

Invisible Stories:

The Presence of Female Convicts
in Queensland Following the
Closure of the Moreton Bay
Penal Settlement in 1842

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Figure 1: Funeral card of Caroline Schofield (née Haines), transported to New South Wales on the *Buffalo* in 1833, died in Queensland in 1907.¹

¹ Funeral card, Caroline Schofield (née Haines), died 1907, original held by Barbara Baker (descendant of Caroline Haines), member, Genealogical Society of Queensland (GSQ). Published with permission.

Introduction

Historical scholarship of the period before Queensland's separation from New South Wales in 1859 has traditionally focused on two distinct periods. First, the years between 1824 and 1839 when recidivist convicts were sentenced to terms of secondary punishment at Moreton Bay and, second, the period from 1842 until 1859 when the district was thrown open to free settlement and its people worked hard to eradicate any lingering 'stain' of convictism. In recent times works by Raymond Evans, Bill Thorpe, Kay Saunders and others have begun to shed light on the convict presence in colonial Queensland but there are few works dealing with the female convict presence during this period.² Mamie O'Keeffe's pioneering work mentions the thirty female convicts living in Queensland in 1846 and the 107 present in 1851, but only Hannah Rigby, Jane Appleyard and Sarah Davis (wife of one of Brisbane's earliest settlers, John Williams) have been named and identified as transportees in any publication dealing with the free settlement period.³ No works gather together the more than one hundred life stories of these women or analyse their experiences in light of the existing scholarship. Instead we must turn to primary sources and the research of genealogists to reveal the names of the female emancipists who lived in Queensland after 1842.

This essay names forty-one female convicts and ex-convicts who have been identified in convict or civil records as having a connection to Queensland. Twenty-six of these women were reoffenders located in Queensland's gaol and court records, ten were found in non-legal records and another five via genealogical research avenues. A large volume of archival and genealogical research lies ahead to rescue the remaining stories from obscurity. Further light also remains to be shed on the experiences of transportee women in Queensland during the free settlement era and the influence of the 'convict stain' on their omission from the historical narrative. The collection of further data will also allow conclusions to be drawn about their lives that will add to and inform the wider debate on the nature and character of female convicts. In the meantime, this preliminary research paper on the forgotten female convicts of Queensland reveals some of their 'invisible' stories and details the methods used to obtain these accounts.

Between 1824 and 1839 just over two thousand recidivist convicts, including 145 females, were sent to the far northern reaches of the colony of New South Wales to serve colonial sentences at the Moreton Bay penal settlement, nearly 1,000 kilometres north of Sydney.⁴ The outpost was initially established at Redcliffe on Moreton Bay but one year later it was relocated inland to a site on the

² Kay Saunders, *Workers in Bondage: The Origins and Bases of Unfree Labour in Queensland 1824-1916*, (St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press [UQP], 1982); Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders and Kathryn Cronin, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland: A History of Exclusion, Exploitation and Extermination*, (St Lucia, Qld: UQP, 3rd ed., 1993); Bill Thorpe, *Colonial Queensland: Perspectives on a Frontier Society*, (St Lucia, Qld: UQP, 1996); Bill Thorpe and Raymond Evans, 'Frontier Transgressions: Writing a History of Race, Identity and Convictism in Early Colonial Queensland,' *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (1999), 325-332; Raymond Evans, *A History of Queensland*, (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press [CUP], 2009).

³ Mamie O'Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay, 1824-1859*, (Brisbane: Royal Historical Society of Queensland [RHSQ], 2001), 19, 26-27, 30, 33-34; Jennifer Harrison, 'Rigby, Hannah (1794-1853),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 20 October 2011, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/rigby-hannah-13171>; Patrick J. Tynan, *The Liverpool Embroiderer: The Incredible Story of the Moreton Bay Convict Hannah Rigby (1784-1853)*, (Moorooka, Qld: Patrick J. Tynan, 2011); J. G. Steele, ed., *Brisbane Town in Convict Days: 1824-1842*, (St Lucia, Qld: UQP, 1975), 207; 'Williams, John (1797-1872),' *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 23 November 2011, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/williams-john-2794/text3983>; Helen Gregory, 'John Williams: Merchant Adventurer,' in *Brisbane: Squatters, Settlers and Surveyors*, ed. Rod Fisher and Jennifer Harrison, (Kelvin Grove, Qld: Brisbane History Group [BHG], Papers No. 16, 2000), 90-101.

⁴ O'Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 6, 14; Jennifer Harrison, 'Moreton Bay Convict Settlement,' Queensland State Archives (QSA), 2004-13, last updated 6 June 2012, accessed 11 June 2013, <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/History/HistoricalEssays/Pages/moretonbay-convict-settlement.aspx>.

Brisbane River that now forms part of the Brisbane city centre.⁵ The settlement's life was relatively short-lived, however, as after a vigorous and heated debate in the 1830s over the perceived evils of convictism, the decision was made to wind down and close Moreton Bay.⁶ The last recidivist convicts were sent north in 1839 and in 1840 convict transportation to New South Wales ceased altogether.⁷ When the *Sophia Jane* departed Moreton Bay on 9 May 1839, the New South Wales Governor, Sir George Gipps, reported that the 'whole of the convict women, 57 in number, have been withdrawn'.⁸ In fact, a small number remained behind and, over the next two years, several more arrived as assigned servants, though most did not stay long.⁹

When the district was finally opened to free settlement on 10 February 1842, the only female convict remaining in the district who had served a sentence of secondary punishment at Moreton Bay was Hannah Rigby.¹⁰ Hundreds of freed convicts ('emancipists') and Ticket-of-Leave convicts migrated to the Moreton Bay, Darling Downs and wider districts from 1842 onwards but relatively few were women. The 1846 New South Wales census recorded the presence of thirty female convicts and ex-convicts in the rapidly expanding 'Northern Districts' encompassing Brisbane, Ipswich and the towns of the Darling Downs.¹¹ The 1851 census recorded 107 female transportees in the district.¹² Female ex-convicts also arrived in the Moreton Bay region after 1851 as free women, often many years after their transportation to Australia. Of these, only Hannah Rigby has attracted a significant amount of interest, ranging from an entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, authored by Jennifer Harrison, to a small, self-published volume by Catholic priest, Father Patrick Tynan.¹³ The lives of the vast majority of the female convicts and ex-convicts living in Moreton Bay in 1851, as well as those who departed before or arrived after 1851, have been overlooked and omitted from the literature.

Contemporary descriptions of female convicts in New South Wales tended to stereotype them as dirty, drunken, foul-mouthed whores.¹⁴ In 1794 Thomas Watling, a convict himself who most likely had a child by a convict mistress, encouraged 'ladies of easy virtue' to embrace 'every

5 Cunningham's Journal, [1 September 1824], Archives Office of New South Wales, Ref. SZ9, reproduced in Steele, ed., *Brisbane Town*, 7-9; John Oxley, 'Extract From Field Books of Mr. John Oxley Relating to the Discovery of the Site of the City of Brisbane on 28th September, 1824,' *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (1925), 153.

6 Evans, *A History of Queensland*, 26, 50; W. Ross Johnston, *Brisbane: The First Thirty Years*, (Bowen Hills, Qld: Boolarong Publications, 1988), 63.

7 O'Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 22.

8 Sir George Gipps to Lord Glenelg, 1 July 1839, in Commonwealth of Australia, *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. XX, ([Melbourne]: Library Committee of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1924), 209. Also see, Major Sydney Cotton, 9 May 1839, in State Library of Queensland (SLQ), Correspondence of the Colonial Secretary: Letters received relating to Moreton Bay and Queensland 1822-1860 [microfilm] (hereafter: SLQ, A2 Series), A2.10, 526-530.

9 Cotton, 9 May 1839, Colonial Secretary (CS) Ref. No. 39/05853, SLQ, A2 Series, Reel A2.10, 534-536; Cotton to CS, 9 May 1839, CS Ref. No. 39/05855, SLQ, A2 Series, Reel A2.10, 504-506, 532; QSA, Chronological Register of Moreton Bay [microfilm], 14 September 1824 to 15 November 1839, Series ID 5653, 'Per Schooner "Curlew" July 1839,' [after 100]; Commissariat Office, 10 July 1839, SLQ, A2 Series, A2.10, 658; J. V. Gorman to CS, 17 March 1841, CS Ref. No. 41/03077, SLQ, A2 Series, A2.11, 173*; Gorman to CS, 25 September 1841, CS Ref. No. 41/08953, SLQ, A2 Series, A2.12, 107-108.

10 Gorman to CS, 4 July 1840, SLQ, A2 Series, A2.11, 234.

11 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 92, 3 November 1846, Supplement.

12 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 128, 7 November 1851, Supplement.

13 Harrison, 'Rigby, Hannah (1794-1853)'; O'Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 19, 33-34; Tynan, *The Liverpool Embroiderer*, (Moorooka, Qld: Patrick J. Tynan, 2011).

14 Joy Damousi, 'Chaos and Order: Gender, Space and Sexuality on Female Convict Ships,' *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 104, No. 104, (1995), 351; Babette Smith, *Australia's Birthstain: The Startling Legacy of the Convict Era*, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2008), 207, 211.

opportunity that occurs for transportation' to Sydney where, 'Be she ever so dispicable [sic] in person or manners, here she may depend that she will dress and live better and easier than ever she did in the prior part of her prostitution'.¹⁵ W. H. Breton thought that the 'greater proportion' of female convicts were 'utterly irreclaimable, being the most worthless and abandoned of human beings!'¹⁶ Edward Smith Hall, editor of the *Sydney Monitor* from 1826-40, wrote that most female convicts were 'not only grossly loose and profane, and filthy in their language, but also receivers of stolen goods, pilferers, companions of thieves and cut-throats, and drunkards in to [sic] the bargain'.¹⁷ These negative ideas concerning female convicts prevailed until at least the 1960s with Manning Clark, A. G. L. Shaw and Lloyd Robson continuing to use 'Dickensian tropes' to paint female convicts as irreclaimable criminals and drunkards.¹⁸ These stereotypes were reinforced in the public mind through the 1987 publication of Robert Hughes' *The Fatal Shore* which, in turn, had been heavily influenced by the prejudices of the anti-transportation leader, Reverend John West.¹⁹

In the 1970s, Anne Summers, Miriam Dixson and Beverley Kingston controversially proposed that women from lower and working class backgrounds were deliberately transported as sexual slaves.²⁰ Other historians have since challenged this accepted view of female convicts.²¹ Deborah Oxley suggested that previous historians had 'undervalued convict women because they undervalue women's work'.²² She argued that female convicts were not 'members of the lowest order' but were 'broadly representative' of British and Irish working women who laboured as 'dressmakers, milliners, laundry workers, rural workers, nurses and ... domestic servants'.²³ Other historians such as Babette Smith, Grace Karskens, Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart have supported these claims by presenting further evidence that female convicts not only represented a cross-section of

15 Thomas Watling, *Letters From an Exile at Botany Bay*, 1794, reprinted, ed. George Mackaness, (Sydney: 1945), 18-20, reproduced in HIST 351 Convict Australia Resource Book, (Armidale: University of New England [UNE], 2010). Also see, Rex Rienits, 'Watling, Thomas (1762-?)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, accessed 6 August 2012, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/watling-thomas-2776/text3947>.

