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 Elizabeth Patrick

Date of Trial:	13 January 1817
Where Tried:	Bristol Quarter Session
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1794
Stated Age on Arrival:	24
Native Place:	Bristol
Occupation:	Hat Binder and Picker
Alias/AKA:	
Marital Status (UK):	Married – John Patrick
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>A prostitute and mutinous</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

Elizabeth (aka Eliza) Patrick teamed up with a younger companion, Hester Wright, to steal five yards of lace.<sup>1</sup> They were caught and, together, were tried on 13 January 1817 at the Bristol Quarter Sessions. Both were sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth was a hat binder and picker by trade.<sup>3</sup> She therefore had skills which potentially gave her an advantage over the lowly servant class in the assignment 'market'. She was mustered on the *Friendship* as 'Elizabeth Patrick ux John Patrick' which tells us that she was another of the women who left behind a husband and possibly a family.<sup>4</sup> And, she was another of the women labelled by ship's surgeon Peter Cosgreave as 'A prostitute and mutinous'.<sup>5</sup>

According to the records, which would have to a great extent relied on information provided by Elizabeth, she was born about 1794-5 and, from a subsequent record, we learn that she considered herself to be a native of Bristol. Without any further evidence we can only speculate on her provenance, and her purported marriage to John Patrick. However, there is a record of a marriage which took place on 12 February 1809 at St. Paul's, Bristol, between one John Patrick and an Elizabeth Rodway.<sup>6</sup> If, by chance, 'Bristol Girl' Elizabeth was the bride, it would suggest that she was a bit older than she claimed. Turning now from the hypothetical to more substantiated evidence for Elizabeth Patrick.

It was as a nurse, and residing 'in the colony' that Elizabeth (transcribed as Elizt Patrick) was recorded in the 1818 Settler and Convict list.<sup>7</sup> Her entry in the 1820 Female Settler and Convict List correctly records her date of arrival, the ship she arrived on, the name of the ship's master, where and when she was tried, and the sentence meted out. However, the entry records that she had been 'disposed' of to Port Dalrymple, Van Diemen's Land.<sup>8</sup> But Elizabeth Patrick is not included in the list of sixty female convicts, the majority of whom had arrived on the *Friendship*, who were trans-shipped to the Derwent on board the *Duke of Wellington* in January 1818.<sup>9</sup> The 1822 muster, conducted in September of that year, finds her in Sydney as the 'wife of C. Elliott'. This is the first and last reference to Mr. Elliott to whom Elizabeth was not actually married. In fact, if as I believe, the record has been mistranscribed, he never existed. By 1822 Elizabeth was indeed married, but to a Mr. C. Ellis.

On 3 December 1821, William Cowper, Assistant Chaplain, forwarded to the Governor a list of people who sought His Excellency's permission for their names to be published in church [i.e. banns read], in order that they might marry. Included in this list were Charles Ellis, convict, per *Dromedary*, and Eliza Fitzpatrick, convict per *Friendship*.<sup>10</sup>

A rectangular box containing two lines of handwritten text. The first line reads 'Charles Ellis' followed by a horizontal line and the word 'Dromedary'. The second line reads 'Eliza Fitzpatrick' followed by a horizontal line and the word 'Friendship'. The handwriting is in cursive.

Prefixing 'Fitz' to 'Patrick' was presumably a ruse to circumvent the inconvenient fact, as confirmed by her records,



that the bride-to-be was Mrs. John Patrick. No questions were asked and so, on 24 December 1821, at St Philips Church, Sydney, Charles Ellis, 35 year old widower, married Eliza Fitzpatrick, 25 year old spinster. Charles signed his own name and Eliza completed the formalities by placing 'X' next to her name.<sup>11</sup> To avoid confusion between the newly wed Eliza Ellis and another contemporary convict woman named Elizabeth Ellis, from this point I will refer to Mrs. Charles Ellis as Eliza.

Eliza had already been in the colony for seven months when Charles Ellis committed the crime that was to bring them together. Charged with larceny (of what is not stated) he faced court at Rotherham, West Yorkshire, on 5 August 1818. He was found guilty and sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>12</sup> Initially he was incarcerated in the grim and overcrowded York Castle Prison. A month later he and thirteen other male convicts were removed from the Castle and delivered to the hulks at Portsmouth where they were to be held prior to being 'severally transported beyond the seas'.<sup>13</sup> After a year on the hulks Charles boarded the *Dromedary*, which departed on 11 September 1819.<sup>14</sup> Having first stopped off at the Derwent to offload 349 of her convict payload, the vessel proceeded to Port Jackson with the remaining 21 convicts, including Charles Ellis, and docked on 28 January 1820, as noted by Governor Macquarie in his diary.

This morning at 8 O'clock anchored in Sydney Cove H.M. Storeship "Dromedary" Commanded by Capt. Richard Skinner, Master in the Royal Navy, with 370 Male Convicts from England ... The whole of the Convicts in the "Dromedary" – as well as the Guard – have arrived in good Health – none of either having died on the Passage ... This same Ship arrived with me here on the 28th of Decr. 1809!!!<sup>15</sup>

The General Muster of September 1820 finds Charles Ellis employed by the Government.<sup>16</sup> By trade, Charles was a file cutter, a highly skilled occupation, but through his ability to read and write, a much valued talent at the time, he had obtained a position as a clerk and storekeeper at the Carters' Barracks.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, as we will see, he utilised his literary skills not only on behalf of the colonial government, but also to further his own interests.

When Eliza married Charles she was an assigned servant to Simeon Lord, an emancipated convict and one of the most prominent merchants in Sydney at the time. Of note, is that one of his myriad of business interests was a hat-making factory.<sup>18</sup> She was still in Lord's employ in May 1822, prompting Charles Ellis, on 11 May, to pen the first of many petitions to the Colonial Secretary. His grammar leaves something to be desired, but through him we find out a bit more about Eliza.

