

Jane Raby and the Cambridge Spinning House

A case study in streetwalking, youth, poverty, punishment and University discipline, 1850-1855

Source base: Compiled spreadsheet of Jane Raby entries in the Cambridge Spinning House committal books. The spreadsheet records 25 arrests over Over 63 months and 308 days of imprisonment; 25 apprehension rows are tabulated below.

Measure	Value
Name	Jane Raby
Age range in entries	16-19
Birthplace	Trumpington, Cambridgeshire
Family note	Father and mother
Employment/lodging note	Not stated in the surviving tabulated rows
Principal charge	Streetwalking
Period covered by dated entries	15 Feb 1850 - 17 May 1855
Spreadsheet total period	Over 63 months
Spreadsheet total arrests	25 arrests
Apprehension rows tabulated	25
Spreadsheet total imprisonment	308 days

1. Introduction

Jane Raby is a compact but highly revealing case in the Cambridge Spinning House records. The spreadsheet identifies her as a young woman from Trumpington, first aged only sixteen, with father and mother noted in the record. Between February 1850 and May 1855 she was repeatedly apprehended for alleged streetwalking. The spreadsheet summary records 25 arrests over Over 63 months and 308 days of imprisonment. The tabulated rows record a detailed sequence of dates, addresses, proctors, outcomes and occasional remarks.

Her case is historically important because it shows the policing of a very young woman who became known to the University authorities over several years. The chronology moves quickly from warning and discharge to repeated custodial sentences, including four- and five-week sentences. Like Ann Ashbury/Ashby and Mary Ann Peters, Raby can be followed across time, allowing the cumulative effect of repeated apprehension to be seen rather than hidden within isolated committal entries.

2. Personal and Social Background

The records name her as Jane Raby and give Trumpington as her birthplace. The earliest entry gives her age as sixteen and notes father and mother, placing her within a local family network rather than presenting her simply as an anonymous figure in the streets. Her addresses shift across the record: Norfolk Street/East Road is named at the outset, followed by Gold Street, Fitzroy Street, Norfolk Street, Union Row and Wellington Row. This movement links her to a geography of poorer streets and lodging areas in which women accused of streetwalking were repeatedly noticed by the University authorities.

3. Statistical Overview

Category	Count / Detail
Spreadsheet total arrests	25 arrests
Rows in table	25
Spreadsheet total days imprisoned	308
Total days in tabulated rows	308
Most common punishment	Two weeks imprisonment
Longest recorded sentence	Five weeks
Principal addresses recorded	Norfolk St East Road (1); Gold Street (4); 30 Gold Street (1);

	89 Fitzroy Street (1); 82 Fitzroy Street (1); 3 Norfolk Street (1); 6 Union Row (2); Union Row (1); Wellington Row (1)
Number of named proctors/officers in rows	12
Outcome category	Occurrences
Warned/admonished and discharged	3
One week imprisonment	7
Two weeks imprisonment	11
Three weeks imprisonment	2
Four weeks imprisonment	1
Five weeks imprisonment	1
Year	Apprehensions in rows with valid dates
1850	5
1851	7
1852	4
1853	3
1854	3
1855	2

Phase 1: first apprehensions and early warning, 1850

Date	Record	Age	Address	Officer / proctor	Outcome	Days	Remarks
15 Feb 1850	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16	Norfolk St East Road	Middleton	Two weeks	14	Warned last night
26 Apr 1850	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Middleton	Warned and discharged the same evening by the VC		
29 Oct 1850	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Emry	Warned and discharged the same evening by the VC		
31 Oct 1850	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Fenwick	One week	7	
7 Nov 1850	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Emery	Four week	28	

The first phase begins with Jane Raby already receiving a two-week sentence, despite the remark that she had been warned the previous night. Two later entries in 1850 record warning and discharge by the Vice-Chancellor, but these are followed almost immediately by one- and four-week sentences. The sequence suggests that she became known to the authorities very quickly.

