



## Hannah Hammond Crampton

Date of Trial:	8 March 1817
Where Tried:	York Assizes
Crime:	Having forged bank notes
Sentence:	14 years
Est YOB:	1787
Stated Age on Arrival:	31
Native Place:	Hull
Occupation:	Housekeeper & Needlework
Alias/AKA:	Hannah Hammond
Marital Status (UK):	Married – William Hammond Crampton
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>Conducts herself with propriety and is very industrious</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

In 1827 the Yorkshire Lent Assizes were held at the Castle of York on Saturday 8 March before the Honourable Sir George Wood, Knight and the Honourable Sir John Bayley. There were seventy-eight people listed for trial, including, as numbers 63 and 64, a husband and wife team.

63 (aged 34) WILLIAM HAMMOND CRAMPTON, late of Saxleby, in the county of Lincoln, labourer, committed the 22d day of February, 1817, charged upon the oath of Nanny the wife of William Broadhead, of Royston, in the West-Riding, innkeeper, with having, on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the same February, at Royston aforesaid, feloniously uttered and paid to her the said Nanny Broadhead, a certain, false, forged, and counterfeited promissory note, for the sum of one pound, purporting to be a promissory note of the Bank of England, for the sum of one pound, knowing the same to be false, forged and counterfeited.

64 (aged 30) HANNAH HAMMOND CRAMPTON, wife of William Hammond Crampton, late of Saxleby, in the county of Lincoln, labourer, committed the 22d day of February, 1817, charged upon the oath of Henry Holdam, of Royston, in the West-Riding, shopkeeper, with having, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of the same February, at Royston aforesaid, feloniously uttered and paid to him the said Henry Holdam, a certain, false, forged, and counterfeited promissory note, for the sum of one pound, purporting to be a promissory note of the Bank of England, for the sum of one pound, knowing the same to be false, forged and counterfeited.

Also stands further charged on the oath of Mary, with wife of John Ward, of Hampole, in the West-Riding, shop-keeper, with having, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of the same February, at Hampole aforesaid, feloniously uttered and paid to her the said Mary Ward, a certain, false, forged, and counterfeited promissory note, for the sum of one pound, purporting to be a promissory note of the Bank of England, for the sum of one pound, knowing the same to be false, forged and counterfeited.

Listed as number 65 was 32 year old Robert Grey, a miller of Wheatley Nottingham, who was in cahoots with the Cramptons, was also committed on 22 February for having two days earlier 'feloniously uttered and paid' to Joseph White, an innkeeper of Royston.<sup>1</sup>

This was not the first time William Crampton and Robert Grey had paired up. They had appeared before the 1814 Spilsby Midsummer Sessions, both charged with uttering counterfeit coins. Robert Grey was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment but William Crampton was found not guilty.<sup>2</sup> Neither were to be so lucky in 1817.

The York Herald of 15 March devoted a few column inches on the trial William and Hannah Crampton and their accomplice Robert Grey.

Tuesday, March 11 – FORGERY

WILLIAM HAMMOND CRAMPTON, HANNAH HAMMOND CRAMPTON and ROBT. GREY, were jointly charged with uttering a Forged Note, purporting to be a Note of the Bank of England, for One Pound, knowing the same to be forged.



After a trial which occupied five or six hours, the two male prisoners were convicted and the female was acquitted, on the ground of her having committed the felony in the presence of her husband, which, in the judgement of the law, is supposed to place her under his control.

The Note on which the indicted was founded, was paid by Wm. Hammond Crampton to the wife of a Publican, of the name of Broadhead at Royston, on the 19<sup>th</sup> of February last, in the presence of the other two Prisoners, in discharge of their joint reckoning, and this was charged as an uttering by all of the Prisoners, & a great variety of evidence was given, to show that the three prisoners had been acting in concert with each other, the woman taking the most prominent part, and they had in the course of the same day, paid away divers Forged Notes, under the colour of making small purchases. These different Notes were proved to be forged, were quite fresh, and impressions from the same Plate, and were satisfactorily traced to the possession of the Prisoners; and upon the female Prisoner, at the time of her apprehension, was found £16 in silver, supposed to have been received as change for Forged Notes; and one of the prisoners was proved to have had twelve Forged Notes in his possession, though he had contrived to throw them upon the floor of the Public House, before he was searched, and some difficulty arose in determining to which of the Prisoners these notes belonged.

