

Elizabeth Roberts

Date of Trial:	12 August 1816
Where Tried:	Warwick Assizes
Crime:	Burglary
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1794
Stated Age on Arrival:	24
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Country Servant
Alias/AKA:	Elizabeth Martin (m)
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	Indolent and filthy
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

Four of the Warwickshire women who were transported on the *Friendship* were tried in August 1816 and the other three in April 1817. As reported by the *Northampton Mercury*, Elizabeth Roberts was in the August 1816 group, one of very many prisoners tried that day at the Warwick Assizes and one of the many capitally convicted.

Warwick Assizes – The whole of the trials having been gone through, Mr. Justice Dallas, on Friday morning, passed the sentences annexed to the names of the respective prisoners.

Condemned - ... Elizabeth Roberts for a burglary ...

However, as further reported by the *Northampton Mercury*,

Previous to the Judge leaving town, His Lordship was pleased to reprieve all the prisoners under sentence of death.¹

A warrant, dated 30 September 1816, spelt out how all these reprieved convicts were to be disposed of in accordance with the recommendation that they were each regarded a 'fit object of the Royal Mercy on Condition of their being Transported beyond the Seas for the Term as hereafter mentioned'. Elizabeth Roberts was one of nine whose sentence was commuted to seven years transportation – in her case a surprisingly lenient outcome for the crime of burglary.²

Elizabeth spent nearly a year incarcerated in the Warwick Gaol before being removed and taken to Deptford for embarkation on the convict vessel *Friendship* which arrived at Port Jackson on 14 January 1818. But Elizabeth had further to go. She was one of the fifty-three *Friendship* women on-forwarded to Van Diemen's Land on the *Duke of Wellington*, reaching her destination on 20 February 1818. What was in store for Elizabeth Roberts, a 24 year old country servant who could neither read nor write, and armed with a less than favourable reference from Surgeon Cosgreave who had deemed her to have been 'indolent and filthy' during the long voyage from England?

Within a few months of arriving at Hobart Elizabeth Roberts found a husband. She and William Martin were married by banns on 11 September 1818. Both were convicts; neither could sign their names. The two witnesses were Daniel Kelly (probably the husband of *Friendship* woman Margaret Yates) and David W. Bush.³

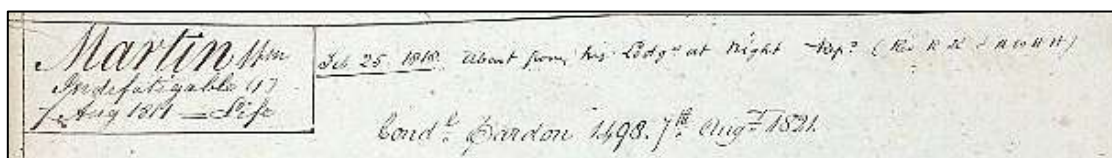
Names		Free or Convict	Ship	Age	When Married	Banns Licence	
William	Martin	Convict	Indefatigable	30 years	11 th September	Banns	285
Elizabeth	Roberts	Convict	Friendship	24 years			
Witnesses							
Daniel W.	Kelly						
David W.	Bush						

William Martin had been tried at Leicester Assizes on 7 August 1811. He and one Thomas Coats were up on a charge of 'stealing a gig and a bay mare, the property of J. Jenkins of Mary-le-Bone, Middlesex'. Coats was

acquitted but William Martin was condemned to the gallows, but afterwards reprieved.⁴ He was one of eleven men who, by Royal Mercy, had their death sentences commuted to transportation for the term of their natural lives 'to the Coast of New South Wales or some one or other of the Islands Adjacent.'⁵ But before undertaking the journey, William spent time in the hulks. According to the Hulk Register, when he was received on the *Retribution* moored at Woolwich on 4 September 1811 his age was recorded as 36, which indicates that he understated his age on his marriage to Elizabeth.⁶

All those detained on the hulks and detailed off for the convict transport *Indefatigable* were embarked over the period 21-15 April 1812. It was not until 4 June that the vessel set sail, Henry Martin being one of 200 men aboard, all destined for Van Diemen's Land. After a journey of 137 days the *Indefatigable* arrived at Hobart on 19 October.⁷

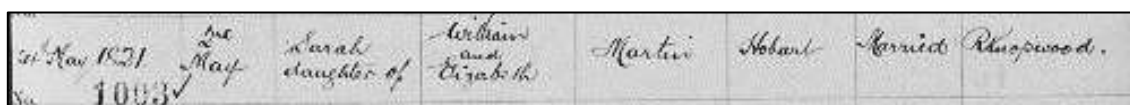
Quite how Henry had earned his living prior to his arrest is not known, and the bound indentures throw no light on his occupation.⁸ The 1816 muster merely confirms that he was in Van Diemen's Land – nothing to show where and to whom he had been assigned.⁹ However, he must have kept a low profile, and conducted himself satisfactorily to earn his conditional pardon which was granted on 7 August 1821.¹⁰ Indeed, only one misdemeanour was recorded in his convict register – having, on 25 February 1818, been absent from his lodgings at night, for which he received a reprimand.¹¹ His wife had apparently led an exemplary life as a convict - her convict record was blank.¹²



As a free man William Martin was included in the 1822 Hobart Town Muster which shows, apart from the standard administrative information, that by this time he had a daughter.¹³

MARTIN William	Conv/Pard	Indefatigable	1812	Life	Leicester	1811	1F
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This daughter was Sarah Martin, born on 2 May and baptised on 24 May 1821.¹⁴ She was actually the third child born to Elizabeth and William Martin.