Hon<sup>d</sup> Sir

Pardon me thus intruding which is in Behalf of my Wife whom I was Married to in December last at that Period she was government Servant to Mr S Lord from the time of our Marriage until now he never said anything he now claims her as his Servant as he states he is accountable for her she not having been discharged from the books as Such She has been upwards of five years in the Colony – 2 years was Nurse in the General Hospital Parramatta 9 Months Nurse in General Hospital in Sydney and was in the Employ of Mr Lord 12 months her Sentence is for Seven Years which Expires on January 1824 So that she has only about 18 M<sup>s</sup> to Serve her name before Marriage was Elizabeth Patrick Per Ship Friendship

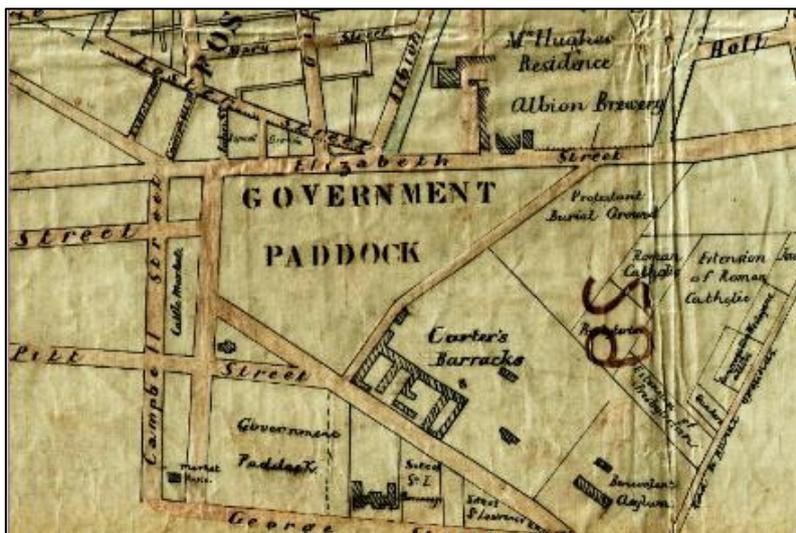
I Humbly hope she may have the indulgence of leaving Mr Lords Employ

I am Sir your M<sup>o</sup> Ob<sup>t</sup> Servant

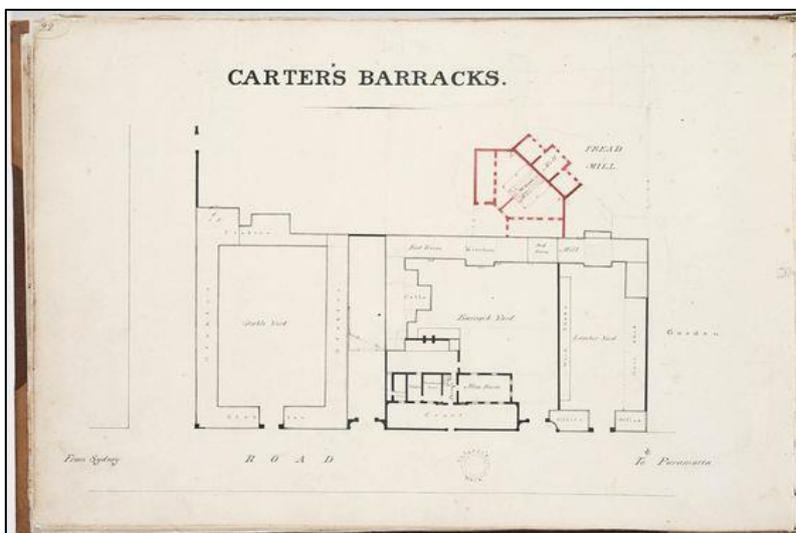
Charles Ellis<sup>19</sup>

How this plea was received is not known. They were both listed as living in Sydney in the September 1822 muster - Eliza as the wife of Charles Ellis, and the latter as a Clerk – but it is not clear if they were living together.

There are two consecutive entries for Charles, the second of which describes him as 'Witness on the late enquiry into the Engineer department'.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, apart from seeking the release of his wife, Charles had another thing on his mind in 1822 – a major inquiry into the administration of the Engineer Department generally and, more particularly, the Carters' Barracks where he was employed.



Location of Carters' Barracks, (City of Sydney Archives [Historical Atlas of Sydney])



Plan of Carters' Barracks, (State Library of NSW)

An initiative of Governor Macquarie, and constructed shortly before the end of his tenure in the Colony, the Carters' Barracks was a very busy place. Apart from providing 'board and lodging' for the convict-gangs assigned to making and hauling bricks at the nearby Brick Fields, the complex accommodated 'stationary' convicts who looked after the Government's horses, bullocks and carts. Also within the compound were various workshops – carpentry, smiths, and wheelwrights – to which convicts were put to work and where convict boys could learn a trade. Major George Druitt had arrived in New South Wales with the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment in 1817 and shortly thereafter was appointed Head of the Engineer Department. As such he was responsible for all the construction and maintenance of public works. In addition, his role encompassed oversight of the administration of the Carters' Barracks.<sup>21</sup>

In December 1821 Governor Macquarie was succeeded by Sir Thomas Brisbane. As early as 4 March 1822 Governor Brisbane was writing to the King's first Private Secretary expressing his deep concern about Major Druitt's management of the Engineer Department.<sup>22</sup>

I very soon found the expenditure was much beyond what in my opinion it ought to have been under proper and economical management; I was surprised to find no regular Books kept embracing the whole expences of the different branches of His Department, or of the registry and number of the Horses, Working Bullocks, &c. belonging to Government, although their numbers are very considerable; Nor was there even an Inventory of the Articles at the Carters Barracks; these circumstances joined to Reports, which reached me from various Quarters that Major Druitt, who had an extensive occupancy of Land in the Colony and possessed of extensive Stock, had been converting all these advantages of His situation to his own private Account. I therefore lost no time in

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naming a Committee, consisting of the two Judges with the Head of the Commissariat Department to investigate into the whole of the transactions in which Major Druitt seemed implicated, and to submit the same for my information ... However as these proceedings of the Committee are extremely voluminous and will not be finished for upwards of two months yet, I consider it my duty to put his Royal Majesty in possession of my opinion of Major Druitt's conduct as early as possible ... In short I may sum up the whole of my opinion by saying that it would be impossible to point out any one Department under his Orders in which he has not been guilty of the grossest malversation of Public trust as well as Public Money.

