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| Born | About 1821, in Bishopsgate Workhouse, London |
| Parents | Isaac Jones and Elizabeth Ash |
| Parent's marriage | Not married |
| Siblings | Hannah, Rachael |
| Wife | Hannah Bosworth |
| Married | 24 October 1842, St John, Hackney, London |
| Children | William (1841); George (1843-1846); Hannah (1847); Louisa (1850) |

The parents of William Ash are clouded in mystery. According to William's sister, Hannah Ellis, who gave this information in 1850:

- William was born in Bishopsgate Workhouse.
- He was never an apprentice or yearly servant.
- His mother was Elizabeth Ash - she was not married to the father of William - he was Isaac Jones, dead nine years – Isaac cohabited with Elizabeth for 3 to 4 years - he was my father.
- [however, Hannah was born about 1805]
- Elizabeth Ash died between 6 and 7 years ago in Spitalfields.
- William was in Bishopsgate Workhouse for several years - and was sent from there to Norwood.

When Hannah married Philip Ellis in 1823, she was Hannah Abrahams or Abrams, a spinster. William thought his father was William Ash and his mother, Elizabeth Jones.

On 24 October 1842 at St John, Hackney, London, married by banns were:
William Ash, full age, bachelor, trimming weaver, resides in Morning Lane; his father was William Ash, a tailor.
Hannah Bosworth, under age, a spinster, resides in Morning Lane; her father was John Bosworth, a trimming weaver.
William signed the register, and Hannah made her mark. Witnesses - John Rush and Elizabeth Bosworth.

At the Central Criminal Court, on 3 February 1845:¹
413. William Ash was indicted for burglariously breaking and entering the dwelling-house of Jonathan James Tarrant, about the hour of one in the night of 27 December, at St. Luke, with intent to steal and stealing therein 41bs. weight of cheroots, value £2, and 41bs. weight of cigars, £2 10s, his property. He was found not guilty.

Then, at the Central Criminal Court, on 20 August 1849:²
1581. William Ash was charged with stealing 254 pairs of boots, valued at £100, the goods of William Reid.

Several people gave evidence, including James Donnohue:
I am in the service of Mr William Reid. He has a house on Finsbury-pavement, and also a house at 9, Little Moorfields—they join at the back—they are in the parish of St. Stephen, Coleman-street—

¹ <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18450203-413>

² <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18490820-1581>

persons live in them in the daytime, and I sleep there at night—there are no lodgers—on Tuesday night, 14 August, I went to the house to sleep, at a quarter before eleven at night, with Mr. Reid's son—he sleeps there also—he put the key into the door, and found it was bolted inside—I had a bag in my hand; I gave that to him to hold while I; tried to open the door—before I had time to try the door, it was opened from the inside, and the prisoner and another man rushed out—I had not an opportunity of seeing him at that time, but I followed, and never lost sight of him till I gave him in charge to the police—one of the men knocked young Reid down, and they then ran in different directions—I overtook the prisoner in South-street, which is nearly a quarter of a mile from Little Moorfields—after giving him into custody, I went back to the house in Little Moorfields, where I found three sacks of boots, which had been removed from the place where they were ordinarily kept—I had never seen them in the place where I found them—they were Mr Reid's—they had been kept hanging on hooks round the shop—the desk in the shop was broken.

William Ash, aged 28, was found guilty and was sentenced to 10 years transportation.

William Ash petitioned the Government; presumably, he wrote the petition himself, as no signatures or other information is included.

