



## Elizabeth Robertson

Date of Trial:	23 September 1816
Where Tried:	Stirling Court of Justiciary
Crime:	Larceny
Sentence:	7 years
Est YOB:	1795
Stated Age on Arrival:	23
Native Place:	Stirling
Occupation:	Servant
Alias/AKA:	Elizabeth Robinson, Elizabeth Davidson
Marital Status (UK):	
Children on Board:	
Surgeon's Remarks:	<i>Well behaved and industrious</i>
Assigned NSW or VDL	NSW

(Note: This woman, like so many others, was known by different names. She was tried in September 1816 as Elizabeth Robertson, and this was the name recorded for her on the Convict Indents.<sup>1</sup> However, she was referred to as Elizabeth Robinson by Surgeon Superintendent Cosgreave, and this was the name used for most of her colonial records.)

By the time Elizabeth Robertson faced the Stirling Court of Justiciary on 23 September 1816 she may well have had form. An item in the *Caledonian Mercury* of 22 May 1815 warned its readers about a woman who was preying on the gullible to obtain money by fraudulent means.

A woman, pretending to be the widow of a private soldier in the 42d regiment, who fell fighting his country's battles in Spain, has been endeavouring to impose on some of the families at Burntfield Links<sup>2</sup> by a long tale of distress, which she accompanied with floods of tears. One gentleman, to whom she made application last Thursday, suspecting the truth of her story, bade her return the next day, and in the meantime he applied at the Infirmary, where she said her son had got his leg amputated, and found that no such circumstance had occurred; he next searched the Castlehill for a Mrs. Duncan, with whom she said she lodged, but no person of that name could be found. His suspicions were further confirmed by her neglecting to call next day, according to promise, and he has since discovered that she is the same person who attempted to swindle the kirk-session of Duddingstone out of a sum of money, under pretence of burying a child. She calls herself Elizabeth Robertson, is of a middle size and slender made. She was dressed in a blue printed gown, with white spots, a muslin cap, without a bonnet, and had the appearance of a servant, but much exposed to the weather.<sup>3</sup>

This devious woman was probably the same person who, with one other, was also brought before the Circuit Court of Justiciary, Stirling, in late September 1815, as reported in the *Caledonian Mercury*.

Stirling, Sept. 25 1815

The Circuit Court of Justiciary was opened here on Saturday last, by the Right Hon. Lord Pitmilley.

The first case that came before the Court was that of Mary Robertson, or Robinson, and Elizabeth Chapman, *alias* Ann Watson, accused of falsehood, fraud, and willful imposition, by obtaining money from different kirk treasurers in the county of Stirling, under false pretences, in name of travelling expences as soldiers wives, the same not being justly due to them. The pannels pleaded guilty to the fraud and imposition libelled, in so far as they and each of them procured the sums of money mentioned in the indictment, knowing the same not to be due to them by means of the passes libelled, and the Jury, having found them guilty, in terms of their own confession, Mary Robertson, or Robinson, was sentenced to four months imprisonment, and Elizabeth Chapman, *alias* Ann Watson, to three months imprisonment. In this case the Court took occasion to animadvert on the careless and improper conduct of the kirk treasurers in paying away the public money, without proper investigation, to persons to whom it was not justly due.<sup>4</sup>

A year later, on 21 September 1816, 'our' Elizabeth Robertson was brought to the bar of the Stirling Justiciary Court with three partners in crime.



Peter Johnstone, Elizabeth Robertson, Margaret Stewart, and Margaret McMillan, were next brought to the bar, accused of stealing a piece of printed cloth and piece of silk handkerchiefs, from the shop of John Anderson, merchant in Stirling; and also of stealing from the shop of Ebenezer Balfour, merchant there, a quantity of lace. The pannels pleaded *not guilty*, and, after a long proof, the Jury returned a verdict, finding the pannels *guilty*, actors, or art and part, in stealing the cloth and handkerchiefs; but finding *not proven* as to the last. The two former pannels were sentenced to seven years transportation beyond seas; and in respect of certain circumstances which appeared from the evidence, the two latter were sentenced only to 12 months imprisonment in the tollbooth of Stirling.<sup>5</sup>

Stirling is located 37 miles northwest of Edinburgh and 26 miles north east of Glasgow. It was likely that, after her trial, rather than being incarcerated in the Stirling tollbooth, Elizabeth spent the next eight months in Glasgow gaol. Alternatively, as noted elsewhere, she may have been accommodated in one of the Leith hulks.

Despite all humanitarian efforts, in Scotland hulks were used to house women prisoners before transportation ... Elizabeth Robertson and many of her shipmates destined for the *Friendship* in 1818 awaiting transport to New South Wales were among those incarcerated in one of these creaky vessels.<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of where she was held, as reported in the *Caledonian Mercury*, it was from Glasgow on 30 May 1817, together with four other women who were to be fellow *Friendship* passengers, that she was removed and taken to Leith, the port serving Edinburgh. They were on their way to their new lives on the other side of the world.

Yesterday forenoon the following convicts, from Glasgow, were sent from the jail here to Leith, to embark for the hulks, viz. Jean Hume, Mary Cain, Jane Jang, junior, Elizabeth Brodie, and Elizabeth Robertson.<sup>7</sup>

Elizabeth was one of the few convicts to earn the praise of Surgeon Cosgreave. During the long voyage she had been well behaved and industrious. However, within eighteen months of her arrival at Port Jackson Elizabeth was once more at sea. On 12 July 1819 the Colonial Secretary advised Captain James Morisset, Commander at Newcastle that, in addition to some stores and equipment the Government brig *Lady Nelson*, about to leave for Newcastle, carried on board seventeen male and two female prisoners, as per a list drawn up by the Sydney Gaoler and appended to the correspondence. One of the two woman was Elizabeth Robinson who had been convicted on 30 July 1819 and sentenced to serve one year at Newcastle, the destination of convicts who re-offended. What she had done to earn this punishment is not mentioned.<sup>8</sup>

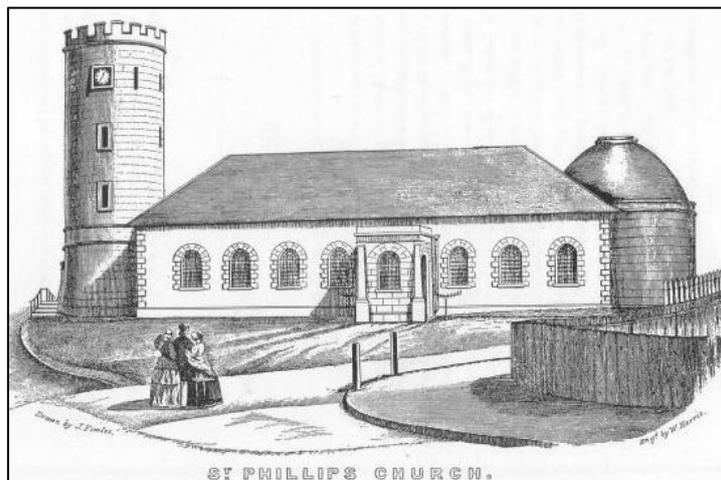
Ships name by	Names	Free or convicts	By whom convicted	Time convicted	Trade	Sentence
<i>Fury</i> (1 <sup>st</sup> )	Wm. Tomlinson	convict	M. M. Arthur Bay <sup>22</sup>	19 <sup>th</sup> June 1819	Labourer	One year
<i>Atlas</i>	Edw. Tyler	"	"	24 "	Labourer	One year
Genl Stewart	Geo. Croft	"	D. H. Wentworth Bay <sup>24</sup>	25 "	Miner	One year
<i>Morley</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> )	John Dawson	"	"	26 "	Wheelwright	The Gov <sup>ty</sup> Pleasure
<i>Shipley</i> (2)	Richard Patcham	"	"	"	Coal Miner	The Gov <sup>ty</sup> Pleasure
<i>St. Charles</i>	Henry Lyons	✓	"	30 "	Labourer	The Gov <sup>ty</sup> Pleasure
<i>Friendship</i>	Elizabeth Robinson	✓	"	"	"	One year

The 1820 Settler and Convict list records Elizabeth Robinson as being in country service.<sup>9</sup> Having served her sentence, she next came to the official attention of the colonial authorities on 4 December 1820 when the Reverend Cowper, on behalf of Elizabeth Robinson and one Solomon Davis, applied for permission for them to marry at Sydney. The groom was recorded as a free man, and the bride as a convict who had arrived on the *Friendship*.<sup>10</sup>

Solomon Davis, Free, and  
Elizabeth Robinson, convict Ship *Friendship*

The application was approved and on 1 January 1821 the couple, both of whom resided in Sydney, were married at St Philips Church of England. William Cowper conducted the ceremony which was witnessed by Richard Hughes and Jane Bevan. The groom and the two witnesses signed their names, but the bride made her mark 'X'.

Solomon Davis, aged 35 and a bachelor, earned his living as a dealer. Elizabeth was simply described as aged 28 and a spinster.<sup>11</sup>



Solomon Davis had been tried at Dublin City in September 1809, sentenced to seven years transportation, and shipped out to the New South Wales on the *Providence*, which arrived at its destination on 2 July 1811. But while he had been tried at Dublin, Solomon laid no claim to any Irish blood. So how was it that he came to be in Ireland at all? The *Dublin Journal* of 5 September 1809, in its report of the trial, provides the answer.

