

## Jane Womack per *Aeolus* 1809 & Jane Womock per *Maria* 1818

‘a twist of fate’

by Rhonda Arthur

As the following information unfolded, it revealed a curious turn of events, and the possibility that they were one and the same person emerged.

Jane Womack (wife of William Womack) and Elizabeth Naylor<sup>1</sup> (wife of William Naylor) both late of Leeds, were tried on 11 July 1807 at the General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, Boro of Leeds, county of York. They were convicted for stealing sixty yards of printed cotton commonly called ‘calico’ of the value of ten pence, the goods and chattels of William Sharp and were sentenced to 7 years transportation. On a second charge for a similar offence they were found not guilty. A third charge for stealing two parts of sixty yards of calico was dismissed because the prosecutors failed to appear in court.<sup>2</sup>

The *Leeds Intelligencer* on 30 March 1807 described these women as ‘two notorious shoplifters’ who were sent to the Wakefield House of Correction Yorkshire to await trial. Their modus operandi was by using ‘force and arms’ and sixty yards of calico would be difficult to conceal. After being convicted, they were imprisoned at Wakefield for eleven months before being transferred to the *Aeolus* female convict transport ship in June 1808.

William Woomack (Jane’s husband) was convicted at the City of York Assizes on 11 July 1807 for general larceny (picking pockets) and sentenced to 7 years transportation.<sup>3</sup> He was sent to the prison hulk *Captivity*, listed as William Womack aged 31, and was transferred to the male convict transport ship the *Admiral Gambier* on 13 June 1808.<sup>4</sup>

The *Aeolus* with 79 female convicts and *Admiral Gambier* with 200 male convicts, departed Portsmouth on 2 July 1808 in the company of a West India fleet, under convoy of His Majesty’s ship the 64 gun *Polyphemus*, two Portuguese frigates and three gun-brigs. At Madeira the convoy parted company. The *Aeolus* and the *Admiral Gambier*, in the company of the *Juno* whaler, continued their voyage to Rio de Janeiro and put into port on 8 September 1808. The *Admiral Gambier* and the *Juno* set sail at Rio on 6 October 1808 and arrived in Botany Bay on 20 December 1808. The *Aeolus* remained in Rio until 6 November 1808 and anchored in Botany Bay on 26 January 1809.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The early years in Hobart Town***

The convict indents of the ships the *Admiral Gambier* and the *Aeolus* listed them as William Woomack and Jane ux [wife of] Wm Womack. It shows when and where they were convicted, and the terms of their sentences, but nothing further is noted to indicate how or when they were sent to Van Diemen’s Land.<sup>6</sup>

However, they both appear on the Hobart Town Muster in 1811.<sup>7</sup> In February that year they were arrested on suspicion of stealing in a dwelling house. Jane’s punishment will make you wince—to sit in the stocks for one hour on four succeeding Tuesdays and to work for the government for three years. William’s punishment will make you flinch and wince even more—he received 100 lashes and six months in the Gaol Gang.<sup>8</sup>

A baptism was registered in Hobart Town on 21 January 1810 for a William Warnock, the son of William Warnock and Jane née Gilmore, which suggests that they had arrived before that date. Although the surname doesn’t match William and Jane’s, there was another baptism registered in Hobart Town on 22 March 1812 for Mary Ann Womack, the daughter of William Womack and Jane née Gillmore.<sup>9</sup>

***Jane Womack née Gilmore/Gillmore – likely to be her first offence***

Jane Gilmore was tried with a Mary Smith at the York Assizes in August 1802 and they were found guilty of grand larceny for stealing printed calicoes. Jane's sentencing was adjourned until a jury of matrons was impanelled and they concluded that she was 'quick with child'. Jane was then sentenced to death and respited for a plea on the sentence to be heard at the next assizes. The presiding judge at that hearing granted Jane a reprieve and her sentence was commuted to imprisonment for two years.<sup>10</sup>

Jane Gillmore was sent to the Wakefield House of Correction Yorkshire on 13 June 1803. On her admission she was described as aged 33, 5 feet 4 inches (162 cm) tall, brown hair, blue eyes and a fresh complexion. Her description is a good fit with Jane Womack's, though she was also noted as being 'indifferent'.<sup>11</sup> No record was found of her confinement after being sent to prison and she was discharged on 12 June 1805.

