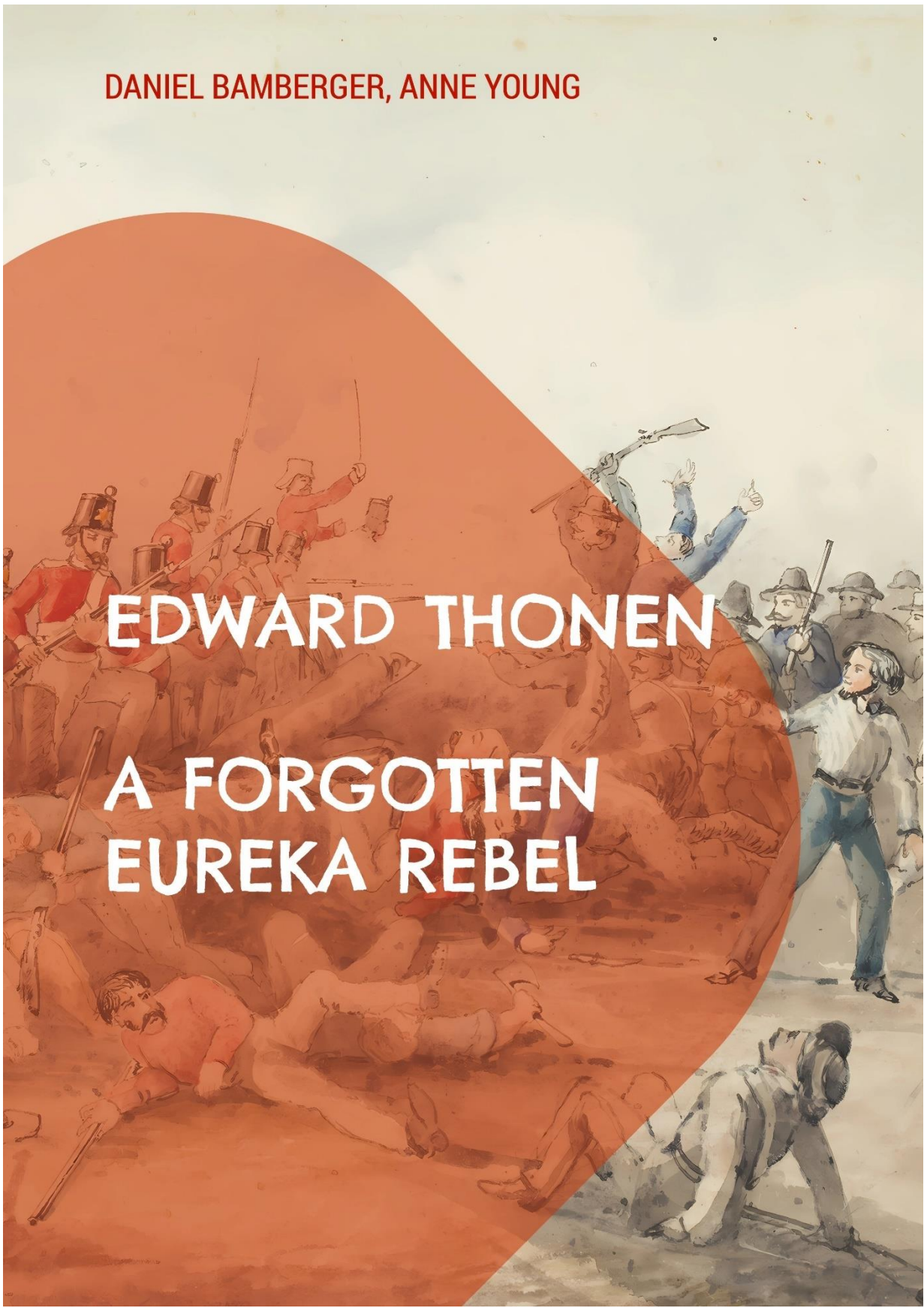


DANIEL BAMBERGER, ANNE YOUNG

A watercolor illustration depicting a battle scene. On the left, soldiers in red uniforms and top hats are engaged in combat. In the center, a large, dark, bearded man is being carried or thrown. On the right, a man in a white shirt and blue pants stands prominently, looking towards the viewer. The scene is filled with soldiers, some on the ground, and a sense of chaotic action. A large, semi-circular orange shape is overlaid on the left side of the illustration.

EDWARD THONEN
A FORGOTTEN
EUREKA REBEL

Edward Thonen

A forgotten Eureka rebel

Daniel Bamberger,¹ Anne Young²
(Marburg and Ballarat, ©2022–2024)

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² Anne Young, Ballarat, Victoria 3350, Australia.

Introduction

by Daniel Bamberger

My initial encounter with the story of Edward Thonen and the Eureka Rebellion occurred in September 2022, when I stumbled upon a post by German genealogist Jelena Eckstädt on the genealogy website WikiTree.³ As part of her *Germany Connector's Challenge*, Eckstädt regularly tasked the WikiTree community with researching a selection of four individuals of German origin, seeking to connect them to existing family trees. In the September 2022 edition, the theme revolved around emigrants, with Edward Thonen being one of the featured emigrants whose ancestry remained unknown at the time. All subsequent findings are the result of Jelena Eckstädt's post.

Germany Connector's Challenge

September 2022: Emigrants

▲ +2
▼ votes

Hi all! 44 views

It's time again for a new group of people who are connected to Germany, but not connected to the Big Tree. In this month I highlight some people who emigrated from Germany to various countries.

The first one is [Edward Thonen](#). He ended up in Australia.

Then we have [Roy](#) of the famous magician duo Siegfried and Roy.

A man who served as politician in America is [Julius Hauser](#).

[Max Bielschowsky](#) is a physician who emigrated to England.

challenges
connectors
germany
german_roots

asked 4 hours ago in The Tree House by Jelena Eckstädt c2c6 Pilot (989k points)

A number of people, including local Ballarat resident Anne Young, joined in, and the challenge was a success. Anne and I later collaborated on an article about Thonen, which was published by the Ballarat Genealogical Society in November 2022.⁴

Our initial objective was to collect what was known about Thonen in Australia, and determine if we could locate any records to shed light on his life before his emigration. Of particular significance was a reference to the 1851 British Census in Dorothy Wickham's essay *Eureka's Fallen*.⁵ Additionally, we learned that Thonen was believed to have Jewish heritage.⁶

What unfolded before us was a biography far more intriguing than we had anticipated. Most notably, we found evidence of Edward Thonen's involvement in a daring diamond robbery during his time in England. The tale of his arrest aboard a ship off the Welsh coast, while attempting to flee to America, captivated the nation's attention at the time. Interestingly, news of this incident and the subsequent trial even reached Australia in the 1890s, but no connection was made between the robbery and the events at Eureka. And Thonen's alleged "Jewish connection" turned out to be fictitious.

In our article for the Ballarat Genealogical Society, we chose to focus on recounting the story of the diamond robbery and Thonen's subsequent capture by the authorities. We omitted certain findings, such as the disputed claims of his Jewish ancestry, due to limitations of space and a desire to maintain a positive tone. The following presentation aims to comprehensively assess all the information we now have about Edward Thonen. While we engage in critical analysis of previous research, both commendable and flawed, we acknowledge and appreciate each work mentioned herein for its role in bringing us closer to uncovering the truth. What we report may not be the last word on the subject, but we hope that it represents a significant step in the right direction.

³ Eckstädt, J.: "Germany Connector's Challenge September 2022: Emigrants", 2 September 2022. www.wikitree.com/g2g/1464773/germany-connectors-challenge-september-2022-emigrants

⁴ Bamberger, D., Young, A.: "Edward Thonen (1827–1854)", in: Ballarat Link, 214, November 2022, pages 10-11.

⁵ Wickham, D.: "Eureka's Fallen", Ballarat Heritage Services, 2019. ballaratheritage.com.au/article/eureka-fallen/

⁶ We first learned about this from jewishhistoryaustralia.net/jha/Eureka.htm. A detailed discussion of this part of Thonen's biography is given in the chapter [Claims of Jewish descent](#).

Origins and extended family

On 26 May 1827 an individual named Eduard Thönen⁷ was born in Elberfeld and subsequently baptised in the Lutheran Church of Elberfeld. The connection between this birth record and Edward Thonen of Ballarat was first made by Michael Knieriem in 1998, who became the first to publish an article about Thonen's life in the German language. However, we were unaware of Knieriem's work until July 2023, late into our research (see the chapter about [what was known in Germany about Eureka](#)). The first to make the link on the genealogy website WikiTree was Alan Salt, who added the birth record as a citation on 16 June 2021.⁸ This connection went unnoticed until our research commenced in September 2022.

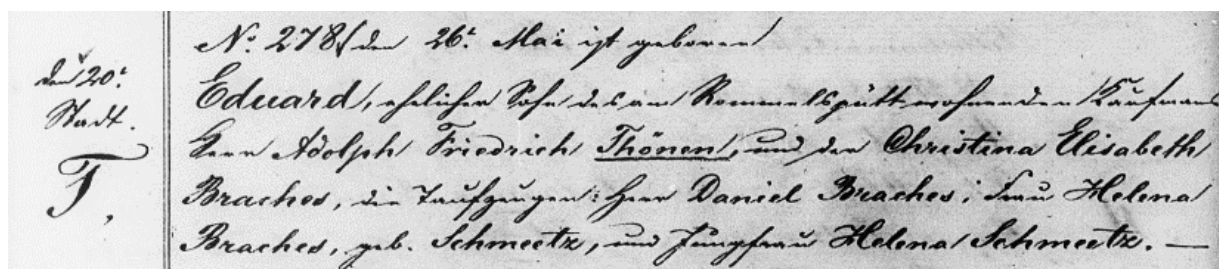
Initially, we approached this information with skepticism. We still held the assumption that we were searching for an individual of Jewish ancestry, and a baptism within the Lutheran church seemed incongruous with this presumption. It was only after uncovering the dubious origins of the "Jewish descent theory" that we began to take this seriously. Ultimately, proof of the connection materialised through Edward Thonen's 1853 request for emigration, as detailed in the chapter [Emigration to Australia](#). These documents explicitly mention the name and occupation of his father, providing secure identification of the individual who emigrated to Australia as the same person mentioned in the 1827 birth record.

Two separate records of Thonen's birth have been preserved: the church records of the Lutheran church, which verify his baptism, and the civil records of the town. Both sources offer additional insights into the family and potentially shed light on their friends and relatives.

The entry in the church records reads as follows:⁹

Den 20t. [Juli 1827] Stadt. T. – No. 278, den 26t. Mai ist geboren Eduard, ehelicher Sohn des am Rommelspütt wohnenden Kaufmanns Herr Adolph Friedrich Thönen, und der Christina Elisabeth Braches, die Taufzeugen: Herr Daniel Braches, Frau Helena Braches, geb. Schmeetz, und Jungfrau Helena Schmeetz.

[Baptised 1827, July] 20th, in the town, T. – No. 278. – On May 26th, Eduard was born, the legitimate son of the merchant Mr. Adolph Friedrich Thönen, residing at Rommelspütt, and Christina Elisabeth Braches. The baptismal witnesses were Mr. Daniel Braches, Mrs. Helena Braches (born Schmeetz), and Miss Helena Schmeetz.



Edward Thonen's baptism in Elberfeld's Lutheran church records

⁷ For reasons of consistency, outside of transcriptions of original documents (which are given ad verbatim), we will henceforth use the spelling „Edward Thonen”, regardless of how the name is spelled in the corresponding sources. In general, sources from Germany called him „Eduard Thönen”, while the name is anglicised in many sources from England and Australia.

⁸ Alan Salt edited the Biography for Edward Thonen (abt.1827-1854), 16 June 2021, WikiTree, www.wikitree.com/index.php?title=Thonen-5&diff=129109034&oldid=127016830

⁹ Kirchenbuch Elberfeld, Taufen 1822-1827, Lutherisch, image 471. www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJB-C9R1

And the entry in the civil records:¹⁰

No. 509. Geburt von Eduard Thönen.

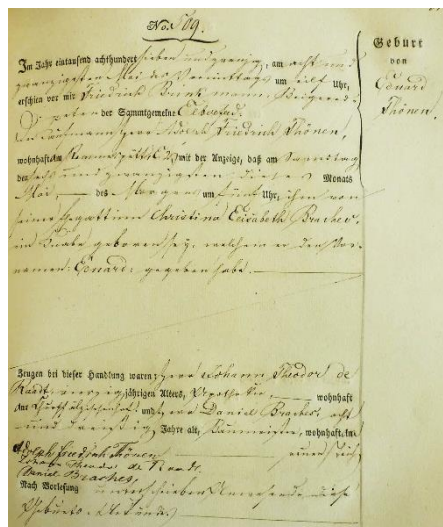
Im Jahr eintausend achthundert sieben und zwanzig, am acht und zwanzigsten Mai des vormittags um elf Uhr, erschien vor mir Friedrich Brinkmann, Beigeordneter der Sammtgemeinde Elberfeld; der Kaufmann Herr Adolph Friedrich Thönen wohnhaft am Rommelspütt, E. R., mit der Anzeige, daß am Samstag den sechs und zwanzigsten dieses Monats Mai, des Morgens um fünf Uhr, ihm von seiner Ehegattinn Christina Elisabeth Braches, ein Knabe geboren sey, welchem er den Vornamen Eduard gegeben habe.

Zeugen bei dieser Handlung waren: Herr Johann Theodor de Raadt, vierzig jährigen Alters, Apotheker, wohnhaft am Churpfälzischen Hof, und Herr Daniel Braches, acht und dreißig Jahre alt, Baumeister, wohnhaft am neuen Teich. Nach Vorlesung unterschrieben Anwesende diese Geburts-Urkunde.

No. 509. Birth of Eduard Thönen.

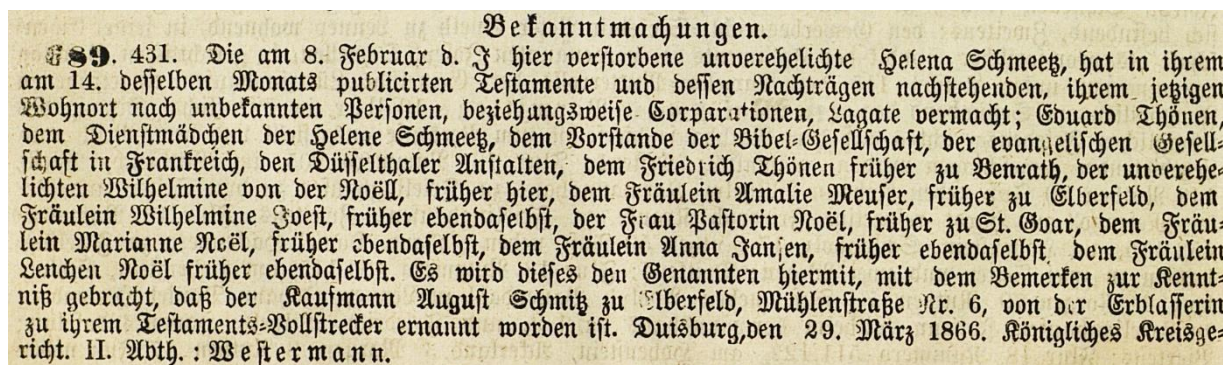
In the year 1827, on the 28th of May, at 11 o'clock in the morning, appeared before me Friedrich Brinkmann, deputy of the municipal community of Elberfeld; and the merchant Mr. Adolph Friedrich Thönen, residing at Rommelspütt, of the Protestant religion, with the declaration that on Saturday, the 26th of this month of May, at 5 o'clock in the morning, his wife Christina Elisabeth Braches had given birth to a boy, to whom he had given the name Eduard.

The witnesses to this act were: Mr. Johann Theodor de Raadt, aged 40, pharmacist, residing at Churpfälzischer Hof, and Mr. Daniel Braches, 38 years old, master builder, residing at Neuer Teich. After reading it aloud, those present signed this birth certificate.



Edward Thonen's civil birth record

Edward Thonen's godparent Helena Schmeetz, a cousin of his mother, passed away in 1866 without having married. Remarkably, she mentioned Edward in her last will. She was probably unaware of his fate, and the last update to the testament may have predated his emigration. Naturally, Edward was not available to accept the inheritance. About six weeks after the reading of the will, a local newspaper published a request for anyone mentioned in it to come forward:¹¹



The last known mention of Edward Thonen by his family, in a testament from 1866

Bekanntmachungen.

689. 431. Die am 8. Februar d. J. [1866] hier verstorbene unverehelichte Helena Schmeetz, hat in ihrem am 14. desselben Monats publicirten Testamente und dessen Nachträgen nachstehenden, ihrem jetzigen Wohnort nach unbekanntten Personen, beziehungsweise Corporationen, Lagate vermacht: Eduard Thönen, dem

¹⁰ Personenstandsregister Elberfeld, 1827, Landesarchiv NRW, October 2021, page 509. www.landesarchiv-nrw.de/data02/Abt_Rheinland/PA_2104/~012/01252-a/LAV_NRW_R_PA_2104_01252-a_0525.jpg

¹¹ Amtsblatt für den Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf, Öffentlicher Anzeiger, 1866, number 29, page 211. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/6337292

Dienstmädchen der Helena Schmeetz, dem Vorstande der Bibel-Gesellschaft, der evangelischen Gesellschaft in Frankreich, den Düsseldorfer Anstalten, dem Friedrich Thönen früher zu Benrath, der unverehelichten Wilhelmine von der Noëll, früher hier, dem Fräulein Amalie Meuser, früher zu Elberfeld, dem Fräulein Wilhelmine Joest, früher ebendasselbst, der Frau Pastorin Noël, früher zu St. Goar, dem Fräulein Lenchen Noël früher ebendasselbst. Es wird dieses den Genannten hiermit, mit dem Bemerken zur Kenntniß gebracht, daß der Kaufmann August Schmitz zu Elberfeld, Mühlenstraße Nr. 6, von der Erblasserin zu ihrem Testaments-Vollstrecker ernannt worden ist. Duisburg, den 29. März 1866. Königliches Kreisgericht. II. Abth.: Westermann.

Announcements.

689. 431. The unmarried Helena Schmeetz, who passed away here on February 8th of this year [1866], bequeathed legacies to the following individuals or corporations, whose current place of residence is unknown, as per her will published on the 14th of the same month and its supplements: Eduard Thönen; the maid of Helena Schmeetz; the board of the Bible Society; the Evangelical Society in France; the Düsseldorf institutions; Friedrich Thönen, formerly of Benrath; the unmarried Wilhelmine von der Noëll, formerly here; Miss Amalie Meuser, formerly of Elberfeld; Miss Wilhelmine Joest, formerly from there as well; Mrs. Pastor Noël, formerly of St. Goar; Miss Lenchen Noël, formerly from there as well. This information is hereby provided to the mentioned parties, along with the notice that the merchant August Schmitz of Elberfeld, Mühlenstraße No. 6, has been appointed as the executor of the testament by the deceased. Duisburg, March 29, 1866. Royal District Court. Division 2. Westermann.

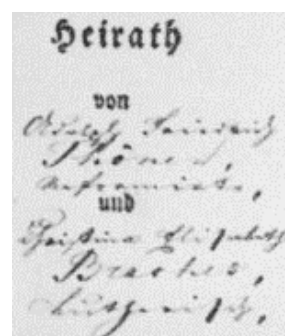
The *Germany Connector's Challenge* has yielded a plethora of additional information regarding Edward's extended family, which was the original objective of the challenge. Given the amount of details, it is impractical to reproduce it all here. However, we will provide an overview of what is known about Edward's parents and siblings below.¹²

Edward was the son of Adolph Friedrich Thönen (born in 1785 in Mönchengladbach, died in 1853 in Offenbach am Main) and Christina Elisabetha Braches (born in 1791 in Mülheim, Cologne, died in 1852 in Elberfeld). The father belonged to the Reformed faith, while the mother adhered to the Lutheran confession. Their children were raised as Lutherans. Edward's grandfather, Johann Abraham Thönen (born in 1750 in Elberfeld, died between 1812 and 1817), had married into a family from Mönchengladbach but relocated to the Rommelspütt area of Elberfeld in 1799, where he worked as a broker.

Mixed marriages between Lutherans and Reformed were not unusual. Sometimes, but not always, one of the partners decided to convert before the wedding. Edward's parents got married in the Reformed church, but still decided to raise their children as Lutherans. Compare the note about their church marriage in the civil records:¹³

Beide Hauptcomparenten übergaben wegen der, zwischen ihnen kirchlich vollzogenen Ehe nachstehendes Zeugniß des gesetzlichen Pfarrers des Bräutigams (der Braut): nach welchem die priesterliche Trauung dieser Ehe durch den hiesigen reformierten Herrn Pastor Nourney heute Montag den siebenzehnten Februar des Abends um fünf Uhr geschehen ist.

Both main participants provided the following certificate from the legal pastor of the groom (the bride) regarding their marriage solemnised in the church, according

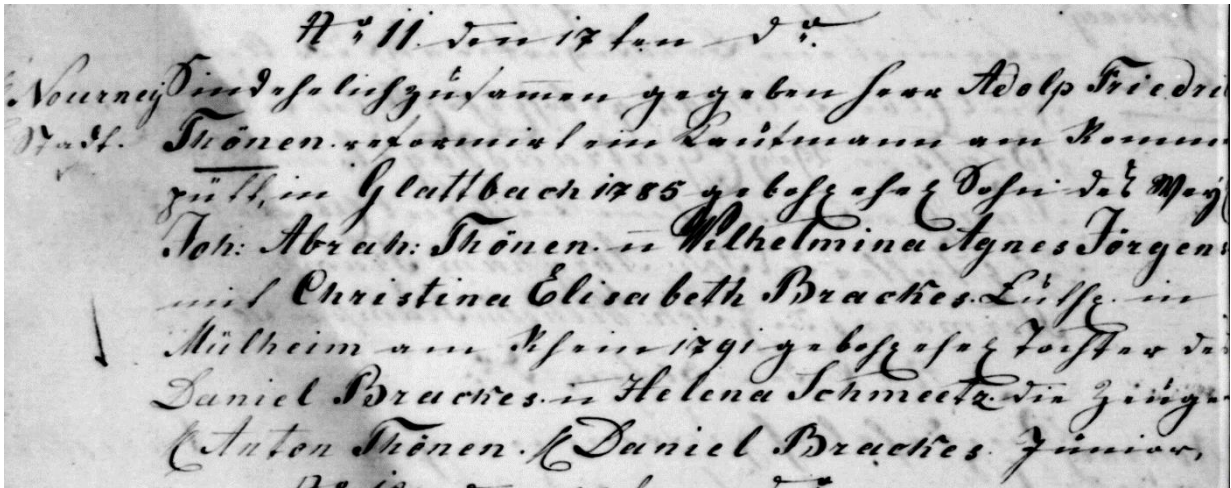


Excerpt from parents' civil marriage record

¹² The connection to the “big tree” was achieved via the Ramaer family (www.wikitree.com/wiki/Ramaer-12) from North Brabant, who were connected to Maria Anne Beckenbach, the wife of Edward Thonen's uncle. For detailed sources, as well as further generations of Edward's ancestors, see the family trees on www.wikitree.com/wiki/Thönen-12 and www.wikitree.com/wiki/Braches-3. The Thönen family itself can be traced back to Peter Georg Thönen (born abt.1680, died before 1737 in Trendelburg, Hessen-Kassel).

¹³ Abteilung Rheinland, PA 2104, Zivilstandsregister Landgerichtsbezirk Elberfeld, Nr. 1372, page 57, www.landesarchiv-nrw.de/data02/Abt_Rheinland/PA_2104/~013/01372/LAV_NRW_R_PA_2104_01372_0057.jpg

to which the priestly ceremony of this marriage was performed by the local Reformed Pastor Nourney today, Monday, the 17th of February [1817], at 5 o'clock in the evening.



Parents' marriage in the Reformed church records

The entry about the marriage in the church records reads:¹⁴

Nourney. Stadt. No. 11. den 17ten do. [Februar 1817]

Sind ehelich zusammen gegeben Herr Adolph Friedrich Thönen reformirt ein Kaufmann am Rommelspütt, in Glattbach 1785 geboren ehel. Sohn des Weyl. Joh. Abrah. Thönen u. Wilhelmina Agnes Jörgens mit Christina Elisabeth Braches, Lth. in Mülheim am Rhein 1791 geboren ehel. Tochter des Daniel Braches u. Helena Schmeetz. Die Zeugen: H. Anton Thönen, H. Daniel Braches Junior.

Nourney, in the town. On the 17th of the same month [February 1817]

Mr. Adolph Friedrich Thönen, of the Reformed faith, a merchant from Rommelspütt, born in Gladbach in 1785, legitimate son of the late Johann Abraham Thönen and Wilhelmina Agnes Jörgens, was joined in matrimony with Christina Elisabeth Braches, of the Lutheran faith, born in Mülheim am Rhein in 1791, legitimate daughter of Daniel Braches and Helena Schmeetz. The witnesses were Mr. Anton Thönen and Mr. Daniel Braches Jr.



Left image: Rommelspütt, early 19th century (post card From Elberfeld's bygone times, c.1920)

Right image: View of Elberfeld from the south-west, c.1845. The three churches of the town were, from left to right: St. Laurentius (catholic), Kirche am Kolk (lutheran), and Alte reformierte Kirche (reformed).

In 1815 Edward's father Adolph Friedrich Thönen moved from Mönchengladbach to Rommelspütt in Elberfeld. Edward's parents got married in February 1817. The family resided

¹⁴ Nordrhein-Westfalen > Archiv der Evangelischen Kirche im Rheinland > Elberfeld > Eheschließungen 1810-1823, image 91. www.archion.de/p/4e01567df9/

at Hofkamp in Elberfeld in October 1817, but by January 1819 they had moved back to Rommelspütt.¹⁵ They went on to have eight children, born between 1817 and 1829.

Edward's father was a merchant, as were Edward's uncles Anton, Johann Abraham, and Friedrich. Many of Edward's cousins and uncles worked in the cloth and silk trade. Between 1833 and 1852, Adolph Friedrich Thönen is documented as a commission merchant for cotton, silk and dyed goods.¹⁶ As a merchant (*Kaufmann*), he frequently travelled within Germany. On multiple occasions between 1819 and 1853 his name appears in the published lists of men residing at hotels in Düsseldorf, Paderborn, Munich, Bamberg, Nördlingen and Regensburg:¹⁷

¹⁵ Kirchenbuch Elberfeld, Taufen 1816-1821, Lutherisch, image 80. www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJB-88TZ

Kirchenbuch Elberfeld, Taufen 1816-1821, Lutherisch, image 120. [/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJB-88VY](http://ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSJB-88VY)

¹⁶ "Thönen, Friedr., Kommissionair in Baumwolle, Twist, Seide und Farbwaaren, E2", in: Offizielles Adress-Buch für Rheinland-Westphalen, 1833, page 92. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/8390928; compare Watanabe, H.: "Die Wuppertaler Unternehmer in den Dreißiger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts. Eine Analyse des Adreßbuches von 1833 unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Verhältnisses zwischen Baumwolle und Seide", in: Hokudai Economic Papers, volume 3, 1972, page 153.

eprints.lib.hokudai.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2115/30651/1/3_P125-160.pdf

"Elberfeld, Mit Baumwolle. Herr Thönen Fr., Commission und Garn", in: Allgemeiner Handlungs-Gremial-Almanach für den oesterreichischen Kaiserstaat, volume 2, 1835, page 487.

[www.google.de/books/edition/Allgemeiner_Handlungs_Gremial_Almanach_fF5w7AAAAcAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Allgemeiner_Handlungs_Gremial_Almanach/fF5w7AAAAcAAJ)

"Thönen, Friedr., Kommissionair in Baumwolle, Twist, Seide und Farbwaaren, E2 Elberfeld", in: Offizielles Adress-Buch für Rheinland-Westphalen 1838, page 92.

www.adressbuecher.net/addressbook/entry/5562141ce4b0f0a2e35986d1

"Rheinpreußen (Elberfeld), Commissionäre. Thonen, Frdr.", in: Grosses Adressbuch der Kaufleute, Fabrikanten und handelnden Gewerbsleuten von Europa und den Hauptplätzen der fremden Welttheile, volume 4, 1841, page 60. www.google.de/books/edition/Grosses_Adressbuch_der_Kaufleute_Fabrika/f8U6AAAAcAAJ

"Thönen, F., Commissionair, D. 1009, Herzogsstraße", in: Adreßbuch für den Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf, 1842/43, Kreis Elberfeld, page 134. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/8386911

"Thönen, Adolph Friedr., Kaufmann, Herzogstraße, D. 1009.; Friedr., Commissionair in Twist, Seide, Wollengarn und Farbwaaren, Neumarktstraße, D. 894.", in: Elberfeld-Barmer Adreß-Buch, 1850, page 189. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/11328916

"Seite 189, Zeile 39. Thönen Ad. Friedr., Kaufmann, Herzogstraße, D. 1009 fällt fort. Derselbe handelt unter der Firma 'Friedr. Thönen,' (s. S. 189, Zeile 40.)", in: Elberfeld-Barmer Adreß-Buch, 1850, errata, page 272.

digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/11328985

Compare Knieriem, M.: "Die abenteuerliche Geschichte des Eduard Thonen", in: Wuppertaler Nachrichten, Westdeutsche Zeitung (WZ), 18 April 1998, page 12.

¹⁷ "Angekommene Fremde", in: Königliches Düsseldorf Intelligenzblatt", multiple issues:

23 March 1819, page 135. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ulbdzd/periodical/pageview/394926

15 December 1820, page 399. [/periodical/pageview/402542](http://periodical/pageview/402542)

"Fremdenblatt", in: Düsseldorf Journal und Kreisblatt, multiple issues:

28 September 1841, number 264, page 1055. [/periodical/pageview/9223691](http://periodical/pageview/9223691); 11 January 1845, number 10, page

40. [/periodical/pageview/9276689](http://periodical/pageview/9276689); 12 January 1845, number 11, page 44. [/periodical/pageview/9276693](http://periodical/pageview/9276693); 13

January 1845, number 12, page 48. [/periodical/pageview/9276697](http://periodical/pageview/9276697); 14 January 1845, number 13, page 52.

[/periodical/pageview/9276701](http://periodical/pageview/9276701); 1 July 1845, number 175, page 705. [/periodical/pageview/9281457](http://periodical/pageview/9281457); 13

December 1846, number 339, page 1407. [/periodical/pageview/9265395](http://periodical/pageview/9265395); 12 May 1847, number 129, page 505.

[/periodical/pageview/9457431](http://periodical/pageview/9457431); 12 April 1849, number 88, page 292. [/periodical/pageview/9322247](http://periodical/pageview/9322247)

"Fremden-Anzeige", in: Königlich Bayerischer Polizey-Anzeiger von München", multiple issues:

2-6 August 1847, page 777. www.bavarikon.de/object/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346008?p=804; 1-5 November

1847, page 1137. [/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346008?p=1164](http://bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346008?p=1164); 8-12 January 1849, page 37. [/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346010?p=41](http://bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346010?p=41); 27-30 July 1849, page 594. [/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346010?p=636](http://bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346010?p=636); 14-17 January

1851, page 64. [/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346012?p=68](http://bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10346012?p=68)

"Fremden-Anzeige", in: Münchener Tagblatt, 1847, volume 2, multiple issues:

6 August 1847, page 1010. www.bavarikon.de/object/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10541955?p=214; 6 November

1847, page 2392. [/bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10541955?p=602](http://bav:BSB-MDZ-00000BSB10541955?p=602)

Date	Town, hotel, owner	Name, occupation
23 March 1819	<i>Düsseldorf, Anker, Wellenkamp</i>	<i>Seling und Thöne Kaufleute aus Elberfeld</i>
10 December 1820	<i>Düsseldorf, Becking</i>	<i>Seeling und Thönen Kaufleute aus Elberfeld</i>
28 September 1841	<i>Düsseldorf, Hof von Zweibrücken, Capellen</i>	<i>Thönen, Kaufmann a Elberfeld</i>
11 January 1845	<i>Düsseldorf, Cölnischer Hof, Juppen</i> ¹⁸	<i>Thönen, Kfm a Elberfeld</i>
12 January 1845		
13 January 1845		
14 January 1845		
2 June 1845	<i>Paderborn, Weißer Schwan</i>	<i>Thönen aus Elberfeld</i>
1 July 1845	<i>Düsseldorf, Cölnischer Hof, Juppen</i>	<i>Thönen, Kfm a Elberfeld</i>
18 December 1845	<i>Paderborn, Weißer Schwan</i>	<i>Thönen aus Elberfeld</i>
13 December 1846	<i>Düsseldorf, Rheinischer Hof, Hörner</i>	<i>Thönen, Kfm a Elberfeld</i>
12 May 1847	<i>Düsseldorf, Römischer Kaiser, G. Engels</i>	<i>Thoene, Kfm a Elberfeld</i>
2-6 August 1847	<i>Munich, Maulick</i>	<i>Hr. Thönen, Kfm. v. Elberfeld</i>
6 August 1847		<i>Thönen und Grupp, Kflte. von Elberfeld</i>
1-5 November 1847	<i>Munich, Maulick</i>	<i>Thönen, Kfm. v. Elberfeld</i>
6 November 1847		
8 November 1848	<i>Munich, Maulick</i>	<i>Thönen aus Elberfeld</i>
8-12 January 1849	<i>Munich, Maulick</i>	<i>Hr. Thönen, Kfm. v. Elberfeld</i>
12 April 1849	<i>Düsseldorf, Römischer Kaiser, Engels</i>	<i>Thönen, Kfm a Elberfeld</i>
22 May 1849	<i>Bamberg, Bamberger Hof</i>	<i>Thönen v. Elberfeld</i>
27-30 July 1849	<i>Munich, Bayerischer Hof</i>	<i>Thönen u. Krup, v. Elberfeld</i>
22 January 1850	<i>Nördlingen, Krone</i>	<i>Thönen von Elberfeld</i>
14–17 January 1851	<i>Munich, Bayerischer Hof</i>	<i>Thönen, Kfm. v. Elberfeld</i>
21 October 1852	<i>Munich, Bayerischer Hof</i>	<i>Schmid und Thönen, Kaufleute von Elberfeld</i>
27 January 1853	<i>Regensburg, zu den drei Helmen</i>	<i>Thönen von Elberfeld</i>

In 1842 and 1850 Adolph Friedrich Thönen lived on Herzogsstraße in Elberfeld; by May 1852 he had moved to Grünstraße.¹⁹ He was engaged in both mercantile and brokerage activities at

¹⁸ "Paderbornsches Intelligenzblatt", 1845, pages 344+788.

www.google.de/books/edition/Paderbornsches_Intelligenzblatt/J7xQAAAAcAAJ

"Der Bayerische Landbote", 1848, page 1342. [/edition/Der_Bayerische_Landbote/bVRDAAAAcAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Der_Bayerische_Landbote/bVRDAAAAcAAJ)

"Tag-Blatt der Stadt Bamberg", 1849, page 756. [/edition/Tag_Blatt_der_Stadt_Bamberg/KdVFAAAAacAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Tag_Blatt_der_Stadt_Bamberg/KdVFAAAAacAAJ)

"Nördlinger Wochenblatt", 1850, page 41. [/edition/Nördlinger_Wochenblatt/PO9EAAAAcAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Nördlinger_Wochenblatt/PO9EAAAAcAAJ)

"Neue Münchener Zeitung", 1852, volume 2, page 2024. [/edition/Neue_Münchener_Zeitung/4yZEAAAAcAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Neue_Münchener_Zeitung/4yZEAAAAcAAJ)

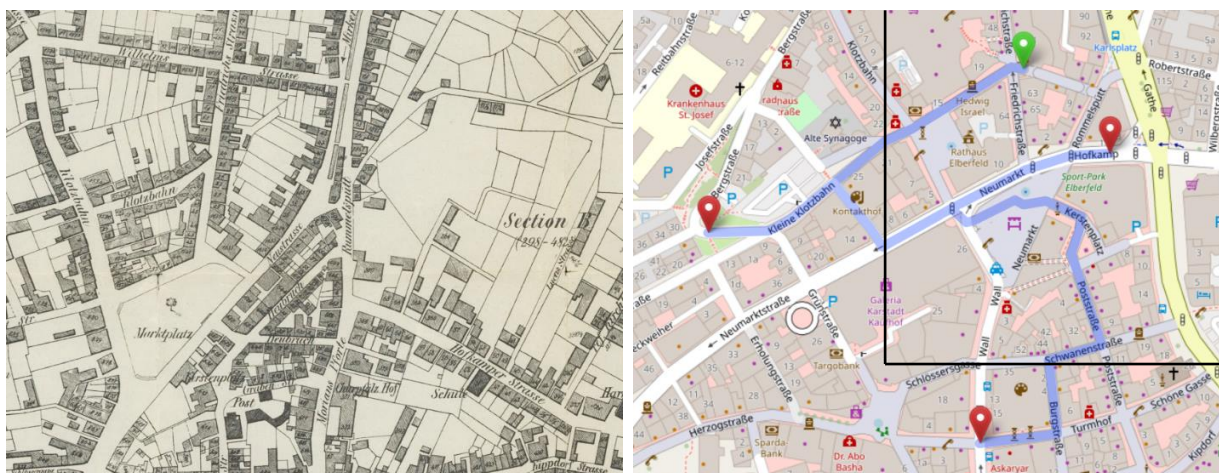
"Bayerisches Volksblatt", 1853, page 98. [/edition/Bayerisches_Volksblatt/PbVDAAAAcAAJ](http://www.google.de/books/edition/Bayerisches_Volksblatt/PbVDAAAAcAAJ)

¹⁸ For the hotels mentioned, compare de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haus_„zum_Kölnischen_Hof“ and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Römischer_Kaiser.

¹⁹ On 12 May 1852 Eduard's mother passed away in the house Neumarktstraße 394, as indicated by the death certificate in the civil records (Abteilung Rheinland, PA 2104, Zivilstandsregister Landgerichtsbezirk Elberfeld, Nr. 1494 a, www.landesarchiv-nrw.de/data02/Abt_Rheinland/PA_2104/~014/01494-a/LAV_NRW_R_PA_2104_01494-a_0528.jpg).

The church records state that she actually lived on Grünstraße at the time (Rheinland: Archiv der Evang. Kirche >

that time. It is likely that the house on Grünstraße is where Edward Thonen spent his final months in Germany, between his return from England and his emigration to Australia.



Left map: The Rommelspütt area in 1849; Right map: Elberfeld today, with Rommelspütt (top), Grünstraße (left), Hofkamp (right), and Herzogstraße (bottom). The black box shows the approximate overlap of the two maps. Credit: OpenStreetMap

In May 1852 Edward's mother passed away. In July 1853, shortly after Edward had emigrated to Australia (see the chapter [Emigration to Australia](#)), his brother Friedrich Adolph Thönen relocated to Offenbach am Main in Hesse.²⁰ He was accompanied by his father, who succumbed to a lung disease a few weeks later, on 19 August 1853.²¹

Of Edward's seven siblings, three did not survive childhood. The fate of his brothers Friedrich (born in 1817) and Julius (born in 1822) is unknown. The two remaining siblings, Friedrich Adolph (born in 1818, died in 1894) and Rosalie (born in 1829, died in 1904), both left Prussia in the 1850s and moved to Hesse. The brother Friedrich Adolph went on to become a prosperous merchant. He was educated in England.²² In 1861 Friedrich Adolph bought an oilcloth factory, establishing the *Tuchfabrik A. Thönen* factory in Offenbach. Rosalie married the merchant Friedrich Wilhelm Reinhard and relocated to Frankfurt am Main in 1859. Both of Edward's surviving siblings had children of their own, although no living descendants are currently known.

The known children and grandchildren of Johann Abraham Thönen are:

Johann Abraham Thönen

born 8 September 1750 in Elberfeld, died between 1812 and 1817

1777 broker in Gladbach, 1780 in Elberfeld, 1782–1785 in Gladbach, since 1799 in Elberfeld, 1812 in Rommelspütt, Elberfeld (together with his son Friedrich)

Son of Johann Christoph Thonen, a merchant, and Anna Maria Catharina Knefels

m.15 August 1777 in Gladbach, Jülich

E > Elberfeld > Sterbefälle 1848-1852, Bild 257. www.archion.de/p/207b6c34f8/). The family may have resided near the corner Grünstraße/Neumarktstraße.

²⁰ The documents regarding his brother's request for permission are kept at Landesarchiv NRW, Auswanderer aus dem Rheinland, BR 0007 552 215 and BR 0007 552 216. He was no longer a member of the Prussian military at this time, and the request was granted almost immediately. Only a few days later, on 25 July, Friedrich Adolph Thönen got married in Offenbach.

²¹ The cause of death is additional circumstantial evidence that he was involved in the cloth trade. Respiratory diseases were (and still are) common among textile workers.

²² "Thönen. Personalbogen und Foto", in: StadtA OF M 597, Haus der Stadtgeschichte Offenbach. Compare the chapters [Youth and education](#) and [Contemporary descriptions](#).

Wilhelmine Agnes Jörgens

born 25 January 1761 in Gladbach, died 9 February 1818 in Elberfeld

Daughter of Johann Adolf Jörgens, a merchant, and Johanna Maria Barbara Steinweg

1. **Maria Carolina Thönen**

born 15 July 1780 in Elberfeld

2. **Johann Anton Thönen**

born 17 December 1782 in Gladbach, died 1827 in Wülfrath, Elberfeld

1817 merchant, 1827 broker in Wülfrath, Elberfeld

3. **Adolph Friedrich Thönen**

born 30 January 1785 in Gladbach, died 19 August 1853 in Offenbach am Main, from lung disease

1817 in Hofkamp, Elberfeld, 1819–1852 merchant in Rommelspütt, Elberfeld, 1842–1850 in Herzogsstraße, Elberfeld, 1852 broker in Grünstraße, Elberfeld, 1853 merchant in Offenbach am Main

m.17 February 1817 in Elberfeld

Christina Elisabetha Braches

born 7 October 1791 in Mülheim, died 12 May 1852 in Neumarktstraße 394, Elberfeld, from consumption

Daughter of Daniel Braches, a master builder, and Helena Catharina Schmeetz

3.1. **Friedrich Thönen**

born 5 September 1817 in Elberfeld

3.2. **Friedrich Adolph Thönen**

born 1 December 1818 in Elberfeld, died 18 April 1894 in Offenbach am Main, Hesse

Apprenticeship in Barmen, job training in England, 1853–1870 merchant in Offenbach, 1848 and 1859 business travels to Munich, 1860 leather merchant in Offenbach, since 1861 industrialist in Offenbach, 1865 participation in the 6th general assembly of the German National Union in Frankfurt am Main, oilcloth manufacturer in Offenbach (cloth factory *Tuchfabrik A. Thönen*), retired before 1894

m.25 July 1853 in Offenbach am Main

Anna Maria Klein

born 17 December 1828 in Offenbach am Main, died 17 September 1887 in Offenbach am Main

Daughter of Johann Georg Klein I., a leatherware manufacturer, and Anna Christina Philippina Carolina Klier

3.3. **Edmund Thönen**

born 14 February 1820 in Elberfeld, died 21 March 1820 in Elberfeld

3.4. **NN Thönen**

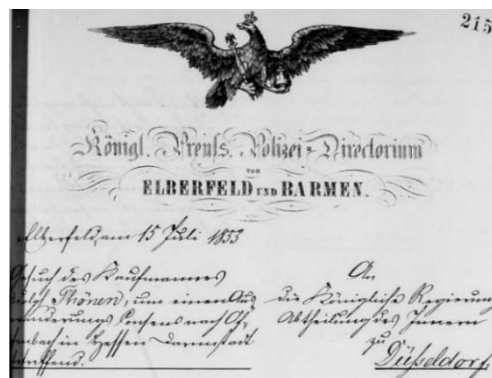
stillborn 2 February 1821 in Elberfeld

3.5. **Julius Thönen**

born 26 May 1822 in Elberfeld

3.6. **Auguste Thönen**

born 21 August 1823 in Elberfeld, died 20 September 1823 in Elberfeld

3.7. **Eduard Thönen**

Request by Edward's brother Friedrich Adolph for permission to relocate to Offenbach, submitted on 15 July 1853 (granted on 19 July 1853 and handed out the following day)

born 26 May 1827 in Elberfeld, died 3 December 1854 in Ballarat, Australia

3.8. *Rosalie Thönen*

born 28 May 1829 in Elberfeld, died 24 February 1904 in Wiesbaden

m.21 August 1859 in Offenbach am Main

Friedrich Wilhelm Reinhard

born 5 November 1821 in Usingen, died 6 April 1901 in Frankfurt am Main

1851 merchant in Frankfurt am Main, 1859–1863 merchant in Neue Kräme 8, Frankfurt am Main, 1901 merchant in Juliusstraße 9, Frankfurt am Main

4. *Johann Abraham Thönen*

born November 1788 in Elberfeld, died 2 August 1827 in Elberfeld

5. *Friedrich Thönen*

born about 1790, died after 1854 in Benrath, Dusseldorf

1812 cotton merchant, running a lending library in Rommelspütt, Elberfeld, 1850–1854 merchant in Benrath

6. *Carl Ferdinand Jacob Thönen*

born 20 May 1799 in Elberfeld, died 17 June 1847 in Rheydt

m.12 June 1828 in Rheydt, Gladbach

Maria Anne Beckenbach

born 26 Oct 1806 in Rheydt, died 12 February 1884 in Rheydt

6.1. *Albert Thönen*²³

born 30 July 1834 in Rheydt, died 8 March 1917 in Mönchengladbach

1849/50 third-year, 1850/51 fourth-year student at the industrial college in Rheydt, later merchant in Mönchengladbach

m.5 April 1865 in Rheydt

Antonie Charlotte Lisette Louise Anders

born 15 June 1841 in Bochum, died after 1920 in United States?

6.2. *Laura Thönen*

born 22 February 1838 in Rheydt, died after 1898

1852/53 second-year student at the school for girls in Rheydt

m.27 January 1864 in Rheydt

Wilhelm Karl Jung

born 21 June 1829 in Siegen

7. *Wilhelm August Thönen*

born 16 June 1801 in Elberfeld

Youth and education

Thonen was raised as a merchant. He went to the Elberfeld grammar school, where in 1840 he is documented as a third-year student.²⁴ He may have lived for a while in the Prussian town of Halberstadt, in the present-day state of Saxony-Anhalt, though this could just be an erroneous

²³ Research about the children of Carl Friedrich Jacob Thönen was first published by Elke Alt (*elke_alr*) on the website Ancestry, at www.ancestry.de/family-tree/person/tree/67750142/person/182158499434/facts. It is reproduced here with permission. The two children Albert and Laura have descendants in England, the United States, and Switzerland.