As an aside, Major Druitt, in his short time in the Colony, had made many enemies, and with the departure of Governor Macquarie, he had lost the patronage he had enjoyed from one of his very few allies. There was also the question of how Major Druitt, who on arrival in the Colony claimed to be so poor that he could not pay his mess bill, now occupied a fine house and lived in the most extravagant way to the outrage of all decency and decorum.<sup>23</sup>

What relevance does the inquiry have to Eliza's story? The answer lies in the reports 'from various Quarters'. The chief 'whistle blower' was Charles Ellis, who had also persuaded a number of his fellow convicts to back up his claims against Major Druitt. The Inquiry dragged on for many weeks, examined, and often re-examined, numerous witnesses, minuted reams of paper and ultimately came to no conclusive decision with regards to Major Druitt. Included in the voluminous documentation was a seven page deposition tabled by Major Druitt, in which he defended himself against all the claims laid against him, together with four signed and witnessed depositions which he claimed would give a 'Short Sketch of the Character of my Accuser'.<sup>24</sup>

These character witnesses were convicts William Docker, William Barlow, John Bradney and Joseph Jennings. All four stated that they had known Charles Ellis long before he was transported when Ellis had been employed in Birmingham as a clerk/book-keeper for a Mr. Paul, a file cutter. Docker, who also worked for Mr. Paul, stated that Ellis told him he could take 'gratis' whatever files he wanted out of his master's warehouse. Bradney added that Mr. Paul had dismissed Ellis for robbery and ill conduct. Docker had been asked by Ellis on two occasions to get hold of some forged notes. Ellis had paid him for the first lot. They agreed to meet at the Lamb Tavern in Birmingham for the handover of the second batch, but, in order to claim a reward, Ellis had 'stationed Constables in Ambush' and the ensnared Docker was arrested, convicted and transported for 14 years. This was corroborated by Barlow and Bradney.<sup>25</sup> From these two, plus Jennings, we hear that in 1810 Ellis had murdered one George Austin and stabbed and maimed two more in a house of ill-fame, but through 'mysterious circumstances' the charge was reduced to manslaughter, for which Ellis received a sentence of only 12 months. This, at least, can be substantiated – the *Oxford Journal* reported on the case – Charles Ellis, for killing and slaying George Austin in Birmingham, imprisoned for 12 months.<sup>26</sup> Jennings added that at about the same time Ellis had 'got a woman six months imprisonment and the pillory'. Ellis earned the nickname Charley the Murderer and was so infamous that 'even Thieves of the worst Description' shunned his society and he was obliged to leave Birmingham. According to Bradney and Jennings, it was common talk around Birmingham, and generally, that after he left town Ellis and two others went on a robbing spree and were caught. Ellis turned King's evidence. The other two were hanged – but Ellis went free 'for the sake of the reward given as Blood-Money'. The coup-de-grace came from Jennings. He said that Ellis had left his lawful wife and children at the Poor House at Sheffield and got married again in December 1821, on which account Ellis and his Brother (who had also been transported to the colony) have had many Disputes. The depositions having been read, Major Druitt addressed the Bench.

Such is the Man, Gentlemen, who has presumed to attack my Character, An Officer of 28 Years' Service in the Army ... And why is this Vile Attack made? Because I refused to release Ellis from the County Jail when he had only the day prior been informed by the Principal Superintendent of Police that as soon as he could procure another Magistrate so as to form a Bench, he should receive One Hundred Lashes, and be sent to Port Macquarie for the remainder of His Sentence for robbing the Government Stores placed under his immediate Charge.

Gentlemen, after Ellis had sent off his first Statement to Dr. Bowman on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> Instant, dated



from the Country Jail, he in the afternoon forwarded to me a Letter which with your Permission I will read.<sup>27</sup>

In the letter Charles pleaded his innocence, drew attention to peccadillos of other staff at the Barracks, complained about people being against him, and pleaded for Druitt's protection and for a chance to prove himself worthy. But Major Druitt was unmoved.

This treacherous Assassin might well consider me his friend and protector. I appointed him an Overseer very shortly after his arrival in this Country, gave him a Government man on and one off the Stores, in consideration of his great talent, as a Mechanic, and I cannot call to my recollection any one Act of mine that could in the slightest degree give him cause to think unfavourably of me, in any respect whatsoever but the reward for this generosity and kindness you will in the course of this investigation be enabled to judge of, if you can only have the patience to listen to the oaths of his associates, but none more particularly than those who I have been obliged (in the Discharge of my Duty) to punish for crimes, some of which were of the blackest dye.

He, too, referred to the Ellis family.