16 W. H. Breton, *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Diemen's Land, 1830-3*, (London: [Richard Bentley], 1834), 281, reproduced in HIST 351 Convict Australia Resource Book, (Armidale: UNE, 2010).

17 'Fearful Scarcity of Labour,' *Sydney Monitor*, 7 December 1836, 3; Erin Ihde, 'Send More Prostitutes: An Alternative View of Female Sexuality in Colonial New South Wales,' *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 4, No. 2, (October 2002), 40.

18 Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, 'The Search for the Invisible Man,' in *Chain Letters: Narrating Convict Lives*, ed. Lucy Frost and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press [MUP], 2001), 63.

19 Babette Smith, 'Legend and Reality: The Genius of Russel Ward: The 2009 Russel Ward Annual Lecture, University of New England, 8 September 2009,' *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 12, (2010), 172, where Smith refers to Robert Hughes, *The Fatal Shore: A History of the Transportation of Convicts to Australia, 1787-1868*, (London: [Collins Harvill], 1987). Also see, Smith, *Australia's Birthstain*, 57-58; Ihde, 'Send More Prostitutes,' 36; Alison Alexander, *Tasmania's Convicts: How Felons Built a Free Society*, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2010), 256.

20 Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: The Colonization of Women in Australia*, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1975); Miriam Dixson, *The Real Matilda: Woman and Identity in Australia 1788 to Present*, (Ringwood: Penguin, 1976); Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia*, (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1975).

21 Portia Robinson, *The Women of Botany Bay: A Reinterpretation of the Role of Women in the Origin of Australian Society*, (Sydney: Macquarie Library, 1988); Babette Smith, *A Cargo of Women: Susannah Watson and the Convicts of the Princess Royal*, (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2nd ed., 1992); Deborah Oxley, 'Packing her (Economic) Bags: Convict Women Workers,' *Australian Historical Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 102, (April 1994), 57-76; Deborah Oxley, *Convict Maids: The Forced Migration of Women to Australia*, (Melbourne: CUP, 1996); Joy Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia*, (Cambridge: CUP, 1997); Grace Karskens, 'Declining life: On the Rocks in Early Sydney,' *Australian Cultural History*, No. 14, (1995), 63-75; Kay Daniels, *Convict Women*, (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1998); K. McCabe, 'Discipline and Punishment: Female Convicts on the Hunter,' *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1999), 38-61; Ihde, 'Send More Prostitutes,' 35-50.

22 Oxley, 'Packing her (Economic) Bags,' 68. Also see, Deborah Oxley, 'Female Convicts,' in *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past*, ed. Stephen Nicholas, (Melbourne and Sydney: CUP, 1988), 96.

23 Oxley, 'Packing her (Economic) Bags,' 67.

working-class society but that many demonstrated agency in their lives, never reoffending once transported and enjoying useful, productive and respectable lives.²⁴ In contrast, however, Damousi has criticised those who have, in her view, tried too hard to ‘rescue’ the reputation of convict women, rather than acknowledging the grim realities of their lives in a patriarchal and sexist society.²⁵ She argues that focusing on individual women and whether or not they succeeded in becoming respectable citizens merely ‘blames the victim for failing to achieve such an ideal, rather than considering the wider forces which shaped the lives of these women’.²⁶

Of the thirteen thousand female convicts transported to New South Wales between 1788 and 1840, only 145 (or 0.01 per cent) were sent north to Moreton Bay to serve sentences of secondary punishment.²⁷ Harrison’s detailed research into the eighty-two Irish female convicts sent to Moreton Bay between 1824 and 1839 shows that only one was transported to New South Wales for a violent crime.²⁸ Eleanor Doughy, a prostitute, assisted several men to commit a highway robbery during which a victim was raped.²⁹ Several others were sentenced to fourteen years for crimes including money felony and receiving, but most of the remainder had been transported for seven years for petty larcenies involving money, clothes or fabric, ribbons, jewellery, spoons, baskets and other household items.³⁰

Unsurprisingly, the few contemporary accounts that exist of these recidivist females are not any kinder than those relating to female convicts more generally. In his convict memoir of Moreton Bay, *The Fell Tyrant*, William Ross wrote that ‘these women’ were ‘of the very worst class, their habits the most depraved of all kinds ... reformation is quite impossible; it is as endless a task, as to make the dumb speak, and the blind to see’.³¹ Harrison and J. G. Steele argue that Ross, who served as a convict at Moreton Bay between 1826 and 1832, was ‘resorting to a generally accepted opinion, using well-worn familiar phrases’.³² They estimate that during his six years at Moreton Bay, Ross would have encountered forty female convicts who were unlikely to have been ‘much worse than many females he would have come across in London’.³³

24 Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, ed., *Chain Letters*; Smith, *Australia’s Birthstain*; Grace Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney*, (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009); Lucy Frost, *Abandoned Women: Scottish Convicts Exiled Beyond the Seas*, (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2012).

25 Damousi, *Depraved and Disorderly*, 30.

26 *Ibid.*, 30.

27 Author’s own calculation based on 145 female convicts transported to Moreton Bay as a percentage of 13,000 female convicts transported to NSW. Also see, Barrie Dyster, ‘Convicts,’ *Labour History*, No. 67, (November 1994), 74; Jennifer Harrison, ‘“The Very Worst Class”: Irish Women Convicts at Moreton Bay,’ in *Irish Convict Lives*, ed. Bob Reece, (Darlinghurst, NSW: Crossing Press, 1993), 179 and 186-187; Libby Connors, ‘The “Birth of the Prison” and the Death of Convictism: The Operation of the Law in Pre-Separation Queensland 1839 to 1859,’ (PhD Thesis, University of Queensland [UQ], 1990), 36; O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 6, 14; Harrison, ‘Moreton Bay Convict Settlement’.

28 Harrison, ‘“The Very Worst Class”’, 186. Also see, Evans, *A History of Queensland*, 29, where he estimates that nearly sixty per cent of female convicts at Moreton Bay were Irish.

29 Harrison, ‘“The Very Worst Class”’, 186.

30 *Ibid.*, 186-187. Also, see Susan R. Allan, ‘Irish Convicts – Hampdens or Hardened Criminals? A Review of the Work of Lloyd Robson and John Williams: A Comparative Study,’ *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 2, (2001), 109-112.

31 Jennifer Harrison and J. G. Steele, ed., *William Ross’s The Fell Tyrant or the Suffering Convict*, (Brisbane: RHSQ, 2003), 53.

32 *Ibid.*, 1, 53.

33 *Ibid.*, 53.

'Jack Bushman', a convict at Moreton Bay between 1826 and 1838, also 'declaims about the moral laxity of the more hardened female convict'.³⁴ Evans and Thorpe note, however, that Jack Bushman's memoirs were ghost-written by a person from the well-educated middle class, most likely either the *Moreton Bay Courier* editor James Swan or his joint editor, William Wilkes, who was himself an ex-convict.³⁵ The ghost-writer, possibly somewhat ironically if it was indeed Wilkes, 'embedded gender, race and class discourses' into the text and, using a 'standard trope within English criminal biography', characterised Brooks' second wife as the 'sexually deviant woman' with a 'pipe in one hand and a glass in the other' who led Brooks into a life of crime.³⁶

An analysis of the current debate is suggestive of an 'either/or' approach to female convicts, yet the research presented in this article indicates that female convicts in Queensland defy easy categorisation either as prostitutes or as skilled workers. In fact, it could be argued that the present debate is unhelpful in its current polarised form. The forty-one women identified for this study do not conform, as a group, to one interpretation or the other. The twenty-six who reoffended after their arrival in Queensland could arguably be categorised as 'members of the lowest order', though only six were admitted to Brisbane Gaol more than once between 1850 and 1864. The majority of reoffenders were, in fact, married women convicted of a single petty offence, possibly borne out of poverty and desperation. Similarly, the remaining fifteen women do not conform to a single stereotype. While none appear to have reoffended after arriving in Queensland, five were found to have reoffended in New South Wales or Van Diemen's Land *before* moving north to Queensland.

The lives of many of these women suggest that they occupied different positions on the continuum between both extremes at various times of their lives. Some moved from reoffending to life as law-abiding citizens but others alternated between the two states as circumstances dictated. Perhaps, therefore, Damousi is closest to the mark in suggesting that we are trying too hard to 'rescue' the reputations of convict women instead of acknowledging the realities they faced at different stages of their lives. More complex analysis of the lives of female convicts, from birth to death, rather than just the few years immediately surrounding their transportation, will provide a clearer indication of whether any of the stereotypes currently applied to the emancipist women of Queensland hold true, or whether, as the preliminary evidence suggests, periods of lawlessness and even violence seem to flow seamlessly into periods of domesticity and industry.

The 'convict stain' and the treatment of Queensland's post-1842 female convicts in the historical and academic landscape

Queensland's early histories were dominated by the desire to distance the newly-established free settlement from its convict past.³⁷ The players were reduced to simple stereotypes: incorrigible convicts, sadistic commandants and savage Aborigines on the one hand, and wealthy squatters, fearless explorers and hard-working immigrants on the other. W. Frederick Morrison's 1888 work, *The Aldine History of Queensland*, for example, contrasted Moreton Bay's dark convict days with the arrival of squatters and merchants who were the 'scions of aristocratic houses', free settlers who

34 Raymond Evans and William Thorpe, 'In Search of "Jack Bushman"', in *Chain Letters*, ed. Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, 32.

35 *Ibid.*, 42-43.