²⁴ "Rede-Actus", in: Jahresbericht über das Gymnasium in Elberfeld, 1840, page 30. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ulbdsp/periodical/pageview/4211674

We credit Wikipedia user *Laurentianus* for finding this source, and for adding it to the German Wikipedia articles about Thonen and the school itself on 25 September 2023.

de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Edward_Thonen&diff=237629947&oldid=237185169

account based on an incorrect statement found in a newspaper article.²⁵ He was drafted into the Prussian army in 1847 and served in the Landwehr Battalion Essen as an infantryman (see the chapter on his [emigration to Australia](#)). He was apparently declared unfit for military duty and was either discharged after about a year or released even earlier as a reservist. As such, it is quite improbable that Thonen was a serving soldier when the Revolutions of 1848–1849 arrived in Elberfeld. Thonen would never have had to engage in combat with the rebels when the Prussian government sent troops to put down the Elberfeld Rebellion in May 1849, a possibility that had been proposed by Knieriem.²⁶

In speculation regarding Thonen's involvement, a number of writers have proposed that he might have joined the uprising. In a 2013 article about the Eureka Stockade, Gregory Blake wondered if Thonen was one of the 500-800 people who traveled from Elberfeld to the provincial capital of Düsseldorf in April 1849, to ask the Prussian government to ratify the Frankfurt constitution.²⁷ In response to a question about further clarification, Blake said:²⁸

That was more of a presumption on my part. If he was living amongst it all I assumed he would have been aware of what was going on. There is no hard evidence that he did participate in the events of the time but my thinking was that he could well have been influenced by what occurred. Certainly his actions at Eureka indicate that he had the revolutionary spirit within him.

In 2012 Peter FitzSimons wrote that²⁹

Thonen is from the town in Germany where Karl Marx's great compadre Friedrich Engels spent a great deal of time – Elberfeld – and was involved in the very uprising that Engels had participated in, which caused Thonen to effectively be expelled from Prussia.

FitzSimons does not cite any references or provide a justification for this conclusion. Thonen's possession of a valid Prussian passport and a satisfactory police clearance certificate (see the section [Emigration to Australia](#)) confirms that he was not expelled from Prussia during that time.

However, we agree with FitzSimons and Blake to some degree, admitting that Thonen, along with a great number of others, might have been involved in the events of April and May 1849. It is important to emphasise that there is no concrete evidence that Thonen was even present in Elberfeld at that time. Although his involvement is still conceivable, claiming more would risk romanticising his character. The only verified political act in Thonen's life is his proposal to the British government to combat the African slave trade (see below). We will examine



„An Elberfeld barricade”, in: *Kladderadatsch*, 20 May 1849, page 80.

²⁵ “Singular Case of Diamond Stealing”, in: *Morning Chronicle*, 10 May 1851, page 7.

²⁶ Notably, parts of the Prussian military actually joined the side of the rebels. During the 1848/49 revolutions the political left had built their hopes on the Landwehr in particular. For this reason, the Prussian government weakened the influence of the Landwehr in 1858, which led to a constitutional crisis.

²⁷ Sperber, J.: “Rhineland radicals: the democratic movement and the revolution of 1848-1849”, United Kingdom, Princeton University Press, 1991, page 358. This is also the source given by Blake, even though Sperber makes no mention of Thonen specifically.

²⁸ Blake, G.: “Re: Eureka Stockade, Edward Thonen”, email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 15 September 2022, 6:04 a.m. and quoted here with permission.

²⁹ FitzSimons, P.: “Eureka: The Unfinished Revolution”, 2012, pages 309-310.

whether political considerations played a role in Thonen's decision to move to England in the upcoming chapter [Why did Thonen come to England?](#)

A little bit more can be said about his education. Since he was raised as a merchant, it is possible that people expected him to follow in his father's footsteps. Edward might have completed an apprenticeship in Barmen, just like his brother Friedrich Adolph did.³⁰ He tried to work for a merchant during his time in England, as detailed in the chapter [December 1850 till April 1851](#). However, he was unfit for a clerk position because he was unfamiliar with how a commercial establishment operated.³¹ It appears that he was not very interested at all in the mercantile trade.

Thonen excelled at languages. He proved to be fluent in a number of foreign languages, including French, Dutch, English, and Spanish.³² Following his failed attempts at working as a clerk, he tried to become a language teacher. He testified during his May 1851 trial that he had been offered a job as a teacher by a schoolmaster in Eastbourne, a city in southern England. However, he never actually took on this role (refer to the chapter [The diamond robbery, his trial, and conviction](#)).³³

He had even written to the British government. One witness testified during Thonen's trial that he was³⁴

[a] person of considerable attainments, and appeared to be one of those who endeavour less to promote their own personal interest than the general welfare and advancement of mankind; for he had had communications with the government, with reference to the colonisation of distant parts of the world, and other matters of a similar character (laughter)

and that he had

made a proposition to the government with reference to emigration to some parts of Africa.

Details of this "proposition" were given by Thonen himself in his testimony:³⁵

[I] wrote to Lord Palmerston,³⁶ who probably thought my letter the production of a madman's brain, and treated it as such, for I received no answer. I should like the copy of that letter, which is in the possession of the officer, read aloud to the court, as it will then give the magistrate some idea as to my general character, and, together with what I have already stated, may prove something in palliation of my offence. The letter was then read. It was very lengthy, and contained a most extravagant proposal for the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa, and offering to perform, single-handed, what the Government had been

³⁰ "Thönen. Personalbogen und Foto", in: StadtA OF M 597, Haus der Stadtgeschichte Offenbach.

³¹ "Singular Case of Diamond stealing", in: London Observer, 18 May 1851, page 11.

³² These are the languages that have been mentioned by others, compare "A Diamond Robber Caught", in: Riverina Recorder, 10 February 1897, page 2. Thonen himself said at his trial that he was fluent in English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese. See Dodsley, J.: "Great Robbery of Diamonds", in: Annual Register, United Kingdom, 1852, pages 62-64.

³³ Thonen may have been lucky not to end up in Eastbourne. In 1860 the new schoolmaster at Eastbourne was tried for murder, after he had beaten a student to death. That case is still relevant as a precedent, compare www.e-lawresources.co.uk/R-v-Hopley.php, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastbourne_manslaughter, and Cretney, S.M.: "Family Law in the Twentieth Century", 2003, page 526.

³⁴ "The Diamond Robbery in the City", in: Morning Post, 16 May 1851, page 7. Another newspaper account (Daily News, 16 May 1851) gives this statement not to a witness, but to Thonen's lawyer, a Mr. Bodkin.

³⁵ "Singular Case of Diamond Stealing", in: Morning Chronicle, 10 May 1851, page 7.

³⁶ Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), British statesman who dominated British foreign policy between 1830 and 1865. Palmerston, a professed opponent of the slave trade, held a lifelong hostility towards the United States. en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_John_Temple,_3rd_Viscount_Palmerston

ineffectually trying for years. All he required was arms and ammunition and a free passage out for any one he required to assist him in the great enterprise.

We have not yet found the original letter. It is not in the collection of Palmerston Papers at the University of Southampton Library, which was collected from his Houses of Parliament office at the time of his death. The British Library holds the letterbooks for Lord Palmerston, and Thonen's letter could be in one of those.³⁷ David Brown, Professor of Modern History at the University of Southampton and an expert in Palmerston studies, has told us that³⁸

I haven't seen the letter from Thonen (which isn't to say Palmerston didn't receive it) and he is certainly not the only person who would have written to Palmerston, or other prominent politicians, in this vein – suggesting policies or requesting favours. However it does not surprise me to read that Palmerston did not reply – the proposal for arms, ammunition and a free passage out does indeed seem 'extravagant'!

I take it you have only come across second-hand references to the letter, such as those quoted in your message. It sounds like it might tell you rather more about Thonen than Palmerston, although the fact that Thonen thought it worth even approaching Palmerston, and then making public reference to that letter, is in itself interesting. But I suspect speculation as to Palmerston's likely response will be just that.

Thonen was an autodidact. He recalled at the trial:

My father and mother live there in independent circumstances, and I was educated there, but I instructed myself in the various languages I am acquainted with without any assistance. I was brought up as a merchant [...]

He received his education at the grammar school in Elberfeld, which is now called the Wilhelm-Dörpfeld-Gymnasium. On 11 September 1840, at the school's graduation ceremony, thirteen-year-old Edward Thonen, a third-year grammar student, performed Heinrich Heine's ballad *Belsazar*.³⁹

Freitag den 11. September, Nachmittags 2 Uhr.
Choral: Hallelujah!
Carl Pagenstecher, Primaner: Hannibalis Iberum trajecturi oratio. (Eigene Arbeit.)
Friedrich Hoffe, Tertianer: Der Harfner; von Stieglitz.
Peter Nippel, Tertianer: Pipin der Kurze; von Streckfuß.
Eduard Thönen, Quartaner: Belsazar; von Heine.
Julius Lips, Ober-Quintaner: Der Holzhacker; von Schmid.
Julius Lucas, Ober-Quintaner: Des Knaben Berglied; von Uhland.
Josefek Bloem, Unter-Quintaner: Der Affe und die Ukele von Richter.

Thonen recites a poem at the school's graduation ceremony, 1840

Four people with the surname “Thoenen” or “Thönen” attended the school between 1813 and 1873, according to records kept by the institution.⁴⁰ Friedrich Adolph, the brother of Edward, was one of them.⁴¹

4mal: Beltz, Berg, Berthold, Bloem, Bockmuehl, Bras, Bruessermann, Bueschler, Cahn(-hen), Diederichs (Dieter., Dieder.), Doerr, Eigen, Eisenlohr, Erbsloeh, Funke, Goebel, von Guérard, Haarhaus, Henn, Hilgers, Himmelmann, Hoemberg, Hopmann, Howahrde, Jonghaus, Josephson, Krafft, Lehning, Leitner, Löwen, Lueckhoff, Mathey (they), Mengelberg, Mink, Morgenroth, Morschbach, Pieper, Platenius, Priesack, de Raadt (d. Radt), Renker, Richter, Schr. Sartorius, Schlösser, Schreiber, Servaes, von Seyssel d'Aix, Spies, Spindler, Struck, Theisen, Thoenen, Utenberg, Uthemann, Wackernagel, Wartenberg, Wesendonk, Wierth (Wirth), Windrath, Witte.

The listing of “Thoenen” in the school's statistics

These statistics were assembled from a student list, or “Schüler-Album”, that was kept by the rectors of the school. Our attempts to locate this album were unsuccessful, and we are unsure of its present whereabouts. It is assumed to have contained comprehensive student information, including full names, enrolment dates, and biographical details. The Wuppertal

³⁷ Nelson, L.: “RE: In search of a letter to Lord Palmerston [23/464 LN]”, email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 23 November 2023, 11:08 a.m.

At this time, the British Library could not be reached due to the ongoing effects of a cyber-attack against their website and services.

³⁸ Brown, D.: “Re: Putting a letter to Lord Palmerston into context”, email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 29 November 2023, 6:52 p.m.

³⁹ “Rede-Actus”, in: Jahresbericht über das Gymnasium in Elberfeld, 1840, page 30. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ulbdsp/periodical/pageview/4211674. For an English translation of the poem, see archive.schillerinstitute.com/trans/heine_belshazzar.html.

⁴⁰ “Statistik des Gymnasiums zu Elberfeld”, 1874, pages 56-57. books.google.com.au/books?id=gtRiAAAAcAAJ

⁴¹ “Thönen. Personalbogen und Foto”, in: StadtA OF M 597, Haus der Stadtgeschichte Offenbach.

city library, which houses the school's archives, has informed us that they do not know anything about this document.

Bildungsgang (welche Schulen, Techn. Hochschulen, Universitäten, sonstige Bildungsanstalten):
*Realschule, Gymnasium. Kaufmann Lehre in
 Barmen. Ausbildung in England * wieder Barmen.*

Excerpt from a file about Edward's brother Friedrich Adolph Thönen at the Offenbach archive. It confirms that Friedrich Adolph visited the middle school ("Realschule") and the grammar school ("Gymnasium") in Elberfeld, followed by a commercial apprenticeship in (Wuppertal-)Barmen and further training as a merchant in England before his return to Barmen.

We can assume that Edward's school education would have started with a few years at the local middle school, followed by up to six years at the grammar school. Details about the grammar school's curriculum can be found in the surviving issues of the yearly school programs (1834–1844). Edward would have received lessons in Latin, Greek, and, to a lesser degree, French and Hebrew. His schedule may have looked something like this:⁴²

Year	Languages	Sciences	Arts
1 (VI) 1838	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	German (4 hours)	History and Geography (2 hours)	Drawing (2 hours)
		Arithmetic (4 hours)	Caligraphy (2 hours)
		Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
2 (V) 1839	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	German (4 hours)	History and Geography (2 hours)	Drawing (2 hours)
	French (3 hours)	Arithmetic (4 hours)	Caligraphy (3 hours)
		Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
3 (IV) 1840	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	Greek (5 hours)	History and Geography (2 hours)	Drawing (2 hours)
	German (3 hours)	Mathematics (4 hours)	Caligraphy (1 hour)
	French (3 hours)	Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
4 (III) 1841	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	Greek (6 hours)	History and Geography (3 hours)	Drawing (2 hours)
	German (3 hours)	Mathematics (4 hours)	
	French (2 hours)	Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
5 (II) 1842	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	Greek (6 hours)	History and Geography (3 hours)	
	German (2 hours)	Mathematics (3 hours)	
	French (2 hours)	Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
	Hebrew (2 hours)		
6 (I) 1843	Latin (8 hours)	Religious Studies (2 hours)	Singing (2 hours)
	Greek (6 hours)	History and Geography (3 hours)	
	German (2 hours)	Mathematics (3 hours)	
	French (2 hours)	Natural Sciences (2 hours)	
	Hebrew (2 hours)	Philosophical Propaedeutics (1 hour)	

⁴² Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf: "Programm des Gymnasiums in Elberfeld, 1831–1843/44", 2013. digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ulbdsp/periodical/titleinfo/4211480

The possibility that Thonen knew at least some Hebrew could have contributed to the later rumors about his possible Jewish ancestry, which we will discuss in the chapter [Claims of Jewish descent](#).

Following his school years, Edward would have done a commercial apprenticeship (maybe in Elberfeld or Barmen like his brother Friedrich Adolph, maybe further afield). The precise details of how such an apprenticeship was structured, and what someone would have learned during the three to five years it generally took, are poorly studied. In his research report about the history of merchant professions in Germany, Holger Reinisch writes:⁴³

In economic and socio-historical studies on the history of merchants, the analysis of autobiographies generally includes a note that the authors of these memoirs underwent commercial training. However, there is hardly any exploration of the organisation and content of this education. Historical vocational training research tends to focus more on artisanal and industrial apprenticeships rather than giving attention to commercial apprenticeship. Historical business education, in general, is more concerned with the development of commercial school systems than with the history of commercial apprenticeship. Therefore, when it comes to on-the-job commercial apprenticeship, we must largely confine ourselves to relatively broad statements, focusing on the legal framework of apprenticeship and contemporary criticisms of commercial vocational training in the workplace.

At least until the 1870s, the training of merchants in Germany suffered from underregulation, placing apprentices at the mercy of their instructors, whose good will and skill varied widely.⁴⁴ Thonen's formal education was designed to prepare him for university. It included no practical instruction that would have prepared him for the daily work of a clerk or a businessman. This could be the reason for his later struggles to find work in England, where he was criticised by his employers for knowing *nothing about the routines of a mercantile house*.⁴⁵

Travel to England

That Edward Thonen has visited England in 1851 was already known to Australian researchers like Dorothy Wickham before we started working on the case. In her essay *Eureka's Fallen*, she wrote:⁴⁶

THONEN, EDWARD. Born Elberfeldt, Prussia (Germany) c1820. The 1851 British Census places the 23 year Edward Thonen of Elbertfeld, Prussia, in Britain earning his living as a teacher of languages. Thonen died on 3 December 1854 from gunshot wounds sustained in the battle. He was buried on 5 December 1854 at Ballarat. The Informant on his death certificate #3242 was Dr A. Sickler, surgeon. Arnold Denham wrote that 'A hand-to-

⁴³ Reinisch, H.: "Geschichte der kaufmännischen Berufe: Studie zur Geschichte vornehmlich der deutschen Kaufleute, ihrer Tätigkeiten, ihrer Stellung in der Gesellschaft sowie ihrer Organisation und Qualifizierungsstrukturen von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 19. Jahrhunderts", in: Wissenschaftliche Diskussionspapiere, No. 125, 2011, pages 149-150 (translated from the original German). www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/236089/1/bibb-wdp125.pdf

⁴⁴ Reinisch, pages 150ff.

⁴⁵ Dodsley, J.: "Great Robbery of Diamonds", in: Annual Register, United Kingdom, 1852, pages 62-64. www.google.at/books/edition/Annual_Register/g3JdAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA62

Michael Haydon (1820-1880) was born in Westminster. In 1845 he was a city police constable (badge number 422). The 1861 census lists him as a police officer. In 1871 he was a detective Sergeant with the City Police. He retired from the police in May 1876, after serving for 34 years. Haydon passed away at his residence at 64 Devonshire Road, Hackney, Middlesex (compare www.wikitree.com/wiki/Haydon-753). By 1850 Haydon was recognised as "the most outstanding and talented City detective of the time". (Wade, S.: "Square Mile Bobbies. The City of London Police 1839-1949", 2009, page 46)

⁴⁶ Wickham, D.: "Eureka's Fallen", Ballarat Heritage Services, 2019. ballaratheritage.com.au/article/eurekas-fallen/

hand conflict now took place at the barriers. Lalor, towering over his companions, stimulated them with his heroism till a shot shattered his arm, and he fell bleeding to the earth. Ross received his death wound in the groin, while a bullet crashing into Thonen's mouth gave him his quietus.' Raffaello Carboni wrote: 'I hastened, and what a horrible sight! Old acquaintances crippled with shots, the gore protruding from the bayonet wounds, their clothes and flesh burning all the while. Poor Thonen had his mouth literally choked with bullets; my neighbour and mate, Teddy More, stretched on the ground, both his thighs shot, asked me for a drop of water. Peter Lalor, who had been concealed under a heap of slabs, was in the agony of death, a stream of blood from under the slabs, heavily forcing its way down hill'.

In 1857 his body was reinterred. *THE EUREKA VICTIMS* – On Thursday morning, about 7 o'clock, the bodies of Captain Ross, James Brown, Thonen, the lemonade seller, and Tom the blacksmith, who fell at the Eureka Stockade, and had been buried apart from the others, were removed from the grave and placed in the grave containing the bodies of the others who lost their lives on the memorable 3rd of December. The removal took place in the presence of Mr Superintendent Foster, Mr Salmon, trustees of the cemetery, and Mr Lessman. The coffins were in excellent preservation. We understand that no procession will take place on Thursday next, the anniversary of the Eureka affair, but the grave of the fallen will be decorated with chaplets and flowers.

What Wickham did not know were the dates of Thonen's arrival and departure, his reasons for becoming a language teacher, and what led to his emigration to Australia a few years later. Fortunately, we can now answer all those questions.

Thonen's time in England can be divided into two distinct phases: December 1850 through April 1851 and April 1851 through 1852.

December 1850 till April 1851

No. 4821		Port of <i>Dover</i>		Certificate of Arrival.	
Day and Place of Landing	Name and Country	From what Country last arrived	REMARKS		
<i>1850 10 Dec</i>	<i>Edward Thonen Prussia</i>	<i>Osney</i>	has <i>a</i> Passport from the <i>Prussian</i> Government.		
Signature of the Bearer <i>E. Thonen</i>		Signature of the Port Officer <i>John John Chubb</i>			

Thonen came to England on the ferry from Ostend in Belgium to Dover. He arrived on 10 December 1850. His certificate of arrival identifies him as a Prussian subject, and notes that he possessed a valid Prussian passport.⁴⁷

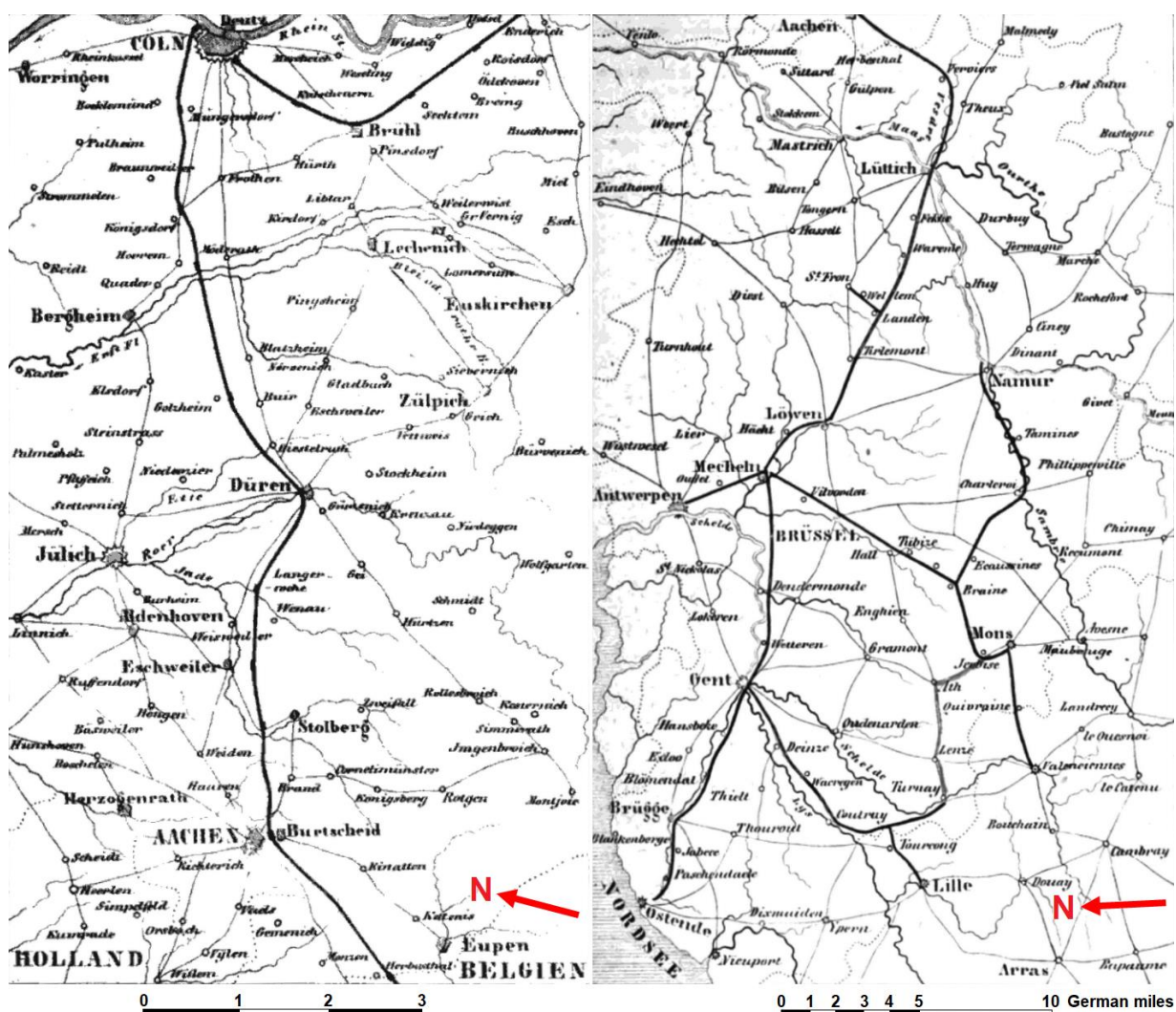
The document is of particular significance because it bears Thonen's signature, representing the only surviving example of his handwriting.

Edward Thonen's signature

How Thonen traveled from Elberfeld to England is an interesting question. While most of his journey is undocumented, his options would not have been numerous, and we can draw some inferences. It is likely that Thonen travelled via Cologne, and then took the Cologne-Aachen railway. In 1850 this was Prussia's busiest passenger line. It also holds the distinction of being

⁴⁷ "Edward Thonen", in: England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869, The National Archives; London, England; Class: Ho 2; Piece: 193; Certificate Number: 4821.

the world's oldest international railway line.⁴⁸ From Aachen, he could have continued directly to Ostend.⁴⁹



The railway lines from Cologne to Aachen (left), and Aachen to Ostend (right). North as indicated. A German mile is equal to about 7,500 metres. From Emil Bürger's Deutschlands Eisenbahnen im Jahr 1845 (German railways in 1845)

In March 1850 a steamer line had been established between Ostend and Dover. Contemporary timetables shed light on the details of this maritime transportation:⁵⁰

ENGLISH AND BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

NEW FAST STEAMERS BETWEEN DOVER AND OSTEND, Conveying the Prussian, Hamburg, and Rotterdam Mails, and commanded by Officers of the Royal Navy.

The SHORTEST & MOST AGREEABLE ROUTE as regards Customs, Passports, Change of Carriages, &c.

FARES—1st Class, 15s.; 2nd Class, 10s.; Children, 7s. 6d. and 5s.

N.B.—Tickets purchased of Agents and Couriers are available at all times.

⁴⁸ Keller, R.: "170 Jahre Rheinische Eisenbahn von Köln nach Aachen", www.eisenbahn-stolberg.de/170-jahre-rheinische-eisenbahn-von-koeln-nach-aachen/

⁴⁹ Bürger, E.: "Rheinisch-Belgische Eisenbahn (Cöln-Aachen-Herbesthal)", in: Deutschlands Eisenbahnen im Jahr 1845, nach officiellen Berichten der respectiven Eisenbahn-Directionen und andern zuverlässigen Quellen, 1845, pages 48-59. books.google.de/books?id=00K0eRwgyNYC&pg=RA1-PA48-IA1

⁵⁰ Bradshaw, G.: "Bradshaw's General (monthly) Railway and Steam Navigation Guide for Great Britain and Ireland", March 1850, page 125. timetableworld.com/ttw-viewer.php?token=682fc28b-ae13-479d-bde0-442f48c7d1ff

A Steamer leaves OSTEND, every Night, between 10 30 and 2 a.m.

A Steamer leaves DOVER, every Night, between 11 15 and 2 a.m.

PERFORMING THE VOYAGE IN ABOUT 4 HOURS!!

NOTE. Due notice will be given to Travellers, on their arrival at each port, of the exact moment of departure.

A commodious Waiting Room is opened at Ostend, close to the spot the Steamers start from and arrive at, with refreshments at very moderate prices. English newspapers seen gratis. Passports and Luggage are examined in the same building, immediately on arrival.

Travellers arriving at Ostend BY THESE STEAMERS, and who are going direct to Germany, need not have their Luggage examined before arriving at Cologne; and travellers going to England from Germany BY THE MAILS, via OSTEND, need not have it examined at all before arriving at Dover. This arrangement does not include such articles as any party may choose to retain in his possession: they will be subject to the usual examination.

No Passports or Permits to embark are required on leaving Ostend.

The distance between England, Cologne, the Rhine, and all Germany, is 110 kilometres, or nearly 70 miles less by Ostend than by Calais.

IN ENGLAND.—For Time Bills and information apply to E. PAREATT, at the Dover, Ostend, and Cologne Company's Steam Packet Office, 450 A, West Strand, and 65, King William Street, City; at the Passport Office, Belgian Legation, 9 A, Weymouth Street, Portland Place; the Belgian Consulate, 6, King William Street, City.

For further particulars, see Bradshaw's Continental Guide.

1-3-50—W.J.A.



The railway and road network in 1849. Marked in red are some of the locations that are most important to Edward Thonen and his family (Elberfeld, Ostend, Dover, London, and Offenbach).

Thonen moved to Calais, where he arrived in late December. At his May 1851 trial, he claimed that he was robbed of all his possessions within days of arriving in London. He said:⁵¹

[W]hen I came to London in December last I was robbed of all the money I had in my possession at the time, amounting to £25, since which I have been with the prosecutors. I should not wish this to reach my poor old

⁵¹ "Singular Case of Diamond Stealing", in: Morning Chronicle, 10 May 1851, page 7.

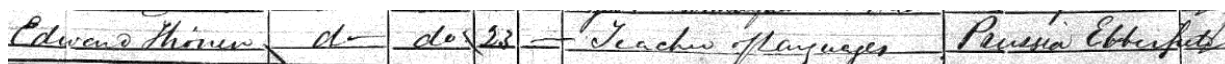
father's ears (here tears filled the prisoners eyes, and his voice assumed a most feeling tone) as he is now nearly seventy years of age, and it might be attended with fatal consequences to him.

What exactly happened is unknown. The newspapers later speculated about it, for example:⁵²

Thonen was of a good family in Germany, and in the end of the year came over to London to seek his fortune. It was late in December when he arrived, and by the first day of the year he had not a penny to bless himself with. He had been robbed of everything he possessed – how robbed he never made known; very likely he was thrown among evil company by a weakness of character which his misfortunes made evident.

Upon arriving in London, he met up with an unnamed Prussian merchant, who had known Thonen's family for thirty years (see chapter [The diamond robbery, his trial and conviction](#)). He moved first into a hotel on Finsbury Pavement, and then into the coffee house of William Woodroffe Browning, at 22 City Road, St. Luke (Old Street), Finsbury, London.⁵³ It is this address that is given in the British census of March 1851 that was mentioned by Dorothy Wickham, and which had prompted us to look for traces of Thonen in England.⁵⁴

Most of what we know about Thonen's activities during those first few months in London comes from testimony at his trial. He found employment as a clerk at the office of two diamond merchants, but his employers did not find him suitable. He convinced them to continue to employ him at a reduced salary, not as a clerk, but as a language teacher. From there, he tried to find a permanent position with a schoolmaster (more about that in the [following section](#)). During most of his time in London, Thonen resided at 22 City Road and Finsbury Pavement.



Edward Thonen in the British census of 30 March 1851

According to the census, the household of William W. Browning included the following people:

Parish or Township of <i>St Luke</i> , Ecclesiastical District of <i>St Paul</i> , Borough of <i>Finsbury</i> <i>22 City Road, Commercial Coffee House</i>						
Name and surname on March 30th, 1851			Age		Rank, profession or occupation	Where born
			M	F		
<i>William W. Browning</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Coffee House Keeper</i>	<i>Kent Deal</i>
<i>Ann M. d^o</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Devon Crediton</i>
<i>Edw. Jr. d^o</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Unm.</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Tailor Journeyman</i>	<i>Mid^x Shoreditch</i>
<i>Walter W. d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>At Home</i>	<i>d^o d^o</i>
<i>Alfred G. d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Scholar</i>	<i>d^o d^o</i>
<i>Frederick G. d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>d^o d^o</i>
<i>Charles C. d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>d^o d^o</i>
<i>Arthur A. d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>d^o St. Luke's</i>
<i>Mary Dolard</i>	<i>Servt.</i>	<i>Unm.</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>House servant</i>	<i>Ireland Galway</i>
<i>Thomas Hurworth</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>Unm.</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>Porter at Coffee House</i>	<i>Mid^x S. Pancreas</i>

⁵² "A Diamond Robber Caught", in: The Charleville Courier, 16 May 1896, page 1.

⁵³ William Woodroffe Browning, also spelled Browney or Brownery (1810-1870) was born in Deal, Kent. Together with his wife Ann Maria from Crediton, Devonshire, he moved to Shoreditch, London, where six of their seven sons were born between 1832 and 1847. At some point before 1850 they moved to St. Luke, Finsbury, where their youngest son was born. A tailor by profession, in 1851 he also worked as a coffee house keeper at 22 City Road, St. Luke, Finsbury. He passed away there in 1870. For more information about the house 22 *City Road*, see the chapter [The diamond robbery, his trial and conviction](#).

⁵⁴ 1851 England Census, www.ancestry.com/sharing/30295476?h=614816

<i>Alfred Perrett</i>	<i>Visitor</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>Carpenter Journeyman</i>	<i>Wilts Stoke</i>
<i>Thomas C. Machie</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>Agent Birmingham iron trade</i>	<i>Surrey Southam</i>
<i>Edward Thönen</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>d^o</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>–</i>	<i>Teacher of languages</i>	<i>Prussia Elberfeld</i>

Thonen was one of 9,566 residents of London who were recorded in the census as having been born in Germany.⁵⁵

Coffee houses were places to talk business and politics. Popular as social gathering places during the 17th and 18th centuries, they became similar to modern cafes during the 19th century. Coffee houses were some of the cheapest places for visitors to stay in London. Mogg's *Stranger's Guide* from 1848 says the following about them:⁵⁶

HOTELS, COFFEE HOUSES, AND TAVERNS. London, profuse in every thing, is replete with accommodation for strangers. Here the man of fortune may dwell in a style of princely grandeur, and here also – strange contrast – the less prosperous individual may live for less money than in any other part of the kingdom. To furnish a list of the numerous hotels with which the metropolis abounds would far exceed the limits of this work [...] Coffee houses in which a man may breakfast well for from 1s. 6d. to 2s., and get a good dinner for 4s. 6d. exclusive of wine, are to be met with in almost every street; and dining-rooms with charges for a single dinner at from 1s. 6d. to 2s. are to be found in all parts of the town [...]

At his nominal salary of only 10s. per week that the diamond merchants paid him, Thonen may have struggled to pay even for the cheapest accomodation.

The diamond robbery, his trial and conviction

Thonen's situation in England was not ideal. Having been robbed of all the money he had, he lost the modest position as a clerk, in which he was found unsuitable. The money he made as a private teacher was barely enough to survive, not to speak of whatever long term plans he may have had. We will tell what happened between April and June 1851 through newspaper articles and court proceedings.

If what Thonen testified at his trial was true, and he had indeed been offered a position as a language teacher with the schoolmaster in Eastbourne, that could have been exactly what he needed to turn things around. We do not know why he did not continue on that path.

In April 1851 Thonen's meager salary led him to the fateful decision of turning to crime. In an attempt to escape what had become a hopeless situation for him, he decided to steal from his employers and use the money to escape to America.

The timeline of events can be reconstructed as follows:

⁵⁵ London Metropolitan Archives: "The German Community in London", Research Guide, page 1. search.lma.gov.uk/rg_pdf_creator/index.php?research_guide=48

⁵⁶ Mogg, E.: "Mogg's new picture of London; or, Strangers' guide to the British metropolis", 1848, pages 182-183. www.google.de/books/edition/Mogg_s_new_picture_of_London_or_Stranger/gRUHAAAAQAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA182

- 19 April (afternoon or evening): A package of diamonds valued £450⁵⁷ is sealed at the office of Schwabacher, Birnstingl & Co.,⁵⁸ where Thonen, who is employed as their clerk at the time, enters the diamonds into their books.
- 20 April (1:15 p.m.): Thonen goes to the office, to write letters to his family and friends. He is tempted to take the diamonds, but puts them back. He returns the following day, but again does not take them.
- 22 April (evening): Thonen finally takes out the diamonds. He reseals the empty package and puts it back into the strong room, to obfuscate the crime.
- 23 April (9-10 a.m.): Thonen pledges some of the jewellery to a pawnbroker in London, receiving £40.
- 23 April (morning): Thonen is last seen at the office, and is thought to leave for Eastbourne the following day. He finds the sealed package on his employer's desk, and, worried that his crime may soon be discovered, decides to flee immediately.
- 24/25 April: Having taken the first train north to Peterborough, and from there to Liverpool, Thonen pays for a ticket on the *Camillus* (a steamer) to America.⁵⁹ The ship's departure, scheduled for the 26th, will be delayed multiple times.
- 28 April: Schwabacher notices that the diamonds are missing, and alerts Scotland Yard. Inspector Haydon of the London police is charged with the case the same day. Thonen is soon suspected of the crime.
- Early May: Having sent an officer to Eastbourne, the police concludes that Thonen had left London a few days prior, but that he had not assumed his teaching position.
- 3 May: After multiple delays, the *Camillus* finally departs from Liverpool, with Thonen on board. Before embarking on the *Camillus*, Thonen had written to his friends in Germany, to explain what he had done. That letter is later opened at the London Post Office, who hands it over to the police.
- 3 May: Information about the crime is forwarded to all stations of the Metropolitan Police. The media get involved.
- 4 May: The *Camillus* suffers a collision with the steamer *Africa* and has to turn back to port.
- 2/4 May:⁶⁰ Thonen sells some of the diamonds to a dealer from Liverpool, acquiring a further £15 (£3 per carat) and a gold watch. A few hours later the dealer resells them to a jeweller for £25.
- 4 May: First reports of the robbery appear in newspapers. A few of them mention the reward of £50 that was offered for the return of the diamonds.
- 6-7 May (night): Inspector Haydon, having traced Thonen first to Peterborough and then to Liverpool, arrives in the city.
- 7 May (morning): Thonen boards the *Sardinia* (a sailing vessel) for New York.⁶¹

⁵⁷ At an average inflation rate of 3.06%, £450 in 1851 are worth £80,375.08 in 2023; compare www.officialdata.org/uk/inflation/1851?endYear=2023&amount=450

⁵⁸ For details about the biographies of Schwabacher and Birnstingl, see the chapter [The jewellery, and the diamond merchants](#).

⁵⁹ Almost all contemporary sources state that the ship was called *Camilla*. This is wrong, as we will discuss below.

⁶⁰ The exact order of events is unclear. In his testimony, Thonen stated that he sold the diamonds immediately after the *Camillus* had returned to port (May 4th). On the other hand, the jeweller who bought them stated that this happened on May 2nd, which is before the ship had even departed.

⁶¹ The *Sardinia* sailed for New York on 7 May 1851. See "Liverpool. May 7. Sailed. Sardinia for New York", in: Morning Herald (London), 8 May 1851, page 8.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0002408/18510508/076&stringtohighlight=sardinia; also, "Sailed for foreign ports", in: Glasgow Chronicle, 14 May 1851, page 7. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0003088/18510514/083&stringtohighlight=sardinia

- 7 May (four hours later): Haydon is informed of Thonen's departure on board the *Sardinia*. He hires a steamer and pursues Thonen, overtaking him 60-80 miles offshore. Thonen is captured, and held at a prison in Liverpool overnight.
- 8 May: Thonen is brought back to London.
- 9 May: He first appears before alderman Wilson at Old Bailey.
- 13 May: Thonen is committed to Newgate Prison for trial.
- 15 May: He pleads guilty. The judgement is respited until the next session.
- 26 May: Judgement respited again.
- 16 June: Thonen is finally sentenced to one year imprisonment.
- 24 June: He is transferred from Newgate to the house of correction.⁶²

On 4 May 1851 newspapers and magazines started reporting the robbery. Most of the initial reports were short, identically worded notes like this one:⁶³

ROBBERY OF DIAMONDS WORTH 450l.—Information has been received by the police of a robbery committed in an office at 8, Broad-street-buildings, city, of diamond ornaments to the value of 450l. The property has been missed, but it is not known in what manner the robbery was committed.

Some included descriptions of the stolen property, and details about the reward that was offered by the owners:⁶⁴

ROBBERY OF A DIAMOND SUIT IN THE CITY, WORTH £450.—Yesterday information was forwarded to the various stations of the City and Metropolitan Police of the following robbery, committed in an office in the house No. 8, Broad-street-buildings, City. The exact period that the valuables were taken away is not precisely known, but the instructions given to the police state them to have been removed within the last fortnight. The property stolen consists of a necklace (forming two bracelets), a pair of earrings, a brooch, and centre piece of necklace (also forming a brooch) with drops, value £450. A reward of £50 has been offered for the recovery of the property.

The earliest known newspaper report of the crime (Bell's New Weekly Messenger, 4 May 1851)

ROBBERY OF A DIAMOND SUIT WORTH £450.—Saturday [May 3rd] information was forwarded to the various stations of the City and Metropolitan Police of the following robbery, committed in an office in the house numbered 8, Broad-street-buildings, City. The exact period when the valuables were stolen is not precisely known, but the instructions given to the police state them to have been removed within the last fortnight. The property stolen consists of a necklace, forming two bracelets, a pair of earrings, a brooch, and centre piece of a necklace, also forming a brooch, with drops—value 450l. A reward of 50l. has been offered for the recovery of the property.

One of the first newspaper articles about the solution of the case appeared in the Liverpool Mercury on 9 May. This first report contains a number of errors:⁶⁵

EXTENSIVE ROBBERY OF DIAMONDS.—On Saturday last [May 3rd] an extensive robbery of diamonds was effected on the premises No. 8, Broad-street, London. The value of the diamonds, according to the London papers, is estimated at £4,500[sic]. It was supposed the robbery had been committed by some persons having a knowledge of the premises, and a large reward was offered for the apprehension of the thieves. On Wednesday last, in consequence of information received, a detective officer arrived in this town, and, in company with Bates, of the Liverpool detective department, succeeded in capturing a man named Edward Turner[sic], on board a ship in the river, on the eve of her departure for America. A number of the diamonds were found in his possession,

⁶² Thonen stayed at Newgate from 13 May until 24 June, at which time he was transferred to the „house of correction“, most likely Bridewell Prison in London. The prison-building programme of the 19th century had ensured that, by 1850, Newgate only held those who were awaiting their trial at Old Bailey, or who had been sentenced to death and were waiting for their execution. Compare Halliday, S.: „Newgate: London's Prototype of Hell“, 2008, page 162.

⁶³ „Robbery of diamonds worth 450l.“, in: Morning Advertiser, 5 May 1851, page 4. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001427/18510505/035

⁶⁴ „Robbery of a diamond suit worth £450“, in: John Bull, 5 May 1851, page 15. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001945/18510505/055

⁶⁵ „Extensive Robbery of Diamonds“, in: Liverpool Mail, Saturday, 9 May 1851, page 6. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000081/18510509/018

and it was subsequently ascertained that he had disposed of some to a jeweller in this town. He was conveyed to London yesterday, in custody of the metropolitan detective.

Most of the later reports give the correct sum (£450) and name (Edward Thonen), and identify the metropolitan detective as Michael Haydon, while they tend to ignore the involvement of the Liverpool police, for example:⁶⁶

SINGULAR CASE OF DIAMOND STEALING.—Edward Thonen, a young German, was brought before Alderman Wilson, at Guildhall, on Friday, charged with stealing a large quantity of diamonds, wholesale value as per invoice £450, the property of Messrs. Birnstingl, Schwabacher, and Co., diamond-merchants, of 8, Broad-street-buildings, City. The prisoner was in the employment of the prosecutor, and having possessed himself of the diamonds absconded. For a time he eluded pursuit; but his trail was discovered by the police, and he was pursued to Liverpool, where it was ascertained he had sailed for New York in the Sardinia. Haydon, the detective officer, hired a steamer, followed, and overtook the Sardinia, and captured the fugitive. The prisoner did not deny his guilt, and he was recognised as having pawned and sold some of the diamonds, while others were found in a belt round his waist. He attributed his dishonesty to the smallness of his salary, 10s. per week. He was remanded for a few days, with an intimation that he would be committed to Newgate for trial.

It would be tedious to repeat all known media reports here. Instead, we will just list below those which we found in British and Irish newspapers. This list is probably still incomplete.

Initial reports of the crime:

- *Robbery of a Diamond Suit in the City, worth £450*, in: Bell's New Weekly Messenger, 4 May 1851, p.5.
- *Robbery of a Diamond Suit worth £450*, in: John Bull, 5 May, p.15.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: Morning Advertiser, 5 May, p.4.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: Morning Herald (London), 5 May, p.6.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: London Evening Standard, 5 May, p.2.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: Sun (London), 5 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Dublin Evening Herald 1846, 5 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: Saint James's Chronicle, 6 May, p.4.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Essex Herald, 6 May, p.2.
- *Robbery of a Diamond Suit in the City, worth £450*, in: Worcester Journal, 8 May, p.6.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Cork Constitution, 8 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter, 8 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Leicester Journal, 9 May, p.1.
- *Accidents, Offences, &c.*, in: Canterbury Journal, Kentish Times and Farmers' Gazette, 10 May, p.1.
- *Epitome of News, Foreign and Domestic*, in: Illustrated London News, 10 May, p.11.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth 450l.*, in: Berkshire Chronicle, 10 May, p.4.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Cambridge Independent Press, 10 May, p.1.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Hampshire Advertiser, 10 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette, 10 May, p.2.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail, 10 May, p.8.
- *Weekly Compendium*, in: Newcastle Journal, 10 May, p.6.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Essex Herald, 13 May, p.4.
- *Robbery of Diamonds worth £450*, in: Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard, 17 May, p.4.

⁶⁶ "Singular Case of Diamond Stealing", in: Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle, 11 May 1851, page 8. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000355/18510511/070/0008

Reports of Thonen's capture and trial:

- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Liverpool Mercury, 9 May, p.6.
- *Diamond Stealing*, in: Globe, 10 May, p.3.
- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Liverpool Mail, 10 May, p.4.
- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Bolton Chronicle, 10 May, p.6.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Morning Post, 10 May, p.7.
- *Guildhall*, in: London Evening Standard, 10 May, p.1.
- *Guildhall*, in: Morning Herald (London), 10 May, p.7.
- *Guildhall*, in: Daily News (London), 10 May, p.6.
- *Guildhall*, in: Express (London), 10 May, p.7.
- *Latest Intelligence*, in: The Examiner, 10 May, p.12.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Shipping and Mercantile Gazette, 10 May, p.4.
- *Singular Case of Diamond Stealing*, in: Morning Chronicle, 10 May, p.7.
- *Serious Robberies*, in: Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, 10 May, p.19.
- *The Police Courts*, in: Morning Advertiser, 10 May, p.7.
- *Diamond Stealing*, in: The Era, 11 May, p.15.
- *Extensive Diamond Robbery*, in: Reynolds's Newspaper, 11 May, p.16.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Bell's New Weekly Messenger, Express Edition, 11 May, p.5.
- *Singular Case of Diamond Stealing*, in: Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle, 11 May, p.8.
- *Central Criminal Court*, in: Morning Herald (London), 12 May, p.2.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Dubin Evening Herald 1846, 12 May, p.4.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Liverpool Albion, 12 May, p.7.
- *Guildhall*, in: Morning Advertiser, 12 May, p.7.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: John Bull, 12 May, p.14.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: Morning Herald (London), 12 May, p.8.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: London Evening Standard, 12 May, p.4.
- Dublin Evening Post, 13 May, p.3.
- *Local News*, in: Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser, 13 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Jewels*, in: Banner of Ulster, 13 May, p.3.
- *Central Criminal Court*, in: Hereford Journal, 14 May, p.3.
- *Coroners' Inquests*, in: Kings County Chronicle, 14 May, p.2.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Western Courier, West of England Conservative, Plymouth and Devonport Advertiser, 14 May, p.2.
- *Guildhall*, in: London Evening Standard, 14 May, p.4.
- *Guildhall*, in: Morning Herald (London), 14 May, p.7.
- *Guildhall*, in: Sun (London), 14 May, p.4.
- *Police*, in: Evening Mail, 14 May, p.7.
- *Police Intelligence*, in: Morning Post, 14 May, p.7.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: North British Daily Mail, 14 May, p.2.
- *Serious Robberies*, in: Nonconformist, 14 May, p.11.
- *The Police Courts*, in: Morning Advertiser, 14 May, p.7.
- Bradford Observer, 15 May, p.6.
- *Clever Capture of a Thief, by Haydon, the Detective*, in: Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser and General Intelligencer, 15 May, p.4.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter, 15 May, p.2.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Belfast Mercury, 15 May, p.4.

- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Dorset County Chronicle, 15 May, p.2.
- *Capture of a Robber on his Voyage to America*, in: Leicester Journal, 16 May, p.4.
- *Crimes, Casualties, &c.*, in: Greenock Advertiser, 16 May, p.4.
- *Diamond Stealing*, in: Stamford Mercury, 16 May, p.4.
- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Fleetwood Chronicle, 16 May, p.4.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Londonderry Sentinel, 16 May, p.1.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Nottingham Journal, 16 May, p.3.
- *Singular Case of Diamond Stealing*, in: Hull Advertiser, 16 May, p.7.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: Daily News (London), 16 May, p.7.
- *The Diamond Robbery in the City*, in: Morning Post, 16 May, p.7.
- *The Police Courts*, in: Express (London), 16 May, p.4.
- *Third Court*, in: Morning Advertiser, 16 May, p.7.
- Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier, 17 May, p.1.
- *Diamond Robbery*, in: Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times, 17 May, p.28.
- *Diamond Stealing*, in: Bristol Mercury, 17 May, p.2.
- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Chester Chronicle, 17 May, p.1.
- *Extensive Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Leeds Intelligencer, 17 May, p.6.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Manchester Courier, 17 May, p.4.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Huddersfield Chronicle, 17 May, p.7.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Roscommon & Leitrim Gazette, 17 May, p.4.
- *Great Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Warder and Dublin Weekly Main, 17 May, p.7.
- *Miscellaneous*, in: Oxford University and City Herald, 17 May, p.2.
- *Robbery by a Servant*, in: Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser, 17 May, p.8.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Westmorland Gazette, 17 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: North Wales Chronicle, 17 May, p.6.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Liverpool Mail, 17 May, p.3.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Staffordshire Advertiser, 17 May, p.8.
- *Serious Robberies*, in: Leicestershire Mercury, 17 May, p.4.
- *Singular Case of Diamond Stealing*, in: Farmer's Friend and Freeman's Journal, 17 May, p.4.
- *Singular Case of Diamond Stealing*, in: Norfolk News, 17 May, p.3.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: Express (London), 17 May, p.7.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser, 17 May, p.8.
- *The Diamond Robbery*, in: Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser, 17 May, p.16.⁶⁷
- *The Diamond Robbery in the City*, in: Morning Post, 17 May, p.7.
- *Third Court*, in: Morning Advertiser, 17 May, p.7.
- *Third Court*, in: Morning Chronicle, 17 May, p.7.
- *Third Court*, in: Morning Herald (London), 17 May, p.7.
- *Third Court*, in: Sun (London), 17 May, p.1.
- *Extensive Diamond Robbery*, in: Reynolds's Newspaper, 18 May, p.4.
- *Guildhall*, in: The Era, 18 May, p.14.
- *Police Reports*, in: Sunday Times, 18 May, p.3.
- *Domestic Intelligence*, in: Liverpool Albion, 19 May, p.3.
- *The Late Diamond Robbery. To the Editor of the Albion*, in: Liverpool Albion, 19 May, p.7.
- *Wednesday to Friday's Posts*, in: Hereford Journal, 21 May, p.1.
- *Diamond Stealing*, in: Exeter Flying Post, 22 May, p.7.

⁶⁷ The case is reported in three separate articles within the same issue of the newspaper (twice on page 8, once on page 16). Thonen's last name is spelled differently each time.

- *Miscellaneous Domestic Intelligence*, in: Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald, 24 May, p.6.
- Home News for India, China and the Colonies, 24 May, p.2.
- *Old Bailey Sentences*, in: Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 25 May, p.7.
- *Central Criminal Court Sentences*, in: Sun (London), 26 May, p.5.
- *Robbery of Diamonds*, in: Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser, 28 May, p.4.
- *Old Bailey Sentences*, in: Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 1 June, p.4.
- *Central Criminal Court*, in: Morning Advertiser, 28 June, p.7.
- *Central Criminal Court*, in: Reynolds's Newspaper, 29 June, p.16.
- *Central Criminal Court*, in: Weekly Dispatch (London), 29 June, p.16.
- *Old Bailey Sentences*, in: Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, 29 June, p.4.

And to give the same information in different form, the following table lists all the publications we could find that have written about the case, with the corresponding dates:

Banner of Ulster	13 May
Belfast Mercury	15 May
Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle	11 May
Bell's New Weekly Messenger	4 May, 11 May
Berkshire Chronicle	10 May
Bolton Chronicle	10 May
Bradford Observer	15 May
Bristol Mercury	17 May
Caernarvon & Denbigh Herald	24 May
Cambridge Independent Press	10 May
Canterbury Journal, Kentish Times and Farmers' Gazette	10 May
Chester Chronicle	17 May
Cork Constitution	8 May
Daily News (London)	10 May, 16 May
Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper	10 May
Dorset County Chronicle	15 May
Dublin Evening Herald 1846	5 May, 12 May
Dublin Evening Post	13 May
Essex Herald	6 May, 13 May
Evening Mail	14 May
Exeter Flying Post	22 May
Express (London)	10 May, 16 May, 17 May
Farmer's Friend and Freeman's Journal	17 May
Fleetwood Chronicle	16 May
Globe	10 May
Greenock Advertiser	16 May
Hampshire Advertiser	10 May
Hereford Journal	14 May, 21 May
Home News for India, China and the Colonies	24 May
Huddersfield Chronicle	17 May
Hull Advertiser	16 May
Illustrated London News	10 May
John Bull	5 May, 12 May
Kings County Chronicle	14 May

Lady's Newspaper and Pictorial Times	17 May
Leeds Intelligencer	17 May
Leicester Journal	9 May, 16 May
Leicestershire Mercury	17 May
Liverpool Albion	12 May, 19 May (twice)
Liverpool Mail	10 May, 17 May
Liverpool Mercury	9 May
Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser	13 May
Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper	25 May, 1 June, 29 June
London Evening Standard	5 May, 10 May, 12 May, 14 May
Londonderry Sentinel	16 May
Manchester Courier	17 May
Morning Advertiser	5 May, 10 May, 12 May, 14 May, 16 May, 17 May, 28 June
Morning Chronicle	10 May, 17 May
Morning Herald (London)	5 May, 10 May, 12 May (twice), 14 May, 17 May
Morning Post	10 May, 14 May, 16 May, 17 May
Newcastle Journal	10 May
Nonconformist	14 May
Norfolk News	17 May
North British Daily Mail	14 May
North Wales Chronicle	17 May
Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser	17 May (three times)
Nottingham Journal	16 May
Oxford University and City Herald	17 May
Portsmouth Times and Naval Gazette	10 May
Reynolds's Newspaper	11 May, 18 May, 29 June
Roscommon & Leitrim Gazette	17 May
Saint James's Chronicle	6 May
Shipping and Mercantile Gazette	10 May
Soulby's Ulverston Advertiser and General Intelligencer	15 May
Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier	17 May
Staffordshire Advertiser	17 May
Stamford Mercury	16 May
Sun (London)	5 May, 14 May, 17 May, 26 May
Sunday Times	18 May
Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser	28 May
The Era	11 May, 18 May
The Examiner	10 May
Warder and Dublin Weekly Mail	10 May, 17 May
Weekly Dispatch (London)	29 June
Western Courier, West of England Conservative, Plymouth and Devonport Advertiser	14 May
Westmeath Guardian and Longford News-Letter	6 May, 15 May
Westmorland Gazette	17 May
Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard	17 May
Worcester Journal	8 May

The witness Thomas Dismore from Liverpool wrote to the editor of the *Liverpool Albion*, explaining his involvement in the case and criticising the police investigation. Dismore's letter is one of a handful instances of the name being spelled "Thönen" in an English or Australian source:⁶⁸

THE LATE DIAMOND ROBBERY.—To the Editor of the Albion. Sir, Permit me to correct your statement in last Monday's paper. The following are facts:

The prisoner Thönen and a dealer, whom I did not know, came to my shop on the 2d May⁶⁹ and produced a diamond bracelet for sale. I said I purchased such things, but that I was very particular of whom. The dealer then produced his card, and said he had much trade with foreigners and captains in these goods. I refused to purchase the bracelet, and the two then left. In an hour or two afterwards the dealer returned with the pendant only of the bracelet, the brilliants taken out, and the roses remaining in the settings, and stated that he had given the prisoner a watch and some cash in exchange for them, and that the other portion of the bracelet, which was not in any way injured by the drops being taken from it, the prisoner had retained for a better market. The price asked was £26. I weighted the diamonds and gave £25. Of course the dealer, a watchmaker and householder in the town, from whom I purchased will make good the loss I should otherwise sustain in giving them up to the officer; to whom I likewise gave an open note that he might obtain the settings from my brother in London. I may add, that I think the London police are somewhat to blame in this matter. We are daily inundated with small handbills announcing trifling losses, but in this case, where a reward of £50 is offered for the apprehension of the prisoner, no information is given to us; and but for a mere accident the prisoner would have been in America or nearly so at this moment, whereas he might have been in custody a week sooner than he was had information been given to the trade of such a loss.
THOMAS DISMORE.



THOMAS DISMORE,
SILVERSMITH AND JEWELLER
TO THE QUEEN,
BOLD STREET, LIVERPOOL.

STRANGERS in LIVERPOOL are respectfully solicited to inspect the Stock of SILVER PLATE, PLATED GOODS both Sheffield and Electro Manufacture, and ELEGANT JEWELLERY, all of which are of the best quality, and of the same fashion and taste as to be seen at the principal Metropolitan Houses, being in daily communication with Messrs. DISMORE and SON, MANUFACTURERS, LONDON.

The great experience which THOMAS DISMORE has had as a Manufacturer enables him with confidence to state the QUALITY of his Goods, and by combining the usually separate Trades of Manufacturer and Retailer, to execute all orders with which he may be favoured at the lowest possible prices.

Exporters supplied with SILVER SPOONS, FORKS, &c.
At the Lowest London Prices.

Advertisement for Dismore's services as a jeweller

We have tried to identify the unnamed dealer/watchmaker, but there are almost 200 men in the 1851 census who fit the description.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Dismore, T.: "The Late Diamond Robbery. To the Editor of the Albion", in: *Liverpool Albion*, 19 May 1851, page 7. This is, in effect, a response to detective Haydon's testimony given further below. Thomas Dismore (1807-1883) of 35 Bold Street, Liverpool (other sources give his address as "Lord Street"), originally came from London. By 1841 he worked in Liverpool as a silver smith and jeweller. In 1847 he married Anne Amelia Davies (abt.1825-1910) from Liverpool. They had two children, a son Thomas (born in 1849) and a daughter Florence (1851-1934); see www.wikitree.com/wiki/Dismore-148. Compare the advertisement for Dismore's services in Lacey, H.: "Pictorial Liverpool: Its Annals, Commerce, Shipping. A New and Complete Handbook", 1846, page 14.

⁶⁹ The date is inconsistent with Thonen's testimony. According to Thonen, he tried to sell the diamonds after the *Camillus* had returned to Liverpool, which happened on 4 May, not 2 May.

⁷⁰ Four of them were Germans, but there is no indication (besides their nationality) that the dealer was one of those:

Joseph Hayman (born 1777 in Prussia), www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC/1851/0001315862

Leonard Keller (born 1820 in Germany), www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC/1851/0001295651

Fredrick L. Gillis (born 1814 in Germany), www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC/1851/0013924541

Karl Zimmermann (born 1812 in Germany), www.findmypast.co.uk/transcript?id=GBC/1851/0001503351

Another source that uses the German spelling “Thönen” is the *Annual Register*, printed in 1852. It also includes the testimony of diamond merchant Jacques Schwabacher and detective Michael Haydon:⁷¹

GREAT ROBBERY OF DIAMONDS.—Guildhall.—Edward Thönen, a young German, was placed at the bar, charged with absconding from his employ, and stealing a large quantity of diamonds, of the value of 450l., the property of Messrs. Birnstingl, Schwabacher, and Co., diamond merchants, of 8, Broad Street Buildings. This case is singular, from the circumstances attending the capture of the prisoner.

Michael Haydon, a detective officer of the City force, said—On the 28th of last month, I received information that prisoner had absconded with a quantity of diamonds belonging to Messrs. Birnstingl, of Broad Street Buildings. I traced prisoner to Peterborough, and from thence to Liverpool. On Tuesday night I went down to the latter place, and from inquiries I made there on the following morning, I found prisoner had sailed for New York, in the Sardinia, a sailing vessel. Finding prisoner had four hours' start of me, I engaged a steamer, and went in pursuit of him. I overtook the vessel off the Great Orme's Head, about 60 miles from Liverpool. I boarded the vessel while it pursued its course through St. George's Channel, and saw prisoner standing on the main deck. I knew him by the description I had received, and accordingly told him I was an officer, and apprehended him on the charge of robbing his employers of some diamonds. He said, "You're mistaken, I know nothing about it." I then searched him, and found a gold watch, a gold guard, three keys, a knife, and two French purses, one of which contained 4l. 2s.

Alderman Wilson—Did the sailing vessel stop while you made these inquiries, or did she slack sail?

Haydon—No, your worship, she continued her course.

Alderman Wilson—Did the captain make any objection to your removing the prisoner from his care?

Haydon—No, sir. He only wished to be satisfied that I was acting officially, and not with any view to wrong the prisoner. He did not object to my taking the prisoner, providing I did so on my own responsibility. Having assured the captain that I was an officer, I took the prisoner back to Liverpool with me, and on my arrival I conveyed prisoner at once to the bridewell,⁷² where I commenced a more strict search of his person. I found on him this handkerchief, containing a great portion of the missing diamonds, tied round his waist in the manner of a belt, secured firmly by a string passed round his body, between and round both his legs. Prisoner at the moment said, "Now, you've got it, you've got all." I opened the handkerchief, and found two large diamond brooches, the centre-piece, a brooch of a diamond stomacher, and a pair of diamond bracelets. Prisoner told me he had taken off the pendants or drops from the centre ornament, and had taken the stones out and sold them to a Mr. Dismore, of Lord Street, Liverpool. I went to Mr. Dismore, who at once gave me up five carats of diamonds, which he had purchased for 25l. The loose diamonds, which I produce, are the same I received from Mr. Dismore. I afterwards found, on searching the prisoner's pocket-book, a duplicate or memorandum of a pair of brilliant earrings, deposited at Mr. Young's, of Leicester Square, in the name of E. Hautman, of 11, Finsbury Square, for 40l. Prisoner



Detail from Francis Holl's "The Railway Station" (1866). The man with the handcuffs is detective Michael Haydon, about to arrest a fugitive.

⁷¹ Dodsley, J.: "Great Robbery of Diamonds", in: *Annual Register*, United Kingdom, 1852, pages 62-64.

www.google.at/books/edition/Annual_Register/g3JdAAAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&pg=RA1-PA62

Michael Haydon (1820-1880) was born in Westminster. In 1845 he was a city police constable (badge number 422). The 1861 census lists him as a police officer. In 1871 he was a detective Sergeant with the City Police. He retired from the police in May 1876, after serving for 34 years. Haydon passed away at his residence at 64 Devonshire Road, Hackney, Middlesex (compare www.wikitree.com/wiki/Haydon-753). By 1850 Haydon was recognised as "the most outstanding and talented City detective of the time". (Wade, S.: "Square Mile Bobbies. The City of London Police 1839-1949", 2009, page 46)

⁷² Liverpool had at least six gaols known as the "Bridewell" at the time; compare www.hevac-heritage.org/electronic_books/M&NW_anniversary/Section-5_ArgyleStreet.pdf

said these earrings, together with the pendants he broke off the centre-piece, and the other articles produced, formed the complete suite of diamonds. The other portions of the pendants, consisting of the settings, were obtained by another officer. While I was bringing the prisoner up to London he said he would throw himself upon the mercy of the Court. He has assisted me in every way possible to enable to complete the case against him.

The prisoner admitted the entire truth of the officer's statement.

Mr. Schwabacher, partner of Mr. Birnstingl, said—The prisoner has not been regularly employed by our firm. He was first, in January last, being recommended by an hotel-keeper in Finsbury Pavement. I agreed to give him a trial for a few weeks, on the condition that, if he made himself useful, I would tell him then what salary I would give him. He had not been with me many days before I discovered that he would not suit us. He was very clever at languages, but knew nothing about the routines of a mercantile house. I told him he would be of no service to us, and he begged me to keep him on till he could get into something permanent, and give him merely a trifle to assist him to live in the interim. We did so, and he remained with us until the 23rd of April. The last week he came only for a few days, and said he had obtained employment as a teacher of foreign languages. He said he was going to a schoolmaster at Eastbourne. The diamonds were packed up, sealed, and directed to Alexandria. We were not early enough with them to send by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and the package was by my direction replaced in the strong room by my clerk. The key of the strong room was placed in the drawer of a desk in the private office. About that time he had entirely left my employ, and I afterwards heard that he called on several occasions in my absence. On the 28th of April last, I had occasion to go to the strong room for the purpose of opening the package, to show a friend the diamonds in question. The parcel appeared in the same state exactly as when I left it, sealed and tied up. I opened it, and found all the diamonds had been extracted. I then looked to the paper that inclosed them, and noticed that the seal on the paper bore evident traces of having been broken and re-sealed. I immediately directed inquiries, and offered a reward of 50l., which subsequently led to the apprehension of the prisoner. I offered him 1l. per week if he suited me. I gave him 10s. a week while he was with us.

*The prisoner gave a similar account of the temptation under which he had committed the robbery; and critical as was the actual capture, it was due only to accident, for the prisoner had actually sailed in another vessel, the *Camilla*, which, while on her voyage, was run into by a steamer, and being in danger of foundering, was compelled to put back. He was of respectable parentage; but when he came to London in December last he was robbed of all he possessed, and had since lived upon what he received from Messrs. Birnstingl. He understood the English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese languages, for the exertion of which he received 10s. per week! Such, at least, was the account the prisoner gave of himself.*

He was, of course, convicted.

Many of the newspaper reports that include this detail put the name “*E. Hautman*” in quotation marks. This seems to be the alias that Thonen used to disguise his identity.

Either Thonen himself or the newspaper that reported it (and those who subsequently repeated this information) are mistaken about the name and destination of the *Camilla*. In April and May 1851 the *Camilla* under Captain Hardie served the line between Liverpool and Glasgow, about twice per week.⁷³ Thonen himself stated that the captain was called Day, and that the ship was going to America; compare his testimony given below. The incident with the collision involved not the *Camilla*, but the *Camillus*. This is confirmed by newspaper reports:⁷⁴

The Camillus, for New Orleans, at anchor in the Sloyne,⁷⁵ was run into on Sunday [May 4th], by the steamer Africa, and damaged in the bow.

⁷³ “Daily Communication between Liverpool and Glasgow”, in: Liverpool Albion, 5 May 1851, page 4. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0003114/18510505/177&stringtohighlight=camilla

⁷⁴ Liverpool Shipping Telegraph and Daily Commercial Advertiser, 6 May 1851, page 1.

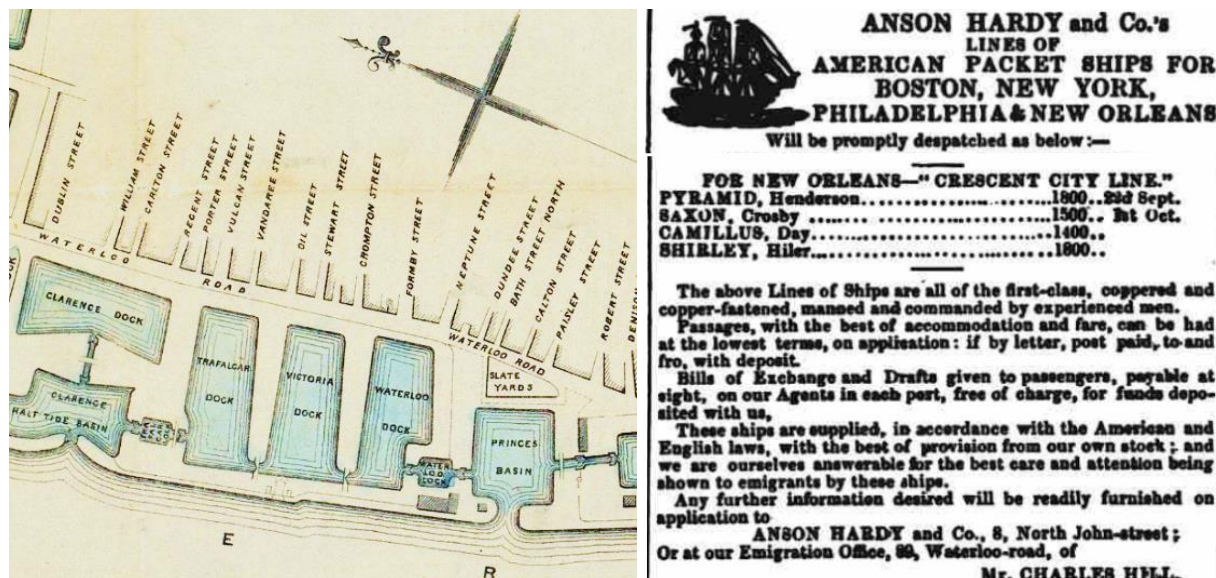
search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0004746/18510506/005

Similar reports of the collision can be found in: Liverpool Standard and General Commercial Advertiser, 6 May 1851, page 7; Sun (London), 6 May 1851, page 8; Morning Post, 6 May 1851, page 8.

⁷⁵ The *Sloyne* is an anchorage at Rock Ferry, about four miles south of Liverpool, in the River Mersey.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sloyne

That ship was indeed under the command of Captain Charles R. Day.⁷⁶ The *Camillus*, operated by the Anson Hardy & Co. shipping company, had arrived in Liverpool from New Orleans on 29 March. Originally scheduled to leave Liverpool from Victoria Dock on 14 April, her departure was pushed back, until her short-lived attempt to leave Liverpool on 3 May. By 7 May the ship had been put back at Wellington Docks.⁷⁷ It eventually left Liverpool for New Orleans on 14 May.⁷⁸ By that point, Thonen had already been committed for trial.



Left image: Victoria Dock in Liverpool, where Thonen embarked on the *Camillus*; Right image: Hardy & Co.'s shipping line from Liverpool to New Orleans (*Liverpool Mail*, 13 September 1851)

Captain Day, who Thonen had spoken to and who had repeatedly put him off from day to day, appears to have been an interesting character. In 1853 he transported a group of mormons on a two-month trip from Liverpool to New Orleans. One of the passengers recalled:⁷⁹

Apparently, the sea became too calm for the liking of Captain Day, master of the Camillus, carrying a cargo of 228 Saints across the Atlantic. On 6 May 1853, James Lee Newton recorded an unusual occurrence on their voyage: "Captain Day came to our Brethren and said he would give us three dollars rather than three hundred dollars if we would pray for good wind to drive the ship 7 miles a[n] hour; in a half an hour the wind drove the ship 4 miles an hour." During such lulls, the Saints would recreate. [...] "The Saints are amusing themselves some in one way & some another. Some sewing some playing checkers &c, &c. A dull time to be in the middle of the ocean."

⁷⁶ "Ship Registers and Enrollments of New Orleans, Louisiana: 1841-1850", page 41: *CAMILLUS*, ship, of New Orleans. Built at Kennebunk, ME, 1848. 716 18/95 tons; 150 ft. 2 in. x 32 ft. 3 in. x 16 ft. 1 1/2 in. Two decks, three masts, square stern, billethead. Previously registered No. 3, Dec. 14, 1848, at Kennebunk. ME. Registered No. 89, June 14, 1850. Owner: Elisabeth Broom, Lafayette, Jefferson Parish (now New Orleans). Master: Charles R. Day.

⁷⁷ *Liverpool Shipping Telegraph and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, multiple issues. "Ship loading at Victoria": 19 April 1851, page 2; 19 April, page 3; 21 April, page 2; 22 April, page 3; 23 April, page 2; 29 April, page 3; 30 April, page 2; 1 May, page 2; 2 May, page 3. "In the river outward bound": 3 May, page 1. "Cleared for sea": 6 May, page 4. "Put back at Wellington": 7 May, page 1. "Wellington": 9 May, page 2; 10 May, page 2; 12 May, page 2; 13 May, page 2. For the docks of Liverpool, compare www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/lancs/vol4/pp41-43; also [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Dock, Liverpool](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Dock,_Liverpool) and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wellington_Dock.

⁷⁸ "Vessels sailed, May 14", in: *Liverpool Shipping Telegraph and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 16 May 1851, page 1.

⁷⁹ Woods, F.E.: "From Liverpool to Keokuk: The Mormon Maritime Migration Experience of 1853", in: *Mormon Historical Studies*, Fall 2003, pages 11-12. ensignpeakfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/MHS_Fall2003_Liverpool-to-Keokuk.pdf

We could not establish whether Charles R. Day was a member of the Day ship building dynasty.⁸⁰

A number of witnesses have testified at Thonen's initial hearing. They shed light on how exactly the crime was committed, the details of Thonen's escape, and what happened to the jewellery after Thonen got rid of it. The most complete record of the events comes from an article in the *Morning Chronicle* from 10 May 1851. This article was not known to us when we wrote our item for the Ballarat Genealogical Society in November 2022, hence why the information in it was not included. Where the previously quoted *Annual Register* merely stated that

the prisoner admitted the entire truth of the officer's statement,

the article in the *Morning Chronicle* elaborated, in extensive detail:⁸¹

Prisoner: What the officer has stated is perfectly correct, but he has forgotten to mention that I told him where to find the pawn ticket.

Haydon: That's quite true, you did.

John Mark Bull, a detective officer in the City force, said: I have been assisting Haydon in this investigation, and in consequence of the receipt of a letter from him I went to Mr. George Dismore, of 12, Clerkenwell-green, diamond merchant, and received from him the rosettes and settings which I now produce. They belong to the loose stones already produced by Haydon. Mr. Dismore said he had received them from his brother, of Liverpool.

Haydon: The party who purchased that part of the property from the prisoner refused to buy them whole, and the prisoner accordingly broke them up in his presence, to give him a better opportunity of testing the quality of the diamonds.

Benjamin Schrader, assistant to Mr. George Mitford Young, a pawnbroker of Leicester-square, said, I produce a pair of diamond earrings deposited on the 23d of April last at our shop by the prisoner. He came early in the morning, between nine and ten o'clock. I advanced him £40 on them. He said he had only just come to England, and was recommended to us, as property left with us would be taken care of. I gave him the memorandums produced.

Jacques Schwabacher said: I am in partnership with Mr. Birnstuigl, and carry on business at 8, Broad-street-buildings. Prisoner was in my employ as clerk. The property produced, consisting of two bracelets, brooches, stomacher brooch, ear-rings, &c., is worth £450 at the wholesale value, as charged in the invoice. The pendants have been taken off the centre piece and the diamonds taken out. I can identify the settings as my property, but the loose diamonds I can only presume belong to me, as they correspond with those in the other articles that have not been disturbed. I have no doubt but that the loose stones would fit the vacant places in the settings, and from which I believe they have been taken.

Alderman Wilson: Although it is generally so difficult for any one to identify diamonds, I think there is quite sufficient evidence to satisfy a jury that the loose stones belong to the settings produced and sworn to.

Witness: The prisoner has not been regularly employed by our firm. [...] ⁸² I immediately directed inquiries, and offered a reward of £50, which subsequently led to the apprehension of the prisoner.

Cross-examined by prisoner: I made your acquaintance first at Short's Hotel. ⁸³ I said £100 per annum was the salary I generally paid my clerks. I did not offer to give you more than 10s., when you requested to be taken on till you got into something better. I offered you £1 per week, if you suited me. I gave you 10s. a week, with full leave to quit me whenever you liked, at the shortest notice.

Henry Nation: I am clerk to the prosecutors. I was present when the diamonds were packed up, and took them to the Steam Navigation Company's offices, on Saturday the 19th of April, about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon. I was too late with them, and brought them back and placed them in the strong room. On the 28th of April I saw the parcel unpacked, but the diamonds were gone. Prisoner came to the office on Monday, the 21st

⁸⁰ Day, J.: "A Southampton Ship Building Dynasty", in: Genealogists' Magazine.

static1.squarespace.com/static/5c65dd81af46834afd07e40a/t/60329cfaca61a13c983f2a25/1613929724293/live_s+retold+day+horace+pt2.pdf; compare en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Day,_Summers_and_Company.

⁸¹ "Singular Case of Diamond Stealing", in: *Morning Chronicle*, 10 May 1851, page 7.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000082/18510510/017

⁸² Omitted. This part of the testimony is identical to the version given in the *Annual Register*, see above.

⁸³ Possibly the tavern/public house at *Short's Hotel*, located at 333 Strand, London, opposite Somerset House, and run by John Short since 1836. Or is he referring to a hotel on *Short Street*, a street off Finsbury Pavement?

SINGULAR CASE OF DIAMOND STEALING.

Edward Thonen, a young German, was brought before Alderman Wilson, at Guildhall, yesterday, charged with stealing a large quantity of diamonds, wholesale value as per invoice £450, the property of Messrs. Birnstuigl, Schwabacher, and Co., diamond-merchants, of 8, Broad-street-buildings, City.

Michael Haydon, a detective officer of the City force, said: On the 28th of last month I received information that the prisoner had absconded with a quantity of diamonds belonging to Messrs. Birnstuigl, of Broad-street-buildings. I traced the prisoner to Peterborough, and from thence to Liverpool. On Tuesday night I went down to the latter place, and from inquiries I made there on the following morning, I found prisoner had sailed for New York in the Sardinia, a sailing vessel. Finding prisoner had four hours start of me, I engaged a steamer, and went in pursuit of him. I overtook the vessel off the Great Ormes Head, about sixty miles from Liverpool. I boarded the vessel while it pursued its course through St. George's Channel, and saw prisoner standing on the main-deck. I knew him by the description I had received, and accordingly told him I was an officer, and apprehended him on the charge of robbing his employers of some diamonds. He said, "You are mistaken, I know nothing about it." I then searched him, and found a gold watch, a gold guard, three keys, a knife, and two French purses, one of which contained £12s.

Alderman Wilson: Did the sailing vessel stop while you made these inquiries; or, did she slack stay?—Haydon: No, your worship, she continued her course.

Alderman Wilson: Did the captain make any objection to your removing the prisoner from his care?—Haydon: No, sir; he only wished to be satisfied that I was acting officially.

Having assured the captain that I was an officer, I took the prisoner back to Liverpool with me, and on my arrival I conveyed him at once to the Bridewell, where I commenced a more strict search of his person. I found a handkerchief, containing a great portion of the missing diamonds, tied round his waist in the manner of a belt, secured firmly by a string passed round his body, between and round both his legs. Prisoner at the moment said, "Now you've got it; you've got all." I opened the handkerchief and found two large diamond brooches, the centre piece, a brooch of a diamond stomacher, and a pair of diamond bracelets. Prisoner told me he had taken off the pendants or drops from the centre ornament, and had taken the stones out and sold them to a Mr. Dismore, of Lord-street, Liverpool. I went to Mr. Dismore, who at once gave me up five carats of diamonds, which he had purchased for £25. The loose diamonds which I produce are the same I received from Mr. Dismore. I afterwards found, on searching prisoner's pocket-book, a duplicate or memorandum of a pair of brilliant earrings, deposited at Mr. Young's, of Leicester-square, in the name of "E. Hautman," of 11, Finsbury-square, for £40. Prisoner said these earrings, together with the pendants he broke off the centre piece, and the other articles produced, formed the complete suite of diamonds. The other portions of the pendants, consisting of the settings, were obtained by another officer. While I was bringing prisoner up to London he said he would throw himself upon the mercy of the Court. He has assisted me in every way possible, to enable me to complete the case against him.

Prisoner: What the officer has stated is perfectly correct, but he has forgotten to mention that I told him where to find the pawn ticket.

Haydon: That's quite true, your did.

John Mark Bull, a detective officer in the City force, said: I have been assisting Haydon in this investigation, and in consequence of the receipt of a letter from him I went to Mr. George Dismore, of 12, Clerkenwell-green, diamond merchant, and received from him the rossettes and settings which I now produce. They belong to the loose stones already produced by Haydon. Mr. Dismore said he had received them from his brother, of Liverpool.

Haydon: The party who purchased that part of the property from the prisoner refused to buy them whole, and the prisoner accordingly broke them up in his presence, to give him a better opportunity of testing the quality of the diamonds.

Benjamin Schrader, assistant to Mr. George Mitford Young, a pawnbroker of Leicester-square, said, I produce a pair of diamond earrings deposited on the 23d of April last at our shop by the prisoner. He came early in the morning, between nine and ten o'clock. I advanced him £40 on them. He said he had only just come over to England, and was recommended to us, as property left with us would be taken care of. I gave him the memorandums produced.

Jacques Schwabacher said: I am in partnership with Mr. Birnstuigl, and carry on business at 8, Broad-street-buildings. Prisoner was in my employ as clerk. The property produced, consisting of two bracelets, brooches, stomacher brooch, earrings, &c., is worth £450 at the wholesale value, as charged in the invoice. The pendants have been taken off the centre piece and the diamonds taken out. I can identify the settings as my property, but the loose diamonds I can only presume belong to me, as they correspond with those in the other articles that have not been disturbed. I have no doubt but that the loose stones would fit the vacant places in the settings, and from which I believe they have been taken.

Alderman Wilson: Although it is generally so difficult for any one to identify diamonds, I think there is quite sufficient evidence to satisfy a jury that the loose stones belong to the settings produced and sworn to.

Witness: The prisoner has not been regularly employed by our firm. He came first in January last, being recommended by an hotel keeper in Finsbury-pavement. I agreed to give him a trial for a few weeks on the condition that if he made himself useful I would tell him then what salary I would give him. He had no meet with us on many days before I discovered that he would not suit us. He was very clever at languages, but knew nothing about the routine of a mercantile house. I told him he would be of no service to us, and he begged me to keep him on till he could get into something permanent, and give him merely a trifle to assist him in the interim. We did so, and he remained with us until the 23d of April. The last week he came only for a few days, and said he had obtained employment as a teacher of foreign languages. He said he was going to a schoolmaster at Eastbourne. The diamonds were packed up, sealed, and directed to Alexandria. We were not early enough with them to send by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and the package was, by my direction, replaced in the strong room. The key of the strong room was placed in the drawer of a desk in the private office. Prisoner had always access to that office. Before that time he had entirely left my employ, and I afterwards heard that he called on several occasions in my absence. On the 28th of April last I had occasion to go to the strong room for the purpose of opening the package to show a friend the diamonds in question. The parcel appeared in the same state exactly as when I left it sealed and tied up. I opened it, and found all the diamonds had been abstracted. I then looked to the paper that enclosed them, and noticed that the seal on the paper bore evident traces of having been broken and resealed. I immediately directed inquiries, and offered a reward of £50, which subsequently led to the apprehension of the prisoner.

Cross-examined by prisoner: I made your acquaintance first at Short's Hotel. I said £100 per annum was the salary I generally paid my clerks. I did not offer to give you more than 10s., when you requested to be taken on till you got into something better. I offered you £1 per week, if you suited me. I gave you 10s. a week, wish full leave to quit me whenever you liked, at the shortest notice.

Henry Nation: I am clerk to the prosecutors. I was present when the diamonds were packed up, and took them to the Steam Navigation Company's offices, on Saturday the 14th of April, about half-past three o'clock in the afternoon. I was too late with them, and brought them back and placed them in the strong room. On the 28th of April I saw the parcel unpacked, but the diamonds were gone. Prisoner came to the office on Monday, the 21st of April, and two following days. When the diamonds were being packed, prisoner was present, engaged making the entry in the books. The date of the entry was April 19th, and ran as follows:—"Monte Corbello, Alexandria, by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company. From the warehouse, taken by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, parcel containing jewellery." This entry is in prisoner's handwriting. The last time I saw him at the office was on the Wednesday following this entry, when he told me that most likely he should get the situation at Eastbourne. He said he expected a letter, with a remittance of money to take him down to Eastbourne on the following Thursday morning. The next day I received a letter from prisoner, requesting me to receive what salary was due to him, and to pay several small accounts that I knew he owed. He also said he had received £5 from Eastbourne, and was on his way to that place. [Prisoner here desired that the letter might be read. With the exception of an invitation to witness to go and see him at Eastbourne, and a message to his employers, telling them that "Mr. Sewabacher might go to the devil with his carpet-bag and his testimonials. I don't want them now," there was nothing particularly interesting in it.]

Mary Anne Estridge, servant to Messrs. Moxhay, of 8, Broad-street-buildings, said: I have the care of the chambers. On Easter Sunday prisoner came, about a quarter past one in the day, and rung at the bell. I opened the door, and asked him what he wanted? He said he wished to go into the office; and, knowing him to be one of the clerks, I went up stairs and fetched the key for him. When I had unlocked the office door, he told me I need not wait for the keys, as he would ring the bell when I need not wait for the keys, and when I came down I found prisoner gone. I was standing at the door when I saw him come back again, and I reminded him that he had neglected to ring the bell. He said he forgot it. He went into the office and remained there about three-quarters of an hour, and when he was going away I told him it was rather an unusual thing for any of the gentlemen to come there on the Sunday. He made no reply but laughed it off. He came again on Tuesday evening after office hours. The door was open, and when I came down I found prisoner in the warehouse. While I was cleaning the office prisoner came from the warehouse and taking up an unlighted candle returned with it. I told the prisoner to be sure to ring the bell before he left. He promised he would, and I then went up-stairs. I did not come down again till about nine o'clock, when I found the office door unlocked, and prisoner gone, without ringing the bell. He called again on a subsequent evening, after office hours, but I did not see him.

Robert Packman, a detective officer of the City force, said: From information I received that prisoner was suspected of stealing a large quantity of diamonds, I went down to Eastbourne, in Sussex, to trace the prisoner. I went to a schoolmaster of the name of Bounds, who informed me that he had received two letters from the prisoner, one applying for the situation, and the other for an advance of the first quarter's salary, half in cash, and the remainder in credit with a tailor at Eastbourne.

[The letters were then put in and read, but were only re-

markable for the writer's fluent style and knowledge of the English language.]

Mr. Alderman Wilson: What have you to say in your defence?

Prisoner: All I have to say is that the one is plain enough—the things have been found upon me, and every link of the evidence is quite complete. I don't know whether it is of any consequence to state when and how I took the diamonds. I may, however, state that when I went to the office on the Sunday morning I had not the slightest thought of committing this crime. I went there to write letters to my family and friends. While I was there I happened by chance to see the drawer half open, and the key of the iron safe there. I took it out and opened the safe, and discharged my lodgings, started by the Eastern Counties railway to Peterborough, that being the first place I could get to by the next train. From Peterborough I went to Liverpool, where I remained until an opportunity offered to get a vessel direct for New York, intending to go to the southern parts of America, as every one went to the northern parts. I found the Camilla, commanded by Capt. Day, would start on the 29th of April, and paid my passage accordingly. The vessel did not start, but was delayed from day to day until at length I demanded my passage-money back. The captain told me it would start on the 2d of May for certain; and I then very imprudently wrote to my friends, stating all my circumstances, and foolishly addressed it *via* London and Ostend. That letter was opened at the London Post-office, and has thereby been the means of putting the officers on my track. A steamer ran into the Camilla, and being in danger of foundering, she was obliged to put back into port. Having very little money left, I proceeded to sell the diamond drops as soon as I landed again in Liverpool. I only got £3 per carat, so I did not sell more than sufficient to meet my urgent necessities, as I intended making restitution of the whole of the property at a future time, and I knew that I could get a fair price for them in America. After leaving the Camilla I received £4 out of my £10 deposit. There being no other steamer ready to start, I engaged with the captain of a sailing vessel, the Sardinia, bound for New York. I paid fifteen guineas passage money last, and had started about four hours when we were overtaken by the officers in a steamer. I told the officer if he treated me as a gentleman I would cause him no trouble, and I have no cause for complaint of him. That which has caused me to do this, your worship may learn from what I have to say on that point. I understand, can write, and converse in English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese, and for the exercise of my abilities in all these languages I received 10s. per week, and on this small sum I had to keep myself in food, clothes, and lodging. I tried to get a better situation, and wrote to Lord Palmerston, who probably thought my letter the production of a madman's brain, and treated it as such, for I received no answer. I should like to see a copy of that letter, which is in the possession of the officer, read aloud to the court, as it will then give the magistrate some idea as to my general character, and, together with what I have already stated, may prove something in palliation of my offence.

The letter was then read. It was very lengthy, and contained a most extravagant proposal for the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa, and offering to perform, single-handed, what the Government had been ineffectually trying for years. All he required was arms and ammunition, and a free passage out for any one he required to assist him in the great enterprise.

Alderman Wilson: Where were you educated?

Prisoner: I was born at Halberstadt, in Prussia. My father and mother live there in independent circumstances, and I was educated there, but I instructed myself in the various languages I am acquainted with without any assistance. I was brought up as a merchant, but when I came to London in December last I was robbed of all the money I had in my possession at the time, amounting to £25, since which I have been with the prosecutors. I should not wish this to reach my poor old father's ears (here tears filled the prisoner's eyes, and his voice assumed a most feeling tone) as he is now nearly seventy years of age, and it might be attended with fatal consequences to him.

Alderman Wilson: You appear to be a young man of extraordinary talent and ability, and I very much regret seeing you in your present unhappy position. It is a pity your abilities were not directed in a proper channel, where you would not have been thrown in the way of temptation, and where you also might have fought your way in the world. My duty here is not to consider your punishment, so that anything you can say will not enable me to mitigate it, though it may have its effect on the minds of a jury. I must therefore commit you for trial; but as time will be required to prepare the depositions, I shall remand you for a few days till they are completed, when you will be again brought up and formally committed to Newgate to take your trial at the ensuing sessions of the Central Criminal Court.

The most detailed account of the court hearing (The Morning Chronicle, 10 May 1851, page 7)

of April, and two following days. When the diamonds were being packed, prisoner was present, engaged making the entry in the books. The date of the entry was April 19th, and ran as follows: "Monte Corbello, Alexandria, by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company. From the warehouse, taken by the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, parcel containing jewellery." This entry is in prisoner's handwriting. The last time I saw him at the office was on the Wednesday following this entry, when he told me that most likely he should get the situation

at Eastbourne. He said he expected a letter, with a remittance of money to take him down to Eastbourne on the following Thursday morning. The next day I received a letter from prisoner, requesting me to receive what salary was due to him, and to pay several small amounts that I knew he owed. He also stated that he had received £5 from Eastbourne, and was on his way to that place. (Prisoner here desired that the letter might be read. With the exception of an invitation to witness to go and see him at Eastbourne, and a message to his employers, telling them that "Mr. Schwabacher might go to the devil with his carpet-bag and his testimonials, I don't want them now," there was nothing particularly interesting in it.)

Mary Anne Ettridge, servant to Messrs. Moxtay, of 8, Broad-street-buildings, said: I have the care of the chambers. On Easter Sunday [April 20th] prisoner came, about a quarter past one in the day, and rung the bell. I opened the door, and asked him what he wanted? He said he wished to go into the office; and, knowing him to be one of the clerks, I went up stairs and fetched the key for him. When I had unlocked the office door, he told me I need not wait for the keys, as he would ring the bell when he went away. I remained up stairs till near seven o'clock in the evening, and when I came down I found prisoner gone. I was standing at the door when I saw him come back again, and I reminded him that he had neglected to ring the bell. He said he forgot it. He went into the office and remained there about three-quarters of an hour, and when he was going away I told him it was rather an unusual thing for any of the gentlemen to come there on the Sunday. He made no reply but laughed it off. He came again on Tuesday evening after office hours. The door was open, and when I came down I found prisoner in the warehouse. While I was cleaning the office prisoner came from the warehouse and taking up an unlighted candle returned with it. I told prisoner to be sure to ring the bell before he left. He promised he would, and I then went up-stairs. I did not come down again till about nine o'clock, when I found the office door unlocked, and prisoner gone, without ringing the bell. He called again on a subsequent evening, after office hours, but I did not see him.

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(The letters were then put in and read, but were only remarkable for the writer's fluent style and knowledge of the English language.)

Mr. Alderman Wilson: What have you to say in your defence?

Prisoner: All I have to say is that the case is plain enough—the things have been found upon me, and every link of the evidence is quite complete. I don't know whether it is of any consequence to state when and how I took the diamonds. I may, however, state that when I went to the office on the Sunday morning I had not the slightest thought of committing this crime. I went there to write letters to my family and friends. While I was there I happened by chance to see the drawer half open, and the key of the iron safe there. I took it out and opened the safe, and took out the parcel. It was a great temptation, but I withstood it, and put it back again, expecting to get a situation at Eastbourne. On Monday evening I came again, opening the case, and took the diamonds out; and looking at them, hesitating whether I should take them or not. I said to myself, "No, I will not," and put them back and left the place. On the Tuesday evening [April 22nd] I came again, and took the diamonds all out, and sealed up the case as I found it. I pledged the earrings for £40. On Wednesday morning I came to the office, and to my great surprise I saw on the table before the prosecutors the very package I had taken the diamonds from. I was in great terror all the time, fearing every moment it might be opened, and my crime discovered.⁸⁴ I went out, and having discharged my lodgings, started by the Eastern Counties railway to Peterborough, that being the first place I could get to by the next train. From Peterborough I went to Liverpool, where I remained until an opportunity offered to get a vessel direct for New York, intending to go to the southern parts of America, as every one went to the northern parts. I found the *Camilla*, commanded by Capt. Day, would start on the 26th of April, and paid my passage accordingly. The vessel did not start, but was delayed from day to day, until at length I demanded my passage money back. The captain told me it would start on the 2d of May for certain; and I then very imprudently wrote to my friends, stating all my circumstances, and foolishly addressed it via London and Ostend. That letter was opened at the London Post-office, and has thereby been the means of putting the officer on my track. A steamer ran into the *Camilla*, and being in danger of foundering, she was obliged to put back into port. Having very little money left, I proceeded to sell the diamond drops as soon as I landed again in Liverpool.

