

FRANK PALMER AND FROME
BY JULIA FIDLER

When Frank Palmer retired on ill-health grounds from the Post Office in 1901 he had been a postman for thirty-one years, despite only being fifty-six years old. He did however live for another sixteen years. Luckily Frank appears frequently in the local papers in the years before and after his retirement, allowing us a glimpse into his life.

Frank lived and died in Frome, Somersetshire. The socio-economic problems of the early and mid-nineteenth century in Frome must have impacted on Frank as he grew up. The town is built on high ground at the eastern end of the Mendip Hills with the River Frome at its centre. The principal industry was the cloth trade with many water mills along the river.

From the 16th to the end of the 18th Century Frome flourished with a population said to be larger than Bath. It was one of the largest towns in Somerset until the Industrial revolution. A 1785 survey showed nearly half the heads of households were employed in twelve different occupations in the cloth trade.¹

Daniel Defoe is quoted as saying, 'Frome is likely to be one of the greatest and wealthiest inland towns in England'.²

However when Franks parents Samuel Palmer and Sarah Creese grew up and married, Frome was in decline. There was a brief boost to trade from the Napoleonic Wars with the production of blue uniform cloth, but the Industrial Revolution, with increased mechanisation, less skilled workers needed, cheaper cloth made elsewhere, caused unemployment and poverty.

In 1826 Frome Parish even started a blanket factory to employ their poor and in 1837 Frome Union Workhouse was built to house 350 paupers.

The effect of the Industrial Revolution in early 19th century England, which brought wealth to many, also caused 'a greater variance in living standards than probably ever before or since'³. In towns the poor lived in overcrowded, unsanitary houses and infectious diseases spread. Not only was infant mortality high but the death rate in children aged between one and nine rose because of endemic infections like smallpox and tuberculosis and epidemics of measles and scarlet fever.

¹ Tim Lambert, 'A History of Frome', *LOCAL HISTORIES: Tim's History of British Towns, Cities and So Much More* (14th March 2021). [Link](#).

² Daniel Defoe, *A tour thro' the whole island of Great Britain, divided into circuits or journies* (London: JM Dent and Co, 1927). [Link](#).

³ Ian Mortimer. 'The Best of Times: The Worst of Times', *BBC History Magazine* (December 2020): pp. 66-72, p. 68.

The Palmer family in the community

However, I have reason to believe that the Palmer family were lucky. His father was a shoe manufacturer and by 1851 when Frank was seven, his older brother Charles at twelve was a shoemaker. There were now two wages coming into the home. By 1861 there were five wages coming in: his mother's (a shoe binder), his father's, his brother's, and his two sisters were also silk weavers. One might suggest they were 'well heeled'?

Weddings and funerals show the Palmers belonged to the Badcox Baptist Chapel.⁴ Frank's father was a Sexton so it might be the family were quite well known. Through numerous newspaper articles about the Chapel's Sunday School events and prize givings, and also in census details, we can see a network of interlinked family names. The closeness of several Palmer homes, especially in the High Street, must surely have given Frank the support of extended family. And unusually in a time of high infant and childhood mortality he, and all his seven siblings, survived to adulthood.

In 1868 Frank married Mary Laurence, the girl down the road.or to be exact, several doors down the High Street. In 1869 their first son Albert Frank was born but sadly died. Also in 1869 Frank joined the Post Office as a Letter Carrier, age twenty-five. Work as a letter carrier in a town which has steep cobbled streets, and to the west hills that rise to 800ft, must have been hard work. Post rounds could be about twelve miles and the heavy weight of the post-bag carried would not be allowed today.

His Annual Salary was £78.1.7p which gave just £1.10 sh. to live on each week.

Frank had sufficient money to be on the electoral roll as there was, 'application by Conservatives for the erasure of Frank Palmer's name, stated as postman, from an electoral role, as he appeared on both the Northern and Southern Electoral roles for Frome.'⁵

From the newspapers we can also see Frank was active in his community:

1884: He 'generously provided the fireworks' for the annual Workhouse Guy Fawkes party for children at the workhouse. There was a bonfire, procession and music.⁶

1893: Celebrations at the Badcox Chapel with family members mentioned.⁷

1903: Won prizes at the local flower show. He also donated prize money.⁸

⁴ 'Births, Deaths & Marriages', *The Frome Times* (24th September 1862): p.4

⁵ 'Frome Parliamentary Division', *Somerset Standard* (15th September 1899): p.8

⁶ 'November The Fifth in Frome', *Frome Times* (12th November 1884): p.2

⁷ 'Tea Arranged by Mrs Palmer', *Somerset Standard* (18th July 1893): n.p.

⁸ 'Flower Show', *Western Chronicle* (14th February 1902): p.5

1903 and 1904: Once again 'superintended' a fireworks display, this time for a Sunday School party. This involved sending balloons up carrying coloured lights to delight the children.⁹

Health in Frome

After 1870 a number of health improvements helped lead to an improvement in life expectancy.¹⁰

There were many reasons for this improvement in health including inoculation against smallpox. The Public Health Act 1875 provided councils with further powers to provide clean water supplies and carry out improvements to sewage and drainage.