20 May 1850. 279/34. Received 23 May 1850. ³

The Humble Petition of William Ash. Sir this is to state how the first Witness contradicted him Self in Given Evidence in the trial the first Witness Between ten and A Eleven clock Me and my Master's boy where Going to Sleep on the Premises when I came to the house to Men Rush out I pursued after one Cross the Road where their was a Cab Stand and I Run Between five or Six Streets Before I over took him When he said I was Mistaken in the Person he was then ask the Second time wither he was Shore that he over took Me and he Said No he Met Me Coming towards him did Not he Contridict himself their that was true I was coming towards him when he stop Me and accused Me of Coming out of his Master house which I am as innocent as A Child un Born of the Crime I am Suffering for I was Going home at the time I then told him to Give Me in Charge if he thought it was me which their was A Midlesix Police Man over the way and I Crossed over to him and he then Give Me into Custody to him the Second Witness I was A Coming along when I saw Several Men Running But I was Some distance off them But when I Came up I Saw the Prisoner and the Witness talking to Gether this Witness Said that I was one of the men that was Running up at the Trial the Last Witness told the Midlesix Police Man when he ask him if I was one of the Men that was Running and he Said he did Not know and Likewise at the Station house when the inspector ask him which they could have Proved if they had Come forward A Boy Stated that he ran after one But he Should Not No him again he Neither Saw me Gane in Charge Nor yet untell I had Been in the Station house an hour or so and he Said one push him down the Policeman Said is this him Puting the words into the Boy Mouth and he Said yes if he Should Not No the man that he Ran after how Should he no A Man that he Never Saw Before he Came to the Station house there was A Hat Brought to the Station house By A Man who said that he Ran after two Men and one of their Hats fell off and he Pict it up But he Could Not Say that I was one of them and he was Not told to appear which would have Been in my favour Nothing of this was Stated at the trial else Maley I Should have Been A quited I could Swar that if I was on My Dying Bed that the witness met me A Coming along and acursed Me of the Crime it his a hard thing for Me to Suffer fure what I No

³ TNA, HO18/279

Nothing about and it is much harder for my wife and family which I was their only support it is a awful thing might not a person be easily mistaken who states and he did that he ran five or six streets and a cross a road where there was a cab rank at that hour of the night I can positively swear that I know no more of the crime that I am charged with than a child unborn I was merely coming along when the witness met me and accused me it is a awful thing for me to be sent out of the country and parted from my wife and family through a person being so positive but I forgive him he has but another to forgive him that is God who knows all things

Hannah also petitioned the Government, praying that her husband not be sent abroad in consideration of his previous good behaviour, the recommendation of his prosecutor and the distress of herself and her children. The petition was received on 30 December 1851 and answered on 7 February 1852. She said William was never convicted of any crime, nothing was taken from Mr Read's premises, and she has three children aged 10, 5 and 2 years old.

William was in Newgate Prison, and on 27 September 1849, he was transferred to Pentonville Prison. The register noted he was 28, convicted at the Central Criminal Court of burglary on 20 August 1849 and sentenced to 10 years transportation. William was married with two children, weighed 8st 13 lbs, could read and write imperfectly, and was an electroplater. His relative or next of kin was Mrs Ash, Rosemary Branch, Hoxton. Nearly a year later, he was removed to Portland Prison on 1 July 1850.⁴ He embarked on *St Vincent* on 22 December 1852 for the voyage to Tasmania. The ship sailed on 28 December and arrived on 23 May 1853.

During the voyage, William appeared twice on the sick list:

28 January 1853: William Ash, aged 28, convict; nausea abundans; put on sick list, 28 January 1853, discharged duty 1 February 1853, 4 days on the sick list.

1 March, 1853: William Ash, aged 47, convict; diarrhoea; put on sick list, 1 March 1853, discharged duty 9 March 1853, 8 days on the sick list.

On arrival at Hobart, William was described as 30 years old, 5'2¼", with brown hair, grey eyes and a fair complexion, Protestant, can read and write and a shoemaker. His native place was Bishopsgate; he was married with three children; his wife Hannah and his sisters, Hannah and Rachael, were at his native place.⁵

On 13 December 1853, he was granted a ticket of leave. According to the cover of his petition, he was to go to Tasmania with a ticket of leave, suggesting he should have received it on landing. A conditional pardon was granted on 4 August 1855.

William returned to England sometime after receiving his conditional pardon in 1855 and 1858, before his sentence had expired.