36 Maxwell-Stewart, 'The Search for the Invisible Man,' 61.

37 Tamsin O'Connor, 'A Zone of Silence: Queensland's Convicts and the Historiography of Moreton Bay,' in *Representing Convicts: New Perspectives on Convict Forced Labour Migration*, ed. Ian Duffield and James Bradley, (London and Washington: Leicester University Press, 1997), 124-141.

were ‘people of the greatest intelligence, scholarship, and refinement’, and explorers who ‘dared the hardships of the wilderness and the waste places of the continent’ to become ‘worthy of a high place’ in the pages of Queensland history.³⁸

Equally noticeable in these early histories is the disconnect between the formal days of penal settlement and the ensuing period of free settlement. Early historians tended to assume that Queensland’s convict days came to a definitive end either when the bulk of the convicts departed Moreton Bay in 1839 or when the penal station was officially closed in 1842. William Henry Traill noted in 1901 that the ‘current of tradition’ led one to believe that ‘the whole of the personnel of the Moreton Bay penal establishment’ had ‘been removed thither in 1839’³⁹ and W. W. Craig wrote in 1925 that not only did the ‘period of convictism end in 1839’ but that:

The convict and the free settler were so absolutely cut off, the one from the other ... that the penal system remained a mere excrescence on the country’s history ... It should therefore be specially remarked that the convict colony, as it existed, and the city which Brisbane ultimately became, are in every important particular cut off from one another.⁴⁰

This disconnect allowed early historians to dismiss the penal era as an aberration, concentrating instead on the stories of the white men who built a new, substantial town over the ruins of an embarrassing convict past. Emphasis was placed on the district’s push for status, recognition and respectability through separation from New South Wales in 1859 and Queensland’s participation in the formation of the Commonwealth Federation in 1901.⁴¹ There was no celebration of the convict presence amongst the free settler population at these turning points in Queensland history.⁴² Instead free immigrants to Queensland were praised as the ‘cream of the British artisan classes’.⁴³ In 1876 the *Queenslander* newspaper proudly declared that its ‘enterprising and vigorous people’ had brought the state ‘into the foremost rank among British colonies’.⁴⁴ The writer only obliquely referred to Moreton Bay’s penal heritage, stating that the recently arrived immigrants had ‘improved’ the ‘character of the inhabitants’, eradicating ‘the evil spirit of the old days’.⁴⁵ The fact that Queensland’s jails and courthouses had seen a constant stream of ex-convicts entering their doors was not something that society wished to publicly acknowledge.⁴⁶

38 W. Frederic Morrison, *Aldine History of Queensland: Illustrated*, Vol. 1, (Sydney: Aldine Publishing Company, 1888), 145-146, 148, 157, 162.

39 W. H. Traill, ‘Sketcher. A Curious Old Record. Moreton Bay Penal Establishment Under Captain Logan,’ *Queenslander*, 14 December 1901, 1135.

40 W. W. Craig, *Moreton Bay Settlement, or Queensland Before Separation 1770-1859*, (Brisbane: Watson Ferguson, 1925), 56-57.

41 O’Connor, ‘A Zone of Silence’, 126.

42 See, for example, Theophilus Pugh, *A Brief Outline of the History of the Moreton Bay Settlement, From the Time of the Discovery of the Bay by Captain Cook Down to the Present Time: Compiled From Various Sources*, ([Brisbane]: [1859]), 95; ‘Arrival & Reception of His Excellency Sir G. F. Bowen, First Governor of Queensland,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 13 December 1859, 2; Craig, *Moreton Bay Settlement*, 56-57.

43 “Nut Quad” (pseud. of Charles Melton), ‘Fighters of the Fifties,’ *Queenslander*, 7 August 1909, 18, in which Melton reminisces about the immigrants who arrived in Brisbane during the 1850s, as he did with his family when he was a young boy.

44 ‘Separation Day,’ *Queenslander*, 9 December 1876, 16.

45 *Ibid.*, 16.

46 Connors, ‘The “Birth of the Prison”’, 45.

Convict women who were prostitutes, alcoholics and criminals were judged particularly harshly and without sympathy.⁴⁷ Only convicts who achieved respectability and success had public profiles, as did runaway convicts with tales of daring and adventure. This select group of emancipist men included the politicians William Henry Groom and Patrick O’Sullivan, journalists Thomas Dowse and William Charles Wilkes, Irish rebels Dr Kevin Izod O’Doherty and John Flood, and the runaway convict James Davis.⁴⁸ With the exception of Hannah Rigby, however, female ex-convicts were nameless and their contribution unacknowledged by a society that had no desire to associate itself with the ‘stain’ of convictism.⁴⁹

Harrison’s research, published in 1993 and limited to the Irish female convicts who were at Moreton Bay between 1824 and 1842, is currently the only academic work specifically written about any group of female convicts at Moreton Bay.⁵⁰ Her forthcoming history of female convicts transported to Moreton Bay as recidivists will be a very welcome addition to the academic landscape.⁵¹ Nonetheless, it will remain the case that the only work which attempts to quantify and name as many as possible of the 2,224 convicts, both male and female, who were present in Moreton Bay in 1851 is O’Keeffe’s *Convicts at Moreton Bay, 1824-1859*.⁵² Libby Connors’ PhD thesis, ‘The “birth of the prison” and the death of convictism’, which deals generally with the ‘transformation of the convict to the prisoner and the convict constable to the policeman’, refers to, but does not name, five female emancipists who were repeat offenders admitted to the Brisbane Gaol on multiple occasions between 1850 and 1859.⁵³

Quantifying and analysing the female convict presence in Moreton Bay, 1839 to 1859

The opening of the district to free settlement on 10 February 1842 marked the beginning of a new phase in the history of Moreton Bay, but the convict era had not been completely swept away. Connors notes that 129 convicts remained in 1842 and ‘as late as 1843 there were still 82 convicts on the civil establishment at Moreton Bay’.⁵⁴ Between 1841 and 1846 the population of Moreton Bay, including Brisbane Town, Ipswich and the Darling Downs, increased more than ten-fold from two hundred to 2,525.⁵⁵ Of the 320 adult women in the district, 290 had arrived free or been born in the colony (often noted as ‘always free’) and twenty-six were ‘other free’ (meaning former convicts).⁵⁶ Four women were still ‘bond’ (convict), including three women in government service and one

47 Ibid., 91, 94.

48 ‘Convict Queenslanders,’ SLQ, 2012, last updated 30 December 2009, accessed 22 February 2012, <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/fh/convicts/qlders>. Also see, for example, Raphael Cilento and Clem L. Lack, “Wild white men” in Queensland,’ *Journal of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland*, Vol. VI, No. 1, (September 1959), 73-84, 88-89.

49 See, for example, ‘Separation Day,’ 16.

50 Harrison, “The Very Worst Class,” 178-198.

51 ‘Dr Jennifer Harrison,’ UQ, accessed 3 March 2013, <http://www.uq.edu.au/hprc/dr-jennifer-harrison>.

52 O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 21-38.

53 Connors, “The “Birth of the Prison”,” v, 94.

54 Connors, “The “Birth of the Prison”,” 43.

55 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 71, 31 August 1841, Supplement; ‘New South Wales. Census of the Year 1841. – (Concluded.),’ *Australian*, 7 September 1841, 3; *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 92, 3 November 1846, Supplement; John Laverty, *The Making of a Metropolis: Brisbane 1823-1925*, (Salisbury, Qld: Boolarong Press in association with BHG, [c. 2009]), 193 (footnote 42), 170, Appendix 5, ‘Population and housing statistics for Moreton Bay 1846-61,’ Table 1: 1846.

56 O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 26-27. O’Keeffe states that 521 men and 26 women in the ‘Other free persons’ column of the 1846 census were ‘now free’ (i.e. they were transportees) and includes them in the total number of 880 of ‘those who were or had been convicts’. Similarly, Alexander, *Tasmania’s Convicts*, 266, analyses the number of ex-convicts in Van Diemen’s Land and states: ‘In 1853 Van Diemen’s Land contained 22,000 free adults, both “always free” and ex-convict. Of these, approximately 16,000 were ex-convicts’.

holding a Ticket of Leave.⁵⁷ By the time of the next census in 1851 the total Northern Districts population had risen to 8,575.⁵⁸ Of 5,690 adults in the region, there were 2,224 transportees of whom 107 were women.⁵⁹ Of these, 105 women had obtained their freedom, one woman held a Ticket of Leave and one female convict was still in private service on the Darling Downs.⁶⁰ Hannah Rigby may have been ‘the only Female Prisoner remaining at Moreton Bay’ in 1840, but by 1851 she had been joined by two female convicts and over one hundred female ex-convicts.⁶¹

As the 1851 census was the last which distinguished between bond and free it is impossible to state with any certainty how many transportees were living in Queensland after this date. Given that most of the convicts had left the Moreton Bay penal settlement by 1839 and transportation to New South Wales officially ended in 1840, it is tempting to think that the 107 transportee women present in 1851 represents the high-water mark.⁶² However, at least five ex-convict women from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land arrived in Queensland after 1851 as free women. In addition, transportation to Van Diemen’s Land continued until 1853. Alison Alexander states that 21,437 ex-convicts left Van Diemen’s Land between 1847 and 1853 bound for Victoria and other parts of Australia, but the figure is more likely 35,000 to 50,000 as many more left after 1853.⁶³ With Queensland’s population increasing seven-fold between 1851 and 1864, jumping from 8,575 to 61,467, it is easy to imagine that hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of the 152,500 ex-convicts from New South Wales and Van Diemen’s Land eventually drifted north to Moreton Bay.⁶⁴

Difficulties lie not only in accurately estimating the numbers of female transportees who moved to Queensland, but also in locating meaningful information about their lives. As Bob Reece notes, ‘there is seldom sufficient information available about individual women convicts to sustain a biographical study’.⁶⁵ And as Richard Davis has discovered, convict women are likely to remain ‘anonymous’ to the historian unless they did something ‘exceptional’, such as commit a shocking crime or marry a colonial luminary.⁶⁶ Queensland historians certainly face this challenge in researching female transportees in Moreton Bay after 1842 as once freed, they could move, marry and change their names, thus covering their tracks and making life difficult for those researching their stories.⁶⁷ Reece argues that marriage ‘represented the only possible escape’ for women of

57 O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 26-27.

58 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 128, 7 November 1851, Supplement. Also see, Laverty, *The Making of a Metropolis*, 170 (Table 2: 1851).

59 O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 30 (Table 2: Adult Population of Northern Districts, March 1851).

60 *Ibid.*, 28-29, 30 (Table 2: Adult Population of Northern Districts, March 1851). Also see, Connors, ‘The “Birth of the Prison”’, 43, for a discussion of the number of bonded workers on the Darling Downs in 1844.

61 Gorman to CS, 4 July 1840, SLQ, A2 Series, A2.11, 234.

62 Steele, ed., *Brisbane Town*, xxi-xxii; O’Keeffe, *Convicts at Moreton Bay*, 18, 22, 26; Manning Clark, *A History of Australia*, abridged Michael Cathcart, (Milsons Point: Pimlico [Random House], 1995), 204.

63 Alexander, *Tasmania’s Convicts*, 1, 267.

64 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Cat. No. 3105.0.65.001, ‘Australian Historical Population Statistics,’ (Table 100: Population, Sex and Marital Status, Qld, Census Years, 1861-91), 2006, accessed 10 February 2012, <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012006?OpenDocument>; Alexander, *Tasmania’s Convicts*, 1, 267; Smith, *Australia’s Birthstain*, 4-5.

