

# MARY ANN WHITLOCK - CONVICT

We have received several references to Mary Ann Whitlock over the past few years. Peter Whitaker's *Whitlock/Whitlock Families Found Down Under* book shows Mary Ann Whitlock born about 1810 married to William Brighton Apr.15,1835 at Launceston, Tasmania. The newspaper article sent in my *Maisie Whitlock on Convict Tokens* mentions that after repeated fines for drunkenness and vagrancy, Mary Ann married had children and prospered. The latest information comes from Muriel Gillman and is an extract from *Love Tokens - the leaden hearts the convicts left behind* by Field & Millet. The listing for Mary Ann Whitlock in this book gives must more detail. Mary Ann Whitlock's token reads "M. A. / Witlock / Aged 22 / 1831" "Adieu / Dear Aunt / Adieu".

"The case of Mary Ann Whitlock is interesting for many reasons, not least that she was a woman from East Anglia leaving her token to an aunt. Although not certain, it is implied that it is only an aunt that she has left to grieve for her. Moreover, although we have always known that a small proportion of convicts were women seemed prepared to publicise their fate.

With Whitlock we are lucky that we have a fairly clear image of this young woman from records gives a strong impression of her, with her ruddy complexion which would either seem to be the result of her farm labours or else (after reading her later life history) from excessive drinking.

Whitlock's conviction and sentence for fourteen years for stealing a purse with the sole contents of half a crown would seem harsh but as would be expected for such a term, there was previous 'form'. Recorded as having been in custody before and once for vagrancy. There is also a note of 'three months on the farms', which may explain her occupation at the time of conviction. She was transported on *Hydery* which left from Plymouth on 10 August 1832, nearly a year after her conviction, with a total of 150 women convicts. After a journey of 121 days, 146 of the originals were handed over in Hobart. It took Mary only a few weeks before she started to face problems with the authorities. On 27 March 1833 she was convicted of being drunk 7 days solitary confinement on bread and water, followed by numerous similar description over the next couple of years. In the gaol report for 1835 we find '17<sup>th</sup> June 1835 Wife of W. Brighton' followed immediately by 'three months imprisonment Female House of Correction Launceston'. Later, by 1842, her life had degenerated to the extent that we read 'misconduct in having formed highly improper companionship and suspected of being accessory to a felony, ordered to be removed to Launceston and recommended that the ticket of leave promised in 1843 be withheld'. The authorities seemingly, at this point, tried a new tack by fining her for drunkenness until finally she was granted a free certificate at age 36, having served the full term of fourteen years. Further investigation showed on 15 April 1835 she married a free settler William John Brighton, while still a convict. Their marriage was by banns with the consent of the government. When it came to signing the document there is a cross by her name. His death is recorded at George Town in 1874, aged 93. As yet no record of hers has been found."

While the newspaper article talks about children we have yet to determine if there are any descendants of Mary Ann Whitlock. Our thanks to those mentioned for putting this material

together and sharing it with us.

Sources: R1201/94; R2082; NP537