His Lordship passed sentence of death upon them at the conclusion of the business of the day, and in a very impressive address he intimated to these Prisoners, that no mitigation of this sentence was to be expected, as it was become necessary to check the circulation of these Forged Notes by the utmost severity of punishment, that those who engaged in the iniquitous traffic [re---ing] them, with the guilty knowledge at their being forged, might understand that they did it at the utmost peril of their lives. His Lordship said he had passed sentence upon them thus early, that he might give them the more time to prepare for the dreadful fate which awaited them, and for that future state to which it would consign them.

HANNAH HAMMOND CRAMPTON against whom another capital indictment, for the same offence, had been found, was permitted to plead guilty to an indictment charging her with having unlawful possession of forged notes, on an understanding that no evidence would be given on the capital charge, and of which she was afterwards acquitted by the consent of the prosecutors ...

The same offer of pleading to the minor indictment, had been made to the prisoners capitally convicted, and W.H. Crampton was very anxious to avail himself of it; but Robert Grey, the other prisoner, refused and the Counsel for the prosecution would not accept the submission of one without that of the other: So that the life of this unfortunate man may be considered as sacrificed to the obstinacy of his companion in his nefarious practices.<sup>3</sup>

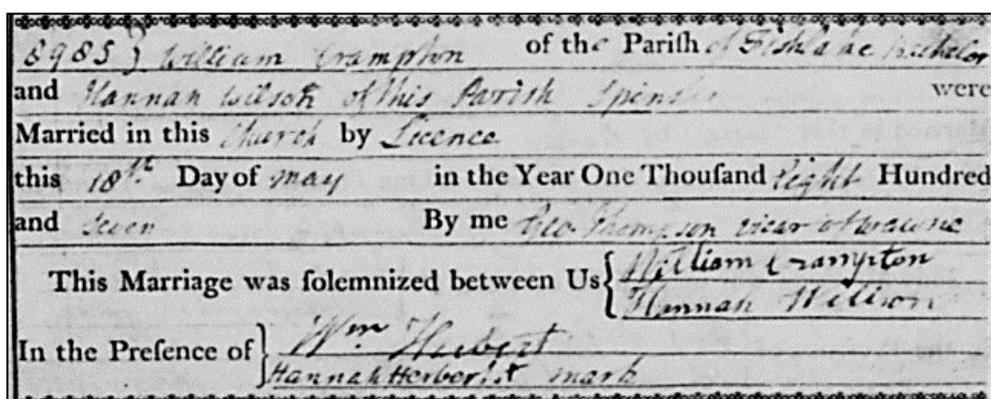
The trio was elsewhere described as 'three well-known offenders', and they operated a slick unit, carrying with them all the wherewithal for their forgery enterprise.<sup>4</sup> It is ironic that on the one hand Hannah Hammond Crampton was identified as the ringleader of the trio – 'taking the most prominent part' – and yet by law her culpability was diminished because it was deemed that she was acting under the control of her husband. It is open to question as to why Robert Grey refused to accept the lesser charge of possession, but in doing so was he aware of the dire implications for his partner-in-crime? But in the end their fate was not a shared appointment with the executioner. By letter dated 15 April 1817, Lord Sidmouth advised the Justice of Assize for the Northern Circuit that the recommendation for leniency for William Hammond Crampton and Robert Grey had been favourably received. The two were to be transported beyond the Seas for the term of their natural lives.<sup>5</sup> Having been saved from the gallows, and perhaps emboldened by the success of this first petition, William enlisted the support of the Rt. Hon. Lord Rous, in seeking a further concession to which, on 7 May 1817, Lord Sidmouth responded.

My Lord

I have the Honor to acknowledge the receipt of Your Lordship's Letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ins. Accompanied with a Pet<sup>n</sup> on behalf of William and Hannah Crampton, two Prisoners under Sentence of Transportation in the Gaol of York, and having taken the same into consideration, I am sorry to acquaint Your Lordship that I do not perceive any circumstance which would justify me consistently with my Public Duty in Recommending either of the Prisoners to H.R. Highness the P. Regent for any Extension of the Royal Mercy.<sup>6</sup>

So, having been spared widowhood, Hannah could look forward, in time, to being reunited with her husband.