⁸⁴ He need not have worried. Schwabacher testified that he only opened the package five days later.

I only got £3 per carat,⁸⁵ so I did not sell more than sufficient to meet my urgent necessities, as I intended making restitution of the whole of the property at a future time, and I knew that I could get a fair price for them in America. After leaving the Camilla I received £4 out of my £10 deposit. There being no other steamer ready to start, I engaged with the captain of a sailing vessel, the Sardinia, bound for New York. I paid fifteen guineas passage money, and embarked on board the Sardinia on Wednesday morning last [May 7th], and had started about four hours when we were overtaken by the officers in a steamer. I told the officer if he treated me as a gentleman I would cause him no trouble, and I have no cause for complaint of him. That which has caused me to do this, your worship may learn from what I have to say on that point. I understand, can write, and converse in English, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Portuguese, and for the exercise of my abilities in all these languages I received 10s. per week, and on this small sum I had to keep myself in food, clothes, and lodging. I tried to get a better situation, and wrote to Lord Palmerston, who probably thought my letter the production of a madman's brain, and treated it as such, for I received no answer. I should like the copy of that letter, which is in the possession of the officer, read aloud to the court, as it will then give the magistrate some idea as to my general character, and, together with what I have already stated, may prove something in palliation of my offence.

The letter was then read. It was very lengthy, and contained a most extravagant proposal for the suppression of the slave trade on the coast of Africa, and offering to perform, single-handed, what the Government had been ineffectually trying for years. All he required was arms and ammunition and a free passage out for any one he required to assist him in the great enterprise.

Alderman Wilson: Where were you educated?

Prisoner: I was born at Halberstadt, in Prussia.⁸⁶ My father and mother live there in independent circumstances, and I was educated there, but I instructed myself in the various languages I am acquainted with without any assistance. I was brought up as a merchant, but when I came to London in December last I was robbed of all the money I had in my possession at the time, amounting to £25, since which I have been with the prosecutors. I should not wish this to reach my poor old father's ears (here tears filled the prisoners eyes, and his voice assumed a most feeling tone) as he is now nearly seventy years of age, and it might be attended with fatal consequences to him.

Alderman Wilson: You appear to be a young man of extraordinary talent and ability, and I very much regret seeing you in your present unhappy position. It is a pity your abilities were not directed in a proper channel, where you would not have been thrown in the way of temptation, and where you also might have fought your way in the world. My duty here is not to consider your punishment, so that anything you can say will not enable me to mitigate it, though it may have its effect on the minds of a jury. I must therefore commit you for trial; but as time will be required to prepare the depositions, I shall remand you for a few days till they are completed, when you will be again brought up and formally committed to Newgate to take your trial at the ensuing sessions of the Central Criminal Court.

At the final hearing, Wilson expressed his gratitude to detective Haydon and the metropolitan police, and Haydon made sure to extend this gratitude to his colleagues from Liverpool:⁸⁷

GUILDHALL.—Yesterday [May 13th] Edward Thonen was brought up for final examination before Alderman Wilson, charged with absconding from his employ with a quantity of diamonds, value, as per invoice, 450l., the property of Messrs. Birnstingl, Schwabacher & Co., diamond merchants, of 8, Broad-street Buildings, City.

Mr. Hockley F. Wood, of 14, Old Jewry-chambers, appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. Lewis, of Ely-place, attended on behalf of the prisoner.

As this case was only remanded for the purpose of completing the depositions, preparatory to committing the prisoner to take his trial at the present Old Bailey Sessions, no further evidence was taken, and having been cautioned in the usual form, prisoner was asked if he had anything to add to his former statement, and if he wished that still to stand upon the face of the depositions.

⁸⁵ If he is referring to the diamonds that he sold to Thomas Dismore then the date (May 4th) is inconsistent with Dismore's testimony. Dismore stated that this happened on May 2nd, which is before the ship had even departed from Liverpool.

⁸⁶ The article says "Halberstadt", but this should most likely read „Elberfeld"; compare the commission records of Newgate Prison, which give the correct place of origin. It is unclear if this mistake is due to the newspaper. There is also the possibility that this refers to an otherwise undocumented part of Thonen's biography, see the chapter about Thonen's [youth and education](#).

⁸⁷ "The Police Courts", in: Morning Advertiser, 14 May 1851, page 7.

Mr. Lewis said that, after the prisoner's own admission of his guilt, he, of course, could not attempt to defend him by denying the facts already sworn to by the witnesses, and acknowledged to by the prisoner himself. The prisoner had no wish to withdraw the statement he had made on Friday last, and the only object he had in instructing counsel to appear in his behalf was, to plead in mitigation of punishment.

Alderman Wilson said, under those circumstances it only remained for him to commit the prisoner to Newgate for trial. But before the prisoner was removed, he thought it but due to the officers engaged in the case to state, that their conduct in apprehending the prisoner, and recovering the property, was exceedingly meritorious, and he expressed himself perfectly willing to grant them a portion of their expenses.

Haydon, the officer who apprehended the prisoner, said, that great praise was also due to the police authorities of Liverpool, who had rendered him every assistance in intercepting the prisoner's departure.

Alderman Wilson was glad to find that the metropolitan and county police co-operated so readily with the City constabulary in all cases of this kind, and was pleased to have the opportunity to testifying to that effect.

The prisoner was then fully committed for trial.

A summary of the events was published in 1896 in an Australian newspaper. This article may be based on the *Annual Register* from 1852, or on an as yet unknown contemporary newspaper article (compare the chapter [What was known in Australia about the diamond robbery?](#)):⁸⁸

A DIAMOND ROBBER CAUGHT.—How Edward Thonen came to stand in the dock for his misdemeanours deserves a place among our "Strange True Stories." It discovers no thrilling incident, it is true, but illustrates how some men's steps are dogged by accident. For an accident led Edward Thonen into crime, and only an accident brought him to book for it.

Thonen was of a good family in Germany, and in the end of the year came over to London to seek his fortune. It was late in December when he arrived, and by the first day of the year he had not a penny to bless himself with. He had been robbed of everything he possessed – how robbed he never made known; very likely he was thrown among evil company by a weakness of character which his misfortunes made evident.

In his plight the hotelkeeper in Finsbury Pavement came to him as a benefactor. The innkeeper recommended his protegee to Birnstingl, Schwabacher, and Co., in Broad-street Buildings, as a man well up in languages – which is true; he could speak French, German, Dutch, Spanish, every European tongue – and the Broad-street firm added him to their mercantile staff. Considering his acquirements the salary of £1 a week was meagre enough, and the condition was that if he did not suit them he could be turned off at any time. And, despite his knowledge of languages, Thonen was not a suitable clerk, and at the end of the week was told so. He begged so hard, however, to be kept on at a nominal sum (the nominal sum was only 10s. a week) until he could get other employment, that the firm good-naturedly agreed to do so; and he was coming and going in the office, more or less a regular clerk, but still with his own hours, until the middle of April, when he began to make an appearance for a few hours a day only. A situation loomed for him, working as a schoolmaster at Eastbourne, and he was already doing some work in the private teaching of foreign languages.

Now it happened that about this very time Birnstingl and Schwabacher had a parcel of diamonds, which they were consigning to Alexandria. They had been too late to ship them off with the Oriental Steam Navigation Company, and thus it came about that the diamonds, packed and sealed, were lying in the strong room during these April days. In the ordinary course they would have been shipped off by the next steamer; but here again an accident occurred to put a spoke in Thonen's wheel.

*A friend of Mr. Schwabacher's had called at the office, and to him, for some casual reason or other, it was thought desirable to show some of the diamonds. Accordingly, the key of the strong room was taken from the desk in the partner's private office, and there, laid out before the two, were the diamonds, apparently as they had been left, wrapped up and sealed. But when the merchant came to open the parcel the diamonds were gone, and, looking carefully at the wrappings, he saw that the seal had previously been tampered with. Immediately the police were communicated with, and a large reward offered for the recovery of the diamonds, and Scotland Yard was on the track of the young German, who apparently had not gone near Eastbourne to take up his mastership. As a matter of fact, Thonen had fled some days before. Michael Haydon, that smart detective of Scotland Yard, had tracked him to Peterborough, and then to Liverpool. But he had a good start, and on board the sailing ship *Camilla* was well on his way into the Atlantic, safe from pursuit.*

*Here, now, we come to the last of the inevitable accidents from which Thonen suffered. When Haydon got to Liverpool he discovered that Thonen had sailed out from that port, not in the *Camilla*, but in the *Sardinia*, and only four hours before. As a matter of fact, the *Camilla*, with him on board, had been run into, and forced to put*

⁸⁸ "A Diamond Robber Caught", in: *The Charleville Courier*, 16 May 1896, page 1.

back to Liverpool port, so that the long start of the fugitive counted for nothing, and he had set sail once more, with the detective hastening from Peterborough on his track.

The remainder of the story is quickly told. Haydon chartered a steamer and set off in the wake of the *Sardinia*, which he overtook off Great Orme's Head, sixty miles from Liverpool. He boarded the vessel while she was going through the St. George's Channel, and on the main deck found his man. He asked him about the diamonds, to which Thonen replied, "You are mistaken: I know nothing about them," turned out his pockets, and to the detective's examination discovered a gold watch and chain, a few pounds, and nothing more. The captain of the vessel, however, being assured that this was indeed a detective officer, allowed him to have his way; and Haydon shipped Thonen from the *Sardinia* on to his steamer, where he had him searched afresh, and there, in his handkerchief, wrapped round his waist like a belt, were the stolen diamonds. Thonen, knowing the game was up, cried. "Now you have got it, you've got all!" and quietly submitted to justice.

Some of the money found in Thonen's possession was used to pay his lawyer:⁸⁹

On Saturday, Mr. Lewis, the solicitor, applied that the money found on Edward Thonan [...] be given up to him for the purpose of feeing counsel to plead for him in mitigation of punishment. Application granted.—On Tuesday [May 13th] he was brought up, and committed for trial.

The trial began on 15 May. Thonen pleaded guilty, and the judgement was respited:⁹⁰

The prisoner pleaded Guilty. Mr. Parry, for the prosecution, said they were anxious to recommend the prisoner to mercy, thinking he had committed the act under a sudden fit of temptation. Mr. Bodkin, who was for the prisoner, informed the court that tomorrow he should be prepared with witnesses to character.—Sentence deferred.

THIRD COURT. (Before the Common Sergeant.) THE DIAMOND ROBBERY IN THE CITY.—Edward Thonen, aged 24, an intelligent-looking German, described as a clerk, was indicted for having stolen, at the parish of St. Botolph, a diamond bracelet, value 100l., a diamond stomacher, value 130l., two diamond bracelets, value 160l., and two diamond ear-rings, value 160l.,⁹¹ the property of Messrs. Schwabacher and Birnstigl, his employers. The prisoner, on being placed at the bar, pleaded guilty.

Mr. Parry said he appeared in this case on behalf of the prosecution, and his friend Mr. Bodkin was instructed for the prisoner, who had been in the service of the prosecutors, and though this was a very serious robbery, diamonds to the value of some 450l. having been stolen by the prisoner, the prosecutors were inclined to the belief that he committed the theft in a moment of temptation, and without any deliberation, or by any preconcerted plan. On this account, and fully believing that up to the present time there was nothing prejudicial attaching to the prisoner's character, they were desirous, with a credible degree of feeling, of recommending the prisoner to mercy. The prosecutors, he ought to say, were much indebted to Haydon, the city detective officer, for it was through his activity, exertions, and ingenuity that the capture of the prisoner was effected, and the property restored to the prosecutors. Haydon traced the prisoner to Liverpool, and having there ascertained that he had sailed for America, he took a steamer, and went after the vessel. He came up with it some eighty miles out at sea, and took the prisoner into custody. A portion of the property was found upon him, and it was ascertained, on returning to Liverpool, that some had been pledged for 40l. at a pawnbroker's, and that portion was now in court produced by the pawnbroker, who would deliver it up to the prosecutors. The prosecutors were much indebted to Haydon for the course he had taken in capturing the prisoner, and recovering the property. Mr. Bodkin said he had not many words to add to what had fallen from his friend Mr. Parry. The prisoner was a person of considerable attainments, and appeared to be one of those who endeavour less to promote their own personal interest than the general welfare and advancement of mankind; for he had had communications with the government, with reference to the colonisation of distant parts of the world, and other matters of a similar character. (A laugh.) Up to the present time his character had been that of an honest person. No doubt, he had committed this offence under a sudden impulse, and it was exceedingly kind of the prosecutors to recommend

⁸⁹ "Great Robbery of Diamonds", in: Manchester Courier, 17 May 1851, page 4.

⁹⁰ "The Diamond Robbery", in: Daily News (London), 16 May 1851, page 7.

A respited or deferred sentence in this context does not mean a suspended sentence, where a defendant avoided serving time in prison. It means that the sentencing was adjourned to a later date.

"The Diamond Robbery in the City", in: Morning Post, 16 May 1851, page 7.

⁹¹ These numbers sum to £550, £100 more than the stated total of £450 – a mistake?

him to mercy in the way they had done. The whole of the property was recovered, and would be restored to the prosecutors.

The Common Sergeant said he would take time to read the depositions, and make himself acquainted with the circumstances.

Mr. Parry applied to the Court to order the diamonds, upon which 40l. had been advanced, to be given up to the prosecutors. The pawnbroker, a Mr. Schroeder, was in court.

Mr. Schroeder then got into the witness box, and said that he knew he should have to give up the diamonds. He was in the hands of the Court and the prosecutors, and was perfectly willing to obey, without objection, the order of the Court.

The Common Sergeant ordered the diamonds to be restored.

Mr. Parry would again say that the prosecutors were deeply indebted to Haydon the officer, for the great activity he had displayed, and said he did not know whether the Court would not take the matter into consideration, as no doubt the conduct of the officer was entitled to reward and praise.

The Common Sergeant was understood to intimate that he would consider the subject.

Mr. Bodkin said, perhaps there would be no objection to witnesses to the prisoner's character being examined, should they be in attendance when he was called up for judgment.

The Common Sergeant said of course there would be no such objection.

The prisoner was then removed from the dock.

Three witnesses appeared before the court to testify in Thonen's favour:⁹²

THE DIAMOND ROBBERY IN THE CITY.—Edward Thönen, who pleaded guilty on Thursday to a charge of having stolen 450l. worth of diamonds, was placed at the bar.

Mr. Bodkin called three witnesses to character. One of them was a Prussian merchant, who said he had known the prisoner but for five months, during which time his conduct was that of an honest young man, but he had known the prisoner's family for thirty years, and they were quite respectable. The other witnesses had known the prisoner three months, during which time they believed him to be both honest and well conducted, and one of them said he knew that the prisoner had paid some attention to the subject of emigration, and had made a proposition to the government with reference to emigration to some parts of Africa.

The Common Sergeant said he would respite the sentence until next session.

In the records of Old Bailey, Thonen's case is listed under the session of 12 May 1851:⁹³

City of London		Centl Criminal Court				37	
RETURN of all Persons Committed, or Bailed to appear for Trial, or Indicted at the Sessions held at the Old Bailey on the 12 th day of May 1851, shewing the nature of their Offences, and the result of the Proceedings.							
No.	NAMES.	Offences of which those tried were Convicted or Acquitted, and of which those Discharged without Trial were charged on Indictment or Commitment.	Convicted and Sentenced				Acquitted and Discharged
			Death	Transportation	Imprisonment: (state if also Whipped or Fined)	Whipped, Fined, or Discharged on Sureties	
8	Edw ^d Thonen	Larceny by a Serv ^t	-	-	1 Year		
9	John Smith	Larceny upon			1 day		Indemnity required.
30	Opie State	Stealing Bank in Debt for post office			1 Year		

City of London		Centl Criminal Court				37	
Return of all Persons Committed, or Bailed to appear for Trial, or Indicted at the Sessions held at the Old Bailey on the 12 th day of May 1851, shewing the nature of their Offences, and the result of the Proceedings.							
No.	Names	Offences	Convicted and Sentenced			Acquitted and Discharged	
			Death	Transportation	Imprisonment		
8	Edw ^d Thonen	Larceny by a Serv ^t	-	-	1 Year	Judgement respited	

⁹² "The Diamond Robbery in the City", in: Morning Post, 17 May 1851, page 7.

⁹³ "Edward Thonen", in: Old Bailey proceedings, 12 May 1851, series HO27, page 37.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/HO27/097/00038&parentid=TNA/CCC/HO27/01540313

The red text (“1 Year”) was added at a later time, probably after Thonen’s sentencing on 16 June.

The Old Bailey proceedings identify three witnesses by name, who gave [Thonen] a good character: A man named Mackie; William Browning, the coffee house keeper whom Thonen and Mackie resided with; and a merchant called William Sneed of Finsbury Square.⁹⁴ It is not clear whether these were the same three witnesses who were later called by Mr. Bodkin, Thonen’s lawyer.⁹⁵

1135. WILLIAM THONEN, stealing 1 suite of diamonds, value 450l. ; the goods of Jacques Schwabacher and another, his masters : to which he pleaded GUILTY. Aged 24. (——— Mackie and William Browning, of 22, City-road, and William Sneed, merchant, of Finsbury-square, gave the prisoner a good character). — Recommended to mercy.— Judgment Respited.

Old Bailey proceedings (12 May 1851, page 63)

The following Prisoners, upon whom the Judgment of the Court was respited at the time of trial, have been sentenced as under :

Vol. xxxiv.	Page	
Staitte, Opie	45	Confined one year.
Banks, Henry.....	57	Confined seven days.
Thonen, William Edward	63	Confined one year.

Old Bailey Court Records (27 October 1851)

Mackie is Thomas C. Machie, who in the March 1851 census is listed alongside Thonen as a visitor of William Browning at 22 City Road. William Sneed may have been the unnamed Prussian merchant who was called again as a witness by Mr. Bodkin, and who knew Thonen’s family. However, Sneed does not sound like a German name, and the identification remains speculative. Unlike the other two named witnesses, Sneed could not be located in the March 1851 census, so we were unable to determine his birth place.

Edward Thonen pleaded guilty. His conviction is documented in the commission records of Newgate Prison:⁹⁶

Name, Age, and Description.	When brought into Custody.	By whom and from where Committed.	Offence charged with.	When Tried, and before whom.	Verdict.	Sentence.	How disposed of.
<i>Edward Thonen 24 fsh blk hy st^t Elberfield Clerk</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>Ald Wilson</i>	<i>Stg a Suite of Diamonds & £450 of Jacques Schwabacher & another his Masters.</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Guilty</i>	<i>Jud respit 1 year Ho. Co.</i>	<i>24 June</i>

Name, age, and description	When brought into custody	By whom committed	Offence charged with
<i>Edward Thonen 24 5/4 fsh blk hy st^t Elberfield Clerk</i>	<i>1851 May 13</i>	<i>Ald Wilson</i>	<i>Stg a Suite of Diamonds v. £450 of Jacques Schwabacher & another his Masters</i>
When tried, and before whom	Verdict	Sentence	How disposed of
<i>May 15 Co Sergt.</i>	<i>Pld. Guilty</i>	<i>Jud respd 1 year Ho. Co.</i>	<i>24 June</i>

⁹⁴ “Proceedings of the Central Criminal Court”, 12th May 1851, page 63.

www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=185105120063

For a discussion of why this document may give Thonen’s first name as *William*, see chapter [What was known in Australia about the diamond robbery?](#)

⁹⁵ “The Diamond Robbery in the City”, in: Morning Post, 17 May 1851, page 7.

⁹⁶ “Edward Thonen (1851), Newgate Prison”, in: UK, Prison Commission Records, 1770-1951, series PCOM2.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/PCOM2/212/00410&parentid=TNA/CCC/2B/PCOM2/01130311

Is the word “st[ou]t” transcribed correctly?

We will discuss the physical description of Thonen (the first column) in the chapter [Contemporary descriptions](#).

The Newgate Prison Calendar also mentions the case:⁹⁷

No.	Name.	Age.	Trade, &c.	By whom committed.	When committed.	Offence charged with.
<i>Well</i> 31	Edward Thonen	24	Clerk	Ald. Wilson.....	.. ,, ...	Stealing a suite of diamonds, value £150, the property of Jacques Schwabacher and another, his masters.

No.	When tried.	Before whom.	Verdict.	Sentence.
<i>31</i>	<i>" 15</i>	<i>do</i>	<i>Pld Guilty</i>	<i>Judg^{mt} Respited</i>

	No.	Name	Age	Trade, &c.	By whom committed	When committed	Offence charged with
<i>Well</i>	31	Edward Thonen	24	Clerk	Ald. Wilson	May 13	Stealing a suite of diamonds, value £450, the property of Jacques Schwabacher and another, his masters.

No.	When tried	Before whom	Verdict	Sentence
<i>31</i>	<i>May 15</i>	<i>Co. Serg^t</i>	<i>Pl^d Guilty</i>	<i>Judg^{mt} Respited</i>

The trial finally ended on 16 June with Thonen's sentencing to one year imprisonment:⁹⁸

City of London		Cent ^l Crim ^l Court		RETURN of all Persons Committed, or Bailed to appear for Trial, or Indicted at the Sessions held at the Old Bailey on the 16th day of June 1851, shewing the nature of their Offences, and the result of the Proceedings.		
No.	NAMES.	Offences of which those tried were Convicted or Acquitted, and of which those Discharged without Trial were charged on Indictment or Commitment.	Convicted and Sentenced			Acquitted and Discharged
			Death	Transportation	Imprisonment: (state if also Whipped or Fined)	
<i>9</i>	<i>Edw. Thonen</i>	<i>Convicted at the Cent^l Crim^l Court of London</i>			<i>1 year 6 months</i>	

Cent ^l Crim ^l Court, City of London		44			
Return of all Persons Committed, or Bailed to appear for Trial, or Indicted at the Sessions held at the Old Bailey on the 16th day of June 1851, shewing the nature of their Offences, and the result of the Proceedings.					
No.	NAMES	Offences	Convicted and Sentenced		
			Death	Transportation	Imprisonment

⁹⁷ "Edward Thonen", in: Newgate Calendar of Prisoners 1782-1931, series HO77.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/HO77/058/00171&parentid=TNA/CCC/2A/HO77/00613125; for a second copy of the record, see nla.gov.au/nla.obj-1427874259/view. Background information about the source can be found at www.digitalpanopticon.org/Newgate_Calendars_of_Prisoners_1782-1931.

⁹⁸ "Edward Thonen", in: Old Bailey proceedings, 16 June 1851, series HO27, page 44.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/HO27/097/00045&parentid=TNA/CCC/HO27/01540475

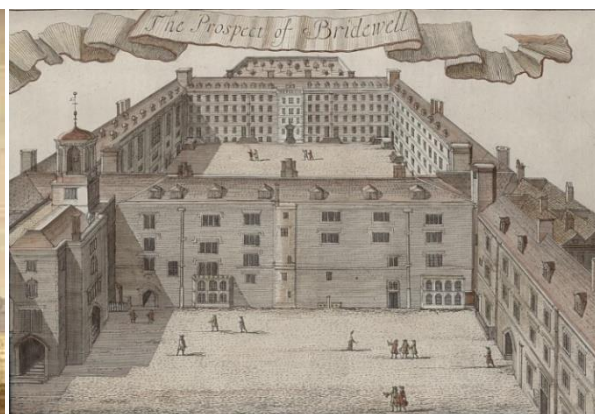
8	<i>Edw Thonen</i>	<i>Conv at the last Sess of Felony & Judg resp^d</i>	-	-	<i>1 year H C from Consⁿ</i>
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Thonen's eventual transfer to the house of correction is listed twice in the prison calendar, because the judgement was respited multiple times. It appears once on page 36,⁹⁹ and again on page 40:¹⁰⁰

PRISONERS WHO HAVE BEEN CONVICTED, AND UPON WHOM THE JUDGMENT OF THE COURT WAS RESPITED.

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Age.</i>	<i>Convicted.</i>	
James Bond	22	April 1851	<i>One Year, Newgate.</i>
Opie Staite	19	May 1851	<i>House of Correction, One Year.</i>
Edward Thonen	24	"	<i>House of Correction, One Year.</i>
Henry Banks.....	38	"	<i>Seven Days, Newgate. Discharged.</i>
Susan Savage	16	"	<i>Seven Days, Newgate. do.</i>
Caroline Jordan	15	June 1851	<i>12 days Newgate.</i>
John Phelps	19	"	<i>Discharged.</i>

<i>Name.</i>	<i>Age.</i>	<i>Convicted.</i>	
James Bond	22	April 1851	<i>1 Year Newgate</i>
Opie Staite	19	May 1851	<i>1 " Ho: Co:</i>
Edward Thonen	24	"	<i>1 " Ho: Co:</i>
Henry Banks.....	38	"	<i>7 days newgate</i>
John Smith	15	"	<i>Discharged.</i>
Susan Savage	16	"	<i>7 days Newgate.</i>



Newgate Prison (left) and Bridewell Palace (right)

From May to June 1851 Thonen spent about six weeks at Newgate Prison. On 24 June, following his sentencing, he was transferred from Newgate to the house of correction, most likely Bridewell Palace, which was known as one of London's "nicer" prisons at the time. In 1789, some six decades earlier, John Howard gave the following description of the conditions at Bridewell:¹⁰¹

Each sex has a workroom and a night-room. They lie in boxes, with a little straw, on the floor [...] There are many excellent regulations in this establishment. The prisoners have a liberal allowance, suitable employment, and

⁹⁹ "Edward Thonen", in: Newgate Calendar of Prisoners 1782-1931, series HO77.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/HO77/058/00276&parentid=TNA/CCC/2A/HO77/00614026

¹⁰⁰ "Edward Thonen", in: Newgate Calendar of Prisoners 1782-1931, series HO77.

search.findmypast.co.uk/record?id=TNA/CCC/HO77/058/00240&parentid=TNA/CCC/2A/HO77/00613737

¹⁰¹ "Bridewell Prison and Hospital", in: London Lives, 2018, www.londonlives.org/static/Bridewell.jsp, which is citing Howard, J.: "An Account of the Principal Lazarettos in Europe", Warrington, 1789, page 127.

some proper instruction; but the visitor laments that they are not more separated [...] no other prison in London has any straw or bedding [...]

We do not know when exactly Thonen was released. His nominal jail term would have ended in May or June 1852. As a foreigner and convicted criminal, it is likely that he was subsequently expelled from England.

That the prosecution recommended Thonen for mercy, and alderman Wilson showed so much understanding for him, has surprised us. We have not found complete records of the actual trial, and it is unclear whether Thonen was able to convince a jury to show the same sympathy. With one year imprisonment, he may have gotten away lightly, considering the severity of his crime. We do not feel qualified to judge if he deserved a tougher penalty. If the parties involved had known that Thonen would end up fighting against British soldiers in an armed revolt a few years later, they probably would have shown less compassion.

We will now look at maps of London, to locate some of the places mentioned in the case. The addresses of some of the key players were:

- Thonen's unnamed hotel-keeper: Finsbury Pavement
- William Browning's coffee house: 22 City Road, St. Luke, Finsbury
- Edward Thonen: Same (as a visitor)
- Jacques Schwabacher: 56 Christopher Street, St. Luke, Finsbury
- Louis Birnstingl: 38 Hunter Street, St. George, Bloomsbury
- Office *Schwabacher & Co.*: 8 Broad Street Buildings, Finsbury Circus, London

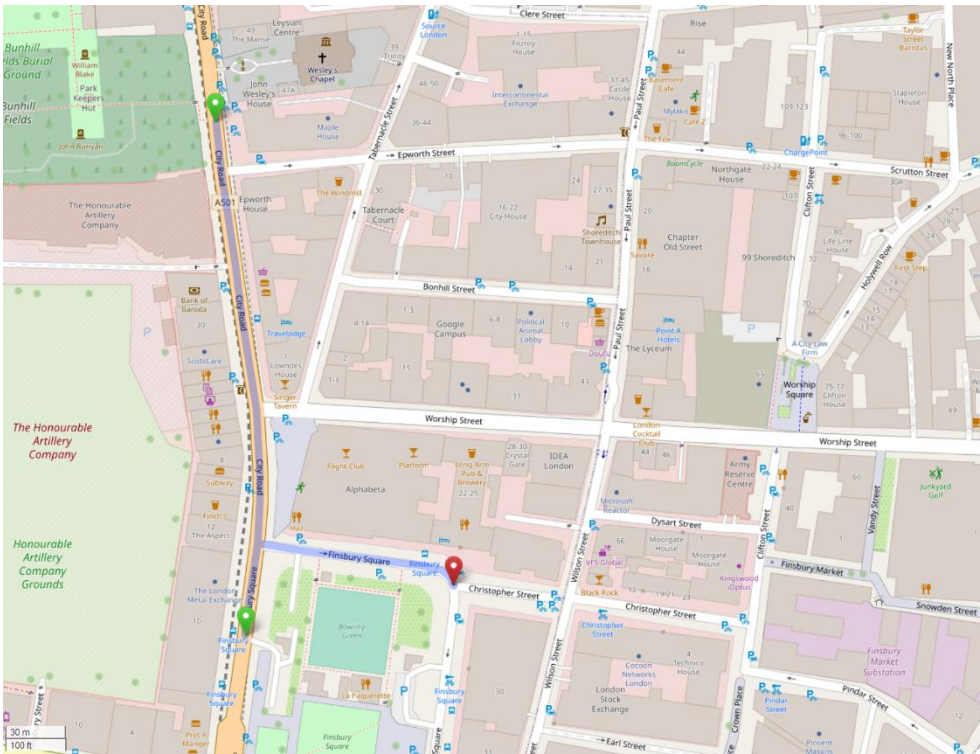
The coffee house was relatively new at the time. It is not yet listed in the 1847 street directory, which lists Browning as *Browning William Weedon, tailor, 25 Eagle st. City road*, while the 1852 edition gives *Browning Wm. Weedon, coffee rooms&tailor, 22 City rd. Fnsbry*.¹⁰²

The address *22 City Road* still exists. However, after numerous renumberings of London's streets in the 19th and 20th centuries and destruction during World War II, the house that is now known as 22 City Road was not only built much later, but it does not even stand at the same place (not even on the same side of the road).

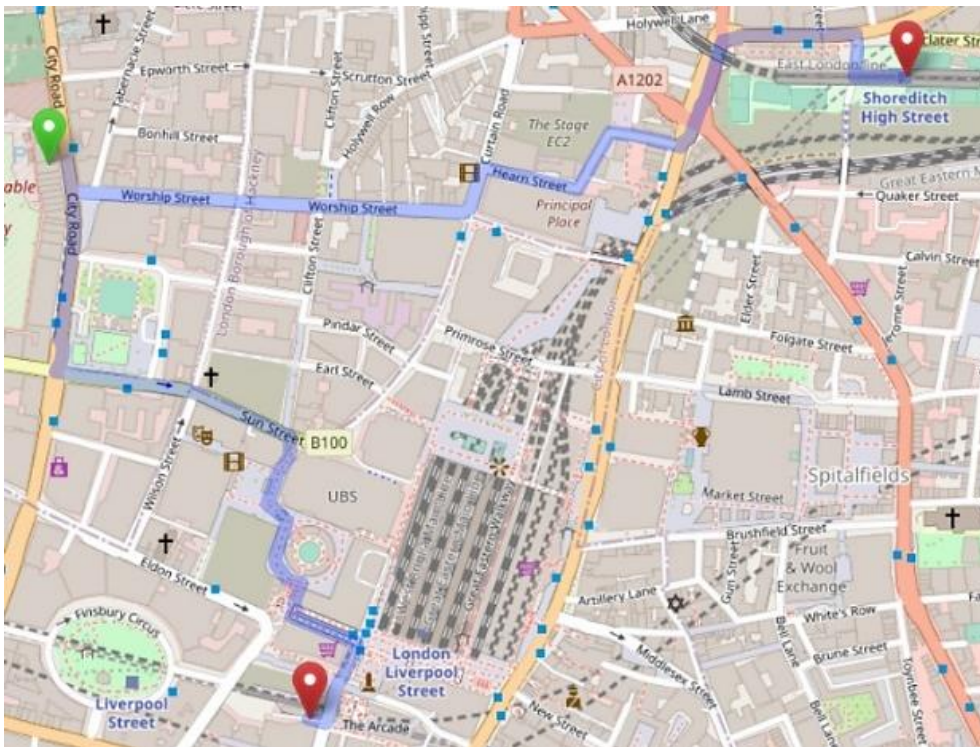
William Faden's edition of Horwood's 1819 London map is used to reconstruct the exact locations of the buildings, particularly *22 City Road* and *8 Broad Street Buildings*. First though, we use a modern map to give an overview over the relative positions and distances between the relevant places.

¹⁰² "The Post office London directory, 1847", page 185, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hn4bt4&seq=193
"The Post office London directory, 1847", page 633, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hn4bt4&seq=641
"Post Office London Directory (Small Edition)", 1852, Commercial directory, page 639.
specialcollections.le.ac.uk/iiif/2/p16445coll4:167103/full/730,/0/default.jpg?page=135

While Birnstingl resided some distance from the others, Thonen and Schwabacher were basically neighbours. In the map below, 22 City Road and Finsbury Pavement are marked in green, and Christopher Street in red:¹⁰³



Broad Street Buildings and the closest railway station at Bishopsgate were each a little over one kilometre away, or about 15 minutes by foot:

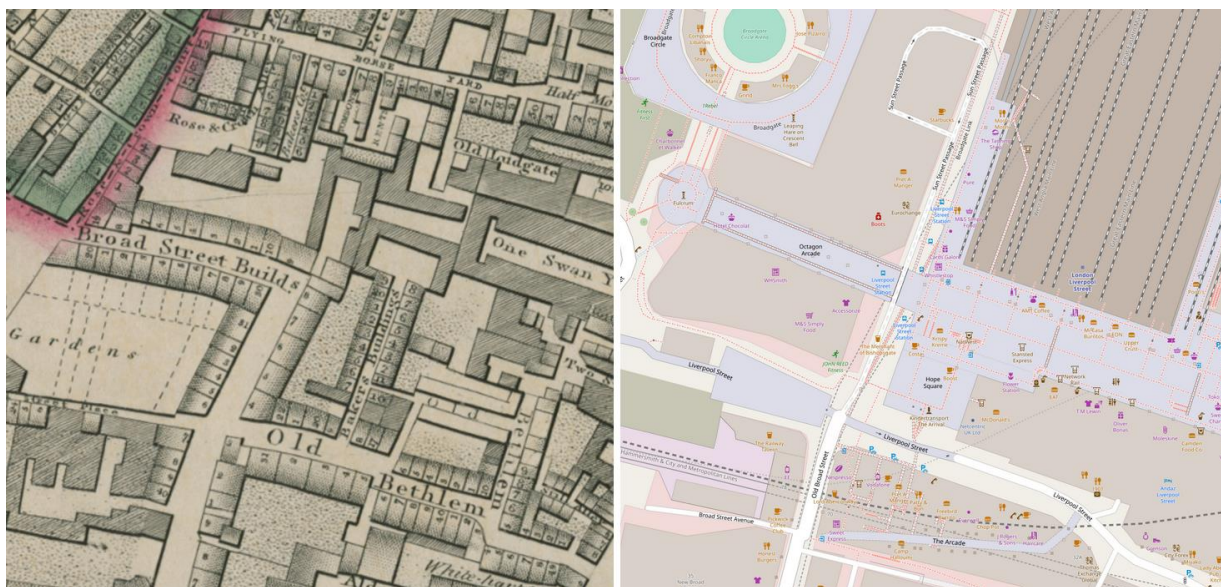


¹⁰³ Maps from OpenStreetMap. The modern street grid is still similar to what it looked like in the mid 19th century.

22 City Road, the coffee house where Thonen resided in March 1851, stood next to *Wesley's Chapel* (erected in 1778) and the later *Susannah Wesley monument* (erected in 1870):¹⁰⁴



What was once 8 Broad Street Buildings, the location of the diamond merchants' office, is now part of Liverpool Street station. The building stood right next to where the *Kindertransport memorial* was installed in 2006. The entire area became unrecognisable after the construction of the railway station in the 1860s:¹⁰⁵



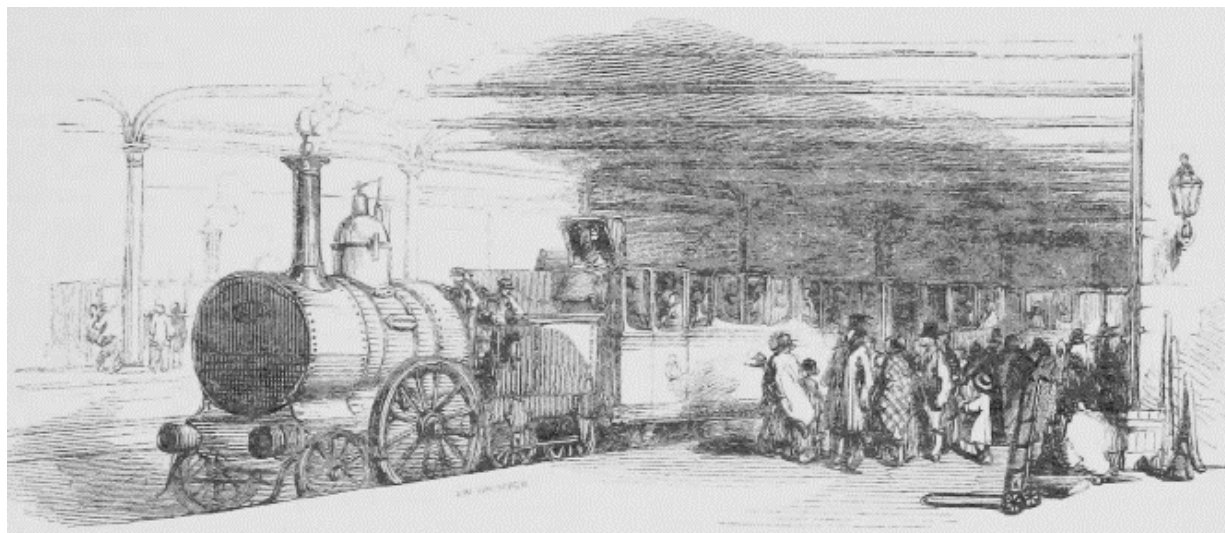
We do not know of any depictions of either the coffee house or the merchants' office, although a thorough search of London archives might yield photographs of either. Wesley's Chapel was photographed often, but none of the images we have found include the building at 22 City Road.

¹⁰⁴ The historical maps are from William Faden's *Fourth Edition of Horwood's Plan, 1819*, www.romanticlondon.org/the-1819-plan/, the modern maps from OpenStreetMap.

For the chapel, see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wesley's_Chapel; also compare www.londonremembers.com/memorials/susanna-wesley-monument

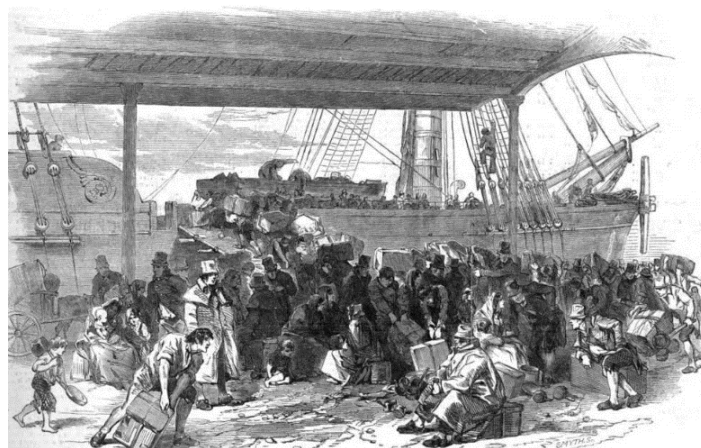
¹⁰⁵ More at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liverpool_Street_station and [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindertransport - The Arrival](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindertransport_-_The_Arrival)

Thonen's escape route from London to Liverpool can be reconstructed at least partially, similarly to how we attempted to reconstruct his earlier journey from Elberfeld to England.¹⁰⁶



Passenger train leaving Bishopsgate railway station (1851)

We know that he took the first train he could get, which meant taking the Eastern Counties railway line to Peterborough. From there he went on to Liverpool. The closest train station that went to Peterborough was Bishopsgate (opened in 1840 as Shoreditch railway station, renamed in 1846), about one kilometre from both City Road (Thonen's residence) and Broad Street Buildings (the location of the robbery). The journey would have taken some four to six hours, and cost 14s. 6d. for a one-way ticket, second Class.¹⁰⁷ From Peterborough, there would have been many possible connections to Liverpool. Two options would have been via Blisworth¹⁰⁸ or Manchester.¹⁰⁹



Emigrants embarking at Liverpool (1850)

The circumstances could have made it easier than expected for the police to track Thonen. He was in great distress after the robbery, and may have stood out to anyone who saw him (a young foreigner with an unusual travel destination, possibly carrying the wrong amount of

¹⁰⁶ "Reconstructing a diamond robber's escape route", RailUKforums, 22 September 2022, www.railforums.co.uk/threads/reconstructing-a-diamond-robbers-escape-route.237473/

¹⁰⁷ The route went via Stratford (north London), Lea Bridge, Tottenham Hale (then just called Tottenham), Brimsdown, Bishops Stortford, Cambridge, Ely and March. Thanks to *Gloster* on RailUKforums.

¹⁰⁸ Bradshaw's "General Railway and Steam Navigation Guide for Great Britain and Ireland", timetableworld.com/ttw-viewer.php?token=d8308b75-4484-4b84-a895-d30fe9c33100

Peterborough departure 1030, Blisworth arrival 1228 / departure 1233, Rugby arrival 1320 / departure 1515, Liverpool arrival 2100 (via Birmingham).

¹⁰⁹ Peterborough departure 0700, Gainsborough arrival 1050 / departure 1051 (connection) Manchester London Rd, arrival 1414 (Cross-City on foot or cab) / Manchester Victoria departure 1700, Liverpool arrival 1800. Thanks to *Sir Felix Pole* on RailUKforums for extracting those routes from Bradshaw's time tables.

luggage for the trip). This includes the person who sold him his train ticket. And he may have just chosen a bad time to leave London:¹¹⁰

The timing, of the last week in April 1851, is most interesting. This was immediately before the opening of the Great Exhibition, in Hyde Park, London by Queen Victoria on 1 May. This initiated the busiest ever period (up to that time) on the entire British railway system and probably the world. No fewer than six million people visited the Exhibition in the few months of its opening, at the rate of up to 100,000 per day. Many of these were from outside London and trains, hotels, etc. would generally have been rammed. Many excursions were chartered and relief trains run.

Paradoxically anyone leaving London would have stuck out like a sore thumb – “But you’ll miss the biggest show on earth!”

The jewellery, and the diamond merchants

Although the available descriptions of the stolen jewellery are limited in detail, it is interesting to examine the information we possess concerning both the stolen goods, and Thonen’s employers, the diamond merchants Jacques Schwabacher and Louis Birnstingl. To aid our understanding, we have incorporated insights provided by members of the *Antiquers* forum, an online community of antique jewellery enthusiasts, whose contributions we sincerely appreciate.¹¹¹

The advent of the industrial revolution ushered in a transformative era, enabling mass production of jewellery and subsequently driving down prices. Concurrently, the discovery of gold reserves in Australia and California contributed to an ample supply of these materials in the global market. The 1840s saw a substantial increase in middle-class incomes in Britain, creating a favorable environment for the affordability of jewellery among a broader segment of society. Notably, Queen Victoria herself was frequently adorned with exquisite jewels, exerting a significant influence on the prevailing fashion trends of her era.¹¹² The enduring impact of these trends on jewellery design can still be observed in the 20th century:¹¹³



Portrait of Queen Victoria by Franz Xaver Winterhalter (1859)

By the 1840s, diamond set floral bouquets were worn as brooches or in the hair with diamond drops (representing either seeds or rain drops) falling from the flower heads. These pieces are the predecessor for the 3-dimensional designs Cartier made popular more than 100 years later.

The newspaper articles reporting on the robbery provide several concise descriptions of the stolen jewellery. However, it is important to note that some of these descriptions are inconsistent, lacking in detail, or potentially inaccurate. Consequently, it proves challenging to

¹¹⁰ Quote by *Dr Hoo*, RailUKforums, 23 September 2022. www.railforums.co.uk/threads/reconstructing-a-diamond-robbers-escape-route.237473/page-2#post-5860061

¹¹¹ See the discussion at Rene_R (Bamberger, D.): “Diamond jewellery stolen in 1851”, in: Antiquers forum, 1 July 2023. www.antiquers.com/threads/diamond-jewellery-stolen-in-1851.79180

¹¹² A fine example is the 1859 Winterhalter portrait. commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Queen_Victoria_-_Winterhalter_1859.jpg

¹¹³ Levys: “Victorian Jewelry and Fashion Styles From 1837-1901”, in: History of Jewelry. levysfinejewelry.com/pages/victorian-jewelry-and-fashion

extract substantial information about the stolen goods beyond the most fundamental aspects; to quote the relevant passages:

- *The property stolen consists of a necklace, forming two bracelets, a pair of earrings, a brooch, and centre piece of a necklace, also forming a brooch, with drops – value £450.*
- *The value of the diamonds, according to the London papers, is estimated at £4,500 [£450?].*
- *[A] diamond bracelet, value £100, a diamond stomacher, value £130, two diamond bracelets, value £160 [£60?], and two diamond ear-rings, value £160 [£60?], diamonds to the total value of some £450 [£550?].*
- *[T]wo large diamond brooches, the centre-piece, a brooch of a diamond stomacher, and a pair of diamond bracelets. Prisoner told me he had taken off the pendants or drops from the centre ornament, and had taken the stones out and sold them [...] five carats of diamonds, for £25.*
- *I proceeded to sell the diamond drops as soon as I landed again in Liverpool. I only got £3 per carat, so I did not sell more than sufficient to meet my urgent necessities, as I intended making restitution of the whole of the property at a future time.*
- *I afterwards found, on searching the prisoner's pocket-book, a duplicate or memorandum of a pair of brilliant earrings, deposited at [a pawnbroker] for £40. Prisoner said these earrings, together with the pendants he broke off the centre-piece, and the other articles produced, formed the complete suite of diamonds. The other portions of the pendants, consisting of the settings, were obtained by another officer.*
- *The property produced, consisting of two bracelets, brooches, stomacher brooch, ear-rings, etc., is worth £450 at the wholesale value, as charged in the invoice. The pendants have been taken off the centre piece and the diamonds taken out. I can identify the settings as my property, but the loose diamonds I can only presume belong to me.*

What we can say is that the jewellery consisted of approximately six individual pieces, presumably silver jewellery adorned with diamonds. The centerpiece was adorned with drops and bejewelled with stones weighing at least five carats.