Then in 1858:

At the Middlesex Sessions, William Ash, 36, described as a photographic artist; Hannah Ash, his wife; and Charles Elton, 42, alias Montroe, were indicted for feloniously breaking and entering the

⁴ HO24/16; PCOM2/63; HO8/114

⁵ [https://stors.tas.gov.au/CON33-1-115\\$init=CON33-1-115p11](https://stors.tas.gov.au/CON33-1-115$init=CON33-1-115p11)

[https://stors.tas.gov.au/CON14-1-47\\$init=CON14-1-47_00136_L](https://stors.tas.gov.au/CON14-1-47$init=CON14-1-47_00136_L)

dwelling house of William Steward and stealing divers, rings, chains, watches etc.; and John Bosworth, 23, hawker, was indicted for feloniously receiving part of the same property, well knowing it to have been stolen.

The prosecutor stated he was a jeweller and watchmaker of 11½, High-street, Islington, but he only occupied the shop, the rest of the premises being a separate tenancy. On 24 February he left the shop at about 9 pm, and the foreman was in charge until 10 pm when he would close the shop. He went to the shop at 11 pm and all was safe at 2:30 am a policeman told him the shop had been broken into. He went to the shop and found broaches and other property scattered about and burglar's implements were found on the counter. About 90 watches, valued at £290, and other property to the amount of £820 was missing.

From the information received, he went to Halifax, armed with a search warrant, to the house of Bosworth's mother, Mrs Heed⁶. Bosworth had just arrived. While the policeman was reading the warrant, Bosworth began fumbling in his pockets, and a broach and ring, part of the stolen property, were found on being searched. The broach was marked by his own hand, and subsequent to the robbery, a photograph of William Ash had been put into it. Bosworth claimed he bought the items from a Jew in Petticoat lane. He then inquired about a man named Heed, whom he ultimately found in Huddersfield. Heed was in possession of a gold chain, also part of the stolen property, which he said Mrs Heed and Hannah Ash gave him a week ago. Two rings taken off the fingers of Hannah Ash were also identified as those belonging to the prosecutor, as was a ring in possession of a soldier.

Jessie Norton, who lodged with Hannah, gave extensive evidence that corroborated all the essential points of other evidence presented. She also said Hannah Ash kept a lodging house near Green-gate, in Hackney road; Elton had the nickname of 'the corporal'; and Hannah spent £30 on new furniture, bedding and clothes for her children and husband.

Elton was a notorious burglar sentenced to 15 years in 1847 for stealing £1400 worth of property.

William Ash was sentenced to 10 years for burglary 1849.

Hannah Ash had been sentenced to 18 months previously.

Elton and William Ash received 15 years penal servitude, Hannah Ash, ten years penal servitude, and Bosworth received three years.⁷

There are numerous petitions by both Hannah and William. None succeeded in changing their sentences.

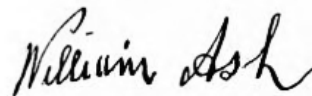
William Ash was transferred to Millbank Prison on 11 May 1858 from Cold Bath Fields gaol, where he had been held since 5 April. He was 36, a shoemaker, able to read and write imperfectly, married with two children, and Protestant. His wife, Hannah Ash, was a prisoner in the House of Correction, Westminster. William spent 17 days in separate confinement at Millbank; his behaviour was good. On 28 May, he was transferred to Pentonville Prison, where he spent 11½ months in separate confinement, and again his behaviour was good. He was described as 5'3½", with brown hair, blue eyes, a slight build, a fair complexion and a scar on his chest. On 12 May

⁶ Mrs Eades or Eade on prison record.

⁷ Weekly Chronicle (London), 24 April 1858, p7

1869, he was removed to Portland Prison. He had a visitor on 22 August 1860, just before he boarded the *Palmerston* on 3 November 1860 for the voyage to Western Australia.⁸

William possessed three books (Bible, Prayer and Hymn), two letters, three photographs, a pocket knife and a strip of leather. He was issued with a web belt, two razors, a shaving box and brush, razor strip, toothbrush and a locket. He later received a pocket compass. He signed for the property.



It was not long before William was in trouble again. He was sent to Rocky Bay on 12 July 1861, and on 30 October, seven probation prisoners forming the Rocky Bay party were marched into town under police escort, charged with stealing a calf, the property of Sergeant Crowdy. The skin and feet were found and identified by the owners. An investigation of the matter will take place at the Convict Establishment today. The seven convicts were all from the *Palmerston*, and William received three years for absconding and stealing.⁹

William wrote another petition on 14 November 1862; however, he would not be granted any exemption apart from what he earned through industry and good behaviour. He spent much of 1862 on the sick list, treated for *Leipoma* (Lipoma), a harmless fatty tumour that grows under the skin.