The marriage between William Crampton and Hannah Wilson had taken place on 18 May 1807 at Hull, which was stated to be the bride's place of residence at the time. William, of the parish of Fishlake, was 23 years old and a bricklayer by trade. Hannah's age was 21. The ceremony was witnessed by William and Hannah Herbert. Of note, and almost a 'prerequisite' for a forger, both bride and groom were able to sign their names.<sup>7</sup>



At least two children have been found for William and Hannah, both born and baptised at Fishlake – William, born on 10 July 1808 was baptised on 21 July 1808, and James, born on 20 October 1809. The parish baptism register usefully not only included the names of the parents – William, labourer, and Hannah his wife – but also records the names of their fathers – James Crampton, farmer, and Samuel Wilson.<sup>8</sup> From this information we can deduce that William was the son of James Crampton, labourer, and Mary Hammond, born on 19 October 1781 and baptised a week later at Fishlake.<sup>9</sup> A 'matching' birth/baptism record for Hannah has not yet been located.

The local newspapers tried to keep their readers informed as to when prisoners were removed from their places of incarceration to the hulks, in the case of the male transportees, and to the convict transports being readied to receive the females. On 17 May the *York Herald* advised that the male convicts who had left the Castle on Monday morning, to be delivered on board the *Retribution* hulk at Sheerness, up the river Medway, included 'lifers' William Hammond Crampton and Robert Grey. A week later, on 24 May the *Leeds Mercury* reported that Hannah Hammond Crampton, to be transported for 14 years, was one of the female convicts who had left York Castle on the previous Thursday morning in order to be delivered on board the *Friendship* transport vessel, lying below Deptford and bound for New South Wales.<sup>10</sup>

It was from the *Friendship* that Hannah wrote to the Bank of England's solicitors Freshfields, directing her letter to 'Mr Key' – probably Joseph Kaye – one of the partners. It is likely that she wrote the letter herself, as we know she was literate enough to at least write her name, and her efforts were rewarded with the customary embarkation allowance for women of £5.

275. [F25/4/52] Hannah Crampton, *Friendship* transport ship, Deptford, 26 May 1817

Mr Key Honred Sir i ham infirmed by a respectabe Jentleman that the Convicts belonging to the Bank of England is intitled to the sum of 5 pounds Honred Sir if so i hope you will have that tender feeling towards the Distrest to forward it as soon as Possable Honred Sir i hope you will Pardon my Adresing you on this subject Sir i ham you Moast Obeident Humble Servent Hannah Crampton on Bord the Frenship

Annotated: Hannah Crampton convict £5<sup>11</sup>

In early July, just after the *Friendship* had departed, William Crampton and Robert Grey sent a similar 'begging', and in this case 'reminder', letter to the Bank. In this instance there is no record of any payment being made. In fact, contrary to our applicants' expectations, the charitable payment of £5 was not paid to male prisoners, as a matter of course, and the Bank was definitely not sympathetic towards those who had refused the offer of a plea bargain in court.

694. [F25/12/8] William Hammond Crampton and Robert Grey, *Retribution* hulk, Sheerness, 6 July 1817

Sir We Most Humbly Beg pardon in troubling You. But having sent Once to the Company of Bank of England

Concerning Getting the £5 Which His Costomary to be paid after Receiving Sentence. And has we have Received no Answer We Are Informed to Make Our Application to You Which we humbly Beg You will be pleased to Look Into Has we are now in the Greatest Distress And should You butt Condecend to Answer this Letter We Should Be Extremely thankfull. We was try'd at Last York Assizes 11th March 1817

And has we going out of the Country for Life the Money if Could be Gott would be of the Greatest Service and we should have butt Little Doubt of Success if You would Kind Sir Butt Intercede In Our Behalf

We remain Your Most H Sts W Hammond Crampton & Robert Grey<sup>12</sup>

The *Friendship*, under Master Andrew Armet, departed from England on 3 July 1817 for what proved to be an arduous journey and a testing experience for all on board. They would have been very relieved when the vessel arrived at its destination on 13 January 1818. Despite the rigours of the passage Hannah Hammond Crampton conducted herself in an exemplary manner and this, together with her industriousness, were commended by Surgeon Superintendent Cosgreave.<sup>13</sup> The convicts who made the journey on the *Ocean* had a much better sea-going experience, not least because the vessel made such good time. Having departed from Spithead on 21 August, the *Ocean* arrived at Port Jackson on 10 January 1818, a week or so before the *Friendship* finally dropped anchor. News of the arrival of the two ships was reported in the Sydney Gazette.<sup>14</sup>



