

## **Hobart town and Sydney: a comparison of the lives of Morley women (presenter: Dianne Lowe)**

- Slide 1.** I will begin by paying respect to the First Australian people, their elders past, present and emerging, and particularly those who resided in Nipaluna (Hobart Town) or Warrane (Sydney Cove) at the time these events took place, and to their ancestors and descendants.
- Slide 2.** I became absorbed in the lives of the Morley women when I discovered a direct ancestor on my mother's side, Anne Harwood, was a convict. I explored her records. Being a researcher with quite an inquisitive nature, this family history endeavour soon morphed into capturing as much information as I could, in a database, for each Morley woman. I was curious whether there was a reason Ann landed here instead of NSW, and how her experience might have contrasted with her peers who disembarked in Sydney.
- Slide 3.** I soon discovered there's extensive information available to the public, thanks to the archiving, digitising, transcribing and story-telling efforts of librarians, researchers, community members and volunteers at organisations like the Female Convict Research Centre. Listed here are some of the resources I accessed for this project.
- Slide 4.** Three of these books in particular contained much information on the Morley convicts - Reid's Two Voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, Tardif's Notorious Strumpets and Dangerous Girls, and Robinson's The Women of Botany Bay.
- Slide 5.** Through the resources I identified these pre-arrival factors that might have influenced where the women disembarked. I also looked at whether there might be differences in their post-arrival experiences. I am delighted to share with you what I have found.
- Slide 6.** This research helped me contextualise the experience of Ann Harwood. She was sentenced to death for attempting to pay with counterfeit money, just a month after being acquitted for the same crime. Thankfully her sentence was respited to transportation for life.
- Slide 7.** As we have just heard from Elaine and Colette, the Morley anchored in the Derwent on the 29th of August after a record breaking passage of 99-days. 50 convicts disembarked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Sept during a

snow storm. The remaining 71 women anchored in Sydney Cove on the 13<sup>th</sup> and disembarked on the 19<sup>th</sup> where half were assigned to service throughout Sydney and the remainder were held in the gaol for four days, before they were sent to Parramatta by water.

**Slide 8.** I will now examine factors that might have influenced destination. One possible factor is time since conviction. This histogram shows time between sentencing and transit in days. The trials were held between January 1819 and April 1820. The time between sentencing and transit ranged from 42 to 494 days. The red line is the median time since conviction which was 173 days. I am using the median, rather than mean, as it is less impacted by extreme values. Ann's trial took place 51 days before transit.

**Slide 9.** The pattern was reasonably similar between the colonies and the p-value of 0.442 suggests that time already served did not influence destination. Normally a p-value of less than 0.05 is accepted as showing some evidence that the results are unlikely to be due to chance.

**Slide 10.** Another factor that might have influenced destination is age. Half the Morley women were 27 or younger, with the youngest being 17 and oldest 55. Ann Harwood was around 24 years old.

**Slide 11.** The median age was slightly older in Port Jackson but again the pattern was fairly similar between the colonies.

**Slide 12.** For their crimes twenty-two were transported for life, 49 for 14 years and 50 for 7 years. But sentence severity does not really look like it played a role in destination.

**Slide 13.** Did prior marriage influence destination? 9 of the 28 married women landed in Hobart Town whereas 19 landed in Port Jackson. Again, prior marriage status does not really look like it played a role in destination. Did the presence of children on board the Morley predict destination?

**Slide 14.** Nineteen mothers were identified as disembarking the Morley with 30 children. Women who came without offspring had almost 50 50 chance of disembarking in either colony, whereas those who came with offspring had closer to 90% chance of disembarking in Port Jackson. Coming with children does look like it played a role in where women ended up. This is supported by the p-value of less than 0.05. There

were 50 children on the Morley and I was only able to account for 30 post arrival and four who died during the voyage. I am concerned this difference actually might reflect differences in record keeping between colonies. It is also plausible that the 50 children counted by Reid may have included the 11 children who were on the Morley with the free women.

