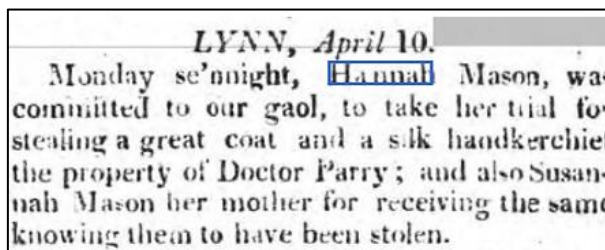




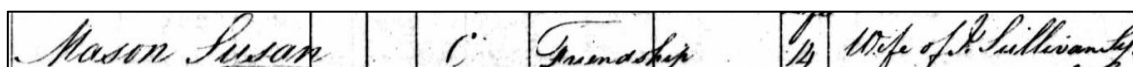
Susannah Mason

Date of Trial:	21 April 1817
Where Tried:	Norfolk, Borough of Kings Lynn Quarter Session and Gaol Delivery
Crime:	Receiving stolen goods
Sentence:	14 years
Est YOB:	
Stated Age on Arrival:	
Native Place:	Little Massingham, Norfolk ?
Occupation:	
Alias/AKA:	
Marital Status (UK):	Married – John Mason
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>Conducts herself with propriety</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

Surgeon Superintendent Peter Cosgreave remarked that Susannah Mason conducted herself with propriety on board the *Friendship*. She did not exhibit such propriety in encouraging her daughter Hannah to commit a crime, as reported in the Norfolk Chronicle on 12 April 1817.<sup>1</sup>



At the Assizes, held on Monday 21 April both mother and daughter were found guilty as charged. Hannah got off lightly with a sentence of six months imprisonment. Susan [sic] Mason, described as ‘an old offender’, was sentenced to fourteen years transportation.<sup>2</sup> Just over a month later, on 1 June 1817, she was removed from the County Gaol for delivery to the *Friendship*.<sup>3</sup> How old she was and what, if any, qualifications she could offer any prospective employer, are not stated in what scant documentation there is for Susannah Mason. Nor is there any record of where she spent her first few years in the colony. The first record found for her is the 1822 muster where she is listed as living in Sydney as the wife of J. Sullivan, whose identity, from the very many men of that name and initial, has not been ascertained.<sup>4</sup>



Her location in 1823 (and sometime after March) can be precisely pinpointed, however, by a petition she made to Frederick Goulburn, Colonial Secretary.

The Humble Petition of Susanah [sic] Mason

Sheweth

That Petitioner arrived in this Colony by the Friendship, Captain Herman [sic] in the year 1818 under sentence of Transportation.

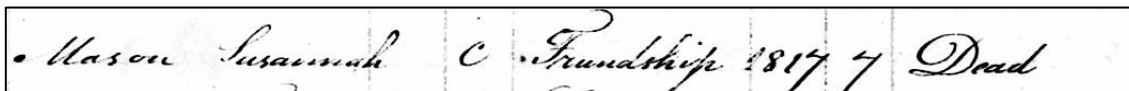
Your Petitioner further Sheweth that her son John Mason (an only child) arrived by the Princess Royal (Sherwood Master) the present year.

Your Petitioner therefore most humbly solicits your Honor may be pleased to allow her said son to reside with her. He is nearly blind and of no Trade, he is now Government Man to Jas McKinzie [sic] who has no objection to let him off to your Petitioner, with your honor's approbation. She is a Housekeeper residing in No. 25 Cambridge Street Sydney.

May your Honor be graciously pleased to grant my prayer and I will as in duty bound ever pray.

Susanah Mason <sup>5</sup>

There is no record to indicate whether or not her petition was favourably received. But even if her son was permitted to live with her, it would have been a very short-term arrangement. The entry in the 1825 muster for Susannah Mason reads 'Dead'. Note, the listing incorrectly records her sentence as 7 years.<sup>6</sup>



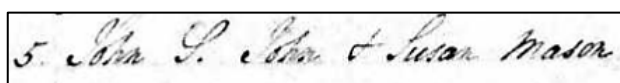
John Mason was another of the family to appear before the Kings Lynn bench. Together with associate Joseph Reddy, he was tried at the April 1822 Quarter Session for stealing five shillings worth of half-pence from the shop of one Thomas Smith. At the time John was about eighteen and Joseph two years his senior. Both were found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>7</sup> And both young men were sent out to New South Wales on the convict ship *Princess Royal* which departed from England on 8 November 1822 and arrived at Port Jackson on 11 March 1823 with its full complement of 154 convicts. In fact their healthy appearance on being landed and mustered was particularly noted. Having been inspected, the convicts were 'distributed throughout the colony'.<sup>8</sup> John Mason was one of twenty (including James Reddy) sent to Windsor where the Bench of Magistrates was to be responsible for their assignment in the district. As we know from Susannah's petition, John Mason was assigned to James McKenzie.<sup>9</sup> Two years later he had relocated to Newcastle, where he was an assigned servant to William Bell.<sup>10</sup> The final record located for John Mason is for his Certificate of Freedom.<sup>11</sup>

**CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.**  
 No. *29/589*  
 Date, *11 June 1829*

Prisoner's No. —  
 Name, — *John Mason*  
 Ship, — *Princess Royal*  
 Master, — *Adwood*  
 Year, — *1823*  
 Native Place, — *Kingsly Norfolk*  
 Trade or Calling — *Carter*  
 Offence, —  
 Place of Trial, — *Norfolk Id.*  
 Date of Trial, — *22 April 1822*  
 Sentence, — *Seven Years.*  
 Year of Birth, — *1803*  
 Height, — *5 feet 4 inches*  
 Complexion, — *Ruddy*  
 Hair, — *light Brown*  
 Eyes, — *Hazel*  
 General Remarks, *two specks on his eyes*

Clearly the 'Native Place' was incorrect. He was in fact born in Kings Lynn, and the following baptism record most likely relates to him.<sup>12</sup>

Name:	John Mason
Birth Date:	Abt 1804
Baptism Date:	5 Apr 1804
Baptism Place:	King's Lynn, St Margaret with St Nicholas, Norfolk, England
Parish:	King's Lynn, St Margaret with St Nicholas
Event Type:	Baptism
Father:	John Mason
Mother:	Susan Mason



Contrary to what his mother claimed, John Mason – as a carter – did have a trade. And, while he did have ‘two specks on his eyes’ this impairment did not necessarily render him as ‘nearly blind’. Susannah further endeavoured to give weight to her plea by claiming that her son John was ‘an only child’. We know that Susannah had at least one other child - Hannah, the daughter she had encouraged to steal. Her claim would only ring true if she meant that John was her ‘only surviving child’ and that Hannah (and any other offspring) was no longer alive.

A check on the ‘rites of passage’ records for the Kings Lynn parish registers records a possible marriage for Susannah. The marriage between John Mason and Susanna Stanford, both of the parish of Little Massingham (within the district of Kings Lynn), was conducted on 29 April 1795.<sup>13</sup>

No. 46	(The Year 1795.96)	Page 16.
John Mason, single man of the Parish of Lynn		
The Margaret and Susanna Stanford of the		
Parish of Little Massingham were		
Married in this Church by Wm. Bann		
the twentieth Day of April in the Year One Thousand Seven		
Hundred and ninety five by me M <sup>r</sup> . Killett, Curate		
This Marriage was solemnized between Us		
In the presence of John Mason		
Susanna Stanford		
The Mason		
Abel Bell		

Susannah Mason may have been the Susan, daughter of Charles Stanford and his wife Amy, who was baptised at Little Massingham on 4 February 1776, which would put her age on arrival at Sydney at around 42. Apart from the baptism of son John, there are listings for other children, with parents John and Susan[nah] for the same district, including two boys named Stanford Mason, both of whom died in infancy.<sup>14</sup>

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 12 Apr 1817, p.2.

<sup>2</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 26 Apr 1817, p.2.

<sup>3</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 7 Jun 1817, p.2

<sup>4</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO10; Piece: 36.

<sup>5</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, NRS 900, Reels 3163-3253, p.30.

<sup>6</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO20; Piece: 36.

<sup>7</sup> *Norfolk Chronicle*, 27 Apr 1822, p.3.

<sup>8</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 30 Mar 1823, p.2.

<sup>9</sup> New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, NRS 937, Reels 6004-6016, pp.460 & 461. James McKenzie was most likely the convict who arrived in the Colony in 1806 per Duke of Portland, and who by 1814 was a free man and landholder and farmer at Windsor – Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for James Kinsey [sic].

<sup>10</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO20; Piece: 36.

<sup>11</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814; 1827-1867.

<sup>12</sup> Ancestry, Norfolk, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials 1535-1812.

<sup>13</sup> Findmypast (FMP), Norfolk Marriages.

<sup>14</sup> FMP, Norfolk Baptisms.



## **SELECTED SOURCES**

### **Genealogy Websites**

#### Ancestry

New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849

New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867

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

Norfolk, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1535-1812

#### Findmypast

Norfolk Baptisms

Norfolk Marriages

### **Other Websites**

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

### **Online Newspapers**

#### British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Norfolk Chronicle

#### TROVE

The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser

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