



Maria Walker

Date of Trial:	19 Jul 1816
Where Tried:	Salop, Town and Liberties of Shrewsbury Quarter Session and Gaol Delivery
Crime:	Larceny from a person
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1794
Stated Age on Arrival:	24
Native Place:	
Occupation:	Country Servant
Alias/AKA:	Maria Raine(m)
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	Prostitute
Assigned NSW or VDL	VDL

The crime for which Maria Walker was tried on 19 July 1816 and sentenced to seven years' transportation – larceny from a person – was not a cause that excited any great interest and no report of the incident has been found in the newspapers of the day. So where, when and on whom the crime was committed is unknown. Coincidentally a girl of the same name was tried at the Summer Assizes at Shrewsbury in 1813, and this case did receive some press coverage. Giving her age as 15, this juvenile delinquent had been found guilty of stealing two £5 promissory notes from a premises, which earned her the seemingly disproportionate punishment of death (subsequently reprieved).¹ However, apart from their shared name, there is nothing to substantiate a connection between these two crimes and, unless the '1813 Maria' had understated her age in the hope of gaining some leniency, the age differential would suggest that they were not one and the same person. On the other hand, no record has been found confirm that the '1813 Maria' was transported to the colony.

Similarly, after nearly a year's imprisonment, Maria Walker's transfer from the County Gaol to Deptford went unnoticed, but once on board the *Friendship* her presence was more than felt by Surgeon Cosgreave who summed up her behaviour in one word – Prostitute. The convict indents record that Maria Walker was 24 years old and a country servant by calling, and confirm her trial date and place.² On arrival at Port Jackson on 14 January 1818 the female convicts were mustered and separated out – those who were to stay in in the colony (NSW) and those who were to be sent to Van Diemen's Land. Maria was one of the 47 women who were embarked on the *Duke of Wellington* which departed for the Derwent on 30 January 1818 and arrived at Hobart Town on 20 February.³

Just over a year later Maria Walker married. Her husband was Pierce [Pierre] Raine and they were married on 8 March 1819, the marriage being registered at Hobart. Maria, aged 26, was four years older than Pierre, and both were convicts. However, given his history, the recorded age for the groom is considerably understated. While he was able to sign his name, Maria made her mark in the register. Hugh George and Gordon Northam were the two witnesses.⁴

<i>Pierce</i>	<i>Raine</i> ✓	Convict	<i>Guildford</i>	22 years.	8 March.	<i>Rains.</i>
<i>Maria</i> mark	<i>X Walker</i> ✓	Convict.	<i>Friendship.</i>	26 years.		
<i>Witnesses</i> <i>Hugh</i> <i>George.</i>	<i>Gordon</i> <i>Northam.</i>					

By the time Maria Walker arrived at Hobart Town her future husband had been resident there for six years. He had arrived at Port Jackson on 18 January 1812 on board the transport *Guildford*, the first of eight voyages the vessel was to undertake as a convict ship. This first voyage had taken four months and fifteen days, with the loss

of only one of the two hundred convicts. Apart from convicts from various English counties and from Scotland, the *Guildford* transported a small group of men who had been court-martialled for military crimes, one of whom was Pierre Raine.⁵

Pierre, a native of France, had at some stage joined the Chasseurs Britanniques, a battalion-sized light infantry corps of foreign volunteers who fought for Great Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. Referred to as Wellington's 'Mongrel Regiment' the Chasseurs Britanniques was formed in 1800, initially comprising mainly French émigrés, its ranks later included deserters from the French Army, and men recruited from other countries where the regiment saw action such as Italy. This irregular corps acquired a something of a reputation as a fine fighting force; but equally it was renowned for a high number of deserters. In 1810 the Chasseurs Britanniques received orders to join Wellington's army in the Peninsula and arrived there in January 1811.⁶ It was on 14 January 1811 that Pierre Raine and brother soldier, Antonio Martino, were court-martialled at Isla de Leon, Spain, charged with desertion.⁷