Phase 2: repeated imprisonment and Gold Street, 1851-1852

Date	Record	Age	Address	Officer / proctor	Outcome	Days	Remarks
7 Feb 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Fenwick	One week	7	
29 Mar 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Emery	Two weeks	14	
6 May 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Emery	Two weeks	14	
23 May 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Fenwick	Two weeks	14	
21 Oct 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16	Gold Street	Adams	One week	7	
14 Nov 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16	Gold Street	Bainbridge	Two weeks	14	
8 Dec 1851	Vol. 3 / No. 15	16		Barnard Smith	One week	7	
18 Feb 1852	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19		Adams	One week	7	
2 Mar 1852	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	Gold Street	Bainbridge	Two weeks	14	
19 Mar 1852	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	Gold Street	Barnard Smith	Two weeks	14	
29 Nov 1852	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	30 Gold Street	Clark	Two weeks	14	Committed for an additional week for throwing stones and breaking the neighbours windows

The second phase is marked by repeated imprisonment and the emergence of Gold Street as a recorded address. Most punishments are one or two weeks, and by November 1852 an additional week was imposed following an incident involving stones and broken neighbours' windows. This phase shows both routine streetwalking charges and occasional evidence of wider conflict in the neighbourhood.

Phase 3: later movement, longer punishment and recurrence, 1853-1855

Date	Record	Age	Address	Officer / proctor	Outcome	Days	Remarks
2 Mar 1853	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	89 Fitzroy Street	Clark	Three weeks	21	
21 Apr 1853	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	82 Fitzroy Street	Ferguson	One week	7	
13 Nov 1853	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	3 Norfolk Street	Long	One week	7	
2 Feb 1854	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	6 Union Row	Long	Two weeks	14	
19 Mar 1854	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	6 Union Row	Long	Two weeks	14	
12 May 1854	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	Union Row	Clark	Admonished and discharged		
?? 1854	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19	Wellington Row	Westmoreland	Two weeks	14	Came quietly
23 Feb 1855	Vol. 3 / No. 84	19		Drake	Five weeks	35	Was very violent
17 May 1855	Vol. 3 / No. 157	19		Westmoreland	Three weeks	21	

The later sequence shows movement through Fitzroy Street, Norfolk Street, Union Row and Wellington Row. Longer punishments appear, including three weeks in 1853, five weeks in February 1855 and a further three weeks in May 1855. The remarks 'came quietly' and 'was very violent' preserve rare traces of the circumstances and manner of committal.

4. Remarks and Qualitative Evidence

Date	Outcome	Remark
15 Feb 1850	Two weeks	Warned last night
29 Nov 1852	Two weeks	Committed for an additional week for throwing stones and breaking the neighbours windows
?? 1854	Two weeks	Came quietly
23 Feb 1855	Five weeks	Was very violent

The remarks are few but significant. The earliest note, 'Warned last night', suggests that Raby had already come to the attention of the authorities before the first dated committal in the table. The 1852 note about throwing stones and breaking neighbours' windows points to conflict beyond the formulaic streetwalking charge. The 1854 and 1855 notes - 'came quietly' and 'was very violent' - are also important because they record conduct at or around apprehension and committal, not simply sentence length.

5. Addresses and the Geography of Surveillance

Jane Raby's recorded addresses show movement through several poorer Cambridge streets and lodging districts. Norfolk Street/East Road appears in the first entry, followed by Gold Street, Fitzroy Street, Norfolk Street, Union Row and Wellington Row. The recurrence of these addresses matters because it connects the Spinning House records to the social geography of the town. The authorities did not police an abstract category of offence; they repeatedly encountered women in particular streets and neighbourhoods associated with poverty, lodging, casual work and public visibility.

Gold Street is especially prominent in the middle of the sequence, while the later entries in Fitzroy Street, Union Row and Wellington Row show continuing movement within the same broad world of working-class Cambridge. Raby's case therefore helps to map the places where young women accused of streetwalking were most likely to become visible to University authority.

6. Punishment, Escalation and Recurrence

The spreadsheet total of 308 days of imprisonment shows the cumulative burden of Raby's record. Although many individual sentences were one or two weeks, repeated punishment over Over 63 months amounted to a major intervention in the life of a young working-class woman. The most severe recorded sentences were four weeks in November 1850 and five weeks in February 1855.

The chronology demonstrates that warning, discharge and imprisonment all failed to prevent recurrence. The system could remove her temporarily from public space, but the repeated returns suggest that it did not address

the conditions that brought her repeatedly before the proctors. Her case therefore illustrates the limits of the Spinning House as a deterrent or reforming institution.

