



Harriet Garva

Date of Trial:	18 September 1816
Where Tried:	Middlesex Gaol Delivery
Crime:	Receiving Stolen Goods
Sentence:	14 years
Est YOB:	1781
Stated Age on Arrival:	37
Native Place:	Hackney, Middlesex
Occupation:	Straw Bonnet Maker (Fortune Teller & Milliner – Trial)
Alias/AKA:	Harriet Garvey
Marital Status (UK):	Married – Samuel Garva
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>Industrious</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

(Note: Harriet was listed in the *Friendship* indentures as Harriet Garva. She is also referred to as Garvey, and variations, in other records).

This woman was brought before the Old Bailey in September 1816, charged with receiving goods which had been stolen previously by one Charlotte Anthony, who had been convicted of the theft at an earlier Sessions. The *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser* of 9 October 1816 details the events leading up to Harriet's arrest and trial, an account which also throws considerable light her character.

Harriet Garva was indicted for receiving from Charlotte Anthony two silver spoons, the property of G. Sunshine, well-knowing them to have been stolen by the said Charlotte Anthony.

Elizabeth Sunshine resided at her father's, in Cresswell-street, Spitalfields; Charlotte Anthony resided there too, with her grandfather. Witness missed the spoons, and on enquiring of Charlotte Anthony, she went to the prisoner's house, in Frying-Pan-alley, Petticoat-lane, where she kept a bonnet-shop, but lived principally by the ancient art of *fortune-telling*. Witness at first, pretended that she wanted the future events of her life to be disclosed to her; but soon stated her real errand, and accused her of having the property in question. This she denied, with horrible imprecations; but the witness told her if she did not return her the duplicates she would take other means. She then left the prisoner; and in about half an hour afterwards the latter came to witness's father's house, although witness had never told her where she lived; and brought her the duplicate, saying, "here are your duplicates, Charlotte brought them to me".

J. Goadwell, a pawnbroker, produced the spoons which the prisoner had pawned with him. They were first pawned by the name of Garva; but three days after she came and had it altered to Ann Anderson.

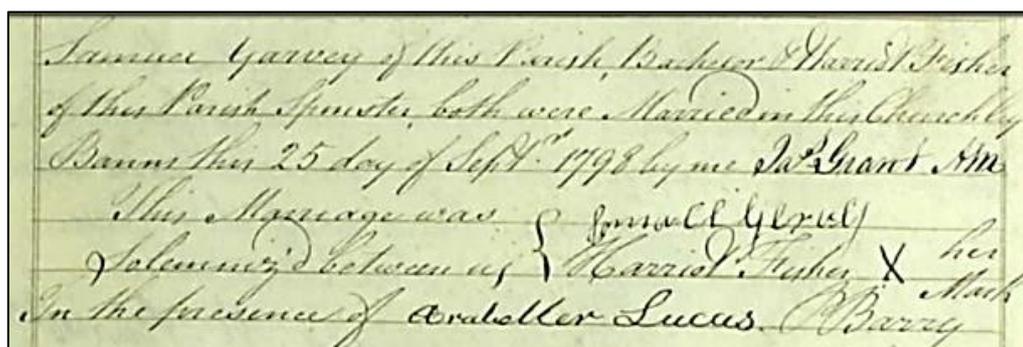
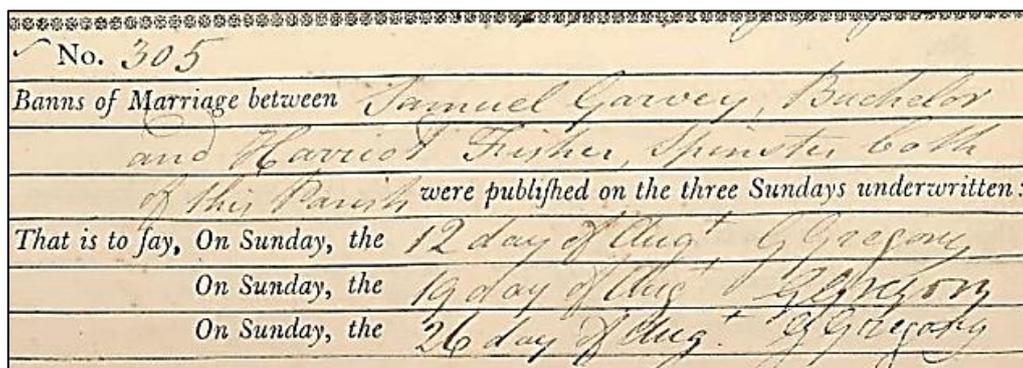
Charlotte Anthony, granddaughter of the prosecutor, dined in October last with her grandfather. Latterly she had lived at the Refuge for the Destitute. In October last she went to the prisoner about a bonnet, when the latter asked her to have her fortune told, saying, "you are keeping company with a young man, and if he is not married he will appear to you in a dark room". She then put witness into a dark room, and while there she saw something in the appearance of a man, which so terrified her that she fainted away, and was carried to a surgeon, who bled her, and brought her to her senses. She paid the prisoner 6d. for telling her fortune; but not contented with that, the prisoner asked her if she could not get something to make money of. Witness said she could not; but the prisoner followed her home, urging her to get something to make money of; assuring her it would never be found out. Witness at last went in, and took the spoons in question, which she gave to the prisoner, who wanted her to take an oath never to disclose what she had done; but that the witness refused to do. She was then prevailed upon to return to the prisoner's house, with whom she went in the evening to the Royalty Theatre; and when they returned the old wretch, the prisoner, was ardent in her intreaties that the poor girl should consent to become a prostitute. Witness was afterwards tried at the Old Bailey, and convicted for stealing the spoons, and was sent to the Refuge for the Destitute. On the day she had gone out, and met the prisoner on London-bridge, who asked her where she had been since she had last seen her – if she had been at home; and concluded by saying, "if