#### ROBBERY AND DETECTION

An instance has occurred last week of a robbery, more unprincipled than robberies generally are, and more quickly detected than any we just at this time recollect. Two itinerant jewellers, both belonging to the Synagogue, happened to meet at the town of Bedford, in England, and to be put to bed in the same room. One of them, Solomon Davis, got up at night and rifled the trunk of his brother traveller of all his trinkets, jewellery, &c and set off for London before day. This occurred on the night of the 26th [i.e. August]. When Abraham Lewis, the person who was robbed, missed his treasure, he instantly set off for London, traced his recreant brother and found that he had taken the route for Holyhead.<sup>12</sup> Abraham followed him in a chaise and four, heard of him again at the Head, proceeded forthwith to Dublin, where he arrived last Friday morning. Called instantly at the Head Office of the Police, obtained a warrant and two Peace Officers – met Solomon in the streets and had him arrested. Brought before Alderman Pemberton on Saturday, the latter ordered his lodgings to be searched, where a quantity of the goods was found. This day, a trunk which has not yet passed through the Custom house, is to be examined, and it is expected that father Abraham will recover the entire of his property. This day Solomon is to be tried by the Recorder. This is an instance of dispatch and seeming justice rarely paralleled.<sup>13</sup>

*Freeman's Journal* covered the proceedings of the trial, held on 19 September. Abraham Lewis, a German Jew, was the prosecutor, and Solomon Davis, another German Jew, was the prisoner on trial. The defendant was charged that 'he, at the city of Dublin, did feloniously take, steal and carry away, several articles therein enumerated among which were gold watches, diamond rings, and other valuable ornaments and trinkets to a very great amount'.

Solomon immediately sought to have the trial postponed until at least 6 October. He wished to call witnesses from his home town of Bedford to testify on his behalf. Furthermore, these witnesses would be of his religion and, due to observing certain Jewish rites, they would not be able to travel before 4 October. Despite a plea from his lawyer, Solomon's request was denied, and the Recorder ruled that the trial would proceed. However, there was another delay when the prosecutor, Abraham Lewis, 'his hair in curious artificial ringlets and a peaked beard', was called'.

The Old Testament in English, was handed to him to be sworn. Mr McNally [for the prisoner] objected. The rule, he said, was established, every man must be sworn according to the rights of his religion ... the Jew must be sworn not only on the Pentateuch, but the book must be in Hebrew, and even that is not the symbol of an Israelite's belief in God unless the language runs on uninterrupted by mark or punctuation.



The objection was allowed, and someone was sent off to find a Hebrew Bible. Meanwhile, the Magistrate recounted the statements taken when the defendant had been detained. According to Solomon he and Lewis were partners and he admitted that some of the jewellery found in his room was Lewis's and some was his own. Solomon's lawyer argued that the case should be dropped as no crime had been committed since the pair were partners, with equal dominion and property in the goods.

A Hebrew bible having been located, prosecutor Abraham Lewis was duly sworn. Unsurprisingly, his testimony contradicted that of his 'partner'. He claimed that he had only known Davis for eight days before the robbery, they having met Stoney Stratford, Bedfordshire. On returning to his lodgings he found his boxes had been broken into and that he had been robbed of all his property. He confirmed that he had chased after Davis, had him arrested in Dublin, and had recovered the stolen goods. He positively denied that any partnership or other trading arrangement existed between him and Davis, or that Davis had any legal claim whatever on the goods.

The prisoner of course had no witnesses to produce, either to facts or to character, and the jury without hesitation found him guilty. He was then sentenced to be transported for seven years.<sup>14</sup>

It was not until 10 December 1810 that the Providence began her journey from Cobh, near Cork, bound for Port Jackson. She called in first at Falmouth and then Rio de Janeiro, finally reaching her destination on 2 July 1811 and anchoring on 6 July. She had embarked 185 convicts, a mixture of male and female, and many of those who completed the voyage had been aboard for nearly ten months.<sup>15</sup>

The 1814 General Muster finds Solomon as an assigned servant to John Brennan at Windsor.<sup>16</sup> A couple of years later, and free by servitude, he set himself up as a dealer in Pitt Street, Sydney, and one whose business practices, if not fraudulent, were definitely questionable. In one instance a reference is made to Solomon seeking 'to draw a deed of gift to the woman he lived with', suggesting that he and Elizabeth were perhaps living together by at least mid to late 1818.<sup>17</sup> In October 1818 the owner of 11 Pitt Street warned the public against Solomon Davis.

Mr. James Elder, Owner of the House at No. 11, Pitt-street, lately occupied by one Solomon Davis, hereby gives Notice, that the said House, No. 11, Pitt-street, is the Property of him the said James Elder, and has been by him rented to the said Solomon Davis; Now I hereby give Notice, that the said Solomon Davis has no legal Interest in the said House whatsoever; and I hereby Caution all Persons whomsoever against purchasing or treating for any Interest in which the said Solomon Davis may be stated to have in the said Premises.<sup>18</sup>

Two months later the Criminal Court was occupied in a case of assault – the defendant Solomon Davis was found guilty and sentenced to six months imprisonment. The victim remains anonymous.<sup>19</sup> So, like his bride, Solomon spent time in prison before their marriage. And indeed, some months before their first anniversary, he was once more a prisoner. On 24 August 1821 Solomon Davis was found guilty of theft and, like Elizabeth, was to serve his time at Newcastle.<sup>20</sup>

Solomon Davis was indicted for stealing from the person of Wm. Kaley £9 in notes and cash. The prisoner was found guilty of the charge specified in the indictment; and such a development of iniquity seldom even in this Colony transpires, as was on this trial manifested to a Court of Justice:- the prisoner was not only found guilty of the robbery, but also proved to be a notorious gambler, with which dreadfully double character was combined that of a cool and deliberate perjurer. The prisoner was held up as a proper object of execration, in which his trifold character was faintly delineated, and he then received the sentence of the Court, which was – 7 years transportation.<sup>21</sup>

Solomon was included in the list, drawn up on 30 August, of prisoners to be transported to Newcastle on board the Government brig *Elizabeth Henrietta*. His trade was recorded as tanner.<sup>22</sup> Solomon was also shortly to become a father. Elizabeth would have been about seven months pregnant when her husband departed for Newcastle. Son Henry Solomon Davis was born on 17 October 1821 and baptised on 2 December 1821.<sup>23</sup> By a letter dated 28 May 1822, Frederick Goulburn, Colonial Secretary, wrote to Major James Morisset advising him that 'the undermentioned persons have permission to proceed to Newcastle on the *Elizabeth Henrietta*. Three of the six

 passengers were the wives of convicts, and one of them was Mrs. Davis, wife of Solomon Davis.<sup>24</sup> No mention was made of her son being aboard, but we know he did accompany his mother.

Listed as Elizabeth Robertson, alias Davidson, the 1822 muster records Elizabeth as a convict, in government employ at Newcastle. The entry immediately following hers reads 'Robertson, child of ditto'. Solomon Davis was likewise recorded as being in government employ at Newcastle.<sup>25</sup> By the time Solomon and Elizabeth arrived at Newcastle its days as a secondary penal settlement were numbered. It was no longer isolated enough from Sydney and adequate and effective supervision of the increasing number of convicts was thus compromised. Furthermore, while its timber supplies were dwindling, free settlers were eyeing-off its rich soil. Port Macquarie had for some time been mooted as a promising alternative and in 1823 Governor Brisbane abandoned the penal settlement at Newcastle, proclaimed it as a free settlement, and commenced the removal of the convicts to Port Macquarie. By October 1823 the transfer was virtually completed.<sup>26</sup>

**Nearly the whole of the convicts have been removed from the Settlement of Newcastle to Port Macquarie. There only remain about 50 to work at the coal mines, By the last accounts from the Northern Settlements, every thing was going on in a rapidly improving way.**

Solomon Davis was one of the convicts who made the trip north on the *Lady Nelson* on 25 September, four days after the birth of his daughter Margaret, who had arrived on 21 September and whose baptism was registered at Christ Church, Newcastle on 9 May 1824.<sup>27</sup> The 1825 muster records Solomon Davis as serving a colonial sentence at Port Macquarie, and listed with him were his four year old son Henry and two year old daughter Margaret. It is puzzling to find that his wife Elizabeth was apparently mustered at Newcastle. By 1825 she had, or was close to having completed her seven year sentence.<sup>28</sup> If in fact they were living apart at this time, it was a domestic arrangement that would continue for a number of years.

By 1825 Elizabeth Robertson had, or was close to having completed her original seven-year sentence. Apart from her 1819 indiscretion, which had earned her a year at Newcastle, she seems to have kept herself out of trouble. But, just when she was able to look forward to changing her status from convict to free woman, she was indicted for larceny. *The Australian* of 9 March 1826 reported on her trial.