When Frank retired in 1901 because of ill-health his wife Mary and daughter Ada were living with him. Mary, four years older than Frank, aged seventy-one had, according to census, never worked in forty-five years of marriage. Ada was working as an art needle worker on her own account at home. Frank's retirement Pension was £40/10 (just over half his salary), meaning 15 shillings a week to live on. His sons Frederick and Albert were working at the Post Office as a sorter and postmaster respectively, and had already married and left Frome by 1901. And in 1904 Ada married William Renouf, a Congregational Minister from Guernsey and also left.

So when Mary died in 1913 Frank was alone in their Broadway home. He was sixty-nine and it occurs to me he might never have been alone before? He would have shared a bedroom, perhaps even a bed, as a boy in a large family. He then married at twenty-two. He may have been very lonely at seventy. In 1914 Frank married Amelia Beaven, widow of Thomas who was also a boot maker and in a previous census had also lived in Broadway.

War comes to Frome

The last three years of Frank's life were the first three years of the war. This must have been very hard for him. As a postman he would have known so many local families over so many years. Infants born to residents on his post round in the last years of his working life, would now be young men going off to war.

⁹ 'Zion Sunday School', *Somerset Standard* (24th July 1903): p.5; 'Zion Sunday School', *Somerset Standard* (22nd July 1904): p.5

¹⁰ Romola J. Davenport, 'Urbanization and Mortality in Britain', *Economic History Review*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (2020): p.5

The Medical Officer Report for 1914 gives us a glimpse into public health in Frome. Alongside reports of the death rates records of a 'peculiar type of Influenza,' drainage improvement, the desire for W.C.s mentioned, and information on the 403 paupers and 4000 billeted soldiers in Frome, the passage from the MOH that most stands out to me is:

*'he [the MOH] laments and deplores the loss of young life in this National Crisis [and] [...]the legacy of mental and physical wrecks which will be a burden on the State.'*¹¹

The war started on 28th July 1914, but less than five months later the Frome Medical Officer could already see the future for the badly injured young men returning from France. The Frome memorial lists 600 served, half of whom returned, the other half perishing in the War.¹²

Frank died age seventy-three in 1917. Local hospitals and large houses like Longleat House were full of injured soldiers. It might have been hard to get medical care. We cannot know how long he was ill. Perhaps the onset was truly sudden. But it is more likely that there had been worsening symptoms. The cause of death was acute intestinal obstruction and peritonitis, and exhaustion.

A diagnosis of obstruction would have been made by physical examination and palpation of all four quadrants of the abdomen, listening for bowel sounds, recording temperature and pulse and observing the vomit, which varies, depending where the obstruction is. 'The temperature is high', wrote one textbook from 1917, 'the disease is very fatal, the patient passing from a condition of extreme prostration, to one of collapse'. It goes on to recommend the aid of a surgeon.¹³

Frank's death, with no surgery, would not have been a gentle, peaceful death. The fact that mention is made of inflammation of the peritoneum and exhaustion suggests, unless the right drugs were given, he would have been in severe pain for 2-7 days. Hopefully pain relief like morphine, ether or caffeine was given.

Probate shows Frank left £516.7s. divided between his younger son Albert and his wife. His houses and land were advertised and auctioned in August 1917. So his wife would have not been able to stay in their home.

His three children lived on. Two sons in the Post Office are on the 1939 census. His daughter Ada died in 1931. They all had children.

¹¹ Frome Urban District Council, *Report of the Medical Officer for the Year Ending December 1914* (Frome: 1915): p.1. [Link](#).

¹² Frome Memorial Theatre (photograph). Credit: Mark Newton 15 November 2016. [Link](#).

¹³ James M. Anders, *A text-book of the practice of medicine* (London: W.B. Saunders, 1917 ed.): p.817. [Link](#).

Conclusion

Frank lived through a pivotal time in Frome's history: through the Crimean, Boer and Great War and the real fear of smallpox, tuberculosis and Russian Flu. It was a time of great social and economic change. The divide between rich and poor was much more pronounced at the start of Frank's life than at the end of his life. His pension was half his salary. Today Frome town has become again a desirable town to live in.

Are there any similarities to 2021? There is still a massive divide between the super-rich and the average wage. The poorest people still live in areas of high density where pandemic COVID-19 infection levels have been highest and in some places life-expectancy is still lower. COVID-19 rates have been lower in the rural areas. The state pension is less than half the living wage but there are additional government benefits to be accessed. And much has improved in the realm of healthcare, from improved medical treatments and of course the founding of the NHS, which is free at the point of patient access.

