

The Lopham Project
Criminals and Miscreants



Henry FLACK
(1799 – 1850)

Nick Woods

This story is part of the Diss Family History Group's project looking at the history of the villages of North and South Lopham.

Many thanks go to Nick Woods for sharing this story.

More information on the project can be found on the D.F.H.G.'s [webpages](#).

The cover picture is a painting of a shepherd's hut c. 1850, source unknown.

Henry FLACK was born in South Lopham in June 1799, the first child of South Lopham born Nathaniel FLACK 1773-1853 and Elizabeth CARMAN 1779-1815 from Garboldisham. They had married at Lakenheath St Mary, Suffolk in July 1798.

It appears Henry had at least 7 siblings all subsequently born in Lakenheath between 1801-1814, so the family must have moved there around 1800 when Henry was less than 2 years old. Henry was noted as a farm labourer and ploughman.

The FLACK family had family roots in South Lopham and Garboldisham back to at least the late 17C.

In August 1821 Henry FLACK was indicted for burglary (house-breaking) in Lakenheath in April of that year and in the company of Ann FLACK and probably Nathaniel FLACK (family members?), for stealing some 26/- in silver, a quantity of copper coin, hemp, calico and other items. Capitally convicted at Bury St Edmunds he received the sentence of death, which was commuted to life transportation to Australia.

In September 1821 Henry FLACK and three other prisoners were removed from Bury St Edmunds gaol and received on a prison hulk at Portsmouth.

From there in October he was removed to the ship 'Phoenix' along with over 180 other prisoners, which left London late 1821 for Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania), arriving in May 1822.

Not much of Henry FLACK's life is known in Tasmania subsequent to his arrival. But by 1850 he was a shepherd living in a hut on crown land

rented by and in the employ of Mr W HEPBURN, some 7 miles from Swansea (Great Swan Port) Tasmania.

On November 3 1850 Henry FLACK was found murdered by another shepherd from an adjacent property. Henry FLACK had been attacked and beaten around the head with a large rock around a week earlier on October 28. He was last seen alive a week earlier in October near a watering hole 100 yards from his hut. At an inquest later in November 1850 it was stated that Henry was known to have money, but robbery did not appear to be the motive, as his possessions remained untouched. His clothing was torn and his appearance indicated a struggle. His hands were scratched and bruised and he may have been shot at, though no marks were noted on his body or torso.

Another shepherd was thought to be the culprit, but to my knowledge no-one was charged with or convicted of the crime. The investigations continued into 1851 and there was even a reward of £50 (8500 today) and a pardon offered to any prisoner of the crown who offered information as to the perpetrator of murder.

That reward remained unclaimed.

Nick Woods.

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