The cumulative value of the jewellery, £450 in 1851, would be equivalent to approximately £80,000 in 2023.¹¹⁴ However, considering the lower value of diamonds at the time (relative to other gemstones like rubies, sapphires and emeralds), it is plausible that the pieces may hold a present-day value that is significantly higher than £80,000.

The biographies of the diamond merchants themselves are unusual, and may be important for understanding Thonen's involvement in their firm, as well as the later reception of his role in the Eureka Rebellion. Because of their potential relevance, we will spend the rest of this chapter giving a more detailed account of their lives and work.

Jacques (Jacob) Schwabacher,¹¹⁵ a Hungarian Jew, was born on 20 February 1821 in Pozsony (now Bratislava) in what is now Slovakia, then a part of the Austrian Empire, to parents Simon Schwabacher and Babette Goldschmidt. The father was a merchant. In the 1830s, the family moved to Vienna, Austria.¹¹⁶

Jacques had at least eight siblings.¹¹⁷ A brother Maurice (Moritz) was born in Pozsony in 1825. In 1862 Maurice married his niece Rosa in Vienna.¹¹⁸ Later he moved to England, where he

¹¹⁴ At an average inflation rate of 3.06%, £450 in 1851 are worth £80,375.08 in 2023; compare www.officialdata.org/uk/inflation/1851?endYear=2023&amount=450

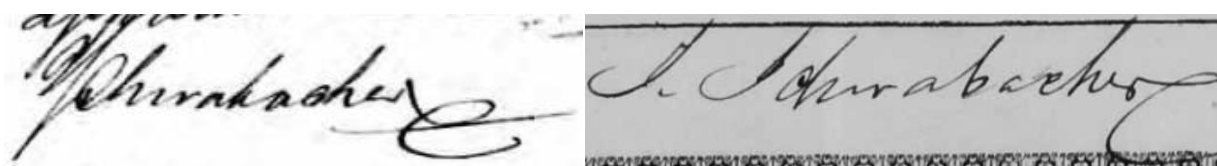
¹¹⁵ Some additional information and links to sources about the two diamond merchants can be found at www.wikitree.com/wiki/Schwabacher-5 and www.wikitree.com/wiki/Birnstingl-2.

¹¹⁶ Österreich, Niederösterreich, Wien, Matriken der Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde, 1784-1911, Wien (alle Bezirke) > Geburtsbücher > Geburtsbuch 1800-1836 > image 299 of 302; Israelitischen Kultusgemeinde Wien (Jewish Community of Vienna) Municipal and Provincial Archives of Vienna, Austria. www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9B29-83L?i=298

¹¹⁷ Compare the extensive family tree at www.geni.com/family-tree/index/6000000163813357835.

¹¹⁸ "Marriage of Moritz Schwabacher and Rosa Schwabacher, Vienna, 30 April 1862", in: Hungarian Marriages, LDS 2442338, item 4, image 62-03.

became a diamond merchant. In 1886 Maurice was naturalised as a British subject.¹¹⁹ A younger brother Leopold, born in Vienna in 1836, also moved to England.¹²⁰



Two instances of Jacques Schwabacher's signature. Left image: From his marriage record (19 May 1873); Right image: From his travel to England (7 November 1849)

Like his older brother Maurice, Jacques Schwabacher ventured into the diamond trade, before relocating to England in April 1848.¹²¹ In partnership with Jacques Bettelheim, Jacques Schwabacher's business operated from 65 Fenchurch Street, London. In early 1850 they moved their office to 8 Broad Street Buildings, but the business partnership ended on 15 March 1850.¹²² Schwabacher sought naturalization in England in 1851, which was granted the following year. During March 1851 he resided as a lodger of Frederick S. Lee at 56 Christopher Street, St. Luke, Finsbury. He returned to Fenchurch Street later that year. In January 1852 Schwabacher became a freemason.¹²³ Eventually he relocated from England to France, where he married Rachel Jenny Hirsch in 1873.¹²⁴ He continued his work as a diamond broker in France until his passing on 4 February 1886.

Louis (or Lewis) Birnstingl was born in the town of Arad, Hungary (now Romania), in 1818 or 1819. After the death of his father, Eisik Löb Birnstingl, from cholera in 1831,¹²⁵ Louis relocated to Pest (now Budapest) in modern-day Hungary. He pursued a career as a silversmith and diamond merchant. In 1838 he embarked on a journey to Australia, joining his older brother Maurice (more on that below).

After moving to England, Louis married Helen Levy (born in 1822, died in 1893) from Chelsea on 12 March 1851.¹²⁶ The marriage was announced two days later:¹²⁷

¹¹⁹ "Maurice Schwabacher", in: UK, Naturalisation Certificates and Declarations, 1870-1916, 1886. www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/75315:9156

¹²⁰ "Leopold Schwabacher", in: UK, Naturalisation Certificates and Declarations, 1870-1916, 1874. www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/87748:9156

¹²¹ "Jacques Schwabacher", in: England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869, The National Archives; London, England; Class Ho 2; Piece: 167; Certificate Number: 761.

"Jacob Schwabacher", in: England, Alien Arrivals, 1810-1811, 1826-1869, The National Archives; London, England; Class: Ho 2; Piece: 181; Certificate Number: 4175.

¹²² The London Gazette, Jan.-Apr.1850, page 811.

www.google.de/books/edition/The_London_Gazette/DRIKAQAAMAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=PA811

¹²³ "Jacques Schwabacher", in: England, United Grand Lodge of England Freemason Membership Registers, 1751-1921, London 'B', #116-1204, fols 1-180, www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1576863:60620

¹²⁴ "Jacques Schwabacher (52) marriage to Rachel Jenny Hirsch", in: Paris, France, Births, Marriages, and Deaths, 1680-1930, Archives de Paris; Paris, France; Etat Civil 1792-1902. www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/7915177:62058

¹²⁵ Kunz, E.F.: "Blood and Gold; Hungarians in Australia", 1969, page 20. Compare Felice S: "Eisik Löb Birnstingl". www.ancestry.de/family-tree/person/tree/166908362/person/262183709388/facts

¹²⁶ "Louis Bernstingl", in: England und Wales, ziviler Heiratsindex, 1837-1915. search.ancestry.de/cgi-bin/sse.dll?dbid=8913&h=2274913&indiv=try&vc=Record:OtherRecord&rhSource=61265

¹²⁷ „Marriages”, in: Evening Mail, 14 March 1851, page 8.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001316/18510314/052

„Marriages”, in: London Evening Standard, 14 March 1851, page 4.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000183/18510314/038

On the 12th inst., by the Rev. Dr. Adler, Louis Birnstingl, of Broad-street-buildings, and Hunter street, Brunswick-square, to Helen, third daughter of Nathaniel Levy, of 1, Upper Montague-street, Russell-square.

According to the census conducted on 31 March 1851, Louis was the head of the household at 38 Hunter Street, St. George, Bloomsbury, London. In the census records he is listed as a coral merchant, indicating possible business connections to the Middle East.

Louis Birnstingl's business partnership with Jacques Schwabacher was dissolved in October 1851.¹²⁸ He subsequently traveled to Australia, from where he returned in late 1853.¹²⁹ By 1856 he resumed trading under the firm name of Louis Birnstingl & Co. at 8 Broad Street Buildings, while also operating under the firm of Solomon Maurice & Co. in Sydney, Australia. On 9 February 1856 Louis Birnstingl declared bankruptcy.¹³⁰ Details from the proceedings of the bankruptcy court, as reported by the newspapers, are as follows:¹³¹

IN RE L. BIRNSTINGL.—[Before Mr. Commissioner FONBLANQUE.] The bankrupt was a merchant in Broad-street-buildings. His accounts, prepared by Messrs. Beesley and Franklin, show debts, £16,026; liabilities, £20,402; balance of consignments to the house of S. Maurice and Co., of Sidney, £14,211.

This was the examination meeting.

Mr. Linklater appeared for the assignees, and Mr. Lawrance for the bankrupt.

The Court was informed that the assets would produce little or nothing, except in the event of the bankrupt going to Australia, and making the best of the consignments.

The bankrupt passed; and it was understood that he should proceed to Australia for this purpose. In the meantime an allowance of £5 per week would be made to his wife, with whom he had received a fortune of £2,000.

Following his bankruptcy, it appears that Louis Birnstingl left the jewellery business. By 1861 he is listed as a naturalised British citizen, residing at 8 Tavistock Place, Bloomsbury.¹³² Throughout the 1860s he changed his residence multiple times (see footnotes on the following page) while he worked as a general merchant, selling anything from photographic equipment

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Partnership heretofore subsisting between us the undersigned, Louis Birnstingl and Jacques Schwabacher, of No. 8, Broad-street-buildings, in the city of London, lately carrying on business as Merchants and Commission Agents, under the firm of L. Birnstingl and Co. was, on the 1st day of this present month of October, dissolved by mutual consent. All debts due to and from the late partnership firm will be received and paid by the said Louis Birnstingl. —Dated this 9th day of October 1851.

*L. Birnstingl.
J. Schwabacher.*

The partnership of Schwabacher and Birnstingl is dissolved (1 October 1851).

CITY OF LONDON.
Mr. Spencer Perceval resumed his sitting this morning at the Court of Common Pleas, Guildhall, to revise the lists of voters for the City of London.
Mr. J. Campbell Smith and Mr. Thomas Roberts appeared on behalf of the Conservatives; and Messrs. Sidney Smith and Ledger for the Liberals.
In the course of the morning the Revising Barrister expunged the name of Louis Birnstingl, who failed to give satisfactory evidence as to his naturalisation in Australia.

Sources disagree whether Louis Birnstingl was a naturalised British citizen. (London Evening Standard, 23 September 1870, page 5)

„Marriages”, in: Morning Advertiser, 15 March 1851, page 8.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001427/18510315/047

For an interesting episode from the life of rabbi Adler, see “Adler Rabbi Nathan and Queen Victoria”, in: The Strange Side of Jewish History, 5 July 2016. strangeside.com/adler-rabbi-nathan-and-queen-victoria/

¹²⁸ The London Gazette, Sept.-Dec.1851, page 2545.

www.google.de/books/edition/The_London_Gazette/5hpKAQAAMAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=PA2545

¹²⁹ Kunz, E.F.: “Blood and Gold; Hungarians in Australia”, 1969, page 24.

¹³⁰ The London Gazette, February 1856, pages 714-715.

www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21853/page/714/data.pdf, [/issue/21853/page/715/data.pdf](http://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21853/page/715/data.pdf)

“Mercantile and Money Article”, in: The Sydney Morning Herald, 21 June 1856, page 7.

trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/28640397

¹³¹ “Court of bankruptcy, yesterday”, in: Morning Chronicle, 6 June 1856, page 8.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000082/18560606/026

¹³² “Louis Birnstingl”, in: 1861 England Census, www.ancestry.com/sharing/30461150?h=af5de3

to velocipedes. He had a shop at 20/21 Basinghall Street, London.¹³³ Birnstingl was a fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society since 1861,¹³⁴ of the Royal Society of Arts since 1862,¹³⁵ and of the Society of Hebrew Literature since at least 1873.¹³⁶

Birnstingl was involved as a photographer in documenting the 1862 International Exhibition. For the sum of £300, he received the exclusive rights to photograph during the erection of the exhibition building. For the occasion, he hired a selection of photographers to assist him. Birnstingl's winning offer triggered a controversy, and rumours were spread that he had obtained the permit illegally, and for a much higher sum than had actually been paid. Those rumours were quickly denied by the Secretary to Her Majesty's Commissioners, Francis Sandford:¹³⁷

In a recent issue of the Times, the following letter appeared, dated from the offices of the International Exhibition, and signed by F. R. Sandford, the Secretary to Her Majesty's Commissioners.

"The attention of Her Majesty's Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1862, has been drawn to certain erroneous statements which have appeared in the public press, with respect to the contract which they have entered into with Messrs. Birnstingl and Co. I am directed to request that you will have the goodness to make known, through your columns, that this contract refers only to photographing the building during the period of its erection; that it will expire on the 12th of February, 1862, the day on which articles will be first received into the Exhibition; and that in any subsequent arrangement which they may make, Her Majesty's Commissioners will certainly not grant permission to any one to take photographs, or drawings of any work of industry or art which may be intrusted to their care, without the express permission of the exhibitors."

Various rumours have been afloat as to the nature and terms of the contract for photographing the progress of the building. A photographic contemporary announced that the terms of the contract which was accepted, were simply an unconditional offer to double the amount of any other tender. The paragraph to which the letter of Mr. Sandford more especially refers, is, we believe, the following, which appeared in some of the minor prints:

"A firm in the City, it is said, has secured the rights to photograph everything exhibited at the Exhibition, and has, of course, paid handsomely for the right. Tenders were invited, and the firm alluded to offered £7,000, which is double the amount of any other tender."

[...]

The firm with whom the contract was made is that of L. Birnstingl and Co., foreign merchants. The bulk of the photography is executed, we believe, for the contractors, by Messrs. Cundall and Downes, by whom some very fine views of the progress of the building have been already produced.

¹³³ "Messrs. Birnstingl and Co.", in: Daily News (London), 10 May 1862, page 4.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0000051/18620510/005

"Velocipedes. L. Birnstingl and Co.", in: Echo (London), 30 July 1869, page 7.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0004596/18690730/082

¹³⁴ "XCVIII.—General Meeting, Nov. 4, 1861. Birnstingl, Louis, 7, Coleman Street, E.C.", in: Proceedings of the Royal Horticultural Society, volume 1, page 697.

www.google.de/books/edition/Proceedings_of_the_Royal_Horticultural_S/pWAhAQAAIAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=PA697

¹³⁵ "List of Members, with Date of Election. 1862. Birnstingl, Louis, 6 Little Winchester street, E.C.", in: Journal of the Society of Arts, volume XIV, page 5.

www.google.de/books/edition/Journal_of_the_Society_of_Arts/X1PaJzGWkPoC?gbpv=1&pg=RA3-PA5

¹³⁶ "Society of Hebrew Literature. Members. Louis Birnstingl, Esq.", in: Perush rabenu Avraham ibn 'Ezra 'al Yesha'yah, 1873, page 108.

www.google.de/books/edition/Perush_rabenu_Avraham_ibn_'Ezra_'al_Ye/5YlcAAAACAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=PT2

¹³⁷ "The photographic contract and the International Exhibition", in: The Photographic News, volume V, 11 October 1861, page 481.

www.google.de/books/edition/The_Photographic_News_A_Weekly_Record_of/8heI8rqJc8YC

More about Sandford can be found at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Sandford,_1st_Baron_Sandford.

Birnstingl continued to photograph at the exhibition after the end of his contract, acting as one of the exhibiting companies.¹³⁸ The rumours that he held a monopoly of some sort did not stop:¹³⁹

In a corner of one of these galleries the visitor will observe the photographic shed of Messrs. Birnstingl and Co., to whom the commissioners have conceded the sole right of photographing everything within the building for the consideration of a certain money payment. We cannot but consider the creation of this monopoly unfortunate. It is certainly contrary to the liberal spirit of the times; and – particularly in fine-art works and delicate objects of virtù, in which every body might like to employ his own photographer – will operate in a coercive manner hardly to be justified.

Besides photographing the various parts of the building in its progress, and the individual notabilities and other persons engaged in the works, Messrs. Birnstingl and Co., we understand, have it in contemplation to take photographs of all the guarantors (some twelve hundred in number) for the formation of a monster album, six copies of which will be placed in conspicuous parts of the building during the exhibition, and three of which will afterwards be presented to the South Kensington Museum, the Society of Arts, and some other public institution.

Reports of Birnstingl's involvement can also be found in a number of German newspapers at the time, most of which at least gave the correct sum he had paid for the license. They all insist that Birnstingl was German, which is not true:¹⁴⁰

Ein Deutscher, Birnstingl, hat für 300 Pfund das Privilegium erhalten, allein Photographien von der Ausstellung und dem Ausgestellten aufnehmen zu dürfen.

A German, Birnstingl, has received the privilege to take exclusive photographs of the exhibition and its exhibits for 300 pounds.

A selection of his photographs were reproduced and released for publication, while others were showcased at the exhibition, eliciting both positive and strongly negative critique. The

MESSRS. BIRNSTINGL and Co. would draw attention to the following, from among many favourable opinions of the Press upon their PHOTOGRAPHS:—
 "Sharpness of outline, accuracy of detail, being especially noticeable."—Daily News.
 "The building, from the Horticultural Gardens, being a gem of photographic art."—Thacker's Overland News.
 "The sharpness and delicacy of these productions render them valuable as works of art."—Morning Star.
 "They are remarkable at once for sharpness of detail and general truth of effect."—Daily Telegraph.
 "Mr. Birnstingl's views are perfect as photographic specimens."—Morning Herald.

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.—
 Visitors to the Exhibition are respectfully informed that PORTRAITS of all kinds are taken in the Royal Horticultural Gardens, and Albums, Photographic and Stereoscopic views of the Exhibition and Horticultural Gardens sold at the most reasonable terms.—L. BIRNSTINGL and CO.

FINE ART AND PHOTOGRAPHIC GALLERIES,
 230, REGENT STREET, W.
L. BIRNSTINGL AND CO.,
 Removed from the Royal Horticultural Gardens and the Exhibition to the above Address.
 Portraits taken in any Style. No Stairs. The Guarantors' Album is still progressing.

Advertisements for Birnstingl's art gallery (Daily News, 19 April 1862; Illustrated Sporting News, 11 October 1862; Weekly Chronicle, 30 May 1863)

¹³⁸ "Class 14. Photographic Aparatus and Photography. Central Tower and Gallery, North Court: 3042 BIRNSTINGL, L. & Co. 7, Coleman-st. E.C., Photographs", in: International Exhibition 1862. Official Catalogue of the Fine Art Department, 1862, page 49.

¹³⁹ "The International Exhibition of 1862", in: Illustrated London News, 28 September 1861, page 18. www.google.de/books/edition/International_Exhibition_1862/HzBbAAAAQAAJ?gbpv=1&pg=PA49
search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001578/18610928/070

For an example of one of his photographs, see Illustrated London News, 26 October 1861, page 5, search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0001578/18611026/016/0005; also compare www.flickr.com/photos/photohistorytimeline/50892944507/, and "Cat. No. 766-771", in: Photographic Exhibitions in Britain 1839-1865, peib.dmu.ac.uk.

¹⁴⁰ For one example, see Siegmund, W.: "Die Industrie-Ausstellung in London", in: Illustriertes Familienblatt zur Unterhaltung und Belehrung, 19 February 1862, page 83.

www.google.de/books/edition/Zeitbilder_Illustriertes_Familienblatt_zu/IUuTFviONSwC?gbpv=1&pg=PA83
 Newspapers from Austria, on the other hand, generally called Birnstingl *Austrian*. "Die Londoner Ausstellung in Wien", in: Wiener Depeschen, 3 April 1862, page 3.
www.google.de/books/edition/Wiener_Depeschen_red_von_A_Krawani/CCjXeBPqCasC?gbpv=1&pg=PP13

criticism extended beyond Birnstingl's establishment of a monopoly, encompassing assessments of the photographers' artistic merit:¹⁴¹

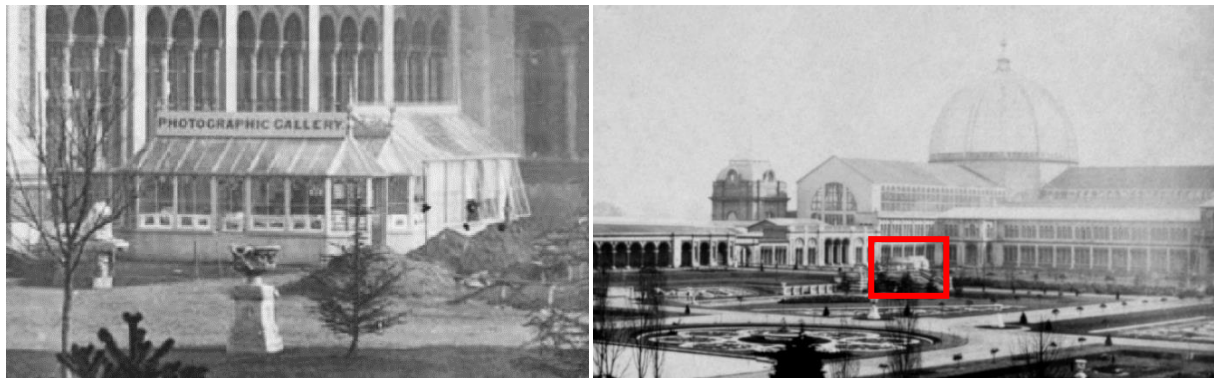
We come to a frame, or a series of frames by L. Birnstingl; as we stand before these, we pause and wonder, and as we remember that this department represents British photography, and that the world is invited to examine the display, we feel a hot flush, half of shame, and wholly of annoyance. These are portraits of the "Guarantors," the representative patrons of science and art in the country, and the portraiture is by the gentlemen who obtained the contract for photography in connection with the Exhibition whilst the building was in progress; so that these pictures possess a quasi-official character, and might naturally be regarded as in some sort representing national character and national photograph. We must confess we are truly sorry for it. The work is irredeemably bad in every sense.

On the other hand, it appears that Birnstingl's gallery was received well by the general public, who appreciated its accessibility. At least that's what the newspaper advertisements want to suggest:¹⁴²

There are some excellent photographs by Messrs. L. Birnstingl, the proprietors of the gallery, from well-known public characters, also from pictures which have become public favourites; and as no charge is made for admission there can be no interested motive in recommending a visit. For aged or lame persons desiring to be photographed a very ingeniously contrived "lift" has been constructed, to raise them without fatigue to the glass room at the top of the house; indeed it is of sufficient power to carry up a whole family, and enable them to meet the non-flattering photographic lens with a happy expression on their countenances.

The jurors' report of the exhibition judged Birnstingl's work harshly:¹⁴³

Many other contributors of this style of photograph display high qualities, whilst some, it is to be regretted, are shown, which illustrate how imperfectly an art distinguished generally by its truth can be practised; a series of card pictures by Birnstingl, purporting to be the portraits of the Guarantors of the International Exhibition, strikingly illustrates this bad eminence to which reference is made.



Birnstingl's "photographic gallery" at the Royal Horticultural garden (about 1862)

In a 2017 study about the photographic documentation of the Royal Horticultural Society, S. McDonald discusses an image of a studio that is believed to be Birnstingl's, saying:¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ The Photographic News, volume VI, number 200, 4 July 1862, pages 316-318.

www.flemingphotohistory.com/british-research/transcriptions/1860-1870/1862-pnews.htm

How much of this was simply art criticism, and how much was xenophobia or even antisemitism, we can not say.

¹⁴² "Fine arts. International photographic galleries, No. 230, Regent-street", in: Morning Herald (London), 20 July 1863, page 3. search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0002408/18630720/031

¹⁴³ "Pictures", in: International Exhibition Jurors' Reports, Class XIV.—Photography and Photographic Apparatus, page 11. www.google.de/books/edition/Jurors_Reports/7qk8he-Bvs4C?gbpv=1&pg=RA3-PA11

¹⁴⁴ McDonald, S.: "Urban landscape photography: documenting the RHS Kensington Gardens, 1859-1862", in: Occasional Papers from The RHS Lindley Library, volume 15, May 2017, pages 46-48. www.rhs.org.uk/about-us/pdfs/publications/lindley-library-occasional-papers/Vol-15-May-2017.pdf

[It] clearly shows a photographic studio just outside the Council Room. This is likely that of the Hungarian Louis Birnstingl, photographer to the Commissioners, and referred to many times in Council Minutes, not least because of the Society's ongoing attempts to evict him. Photography was still beyond the pocket and capabilities of the public, and Birnstingl provided a portrait studio for visitors to the Exhibition and gardens. (Lady Clementine Hawarden briefly set up a portrait booth in the gardens photographing partygoers in fancy dress, and may have borrowed Birnstingl's studio for the purpose.) Birnstingl did photograph the gardens, however – at least one stereo view of the interior of the conservatory is credited to him and he also applied to Council to photograph the fountains (RHS Kensington Garden Committee Minutes, Vol. II, p. 145).

Birnstingl did photographic work for the Royal Horticultural Society itself.¹⁴⁵ However, as McDonald has said, their relationship was difficult:¹⁴⁶

[Not unproblematic were the Society's] relations with the photographer Louis Birnstingl, who was allowed to erect a photographic studio within the garden, and then carried resistance to eviction to the point of applying for an injunction against the Society.

In 1863 the Society finally got rid of Birnstingl, and his gallery was moved from the Royal Horticultural Gardens to 230 Regent Street. He pursued the goal of finishing his “guarantors' album” for some time after the end of the exhibition.¹⁴⁷

By 1871 Louis Birnstingl had relocated to Kensington, and by 1881 he had moved to 26 Leinster Gardens, Paddington, where he continued to work as a general merchant. Louis Birnstingl passed away on 23 October 1889 at Hawthornden, Lawrie Pard Road, Sydenham, Kent, England.¹⁴⁸ Martin Birnstingl (born in 1924, died in 2011), a prominent vascular surgeon at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, and for some time president of the Vascular Society of Great Britain and Ireland, was his great-grandson, as is the classical bassoonist Roger Birnstingl (born in 1932).¹⁴⁹

Prior to his arrival in England, Louis had spent some time in Sydney, Australia, together with his brother Maurice (Moritz, Mauritius). They worked there as master silversmiths and importers of jewellery. In 1969, Egon F. Kunz highlighted in his book *Blood and Gold* the lives of the Birnstingl brothers and their significant involvement in the construction of a synagogue

The photograph was originally published in Thurston, C.: “The book of the Royal Horticultural Society”, 1863, archive.org/download/gri_33125010891220/gri_33125010891220.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ Arguably his most important work was a photograph of the fountain in the society's gardens, compare “Fountain in the Horticultural Gardens”, in: *The Illustrated London News*, 14 June 1862, volume 40, page 621. www.google.de/books/edition/The Illustrated London News/6mHBA1_Fa2EC?gbpv=1&pg=PA621

¹⁴⁶ Elliott, B.: “The Royal Horticultural Society. A History, 1804-2004”, 2004, page 71.

www.google.de/books/edition/The Royal Horticultural Society/-r8fAQAAIAAJ?gbpv=1&bsq=Birnstingl

¹⁴⁷ “Fine Art and photographic Galleries”, in: *Weekly Chronicle* (London), 30 May 1863, page 10.

search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl/0002267/18630530/058

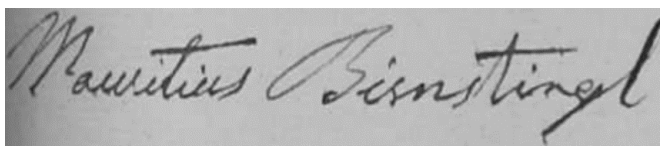
¹⁴⁸ “Louis Birnstingl”, in: *England und Wales, nationaler Nachlasskalender (Index von Testamenten und Verwaltungen)*, 1858-1995. www.ancestry.de/imageviewer/collections/1904/images/31874_222948-00040?pid=5146990

¹⁴⁹ Via Avigdor Lewis Birnstingl (1853-1924) and Charles Avigdor Birnstingl (1895-1971). See “Martin Birnstingl”, obituary, in: *The Telegraph*, 1 April 2011. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/medicine-obituaries/8422225/Martin-Birnstingl.html

“Birnstingl, Martin Avigdor (1924-2011)”, obituary, in: *Royal College of Surgeons of England*, [livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/client/en_GB/lives/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ASSET\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ASSET:373499/one?](https://livesonline.rcseng.ac.uk/client/en_GB/lives/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ASSET$002f0$002fSD_ASSET:373499/one?)

Also see Wolff, S.: “Martin Avigdor Birnstingl Dr”, in: *Susanne Wolff family tree*, www.ancestry.de/family-tree/person/tree/60211825/person/40130670185/facts; and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Birnstingl for more about Roger Birnstingl.

in Sydney in 1845. A review of the book was published in the Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society in 1970:¹⁵⁰



[W]e meet Isaac Friedman, the first Hungarian in Australian history. He arrived in 1833 and was prominent in establishing the Hobart congregation. His changing fortunes have been repeatedly referred to in the Proceedings of this Society, which are often quoted and acknowledged by the author. Friedman was followed in 1838 by Maurice Birnstingl, who together with his brother Lewis, was among the first outstanding silversmiths in Sydney. They were also generous contributors to the Synagogue Building Fund in 1845.

Maurice Birnstingl's signature (17 December 1836). We could not locate a signature of his brother Louis.

In 1854 Maurice Birnstingl moved to Marseille in France, where he spent the rest of his life.¹⁵¹

For further discussion of the role that Louis Birnstingl's "Australian connection" may have played in the claims that Edward Thonen himself was Jewish, see the chapter [Claims of Jewish descent](#).

Why did Thonen come to England?

Peter FitzSimons has speculated that Thonen had been expelled from Prussia after the Revolutions of 1848/1849, and that this is why he moved to England.¹⁵² While we now know that Thonen was not expelled, FitzSimons may have a point: England was considered a kind of safe haven for political refugees from Germany, and Thonen may have been among those who found it more suitable than his homeland Prussia.¹⁵³

The true motivations driving Thonen's journey to England remain elusive. It is plausible that this endeavour was merely his initial foray into seeking his fortune abroad, a pursuit he contemplated multiple times during the remaining four years of his life.

Thonen's older brother Friedrich Adolph was trained in England as a merchant, and Edward's travel may have had a similar purpose.¹⁵⁴ It is also possible that he was sent to England to facilitate some business transaction. A lot of Germans came to London to do business, especially if they saw no good opportunities in their home market. The fact that Thonen met an acquaintance of his family upon arrival suggests that the trip had been prearranged. Thonen kept in touch with his family and friends in Germany, indicating that they endorsed the journey.¹⁵⁵ Nonetheless, it is conceivable that he may have been dispatched against his own volition. It is evident that something went awry along the way. Even though the intended purpose of Thonen's travel was possibly rendered obsolete due to his possessions being stolen

¹⁵⁰ Kunz, E.F.: "Blood and Gold; Hungarians in Australia", 1969.

www.google.de/books/edition/Blood_and_Gold_Hungarians_in_Australia/9lkhAAAAMAAJ

"Blood and Gold" (book review), in: Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, volume 6, part 8, 1970, pages 549-550. ajhs.collectiveaccess.au/Detail/objects/52866. Reviews also appeared in the Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society, volume 56, part 2, June 1970; and in Jewish News, 1 March 1970.

¹⁵¹ Kunz, E.F.: "Blood and Gold; Hungarians in Australia", 1969, page 24.

¹⁵² FitzSimons, P.: "Eureka: The Unfinished Revolution", 2012, pages 309-310.

¹⁵³ Ashton, R.: "Little Germany: Exile and Asylum in Victorian England", Oxford University Press, 1986.

¹⁵⁴ "Thönen. Personalbogen und Foto", in: StadtA OF M 597, Haus der Stadtgeschichte Offenbach.

¹⁵⁵ Thonen wrote letters to Germany when he was about to leave London, and again immediately before he boarded the ship to leave Liverpool with the diamonds. Those letters are not preserved, but their existence is inferred from the testimony of Thonen and others at his trial. It demonstrates that he was still somewhat close to his friends and family.

around the New Year of 1851, he made the decision (or was compelled) to stay in England. Thonen tried to hide certain facts from his parents. He stated at the trial that he did not wish his father to learn that he had been robbed:¹⁵⁶

[W]hen I came to London in December last I was robbed of all the money I had in my possession at the time, amounting to £25, since which I have been with the prosecutors. I should not wish this to reach my poor old father's ears (here tears filled the prisoners eyes, and his voice assumed a most feeling tone) as he is now nearly seventy years of age, and it might be attended with fatal consequences to him.

That is peculiar, considering he was willing to confess to his friends in Germany that he had committed a robbery and would flee to America, objectively a more serious matter:

I then very imprudently wrote to my friends, stating all my circumstances, and foolishly addressed it via London and Ostend. That letter was opened at the London Post-office, and has thereby been the means of putting the officer on my track.

back. The captain told me it would start on the 2d of May for certain ; and I then very imprudently wrote to my friends, stating all my circumstances, and foolishly addressed it via London and Ostend. That letter was opened at the London Post-office, and has thereby been the means of putting the officers on my track. A steamer ran into the Camilla, and being in danger of foundering, she was obliged to put back into port. Having very little money left,

Was the initial purpose of his journey so important to his family that it outweighed his crime, or had he asked his friends to keep his fate a secret? Thonen's letter is not preserved, so we may never know.

Emigration to Australia

After his release from prison, and his subsequent return to Prussia in the summer of 1852, Edward Thonen did not pursue his earlier plans to move to Africa or America. Instead, he set his eyes on a new goal: Australia.

German newspapers at the time were full of enthusiastic reports of gold strikes in Victoria and New South Wales, and of the rising number of Britons who returned from trips to Australia with large sums of money.¹⁵⁷ Edward's mother had passed away in May 1852; his father and brother moved from Elberfeld to Offenbach am Main in July 1853. It is unclear if Edward ever considered to join them. In March 1853 Edward's father requested permission for his son to be released from military service, and to be allowed to emigrate to Australia. The documents regarding this request are kept at the State Archive of North Rhine-Westphalia.¹⁵⁸ We learned of these documents from an entry on the website genealogy.net, which listed the source (Auswanderer aus dem Rheinland 12/13; Landesarchiv NRW, Auswanderer aus dem Rheinland, BR 0007 552 188).¹⁵⁹ It was Florian Straub at the *Germany Connector's Challenge*

¹⁵⁶ "Singular Case of Diamond Stealing", in: Morning Chronicle, 10 May 1851, page 7.

¹⁵⁷ To give just two examples:

"Großbritannien", in: Düsseldorfer Journal und Kreisblatt, 1 February 1853, page 2.

zeitpunkt.nrw/download/webcache/1504/8835358

"Großbritannien", in: Düsseldorfer Journal und Kreisblatt, 14 April 1853, pages 1-2.

zeitpunkt.nrw/download/webcache/1504/8835606

¹⁵⁸ Landesarchiv NRW, KREIS ELBERFELD: Specialia I e 20 552-554 Bd. 1-3 1852-1858 / 1347226 / 8207352, familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLY-D9N7-B

¹⁵⁹ Dosch, F.: "Auswanderer aus dem Rheinland 12/13", 12 April 2015.

gedbas.genealogy.net/person/show/1160126444

The same source also mentions Edward's brother Friedrich Adolph ([/person/show/1160126445](http://person/show/1160126445)) and his sister Rosalie ([/person/show/1160126446](http://person/show/1160126446)), who moved to Offenbach am Main and Frankfurt, respectively. See the section [Origins and extended family](#) for a discussion of Friedrich Adolph's request to relocate to Offenbach, and the section about [Edward Thonen's physical appearance](#) for a photograph of the brother.

who got in contact with the state archive, and who then forwarded to us the documents that are described below.

We are not the first to discover these documents, although we found them independently. Michael Knieriem, director of the Historical Centre in Wuppertal, already mentions them in a 1998 newspaper article. Knieriem's article is mostly correct, apart from a few minor mistakes (see chapter [What was known in Germany about Eureka?](#)) and the omission of Thonen's time in England of which he was unaware; more about this in the section [What was known in Germany about Eureka](#), as well as the chapter about the song [German Teddy](#). It is unfortunate that we did not know of Knieriem's work until late into our research.

On 4 March 1853 Edward's father submitted the request on his son's behalf. That first letter apparently has not survived, but on 29 March Elberfeld's mayor forwarded the request to the Royal District Office, to check if Edward's military unit had any objections:

Die Entlassung des Superrevidenden Eduard Thönen aus dem Reserve-Verhältniß der Landwehr betreffend.

Elberfeld am 29. März 1853

An das Königliche Landraths-Amt hier:

Der Kaufmann Adolph Friedrich Thönen hierselbst hat das anliegende Schreiben vom 4. März nebst der darin bezogenen Anlage mit dem Gesuche übergeben, Hohern Orts die Entlassung seines Sohnes Eduard, welcher nach Australien auszuwandern wünsche, aus dem Landwehr-Reserve-Verhältniß zu erwirken.

Da diessseits diesem Gesuche nichts entgegensteht, so bitte ich das Königliche Landraths-Amt ergebenst, dasselbe geneigtest befürwortend, weiter befördern zu wollen.

Der Bürgermeister

Regarding the discharge of superrevidend Eduard Thönen from the reserve status of the Landwehr.

Elberfeld, March 29, 1853

To the Royal District Office here:

The merchant Adolph Friedrich Thönen, residing here, has submitted the attached letter of March 4th, along with the enclosed attachment, with the request to obtain the discharge of his son Eduard from the Landwehr reserve, as he wishes to emigrate to Australia.

As there is no objection to this request from our side, I kindly request the Royal District Office to further support and facilitate the request.

The Mayor

The Royal District Office replied on 13 April that the Landwehr battalion Essen,¹⁶⁰ Edward's military unit, approved of his release from the reserve:

Wird br. m. der Königl. Regierung zu Düsseldorf mit der gehorsamsten Bitte vorgelegt, die beantragte Entlassung des g. Thönen aus dem Reserve-Verhältniß geneigtest erwirken zu wollen, da das Landwehrebataillon Essen nach dem den Anlagen angeschlossenen Schreiben dem Gesuche nichts entgegen zu stellen hat.

Elberfeld den 13. April 1853, der Königl. Landrath.

Der Kaufmann Adolph Friedrich Thönen hierselbst hat das anliegende Schreiben vom 4. März nebst der darin bezogenen Anlage mit dem Gesuche übergeben, Hohern Orts die Entlassung seines Sohnes Eduard, welcher nach Australien auszuwandern wünsche, aus dem Landwehr-Reserve-Verhältniß zu erwirken. Da diessseits diesem Gesuche nichts entgegensteht, so bitte ich das Königliche Landraths-Amt ergebenst, dasselbe geneigtest befürwortend, weiter befördern zu wollen.

Wird br. m. der Königl. Regierung zu Düsseldorf mit der gehorsamsten Bitte vorgelegt, die beantragte Entlassung des g. Thönen aus dem Reserve-Verhältniß geneigtest erwirken zu wollen, da das Landwehrebataillon Essen nach dem den Anlagen angeschlossenen Schreiben dem Gesuche nichts entgegen zu stellen hat.

Elberfeld den 13 April 1853
Der Königl. Landrath.

¹⁶⁰ An infantry regiment within the Prussian army. The full name of the unit is *Landwehr-Bataillon 36. Infanterie-Regiment, 4. Reserve-Regiment, IV. Armee-Korps*. See Hirtenfeld, J.: "Allgemeines militärisches Handbuch", 1854, page 121. books.google.de/books?id=QimSlrx3R4cC&pg=PA121

Its draw area included the districts of Essen, Elberfeld and Barmen, compare Prager, C.J.: "Das Preussische Militär-Medicinal-Wesen in seiner gegenwärtigen Gestalt", volume 2, 1865, page 16. books.google.de/books?id=Q-UAAAAcAAJ&pg=PA16

It is respectfully submitted to the Royal Government in Düsseldorf with the humble request to kindly obtain the requested discharge of the aforementioned Thönen from the reserve, since the Landwehr battalion Essen, according to the attached letter, has no objection to the request.

Elberfeld, April 13, 1853, the Royal District Officer.

On 18 April the department of the interior asked the police department for clarification regarding Thonen's reason to emigrate:

Br. man mir nebst den Anlagen an den Herrn Polizei Director zu Elberfeld einen Bericht über die gewöhnlichen Verhältnisse des Eduard Thönen und den Grund der beabsichtigten Auswanderung.

Düsseldorf den 18ten April 1853, Königl. Regierung Abtl. d. Innern

Please send me, along with the attachments to the Police Director in Elberfeld, a report on the usual circumstances of Eduard Thönen and the reason for his intended emigration.

Düsseldorf, April 18, 1853, Royal Government, Department of the Interior.

The reason for the request is stated in the police department's response from 22 April:

Wird der Königlichen Regierung, Abtheilung des Innern zu Düsseldorf bem. mit dem ganz gehorsamsten Bemerken wieder vorgelegt, daß Thönen die Handlung erlernt hat und die Hoffnung hegt sich in Australien eine sichere Existenz zu gründen, wozu er hier noch keine Gelegenheit gefunden hat.

Elberfeld, den 22. April 1853.

The Royal Government, Department of the Interior in Düsseldorf, is respectfully informed once again that Thönen has been trained as a merchant, and hopes to establish a secure existence in Australia, for which he has not yet found an opportunity here.

Elberfeld, April 22, 1853.

On 27 April the department of the interior asked the police department for Edward's travel passport and his police clearance certificate. Once the documents had been provided by Edward Thonen, they were handed over to the department of the interior on 21 May, who found them satisfactory.

On 28 May Edward Thonen was given permission to emigrate, following his formal release from the Prussian military and the revocation of his Prussian citizenship:

Entlassungs-Urkunde

Die unterzeichnete Königliche Regierung bescheinigt hierdurch, daß dem Eduard Thönen aus Elberfeld, 26 Jahre alt, Landmann I. Aufgebotes, auf sein Ersuchen und Behufs seiner Auswanderung nach Australien, die Entlassung aus dem Preussischen Unterthanen-Verbande bewilligt worden ist. Die Entlassungs-Urkunde bewirkt, ~~jedoch nur für der darin ausdrücklich genannten Personen~~ den g. Thönen, mit dem Zeitpunkte der Aushändigung den Verlust der Eigenschaft als Preussischer Unterthan.

Düsseldorf, den 28ten Mai 1853.

Königlich Preussische Regierung

Discharge Certificate

*The undersigned Royal Government hereby certifies that Eduard Thönen from Elberfeld, 26 years old, a Landmann of first draft, has been granted discharge from the Prussian citizenship upon his request and for the purpose of his emigration to Australia. The discharge certificate causes, ~~but only for the subjects listed herein~~ **but only** for the subjects listed herein aforementioned Thönen, the loss of his status as a Prussian citizen from the moment of its delivery.*

Düsseldorf, May 28, 1853.

The Royal Prussian Government

That certificate was handed out to Thonen on 30 May.

In the documents, Thonen is called a *Landmann ersten Aufgebots*, which means a member of the military who is drafted as a reservist, and a *Superrevidend*. In the context of the Prussian military, with its mandatory conscription, the term *Superrevidend* describes someone who was initially drafted into a military unit, but was found unsuitable at the time, and was released, while still retaining the status of a reservist.¹⁶¹ Essentially, Thonen had been withdrawn from service at some point (possibly immediately) after finishing his basic military training. It is unknown what exactly made him unsuitable for regular military service.¹⁶²

Among the documents listed as necessary for the permission, and which Edward Thonen had submitted, are a Prussian passport and a police clearance certificate. Neither of those would have been available if FitzSimons's theory was correct that Thonen had been expelled from Prussia for participation in the 1849 revolt. He was a regular Prussian citizen, up to the day he got permission to move to Australia.

We could not determine when exactly Thonen left Germany, or when he arrived in Australia. People sometimes announced their emigration in local newspapers, and we looked for an announcement of his emigration in newspapers from the Elberfeld area, but could not find one. He is last mentioned in Prussia on 30 May 1853, the day his discharge certificate was handed out to him. We were also unable to find him in passenger lists of ships leaving Europe for Australia (with his most likely destination having been Melbourne), nor in immigration records in Australian archives, but both of these historical records are known to be incomplete. After losing his Prussian citizenship, Thonen would have been forced to leave Prussia basically immediately, although his departure for Australia could still have taken a couple of weeks, depending on which port he intended to depart from.¹⁶³

There are eyewitness accounts that claim to know when Thonen arrived in Australia. In general, it is difficult to determine their veracity, and they are of limited use overall. One example, which incorrectly claims that Thonen was Polish, is quoted below:¹⁶⁴

The first I recognised was little Thoneman, the lemonade man. He was a Polish refugee, coming to Australia with Dr. Woinarski's father, about the same time that Kossuth took refuge in England.

We know from Carboni's accounts that Thonen was present at the goldfields of Ballarat no later than November 1853. According to the Immigration Museum of Victoria, travel time from Europe to Australia was at least 68 days.¹⁶⁵ There are no more than 184 days between Thonen's

¹⁶¹ Keller, C.: "Militär-Strafgesetzbuch für das Deutsche Reich. Nach den Motiven und Kommissions-Verhandlungen erläutert von C. Keller, Königl. Preuß. Geheimen Justiz-Rath, Mitglied des General-Auditoriums", Berlin, 1872, page 90.

¹⁶² One possibility is that he lied. If Thonen did not care for military service and sought to escape, feigning some medical condition may have been effective.

¹⁶³ Ignoring ports in the United Kingdom (which may have been off limits to Thonen, following his imprisonment and subsequent return to Prussia), Hamburg and Amsterdam have been some of the more popular departure ports for ships from Europe to Australia.

¹⁶⁴ "Gold-Seekers of the Fifties. The Fall of Eureka", in: *The Argus*, 24 June 1899, page 4, trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/9520758. The account refers to the Hungarian revolutionary Lajos Kossuth, and mentions George Gustave Zichy-Woinarski (born about 1825, died in 1891 in Melbourne), whose son Stanislaus John Emil Anthony practiced medicine in Ballarat for many years; compare victoriancollections.net.au/items/5ea57bd921ea6706d0e38f64. Some of Zichy-Woinarski's children (like his son Casimir Julius, who became a lawyer) played important roles in the history of Victoria.

¹⁶⁵ "Journeys to Australia", museums.victoria.com.au/immigrationmuseum/resources/journeys-to-australia/

last mention in Prussia (30 May 1853), and his first mention in Ballarat (before 1 December 1853), placing his arrival somewhere between August and November of that year.

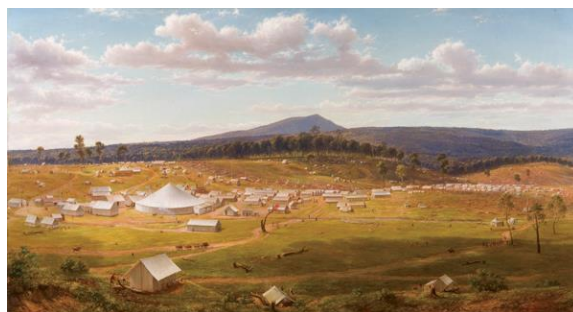
Thonen's death record gives the time since his arrival in Victoria as two years.¹⁶⁶ This could mean that he was thought to have arrived as early as December 1852. However, we believe this would be reading too much into it. Not only could *two years* conceivably mean anything between 13 and 35 months, but the death record, which was only issued in June 1855, may date back his arrival from that point, rather than from the day of his death.

