

George Jackson, 6631, York

Researched by Marcia Watson

Alias: John Cropper, Alfred or Herbert Coates

Nothing, so far, has been found of the early life of George Jackson or his real name. The following is the earliest court appearance found.

Cumberland Michaelmas Sessions, Cockermouth, October 1848.

THOMAS BROWN (aged 27, reads and writes well) and JOHN CROPPER (aged 17, reads and writes imperfectly) were charged with stealing various jewellery articles from the George Cox of Whitehaven shop.

A long account appears in the Carlisle Journal. The trial concluded with the following:

Chairman: Mr Sabbage, what do you know about the prisoners?

Mr Sabbage: Cropper belongs to the Liverpool swell mob. He has five blue spots on his wrist—that is the sign of the gang by which they know each other.

The Chairman—I am quite certain that they belong to a large gang of thieves, and it is fortunate for the county to have been detected before they carried out their system any further. (Both the prisoners here fell a blubbering.) It is no uncommon thing for professed thieves to feign a great deal sorrow. I am convinced that if you were turned loose upon society, you very soon begin to thieve again.

Brown (wringing his hands and interrupting the Chairman with his low crying)—Oh sir, if you let me off this time, I'll take care not to come into this Court as long as I live. Cropper again joined Brown in a lusty chorus of "oh, dear's."

The Chairman: I must say that a more just verdict was never given. You have had the advantage of able counsel to defend you, but it was impossible, in the face of the evidence adduced against you, that they could save you from conviction. You appear to be well-dressed men going about the country to plunder honest men.

Chopper: No, sir; I never went about the country. (Laughter.)

The Chairman: It is quite unfit that you should be allowed to remain in the country, and the sentence of the Court upon you is that you and each of you be transported for seven years.

Cropper, immediately after the sentence was passed, assumed a look brazen ferocity and applied for the restoration of his trunk and the articles of clothing it contained. The £4 10s found in his possession was directed to be handed over to the prosecutor as being the value of the lost ring, and Mr Sabbage was requested to give to a draper in Whitehaven some unmade handkerchiefs which were found in the trunk, which he identified as goods that had been pilfered from his shop.

[The prisoners belong to the London and Liverpool swell mobs. Seven "schools," or parties of four each, set out a few months ago from Loudon on a provincial tour, having cast lots for the routes. The "Northern Circuit" fell to the prisoners, who have been stopped short in their shoplifting career—their more lucky companions escaping.]¹

George was committed on 10 May 1851 at Penrith, Cumbria, charged with larceny from the person. His trial was reported in the newspaper:

Quarter Sessions for Cumberland, July 1861 at Carlisle.

James Anderson, 51, horse dealer, reads and write imperfectly, and George Jackson, 28, tailor, reads and write imperfectly, were charged with stealing from the person of John Barker, at Penrith, on 24 April, two hundred pounds in Bank of England notes, the property of John Barker. The prisoners pleaded not guilty. Mr Scott appeared for the prosecution, and Mr McOubrey and Mr Fawcett for the prisoners.

The prosecutor said he was land Stewart to Henry Howard Esq of Greystoke Castle. On 24 April, the day of the Spring Fair, he was at Penrith. Between 10 am and 11 am, he was in the White Ox Inn near Hill Top; Mr speak was there and paid him £155 in notes and £15 in gold. He put the notes in his

¹ Carlisle Journal, 20 October 1848, p3

breast pocket and the gold in his trowser pocket. The payment was made in a small room upstairs. There were many people in the room, most of whom he knew. On coming downstairs, he turned to the right to go out of the house to the Hill Top. In the passage of the house, there are three steps, and in ascending them, he was nearly thrown down. There was a great crush, and he felt someone's hand come in contact with him. he had not gone far when he discovered his loss and immediately went back to the house where he had seen Mr Carson and to tell him but could not find him. The pocketbook was produced and identified by the prosecutor. In cross-examination, he could not swear the purse was not taken from him after he left the house.

Superintendent Carson of the County Police said he was on duty at the Hill Top and neighbourhood on 24 April. He was dressed in plain clothes and, between 10 am and 11 am, went into the White Ox and saw Mr Barker there. He was in a small room next to the door and saw everyone in the room. The door was three yards from the stairs, and I saw Mr Barker, Mr Thom, and Mr Speak go upstairs. The prisoner Jackson also went upstairs, but he did not see him come downstairs. He went out of the house to get assistance. He went about 60 yards down the street in order to get a good view of the town and the White Ox. While standing there, he saw the two prisoners and two other men come hurriedly out of the house. The prisoners tried to disguise themselves; the two who had coats on took them off, and the other two put them on. He saw them walk out of the town. He followed them, and getting in front of them on a bye road, he told them he wanted them to go back to Penrith. They asked what they were charged with; he replied only on suspicion, and if they had done nothing he would let them go. With the assistance of another man, and after a great struggle in which one prisoner got his head cut, and two of them were captured and taken to the Police office. Richard Horsley, who assisted in taking the prisoners into custody, saw one of them draw a knife, and he saw them in the neighbourhood where the money was found. The prisoners offered to give him money if he would let them go.