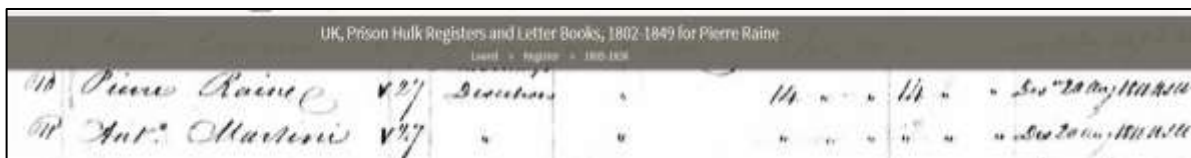


Isla de Leon – 1813⁸

Shipped back to England, probably on the HMS *Dido*, Pierre was then transferred to the hulks at Portsmouth, as per advice, dated 3 May 1811 from Whitehall, to Mr. William Merry Esq, Deputy Secretary of War.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of Your Letter of 1st instant enclosing three Certificates of the Orders of the Lord Chief Justice of the Court of King's Bench for the Transportation to New South Wales of ... and Antonio Martini & Pierre Raine late of the Chasseurs Britanniques, & I am to acquaint you for the Information of the Secretary of War that the necessary orders have been given to the Overseer of the Convicts at Portsmouth to receive the Prisoners on board the Hulks at that Place.⁹

On 13 May 1811 prisoner No. 810, 27 year old Pierre Raine, was received on the prison hulk *Laurel*, moored at Portsmouth.¹⁰ He was no doubt grateful that according to Neild, the contemporary authority on the prison system, by 1807 the conditions on board the *Laurel* were somewhat better than those on other prison hulks, not least because of access to a small allotment which produced a regular supply of fresh vegetables to supplement the convicts' otherwise meagre diet.¹¹ He was discharged on 31 August 1811.¹²



Port Jackson was not the final destination for Pierre Raine. He was one of eighty men from the *Guildford* who were to be shipped to Hobart on board the ship *Ruby*. Arrangements for the departure were published in *The Sydney Gazette*.¹³ There was a minor hiccup in arrangements when, just before the *Ruby* was due to leave port, the designated master, Captain Cripps had, 'in a most daring and piratical Manner, effected his Escape on the 10th Instant...'¹⁴ Captain Ambrose took over command of the ship which left Port Jackson according to plan.

Head Quarters, Sydney,
 Saturday, February 8th, 1812.

ENSIGNS GREENSHIELDS and HOLMES, with the Detachment of the 73^d Regiment, and the Eighty Male Convicts destined for Hobart Town in Van Diemen's Land, are to embark on board the Ship *Ruby* at Twelve o'Clock on Monday next, the 10th Instant.

Major GILLS, Commandant of Hobart Town, will embark on the same Day on board the *Ruby*, at any Hour most agreeable and convenient to himself.

By Command of His Excellency the Governor,
 H. C. ANTILL, Major of Brigade.

Further information about Pierre Raine (aka Pierce Raine/Rennie or Peter Raine) is sparse. He was apparently 5ft 6¼ in tall, of sallow complexion, with dark brown hair, hazel eyes, and with two blue spots on his left cheek.¹⁵ An 1816 listing shows him as being at Hobart Town, but with no reference to how he was disposed.¹⁶ His time as a soldier would have well equipped him to carry out the role of Constable, Hobart Town, to which he was appointed in August 1817, a position he still held in February 1820 as he was included in the 1820 list of magistrates, constables and family and Government men rationed from His Majesty's magazine at Hobart Town.¹⁷ In September 1819, six months after his marriage to Maria, Pierre Rennie was paid £2 from the Police Fund as a reward for having apprehended an absentee.¹⁸ The 1820 and 1821 Settler and Convict Lists find him still in Hobart and, for the 1821 list, employed as a Government servant.¹⁹ It was in 1821 that the only notation was made in the conduct record for Pierre Rennie. On 1 March he was charged, but acquitted, of having conveyed spirits into the HM's Gaol at Hobart Town.²⁰ Later that same year, effective 7 August 1821, he was granted a conditional pardon.²¹ It was, therefore, as a free man that he was listed in the 1822 Hobart Town Muster.²²

RAINE Pierre	Con/Pard	Guildford	1811	14	Isle de Leon	1811
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With reference to the 1822 Hobart free men listing, there was a column provided for recording any children. In Pierre Raine's case this column was left blank. Indeed, he may well have not had a wife living with him by then, judging from a February 1820 notice.²³ With this notice the trail of Pierre Raine effectively comes to a dead end.

