

# JOHN ORAM

One of 250 Convicts Transported on "Ratcliffe" 1848  
Sentenced to 7 years at Cornwall Assizes  
Transported to Van Diemen's Land

**NAME:** JOHN ORAM

**AGE:** 20 (trial); 23 (VDL)

**BORN:** About 1825, Rothwell-Northamptonshire

**TRIED:** 1 August 1846, Cornwall Assizes

**SENTENCE:** 7 Years – To be computed from 4 August 1846

**CRIME:** Stealing from William Harvey of South Petherwin; second indictment of stealing from James Coombe of Northhill - The prisoners were soldiers who had deserted from their regiments, and had since employed themselves in stealing

**TRIED WITH:** John Hogan and Thomas Conboy (both also onboard Ratcliffe)

**GAOL REPORT:** First conviction

**HULK REPORT:** Good

**SHIP:** Ratcliffe (second voyage) – departed Spithead 29 July 1848, arrived Hobart 12 November 1848, a voyage of 106 days, carrying 250 male convicts (248 landed). Master Phillipson, Surgeon John Gibson

**SURGEON'S GENERAL COMMENTS:** (Folios 14-15) - The numerous cases of diarrhoea on board was attributed by the surgeon to the change of diet. The guard, convicts and seamen all suffered more or less from the disease at Spithead and in the Channel. On approaching the Cape and the Colony the disease appeared again from the sudden vicissitude of climate. The surgeon suggested that warmer clothing should be allowed. Included in the general remarks is a table of the average height of the thermometer and barometer and remarks about the weather during the period of the voyage, and also regulations for the guidance of the convicts on board set up by the surgeon.

**RELIGION:** Protestant

**LITERACY:** Can read and write

**FAMILY –**

**Marital status:** Single

**Father:** Thomas

**Mother:** Anne

**Brothers:** William, Thomas, Jason, Robert

**Sisters:** Elizabeth, Hannah

**At native place (Rothwell)**

**IGI –**

**Children of Thomas and Ann Oram, baptised Rothwell-Northampton**

**Robert Oram – 15 November 1812**

**Ann Oram – 25 September 1814**

**William Oram – 22 February 1818**

**Elizabeth Oram – 10 June 1821**

**Isaac Oram – 8 June 1823**

**John Oram – 23 October 1825**

**George Oram – 27 May 1827**

**Hannah Oram – 9 August 1829**

**DESCRIPTION –**

**Trade: Farm labourer, can plough / Soldier in the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment**

**Height: 5' 10"**

**Age: 23**

**Complexion: Fresh**

**Head: Oval**

**Hair: Brown**

**Whiskers: None**

**Visage: Oval**

**Forehead: Medium height**

**Eyebrows: Dark brown**

**Eyes: Grey**

**Nose: Medium**

**Mouth: Small**

**Chin: Grey (sic)**

**Native Place: Rothwell**

**Remarks: Stout-made. Has been a soldier. (Tattoos) – I.H.L. over foreign half moon, 3 stars above elbow of right arm; woman holding flag 2 trees above elbow; heart and fish, mermaid and half moon and stars on left arm below elbow; ring on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> finger of left hand**

**TASMANIAN CONDUCT RECORD –**

**Crime:**

Transported for stealing boots, stockings &c. and £1, prosecutor Mary Butt of North Hill (2 indictments) – was in the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment at the time – 3½ years in the 55<sup>th</sup> Regiment

**Probation:**

**Assignment:**

16 Nov 1848 – Constable

17 Feb 1849 – Glenorchy

9 Feb 1850 – Prisoners Barracks

16 Feb 1850 – Ticket-of-Leave, from Police Magistrate

13 Aug 1852 – Gaol, Longford

17 Aug 1852 – District of Longford

10 Oct 1852 – Ticket-of-Leave

10 Feb 1853 – District of Launceston, Mr Beamish West

(too faint to be legible) – Recommended appointment for September 12 to \_\_\_\_\_

**Offences and Sentences:**

5 Feb 1849 – Hobart – Misconduct in being in a public-house in company with a female \_\_\_\_ who was illegally at large – two months imprisonment and hard labor – Public Works approved 19 Feb 1849