A sergeant searched the road on the west side of the railway and found the pocketbook produced, six £10 notes and eight £5 notes. James Speak identified the money as that he had paid to Barker.

Verdict: Guilty, a previous conviction was proved against Jackson. Anderson received 10 years of penal servitude and Jackson 12 years of penal servitude.²

George Jackson, *alias* John Cropper, *alias* Alfred (or Herbert) Coates, was convicted on 2 July 1861 and transferred to Wakefield Prison on 12 September 1861 from Carlisle Prison. Almost a year later, on 9 June 1862, he was transferred to Portland Prison. From here, he boarded the convict transport *York* on 2 October 1862 for the voyage to Western Australia.³

George worked as a labourer, general servant, boatman, fruit seller, painter and storeman before he received a Conditional Pardon on 15 July 1870.

Departure from Fremantle, on 27 September 1870, per *Bungaree*, passengers included: Mr and Mrs Morgan and child travelled with George Jackson, convict No. 6631. George appears to have a wife, Mary Jackson; however, there are conflicting newspaper reports of the children.⁴ No marriage has been found for George Jackson.

27 — Bungaree, 80 tons, Nash, master for Melbourne. Passengers—J. Harris, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson, J. Sangee, J. Collins, W. Lyons, Margaret Burrows, W. Colton, Mary Colton, Mr. and Mrs. Morgan and child, J. M'Coy, M. Stokes, G. Jackson, wife and 3 children. Mary White. 5

² Carlisle Examiner and North Western Advertiser, 06 July 1861, p4

³ TNA, HO23/18: PCOM@/389

⁴ No marriage has been found for George Jackson and Mary.

⁵ The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times (WA : 1864 - 1874), 30 Sep 1870, p2

Sept. 27th—BUNGAREE, schooner, 89 tons, Nash, master, for Melbourne. Passengers—I. Harris, R. Nelson, Mrs. Nelson, J. Saugee, J. Collins, G. Lyons, Mary Barrows, Wm. Colton, Mary Colton, Wm. Morgan, Mary Morgan, H. Morgan (Infant,) J. McCoy, W. Stokes, G. Jackson, Mary Jackson, Mary and Kate Duncan (children,) Mary Ann White.

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Testimonial to Captain Nash, from the passengers, on his first voyage to Melbourne.
Schooner *Bungaree*, 15 October 1870.

To Captain Nash

Sir, we, the undersigned, have taken this opportunity of expressing our sincere thanks for the very kind manner you have treated us on board the schooner *Bungaree* during your voyage from Fremantle to Melbourne.

We noticed that you have done all in your power to promote the comfort of all your passengers and made unceasing efforts as Captain in watching for the safety of all on board your ship.

We cannot part without wishing you a safe and speedy return to your home and friends.

Signatures - Steerage Passengers included William Morgan, Mary Morgan, Mary Jackson.⁷

Williamstown Court, Monday 17 October 1870.

George Jackson and William Morgan were charged with being prisoners of the Crown illegally at large in Victoria. The prisoners arrived in Hobson's Bay on Sunday afternoon in the schooner *Bungaree* from Western Australia. The original sentences of Jackson had not expired, and Morgan's expired in July last. The law of this colony was that no man who had been a prisoner of the Crown should be permitted to come here until he had been a free man three years from the time he obtained his liberty. The prisoners said they wished to go on to Sydney by the next steamer, with a view of proceeding thence to New Zealand. The police applied for an adjournment to inquire into further particulars, and the prisoners were remanded till the following day.⁸

Tuesday 18 October 1870.

George Jackson and William Morgan were brought up on remand, charged with a breach of Section 2 of the Criminal Influx Prevention Act, in being prisoners of the Crown illegally at large in Victoria from Swan River. The men were ordered to enter into their own recognizances of £20 each to leave the colony within seven days. James Nash, master of the schooner *Bungaree*, which brought Jackson and Morgan to this port from Swan River, was then proceeded against for a breach of the 6th Section of the same Act. The defendant pleaded guilty to the charge, observing that this was his first voyage to this port and that the authorities at Swan River had misled him. He was fined £10 or 14 days imprisonment.⁹

No further trace has been found of George Jackson.

⁶ The Express (Fremantle, WA : 1870-1871), 28 Sep 1870, p2

⁷ The Express (Fremantle, WA : 1870-1871), 30 Nov 1870, p2

⁸ The Herald (Melbourne, Vic.: 1861 - 1954), Mon 17 Oct 1870 , p3

⁹ Williamstown Chronicle (Vic. : 1856 - 1954), 22 Oct 1870, p5