you will come to Broker's gardens, I have a nice little room, and we will live together". Witness refused; and when she returned to the Refuge for the Destitute she told what had passed; in consequence of which the prisoner was apprehended.¹

Harriet Garva, aged 34, was found guilty and sentenced to transportation for 14 years.² Young 17 year old Charlotte was fined.³

As an aside, it is interesting to note that, while not supplementing her income through fortune telling, Harriet earned her living as a milliner. And indeed she may well have carried out an unquestionably respectable millinery business. But so often, and particularly in London's 'red-light' district, a milliner (and other allied feminine occupations such as dress and/or mantua maker) was often the front for yet another string to the professional bow – as a madam, operating a house of ill-repute. It is perhaps telling that Harriet invited young Charlotte to live with her and offered her an opportunity to earn some money as a prostitute.⁴

In reviewing what scant documentation has been located for Harriet, she is nearly always defined as Harriet, wife of Samuel Garva. Who was Samuel and, if the pair married, when did the wedding take place? Nothing has been found for Samuel, apart from a possible marriage for a Samuel Garvey, bachelor, and a Harriot Fisher, spinster, at Saint Giles Cripplegate on 25 September 1789, following the calling of banns on 12, 19 and 26 August. All members of the wedding party were able to sign the register apart from the bride.⁵



Harriet Garva was detained in prison for nearly ten months before, in early June 1817, she and the other female prisoners consigned to the transport *Friendship* were taken to Deptford. It is somewhat ironic that their journey to the dock was itself the subject of a criminal offence, described by *Bell's Weekly Messenger* of 8 June as an 'Uncommon Case' involving the driver of the Greenwich coach and heard before the Lord Mayor.

