



Mary Davis

Date of Trial:	14 March 1817
Where Tried:	Nottingham Town Assizes
Crime:	Uttering forged notes
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1762
Stated Age on Arrival:	56
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Straw Worker
Alias/AKA:	Mary Henroy, Mary Stevenson, Mary Brammer (m)
Marital Status (UK):	Widow?
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	Quiet and industrious
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

There are nineteen women by the name of Mary Davis found in the Female Convict Research Centre database. Aged 56 on arrival at Port Jackson, our Mary Davis, assigned Police Number 10, and a straw worker by occupation was the oldest of these Davis women.¹

Under the name Mary Stevenson alias Davies she had been committed to the Nottinghamshire County Gaol in August 1816 for trial at the next Assizes on a charge of uttering forged notes.² Eight months later, on 14 March 1817, she was brought to trial at the 1817 Nottingham Lent Assizes. She was acquitted on one indictment, but not so lucky for the second charge.

Mary Stevenson, otherwise Davis, aged 55, for uttering a forged note at Worksop, was acquitted on that charge; but a second indictment being preferred against her, for a similar offence committed at Newark, she was found guilty. Death.³

Upon the delivery of the verdict Mary was taken to the County Gaol. The prison register records that fortunately for Mary her death sentence had been respited.⁴ She spent just over a year incarcerated in the Gaol before, in May 1817, she was removed to the *Friendship* at Deptford.⁵ It was from on board the vessel that on 4 June she (together 3 fellow transportees) forwarded a petition to the Bank of England.

268. [F25/4/42-3] Mary Davis, Mary Lenny, Margaret Sellars, and Barbara Oliver, *Friendship* transport ship, Deptford, 4 June 1817

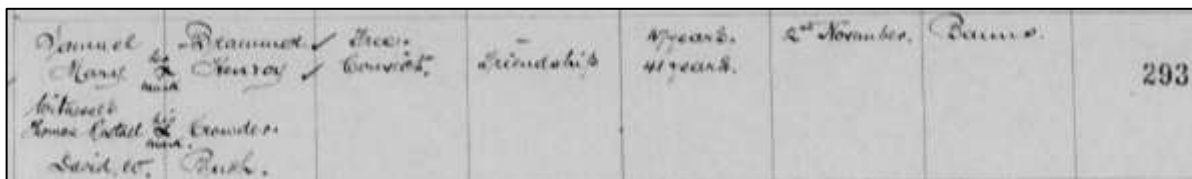
Honored Sir the Humble Pertition of Mary Davice who was tride at the County Gaol Notingham and Cast for Death But now Going to Leave my Country Leaveing 9 Children and quite Destetute therfor hopes you will Be So Kind as to take into Concerderation my pitifull Case Likewise Mary Lenny who was tride at the Winchester Last March and was Sentence to 14 years and as Left 6 Children fatherless and Destetute likewise Margrate Selars who was tride at Carlile Last August widow Sentense for Life Likewise Barbbery Oliver who was tride in the City of Drurumn Sentence for 14 years Tranceporttation the Smallides Danation will Be Gratefully Received By your Humbly Pertitioners Being all quite Destetute.

Annotated: Petitions from Mary Davis £10 Mary Lenny £10 Margt Selars £5 Barbara Oliver £5 Convicts⁶

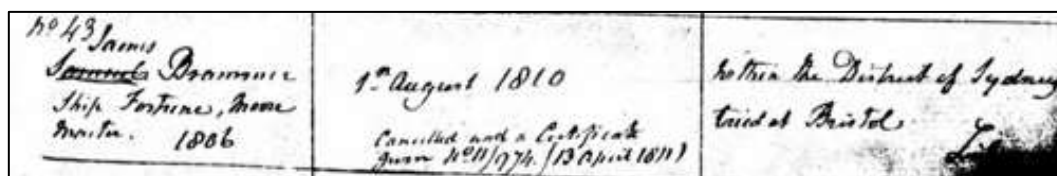
This is the first, and last, reference to Mary Davis' family. Some small mercy was shown for her plight, but £10 would not go far in supporting the children she was leaving behind and/or buying the necessities for her voyage and arrival in New South Wales.