He was released on a ticket of leave on 1 September 1864 and sent to the Perth district. A conditional pardon was granted on 29 April 1868. He managed to keep out of trouble until 26 November 1868 - sentenced in Perth to 1 month's hard labour for "loitering for an unlawful purpose" in Wellington Street at 12 o'clock at night.¹⁰

William left per *Catherine* from Albany on 30 December 1869 for Colombo. His daughter, Hannah and her family, arrived in Melbourne in 1868. William was in Victoria by 1877, as his police record shows. How did he know Hannah was in Melbourne?

Victorian Prison Record ¹¹

15012. Asche, William *alias* Barrett, William Ash, Wm Ash.

5'2¾", 8st 10lbs, fresh complexion, grey hair, blue eyes, large nose, medium mouth, large chin, brown to grey eyebrows, square visage, high forehead, born 1823, native place is London, slipper maker, Church of England, can read and write, scar between eyebrows, lost all upper front teeth but one, right finger injured, left forefinger slightly injured, slight build.

Convictions:

15 October 1877, 10 years hard labour, breaking into a shop and stealing therein, tried Melbourne Criminal Sessions by Justice Fellows.

⁸ HO24/008; HO24/013; HO24/017; PCOM2/067

⁹ The Perth Gazette and Independent Journal of Politics and News (WA : 1848 - 1864), 1 November 1861, p3; SROWA Probationer Prisoners Register for Nos 5586-6999 (R7). The seven convicts Edward Caveney, Anthony Pyne, James Timlin, George Vaughan, William Angus, John Williams and William Ash.

¹⁰ The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times (WA : 1864 - 1874), 4 December 1868, p3

¹¹ VPRS 515/P0000, Central Register for Male Prisoners 14722 - 15184 (1877), p310

18 January 1886, 12 months, idle and disorderly, tried Geelong Petty Sessions by chairman of bench.

16 November 1887, 2 years hard labour, attempt to break into a shop with intent to steal, tried Melbourne Supreme Court by Mr Justice A'Beckett.

27 December 1889, 12 months, suspected person, tried Melbourne Petty Sessions by chairman of bench.

13 August 1891, 12 months hard labour, having housebreaking implements in his possession, tried Melbourne Petty Sessions by chairman of bench.

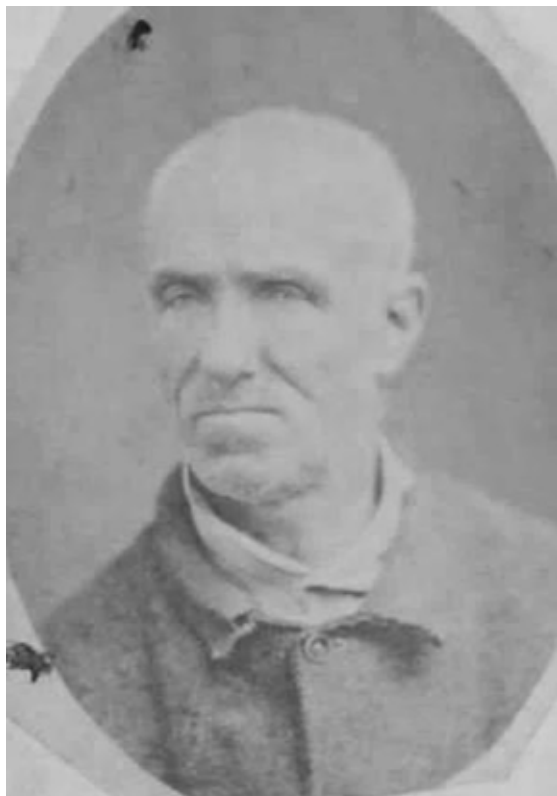
21 June 1893, 2 years hard labour, rogue and vagabond, housebreaking implements in his possession, tried Ballarat Petty Sessions by chairman of bench.