A Mr. Kruse and his wife took their seats in the coach for the purpose of going to Deptford on business. They were told by the coachman that he would set off at the usual hour, but were delayed in Gracechurch-street upwards of fifty minutes beyond the time. Upon expostulating with the coachman, he at length whipped on his horses, but instead of driving in the direction of London-bridge, he directed his horses towards the Mansion-house. Upon being told that he was turning his back to the direct road, he expressed his wonder at the ignorance of the complainants, who did not seem to know that the pavement of London Bridge was up and of course coaches could not go that way. The complainants were satisfied to go over Blackfriars Bridge, but finding that



the driver turned down Newgate-street, they again expostulated with him, but received no satisfactory answer. At length the coach stopped at the door of the Compter in Giltspur-street. The driver said he would delay but a few moments, for the purpose of taking up the luggage of a few ladies, who were going to travel for the benefit of their health. A quantity of luggage was then lashed to the fop of the coach, and the complainants thought they would be upon their journey without further interruption when the coachman introduced them to a dozen female convicts, heavily ironed. He desired the new passengers to stow themselves where they could. The complainants went into the dickey; but were followed there by the convicts, some of whom thought the air of the coach too confined. The driver then paid a visit to Newgate, and the complainants supposing that they were to have more company of the same description, and having already borne as much as human patience could endure, left the coach. They complained to the Lord Mayor, not only of the disgrace to which they were exposed amongst a crowd of spectators, but also of the delay.

The Lord Mayor regretted that it was out of his power to punish the defendant as he deserved for such infamous conduct. He should, however, inflict as severe a fine as the law would allow for the only offence of which his Lordship could take cognizance, that of delaying beyond time in Gracechurch -street. Fined 20s. and compelled to pay expenses.⁶

This unfortunate adventure caught the attention of other newspapers of the day, who reported the events with minor variations. For example, the *Evening Mail* made reference to the large crowd of onlookers which enjoyed the spectacle of the Kruse's discomfort, and to the coachman's claim that the luggage 'was destined for a remote land'.⁷ Doubtless the female convicts were acutely aware that they and their luggage were bound for a far-away destination, but they would hardly have thought that they were embarking on a voyage 'for the benefit of their health'!

Having completed all the preparations for sailing, and embarked all the convict cargo, and the free passengers, the *Friendship* eventually departed England on 3 July 1817. After a protracted and eventful voyage – rescuing pirates near Madeira; broken anchor cable off the coast of Africa; the suicide, by jumping overboard, of one of the convicts – the *Friendship* arrived at Port Jackson on 14 January 1818.⁸ How Harriet spent her time on board – making bonnets? Telling fortunes? – is not known. However, as far as Surgeon Peter Cosgreave was concerned, Harriet Garvey was industrious, and John Gyles, one of the paying passengers, recalled that she was well behaved (and remained at Sydney).⁹

While not particularly informative, it is possible to trace Harriet through the 'regular' convict musters and lists. In 1819 she was recorded as a straw bonnet maker (possibly holding a ticket of leave); for 1820 she was an assigned servant, but the employer's name is hard to decipher; in 1821 she was offering her services as a mantua maker; by 1822, and having obtained a ticket of leave, was lodging at Sydney with R. Smith – not yet identified; and in 1825, perhaps presaging events over the next few years, she was found at the Female Factory at Parramatta.¹⁰

Thereafter Harriet's life became rather unsettled. On 20 February 1827 she was brought before the Sydney Magistrates charged with having absented herself without leave, for which she was sentenced to serve one month in 3rd class. Later that year, in December, the Gaol Entrance Book recorded that she had been given up by her master and was to be returned to the 1st class at the Factory.¹¹

A notice from the Principal Superintendent's Office, issued on 13 June 1828, advised the public that, among other prisoners who had absconded, was -

3. Garvey Harriett, *Friendship*, 47, *Straw Bonnet Maker*, from Nicholas Devine.¹²

A further notice, dated 1 August 1829, announced that Harriett Garvey, who had absconded from Nicholas Devine, was one of the runaways apprehended during the preceding week. She paid for her absence by being admitted to the Female Factory on 28 July for a spell of three months, 3rd class. She had only just completed her sentence when, once again on 10 November, she was back at the Factory, in 3rd class, having been charged and found guilty of drunkenness.¹³

Clearly, the relationship between Harriet and her master Mr. Devine continued to cause mutual difficulties, because we find that on 12 December 1829 Harriet was once again on the run –

