

THE JOURNEY OF MARY CARR HOBSON MCCASKER

HELLO, MY NAME IS SUSAN HAZELL AND I WILL ENDEAVOUR TO PRESENT THE JOURNEY OF MY GGGGRANDMOTHER, MARY CARR HOBSON MCCASKER. IT IS AN HONOUR FOR ME TO PRESENT THIS TO YOU TODAY ,AS WHILE I HAVE BEEN RESEARCHING HER LIFE, I HAVE COME TO KNOW HER VERY WELL. I FEEL HER SPIRIT WITHIN ME, ESPECIALLY HERE IN TASMANIA .

MARY'S JOURNEY...

MARY CARR WAS BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY 1797 IN THORNBURY, YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND . ALTHOUGH DELIGHTED TO HAVE A NEW BABY, TIMES DID NOT ALLOW FOR CELEBRATIONS. THE UNDERCLASS CLASS, AS THEY WERE REFERRED TO IN THE CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE TIME, EXPERIENCED STARVATION, ILLNESS, UNEMPLOYMENT AND HOMELESSNESS. WOMEN IN PARTICULAR , WHETHER MARRIED OR NOT WERE TREATED LIKE SERVANTS. MOST MARRIAGES WERE THE RESULT OF PREGNANCIES AND NOT LOVE FROM THE HEART.

WOMEN WERE BROKEN UP INTO THREE DIFFERENT CLASSES: WOMEN OF THE UPPER-WORKING CLASS, WOMEN OF THE LOWER-WORKING CLASS, AND THE UNDERCLASS WOMEN. THE DIVISIONS OF THE CLASSES WERE VERY DISTINCT, AND ALTHOUGH NONE OF THE WOMEN IN ANY OF THE CLASSES HAD MUCH POWER, THERE WERE DIFFERENCES IN THE DAILY LIFE, FAMILY LIFE AND WORKING LIFE. THE WORST OFF OF ALL OF THE WOMEN WERE THE UNDERCLASS WOMEN. THESE WOMEN MAINTAINED A VERY DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE THAN THE OTHERS. THEIR CLOTHES OFTEN CONSISTED OF DIRTY AND TORN SKIRTS AND BLOUSES, AND MESSY HAIR. DEPRIVED OF ANY FORM OF EDUCATION AND RESPECTED JOBS, THESE UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN MOSTLY RELIED ON RELIEF ORGANIZATIONS AND SOME EVEN RESORTED TO PROSTITUTION TO MAKE A LIVING FOR THEMSELVES WHEN THERE WAS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE.

THE MAJORITY OF THE WOMEN BELONGED IN THE LOWER-WORKING CLASS CATEGORY. WITH LITTLE OR NO INHERITANCE TO LOOK FORWARD TO, SOME WOMEN BEGAN WORKING BETWEEN THE AGES OF 8 AND 12. LIKE THE UNDERCLASS WOMEN, LOWER-WORKING CLASS WOMEN WERE OFTEN RIDICULED BY HIGH SOCIETY BECAUSE THEIR LIVES DID NOT PERMIT THEM TO DRESS WITH PRESTIGE AND CLASS. THEIR LABORIOUS WORK SCHEDULES DID NOT ALLOW FOR IT. SOME OF THE JOBS THAT WERE AVAILABLE TO THEM WERE DOMESTIC SERVICE, AGRICULTURAL LABORERS, SEAMSTRESS, WASHER WOMEN, AND SERVING THE WEALTHY RESIDENTS.

MARY'S FATHER MOVED TO WHEREVER HE COULD FIND WORK. LEAVING SHE AND HER MOTHER ALONE FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME. BUT MARY SOON LEARNED THAT LIFE WAS NOT TO BE EASY AND PREPARED HERSELF TO FACE THE FUTURE IN THE CLASS SHE HAD BEEN BORN INTO.

MARY DID GO TO SCHOOL IN THE BEGINNING AND LEARNED TO READ AND WRITE. IT WAS THE LAW OF THE DAY THAT EDUCATION BE PROVIDED TO THE AGE OF THIRTEEN.

