

## Elizabeth Attwood

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Elizabeth Attwood was born at Pinfold St, Birmingham on 27 December 1813 to parents Thomas and Hannah Attwood. Thomas Attwood was born in 1766, was a jeweller and died in 1823. Hannah was born in 1785 and died in 1821. Thomas and Hannah were married circa 1808 and had three other children – John died as an infant, Thomas Jnr born in 1815 and Maria. Thomas and Hannah both died young, with Elizabeth being only 8 when her mother died and 10 when her father died. We do not know how the children were raised, but can assume that things were very tough for them.

We can find no trace as to what happened to Maria, but we do know that Elizabeth started a relationship with Charles Spratt around 1832, with a daughter, Emma Attwood, being born in 1833. In April 1835 Charles and a pregnant Elizabeth, were living in Birmingham when they robbed a man of two shillings and five pence.<sup>1</sup>

**Street Robbery:** On Friday night last, about nine o'clock, Joseph Sarty, an Italian hawk of images, was attacked by two men and two women, in Chapel-street, Birmingham and robbed of two shillings and five pence, being all the money he had in his pocket. The men came up to him in front, one of them saying, "Tip you .....". Sarty not understanding the lingo of his assailants, asked what they wanted? When one of them replied, "Your money; and if you don't give it to us we will make you".

The two women who were behind, proceeded to rifle his pockets, while the men stood in front, one of them being armed with a heavy stick. Having completed the robbery, the thieves ran off; but Sarty watched them into a house in Drury-lane, a very short distance from the spot where he was attacked. He afterwards gave information to the police, and the following morning Wesson and Palmer, the officers, accompanied him to the house, where they found in bed a notorious character named **Charles Spratt**, and two girls' named **Elizabeth Attwood** and Mary Ann Harris. Sarty immediately identified three of the persons by whom he was attacked. In consequence of Knowles, the man implicated with Dollman and Hedge, being one of Spratt's companions, he was afterwards apprehended on suspicion of being the fourth, but Sarty not able to swear to him he was afterwards discharged. The prisoners were brought before the Magistrates, at the Public Office, Birmingham, on Monday, when they all denied having committed the robbery, although Harris said Sarty had been in the house with her, and a quarrel ensued in consequence of money matters.

Two witnesses were brought forward on behalf of the defence, but, unfortunately, so far from shaking the prosecutor's evidence, they materially confirmed him. The prisoners were committed to take their trials at the sessions. Harris is the girl who cohabited with Knowles at the time he was apprehend on suspicion of being concerned in the murder of Mr Painter.

We have no idea as to why Elizabeth had not had Emma baptised up to this time. But perhaps with their trial pending and the distinct possibility of a severe sentence particularly for Charles, Emma was baptised on 24 July 1835 at St Mary's church in Birmingham. Within two months of this happening Charles Attwood was born.

Charles Spratt's and Elizabeth Attwood's trial was conducted in August 1835. Charles was found guilty and sentenced to 7 years transportation to New South Wales and Elizabeth was found guilty and sentenced to 12 months imprisonment in Birmingham.

Elizabeth probably spent this sentence in a work-house where she would have been entitled to have the children with her, as they were under the age of 7. And during this time Charles Attwood was baptised on 16 September 1835 at St Mary's church, Birmingham, just as Charles Spratt was about to be transported. Perhaps Elizabeth felt that this was one way she could hold onto her partner, even though she would probably never see him again.

Whilst Elizabeth was in prison her brother, Thomas Attwood, was convicted of stealing a shirt and sentenced to 7 years transportation, but more of that later.

After her release, Elizabeth supported herself and her children by doing laundry as well as working as a cloth cutter in Birmingham. A report published in 1836 by local doctors stated that the working population of Birmingham lived in 2,030 courts, which contained 12,254 tenements. Each court had a washhouse, an ash pit, a communal toilet and pigsties.

The 1841 census tells us that Elizabeth was living in Old Thomas Street, St. Mary, Birmingham with her children, Emma aged 8 and Charles aged 6. The family of Charles Spratt appears to have stood by Elizabeth and her two children.

On 7 August 1844 Elizabeth was again in trouble, this time being found guilty of receiving stolen goods and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment.

She was on trial again on 7 January 1848 at the Birmingham Quarter Sessions, this time for "larceny from the person" – she had stolen 3 shillings and six pence from Benjamin Russell.<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth was found guilty and sentenced to 7 years transportation. She was initially imprisoned at Birmingham and was then taken to the Millbank Prison in London to await her departure aboard a convict ship. Elizabeth's court record notes that this was Elizabeth's fourth conviction.