George Streeter, John Stone, John Wilson, and Elizabeth Davis, otherwise Robinson, were indicted for larceny – a verdict of guilty was returned against the latter persons, and sentence of transportation passed for 7 years – Streeter was acquitted. It appeared that Robert Guin, a dealer had taken an excursion to Wallis's plains – on passing the house of the female prisoner, he accepted an invitation to step in and rest himself. The boat which had conveyed him up the river was moored contiguous to the house, and afforded him a nice opportunity, without being put to a great deal of trouble, of displaying his wares – a bundle, containing some drapery was soon landed, and as soon examined; but whilst the chapman was busied in measuring out a piece of Jean for the woman, to his no small amazement the property disappeared. With the sapient idea that it would be useless just then to make a noise, he told them in consideration of the goods being restored to their proper owner, he might be mulcted in half a gallon of rum. Stone agreed to this, the woodman and he brought them the liquor, which they drank, but would not then restore the goods. Wilson, Stone and the female prisoner were present. The house was afterwards searched, but none of the stolen property could be found. However, a piece of ribbon was found in an adjoining house.<sup>29</sup>

Three months after her conviction Elizabeth Robertson arrived at the penal colony of Moreton Bay aboard the Government schooner *Isabella*, which had left Sydney on 20 May and weighed anchor on 2 June.<sup>30</sup> From this anchorage the cargo – comprising a military guard of the 57<sup>th</sup> Regiment, 37 male and 1 female convict plus supplies – was transferred to a smaller boat, which crossed the bar, and then made its way along the river to finally reach the rough and ready penal settlement. Elizabeth had 'the honour' to be Moreton Bay's first woman convict. As prisoner number 763, she was recorded as being 28 years old, 5' 0½" tall, with a fair complexion, dark hair and hazel eyes.<sup>31</sup> It was not until April 1827 that two more female convicts arrived and, until 1829, these three



were the only female convicts at the penal settlement.

By the time Elizabeth arrived there some semblance of an established settlement was evident. Under the direction of the first Commandant Henry Miller and his successor Peter Bishop, the convict labour force had constructed wooden cottages for the commandant and engineer, slab huts for the soldiers and convicts, a commissariat store, workshops, cook-houses and boat shelters. The next commandant, Captain Patrick Logan, took up his position on 17 March 1826, and set about expanding the building programme, to include a gaol and hospital and, with the increasing number of convicts arriving, a prisoners' barrack, lumber yard and store. In line with Governor Bathurst's decree that commandants of the remote out-stations should preferably be married men, Patrick Logan's wife Letitia, together with their toddler son and her sister Anne O'Beirne, accompanied him to Moreton Bay on board the Government brig *Amity*.<sup>32</sup> Letitia Logan was pregnant again when she left for Moreton Bay. Whether Elizabeth Robertson was selected prior to the Logan's departure from Sydney, or on her arrival at Moreton Bay, she had landed the plum job of servant to the Logan household. Her services would have been much in demand with the arrival of Letitia Bingham Logan on 23 July. While working for the Logan family Elizabeth would have lived within the commandant's precinct, in a tent or a hut built for servants.<sup>33</sup>

However, in May 1827 Captain Logan returned his house servant and nursemaid to government service, after which Elizabeth shared accommodation with the two other female prisoners. She was now put to work milking cows and making butter - a challenge for a domestic rather than country servant - and shelling corn and picking oakum, with time probably also spent in the laundry. From April 1828 to March 1829, the women were placed under the supervision of Letitia Baxter, who acted as matron - hardly an arduous or demanding role!<sup>34</sup> By August 1829 the ranks of female prisoners had quadrupled, and more were expected to the near future. Construction of the female factory, located about half a mile from the male barracks and modelled on the Parramatta Female Factory, was completed in 1830. The accommodation consisted of one larger room (24ft x 20ft) and four smaller rooms which could be used for work activities and meals and, separately, a kitchen, wash house and two privies.

This plan was intended to provide basic shelter with security which permitted no provision for modern notions of privacy or quiet refuge so that each female prisoner was surrounded by others every hour of every day.<sup>35</sup>

This was to be 'home' to Elizabeth Robertson and the other female prisoners. It was not until June 1831 that the first matron, Mary McCauley, arrived, and she lasted only five months before being dismissed for 'improper behaviour', including covering up rather than reporting the female prisoners' misdemeanours. Mary was replaced in January 1832 by Isabella Blount who held the position for a year before, voluntarily, resigning. Elizabeth Robertson was not there to farewell her, having herself left Moreton Bay on 4 July 1832.<sup>36</sup> Together with two other female prisoners, she arrived at Sydney on 18 July 1832 on board the brig *Governor Phillip*.<sup>37</sup>

Elizabeth had served six years of her sentence. It had been about ten years since she had last lived in Sydney, and she had been separated from her husband and two children for about eight years. How well did they all adjust to the reunion? Perhaps more easily than might be expected if, as has been mooted, during her incarceration she had attempted to maintain links with the family. I have not sighted the document, but Elizabeth had petitioned for a reduction of her sentence at Moreton Bay, claiming that her family in Sydney were 'looking forward in the anxious expectation of petitioner returning home from the dreadful and unhappy situation in which she is placed'.<sup>38</sup>

Some idea of how the family had fared can be gleaned from the census conducted in November 1828, for which Elizabeth, of course, was recorded at Moreton Bay. Solomon Davis, now free by servitude, was residing at Phillip Street, and employed as a carrier (or currier?) for J.B. Weller, a merchant, of George Street.<sup>39</sup>

An annotation in the 'Date of Return' column in the list of convicts transferred from Newcastle to Port Macquarie referred to previously, states that Solomon Davis was returned on 18 August 1828. Further records relating to the *Phoenix* hulk show that he had been received on board on 16 August, having arrived that day from Port Macquarie per the Government barque *Lucy Ann*. The hulk's discharge register states that Solomon Davis was transferred

to the Hyde Park Barracks on 24 August.<sup>40</sup> Two days later Solomon received his certificate of freedom.<sup>41</sup>

CERTIFICATE OF FREEDOM.	
No.	28779
Date,	26 August 1828
Prisoner's No.	—
Name,	Solomon Davis
Ship,	Providence (1)
Master,	Barelay
Year,	1811
Native Place,	London
Trade or Calling,	Tanner & Currier
Offence,	—
Place of Trial,	Sydney Court
Date of Trial,	July 1821
Sentence,	seven years
Year of Birth,	1786
Height,	5 feet 2 1/2 inches
Complexion,	Dark Ruddy
Hair,	Brown to Grey
Eyes,	Grey
General Remarks,	Holds a certificate of freedom, No 1707 dated 24 <sup>th</sup> 1816 for his original sentence of seven years. Scar on left side of forehead.

This tells us that Solomon was slightly taller than his wife, he had a dark ruddy complexion, brown to grey hair, grey eyes, and a scar on the left side of his forehead. He had originally been granted a certificate in 1816. We also learn that he was a tanner and currier by trade.<sup>42</sup>

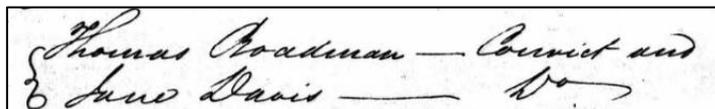
For the 1828 census Henry Davis, now aged 7, was living with William Smith at Newcastle, while daughter Margaret, aged 5 was an 'inmate' with Thomas Boardman, at Wallis Plains.<sup>43</sup>

William Smith was probably the convict who, having been convicted in Cornwall in November 1816 and sentenced to transportation for life, had arrived at Sydney on the *Larkins* in 1817 and, 'having incurred the displeasure of the public authorities', had been sentenced in 1818 to three years transportation at Newcastle. In November 1821, the three years having been served, William petitioned the Governor for mitigation of his sentence. He drew attention to the number of vessels – two schooners, three large working and two pilot boats and other smaller craft - and the regular and ongoing repairs and maintenance that had been achieved during his term as Overseer of the Newcastle boat builders. This prodigious output and excellent conduct had merited him 'the good opinion of the worthy and respectable officer commanding here, from whom Petition received every encouragement'. His request for the conditional pardon which would 'restore him to that rank in Society, who he [sic] unfortunately forfeited by his Conviction' was granted. A petition submitted the following year met with equal success. The petitioner, intending to carry on boat building and to permanently settle in the Newcastle district, requested a town lease of an allotment of land upon which he could build a dwelling house.<sup>44</sup>

On William Smith's behalf, a third petition was put before the Governor in July 1823. He sought, and was granted permission to marry convict Christiana Young.<sup>45</sup> At Glasgow, in May 1816, the bride to be, 32 year old Christian Young alias Ewing - a thief 'by habit and repute' - had been found guilty of robbing one Mr. Strang and sentenced to fourteen years transportation.<sup>46</sup> She arrived at Sydney on the *Lord Melville* on 24 February 1817. In October 1822 she was again in trouble, this time for burglary, for which she was sentenced to transportation for life, and was another prisoner sent off to Newcastle.<sup>47</sup> William and Christiana were married on 8 September 1823 at Christ Church, Newcastle. The witnesses were John Duncan and Elizabeth Davis. The only person who could sign the register was John Duncan, strongly suggesting that William's petitions had been penned by a literate friend. Despite her sentence(s), Christiana was free by servitude by 1825 and was listed with her husband for the 1828 census.<sup>48</sup> Having witnessed the Smith/Young marriage, Elizabeth would no doubt have been pleased that the

couple was prepared to look after her son Henry while she was at Moreton Bay.

