



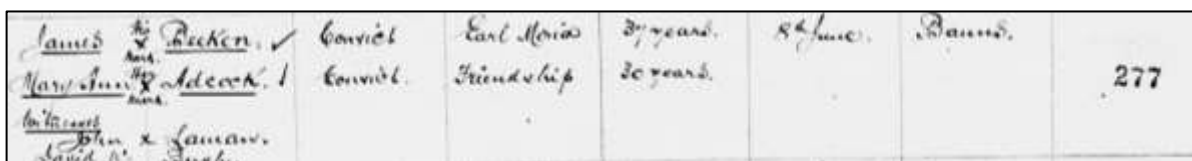
Mary Adcock

Date of Trial:	26 March 1817
Where Tried:	Leicester Borough Assizes
Crime:	Larceny from a person
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1788
Stated Age on Arrival:	30
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Country Servant
Alias/AKA:	Mary Ann Adcock/Hadcock, Mary Beeken/Baker (m)
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	A prostitute and filthy
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

The *Leicester Chronicle* of 22 March 1817 pinpoints Mary Adcock's whereabouts on that day. She was one of those in the Borough Gaol awaiting trial at the Town and Country Assizes scheduled to commence the following week. She would answer to the charge of having stolen eleven one-pound notes from the person of Joseph Scott, in Leicester.<sup>1</sup> Her case was just one of 'an unprecedented quantity of business' dispatched during the Assizes, and one of little significance compared with the more sensational trial of seven Luddites, including James Towle, perhaps the most notorious Luddite in the Midlands.<sup>2</sup> Towle was sentenced to death; for her crime of stealing promissory notes, Mary Adcock, aged thirty, was sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>3</sup>

She did not have to wait long before she was removed from the Gaol and taken to London in readiness for her voyage on the *Friendship*. She may have made an impression on the ship's surgeon, who regarded her as 'a prostitute and filthy', but she was of little significance in terms of the history of Van Diemen's Land to which she was sent on arrival at Port Jackson.

Reflecting the surgeon's opinion of Mary Adcock, the Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database notes her reputation as having been being 'On the Town'. Her stated age on arrival was 30. She was a country servant by calling, but literacy was not one of her attributes.<sup>4</sup> Very soon after her arrival at Hobart Mary Ann Adcock became Mrs. Beeken. On 8 June 1818 she and James Beeken were married by Banns at Hobart.<sup>5</sup>



Both were convicts and neither were able to sign their names. James, some years Mary's senior, having spent almost two years on the hulk *Retribution* at Woolwich, had been transported on the convict ship *Almorah* which, on its first journey to New South Wales, had arrived at Port Jackson on 29 August 1817 with 180 prisoners on board. On 14 September the majority of these convicts, including James, were forwarded on to Hobart on the *Pilot*.<sup>6</sup> It was as James Bekin that Mary's future husband had been tried at the 18 March 1815 Kent Assizes, Maidstone. The scene of his crime had been a small village just fifteen miles south of Maidstone – he was charged and found guilty of 'stealing in Smarden a neck of mutton, the property of Geo Cornes' for which he was sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>7</sup>

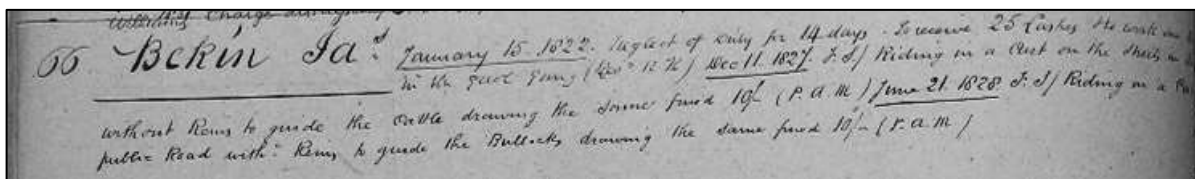
From the convict indent we learn that James was a native of Kent and a gardener by trade. He was 5' 7" tall, with grey eyes, sandy coloured hair, with a fair to ruddy complexion. He was described as a 'Very Good Man', and was assigned to Mr. Evans on arrival at Van Diemen's Land.<sup>8</sup>

For the 1820 Hobart muster Mary was listed as the wife of James Baker [sic], Government gardener. She was still

the wife of James Baker for the 1821 Hobart muster.<sup>9</sup> Mary kept out of trouble, as evidenced by a clean conduct sheet.<sup>10</sup>