CAUTION.—All Persons are hereby cautioned against harbouring, concealing, or maintaining my Wife, MARIA RAINE, on Pain of Prosecution; or from giving Credit to her on my Account, as I will not be answerable for any Debts she may contract after this Advertisement.
 PETER RAINE.

He may have been the Pierce Rennie who had been granted land at New Norfolk, but which he subsequently

disposed of to one Harriet Oakes as described in the following notice on 1 January 1836.

The following claims for grants are to be forwarded for the approval of the Commissioners of the Caveat Board ...John Hedger Wedge and James Thorneloe, trustees for Harriet Oakes, 30 a, New Norfolk parish, originally located top Pierce Rennie.²⁴

He may also have been the Pierre Riane [sic] 'captured' in the 1837 census district of New Town.²⁵

It is requested by HIS EXCELLENCY The Lieutenant Governor, that this Form may be filled up, and sent to the Police Office of the District in which the Householder resides, on or before the 1st January next.

NOTE.—The Names of all Free Persons in the House are to be included.

Names of Free Persons Male & Female in the house above 14 years of age.	Religious Sect or denomination of each.	Names of Free Persons Male & Female in the house under 14 years of age.	Religious Sect or denomination of each.
<i>Don'thed, Bomp</i>	<i>Methodist</i>		
<i>Pierre Riane</i>	<i>Methodist</i>		

An incomplete listing of convicts for 1820 finds Maria Walker, with a ticket of leave, at Coal River, and she is still there in 1821. In 1803 and 1804 coal was discovered on the banks of the river which was then aptly named Coal River. Land grants to settlers encouraged settlement, which was made even more attractive with the erection of the Richmond Bridge in 1823, and the establishment of the township of Richmond. What Maria was doing there, and for/with whom is not recorded.²⁶ Some clue as to her occupation is provided by yet another list – Muster of Prisoners in the Colony 1810-1820 – which states that she was disposed of in 'Country Services'.²⁷ Again, the listing for 1822 merely records her name, trial date and place, and her ticket of leave status.²⁸ She was granted her certificate of freedom on 3 October 1823.²⁹

From this point on nothing further has been found for Maria Walker. She was apparently a model convict, as there is nothing recorded for her in the conduct register.³⁰

<i>12 Walker Maria</i> <i>Friendship 1810 10 Wellington 1810</i> <i>Saltp 1815 - 7.</i>	
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Could she possibly have been the Maria Walker, house servant, who died on 27 October 1873 at the age of 80. The death was registered at Green Ponds, the cause of death was debility, and the Informant was William Foster, of Dysart Park, Constitution Hill.³¹

<i>112</i>	<i>27 Oct 1873</i>	<i>Maria Walker</i>	<i>house servant</i>	<i>debility</i>	<i>Wm Foster</i>	<i>27 Oct 1873</i>	<i>W. Foster</i>
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Tasmanian William George Foster had been born in 1836 to George Foster, shoemaker, and his wife Mary. When William married in 1862 he was recorded as a farmer. His bride was Mary Ann Dwyer.³² Over a period of seventeen years, nine children were born to William and Mary Ann.³³ It is likely that Maria Walker would have been a long-serving family servant, and it is heartening to think that the Fosters had kept her on probably well past her 'useful' years. But, even though the ages would tally, whether this Maria was also 'our' Maria has not been established.