Gentlemen

I regret to be obliged to introduce here the name of an unfortunate man (Edw<sup>d</sup> Ellis) for the purpose of proving to you, how Villainy and infamy is riveted to this family, he is brother to my Accuser, and sent out to New South Wales as a Convict for Life for the Crime of House Breaking and Robbery. I have now to add that Charles Ellis has within the last 3 weeks married a young woman of Sydney, notwithstanding he had a wife and 4 children in England, this family if I am correctly informed may be expected here by the first Female Convict Ship.<sup>28</sup>

So here then we find out more about the man Eliza Patrick married. To fill in some detail – his brother Edward Johnson Ellis, native of Sheffield and also a file cutter, was 18 when he arrived in the colony on 30 December 1820 per *Hebe*. He had been tried and found guilty at the March 1820 York Assizes, sentenced to transportation for life, and removed from York Castle in May for delivery to the hulks prior to transportation.<sup>29</sup> Reference is made Charles Ellis being the father of four children. Baptism records have been found for two, both baptised at Birmingham on 13 December 1814 – Charles, born on 23 April 1810 and Emelly, born on 21 April 1814. The parents were Charles Ellis, a file smith, and his wife Rebecca, and they were living in Hill Street, Birmingham, at the time.<sup>30</sup> No records have yet been located for any other children. Rebecca may have been the widowed Rebecca Crawshaw who married a Charles Ellis at Rotherham Minister on 31 March 1807.<sup>31</sup> Major Druitt had heard that Charles' wife and children were possibly considering joining him. And indeed, Charles had written to his wife in Sheffield telling her that he had been appointed as a clerk in the lumber yard under the direction of Major Druitt, who would attest to his good conduct, sobriety and integrity, and to the fact that Charles was now in a position to maintain his wife and children in a comfortable manner.<sup>32</sup>

But how much would Elizabeth Patrick have known, or indeed cared, about Charles Ellis, the man she married. If other people in the gossip-ridden and close-knit society of Sydney were aware of his past life, it would be surprising if she remained ignorant. Charles had declared himself a widower when they married. Did it come as a shock to her to learn about his wife and children back in England? How did she react (if at all) to the fact that she and Charles were now in a doubly bigamous relationship. Incidentally, no record has been found to show that the first Mrs. Ellis and family ever arrived in New South Wales.

And for the record, Charles Ellis did not spend long in the County Jail. In view of the pending inquiry into Major Druitt's apparent mismanagement, there was a flurry of letter writing in the Colonial Secretary's Office on 8 January 1822. Major Druitt and Mr. Orrell, his deputy at the Carter Barracks, were both relieved of their posts. D'Arcy Wentworth, Superintendent of Police, also received a letter.

Sir

I am directed by His Excellency Sir Thomas Brisbane to request that Charles Ellis Convict per Dromedary lately sentenced to the Gaol Gang for a breach of trust, may be released from all personal restraint immediately and exempted from public labour until the result of an Investigation about to be commenced shall have been made known.<sup>33</sup>



Now 'at large', Charles Ellis, ever vigilant on behalf of the colonial government, sent a letter, dated 3 June, 1822 to the Colonial Secretary, drawing attention to some information he had received about robberies that had or were about to occur at the Carters Barracks. It does not appear that any action was taken to follow up on Charles' intelligence. Three months later, by which time he and Eliza were apparently living together, Charles again wrote to the Colonial Secretary, hoping that he would pardon him being so troublesome. Apparently he and Eliza had gone out for a while and on their return had discovered that the door had been broken open and they had been robbed. The thieves had made away with all their wearing apparel, a new blanket and sheets, 25 pounds of sugar and one pound of tea that he had just received for some work he had done. He was left 'in a most miserable state'. On the advice of Mr. Bowman he now called upon the Colonial Secretary's goodness in letting him have a blanket from the Carter Barracks.<sup>34</sup> Hopefully his wish was granted.

Charles may have been released from the County Jail, but he was still required to serve out the remainder of his sentence at Port Macquarie, where a penal settlement had been established in 1821. It was the destination for convicts who had reoffended in the colony and for 'troublesome convicts'. It must have been with a collective sigh of relief that the colonial administrators made the necessary arrangements for Charles and his wife to relocate to Port Macquarie on board the *Lady Nelson*. On 20 January 1823 the Colonial Secretary wrote as follows to Captain Allman, Commandant at Port Macquarie.

Sir

I have the honor to acquaint you that His Majesty's Col[onial] Brig Lady Nelson is despatched to Port Macquarie with six Prisoners under various Sentences of Transportation to that Settlement for which I beg leave to refer you to the accompanying List.

Chas Ellis, his wife, and Marg Morrison have permission to proceed by this vessel to Port Macquarie.<sup>35</sup>

Why, since neither Charles nor Eliza had yet been given their tickets of leave, were they treated differently from the six convicts who were aboard the vessel? In Eliza's case, she was possibly regarded as being 'assigned' to her husband. It may be that Charles was regarded as a 'Special', a high proportion of whom were sent to Port Macquarie. Typical characteristics of a 'Special' convict, as identified by Robert Hughes, include: educated/above average literacy; a troublemaker; convinced of own innocence; arrogant; a self-serving rorter of the system. As a group the 'Specials' neither trusted nor were trusted by other convicts. Indeed, among their peers, 'Specials' were often the most hated felons. For the colonial administration, needing educated people to staff the expanding bureaucracy, they were a necessary evil.<sup>36</sup> From what we know about Charles Ellis he would fit neatly into this profile.

Within a short time of arrival Charles wrote the first of what was to become a series of letters addressed to the Governor. His writing style is chaotic and at times it is difficult to follow his disjointed line of thought. However it is possible to distil the ramblings to a few recurring themes: – he was unfairly treated at Carters Barracks and now also at Port Macquarie; he was not given the preferential treatment he had been 'promised' when he 'volunteered' to go to Port Macquarie; regarded as a spy, he was universally disliked; he was miserable; his only shortcoming, if indeed there was one, was a 'too Ardent Zeal to bring forward the whole Depredations committed upon Government'. But the one consistent and persistent theme was his plea to be removed from Port Macquarie, preferably back to Sydney. So desperate was he to leave Port Macquarie that he enlisted his wife to his cause. Given his subsequent concern for her welfare this seems to have been a very unwise and/or selfish tactic.<sup>37</sup>

It was in his letter of 4 September 1823 that he mentions that he had obtained a pass for Eliza to go to Sydney. He considered it a 'very hard Case under the circumstances to be Debarred from accompanying her', but he humbly trusted that she would successfully obtain the Governor's permission for his immediate removal from Port Macquarie. He wrote again on 29 September, and again referred to his wife, this time revealing that she had a serious problem.

