

Basic Detail Report



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Title

The ship WOODFORD, Captain Alfred Chapman, on the 11 February 1824, on her Passage from Madras to England

Date

1 April 1825

Primary Maker

William John Huggins

Medium

Hand coloured mezzotint on paper.

Dimensions

Overall: 505 x 710 mm Image: 425 x 655 mm

Name

Mezzotint

History

Until the early nineteenth century, except for the King's Bench, Marshalsea, Fleet Prisons and Newgate Gaol which were all Crown prisons attached to the central courts, prisons were administered locally and were not the responsibility or property of central government. They were used for the correction of vagrants and those convicted of lesser offences, for the coercion of debtors and for the custody of those awaiting trial or the execution of sentence. For nearly all other crimes the punishments consisted of a fine, capital punishment or transportation overseas. Since the early 1600s European societies used the transportation of criminals overseas as a form of punishment. When in the eighteenth century, the death penalty came to be regarded as too severe for certain capital offences, such as theft and larceny, transportation to the British colonies in North America became a popular form of sentence. The American War of Independence (1776-1781) put an end to the mass export of British and Irish convicts to America and many of the convicts in Great Britain's gaols were instead sent to the hulks (de-commissioned naval ships) on the River Thames and at Portsmouth, Plymouth and Cork (Ireland) where they were employed on river cleaning, stone collecting, timber cutting and dockyard work whilst serving out their sentence. In 1784, under the Transportation and Penitentiaries Act, felons and other offenders in the hulks could be exiled to colonies overseas which included Gibraltar, Bermuda and in 1788, the colony of NSW. (Frost, 1995) Between 1788 and 1868 over 160,000 men, women and children were transported to Australian colonies by the British and Irish Governments as punishment for criminal acts. Although many of the prisoners convicted were habitual or professional criminals with multiple offences recorded against them a small number were political prisoners, social reformers, or first time offenders. Transportation of these

convicts to the remote colonies of New South Wales, Moreton Bay, Norfolk Island, Van Diemen's Land and Western Australia during the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century (1788-1868) caused much human loss and anguish. The 554 ton, three masted, wooden ship WOODFORD was built at Bristol, England in 1819 for the well known and well connected shipping company of Abel and Arthur Chapman. The WOODFORD was a copper sheathed and fastened, single decked with iron beams and standards ship. It was also equipped with iron anchor cables or chains - a cabling system which was patented in 1819 the same year the ship was built. (Lloyds, 1819) The Chapman's, members of the Blackheath Gentlemen's Club, were actively involved in the contracting of shipping to the British Government for the transportation of troops to India and troops and convicts to the Australian colonies. The Chapman's operated, owned or husbanded a number of vessels including the WOODFORD, MARINER, MOUNTAINER, CHAPMAN, BROTHERS and the KATHERINE STEWART FORBES. Although the number of voyages made by the WOODFORD to India is unclear the vessel was taken up by the Hon. East India Company in 1820 as an extra vessel to its normal fleet of East Indiamen. On one of these voyages Captain Arthur Chapman befriended Caroline MacNaghten, daughter of Sir F. MacNaghten a judge in the Supreme Court in Calcutta, they were later married in London in July 1824, the same year the mezzotint of the WOODFORD returning home from Madras, India was published. In 1826 the WOODFORD made the first of two voyages to Van Diemen's Land carrying convicts and stores for the colony - the vessel arrived in Hobart on 22 November under the command of Edward Chapman, possible the son, or brother of the vessel's previous Captain, after a voyage of 109 days with 99 male convicts onboard. Whilst in Hobart Captain Edward Chapman married Miss Burnett the eldest daughter of John Burnett, Colonial Secretary of Van Diemen's Land. (Sydney Gazette 27 December 1826). On Christmas Day the WOODFORD arrived in Sydney from Hobart with Captain and Mrs Chapman on board along with Surgeon-Superintendent Dickson, Colonel Balfour and family, Adjutant Merrick, Ensign Buckley, 31 rank and file and 13 convicts sentenced to secondary punishment at Norfolk Island. On the 28 January 1827 the WOODFORD left Sydney for Calcutta, India with Colonel Cameron and the 3rd Regiment of 'The Buffs' on board. In 1828 the WOODFORD made a second voyage to Australia, still owned by the Chapman's, but this time under the command of Captain Milbank. The vessel arrived in Sydney on the 25 August 1828 after a voyage of 115 days with 183 male convicts on board along with a guard consisting of a detachment from the 26th, 39th and 57th Regiments. The vessel departed Sydney on the 25 September for Batavia with oil. The vessel was later reported lost with all hands and the upturned hull was sighted by the convict transport SURREY in December 1829. (Nicholson, Shipping Arrivals and Departures, Vol I, pp121, 125, 145 and 164) William John Huggins - artist and publisher was born in London, England in 1781 and died on the 19 May 1845. After several years at sea in the service of the East India Company - where he may well have seen or even sailed on the WOODFORD he settled in London. His house at 36 Leadenhall Street was near East India House, and he was regularly employed to paint carefully detailed pictures of the company's ships. He exhibited 16 marine paintings at the Royal Academy between 1817 and 1844 and also exhibited at the British Institution and Suffolk Street. He was appointed Marine Painter to William IV in 1834, his royal commissions include three paintings of the Battle of Trafalgar, which now hang at Hampton Court. His daughter married Edward Duncan (1803-82), a talented watercolourist and engraver who engraved many of Huggins's paintings and sometimes acted as his assistant. The National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, has 26 of his works, mostly ship portraits of East Indiamen including several mezzotints on the WOODFORD but taking from different

viewpoints. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/william-john-huggins>)