Fact Sheet: Frank Palmer

Pensioner Details
<i>Pensioner name:</i> Frank Palmer
<i>Person ID:</i> SM1006
<i>Your name:</i> Julia Fidler
<i>U3A group:</i> Barnet
Part One: Birth and Family
1: When and where was your pensioner born?
Frank Palmer was born in the 4 th Qu.1844 in Frome, Somerset. He is the only Frank Palmer recorded as born in Frome between 1844 and 1846. On the 1851 Census his birth is recorded as 1844. I feel he may have been baptised or his birth registered in 1845 and hence that is on his PO records.
2: Who were your pensioners' parents? Record any details you can find out about them here (e.g. occupation, religious affiliation, whether they could read or write)
<p>Palmer is a very common name in Frome and in nearby Bath and Bristol. I had hoped, as John Palmer was from Bath, that I might find that pensioner Frank Palmer was related to the man who had started the mail coach at the end of the 18th Century.</p> <p>We see from census records that Frank Palmer's father was a Samuel Palmer, born in Frome and in 1841 was a shoe manufacturer.</p> <p>However there were in fact two Samuel Palmers' born in Frome, Somerset, to different parents, within 10 months of each other. One was born on 7th Dec 1815 to George and Sophia Palmer. Denomination Baptist. Badcox Lane Meeting House (Baptist) The second was born on 10th.October 1816 to Thomas and Charlotte Palmer. Denomination Independent. Rook Lane, Frome (Independent).</p> <p>Because of a connection with the Badcox Lane Meeting House later in this narrative, (found in a newspaper), which mentions a Frank as well as a Samuel Palmer, I feel that the Samuel born in 1815 is more likely to be Frank's father</p> <p>Frank Palmer's mother was born Sarah Creese in 1818, in Frome. A search has not yet conclusively revealed her family although there are some of that name in Frome Samuel Palmer and Sarah Creese were married in 4th Qu 1837, in Frome.</p> <p>In 24 years of marriage they had 8 children who lived and are on the census. The name Creese (Crease) is on the birth records of their first child, and most of their children, including that of the 8th and last child, born in 1861. There is no record of any other children born to them between their marriage in 1837 and 1862.</p> <p>Samuel Palmer From Census and other research</p>

1841: Census. Samuels' occupation: listed as a shoe manufacturer. Living at Hope St Frome with wife, Sarah, of no occupation, and their 2 year old first child baby Charles..

Living with them is Amelia Hoddinott age 85 who is living on her own means.

1844: The birth of **Frank Palmer** their third child

1851: Census. Listed as Shoe Maker. Now Living at High Street with Wife Sarah of no occupation. and Charles, age 12, is also listed as a shoe Maker. Plus younger children Sophia, **Frank** and Sarah

1861: Census. Listed as Boot Maker, Journeyman. Living at no 1 High Street. Sarah, wife, is now listed as a Shoe Binder. Charles has left home and **Frank**, age 17, is a Boot Maker Assist to Father. Sophia age 19, and Sarah age 13 are both listed as Silk Weavers. Emma and Mary are Scholars. Samuel jnr is 5 and there is a new baby, William.

1861: Census. Wife Sarah's occupation is listed as Shoe Binder on Census. Living in High st

1861: Birth of 8th child William

1862: Death of wife: Sarah Palmer

1865: Samuel 2nd marriage to Caroline Dyer m, 2nd Qu 1865

1871: Census. Occupation listed as Store Keeper, Leatherman. Living at High Street Now married to Caroline on Census ,

And now only his 2 youngest sons, Samuel 13, listed as a Compositor, and William Stephen age 10 a scholar, live with their father Samuel and step mother Caroline.

Also listed on the 1871 census are Hannah Dyer aged 21, a Silk Weaver and Louisa Dyer aged 11, a Scholar. They are listed as daughter-in laws but I feel are step-daughters at that age.

1881: Occupation Shoemaker. Living at 1 High Street. Wife Caroline has no occupation.

Samuel age 23 is a Cardmakers Packer. William, age 20 is a Solicitors Clerk

1887: Death of Caroline 2nd wife

1891: Census. Listed Retired Shoemaker. A widower. Living at Salisbury Terrace Frome. Living with his son Samuel, listed as Store Keeper Leather Stores, and Samuel's wife Mary and baby Edith.

1900: Death Certificate. Age 85. Died in Frome

The other Samuel Palmer

I mentioned there were 2 Samuel Palmers born within 9 months of each other.

So there is also another death Certificate for another Samuel Palmer in 1899 with probate in 1900 but not now living in Frome, but living in Stoke-sub-Hamden, Somersetshire which is about 25 miles from Frome. He was **a retired leather dresser**, and leaves his money to his widow Mary Lee.

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1900-1900%2F00041014>

I can find no 3rd marriage of Frank Palmer's Father to a Mary Lee , (I assume Lee, is a second Christian name)

However a Mary Reed DID marry a Samuel Palmer in 1889 in Barnstable in Devon.

Marriage records noted here not in the refs in section 5

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1889%2F1%2FAZ%2F000181%2F200>

Marriage record

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1889%2F1%2FAZ%2F000200%2F009>

Interestingly, in the 1981 census before Frank's father Samuel was widowed, there is a married **Maria L Reed**, Born 1829, living in Frome whose occupation was a dress maker and whose lodgers were weavers. Frank's sisters, Samuel's daughters, were silk weavers and it is possible the families knew each other as they lived nearby.