Considering everything we know, it appears that Thonen probably arrived in Victoria during the early (southern) spring of 1853, and then moved to Ballarat shortly after his arrival.

His time in Australia

Much has been written about the events of 3 December 1854, and the weeks leading up to it. A comprehensive discussion of the Eureka Rebellion would be beyond the scope of this work. What we are interested in is how Edward Thonen was involved in the events; in particular:

- what role he played in the diggers' meetings,
- how he may have influenced their decision process,
- what he did at the stockade,
- how he died, and
- how he is remembered today, and by his contemporaries.



Ballarat's tent city in the summer of 1853/54

There are concrete sources that answer some of those questions, in the form of vital records and eyewitness accounts. Others are contradictory, or speculative. We will discuss sources of both type in the following sections.

Carboni's eyewitness accounts

Among the most important sources for the history of the Eureka Rebellion are the eyewitness accounts of one of the rebels, an Italian named Raffaello Carboni, who survived and published a book about the events in 1855. In his report titled *The Eureka stockade: The Consequence of Some Pirates Wanting on Quarter-deck a Rebellion*, Carboni refers to Thonen a number of times.¹⁶⁷ The excerpts below are from pages 45, 48, 58, 69-71, and 74:¹⁶⁸

PETER LALOR, at our request, called in all the captains of division, then present, and the chief persons who had taken part in the movement. We entered a room some twelve feet square, in Diamond's store. An old European fox for such occasions, I took the right sort of precautions, that no spy might creep in among us. Black bottles

¹⁶⁶ Death Index (Victoria Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages). Index entry for Edward THONEN.

www.bdm.vic.gov.au/research-and-family-history/search-your-family-history

¹⁶⁷ Carboni does not always refer to Thonen directly by name. For example, in the first quote, Carboni talks about „all the captains of division“. Thonen is known from other sources to be one of those.

¹⁶⁸ Carboni, R.: "The Eureka stockade: The Consequence of Some Pirates Wanting on Quarter-deck a Rebellion", 1855. gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00015.html

and tumblers were placed on the table, as a blind to any intruder; “et nunc satis, profani vulgus causa,”¹⁶⁹ we proceeded to business.

Present—

[...]

4. EDWARD THONEN, a native of Elbertfeld, Prussia, five feet high, some thirty years old, thin, but robust, of vigorous health, used no razor. His eyes spoke determination and independence of character. One day in November, 1853, he called with his lemonade kegs at my hole in Sailors’ Gully. A mate was served with a glass of lemonade—halloo! he must help at the windlass just at the moment he was tendering payment, and the shilling fell to the ground. Some words passed to the effect that six-pence a glass should be enough for lemonade. Thonen asked for his shilling; my mate directed him where the shilling lay; Thonen would see him d—d first before picking up his money like a dustman, and went away. I sent that identical shilling (stamped 1844), along with my little gold, to Rome; most astonishing! I had the presentiment at the time that I should have had occasion to relate the story. There was no mate on the gold-fields to match Thonen at chess-playing. He would turn his head, allow his opponent the move, and then he would give such a glance on the chess board, that the right piece would jump to the right place, as it were of its own accord. Shrewd, yet honest; benevolent, but scorning the knave; of deep-thought, though prompt in action; Thonen possessed the head belonging to that cast of men whose word is their bond.

[...]

I commended, in high terms, the conduct of Lalor during the morning, and it was my impression that he possessed the confidence of the diggers and should be their Commander-in-chief.

Thonen seconded the motion. The first “unnamed”, shewed approbation, and the appointment was carried by a majority of eleven to one.

[...]

Of course something must be done. Thonen was the purveyor. The Eureka butcher on the hill gave plenty of meat, and plenty of bread was got from all the neighbouring stores, and paid for. A large fire was lit in the middle of the stockade, and thus some were made as comfortable as circumstances admitted; others were quartered at the tents of friends; the greater part, soon guessing how they had been humbugged, returned to their old quarters.

[...]

I RAN up to the stockade to remonstrate with Peter Lalor, for whom I had too much respect to think for one moment, that he had any hand, and much less that he had sanctioned, such suicidal proceedings.

Thanks to the password; I entered within the stockade. It must have been not far from midnight. I found everything comparatively quiet; the majority were either asleep or warming themselves round the big fire. I spoke in German face to face, for the last time, with Thonen. M’Gill and two-thirds of the Independent Californian Rangers’ Rifle Brigade, in accordance with the avocation expressed in the title, were out “starring” to intercept reinforcements reported on the road from Melbourne. Neelson and his division were off for the same purpose. Was their lot that of Lot’s wife?

Sir Charles Hotham must have possessed the rod of Moses to convert the quartz of Victoria into red coats, as numerous as the locusts that plagued Pharaoh’s land. The Local Court of Ballarat should recommend His Excellency to carry out the “abolition of shepherding at Sebastopol.”

I asked Thonen to see Lalor. I was answered that Peter, from sheer exhaustion, must rest for an hour or two, and was asleep.

Myself not having closed an eye since Thursday, I felt severely the want of sleep. Is not sabbath-keeping our day’s cant in the English language? Anyhow it must be admitted, in justice to both silver and gold lace, that they take it in good earnest: to keep the sabbath is a holy and wholesome thing for them. I do not remember what was my frame of mind at the time I wished Thonen good night; very probably, “Enough for the day, the morrow will have its own troubles.” at any rate, Thonen gave word to the “outposts”, chiefly Californians to let me pass to my tent: and having thrown myself on my stretcher, with every thing quiet round about, I soon fell asleep.

[...]



Raffaello Carboni
(1817-1875)

¹⁶⁹ Literally „and now enough, for the sake of the profane crowd”. The first part indicates that nothing else needs to be said, or that attention must be turned to a more important task. The second part suggests that an action is carried out of which the general public possesses no knowledge.

I awoke. Sunday morning. It was full dawn, not daylight. A discharge of musketry—then a round from the bugle—the command “forward”—and another discharge of musketry was sharply kept on by the red-coats (some 300 strong) advancing on the gully west of the stockade, for a couple of minutes.

The shots whizzed by my tent. I jumped out of the stretcher and rushed to my chimney facing the stockade. The forces within could not muster above 150 diggers.

The shepherds’ holes inside the lower part of the stockade had been turned into rifle-pits, and were now occupied by Californians of the I.C. Rangers’ Brigade, some twenty or thirty in all, who had kept watch at the “outposts” during the night.

Ross and his division northward, Thonen and his division southward, and both in front of the gully, under cover of the slabs, answered with such a smart fire, that the military who were now fully within range, did unmistakably appear to me to swerve from their ground: anyhow the command “forward” from Sergeant Harris was put a stop to. Here a lad was really courageous with his bugle. He took up boldly his stand to the left of the gully and in front: the red-coats “fell in” in their ranks to the right of this lad. The wounded on the ground behind must have numbered a dozen.

[...]

A full discharge of musketry from the military, now mowed down all who had their heads above the barricades. Ross was shot in the groin. Another shot struck Thonen exactly in the mouth, and felled him on the spot.

[...]

I hastened, and what a horrible sight! Old acquaintances crippled with shots, the gore protruding from the bayonet wounds, their clothes and flesh burning all the while. Poor Thonen had his mouth literally choked with bullets;¹⁷⁰ my neighbour and mate Teddy More, stretched on the ground, both his thighs shot, asked me for a drop of water. Peter Lalor, who had been concealed under a heap of slabs, was in the agony of death, a stream of blood from under the slabs, heavily forcing its way down hill.

Considering the timing of Thonen’s arrival, the story of the November 1853 “coin incident” may be Carboni recalling the first time he ever met Thonen, who clearly left an impression on him.

Assessing the reliability of Carboni as a witness has proved challenging. He was a complex figure, far from a neutral observer, with his writings often influenced by his political motivations. From Carboni’s perspective, Lieutenant-Governor Charles Hotham shouldered the greatest responsibility for the massacre. Carboni overlooked that Hotham himself grappled with conflicting motivations and had shown some degree of sympathy towards the miners’ cause. According to the historian Geoffrey Blainey,¹⁷¹

[Hotham’s royal commission] *was perhaps the most generous concession offered by a governor to a major opponent in the history of Australia up to that time. The members of the commission were appointed before Eureka... they were men who were likely to be sympathetic to the diggers.*

Carboni also held strong and, at times, enigmatic opinions regarding his comrades, leaving his underlying motivations unclear. Nevertheless, many of the narratives he recounts from the goldfields find corroboration among other eyewitnesses. We conclude that a substantial portion of his writings accurately portrays the events.

Thonen’s role at Eureka

Thonen was known on the goldfields as a *lemonade seller*. The meaning of that term may be ambiguous, as Anne Beggs-Sunter has clarified in an email to us:¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Footnote from the original: *Carl Wiesenhavern has one of those bullets in his possession.*

For a biography of Carl Friedrich Wiesenhavern (1828-1915), compare [wikitree.com/wiki/Wiesenhavern-2](https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Wiesenhavern-2).

¹⁷¹ Blainey, G.: “Eureka – meanings”, speech, given at the 2004 Democracy Conference Ballarat. Compare en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Hotham

¹⁷² Beggs-Sunter, A.: “Re: Edward Thonen”, email, received by Greg Young, 13 September 2022, 4:43 p.m.

Lemonade seller/ lemonade tent was often used on the goldfields as a euphemism for sly grog seller, especially before the goldfields were licensed in mid 1854.

*On 11 April 1854 the Legislative Council passed a new act (17 Victoria No. 24) which replaced the earlier Act and licensed beer, wine and spirit sales on the Goldfields as from 1 June 1854. Publicans and storekeepers could obtain a license on payment of 100 pounds annual fee, and Hargreaves records that there were 100 applications in Ballarat in the first few weeks. (J. Hargreaves, *Hotels of Ballarat*, p. 3) This brought an end to the era of sly grogging, and regulated the liqueur trade upon payment of 100 pounds and character references to the Magistrate.*

But it is interesting that Carboni's account of Thonen suggests that he was indeed selling lemonade.

It is not clear if Thonen ever tried to sell alcohol illegally. This would have been a very risky business, as the French miner Antoine Fauchery wrote in one of his letters:¹⁷³

The farsighted authorities, for fear of the disturbances and excesses caused by drunkenness, have utterly and absolutely forbidden, at the mines, all spiritous or fermented liquors, and they prosecute those that sell them on the sly with a severity that drives drinkers and vendors to despair. The police show no mercy; they inspect the drays and seize implacably the liquids with which they are loaded [...]. Sometimes the policemen disguise themselves as diggers covered with dust and mud, and with a pick on their shoulder seek to catch unawares the confidence and cupidity of the merchants, who don't always resist the temptation to gain about a thousand per cent on a drop of gin, rum or brandy [...].

To be sure, it is a cruel alternative. On the one hand, why not try to satisfy your customers, when the profits are so exorbitant and these same customers threaten to pay double the agreed price or, if you refuse too obstinately, to take their money to a less recalcitrant dealer?

On the other hand, the law is brutal. At the first denunciation by the detectives, the liquor is seized, and you have to pay out at the commissioner's office the sum of 50 pounds as a fine. If there is a second offence, there is a fresh seizure, but the fine is five times as big. A third offence, and once more there is a seizure, plus 250 pounds, plus four months' hard-labour, – in other words, imprisonment plus work every day breaking stones on the roads under the eye of the overseers. There is no known instance of a fourth offence. For that you must surely be hanged.

Even though liquors were clearly in high demand, non-alcoholic drinks were also sought after. Robyn Annear wrote about the difficulty of providing clean water at the goldfields:¹⁷⁴

Eduard Thonen, the Eureka rebel in Ballarat, was not the only digger to earn money by selling lemonade on the goldfields. It may seem strange now for someone to be known as a "lemonade-seller", but on the goldfields water (and certainly clean water, rather than water that was half-water/half-mud) was fairly scarce. Diggers used the water in the creeks for washing their "washdirt" in order to find any specks of gold in the earth they had dug up; they washed their clothes in it, and urine etc could also find its way into the water. "Safe" drinks like lemonade and cordials were popular, and on each major gold field there were a considerable number of "lemonade sellers". Sometimes, though, these drinks weren't especially clean; they were usually made with the dirty water that the digger was trying to avoid drinking, but made more attractive by the addition of flavourings like lemon syrup. During the drought of the early part of 1852 on the Mount Alexander diggings (present-day Castlemaine region) a bucket of water that had been carted up from the Loddon River cost a shilling. On Adelaide Flat at Forest Creek this price was heavily undercut by a group of German diggers from South Australia, who sank a hole about 21 metres deep and found a good supply of brackish water, which they hauled up and sold on the spot for sixpence a nail-can.

It is notable that Carboni describes Thonen as a a lemonade seller when the two met in November 1853, and also at the time of the Eureka Stockade in December 1854. Some important changes had taken place during that time. Fauchery wrote:¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Fauchery, A.: "Letters from a Miner in Australia", originally published in 1857, translated from French by A. R. Chisholm, paperback, 1969, page 57.

¹⁷⁴ Annear, R.: "Nothing But Gold. The Diggers of 1852", Text Publishing, Melbourne, 1999. Compare Nutting, D.: "German diggers selling drinks on the Victorian goldfields", 2001. www.germanaustralia.com/e/lemonade.htm; Nutting, D.: "German Rebels at the Eureka Stockade", 2024. <https://www.germanaustralia.com/e/eureka.htm>

¹⁷⁵ Fauchery, page 93.

In 1853, if you took ten emigrants, nine of them would have resolutely worked on the diggings, while the tenth, through constitutional weakness or unsuitability, would, with great regret, have gone in for business. Towards the middle of 1855, the proportions were completely reversed. Out of ten emigrants, nine were speculating in something or other, – tool-handles or lemonade at a penny a glass, and the tenth, stripped of all resources, kept to his pick, but with what ill grace!

There are many accounts that refer to Thonen as the “lemonade man”. Some will be quoted in the following sections. We think it is safe to identify the man as Thonen anytime witnesses mention the death of the “lemonade man” during the battle. But as with almost everything connected to the Eureka events, there are contradictions and a lack of clarity in the details. Most of those cases can easily be recognised as instances of identity confusion. Sometimes people mistook Thonen for Carboni, and vice versa. Frederick D’Amaral’s 1904 eyewitness report serves as an illustration:¹⁷⁶

Verne, a Dane, had good English, and he, too, spoke occasionally; but the man who stood head and shoulders above them all was an Italian, known as “the lemonade man” – he sold lemonade – Raffaello.

The idea that the lemonade man was an Italian is, in fact, contemporary; the identification as Raffaello Carboni is not. At least when it comes to the identity of the lemonade man, D’Amaral’s account may be a badly remembered retelling of old newspaper reports (themselves mistaken about the nationality of some of those involved), rather than something he witnessed himself. As early as 8 December 1854, *The Argus* wrote that¹⁷⁷

Bayonet thrusts had been inflicted on many after death. The case of one lad, an Italian, who was well known on the diggings as a seller of lemonade, is often referred to. He had fired one barrel of a revolver before he himself received a ball and fell. Rising on his left elbow, he discharged the remaining shots, and then died.

This clearly refers to Edward Thonen, compare the chapter about the [accounts of his death](#). Why he was referred to as an Italian is unclear. This is a mistake, but the question who initially made it can no longer be answered.

Some authors have claimed that Thonen was also a blacksmith. In his 1946 book *The Australian People*, Brian Charles Fitzpatrick wrote that¹⁷⁸

Peter Lalor’s report on his fellow-defenders of the stockade gave fourteen killed, including a man whose name he did not know and another called Happy Jack, and Edward Thonen ‘the lemonade man’ from Prussia, who had set up a forge and made pikes for his comrades.

We are not aware of an original source that identifies Thonen as a blacksmith. Fitzpatrick’s 1946 history is the earliest mention of this fact that we could locate, and we believe that this information is unreliable. More about this in the following chapter.

According to Carboni, Thonen was involved in the decision process leading up to the showdown on 3 December 1854. While Thonen’s time in the Prussian military appears to have been short (compare the previous chapter [Emigration to Australia](#)), he did receive basic military training. Many of the men at Ballarat, especially those of British ancestry, would have

¹⁷⁶ D’Amaral, F.: “The Eureka Anniversary”, in: *The Ballarat Star*, 6 December 1904, page 1.

trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/208878724 Note also that Friedrich Vern was German, not Danish.

¹⁷⁷ “Ballarat”, in: *The Argus*, 8 December 1854, page 5. [/newspaper/article/4801480](#). This was reprinted as:

“News from Ballarat”, in: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December 1854, page 4.

“Ballarat. Latest Intelligence. Restoration of Order”, in: *Colonial Times*, 13 December 1854, page 2.

“The Insurrection at Ballarat”, in: *Empire*, 13 December 1854, page 7.

“Fatal Collision at Ballarat”, in: *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 December 1854, page 2.

“Colonial News”, in: *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 16 December 1854, page 2.

“The Riots at Ballarat”, in: *The People’s Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, 16 December 1854, page 5.

¹⁷⁸ Fitzpatrick, B.C.: “The Australian People, 1788-1945”, Melbourne University Press, 1946, page 169.

had no military experience at all, as Britain had a professional army without universal conscription. The reason for Thonen's withdrawal from service is unknown, but his health does not appear to have played a role, as he was later described as being of vigorous health (see chapter [Contemporary descriptions](#)). Thus, he may have made a good candidate for a military leader among the rebels.

Along similar lines, Gregory Blake wrote in 2023:¹⁷⁹

Thonen commanded one of the rifle companies of diggers, which alone in an army where the officers were elected by the rank and file, indicates the respect in which he was held by his peers as well as a presumed degree of military expertise above and beyond that which was to be expected from a young digger. Thonen also organised a supply of meat and bread for the newly arrived and famished diggers who had marched from Creswick to Eureka, thus providing an essential logistical service to the Eureka cause.



*Oath swearing ceremony at Bakery Hill
(30 November 1854)*

In his 1909 retelling of the events of the Eureka Stockade, the journalist William Henry Fitchett listed Thonen as one of the leaders:¹⁸⁰

The firing of the soldiers was deadly. Lalor had his left shoulder shattered. Ross, another leader, was shot in the groin. Yet another, Thonen, was killed by a bullet through the head.

Thonen's role as a leader of the rebellion has been acknowledged many times, by both eyewitnesses and historians. At the same time, there has been a fierce debate over who had actually been in command on the morning of 3 December 1854. In 1892, in a response to Archibald Forbes's article *A Forgotten Rebellion*, one of the Eureka diggers argued that Thonen, not Lalor, was their true leader. The anonymous author, who simply calls himself *An Old Digger*, notes that Lalor had been chosen because the Irish were in a majority, but that he had no combat experience, which led to resentment among the remaining diggers:¹⁸¹

I have just read Archibald Forbes's description of the Eureka Outbreak, under the title of "A Forgotten Rebellion", which is such a mixture of truth and error that I am induced to set down my recollections of those transactions of which I was an eyewitness. [...] There can be no doubt the defenders of the Stockade counted on the Tips coming to their aid, with their wild Faugh-a-ballagh, and massacring the soldiers and police to a man, but they did not. As a matter of fact, the

he fell riddled with balls. I have often wondered whether he, and not Lalor, was not the leader of the fight. Lalor, of course, was commander-in-chief, because the Irish were in a majority, but these foreigners, who were used to warfare, could not have much respect for their greenhorn commander.

*Eyewitness account from 1892, describing Thonen
(not Lalor) as the true leader of the revolt*

most conspicuous bravery was shown by a German itinerant lemonade vendor, who jumped on the top of the Stockade after the first volley and cheered till he fell riddled with balls. I have often wondered whether he, and not Lalor, was not the leader of the fight. Lalor, of course, was commander-in-chief, because the Irish were in a majority, but these foreigners, who were used to warfare, could not have much respect for their greenhorn commander. And the question is whether they did not shunt him when the pinch came, and take their cue from the gallant Teuton, who may have been cheering to encourage the Tips to the charge over the ridge – a charge

¹⁷⁹ Blake, G.: "The Eureka Stockade", 2023.

www.google.de/books/edition/The_Eureka_Stockade/UuCiEAAAQBAJ

¹⁸⁰ "Eureka Stockade. Story Retold", in: Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate, 7 August 1909, page 11. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/136067706

For a biography of the author, compare en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Fitchett.

¹⁸¹ "The Eureka Stockade. By an Old Digger", in: The Argus, 31 December 1892, page 5. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/8497481

they could not make and bolt to the bush at the same time. However that may be, there is no question that this lemonade vendor was the hero of the Stockade, and a fighter after Archibald Forbes's own heart.

Forbes himself did not mention Thonen.¹⁸²

Some commenters, of course, have disagreed, and may still disagree today. To give just one example, the *Australasian*, a Melbourne newspaper, had the following to say about the previous eyewitness account:¹⁸³

Where the old digger describes the things he saw his testimony is valuable, but judgment is prejudiced and his conclusions narrow. For instance, it is interesting to hear how the lemonade seller mounted the stockade and cheered on the rioters, but nonsense to credit him with being the real leader. The real leaders were men like Peter Lalor and Raffaello, afterwards a general under Garibaldi.

Shortly before his death, the eyewitness Alexander Short (born in 1828, died in 1901) told the story of how Thonen was the first to notice the advancing soldiers, and how he shot Captain Henry Wise of the 40th Regiment:¹⁸⁴

A little fellow, a German, who went round the claims selling ginger beer and lemonade, heard the tramp of the horses and men just as day was breaking. He got up and put his clothes on and went to see what was the matter; he saw it was the soldiers going to the stockade. He went and got his revolver, and shot the captain of the soldiers so that he died, and then there was a regular fusillade on the German, but when he saw them preparing to fire he jumped into a hole about 4 feet deep, and escaped the first round of firing; he showed up again and returned the fire, then the troopers rode up to the hole and made a target of him. And yet, while this firing was going on there was no one astir in the stockade; they were asleep and drunk when the troopers put their horses to the fence and commenced the slaughter, and when Lalor got on the orators' stump to rally his followers he became a target for them, and he soon got tumbled over.

That account, like all others, can not be taken at face value. It is not clear who actually killed Wise, or who fired the first shot. Thonen is just one of several who have been named over the years. Michael Tuohy, one of the thirteen surviving Eureka prisoners, claimed that Wise was shot by *a little barber who was standing near him*.¹⁸⁵ John Joseph was named as a suspect as well.¹⁸⁶ Michael Canny, another Eureka rebel, appears to have believed that he himself fired the deadly shot. The American C. D. Ferguson, who was fighting with the Californian Rangers Revolver Brigade on the side of the insurgents, named one of his fellow rangers:¹⁸⁷

The 40th Regiment was advancing, but had not as yet discharged a shot. We could now see plainly the officer and hear his orders, when one of our men, Captain Burnette, stepped a little in front, elevated his rifle, took aim and fired. The officer fell. Captain Wise was his name.¹⁸⁸ This was the first shot of the Ballarat war. It was said by many that the soldiers fired the first shot, but that is not true, as is well known to many.

¹⁸² Forbes, A: "A Forgotten Rebellion", in: The Gentleman's Magazine, volume 266, 1889, pages 439-447.

www.google.de/books/edition/The_Gentleman_s_Magazine/IhJIAQAAMAAJ

¹⁸³ Reprinted in "Eureka Stockade", in: The Ballarat Star, 9 January 1893, page 2.

trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/209781318

¹⁸⁴ Short, A.: "The Eureka Stockade. To the Editor of the Gympie Times", Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette, 1 April 1899, page 5. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/171514066; for more information about the author, compare shortfamilytree.com/getperson.php?personID=I0210&tree=short-misc.

¹⁸⁵ O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, page 146; compare eurekaopedia.org/Michael_Tuohy.

¹⁸⁶ "Victoria", in: The Perth Gazette, 30 March 1855, page 2. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/3175935

¹⁸⁷ O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, page 89.

¹⁸⁸ Footnote from the original: *Captain Wise was felled by that bullet, then struck again shortly afterwards. He died some weeks later.*

It is known that Wise received not just one, but two gunshot wounds to his legs, from which he ultimately passed away on 21 December 1854.¹⁸⁹ That still does not account for all the claims that were made, most of which will necessarily be false. One eyewitness put it like this:¹⁹⁰

What happened in the Stockade is somewhat difficult to be discovered. It is next to impossible to get any two versions of what transpired to tally, and as to the morning of the Stockade and what happened there, it is, perhaps, sufficient to say that there are at least a score of people, all of whom not only shot at but struck down Captain Wyse.

Thonen was a member of the distinct group of German immigrants, and there have been attempts to pin down (and acknowledge) the role of those foreigners in the rebellion. The *Old Digger's* accounts already went in that direction. Another example is an 1899 article about the leaders of the Eureka Rebellion:¹⁹¹

It was not so with the foreigners, though. In the ranks and file were men who fought well. Few were better known on Ballarat than Edward Thonan, the poor Prussian lemonade seller, who carried his keg around amongst the claims. He stood to the breast-work till a bullet passed through his mouth and killed him.

In a talk given in 1946 before the Royal Australian Historical Society, N.O.P. Pyke said that¹⁹²

The place of foreigners, however, has not been decisively assessed – so far as this last is possible. One final problem, then, still remains: how far were those foreigners who were individually prominent at Eureka really leaders, of what did their leadership consist, and what qualities had they to fit them for it? The foreign persons generally conceded some sort of leadership in the émeute were Vern, a Hanoverian; Ross, a Canadian; M'Gill, an American; Thonen, a German; and Raffaello, an Italian. [...]

[I]t seems clear that one of the main reasons for the speedy military defeat of the rebels was the absence of an over-all leader. Though Lalor, an Irishman, was elected to this office at the final meeting at a diggings where Irish were numerically strong, he admitted that he was not a man of any military experience [...]

Now, Vern, Ross, M'Gill and Thonen, all of them cultural foreigners, held leading military commands among the rebels. [...] It is clear, then, that [they] and Raffaello were leaders, and as such made their own contribution to the cause at various times and in their several ways; part of this contribution consisted, in varying degrees, of representing this or that group. Where these groups remained distinct, however, composite leadership might be threatened – as in the choice of a common flag, or in the election of a political leader to a supreme command over military leaders in a small geographical unit and under primitive conditions which demanded that the leader lead in all things.

In 2002 Leslie Bodi, professor of German at Monash University, concluded in his analysis of German influence on Australian literature, politics and identity:¹⁹³

The difference between the political realities of the German-speaking countries of Central Europe and the British institutions of Australia have always made it difficult for Germans, the Swiss or Austrians to play a substantial role in Australian political life. [...] There was little use for the political experience and rhetoric of radical German »1848-ers« in colonial Australia. Germans fought at the Eureka Stockade in 1854 (F. Wern and E. Thonen), and as early as 1858 German posters were produced in Melbourne at election time.

¹⁸⁹ O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, pages 96-97; 115.

¹⁹⁰ "The Eureka Stockade", in: The Ballarat Star, 4 March 1870, page 3. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/219306659

¹⁹¹ "Gold-Seekers of the Fifties", in: The Argus, 3 June 1899, page 4. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/9509580

¹⁹² Pyke, N.O.P.: "Some Leading Aspects of Foreign Immigration in the Goldfields", in: Journal and proceedings of the Royal Australian Historical Society, volume 33, part 1, 31 January 1947, pages 9+11. nla.gov.au/nla.obj-603582787/view?sectionId=nla.obj-609331676&partId=nla.obj-603596083

¹⁹³ Bodi, L.: "Literatur, Kultur, Identität – Literature, politics, cultural identity", 2002, page 136.

In his speech at the *Lalor Address on Community Relations* in 1978, Joseph Lennard Forace, High Commissioner for the Republic of Malta, said the following about the European influence on Eureka:¹⁹⁴

You may count on my people, as I know you can rely on all the other ethnic groups of Australia, to work for the good of all Australians. You can always count on these people, as others counted on Peter Lalor and his Council of the Ballarat Reform League.

That Council is today accepted as having been the foundation of Australian Democracy.

Let us look back on the names and nationality of those heroes: Lalor, an Irishman; Humphrey, a Welshman; Vern, a German; Carboni, an Italian; Hayes, an Irishman; Black, an Englishman; Thonen, a Prussian; John Joseph, an American Negro; Ross, a Canadian; Curtain and Manning, Irishmen.

In that Council, you have in my view the very first Ethnic Council of Australia. Today we commemorate the deeds of those heroes, and I am personally proud as a long resident Maltese of Australia, to share with you this 123rd Anniversary of those gallant men. Those immigrants struck the first blow for the dignity of man in this country. Nineteen of the twenty who paid with their lives were born in Europe. They paid the supreme price to ensure that all Australians might enjoy their freedoms, freedoms which are so often today taken for granted.

We can not ultimately decide how relevant Thonen's actions were, and if he should be considered a driving force in what happened at the Eureka Stockade (let alone if he was the rebellion's "true leader", whatever that means). Some of his contemporaries apparently saw him that way, but the debate never reached a consensus. His role at Eureka remain nebulous for now.

Accounts of his death

Edward Thonen was one of at least 30 miners who were killed during the battle. The bodies were then brought to the morgue, a *shed made as a dead house and situated in the rear of the hospital, somewhere near the site of the present post office, the high ground upon which it stood being now levelled*, according to one eyewitness.¹⁹⁵

Curiously, the deaths were not registered immediately. Thonen's death is recorded on page 745 of *Schedule B, Deaths in the District of Ballarat*, where it was entered on 20 June 1855, more than half a year after the event, alongside other victims of the Eureka Stockade:

No.	When and where	Name, surname, profession	Sex and age	Cause of death	Parents
437	3 December 1854 at Ballarat	Edward Thonen Lemonade Seller	Male 24 years	Gunshot wound	Unknown

Witness	Deputy Registrar	Burial	Where born, how long in Australia, and in which colony	Married
A. Sickler ¹⁹⁶ Surgeon Ballarat	William Tho. Pooley 20 June 1855 at Ballarat	5 December 1854 at Ballarat	Elberfeldt Prussia 2 years Victoria	no

¹⁹⁴ Forace, J.L.: "Address by His Excellency Mr. J.L. Forace, High Commissioner for the Republic of Malta", in: 3rd Annual Lalor Address on Community Relations, 1978. humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/Lalor3.pdf

¹⁹⁵ Description by S.D.S. Huyghue, in: O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, page 21.

¹⁹⁶ Alfred Julius Sickler was an interesting individual in his own right; compare the footnote on page 68, as well as Kass, T.: "Finding Sickler: A Romp through the Records. Estonian Archives in Australia", BaltHerNet, 2016. www.balther.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Kass_ENG.pdf

No.	DESCRIPTION.				Cause of Death, ¹⁹⁷ Date of last illness, ¹⁹⁸ Medical Attendant by whom certified, and ¹⁹⁹ when he last saw deceased.	Name and Surname of Father and Mother, if known, with Rank or Profession.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant, and ²⁰⁰ Witness.	Signature of Deputy Registrar, ²⁰¹ Date, and ²⁰² where Registered.	IF BURIAL REGISTERED.		Where Born, and how long in the Colonies (stating which).	IF DECEASED WAS MARRIED.	
	When and where Died.	Name and Surname, Rank or Profession.	Sex and Age.	When and where Buried. Undertaker by whom certified.					Name and Religion of Minister, or Names of Witnesses of Burial.	Where, and at what ²⁰³ Age, and to ²⁰⁴ Whom.		Issue in order of Birth, their Names and Ages.	
437	3 December 1854 at Ballarat	Edward Thonen Lemonade Seller	Male 24 years	Gunshot in forehead	Unknown	Lavater, Tinsman Ballarat	William H. P. P. P. 20 June 1854 at Ballarat	3 December 1854 at Ballarat	Ballarat Prussia 2 years Victoria				

Edward Thonen's death certificate

We have already quoted a number of eyewitness accounts in the previous section, including reports related to Thonen's death. We will now look at his cause of death more specifically. Carboni is quite clear that Thonen was *felled on the spot* by a bullet *exactly in the mouth*. While the death certificate generally agrees with that notion, we can not be sure of the details.

One of the rebels called Charles Evans kept a diary, and in his entry for 3 December 1854 he may be talking about Thonen when he writes:¹⁹⁷

One body pierced with 16 or 17 wounds I recognized as that of a poor German whom I have often joked with.

The author of an obituary for James W. Graham (born in 1830, died in 1910), a founding member and vice president of the Ballarat Old Colonists' Association, claimed that Graham was present at the Eureka Stockade, and that he provided first aid to Thonen:¹⁹⁸

Another of Ballarat's pioneers, in the person of Mr Jas. W. Graham, died yesterday afternoon, after an illness extending over a few days. Mr Graham, who had reached the ripe age of 80 years, was a well-known local figure, especially about the Stock Exchange, where he was a prominent member. [...] He was attracted to Ballarat by the gold fever, and he witnessed the fight between the diggers and the soldiers at Eureka on the 3rd December, 1854. Mr Graham was well acquainted with Carboni Raffaello, Peter Lalor, Verne, Black, and other leaders in that rebellious movement. He was the first to go to the assistance of a man named Thoneman, who hawked ordials and was known on the field as the soda water man. Thoneman, while cheering the diggers on in the fight, was shot in the mouth by one of the soldiers, and he died soon afterwards.

Not all accounts agree that Thonen died from being hit in the mouth by bullets. Reminiscent of Charles Evans' diary entry, a Mr. Laveter wrote in 1909 in a letter to the editor of the *Argus* newspaper:¹⁹⁹

Little Edward Thonen (a Prussian), the lemonade-seller, was bayonnetted as he lay wounded, until there was nothing left to bayonet but a corpse. He was covered with wounds.

Taken at face value, Laveter's account contradicts the official cause of death (a gunshot wound). However, it is possible that the bayonet wounds he describes were afflicted post-mortem. An eyewitness account published in 1899 notes that²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ "State Library Victoria: Diary of Charles Evans, 1853 September 24 - 1855 January 21, Signature MS 13518, ID 1640743, Filename mu000566-132, entry 3 December 1854", page 132. handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/236326
The list of known deaths at Eureka includes only two other Germans: John Hafele or Henfeld (www.wikitree.com/wiki/Hafele-25) and William Emmermann (www.wikitree.com/wiki/Emmermann-3).

¹⁹⁸ "Death of Mr Jas. W. Graham", in: The Ballarat Star, 20 July 1910, page 2.
trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/216370709

For more about Graham, see bih.federation.edu.au/index.php/James_W._Graham.

¹⁹⁹ Lavater, G.T.A.: "The Eureka Stockade", in: The Argus (Melbourne, Vic.: 1848-1957), 22 June 1909, page 6.
trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/10714975

²⁰⁰ "Gold-Seekers of the Fifties. The Fall of Eureka", in: The Argus, 24 June 1899, page 4.
trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/9520758

I counted 15 dead bodies on the ground, several of men I knew. All of them, I think, with one exception had the mark of the bayonet thrust in the neck, evidently delivered after life was extinct, for not one of them showed any signs of bleeding. The first I recognised was little Thoneman, the lemonade man. [...] He was shot through the body, and must have died immediately.

The cause of death is called into question by the following description, printed on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the event:²⁰¹

Groups of horrified miners, like ourselves with bated breath were in the Stockade which had been stormed by the soldiers at early dawn, and the result of their work was still visible, eleven dead bodies were lying in different positions, and in separate places upon the ground, the bullet in all cases had done the deadly work but with one exception (that of the lemonade seller); all had been gashed and cut with bayonets or sabres by fiends in human shape (I dare not call them soldiers).

Did Thonen die from a misfiring of his own weapon, rather than enemy fire? This may be suggested by the eyewitness Samuel Douglas Smyth Huyghue, chief clerk to Commissioner Robert Rede, assuming that Huyghue was talking about Thonen when he wrote in 1857:²⁰²

At an early stage of the attack a young man was observed just outside the Stockade and pointing his gun at the advancing troops. So self-absorbed was he in the excitement of the moment, that he seemed unconscious of the approach of the mounted police, some of whom spurred their horses towards him. But ere they reached him, he gave an extraordinary spring into the air, his gun exploded and he fell on his back, his face crushed in by a frightful bullet wound in the nose, rolled over and died. The officer who witnessed this had his bridle rein cut by a ball at the same time, and said that he was glad to get under cover with the rest as soon as he could, for the bullets were flying about thick as hail from the crossfire of the 40th Regiment and the rebel garrison.

Huyghue's description would still be consistent with the official cause of death. In contrast, one early account of the event that mentions Thonen, published on 28 December 1854, raises the question whether he was still alive when he was stabbed by soldiers:²⁰³

Another case of savage and cowardly brutality was that in which the brave and lamented little lemonade-seller was the sufferer. When disabled and dying of several gunshot wounds, he was tortured by the indiction of a number of wounds by the bayonet.

Another eyewitness, whose report was published in 1884, clearly refers to Thonen in the following section:²⁰⁴

The troops now entered the stockade in force, and did some devil's work in their fury. A little foreigner who hawked lemonade about the diggings was killed. It was afterwards discovered that he had 11 bayonet wounds on his body.

That Thonen suffered both gunshot and bayonet wounds is corroborated by an article in the *Ballarat Star*, published on 22 September 1888:²⁰⁵

Look, yonder is where Captain Wise came on with the 40th, and around here the troopers dashed through the slabs, and soon made short work of it. Little Thoneman, the lemonade man, was shot, bayoneted, and sabred here on the right of the gully, and over there on the left lay the German blacksmith who made the pikes, with the

²⁰¹ "Egerton", in: *The Ballarat Star*, 6 December 1884, page 4. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/207630176

²⁰² Huyghue, S.D.S.: "The Ballarat Riots", in: O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, pages 21-22. Compare en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douglas_Smyth_Huyghue and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_William_Rede.

²⁰³ Publicola: "The Attack on the Stockade. To the Editor of the Argus", in: *The Argus*, 28 December 1854, page 5. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4802340

²⁰⁴ "The Eureka Stockade (by one of the Insurgents)", in: *The Ballarat Star*, 14 June 1884, page 3. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/202590159

²⁰⁵ "Renewing their Youth", in: *The Ballarat Star*, 22 September 1888, page 5. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/209448532

top of his skull hanging by the scalp, and still living, his little terrier dog lying on his breast and refusing to leave his master.

In 1938, the *Daily News*, a Sydney newspaper, told this version of the story:²⁰⁶

Captain Wise was shot dead at the barricades in the miners' first volley. Lalor, dauntless under fire, stood on a stump, smoking revolver in hand, directing his men. [...] Two martyrs in the front line, Thonen, a Prussian, and Ross, a Canadian, died at their posts fighting to the last. The German smith who made the pikes fought valiantly and died gloriously. He was picked up dead with 15 wounds in his body, many inflicted by berserk soldiers after death.

According to Huyghue's account of the aftermath of the attack,²⁰⁷

the dead rebels presented an example of humanity in its worst guise, their faces ghastly and passion-distorted and their eyes staring with stony fixedness, and in some instances, with their arms upraised, and fingers bent as though grasping a weapon in the death struggle.²⁰⁸ Over one attenuated corpse a small dog kept jealous guard as it lay in the death cart. [...] The internment of the bodies took place the same day. The soldiers were buried with military honours. The insurgents dead, enclosed in rough coffins, were placed in a separate grave, the burial service being read over them by the clergymen in whose faith they respectively belonged [...]

Mentions of a "German blacksmith" clearly refer not to Thonen, but to a German called Thomas Henfield, sometimes referred to as *Tom the blacksmith*, suggesting that the idea that Thonen was a blacksmith (or even a pikeman) is likely apocryphal; compare the note about this in the previous chapter. We will return to the story of the terrier dog in the following section.

Monuments

There are five²⁰⁹ monuments in Ballarat that honour Thonen: One at Ballarat Old Cemetery, one at the Eureka Stockade Memorial Park, two at the Eureka Stockade Memorial Gardens, and the Peter Lalor Monument.

The *Eureka Diggers Memorial* at the cemetery was the first to be erected. It effectively serves as a gravestone. The monument was dedicated in 1856, just two years after the events. It lists the names of the diggers who died at the Eureka Stockade; among those names is

Edward Thonen. Elbertfeldt. Prussia.



Inscription on the Eureka Diggers Memorial, Ballarat Old Cemetery

The monument is described in Wither's 1887 *History of Ballarat*:²¹⁰

The diggers' monument is a grey sandstone obelisk, surmounted by a draped urn, and resting on a bluestone base. The west face bears the following inscription: "Sacred to the memory of those who fell on the memorable 3rd of December, 1854, in resisting the unconstitutional proceedings of the Victorian Government. This monument was presented by James Leggatt, Geelong, to the people of Ballarat, and by them erected on the 22nd March, 1856."

²⁰⁶ James, J.C.: "Hats off to Men of Eureka", in: *Daily News*, 2 December 1938, page 4. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/236320624

²⁰⁷ O'Brien, B.: "Massacre at Eureka", 1992, pages 21-25.

²⁰⁸ Footnote from the original: *All the unclaimed bodies found in the Stockade, as well as the wounded, were brought in and the latter immediately attended to by the regimental and civil (district) surgeons.*

²⁰⁹ Six, if we include the memorial to the pikeman's dog, which is tenuously linked to Thonen.

²¹⁰ Wither, W.B.: "History of Ballarat", F. W. Niven & Co., 1887, page 156. gutenberg.net.au/ebooks13/1304971h.html

Coinciding with the third anniversary of the Eureka Stockade, local newspapers wrote about the reinterment of Thonen's body next to the monument at the cemetery. From the Ballarat Star, 28 November 1857, page 3:²¹¹

THE EUREKA VICTIMS.—A request has been made to the Trustees of the Cemetery to have the bodies of those of the Eureka victims who were interred apart from the spot where the monument now stands, exhumed and removed to that part of the Cemetery. The request has been favorably received, and we believe the bodies – which are those of Captain Ross, Thonen, the Lemonade Seller, James Brown, and 'Tom the Blacksmith,' will be removed very shortly and placed beside their fallen victims, over whose remains, the 'Eureka Monument' now stands.

And again from the same newspaper, 2 December 1857, page 3:²¹²

THE EUREKA VICTIMS.—On Tuesday morning, about 7 o'clock, the bodies of Captain Ross, James Brown, Thonen, the lemonade seller, and Tom the blacksmith, who fell at the Eureka Stockade, and had been buried apart from the others, were re-moved from the grave and placed in that containing the bodies of the others who lost their lives on the memorable 3rd of December. The removal took place in the presence of Mr Superintendent Foster, Mr Salmon, trustees of the cemetery, and Mr Lessman. The coffins were in excellent preservation. We understand that no procession will take place on Thursday next, the anniversary of the Eureka affair, but the grave of the fallen will be decorated with chaplets and flowers.



*Left image: Eureka Diggers Memorial, Edward Thonen's final resting place
Right image: Thonen Drive, one of the footpaths at Ballarat Old Cemetery*

A plaque installed at the cemetery in 1988 by the Ballarat City Council says:²¹³

Following the battle at Eureka many of the bodies were buried in a mass grave but later their remains were treated a little more respectfully. In 1856 a Geelong man provided funds for the construction of the memorial to the fallen diggers. Two decades later local citizens and the Victorian Government decided to mark the soldiers'

²¹¹ "Local and General News", in: The Star, 28 November 1857, page 3. nla.gov.au/nla.news-article66045398

²¹² "Local and General news", in: The Star, 2 December 1857, page 3. nla.gov.au/nla.news-article66045437

²¹³ "Ballarat Old Cemetery", in: Goldfields Guide. Exploring the Victorian Goldfields. www.goldfieldsguide.com.au/explore-location/613/ballaarat-old-cemetery/

graves. The inscriptions on the memorials give a clear indication of public attitudes in the 1880's. 'Rebels', 'Tyrants' and 'Duty'. You will still find differing opinions on what these words mean today.

Thonen is also remembered by *Thonen Drive*, a foot path at Ballarat Old Cemetery.²¹⁴

The plaque at Eureka Stockade Memorial Park reads:

This tablet was erected by the Eureka Improvement Committee 1923. To the honored memory of the heroic pioneers who fought and fell on this sacred spot in the cause of liberty, and the soldiers who fell at duty's call.

And at Eureka Stockade Memorial Gardens:²¹⁵

We honour the memory of all those who died during or because of the events at the Eureka Stockade on 3 December 1854 – the men known to us, who are recalled below, as well as the other men and women whose names are unrecorded.

Both of these also list the victims, among them *Edward Thonen (E. Thonen)*.

Edward Thonen is one of 20 people who are named on a plaque at the base of the Peter Lalor Monument, erected in Ballarat in 1893:²¹⁶

In Memory of [...] Edward Thonen [...] and others, who were killed while fighting at the Eureka Stockade, December 3rd, 1854.



Left: Plaque at Eureka Stockade Memorial Park; middle: at Eureka Stockade Memorial Gardens; right: Peter Lalor Monument, Ballarat (image credit: Mattinbgn, Wikimedia, CC BY 3.0 Deed)

When the Peter Lalor Monument was originally proposed, Thonen was one of those who were specifically considered for depiction alongside Lalor. In 1884, a reader of the *Ballarat Star* suggested in a letter²¹⁷

that the committee should provide for a monument after the style of the Burke and Wills, Collins street, Melbourne, with the Hon. the Speaker, as the main figure, Captain Ross, and Messrs Thonen, Raffaello and others subordinate, the whole with a view to the further expansion of our municipal freedom.

In the final design of the monument, only Peter Lalor (“the Speaker”) was actually depicted.

²¹⁴ Corfield, J.J., Gervasoni, C., Wickham, D.: “The Eureka Encyclopaedia”, Ballarat Heritage Services, 2004, page 506.

²¹⁵ Compare www.eurekapedia.org/File:IMGP6012-wiki.jpg

²¹⁶ “Eureka Stockade”, monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/government/dissent/display/30204-eureka-stockade; “Peter Lalor”, monumentaustralia.org.au/themes/people/humanitarian/display/30224-peter-lalor

²¹⁷ “The Eureka Stockade. To the Editor”, in: The Ballarat Star, 22 May 1884, page 4. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/202588952

Thonen may be the pikeman who Christopher Crook refers to in this famous story, told here in a 1904 newspaper:²¹⁸

Perusing your Saturday's issue I was very much interested in your narrative of the Eureka riot, especially the incident referring to the little terrier dog, to which I am desirous of adding my testimony as to its correctness. Upon that fatal Sunday morning, when the strife was practically over, I visited the scene. I saw eleven bodies lying upon the ground, to be recognised by relatives or friends. Some had been taken away before my arrival. I saw the little terrier whining piteously beside his dead master. While viewing this solemn scene a dray arrived in which was placed the body of the man who in life was the owner of the dog. When the little dog saw his master removed, his grief knew no bounds. Those interested tried to drive him away: they could not beat him back. He got into the dray and sat upon his master's breast, revealing in most unmistakable language that his master was taken from him. No human being could have lamented more at the loss of their dearest relative or friend than that affectionate and faithful dog be wailed the loss of his master. Though fifty years have passed away, this pathetic scene is vivid in my memory as though it occurred yesterday. It is one of those scenes which time cannot efface.