Thomas Boardman was another closely acquainted with Elizabeth. Following a now familiar pattern, Thomas, who hailed from Lancashire, had been tried in March 1813 at Worcester and sentenced to transportation for life. After a short spell on the *Retribution* hulk, he embarked on the *General Hewitt* and arrived in the colony in February 1814.<sup>49</sup> In December 1815 he was listed as having absented himself from the Parramatta Gaol Gang.<sup>50</sup> In 1816 he was re-sentenced and sent to Newcastle. In January 1822 he sought and was given permission to marry Jane Davis, also a convict who had arrived on the *Lord Melville* in February 1817.<sup>51</sup>

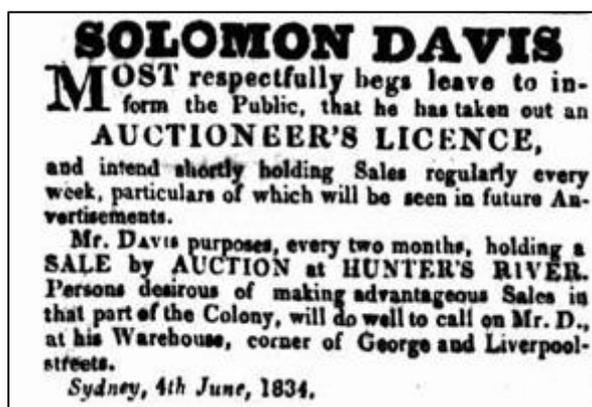


Thomas Boardman — Convict and  
Jane Davis — Do

The couple, both of Wallis Plains, married on 19 February 1822, the event being registered at Christ Church, Newcastle. Within six months Mrs. Thomas Boardman was dead at the age of 31. She was buried on 10 August 1822 at Newcastle.<sup>52</sup> His late wife's death, combined with his own ill health, were the grounds cited in a petition submitted to the Governor in 1825. Thomas hoped that His Excellency would 'be pleased to allow a middle-aged woman as housekeeper off the store to be sent down to Newcastle'.<sup>53</sup> By September 1825 one Jane Graham was assigned as a general servant to Thomas Boardman at Newcastle. It was this Jane who, for the 1828 census and now free by servitude (and doubtfully aged 23), was listed as a member of Thomas' household at Wallis Plains, together with the young girl Margaret Davis.<sup>54</sup>

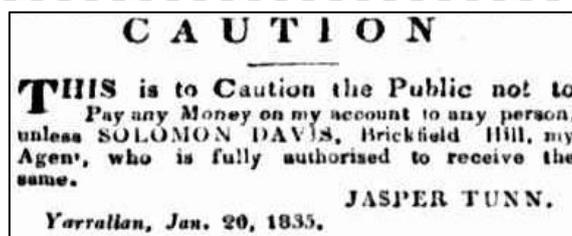
From the time Elizabeth Robertson was discharged from Moreton Bay she, now aged about 37, and Solomon aged about 46, spent the rest of their lives in Sydney. Their lives revolved around Solomon's business interests, principally as a general dealer, operating from premises and/or residences variously stated to be Kent and Druitt Streets, and George Street. There are also various newspaper items concerning a Solomon Davis, dealer, of Brickfields Hill. By the 1840s, Brickfields Hill, an inner city district of Sydney roughly located between Haymarket and Lower George Street, had developed as a commercial precinct.<sup>55</sup> I have not been able to establish the existence of two men named Solomon Davis living and dealing contemporaneously in Sydney. At this stage, therefore, and if and until proved presumptuous, I have attributed the following references to Solomon Davis as being the man married to Elizabeth Robertson.

Inauspiciously, within a year of Elizabeth's return, her husband had a brush with the law. He was charged and found guilty in May 1833 of harbouring a prisoner of the crown, named Hugh McCain. Solomon claimed that he had been at Hunter's River at the time the man was in his house. Notwithstanding, he was fined £1 6s and sent on his way.<sup>56</sup> A year later Solomon Davis had taken out an Auctioneer's Licence and announced that he intended to hold weekly sales at Hunter' River.<sup>57</sup>



**SOLOMON DAVIS**  
**M**OST respectfully begs leave to inform the Public, that he has taken out an **AUCTIONEER'S LICENCE,** and intend shortly holding Sales regularly every week, particulars of which will be seen in future Advertisements.  
 Mr. DAVIS purposes, every two months, holding a **SALE by AUCTION at HUNTER'S RIVER.** Persons desirous of making advantageous Sales in that part of the Colony, will do well to call on Mr. D., at his Warehouse, corner of George and Liverpool-streets.  
 Sydney, 4th June, 1834.

We know from a February 1836 notice in *The Australian* that Solomon Davis of Brickfield Hill acted as an agent for Jasper Tunn, an emancipated settler in the Argyle district.<sup>58</sup>



Solomon was also an aspiring publican, but for reasons not given, his June 1838 application for a license for the "Maitland Inn", Kent Street, was one of sixty-two refused at the Petty Sessions held at the Police Office.<sup>59</sup>

Solomon was again a subject of interest to the Police Office in March 1839 when he was one of a considerable number of persons convicted 'for having false weights &c. in their possession'. Solomon Davis, dealer, Kent and Druitt-streets, was fined on two accounts of 10 shillings each. In November 1844 the Weights and Measures man had paid him another visit with the result that Solomon was one of twenty-four persons who appeared before the Police Court charged with having 'false weights or unequal balances in their possession'. With the exception of Solomon Davis of Brickfield Hill, 'all the parties appeared to have offended in ignorance or by accident' and they got off lightly. The case against Solomon was 'a very aggregated one, in as much as an attempt had been made to adjust the weights by putting soap into them'. He pleaded guilty and thereby escaped a trial, but his weights were to be destroyed and he was ordered to pay 10s for each 'dodgy' weight and 5 shillings costs – an expensive day in court!<sup>60</sup> But officials appointed to examine and regulate business operations were not the only people dealers and shop-keepers had to watch out for. Theft, shoplifting and fraud were other occupational hazards.

November 1839 found Solomon Davis again at the Police Office but this time he was the aggrieved party in a case of attempted theft, the circumstances of which were decidedly Dickensian.

*Juvenile Depravity* – Two children, one, aged seven years, named Robert Smith, and the other, Henry Quigly, aged four years, were charged before Mr. Windeyer, the sitting magistrate, at the Police Office on Tuesday, by Mr. Solomon Davis, shopkeeper of Kent-street, with suspicion of stealing a £1 note. It appeared from the evidence of the prosecutor that the juvenile delinquents went into his shop, on Monday, and asked for change for a pound note; on being asked where they got it, Smith said, his father had given it to him. Mr. Davis told him to go and bring his father, and he would change it. The boys went away, and returned shortly, stating that it was not Smith's father, but another man who gave it to them. Mr. Davis said he would go with them to that man, and Quigly (the youngest) said that he saw Smith pick it up in Petticoat lane, and heard him say, "I've found a pound note". They were then given charge. Mr. Davis also stated that they were the ringleaders of a band of juvenile thieves in the vicinity, whose dexterity in the art it was almost impossible to defeat, and he particularised Quigly as the worst and most expert of the gang. They were remanded for the attendance of Smith's father, who had stated to Mr. Davis that his son had taken the note from his box, and afterwards denied it.<sup>61</sup>

Quite a bit of Solomon's time in late 1839 and early 1840 was taken up in seeking to locate a man by the name of Joseph Porter via a notice in the newspapers.

If this should meet the eye of Mr. JOSEPH PORTER, he will please to call on Mr. Solomon Davis, Kent-street, Sydney, as early as possible.<sup>62</sup>

Mr. Porter was obviously reluctant to show himself, but the reason for Solomon's request was revealed in 1840 via a notice that appeared in every issue of *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser* in January and February 1840. Solomon Davis was now offering a reward of five pounds for arrest of Mr. Porter against whom a warrant had been issued for forging two Notes to the value of £51.<sup>63</sup>

Unconnected with business, but an event of some significance and described by *The Colonist* in its Wednesday 16 January 1839 edition 'as worthy of attention', involved both Mr. and Mrs. Solomon Davis.