During her defence she stated "Charles Spratt is the father of my childs; thirteen years ago he was transported". One wonders if Elizabeth was endeavouring to be sent to NSW with the hope of meeting up with Charles Spratt, the father of her two children. Her convict records advise of a scar "C Spratt" tattooed onto her upper left arm. Interestingly, in 1843, across the world in NSW, Charles Spratt had obtained his Certificate of Freedom; and it was noted that he had a scar inside his right wrist "CSES". It is pure speculation that this stands for "Charles Spratt Elizabeth Spratt". Of

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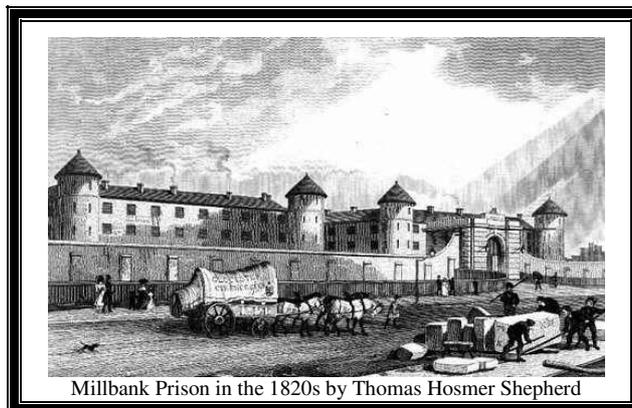
<sup>1</sup> Coventry Herald 24 April 1835.

<sup>2</sup> Birmingham Gazette 10 January 1848.

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course, that is a secret of the past and for our interpretation!

In February 1848, Elizabeth, prisoner 2624, and daughter Emma were taken from Millbank and boarded the convict ship “*Tory*” at Portsmouth. The “*Tory*” was built in 1842 at Hylton, near Sunderland, England and weighed 433 tons. There were 170 convicts and 13 children accompanying their mothers boarding the “*Tory*”.



Elizabeth’s son, Charles Attwood, remained in Birmingham to live with his father’s half brother, George Spratt and family.

Emma was now 15 years of age and therefore not allowed to travel with her mother (only children under the age of 14 were allowed to accompany their convict parents). So why do we now find Emma aboard the “*Tory*”? Whilst the following is pure speculation, it does offer an explanation.

We know Emma was small in stature later in her life and assume this was the case whilst she was growing up. Emma could therefore pass as someone quite a bit younger than what she really was. Elizabeth perhaps decided to swap the ages of her children, with Charles becoming 14 and Emma becoming 12. Thus we find Emma being allowed to accompany Elizabeth.

The “*Tory*” was anchored at Portsmouth for another two long months before the voyage to Van Diemen’s Land began on 30 April 1848. The master’s name was Smith and the surgeon was also a Smith, Charles Smith.

After 98 days at sea, the “*Tory*” reached Hobart Town on 6 August 1848.

The General Remarks of Charles Smith, the Surgeon Superintendent aboard the “*Tory*”, follow:

A NOSOLOGICAL SYNOPSIS of the Sick Book kept during the Period of this Journal, in conformity with the 30<sup>th</sup> Article of the Surgeon’s Instructions.

Diseases Nosologically arranged	Numbers						No of such cases as are detailed in the Journal
	Total	Discharged to Duty	Sent to the Hospital	Died on Board	Invalided	Remaining	
<b>Pyrexiaë</b>							
Ord. I. Febres. Intermittentes Quotidiana.... Tertiana.....							
Continuae. Synochus..... Typhus.....	2	1	1				9
Ord. II. Phlegmasiaë. Phlogosis..... Pneumonia..... Rheumatismus.....	3 2	3 1					7 14 5 11
Ord. III. Exanthemata. Variola..... Rubeola..... Erysipelas..... Vaccina.....	4	4	1				2
Ord. IV. Haemorrhagiaë. Haemoptysis..... Phthisis incipiens... Phthisis confirmata Menorrhagia.....	1	1					4
Ord. V. Profluvia.							