READING AND WRITING WAS NOT GOING TO DO MUCH FOR MARY IN HER EARLY YEARS, AND SHE HAD TO WORK IN THE FACTORIES, BESIDE HER MOTHER. CONDITIONS WERE TERRIBLE AND THE FACTORIES WERE OVERCROWDED AND POORLY BUILT. MOTHERS HAD TO TAKE THEIR CHILDREN AND BABIES WITH THEM. SICKNESS WAS RIFE. SOME FAMILIES HAD TO LIVE WHERE THEY WORKED, SLEEPING ON FLOORS, AND THEY WORKED FROM MORNING UNTIL THE NIGHT.

ONE DAY WHILE WALKING PAST A FANCY SHOP MARY NOTICED A BEAUTIFUL BLOUSE IN THE WINDOW. SHE ADMIRERD IT FROM AFAR. BUT THE NEXT DAY, SHE COULD NOT RESIST HER URGES AND SHE TOOK THE BLOUSE WHILE SHE THOUGHT THE OWNER WAS NOT LOOKING. SHE HAD BEEN SEEN BY THE OWNER AND THE POLICE WERE CALLED. MARY WAS CHARGED WITH LARCENY AND SENTENCED TO 12 MONTHS IN PRISON, SHE WAS ONLY 13 YEARS OLD. THOUGH SHE WAS RELEASED AFTER SIX MONTHS, THIS TIME SERVED WAS TO BE BOTH TRAUMATIC AND ENLIGHTENING FOR MARY. SHE WAS JAILED WITH MURDERERS, FELONS, THIEVES AND PROSTITUTES. SHE SOON LEARNED THAT TO SURVIVE, SHE WOULD HAVE TO GROW TO BE A VERY TOUGH WOMAN.

SHE MET AND MARRIED CHARLES HOBSON ON 31ST JULY, 1823. THEY WERE BOTH 26 YEARS OLD. SOON AFTER THEIR MARRIAGE, MARY MOVED TO LEICESTER TO FIND WORK. IT WAS HERE SHE DISCOVERED SHE WAS PREGNANT. THERE WAS NO WORK. THIS MEANT NO FOOD AND NO ROOF OVER HER HEAD. NO CARE FOR HER WITH HER PREGNANCY. SHE SOON BECAME INVOLVED WITH A TOUGH CROWD. ON 22ND MARCH, 1824, AFTER STEALING A WATCH, MARY WAS AGAIN ON TRIAL FOR LARCENY AT THE LEICESTER BOROUGH ASSIZES AND SENTENCED TO FOURTEEN YEARS TRANSPORTATION TO THE COLONY OF VAN DIEMENS LAND. HER SON BENJAMIN WHO WAS BORN ON 1ST JUNE 1824 IN LEICESTER PRISON, REMAINED WITH HER. HER HUSBAND WAS NEVER TO KNOW THE OUTCOME OF MARY'S PREGNANCY AND SHE WAS NEVER TO SET SIGHT ON HIM AGAIN.

ON 12TH OCTOBER 1824, AFTER SPENDING OVER 6 MONTHS IN LEICESTER JAIL, MARY BOARDED THE CONVICT SHIP HMS HENRY AND BEGAN HER JOURNEY TO VAN DEIMENS LAND. THERE WERE 79 CONVICT WOMEN ON THE HENRY AND FIVE CHILDREN, INCLUDING HER BABY SON, BENJAMIN, WHO WAS NOW 4 MONTHS OLD.

THE WOMEN WERE AGED FROM 13 TO 63 YEARS. SOME WERE FRAGILE OLD GRANDMOTHERS. THEY WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO STAY UPRIGHT WHEN THE SHIP SWAYED IN THE GIANT WAVES AND WIND DURING THE JOURNEY. ONE WOMAN HAD BOARDED THE SHIP TO BE WITH HER DAUGHTER. MANY RECEIVED BROKEN LIMBS AND BRUISES FROM FALLS. SMALL POX WAS RIFE AND SOON SPREAD. SEA SICKNESS WAS PROBABLY THE WORSE COMPLAINT FROM THE WOMEN. TO EASE PAIN, THE SHIPS SURGEON WOULD ADMINISTER WINE TO HELP THEM SLEEP. MAYBE THIS DID NOTHING FOR THEIR NEED FOR ALCOHOL WHEN THEY FINALLY ARRIVED IN THE COLONY.

