

OLD BAILEY

Sarah Woolley, Ann White, Theft – shoplifting, 28 October 1789

SARAH WOOLLEY, ANN WHITE, Theft > shoplifting, 28th October 1789.

Reference Number: t17891028-56

Offence: [Theft](#) > [shoplifting](#)

Verdict: [Guilty](#) > [theft under 5s](#)

Punishment: [Transportation](#)

Navigation: [< Previous text \(trial account\)](#) | [Next text \(trial account\) >](#)

Related Material: [Associated Records](#)

Corrections: [Add a correction](#)

Actions: [Cite this text](#) | [Print-friendly version](#)

[See original](#)



[See original](#)



796. SARAH WOOLLEY and ANN WHITE were indicted for feloniously stealing, on the 9th of October , four yards of printed cotton, value 8 s. the property of Joseph King and Robert Cottle , privily in their shop .

(The witnesses examined separate.)

ROBERT COTTLE sworn.

I am a linen draper ; my partner's name is Joseph King; on Friday, the 9th of October, the two prisoners came into my shop; I was alone: they came in together, and conversed as they came in; Sarah Woolley asked for a remnant of printed cotton; I told her I had not a remnant of the quantity she asked for, but I would cut her some from the piece; she then desired me to shew her some; I shewed her about four pieces of printed cotton; at that time, my servant, Samuel Goff came into the shop; I called him behind the counter, and desired him to serve her, which he did; and I returned to my other business; after I had left them about one minute, my shopman, Goff, cried out R. F. which is a by-word for any shopman that discovers any robbery; that alarmed me; I came and stood by him; the prisoners seemed very troublesome; they seemed equally busy, and asked one another which they liked; and fixed on a piece, which I ordered to be cut at prime cost, in order to get rid of them; I did not like them; it was cut by Goff; I told the prisoners it came to two shillings and seven-pence halfpenny; it was a yard and a half at twenty one pence; Sarah Woolley gave me three shillings; I was giving her change, when I observed Ann White stoop to the ground; I asked her if she had dropped any thing? she smiled, and said, no; I then gave the prisoner, Sarah Woolley , the four-pence halfpenny; and I observed Ann White 's right hand was in her pocket hole; and there appeared a bulk near her right hip; they then went out of the shop; while they were walking away, I sent Goff out after them; and while he was gone, I walked round the counter, to see what they could have taken most handily: my servant, Samuel Goff , then returned with the two prisoners; I told Ann White I suspected she had robbed me; the bulk did not appear so large then; and while I was sending for a constable, I perceived a piece of cotton laying on her shoe; it was under her petticoats, and on her shoe; I took it up; it was wet and muddy; it was four yards and a half of printed cotton; the streets were dirty at that time: I sent for a constable, and took them before the lord mayor: I could not see it drop; I did not at that time, observe I had missed any printed cotton; but I had shewed it a few minutes before to a

customer; my private mark is upon it, E. S. in my hand writing; I am sure I had not sold such a piece; I had seen it not five minutes before.

Court. What would this piece have sold for? - About eight shillings and sixpence.

How long had you had it? - About seven months.

Court. I suppose you had no doubt at this time, when she stooped down, but she stole it then? - I did not know what she stooped for; but I then conceived her to be a shoplifter.

SAMUEL GOFF sworn.

I had been into Cheapside; when I returned, there were only these two women and Mr. Cottle in the shop; he told me to come round and shew some prints, about twenty-pence a yard; I shewed some to them both; they both conversed; and while I was shewing them, the tall woman had got a remnant of printed cotton that was on the counter, rolled up ready to put under her cloak; then I said to Mr. Cottle, R. F. and he came and stood by, and said, here is a print they have bid the cost price for; and I cut a yard and a half, at twenty one pence; she gave him three shillings, and he gave her four-pence halfpenny; the short one, White, stooped down with her hands through her pocket holes.

Do not you think she took the property

[See original](#) 

at that time? - Yes; Mr. Cottle asked her if she dropped any thing; she said, no, Sir; then they went out of the shop; she had her hands through her pocket hole; Mr. Cottle sent me after them; I followed them twenty yards in the street; and then I brought her back; her hand was through her pocket hole at the time; when I came into the shop, there was nothing on the counter; Mr. Cottle asked her if she had not taken some things off the counter? she said, no; he bid me fetch a constable, and then I saw Mr. Cottle pick up the cotton, partly from under her petticoats; it was on the floor, and all dirty with the marks of her feet; the constable has had it in his care ever since.

- GOLDSMITH sworn.

Produces the piece of cotton, which was deposed to by the prosecutor.

PRISONER WOOLLEY's DEFENCE.

I went into the gentleman's shop to buy a yard and a half of cotton; I agreed for it, and paid him for it, and came out of the shop about five or six doors; he brought us back, and Mr. Cottle said that she wanted to drop something; and there was a piece of cotton laying on the floor, and he said that was the piece he supposed she wanted to drop.

PRISONER WHITE's DEFENCE.

I went in with this young woman as she has said; and we were fetched back; I went back; this piece of cotton was laying on the floor when I went back; Mr. Cottle searched me; this piece of cotton lay about a yard from the floor.

Court to Mr. Cottle. Do you say with certainty, that when the women went out of the shop, there was nothing on the floor? - I do; I made an observation.

You never searched her, nor touched her at all? - Neither of them, otherwise than that she came up to me, and begged me not to do any thing to her, and took hold of my hand; I disentangled myself of course.

BOTH GUILTY of stealing to the value of four shillings and six-pence ,

Transported for seven years .

Tried by the London Jury before Mr. RECORDER.