65 Bob Reece, ‘Introduction,’ in *Irish Convict Lives*, ed. Reece, 7.

66 *Ibid.*, 7-8. Richard Davis, ‘Victims or Initiators? Three Irish Women Convicts of Van Diemen’s Land,’ in *Irish Convict Lives*, ed. Reece, 200. Davis wrote about three convict women (199-230): Mary Sullivan, hung at the age of sixteen for the murder of a baby in her care; Margaret Coughlan, the last woman to be hung in Tasmania, who killed her abusive, alcoholic husband; and Eliza Callaghan who married John Batman, one of Victoria’s founders, but who died in virtual anonymity in Geelong ‘at the end of a hob-nailed boot after a drunken row’.

67 See Alexander, *Tasmania’s Convicts*, 158-161, for a discussion of how Tasmanian convicts moved, changed their names and invented new life stories to hide their convict origins.

this class, with many women marrying male transportees.⁶⁸ Gordon Carmichael notes, however, that the low rate of marriage between free settler men and convict or emancipist females can be attributed to the ‘corporate image of debasement and promiscuity that largely disqualified convicts as marriage partners (though not as sexual partners)’.⁶⁹ Other female emancipists eked out an existence in the violent and alcohol-fuelled ‘ex-convict sub-culture’ which rendered them ‘individually unattractive as prospective lifetime companions’ and did not marry at all.⁷⁰

The task of rediscovering Queensland’s post-1842 female convicts is also hampered by the fact that there are no known narratives produced by the convict women of Moreton Bay.⁷¹ In fact, as noted by Frost, ‘the convict narrative has been implicitly gendered male’ which ‘undoubtedly reflects the literacy rates of the women’.⁷² In order to bring to life the more than one hundred female convicts whose lives have been ‘dominated, trivialized [and] made invisible’ in the pages of Queensland history we must look not only to the existing literature and primary sources but also to the new avenues now opened up through genealogical research.⁷³ Having located references to these women in the records, the challenge is to assemble the available fragments into a meaningful narrative of their lives. Eleanor Conlin Casella and Frost describe the interweaving of ‘historical details into a patterned narrative chorus of verified facts’ to ‘discover and recover’ the female convict voice as ‘triangulation’.⁷⁴ When attempting to hear the voices of female convicts and ex-convicts who arrived in Queensland as prisoners, Ticket-of-Leave holders and freed women, we must follow in Conlin Casella and Frost’s footsteps, utilising the ‘combined fortunes of archival detective work and simple luck’ to recover the stories of Moreton Bay’s ‘invisible’ women.⁷⁵

Female convict biographies: women traced through legal records

As with the three Tasmanian convicts traced by Davis in *Irish Convict Lives*, it is those who have run foul of the legal system and appear in Moreton Bay court records that are easiest to locate. So far, twenty-six women have been identified from the records of the Brisbane Gaol and Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions. The Brisbane Gaol register for 1850 to 1864, in particular, has allowed the easy identification of female convicts as each woman’s name, ship and year of arrival, ‘Native Place’, religion and ‘Trade or Calling’ is recorded in the appropriately headed columns. Crucially, a prisoner’s ‘condition’, both on arrival in Australia and entering gaol, is also recorded as ‘Free’,

68 Reece, ‘Introduction,’ 7. Also see, Smith, *Australia’s Birthstain*, 145; Paula J. Byrne, ‘A Colonial Female Economy: Sydney, Australia,’ *Social History*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (October, 1999), 288.

69 Gordon A. Carmichael, ‘From Floating Brothel to Suburban Respectability: Two Centuries of Nonmarital Pregnancy in Australia,’ *Journal of Family History*, Vol. 21, No. 3, (1996), 285.

70 First quote author: Reece, ‘Introduction,’ 7. Second quote author: Carmichael, ‘From Floating Brothel,’ 285.

71 No female convict narratives are mentioned in the academic literature on Moreton Bay. Male convict narratives include: William Ross, *The Fell Tyrant, or, The Suffering Convict: Showing the Horrid and Dreadful Suffering of the Convicts of Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay, Our Two Penal Settlements in New South Wales, With the Life of the Author William R. S.*, (London: Ward, 1836); ‘Jack Bushman’ (pseud.), ‘Passages From the Life of a “Lifer”’ (series), *Moreton Bay Courier*, 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 April 1859, all 4; ‘Old Tom’ (pseud. of Thomas Dowse), ‘Old Times. (By Old Tom.) The Settlement.—(Continued.)’, *Brisbane Courier*, 31 July 1869, 6.

72 Lucy Frost, ‘Eliza Churchill Tells...’ in *Chain Letters*, ed. Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, 79, 90. Also see, Susanna De Vries, *Females on the Fatal Shore: Australia’s Brave Pioneers*, (Brisbane: Pirog Press, 2009), 2-3, 5.

73 Joy Damousi, ‘Kay Daniels, Convict Women and 19th-Century Tasmanian History,’ *Tasmanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, (2011), 37, citing Kay Daniels, ‘Women’s History,’ in *New History: Studying Australia Today*, ed. G. Osborne and W. F. Mandle, (Sydney: [George Allen & Unwin], 1982), 32.

74 Eleanor Conlin Casella, Ellen Cornwall and Lucy Frost, ‘Your Unfortunate and Undutiful Wife,’ in *Chain Letters*, ed. Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, 105. Note: Ellen Cornwall is the convict woman who penned the letter that Conlin Casella and Frost write about in this paper.

75 *Ibid.*, 105.

'Bond', 'T of L' [Ticket of Leave] or 'F by S' [Free by Servitude]. A typical entry from 1856 gives Agnes Ferguson's ship as the *Whitby* (1839) and describes her as 'Bond' on arrival in Australia and 'F by S' when entering gaol. She was also described as a 'Needlewoman' and a Roman Catholic from Ireland.⁷⁶ In contrast, the records of the Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions give a brief description of each trial entered with the format and length according to both the nature of the offence and the complexity of the trial. An entry from 1849 reads in its entirety:

Elizabeth Carroll, of "Sarah & Elizabeth" 1837 brought up being illegally out of Her District / Port Macquarie[;] wrote to Maitland for her T of L.⁷⁷

There is no doubt that the names of some of the currently unidentified female convicts will be found in other gaol and court records, including those of the Brisbane courts and the Toowoomba Gaol. This could, however, prove to be an extremely time-consuming task as many of the available primary sources, including the registers of the Toowoomba Gaol and the associated Court and Discharge Books, do not conveniently include columns to record a prisoner's ship and year of arrival, nor their 'condition' as bond or free.⁷⁸ Determining if any of the women appearing in these other records are ex-convicts will involve cross-checking each name against the Convict Indents and other convict records, as well as local newspaper reports and other gaol registers and court records, including those from Brisbane, Sydney and Hobart, in the hope that the 'triangulation' of evidence leads to the positive identification of more female convicts.

Between 1850 and 1859, ninety-eight women were admitted to Brisbane Gaol, comprising seven per cent of total admissions to the gaol.⁷⁹ Of these, nearly half were admitted for the non-payment of fines, seven per cent were mentally ill, eight per cent were awaiting trial and approximately forty per cent were imprisoned for more serious offences resulting in terms exceeding forty-eight hours.⁸⁰ Connors' research establishes that:

For a small number of women mainly from the towns of Ipswich and Brisbane who were already deemed to be fallen and irreclaimable, [...] imprisonment was a common experience. Twenty-eight repeat offenders accounted for sixty-five per cent of all female admissions, while five ex-convict women comprised seventeen per cent of entries.⁸¹

Connors states that as incarceration was a 'predominantly masculine phenomenon', it led to the stigmatisation of the small number of women whose transgressions warranted imprisonment 'as social outcasts from the female population generally'.⁸² This stigmatisation must surely have applied doubly to those women who were also ex-convicts. Indeed, Connors argues that the 'contrast between the purity of respectable womanhood and the irredeemable convict was forcefully present' in colonial New South Wales.⁸³

76 QSA, Register of Male and Female Prisoners Admitted [to Brisbane Gaol] [microfilm], 3 January 1850 to 3 February 1864, Series ID 10826 (hereafter: QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register), 1 April 1856.

77 QSA, Register of Proceedings – Court of Petty Sessions, Ipswich [microfilm], 2 February 1847 to 28 April 1852, Series ID 5153 (hereafter: QSA, Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions), 24 November 1849.

78 QSA, 'Toowoomba Prisoners Indexes 1864-1906', 2004-13, accessed 5 July 2013, <http://www.archives.qld.gov.au/Researchers/Indexes/Convicts/Pages/Toowoomba.aspx>.

79 Connors, 'The "Birth of the Prison"', 93 and Fig. 12, 'Actual number of women confined, 1850-59,' [after 94].

80 Ibid., 93-94 and Fig. 11, 'Reasons for the confinement of women, 1850-59,' [after 94].

81 Ibid., 94.

82 Ibid., 91-92.

83 Ibid., 91-92.

While Connors only refers to five ex-convict women who were repeat offenders before Queensland separated from New South Wales in December 1859, the Brisbane Gaol register for the period 1850 to 1864 contains entries for one convict and twenty ex-convict women.⁸⁴ (See Table 1.) All were recorded as 'Bond' on arrival in Australia but only Jane Thompson per *Elizabeth* was a Ticket-of-Leave holder when admitted to gaol; the rest had earned their freedom prior to admission. The 1851 New South Wales census only listed one female Ticket-of-Leave holder and one female convict in private service. It is therefore likely that Thompson was one of these two women.⁸⁵ If this is the case, then she has the distinction, along with another as yet unknown woman, of being one of only two females in Queensland still serving their original convict sentence in 1851, over ten years after transportation to New South Wales ceased and fifteen years after she first arrived in New South Wales. From the following table, we can see that Agnes Ferguson, Janet Morrison, Ann Brown, Mary Broom and Mary Allen must be the five ex-convict women whom Connors identified as repeat offenders prior to separation in 1859. The only other repeat offender, Jemima Smith (or Norwood), was first admitted to Brisbane Gaol in 1861.