With respect to my wife who was to have returned again to this Settlement per first Vessel and upon her not returning and as it is well known unto Mr. Dunn Chief Constable of Sydney, that if she only takes a Glass of

Spirits it causes her Intolects(?) to be Deranged and not having me with her to Protect her Heaven knows what Dissipation or Trouble she may incur. I dread everything her not returning according to promise.

So concerned was Charles that he stated that he would most willingly agree to stay at Port Macquarie if only His Honour would permit Mr. Dunn to put Eliza on board the next Vessel bound for Port Macquarie, claiming that 'she is not a fit object well known to Mr. Dunn to be without Protection'. And further, he asserts:

... if she should by Drinking and Dissipation form any Bad connexions it would only imbitter the remainder of our Days. She is at this present period a Prisoner of the Crown until January next.<sup>38</sup>

By 14 October he was even more agitated.

Pardon the feelings of an unfortunate Man who would not Trouble your Honor with his complaints if he could avoid it. I hope you will take my case into your Humane Consideration. Cap<sup>n</sup> Allmann says he does not wish me to remain [*how surprising!!*] down here and there is another File Cutter so that I can be Easily Dispenced with ... I got a Pass for my wife who left this settlement 5 weeks ago and Providing she could not obtain my removal was to have returned by the first vessel and there has 4 vessels arrived and no answer from her. Judge then Hon<sup>d</sup> Sir what the feelings of an anxious Husband is when he is informed that she is following a Scene of Dissipation in Sydney this alone is sufficient to make any man unhappy. I hope under these circumstances my having only a few remaining months to serve and as I can have a good situation at Lane Cove if your goodness will Permit me to Embrace this offer I shall Ever be Thankfull for the favour granted if not I hope Hon Sir your goodness will be such towards me that you will order Mr Dunn to place my wife on Board the first Vessel for this Port. She only went on Pass and ought to have returned. One of these favours is all I will Ever ask you again if you will be so kind as to render me Either of them but to be here Parted from my Wife is certainly a hard case and having committed no Crime I hope in heavens I may be Permitted once more to return to Sydney and I will never be anyways again Troublesome. Your condescension will Oblige Your M<sup>o</sup> Ob<sup>t</sup> Servant Chas Ellis.<sup>39</sup>

Was Eliza returned to Port Macquarie? Did she remain in jail until the she was due to be released in January 1824? When did Charles finally return to Sydney? I have no answers to these questions.

NUMBER.	6/1800
NAME.	Eliza (ux John) Patrick
VESSEL.	Friendship (3)
YEAR ARRIVED.	1818
WHERE CONVICTED.	Bristol
WHEN CONVICTED.	13 January 1811
TERM.	Seven Years
NATIVE PLACE.	Bristol
CALLING.	Wool Drummer
AGE.	Twenty nine
HEIGHT.	5 feet 1/4 inches
COMPLEXION.	Fair ruddy
HAIR.	Brown
EYES.	Blue
DATE of CERTIFICATE.	5 February 1824

We do know however, that on 5 February 1824, 'Eliza (ux John) Patrick' was granted her Certificate of Freedom (No 6/1800), and it is this record that tells us that her height was 5' 0¼" tall, she had a fair-ruddy complexion, brown hair and hazel eyes. It also records that she was a native of Bristol and that she was 29 years of age. If her current age was recorded on the Certificate, and if it was correct at that time, it calls into question her age given on arrival in the colony as 24.<sup>40</sup>

There is nothing in the records to show that, on her return to Sydney in September 1823, Eliza made any immediate attempt to fulfil her mission. She did, however, send a letter to the Governor in May 1824. It is not clear from the letter if Charles was still at Port Macquarie or had been returned to Sydney. If Eliza was indeed illiterate the letter must have been written by someone on her behalf. The wording and tone is very much in the style of Charles Ellis.

Sydney May 4th 1824

Hon<sup>d</sup> Sir

Pardon the liberty taken in Humbly Soliciting in behalf of my Husband Cha<sup>s</sup> Ellis being myself placed in a most forlorn and destitute State and as you have been so kind for to forgive him his punishment I hope you will further Extend your benevolence and permit him to go off the Store as Gov<sup>t</sup> Servant to Myself who being his lawful wife and free. I hope my Humble request will meet your kind sanction, it will be a great Charity as I am in a most Deplorable state of Indigence having been forced to make away with everything for Support and last week was

forced to sell the Only Blanket I had for Subsistence.

I hope Hon<sup>d</sup> Sir you will take my Misery into Humane Consideration and grant me my Husband who has only 15 M<sup>o</sup> to serve before he is free and will be able to obtain a Decent Subsistence for us both. And his services not being required I hope he may be disposed with and his future good Conduct will be such as to merit the Esteem of Every One. Your kind Attention to my Humble Petition will be an Everlasting Obligation Upon Sir, Y<sup>r</sup> M<sup>o</sup> Ob<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

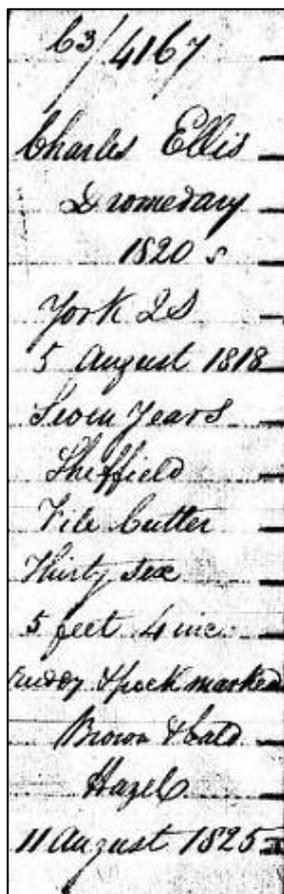
Eliza Ellis <sup>41</sup>

Nearly a month later, a reply from the Colonial Secretary's Office, dated 2 June was received. It did not bring good news.