THE CHILDREN, ESPECIALLY, WERE REGULAR VISITORS TO THE SHIPS SURGEON. BENJAMIN HAD CONTRACTED SMALLPOX. WILLIAM LUGG, AGED 6 MONTHS, ALSO HAD VERY SEVERE SMALLPOX AND SUFFERED COMPLICATIONS. HE WAS TO DIE DURING THE VOYAGE. ANN LUGG, HIS MOTHER, HAD BEEN TRIED WITH MARY AT THE LEICESTER BOROUGH ASSIZES.

MARY WORRIED ABOUT HER BABY BUT NEVER GAVE UP HOPE THAT THEY WOULD SURVIVE AND MAKE IT TO HOBART TOWN. ONE WOMAN AND ONE CHILD DIED ON THAT TREACHEROUS VOYAGE. ONE BABY DIED AND TWO WERE STILL BORN. ONE STILL BIRTH WAS AS A RESULT OF THE MOTHER FALLING DOWN THE HOLE.

THE WOMEN WHO WERE TO ARRIVE IN THE COLONY , WOULD NEVER FORGET THEIR SISTERS AND THEIR BRAVE EFFORTS FOR SURVIVAL.

THE HENRY ARRIVED IN HOBART TOWN ON THE 8TH FEBRUARY 1825. THE WOMEN WERE HECKLED AND ABUSED BY THOSE ON THE WHARF. IT WAS OBVIOUS TO THEM FROM THE BEGINNING THAT THEY WERE TO EXPERIENCE THE SAME TREATMENT AND LIFE IN VAN DEIMENS THAT THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD LEFT BEHIND THEM.

MARY WAS ASSIGNED SOON AFTER ARRIVAL . SHE WAS ASSIGNED TO A MR JOHN HEADLAM. BENJAMIN WAS PLACED IN THE ORPHANAGE, AS WERE ALL CHILDREN WHOSE MOTHERS WERE UNDER SENTENCE.

JOHN HEADLAM WAS A SCHOOL TEACHER AND RAN HIS SCHOOL IN HOBART TOWN. HE APPOINTED A MANAGER TO HIS PROPERTY, CALLED EGGLESTON. THIS MAN WAS PATRICK MCCASKER, AN IRISH CONVICT WHO HAD ALREADY SERVED 8 PLUS YEARS IN THE COLONY. HE HAD ARRIVED ON THE CHAPMAN ON 23RD AUGUST 1817. HE WAS TRIED IN CORK FOR ARMED ROBBERY AND SENTENCED TO TRANSPORTATION FOR LIFE .

SOON AFTER HER ASSIGNMENT TO JOHN HEADLAM, MARY BECAME PREGNANT AGAIN. A SON WAS BORN ON 10TH NOVEMBER, 1826. SHE NAMED HER SON JOHN. THE FATHER OF THIS BOY IS UNKNOWN TO THIS DAY.

SHE HAD BOTH HER SONS BAPTISED IN LAUNCESTON IN 1826. ON 23RD JULY 1827, MARY CARR HOBSON AND PATRICK MCCASKER WERE MARRIED AT ST JOHNS CHURCH LAUNCESTON. THEY HAD MOVED NORTH NEAR THE DELORAINE ON NORFOLK PLAINS AND ESTABLISHED A HOME THERE. PATRICK WORKED AS OVERSEER FOR GAMALIEL BUTLER AT A PLACE HE HAD NAMED THE RETREAT. IN THEIR OWN WAY THEY WERE HAPPY AND WORKED HARD. ON THE 3RD MAY 1828, A SON WILLIAM WAS BORN. THEN IN 1829, ANOTHER SON DANIEL. AT THE AGE OF 3 MONTHS , DANIEL DIED. HE IS BURRIED AT THE KIRKLANDS PRES CEMETERY IN CAMPBELL TOWN. TODAY , AFTER MUCH SEARCHING , I FOUND DANIEL'S HEADSTONE AT THE CEMETERY IN CAMPBELL TOWN.

ON SOME EVENINGS MARY WOULD SIT AND PONDER AT THE WAY LIFE HAD TAKEN HER. FROM A POOR CHILD IN YORKSHIRE TO A WIFE AND MOTHER IN A VERY FRIGHTENING AND UNKNOWN LAND. SHE WAS VERY MUCH A LOVING AND PROTECTIVE MOTHER TO HER THREE SONS. HER HOPES AND DREAMS FOR THEM WAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE IN THIS COUNTRY. JUST THE SAME AS MOTHERS TODAY.

IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL FOR ME , AT THIS STAGE OF MARY'S LIFE JOURNEY , TO GIVE YOU A HAPPY EVER AFTER ENDING. BUT THAT IS THE PART OF MARY'S JOURNEY THAT I CANNOT PROVIDE. ON THE 29TH JANUARY, 1831, WHILE PATRICK WAS AWAY IN A TOWN CALLED WESTBURY, TO BUY SHEEP FOR MR BUTLER, A GROUP OF NATIVES GATHERED AT THEIR

HOUSE.

THE CHILDREN , NOW AGED 7, 5 AND 3 YEARS, WERE PLAYING IN THE FIELDS AMONGST THE LONG GRASS. MARY, WHO WAS IN THE HOUSE, SAW THE NATIVES APPROACHING WITH THEIR SPEARS RAISED. THEY WERE FROM THE BIG RIVER TRIBE, NOT USUALLY IN THIS AREA. THE LOCAL SETTLERS GOT ON WELL WITH THE LOCAL NATIVES . MARY TRIED TO RUN OUTSIDE TO FIND HER CHILDREN. THE NATIVES CAME INTO THE HOUSE AND THREW ROCKS THAT SENT MARY TO THE FLOOR. BLEEDING FROM A LARGE WOUND IN HER HEAD, SHE RAN FROM THE HOUSE, CALLING FOR HER BOYS AS SHE RAN. THE NATIVES THREW A SPEAR AND SHE FELL TO THE GROUND. THE CHILDREN WERE HELD BACK BY A WORKER NAMED SAMUEL JAMES. HIS ONLY THOUGHTS WERE TO TO SAVE THEM.

PATRICK SOON RECEIVED WORD OF THE TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AND RODE HOME , ONLY TO FIND HIS WIFE LAYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD OUTSIDE THE HOUSE WHERE SHE FELL. HE LENT OVER HER AND ALL HE COULD DO WAS TO OFFER COMFORT AND SAID HIS FINAL GOODBYE. HE THEN FOUND HIS CHILDREN AND WAS TO BEGIN A NEW JOURNEY, WITHOUT MARY, TO CARE FOR THEM. TO RAISE THEM AS GOOD MEN AND SEE THAT THEY WOULD HAVE A FUTURE IN THIS LAND THAT HAD TREATED THEM SO BADLY. THE LOCAL ORPHANAGE HAD OFFERED TO TAKE THE BOYS BUT PATRICK REFUSED, WANTING TO CARE FOR THEM HIMSELF.

HE CARED FOR THEM UNTIL HE DIED IN LAUNCESTON IN 1845. BENJAMIN HOBSON AND JOHN , WHO TOOK THE MCCASKER NAME, LEFT TASMANIA IN 1847 AND HEADED TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA. THEY THEN MOVED TO VICTORIA WHERE THEY BECAME GOLD MINERS. WILLIAM MCCASKER HEADED NORTH TO NSW, AND BEGAN A LIFE ON THE LAND. BENJAMIN DIED IN 1854 IN CRESWICK CREEK IN VICTORIA. HE WAS ONLY 30 YEARS OLD. MAYBE HIS BEGINNINGS ON THE HENRY CONTRIBUTED TO HIS EARLY GRAVE.

THE THREE SONS OF MARY CARR HOBSON MCCASKER DID HER PROUD AND PRODUCED MANY GENERATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN MAINLANDERS. SONS AND DAUGHTERS. IN WILLIAMS CASE, ALL MALES BORN TO THE MCCASKER FAMILY , TOOK THE FULL SURNAME OF CARR HOBSON MCCASKER.

IT IS NOT KNOWN AS THIS TIME, WHERE MARY'S BODY LAY IN THIS LAND. TO FINALLY PROVIDE AN HONOURABLE END TO HER JOURNEY, I WILL TRY TO FIND HER WHILE I AM HERE.

I HAVE ONLY SEEN ONE DESCRIPTION OF MARY. I FOUND ON IT HER CONVICT RECORD. IT READ.....

“MARY CARR HOBSON MCCASKER A LARGE WOMAN WITH AN ARTFUL DISPOSITION.”

THANKYOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE MARY'S JOURNEY WITH YOU TODAY.