TABLE 1: CONVICT WOMEN ADMITTED TO BRISBANE GAOL, 1850-64⁸⁶

NAME	SHIP	YEAR	FIRST ADMISSION	NO. OF ADMISSIONS
Agnes Ferguson	<i>Whitby</i>	1839	09/03/1850	12
Janet Morrison	<i>George Hibbert</i>	1834	24/09/1850	2
Ann Brown	<i>Margaret (3)</i>	1840	01/11/1850	2
Bridget Jones alias Mary Woods	<i>Minerva</i>	1839	22/11/1850	1
Margaret Palmer	<i>Edward</i>	1828	12/02/1851	1
Ann Bentley	<i>Diamond</i>	1839	09/10/1851	1
Mary Broom	<i>Margaret</i>	1832	01/12/1852	6
Mary Wright	<i>Sarah & Elizabeth</i>	1837	21/12/1852	1
Maryann Chick	<i>Whitby</i>	1839	14/01/1853	1
Catherine Barnes	<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>	1836	17/05/1853	1
Mary Allen	<i>Rosland Castle</i>	1835	18/08/1853	26
Jane Thompson	<i>Elizabeth</i>	1836	01/07/1854	1
Sarah Taaffe	<i>Maryann</i>	1839	28/05/1855	1
Margaret England	<i>Minerva</i>	1843	04/07/1856	1
Mary Clark	<i>Roslyn Castle</i>	1835	20/10/1858	1
Susan Reynolds	<i>Caroline</i>	1833	17/02/1859	1

84 QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register, 3 January 1850 to 3 February 1864, contains a total of fifty-three entries for offences committed by one convict and twenty ex-convict women between 9 March 1850 and 31 October 1862.

85 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 128, 7 November 1851, Supplement.

86 QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register, 3 January 1850 to 3 February 1864. Individual entries, or first entry for repeat offenders, as per the dates contained in Table 1. The numeral in brackets after a ship's name represents the sailing of the ship that the convict arrived on; in the case of Ann Brown, the 3rd sailing of the *Margaret*.

Fanny Sullivan	<i>Mary</i>	1835	27/04/1859	1
Elizabeth Coombs	<i>Diamond</i>	1838	03/12/1859	1
Mary Frost	<i>Minerva</i>	1839	21/06/1860	1
Jemima Smith/ Norwood	<i>Maryann</i>	1837	11/06/1861	5
Mary Singleton	<i>Sable Chief</i>	1856	13/04/1862	1

In addition to the twenty-one convict women admitted to the Brisbane Gaol, Elinor Lewis, Helen McNeil, Margaret Davis and Elizabeth Carroll are referred to in Ipswich court records.⁸⁷ Finally, Jane Appleyard's name appears in the Moreton Bay Book of Trials, convicted of drunkenness on 28 February 1842, two weeks after Moreton Bay was opened for free settlement.⁸⁸ (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2: CONVICT WOMEN LOCATED IN OTHER LEGAL RECORDS, 1842-51⁸⁹

NAME	SHIP	YEAR	LEGAL RECORD	DATE
Jane Appleyard	<i>Mary</i>	1835	Book of Trials	28/02/1842
Elizabeth Carroll	<i>Sarah & Elizabeth</i>	1837	Ipswich Petty Sess.	24/11/1849
Elinor Lewis	<i>Mary Anne</i>	1849	Ipswich Petty Sess.	26/12/1849
Helen McNeil	<i>Mary Anne</i>	1839	Ipswich Petty Sess.	25/01/1850
Margaret Davis	<i>Margaret</i>	1839	Ipswich Petty Sess.	31/03/1851

Of the twenty-six women named above, Janet Morrison was sent to Parramatta Gaol to serve twelve months' hard labour, 'the last fortnight of each 3 mo[nth]s in Solitary Confinement', and two other women, Catherine Barnes and Sarah Taaffe, were sentenced to two and three years' hard labour in Parramatta Gaol respectively.⁹⁰ The majority of the remainder appear to have been guilty of lesser offences including drunk and disorderly behaviour, obscene language or absence from their Ticket-of-Leave district. Some met bail and were discharged but most served sentences of between one day and three months. Janet Morrison's crime was 'stealing £80, in bank notes, from the person of Peter Fallon, at Brisbane'.⁹¹ Fallon met Morrison at a public house and went with her to a back lane in North Brisbane. After falling asleep, Fallon awoke to find that both Morrison and his money had disappeared. Morrison 'protested her innocence, and denied all knowledge of the transaction' but the jury returned a verdict of guilty. The judge 'observed very forcibly and feelingly on the serious nature of the prisoner's offence, and expressed a hope that the punishment which she would have to undergo might have the effect of changing her mode of life'.⁹² Morrison was described as a sixteen-year-old 'nurse girl' when she was transported to New South Wales on the *George Hibbert* in

87 QSA, Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions, 26 December 1849; QSA, Clerk of Petty Sessions, Ipswich, In-letters, 1 January 1847 to 30 January 1850, Series ID 150079 (hereafter: QSA, Ipswich Petty Sessions In-letters), 189.

88 QSA, Book of Trials [microfilm], 1 July 1835 to 28 February 1842, Series ID 5646 (hereafter: QSA, Book of Trials), 294; Steele, ed., *Brisbane Town*, 207.

89 QSA, Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions, 24 November 1849, 26 December 1849, 31 March 1851; QSA, Ipswich Petty Sessions In-letters, 189; QSA, Book of Trials, 294.

90 QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register, 15 November 1851, 17 May 1853, 28 May 1855.

91 'Brisbane Circuit Court,' *Maitland Mercury*, 6 December 1851, 2.

92 'Assize Intelligence. Brisbane. Wednesday, November 12,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1851, 2.

1834.⁹³ She applied to marry a free man in 1836 and an ex-convict in 1837 but, as she was admitted to the Brisbane Gaol in 1851 as 'Janet Morrison', perhaps she never married.⁹⁴ There is no record of Morrison returning to Queensland after serving her sentence at Parramatta Gaol.

Catherine Barnes of Ipswich was found guilty of a violent crime after assaulting her neighbour who she said was 'decoying her fowls away for the eggs'. Barnes attacked Sophia Kelly with a basin and two tin quart pots until she 'lay upon the ground' with many wounds including a 'large cut to the forehead' which was 'dangerous, and might have ended fatally, without medical aid'.⁹⁵ There were at least ten women named Catherine transported to New South Wales on the *Sir Charles Forbes*, none of whom were named Barnes.⁹⁶ Civil records show, however, that Catherine Glynn married John Barnes in Sydney in 1845 and Catherine Barnes, née Glynn, died in Queensland on 5 December 1889.⁹⁷ Catherine Glynn, per *Sir Charles Forbes*, was a twenty-one year old dairymaid from County Galway who was found guilty of stealing money at the Galway Spring Assizes of 1837.⁹⁸ After serving her sentence for the 1853 assault of Sophia Kelly at Parramatta Gaol, Barnes returned to Queensland where she died in 1889.

Agnes Ferguson was not only admitted to Brisbane Gaol multiple times, she was also the subject of numerous newspaper articles that referred to her 'drunk and disorderly' behaviour, 'profane language' and 'conduct ... of an outrageous character'.⁹⁹ As noted previously, the Brisbane Gaol register records Agnes as arriving in Australia on the *Whitby* in 1839.¹⁰⁰ There was no convict named Agnes Ferguson on the *Whitby*, however. Rather, convict and civil records show that Agnes Connor per *Whitby* married Charles Chilton in Parramatta in 1845 and then David Ferguson in 'Brisbane, New South Wales' in 1848.¹⁰¹ David Ferguson, per *Hooghley* (1834), obtained a Ticket of Leave for Moreton Bay in 1845 and, like his wife, made regular court appearances.¹⁰² In 1853 he

93 National Archives of the United Kingdom (NAUK), Home Office, Convict Transportation Registers, Class HO 11, Piece 9; State Records Authority of New South Wales (SRANSW), Butts of Certificates of Freedom, NRS 12210 (hereafter: SRANSW, NRS 12210), Roll 1012, Item 4/4376; SRANSW, Bound Manuscript Indents, 1788-42, NRS 12188 (hereafter: SRANSW, NRS 12188), Microfiche 693, Item 4/4019.

94 SRANSW, Register of Convicts' Applications to Marry, Series 12212 (hereafter: SRANSW, Series 12212), Item 4/4509, 44 and Item 4/4512, 248.

95 'Cutting and Wounding,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 1853, 2S.

96 SRANSW, 'Convict Index' [online database], accessed 1 January 2011 to 1 July 2013, <http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/indexes-online/indexes-online#convicts-1> (hereafter: SRANSW, Convict Index). See search results for women named Catherine on the *Sir Charles Forbes*.

97 Unless stated otherwise, all birth, marriage and death records have been extracted from the following online databases accessed 1 January 2011 to 1 July 2013: Qld Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 'Historical Index,' 2009, <https://www.bdm.qld.gov.au/Index/Search/BirIndexQry.m>; NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, 'Historical Indexes,' 1995-2012, <http://www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/familyHistory/searchHistoricalRecords.htm>; 'Australia Birth, Marriage and Death Index,' Ancestry.com, <http://search.ancestry.com.au/search/grouplist.aspx?group=ausbmd>.

98 SRANSW, Annotated Printed Indents, NRS 12189 (hereafter: SRANSW, NRS 12189), Microfiche 730, Item X640.

99 See, for example: 'Malicious Injury to Property,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 17 February 1849, 3; 'Indecent Conduct,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 15 January 1853, 3; 'Profane Language,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 1 November 1856, 3; 'Central Police Court,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 4 October 1860, 2; 'Central Police Court,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 21 March 1861, 2; 'Central Police Court,' *North Australian*, 7 May 1864, 2.

100 QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register, 9 March 1850, 4 March 1851, 21 March 1851, 6 August 1851, 12 January 1853, 5 October 1855, 1 April 1856, 5 April 1856, 4 December 1856, 31 July 1860, 2 October 1860, 19 March 1861.

101 SRANSW, Convict Index: Agnes Conner [sic], *Whitby* (1839), Certificate of Freedom (CF) No. 47/0564, 30 June 1847, wife of Charles Chilton, per *Bencoolen*, came free (as stated on her CF).

102 SRANSW, Convict Index: David Ferguson, *Hooghley* (1834), Ticket of Leave (TL) No. 45/830 for Moreton Bay (MB), 1845; 'Disorderly Conduct,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 13 January 1849, 3.