Were the 2 Samuel Palmers cousins both working in the leather trade?

1891 census Maria Reed

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0010814629>

3: Did your pensioner have any siblings? What were their names, and how old were they in relation to your pensioner? Use this space to record anything else you have found out about them (e.g. occupation)

Frank Palmer (FP) was one of 8 children.

He had 7 siblings

He was the third child, and the second son born.

Charles Palmer (brother) born 1839./6 years older than FP

1841: age 2

1851: listed shoe maker at age 12

1861 not on census check would be 22 and no reliable link to any of the many Charles Palmers

1871 not found

Sophia Palmer (sister) born 1841/ 3 years older than FP

1851: listed as a scholar

1861: Listed as a silk weaver

1871: not on census with father

In 1863 A Sophia Palmer did marry a Thomas Morris in Frome. I suspect this is correct and she married the year after her mother died

Frank Palmer born 1844/1845 (Postal Pensioner)

1851 a scholar

1861: listed as Boot Maker Assist to Father

1871: Now listed as Letter Carrier. Head of family and now married and on the census under his own name

1871: Four doors away from Charles Palmer at 4 High Street on the census image, live some of the Laurence Family! Frank Palmer married Mary Laurence in 1868 having lived at 1 High Street. They continued to live somewhere in High Street after their marriage.

Sarah Palmer (sister) born 1848 /3 years younger than FP

1851:Scholar

1861: Listed Silk Weaver

1862: Mother died

1865: Father re-married

1871 Not on census with father. Not found on another census in Frome. No convincing marriage

Emma Palmer (sister) born 1851 /6-7 years younger than FP

Not on 1851 Census..

1861 Census listed as a scholar age 10

1865: father re-married

1871 not on census with father. Age 20 /not found on another census in Frome, or a marriage.

Mary Palmer (sister) born 1854 /about 10 years younger than FP

1861: Census listed as age 7 scholar

1862 Mother Mary died

1865 Samuel (father) remarried

1871 not on census with father and step mother

Only 2 youngest children, Samuel and William Stephen now on census with father and step-mother.

Note:

In 1871 A Charles Palmer, born in 1798, was living at 4 High Street, but the Maria and Mary Anne listed are his daughters as were with him in 1861. He does not match the name of either possible Grandfather, but feel sure he is related! Perhaps a Great Uncle. Also neighbours in High Street, live some of the Laurence Family! Frank Palmer married Mary Laurence in 1868 having lived at 1 High Street. They continued to live somewhere in High Street after their marriage. At 22 High street Sarah Palmer a widow born in 1796. I assume all extended family. Two youngest Siblings who were with their father on early census and remained with him and the census refs are with their father .

Samuel Palmer (Brother) born 1856 (1856-1858) / 11-13 years younger than FP

1861: age 5

1871: listed compositor at age 13 living with father

1881: listed as card makers Packer living with father

1881 living with father, now age 23. Living with step mother and 2 relatives of step mother

1884 Marriage to Mary ,(born Mary Ellen Harvey in 1857) from Crockerton, Wiltshire in 2nd Qu 1884:

1890 daughter Edith M born. 1890

1891: listed Store keeper leather store Now Head of family, and father Samuel living with him at a new address, Salisbury Terrace Frome.

1901: listed Store keeper Card works. now Head of Family

1911 Listed Store keeper

1939 Not found

William Palmer (Brother) born 21.5.1860 (from 1939 census) 16-17 years younger than FP

1861 age 0 on census

1865 Father remarried

1871 census age 10 scholar

1881 listed as solicitors clerk

1891 listed solicitor clerk and married to Frances Palmer born 1860 from Lincolnshire

1901: listed as Solicitors clerk living at 12 Broadway with wife Frances and 3 children. Ella Challons, John Arnold, and Alice

1911: Not found

1939: Listed as a Retired County Council Clerk. Living in Taunton with wife Frances and Alice who is now age 43 and single.

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1949%2F1%2FAZ%2F000910%2F122>

1949 Death of a William S Palmer in Taunton at age 88. (No probate record to confirm)

No conclusive records found for Frances palmer (wife) or Alice daughter in Devon.

Part Two: Marriage and children

1: Did your pensioner marry? What was their spouse's name, and when and where did they marry them? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about their spouse (e.g. when/where they were born, their occupation)

Frank Palmer married **Mary Laurence** in the 1st Qu of 1868 in Frome, Somersetshire

The 1871 census image shows Mary Lawrence was born in Frome in 1840 and was four years older than Frank. There is only one birth record in Frome for Mary between 1838 and 1842, and that is in 1840, but has the spelling of her name as Lawrence. Her mother's maiden name was Trotman.

1871 census images show that Frank, married, was still living in High St Frome. His father, Samuel, was living at No 1 High Street. An older ? relative, Charles Palmer, was living at No 4 High St. On the same image page of the census is the Laurence family living a few doors away from 4 High Street. William Lawrence was in fact married to Ann Elizabeth Crease, the family name of Frank's mother. So Frank was probably related to wife Mary in some way.

