

## **Thomas Aaron, 1306, William Jardine**

Marcia Watson

Thomas was the son of John and Catherine Aaron, born in Glasgow about 1829.

Living at West Street, Govan, Glasgow in Lanarkshire, Scotland, in 1841 were:

John Aaron	45, Dress M (manufacturer?), not born in county, <u>born Scotland</u>
Catharine Aaron	40, not born in county, born in Scotland
Mary	17, born in county
<b>Thomas Aaron</b>	12, born in county
Robert Aaron	11, born in county
James Aaron	9, born in county

In 1851 at Buchanan Court, 16, Broomielaw Street, St Georges, Glasgow:

John Aaron, 52, born in Ireland, Second Hand Bookseller

Mary Aaron, 24, a needlewoman, was lodging at the same address with another family. Mary is John's daughter, according to his death certificate.

John Aaron died suddenly of apoplexy on 21 April 1857 at 36 St Enoch's Wynd, Glasgow, a bookseller and a widower.

At the Glasgow Circuit Court, on 26 April 1851, Thomas Arron stood trial.

James Macdonald, Robert Kyle, John McGregor, dyer, **Thomas Aaron**, and John McGregor, painter, pleaded not guilty to the crime of theft, housebreaking, and reset of theft. Robert Kyle, and John McGregor, painter, were charged with having broken into the shop Glassford-street, occupied by Thomas Bennie, draper, by forcing off one of the iron stanchions securing a window, and stealing from there two webs of gala tartan cloth, 200 yards of printed cotton cloth, two pieces of regatta shirting, and 20 yards of Orleans cloth.

Furthermore, Robert Kyle, and John McGregor, painter, were charged with having on the night of the 22 November, broken into the premises occupied by Dickson & Laings, woollen manufacturers, Glassford-street, by forcing open the door of a water-closet, in a stair leading to the premises of William and Peter Blair, gingham manufacturers, and ascending through a hatchway in the ceiling of the said water-closet, and stealing from there 100 tartan plaids, and 100 tartan shawls or thereby.

Also, the said Robert Kyle, and John McGregor, dyer, and John McGregor, painter, were charged with having broken into the premises in Queen-street, occupied Peter Salmond & Co., paper-hangers, there, by forcing the outside shutters of a window and breaking one of the panes, and stealing therefrom 396 packages of Dutch metal leaf, ten packages of bronze dust, 20 camel-hair pencils, and 12 painters combs.

James McDonald, Robert Kyle, John McGregor, dyer, John McGregor, painter, and **Thomas Aaron**, were also charged with having on the 5 December broken into the premises in Miller-street, occupied by the firm of D. and H. Inglis, by means of false keys, and stolen therefrom 40 or more pieces Musline-de-laine cloth.

John McGregor, painter, has absconded.

In the case of Alexander McKyle, Thistle-street, Hutchesontown, who had been associated with the prisoners as the receiver of the stolen goods, had been already disposed of.

The case against James McDonald, who was only seen in the company of the others at the Broomielaw, was withdrawn by the public prosecutor. The jury unanimously found the charges proven against Robert Kyle, **Thomas Aaron**, and John McGregor, dyer, but recommended John McGregor to the leniency of the Court, on account of his not being so actively engaged as the others. James MacDonalld was dismissed with a serious admonition. Kyle and **Aaron** were sentenced to be transported for a period of 14 years; McGregor for 10 years. The prisoners, especially McGregor, appeared to be overwhelmed by their sentences.

*Glasgow Gazette* - Saturday 26 April 1851, p2

Note: Web – is a piece of woven cloth.

Scotland, Court & Criminal Database gives a little more detail:

Name and Designation	Age	Birthplace	Crime
Alexander Kyle, cloth lapper and dealer, prints, Thistle Street, Hutchesontown, Glasgow, Lanarkshire	49	Glasgow	Theft by housebreaking
James MacDonalld, weaver, Gallowgate, Glasgow, Lanarkshire	20	Glasgow	Theft by housebreaking
John McGregor, dyer, Risk Street, Calton, Glasgow, Lanarkshire	17	Glasgow	Theft by housebreaking
John McGregor, painter, 6 Allison Lane, Great Hamilton Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire			Theft by housebreaking
Robert Kyle, painter, Broomielaw Street, Glasgow, Lanarkshire	20	Perth	Theft by housebreaking
<b>Thomas Aaron</b> , dealer, Saltmarket, Glasgow, Lanarkshire	18	Glasgow	Theft by housebreaking

Alexander Kyle, the receiver of the stolen goods: Guilty in terms of own confession - third charge. Imprisonment - 12 months

John McGregor who absconded: Outlaw and fugitive. Outlawed and put to the horn.