‘begged for clemency’ on behalf of Agnes who was charged with disorderly conduct.¹⁰³ In 1860, however, he placed the following advertisement:

CAUTION. – I hereby caution the public against giving credit to my wife AGNES FERGUSON, as I will not be responsible for any debts contracted by her from this date.
DAVID FERGUSON. Brisbane, March 24, 1860.¹⁰⁴

In 1862 Agnes Ferguson, ‘the lady who some time ago was sold by her husband to one Aaron Walmsley for a horse and dray’, was charged with assaulting John Dunford at ‘the “Gap”’,¹⁰⁵ a station near Brisbane Town owned by an ex-convict, Darby McGrath.¹⁰⁶ The newspaper reported that Ferguson and ‘the paramour Walmsley were at complainant’s house doing homage to Bacchus by a copious inhibition of rum’ following which Dunford was assaulted. Ferguson and Walmsley were sentenced to short terms of imprisonment, the magistrate declaring that ‘the “Gap”’ was an area of Brisbane which ‘bears a very bad repute and requires purification’.¹⁰⁷ Agnes Ferguson, née ‘O’Connor [sic], a ‘native of Dublin’, died at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on North Stradbroke Island in 1893, presumably abandoned by her husband who died four years later at the Brisbane General Hospital.¹⁰⁸

Other female convict reoffenders can also be identified from the ‘triangulation’ of information gathered from newspaper articles, convict records and civil records.¹⁰⁹ In 1848 the *Moreton Bay Courier* reported that John Williams, husband of the emancipist Sarah Davis, complained that Mary Broom, who ‘frequently annoyed’ the neighbourhood ‘while in a state of intoxication’, had:

made use of the most abusive and obscene language, evidently culled from that well-known work called the Flash Dictionary, with a few choice epithets seldom met with except in the lowest purlieu of far-famed St. Giles, which she showered upon his head and that of his wife, to the great disgust of the neighbours.¹¹⁰

Mary Broom was, in fact, Mary Corcoran per *Margaret* who had been granted permission to marry Stephen Broom per *Claudine* (1829) in 1840.¹¹¹ Three years later Mary’s Certificate of Freedom was notated ‘Brisbane 29 Dec[embe]r’ in the left margin.¹¹² The Brooms had at least six children in Queensland but Mary and her youngest daughter, Ann, died in 1860 when Mary was aged only 37.¹¹³

103 ‘Disorderly Conduct,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 19 March 1853, 2.

104 ‘Caution’ [classified advertising], *Moreton Bay Courier*, 27 March 1860, 3.

105 ‘Police Court, Tuesday, August 2. Before the Police Magistrate,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 4 August 1860, 4. Note: This article is quoted in a paper on the history of Ashgrove and The Gap, suburbs of Brisbane, however Agnes is not identified as a convict. See, Dick Paten, ‘Glimpses of Pre-separation Ashgrove: Landscape, Land Use, Access and People,’ in ed. Barry Shaw, *Brisbane: People and Places of Ashgrove*, BHG Papers No. 21, (Kelvin Grove, Qld: BHG, 2010), 39.

106 Jeff Hilder, ‘The Intriguing Life of a Colonial Pastoralist,’ (presentation at a general meeting of The Gap Pioneer and History Group), The Gap, Qld, 8 September 2012.

107 ‘Police Court, Tuesday, August 2. Before the Police Magistrate,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 4 August 1860, 4.

108 ‘Brisbane General Hospital,’ *Brisbane Courier*, 2 June 1897, 6.

109 QSA, Brisbane Gaol Register, 1 December 1852, 25 October 1853, 25 April 1854, 29 September 1854, 12 February 1855; ‘Incorrigible,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 24 February 1849, 3; ‘An “Old Familiar Face”’, *Moreton Bay Courier*, 3 February 1849, 3.

110 ‘Caution to Street Brawlers,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 8 January 1848, 2.

111 SRANSW, 12212, Item 4/4513, 200; SRANSW, NRS 12188, Microfiche 674, Item 4/4015. Also see, ‘Domestic Intelligence. Ipswich,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 27 November 1852, 3.

112 SRANSW, NRS 12210, Roll 1015, Item 4/4387.

113 ‘Albion Hotel, Ipswich,’ [advertisement], *Moreton Bay Courier*, 31 July 1852, 3.

Mary Wright appeared before the Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions in April 1850 charged with ‘cribbing three ginger-beer bottles’. A warrant having been issued, Mary appeared ‘carrying in her arms, as most women do in this prolific town, a young squaller’. While the offence was ‘clearly proved’, the judges, ‘in compassion for the bairn (not quite six months old), overlooked Mary’s peccadillo’ and merely admonished her.¹¹⁴ Another ex-convict, Margaret Davis, a Ticket-of-Leave holder per *Margaret*, had been refused permission to marry William McGarry in 1842 as he was already married.¹¹⁵ In 1851 she appeared before the Ipswich Court, where Constable Hart gave evidence that:

William McGeary [sic] gave him information on Saturday that Margaret Davis with whom he had been cohabiting for 11 years and is the mother of 3 children by him was a Prisoner of the Crown and was illegally at large.¹¹⁶

Other female convicts who reoffended, however, have so far proved elusive. Ann Brown per *Margaret (3)*, Jane Thompson per *Elizabeth* and Mary Clark per *Roslyn Castle* may never be identified due to the common nature of their married surnames. Elinor Lewis per *Mary Anne* (1849) and Mary Singleton per *Sable Chief* (1856) will also remain untraceable until the ships or years in which they were first transported to Australia can be identified. Despite these difficulties, it remains the case that the twenty-six women who reoffended remain the easiest group of women to research in Queensland’s primary sources. In contrast, those women who took control of their lives, raised families and became valued members of the working class, are difficult to trace without some luck or the assistance of genealogists who have already worked backwards to discover a female convict ancestor.¹¹⁷

Female convict biographies: women traced through non-legal records

In addition to Hannah Rigby and Sarah Davis, both mentioned in the secondary literature, a relatively small number of women can be traced outside of Queensland’s prison and legal records. Eight women have been identified through convict records as they were granted Tickets of Leave for Moreton Bay during the free settlement period.¹¹⁸ (See Table 3.) Another five women who arrived in the 1850s or 1860s as free women have been identified via genealogical sources, including contact with descendants of Caroline Haines and Ann Jane Burnside. (See Table 4.) As it is unlikely that more women with Tickets of Leave for Moreton Bay will surface, women in the ‘non-legal’ category who remain to be identified will be hard to come by.¹¹⁹ If an ex-convict woman arrived in Queensland under her married name and did not reoffend in Queensland, then there is no way of determining her convict status. In lieu of identifying and checking the status of all 1,073 females who were counted in the 1851 ‘Northern Districts’ census, the only avenue remaining is to contact descendants who have discovered that their female convict ancestor lived in Queensland.¹²⁰

114 ‘Domestic Intelligence. Ipswich,’ *Moreton Bay Courier*, 13 April 1850, 2.

115 SRANSW, Convict Index: William McGarry, *Royal Admiral* (1835), CF No. 41/0938, 10 July 1841; ‘From the Government Gazette,’ *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 19 March 1842, 4; SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4513, 106.

116 QSA, Ipswich Court of Petty Sessions, 31 March 1851.

117 Frost and Maxwell-Stewart, ed., *Chain Letters*; Smith, *Australia’s Birthstain*; Karskens, *The Colony*; Frost, *Abandoned Women*.

118 These women have not been included in the ‘legal records’ category as there is currently no indication that they reoffended in Queensland.

119 The SRANSW’s Convict Index does not record any female convicts as having been granted Tickets of Leave for Ipswich, the Darling Downs or other areas of Queensland; the only records located are for eight women granted Tickets for Moreton Bay.

120 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, No. 128, 7 November 1851, Supplement.

Despite being the most celebrated of Moreton Bay's female convicts, Hannah Rigby virtually disappears during the free settlement period. A trail of evidence is left behind from her recidivist days - from her two sentences of secondary punishment at Moreton Bay to her relationship with colonial administrator Robert Crawford, marriage to the convict George Page and the birth of three sons - but we are left with only a few shreds of her story after 1842.¹²¹ On 22 August 1845, the Reverend J. D. Lang of Sydney granted permission for Rigby's eldest son, 'Robert Crawford or Rigby', aged 21, 'A Native of the Colony', to marry Mary Kay, aged 29, a Ticket-of-Leave convict per *John Renwick*.¹²² The following year, perhaps while visiting her eldest son and his new wife, Hannah placed an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* seeking news of her second son:

Samuel Rigby, about 18 years of age, a native in the colony, supposed to be in the interior, is earnestly requested to communicate with his parent, to the following address ...
HANNAH RIGBY, 119, Elizabeth-street, Sydney.¹²³

Seven years' later the *Moreton Bay Courier* advised that Rigby, who 'lived in a hut by herself, near Queen street' in Brisbane, died alone after attending a wedding party in October 1853.¹²⁴ No other biographical information is given, except that she 'was a relict of the old times here, having resided in Brisbane many years before it became a free settlement'.¹²⁵

Sarah Davis, a 43-year-old cook born in London, was convicted at the Old Bailey of stealing a yard of white satin ribbon from a haberdasher's shop and transported to New South Wales on the *Burrell* in 1832.¹²⁶ She applied to marry the free arrival, John Williams, several times in 1833 but was refused as she was already married with four children.¹²⁷ Carmichael notes that a 'significant minority' of transportees were already married on arrival in Australia, contributing to the high rate of cohabitation amongst convict couples.¹²⁸ By 1837 the obstacle of Davis' prior marriage had been overcome and she and Williams were married in Sydney.¹²⁹ Williams wrote to the Colonial Secretary on 2 October 1841 enquiring about his application to take sawyers to Moreton Bay and applying for permission to reside with his family at Brisbane Town.¹³⁰ It is entirely possible that Davis, who was granted her freedom in 1839, was the first female convict to arrive at Moreton Bay as a free woman.¹³¹

Although Davis was sent to the Female Factory at least twice during her time in Sydney, there is no record of her reoffending in Queensland so we are left to read between the lines of her husband's

121 Harrison, 'Rigby, Hannah (1794-1853)'.

122 SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4514, 101.

123 'Samuel Rigby,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 January 1846, 3.

124 'Sudden Death,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 15 October 1853, 2.

125 *Ibid.*, 2.

126 'Trial of Sarah Davis and Mary Collins,' 1 December 1831, Ref. No. t18311201-160, Old Bailey Proceedings Online, (Version 7.0), accessed 25 September 2012, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org>; 'Williams, John (1797-1872)'; Gregory, 'John Williams: Merchant Adventurer,' 90-101.

127 SRANSW, NRS 12188, Microfiche 682, Item 4/4017; SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4509, 242; Item 4/4512, 38; Item 4/4509, 243; Item 4/4512, 43.