On the other hand, James Bekin's conduct sheet recorded some misdemeanours, the first being 'neglect of duty', on 15 January 1822. Subsequent offences, committed when James was free by servitude, were driving a cart on public streets without using the reins in 1827 and 1828 for which he was fined 10/- on each count.<sup>11</sup>



Listed separately, and more seriously, on 3 November 1835 James Beekin [sic] was found guilty of stealing a quantity of cabbage and cauliflower plants from the garden of Mr. J.W. Gleadow for which he was sentenced to 'six months to the Com<sup>n</sup> Jail as the House of Correction there to be held to h<sup>d</sup> labor'.<sup>12</sup>

But how well or otherwise James conducted himself was of no concern to his wife Mary who had died prior to the recording of the first offence. At the age of only 33 she had died on 29 November 1821 and was buried two days later.<sup>13</sup>

Ann Beekin	5 1/2	29 <sup>th</sup> November 1821	1 <sup>st</sup> December 1821	33 years	Friendship	Council	R Angerwood
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For the record, James Beekeen [sic] died on 30 September 1843 aged 68 at the Colonial Hospital and, as an 'Object of Charity', was buried on 4 October.<sup>14</sup>

James Beekeen	Colonial Hospital	4 October	68	Almoraah	Object of Charity	R Palmer
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Apart from the various spellings of James' surname, there is some inconsistency in the recording of his age. He was 44 when received on the hulk *Retribution* on 13 April 1815; 38 in the 1814-1818 bound indenture listings; 37 when he married Mary in 1818; and 68 when he died in 1843, yielding an estimated year of birth spanning from 1771 to 1779.<sup>15</sup>

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Leicester Chronicle*, 22 Mar 1817, p.4.
- <sup>2</sup> The Luddite Bicentenary – 1811-1817, <http://ludditebicentenary.blogspot.com.au/2015/03/21st-march-1815-trial-of-james-towle.html>.
- <sup>3</sup> *Leicester Chronicle*, 29 Mar 1817, p.2.
- <sup>4</sup> Female Convict Research Centre (FCRC) Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database, Convict ID: 3575.
- <sup>5</sup> Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO), Hobart marriages 1818, RGD36/1/1 no 277.
- <sup>6</sup> Ancestry, UK, Prison Hulk Registers and Letter Books, 1802-1849. Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/ships/almoraah>. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 13 Sep 1817, p.2.
- <sup>7</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for James Bekin. *Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal*, 21 Mar 1815, p.3.



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<sup>8</sup> TAHO, CON13-1-1 image 97.

<sup>9</sup> FCRC, Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database.

<sup>10</sup> TAHO, Conduct Record, CON40/1/1 image 4.

<sup>11</sup> TAHO, Conduct Record, CON31/1/1 image 115.

<sup>12</sup> TAHO, Conduct Register, CON78/1/1 p.68. Ancestry, Tasmania, Australia, Convict Court and Selected Records, 1800-1899. John Ward Gleadow (1801-1881), lawyer, politician, and farmer, arrived in Hobart in 1825. He subsequently moved to Launceston where he died on 25 August 1881 - G. H. Crawford, 'Gleadow, John Ward (1801-1881)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/gleadow-john-ward-2100/text2649>, published first in hardcopy 1966, accessed online 3 December 2018.

<sup>13</sup> TAHO, Hobart deaths 1821, RGD34/1/1 no 533.

<sup>14</sup> TAHO, Hobart deaths 1843, RGD34/1/2 no 1164.

<sup>15</sup> Ancestry, UK, Prison Hulk Registers and Letter Books, 1802-1849. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842.



## **SOURCES**

### **Genealogy Websites**

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Tasmania, Australia, Convict Court and Selected Records, 1800-1899

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### **Other Websites**

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Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), <http://www.bda-online.org.au/>

Female Convicts Research Centre, <https://www.femaleconvicts.org.au/>

Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/>

The Luddite Bicentenary – 1811-1817, <http://ludditebicentenary.blogspot.com.au/>

LINC Tasmania, <https://www.linc.tas.gov.au/>

Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office, <https://www.libraries.tas.gov.au/archive-heritage/>

### **Online Newspapers**

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Kentish Weekly Post or Canterbury Journal

Leicester Chronicle

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The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser

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