3. *Garvey Harries* [sic], *Friendship*, 39 [sic], *Straw Bonnet Maker, from Nicholas Devine, 3d time to running.*¹⁴

This time the long-suffering Mr. Devine had had enough – Harriet was returned to the Factory on Christmas Eve, 'given up' by her master.¹⁵

No.	307/399
Date	28 Decr 1830
Prisoner's No.	
Name	Harriet (nee) Samuel Garva
Ship	Friendship (3)
Master	Armit
Year	1818
Native Place	Hackney, Middlesex
Trade or Calling	Straw Bonnet Maker
Offence	Receiving stolen plate
Place of Trial	Middlesex Ct
Date of Trial	18 Sep 1816
Sentence	Fourteen years
Year of Birth	1781
Height	5 feet
Complexion	Ruddy
Hair	Grey
Eyes	Dark Chestnut
General Remarks	right eye weak small mole on chin small finger of right hand contracted lost several front teeth in upper jaw - Beard on upper lip and chin

Finally, on 28 December 1830, at the age of 49 and just over fourteen years after her conviction, Harriet Garva was issued with her certificate of freedom.¹⁶ The details tell us that she was born in 1781, a native of Hackney. She was of average height, at 5 foot, had a ruddy complexion, grey hair and dark chestnut eyes, but was weak in her right eye. She was distinguished by a small mole on her chin, the small finger of her right hand was contracted, she had lost several front teeth in her upper jaw, and sported a beard on her upper lip and chin. If, with her dark chestnut eyes, she had been an attractive woman in her youth, age had not been kind to her.

The certificate, as did all her convict records, referred to Harriet as the wife of Samuel Garva. However, nothing further has come to light regarding Mr. Garva. Perhaps he had died sometime during Harriet's sojourn in New South Wales. Regardless of whether or not he was still alive, we find Harriet getting married again on 9 April 1832 at St. Phillip's, Sydney, to one Edward Holt. They were married for seven years before, at the stated age of 55, Harriet Holt died in 1839 at Sydney, the death registered at St. Phillip's.¹⁷

But which Edward Holt did she marry? A few men of that name, within the appropriate time frame, have been identified. Could he have been the Edward Holt, born about 1772, who had arrived on board the *Royal Admiral* in May 1792?¹⁸ Could he have been the Edward Holt, dealer in Sydney, who served as a juror at an inquest in October 1819 and who was the Edward Holt of Kent Street to whom a convict was assigned in March 1822?¹⁹ Or could he have been the Edward Holt, recorded as having arrived on the *Albemarle* in 1791 and who, by the 1828 census, was a 53 year old free man, and labourer for Cornelius Dwyer at Airs?²⁰ Researching the background of two of these three possible marriage candidates has been hampered by a dearth of documentation. However, some further information has been found for the Edward Holt who was tried at Session of the Peace for Middlesex in September 1789 and found guilty, together with two accomplices, of having on 17 August stolen a brass door plate which had graced the door of one John Macklean [sic]. On receiving his sentence of seven years transportation Edward exercised his right for a review of the decision. The appeal process was recorded in a series of letters.²¹ In a letter dated 14 November 1789 William Grenville, Home Secretary, advises William Mainwaring, Esq, as follows.

I am commended to signify to you the King's Pleasure that you take into your consideration the inclosed Petition of Edward Holt, who was tried before you, at the Sessions holden for the County of Middlesex, and am to desire you will report to me, for the King's Information a state of his case together with your opinion how far he may be



an object of the Royal Mercy.

A month later, by letter dated 15 December 1789, William Mainwaring of Hanover Square presented his report to the Home Secretary.

Sir

In obedience to his Majesty's Command, signified by your Letter, I have the Honor to transmit to you a Report of the Case of Edward Holt – tried at the Session of the Peace for County of Middlesex in September 1789.

Edward Holt was indicted together with Joseph Wood and John Fitz, for stealing a Brass Door plate, the property of John Macklean on the 17th of August last.

