



Mary Buxton

Date of Trial:	23 October 1816
Where Tried:	York, West Riding Quarter Session
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1783?
Stated Age on Arrival:	35
Native Place:	
Occupation:	
Alias/AKA:	
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>An indolent, inoffensive woman</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

Information in the convict indent for Mary Buxton, who was tried at Wakefield, in the West Riding of Yorkshire on 23 October 1816, is sparse. In particular, it tells us nothing about her age, which is gleaned from other documentation, or her occupation, which was never stipulated.¹ The details of the crime that resulted in her transportation are found in the (punctuation-free) Yorkshire Quarter Session Records.

Whereas Mary Buxton late of Wakefield in the West Riding of the County of York Singlewoman having been duly convicted of vagrancy at a former Sessions and recorded as in incorrigible Rogue and Vagabond and she being at this Sessions also convicted of the same It is ordered by this Court that the said Mary Buxton for the offence aforesaid be Transported into Foreign Parts beyond the Seas for the Term of seven years to such place as His Majesty in his privy counsel shall order and direct and that she be committed to his Majesty's Gaol Castle of York there to be confined in safe custody until the time of her said Transportation.²

The phrase 'at a former Sessions' referred to Mary Buxton's appearance at the Rotherham Sessions on 2 August 1815.

Whereas Mary Buxton was lately committed to the House of Correction kept for the said Riding charged with Vagrancy and being now brought before this Court appears to be Guilty of the same It is ordered that the said Mary Buxton for the Offence aforesaid be recorded as a Rogue and Vagabond and she is hereby recorded accordingly and it is further ordered that the said Mary Buxton be immediately conveyed as a Vagrant according to the directions of the Statute in that case made to Sheffield in the said Riding the said Mary Buxton having upon her Examination in Oath in open Court having deposed that her last legal settlement is at Sheffield aforesaid.³

A further check on West Riding criminal records, and assuming that the following refer to her, suggests that Mary Buxton was indeed no stranger to the West Riding legal establishment.

On 1 February 1804, a Mary Buxton was sentenced to one year's imprisonment in the West Riding House of Correction. Aged 23 when committed, she was 5' 3" tall, had brown hair, gray eyes and a fresh complexion. Mary had been charged with being a 'Lewd and Disorderly Woman having 3 Bastard Children'.⁴ She was well behaved in gaol and at the Wakefield Sessions on 8 November 1804 was given an early release.

Ordered that Susannah Lottie and Mary Buxton be discharged out of the House of Correction kept for the said Riding and forthwith suffered to go at large.⁵

Mary Buxton made a return visit to the House of Correction in 1812 following her appearance on 6 April at the Pontefract Sessions.

And That Mary Buxton late of Sheffield in the West Riding of the County of York Singlewoman on the fourteenth day of March in the fifty second year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third by the Grace of God



of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and King Defender of the Faith with force and arms at the Parish of Sheffield in the West Riding of the County of York one Linen Sheet of the value of ten pence of the Goods and Chattels of one James Winter then and there found did then and there feloniously steal, take and carry away against the Peace of the said Lord the now King his Crown and Dignity.

Confesseth : To be confined in the House of Correction fourteen days in a Solitary Cell.⁶

Returning now to Mary Buxton, languishing in York Castle following her trial in October 1816. Either her surroundings were not to her liking or, more likely, the prison authorities wanted her removed. On 12 December 1816 Lord Sidmouth, Home Secretary, wrote to J.A. Stuart Wortley, Esq, in response to a letter he had received from the latter.

Sir

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Letter of the 28th Ult. respecting the Case of Mary Buxton a Prisoner lately convicted of Vagrancy and Sentenced to Transportation – In reply to which I beg to acquaint you, that the Prisoner in question does not come within the class of Person which have hitherto been sent to the Penitentiary House at Millbank.⁷

Thus Mary spent seven months in the Castle before, as announced in the *Hull Packet* of 27 May 1817, she was finally removed.

Thursday morning the following female convicts left York Castle in order to be delivered on board the Friendship transport vessel, lying below Deptford bound to New South Wales: - Hannah Hammond Crampton ... to be transported for 14 years. Mary Buxton to be transported for seven years.⁸

According to Surgeon Cosgreave, Mary did not make much of an effort to contribute to shipboard life – being described as indolent and inoffensive. On a more positive note, she did not apparently do anything to draw unwanted attention to herself. And this was the case once she had arrived at Port Jackson. She had spent much of her adult life in institutions, and this set the pattern for life in the colony.

For the 1822 muster Mary Buxton was listed as a convict, resident at the Government Factory, Parramatta. The only change for the 1825 muster is that Mary was by this time free by servitude. For the 1828 census she is still listed as living at the Factory, but this return gives the additional information of her age – 45.⁹

It is here that the documentary evidence for Mary Buxton, convict per Friendship, comes to an end. Three other references to a Mary Buxton have, however, been found but whether they refer to 'our' Mary Buxton is decidedly questionable. The first two are located in the Gaol Description and Entrance Books.

On 24 April 1835 a Mary Buxton, free, native of Manchester, and a domestic by calling, was committed to the Parramatta Gaol to serve 14 days hard labour. Her sentence expired on 7 May.

On 23 May 1835 a Mary Buxton, free, was committed to the Parramatta Gaol to serve 1 month hard labour. She was disposed of to the Liverpool Asylum on 27 May 1835.¹⁰

While 'our' Mary Buxton was free by servitude by 1822, in both references above the word 'free' was placed in the ship arrival column. In the first, the birth place 'Manchester' does not match 'our' Mary, and no other record has been found to indicate that 'our' Mary was a domestic servant.

The third reference is for the death of a Mary Buxton which was registered at Liverpool in 1836, with the deceased's age given as 72.¹¹

Name	Registration Number	Father's Given Name(s)	Mother's Given Name(s)	District
<input type="checkbox"/> ? BUXTON MARY	802/1836 V1836802 20	AGE 72		

If 'our' Mary Buxton was 45 in 1828 when the census was conducted, she would have been about 53 in 1836.



NOTES

- ¹ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842, Bound Indentures, 1814-1818.
- ² Ancestry, Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914, Wakefield, Order, 1815-1816.
- ³ Ancestry, Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914, Wakefield, Order, 1815-1816. The Statute cited was the Poor Relief Act of 1662 (also called the Settlement Act) whereby, through a Settlement Examination, the parish to which a person belonged to, and which would be responsible for supporting them – poor relief - could be established.
- ⁴ Ancestry, West Yorkshire England, Prison Records, 1801-1914, West Riding House of Correction, Register of Male and Female Prisoners, 1801-1808.
- ⁵ Ancestry, Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914, Wakefield, Order 1802-1804.
- ⁶ Ancestry, Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914, Wakefield, Indictment, 1810-1813.
- ⁷ Findmypast (FMP), England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence And Warrants.
- ⁸ *Hull Packet*, 27 May 1817, p.3.
- ⁹ Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Mary Buxton. Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, 1822 and 1825. Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (Australian Copy).
- ¹⁰ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930, Description Book, Parramatta, 1835-1836.
- ¹¹ Ancestry, Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985. NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages (NSW BDM), Death registration, V1836802 20.



SELECTED SOURCES

Genealogy Websites

Ancestry

1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (Australian Copy)

Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985

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

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

New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930

West Yorkshire England, Prison Records, 1801-1914

Yorkshire, England, Quarter Session Records, 1637-1914

Findmypast

England and Wales Crime and Punishment

Other Websites

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

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

Online Newspapers

British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Hull Packet

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