On Saturday information reached the Chief Constable that a man named Hoyle, an Inspector of Police for the southern division of Kent-street, had been living in a state of adultery with a female prisoner of the Crown, illegally

at large for a period of three years of thereby. The female, whose name is Mary Milligan had, it appeared, been assigned to a Jew pedlar, named Solomon Davies, with whose connivance she was living in the state described. On receiving the information. Mr. Mitchell, the Chief Constable, caused the woman to be apprehended and lodged in the watch-house, whence the magistrates transferred her for a period to the third class Factory. Hoyle, on the discovery being made, immediately resigned his situation, professing his determination to have nothing to do with such a blackguard *corps* as the Sydney Police Force. The magistrates have very properly recommended, that in future Davies shall be held ineligible as the assignee of convict servants. An information has also been filed against the ex-Inspector for harbouring a prisoner of the Crown illegally at large. The woman Milligan, it appears, has had three children to Hoyle; these we presume will be sent to the Orphan School and the State be called upon for their support.<sup>64</sup>

There is more to this story. In brief, Mary Milligan was in fact the Martha Millington who had arrived at Sydney in 1820 per *Harmony* to serve a life sentence. In November 1828 she married Samson Fry (*alias* Pow/Pau). In September 1829, having reoffended, she arrived at Moreton Bay to serve a seven year sentence. It was there that she and Elizabeth Robertson would have become closely acquainted. It was also at Moreton Bay that Martha met Alexander William Hoyle, who had arrived at Sydney as a free man, but who, found guilty of forgery, had been sentenced to death, commuted to fourteen years hard labour in chains, and transported to Moreton Bay in 1827. Martha returned to Sydney in 1836, where she was assigned to Solomon Davis, presumably on the recommendation of his wife Elizabeth. Having gained a reprieve, Alexander Hoyle also returned to Sydney in 1836 where he was appointed as Inspector with the Police Force and, with the blessing of the Davis's, resumed 'married' life with Martha.<sup>65</sup>

To return to business – Solomon used *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser* to alert the public to forthcoming auctions, as illustrated by the following 1839 and 1840 examples.<sup>66</sup>

**SALES BY AUCTION.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,**  
**BY SAMUEL SOLOMONS,**  
 On MONDAY next, At Solomon Davis', corner  
 of Kent and Druitt-streets,

**T**HE FOLLOWING ARTICLES—BEDS.  
 Blankets, Mattrasses, Sofas, Counterpanes.,  
 Chests of Drawers, Dining Tables, Chairs, Wash-  
 hand Stands, Looking Glasses, Pictures, Kitchen  
 Utensils, Crockery Ware, &c. &c. &c.

**TERMS—CASH.**

**TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION,**  
**BY MR. N. A. GREAVES.**

**T H I S D A Y,** the 1st instant, at Eleven  
 o'clock, at Mr. Solomon Davis's, corner of  
 Druitt and Kent-streets, without re-serve,

**A** QUANTITY of HOUSEHOLD FUR-  
 NITURE, consisting of Bedsteads, Sofas,  
 Cane Bottom and Rush Chairs, Tables, Forms,  
 Beds and Bedding. Also a lot of Kegs, Pewter  
 Measures, two Dinner Services, Port Wine in  
 bottle, slops, and a variety of other goods too nu-  
 merous to mention.

**Terms at time of sale.**

However, it seems that the Davis's business was in a bit of trouble in early 1842. On 27 May three people filed for insolvency – a storekeeper of Singleton, a professor of dancing of Castlereagh Street, Sydney, and Solomon Davis, dealer, of Brickfield Hill, Sydney.<sup>67</sup> Two days later the Sydney public were advised as follows.<sup>68</sup>

**S**OLOMON DAVIES, of Kent and Druitt  
 streets, begs to inform the public that the  
 insolvent of the same name on Brickfield Hill,  
 does not refer to him. 6741

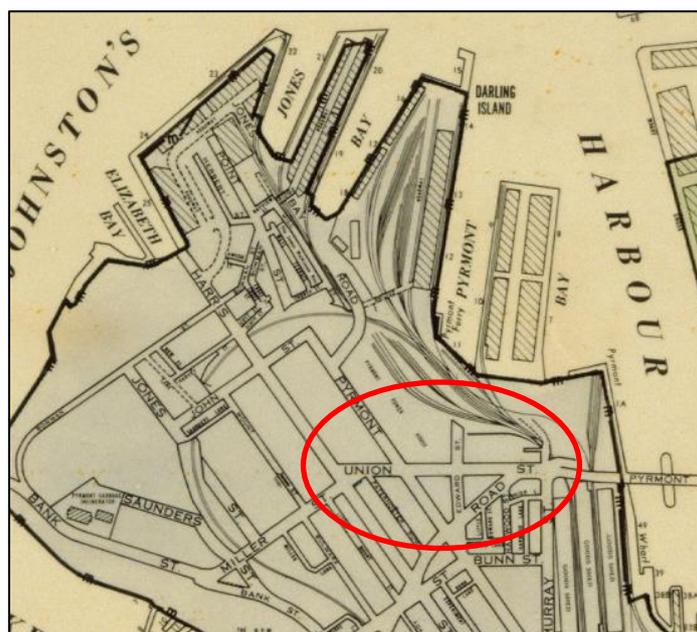
Again, this raises the question - is it possible that there were two men with the name Solomon Davis and both dealers? In any case, and for the record, a detailed listing of insolvent estates appeared in the Sydney Herald on 7 June 1842. There had only been one meeting of creditors at which it was revealed that Solomon Davies [sic] owed £130 4 8 and had credit of £4 0 0, leaving him indebted to the tune of £126 4 8.

If there had been a set-back, it can be assumed that Solomon's business picked up and survived because in 1844 he was pleased to advise that he and Elizabeth were moving to larger premises.<sup>69</sup>

**M**R. SOLOMON DAVIS respectfully announces to his friends and the public, that he has REMOVED to the premises formerly occupied by Mr. Sherbin, George-street, near the Cattle Market, where he intends carrying on a GENERAL STORE, and hopes to meet with that support he formerly received.

N.B.—Colonial produce received in exchange. 809

The Assessment Books show that from 1848 to 1856 Solomon Davis rented a two-storied, eight roomed brick shop with shingled roof shop in George Street from the owner George Shirbin.<sup>70</sup> Meanwhile and over time Solomon and Elizabeth had acquired a modest property portfolio. In 1835 and 1836 they had acquired small allotments in Maitland. Subsequently, as indicated by the electoral rolls, Solomon and Elizabeth owned freehold property at Pymont.<sup>71</sup> It was one of these properties – ‘the extensive and commodious premises at Pymont, known as Jack Straw’s Castle’ - which, in January 1846, was advertised for let at a moderate rate. Interested persons could apply to Solomon Davis at 127 George-street South.<sup>72</sup> Located on the corner of Union and Edwards Streets, the hotel was subsequently known as the ‘Edinburgh Castle’.<sup>73</sup> In July 1844 an indenture was taken out on the property between ‘Solomon Davis of Pymont, near the city of Sydney, NSW, General Dealer and Elizabeth Davis his wife, on the one part, and John MacDonald, Esq. of the next part’ by which John MacDonald agreed to lend £300 lawful money at interest upon security of ‘these presents’, the sum and interest to be paid in equal quarterly payments each and every year until 1847.<sup>74</sup> Given that the advance was made just one week before Solomon relocated to larger premises, it has been suggested that the money was put towards stock in trade for the new premises.



Extract from 1857 City of Sydney, City of Sydney Archives

The next transaction was dated 10 March 1845 – a further indenture between (1) Solomon Davis and Elizabeth Davis and (2) John McDonald. Noting that while the principal sum of £300 remained due and that Solomon and Elizabeth had met all interest payments up to 11 January, John McDonald at the request of Solomon Davis agreed to advance him the further sum of £70 in consideration of all that property mentioned in the previous indenture of 11 July 1844. Interest on the £300 was to be paid as before as well as interest paid on the £70 at the rate of twelve pounds ten shillings for every one hundred pounds, per annum. Elizabeth, ‘the wife of the said Solomon Davis’, made her mark, X, in the presence of the solicitor of the Supreme Court, N.S.W., with the indenture signed, sealed and delivered by Solomon Davis.<sup>75</sup>



The third document connected with the Pymont property – an indenture dated 22 November 1852 - is particularly interesting. It was drawn up between three parties, (1) John McDonald Esquire; (2) Solomon Davis, General Dealer, and Elizabeth Davis, his wife; and (3) Margaret Mary Davis, Spinster of Sydney. This indenture makes reference to the 11 July 1844 Indenture of “Release and Mortgage and to the Indenture of “Further Charge” of 10 March 1845. It further references an understanding between Solomon and his daughter Margaret Mary Davis that, subject to the outstanding moneys being paid, the property would be conveyed to her. The upshot of negotiations was that, with the agreement of John McDonald and her parents Solomon and Elizabeth, Mary Margaret Davis would pay out to John McDonald all accrued outstanding moneys, with the purpose of releasing and extinguishing any claim which she had or might thereafter have had in the land, hereditaments, and premises.

A discomfiting incident in 1848 involving Solomon Davis and a tailor, Henry Nixon, in which the former accused the latter of threatening behaviour such as to put Solomon in fear of his life, ended up in the Police Court and an “entertaining” account of the matter, which ridiculed all parties to the case, ended up in the pages of *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Review*.

