

Elizabeth Cleaveland

POLICE NUMBER 431 ¹	LITERACY read only
TRIAL DATE 17 August 1840	AGE ON EMBARKATION 53
TRIAL PLACE Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London	AGE ON ARRIVAL 56
OFFENCE throwing a burning liquor, vitriol, over a person, George Day, "I did this in a passion, he struck me first"	HEIGHT 5' 2½"
SENTENCE 15 years	COMPLEXION fresh
GAOL REPORT connexions poor, widow, 1 child	HEAD oval
PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS none	HAIR dark brown to grey
SURGEON'S REPORT orderly	VISAGE oval
ON THE TOWN no	FOREHEAD medium, wrinkled
MARITAL STATUS widow	EYEBROWS brown
CHILDREN 1	EYES hazel
FAMILY	NOSE medium
NATIVE PLACE near Peterborough, England	MOUTH medium
TRADE ON EMBARKATION plain cook, laundress	CHIN round
TRADE ON ARRIVAL plain cook, laundress	MARKS slightly freckled

c1785

Born near Peterborough, Northamptonshire, England.²

17 August 1840

Tried at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London, England indicted on 3 counts: (1) for unlawfully, maliciously and feloniously assaulting George Day on 13 July 1840 and casting a large quantity (one half-ounce) of sulphuric acid in and upon his face with intent to burn him and whereby he was burned; (2) for stating her intent to be to maim and disfigure him; and (3) to do him some grievous bodily harm; found guilty; sentence 15 years transportation; aged 53.³

Statement of witness George Day:

I am a coach-master, and live in New-court, Holborn. On Monday, the 13th of July, I was in Lucas-place, St. Pancras, about two o'clock – as I passed a house, a woman, in the ground-floor room, beckoned me, and called me in – I went into the room to her, and, as soon as I got in, they demanded something to drink – I was there about five minutes – I refused to give her any thing, and wanted to come out of the house, but the door was closed – they would not let me come out of the room – there was another female in the room with her – they said I was not going out in that sort of manner, without I was going to stand something to drink, and told me to send for it there – the other girl said, "I will go and get half-a-pint, if you will send for it," but I would not – I went to pull open the door, but it was closed – I cannot tell whether it was flour or lime that was first thrown at me – a woman who was in the room then threw something in my face – it was not that woman who invited me in, but an old woman – the other woman had not said any thing to her before that – I had said I would send for nothing, but if they would come up to the corner I would not mind paying for something, but she said, "Send for it here" – I was in the act of pulling the door open when something was thrown into my face – the prisoner was the woman who did it – it burnt my face all over, and I have lost the sight of my right eye, and the other is so affected I can scarcely see at a distance – it burnt my linen and clothes – I had nothing to do with the woman in the room – it blinded me directly.

Cross-examined by Mr. Clarkson. Q. What did you say you are? A. A cab-master – I have got one cab – I have not followed that trade long – I was working for my father before that – he is a cow-keeper – I had no brother James – I had a cousin James – I have been married about four years – I have no children – I have not been in the habit of frequenting brothels, I swear that – I have never been a complainant at police-offices against prostitutes – I was insulted

¹ TAHO, CON40/1/2 p.201 No.431 [image 199] (Elizabeth Cleaveland); TAHO, CON19/1/1 p.230 [image 118] (Elizabeth Cleaveland); ML, CY 1282 p.145 (Elizabeth Cleaveland); ML, CY 1197 p.150 (Elizabeth Cleaveland); ML, CY 958 p.440 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

² TAHO, CON19/1/1 p.230 [image 118] (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

³ *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, t18400817-1998 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

This biography supplements our book *Patchwork Prisoners* available from www.researchtasmania.com.au.