**Slide 15.** Another factor that might have influenced destination is the surgeon's character assessment. You may recall Ann was enticed by sailors to escape prison. This didn't escape mention on her file, but the surgeon did note her conduct prior was excellent and her behaviour since -exemplary.

**Slide 16.** In total 17 women (or their children) were mentioned by Reid in his journal. Being mentioned by name predicted disembarking in Hobart Town. This was unlikely to be due to chance.

**Slide 17.** My analyses treat the women as though they were static once landed. However their records show that at least 10 moved between colonies. Specifically, seven went from VDL to NSW, three went the other way, and Jane Peck servant to Lieutenant-Governor William Sorell returned to England with his family in 1824 after his administration was ended. Typically this movement between colonies was to reunite with or accompany husbands, but for widow Jane Barker it was a partially unsuccessful attempt to consolidate her family. Five years after landing in Sydney with two sons who came free, Jane Barker obtained permission to proceed to Hobart with one of them, but by then, Stephen Lear, one of her two convict sons already in Hobart had been executed for a burglary at the Surveyor General's place.

**Slide 18.** So far we have looked at the key pre-arrival factors that could have influenced destination, and now we will explore whether key post-arrival experiences differed by colony. Although I found data for the majority of the women after landing - I couldn't find post-arrival records for two, Catherine Leeson and Jean Wilson alias Brown after they disembarked in NSW.

**Slide 19.** Ann's trial records mention a husband Mr Turner had earlier deserted her so reunion post transportation was unlikely. Once in Hobart Town Ann Harwood married a convict Thomas [H]Edges. I

wondered whether the outcomes of prior marriages might vary between colonies. 28 of the women on the Morley had been previously married.

**Slide 20.** Interestingly, transportation actually enabled five in NSW, and two in Hobart, - Elizabeth Cheatham and Sarah Horton - to reunite with their convict husbands. But a decade later Sarah Horton was "Living in a state of illicit intercourse with William Yates and was ordered to live with her husband who holds a Ticket of Leave and from whom she says she receives support." Despite the order, in 1836 her death notice reads "Died at the residence of William Yates ... Sarah, the wife of William Horton". Some couples were tried together, like Sarah and Charles Mitchel, and happened to both end up NSW - her with their infant son. Others obtained permission to join their husband - like Judith Myers who arrived in Parramatta with three children and reunited with husband Frederick, who, even though he was sentenced before her in 1818, didn't arrive in VDL until 1821.

**Slide 21.** A total of 97 Morley women married after transportation. Between them there were 111 marriages. Among the 96 women I identified a marriage date for, 50% were married within 1.5 years after disembarking, with a range from 0.1 to 20 years.

**Slide 22.** The pattern of time to first marriage in Australia did not seem to differ between VDL and Port Jackson.

**Slide 23.** Nor was there a difference in the number of times married after arriving in Australia between colonies.

**Slide 24.** Three years after marrying, Ann had eloped and her husband placed a notice in the newspaper warning against giving her credit on his account. Two months later Ann's conduct record states she was found living in adultery with James Luckman and sentenced to the "Crime Class, Factory". Being after 1821 it's possible Ann was in the Female Factory, built in Hobart Town Gaol precinct. For his part James Luckman (also a convict) was found guilty of harbouring Ann. James was Thomas and Ann's neighbour on Liverpool Street. Between 1824 and 1828, Ann accrued multiple charges of absence without leave and disorderly conduct and drunkenness.

**Slide 25.** The disorderly charges continued, one even laid by her husband in 1831, but the case was dismissed. In 1833, Ann Elizabeth was found

guilty of adultery again, this time with Constable Peacock. Her ticket of leave was suspended for six months. She was returned to the Factory, the register of females admitted to Cascades shows her sentence started the same day. As the journalist poetically notes in this article, for his part, "The Peacock was ordered to strut in the country". Five years later, Constable Peacock assisted Captain Mackenzie in the capture of bushrangers.