The 1851 census shows Thomas Aaron, 20, a blacksmith born in Glasgow, was in North Prison, St Mungo, Lanarkshire, Scotland.

Thomas was received at Millbank Prison on 11 November 1851. He was single, could read and write imperfectly, was a dealer, Presbyterian and had been convicted once before for being disorderly, convicted 25 April 1851 and sentenced to 14 years transportation. Thomas said his father was John Arron, bookseller, Broomielaw Street. He boarded the *William Jardine* on 17 April 1852 for the voyage to Western Australia. On board with him was Robert Kyle, 5186.

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While in prison, Thomas petitioned for a mitigation of his sentence.

22158 Thomas Aaron, aged 20

Petitioner received at Millbank Prison on 11 Nov 1851 from Glasgow

To The Right Honorable Sir George Grey, Bart

Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department  
The Petition of Thomas Aaron (received 25 Nov 1851)

A prisoner in the Millbank Prison  
Humbly Sheweth

That it is with feelings of a very harrowing nature combined with reluctance and a dread of being, cancelled by reproof, that I can bring my mind to the conclusion of taking the liberty of addressing your honour; but I have to comply to the promptings of a wounded spirit and a full sense of injustice together with a knowledge that the laws and government of my country, are established for the protection and administrating of equity and justice to the meanest of its subjects, showing no partiality or respect of persons when charged with having broken its bounds to whatever rank of society they belong, these, pardon me Sir, has tended to impart encouragement for the execution of my design.

Honoured Sir, I will give you a brief sketch of my history, and display to you in as clear a light as I, can safely term base dishonesty that I, experienced from the Ministries appointed for the dispensing of justice between the pursuers and the delinquents, and also have to complain of the unhallowed artifices that were used by the prosecutors, and fulfillers of the law namely pleading advocates, and their assistants, and also the subtle schemes that are devised, and actually put into Execution by criminal officers of extorting a confession from the young ignorant and deluded beings that falls within their avaricious grasp it gains them a name of being expert in diminishing crime while in my humble opinion they are decidedly nurturing it, for they who are worked upon in this manner in their first offence take precious good case not to be wheedled into the same snares, but still they keep up their nefarious system of extortion because they find it a ready way of replenishing their powers, at the heaping of immorality upon the community, at their expence, and at the life's blood of the poor and truly infatuated beings that follow the vocation s of crime in all its multitudinous and mysterious systems.

I have said I will give you a sketch of my history, which I will now give in as short a style as possible. I was born in Glasgow in the year 1831 of respectable parents who in my childhood followed the calling of baby linen manufacturing, until my mother's death which for me and the rest of the family happened very untimely, to be short after that event circumstances altered my Father's position in life with regard to his worldly affairs, the consequence was that his young and inexperienced family were thrown early upon their own resources to buffet with the world as they best could. I was the eldest of the male members, and of course was the first to be sent afloat on the ocean of life, and not to give self-praise mane manys an honest shift to keep hunger and infamy far from my dwelling, until at last unhappily falling out of employment, and alas falling into company of poor deluded prison depraved beings who soon overturned my principles of honesty so far, as, gain my consent to take a hand in the robbery of Mr Inglis's delaine warehouse in Millers Street Glasgow, on the fifth night of December 1851 between the hours of eight and nine. I will give you the names of the whole party that took a hand in this nefarious exploit, first I will name the instigator of the affair John McIntyre, next James McDonald, Robert Kyles, John McGrigor, dyer, and John McGrigor painter, and myself. I mention the trades of the two McGrigors to distinguish them, so John McGrigor, dyer, and I, were mentioned to follow after the above named four, which we accordingly did, and arrived at the appointed place, he and I, lost sight of