and had my pocket picked, but not at a brothel – it is a long time ago, it was by one man and one woman – the woman was apprehended, and I went to the Magistrate – I did not stay away and refuse to prosecute – we could not find the other party – I cannot say whether that woman was a street-walker – I was once tried here about some property which was found in a stable which I occupied in Judd-street, but I was honourably acquitted – my cousin, James Day, a cab-driver, was tried with me – he was transported – it was my father’s cab, but my stable – we had three cabs – I had one, and he had two – that is between five and six years ago – I did not go up stairs at this house – the prisoner was in the house when I went in – she did not come in from the outside with the bottle in her hand, she stepped back from the door – I cannot say whether she was burnt herself – I had enough to do to mind myself – she had nothing in her hand when she closed the door, but when I went to pull it open she stepped to a side cupboard, and got it, and threw it right in my face – I had not struck the woman at all – I said if the door was not opened I would open it with the poker – I never attempted to struggle with or strike her – I did not cry out, “My G – d, I have hit something that has blinded me – I said, “My G__d, I am blinded” – I was sober – I had had two pints, or I might have had three pints of porter – I do not suppose that would make me drunk.³

Statement of witness Mary Ann Murphy:

I live in Lucas-place, Coram-street – the prisoner lived on the left-hand side round the corner. Between two and three o’clock on this Monday I was going by the house, and heard a noise inside – I heard a little bit of a bother, but not much – I heard a girl ask the man for his money – I did not hear his answer – I heard her say, “Don’t let him go, he wants to bilk her” – the street door was a little way open – I saw the prosecutor coming towards the door, and the prisoner got a handful of flour, and hove at him at first – she hove it behind him as he was coming out – he turned round to see what she was heaving at him, and then she chucked something right in his face – he hallooed out, “Oh murder, murder, I am blinded; they have been heaving lime in my face, I am blinded.”

Cross-examined. Q. What business do you follow? A. I am a servant out of place, and live with my mother and father – I have also worked at the fur business – I have been nothing else – I have always led a regular, proper life – I never lived at a brothel – I am going on for nineteen years of age – the last place I worked at was No. 33, Hunter-street – I lived at Mrs. Downes, in Bidborough-street, once – she is married, and had one lodger named Temple, and his wife – I lived there about three months – that is not twelve months ago – I left to come home and nurse my mother in her lying-in – my mother lives in Lucas-place – she does not take lodgers – it is a little house at 3s. a week – there are only two rooms in it – I was not tipsy on that day – the door of the room was open – it was going on about five minutes – the prisoner was inside round the corner by the window, not at the door – there is one upper room in the house – I did not see any one else there – I do not know Jane Phillips and Sarah Welch – the young woman stood by, and said, “You shan’t go” – whether she had hold of the prosecutor I cannot tell – she was not between him and the door, she was close to the piano – he was struggling to get away – he got towards the door, opened it, and they hove the flour at him, and then hove the stuff in his face – I saw through the door – it was not wide open, but wide enough for the man to have come through – I never saw him before – I know a person named Gainsford – I did not see her – I have been twelve months out of place – I left to go to my mother, but since that I have been working at M’Cave’s, the furrier – my father is a bricklayer, and my mother a furrier, the same as myself.³

Statement of witness John Bospher:

I am a policeman. I was called in, and saw the prosecutor very much burnt from having something thrown over him like vitriol, his face, and eyes, and his clothes – I went into the prisoners house, and found her there – I took her into custody, and told her the charge – she said she was sorry the man was hurt, that it was vitriol she had thrown over him, and she had got it to clean brass candlesticks – she had not put any water with it, and it was strong vitriol – she said the prosecutor had struck her once, or she should not have thrown it at him, and when she threw it at him she did not think it would have gone in his eyes.