A baptism was registered for Jane Gilmore at St Oswalds Oswestry Shropshire on 12 July 1772.<sup>12</sup> A marriage was registered in Shropshire on 3 April 1791 of Jane Gilmore and John Kelly.<sup>13</sup> It is possible that she could be Jane Kelly [née Gilmore] aged 34 who married William Womack, chapman [an itinerate dealer or hawker], aged 33 at Leeds St Peter Yorkshire on 27 December 1805.<sup>14</sup>

In historical records Shropshire is described as the 'county of Salop' and Shrewsbury as the 'town of Salop'.<sup>15</sup>

***William Womack – likely to be his first offence***

William Womack's surname and birth year were often inconsistent and caution is required to say with any certainty that this was his first offence. However, research shows that William Womack resided in the vicinity of Yorkshire and therefore he is likely to be the same person.

A baptism was registered for William, son of William Womack, on 25 November 1774, at St John the Baptist Church Royston.<sup>16</sup> The family were living in Notton, a small village and civil parish in the City of Wakefield West Yorkshire England. The village of Notton is approximately 1.6 km from Royston and 8 km from the centre of Wakefield.<sup>17</sup>

On 6 November 1787, a William Womack, late of Halton in the county of York, labourer, was tried at the Leeds Quarter Sessions, Boro of Leeds, county of York. He was convicted for stealing one silk handkerchief of the value of ten pence, the goods and chattels of Edward Reeve, at Leeds. He was sentenced to confinement in a solitary cell for three months at the Wakefield House of Correction Yorkshire.<sup>18</sup> Halton is a district of east Leeds West Yorkshire and is approximately 35 km north of Notton.<sup>19</sup>

***Leaving the colony***

Jane Womack was free by servitude on 11 April 1814 and received a certificate of freedom in March the following year. A letter from the Secretary's Office Sydney to Lieutenant Governor Davey, Hobart Town, dated 13 March 1815 enclosed their certificates, '... namely Wm Womack, per ship *Admiral Gambier* ... and Jane (wife of Wm) Womack, per *Aeolus* ...'.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly after receiving a certificate of freedom, William Womack, yeoman, signed his mark appointing William Holsgrove of Hobart Town a power of attorney to settle his affairs, and stated that he was 'deserting the settlement'. In July 1815 he sold his house and premises in Elizabeth Street Hobart Town and assigned his lease from the Crown to Joseph Wright, a wheelwright, for the sum of £110 sterling.<sup>21</sup>

William and Jane Womack's return to England has not been substantiated, but a Memorial of the Sheriffs for London and Middlesex to Lord Hawkesbury, his Majesty's Principle Secretary of State, presents an interesting conjecture of returning to England.

The Memorial was printed in *Freeman's Journal* on 8 October 1808 and could relate to the female convicts on board the *Aeolus*.<sup>22</sup>

*'... the Sheriffs of London have this day received, through the keeper of Newgate, an order to deliver on board a ship, bound for New South Wales thirty-nine female convicts, subjected by the law to a transportation beyond the seas for the term of seven years ...'*

The point of their appeal for the female convicts who were transported for seven years, was that no provision had ever been made to return them to their homeland at the expiration of their sentences. It effectively meant that they were being separated from their families for the remainder of their lives, and thereby caused long-suffering and misery, than being sentenced to death.

The Sheriffs pleaded that:

*'Perhaps a full consideration of the subject may lead the government to charter some of the ships which convey convicts out to Botany Bay, to bring back those who have suffered the term of their banishment, and who may choose to return; ...'*

This was unlikely to have been put into effect for the female convicts on board the *Aeolus* but William Womack was now in receipt of funds which would cover the cost of their passage back to England.