“TIS HIS SUMMONS” – Shakesp. – As differences of opinion occasionally exist in the best regulated families, it is not by any means surprising that slight collisions should take place between rival tradesmen, or betwixt a debtor and a Court of Requests agent. These premises being settled, it will not excite great wonder that Solomon Davis of Brickfield-hill did not look upon the arrival of Mr. Henry Nixon, armed with a summons, with any great glow of inward satisfaction. The degree of coolness was fully participated in by Mr. Nixon, and was rather heightened than otherwise, when Solomon entirely denied the justness of the debt of which a small strip of paper in his hand was the unpleasant remembrancer. This denial led to some words which excited Mr. Nixon to precede the term – “swindling Jew” as applied to Mr. D. with an anathema not much in use in the highest circles, and also to shake his riding whip at him in that peculiar kind of pantomimic manner which is generally interpreted by the term “I’ve a great mind to lay it across your back.” Mr. Gowland, a stout gentleman connected with the law (but no relative so far as we know of the inventor of the celebrated “Lotion” bearing that name) made a most luminous exposition of the law of the case, while Mr. Edward Jones, (a red haired exotic of the Coxcomb genus, whose satinet stock was enlivened by an extensive pin representing a pigeon of the true Brummagem breed) explained the facts of it, in a manner which differed completely from the song of Solomon, and so completely “obfuscated” their worships that they dismissed the case without giving Mr. Davis the slightest satisfaction of seeing Mr. Nixon bound over to keep the peace until he had more decidedly broken it.<sup>76</sup>

Some time before 1855 Elizabeth and Solomon had moved house and were then living in Sussex Street which was where Elizabeth died in November 1855.

At her residence, Sussex-street, South, on the 7th instant, in the 58th year of her age, Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Solomon Davis, formerly of George-street South.<sup>77</sup>

Her funeral was held two days later and she was buried at the Devonshire Street Cemetery in the Roman Catholic section. Her remains were subsequently transferred to La Perouse, Roman Catholic Section: 6S, Plot: 59.<sup>78</sup>

FUNERAL – The friends of Mr. SOLOMON DAVIS are invited to attend the funeral of his deceased wife ELIZABETH, to move from his residence, Sussex-street South, THIS DAY at three o’clock ... NB No circulars will be issued.<sup>79</sup>

Solomon had outlived Elizabeth by some six years or so when he literally dropped dead in the street on Monday 13 May 1861, his sudden death calling for an inquest which was held on the following day.

SUDDEN DEATH – Mr. J.S. Parker, the coroner for the city, held an inquest at the Railway Hotel, George-street South, on Tuesday, on the body of a man named Solomon Davis, who fell dead in George-street on the previous morning. It appeared from the evidence that the deceased was born in Poland, of Jewish parents; he came out from Birmingham to this colony about forty years ago, and at the time of his death was about eighty years of age. He had one son and one daughter, the former is now up the country in the neighbourhood of Yass, and the latter married a grocer of Brickfield-hill, Sydney and died some time ago. The deceased at one time carried on the business of a grocer, but latterly he lived privately in one of his houses – for he possessed several – at



Pyrmont. It was stated in evidence that he was subject to epileptic fits. He was slightly indisposed during eight or nine days preceding his death, but the indisposition was thought to be only temporary. On Monday morning he came over to Sydney for the purpose of drawing money from the Savings' Bank. After leaving the bank he proceeded down the street towards George-street, but when he reached the corner of the street he fell in a fit and expired immediately. His body was removed to the Dead House of the Jewish Burial Ground. The sum of £40 10s 7d was found in his pocket. Verdict, "Died suddenly from natural causes."<sup>80</sup>

The details of Solomon's early life tend to the fictional and there is no reference to his wife Elizabeth. His funeral was held the next day.

FUNERAL – the Friends of Mr. SOLOMON DAVIS of Brickfield-hill, are invited to attend his Funeral, which will take place, at the Jewish Burial Ground, at half-past 12 o'clock THIS DAY.<sup>81</sup>

Incidentally, before he died Solomon had secured and, briefly held a publican's licence. The Sands Directory for 1858-1859 lists Solomon Davis as the Licensed Victualler for the "Edinburgh Castle", of Union and Edwards Streets. The licence was issued for the year commencing 1 July 1858. In September of that year Solomon transferred the licence to Dennis Murray, but retained ownership of the building.<sup>82</sup>

Elizabeth and Solomon lived long enough to see both of their children married off.

### Henry Solomon Davis

What happened to son Henry after the 1828 census? According to his father's inquest, in 1861 he was thought to be in the Yass district. Indeed he was, as the birth of his son Ambrose was registered at Binalong, near Yass, in 1860. The marriage of Henry A Davis and Julia Ann McGee was registered at Appin in 1846 and the event was announced in the Sydney press.

By special license, at St. Bede's Church, Appin, by the Rev J. Grant, on Monday, the 21<sup>st</sup> instant, Henry A. Davis, storekeeper, Appin, to Miss Julia Ann McGee, of the same place.<sup>83</sup>

Julia had been born in March 1826 to Edward Magee and Joanna McCart(h)y, both of whom had arrived in Sydney as convicts. By the time of Julia's birth the family was at Appin where Edward was farming his grant of land. Edward died in 1828, shortly before the census, which found Joanna, a widow with three children, in charge of the farm.<sup>84</sup> Between 1846 and 1860 seven sons, including a set of twins, were born to Henry and Julia, all births registered in the Binalong, Yass, district, five of whom lived to adulthood.<sup>85</sup>

To complement his business as a storekeeper, in November 1848 Henry paid the statutory six-month fee of £17 for a licence for the "Erin go Bragh" public house at Binalong. Thereafter he also acquired a publican's licence for "The Golden Fleece" (1853-54) at Binalong, and the "Burrowa Hotel" (1856).<sup>86</sup> By the end of 1860 he filed for bankruptcy. The Chief Commissioner for Insolvent Estates advised the public that a first meeting of creditors would be held on 20 December, to be followed by a second meeting on 31 December. It was not until November 1861 that the official assignee announced that a Plan of Distribution had been drawn up. The matter dragged on, but on 17 August 1863, Henry Augustus Davis formally advised the Official Assignee and Creditors that he intended to apply on 29 September for a Certificate of Conformity.<sup>87</sup> His application was still under consideration in January 1864, pending the insolvent providing some further information.<sup>88</sup>

The death of Henry A. Davis was registered in 1864 at Young. According to one researcher, his death occurred at Mile Rush (Monteagle) suggesting that Henry might have been trying his luck on the gold fields.<sup>89</sup> Julia did not remarry after her husband's death. Her death was registered in 1903 at Forbes.<sup>90</sup>

### Margaret Mary Davis

On 9 November 1854, almost one year to the day before her mother's death, Margaret Davis became Mrs. Thomas Grogan.

By special license, at St. Mary's Cathedral, on the 9<sup>th</sup> instant, by the Rev. J.J. Therry, Mr. Thomas Grogan,



draper, of George-street, to Margaret Mary, the only daughter of Mr. S. Davis, George-street, Sydney.<sup>91</sup>

Their daughter, Matilda Catherine Elizabeth Grogan, whose middle names were bestowed in honour of her paternal and maternal grandmothers, was born on 16 June 1856.<sup>92</sup>

On Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> instant, Mrs. T. Grogan, George-street, of a daughter.<sup>93</sup>

Sadly this child died on 30 August 1859, shortly after her third birthday.

On Tuesday, the 30<sup>th</sup> ultimo, Matilda Catherine Elizabeth, infant daughter of Mr. T. Grogan, George-street South, aged 3 years and two months.<sup>94</sup>

Eight months later, in April 1860, the following notices appeared in of *The Sydney Morning Herald*.<sup>95</sup>

On the 17<sup>th</sup> instant, at her residence, Pyrmont, Margaret, wife of Mr. Thomas Grogan, and daughter to Mr. Solomon Davis, in the 34<sup>th</sup> year of her age.

FUNERAL – The Friends of Mr. THOMAS GROGAN, grocer of Brickfield Hill, are invited to attend the Funeral of his deceased Wife, MARGARET. To move from his private residence, Pyrmont, THIS (Wednesday) AFTERNOON at a quarter to 3 o'clock.

Judging by the addresses in the notices, Elizabeth and Solomon kept in close contact with their daughter and son-in-law. Sometime in the mid-1870s Thomas moved to what was by then a much more salubrious area – Burwood.<sup>96</sup> And it was at his Burwood home, “Chatswood”, Liverpool-road, that Thomas died on 8 November 1884 aged 58, and from where his funeral party left on 10 November for the Devonshire-street Cemetery.<sup>97</sup> Thomas was a modestly wealthy man when he died – probate on his estate was valued at £8626.<sup>98</sup>

### Postscript

Jane Davis has been referred to as a sister of Solomon Davis (and therefore sister-in-law to Elizabeth Robertson), but I have not found any documentation to support this. She certainly was not Jane, the aunt with whom Margaret Davis was said to be living in 1828.<sup>99</sup>

I believe that the woman Thomas Steadman married was the convict listed as Jean Davie in the schedule of women transported in 1816 on the *Lord Melville* and who arrived in the colony on 24 February 1817.<sup>100</sup> This woman, well known to the judiciary, had been tried at Glasgow on 28 September 1815. She pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven years transportation.<sup>101</sup>

**Jean Davie, residenter in Glasgow, accused of stealing several articles of wearing apparel from a house in Drygate, on 29th June last, pleaded guilty. The libel was restricted. Sentenced to seven years transportation. She had been nine times imprisoned in Bridewell.**

She was listed as Jane Davie in the convict indents, and thereafter was recorded in the colonial records as Jane Davis. As such, in 1817 she was assigned to John Oxley, Esq, and in October 1818 was listed as one of the prisoners to be sent to Newcastle per the *Lady Nelson*. She had been convicted on 24 September and sentenced to one year's transportation.<sup>102</sup>

Lord Melville	Jane Davis	8 "	Mr. Steadman	24 <sup>th</sup> Sept.	"	One Year
---------------	------------	-----	--------------	------------------------	---	----------

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842, Bound Indentures, 1814-1818.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Bruntsfield Links, for centuries an open expanse of ground used as a golf course, Wikipedia, Bruntsfield Links, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruntsfield\\_Links](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruntsfield_Links).