Eliza Ellis

Your Letter of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ult, having been submitted to the Governor, I have been honored with His instruction, that your Application to have your Husband to be assigned to you off the Stores, is declined. <sup>42</sup>

So, as well as having a drinking problem, with no apparent means of support Eliza Ellis was in a very parlous state.



It was not until 11 August 1825 that Charles Ellis received his Ticket of Leave (No 63/4167). Like Eliza, he had brown hair and hazel eyes, but he was taller, standing at 5 feet 4 inches, and had a ruddy pock-marked complexion.<sup>43</sup>

They are both listed in the 1825 Muster, but again living in two different places. Charles was in the Government employ, residing in Sydney; Eliza, wife of Chas. Ellis, was at Campbelltown.<sup>44</sup> Why were they separated? The reason is that Eliza was doing time at the Female Factory. Now it was Charles' turn to petition for a release – that of his wife – by a letter dated 13 September 1825 addressed to the Colonial Secretary.<sup>45</sup> The gist of this barely legible letter is that Charles Ellis was asking the Colonial Secretary to intercede on his behalf to have Eliza Ellis, then five weeks into a three month sentence, returned to his care and protection through which, he was sure, she would become a reformed woman.<sup>46</sup> Assuming, as before, Charles' plea was either ignored or refused, it would be November 1825 before Eliza would be released to his care. But to further confound the situation, on 12 July 1825 Charles Ellis had been found guilty of being an accessory to the theft of a shoulder of mutton, his sentence being sent to a clearing party for six months.<sup>47</sup>

We can assume that Charles and Eliza were living together in March 1826 as they were both called as witnesses in a case of burglary supposed to have been committed by one John Dent who was lodging with them in Sussex Street at the time. It is interesting to note that Charles Ellis had informed the police that Dent was the likely burglar. Further, witnesses for the defence were unanimous in claiming that he was an unreliable witness.

... his character is extremely bad; would not believe him on oath; he has tried to take away the characters of some of the most respectable persons in the Colony.

... does not know of any quarrel he [the defendant] had with Ellis, further than the latter being jealous of his wife; has heard that Ellis say that for £5 he would go any hour of the night to hang the prisoner.

The judge even warned the jury –

... it was a case for the consideration of the Jury, as to what degree of credit they would affix to the testimony given by Ellis, though he had no hesitation in saying it was of such a nature as might very easily have been made up.<sup>48</sup>

Eliza may have had a predilection for drink before they met, but imagining her life with Charles – a husband who



could not provide the support she needed, who mistrusted her, who jealously watched over her, who was universally loathed – it would be hardly surprising that she found comfort in the bottle. It was unlikely that they had any friends she could turn to. And so we read that, on 10 November 1826,

Eliza Ellis, free, was found on the streets last night, in a state of mistification [sic]. Sentenced to two hours to the stocks.<sup>49</sup>

The following year, on 20 December 1827, she appeared before the General Quarter Sessions on a charge of 'Breach of the Peace' and was sent to the Sydney Gaol, but was bailed out five days later, on Christmas Day.<sup>50</sup>

In his letter of 13 September 1825 seeking Eliza's release from the Female Factory, Charles mentioned that he had a painting job to complete. It was as a painter that he was recorded three years later for the 1828 Census, conducted in November, so perhaps he was by then holding down a steady job and at last was able to provide a 'Decent Subsistence' for himself and his wife, both of whom were recorded as residing in Kent Street, Sydney.<sup>51</sup> But Eliza did not celebrate Christmas at home that year. On 18 December she had been charged with being 'An abandoned drunkard', and sentenced to 14 days, as a 3<sup>rd</sup> Class prisoner, at the Female Factory, Parramatta.<sup>52</sup> The third class, alternatively referred to as the criminal class, was reserved for those guilty of more serious crimes, and for such offences as habitual drunkenness. Punishment was harsh with the women being put to hard labour, and it was practice from 1826 for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Class women to have their heads shaved.<sup>53</sup>

There is an 1833 record of Eliza being again admitted to gaol, but the record does not list her crime.<sup>54</sup> The last such record shows her being sent to Darlinghurst Gaol on 8 May 1834 to await trial. Her trade or calling was given as 'widow'. No sentence was recorded because by this time, and before her trial, she was evidently a very sick woman. She was 'disposed of' to the General Hospital on 9 June.<sup>55</sup>

A search of death records results in two that appear to 'fit' Charles and Eliza Ellis. The first is for a Charles Ellis who died in 1833 at the age of 44, which would put his year of birth around 1789. The other is for an Eliza Ellis who died in 1834 at the age of 39, suggesting a year of birth around 1795. Their deaths went unnoticed. There were no children to mourn their passing. They contributed nothing to posterity.

Eliza Patrick was to be the principal character of this story but, like so many of the *Friendship* women, her fate was essentially determined, defined and overshadowed by the man she married. Charles Ellis is very much centre-stage, and Eliza relegated to the wings. It is perhaps fitting, therefore, we turn to him for the epilogue. The following letter, written in his inimitable style, from Charles to Major George Druitt, so clearly illustrates what a manipulative, self-centred, arrogant and self-serving person he was.