Nothing further is known of Jane and William Womack in Van Diemen's Land and no further records in Hobart Town were found of their two children, William and Mary Ann.

### ***History repeating itself***

It was early 1817 that Jane and William Womock make an appearance in court at Shrewsbury county of Salop and it seemed that they had returned to old habits.

Jane Womock was tried at Shrewsbury Lent Assizes county of Salop on 19 March 1817. She was convicted of 'larceny &c from a shop' and sentenced to death. No transcript of the trial was found but history appeared to be repeating itself. Jane Womock and Jane Gilmore had both been sentenced to death.

Jane Womock's sentence was obviously commuted as she was sentenced to 14 years transportation. Her husband William Womock was also tried that day at the same court and convicted of receiving stolen goods. He was sentenced to 14 years transportation.<sup>23</sup>

Their surnames are hereinafter spelt as they appear in the records.

In October 1817, William Woomock embarked on the *Batavia* 1818, transporting 220 male convicts and landed in Port Jackson on 5 April 1818. On 14 April 1818 he was sent to the Government Factory at Parramatta for distribution listed as William Womack.<sup>24</sup> His convict indent lists him as William Womock born in Yorkshire, aged 44, a hawkster [sic:read hawker].<sup>25</sup>

On 27 March 1818, Jane Womock and her unnamed child, embarked on the *Maria* 1818, transporting 126 female convicts, and landed in Port Jackson on 7 September 1818. Jane was aged 47, born about 1771, tried at Salop, and was a housekeeper.<sup>26</sup> During the voyage Jane suffered from general sickness in the stomach and was treated over three days with calomel and salts.<sup>27</sup> There are no case notes for her child. The ship's muster lists Jane

Womack's name alongside 'a girl aged 7 years' and it is fair to say that this girl is her daughter, Mary Ann Womack, who was baptised in Hobart Town in 1812.<sup>28</sup>

### *At Parramatta, New South Wales*

The Musters of 1821, 1822 and 1825 show that Jane was at the Government Factory Parramatta, and was listed as 'Jane Womack', 'Jane Woomack wife of Wm Woomock Parramatta', and 'Jane Womack wife of Wm Womock Parramatta', respectively.<sup>29</sup>

On 30 November 1821 William Whomack was recommended for a mitigation of his sentence by the Superintendent of Government Works, Richard Rouse. William was overseer of the woodcutters and had been employed for three years under his charge as '... Overseer of The Gaol Gang and Dam.'<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately, things took a turn for the worse on 9 March 1822 when William Womack was charged with failing to attend the Church muster the previous Sunday morning and was fined 5/-.<sup>31</sup> On 6 April 1822 he was dismissed from his office as overseer.<sup>32</sup>

William Womock was granted a ticket of leave on 3 November 1825.<sup>33</sup> A testimony as to his character had been submitted on 26 March 1825, signed by a senior chaplain and others, professing that he had not been convicted of any crime or misdemeanour in the colony, and that he was '... an honest, solid and industrious character having served faithfully in Government employ at Parramatta since April 1818 ...'.<sup>34</sup>

William Womack, 'holding a ticket of leave' was brought before the Parramatta Police on 16 August 1826, '... to answer for his daughter, having on her person a gown, sworn to by Mrs Reynolds of Sydney, as one stolen from her clothes-line, in Pitt Street ...'. He was remanded to stand trial at the quarter sessions, though no record of the outcome has been found.<sup>35</sup> His daughter's name or age wasn't mentioned but she would have been a minor if her parent was held accountable for the misdemeanour. William and Jane Womack's daughter Mary Ann would have been aged 15.