'Quiet and Industrious' - Mary Davis was one of the better behaved of the women under Surgeon Cosgreave's guardianship. Perhaps it was these traits that attracted Samuel Brammer's attention because, within a year of Mary have arrived at Hobart on the *Duke of Wellington* in February 1818, she and Samuel were married at Hobart on 2 November.⁷ Neither of the parties was married under the name by which they had been tried, and both 'modified' their ages. Mary must have kept her looks if she could claim to be a woman of 41 rather than her actual

age of mid-50s! If, as one record has it, the groom had been 46 in 1805 (see below), he would have been close to 60 when he married.



It was as James Brammer that 'Samuel' found his way across the other side of the world. He was tried on 7 April 1804 at the Session of Peace, Oyer & Terminer & Goal Delivery at Bristol, found guilty of felony and sentenced to seven years transportation, and, at the age of 46, taken on board the hulk *Laurel* to await his passage on a convict ship.⁸ He was removed from the *Laurel* on 9 January 1806, in readiness for the departure of the convict ship *Fortune* on 28 January, which arrived at Port Jackson on 12 July 1806.⁹ He was included in the NSW musters of 1806 (initially assigned to Samuel Skinner, an earthenware manufacturer) to 1811.¹⁰ He received a Ticket of Leave in August 1810, the entry in the Register suggesting that he was known either as James or Samuel Brammer.¹¹



He was awarded his certificate of freedom in April 1811 and in January 1813 he placed a notice in the *Sydney Gazette* advising he was about to leave the Colony¹². His destination was Hobart. He was one of those who in 1815 put their names to a petition for the establishment of a Criminal Court in Hobart.¹³ He was included in the list of free men for the 1818 General Muster, being then off government rations. When he married Mary he was the Overseer of the Brickmakers, and in October 1819 he was listed as the licensee of the Kings Arms.¹⁴

For the 1820 and 1823 musters Mary is recorded as the wife of Samuel Brammer and living in Hobart.¹⁵ Of interest is that for the 1819 Land Stock Muster James is recorded as having a wife and a child, and for the Hobart Town Muster, Men for 1822, he is listed as having a female child.¹⁶

BRAMMER James	G/GM	-	-	-	-	33	33	-	-	137	-	1N	1N	-	-	3	HT
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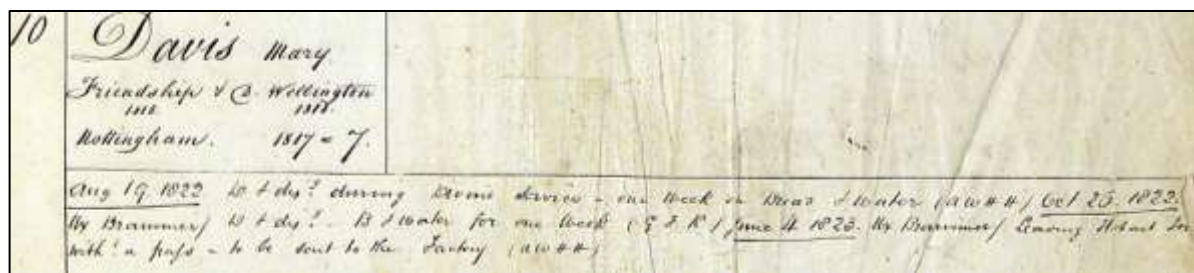
BRAMMER James	By/Serv	Fortune	1806	7	Bristol	1804	1F
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This young person is a mystery. It is unlikely that Mary was the mother, and no colonial record had been found for such a birth. Was this child one of Mary's many children who had somehow managed to join her in Tasmania? Was she the result of a previous relationship between James and an unknown woman? Was she an adopted child?

As he had arrived in Van Diemen's Land a free man there is no conduct register for Samuel Brammer, but as James, he was found guilty as charged for some infringements of the liquor licensing laws. In June 1821 he was fined £10 for 'retailing spirituous liquors without being duly licensed according to Law' and four months later in October.

