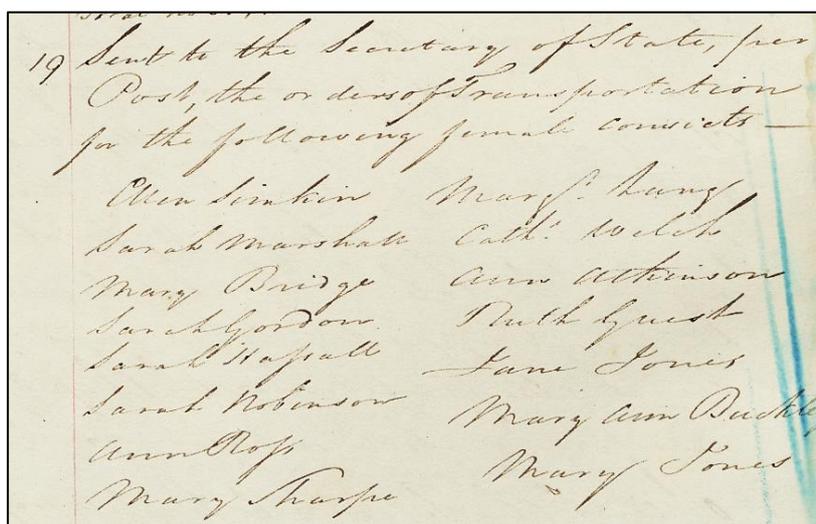


Margaret Lang

Date of Trial:	22 January 1817
Where Tried:	Lancaster Quarter Session
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1776 (based on stated age at death)
Stated Age on Arrival:	
Native Place:	
Occupation:	
Alias/AKA:	
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>A helpless old woman</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

A review of the sentences meted out at the January 1817 Lancaster Quarter Sessions to those found guilty of stealing items of clothing, exposes a striking inconsistency in the relative severity of the judgements handed down. For instance, Margaret Lang was sentenced to seven years transportation for stealing a pair of shoes from one S. Ridgway. Yet other such crimes were treated more leniently - stealing shawls and wearing apparel, 'rewarded' with two years' imprisonment; stealing a hat and stealing a pair of stockings earned the perpetrators just twelve months imprisonment; six months was the sentence for a number of others found guilty of stealing wearing apparel; and, most notably, one John Clay was sentenced to just three months imprisonment for exactly the same crime as Margaret Lang – stealing a pair of shoes.¹ Although there is no reference to any prior convictions, perhaps this was not Margaret's first appearance before the bench.

While awaiting transportation Margaret was held in the Lancaster Gaol from where, on 19 May 1817, the Governor sent to the Secretary of State the Order of Transportation for fifteen convicts, all of whom were destined for the *Friendship* and one of whom was Margaret.



Eight days later, on 27 May, having inspected the all the rooms and wards and visited the manufactory, the Governor turned his attention to eleven of the female convicts listed in the Order of Transportation, including Margaret Lang, who were to be removed from the Gaol and sent on their way to Deptford per Harrison and Donaldson.²

May 27th Visited all the Rooms Wards & attend
locking up, visited the Manufactory.
Remov'd to Deptford the following female
Transports - Jas Harrison & Donaldson -
Sarah Marshall Mary Ann Buckley
Mary Bridg Ann Pop -
Sarah Gordon Cath: Welch
Sarah Marshall Mary: Lang.
Sarah Robinson Mary Jones -
Jane Jones -

The *Friendship's* indent is particularly unhelpful in building up a picture of Margaret Lang. It provides her name, place and date of trial, and sentence. The columns for recording her age and trade were left blank.³ While there are no "ditto" marks under the corresponding columns for Mary Sharpe, some transcribers have also ascribed 'Servant | 22' to Margaret Lang.

Mary Sharpe.				Servant 22
Ann Kops.				
Margaret Lang				

She may have been the strangely transcribed Margaret London(?), passenger of the *Friendship*, who, for the 1820 Settler and Convict List, was an inmate at the Government Factory.⁴

London Margaret Oct 1818 Manchester July 1819

But we can pinpoint her whereabouts in October 1821 – at Parramatta - where her burial on 20 October was registered at St. John's Church of England.⁵

[The Year 1821] Page 73
Margaret Lang Dist. ^{Friendship} aged 45 of the Parish of
Parramatta was buried Oct. 20th 1821
Registered same day by me Joseph Angon

Thus Margaret Lang faded quietly into history – an unremarkable woman who left no imprint on the colonial landscape. We will almost certainly never know what she looked like or where she was born. She did not marry in the colony, but had she left behind a husband and/or children when she boarded the *Friendship*? If she really was 45 when she died she would have been in her early 40s when she was convicted and arrived at Port Jackson. What skills, if any, did she have to offer? On arrival was she assigned or did she spend her short time in the colony as an inmate of 'The Factory Above the Gaol' at Parramatta where 'unassigned female convicts were gainfully employed in tasks that were beneficial to the colony'?⁶ Indeed was she employable at all given Surgeon Cosgreave's assessment of her as a 'helpless old woman'?



NOTES

¹ *Manchester Mercury*, 28 Jan 1817, p.4.

² FindmyPast (FMP), England & Wales, Crime, Prisons & Punishment, 1770-1935, Prison Registers, Lancaster Gaol, Lancashire Governor's Journals, PCOM2/442.

³ FMP, Australia Convict Ships 1786-1849, Indents 1788-1842 (NRS 12188)/394. Note – the same problem regarding age and occupation applies to Ann Ross.

⁴ Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, New South Wales, Female, 1820. Note – there was no one of that name on the Friendship and the recorded Arrival and Trial Dates are surely incorrect.

⁵ Ancestry, All New South Wales, Australia, St. John's Parramatta, Burials, 1790-1986, Vol 01, Baptisms, 1790-1825; Marriages, 1789-1823; Burials, 1790-1825. The burial entry was transcribed as Margaret Long. Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Person ID B#10013631901 - Note – the date is incorrectly given as 30 October. FMP, New South Wales Deaths 1788-1945, Registration Parramatta, St. John, Vol V18215232 2B.

⁶ Michaela Ann Cameron, "The Factory Above the Gaol: Australia's First Female Factory," Female Factory Online (2018), <https://femalefactoryonline.org/about/history/the-factory-above-the-gaol/>, accessed 28 October 2019. Margaret Lang does not appear in the current listings for 1820 and 1821, <https://femalefactoryonline.org/browse/year/year-1820/> and <https://femalefactoryonline.org/browse/year/year-1821/>.



SELECTED SOURCES

Genealogy Websites

Ancestry

All New South Wales, Australia, St. John's Parramatta, Burials, 1790-1986

New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834

Findmypast

Australia Convict Ships 1786-1849

England & Wales Crime, Prisons & Punishment 1770-1935

New South Wales Deaths 1788-1945

Other Websites

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

Michaela Ann Cameron, "The Factory Above the Gaol: Australia's First Female Factory," Female Factory Online (2018), [https://femalefactoryonline.org/about/history/the-factory-above-the-gaol/accessed 28 October 2019](https://femalefactoryonline.org/about/history/the-factory-above-the-gaol/accessed%2028%20October%202019)

The Female Factory Online, <https://femalefactoryonline.org/>

Online Newspapers

British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Manchester Mercury

© Leonie Fretwell, 2019