William Henry Martin had been born on 20 March 1819, but died nine days later on 29 March.¹⁵ A year later William and Elizabeth mourned the death of a daughter, Mary Ann, who had been born on 12 March 1820 and who survived 18 days and was buried on 30 March 1820.¹⁶ The parents' joy can be imagined when another William Henry was born on 25 January 1823, and who was to survive infancy.¹⁷ Another daughter, Catherine, was born about 1824, but no record of her birth/baptism has been located. All three of the surviving children were included in the 1827 Tasmanian Children's Muster, and it was noted that the Martin family was then living in Goulburn Street, and the parents were 'of good character'.

It has been suggested that William Martin died at Hobart on 9 November 1852, but no record is cited to substantiate this.¹⁸ In fact, William Martin was probably the man of that name who died in Hobart and was buried on 11 May 1831. His age was given as 49 and he had been a gardener by occupation.¹⁹ His widow was left with the care and responsibility of three young children.

No. 919	William Martin	Robert Town	11 th May	49 years.	Gardener	Wm. Redford
	2433					Wm. Redford.

As head of the household, Elizabeth Martin was included in the 1842 census. She was living at 132 Liverpool Street, in a completed wooden dwelling, the tenant of Joseph Morgan. Apart from Elizabeth, five people generally lived in the residence of whom four were designated 'free', and all were at home on 31 December 1841.²⁰

338

N^o 45

A.

VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

Census of the Year 1842.

Parish of N^o 3

Name of Householder Elizabeth Martin

Name of Employer of Servants None

Name of Person in charge Elizabeth Martin

Place of Residence and (if in a Town) the Name and (if in Hobart Town) the Number of the Street 132 Liverpool St.

Elizabeth had never remarried and as Elizabeth Martin she died at home in Liverpool Street on 9 November 1852. The cause of death was an ulcer. Her age was given as 60 and she had made a living as a dairywoman. The informant was Lewis Prentis, a friend, of Liverpool Street.²¹

1849	November 9	Elizabeth Martin	female	60	Housewife	132 Liverpool St.	Liverpool	December 9	Lewis Prentis
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Elizabeth, who had committed the serious crime of burglary, and who, according to Surgeon Cosgreave, had been an indolent and filthy passenger on the voyage out, was one of those convict women who, for all intents and purposes became 'invisible' on her arrival. She did not trouble the authorities in any way but, as a wife and mother, and subsequently bread winner, seems to have settled down to life in her 'adopted' country. It is only through the following notice placed in the local newspapers that we learn that in her quiet and unassuming way Elizabeth had made a noted contribution to the community.²²

DEATH.
At her residence, in Liverpool-street, Mrs. ELIZABETH MARTIN, aged 60 years, deeply regretted by all who knew her. Deceased ever evinced a spirit of true benevolence, and in this respect was an example to the neighbourhood where she resided

Postscript

What had become of the three Martin children by the time Elizabeth Roberts died in 1852?²³

Nothing further has been found at this stage for son William Henry Martin who, if he was still alive, would have just celebrated his thirtieth birthday. Did Sarah Martin, as has been suggested by some researchers, move to Victoria where she married a man named Edward Taylor by whom she had six children?²⁴

And did Catherine, the youngest of the trio, marry William Robert Holland who had been born in London and was just 15 years old, and a painter's boy, when he arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1834 on the *William Metcalf* to serve out a seven year sentence for stealing of a pair of shoes? By November 1838 he had been granted a ticket of leave and in February 1839 he was appointed a Constable. William Holland gained his certificate of freedom in 1841.²⁵

Catherine Martin and William Holland were married at St. Saviour's Church, Goulburn on 7 September 1847 by which time Catherine had registered the birth of William Martin in 1846.²⁶ Between 1848 and 1856, four Holland children were registered to parents named William and Catherine – Emma Mary, Charles Robert, Elizabeth Jane, unnamed son (died 1856).²⁷ William Robert Holland died on 6 May 1860 at Goulburn at the relatively young age of 45.²⁸ He had been a member of the Loyal Strangers' Friend Lodge of Goulburn which arranged a benefit for the widow and family of their late brother Holland, an event which was deemed a success.²⁹



THE SILVAIN MINSTRELS

HAVE kindly placed their services at the disposal of the Loyal Strangers' Friend Lodge, Goulburn, on behalf, and for the benefit of the **WIDOW and FAMILY** of the late brother **HOLLAND**.

Full particulars will appear in a future programme. The Benefit will be given on **THURSDAY EVENING**, 17th instant.