- <sup>3</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 22 May 1815, p.3.
- <sup>4</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 30 Sep 1816, p.3.
- <sup>5</sup> *The Scots Magazine*, 1 Oct 1816, p.74. The law of Scotland makes no distinction between the accessory to any crime (called art and part) and the principal.
- <sup>6</sup> Jennifer Harrison, *Shackled: Female Convicts at Moreton Bay 1826-1839*, Anchor Books, Australia, 2016, p.81. However, the corresponding endnote refers to reports in the May-June 1815 *Caledonian Mercury* – some time prior to Elizabeth Robertson's 1816 conviction.
- <sup>7</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 31 May 1817, p.3.
- <sup>8</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856 (Col Sec), Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6004-6016.
- <sup>9</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834, New South Wales, Female, 1820.
- <sup>10</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reels 6004-6016.
- <sup>11</sup> Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), Biographical report for Solomon Davis, Church Register: NSW Sydney St Philip CE Marriage. The sketch of St Philips Church is taken from Joseph Fowles *Sydney In 1848*, the aim of which was 'to remove the erroneous and discreditable notions current in London concerning this City, in common with every thing else connected with the Colony.'
- <sup>12</sup> Holyhead, on the Welsh coast, provided a direct shipping route to Ireland.
- <sup>13</sup> *Dublin Journal*, 5 Sep 1809, p.2.
- <sup>14</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Sep 1809, p.3.
- <sup>15</sup> Don Wilson, comp., *The Providence Convict Ship 1810-1811 – The Voyage of the Convict Ship – Sailing from Cobh, Ireland to Port Jackson, Australia*, <https://providenceconvictship.com/>.
- <sup>16</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Solomon Davis.
- <sup>17</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 28 Nov 1818, p.3, Raphael v. Gore, Esq. and Eagar, concerning an action of trover, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/2178375>.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 10 Oct 1818, p.2.
- <sup>19</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 19 Dec 1818, p.2.
- <sup>20</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 Aug 1821, p.4. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930, Entrance Book, Sydney, 1819-1833.
- <sup>21</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 30 Aug 1821, p.4.
- <sup>22</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6004-6016.
- <sup>23</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Henry Solomon Davis. The baptism was registered at Christ Church, Church of England, Newcastle. Note, subsequently his middle name was given as Augustus.
- <sup>24</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6004-6016.
- <sup>25</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849, New South Wales, General Muster, 1822.
- <sup>26</sup> NSW State Archives & Records (NSWSA&R), Newcastle Penal Establishment, <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/agency/2111>. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 16 Oct 1823, p.2.
- <sup>27</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 939; Reel or Fiche Numbers: Reels 6018-6019, 2649, and 898-901. BDA, Biographical report for Margaret Davis.
- <sup>28</sup> BDA, Biographical reports for Solomon Davis and Elizabeth Robertson.
- <sup>29</sup> *The Australian*, 9 Mar 1826, p.3. All four of the persons indicted had spent time/lived in the Newcastle district, and were known to each other.
- <sup>30</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 6 May 1826, p.2. In 1824 the first commandant, Lieutenant Miller, had been commissioned to establish a camp at Redcliff, a peninsula in Moreton Bay. Very quickly it was realised that this site was not suitable. In April/May 1825 the station was moved across the bay and some 25 miles up the Brisbane River. Jennifer Harrison, *Shackled* - information about Elizabeth Robertson's time at Moreton Bay is based principally on Jennifer Harrison's comprehensive study of the female convicts sent to the Moreton Bay penal settlement.
- <sup>31</sup> Queensland State Archives, Chronological Register of Convicts at Moreton Bay 1824-1839, <https://data.qld.gov.au/en/dataset/convict-register-chronological-1824-to-1839/resource/f79328f8-faa0-4465-8e9d-b9a65f3ab386>.
- <sup>32</sup> *The Australian*, 9 Mar 1826, p.4.
- <sup>33</sup> In addition to managing the penal settlement, Captain Logan explored large tracts of what is now south-east Queensland. It was on one of these expeditions, to be the last before the completion of his term as commandant, that he met his death on 17 October 1830. His distraught widow and children returned to Sydney on the *Governor Phillip*; her husband's body arrived shortly afterwards on 22 November on the *Isabella*. Patrick Logan's funeral was held on 23 November. His widow and children returned to England on the ship *Nancy* in January 1831 - Louis R. Cranfield, 'Logan, Patrick (1791–1830)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/logan-patrick-2367/text3107>, published first in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 23 April 2019. *Colonial Times*, 3 Dec 1830, p.3. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 Nov 1830, p.2. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 8 Jan 1831, p.2.
- <sup>34</sup> Letitia Baxter was the wife of George Baxter, who had been sentenced to seven years transportation at Moreton Bay. The Baxters returned to Sydney in March 1829.
- <sup>35</sup> Jennifer Harrison, *Shackled*, p.133.



- <sup>36</sup> Queensland State Archives, Chronological Register of Convicts at Moreton Bay 1824-1839.
- <sup>37</sup> *The Sydney Herald*, 19 Jul 1832.
- <sup>38</sup> Jennifer Harrison, *Shackled*, p.62.
- <sup>39</sup> Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy). Joseph Brooks Weller – merchant, landowner and whaler – he and his brothers George and Edward, founded the first white settlement in Otago. Joseph died there in 1835 aged 32 – Malcolm Weller, The Weller family tree, <http://www.weller.org.uk/>. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 Oct 1835, p.3.
- <sup>40</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 939; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6018-6019, 2649, and 898-901*. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Records, 1810-1891, Phoenix Hulk, Phoenix Hulk: Entrance Books, 1825-1831. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Convict Records 1810-1891, Phoenix Hulk, Phoenix Hulk: Discharge Book, 1825-1830. In 1824 the *Phoenix*, having discharged its cargo of convicts at Hobart, continued on to Port Jackson where it hit rocks and was damaged beyond repair. The colonial government bought the wreck for £1000 and converted her into a prison hulk. Moored in Lavender Bay, she temporarily housed the overflow from Sydney Gaol and those transportees awaiting transfer to penal colonies and, in the case of Solomon, those returned and about to be discharged – NSWSA&R, “Phoenix” [Hulk], <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/agency/416>.
- <sup>41</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867.
- <sup>42</sup> A currier applies finishing techniques to tanned leather – e.g. colouring - to bring it to a saleable state.
- <sup>43</sup> Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy).
- <sup>44</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 900; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 3163-3253*. Col Sec, Series: NRS 899; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 3001-3162*.
- <sup>45</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6004-6016*.
- <sup>46</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 11 Apr 1816, p.3, 6 May 1816, p.3.
- <sup>47</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Christian Young. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 25 Oct 1822, p.2.
- <sup>48</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Christian Young.
- <sup>49</sup> Free Settler or Felon? Convict Ship General Hewitt 1814, [https://jenwilletts.com/convict\\_ship\\_general\\_hewitt.htm](https://jenwilletts.com/convict_ship_general_hewitt.htm).
- <sup>50</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 23 Dec 1815, p.2.
- <sup>51</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6004-6016*.
- <sup>52</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Jane Davis. Biographical report for Jane Davie [sic]. Ancestry, Australia, Death Index, 1787-1985, Death registration Vol Number VB18225481 2B.
- <sup>53</sup> Col Sec, Series: NRS 897; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6041-6064, 6071-6072*.
- <sup>54</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales and Tasmania, Australia Convict Musters, 1806-1849. Jean/Jane Graham had been tried at Glasgow in April 1819 and sentenced to 7 years transportation. She arrived in the colony on 3 May 1820 aboard the *Janus*. The New South Wales Goal Description and Entrance Books 1818-1930 indicate that she found herself in trouble, and in 1821 she was re-transported to Newcastle to serve a 12 month sentence. She obtained her certificate of freedom in January 1827 – BDA, Biographical report for Jean Graham. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 15 Jan 1827, p.1. Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy). In 1830 the marriage between Jane Graham and John Reed was registered at Hoxham, Newcastle – Ancestry, Australia Marriage Index, 1788-1950, Marriage registration Volume V.
- <sup>55</sup> Dictionary of Sydney, Brickfield Hill, [https://dictionaryofsydney.org/place/brickfield\\_hill](https://dictionaryofsydney.org/place/brickfield_hill).
- <sup>56</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 11 May 1833, p.2.
- <sup>57</sup> *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 21 Jun 1834, p.1.
- <sup>58</sup> *The Australian*, 2 Feb 1836, p.3. Note – the date in the advertisement is incorrect.
- <sup>59</sup> *The Sydney Monitor*, 27 Jun 1838, p.2.
- <sup>60</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 18 Jul 1832, [Issue No.20], p.188. *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 22 Mar 1839, p.2. In 1832 ‘A Bill for preventing the use of false and deficient Weights and Measures’ had been enacted, by which Examiners were appointed with powers to seize false weights and fine offenders. *The Dispatch*, 23 Nov 1844, p.3.
- <sup>61</sup> *The Australian*, 28 Nov 1839, p.3.
- <sup>62</sup> *The Australian*, 1 Oct 1839, p.3.
- <sup>63</sup> For example, *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 8 Jan 1840, p.3.
- <sup>64</sup> *The Colonist*, 16 Jan 1839, p.4.
- <sup>65</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Martha Millington. Jennifer Harrison, *Shackled*, pp177-178. See also the excellently documented Parkes/Hobbs Ancestry online family tree, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/1206224/person/24075677109/facts>.
- <sup>66</sup> *The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 18 Jan 1839, p.3, 21 Dec 1840.p.4.
- <sup>67</sup> *The Sydney Herald*, 28 May 1842, p.2.
- <sup>68</sup> *The Sydney Herald*, 30 May 1842, p.3.
- <sup>69</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 Jul 1844, p.3.
- <sup>70</sup> City of Sydney Archives, Assessment Books, 1845-1948, <http://photosau.com.au/CosRates/scripts/home.asp>.
- <sup>71</sup> Ancestry, New South Wales, Registers of Land Grants and Leases, 1792-1867, Town Purchases, Maitland and Newcastle. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Returns of the Colony, 1822-1857. *The Sydney Herald*, 28 Apr 1834, p.4. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 26 Jan 1836, p.4. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Historical Electoral Rolls, 1842-1864.
- <sup>72</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 Jan 1846, p.4.