This is the first census with Frank as Head of Household. Occupation is listed **Letter Carrier** They are living at High Street Frome. His wife Mary has no occupation and they have a son Frederick William age 6 months born in 1871

1881 census: Occupation: Letter Carrier. Now living at 8 Catherine Street Frome. Wife Mary still has no occupation, listed with their 3 children Frederick William, Albert Frank, and Ada Mary.

1891 Census not found

1901 Census: Frank is now a **Retired Letter Carrier** Living at Brixton Villa, 12 Broadway Frome with Mary his wife and their youngest child, Ada May who at 22 is listed as an Art Needle Worker. From the transcript one can see that she is not employed but working on her own account.

1911 Census: Frank is listed as a **Pensioned Letter Carrier**. Living at 10 Broadway, instead of 12 Broadway. His wife Mary is still alive and living with him. 1917.

1914: Marriage of Frank to Amelia L Beaven in the 4th Qu. of 1914 in Frome.

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1914%2F4%2FAZ%2F000079%2F042>

1917, Frank died at 10, Broadway Frome. His son F W Palmer was the informant of his death. It can be seen that son Frederick no longer lives in Frome but at 1, Oxford St Kingston Rd, Wimbledon, London.

1917. Probate on the 23 July 1917 shows that his Estate passes to his **wife**, Amelia Louisa Palmer, and to his son Albert Frank Palmer, Overseer at the Post Office. His estate passed to a **second** wife. He married between the 1911 census and his death. Estate to be shared with his second son. However not to his oldest son Frederick, who was still alive (1939 Census). One might expect that his daughter would not be mentioned as she was a married woman!

Amelia Louisa Palmer had perhaps a life that is typical of a 19th century working woman. She was born Amelia Wheeler in 1851 in Frome. At 22, in 1873, she married a Henry Webb.

In the 1881 census she is now 29, and a widow. She is listed as a Crape Weaver and had 3 children under 7 to care for. Boarding with her was Annie Wheeler, 10 years older and a possible relative.

1891 census: Amelia listed as a Silk Weaver and her daughter Ellen also listed as a silk weaver . One son was a scholar, the other an errand boy. She no longer had a boarder and hopefully had more money coming into her house

1901 : Amelia married a Thomas Edward Beaven. In a previous census he had been living in Broadway and his father was a Boot maker. Two connections to the Palmer Family.

1911: Thomas died and Amelia was widowed again

1914: Amelia married Frank Palmer, living in Broadway Frome. They lived together for 3 years until his death in 1917. Amelia Palmer outlived Frank Palmer by 17 years and died, aged 83, in 1934.

2: Did your pensioner have any children? What were their names, and when they were born? Use this space to record any extra details you can find out about them (e.g. occupation, where they lived later in life)

From the 1911 Census one can see that Frank Palmer had 4 children as live births recorded, not just the 3 children named in previous census -- one child had died and 3 were still living.

- 1) Baby **Albert Frank Palmer** was born in Frome, in 1869 the first child of Frank Palmer and his wife Mary, nee Laurence. The death of baby Albert Frank Palmer, age 1, is recorded in 1870
- 2) **Frederick William Palmer** born 4th Qu. 1870 in Frome. The 2nd child of Frank and Mary Palmer

1871. Listed on Census Living with parents, age 0. at High Street Frome

1881. Listed on census Living with parents at age 10, a scholar. Now living at 8 Catherine St Frome

1891. Not yet found

1897. Married Gertrude Annie Mortimer in Frome. The 1891 census for Gertrude shows her living in Wallbridge, Frome, a dressmaker, born in 1873 aged 18: listed as born in Trowbridge Wilts Gertrude's father William Mortimer born in 1831 and aged 60, is listed as a Woollen Cloth Weaver and was born in Gloucestershire. Gertrude's mother Mary aged 58, born in 1833, listed as no occupation was born in Trowbridge, Wilts. Gertrude's sister Martha age 24, born in 1867 is listed as a Woollen cloth mender. Also born in Trowbridge

1901 Census shows Frederick and Gertrude now living at 64 Carlton Rd St Pancras, London and Middx. Frederick is listed as a Post office Sorter. Gertrude has no occupation and they have a baby, Doris G. Born in 1901 in Kentish Town Middlesex

1911 Census shows the family now living at 8 Chesnut Rd, Merton, Surrey and London. Frederick is listed as Sorter at the GPO, London Postal Service. Wife Gertrude has no occupation but in addition to Doris, now age 10, they have Leslie Stuart, born in 1903 in Kentish Town and a second son Phillip Mortimer born in Raynes Park, Surrey in 1908, age 3 on this census. Strangely baby Phillip has his occupation listed as School although only three years old

1917. From the death certificate of Frank Palmer we note that Frederick's residence when he

Registered his father's death was 1, Oxford Street, Kingston Rd, Wimbledon London