NOTES

- ¹ Findmypast (FMP), Home Office: Criminal Registers, England and Wales, 1805-1892, FMP, Prison Registers, 1816, HO27/12, 1813, HO27/9. *Worcester Journal*, 26 Aug 1813, p.3.
- ² Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Maria Walker.
- ³ Ancestry, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, NRS 937; Reels 6004-6016.
- ⁴ TAHO, Hobart marriages 1819, RGD36/1/1 no 308. Based on the Hulk record, Pierre's estimated year of birth would have been 1784.
- ⁵ Free Settler or Felon? "Convict Ship Guildford, 1812", https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_guildford_1812.htm.
- ⁶ Wikipedia, "Chasseurs Britanniques", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chasseurs_Britanniques; Alistair Nichols, Wellingtons Mongrel Regiment: A History of the Chasseurs Britanniques Regiment, Spellmount, 2005; Total War Wiki, "Chasseurs Britanniques (ETW unit)", [http://wiki.totalwar.com/w/Chasseurs_Britanniques_\(ETW_unit\)](http://wiki.totalwar.com/w/Chasseurs_Britanniques_(ETW_unit)).
- ⁷ The Isle de Leon, separated by a small causeway from Cadiz, was renamed San Fernando in honour of Fernando VII of Spain, for his courage during the Siege of Cadiz.
- ⁸ The National Archives of the UK, Kew, Surrey, England; Judge Advocate General's Office: General Courts Martial Registers, Confirmed at Home; Series WO92; Piece Number: 1. Map, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1509580>.
- ⁹ FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935.
- ¹⁰ FMP, Correspondence And Warrants, HO13/21, p.395.
- ¹¹ James Neild, Report of the Hulks at Portsmouth, State of the prisons in England, Scotland and Wales, John Nichols and Son, Fleet Street, 1812, pp.627-229.
- ¹² FMP, Home Office, Convict Prison Hulks: Registers and Letter Books; Class: HO9/9.
- ¹³ The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 8 Feb 1812, p.1.
- ¹⁴ The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser, 19 Sep 1812, p.1.
- ¹⁵ D. Wong, Community Contribution, 25 Jan 2016, "Convict Records", <https://convictrecords.com.au/convicts/raine/pierre/73807>.
- ¹⁶ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, HO10/3.
- ¹⁷ *The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter*, 16 Aug 1817, p.2; Irene Schaffer (ed), Land Records, Land Musters, Stock Returns and Lists Van Diemen's Land 1803-1822, St. David's Park Publishing, Hobart, 1991, List 10:1, Victualling list for magistrates, constables and families, and government men from H.M. Magazine, Hobart Town, 1820. Historical Records of Australia (HRA), Series I, Vol III, pp.597-8.
- ¹⁸ The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, 4 Dec 1819, p.1.
- ¹⁹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, HO10/13, HO10/16.
- ²⁰ TAHO, Conduct Record, CON31-1-34, Image 237.
- ²¹ State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Card Index to Letters Received, Colonial Secretary*, Reel Number 774, page 159.
- ²² Irene Schaffer (ed), List 11.1, Muster of Free Men at Hobart Town, 1822.
- ²³ The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter, 26 Feb 1820, p.2.
- ²⁴ The Hobart Town Courier, 1 Jan 1836, p.1.
- ²⁵ TAHO, Census, POL361/1/1 p.12.
- ²⁶ Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO10/44 p.154. Female Convicts Research Centre (FCRC), Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land database Convict ID : 3628. Note: while some of the records correctly state that Maria Walker was tried at Salop, others have this place transcribed as Salisbury.
- ²⁷ Ancestry, Muster of Prisoners in the Colony, 1810-1820, Volume: 4/1237. Note: In accordance with instructions from Earl Bathurst, Governor Macquarie was required to provide annually 'Two large Bound Books containing the Names of all the Male and Female Convicts who were alive in the Colony of New South Wales at the time of my assuming the Government thereof on the 1st of January 1810' and who arrived thereafter. Noting the time and effort involved in compiling the lists, Governor Macquarie requested permission to dispense with the need to send duplicate copies, suggesting that one copy should suffice – HRA, Series I, Vol IX, p.336, Despatch "No. 15 of 1817".
- ²⁸ Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO10/18.
- ²⁹ The Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser, 4 Oct 1823, p.1.
- ³⁰ TAHO, Conduct Record, CON40-1-19, Image 228.
- ³¹ TAHO, Green Ponds deaths 1873, RGD35/1/42 no 187.
- ³² TAHO, Hobart births 1836, RGD32/1/1 no 6878; TAHO, Hobart marriages 1862, RGD37/1/21 no 201.



³³ Ancestry, Australia Birth Index, 1878-1922. Ancestry Family Tree, Watson Family Tree, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/61815584/person/38075342437/facts>



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