

MEET ELLEN SCOTT

Ellen Scott became the scourge of her masters and the terror of the Female Factories

Ellen arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1830, sentenced to transportation for life for stealing a watch. She was the assigned servant that nightmares are made of.

Within three weeks of her arrival she had committed the first of 48 offences, 'being out of bed at an unreasonable hour on Sunday last and disobeying orders'. She was returned to the Female Factory for seven days in solitary on bread and water. While she was there, her master discovered that she had also stolen money, and she received three months in the Crime Class at hard labour on reduced rations.

Returned to service with a succession of masters, she continued her career of minor offences and absconding, incurring more time in the Crime Class on each occasion. Eventually she seems to have been guilty of a serious offence, not only absconding but putting the life of her master's child in danger. For that she was back in the Crime Class for six months with the addition of a heavy, spiked iron collar and the longest stint in solitary that the regulations permitted.

But Ellen was not to be tamed. Back in the Factory for absconding yet again, she was charged with 'indecent behaviour during divine service' and received another two months in the Crime Class, for a month of that to sleep in solitary. Exasperated masters laid yet more charges, including 'dancing in a public house' in 1834. Two years later she and a group of other women in the Factory known as the Flash Mob attacked Mrs Hutchinson, putting her in fear of her life. For this Ellen, described as 'the ringleader of a



A scene from 'Her Story', performed daily at the Cascades Female Factory

desperate set', received two years hard labour. Unrepentant, she continued her uncontrollable habits, absconding, disobedience, and once 'being in bed with her master'. In 1843 she committed her final offence, bringing tobacco into the Launceston Factory. Trafficking in forbidden items was the province of the Flash Mobs.

Ellen received her Conditional Pardon in 1847 and disappeared from the records.

Visit the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site to gain a sense of what convict women experienced.

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