

*Sophia Weller\**  
(*alias Louisa Godfrey; Sophia Clarke*)

POLICE NUMBER 413 <sup>1</sup>	LITERACY read and write imperfectly
TRIAL DATE 14 December <sup>2</sup> 1840	AGE ON EMBARKATION 20
TRIAL PLACE Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London	AGE ON ARRIVAL 24
OFFENCE larceny in a dwelling house in stealing from her mistress	HEIGHT 4' 7¼"
SENTENCE 10 years	COMPLEXION pale
GAOL REPORT tried before, not guilty, single	HEAD oval
PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS once before for pawning acquitted	HAIR light brown
SURGEON'S REPORT good	VISAGE small
ON THE TOWN 11 months	FOREHEAD flat
MARITAL STATUS single	EYEBROWS brown
CHILDREN 0	EYES brown
FAMILY	NOSE long
NATIVE PLACE Clerkenwell, London, England	MOUTH medium
TRADE ON EMBARKATION	CHIN round
TRADE ON ARRIVAL dressmaker	MARKS none

c1819

**Born** at Clerkenwell, London, Middlesex, England.<sup>3</sup>

14 September 1840

Tried at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London, England indicted for larceny in stealing on 21 July 1840 1 sheet value 5 shillings, 1 bolster value 8 shillings, 1 flat iron value 1 shilling, 3 blankets value £1, and 1 table cloth value 3 shillings, from cabinet maker Richard Perkins, Old Fish Street, London; found not guilty.<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness Richard Perkins:

*I am a cabinet-maker, and live in Old Fish-street. I let a lodging to the prisoner, and a man whom she represented as her husband – I entered the room with the man – after we had been in the room some time, the prisoner came in, 'and asked if her husband had been there – I said, "Yes," and I took her.*<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness William Richard Tuckwood:

*I am assistant to a pawnbroker. I have a bolster pawned with me, but I do not know by whom.*<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness William John Laws:

*I have a blanket pawned with me – I do not know who by.*<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness Charles Woodhouse:

*I am a pawnbroker. I have an iron – I do not know by whom it was pledged.*<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness Samuel Kett, Police Constable C 353:

*I took the prisoner – she did not give me information where to find the things.*

*Q. Did you not say to the Magistrate that she did? A. The information she gave me respected the duplicates – she told the prosecutor where the articles were pawned in my hearing.*<sup>4</sup>

Statement of witness Richard Perkins:

*Richard Perkins re-examined. I asked the prisoner about the articles – she hesitated at first, and then told me where some of them were pawned – I cannot recollect whether I told her it would be better for her to tell me.*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> TAHO, CON40/1/10 p.218 No.413 [image 195] (Sophia Weller); TAHO, CON 19/1/1 p.265 [image 136] (Sophia Weller); ML, CY 1282 p.155 (Sophia Weller); ML, CY 1197 p.152 (Sophia Weller alias Louisa Godfrey); ML, CY 958 p.441 (Sophia Weller alias Louisa Godfrey)

<sup>2</sup> Trial date given as 14 September 1840 on conduct record (TAHO, CON40/1/10 p.218 No.413 [image 195] (Sophia Weller)).

<sup>3</sup> TAHO, CON19/1/1 p.265 [image 136] (Sophia Weller)

<sup>4</sup> *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, t18400914-2241 (Sophia Weller)

This biography supplements our book *Patchwork Prisoners* available from [www.researchtasmania.com.au](http://www.researchtasmania.com.au).

- 29 September 1840 Entered the service of smith William Taylor, Gloucester Street, Queen Square, St George the Martyr parish, London, from the Clerkenwell Poorhouse; at a wage of £6 per annum.<sup>5</sup>
- 10 December 1840 Apprehended at a brothel in George Court, Gray's Inn Lane, London, Middlesex, England.<sup>5</sup>
- 14 December 1840 Tried at the Central Criminal Court (Old Bailey), London, England indicted for larceny in stealing on 8 December 1840 1 boa value £1, 1 veil value 12 shillings, 1 umbrella value 4 shillings, 1 shift value 3 shillings, 1 handkerchief value 4 shillings, and 9 sovereigns, from her master William Taylor, smith, in his house at Gloucester Street, Queen Square, St George the Martyr parish, London; found guilty; sentence 10 years transportation; aged 20, alias Louisa Godfrey.<sup>5</sup>

Statement of witness Sarah Taylor:

*I am the wife of William Taylor, a smith, in Gloucester-street, Queen-square, in the parish of St. George the Martyr. The prisoner came into our service on the 29th of September last from Clerken-well poor-house – she was to have 6l. a year – she received 10s. before she left – I paid her 10s. at the end of the six weeks – on Tuesday, the 8th of December, I had a child very ill, and about twenty minutes to three o'clock in the afternoon, she brought up some warm water to bathe it – I then told her to let me know when it wanted ten minutes to three – she did not do so – I inquired for her about ten minutes to three and she was gone – I did not expect her to go – she had given me no notice – I directly made search, and missed the articles stated, and nine sovereigns which had been in a chest of drawers in my bed-room – I was attending my child in another room – I had seen the things on the Saturday evening, I remember seeing the boa on Sunday – the sovereigns were locked in a drawer – there was other money there – the key of the drawer was in my reticule, which was in the kitchen – she did not return to the house – I did not see her again till she was in custody – she was then dressed very differently to when in my service – she had on a velvet bonnet and fur cape.<sup>5</sup>*

Statement of witness Jonathan Whicher:

*I am a policeman. I apprehended the prisoner on Thursday, the 10th of December, at a brothel in George-court, Gray's-inn-lane – she was wearing this boa, this velvet bonnet, and fur cape – I found a purse in, a reticule, containing three sovereigns and 3s. 6d. – there were five other girls there – she told them to keep away from her, or perhaps they might get into trouble as well as herself – I took her to the station – I told her what I took her for – she asked me if I thought she would get transported – I did not threaten her or make her any promise.<sup>5</sup>*

Statement of witness Sarah Taylor:

*Mrs. Taylor (re-examined.) This is my boa – I know it by a particular mark down the seam – there is nothing else here belonging to me.<sup>5</sup>*

Statement of defendant of Sophia Weller:

*Prisoner's Defence. The officer told me it would be better to tell him where I bought the things, to save him the trouble of going about to find it out.<sup>5</sup>*

Newspaper report on trial:

CENTRAL CRIMINAL COURT – FRIDAY.

*Sophia Weller, aged twenty, was indicted for stealing nine sovereigns, a boa, a veil, and a variety of other articles, the moneys and goods of William Taylor, her master.*

*The prisoner, it appeared, was taken into the service of Mr. Taylor, from Clerkenwell Workhouse on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September last, and on the 8<sup>th</sup> instant she absconded, carrying with her the articles named in the indictment. She had taken them from a drawer in the absence of Mrs. Taylor. She was apprehended two days afterwards at a brothel in George court, Gray's-inn-lane, and she was then showily dressed, and wore Mrs. Taylor's boa. In her pocket was found a purse containing some silver and three sovereigns.*

*Verdict – Guilty. Sentence – Transportation for ten years.<sup>6</sup>*

- 5 April 1841 Departed Woolwich, England on the *Rajah*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Old Bailey Proceedings Online*, t18401214-368 (Sophia Weller alias Louisa Godfrey)

<sup>6</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 19 December 1840 Issue 22174 Article 1 (Sophia Weller)

<sup>7</sup> *AJCP*, ADM 101/63 *Rajah*

*Sophia Weller*

19 July 1841	Arrived at Hobart on the <i>Rajah</i> . <sup>7</sup>
c24 July 1841	Upon arrival at Hobart, assigned to Mrs Logan, Macquarie Street, Hobart. <sup>8</sup>
20 October 1841	Charged with being absent without leave from her master Logan; reprimanded and returned to her service.
31 December 1841	Mustered at Cascades Female Factory. <sup>9</sup>
7 January 1842	Charged with misconduct in the service of Carter; recommended she be detained at Cascades Female Factory for 4 months, then sent to Launceston for assignment. <sup>10</sup>
30 August 1842	Charged at the Police Court on the complaint of her mistress with misconduct in falsely reporting that she had destroyed a handkerchief which her mistress saw in her possession; in the service of Mrs Carter, New Town; plea guilty; sentence 6 months hard labour at Cascades Female Factory; on being searched at the Police Office the handkerchief was found on her person. <sup>11</sup>
17 July 1843	Application for permission to marry Samuel Shufflebottom ( <i>Pyramus</i> ) sent to the Muster Master. <sup>12</sup>
26 July 1843	Application for permission to marry Samuel Shufflebottom sent to the Secretary; not approved on account of female's misconduct. <sup>12</sup>
10 October 1843	<b>Died</b> at the Colonial Hospital, Hobart; aged 21. <sup>13</sup>
19 October 1843	Buried at Holy Trinity Cemetery, Hobart. <sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ML, CY 1274 p.264 (Sophia Weller)

<sup>9</sup> AJCP, HO 10/51 p.404 No.413 (Sophia Weller)

<sup>10</sup> TAHO, CON40/1/10 p.218 No.413 [image 195] (Sophia Weller)

<sup>11</sup> TAHO, AC480/1/1 30 August 1842 (Sophia Weller)

<sup>12</sup> TAHO, CON52/1/2 p.189 (Sophia Weller & Saml Shufflebottom)

<sup>13</sup> TAHO, NS349/1/29 p.91 No.1322 (Sophia Clarke); AJCP, HO 10/51 p.404 No.413 (Sophia Weller)

<sup>14</sup> TAHO, NS349/1/29 p.91 No.1322 (Sophia Clarke); TAHO, RGD34/1/2 1843/1167 Hobart (Sophia Clarke)

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