James Brammer appeared to answer to an information for selling spirits by retail without being duly licensed thereto, and was convicted in the full penalty of £20 for the offence.¹⁷

There is nothing on Mary's conduct register until 1822 when she clocked up two misdemeanours. On August 19 she was ordered to spend one week on bread and water for having been drunk and disorderly during Divine Service, and again on 26 October for being drunk and disorderly with the same outcome – one week on bread and water.¹⁸

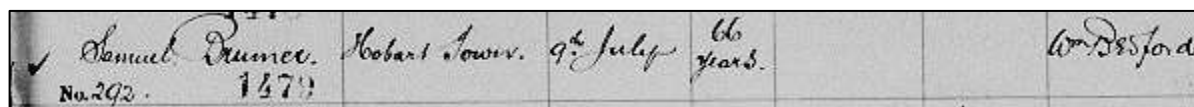


However, the offence of 4 June was more serious and a foretaste of things to come. Mary had been charged with leaving Hobart without a pass for which she was ordered to be sent to the Female Factory at Hobart. It is not clear whether or not she was actually caught and did her time in the Factory. Regardless, she was determined to leave Samuel who placed the following notice in the paper in October 1823.¹⁹

CAUTION.—All Persons are hereby cautioned against giving Credit to my wife, MARY BRAMMER, as I will not be answerable for any debts she may contract, she having eloped from her home. SAMUEL BRAMMER.

From this point Mary Brammer disappears from the records apart from the Government Public Notice of 19 March 1824 which advised that Mary Davis had been granted her certificate of freedom.²⁰ Did she actually front up with the fee to collect the certificate?

Samuel [Bramer] died on 9 July 1827.²¹ If his widow was still alive she would have been in her mid-60s.



NOTES

¹ Female Convicts Research Centre (FCRC), Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database, Convict ID 3587.

² *Nottingham Review*, 16 Aug 1816.

³ *Stamford Mercury*, 28 Mar 1817, p.4.

⁴ Ancestry, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892, Nottinghamshire, 1817.

⁵ *Nottingham Review*, 30 May 1817.

⁶ British History Online, London Record Society, Prisoners' Letters to the Bank of England, 1781-1827, 268. Mary Davis, Mary Lenny, Margaret Sellars, and Barbara Oliver, Friendship transport ship, Deptford, 4 June 1817 f25/4/42-3, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol42/pp65-92>.

⁷ TAHO, Hobart marriages 1818, RGD36/1/1 no 293.

⁸ The stated age is inconsistent with his age recorded in the prison hulk register. If he was 46 in 1805 he would have been 59 in 1818.

⁹ Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for James Brammer. Ancestry, UK, Prison Hulk Registers and Letter Books, 1802-1849, Laurel, Register, 1805-1836. Claim a Convict, Details for ship Fortune (1) (1806), <http://www.hawkesbury.net.au/claimaconvict/shipDetails.php?shipId=63>.

¹⁰ BDA, Biographical reports for James Brammer and Samuel Skinner.

¹¹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Tickets of Leave 1810-1869, List of Tickets issued 1810-1814.

¹² Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 23 Jan 1813, p.4.

¹³ Irene Shaffer, Land Masters, Stock Returns and Lists Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1822, St. David's Park Publishing, Hobart, 1991, List 7:7a, Signatures of Inhabitants of Hobart Town for Establishment of Criminal Court at Hobart Town, 1815; List 8:3a, General Muster of Free Men, Hobart Town, 7 September to 2 October 1818..

¹⁴ *The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 9 Jan 1819, p.2. *The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 16 Oct 1819, p.1.

¹⁵ Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849.

¹⁶ Irene Shaffer, Land Masters, Stock Returns and Lists, List 9:2, Land Stock Muster, Van Diemen's Land 1819; List 11:1, Hobart Town Muster, Men, 1822.

¹⁷ *The Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 16 Jun 1821, p.2 and 27 Oct 1821, p.2.



¹⁸ TAHO, Conduct Register, CON40/1/3 p.5.

¹⁹ *The Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 25 Oct 1823, p.1.

²⁰ *The Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 19 Mar 1824, p.1.

²¹ TAHO, Hobart deaths 1827, RGD34/1/1 no 1479.



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TROVE

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Publications

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