Left image: Plaque at Eureka Memorial Gardens; Right image: Memorial to the pikeman's dog at Eureka Stockade Memorial Park. Credit: Karen MacDonald, 10 September 2022 www.wikitree.com/photo/jpg/Thonen-17-1; Sandra Brown, Monument Australia

However, the identification of Thonen as the pikeman and owner of the dog is not certain. Some eyewitnesses claimed that the dog belonged to Thomas Henfield; one account published immediately after the events describes the owner of the dog, and that does not seem to fit what we know about Thonen (compare the chapter about [contemporary descriptions](#)):²¹⁹

One man, a stout chested fine fellow, apparently about forty years old lay with a pike beside him, he had three contusions in the head, three strokes across the brow, a bayonet wound in the throat under the ear, and other wounds in the body – I counted fifteen wounds in that single carcass. [...] A little terrier sat on the breast of the man I spoke of, and kept up a continuous howl, it was removed but always returned again to the same spot, and when his master's body was huddled with the other corpses into the cart, the little dog jumped in after him, and lying again on his dead master's breasts began howling again.

According to Eurekaedia,²²⁰

An unpublished diary makes reference to William Emmermann as the pikeman whose terrior would not leave his side after Emmerman's death, although according to Peter Lalor the pikeman could have been Edward Thonen.

²¹⁸ Crook, C.: "A Reminiscence of Eureka", Geelong Advertiser, 6 December 1904, page 2.

²¹⁹ "The Eureka Massacre. From a Correspondent To the Editor", in: Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer, 6 December 1854, page 4. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/91861716

²²⁰ eurekaedia.org/Pikemen, 24 May 2018, accessed on 16 June 2023; compare Wickham, D., Gervasoni, C., Phillipson, W.: "Eureka Research Directory", Ballarat Heritage Services, 1999.

On their website, Memorial Australia writes about the pikeman's dog, to which they dedicated a monument in 2014:

The Pikeman's Dog (known as Wee Jock), a little terrier, showed great devotion and bravery at the death of his master at the Eureka Stockade on 3 December 1854. As a result of the attack on the miners by Crown forces, five British soldiers and some thirty miners died. Among the miners lay a Pikeman, mortally wounded with some 15 wounds. Guarding his body throughout the hours it lay unclaimed at the battlefield, and later accompanying it on the death cart as the remaining bodies were transferred to the cemetery, was this small dog. According to reports the dog howled continuously and could not be separated from his master. The dog was awarded the RSPCA's Purple Cross which Honours exceptional behaviour in serving humans in 1997.

There are small plaques throughout the gardens for each of the victims of the Eureka Stockade, including one for Thonen. These are part of a Pathway of Remembrance that opened in May 2022. There are 35 men remembered with plaques who are known to have died because of the events which occurred at Eureka.

To conclude this chapter, we note that Thonen was known as "Edward Thonen from Elberfeld, Prussia". That his place of origin was known so precisely is unusual in itself, and is only true for a handful of people who were involved in the rebellion. Wherever he went, those who knew Thonen appear to have been aware of exactly where he came from. This is true not only for the accounts of his time in Ballarat, but also for the time he spent in England. If Thonen was so fond of his home that he told everyone about it, why did he leave Elberfeld in the first place?

What was known in Australia about the diamond robbery?

Apart from Gregory Blake's books and his earlier research,²²¹ we are not aware of any work about the Eureka Stockade that mentions the diamond robbery. Blake apparently was aware of both the court case in general, and some of the newspaper reports, but was thrown off by what appear to be misprints in the surviving records, and some of his conclusions are incorrect. For example, while the records of Newgate Prison list an Edward Thonen from Elberfeld,²²² the printed summary of those same documents uses the name William Thonen (see chapter [The diamond robbery, his trial and conviction](#)). We have no explanation for the inconsistency, other than possibly a misreading of the abbreviation *Edw* in the handwritten version as "Edward William" (which would usually be abbreviated as "Edwd Willm"). The first name "William" is attested nowhere else.²²³

In his 2023 book about the Eureka Stockade, Blake wrote about Thonen, and the state of research:

²²¹ Blake, G.: "Searching for Edmund THONEN, Elberfeld > UK > Australia", 4 December 2009, groups.jewishgen.org/g/main/message/46738.

"The Eureka Stockade: an International/Transnational Event", UNSW Canberra, 2013.

"The Eureka Stockade", 2023, www.google.de/books/edition/The_Eureka_Stockade/UuCiEAAAQBAJ.

²²² "Edward Thonen (1851), Newgate Prison", in: UK, Prison Commission Records, 1770-1951. First found by Paul Masini, www.ancestry.co.uk/sharing/30276091?h=45c785

²²³ In the version printed shortly after the initial hearing, the name is given as *William Thonen*, see "Proceedings of the Central Criminal Court", 12th May 1851, page 63.

www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=185105120063

Compare also the annual summary, which lists him under both names (as *William Edward Thonen*): "1851 Legal Record: Middlesex, London, Old Bailey Court Records 1674-1913", 27 October 1851, page 183.

www.oldbaileyonline.org/images.jsp?doc=185110270183

Nothing is known of his life in Elberfeld but he was there as a young man during the years 1848–1849 when the city was a hotbed of revolutionary activity. In the 1851 British census, Thonen, then a 23-year-old teacher of languages, lived in a coffee house in Middlesex. Old Bailey records for the same year record a William or Edward Thonen, described as a young German man, being charged with theft but he was released without a conviction being recorded. The description given by the newspapers of the court case are definitely for an Edmund Thonen yet the court records are for a William Thonen. Perhaps young Thonen used different names at different times. [...] Thonen's presence in Elberfeld during 1848–1849 and his obvious commitment to the digger's armed resistance suggests a connection between his earlier experiences and fervour for revolutionary direct action he brought with him to Eureka.

Regardless of what conclusions Blake may have drawn, Edward Thonen's past as a diamond robber could have been known to Australians much earlier. The story reached Australia in the 1890s, when numerous newspapers printed articles about it, possibly based on the Annual Register from 1852 (compare chapter [The diamond robbery, his trial and conviction](#)). The newspaper accounts from Australia are, in fact, the last known reports about the story. The earliest version of it that we could find in Australia is a 1896 article titled *A Diamond Robber Caught* in *The Charleville Courier*, a Queensland newspaper. This was reprinted by another newspaper a week later, and then again multiple times between 1897 and 1900.²²⁴ One of the newspapers that printed it was the *Riverina Recorder*, a Balranald newspaper. Its range of distribution stretched across the NSW/VIC border, coming within about 300 km of Ballarat. One would imagine that the name Edward Thonen may have sounded familiar to people of the area, but it seems that nobody at the time – neither the editors of the newspaper nor its readers – made the connection. Maybe we overestimate Thonen's fame here; or they considered it an instance of two different people of the same name, and did not believe the article to be about “their” Edward Thonen.

For further discussion of whether this article was known to researchers in Australia during the 20th century, see the next chapter.

Claims of Jewish descent

One of our initial questions concerned the origins of the (inaccurate, as we later learned) claim that Thonen was of Jewish ancestry. Throughout the 19th century, Elberfeld had a small but well-established Jewish community. The religious breakdown in Elberfeld in 1827, the year Thonen was born, was as follows: 22,861 Protestants, 5,218 Catholics, 15 Mennonites, and 127 Jews.²²⁵ As early as 2009, attempts were made by Gregory Blake and other researchers to find a Jewish connection for Thonen in Elberfeld.²²⁶ Although these efforts were unsuccessful, they contributed to the confirmation that no Jewish family with the surname Thonen lived in the

²²⁴ We could find the following examples, but there may be more:

The Charleville Courier (Qld.), May 16, 1896, page 1. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/84401645

Warwick Examiner and Times (Qld.), 23 May 1896, page 2. [/newspaper/article/82149541](#)

Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette (Qld.), 30 May 1896, page 1. [/newspaper/article/171451273](#)

Riverina Recorder (Balranald, Moulamein, NSW), 10 February 1897, page 2. [/newspaper/article/137613091](#)

Northern Territory Times and Gazette (Darwin, NT), 11 June 1897, page 2. [/newspaper/article/4171415](#)

The Bundaberg Mail and Burnett Advertiser (Qld.), 9 March 1900, page 2. [/newspaper/article/215498588](#)

²²⁵ “Annalen der Stadt Elberfeld”, 1827, page 52, [digital.ub.uni-](http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/1493158)

duesseldorf.de/ihd/periodical/pageview/1493158. The figure for Protestants includes both Lutherans and Reformed.

²²⁶ Blake, G.: “Searching for Edmund THONEN, Elberfeld > UK > Australia”, 4 December 2009,

groups.jewishgen.org/g/main/message/46738. The first name is misspelled, but this was a search for the Edward Thonen who died in Ballarat.

town in 1848 or 1859 based on lists of Elberfeld's Jewish residents.²²⁷ Additionally, we found that there was also no mention of a person by the name of Thonen in the exhaustive list of Elberfeld's Jewish population in 1846, which included biographical information for each individual.²²⁸ It should be noted that because Jews in the region did not adopt surnames before 1845, earlier records would not have listed any families with that name.²²⁹

In light of our inability to locate any proof of a Jewish person by the name of Thonen in Elberfeld, we proceeded to investigate the origins of the claims from Australia regarding his Jewish connection. There are no records of an Edward Thonen at either the Ballarat Hebrew Community or the Melbourne Hebrew Community.²³⁰ Furthermore, Thonen's faith is not mentioned in any of the known contemporary eyewitness accounts, especially those of Carboni.

Previous works pertaining to the Jewish community at Eureka were examined, including Rubinstein's *The Jews in Australia* (1900),²³¹ Spielvogel's *The "affair" at Eureka* (1912),²³² and Rosenthal's *Formula for survival: the saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation* (1979).²³³ Rubinstein's account provides thorough coverage. Rosenthal and Spielvogel both mention the Jew Charles Dyte. Spielvogel calls Thonen *little Teddy Thonen, the German lemonade man*, but does not identify him as Jewish. It seems unlikely that they would have omitted Thonen's Jewish heritage if they had thought of him as a Jew.

The source for Thonen's purported Jewish ancestry in Gregory Blake's 2013 thesis *The Eureka Stockade: an International/Transnational Event* is²³⁴

Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, Vol 4. Part 7. 1958. p.480.

The 1958 article says:²³⁵

Amongst the thirty "rebels" who lost their lives was Teddy Thonen, the lemonade man. He was the only Jew who took part in the actual fighting.

²²⁷ Heilbut, H.: "re. Edmund THONEN and the Wuppertal-Elberfeld Jewish Community BOOK CITE", 2009, groups.jewishgen.org/g/main/message/46754. For lists of the Jewish inhabitants of Elberfeld in the 19th century, see also Jorde, F.: "Zur Geschichte der Juden in Wuppertal", Bergland-Verlag, Wuppertal-Elberfeld, 1933.

²²⁸ "Amtsblatt für den Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf", 1846, page XII. www.digitale-sammlungen.de/en/view/bsb10001243_00511_u001?page=20

²²⁹ Arbeitskreis der NS-Gedenkstätten und -Erinnerungsorte in NRW e.V.: "Judentum im Bergischen Land", www.ns-gedenkstaetten.de/nrw/wuppertal/wissenswertes/juedische-geschichte

²³⁰ Archives of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, SLV A1387 Series 6, 6/1 AJHSV MS 9352A, 6/4 6/1 AJHSV MS 9352A; Archives of the Melbourne Jewish Congregation, SLV Section 1 Letter Books Correspondence, Indexes, Box I Jewish Congregation of Melbourne and Port Phillip 26 Jan 1844 – 2 Sept 1859, Box II Melbourne Hebrew Congregation 1 Feb 1855 – 12 Dec 1869, A1532, A1533a, A1649 Series 075.

²³¹ Rubinstein, H.L.: "The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History. Volume I. 1788-1945", William Heinemann, Port Melbourne, 1900.

²³² Spielvogel, N.F.: "The affair at Eureka", in: *The Lone Hand*, 1 January 1912, page 182. nla.gov.au/nla.obj-406299514/view?sectionId=nla.obj-413134381&partId=nla.obj-406310687#page/n24/mode/1up Besides the song *German Teddy* (dated to 1889), which we will discuss in the [following chapter](#), this is the earliest instance we are aware of where Edward Thonen is referred to as *Teddy Thonen*. The nickname is not attested in contemporary sources.

²³³ Rosenthal, N.H.: "Formula for survival: the saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation", Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1979.

²³⁴ Blake, G.: "The Eureka Stockade: an International/Transnational Event", UNSW Canberra, 2013, pages 121-122. The source is misprinted, it should be "Vol 4. Part 8. 1958. p.480".

²³⁵ Available online at ajhs.collectiveaccess.au/Detail/objects/48524

However, after looking into the aforementioned article, its only source is Withers's 1887 book *History of Ballarat*, specifically page 13. Withers makes a number of references to Thonen in his book, but he never mentions his Jewish heritage.²³⁶

Ultimately, the earliest source known to state that Thonen was Jewish and the one to which all subsequent claims can be traced back is a self-published article by Lazarus Morris Goldman from 1954:²³⁷

[A]bout 30 of the rebels lost their lives. Poor Teddy Thonen, the lemonade man, was numbered among the latter. He was the only known Jew who took part in the actual fighting. He stood in front of the flag, cheering and shouting in his native German, when a bullet entered his mouth. He made a grotesque attempt to spit it out—but he dropped dead. He was only 24 years old.

In December of that year, this article was reprinted numerous times, probably in commemoration of the event's 100th anniversary.²³⁸ It was mentioned again in 1955 in the Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society:²³⁹

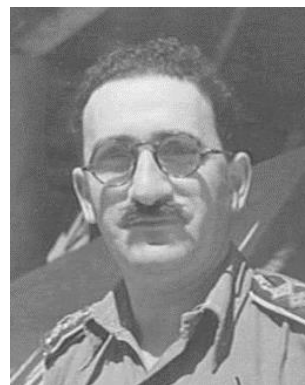
Edward Thonen, who was killed instantly when a bullet struck him in the mouth, was born in Elberfeld, in Prussia, and was well known in Ballarat as a lemonade seller. [...] Carboni's tribute to this Jew, who gave his life for what he deemed right and fair, explains why he found a ready place on the council which directed the miners' resistance.

Unfortunately, neither in the original article nor in any of the reprints does Goldman cite or provide a source to support this claim. We have looked for other sources from which he might have obtained this information, but we have been unable to find any.

In their edition of 17 December 1954, the Sydney Jewish News reviewed a reprint of Goldman's article that had been published anonymously:²⁴⁰

Participation of two Jews in the Eureka Stockade, the centenary of which was celebrated recently, is described in an article, "The Jews of Eureka" published in the current issue of the Great Synagogue Journal. The article says that one of the Jews, Edward Thonen, born at Elberfeld, (Western Germany), was killed instantly when a bullet struck him in the mouth. The other, Charles Dyte, who came to Australia, later became President of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation and Mayor of Ballarat East. Both were highly respected among the miners and their families who became involved in the rebellion against local authorities and the then Governor of Victoria.

The 1958 issue of the Journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, to which Blake referred, reprinted the 1954 article with minimal changes.



*Rabbi Lazarus Morris Goldman (1907-1960)
Image: Australian War Memorial*

²³⁶ Withers, W.B.: "History of Ballarat", F. W. Niven & Co., 1887.

²³⁷ Goldman, L.M.: "The Jews in Victoria in the Nineteenth Century", Melbourne, 1954 (self-published), page 122. www.google.de/books/edition/The_Jews_in_Victoria_in_the_Nineteenth_C/k5waAAAAIAAJ?gbpv=1&printsec=frontcover&bsq=Thonen. For the 1944 photograph of Goldman see www.awm.gov.au/collection/C76612. A biography of Goldman can be found at www.oztorah.com/2011/03/rabbi-lm-goldman-a-profile/.

²³⁸ See, for example, the anonymously published "The Jews of Eureka" in The Great Synagogue Journal, December 1954.

²³⁹ "The Jews of Eureka", in: Journal and Proceedings of the Australian Jewish Historical Society, volume IV, part II, 1955, page 82. ajhs.collectiveaccess.au/Detail/objects/52721

²⁴⁰ "NEWS IN BRIEF", in: The Sydney Jewish News, 17 December 1954, page 2. nla.gov.au/nla.news-article262676388

Thonen being Jewish was quickly accepted as fact. Solomon's *100 Full Years of Ballarat Jewry* from 1961²⁴¹ and Cowen's *Jews in Remote Corners of the World* from 1971²⁴² are two early sources that corroborated the assertion. A 1961 article by Monty Schaffer (executive director of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies) in the Canadian newspaper *The Jewish Post* may be the first such work published outside of Australia:²⁴³

Dyte and others helped to frame the vigorous protest resolution against Government action which had resulted in 30 miners being killed, among them a Jew, Teddy Thonen.

The Australian Jewish Historical Society summarised a trip to Ballarat by saying the following in 1990:²⁴⁴

Ballarat genealogist Lois Reynolds and AJHS member Isador Solomon gave thumb-nail sketches of many of the members of the Jewish community buried in the old cemetery. [...] Some have even become part of Australian history. Records show that Teddy Thonen, a Jewish miner of German extraction, was one of the miners who built what became known as the Eureka stockade at Bakery Hill in 1854. Thonen died when armed police and troopers stormed the stockade.

Numerous other references continue to be published up to the present day, which all rely on some iteration of Goldman's 1954 article. The *Eureka Encyclopedia*, published in 2004, is no exception, citing one of the 1954 articles as one of its sources:²⁴⁵

THONEN, EDWARD (1830–1854) A Prussian, he was one of the leaders of the miners and was killed at the storming of the Eureka Stockade on 3 December 1854.

Thonen was born in the town of Elberfeld (or Elberfeldt) which was located in Westphalia, an enclave of the Kingdom of Prussia close to the Netherlands border, and near the city of Dusseldorf. During the Napoleonic Wars it had been annexed by France, but after the Congress of Vienna in 1815 was restored to Prussia. Some writers spoke of it as the 'Manchester of Germany', and it had a slightly radical tradition with the town maintaining a system of poor relief. Indeed the philosopher Frederick Engels went to school in the town – he was ten years older than Thonen and in 1845, when Thonen was 15, Engels addressed communist meetings in Elberfeld. Following from the Year of Revolutions (1848), in May 1849 there was an uprising in Elberfeld and nearby towns, which was suppressed by the Prussian authorities. It is speculation but Thonen may have been one of those who left for exile in England.

Edward Thonen came to Victoria in 1852. He moved to Ballarat and worked on the goldfields selling lemonade. He had quickly gained a reputation as a strong chess player. At the second Bakery Hill Meeting on 29 November 1854, he was chosen to be a captain of some of the diggers. A blacksmith and pike-master during the Eureka uprising,²⁴⁶ he was described as being five feet tall, thin but robust. He died from gunshot wounds when he was defending the Eureka Stockade. Raffaello Carboni wrote that Thonen's mouth was literally full of bullets. He was buried on 5 December in the Ballarat Old Cemetery. The only Jewish person killed at Eureka, Edward Thonen was aged 24. The informant for his death certificate was Dr Albert Sickler.²⁴⁷

²⁴¹ Solomon, I.: "100 Full Years of Ballarat Jewry", in: *The Australian Jewish Herald* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1935 - 1968), 30 March 1961, page 7. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/265728085

²⁴² Cowen, I.: "Jews in Remote Corners of the World", Prentice-Hall, 1971, page 113.

²⁴³ Schaffer, M.: "Synagogue in the Goldfields", in: *The Jewish Post*, 28 September 1961, page VIII. [www.jhcwc.org/jhcdb/clipping/Jewish Post/1961/September/September 28 1961/The Jewish Post Vol XXXVII No 39 September 28 1961 pp 18VIII 18IX.pdf](http://www.jhcwc.org/jhcdb/clipping/Jewish%20Post/1961/September/September%201961/The%20Jewish%20Post_Vol%20XXXVII_No%2039_September%2028%201961_pp%2018VIII%2018IX.pdf)

²⁴⁴ "Back to Ballarat", in: *The Australian Jewish News* (Melbourne, Vic. : 1935 - 1999), 20 July 1990, page 18. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/261654688

²⁴⁵ Corfield, J.J., Gervasoni, C., Wickham, D.: "The Eureka Encyclopaedia", Ballarat Heritage Services, 2004, page 506.

²⁴⁶ Thonen probably was not a blacksmith. This information appears to refer to another German called Thomas Henfield; compare the chapter [Accounts of his death](#).

²⁴⁷ The encyclopedia is the earliest mention of Dr. Sickler in the literature in the context of Eureka that we are aware of, compare Kass, T.: "Finding Sickler: A Romp through the Records. Estonian Archives in Australia", BaltHerNet, 2016. www.balther.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Kass_ENG.pdf

Thonen is now remembered by Thonen Drive at Ballarat Old Cemetery. Peter Lalor's accounts mention that Thonen's terrier dog would not leave his body, and this later became the legend of the Pikeman's dog. However, according to an unpublished diary, it seems more likely that this was William Emmerman.

[References:] *Heinrich Born*, *Die Stadt Elberfeld 1610–1910, Druck und Verlag von J H Born: Elberfeld 1910*; *Eberhard Illner*, *Bürgerliche Organisation in Elberfeld 1775–1850, Ph C W Schmidt: Neustadt an der Aisch, 1982*; *Gustav Mayer*, *Friedrich Engels: a biography, Chapman & Hall: London 1936*; *Newman Rosenthal*, *Formula for Survival: the saga of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, Hawthorn Press: Melbourne 1979, p9*; *Dorothy Wickham*, *Deaths at Eureka, Ballarat 1996*; *Dorothy Wickham, Clare Gervasoni & Wayne Phillipson*, *Eureka Research Directory, Ballarat 1999, p96*; 'The Jews of Eureka', *Australian Jewish Historical Society Vol 4 (1954), p82-83*.

A contemporary source suggesting Thonen knew Hebrew could be one reason why Goldman incorrectly claimed Thonen was of Jewish descent. Even though we are unaware of such a source, we cannot rule out its existence. As we discussed in the context of Thonen's education in the chapter [Youth and education](#), it is possible, if not likely, that he had some knowledge of Hebrew.

Due to the lack of evidence, theories of a late-life conversion to Judaism seem unlikely. Another possibility²⁴⁸ is that Goldman was aware of Thonen's connections to the Hungarian Jews Schwabacher and Birnstingl, the two diamond dealers, and took those connections as proof that Thonen was Jewish as well. Jews dominated the diamond trade in the Victorian era, which Goldman was likely aware of. Although we lack evidence that he knew of Thonen's time in England, let alone the background of his employers, we also cannot rule it out because Goldman did not specify his sources. Goldman at the time was in the process of writing a history of the Jews in Australia, a work that sadly remained unfinished. Finding an "Australian connection" for the diamond merchants is not difficult: Birnstingl spent some time in Australia, and the journal of the Australian Jewish Historical Society even made reference to him in a book review from 1970 (see chapter [The Jewellery, and the diamond merchants](#)). Despite the fact that we were unable to locate any references to Birnstingl's time in Australia before 1969,²⁴⁹ 15 years after Goldman's article, his role may have been well known in 1954. The accounts of Thonen's diamond heist that were printed in Australian newspapers in the 1890s, which mention Birnstingl, may also have been known to Goldman, and he may have correctly deduced that the Birnstingl and Thonen in London and Australia were the same individuals. However, if Goldman had further concluded that Thonen must have been Jewish because he worked for a Jewish merchant, he would have been mistaken.

The evidence for a Jewish ancestry is weak, even if we disregard everything else that is known about Edward Thonen, such as his baptismal record, or the details in his request for permission to emigrate to Australia (details that were unknown to Australian researchers when we began working on this project). We conclude that the claims of his Jewish heritage can not be verified. They lack credibility because of their absence from studies of Jewish life in Ballarat before the mid-20th century, and because they are based on a single article that is not supported by primary sources.

Kass was not aware of either the encyclopedia or the death record. From Kass, T.: "Re: Sickler", email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 9 July 2023, 3:03 a.m., quote: *The death registration that you sent was quite interesting. It does confirm that Sickler treated injuries received during the Eureka Rebellion. I did not investigate these records, because there was no suggestion from other sources that they might prove useful.*

²⁴⁸ First suggested by German Wikipedia user *Hodsha*, 23 June 2023.

de.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Diskussion%3AEdward_Thonen&diff=234906029&oldid=234848183

²⁴⁹ Kunz, E.F.: "Blood and Gold; Hungarians in Australia", 1969.

www.google.de/books/edition/Blood_and_Gold_Hungarians_in_Australia/9IkhAAAAMAAJ

The song *German Teddy*

Carboni's accounts of Thonen's story were the inspiration for a song, *German Teddy*, probably dating to the 1880s. A manuscript of the song, dated 15 July 1889, was given to New Zealand composer Alfred Hill by Lieselotte Schreiner from Germany, a friend of Hill from Hohenprießnitz in Saxony, who he may have known from his time at the Leipzig Conservatory. The manuscript is now housed in the Alfred Hill collection at the State Library of New South Wales,²⁵⁰ where it was rediscovered in the 1980s by musicologist Kay Dreyfus.

That song, in turn, inspired the 1984 symphony *German Teddy* by Kay Dreyfus's husband George Dreyfus (born in 1928), an Australian composer of Jewish descent who, like Edward Thonen, was born in Elberfeld. The symphony premiered in Wuppertal in 1986, and was performed at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka in 2016.²⁵¹

There are several unanswered questions about the origin of the song. The original composer's identity and, if it was Lieselotte Schreiner, her connection to Australia are unknown. In addition, according to the State Library of New South Wales, the song does not appear in catalogues of Australian folk music. Despite being perhaps justified by the musical elements and style, the song's classification as an Australian folk song remains a mystery, as do its origins.

The manuscript is dedicated to Alfred Hill:

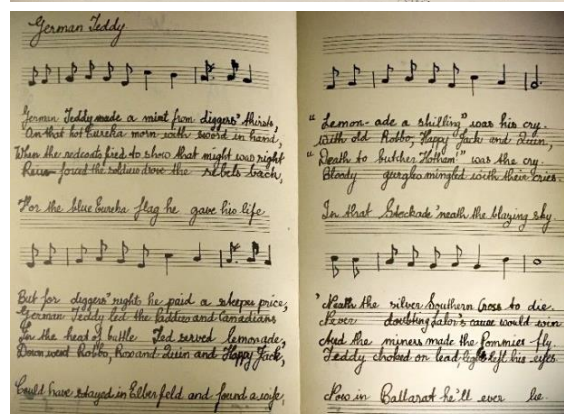
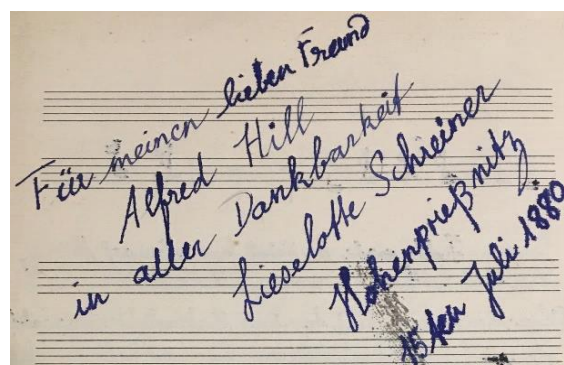
Für meinen lieben Freund Alfred Hill in aller Dankbarkeit.
Lieselotte Schreiner, Hohenprießnitz, 15ter Juli 1889.²⁵²

The lyrics are as follows:

German Teddy

*German Teddy made a mint from diggers' thirst,
'Lemonade a shilling' was his cry,
But for diggers' rights he paid a steeper price,
'Neath the silver Southern Cross to die.*

*On that hot Eureka morn with sword in hand,
With old Robbo, Happy Jack and Quin,
German Teddy led the Paddies and Canadians*



*The 1889 manuscript of the song,
dedicated to Alfred Hill.
Image: State Library of New South Wales*

²⁵⁰ A traditional song sent to Alfred Hill by Lieselotte Schreiner, in Series O4: Alfred Hill music manuscripts collected, 1880–1953. Call numbers MLMSS 6357/Boxes 41–42, MLMSS 6357/Box 62X, record identifier 94Rkr0j1, State Library New South Wales, collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/94Rkr0j1
Dreyfus, George, *German Teddy* [music]: traditional song / arranged by George Dreyfus; Bib ID 18416, National Library of Australia, catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/18416

²⁵¹ "World Premiere – German Teddy by composer George Dreyfus", Melbourne Composers' League, 1 April 2016.

Images of the performance can be found at: Lane, T.: "George Dreyfus' GERMAN TEDDY", 17 April 2016. www.flickr.com/photos/140402009@N04/albums/72157666728012890

(Note: This was not, in fact, a world premiere. The symphony was first performed in Wuppertal in 1986.)

²⁵² English: *For my dear friend Alfred Hill, with all gratitude.* Lieselotte Schreiner, Hohenprießnitz, 15 July 1889.

Never doubting Lalor's cause would win.

*When the redcoats fired to show that might was right
'Death to butcher Hotham!' was the cry.
In the heat of battle Ted served lemonade,
And the miners made the Pommies fly.*

*Reinforced the soldiers drove the rebels back,
Bloody gurgles mingled with their cries.
Down went Robbo, Ross and Quin and Happy Jack,
Teddy choked on lead, light left his eyes.*

*For the blue Eureka flag he gave his life
In that Stockade 'neath the blazing sky.
Could have stayed in Elberfeld and found a wife,
Now in Ballarat he'll ever lie.*

After receiving the original lyrics and sheet music from the State Library of New South Wales, we decided to record the song. We have released that audio recording into the public domain.²⁵³

Below we are reproducing some of the news coverage about Dreyfus's symphony, which sheds some light on the composer's inspiration. We begin with *The Bulletin*, 29 April 1986:²⁵⁴

THE CHEERFUL ART OF THE CHEEKY DREYFUS, PURLOINER—As he awaits reactions to his music for Bruce Beresford's latest film, The Fringe Dwellers, composer George Dreyfus is visiting Europe for the premiere of perhaps his oddest work. He told SUSAN McCULLOCH all about it.

A GERMAN-born Australian composer has expanded an obscure Australian folk song into a 30-minute symphony for a mandolin orchestra which is to be given its world premiere this week before a European audience more accustomed to works by Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler and the occasional Schoenberg. Sounds risky? Not a bit of it. Well, not according to the irrepressible George Dreyfus who is delighted with both the work and the story behind it.

Called German Teddy, the symphony was commissioned by the town of Wuppertal in West Germany (Dreyfus' birthplace) for the local resident mandolin orchestra. And they commissioned the piece because it is based on a folk song about a chap nicknamed „German Teddy” who was also born in Wuppertal and, like Dreyfus, came to Australia, but a good century earlier.

Edward (Teddy) Thonen apparently joined the great gold rush of the 1850s, leaving Wuppertal for the Ballarat goldfields where he may well have vanished into obscurity forever were it not for one event. For Teddy, a lemonade seller as well as miner, was a supporter of Peter Lalor's fight against the exorbitant government-imposed mining licence fees. And he was among those who fought and were subsequently killed at the Eureka Stockade in December, 1854.

His name is one of the 30 listed on the monument to the miners which still stands near Bakery Hill in Ballarat. Dreyfus saw the monument and registered the coincidence that one of the miners was born in the same town as himself (in Thonen's day it was called Elberfeldt). Once again, that may have been that. Then one day about three years ago Dr. Kay Dreyfus, the composer's wife, was researching some material in Sydney's Mitchell Library. Looking through some papers left by composer Alfred Hill she came across a scrap of manuscript with the words and one-line melody of a hitherto unknown song called German Teddy about Edward Thonen. The anonymous song had apparently been given to Hill.

„No one knows where it came from,” says Dreyfus. „The chord progressions are typical of early Australian folk music. It had obviously been given to Hill and he'd just put it among his miscellaneous papers.”

The coincidence of discovering something about the man born in the same town as he, and dying in such a notable way in Australia pleased Dreyfus who immediately thought of turning the scrappy tune into something

²⁵³ Available via commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:German_Teddy.flac

²⁵⁴ McCulloch, S.: “The cheerful art of the cheeky Dreyfus, purloiner”, in: *The Bulletin*, published by J. Haynes and J.F. Archibald, Sydney, volume 108, 29 April 1986, page 84.

more substantial. He contacted a friend and colleague Hartmut Klug,²⁵⁵ director of the Wuppertal mandolin orchestra, who commissioned a piece on the theme. Funding was sought and granted by the Music Board of the Australia Council and now two years later the symphony is ready for its world premiere.

In style it is very like the treatment he had given many other Australian folk songs, most notably the theme for the television series *Rush* based on the old tune *The Old Palmer Song*. Undoubtedly the most successful instrumental piece to be written in Australia recently, *Rush* created a mild musical furore at the time with debates in several newspapers questioning Dreyfus' integrity as an original composer.

Acknowledging freely that he, in fact, stage managed a good deal of the row himself, Dreyfus cheerfully describes himself as a „purchaser“ of traditional material. „There isn't a tune I haven't done or tried to do,“ he says. „Ask the man in the street to sing five Australian songs and he'll come up with perhals, Click go the Shears, Waltzing Matilda, Botany Bay, I still call Australia Home, maybe Advance Australia Fair... and... the theme from *Rush*. [...]

From *The Marvellous World of George Dreyfus*, 1992:²⁵⁶

GERMAN TEDDY: SYMPHONY FOR MANDOLIN ORCHESTRA—1. *Allegro vivo*, 2. *Lento*, 3. *Allegro con brio*.

If you ever visit the Ballarat cemetery you will not be able to miss the memorial for the miners who fell at the Eureka Stockade uprising on the 3rd of December 1854. One of those listed on the memorial is Eduard Thonen and his place of origin is given as Elberfeld, Prussia. This town is of course the old name for Wuppertal, the birth place also of George Dreyfus.

If you ever visit the State Library of New South Wales and look into the Alfred Hill collection, you will find the original manuscript of the folk song „German Teddy“ who turns out to be none other than Eduard Thonen. So when Dreyfus received a commission in 1983 from his friend Hartmut Klug, the conductor of the Mandolin orchestra in Wuppertal, to compose a work for that ensemble, what could be better than to combine all these factors: a Symphony composed by a German-born Australian composer, based on an Australian folk song found in the collection of another Australian composer, about the life of a German miner, who died in the city which is also the birthplace of Dreyfus's wife Kay? For use in the first movement of the symphony the „German Teddy“ song is speeded up to double tempo, making it ideal for playing on plucked instruments. The song itself is cited and also goes through various transformations during the course of the movement.

The second movement reveals music of a darker, night-time, nature. The last movement is a bright fantasia with varied moods, finishing with a citation of the greatest Australian mining music of all time, the composer's own theme for the television series „*Rush*“.

From a speech given by George Dreyfus in Potsdam, Germany on 24 June 1995:²⁵⁷

Der Goldrausch der achtzehnhundertfünfziger Jahre änderte alles für das neu entdeckte Australien. Immigranten rasten massenhaft an, auch die Deutschen. Viele waren erfolglose Revolutionäre von 1848, ich zitiere Wolf Biermann „Deutschland ist sehr erfolgreich mit erfolglosen Revolutionen.“

Die Goldstadt Bendigo im Norden Victorias wurde mit ihren Liedertafeln und nachgeahmten deutschen Barockmalereien eine deutsche Kulturstadt, und die Goldstadt Ballarat, westlich von Bendigo wurde berühmt als Ort der einzigen australischen, und wie all die deutschen, erfolglosen Revolution.

Ein geborener Wuppertaler, Eduard Thonen, fiel in dem blitzminutenlangen Gefecht mit den state troopers, er ist verewigt nicht nur mit einer Inschrift auf dem Eureka Stockade-Denkmal, sondern auch in der Symphonie für Zupforchester, ein Auftragswerk der Stadt Wuppertal des ebenfalls in Wuppertal geborenen Komponisten George Dreyfus.

Der erste Satz dieser Symphonie basiert auf dem zeitweilig verschollenen australischen Volkslied German Teddy, welches die Frau des Komponisten, die Musikwissenschaftlerin Dr. Kay Dreyfus, in der Alfred Hill Collection in der State Library of NSW Sydney während ihrer eigenen Recherchen durch Zufall gefunden hat.

²⁵⁵ Hartmut Klug (1928-2019); compare de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hartmut_Klug.

²⁵⁶ „The Marvellous World of George Dreyfus“, Move Records, Australia, 1992, www.move.com.au/pdf.cfm?id=3129. The main theme starts at the 2m28s position in the 1st movement (*Allegro Vivo*), open.spotify.com/album/1J3Mm8wZZJEdzcCIUDb120.

²⁵⁷ Later published as „Nette Deutsche, liebe Australier, doch trotzdem könnt Ihr zusammen leben: Diverse Auseinandersetzungen mit nationaler Identität, Zeitschrift für Australienstudien“, in: *Australian Studies Journal*, volume 9, 1995, page 38. thestacks.libaac.de/bitstream/handle/11858/2070/NAAS_09-1995_02_Dreyfus.pdf

The gold rush of the 1850s changed everything for the newly discovered Australia. Immigrants arrived in masses, including the Germans. Many of them were unsuccessful revolutionaries from 1848; as Wolf Biermann said, "Germany is very successful with unsuccessful revolutions."

The gold city of Bendigo in northern Victoria became a German cultural city with its singing societies and imitated German Baroque paintings. The gold city of Ballarat, west of Bendigo, became famous as the site of the only Australian, and like all the German ones, unsuccessful revolution.

A native of Wuppertal, Eduard Thonen, fell in the lightning-fast skirmish with the state troopers. He is immortalised not only with an inscription on the Eureka Stockade Memorial but also in the Symphony for Plucked Orchestra, a commissioned work by the city of Wuppertal by composer George Dreyfus, who was also born in Wuppertal.

The first movement of this symphony is based on the temporarily lost Australian folk song "German Teddy," which was serendipitously discovered by the composer's wife, musicologist Dr. Kay Dreyfus, in the Alfred Hill Collection at the State Library of NSW Sydney during her own research.

Did George Dreyfus believe Thonen to have been one of those "unsuccessful revolutionaries of 1848," like Blake and FitzSimons have done? We have no proof of Thonen's participation in the events of 1848/1849, although it is possible that he was involved (compare chapter [Youth and education](#)).

On 14 February 1993, in an interview with Manfred Brusten, Dreyfus recalled the circumstances of the first performance of his symphony. The interview was published in 1998:²⁵⁸

Ich habe auch Motive alter australischer Volkslieder in meinen Kompositionen und Filmmusiken verwendet, Lieder z.B. aus der Zeit des Goldrausches und der Schafzucht. Hierzu gehört u.a. eine meiner populärsten Kompositionen, die Sinfonie 'The German Teddy', die am 27. April 1986 mit der Mandolinen-Konzertgesellschaft unter der Leitung von Hartmut Klug in der Immanuelskirche in Wuppertal-Barmen zur Uraufführung gelangte. Der Titel der Sinfonie weist bereits auf ein australisches Volkslied hin, das von einem in Elberfeld geborenen Auswanderer, Eduard Thonen, berichtet, der – als Limonadenverkäufer und Pazifist – bei der historischen 'Eureka-Stockade', der einzigen australischen 'Revolution', in Ballarat, ca 110 km nordwestlich von Melbourne, am 3. Dezember 1854 zwischen die Fronten der Goldgräber und der Regierungstruppen geriet und dabei mit 25 Goldsuchern und 5 Polizisten den Tod fand.[FN29] Die Melodie dieses Volksliedes ist das Leitmotiv der ganzen Komposition.

[FN29]: *vgl die erst kürzlich erschienene Schilderung der tragischen Lebensgeschichte dieses schon sehr früh nach Australien ausgewanderten Wuppertalers 'Eduard Thoenen' durch Michael Knieriem in der 'Westdeutschen Zeitung' vom 18. April 1998, S.12.*

I have also used motifs from old Australian folk songs in my compositions and film music, songs from the time of the gold rush and sheep farming. One of my most popular compositions is the symphony 'The German Teddy', which premiered on April 27, 1986, with the Mandolin Concert Society conducted by Hartmut Klug at the Immanuelskirche in Wuppertal-Barmen. The title of the symphony refers to an Australian folk song that tells the story of an emigrant born in Elberfeld, Eduard Thonen, who – as a lemonade seller and pacifist – got caught in the middle of the historical 'Eureka Stockade', the only Australian 'revolution', in Ballarat, approximately 110 km northwest of Melbourne, on December 3, 1854, between the gold miners and government troops, resulting in the death of 25 gold diggers and 5 policemen.[Footnote 29] The melody of this folk song serves as a leitmotif throughout the composition.

[Footnote 29]: *Refer to the recently published account of the tragic life story of this Wuppertal emigrant 'Eduard Thoenen', who migrated to Australia at an early age, by Michael Knieriem in the 'Westdeutsche Zeitung' on April 18, 1998, p.12.*

In a footnote, Brusten mentioned an article by the German historian Michael Knieriem in the *Westdeutsche Zeitung* ("West German Newspaper"), published in April 1998, where Knieriem told the story of Edward Thonen. It is unclear if Dreyfus was made aware of Knieriem's

²⁵⁸ Brusten, M.: "George Dreyfus – 'Mr. New Music' in Australien", 1998, pages 18-19. www.exil-archiv.de/grafik/biografien/dreyfus/George-Dreyfus.pdf
About the author: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manfred_Brusten

research. It seems to be unknown to Australian historians, possibly due to the language barrier, or the fact that Knieriem's article was never republished and is not available online. German researchers after Knieriem did not give any attention either, and Brusten's footnote is the only place we could find that even mentions it. In his article, Knieriem also wrote about a performance of the symphony, which was about to take place in Wuppertal the following month:²⁵⁹

„German Teddy“ in der Stadthalle. Komposition des Musikers George Dreyfus—(MK). Der im Jahr 1928 in Elberfeld geborene Musiker George Dreyfus wird am 24. Mai dieses Jahres in Wuppertal seine neueste Komposition unter dem Titel „German Teddy“ im Mendelssohn-Saal der Stadthalle zu Gehör bringen. Diese Konzert-Veranstaltung wird unter den Auspizien des Musik- und Theaterbundes der Bergischen Musikschule und unter Mitwirkung der Professoren Joachim Dorpmüller und Hartmut Klug stattfinden.

Dreyfus, der als elfjähriger Junge gezwungen war, vor den Nazischergen nach Australien zu emigrieren, lebt dort als Komponist und hat bereits etliche Werke seines künstlerischen Schaffens in Deutschland vorgestellt. Nun haben nicht nur Bücher ihre Geschichte, sondern oft auch Titel von Zeichnungen, Gemälden oder Kompositionen. Sie sind meist das Ergebnis einer spontanen Eingebung, eines Erlebnisses oder einer anderen Impression, die im Gedächtnis haften geblieben ist.

Was steckt also hinter dem Titel „Ein deutscher Teddy“? Doch kaum ein deutsches Kuscheltier mit samtigen Augen und Plüschohren. Ein Bärchen, das jeder lieben muß, natürlich ein bißchen tapsig und unbeholfen, in jedem Fall aber drollig. Dazu will aber die Vokabel „deutsch“ eigentlich nicht so recht passen. Erinnern wir uns: Prototyp und Vorbild des Teddy-Bären ist der australische Koalabär. Also, ein deutscher Bär in Australien, das mag man gelten lassen.

George Dreyfus beweist hier nun seinen Sprachwitz: Teddy ist auch eine gängige angelsächsische Abkürzung, Nickname und Koseform von Edward. Der Trittstein ist gefunden: Edward ist ein deutscher Eduard. Die Idee zur Komposition mag Dreyfus gekommen sein, als er die Inschrift des Memorials in Ballarat/Victoria las. Hier findet sich eingemeißelt der Name „Edward Thoenen, Elberfeldt, Prussia“. Eduard Thoenen (1827-1854) fiel, wenn auch nicht im soldatischen Sinne, auf dem Feld der Ehre – in einer Auseinandersetzung zwischen englischen Kolonialtruppen und wütenden Goldsuchern. Ein 27jähriger Deutscher, der kaum Erfahrungen in Australien hatte sammeln können, war in eine Sache hineingeschlittert, die er mit seinem Leben bezahlen mußte. Eben doch ein unseliger „German Teddy“, auf den die Wuppertaler stolz sein können. Schade nur, daß das Konzert nicht am 26. Mai stattfindet, dann wäre es genau zum 171. Geburtstag von Eduard Thoenen gewesen.

“German Teddy“ in the civic centre. Composition by musician George Dreyfus—(Michael Knieriem). Musician George Dreyfus, born in Elberfeld in 1928, will present his latest composition titled “German Teddy” at the Mendelssohn Hall of the civic centre in Wuppertal on 24 May of this year. This concert event will take place under the auspices of the Music and Theater Association of the Bergische Musikschule, with the participation of Professors Joachim Dorpmüller and Hartmut Klug.

Dreyfus, forced to emigrate to Australia as an eleven-year-old boy from the Nazi authorities, now resides there as a composer and has already presented numerous works of his artistic creation in Germany. Titles of drawings,

„German Teddy“ in der Stadthalle

Komposition des Musikers George Dreyfus

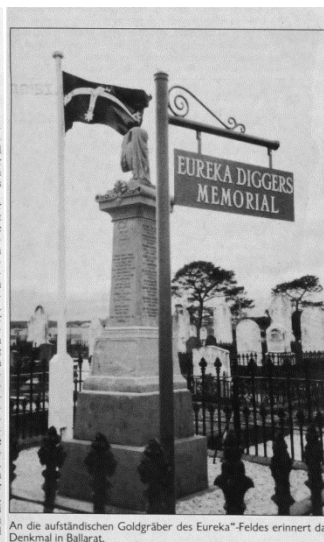
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An die aufständischen Goldgräber des Eureka*-Feldes erinnert das Denkmal in Ballarat.

Excerpt from Knieriem's article (WZ, 18 April 1998). Image: Stadtarchiv Wuppertal

²⁵⁹ Knieriem, M.: "Die abenteuerliche Geschichte des Eduard Thoenen", in: Wuppertaler Nachrichten, Westdeutsche Zeitung (WZ), 18 April 1998, page 12.

About Michael Knieriem: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Knieriem

paintings, or compositions often have stories behind them, just like books do. They are mostly the result of spontaneous inspiration, an experience, or another impression that remains in memory.