Hon. Sir      Sydney, 21<sup>st</sup> Sepr., 1825

Being now a free subject and consequently released from that oppression and Torture, with which the unhappy men under sentence of the Law in this Colony are so frequently visited, and, in order to make every reparation within my power for the unjust injuries I was innocently the cause of bringing upon you, I beg leave to make the following representations of Facts as they have actually occurred, and for the truth of which I am ready to make oath before any of the Law Officers of the Colony, you may be pleased to name.

I adressed a note from the Goal of Sydney to Major Goulburn, Mr. Campbell and Dr. Bowman. In the course of half an hour Dr. B. came to my cell door. I informed them I was Clerk of the Carter B'ks, and, if they could ensure me of the Governor's protection, I could give them some information respecting some circumstance, which they had been making very minute enquiries about before at that Establishment. Dr. B. pressed me, in the most urgent manner, to make out everything I could against Major Druitt; and Dr. B. furnished me with papers, pens, and Ink, for that purpose, and to make out my statement, and directed my cell door to be kept open. I immediately committed to paper every particular, as far as my knowledge went, respecting some Horned Cattle, which was put into the Govt. Paddock, farming Utensils, Pigs, etc., etc., belonging to Major Druitt, the farming utensils being made in the Lumbar Yard. This statement I gave unto Dr. B., who returned the next day, and stated that he had laid the same before the Governor, and assured me of his protection, and requested me to endeavour to refresh my memory and make out everything I possibly could do to serve the case.



A few days afterwards, I appeared before a Bench of Magistrates, and received sentence of six months hard labour in the Gaol Gang in double Irons. I asked permission, after receiving my sentence to go home to arrange some little affairs, which was granted me to go with a constable. On my return, I prevailed upon the Constable to allow me to call at Dr. B., which he consented. On seeing Dr. B., I informed him I had received the sentence of 6 months Gaol Gang. He told me not to mind that, for he would take care that I should be released the next day; and, on the following day, I was released and went up to Major G.'s office. Dr. B. was there, and, in order to give me every encouragement, he informed me that Major Druitt was suspended from his Office, and that Wm. Orrell, the Superintendent of Carters' B'ks, was dismissed, and that this arrangement would afford me every facility in bringing forward the Charges, and the Witnesses would not now have anything to fear. Major Goulburn upon this remarked that I was about to attack an Officer of high rank, and that, if I failed in my proofs, I should meet the heaviest punishment, as perhaps I could not depend upon the evidences. Dr. B. said there was nothing to fear on that point, as he had already privately examined several of the men that I had to call upon, and that he had taken their testimonies down in writing during the time of my Confinement. On the same Evening, I received a note from Major Goulburn with Instructions to attend next morning at C. B'ks, in order to see everything delivered up by Wm. Orrell to his Successor, Mr. Ellyard; this I complied with, and some private Letters, public papers and Plans of Buildings, belonging to Major Druitt, were tied together and left in his desk in his Office. Isaac Wise was present at the time when this took place, he being Constable of the Lumber Yard. And from this period, until the time the Board of Enquiry assembled, I was constantly employed by Dr. B.'s Express Orders in bringing to him such men, as I intended to bring forward before the Committee, as my Witnesses. I procured a great number, and Dr. B. took particular pains to write down himself what these people had to say; the greater part were thus examined in my presence, and he promised that that something handsome should be done for them, as soon as the investigation was closed; he also authorised me to assure them that they would be rewarded by Tickets of Leave, or some other remuneration; and Dr. B. told the men that they had no occasion to fear anything, for that Major Druitt would never be Engineer again. Abundant proof of this can be furnished if required, and, as far as concerns myself, I can safely swear that Dr. B. repeatedly told me that I should have a free pardon, a passage Home, or that Cattle Land, indeed more, he said would be done for me than ever I possibly could expect; and I have rec'd from Dr. B.'s hands at 5 different time various sums of money and at 3 different times sums of money from his Overseer, Dr. B. authorising me to make to make use of his name for this express purpose; and I was ordered to make out a List of the different Witnesses, who had come forward against Major Druitt, in order that Tickets of Leave or some other remuneration should be given them, which I did, and gave unto Dr. B. One particular occurrence that I recollect of a Witness, who objected to give the testimony, Dr. B. wished him to do, but, upon being pressed and told to recollect himself, and after being positively promised to be rewarded with a Ticket of Leave for his services, he partly met Dr. B.'s views, not to the extent he wished him to do; and this Witness when I examined before the Board of Enquiry, he declared he had nothing to say against Major Druitt, whatever, as his complaint was against Wm Orrell and his Overseer Johnson.

But I beg to assure you, Honored Sir, that, from the miserable prospect that was before me of 6 months Gaol Gang to Hard Labour in Double Irons, was one cause of my making the unjust attack, I did, in the hopes of being the means of relieving me from that severe punishment; and afterwards, from the promises made to me and instilled by Dr. B., led me further to exert myself all I could against you; and I candidly acknowledge, had I been aware that you had Governor Macquarie's permission, of what I conceived was wrong, I never would have presumed to have offered myself to Dr. B. the way I did; but, when you produced the many documents before the Committee in Genl Macquarie's handwriting, I considered the whole business must cease. This I communicated to Dr. B.; he smiled at my folly, but said he would recommend that the proceedings should be stopped until Governor Macquarie had sailed for England. In this proposal he succeeded; and after the departure of Governor Macquarie, Dr. B. informed me that Judge Field had withdrawn himself from the Committee, but that Dr. D. was to sit in his place, and that he was not a friend of Major Druitt's; he would render me every assistance in his power, and I cannot offer a more convincing proof than the following circumstances will clearly shew that the prosecutions, so rigorously followed up against you, was founded in Malice of the very worst description. I preferred charges against other individuals of high rank and holding Public Situations for a breach of the Trust, reposed in them, and had substantial proof to establish the report I made to the highest Authorities in this Colony; but instead of investigation or public Trial for such conduct, I was ordered on the Tread Mill until further orders; and at that period I was in a very bad state of health and not able to go on the Mill, and was exempted by Dr.