7. Gender, Poverty and Town-and-Gown Discipline

Raby's case illustrates the gendered operation of the Spinning House. The charge is consistently streetwalking, and the records name a young woman repeatedly acted upon by proctors, officers and the Vice-Chancellor. Male clients or gowmsmen are not similarly documented in the spreadsheet. The burden of moral discipline therefore fell most visibly on women, particularly poor young women whose addresses placed them in districts already subject to close surveillance.

8. Historical Significance

Jane Raby is historically significant because her record combines youth, recurrence, geographical movement and escalating punishment. First recorded at sixteen, she appears repeatedly over a period of more than five years. Her entries show the rapid transition from warning to imprisonment and include unusual remarks about warning, neighbourhood conflict, quiet compliance and violence. These qualitative details make her more than a statistical case.

Her record also contributes to a comparative understanding of the Spinning House. Compared with Ann Ashbury's exceptionally long record and Mary Ann Peters's dense sequence of appearances, Jane Raby's case highlights the vulnerability of a younger woman drawn into the same disciplinary system. Together, these case studies show how the University repeatedly regulated the lives of working-class women through short sentences, warnings, and re-arrest.

9. Conclusion

Jane Raby emerges from the records as a young local woman repeatedly exposed to the coercive powers of the University. Her movements through Norfolk Street, Gold Street, Fitzroy Street, Union Row and Wellington Row link her personal history to the geography of poverty in Victorian Cambridge. The spreadsheet total of 25 arrests over 63 months and 308 days of imprisonment demonstrates the scale of intervention involved. Her case is therefore an important example of how the Spinning House operated against young women accused of streetwalking, and how repeated punishment failed to resolve the social vulnerability that lay behind the records.

Appendix: Complete Apprehension Table

Date	Vol/No	Age	Birthplace	Address	Officer	Charge	Outcome	Days	Remarks
15 Feb 1850	3/15	16	Trumpington	Norfolk St East Road	Middleton	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	Warned last night
26 Apr 1850	3/15	16	Trumpington		Middleton	Streetwalking	Warned and discharged the same evening by the VC		
29 Oct 1850	3/15	16	Trumpington		Emry	Streetwalking	Warned and discharged the same evening by the VC		
31 Oct 1850	3/15	16	Trumpington		Fenwick	Streetwalking	One week	7	
7 Nov 1850	3/15	16	Trumpington		Emery	Streetwalking	Four week	28	
7 Feb 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington		Fenwick	Streetwalking	One week	7	
29 Mar 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington		Emery	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
6 May 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington		Emery	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
23 May 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington		Fenwick	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
21 Oct 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington	Gold Street	Adams	Streetwalking	One week	7	
14 Nov 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington	Gold Street	Bainbridge	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
8 Dec 1851	3/15	16	Trumpington		Barnard Smith	Streetwalking	One week	7	
18 Feb 1852	3/84	19	Trumpington		Adams	Streetwalking	One week	7	
2 Mar 1852	3/84	19	Trumpington	Gold Street	Bainbridge	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
19 Mar 1852	3/84	19	Trumpington	Gold Street	Barnard Smith	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
29 Nov 1852	3/84	19	Trumpington	30 Gold Street	Clark	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	Committed for an additional week for throwing stones and breaking the neighbours windows
2 Mar 1853	3/84	19	Trumpington	89 Fitzroy Street	Clark	Streetwalking	Three weeks	21	
21 Apr 1853	3/84	19	Trumpington	82 Fitzroy Street	Ferguson	Streetwalking	One week	7	
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2 Feb 1854	3/84	19	Trumpington	6 Union Row	Long	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
19 Mar 1854	3/84	19	Trumpington	6 Union Row	Long	Streetwalking	Two weeks	14	
12 May 1854	3/84	19	Trumpington	Union Row	Clark	Streetwalking	Admonished and discharged		
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23 Feb 1855	3/84	19	Trumpington		Drake	Streetwalking	Five weeks	35	Was very violent
17 May 1855	3/157	19	Trumpington		Westmoreland	Streetwalking	Three weeks	21	