

# MEET MARY WILKES

*From the moment she was sentenced to transportation, Mary Wilkes maintained a reputation for trouble.*

Mary was 22 when she was found guilty of highway robbery and sentenced to transportation. On the voyage she was quarrelsome, defiant and disorderly. Worse, she encouraged these behaviours in others. Upon arrival she was sent straight to the Cascade Female Factory, with only bread and water for sustenance.

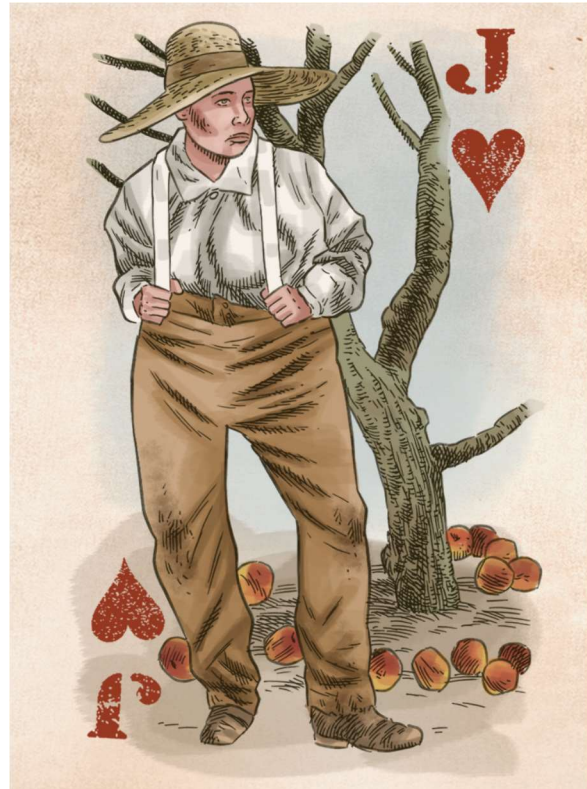
After release, Mary went into service under the Assignment System - she received no payment for her work and could be returned to the Female Factory at any time for misbehaving.

Drinking and being absent from work led to Mary being sent back and forth between her places of employment and the solitary cells of the Female Factory.

Before finishing her first year under the assignment system, Mary was enticed by fellow convict, Edward Taylor, to run away. The two managed to survive for five months over autumn and early winter in the harsh Tasmanian bush.

How the two survived for so long is a mystery. What is known is that Mary wore men's clothing during this time - a practical fashion choice that could have provided warmth, protection or a convenient disguise. After capture, Mary was sent back to the Cascades Female Factory for another year. A sentence that was carried out in full, but not before she attempted to abscond again.

Over the following years, Mary's behaviour was slow to improve, she was sent out on assignment several times, and totalled 19 offences to her record.



It took her eight years to be granted her Ticket of Leave, and another three to receive a Conditional Pardon. Eventually all records of Mary stop - whether she reinvented herself, or died forgotten and unregistered, is unknown.