our accomplices, and stood in the same stt (?) about an hour or so, and began to think they had duped us, for it is not always there in honour amongst the plundering fraternity, their not making their appearance made us get timid and anxious, and thinking of making our exit, when we were suddenly arrested took to prison and to my amazement charged with four cases of house-breaking and theft. I thought it was a stratagem to try our nerves, but I experienced latterly was the cause of all the misery which I am now suffering, although McGrigor dyer, and I lost sight of our accomplices, they had accomplished their design and extracted from the said warehouse to the best of my remembrance 49 pieces of muslin delaine, which were arraigned before us along with the articles of the other three cases, which I was charged with, and which three cases I learned when I received my indictment were perpetrated by John McIntyre, John McGrigor painter, and Robert Kyles, and for whom unknown to me were in quest of by the criminal officers for the same I hear that John McGrigor dyer, was implicated in having a hand in one of the other three, which I can say nothing about, but He, who knows the secrets of all hearts, only knows his innocence next day after our committal - we all individually gave in a statement of all we knew regarding the deeds, some were well versed in the art of evading the artful questions that condemned themselves, and which I have mentioned before is well drawn from them by the criminal officers in private ere the come to give their statement - in an open court or at least before a plurallity of numbers, there was one whom I had never saw before who on the day of our examination in part of the housebreaking of two of the cases, the papers will not suffice to give a long detail of what I would wish to speak of, so therefore I must be short, the John McGrigor painter, was never captured, so there were six of us lay for about six months untried prisoners, when we got our indictments to appear before the high ministers of justice on the 24th of April 1851. John McIntyre, who was three times previously convicted, and who was the instigator of the whole affair was taken as queens evidence, on the forenoon, of the 24th we were taken out for trial, and the resetter was singled out from amongst us while on the stair leading to the bar, by the combined manoeuvring of his Lordship on the bench and the Crown prosecutor with the pleading advocate of the resetter, and he came down shortly after ejaculating in an ecstasy of joy, in the sight and hearing of us who were indicted with him, and in the presence of his paid advocate and agent, a twelve month Sir, a twelve month Sir, this was a scene done out of the public sight, we were order to be put back till the next day, but why were we put back merely their own conscience told them they were acting dishonestly towards, the poor deluded beings who next day suffered the full weight of the laws vengeance and because they could not give scope to their wish of severity upon us in the sight of the public, after giving him who reaped the sole proceeds of the plunder, such a short period immediately before, we were accordingly put back and brought to the bar the day following the 25th, and his Lordship told the Jury the prisoners now placed at the bar, were charged with several cases of housebreaking, but he would try us for the last case being the one I unfortunately had a hand in (I told in the last page who was the perpetrators of the three other cases) it may be imagined what the Queens evidence was capable of swearing, when he swore by the Almighty God that McDonald was not with us at all, which in the first offgoing was an infamous falsehood. McDonald was liberated from the bar, and immediately after Robert Kyles and I got the sentence of 14 years transportation, John McGrigor got 10 years for giving vent to his feelings in tears, by being also commended to the mercy of the court, which pardon me, Honourable Sir, for, saying put his Lordship actually into a transport of rage saying in an irritated

manner a person should not give way to feelings of sympathy towards beings who had so violated their country's laws, but why did he allow those feelings, to give way so far the day before as deal so lightly upon the resetter, him who reaped the sole benefit arising from the whole deeds of dishonesty, a man also of a good education who had arrived at the years of maturity, and whose position in life was, such, that every avenue was open for his rising in the scales of society, and an ornament thereto, instead, of what he had not for the first time done, become a dishonest member and a pest, for he had brought disgrace upon his connections by a former conviction, what does it say for his Lordship, who sympathized with him I have been describing, in giving him one year's imprisonment, and then, so far let passion get the better of humanity and justice, as give me thirteen years more than him, and as heavy a sentence as them, that was guilty of the whole four cases the sentencing of three youths without a conviction against us upon the evidence (at least he was the chief against us) of such a character who was three time previously convicted, and who was capable of swearing anything to save himself, it leaves a stain upon his Lordship's name that can never be erased, and there is a day coming when the, Judge od Judges, he will have to answer for his maladministration and inhumanity that he showed towards his fallen, yet nevertheless fellow beings. Honourable Sir pardon the bold manner in which I write, I frankly confessing my inability of writing, but the thoughts of such a long sentence upon my head combined with eleven months I have been in solitary confinement and the thoughts that I have to be a twelve month more, will ere long be the means of sending me to a premature grave or into a state of mental derangement, pardon me Honorable Sir for forwarding this petition for your consideration, and any mitigation of my sufferings that you deem proper to grant, will be humbly acknowledged and fully appreciated by

Your humble petitioner and Servant Thomas Aaron

Gaol report: Once in prison for disorderly conduct.

Petition was unsuccessful.

HO18/320