### *The final years*

William Womock received a certificate of freedom on 28 March 1831. It records that he was born in 1772 in Leeds Yorkshire, a labourer, 5 feet 8 inches (173 cm) tall, dark brown to grey hair, hazel eyes and a ruddy complexion.<sup>36</sup> Two years later, a William Warmack died in New South Wales, aged 64. It is probable that he is William Womack but the image was unavailable and cannot be substantiated.<sup>37</sup>

Jane Womock received her certificate of freedom on the same date as William. It records that she was born in 1770 in Shropshire, a housekeeper, 5 feet 3 inches (160 cm) tall, brown to grey hair, grey eyes and a sallow complexion.<sup>38</sup>

A Jane Womac died in 1846, aged 76 in Cobbitty Narellan NSW, but the image was not available and cannot be substantiated. However, her birth year is the same as Jane Womock and Jane Gilmore and therefore she is more than likely to be Jane Womack.<sup>39</sup>

Jane Womack on her admission to the Wakefield House of Correction in 1807, was 5 feet 4 inches (162 cm) tall, brown hair, grey eyes and a fresh complexion.<sup>40</sup> Jane Gilmore, on her admission to Wakefield in 1803, was 5 feet 4 inches (162 cm) tall, brown hair, blue eyes (easily mistaken for grey) and a fresh complexion. The vicissitudes of life had taken their toll and Jane Womock now stooped with age and her hair turning grey, by a twist of fate, had been transported twice.

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## Notes:

Mary Kelly (born 10 Feb 1792) baptism 26 Feb 1792 at St Oswalds Oswestry Shropshire, Eng, daughter of John and Jane Kelly. *FHL Film No 1701314 Reference I :item 5v SRO3965/5* Ancestry.com – the image was unavailable.

Joseph Womack (born 13 Apr 1806) baptism 19 June 1806 at Leeds St Peter Yorkshire, Eng., father William Womack of Marsh Lane. Joseph Womack died aged 11 weeks. *West Yorkshire Eng, Church of England Reg 1512-1812, West Yorkshire – Archive Service. Wakefield, Yorkshire Eng Yorkshire Parish Records.* Ancestry.com

Mary Ann Womack married Henry Maddox in 1829 at St Phillips Church of England Sydney NSW and two children were born, namely, Frederick J in 1835, and Elizabeth in 1837. BDM NSW V1829 4595 3B, 308/1835 V183530819, 235/1837 V183723521 –the images are unavailable. However, further research could not prove conclusively a familial connexion of Mary Ann Maddox née Womack to William and Jane Womack.

## Sources

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- 4 Home Office: Convict Prison Hulks: Registers and Letter Books, Class: HO9, piece 8. Ancestry.com.
- 5 Aeolus convict ship [https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict\\_ships\\_aeolus\\_1899htm](https://www.jenwilletts.com/convict_ships_aeolus_1899htm).
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- 16 Register of baptism Wm Womack, *West Yorkshire Archive Service, Wakefield, Yorkshire, Eng Yorkshire Parish Records*, New Reference No WDP136/1/1/5. Ancestry.com.
- 17 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Notton>.
- 18 *Yorkshire Qtr Session Records 1637-1814* [database-on-line] Provo UT USA Ancestry.com Oper Inc 2016, p20.
- 19 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halton>.
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- 21 *NRS 898, Reels 6020-6040, 6070 NSW, Aust, Col. Sec. Papers, 1788-1856* pp61-66. Ancestry.com.
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- 25 *NRS 1218, Item [4/4006], fiche:639.* Ancestry.com
- 26 J Reakes, comp *Australia, Convict Index, 1788-1868* [database on-line]. Provo UT USA Ancestry.com Oper Inc 2001.
- 27 *Diary of Thos Prosser surgeon-super<sup>t</sup> of the Maria* 1818, pp7,43-45, Adm101/49/1 <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>.
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## COMPARISON