1939 Census. Frederick (Birth listed as 12.10.1870) is now living at 8 Beaford Grove, Merton and Morden UD. He is listed as a Retired Civil Servant and married. Wife Gertrude is not on the census. Also on 1939 Census living with Frank, is a Florence A Palmer, born on 30.9. 1885. She is listed as married and 15 years older than Frederick and does Unpaid Domestic Duties Leslie S Palmer, Born 3.5.1902 Frank's son is also living with him and listed as a Maintenance Engineer. As first wife Gertrude is not on the 1939 census it is possible that she died in 1936. There is a death of a Gertrude Palmer in Surrey Mid.East. No probate. Assumed she is the wife of Frederick Palmer as that District included Merton at that time, which was where Frederick was living in 1939 Census. But There is a marriage of a Frederick W Palmer to a Florence A Salmon in the 4th Qu. of 1938 in the same Surrey Mid Eastern District. This could mean that Frederick may have re-married someone 15

years older than himself 2 years after he was widowed. There is no confirmed death record for Gertrude but I feel she would have pre-deceased Frederick as in his probate he does not mention her.

1943 Frederick Palmer died on 9.12.1943 in St Helier Hospital. His address was still 6 Beaford Grove and his estate was left to his son Leslie Stuart Palmer

- 3) **Albert Frank Palmer** born in Frome in 1874 (1st Qu.) the third child of Frank and Mary Palmer and named after their first son who died .

1881 Census: Albert Frank is living with his father Frank Palmer and Mary Palmer at 8 Catherine Street, Frome and listed as a scholar age 7.

1898 Marriage of Albert to Edith Emeline Roberts in Westbury, Wiltshire.

1901 Census. Albert is now 27, living in Bratton Road, Westbury, with his wife Edith and her family. Edith's father is Abraham Roberts age 67, born in 1834, listed as an Overlooker Cloth Mills. Edith's Mother Elizabeth Roberts, age 70, was born in Buckland in Durham in 1831. She has no occupation listed. Fanny Roberts, Edith's sister, age 30, born in 1871 , is still living with her parents and family and has no occupation listed Albert's occupation is listed as L C & F Post Office

1911 census. Albert Palmer is now living at 42 Nunney Rd back in Frome with his wife Edith.

His occupation is listed as Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist. They have a daughter Edith Joyce age 9, born in Frome in 1902. Living with them is an older sister of Edith. She is Alice Roberts, age 50, born in 1861 and is listed as 'Late Housekeeper' Also listed on the 1911 Census is a visitor Maud Emmeline Brown age 39, born in 1872.

1939 Census. Albert F Palmer (birth noted as 26.1.1874) is now living at Upalong Coreway, Sidmouth, Devon, and listed as a Civil Servant (Post Master) Retired. Edith his wife has her occupation listed Unpaid Domestic Duties

1946. Albert died 2.11. 1946 at the same address as in 1939 and Probate was granted to his widow Edith Emeline Palmer

Death of Edith not confirmed

Marriage of their daughter Edith Joyce not confirmed

- 4) **Ada Mary Palmer** Born in 1879 in Frome, fourth child to Frank and Mary Palmer

1901 census: Ada age 22 is still living with Frank and Mary Palmer, now at Brixton Villa, 12 Broadway, Frome, and listed as an Art Needle Threader, working on 'Own Account' not employed.

1904. Ada married William George Renouf in Frome 4th Qu. 1904

c. 1904-1911 Ada and George had two children die between their marriage in 1904 and the 1911 census, according to the 1911 census. A Dora Renouf was born in the 2nd qu. 1905 in Frome. There is a recorded death of Dora Renouf in the 1st quarter of 1905 in Frome. Whilst there were, surprisingly, many baby Renoufs born in the right time frame, they either had no mother's name /or wrong mother's name on the record. A search in the Channel Isles was equally inconclusive.

1911. Census shows that George and Ada are now living at 8 Marmoin Rd, Hove, Sussex.

George's Renouf's birth place is listed as Guernsey, and his occupation is listed as a Congregational Minister. They have two children:

- Rene May Renouf age 3 born in 1908 stated in Tottenham London
- Ada Phyllis Renouf age 0, born in 1911 stated in Dalston, London

However the birth record of Rene May actually records her birth as the 4th Qu. 1907 not 1908, and born in Edmonton. The birth record of Ada Phyllis actually records her birth in the 4th Qu. 1910 in Hackney.

1939 Census: William G Renouf is now a widower. His occupation is listed as Church Publicity Agent Living at 6 Eversfield Place, Hastings, Sussex. Ada P Renouf, his daughter, now age 19 is living with her father. Occupation listed as Unpaid Domestic Ada Mary Renouf therefore must have died before the war and after the 1911 Census.

There is only one death, born in 1879. Ada died in 1931 in Hastings, where her husband and daughter lived at the time of the 1939 Census.

Ada Phyllis Renouf (daughter) is listed as dying on 25th May 1995. She would have been 85.