Cross-examined. Q. Have you got the handkerchief which you took off her neck? A. Yes – it is burnt – she did not say it was vitriol she had in her hand – she said it was vitriol she had thrown over him – she said it as I took her to the station-house, and repeated it at the station-house, and at the police-court – I did not know Day before.³

Statement of witness William Dodd, Police Sergeant:

*I was at the station-house when the prisoner was brought in, about three o'clock that afternoon – the prosecutor stated the whole of the circumstances to me in her presence – she said, in answer to that, “I own I did it, I am sorry for it; it was vitriol; I had not put the water to it; it was strong vitriol; the girl told me not to let him out.”*³

Statement of witness Alfred Beaumont Maddocks:

*I am a surgeon. The prosecutor was brought to me that afternoon – his face and eyes were much injured by the application of a powerful acid – vitriol is of that description – I think there is very little chance of the sight of the eye ever being restored – it is possible, but not probable – his clothes and hat were very much burned.*³

Newspaper report of crime:

POLICE INTELLIGENCE.

HATTON-GARDEN. Yesterday Elizabeth Cleaveland, aged fifty-three years, who was described in the police sheet as a brothel-keeper, residing in Cromer-street, St. Pancras, was placed at the bar before Mr. Combe, charged by George Day, a cab-driver, with having assaulted him by throwing over him a quantity of vitriol, by which he was most shockingly injured.

The prosecutor, who is a young man, appeared with his countenance dreadfully disfigured, and was conducted into the Court nearly blind. His hat and clothes were burnt and discoloured, and he was suffering the most excruciating agony.

It appeared that the complainant, having entered the prisoner's house, and refused to send for liquor, was assaulted in the manner described.

The prisoner was committed for trial.⁴

Newspaper report of trial:

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT. – AUG. 20.

Elizabeth Cleaveland, aged 53, was indicted for feloniously casting a quantity of oil of vitriol upon George Day, with intent to maim, disfigure, and disable him.

Mr. Clarkson defended the prisoner.

It appeared from the evidence that the transaction in question took place on the 13th of July in Lucas-street, St. Pancras. The prosecutor was walking down the street in question, where there are some disreputable houses, and the prosecutor went into one of them, where he saw the prisoner and another female, who requested him to treat them. He refused, and wanted to leave the house, and, as he was doing so, the prisoner threw the liquid in his face; the consequence of which was that he was severely burned, and that he lost the sight of one of his eyes.

The jury found the prisoner Guilty.⁵

5 April 1841	Departed Woolwich, England on the <i>Rajah</i> . ⁶
19 July 1841	Arrived at Hobart on the <i>Rajah</i> . ⁶
c24 July 1841	Upon arrival at Hobart, sent to Cascades Female Factory; not immediately assigned. ⁷
31 December 1841	Mustered in the service of Mr D McPherson, Hobart. ⁸
29 July 1844	Classified as a 3 rd class probation pass-holder; gazetted 2 August. ⁹
24 May 1845	Ticket of Leave granted on occasion of the anniversary of Her Majesty's birthday; gazetted. ¹⁰
9 August 1845	Charged with being drunk; fined 5 shillings. ¹¹
17 November 1847	Conditional Pardon recommended; gazetted 23 November. ¹²
30 January 1849	Conditional Pardon approved. ¹¹

⁴ *Morning Post*, 15 July 1840 Issue 21675 Article 1 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

⁵ *Morning Post*, 21 August 1840 Issue 21707 Article 5 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

⁶ AJCP, ADM 101/63 *Rajah*

⁷ ML, CY 1282 p.143 (Elizabeth Cleaveland); ML, CY 1274 p.254 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

⁸ AJCP, HO 10/51 p.354 No.431 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

⁹ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 2 August 1844 p.912 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

¹⁰ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 27 May 1845 p.630 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

¹¹ TAHO, CON40/1/2 p.201 No.431 [image 199] (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

¹² *Hobart Town Gazette*, 23 November 1847 p.1141 (Elizabeth Cleaveland)

Elizabeth Cleaveland

- 13 December 1850 Petition for a Free Pardon refused.¹¹
- 10 March 1854 **Died** of debility at the Colonial Hospital, Hobart; aged 68, house servant; informant James Fitzgerald, Superintendent, Colonial Hospital.¹³
- 17 August 1855 Free by servitude.¹¹

¹³ TAHO, RGD35/1/4 1854/1253 Hobart (Elisabeth Cleaveland)