Tickets to be had from P. G. M. King, P. C. S. Richards, G. M. Mangan, P. G. Munoz, P. G. D. S. Miles, Brother Triglone, and Host Cohen, Commercial Hotel.

Front seats, 3s.; back seats, 2s.; children half price. 5486

THE SILVAIN MINSTRELS.— These performers gave an entertainment, on Thursday evening, at the Commercial Hotel, for the benefit of the widow and family of the late Mr. Holland, of this town. The entertainment was under the auspices of the Odd Fellows, of which body Mr. Holland was a member, and was highly successful, the room being crowded. The total amount realized was £24. The use of the room, lights, &c., was given gratuitously by Mr. Cohen, and the Silvain company gave their services gratuitously, so that the only deduction from the above sum will be the expense of printing and advertising. The conduct of the minstrels is the more praiseworthy, when it is remembered that they had no personal acquaintance with Mr. or Mrs. Holland.

Catherine Holland outlived her husband by nearly thirty years. She died, aged 66, at Goulburn on 25 May 1889. Her son Charles organised the funeral.³⁰

Funeral.

THE friends of **CHARLES HOLLAND** are respectfully requested to attend the **FUNERAL** of his Late Beloved **MOTHER, CATHERINE HOLLAND**, to move from her late residence, Clifford street, at half-past two o'clock on **MONDAY AFTERNOON**.

J. KELLY,
Undertaker.



NOTES

- ¹ *Northampton Mercury*, 24 Aug 1816, p.4.
- ² Findmypast (FMP), England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence & Warrants.
- ³ TAHO, Hobart marriages 1818, RGD36/1/1 no 286.
- ⁴ *Northampton Mercury*, 17 Aug 1811, p.3.
- ⁵ FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence & Warrants.
- ⁶ Ancestry, UK, Prison Hulk Registers and Letter Books, 1802-1849, Retribution, Register, 1803-1836.
- ⁷ Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Indefatigable 1812, https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_indefatigable_1812.htm.
- ⁸ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842.
- ⁹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834.
- ¹⁰ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Registers of Conditional and Absolute Pardons, 1788-1870.
- ¹¹ TAHO, Conduct Register, CON31/1/29 p.10.
- ¹² TAHO, Conduct Register, CON40/1/7 p.3.
- ¹³ Irene Schaffer, Land Musters, Stock Returns and Lists Van Diemen's Land 1803-1822, St David's Park Publishing, Hobart, 1991.
- ¹⁴ TAHO, Hobart births 1821, RGD31/1/1 no 1003.
- ¹⁵ TAHO Hobart births 1819, RGD32/1/1 no 699. TAHO Hobart deaths 1819, RGD34/1/1 no 320.
- ¹⁶ TAHO Hobart births 1820, RGD32/1/1 no 814. TAHO Hobart deaths 1820, RGD34/1/1 no 385.
- ¹⁷ TAHO Hobart births 1823, RGD32/1/1 no 1398.
- ¹⁸ For example, Ancestry online ODEA4 Family Tree, ODEA4, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/34005476/person/120011041419/facts?ssrc=>.
- ¹⁹ Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for William Martin. TAHO Hobart deaths 1831, RGD34/1/1 no 2433.
- ²⁰ TAHO, Census, CEN1/1/22 p.75.
- ²¹ TAHO, Hobart deaths 1852, RGD35/1/3 no 1799.
- ²² *Hobarton Guardian, or, True Friend of Tasmania*, 13 Nov 1852, p.2.
- ²³ The information for the Martin offspring is yet to be researched. There are a number of Ancestry online family trees for the Martin family, some clearly inaccurate, and others that have replicated the information without reference to checking, etc. What is provided here for Sarah and Catherine Martin is based partly on the Ancestry online McCarthy Family Tree - <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/112018746/person/100101674241/facts?ssrc=>.
- ²⁴ See, for example, ODEA4 Ancestry Online Family Tree, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/34005476/person/120011041419/facts?ssrc=>.
- ²⁵ Convict Records, William Holland, Community Contributions, <https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/holland/william/41956>.
- ²⁶ New South Wales Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages (NSW BDM), Marriage registration 358/1847 V1847358 32C. NSW BDM, Birth registration, 1774/1846 V18461774 31A.
- ²⁷ NSW BDM, Birth registrations 1295/1848 V18481295 34A, 1641/1850 V18501641 35, 3457/1854 V18543457 40, 4684/1856.
- ²⁸ NSW BDM, Death registration 3886/1860.
- ²⁹ *Goulburn Herald*, 16 May 1860, p.3, 19 May 1860, p.2.
- ³⁰ *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 25 May 1889, p.4.



SOURCES

Genealogy Websites

Ancestry

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New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842

New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834

Online Family Trees

UK, Prison Hulk Registers and Letter Books, 1802-1849

Findmypast

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

Other Websites

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

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

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

Free Settler or Felon? <https://www.jenwillets.com/>

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

New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths, Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>

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

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Goulburn Herald

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Publications

Schaffer, Irene, Land Masters, Stock Returns and Lists Van Diemen's Land 1803-1822, St. David's Park Publishing, Hobart, 1991

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