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Catarrhus..... Dysenteria.....	6 1	6 1					8 10
<b>Neuroses.</b>							
Ord. I. Comata. Apoplexia.....							
Ord. II. Adynamiaë. Dyspepsiæ.....	10	10					
Ord. III. Spasmi. Asthma..... Diarrhœa..... Colica.....	3 8	2 8	1				12 6
Ord. IV. Vesasiæ. Amentia..... Mania.....	6 1	6 1					
<b>Cachexiæ.</b>							
Ord. I. Marcores. Tabes.....							
Ord. II. Intumescentiæ. Anasarca..... Ascites..... Hydrothorax.....							
Ord. III. Impetiginis. Syphillis..... Scrophula..... Icterus..... Scorbutus.....	1  1	1					1  1
<b>Locales.</b>							
Ord. I. Dysæsthesiæ. Amaurosis.....							
Ord. II. Dysorexiæ. Anorecia.....	1	1					
Ord. III. Dyscinesiæ.							
Ord. IV. Apocenoses. Gonorrhœa.....	1	1					
Ord. V. Epischeses. Ischuria..... Obstipatio..... Dysuria.....	1 2	1 2					
Ord. VI. Tumores. Aneurisma.....							
Ord. VII. Ectopiæ. Hernia..... Prolapsus.....							
Ord. VIII. Dialyses. Vulnus..... Ulcus..... Contusio.....	4	4					

On referring to the preceding nosological synopsis, it will be seen that the Female Transports have in general, been very healthy during the passage from England to this place and that no fatal case has occurred and only a few of a severe character. The total number of sick and hurt amount to 50, of these forty-six have been cured on board and four sent to the Colonial Hospital in this Colony, nearly convalescent.

The convicts when received on board at Woolwich, were in general thin and pale, no doubt through much confinement in prison, many of them appeared to be suffering from mental depression at the prospect of leaving their friends and native country while a few were completely apathetic as in everything going on around them. During the first month, **dyspeptic afflictions** (*impairment of the power or function of digestion*) and calls of severe headache and constipation were common. Hysterical symptoms of various kinds frequently presented themselves; these complaints may be accounted for partly by the moral situation on which many of the females found themselves placed and partly by the nature of the lives some of them had led before being convicted.

Being deeply impressed with the influence of the mind on health, every means were taken to have the transports cheerfully and usefully occupied in making shirts (of which 500 were made up during the voyage) and in knitting. Regular morning and evening schools were established for reading and writing under the care of the Religious Instructor and every portion of the day set apart for some particular duty. Constant employment has no doubt a most beneficial effect on their health and adds very much to their comfort and happiness. Opportunities were taken to encourage the desponding by pointing out to them, the probability of their doing well in the Colony, provided their conduct deserved it, during the voyage and the great advantages that would accrue to them by a following out a regular and industrious course of life.

The prison was carefully cleaned out every morning and the scuttles opened, when the weather would permit. The swinging stoves with coke fires were used during damp or heavy weather and the "tween decks" preserved in a dry and comfortable

condition. The temperature in the prison never exceeded 81 ° of Fahrenheit. The solution of the chloride of lime was freely used in the hospital and prison and ... always with the best effect in destroying that ... which is present in every crowded vessel during hot weather.

Considerable attention was paid to the personal cleanliness of the convicts, the underclothing were regularly changed and the beds and bedding aired by hanging them up in the rigging. During the month of July the weather became much colder as we advanced southward and a few **catarrhal** (*inflammation of a mucous membrane*) and **rheumatic** affections occurred, but in general, the females were much improved in appearance and had completely lost that pale and sallow look which almost all had when received on board. They continued to improve during the remaining portion of July and first part of August and when discharged to the "Anson Hulk" at Hobart Town, the change that had taken place during the voyage was most striking, with the exception of four sent to the colonial hospital, they had all the aspect of high health.

The total number of sick as stated above, amount to 50, being in the ratio of 1 to 3. Of these, 2 cases have been reported under the head of **Synochus** (*a continuous fever*) as they nearly resembled that type of fever; the first N<sup>o</sup>(9) was sent to the colonial hospital. The second was of a more tractable character and readily responded to the remedies prescribed. There were four cases of **erysipelas** (*superficial bacterial skin infection*), the first recurred before leaving England and was of a severe character, the remaining three were of less importance and readily gave way to the usual remedies. The bowel complaints, comprising **dysentery** (*inflammation of the intestine*) N<sup>o</sup>(10), **colica** (*spasmodic pain in belly*) and **diarrhea**, amount to 13, some of the colicky afflictions were very troublesome, requiring acute treatment - large opiates, and injective enemata. Of the three cases of Diarrhea one was sent to the Colonial Hospital, the two cured on board were less obstinate, mercurial alteratives (*obsolete term used for drugs said to reestablish healthy functions of the system*), chalk, with catechu (*astringent extract from leaves formerly used in treatment of diarrhea*) and opium were used with success.