Thomas Dalton and Charles Young, two persons belonging to the Justices Rotation Office in Litchfield Street, having had Information given to them that three men were at a publick house in Compton Street, Soho, with a Bundle supposed to be stolen plate, were going to apprehend them; in the way, they met the three prisoners Holt, Wood and Fitz, who were well known to them as reputed thieves, carrying a large Bundle; they immediately stopped them, carried them to a proper place and examined their parcel, which they found to contain a quantity of Door Plates, Knockers, and ornaments belonging to Street Doors, with other articles, and which evidently appeared to have been forced from the Doors; among others was the Door plate of Mr. Macklean, and that it had been forced from his Door in the Night, a short time before the prisoners were taken.

It appeared from the Evidence of two Watchmen that the Houses in the Streets of their District had been lately robbed of Door plates, Knockers, Bell pulls and other Things belonging to street doors to a considerable Value; that three men had been detected by them and pursued, but had made their Escape, and that this sort of Felony was of late become very frequent.

The property being clearly proved by the prosecutor and the prisoners not being able to account how they came by the possession of it – the Jury found them Guilty, and the Court sentenced them to be transported for seven years.

These three prisoners had before, in the same Session, been tried upon other Indictments for the same sort of offence and acquitted, the several prosecutors not being able or willing to swear that the Things found upon them were their property.

The Father of one of the prisoners expressed much Satisfaction that the Court had ordered his Son for Transportation, and said, from the Company and Way of Life he was got into, he believed it was the only possible means of preventing a more dreadful sentence at some future Time.

Upon the whole, no circumstances appeared on the several Trials to authorize me to say that I think Edward Holt or either of the other prisoners convicted and sentenced with him, proper objects of his Majesty's Royal Mercy.

The report makes for interesting reading and conjures up a vision of the three men creeping around in the dead of night, 'with cat like tread' and, with a quiet and deft *modus operandi*, denuding the doors of the targeted neighbourhood householders. The report also serves to definitively quash any hopes Edward may have held for a reprieve (and any such hopes the other two may have had). What is not specified is the name of the appreciative father.

Meanwhile, perhaps in anticipation of a positive outcome for Edward, and also confusingly dated 15 December 1789, William Grenville drafted a letter to Mr. Whitlock, Contractor of Transports.²²

Sir

Application having been made to the King in behalf of Edward Holt now on board one of the Transports under your Superintendence at the Mother Bank, in order for Transportation; I am to signify to you His Majesty's Pleasure, that upon receipt hereof, you give immediate orders for the said Edward Holt, being sent back to the Fortunée Hulk in Langston Harbour, and I inclose to you a letter to Mr. Campbell requiring him to receive the said Convict into his Custody.

However, as noted in the margin 'The Report of Mr. Mainwaring being unfavourable this letter was not sent'.



Although Joseph Wood was sentenced to transportation I have not found any documentation to confirm this, nor to determine his fate post-trial. However, the documentation for John Fitz confirms that he was transported on the *Royal Admiral*, arriving at Sydney on 7 October 1792 and in the convict indents and the transportation registers he is 'paired up' with Edward Holt, both aged 20 when convicted and both tried at Middlesex on 11 September 1789.²³ And if this Edward was the Edward Holt who died in Sydney in 1804 he can be ruled out of marriage stakes.²⁴

Nothing further has been unearthed about the previously cited Edward Holt - merchant, jury man and recipient of an assigned convict.

Turning now to the Edward Holt who supposedly had arrived in the colony in 1791 on the *Albermarle* (although his name does not appear in any of this ship's indents). Listed with him at Airds for the 1828 census was Mary A Holt, 44, and a young 6 year old girl, also named Mary A Holt.²⁵ Mary A the elder was most likely Ann Best, found guilty at the Manchester Quarter Sessions in January 1812 of stealing wearing apparel, sentenced to seven years transportation, and who had arrived on the *Broxbornebury* in 1814, and who died in 1829 and was buried at Parramatta.²⁶ I have not found any marriage record between this Edward Holt and Ann Best, but their daughter was baptised as Mary Ann Holt on 23 October 1823 at Airds, and registered at St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church.²⁷

Of course, the Edward Holt who married Harriet Garva may have been another person altogether, as yet unidentified. But at least Edward, partner of the late Ann Best, was 'available' from 1829. But without sighting any supporting information (if any) on her marriage registration, the question as to whom Harriet married remains unresolved.

