

## Sarah Hassall

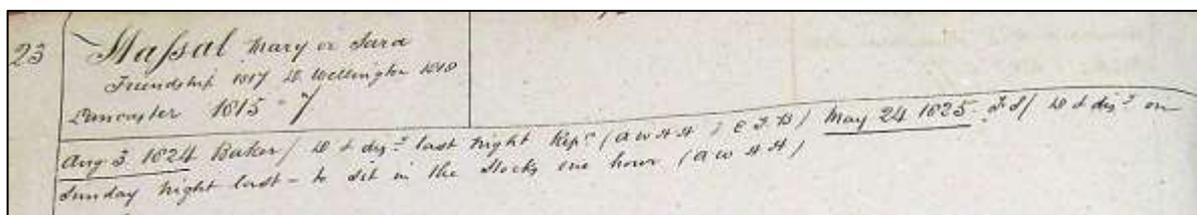
Date of Trial:	31 August 1816
Where Tried:	Lancaster Assizes
Crime:	Having in possession forged bank notes
Sentence:	14 years
Est YOB:	1763
Stated Age on Arrival:	55
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Housekeeper
Alias/AKA:	
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	An inoffensive old woman
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

Arrested in June 1816 on the capital offence of uttering a forged Bank of England note at Manchester, and also of having five other forged notes in her possession, on 31 August Sarah Hassall pleaded guilty at her trial at the Lancaster Summer Assizes to the lesser charge of possessing forged notes, resulting in her receiving a mitigated sentence of fourteen years transportation.<sup>1</sup> It was a very busy time for the Lancaster court and prison authorities, as noted in the *Lancaster Gazette* report of the proceedings.

Independent of this great list, there are at present in Lancaster Castle, on different terms of imprisonment, and for transportation, 151 prisoners. The list of the Civil Causes that were fixed for trial at these Assizes amounted to 162.<sup>2</sup>

'An inoffensive old woman', Sarah managed to stay out of trouble on the voyage out to Port Jackson. Aged 55 on arrival, and a housekeeper by calling, if she was to serve her full term she could look forward to a conditional pardon just before her seventieth birthday! And it was likely that she would see out her time in Van Diemen's Land as she was one of the *Friendship* women who was selected to be sent on to Hobart on board the *Duke of Wellington*, arriving there on 20 February 1818. Sarah was initially assigned to a person by the name of Fogerty.<sup>3</sup> For the 1820 and 1821 musters, as a ticket-of-leave holder, she was mustered as living in Hobart, and for the 1823 muster was inmate at the Female Factory. As there is no corresponding record of any misdemeanour at this time, perhaps Sarah was housed there while in between assignments.<sup>4</sup>

She was employed by a Mr. Baker in 1824, and it was he who reported that, on 3 August, Sarah had been drunk and disorderly the previous night – for which she was reprimanded. A further report of drunk and disorderly conduct was made on 24 May the following year for which she was ordered to sit in the stocks.<sup>5</sup>



Her drinking problem was literally the death of her. Sarah Hassall died on 23 July 1825, the inquest was held on 25 July and she was buried on 26 July at Hobart.<sup>6</sup>

**On the same day an inquest was held, at Stodart's Hotel, on the body of Mary Hassal, an assigned servant to Mr. Baker, who, it appeared, was shockingly burnt to death in a state of intoxication.**

No	1013						
	Mary Hazel.	25 <sup>th</sup> July	26 <sup>th</sup> July	60 years.	Parent Ship Unknown.	Convict	Wm. S. B. 1817.
	1014						

Sarah Hassall was one of the few *Friendship* women who died within a short time of their arrival in the colony. She died while still under sentence – the closest she came to her freedom was the ticket of leave she had been granted. Nothing else is known about this woman. Where had she been born? Was she a married woman or a widow when she tried to pass off the forged bank note? Did she leave behind any children and/or grandchildren when she sailed away in July 1817?

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 18 Sep 1816, p.4.

<sup>2</sup> *Lancaster Gazette*, 31 Aug, 1816, p.3.

<sup>3</sup> Tasmanian Archives and Heritage Office (TAHO), Appropriation List, CON13-1-1, Image 112. Perhaps Thomas Fogerty, then an Overseer of the Gaol Gang.

<sup>4</sup> Female Convict Research Centre (FCRC), Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database, Convict ID: 3595. Note - she is listed as Mary Hassal in the database. Phillip Tardif, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls : convict women in Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1829*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1990, p.263 No338.

<sup>5</sup> TAHO, Conduct Record, CON40-1-5, Image 16. There is some inconsistency in the records, e.g. Mary or Sarah, and sentences - 7 and 14 years.

<sup>6</sup> *Hobart Town Gazette*, 30 Jul 1825, p.2. Note the report referred to Mary rather than Sarah Hassall. TAHO, Hobart deaths 1825, RGD 34/1/1825 no 1014 (note under name Mary Hazel). *Hobart Town Gazette*, 30 Jul 1825, p.2. Note the report referred to Mary rather than Sarah Hassall.



## **SOURCES**

### Genealogy Websites

#### Ancestry

New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856

#### FindmyPast

England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935

### Other Websites

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

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

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

### Online Newspapers

#### British Newspapers (FindmyPast)

Lancaster Gazette

Morning Chronicle

#### TROVE

Hobart Town Gazette

### Publications

Tardiff, Phillip, *Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls : convict women in Van Diemen's Land, 1803-1829*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryle, 1990

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