

BUSHRANGER



HARRY
POWER



HISTORIC
PERSON
SERIES

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER

CONTRIBUTORS

Australian Births Deaths and Marriages

National Library Australia

Courtesy State Library Victoria

Australian Dictionary Biographies

Kelly Country by Brendon Kelson & John McQuilton

A pictorial history of Bushrangers by Tom Prior, Bill Wannan & H Nunn

The friendship that destroyed Ned Kelly by Ian Jones

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THE MAIN FOUNDATION OF THIS FACTSHEET IS BASED ON THE
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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER

Name: Harry Power
Born: 18 May 1819
Died: 11 October 1891
Known for: Australian Bushranger

Born Henry Johnson of Johnstone, he changed his name to Harry Power after being released from prison and given a ticket-of-leave from Tasmania, where had had been imprisoned for stealing a pair of shoes. He became a notorious bushranger.



Harry Power was born Henry Johnson/Johnstone at Waterford Ireland on the 18 May 1819. He grew up in Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancashire, England. When he was sixteen years of age his father had him apprenticed to the saddlery trade, and he also worked as a piecer in the Woollen Mills. Later on he joined the peasants in their conflicts with the British troops. It was during this time that he received the sabre wounds on his face, which are described in the Victorian police records as, 'Scar over right eyebrow, scars on right cheek'.

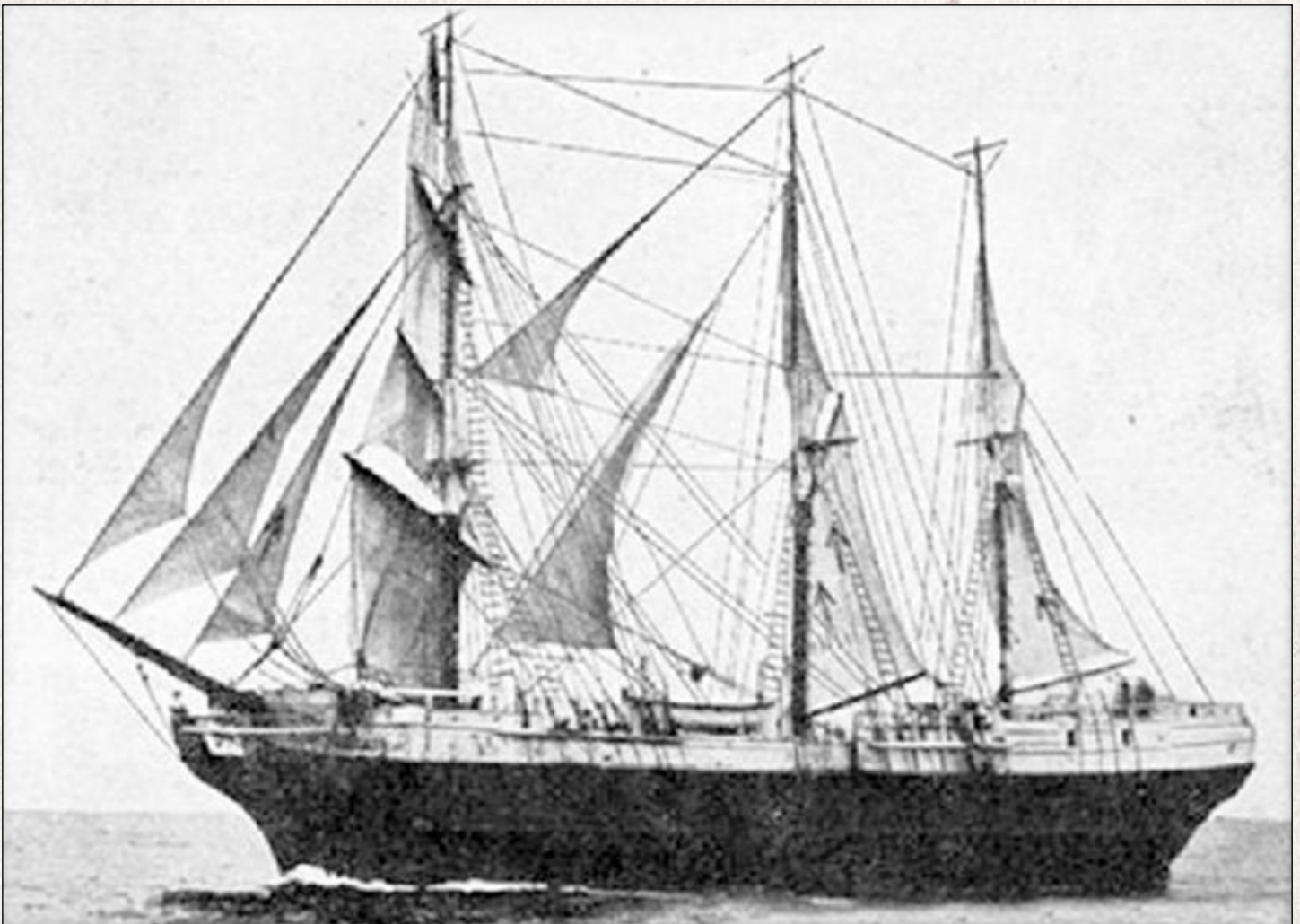
HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER

Between 1840 and 1885, Power was a constant breaker of the law, and spent considerable time behind bars for his illegal activities. He was never convicted for murder, and rarely took from the poor. He was however reported to have a terrible temper, of which Ned Kelly was even fearful.

