she promising to take care of the little one in the meantime. On the girl returning, the woman and the child had both disappeared. The poor little creature has since been restored to its almost broken-hearted parents, and the accused (who has been already convicted and imprisoned for felony) will be put on her trial this week at Stafford assizes, for the unfeeling robbery above narrated. The child is about nine weeks old. Too much praise cannot be given to the police authorities for their promptitude and humanity on this occasion.

THE TRIAL OF EMMA CASHMORE

Leicester chronicle - Saturday 19th August 1854

THE STOLEN CHILD

Emma Cashmore, the wicked and worthless young woman, who stole an infant child at Lichfield, as noticed in one of our late impressions, was committed for trial at that place on the following Monday, tried for the offence on Wednesday, and sentenced to **four months' imprisonment with hard labour**, the former convictions not being brought forward against her.

NOTE

it seems that the stealing of four yards of Calico was judged to be a worse crime than child kidnapping, judging by the sentences given

THE CASHMORE FAMILY

The first record of the Cashmore family in Coleorton was in the 1861 census. The would have located there c.1853.

RICHARD CASHMORE	HEAD	49	MARRIED	AG LAB	ASTLEY, WARKS
ANN CASHMORE	WIFE	39	MARRIED		TICKNALL, DERBYS
CAROLINE CASHMORE	DAUGHTER	15	UNM	SEAMSTRESS OF STOCKINGS	RAVENSTONE
ELIZA CASHMORE	DAUGHTER	12		SEAMSTRESS OF STOCKINGS	RAVENSTONE
JANE WALKER	G, DAU ??	3 ?			THRINGSTONE
ADELINE CASHMORE	DAUGHTER	1			COLEORTON

It would seem that Emma Cashmore would have been the oldest daughter whether she was 19 or 20 years old, although one newspaper article gave her as 23. The most popular in those researched seemed to be 19.

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