Perhaps surprisingly, and whether by choice or circumstance, Hannah and William Crampton did not pair up again when they reached New South Wales. For the convict listings for 1819 to 1821 Hannah Crampton is recorded as 'Single Sydney'.<sup>15</sup> For the 1822 muster she is listed a convict, serving a life sentence [sic and incorrect], and the 'Wife of J. Browne Sydney'. Three years later, now with a ticket of leave and the correct term of 14 years, Hannah is again listed as 'Wife of J<sup>no</sup>. Browne Sydney'.<sup>16</sup> Whatever the terms of the arrangement might have been between Hannah and John Browne, they were not in a position to marry. It must have been known to the authorities that not only was Hannah a married woman, her husband was actually living in the colony. So unsurprisingly, no record of marriage between a John Browne and Hannah has been found. Indeed, with so many men with the name John Brown(e) it has been impossible without any further contextual documentation to identify which one Hannah was living with. Hannah does not appear in the 1828 census and there is no record of her having gained a certificate of freedom, and so, at this stage, it is with the 1825 record that her story comes to an end.

When the *Friendship* arrived at Port Jackson thirteen of the women who had survived the journey were admitted to the General Hospital suffering from scorbutic diseases. It is to the credit of George Fairfowl, who was making his first voyage as Surgeon Superintendent of a convict ship, that due to his ministrations only two men were lost during the voyage of the *Ocean*.<sup>17</sup> Governor Macquarie was particularly pleased -



The whole of the Male Convicts under his charge on board of that ship having been landed here in a clean Healthy State and without a single complaint.<sup>18</sup>

According to the indent, 35 year old William Hammond Crampton's pre-transportation occupation was Road and Canal maker, generally referred to in England disparagingly as a 'navvie', but whose skills would be valued in the colony. He stood at 5' 7", had a ruddy complexion, dark brown hair and brown eyes.<sup>19</sup> Nearly 100 of the *Ocean* convicts were allocated for assignments variously to Van Diemens Land, Parramatta, Windsor and Liverpool, but William Hammond Crampton was not among them. For the 1819 to 1821 convict lists he was recorded as being a servant to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor and at Government House.<sup>20</sup> By the 1822 muster he was residing at Liverpool, a ticket-of-leave man employed by Mr. Ewing [?] and he was also listed as being resident at Liverpool for the 1823 Liverpool Population Book.<sup>21</sup> The next two records located for William are for 1824. In October William H Crampton was included in the Return of grain in the possession of settlers in the Minto district – which recorded that he had on hand 4 bushels of wheat.<sup>22</sup> On 30 November William Crampton was assigned the newly arrived William Watts, an 18 year old groom and carter from Leeds who had arrived per *Guildford 6*.<sup>23</sup>

For the 1825 muster William was listed as a ticket of leave landholder at Appin, located halfway between Campbelltown and Wollongong, and at that time an important wheat and dairy farming area. Still with him for this muster was his assigned servant William Watts.<sup>24</sup> Mistakenly transcribed as William Alexander Crampton, we find that on 20 April 1827 William is issued with a ticket of leave to replace an earlier one, dated 17 October 1821 which, as certified by Wm. Howe, Esq, had been lost at some stage. As noted on the replacement ticket, William was allowed to remain in the District of Liverpool. Three years later he applied for and was issued with another ticket on 13 May 1830, this one endorsed 'Allowed to remain in the District of Minto'.<sup>25</sup>

Now in his late forties and with thirteen years of his sentence under his belt it seems that William, while not a free man, but who had held a ticket of leave for some considerable time and was eligible for an assigned servant, was making something of a living at Appin. So we have to ask what the circumstances were which led William to jeopardise his prospects. It is from *The Sydney Herald* of 24 June 1833 that we learn that the ticket of leave granted to William Hammond Crampton was cancelled per the Colonial Secretary's order of 18 June, for 'threatening conduct to a female'. There is no reference as to when and where the incident occurred nor the name of the victim.<sup>26</sup> Nor do any of the contemporary newspapers carry a report about the case. However six months later, on 19 December 1833, William Hammond Crampton was admitted to the Sydney Gaol, having been sent there from Liverpool. Again there are scant details. His status was recorded as 'bond' and a labourer, but the admission book is silent on what his crime had been. He was not brought to trial, but was ordered to be sent to the Hunter River to be dealt with, and was dispatched to Newcastle.<sup>27</sup> It was as a convict, in the District of Liverpool Plains that William died on 2 February 1836.<sup>28</sup>

### Postscript

When Hannah Crampton embarked on the *Friendship* in July 1817, and assuming that they were still alive, her two sons, William and James, would have been aged 8 and 6 respectively. At this stage I have found nothing more about them, but hope that they were taken care of by family and managed to avoid the same fate as their parents.