Anderson to some light employment; and on my stating my inability to perform such hard and laborious Work, I was ordered to be confined in the Cells at Carters B'ks, until such time as I agreed to go on the Mill; in this Confinement, I was kept 5 days and 5 nights in a Cold Cell upon Bread and Water, altho' in such a state of health, and taking medicines by the surgeon's orders; and during which period Dr. Anderson remonstrated respecting such Usage to the man, who accompanied me to the General Hospital, but without effect, as on my return I was allways placed again in the Cells; after being taken out of the Cells, I was placed on the ring, and then afterwards on the Tread Mill, where I was jointly for the space of three months, and I have much more to say on the subject of the charges before specified, which I shall reserve for another opportunity.

And on a recent occasion, Dr. B. sent for me and pressed me to make an affidavit to the following effect: that, in order to secure him from the punishment of the Law, I was to swear that he never offered me any Bribes, or rewards for my services against Major Druitt. This I positively refused to do, as, in common justice to you, I sincerely hope that you will ultimately be able to obtain that satisfaction you are much entitled to. I have now only to intreat your forgiveness for all the serious injuries that I have been the cause of heaping upon you, and I trust the day is not far distant, when you and all your friends will triumph over your Contemptible Enemies in this Colony.

I am, Sir &c., CHARLES ELLIS <sup>56</sup>

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#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> See BOF, Section 3b, Hester Wright.
- <sup>2</sup> Ancestry, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892.
- <sup>3</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Elizabeth Patrick.
- <sup>4</sup> Ancestry, Australian Convict Transportation Registers – Other Fleets and Ships, 1791-1868.
- <sup>5</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>6</sup> Findmypast (FMP), England Marriages 1538-1973 Transcription.
- <sup>7</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, HO 10/2.
- <sup>8</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, HO 10/14.
- <sup>9</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO 10/36.
- <sup>10</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, NRS 937.
- <sup>11</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Eliza Fitzpatrick; New South Wales Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages (NSW BDM), marriage registration 187/1821 V18211817 8.
- <sup>12</sup> Ancestry, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892.
- <sup>13</sup> *Leeds Intelligencer*, 14 Sep 1818, p.3.
- <sup>14</sup> Convict Records, <http://www.convictrecords/ships/dromedary/1819>.
- <sup>15</sup> Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie Archive, <http://www.mq.edu.au/macquarie-archive/lema/1820/1820jan.html>.
- <sup>16</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, HO 10/12.
- <sup>17</sup> Making Files in Sheffield, Early 1840s, <http://pweb.netcom.com/~brlevine/filemak.txt>.
- <sup>18</sup> D.R. Hainsworth, 'Lord, Simeon (1771-1840)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://abd.anu.edu.au/biography/lord-simeon-2371/text3115>.
- <sup>19</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>20</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO 10/36.
- <sup>21</sup> M. Austin, 'Druitt, George (1775-1842)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://abd.anu.edu.au/biography/druitt-george-1944/text2431>.
- <sup>22</sup> Historical Records of Australia (HRA) Series 1, Vol 10, Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, pp. 626-627.
- <sup>23</sup> Major George Druitt (1775-1842), <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~garter1/georgedr.htm>.
- <sup>24</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>25</sup> *Northampton Mercury*, 19 Apr 1817, p.3 – report of trial.
- <sup>26</sup> *Oxford Journal*, 1 Sep 1810, p.4.
- <sup>27</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>28</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>29</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Edward Johnson Ellis. *Yorkshire Gazette*, 26 Feb 1820, p.3. *Sheffield Independent*, 13 May 1820.
- <sup>30</sup> Ancestry, Birmingham, England, Church of England Baptisms, 1813-1912, Birmingham, St. Philip, 1813-1830.
- <sup>31</sup> FMP, Record Transcription, Yorkshire Banns. In 1800 a Rachel Reaney married a William Crawshaw, the marriage also registered at Rotherham Minster. FMP, Record Transcription, Yorkshire Marriages.



- <sup>32</sup> Cited [PC1:69 PRO940 1821: wife Rebecca Ellis] in Portia Robinson, *The Women of Botany Bay*, The Macquarie Library, Sydney, 1988, pp.130-131.
- <sup>33</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>34</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>35</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>36</sup> Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore*, Pan Books, London, 1988, pp 349-51, 438-39.
- <sup>37</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>38</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>39</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>40</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867, Register 4 Feb 1810-26 Aug 1814.
- <sup>41</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>42</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>43</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867.
- <sup>44</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, HO 10/19, HO 10/20.
- <sup>45</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856
- <sup>46</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.
- <sup>47</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (The Sydney Gazette), 21 Jul 1825, p.3.
- <sup>48</sup> *The Sydney Gazette*, 29 Jul 1825, p.3; *The Australian*, 29 Jul 1826, p.3.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Sydney Gazette*, 11 Nov 1826, p.3.
- <sup>50</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930.
- <sup>51</sup> Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census, (TNA Copy).
- <sup>52</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930.
- <sup>53</sup> Dictionary of Sydney, Parramatta Female Factory, [http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/parramatta\\_female\\_factory](http://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/parramatta_female_factory).
- <sup>54</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930.
- <sup>55</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930.
- <sup>56</sup> HRA, Series 1, Vol 12, pp. 475-478. The letter formed part of the correspondence Major Druitt sent to the Colonial Office in support of his claim that he was innocent of all charges.



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