The **catarrhal afflictions** (*nasal congestion usually associated with having a cold*), six in number, were of a more varied character, in a few cases there was a good deal of respiratory disturbance, and Smart Pyrexia (*fever*) requiring the use of the lancet (*for blood letting*), antimonials (*wine containing antimony*), and counter-irritants, in others laxatives, and sudorifics (*causes sweating*) with abstemious regimes (*refraining from free use of food and strong drink*) were found sufficient to relieve the symptoms.

The **dyspeptic** complaints (*impairment of the power or function of digestion*) were numerous and difficult to treat, constipation, with severe headache and general debility were the most frequent symptoms, laxatives, bitters and tonics variously combined were exhibited, but only with partial benefit. There is little doubt but that the nature of life on board of ship; want of exercise tends much to aggravate these disorders. Towards the end of the voyage however, they had nearly all disappeared.

There is one case of **Menorrhagia** (*excessive menstrual flow*) reported, N<sup>o</sup>(4). This patient was discharged in Van Diemen's Land in good health; the amelioration that had taken place in her appearance during the voyage was most striking.

Of the two **rheumatic afflictions**, one was cured on board, the other was sent to Colonial Hospital. They had both been the subject of the same complaint at a former period, the great vicissitudes of temperature during this voyage is not favourable to disorders of this kind.

The cases of **Phlogosis** (*inflammation*) were all cured on board, the proportion of this genus is comparatively low, inflammatory afflictions of the extremities being in general extremely common at sea.

No casualties of any importance occurred during the passage, only slight cases of **contusio** (*contusion, bruising*) four reported with the symptoms.

The only remaining case is one actioned under the heading of **Scorbutus** (*scurvy, lack of vitamin C*). No similar symptoms appeared in any of the other females and I am inclined to think that in this instance it was more the result of simple debility, than from any excess of salt provisions. The preserved potato now supplied is a valuable addition to the convicts rations and no doubt has a most beneficial effect in counteracting that peculiar influence which salt provisions are well known to have (when long continued). The potato was served out in the proportion of 2oz each female and there can be no question but that it contributed largely in the high state of health they enjoyed during the voyage out. Lime juice was served out in the proportion directed by the printed instructions.

Island of Van Diemen's  
Hobart Town  
August 19<sup>th</sup> 1848

Charles Smith, Surgeon Superintendent, "Tory" Convict Ship

A letter written by fellow "**Tory**" convict, Jane Burrell, describing the voyage follows.<sup>3</sup>

Dear Husband and Children - I have once more taken the liberty to address you without examination as I dare say you are anxious to know how I am situated, but I can assure you never better had I you all with me. I should have wrote sooner if I could, but from the effects of the Sea, for I was ill all the time we was crossing the Ocean's from the 1st of May to the 6th of August I was very much reduced and as soon as I heard the call of Land ahead I was better and have had my health well ever since. You would not think I had been ill if you was to see me. We had a fine passage and a quick one for many rough seas but no danger. We was twice washed out of our beds in the Bay of Biscay and what would you think to that but was not at all afraid. We had the Old Charter performed on the Line - two sailors shaved with tar and covered with water and in the evening the King of the Seas performed. It was hot when I got upon Deck but in a few minutes the Skin was taken off my nose and Forehead. I could tell you a deal about the Sea but time will not allow me. When we got to our journeys end we was sent on board her Majesty's Ship the Anson ... .. hulk, where we had six months probation to do. We was well treated. There are all sorts of needle work to do. We had one hundred women in our Ward, about thirty of them time servers. I had the work to manage and finish and gave great satisfaction.