And what happened to Robert Grey, the Cramptons' partner in crime? It was as a Baker and Confectioner that this man from Louth, Lincoln, was mustered on arrival at Port Jackson. He was aged 36 when, on 27 March 1820, he married 28 year old Eleanor Gleeson, who had arrived in 1818 per *Elizabeth* on a seven year sentence. In 1825, when he and Eleanor were living in the Minto district, Robert was assigned to his wife, and in 1834 he gained his ticket of leave, followed in 1841 by a conditional pardon, by which time he was in his mid-50s and had added Miller to his curriculum vitae.<sup>29</sup> So it seems that of all three of those who together faced the York Assizes, Robert Grey fared the best. He at least gained a conditional pardon, rather ironic considering that he might have been the cause of his own and William Crampton's execution.



## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Findmypast (FMP), City of York Calendars of Prisoners, 1739-1851, Ref Y/ORD/1/1 – 1800-1819.
- <sup>2</sup> *Stamford Mercury*, 5 Aug 1814, p.3. FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Prison Registers, Series HO27/10.
- <sup>3</sup> *York Herald*, 15 Mar 1817, p.2. Also covered by the *Lancaster Gazette*, 22 Mar 1817, p.3.
- <sup>4</sup> *Stamford Mercury*, 21 Mar 1817, p.3.
- <sup>5</sup> FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence and Warrants, Series HO13/29, pp. 357-360.
- <sup>6</sup> FMP, England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Correspondence and Warrants, Series HO13/30, pp. 3-4.
- <sup>7</sup> FMP, Yorkshire Marriages, East Riding Archives & Local Studies Service, Ref PE158/26. FMP, Yorkshire, Archbishop of York Marriages Licences Index, 1613-1839, Record sequence number 26, p.69.
- <sup>8</sup> FMP, Yorkshire Baptisms, Doncaster Archives, Ref P17-1-A5.
- <sup>9</sup> FMP, Yorkshire Baptisms, Doncaster Archives, Ref P17-1-A5. William's grandfathers were John Crampton of Scrooby, a tailor, and Thomas Hammond, a stone cutter.
- <sup>10</sup> *York Herald*, 17 May 1817, p.3. *Leeds Mercury*, 24 May 1817, p.3.
- <sup>11</sup> British History Online, Prisoners' Letters to the Bank of England, 1781-1827, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol42/pp65-92>.
- <sup>12</sup> British History Online, Prisoners' Letters to the Bank of England, 1781-1827, <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol42/pp186-222>.
- <sup>13</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Series: *NRS 897*; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072*, p.60.
- <sup>14</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 17 Jan 1818, p.3.
- <sup>15</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834.
- <sup>16</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, New South Wales, General muster, 1822 and New South Wales General muster A-L, 1825.
- <sup>17</sup> Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Friendship 1818, [https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict\\_ship\\_friendship\\_1818.htm](https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_friendship_1818.htm). Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship Ocean 1818, [https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict\\_ship\\_ocean\\_1818.htm](https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_ocean_1818.htm).
- <sup>18</sup> Ancestry, UK, Royal Navy Medical Journals, 1817-1857, O, Ocean, 1817 24 Jun – 1816 16 Jan. The note expressing Governor Macquarie's 'entire approbation' is appended to George Fairfowl's Medical Journal.
- <sup>19</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842, Bound Indentures, 1814-1818.
- <sup>20</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834.
- <sup>21</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, New South Wales, General Muster, 1822. Ancestry, New South Wales, Census and Population Books, 1811-1825, Liverpool Population Book, 1823.
- <sup>22</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856, Series: *NRS 897*; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072*, p.301a.
- <sup>23</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842, Bound Indentures, 1823-1826.
- <sup>24</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, New South Wales, General Muster A-L, 1825.
- <sup>25</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Tickets of Leave, 1810-1869, Ticket of leave butts (NRS 12202) Mar 1827-Sep 1827, Dec 1829-Jun 1930.
- <sup>26</sup> *The Sydney Herald*, 24 Jun 1833, p.2.
- <sup>27</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930, Entrance and Description Book, Sydney, 1834-1838.
- <sup>28</sup> NSW State Archives & Records (NSW SA&R), Convicts Index 1791-1873, [4/4549; Reel 690 Page 038] | Record Type: Convict Death Register | Date 02/02/1836.
- <sup>29</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Robert Grey, ID: B#10013627401. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Registers of Conditional and Absolute Pardons, 1788-1870, Conditional, 1841.



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### Online Newspapers

#### British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Lancaster Gazette  
Stamford Mercury  
York Herald

#### TROVE

The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser  
The Sydney Herald

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