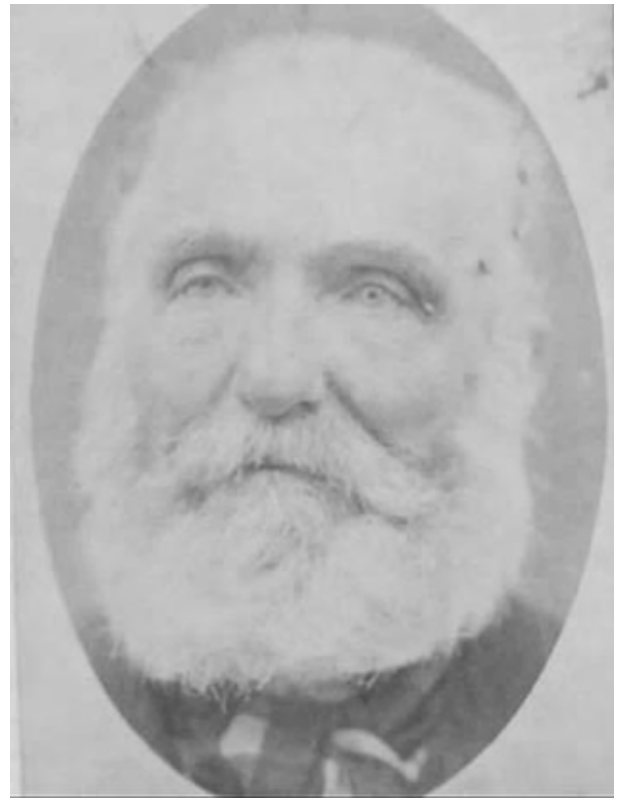
Previous history (much of which is incorrect):

Said to have undergone a sentence of 15 years for jewel robbery served in W.A vide papers ret'd to C.C. Police, December 1877; per *Blyth* from London to Melbourne in 1856, to England per *Morning Light* in 1859. To Melbourne per *Eliza Firth* in 1873; married wife in England maiden name Anna Bosworth; he denies having been sent to Western Australia as an Imperial Convict; admits having been in Ceylon and India but denies having been convicted in either place; his son in law is 15014 Robt Smith.

On 25 February 1895, William received his freedom by remission.

William Ash, 84, caretaker, died on 10 April 1904 at Melbourne Benevolent Asylum from senile debility and heart disease. His parents were William Ash, a dealer, and Elizabeth Ash, formerly Jones. He had been in Victoria for 46 years, was a widower, had no children, and is buried at Springvale Cemetery in the public area.





Images from Victoria Public Records Office

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/archive/1C80B3ED-F3A9-11E9-AE98-15187FC950BE?image=301>

Wife Hannah.

On 10 February 1850, Hannah applied for settlement.¹²

Hannah Ash, 19 New Inn Broadway. I am about 24 years of age, the wife of Wm Ash, now a prisoner in Pentonville Prison, London (prison number 2540). I was married to him in the Parish Church of St John, Hackney, about 7 years ago and by him have 2 children [originally 3 and overwritten 2], namely Hannah, aged 3 years and Louisa, aged 6 weeks. I have a child by him born before our marriage named Wm Bosworth, who is now aged 8 years and upwards, born at Folkstone. I never knew my husband to rent a house or do any act to acquire a settlement. His parents [unnamed] are both dead.

On the 1851 census, living at 4 Blyth Buildings, Saint Botolph Bishopsgate, East London: ¹³

Hannah Ash, head, widow, 36, silk weaver, born in Manchester

William, son, 10, born in Manchester

Hannah, daughter, 3, born in Bishopsgate

Louisa, 1, born in Bishopsgate

and a friend, Mary Anne Atkins, 19, silk winder.

Then in December 1853, she appeared at the Worship Street Court was:

¹² London Metropolitan Archives; London Poor Law Registers, 1843-1853

¹³ TNA, HO107/1524

Hannah Ashe, a tall, masculine-looking woman, was placed at the bar for final examination before Mr Hammill, charged with having been concerned with three men, not in custody, in breaking into the premises of Mr. Charles Howe, a draper in Clifton street, Finsbury, and stealing a quantity of Coburg cloth of the value of £18.