128 Carmichael, 'From Floating Brothel,' 285.

129 SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4512, 233.

130 John Williams to CS, 2 October 1841, CS Ref. No. 41/08880, SLQ, A2 Series, Reel A2.12, 665-666.

131 NAUK, Home Office, Settlers and Convicts, NSW and Tasmania, Class HO 10 (hereafter: NAUK, Class HO 10), Piece 33; SRANSW, NRS 12210, Roll 1002, Item 4/4346.

well-documented life story.¹³² We can guess that Davis squatted with Williams on the south side of the Brisbane River from 1841 in a bark roofed humpy and later assisted him in running his many businesses, including the Captain Piper Hotel in South Brisbane.¹³³ Sadly, no positive trace of her life in Queensland exists except for the newspaper article about Mary Broom's rowdy behaviour, mentioned above, and a brief death notice recording that 'Sarah, the beloved wife of Mr. John Williams, licensed victualler' died on 7 April 1849 aged fifty-two.¹³⁴

Eight women were granted Tickets of Leave for Moreton Bay, of whom only one can be positively identified as spending the rest of her life in Queensland. Mary Langley, per *Surry*, obtained her Ticket of Leave on 10 September 1845, 'On recommendation of [the] Brisbane Bench'.¹³⁵ Six weeks later, aged 39, she applied to marry Henry Skinner, aged 51, per *Lady Kennaway*, also a Ticket-of-Leave convict.¹³⁶ Permission was granted and the marriage took place on 19 December 1845. Skinner had arrived in Moreton Bay on 21 October 1839 as one of the ordinary prisoners of the crown sent north to maintain the convict establishment until the area was opened to free settlement.¹³⁷ He stayed on and was granted a Ticket for Moreton Bay on 13 April 1842.¹³⁸ Thomas Henry Skinner, son of Henry and Mary Skinner, was born in Brisbane in 1850. Henry Skinner, Mary Skinner (née Langley) and their son all died in Queensland between 1864 and 1906.

Other female Ticket-of-Leave holders are harder to trace and we are left only with tantalising hints. Catherine Mara, a 25-year-old housemaid from Waterford, arrived on the *Isabella* in 1840 and was issued a Ticket of Leave for Moreton Bay 'On recommendation of the Hyde Park B[arra]ck Bench'.¹³⁹ Margaret Reilly, also on board the *Isabella* in 1840, was a married kitchen maid from County Cavan with two children.¹⁴⁰ She was granted a Ticket of Leave for Moreton Bay in 1845 and her Certificate of Freedom, issued in 1847, is notated 'Brisbane 9 Aug[us]t'.¹⁴¹ The *Moreton Bay Courier* of 24 October 1846 advised Jane Doyle and Jane Gaskill that their Tickets of Leave 'for this district' were waiting to be collected from the Brisbane police office.¹⁴² Jane Doyle has proved elusive but Gaskill's Ticket, originally for the Gosford region, was 'Altered to Moreton Bay [on] 9 Jan[uar]y 1846'.¹⁴³ Gaskill, who arrived on the *George Hibbert* in 1834, married Thomas Teague (alias Smith), per *Asia* (5), at

132 SRANSW, Entrance Books [Sydney Gaol], Series 2514 (hereafter: SRANSW, Series 2514), Item 4/6434, Roll 852; SRANSW, Description Books [Sydney Gaol], Series 2517 (hereafter: SRANSW, Series 2517), Item 4/6298, Roll 855.

133 R. H. Madocks [sic] to CS, 12 August 1840, and note dated 14 August 1840, CS Ref. No. 40/07953, SLQ, Reel A2.11, 486-487; Williams to Gipps, 14 April 1842, CS Ref. No. 42/02823, SLQ, A2 Series, Reel A2.12, 744; 'An Old Colonist,' *Brisbane Courier*, 25 September 1872, 3; 'Old Tom' (pseud. of Thomas Dowse), 'Old Times. (By Old Tom.) The Settlement.—(Continued.)', 6; 'Old Tom' (pseud. of Thomas Dowse), 'A Day Amongst the Doughboy,' *Brisbane Courier*, 3 October 1870, 7.

134 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 14 April 1849, 1. Davis is not mentioned in her husband's obituary; see, 'An Old Colonist,' *Brisbane Courier*, 25 September 1872, 3.

135 SRANSW, Convict Index: Mary Langley, *Surry* (1840), TL No. 45/1710 for MB, 1845; SRANSW, Ticket of Leave Butts, 31 March 1827 to 20 August 1867 (hereafter: SRANSW, NRS 12202), Reel 957, Item 4/4202.

136 SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4514, 106.

137 QSA, Chronological Register of Moreton Bay [microfilm], 14 September 1824 to 15 November 1839, Series ID 5653, 31 October 1839.

138 SRANSW, NRS 12202, Reel 944, Item 4/4612.

139 SRANSW, Convict Index: Catharine [sic] Mara, *Isabella* (1840), TL No. 44/2446 for MB, 1844; SRANSW, NRS 12202, Reel 954, Item 4/4193.

140 SRANSW, NRS 12189, Microfiche 744, Item X642A.

141 SRANSW, Convict Index: Margaret Reilly, *Isabella* (1840), TL No. 45/1182 for MB, 1845, and CF No. 47/0616, 30 July 1847; SRANSW, NRS 12202, Reel 956, Item 4/4200; SRANSW, NRS 12210, Roll 1024, Item 4/4409.

142 'Tickets-of-Leave,' *Moreton Bay Courier*, 24 October 1846, 3.

143 SRANSW, NRS 12202, Reel 951, Item 4/4183. Note: 'Brisbane Water' is an area of NSW just to the north of Sydney encompassing the towns of Gosford, Terrigal and Woy Woy.

Parramatta in 1835.¹⁴⁴ Finally, in August 1850 the *Sydney Morning Herald* informed Margaret Smith, per *Sarah and Elizabeth* (1837), that her 1847 Ticket of Leave for Moreton Bay had been cancelled as she was ‘absent without authority’.¹⁴⁵ Despite extensive searches, no information has yet been found proving that these five women lived in Queensland.

TABLE 3: CONVICT WOMEN IDENTIFIED FROM NON-LEGAL RECORDS WHO ARRIVED IN QUEENSLAND BEFORE 1851

NAME	SHIP	YEAR	INITIAL IDENTIFYING SOURCE	ARRIVAL IN QLD
Hannah Rigby	<i>Lord Sidmouth</i>	1823	Secondary sources	1837 ¹⁴⁶
Sarah Davis	<i>Burrell</i>	1832	Secondary sources	c.1840
Margaret Maddocks	<i>George Hibbert</i>	1845	Ticket of Leave 42/3308	c.1842
Ann Andrews	<i>Pyramus</i>	1832	Ticket of Leave 44/1755	c.1844
Mary Langley	<i>Surry</i>	1840	Ticket of Leave 45/1710	1845
Margaret Reilly	<i>Isabella</i>	1840	Ticket of Leave 45/1182	c.1845
Catherine Mara	<i>Isabella</i>	1840	Ticket of Leave 44/2446	
Jane Gaskill	<i>George Hibbert</i>	1834	<i>MBC</i> 24/10/1846 and Ticket of Leave 43/2894	c.1846
Jane Doyle	(<i>unknown</i>)	1834	<i>MBC</i> 24/10/1846	c.1846
Margaret Smith	<i>Sarah & Elizabeth</i>	1837	<i>SMH</i> 17/08/1850	c.1847

The last group to be included in this study are the five female convicts who arrived in Queensland as free women during the 1850s and 1860s. Three had been transported to New South Wales and two to Van Diemen’s Land. Caroline Haines, per *Buffalo* (1833), a servant born in Gloucestershire, was sentenced to seven years’ transportation for stealing four caps, one collar and ten yards of cotton.¹⁴⁷ After the death of her first husband, Thomas Marsh per *Adamant*,¹⁴⁸ Caroline married another ex-convict, Robert Schofield per *John (1)*.¹⁴⁹ The Schofields undertook the back-breaking trip by bullock dray to MacIntyre Brook, Queensland in about 1858 but Caroline was widowed again

144 SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4509, 221.

145 SRANSW, Convict Index: Margaret Smith, *Sarah and Elizabeth* (1837), TL No. 42/3371 for Dungog, 1842, and TL No. 47/359 for MB, 1847; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 August 1850, 8.

146 Hannah Rigby served two sentences of secondary punishment at Moreton Bay, the second commencing in 1837. See, Harrison, ‘Rigby, Hannah (1794-1853)’.

147 Irina McKavanagh, Barbara Baker and Jan Shaw (descendants of Caroline Haines) [incorrectly attributed to Neville Lines], ‘Caroline Paulina Haines (Hynes),’ *Generation*, GSQ, Vol. 34, No. 2, (December 2011), 34; NAUK, Class HO 10, Piece 30; SRANSW, NRS 12188, Microfiche 687, Item 4/4018; SRANSW, NRS 12210, Roll 1025, Item 4/4410.

148 McKavanagh, et al., ‘Caroline Paulina Haines (Hynes),’ 34-35; SRANSW, Convict Index: Thomas Mersh [sic], *Adamant* (1821), TL No. 25/542 for Windsor, 1825, and CF No. 28/578, 27 June 1828; SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4512, 151.

149 SRANSW, Series 12212, Item 4/4514, 146; SRANSW, Convict Index: Robert Schofield, *John* (1827), TL No. 41/2475 for Patricks Plains, 1841, Recommended Conditional Pardon, [n.d.] and six TL Passport records dated 1842-1848; ‘Gazette,’ *Hobart Town Courier*, 3 July 1840, 4; ‘Conditional Pardons,’ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 September 1848, 2.

in 1862.¹⁵⁰ She died at her daughter's house in Roma in 1907 aged 89 having outlived both of her convict husbands and two of her twelve children.¹⁵¹ (See Figure 1.)

Ann Jane Burnside, per *Margaret (3)*, and Joseph Ray, per *Bussorah Merchant*, were the first couple to be married at St John's in Camden, New South Wales, in 1843 before moving to North Brisbane in about 1852.¹⁵² In 1854 the family was living at Kangaroo Point and Joseph was working as a sawyer but by 1856 they had moved to Drayton, then to Ipswich, and later to Rockhampton where Joseph Ray died in 1866.¹⁵³ Ann 'Jane' Ray had twelve children, of whom three died young, and outlived her husband for many years, dying in Toowoomba in 1910 just two days short of her ninety-seventh birthday.¹⁵⁴ The third woman who arrived in Queensland via transportation to New South Wales was identified not through the research of a descendant, but by genealogists on behalf of the television series, *Who Do You Think You Are?* A 2012 episode revealed that the Irish convict Hannah Lenehan, per *Sir Charles Forbes (1835)*, moved to Queensland about thirty years after first arriving in New South Wales.¹⁵⁵ She does not appear to have reoffended after arriving in Dalby in the late 1860s, though prior to her departure from New South Wales she had been admitted to Darlinghurst Gaol at least twice and in 1864 she was acquitted of 'keeping a brothel in Wood's-lane, off Parramatta-street'.¹⁵⁶

Finally, from the 'Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land' online database, we know that at least two ex-convict women from Van Diemen's Land settled in Queensland following the expiration of their convict sentences.¹⁵⁷ Sophia (or Kezia) Grantham arrived in Hobart in 1841 on the *Rajah (1)*. She married John Tregilgus (or Tragillus) in Hobart in 1845, however their daughter Ruth Elizabeth Tregilgus married in Queensland in 1861, suggesting the family moved north during the 1850s.¹⁵⁸ In 1873 Sophia Tregilgus and her daughter Ruth died within a month of each other in Springsure, a small town west of Gladstone.¹⁵⁹ Ann Duffen arrived in Hobart on the *Baretto Junior (1)* in 1850 after she and four other women robbed and assaulted a gamekeeper. She was sent to the Cascades Female Factory three times between 1851 and 1854 for offences including being absent without leave from the service of her master. She married Henry Gear per *Marion* in Van Diemen's Land in 1851 and received her Certificate of Freedom in 1856. Civil records show that her first child was born in Hobart, several more were born in Sydney and the two youngest, Emma and Thomas, were born in

150 McKavanagh, et al., 'Caroline Paulina Haines (Hynes)', 35-37.

151 *Ibid.*, 34-37.

