

William Williams is an extremely common name in Wales and elsewhere.

The various records give his year of birth as 1819 when convicted, 1827 on the hulk, to 1826 on arrival in Australia.

At the Breconshire Assizes at Brecon on 24 July 1847:

William Williams, labourer, was charged upon the oaths of Rees Williams and others, with having at the hamlet of Vennyfach [also called Fenni-fach], stolen two draught mares.

Messrs Davidson and Allen appeared for the prosecution, and Mr N. Carne was counsel for the prisoner.

The following witnesses were examined on behalf of the Crown.

Mr Evan Williams, plaintiff's son, who deposed that on the night of 3 June he had occasion to send his father's horses to the field, and amongst them were the two mares that had been stolen. He missed them and first saw them at Mr Bailey's stables, at Nantyglo.

Watkins Jones, farm bailiff to Mr Bailey, deposed that on 9 June the prisoner offered him two mares for sale. He said he had brought them at Machynileth fair, in Montgomeryshire. He said he did not want to purchase them, but prisoner came again on 10 June, and the witness then bought the two mares for £50. Mr Bailey and his son were present when the bargain was made, and a cheque was at once given for the amount. The witness and the prisoner then proceeded to Mr Jayne, the cashier, who cashed the cheque. The witness subsequently went to a public house in the company of the prisoner, thereby having every opportunity to observe and identify the party who sold the horses. He now swore positively that it was the prisoner.

Mr Henry Bailey corroborated the evidence, as did the cashier at Mr Bailey's establishment.

Daniel Jones, a pitman at Dowlais, met the prisoner on 9 June between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning with two mares. He (the prisoner) was coming from the Bwlch-y-fan road to Dowlais. The witness asked about the price of the mares and how it was that the prisoner could afford to bring only two horses such a distance as he claimed to have done. Prisoner replied that the price of the mares was £65, and that they were two which he had remaining after he and his brother had sold a number of horses to the Rhymney Company and the Neath Valley Railway Company.

This closed the case for the prosecution, and Mr N. Carne addressed the jury on behalf of the prisoner.

A number of witnesses were then called, who distinctly swore that on the 8th, 9th, and 10th of June, the prisoner was working at Kiddy Farm, in the employment of Mr John Williams, his cousin. The farm was located 38 miles from Nantyglo.

Mr Davidson addressed the jury in reply, after which the learned Judge summed up, and the jury, having consulted for half an hour, returned into court with a verdict of guilty.

The prisoner was sentenced to be transported for 10 years.<sup>1</sup>

In another newspaper, "the witnesses for the prosecution, about six in number, nearly all identified the prisoner as the person who sold the horses to Mr Bailey; and the circumstances were detailed which tended to prove the guilt of the prisoner, but the defence of an alibi was set up, and about 14 witnesses corroborated each other, in stating that at the time of the stealing of the horses the prisoner was at home in a distant part of the county, and it became purely a question of credibility."<sup>2</sup>

The Criminal Register for Brecon County Assizes, 24 July 1847:

William Williams, 28, can read and write imperfectly, was convicted of horse stealing, and sentenced to 10 years.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Welshman, 30 July 1847, p3

<sup>2</sup> Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, 1 July 1847, p3

<sup>3</sup> The National Archives (TNA) UK, HO 27/81, p33

The Prison Registers show that William Williams, 28, single, can read, labourer, convicted 24 July 1847 at Brecon Assizes of horse stealing and sentenced to 10 years. He had no previous convictions. William was received at Millbank Prison on 29 September 1847 from Brecon Gaol and transferred to the *Warrior* hulk on 24 December 1847. <sup>4</sup>

When he arrived on *Warrior* hulk on quarter ending December 1847, his age was recorded as 20. Here he was healthy, and his behaviour was good. The final 6 months before departure to Western Australia, his behaviour was very good. He boarded the *Pyrenees* on 5 March 1851. <sup>5</sup>

On arrival at Fremantle, Western Australia, on 28 June 1851, William was assigned number 388, issued with a Ticket of leave and a physical description was recorded.

388. William Williams, 25, 5'3½", dark brown hair, dark hazel eyes, long face, fresh complexion, mole on right arm, and front tooth out of the top jaw, labourer, single. <sup>6</sup>

The Character Book says 388. William Williams was 25 in 1851, single, did farming work, was Church of England, could read tolerably and write badly, and knew very little arithmetic. He attended Divine Service pretty regularly up to the time of his commitment, and had received the Sacraments before and after coming to prison. He was sober and attentive to work at all times.

According to the scribe, William seemed half-crazed. He meant to be attentive and to do his best to give satisfaction. He alleges total ignorance of the crime for which he was transported. His mother, Ann Williams, lives near Brecon town in South Wales. The name of the person referred to for his character is Mr John Williams of near Brecon town, Breconshire, South Wales. This might be the cousin referred to at the trial. <sup>7</sup>

The Superintendent's Journal shows:

1 July 1851. William was one of the first 50 men removed from the *Pyrenees* and was located in Division No. 3 at the Prison. The men all came from the *Warrior* hulk.

3 July 1851. The following men holding passes will be detached from the Establishment and proceed to North Fremantle Station on 4 July. They will be arranged in the following messes with a boatswain to each. Mess No.3 included the boatswain and seven men, including 388. Wm Williams. <sup>8</sup>

Advertisements were placed in newspapers for men who were available for hire. Ticket-of-Leave-Men at North Fremantle Station, 388, William Williams, agricultural labourer. <sup>9</sup>

William was doing well. By December 1852, he had paid £9 back for his passage, consisting of £2.11.11¼ from working on public works and £6.11.0¼ in cash. <sup>10</sup>

A Conditional Pardon was granted on 30 September 1853, and his sentence expired in July 1857.

What happened to William is unknown. If he stayed in Western Australia, there were three possible deaths in the BDM Index.

1858 at Bunbury

1899, at Perth, aged 75

1812, at Northam, aged 87.

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<sup>4</sup> TNA, HO24/3

<sup>5</sup> TNA, HO8/194; HO108/107; PCOM2/27

<sup>6</sup> SROWA, Acc 128/32

<sup>7</sup> SROWA, Acc 1156/R1A-R1B, image 146

<sup>8</sup> SROWA, Superintendent's Orders, So1-So3, p45, p47

<sup>9</sup> The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News, 25 July 1851, p2

<sup>10</sup> TNA, CO18/69