**Slide 26.** 70% of Morley women attained freedom. This was either free certificate for those who'd served their time, or as with Ann, an indulgence of conditional pardon enabling them to attain freedom earlier. 18% died before attaining freedom and 12% were unclear. Did this vary by sentence and colony?

**Slide 27.** Among those who landed in Hobart with a 7 year sentence - 18 attained freedom and 1 died prior. For one, Sarah Kirtland, I couldn't find a freedom or death record. The pattern was similar for those in NSW. But did the time served differ?

**Slide 28.** This is a plot of the time served until free for those sentenced to 7 years. On the bottom axis is years and on the vertical axis is the proportion of women who hadn't obtained freedom yet. This analysis includes women up to the point that they either attained a certificate of freedom or conditional pardon. Women remain in the analysis until they are free, died or their last known record. As you can see in this plot, no-one with a seven year sentence attained freedom before 7 years. But at 7 years, over half of the women attained their freedom. A few took longer to attain freedom due to additional colonial sentences. This pattern is the same between the colonies.

**Slide 29.** Among Hobart Town women sentenced to 14 years, 16 attained freedom and 2 died prior, leaving 1 unclear. Whereas in NSW 16 attained freedom, 9 died prior and 5 were unclear. There was a trend for women in NSW to die prior to attaining freedom but this was not significant. Did time to freedom differ by colony for those with a 14 year sentence?

**Slide 30.** Almost all served the full 14 year sentence. But 75% plus in Hobart Town attained freedom soon after 14 years, whereas in NSW only around 50% of women attained freedom at the 14 year mark, with some

women still not free for over 30 years. That means among women with a 14 year sentence - those who disembarked in Hobart served less time. The p-value suggests this difference is unlikely to be due to chance alone.

**Slide 31.** Of the 11 sentenced to life in Hobart Town, 7 attained freedom and 4 died prior. In contrast for Port Jackson, only 2 out of 11 sentenced to life attained freedom, 4 died prior and 5 were unclear. Although the p-value is significant, the difference between the colonies could be due to finding fewer freedom or death records for women in Port Jackson.

**Slide 32.** In Hobart Town, women with a life sentence began to attain freedom after 11 years – even earlier than their peers with a 14 year sentence. They all attained freedom (or died) by 21 years. Whereas in PJ, only two women sentenced to life had a record of attaining freedom identified, another 2 died during their sentence. After 20 and half years five women in NSW had not yet obtained their freedom and no death date was identified. Given the p-value of 0.045 this appears unlikely to be due to chance.

**Slide 33.** Ann Hedges died in 1858 (38 years after arriving and 15 years after her conditional pardon). Thomas and Ann, were buried in Queenborough Cemetery at Sandy Bay.

**Slide 34.** 25 years after leaving England, half the Morley women were still alive. There appears to be no real difference in the pattern of survival between the two colonies, even though the women who survived longest tended to be in Tasmania.

**Slide 35.** Of the 68 Morley women with a date of death, the median age at death was under 51 years, which speaks to the challenges of survival in that era. But this analysis includes people to their last known record, and this suggests that half the Morley women were still alive at 58 years of age. Ann Harwood was 62 when she died. The shortest lifespan was Catherine McGinnis who died in childbirth aged 27. The longest lived, Sarah Web died at 98 years. She was a long time servant of Lieutenant Governor George Arthur. There appears to be no real difference in lifespan between the colonies.

**Slide 36.** In this presentation we have seen that key pre-arrival factors that could have influenced destination and post arrival experiences were

largely similar across colonies. However, it appears that women with children on the Morley may have been made to proceed to Port Jackson and those mentioned in Reid's journal were more likely to land here in Hobart Town. Once landed, Tasmanian Morley women with a 14 year or life sentence attained their freedom more rapidly than those landing in NSW. Despite this, survival of the Morley women was similar regardless of which colony they landed in. I find the Morley voyage and the women on-board truly remarkable; especially for their resilience enduring hardships, which has enabled many of us, including me, to be here today.

**Slide 37.** References to Ann Harwood.