152 Jan Bimrose (descendant of Joseph Ray and Ann Jane Burnside), 'Joseph and Jane Ray,' unpublished manuscript (copy in author's possession), February 2011, last updated 13 May 2011, 4-6; SRANSW, Convict Index: Joseph Ray, *Bussorah Merchant* (1828), TL No. 39/1481 for Evan, 1839; SRANSW, Convict Index: Jane Burnside, *Margaret* (1840), CF No. 47/655, 28 August 1847; Eric Ramsden, 'St John's, Camden. Anniversary of Consecration,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 June 1933, 9.

153 Bimrose, 'Joseph and Jane Ray,' 9-13.

154 *Ibid.*, 13-20.

155 SBS Television, *Who Do You Think You Are?*, Series 4, Episode 2, aired 3 April 2012; SBS Television, 'Kerry O'Brien,' 2012, accessed 10 April 2012, <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/whodoyouthinkyouare/episodes/detail/episode/4563/season/4>; SRANSW, Convict Index: Patrick McEvoy, *Eliza* (1827), TL No. 37/417 for Illawarra, 1837. (Hannah Lenehan, also known as Johanna and Ann, does not appear in the SRANSW's Convict Index.)

156 SRANSW, Description Books [Sydney and Darlinghurst Gaol], Series 2523 (hereafter: SRANSW, Series 2523), Roll 859, Item 4/6307; 'Metropolitan General Sessions,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 1864, 2.

157 Female Convicts Research Centre (FCRC), 'Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land Database', [online database accessible to FCRC members], accessed 12 May 2013, <http://www.femaleconvicts.org.au>. See records for Ann Duffen, ID 2559 and Sophia (Kezia) Grantham, ID 640.

158 'Married,' *Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, 19 December 1861, 3.

159 'Births, marriages and deaths,' *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 21 March 1873, 1; 'Deaths,' *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 5 April 1873, 1.

Queensland in 1867 and 1869. This places the family's arrival in Queensland in the mid-1860s. Ann Gear (née 'Duffin') died in Brisbane in 1899 aged 67.¹⁶⁰

TABLE 4: CONVICT WOMEN IDENTIFIED FROM NON-LEGAL RECORDS WHO ARRIVED IN QUEENSLAND AFTER 1851

NAME	SHIP	YEAR	INITIAL IDENTIFYING SOURCE	ARRIVAL IN QLD
Ann Jane Burnside	<i>Margaret</i>	1840	Descendant	c.1852
Sophia (Kezia) Grantham	<i>Rajah (1)</i>	1841	VDL Female Convict database	c.1855
Caroline Haines	<i>Buffalo</i>	1833	Descendant	c.1858
Hannah Lenehan	<i>Sir Charles Forbes</i>	1835	<i>Who Do You Think You Are?</i>	c.1865
Ann Duffen	<i>Baretto Jr (1)</i>	1851	VDL Female Convict database	c.1865

There is no reference in any official Queensland records that would indicate the former convict status of these five women, particularly as they had all married and changed their surnames prior to arriving in Queensland. Researchers locating Hannah McEvoy, Ann 'Jane' Ray, Caroline Schofield, Sophia Tregilgus or Ann Gear in Queensland in the second half of the 1800s would have no reason to suspect that they had been transported to Australia as convicts. It should be noted, however, that of the fifteen women not known to have reoffended in Queensland after 1842, at least five (Hannah Rigby, Sarah Davis, Ann Andrews, Hannah Lenehan and Ann Duffen) can be shown to have reoffended in various ways prior to the start of their new lives in Queensland as free women.¹⁶¹ The fact that female convicts have not been traced in Queensland's legal records, therefore, does not mean that they did not reoffend elsewhere in New South Wales or in Van Diemen's Land. What this does indicate, however, is that those women who did not reoffend after arriving in Queensland may remain untraceable without the efforts of genealogists to assist in uncovering their convict roots.

Conclusion

As has been found in the course of researching this essay, assembling the fragmentary references to post-1842 female convicts in the primary sources into a meaningful account of their lives is a time-consuming, laborious and frustrating task. But while it is tempting, at times, to 'collapse into the despair of researchers who have found so much, only to know nothing', the incentive to continue lies in the fact that each 'invisible' story that is recovered is as unique and important as the woman who lived it.¹⁶² Indeed, the omission of female convicts from the history of Queensland's free settlement period not only silences their individual voices but also obscures the significant contribution made by all ex-convicts to the formation of Queensland. They are also denied the

¹⁶⁰ 'Funeral Notices,' *Brisbane Courier*, 29 March 1899, 1.

¹⁶¹ Hannah Rigby: Harrison, 'Rigby, Hannah (1794-1853)'. Sarah Davis and Ann Andrews both appear in SRANSW, Series 2514, Item 4/6434, Roll 852 and SRANSW, Series 2517, Item 4/6298, Roll 855. Hannah Lenehan: SRANSW, Series 2523, Item 4/6307, Roll 859; FCRC, 'Female Convicts in Van Diemen's Land Database', record for Ann Duffen, ID 2559.

¹⁶² Conlin Casella, Cornwall and Frost, 'Your Unfortunate and Undutiful Wife,' 104.

opportunity to contribute their experiences and stories to the overarching debate on the nature of female convicts transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land.

Harrison's research into the eighty-two Irish female recidivists punished at Moreton Bay between 1824 and 1842 shows many of them to be young illiterate servants from urban areas who were transported to New South Wales after being found guilty of multiple petty offences.¹⁶³ As noted previously, only one of these women was originally transported to New South Wales for a violent crime.¹⁶⁴ In introducing Harrison's paper in *Irish Convict Lives*, Reece argues that:

Few of them justified the description of 'women ... of the worst class' applied to them all by their convict contemporary at Moreton Bay, William Ross; but nor can they be recognized as Portia Robinson's virtuous 'family women' or the skilled workers suggested by Deborah Oxley.¹⁶⁵

In light of my research, however, it seems that Ross's characterisation of the female convicts at Moreton Bay *before* 1842 does carry some weight when evaluating the experiences of the forty-one ex-convict women present in Queensland *after* 1842. While some were Robinson's virtuous family women and others were possibly Oxley's skilled workers, many swapped periods of work and raising children with reoffending. From Catherine Barnes, who violently assaulted her neighbour, to Mary Allen, admitted to gaol twenty-six times for alcohol-related offences and anti-social behaviour, a significant proportion of these women committed a serious crime or were serial reoffenders. Others lived on the margins of society where they found themselves caught in cycles of petty crime, alcohol abuse, domestic violence and prostitution. It would, indeed, be deeply ironic if the female convicts punished with harsh sentences of secondary punishment at Moreton Bay prior to 1842 were, in fact, less deserving of being called 'women of the very worst class' than the emancipist women who lived in Queensland during the free settlement period.¹⁶⁶

Of the forty-one convict women identified for this research project, twenty-six were first located in Queensland's gaol and court records and fifteen were found in non-legal records. Five of the fifteen had reoffended prior to arriving in Queensland. At least thirty-one of the forty-one women identified for this study (or seventy-five per cent), therefore, reoffended in New South Wales, Van Diemen's Land or Queensland after their initial transportation. Taken as a proportion of the 107 convict women present in Queensland in 1851, however, the total number of reoffenders falls to twenty-nine per cent. Further detailed research is now required to establish how many of the remaining 107 women also reoffended, whether before moving to Queensland, after their arrival or both. More comprehensive analyses are also required to better understand the position and experiences of these convict women, particularly how these differed from the experiences of female convicts in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. In addition, as outlined above, a comparison of their experiences with the convict women who were transported to Moreton Bay prior to 1842 may also prove fruitful.

This article has sought to illuminate the methods through which further data and biographical information can be gathered on female convicts who were present in Queensland after 1842. It is

163 Reece, 'Introduction,' 6.

164 Harrison, "'The Very Worst Class,'" 186.

165 Reece, 'Introduction,' 6. Ross actually described the women as 'of the very worst class': see Harrison and Steele, ed., *William Ross's The Fell Tyrant*, 53.

166 Harrison and Steele, ed., *William Ross's The Fell Tyrant*, 53.

suggested that a detailed examination of prison registers and court records from Brisbane and the Darling Downs will reveal the names of further female convicts. A comprehensive examination of newspaper reports of court cases involving females may also prove helpful in this regard. When the primary sources have been exhausted, further attempts should be made to contact the descendants of Queensland's female convicts via genealogical societies and forums. This further research will reveal not only a more accurate number of female transportees present in Queensland post-1842, but also allow conclusions to be drawn regarding many different facets of their lives, including the proportion who reoffended, the number of prostitutes, the prevalence of alcoholism, the likelihood of marriage, the number who had children and the occupations they held. Analysis of the resulting quantitative and qualitative data will not only inform Queensland history, but also prove vital in assessing, or perhaps reassessing, the current debate regarding the characterisation of female convicts either as women 'of the very worst class' or as productive members of society.

The preliminary research presented in this paper suggests that the high proportion of female reoffenders in Queensland will challenge and modify the current discourse. Further comprehensive research must be completed, however, before making any conclusions regarding their character. What can be stated with more certainty is that the mere fact that female convicts have been shown to have lived in Queensland after 1842 challenges their exclusion from the pages of Queensland history, as well as from current Queensland scholarship. Furthermore, this small study provides a window into the lives of forty-one female convicts who were present in Queensland after 1842 and allows us to imagine what may have happened to the others who came to Moreton Bay and successfully disappeared from view. Though their stories may have previously been silenced by a population eager to rid itself of Moreton Bay's convict stain, new discourses are revealing, and will continue to reveal, the 'invisible' stories of Queensland's female convicts. With further research these women can be rescued from anonymity to reclaim their rightful place alongside Hannah Rigby and the two thousand male convicts who made a new life for themselves when Queensland threw open its doors to all-comers in 1842.