9 Feb 1850 – Constable, Hobart – Drunk on duty – Seven days solitary confinement

26 March 1850 – Ticket of Leave revoked – Absent from Muster

12 Aug 1852 – Ticket-of-Leave holder, Longford – Assault – Fined 30/-

1 Nov 1852 – Ticket-of-Leave holder, Longford – Absence from Muster – Ticket-of-Leave revoked

**Ticket of Leave:**

**Conditional Pardon:**

5 November 1852 – Approved

**Certificate of Freedom:**

4 August 1853

**DEPARTURES INDEX:**

## NEWSPAPER REPORTS –

CORNWALL ROYAL GAZETTE, 31 JULY 1846 - To be tried at Cornwall Summer Assizes, Thomas Conboy along with John Hogan and John Oram (facing additional charges) with stealing various articles of clothing &c from William Harvey of South-Petherwin, and James Coumbe of Northhill. The prisoners were soldiers who had deserted from their regiments, and had since employed themselves in stealing; Judge said he would not be doing his duty to suffer such dangerous men to remain in the country.

CORNWALL ROYAL GAZETTE, 31 JULY 1846 - To be tried at Cornwall Summer Assizes, John Hogan and John Oram for stealing money and clothes from Charles Woolcock of Tavistock a miner; also stealing money, clothes and a watch from Wm. Colenso of Tavistock miner; same two prisoners along with Thomas Conboy with stealing various articles of clothing &c from William Harvey of South-petherwin, and James Coumbe of Northhill.

WEST BRITON, 7 AUGUST 1846 – SUMMER ASSIZES – CROWN COURT, Tuesday, August 4, before Mr Justice Erle -

JOHN HOGAN, 20, JOHN ORAM, 20, and THOMAS CONBOY, 21, were indicted for stealing, on the 16th of July, a pair of boots, a brass pound weight, two pieces of silk, and some lamb, the property of WILLIAM HARVEY, of South Petherwin.

MARY BATT, the servant of the prosecutor, said she recollected the three prisoners coming into her master's house; they went into the front room, called the club-room. They had something to drink, and after they were gone she missed the articles named in the indictment, the whole of which she had previously seen in the room.

WILLIAM DINGLE said he had apprehended the prisoners; he took Oram first, and found upon him the boots and piece of silk. The other two prisoners, Hogan and Conboy, were caught in a wood; he found the neck of lamb in Hogan's possession. The jury found Hogan and Oram Guilty, but Acquitted Conboy.

The same three prisoners were then charged on a second indictment, with having stolen, on the 16th of July, in the parish of Northhill, seven stockings, a cloth cap, and a shawl, the property of JAMES COOMBE. The prosecutor stated that he was a cooper, living with his mother, who keeps the Ring of Bells public house. He recollected the prisoners coming into his mother's house and calling for some cider and one of them had some spirit and water. Witness left the house before the prisoners went away.

JANE COUMBE said she lived at the Ring of Bells, and recollected the prisoners coming there on the 16th of July, and calling for some refreshment. After they were gone she missed some stockings, a cap, a shawl, which she had previously seen in the room where they had been drinking. She ran after them, and charged them with having her son's cap; they said they had not, one of them had put it in the cupboard. Constable DINGLE then came up, and the prisoner Conboy returned with him to the house, but the cap was not there. The constable afterwards brought them all back, and the cap and other things were recovered.

JOHN COODE, living at Northhill, said he saw the three men in the village on the 16th of July, and had some conversation with them. Not liking their appearance he followed them at some distance, and observed them when they thought they were out of sight begin to run. Witness saw constable Dingle afterwards, who required his assistance, and witness mounted a horse and rode after them. When he overtook Hogan and Oram he called to them to stop, but Oram lifted his stick and said no one should stop him. Some other men, however, being near on the road, witness succeeded in taking him. GORGE DAW, a shoemaker, gave a very interesting account of the chase and capture of one of the prisoners, and deposed, as did also the preceding witness, to the finding of some stockings, a jacket, &c.

CONSTABLE DINGLE said he was sent for by Mr. Coumbe, and took Conboy; Oram and Hogan secreted themselves in a wood, but were afterwards found and brought back to the Ring of Bells. The jury found all three prisoners Guilty, upon this indictment. There were two other indictments against Hogan, for stealing various articles at Tavistock, the property of CHARLES WOOLCOCK and of WILLIAM COLENZO. These indictments, however, were not tried. The learned Judge said it appeared from the depositions that the prisoners were soldiers, who had deserted from their regiments, and had since employed themselves in stealing. He should not be doing his duty to suffer such dangerous men to remain in the country, and should therefore sentence them each to Seven Years' Transportation.

## **REFERENCES –**

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**Last Updated: 11 January 2011**