

MEET NAPPY RIBBON

Like many Irish women transported during the famine, Nappy conducted herself well and pursued a new life in Van Diemen's Land.

The Great Famine of the late 1840s took its toll on the Irish, and many women were forced into crime. One woman was Penelope 'Nappy' Ribbon, who faced the courts on 23 June 1848 for stealing a sheep – this was not her first crime, but Irish courts appeared reluctant to transport women for first offences.

On 20 January 1849 Nappy Ribbon arrived in Van Diemen's Land on the *Lord Auckland* (3). Under the assignment system she behaved well, however her life was not without heartache. On 5 January 1851 Nappy gave birth to a son, Thomas, at the Launceston Female House of Correction. No other records of Thomas have been found – with mortality rates high at the Female House of Correction, he may not have survived.

On 6 July 1852 Nappy received her Ticket-of-Leave. In August she, with fellow convict William Connor, applied for permission to marry – which was denied.

By October 1853 William and Nappy were convicted of living in adultery and Nappy was sentenced to four months hard labour with her Ticket-of-Leave revoked. She gave birth to Mary Ann Ribbon on 13 March 1854.

Nappy and Mary Ann were sent to the Ross Female Factory, which was intended to provide a healthier environment for infants born to convict mothers. For Mary Ann, however, this was not enough, and she passed away due to catarrhus (inflammation of mucous membranes) at four months of age. Nappy was sent to the Cascades Female House of Correction.



On 26 June 1855 Nappy gained her Free Certificate. The last reference found of Nappy Ribbon is on 8 July 1858 when she married Joseph Harvey at Port Sorell. They appear to have had no children.

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