Probate records 19th June 1995 show her residence as 30, Anchor Court 16-18 Village Rd, Enfield, Essex. Probate was in Ipswich. She left 'less than £125,000'.

Part Three: Work

1: What occupation was your pensioner recorded as doing in census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

Frank Palmer in the Census

1851: Listed as a scholar

1861: Listed as Boot Maker Assist Father

1871: Listed as Letter Carrier. Also living in High St Frome but now head of family with wife and son age 0

1881: Listed as Letter Carrier

1891: Not found

1901: Listed as Retired Letter Carrier

1911: Listed as Pensioned Letter Carrier

2: What occupations were people living with your pensioner (e.g. spouse, children, boarders) doing in the census years? Please make sure to state clearly which year you are referring to

Frederick William Palmer (son)

1901 Post Office Sorter

1911 Sorter GPO

1939 Civil Servant (Retired)

Albert Frank Palmer (son)

1901 L C & F Post Office

1911 Sorting Clerk and Telegraphist

1939 Post Master (Retired)

Ada Mary Palmer (daughter)

1901 Art needle Worker/
1901 On image Art Needle Threader/ Not employed but working on own account

Mary Palmer (wife) No occupation listed on any census

Part Four: Anything Else

Please use this space to record anything else you have found out about your pensioner

Frank Palmer retired in 1901 on ill health grounds, age 56, having worked as a Letter Carrier, Postman, for 31 years.

He must or should have been awarded the Imperial Service Medal in 1900 as he completed 30 years of Service.

Despite retiring on health grounds Frank lived another 16 years in retirement, marrying Amelia Beavan in 1914 at the age of 69. He was still living in his home in Broadway, Frome where he had lived at the time of the 1901 Census with his first wife.

I would imagine that Frank was pleased that both his two sons had secure jobs working for the Post Office, which carried a pension.

The last 3 years of his life were the first 3 years of World War One and having lived in Frome all his life he must have known many of the 300 young soldiers who came home injured, and many of the 300 who died and did not come home.

In 1917 there was a song sung in Frome he may have heard.

‘ From someone in France
to
Someone in Somerset.’

Frank died at home on 12th June 1917, age 72, 4 years after his second marriage. The cause of death was Acute Intestinal Obstruction and Peritonitis Exhaustion.

It was his older son Frederick from London, who was in Frome to report Frank's death. But Frank's Probate divided the £519.7s he left between Albert Palmer the younger son and his widow Amelia.

Information from Newspapers

- Death of the wife of Samuel Palmer who lived at High Street Frome. He is a sexton at Badcox Lane Chapel Frome. Frome Times 24th Sep 1862
<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0001411%2f18620924%2f054&stringtohighlight=samuel%20palmer>
- Frank Palmer , Postman, gave evidence at the trial of a drunk. The drunk received a 10 day sentence.

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0001411%2f18840910%2f028&stringtohighlight=frank%20palmer>

- Application by the Conservatives for the erasure of Frank Palmer's name, stated as postman, from an electoral role as he appeared on both Northern and southern roles for Frome.

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0002679%2f18990915%2f112&stringtohighlight=frank%20palmer>

- Death in 1894 Dec 20th in Luzerne Pennsylvania Charles J Palmer, eldest son of Samuel Palmer of Frome Somerset age 55. Somerset Standard January 12th 1895. Likely Brother of Frank Palmer as no trace on English census:

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0002679%2f18950112%2f061&stringtohighlight=samuel%20palmer>

- 18th July 1893 Somerset Standard. Tea arranged by Mrs Palmer. A thank you to the Vicar of Badcox Baptist Church. A Mr W S palmer gave the speech. Later it is mentioned that Samuel Palmer was then oldest member and the Sexton of the church:

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0002679%2f18930708%2f112&stringtohighlight=samuel%20palmer>

Part Five: Your Sources

Please use this space to record the sources you have used

- 1844 Birth Record for Frank Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1844%2F4%2FIS%2F000727%2F025>
- 1841 census transcription for Samuel Palmer and family
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1841%2F000334162>
- 1841 census Samuel Palmer
<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBC%2F1841%2F0942%2F0346&parentid=GBC%2F1841%2F0003341623>
- 1851 census Samuel Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1851%2F0009891932>
- 1861 census Samuel Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1861%2F0009156897>
- 1871 census Samuel Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1871%2F0010695059>
- 1871 census Samuel Palmer
<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBC%2F1871%2F2431%2F0052&parentid=GBC%2F1871%2F0010695059>
- 1881 census Samuel Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0010817272>
- 1891 Census Samuel Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1891%2F0013204583>
- 1837 Marriage record for Samuel Palmer and Sarah Creese:

https://www.findmypast.co.uk/search/results?sid=998&firstname=sarah&firstname_variants=true&lastname=creese&eventyear=1837&eventyear_offset=2&keywordsplace=frome%2C+somerset%2C+england&keywordsplace_proximity=5&sourcecountry=england

