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EMMA D. WATKINS, *Life Courses of Young Convicts Transported to Van Diemen's Land*, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. ISBN 978 1 3500 8126 0, £76.50 (hb).

Some 73,000 convicts were transported to Van Diemen's Land by the British judicial system in the first half of the nineteenth century, of whom about 13,000 were under the age of 18. This book examines not only the crimes and sentences of these young men and women, but also the ways their time in the penal system shaped their later lives. By investigating their employment, family lives and deaths, Watkins carefully builds an integrated life-course analysis that sheds new light on the treatment of juvenile convicts and their social outcomes.

By the early nineteenth century offending by children was understood differently to offending by adults but child offenders were nonetheless treated similarly in many ways, including incarceration. Transportation for youth and adults alike came to be seen by the British government as a cheap and effective deterrent punishment with the additional advantage in this period of building its Australian colonies. The vast majority of offences leading to juveniles' transportation were theft, usually of relatively low-value items from shops, and transportation sentences were usually seven years or longer.

Once in Van Diemen's Land – now Tasmania – many offenders were assigned to work under free masters who could return them to the penal institutions for such poor behaviour as insubordination, drunkenness or more serious infractions. The conduct records of transported juveniles survive in large part, and Watkins shows that the majority of offences committed while under sentence were relatively minor infringements of regulations, such as the use of bad language or falling asleep in church, rather than activities which were crimes for the free population. All of the female juveniles examined in this study, and most of their male counterparts, stopped offending on release.

There was an informal scale of punishments in the colony, from confinement to barracks or solitary confinement (with or without extra labour such as groundbreaking) to up to 36 lashes or transfer to another colony. 82 per cent of juveniles experienced hard labour, with some subjected to over three-years'-worth. Corporal punishment was widespread, in domestic as well as penal settings, and in Van Diemen's Land flogging or birching was seen as a short, sharp chastisement which was a more efficient use of resources than solitary confinement. As birching on the buttocks was seen as a children's punishment, its use for older juveniles added humiliation to the sentence. 65 per cent of the juveniles in Watkins's sample were flogged at some point, receiving on average 62 lashes each over their sentences.

For male youth, sustained reoffending while in a juvenile institution such as Point Puer, part of the larger penal colony Port Arthur, could lead to transfer to another 'adult' station such as the feared Macquarie Harbour, on the west coast of Van Diemen's Land, or Norfolk Island, a thousand miles east of mainland Australia. Female reoffenders were not usually sent to such stations, and instead were subject to confinement and labour, including spinning, carding, washing, picking oakum or breaking rocks.

Male and female juveniles with agricultural skills were more readily employed than those without, but most of the group were from urban backgrounds. The difficulty in finding work assignments for the boys led to the creation of Point Puer, where they were taught reading, writing and arithmetic, though only for a couple of hours a day alongside their seven-and-a-half hours of labour. There was no equivalent facility for girls, but demand for domestic work meant that unemployment was lower among female convicts than among their male counterparts. Overall, juvenile convicts tended to improve their skills during their sentences, judging by their tendency to obtain specialist work on release. This was dependent on the wider labour market, however, and those finishing their sentences in the early 1840s were especially disadvantaged by the economic depression in the colony.

Marriage and the stability and responsibility of a family were thought to be useful for the reformation of both men and women. Convicts tended to marry other convicts. They required permission to marry from the authorities while under sentence, and several women among the juvenile sample obtained permission to marry more than one man in short succession, suggesting that their minds might have been changed on receiving a better offer. 89 per cent of female juvenile convicts are known to have married in the colonies, at a mean age of 19, and 71 per cent of them had children, averaging five apiece. Most men did not marry. Registration of births and marriages was patchy and unmarried cohabitation escaped recording altogether, and though only a quarter of male convicts from the juvenile group are known to have had children, the total is probably higher. Where the birth certificates of children of convicts exist, they give useful data on fathers' occupations after the expiration of their sentences, and most of these, Watkins finds, went on to 'respectable' trades such as carpenter, publican, printer, butcher, gardener or shoemaker.

The book ends with a survey of the causes of death, where known, of individuals who had been juvenile convicts. The majority of men, and all the women, died either of old age or of illness, with a handful meeting with accidents and just two of the sample being executed. The

mean age of death for men was 50.7 years, and for women 53.1. Watkins suggests that life expectancy for the juvenile sample was in line with adult convicts, though neither group lived as long as free-born colonists or their counterparts in the UK. Life expectancy among former juvenile convicts seems not to have been affected by the hard labour, floggings and solitary confinement, but a higher death rate among those under sentence can be attributed, Watkins argues, to the dangerous working conditions imposed on them. Among the illuminating case studies are found a wide range of outcomes for the juvenile cohort, from premature death on board the transport ship to decades of productive, peaceable family life following release. The qualitative analysis is handled a little more confidently than the quantitative, but Watkins weaves a compelling narrative nonetheless.

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature on penal transportation, not only because it investigates an important sub-group of transported convicts but more especially because it takes a thorough life-course approach. By considering these individuals' lives in context, we can begin to understand how their experiences in the penal system in youth shaped their adulthood.

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