We went to school one day in the week to write and sum. We had exercise twice a day one hour each time. We had six hundred on board, some of all sorts. I could not write at all when we anchored. The rules and regulations excellent. We have a Sunday Service in the morning and prayers in the evening, prayers morning and evening the week throughout. We were

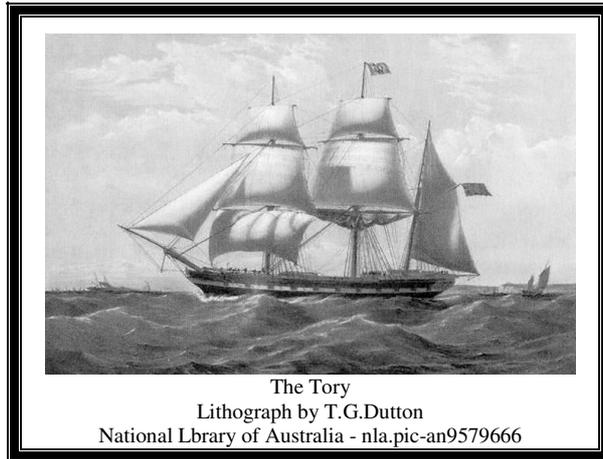
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<sup>3</sup> Laurice Cross from the Descendants of Convicts' Group.

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not under the silent act. I can assure you I have seen some scores of fights - 4 and 5 in a morning before breakfast. We were not allowed to use any irriative language to the Officers, nor they to use any to us, but I have done with all I hope. The day we were landed we had some fun boats with Ladys and Gentlemen from all parts for English Women to see which should get there first. We were all in classes Cooks, House Maids, Dairy maids not much wanted, farm servants are very scarce. I should like to have gone up the country but our Minister wished me to stay in Town. I have taken a Cooks place for the present. Our hire is six months at the end of 6 months I shall go up the Country as wages are very high there. You are not allowed to ask less than nine Pounds Government wages as much more as you please. If I had Hannah here she would get paid nine to twelve pounds, Elizabeth nine, Harriett from twelve to eighteen pounds. Good servants are prized like gold and a talented woman may get almost any money. We keep two cows - both are fine beasts but women neither milk nor churn. Our Lady very much liked my way of making butter and has had some sent in cakes for presents that her friends might see it. They do not make butter as we do - they make it in lumps ... It is a very fine country. I admire it. I cannot think I am so far from England for everything is so much like here as with you everything very cheap, wine and spirits very cheap. I get London Porter but that I give to the Gardener, as you know I never could drink it. Let S, A, and Elizabeth have my hightops? As if I come home I shall have some if I keep my health.



On board the Anson Ship a great many seemed tractable and about 50 in our ward but I said no. I should like to taste some of their cheap wine and so I do. Tea is very cheap - I have a 1/4 lb allowed me the week and the Sugar Cask at my disposal. I have plenty of everything that is good. I took up the Blacking Bottle the other day - the label was Day and Martin, so I said to it "are you transported too"; in a word I cannot but think I am at home. Your choice pot plants grow in the hedgerows here and round the garden like Quick in England. Fruit in abundance - apples and plums I have seen given to swine by bushels. Amusements of all sorts - horse racing, boat racing, games of every description. Coaches and cabs by scores, all day on Sunday, four stage Coaches run by ours and I must tell you I can say what my Uncle sent me when at Woolwich I was not allowed to have while I got my Ticket of Leave and then I got it and the interest but I do not want it.  
.....

Direct – Jane Burrell, Hobart Town, Vandiemans Land  
To be left at the Post Office to be called for

Elizabeth Attwood's convict record tells us that she arrived in Hobart on board the "*Tory*" on 6 August 1848. She had been tried and convicted at the Birmingham Quarter Sessions on 7 January 1848 for stealing 3/6 "from the Person" and was sentenced to be transported for seven years. She was from Birmingham, Warwickshire, and was 30 years old when sentenced. Her shipping record tells us she was single, had two children, was Protestant, could read but not write and in the comments stated "Charles Spratt is the father of my children. He was transported 13 years ago". Her brother, Thomas Attwood, was transported to NSW 13 years before, and she had a sister Maria. Elizabeth's police number was 233.

Upon arrival in Hobart Town, Elizabeth was separated from Emma and was sent directly to the hulk "*Anson*" for a period of Gang Probation of 6 months. She was declared a 3<sup>rd</sup> class convict on 8 February 1849.

Elizabeth's convict record describes her as follows:

<b>Height</b>	5'	<b>Complexion</b>	Fair
<b>Head</b>	Round	<b>Hair</b>	Light brown
<b>Visage</b>	Long	<b>Forehaed</b>	Low
<b>Eyebrows</b>	Light brown	<b>Eyes</b>	Grey
<b>Nose</b>	Long	<b>Mouth</b>	Large
<b>Chin</b>	Medium	<b>Trade</b>	Laundress, housemaid
<b>Marks</b>	scar left side of under lip, scar right wrist, C Spratt (tattoo) upper left arm indistinct		

The "*Anson*" was used to house female convicts from 1844 in an attempt to alleviate the overcrowding at the Cascades Female Factory.