- 1862 Death record Sarah Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1862%2F3%2FGU%2F000838%2F027>
 - 1865 Marriage record for Samuel palmer to Caroline Dyer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1865%2F2%2FAG%2F000658%2F014>
 - 1887 Death record for Caroline Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1887%2F2%2FAZ%2F000262%2F045>
 - 1900 Death Record for Samuel Palmer died age 85 in 1900 in Frome
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1900%2F1%2FAZ%2F000356%2F236>
-
- Census 1891 Samuel Palmer jnr
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1891%2F0013204580> (note diff refs as Samuel jnr)
 - Census 1901 (Samuel Palmer jnr) born about 1856
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1901%2F0000217925>
 - Census 1911 Samuel Palmer jnr
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1911%2FRG14%2F14467%2F0141%2F1>
 - Marriage of Samuel Palmer (jnr) to Mary E born in Crockerton
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1884%2F2%2FAZ%2F000226%2F35>
 - Birth of Edith Mary Palmer, child of Samuel and Mary Palmer born 1889
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1889%2F4%2FAZ%2F000419%2F183>
-
- Census 1891 William S Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1891%2F0013204594>
 - Census 1901 William Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1901%2F0000212270>
 - Census 1939 William S Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=TNA/R39/7042/70421/016/11>
 - Death Record 1949 William S Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1949%2F1%2FAZ%2F000910%2F122>
 - 1st marriage/ Amelia Wheeler to Henry Webb
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD/M/1873/3/AZ/000293/158>
 - 2nd marriage/ Amelia Webb to Beavan
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1901%2F2%2FAZ%2F000410%2F070>
 - 3rd marriage/ Amelia Beaven to Frank Palmer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1868%2F1%2FAZ%2F000130%2F312>

- Amelia Death Record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1934%2F4%2FAZ%2F00695%2F051>
- 1914: Marriage of Frank to Amelia L Beaven in the 4th Qu. of 1914 in Frome.
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1914%2F4%2FAZ%2F00079%2F042>

Children of Frank Palmer

Albert Frank Palmer

Birth of Albert Frank Palmer first child of to Frank Palmer and his wife, nee Laurence, in 1869

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1869%2F1%2FAZ%2F000544%2F195>

Death of Albert Frank Palmer, age 1 in 1870 1st child of Frank Palmer born 1869

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1870%2F4%2FAZ%2F000257%2F288>

Frederick William Palmer

- Birth
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1861%2F1%2FAZ%2F00925%2F106>
- Census 1871
- <https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1871%2F0010695092>
- Census 1881
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0010817052>
- Marriage 1897 Of Frederick William Palmer to Gertrude Annie Mortimer
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1897%2F4%2FAZ%2F00261%2F369>
- Census 1901
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1901%2F0004640062>
- Census 1911
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1911%2FRG14%2F03456%2F0235%2F1>
- Marriage record 1938
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1938%2F4%2FAZ%2F001009%2F114>
- Census 1939
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=TNA%2FR39%2F1365%2F1365B%2F013%2F13>
- Death record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1944-1944%2F00122804>
- Probate to his son Leslie Stuart Palmer

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2F1944%2FPO04222-PALMER-1944&parentid=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1944-1944%2F00122804>

Albert Frank Palmer

- Birth record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1874%2F1%2FAZ%2F00413%2F141>
- Census 1881
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0010817053>
- 1898 marriage record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1898%2F3%2FAZ%2F00271%2F091>
- Census 1901
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1901%2F0012871631>
- Census 1911
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1911%2FRG14%2F14460%2F0113%2F1>
- Census 1939
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=TNA%2FR39%2F6835%2F6835D%2F002%2F14>
- 1946 Death record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1947-1947%2F00137685>
- Probate of Albert Palmer
<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2F1947%2FPO04764-PALLET-1947&parentid=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1947-1947%2F00137685>

Ada Mary Palmer

- Birth
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1878%2F4%2FAZ%2F00422%2F043>
- Census 1881
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1881%2F0010817054>
- Census 1901
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1901%2F0000212247>
- 1904 Marriage record
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FM%2F1904%2F4%2FAZ%2F00284%2F103>
- Birth of Dora Renouf 1905
<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1905%2F2%2FAZ%2F00500%2F273>
- Death of baby Dora Renouf but inconsistent date of birth and death

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1905%2F1%2FAZ%2F00328%2F051>

- Birth of Rene May Renouf 1907

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FB%2F1907%2F4%2FAZ%2F00470%2F237>

- 1911 census Ada Renouf

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC%2F1911%2FRG14%2F05196%2F0845%2F3>

- 1939 Census

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=TNA%2FR39%2F2482%2F2482A%2F016%2F16>

- Death of Ada Renouf

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=TNA%2FR39%2F2482%2F2482A%2F016%2F16>

- Death of William George Renouf

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD/D/1957/4/AZ/001011/074>

- Death of Ada Phyllis Renouf

<https://www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=BMD%2FD%2F1995%2F5%2F80991443>

- Probate

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2F1995%2FRO08634-RENNIE-1995-2&parentid=GBOR%2FGOVPROBATE%2FC%2F1995-1995%2F00173634>