NOTES

¹ *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser*, 9 Oct 1816, p.3.

² Old Bailey Proceedings Online (www.oldbaileyonline.org, version 8.0, 24 August 2019), September 1816, trial of CHARLOTTE ANTHONY HARRIET, the wife of Samuel Garva (t18160918-120). There are three accounts of the trial (Case 937), all similar in substance, but with minor variations. The pawnbroker is also recorded as John Goodburn, and Charlotte Anthony is described as Ann Sunshine's niece.

³ Ancestry, England & Wales, Criminal Registers, 1791-1892.

⁴ Lucy Worsley, *Jane Austen at Home*, Hodder & Stoughton, London, 2017. The link between millinery and prostitution is discussed in Act One, Chapter 6, in connection with one of Jane Austen's female relatives being apprenticed to a milliner.

⁵ Ancestry, London, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754-1932, City of London, Saint Giles Cripplegate, 1796-1806.

⁶ *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 8 Jun 1817, p.6. One of the reforms introduced by Elizabeth Fry in her work with prisoners was that the Newgate women transports were to be conveyed in a hackney coach, rather than being loaded into open wagons. Subsequently the wearing of irons during transfer was also done away with – History's Heroes? Elizabeth Fry, <http://historysheroes.e2bn.org/hero/othersources/108/15>.

⁷ *Evening Mail*, 9 Jun 1817, p.3.

⁸ Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Friendship 1818, https://www.jenwillets.com/convict_ship_friendship_1818.htm.

⁹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Series: *NRS 897; Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072*.

¹⁰ Ancestry, New South Wales, Census and Population Books, 1811-1825, Population Muster 1819. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, New South Wales, Female, 1820 and 1821. Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, New South Wales, General Muster 1822 and General Muster A-L, 1825.

¹¹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1819-1833 and Entrance Book, Sydney, 1825-1832.

¹² *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 16 Jun 1828, p.3.

¹³ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 4 Aug 1829, p.4. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1818-1830, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1825-1832.

¹⁴ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 15 Dec 1829, p.3.

¹⁵ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1818-1830, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1825-1832.

¹⁶ Findmypast (FMP), Record Transcription, Butts of Certificates of Freedom 1827-1867 (NRS12210, Reels 982-1027 & 604).



¹⁷ FMP, Record Transcription, New South Wales Marriages 1788-1945, Ref V1832950 16. FMP, Record Transcription, New South Wales Deaths 1788-1945, Ref V183948 23A.

¹⁸ Ancestry, Australia, Convict Index, 1788-1868.

¹⁹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856.

²⁰ Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy), New South Wales, Census E-H, 1828.

²¹ FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, HO13, Correspondence and Warrants. FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, HO47, Judges' Reports on Criminals 1784-1830 – Correspondence.

²² FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, HO13, Correspondence and Warrants.

²³ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict indents, 1788-1842, Royal Admiral. Ancestry, Australian Convict Transportation Registers – Other Fleets & Ships, 1791-1868. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia Convict Ship Muster Rolls and Related Records, 1790-1849, 1792, Royal Admiral. John Fitz was one of the numerous partners of Esther Salamon/Spencer, who had arrived on the *Indispensible*, and by whom he had two children – Susannah Spencer Fitz Stubbs, married name Day (1797-1832) and Joseph Clark Fitz (1799-1800) – Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for John Fitz.

²⁴ BDA, Biographical report for Edward Holt, B#10011499401.

²⁵ Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy), New South Wales, Census E-H, 1828.

²⁶ *Lancaster Gazette*, 1 Feb 1812, p.12. BDA, Biographical report for Ann Best. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, St. John's Parramatta, Burials, 1790-1986, Vol 02, Baptisms, 1826-1834; Marriages, 1826-1834; Burials, 1826-1834.

²⁷ BDA, Biographical report for Mary Ann Holt.



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