From 1844 to 1850, female convicts arriving in Van Diemen's Land were immediately sent to the Anson for six months' probation. This was the only designated probation station for women, though New Town Farm operated temporarily as a station for female convicts in 1850. During this time, it was considered desirable to keep the newly arriving convicts separate from the old hands.....

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...The HMS Anson was a 1870 ton warship which arrived at Hobart in 1844 landing 499 male convicts. After disembarking her 'cargo', she was refitted as a prison and towed to Prince of Wales Bay, Risdon, near Hobart, where she was moored.

The Hobart Town Courier of 29 October 1844 had the following to say about the Anson and Mrs Bowden's management of it.

We had the pleasure a few days since to pay a visit, too long deferred, to the female penitentiary on board the Anson, under the superintendence of Dr and Mrs Bowden. As we ascended the ship ladder we were agreeably saluted by the singing of the prisoners, who are assembled on Wednesdays for afternoon service. The singing, as well as the general service, is conducted by the Rev. Mr Giles, and, with very great effect, his congregation appearing to unite with him throughout. Through the politeness of Mrs Bowden, who appears desirous to afford strangers an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the system pursued by her, we were conducted through every particular of our inquiries. We found that besides the necessary duties of the establishment in washing and cooking, the women were employed in various descriptions of needlework, in the manufacture of shoes, straw-hats, door mats, &c., as far as the very limited means at Mrs Bowden's command will allow. Every part of the ship exhibited remarkable cleanliness, and we could not have expected to witness such general health, and to find the ventilation so good, where so large a number are collected together in a limited space. But these physical appearances constitute the least recommendation of those who superintend the arrangements on board the Anson. We remarked with great satisfaction the subdued, respectful, and throughout proper deportment of the women, exhibiting a very striking contrast with what we have been too long accustomed to in similar establishments in this country. No one who is acquainted with the trying circumstances in which the best disposed are placed in service in this colony, will expect too much from the subjects of Mrs Bowden's management when they are again turned into society; but this reflects nothing upon that lady's management, from which, in more favourable circumstances, the best results could not fail to arise.<sup>4</sup>

Following her six months at the Probation Station, Elizabeth was assigned to various settlers in the Hobart area. On 20 February 1849, when assigned to Mr. Bentley, she was charged with being out after hours, disturbing the peace and being drunk and was sentenced to 6 months hard labour at the House of Correction, Cascades Female Factory in Hobart.

Although the following description gives the Cascades Female Factory an appearance of orderliness and propriety, the establishment had a fearsome reputation. On New Year's Day 1851, the visit of a Colonel Mundy to the Cascades Female Factory was reported:

On January 1, 1851, Colonel Mundy found the Cascades Factory at Hobart Town a model of good order. A matron maintained faultless discipline; the cleanliness was dazzling and the turnkeys vigilant. In dead silence the women, in their white mob caps and duffle dresses, were drawn up in Hollow Square and greeted the Colonel with a "running fire of curtseys". At this date there were at the Cascades 730 women and 130 infants. As usual they were engaged in laundry work or fine sewing. A few turbulent inmates were dosed with ipecacuanha, put on half-rations and locked into darkened cells.<sup>5</sup>



Elizabeth was reassigned around August 1849 and on 22 October 1849 was sentenced to 14 days solitary confinement for being absent without leave. Then on 16 November 1849, she was found guilty of not proceeding to the Brickfields Depot according to her pass and sentenced to 6 months hard labour, half of that period to be passed in the Separate Apartments at the Cascades (these were completely dark when both inner and outer doors were shut and locked and silence prevailed in these apartments) and then to be sent to the interior. On 23 November, she was returned to the Cascades Female Factory and deemed not allowed to enter service in Hobart Town.

On 13 May 1850, Elizabeth married William Bowdler at St Georges Church, Battery Point. William was born circa 1810 and was an ex-convict, of full age, transported on the "*Layton*" (4). William signed his name but Elizabeth made her mark on the certificate.

On 24 July 1850, she was charged with being drunk and out after hours and was sentenced to seven days in the cells. And on 23 September 1851 was charged with being drunk and out after hours, and sentenced to one month hard labour, again being sent to the Cascades Female Factory.

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<sup>4</sup> Female Convict Research Centre.

<sup>5</sup> Female Convict Research Centre.