<sup>73</sup> I am indebted to Ian Milton who provided details of land transactions between the Davis family and other parties. With respect to the Pymont property, on 16 January 1843, Thomas Swindells, of Sydney, Master Mariner, sold to Solomon Davis of Sydney, Dealer, as witnessed by J.F. Josephson, "All that parcel of land in the Parish of Saint Andrew in the County of Cumberland in the Colony aforesaid, commencing at the intersection of Union and Edward Streets and bounded on the south by Union Street bearing west 40 feet on the west by lots 11 and 20 bearing north 97 feet 3 inches to Marion [Pymont] Street on the north by Marion Street bearing easterly 40 feet to Edward Street aforesaid and on the east by Edward Street bearing south 100 feet to the commencing point Which land parcel aforesaid comprises lots 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the plan of the said land exhibited at the Sale thereof". The price paid was £212 12s sterling. Land Registry Services, Book 3, Number 401, To Solomon Davis [Release].

<sup>74</sup> Land Registry Services, Book 7, Number 73, and Book 24, Number 697.

<sup>75</sup> Ian Milton, email correspondence, 20 Jan 2021.

<sup>76</sup> *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, 23 Sep 1848.

<sup>77</sup> *Empire*, 9 Nov 1855, p.4.

<sup>78</sup> Elizabeth Davis's remains were subsequently reinterred at La Perouse, Roman Catholic: 6S: Plot 59. – NSWSA&R, Devonshire Street Cemetery Reinterment Index, <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/devonshire-street-cemetery-reinterment-index>.

<sup>79</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 Nov 1855, p.8.

<sup>80</sup> *Sydney Mail*, 18 May 1861, p.5.

<sup>81</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 May 1861, p.8. The remains of Solomon Davis were transferred to Bunnerong, Section: 1S, Plot: 24 – BDA, Biographical report for Solomon Davis, #4001847401.

<sup>82</sup> NSWSA&R, Publican's Licenses Index 1830-1861, <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/collections-and-research/guides-and-indexes/publicans-and-innkeepers/indexes>. *Sands Directory*, <http://cdn.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/history/archives/sands/1858-1869/1858-1859-part3.pdf>. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 May 1858, p.6. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 Sep 1858, p.3.

<sup>83</sup> New South Wales Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages (NSW BDM), Marriage registration B1846702 94/1846. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Sep 1846, p.3.

<sup>84</sup> BDA, Biographical reports for Joanna McCarthy, Edward McGee and Julia Ann Magee. Ancestry, 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (Australian Copy).

<sup>85</sup> NSW BDM, Birth and Death registrations.

<sup>86</sup> NSWSA&R, Publican's Licenses Index 1830-1861.

<sup>87</sup> *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 11 Dec 1860 [Issue No.232], p.2423; 29 Nov 1861 [Issue No.266], p.2568; 25 Aug 1863 [Issue No.165], p.1859.

<sup>88</sup> *Sydney Mail*, 2 Jan 1864, p.3.

<sup>89</sup> NSW BDM, Death registration, 3090/1964. Ancestry, Austin/Magann Family online family tree, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/28408096/person/180080282312/facts> - note, however that this tree cites Henry Joseph Davis, which is not correct.

<sup>90</sup> NSW BDM, Death registration, 5844/1903.

<sup>91</sup> *The People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, 18 Nov 1854, p.2.

<sup>92</sup> Thomas Grogan's mother was Catherine Grogan (née Connelly/Conolly), Ancestry, online Grogan Family Tree, <https://www.ancestry.co.uk/family-tree/person/tree/32536653/person/18774538977/facts>.

<sup>93</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Jun 1856, p.1.

<sup>94</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 Sep 1859, p.1.

<sup>95</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 Apr 1860, p.1.

<sup>96</sup> Ancestry, Sands Directories: Sydney and New South Wales, Australia, 1858-1933, 1876.

<sup>97</sup> *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 15 Nov 1884, p.43. Evening News, 10 Nov 1884, p.3.

<sup>98</sup> *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 Dec 1884, p.3.

<sup>99</sup> Refer to Jennifer Harrison, Shackled, p.62.

<sup>100</sup> As noted, Christiana Young, *alias* Ewing, convicted at Glasgow in May 1816, had also arrived per the *Lord Melville*. Coincidentally, immediately preceding its report on Jean Davie's trial, the *Caledonian Mercury* reported on that of Jean Young, or Ewing, who was also sentenced to transportation, and who had previously been confined to Bridewell eight times – *Caledonian Mercury*, 30 Sep, 1815.

<sup>101</sup> Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/ships/lord-melville/1816>. *Caledonian Mercury*, 30 Sep 1815, p.3.

<sup>102</sup> BDA, Biographical report for Jane Davie. Ancestry, New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834. Col Sec, Series: NRS 937; Reel or Fiche Numbers: *Reels 6004-6016*.



## SELECTED SOURCES

### Genealogy Websites

#### Ancestry

1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (Australian Copy)  
 1828 New South Wales, Australia Census (TNA Copy)  
 Australia Marriage Index, 1788-1950  
 Australian Death Index, 1787-1985  
 New South Wales and Tasmania, Australian Convict Musters, 1806-1849  
 New South Wales, Australia, Certificates of Freedom, 1810-1814, 1827-1867  
 New South Wales, Australia, Colonial Secretary's Papers, 1788-1856  
 New South Wales, Australia, Convict Indents, 1788-1842  
 New South Wales, Australia, Convict Records, 1810-1891  
 New South Wales, Australia, Gaol Description and Entrance Books, 1818-1930  
 New South Wales, Australia, Historical Electoral Rolls, 1842-1864  
 New South Wales, Australia, Registers of Land Grants and Leases, 1792-1867  
 New South Wales, Australia, Returns of the Colony 1822-1857  
 New South Wales, Australia, Settler and Convict Lists, 1787-1834  
 Online Family Trees  
 Sands Directories: Sydney and New South Wales, Australia 1858-1933

### Other Websites

Australian Dictionary of Biography, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/>  
 Biographical Database of Australia (BDA), <http://www.bda-online.org.au/>  
 City of Sydney Collections, <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/search-our-collections/>  
 Convict Records, <https://convictrecords.com.au/>  
 Dictionary of Sydney, <http://home.dictionaryofsydney.org/>  
 Free Settler or Felon? <https://www.jenwillets.com/>  
 New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths, Marriages, <https://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/>  
 NSW State Archives & Records, <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/archives/>  
 Queensland State Archives, <http://www.archivessearch.qld.gov.au/>  
 The Providence Convict Ship 1810-1811, Australia, <https://providenceconvictship.com/>  
 The Weller Family Tree, <http://www.weller.org.uk/>  
 Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/>

### Online Newspapers

#### British Newspapers (Findmypast)

Caledonian Mercury  
 Dublin Journal  
 Freeman's Journal  
 The Scots Magazine

#### TROVE

Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer  
 Colonial Times  
 Empire  
 Evening News  
 New South Wales Government Gazette  
 Sydney Mail  
 The Australian  
 The Colonist  
 The Daily Telegraph  
 The Dispatch  
 The Hobart Town Gazette and Southern Reporter  
 The People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator  
 The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser  
 The Sydney Herald  
 The Sydney Monitor  
 The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser  
 The Sydney Morning Herald



Town and Country Journal

**Publications**

Harrison, Jennifer, *Shackled : Female Convicts at Moreton Bay 1826-1839*, Anchor Books, Australia, 2016

(Updated 24 January 2021)

© Leonie Fretwell, 2021