So, what lies behind the title “A German Teddy”? It is not likely to be a German cuddly toy with velvet eyes and plush ears. A bear that everyone loves, naturally a bit clumsy and awkward, but undeniably adorable. However, the term “German” does not quite fit here. Let’s remember: the prototype and model for the Teddy Bear is the Australian Koala. So, a German bear in Australia might be acceptable.

George Dreyfus displays his linguistic wit here: Teddy is also a common Anglo-Saxon abbreviation, nickname, and term of endearment for Edward. The stepping stone is found: Edward is a German Eduard. The idea for the composition may have come to Dreyfus when he read the inscription on the memorial in Ballarat, Victoria.²⁶⁰ Carved into the stone is the name “Edward Thoenen, Elberfeldt, Prussia.” Eduard Thoenen (1827–1854) fell, though not in the military sense, on the field of honor – in a confrontation between English colonial troops and furious gold miners. A 27-year-old German who had little experience in Australia had gotten entangled in a situation that cost him his life. Indeed, an ill-fated “German Teddy,” of whom the people of Wuppertal can be proud. It’s a shame that the concert does not take place on 26 May; it would have been exactly on Eduard Thoenen’s 171st birthday.

The collaboration between George Dreyfus and Hartmut Klug was mentioned again in 2004, in the context of Klug’s 75th birthday. From Siegfried Büttner’s homage:²⁶¹

Heirbei kam von Klugs australischem Freund George Dreyfus „The Adventures of Sebastian the Fox” ins Spiel, und bei späterer Gelegenheit „German Teddy” für Mandolinen-Orchester, eine Geschichte mit traurigem Ende: Ein junger Elberfelder suchte in Australien als Goldsucher sein Glück, als Limonadenverkäufer endete er durch die Kugel.

During this collaboration, Klug’s Australian friend George Dreyfus introduced “The Adventures of Sebastian the Fox,” and on another occasion, “German Teddy” for mandolin orchestra—a story with a tragic ending. A young man from Elberfeld sought his fortune as a gold digger in Australia, but his journey ended as a lemonade seller, tragically shot.

The symphony’s first performance on the Australian continent appears to have been at the Melbourne International Mandolin Festival in 1993, where it was conducted by Fred Witt.²⁶² In 2016 it was performed at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka (M.A.D.E). From the Ballarat newspaper *The Courier*, 12 April 2016:²⁶³

AN ODE TO AN IDEALIST—Bringing history to life: Eminent composer George Dreyfus will launch his world premiere of German Teddy in Ballarat this Sunday.

TEDDY Thonen came to Ballarat in the mid-1800s with dreams of striking it rich by finding gold – or at least by selling enough lemonade to make a decent quid.

But the German Jew must have also been a heady idealist.

Leading a division of miners into the Eureka Stockade, he was also sadly the first to be killed in the violent battle. Over time, Teddy’s story has simply faded into oblivion – until now.

Renowned composer George Dreyfus has composed a score for string orchestra entitled German Teddy, an ode to the ill-fated historical figure.

It will be performed this weekend in a free concert at the Museum of Australian Democracy at Eureka, fulfilling Dreyfus’ wish to stage its world-premiere in Ballarat.

The composition combines elements from the original folk song German Teddy as well as Dreyfus’ own score for the 1970s television program Rush, a highlight of his career.

Dreyfus, who now lives in Melbourne, also hails from Germany. In fact, he was born in the same city as Teddy – Elberfeld – which is now known as Wuppertal.

²⁶⁰ At the time of writing this, Knieriem was either oblivious of the traditional song that had actually inspired Dreyfus, or he omitted that information on purpose.

²⁶¹ Büttner, S.: “Scherenschnitt-Künstler als Multitalent. Hartmut Klug zum 75. Geburtstag”, in: concertino, 2004, volume 2, page 68. bdz-rlp.de/sites/bdz-rlp.de/files/user_file_upload/1_75_Jahre.pdf

²⁶² Barber, G.: “The West Australian Mandolin Orchestra. Our First 40 Years 1976-2016”, 2016, page 61. www.google.de/books/edition/The_West_Australian_Mandolin_Orchestra/wj90jwEACAAJ

²⁶³ Wilson, A.: “An ode to an idealist”, *The Courier*, 12 April 2016. www.thecourier.com.au/story/3844309/an-ode-to-an-idealist/

An eminent composer, Dreyfus has a long history composing for film and television and has been made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to music.

The concert will open M.A.D.E's exhibition 19th Century BLING – an exploration into goldfields jewellery, which runs Saturday through to July 4.

M.A.D.E Director Jane Smith said many people would never have heard about the miner and lemonade-seller Teddy Thonen before, with works like these keeping his memory alive.

“He would have been wildly idealistic and sadly he paid the price for it,” she said.

“I didn't know about Teddy before. So it's a nice part of Stockade history that people wouldn't know.”

Ms Smith said Dreyfus would bring 14 musicians from Melbourne to perform the concert along with a group of Ballarat players.

“It's a nice way of connecting to that goldfields history,” she said.

“There are quite a few pieces of music out there but I guess the thing about this is we'll have someone coming to play it.”

The free performance of German Teddy will be held at the M.A.D.E theatre in Stawell Street on Sunday April 17 at 2pm.

It is apparent that, at least at the time of the M.A.D.E performance, Dreyfus believed that Edward Thonen was Jewish, like he himself. We do not know if he already held that belief in the 1980s when he composed the symphony, and whether this affected his decision to write the piece. For a detailed discussion of where the idea of Thonen's Jewish heritage came from, see the chapter [Claims of Jewish descent](#).

We were able to contact George Dreyfus in June 2023, and to inform him about our discoveries. We were happy to receive this reply, among others:²⁶⁴

Dear Daniel

I am writing to thank you most sincerely for your message and for sending me the draft of your Thonen manuscript.

I have only had a quick look at your story so far, but I plan to have it printed and quick bound and read it properly next week. But in the meantime, I would like to say how surprised and delighted I was to see how much attention you have given to German Teddy.

With every good wish and my best thanks again,

George Dreyfus

While Dreyfus could not answer all of our questions, he shared some details about his symphony, which are reflected in this chapter.

Other appearances in literature

Dreyfus' symphony is not the only instance where Thonen's role in the Eureka Rebellion has been adapted by art or literature. Thonen plays a role in the 1917 poem *A Ballad of Eureka* by Vance Palmer (born in 1885, died in 1959). The second stanza reads:²⁶⁵

*Lalor was their leader, and behind him walked in pride
Fiery little Raffaelo, whose heart was finest gold,
Vern and Ross and Thonen and a chosen few beside,
Drilled as many rebels as the rough Stockade would hold –
Drilled through the silent night
All who were pledged to fight
Tyrants in high places like their fathers did of old.*

²⁶⁴ Dreyfus, G.: “Your message”, email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 9 July 2023, 4:11 a.m.

²⁶⁵ See, for example, Palmer, V.: “A Ballad of Eureka”, in: *The Evening Echo*, 9 April 1917, page 3.

trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/241705179

Details about the poet may be found at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vance_Palmer.

The Australian poet Roland Robinson (born in 1912, died in 1992) also mentions Thonen in his 1975 poem *Eureka*.²⁶⁶

*Today, the challenge of Eureka rings
against God given rights of Queens and Kings.
Again that International Brigade
rises in us, holds fast to our Stockade.
From the flag's corner rip the Union Jack
and bring our own Australian Banner back:
our seven stars unseen, the Southern Cross,
for once our heritage, and then our loss.
Now Lalor, Thonen, Raffaello, those pike-men –
the Irish rebels must rise in us again.
Beyond the reach of change, I hear the name
“Eureka” still, the nearest that we came
to put all Herrs and Frasers down; our keen:
“Waltzing Matilda”, not “God save the Queen”.*

Apart from a few poetic references, Thonen is remarkably absent from most fictional accounts of Eureka. As a result, he is perhaps not as well known today as some of the other leaders, especially Lalor and Ross. Nadia Wheatley's *A banner bold: the diary of Rosa Aarons* is an example of juvenile fiction that mentions him numerous times, although Thonen plays only a minor role in the plot, and the story focuses on his role as a lemonade seller rather than a rebel.²⁶⁷ In her 1979 novel *So wicked my desire*, Stephanie Blake refers to Thonen in passing:²⁶⁸

“A toast to Pete Lalor,” Addie's father proposed. “And to the other heroes of Australia, Finian Lalor and Ed Thonen and Jim McGill, our good American cobbler.”

Thonen is not mentioned in any of the screen adaptations of Eureka.²⁶⁹ Some critics of the 1949 film noticed his absence. The journalist and communist activist Rupert Lockwood wrote that²⁷⁰

People not familiar with Eureka would not have realised the extent of international support for Australian democracy — the Californian Rangers' Revolver Brigade; Thonen the German lemonade-seller who died on Bakery Hill with his mouth filled with bullets (he is named only once); the many Irish rebels who helped so much to found the Australian labor movement.

Actually, that movie doesn't name “Thonen” at all. We would like to think that, had the story of Thonen's life been known, he may have played a bigger role.

²⁶⁶ Robinson, R.: “Eureka”, in: Education, Journal of the N.S.W. Public School Teachers Federation, volume 56, number 21, 3 December 1975, page 428. nla.gov.au/nla.obj-710570114/view?sectionId=nla.obj-719359230&partId=nla.obj-710614331#

For more information about the author, see [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_Robinson_\(poet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_Robinson_(poet)).

²⁶⁷ Wheatley, N.: “A banner bold: the diary of Rosa Aarons”, 2005.

archive.org/details/bannerbolddiaryo0000whea/mode/2up?q=Thonen

²⁶⁸ Blake, S.: “So wicked my desire”, 1979, page 14.

²⁶⁹ Beginning with the silent film *Eureka Stockade* in 1907, the screen adaptations of the events include: a British film *Eureka Stockade* (1949); an Australian musical film *Stockade* (1971); an Australian mini-series *Eureka Stockade* (1984); and an Australian documentary *Riot of Revolution: Eureka Stockade 1854* in 2006. Another silent film *The Loyal Rebel* (1915) is considered lost, but it appears that Thonen played no role in that film either.

²⁷⁰ Lockwood, R.: “Eureka Film Portrays Our Struggle For Democracy”, in: Tribune, 19 February 1949, page 5. trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/209387363

What was known in Germany about Eureka?

It is unclear if (or when) Edward's family in Germany ever became aware of his fate in Australia. The family had left Elberfeld around the time of Edward's emigration, and by the time of the Stockade, Edward's parents had both passed away. However, Edward's story definitely did reach Germany no later than 1889, as indicated by the provenance of the song *German Teddy*.

Thonen's name entered the academic discussion in Germany in 1907, when Maximilian Harden published an article about the Eureka Stockade by Robert Schachner, an economist at the University of Jena,²⁷¹ in his journal *Die Zukunft* (the future).²⁷² Schachner had written the article during his 1906–1907 visit to Australia, while staying in Tarnagulla, Victoria.²⁷³ In 1911 Schachner republished that article in a book about Australian politics, economics and culture, where he discussed "the social question in Australia and New Zealand".²⁷⁴ That book was praised by critics at the time as one of the best yet published about the consequences of the Eureka Stockade. In his review for Oxford's *Economic Journal*, M. Epstein wrote:²⁷⁵

It is curious that up to the present German scholars have written some of the best books on the subject, and among them, perhaps, Professor Schachner's stands first.

From those published in the 1930s, the book of August Lodewyckx may be the most notable. He describes the roles of three Germans who were involved in the revolt, including Thonen:²⁷⁶

Einer derselben, der Hannoveraner Friedrich Wern, wurde als der Haupturheber des Aufruhrs bezeichnet, und die Regierung setzte eine Belohnung von £500 in Aussicht für seine Verhaftung. Ein anderer, der Preuße E. Thonen, war einer der zwei „Leutnants“, die den Stab des Führers Peter Lalor bildeten, und fand den Tod auf seinem Posten. Ein dritter war ein Schmied und wird wegen seines Mutes erwähnt in H. G. Turners „Our Little Rebellion“.

One of them, the Hanoverian Friedrich Wern, was identified as the chief instigator of the rebellion, and the government offered a reward of £500 for his arrest. Another, the Prussian E. Thonen, was one of the two "lieutenants" who formed the command staff of Peter Lalor. He met his death at his post. A third was a blacksmith and is mentioned for his courage in H. G. Turner's "Our Little Rebellion."

There are more works from the interwar period that mention Thonen. Wilhelm Nowack wrote in 1938, clearly based on Schachner's account:²⁷⁷

Ein Preuße, Thonen, hatte, obwohl siebenfach verwundet, mit zwei Pistolen geschossen, so lange er noch konnte. A Prussian, Thonen, had, although wounded seven times, continued to fire two pistols as long as he could.

²⁷¹ Compare "About Robert Schachner (1875-1912)", peoplepill.com/people/robert-schachner

²⁷² Schachner, R.: "Auf dem Australischen Goldfeld" (On the Australian goldfield), in: *Die Zukunft*, volume 59, page 303, Berlin, 1907. archive.org/details/diezukunft22hardgoog/page/n315/mode/1up

²⁷³ Lack, J. et al.: "The workers' paradise?: Robert Schachner's letters from Australia, 1906-07", 1990. catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/2970744

²⁷⁴ Schachner, R.: "Australien in Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur", volume 2, page 352, Jena, 1909.

²⁷⁵ Epstein, M.: "Robert Schachner. Die Soziale Frage in Australien und Neuseeland. Australien in Politik, Wirtschaft, und Kultur; Adolf Weber. Der Kampf Zwischen Kapital und Arbeit; Herman Ritter von Schullern. Grundzuge der Volkswirtschaftslehre, Ein Studienbehelf für Hochschuler; Gerhard Hildebrand. Die Erschütterung der Industrieherrschaft und des Industriesozialismus" (book review), in: *The Economic Journal*, volume 21, issue 83, 1 September 1911, pages 442-445. academic.oup.com/ej/article-abstract/21/83/442/5291751

²⁷⁶ Lodewyckx, A.: "Die Deutschen in Australien", 1932, page 79.

www.google.de/books/edition/Die_Deutschen_in_Australien/QEVCAAAAIAAJ

²⁷⁷ Nowack, W.: "Australien, Kontinent der Gegensätze", 1938, page 187.

www.google.de/books/edition/Australien_Kontinent_der_Gegensätze/CydXAAAAMAAJ

That initial interest did not persist, and little has been published about the Eureka Stockade in Germany since the Second World War. A notable exception is Johannes Hermann Voigt's 1988 book *Geschichte Australiens*. Voigt mentions Thonen, not as one of those who were killed on December 3rd, but in the context of the mass meeting that was held a few days earlier:²⁷⁸

Unter der Führung des Iren Peter Lalor, des Italieners Raffaello Carboni, der Deutschen Eduard Thonen und Friedrich de Vern, wurde in Ballarat eine Massenversammlung abgehalten, auf der gegen die Verstärkung der Polizei durch Militär und gegen die Ausrüstung der Truppen mit Schußwaffen und deren drohende Zurschaustellung protestiert wurde.

Under the leadership of the Irishman Peter Lalor, the Italian Raffaello Carboni, and the Germans Eduard Thonen and Friedrich de Vern, a mass meeting was held in Ballarat, during which protest was raised against the reinforcement of the police by the military, the arming of troops with firearms, and the intimidating display of those weapons.

The Eureka Rebellion regained some short lived popularity in the 1980s and 1990s, at least in the Wuppertal region. George Dreyfus promoted his symphony "German Teddy", which was performed in the city at least twice (see the [chapter about the song](#)). In 1986, around the time of its world premiere, Joachim Dorf Müller wrote about Dreyfus's symphony in his book about composers from Wuppertal:²⁷⁹

Nicht nur die Elberfelder wird es interessieren, wer dieser "German Teddy" ist. Es handelt sich um jenen in ihrer Heimatstadt geborenen Eduard Thonen, der um die letzte Jahrhundertmitte nach Australien emigrierte, sich dort als Goldgräber verdingte, dabei den Spitznamen erhielt, der im Titel der neuen Dreyfus-Komposition wiederkehrt, und schließlich bei einer Revolte der Goldgräber in Ballarat ums Leben kam. Aus Ballarat, gelegen etwa 100 km nordwestlich von Melbourne, stammt George Dreyfus' Ehefrau Kay; durch sie wurde der Komponist auf die historische Begebenheit aufmerksam gemacht, die ihn sofort faszinierte.

Not only the people of Elberfeld will be interested to know who this "German Teddy" is. It refers to Eduard Thonen, born in their hometown, who emigrated to Australia around the middle of the last century, worked as a gold miner, earned the nickname that reappears in the title of the new Dreyfus composition, and eventually lost his life during a revolt of the gold miners in Ballarat. George Dreyfus' wife, Kay, grew up in Ballarat, located approximately 100 km northwest of Melbourne. Through her, the composer became aware of this historical event, which immediately fascinated him.

In his 1998 article about Thonen, Michael Knieriem told the story of the diggers' life, from what he was able to find in German archives.²⁸⁰ It presents an interesting contrast to some of the articles published in Australia around the same time. Knieriem makes a few mistakes, and he is unaware of Thonen's time in England, but he knew about Thonen's birth record, the background of his parents, and of his request for permission to emigrate to Australia:²⁸¹

Tod eines Elberfelder Goldgräbers. Eduard Thoenen: Als „Digger“ in Australien kämpfte er für Reform auf den Goldfeldern. Von Michael Knieriem. —Der Held unserer Geschichte, Eduard Thoenen, wurde am 26. Mai 1827 in Elberfeld geboren. Der Vater betrieb mit Erfolg ein Kommissionsgeschäft auf dem Rommelspütt und später auf

²⁷⁸ Voigt, J.H.: "Geschichte Australiens", 1988, page 105. www.google.de/books/edition//FicxAQAAIAAJ

²⁷⁹ Dorf Müller, J.: "Wuppertaler Komponisten", volume 1, 1986, page 96.

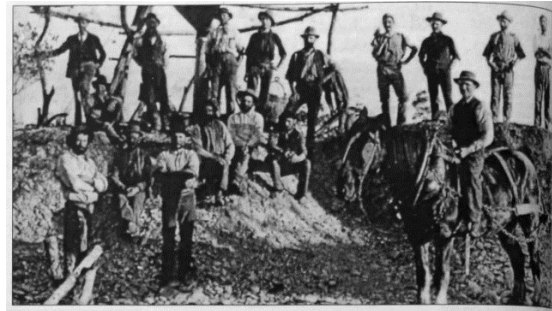
www.google.de/books/edition/Wuppertaler_Komponisten/1v_iAAAAMAAJ

²⁸⁰ We tried to contact Knieriem about his research, but he was not able to provide additional details. In an email received by Daniel Bamberger on 27 July 2023, 11:34 a.m., Alexandra Barbian of the Museum Industriekultur in Wuppertal told us that she had spoken with Dr. Knieriem regarding this matter. Although he still remembers the tragic fate of the gold digger Thoenen, he was one of the two Australians he had researched, at the age of 80, he cannot provide details from his research. He referred to a "file folder" containing newspaper articles and research notes, but I couldn't find it in our temporary on-site library. It might be resting in one of the approximately 250 boxes that will only be unpacked at the new library location, likely not before 2025.

²⁸¹ Knieriem, M.: "Die abenteuerliche Geschichte des Eduard Thoenen", in: Wuppertaler Nachrichten, Westdeutsche Zeitung (WZ), 18 April 1998, page 12.

der Louisenstraße. Die Eltern hatten 1817 in Elberfeld geheiratet. Beide waren Zuwanderer, Thoenen stammte aus Gladbach, seine Frau kam aus Mülheim am Rhein. Das äußere Umfeld ließ eher auf eine in geordneten Bahnen verlaufende Entwicklung ihrer Kinder schließen. Dienstzeit in den Revolutionsjahren—Eduard Thoenen besuchte in Elberfeld für ein paar Jahre die „Höhere Schule“, daran schloß sich eine kaufmännische Ausbildung an. 1847 wurde Eduard – wie im Rheinland üblich – gestellungspflichtig. Für zwei Jahre wurde er nun Soldat. Wir können vermuten, daß er seine Militärpflicht in Düsseldorf, Köln, Wesel oder Wetzlar ableistete. Später finden wir ihn jedenfalls als Reservisten des Landwehrbataillons Essen im Ersten Aufgebot. Seine Dienstzeit fiel in die Revolutionsjahre von 1848/49. Sein späterer Lebensweg zeigt ihn als einen aufrechten Demokraten. So können wir annehmen, daß er zähneknirschend wahrnehmen mußte, was um ihn herum passierte, wenn er nicht sogar gezwungen gewesen war, gegen seinen Willen an der Kampagne in Baden – für ihn auf der falschen Seite – teilzunehmen. „Gegen Demokraten helfen nur Soldaten“, aber gegen Soldaten halfen keine Demokraten. Wie dem auch sei, die Reaktion in Preußen siegte auf allen Feldern, Agonie und Resignation machten sich breit. Am 4. März 1853 stellte sein Vater für ihn den Antrag auf „Entlassung aus dem Preußischen Untertanenverband“. In den beigefügten Papieren steht vermerkt, daß Thoenen die Handlung erlernt habe und jetzt die Tätigkeit eines „Superrevidenten“, in etwa die eines Buchprüfers, ausübe. Auf Rückfrage des Regierungspräsidenten in Düsseldorf teilte der Elberfelder Polizeidirektor Hirsch der Behörde mit, daß „Thoenen die Hoffnung hege, sich in Australien eine sichere Existenz gründen zu können“. Am 28. Mai 1853 erhielt Thoenen die Entlassungsurkunde aus der Preußischen Staatsbürgerschaft. Er wird sich vermutlich sofort nach England begeben haben, um von Liverpool aus ein Schiff nach Australien zu finden. Die Reise dauerte mindestens sechs Monate, so daß er frühestens Anfang 1854 in Melbourne an Land gegangen sein kann.

Etwas zur gleichen Zeit kam ein weiterer Elberfelder in Australien an. Hermann Püttmann (1811–1874), ein ehemaliger Redakteur verschiedener Zeitschriften, hatte das Kunststück fertiggebracht, sich im Laufe seines Lebens zwischen alle Stühle zu setzen. Der als Literat ein Mann im zweiten Glied geblieben und gleichzeitig ein glühender Verfechter sozialistischer Gedankengutes war. Der nicht nur die Herrschenden gegen sich aufgebracht hatte, sondern sich auch wegen des von ihm propagierten utopischen Sozialismus und der Inkonsistenz seiner Gedankenführung Karl Marx zum Feind gemacht hatte. Der hatte nur einen verächtlichen Satz für ihn übrig, als er 1854 an Engels schrieb: „Püttmann, das dicke Schwein, ist nebst family als ‚Kolonist‘ von hier nach Australien verschifft“. Thoenen wird Püttmann in Elberfeld gekannt haben, wenn letzterer auch seit 1852 in England lebte. Immerhin, Püttmann gilt heute als Begründer des deutschen Pressewesens in Australien und hätte es längst verdient gehabt, daß seine Heimatstadt eine Straße nach ihm benannt hätte. Kehren wir zu Eduard Thoenen zurück. In Melbourne angekommen, hörte er von den neu entdeckten Goldvorkommen in Ballarat. So zog er hundert Kilometer landeinwärts, um mit Hacke und Schaufel nach Gold zu suchen. Hier – auf einem „Eureka“ genannten Goldfeld – kam es zu einem bewaffneten Zwischenfall gegen staatliche Willkür. 1852 hatte der Gouverneur von Victoria eine Lizenzgebühr für das Goldschürfen eingeführt, unabhängig davon, ob den „diggern“ Erfolg beschieden war oder nicht. Aus Protest schlossen sich die Goldsucher zur „Ballarat Reform League“ zusammen. Neben ihrem eigentlichen Anliegen, die Reform auf den Goldfeldern, erhoben sie die Forderung nach jährlichen Parlamentswahlen und einem allgemeinen geheimen Wahlrecht. Provoziert durch Polizeieinsätze, verschanzten sich die „diggers“ hinter selbst gebauten Palisaden. Eduard Thoenen, der gediente Soldat, wurde die rechte Hand des irischen Anführers Peter Lalor (1827–1889). Am frühen Morgen des 3. Dezember 1854 setzte eine Kompanie von 276 Soldaten zum Sturm auf die „Eureka Stockade“ an, die schon nach wenigen Minuten fiel. 25 Goldgräber und vier



Goldgräber in Australien.

Tod eines Elberfelder Goldgräbers

Eduard Thoenen: Als „Digger“ in Australien kämpfte er für Reform auf den Goldfeldern

Von Michael Knieriem

Der Held unserer Geschichte, Eduard Thoenen, wurde am 28. Mai 1827 in Elberfeld geboren. Der Vater betrieb mit Erfolg ein Kommissionsgeschäft auf dem Kornmarkt und später auf der Louisenstraße. Die Eltern hatten 1817 in Elberfeld geheiratet. Beide waren Zuwanderer, Thoenen stammte aus Gladbach, seine Frau kam aus Mülheim am Rhein. Das äußere Umfeld ließ eher auf eine in geordneten Bahnen verlaufende Entwicklung ihrer Kinder schließen.

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Polizeieinsätze, verschanzten sich die „diggers“ hinter selbst gebauten Palisaden. Eduard Thoenen, der gediente Soldat, wurde die rechte Hand des irischen Anführers Peter Lalor (1827–1889). Am frühen Morgen des 3. Dezember 1854 setzte eine Kompanie von 276 Soldaten zum Sturm auf die „Eureka Stockade“ an, die schon nach wenigen Minuten fiel. 25 Goldgräber und vier

Soldaten verloren dabei ihr Leben. Darunter Eduard Thoenen, der voller Hoffnung auf eine sichere Existenz nach Australien gekommen war.

Denkmal für Widerständler—Knapp anderthalb Jahre nach diesem Ereignis errichteten die Bürger von Ballarat ein Denkmal, das übersetzt die Inschrift trägt: „Geweiht der Erinnerung an diejenigen, die am denkwürdigen 3. Dezember 1854 im Widerstand gegen die verfassungswidrige Vorgehensweise der Regierung von Victoria gefallen sind. Errichtet am 22. März 1856“.

Durch die Denkmalsetzung wurde die Erinnerung an Thoenen wachgehalten. Dabei ist bemerkenswert, daß sich die Regierung von Victoria einen öffentlichen und permanenten Tadel gefallen ließ. In der Tat, der Aufstand der „diggers“ setzte einen Demokratisierungsprozeß in Gang, der es verdient, nicht vergessen zu bleiben. 1857 gab es bereits ein allgemeines Wahlrecht in Victoria. Dafür hatte Eduard Thoenen sein Leben geopfert. Dies geschah zu einer Zeit, als es in Preußen noch ein Dreiklassenwahlrecht gab, das den größten Teil der arbeitenden Bevölkerung von vornherein von der Wahl ausschloß.

Death of an Elberfeld gold digger. Eduard Thoenen: as a “digger” in Australia, he fought for reform on the goldfields. By Michael Knieriem.—The hero of our story, Eduard Thoenen, was born on 26 May 1827 in Elberfeld. His father successfully operated a commission business in Rommelspütt and later on Louisenstraße. The parents had married in Elberfeld in 1817. Both were immigrants; Thoenen was from Gladbach, and his wife came from Mülheim am Rhein. The external environment indicated a well-organised development of their children.

Years of Service during the Revolutions—Eduard Thoenen attended the “Higher School” in Elberfeld for a few years, followed by commercial training. In 1847, Eduard, as was customary in the Rhineland, became liable for military service. He served as a soldier for two years, presumably in Düsseldorf, Cologne, Wesel, or Wetzlar. Later, we find him as a reservist in the Landwehr Battalion Essen in the First Draft.

His military service fell during the revolutionary years of 1848/49. His later path in life reveals him as a staunch democrat. We can assume that he had to reluctantly witness what was happening around him and might have even been forced to participate in the campaign in Baden – on the wrong side. “Only soldiers can defeat democrats,” but democrats couldn’t defeat soldiers. Nevertheless, the reaction in Prussia triumphed on all fronts, and agony and resignation spread. On 4 March 1853 his father applied for his dismissal as a Prussian subject. The accompanying documents noted that Thoenen had learned the trade and was now working as a “Superrevident,” roughly equivalent to an auditor.²⁸² In response to an inquiry from the Regierungspräsident in Düsseldorf, the Elberfeld Police Director Hirsch informed the authority that “Thoenen hopes to establish a secure existence in Australia.” On 28 May 1853 Thoenen received his certificate of dismissal from Prussian citizenship. He likely immediately traveled to England to find a ship from Liverpool to Australia. The journey took at least six months, so he probably arrived in Melbourne no earlier than the beginning of 1854.²⁸³

Around the same time, another Elberfeld man arrived in Australia. Hermann Püttmann (1811–1874), a former editor of various magazines, had managed to alienate everyone throughout his life.²⁸⁴ As a writer, he remained in the background, while being a passionate advocate of socialist ideas. He not only antagonised the ruling class but also made Karl Marx his enemy due to his propagated utopian socialism and inconsistent reasoning. Marx had nothing but contempt for him when he wrote to Engels in 1854: “Püttmann, the fat pig, along with his family, has been shipped as a ‘colonist’ from here to Australia.” Thoenen probably knew Püttmann in Elberfeld, although the latter had been living in England since 1852. Nevertheless, Püttmann is now considered the founder of the German press in Australia, and he would have deserved long ago that his hometown would name a street after him.

Let’s return to Eduard Thoenen. Upon arriving in Melbourne, he heard about the newly discovered gold deposits in Ballarat.²⁸⁵ He traveled a hundred kilometres inland to search for gold with pick and shovel. Here, on a goldfield known as “Eureka,” an armed incident against government arbitrariness occurred. In 1852, the Governor of Victoria introduced a licensing fee for gold mining, regardless of whether the “diggers” were successful or not.

²⁸² Knieriem’s etymology is wrong. Compare the section [Emigration to Australia](#).

²⁸³ Knieriem was unaware of Thonen’s time in an English prison, so it makes sense that Liverpool appeared to him as the most reasonable choice. It is unlikely that Thonen could have travelled to Australia via England. Amsterdam seems to be the more likely port of departure. For the duration of the journey, see the chapters about his [emigration](#) and [his time in Australia](#).

²⁸⁴ Compare Bodi, L.: “Püttmann, Hermann (1811-1874)”, in: Australian Dictionary of Biography, volume 5, Melbourne University Press, 1974. adb.anu.edu.au/biography/puttmann-hermann-4421

²⁸⁵ We are unaware of any records that document that Thonen arrived in Melbourne, and it appears that Knieriem didn’t have proof of this either.

In protest, the gold miners joined the “Ballarat Reform League.” Besides their main goal of reforming the goldfields, they demanded annual parliamentary elections and universal suffrage. Provoked by police actions, the “diggers” barricaded themselves behind self-built palisades. Eduard Thoenen, the experienced soldier, became the right-hand man of the Irish leader Peter Lalor (1827–1889).²⁸⁶ In the early morning of 3 December 1854 a company of 276 soldiers stormed the “Eureka Stockade,” which fell within minutes. 25 gold miners and four soldiers lost their lives in the incident, including Eduard Thoenen, who had come to Australia full of hope for a secure existence.

Monument for the Resisters—Approximately a year and a half after this event, the citizens of Ballarat erected a monument that bears the inscription: “Dedicated to the memory of those who fell in resistance against the unconstitutional actions of the Government of Victoria on the memorable 3 December 1854. Erected on 22 March 1856.”²⁸⁷

The monument’s establishment kept the memory of Thoenen alive. Remarkably, the government of Victoria allowed itself to be publicly and permanently criticized. Indeed, the uprising of the “diggers” set a democratization process in motion that deserves not to be forgotten. By 1857, there was already universal suffrage in Victoria. Eduard Thoenen sacrificed his life for this cause at a time when Prussia still had a three-class voting system, which excluded most of the working population from voting from the outset.

The article also mentions how the newspaper became aware of Thonen’s story. A reader of the newspaper had discovered the monument for Thonen during a visit to Ballarat:

Die abenteuerliche Geschichte des Eduard Thoenen wird auf dieser „Historischen Seite“ erzählt. WZ-Leser Heiner von der Bank hat das Denkmal mit dem Schriftzug des Elberfelders als „Edward Thonen. Elberfeldt. Prussia“ in Ballarat/Australien entdeckt. Dr. Michael Knieriem, Direktor des Historischen Zentrums, hat sich auf Spurensuche begeben – und eine abwechslungsreiche, tragisch endende Lebensgeschichte eines Auswanderers aufgezeichnet.

The adventurous story of Eduard Thoenen is told on this “Historical Page.” WZ [Westdeutsche Zeitung] reader Heiner von der Bank discovered the monument with the inscription of the Elberfeld man as “Edward Thonen. Elberfeldt. Prussia” in Ballarat, Australia. Dr. Michael Knieriem, Director of the Historical Centre, embarked on a search for clues and recorded a diverse, tragically ending life story of an emigrant.

We have tried to contact Mr. von der Bank for further comments, but have not been able to reach him.

In an email to us, the *Zentrum für Stadtgeschichte und Industriekultur* (Museum of Industrial Culture) in Wuppertal has expressed their interest:²⁸⁸

Ja, ich wäre in der Tat sehr an dem geplanten Artikel über Eduard Thönen interessiert. Bislang taucht sein Name weder in unserer archivinternen Personenkartei noch in der Zeitgeschichtlichen Sammlung auf. Insofern ist natürlich auch Ihre Anfrage zu Thönen von Interesse, da ich den Artikel aus dem Jahre 1998 ebenfalls in unserer Sammlung ablegen werde. Und der von Ihnen geplante Artikel wird dann eine gute Ergänzung der Dokumentation sein.

Yes, I would indeed be very interested in the planned article about Edward Thonen. So far, his name does not appear in our archive’s personal index nor in our Contemporary History Collection. Therefore, your request regarding Thonen is also of interest, as I will also file the article from 1998 in our collection. Your planned article will then be a valuable addition to the documentation.

Hopefully the present work will help make Thonen and his achievements more widely known.

²⁸⁶ For the role that Thonen’s military service in the Prussian army may have played in what he later did in Australia, see the chapter about [Thonen’s role at Eureka](#).

²⁸⁷ The English translation here is a back-translation of Knieriem’s German translation. For the exact wording, see the chapter about [monuments](#).

²⁸⁸ Teubert, M.: “AW: Anfrage Zeitungsbestand”, email, received by Daniel Bamberger on 28 July 2023, 1:37 p.m.

To summarise his life:

26 May 1827	Birth
1827 – about 1834	Early childhood in Elberfeld
about 1834 – mid-1837	Middle school
October 1837 – about 1843	Grammar school in Elberfeld
about 1843 – 1847	Commercial apprenticeship
1847 – about 1848	Basic military training in Essen, withdrawn from service
1848 – 1850	Unknown (possible involvement in the revolutions of 1848–1849)
10 December 1850 – April 1851	Travel to England, work as a clerk and a language teacher, plans to fight the African slave trade
22 April 1851 – 7 May 1851	Diamond robbery, attempt to escape to America
7 May 1851 – June 1851	Capture and trial
mid-1851 – mid-1852	Imprisonment in London, released after one year
about mid-1852	Return to Prussia
March – May 1853	Preparations to emigrate to Australia
about September 1853	Arrival on the Ballarat goldfields
1853 – 1854	Work as a lemonade seller
November 1854	Involvement in the Eureka Rebellion
3 December 1854	Death during the battle at the Eureka Stockade

Contemporary descriptions

In 1958 Raymond Stewart Wenban published a series of books intended for use in Australian schools, including one about the Eureka Stockade.²⁸⁹ That book includes a fictitious portrait of Thonen, based entirely on Carboni's description. Wenban called Thonen a *leader of the revolt*.

No contemporary portrait survives of Thonen. However, we have a number of more or less detailed descriptions of him. The two most interesting ones are the accounts of Carboni from his time in Ballarat, and the prison records from Thonen's 1851 trial in England.

In his eyewitness accounts, Carboni gives a detailed description of Edward Thonen's appearance and character:²⁹⁰

[A] native of Elbertfeld, Prussia, five feet high, some thirty years old, thin, but robust, of vigorous health, used no razor. His eyes spoke determination and independence of character. [...] There was no mate on the gold-fields to match Thonen at chess-playing. He would turn his head, allow his opponent the move, and then he would give such a glance on the chess board, that the right piece would jump to the right place, as it were of its own accord. Shrewd, yet honest; benevolent, but scorning the knave; of deep-thought, though prompt in action; Thonen possessed the head belonging to that cast of men whose word is their bond.

In the records of Newgate Prison,²⁹¹ Thonen is described as:

²⁸⁹ Wenban, R.: "Australian Exploration and Development: The Revolt at Eureka", Australian Visual Education Pty. Ltd., Pictorial Social Studies, volume 16, 1958. eurekaedia.org/index.php?title=File:2Clare20140819-0820-thonan-ross-wiki2.JPG&oldid=13830

²⁹⁰ Carboni, R.: "The Eureka stockade: The Consequence of Some Pirates Wanting on Quarter-deck a Rebellion", 1855.

²⁹¹ "Edward Thonen (1851), Newgate Prison", in: UK, Prison Commission Records, 1770-1951.

Regarding the word "stout", see the footnote on page 35.

5/4 [that is, 5 feet 4 inches in height], *fresh* [teint], *black* [hair], *healthy, stout*, 24 [years old], [from] *Elberfeld*, [a] *clerk* [by profession]

While considerably more concise than Carboni's, this description comes with the benefit of being impartial. It confirms, and makes more precise, what Carboni wrote about Thonen's height and health. It also gives some new details, like the colour of his hair. Carboni describes Thonen as *thin but robust*, while the prison records call him *stout*. Maybe he lost weight during or after his time in prison.

Our search for an authentic portrait of Edward Thonen has proven fruitless, but we have uncovered a file at the *Haus der Stadtgeschichte* in Offenbach am Main pertaining to his older brother Friedrich Adolph, who achieved prosperity as a merchant and industrialist in the latter stages of his life.²⁹² That file contains a brief biography of Friedrich Adolph, and a photo of him as an elderly man. The photo, which shows him standing next to an old walnut tree, was taken by his daughter Marie Rosalie Freund (born in 1860, died in 1943), and was given to the archive in 1942. In the photo, Friedrich Adolph appears to be a stout man. He used a walking cane at the time. Whether he resembled his brother Edward is hard to tell, not least because we do not know what Friedrich Adolph looked like as a young man.



*Edward's older brother
Friedrich Adolph Thönen
(1818-1894)*

Epilogue

Edward Thonen was a lot of things: an autodidact, a rebel, an idealist, a criminal, an abolitionist, a fortune seeker. We also regard him as a tragic hero, not for his role as a freedom fighter, but rather as a young man brimming with talent and untapped potential. His pursuit of happiness was met with relentless misfortune, made worse by his own bad decisions. We find ourselves speculating on what he could have accomplished had he been granted a longer life. Ultimately, it is due to his sudden and violent death at the age of only 27 that his memory endures, capturing our attention to this day.

Acknowledgements

Our special thanks go to Florian Straub, Anne Beggs-Sunter, David Seipp, David Brown, Dorothee Pfeifer, and Ella Dreyfus, and to everyone whose work is mentioned in this article.

We are particularly grateful to the staff of the *Stadtarchiv Wuppertal*, *Stadtbibliothek Wuppertal*, *Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen Abteilung Rheinland* (Duisburg), *Zentrum für Stadtgeschichte und Industriekultur Wuppertal*, *Marburg University Library*, *Haus der Stadtgeschichte* (Offenbach am Main), *Ballarat Genealogical Society*, *Eureka Centre* (Ballarat),

²⁹² "Thönen. Personalbogen und Foto", in: StadtA OF M 597, Haus der Stadtgeschichte Offenbach.

Svatek-Storch, L.: "Thönen", email, received by Daniel Bamberger, 14 Jun. 2023, 4:35 p.m.

Quote (translated from German): *In our Contemporary History Collection (M 597), there appears to be a personal information form as well as a photo of Adolf Thönen. We were unable to locate a photo/image of the company; however, you could potentially conduct further research in the topographical files of our contemporary history collection. If the building no longer exists, we could search for any available building files (building supervision). A description of the factory buildings might be found in the fire cadastre.*

State Library of New South Wales (Sydney), archives of the Ballarat Hebrew Congregation, archives of the Melbourne Jewish Congregation, University of Southampton Library, and the London Metropolitan Archives, as well as to the members of the RailUK, Antiquers and British Genealogy forums.

We appreciate the work of all those who dedicated their time to crafting articles about Edward Thonen for the English and German Wikipedia. Their valuable contributions to the encyclopedias have helped to disseminate Thonen's story to a broader audience, especially by presenting facts about him on the respective main pages.²⁹³

And last, but not least, we want to thank all who participate in the monthly *Germany Connector's Challenge*, or in the WikiTree project in general.

On 22 August 2023 copies of this research report have been deposited at the *Eureka Centre* in Ballarat, Australia, and at the *Museum Industriekultur* in Wuppertal, Germany. It has been updated on 17 October 2023.

The results of this research were featured on an episode of the *In Black and White* podcast in December 2023.²⁹⁴

Last revision: 4 April 2024 (version 2, revision #20)

²⁹³ English Wikipedia: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Thonen. The fact „*Did you know... that Edward Thonen, one of the miners killed in the Eureka Rebellion, had gained notoriety in England as a jewellery thief prior to his emigration to Australia?*” was presented on the main page on 17 December 2022.

German Wikipedia: de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Thonen. On 24 June 2023, the article was presented on the main page, with the fact „*Ein australisches Volkslied handelt von dem Elberfelder Juwelendieb Edward Thonen.*” (English: “An Australian folk song centres around the jewellery thief Edward Thonen from Elberfeld.”)

²⁹⁴ Part 1 (34:27 min): <https://omny.fm/shows/in-black-and-white-1/the-diamond-thief-who-became-a-eureka-hero-part-1>; part 2 (23:06 min): <https://omny.fm/shows/in-black-and-white-1/the-diamond-thief-who-became-a-eureka-hero-part-2>

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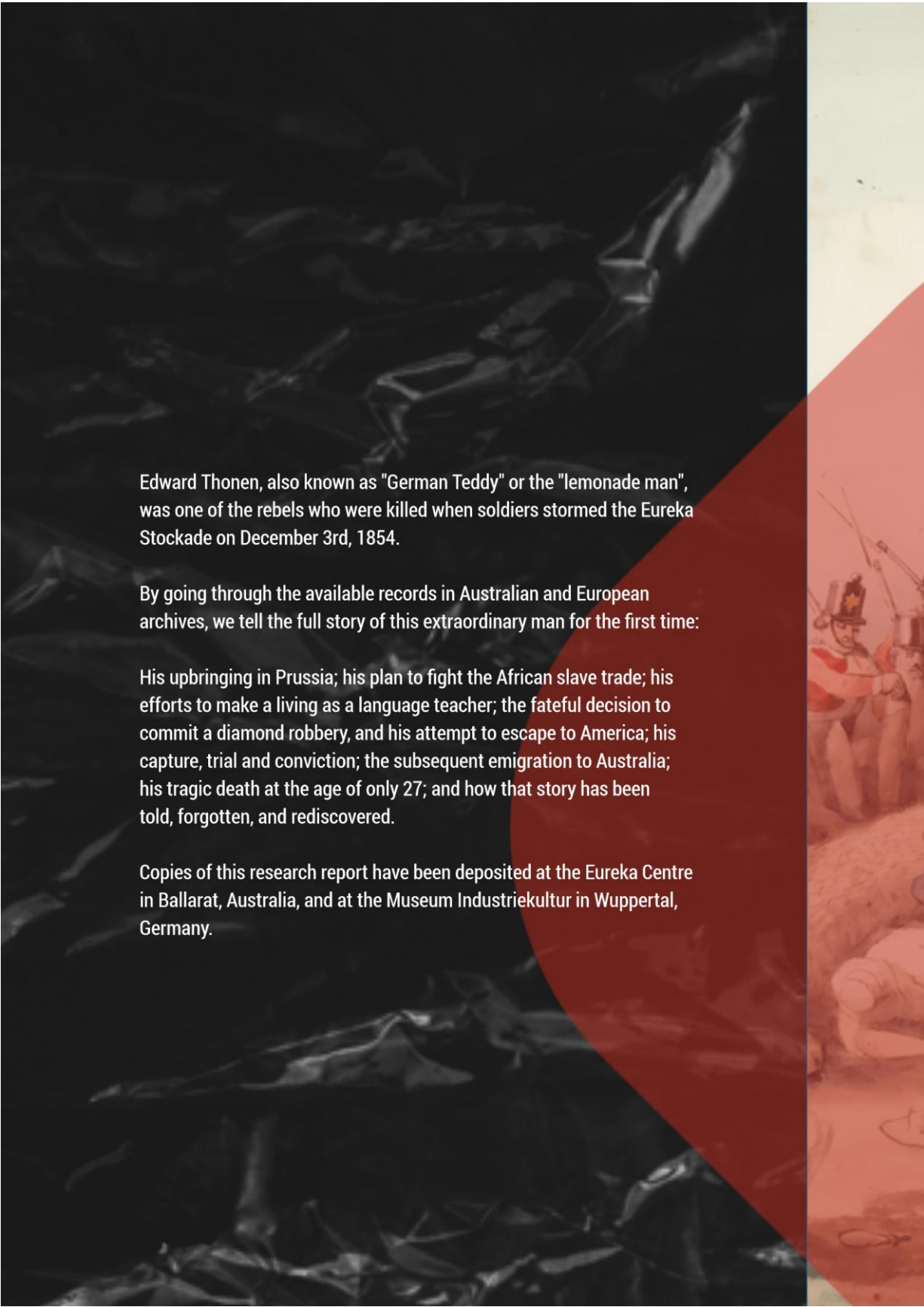
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For a separate list of newspaper articles about the diamond robbery, see pages 24-28 (British newspapers), and the footnote on page 76 (Australian newspapers).



Edward Thonen, also known as "German Teddy" or the "lemonade man", was one of the rebels who were killed when soldiers stormed the Eureka Stockade on December 3rd, 1854.

By going through the available records in Australian and European archives, we tell the full story of this extraordinary man for the first time:

His upbringing in Prussia; his plan to fight the African slave trade; his efforts to make a living as a language teacher; the fateful decision to commit a diamond robbery, and his attempt to escape to America; his capture, trial and conviction; the subsequent emigration to Australia; his tragic death at the age of only 27; and how that story has been told, forgotten, and rediscovered.

Copies of this research report have been deposited at the Eureka Centre in Ballarat, Australia, and at the Museum Industriekultur in Wuppertal, Germany.