<p><b>Jane Womack (née Gilmore/Gillmore) per <i>Aeolus</i> 1809</b>  <i>Likely to be second offence</i>  <u>born:</u> <i>abt 1773</i></p> <p><u>native place:</u> late of Leeds county of York</p> <p><u>crime:</u> larceny, stealing calico</p> <p><u>tried:</u> 11 July 1807 General Quarter Sessions of the Peace Leeds county of York</p> <p><u>sent to Wakefield:</u> aged 34, 5 feet 4 inches (162 cm) tall, brown hair, grey eyes, fresh complexion</p> <p><u>marriage:</u> 27 December 1805, William Womack (a chapman) aged 33 and Jane Kelly, aged 34 at Leeds St Peter Yorkshire, England.</p> <p><u>certificate of freedom:</u> 13 March 1815 Jane Womac death notice 1846 aged 76 NSW</p>	<p><b>Jane Gilmore</b>   <i>Likely to be first offence</i>  <u>born</u> 1770  <u>baptism:</u> 1772 Shropshire  <u>native place:</u> Shropshire county of Salop.  <u>tried</u> Aug 1802 York Assizes  <u>crime:</u> grand larceny, stealing calicoes  <u>tried:</u> 13 June 1803 York Assizes</p> <p><u>sent to Wakefield:</u> aged 33, 5 feet 4 inches (162 cm) tall, brown hair, blue eyes, fresh complexion. Released June 1805.</p> <p><u>marriage:</u> 3 April 1791, Jane Gilmore and John Kelly at Shropshire, county of Salop</p>	<p><b>Jane Womock per <i>Maria</i> 1818</b>   <i>Likely to be third offence</i>  <u>born</u> 1770</p> <p><u>native place:</u> Shropshire</p> <p><u>crime:</u> larceny &amp;c from a shop</p> <p><u>tried:</u> 19 March 1817 Shrewsbury Lent Assizes county of Salop</p> <p>7 September 1818, convict index: aged 47, housekeeper born abt 1771</p> <p><u>certificate of freedom:</u> 31/216 28 March 1831, aged 61, 5 feet 3 inches (160 cm) tall, brown to grey hair, grey eyes, sallow complexion</p>
<p><b>William Womack per <i>Admiral Gambier</i> 1808</b>  <i>Likely to be second offence</i>  <u>born:</u> [1772-4]</p> <p><u>native place:</u> unknown</p> <p><u>crime:</u> general larceny (picking pockets)  <u>tried:</u> 11 July 1807 City of York Assizes Yorkshire</p>	<p><b>William Womack</b>   <i>Likely to be first offence</i>  <u>born:</u> unknown  <u>baptised:</u> 25 Nov 1774  <u>native place:</u> Notton near Wakefield West Yorkshire  <u>crime:</u> larceny stealing one silk handkerchief  <u>tried:</u> 6 November 1787 Leeds Qtr Sessions county of York,</p>	<p><b>William Womock per <i>Batavia</i> 1818</b>  <i>Likely to be third offence</i>  <u>born</u> 1772</p> <p><u>native place:</u> Leeds Yorkshire.  <u>crime:</u> receiving stolen goods</p> <p><u>tried:</u> 19 March 1817 Shrewsbury Lent Assizes county of Salop</p>

<p><u>listed as:</u>  convicted as William Woomack  William Womack Prison Hulk <i>Captivity</i>, aged 31  William Womack per <i>Admiral Gambier</i> 1808  <u>certificate of freedom</u> :  13 March 1815  <u>marriage:</u> 27 December 1805,  William Womack, a chapman [a hawker], aged 33 and Jane Kelly (née Gilmore) at Leeds St Peter Yorkshire, England  <u>death notice:</u>  William Warmack 1833, aged 64, New South Wales</p>	<p>late of Halton county of York labourer,  and confined at Wakefield House of Correction Yorkshire.</p>	<p><u>listed as:</u>  William Woomock per <i>Batavia</i> 1818, aged 44, hawkster  [<i>sic:read hawker</i>]  William Womack -14 Apr 1818 sent to Parramatta  William Womack – Muster 1820  <u>ticket of leave:</u> 541/2015  William Womock  3 November 1825, aged 53, labourer  <u>certificate of freedom:</u> 31/217  William Womock  28 March 1831, aged 59</p>
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