Police-constable Arrowsmith, G 103, stated that shortly after six o'clock on the morning of Wednesday se'nnight his attention was attracted to the prisoner, who was loitering about in the company of a man within a short distance of the prosecutor's shop. Suspecting that they were there for some unlawful purpose witness secreted himself underneath a doorway, in order to watch their movements, and they were shortly afterwards joined by two other men, one of whom said something in a low tone to the prisoner's companion, who immediately handed him an instrument, resembling a chisel, with which he proceeded down the street, accompanied by the prisoner, and both of them placed themselves immediately in front of the prosecutor's shop window. Witness then emerged from his place of concealment, and was stealthily advancing towards them when he heard the crash of broken glass, and immediately afterwards saw the man thrust his hand through an aperture in the window and draw-out three pieces of cloth, which he handed to the prisoner, who deposited them in her apron. Witness instantly ran forward and secured the prisoner with the property in her possession, but the man who was with her started off, and effected his escape. The Prisoner declined to offer any defence, and was committed for trial.¹⁴

At the Central Criminal Court on 12 December 1853, Hannah Ash, 28, pleaded guilty to stealing 100 yards of Coburg cloth and was sentenced to 18 months. She was described as 5'0", slender, with brown hair, hazel eyes, fr p (fresh pockmarked?) complexion, a widow from Coventry.¹⁵

Then in 1858, Hannah was convicted with her husband William and Charles Elton of breaking and entering the dwelling house of William Steward, and stealing divers, rings, chains, and watches; and with James Bosworth, her brother, of receiving the stolen goods. She received ten years penal servitude.

Hannah had been previously convicted in 1853 and sentenced to 18 months, and summarily convicted of being drunk on 11 June 1856 and spent seven days in gaol. After being convicted in 1858, she spent time in the House of Correction at Westminster, Millbank Prison, Brixton Prison and Fulham Refuge. In her numerous petition, and at different times, she said:

- she acted entirely under the influence of her husband
- her daughter needed her mother
- she could obtain work as a trimming weaver and support herself
- her mother would take her in
- if allowed to meet with William, she could induce him to say where the stolen property was, even though his petitions claimed he was innocent
- friends would help her leave the country

Hannah was discharged on License on 17 October 1865, 2½ years before her sentence expired.

What happened to Hannah has not been discovered yet.

¹⁴ Morning Herald (London), 02 December 1853, p7

¹⁵ <https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/browse.jsp?div=t18531212-127> ; HO77/060

Son William

William was born on 2 August 1841 and baptised on 30 January 1842 at St Botolph Bishopsgate, London. He has not been positively identified after the 1851 census.

Son George

He was buried at Globe Fields Burial Grounds (Wesleyan) in Stepney on 13 September 1846, aged 3; his address was Blyth Buildings.

Daughter Hannah

His daughter Hannah, married on 28 October 1866, St Mary, Newington, Surrey, by banns: Robert Smith, full age, bachelor, turner, resides in West Street; his father was William Smith, a turner.

Hannah Ash, a minor, spinster, resides in Olney Terrace; her father was William Ash, a shoemaker. Both signed the register; witnesses - James Smith and Susanna Smith

The family migrated to Victoria, Robert Smith, 22, a turner, R&W; Hannah, 19, R&W; Harriet, 1, left Liverpool on 19 December 1867 and arrived 7 April 1868 at Melbourne per *Vimiera*.

She and Robert had five children – Harriet, James 1871-1871, Edmond (or Robert) 1873, Rose Elizabeth 1874 and Alice Maud 1878.

Robert Smith was convicted with her father, William Ash, on 15 October 1877 and sentenced to 10 years.

Hannah died on 14 February 1883 of Bright's disease brought on by alcoholism. She died while her husband, Robert Smith, was in prison. He was released on 25 May 1883.

Daughter Louise

Her daughter, Louise Ash, was probably buried on 23 May 1854 at Croydon while Hannah was in prison. Louise was four years old and from the Central London District School; the school catered chiefly for orphans, deserted, illegitimate children, or the offspring of persons undergoing punishment.