After his release from jail in 1885 (aged 66) he was appointed as a tour guide on the Prison Hulk '*Success*' where he had spent much time imprisoned. He was not a well man at this stage of his life.

It is believed that Power died on or around 11 October 1891, after drowning in the Murray River near Swan Hill. There was nothing to indicate how he came to be in the river, though it is speculated that he fell in while fishing, and was unable to safely recover himself.





HISTORIC FACTSHEET

FACTS

- Harry Power was the alias for Henry Johnson/Johnstone.
- Power was known and feared for his violent temper.
- Occupation - convict, prisoner, escapee, station hand, emancipist (*emancipist* was any convict sentenced and transported under the convict system to Australia, who had been given conditional or absolute pardons) horse trader & bushranger.
- Power wore boots several sizes too big to ease his bunions. (Geelong Advertiser April 30th, 2012).
- Power was known to have tutored Ned Kelly in a life of crime and probably committed 80 more robberies than Ned Kelly.
- Responsible for numerous hold-ups and robberies, for stealing horses, and bailing up mail coaches.
- He was not only an excellent bushman and horseman, but also a great showman who boasted about his exploits, and liked to sing: *"We might sing of young Gilbert, Dan Morgan, Ben Hall, but the bold, reckless robber surpasses them all. The pluck that's in Power is past all belief. Daring highwayman! Professional thief!"*
- It is considered possible that the young Ned Kelly was with Harry Power when he held up a trooper near Yea and took his horses on Friday 4 March 1870. It is believed that they may have then continued on with the fresh horses to the Geelong district.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

A LIFE CHANGING EVENT

"I was going along quietly," says Power, "when down came the two troopers, hooting and shouting. I saw they were drunk, and pulled on one side, but they stopped me. 'Whose horse is that?' says one. 'It's mine,' says I. 'Are you going to shout?' says the other. 'No,' says I, for I didn't like the Germans. 'I believe you stole that horse,' says the first. 'You're a liar,' says I. 'You'll have to come along with us,' says the other. 'I won't do it,' says I, getting riled. On that one of them drew his hanger, and said he'd make me. 'You can't,' says I. He charged at me, and I'd only just time to draw my revolver, or he'd have cut me down. I shot him, and then the other fellow rode up and fired at me, and the powder singed my coat. I shot him, and then rode off. Now, if I had been sensible, I'd have ridden off to the nearest police station and given myself up. But I was frightened, and rode across the colony, thinking to go and stay in New South Wales till the row was over. At the Murray I was stopped. I did not deny my name or resist. They arrested and brought me down to Melbourne, and I got ten years. The men were not hurt much, and it was proved they stopped me without cause, or I'd have got more."

Gippsland Times

12 March 1877

Courtesy National Library Australia.

It is possible that this incident was the event that helped move Harry Power towards being a bushranger. It is believed by some that up until this point he was a relatively harmless man. This incident occurred near Sandhurst in New South Wales. The Vagabond wrote that Power said of this incident that *'but for this he would have lived and died honestly'*.

(Gippsland Times, Monday 12 March 1877)

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- 18 May 1819** Henry Johnson/Johnstone was born.
- 1835 circa** Johnson (aged 16) was apprenticed by his father to the saddlery trade. He also worked as a piecer in the Woollen Mills.
- Unknown** Johnson joined the peasants in their conflicts with the British troops. It was during this time that he received the sabre wounds on his face, which are described in the Victorian police records as, "Scar over right eyebrow, scars on right cheek. (*LIFE OF BUSHRANGER POWER.*". *Western Mail (Perth, WA : 1885 - 1954) (Perth, WA: National Library of Australia): p. 50. 5 February 1910. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article37403020>. Retrieved 14 April 2012).*
- 1840** Johnson was convicted for stealing a pair of shoes.
- 1842** He was one of 267 convicts transported on the ship *Isabella*, 15 January 1842 to Hobart Tasmania, crime was stealing a pair of shoes, transported for seven years. (www.convictrecords.com.au).
- 1847** He received a ticket-of-leave in November 1847 (Tasmanian State Archives).
- 1848** Certificate of freedom in September 1848. (Tasmanian State Archives).
- 1848** Arrived at Port Phillip Bay Victoria (Victorian shipping records).
- 1848-1855** He became a horse-dealer at Geelong, but was attracted by the gold discoveries.
- 1852** Received 13 years for stealing a horse and served some of his imprisonment in the Hulk "SUCCESS" in Hobson's Bay.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- Unknown** Worked hard labour on the Williamstown Bluestone Quarry with Ned Kelly, who was a youth at the time.
- 1855** He was stopped by two troopers at Daisy Hill, near Maryborough, in March 1855 on suspicion of horse-stealing, he wounded one of the police. A week later he was arrested whilst attempting to cross the Murray River and was sentenced on 25 September 1855 to 13 years on the roads. He was innocent on charges of horse theft but guilty for wounding police. (trove).
- 1855** Alias (assumed name) - Harry Power
- 1856** Confined to the hulk *Success*, Johnson was implicated with *Captain Melville* and others in the murder of Owen Owens and John Turner on 22nd October 1856, but was found not guilty. After two and a half years in the hulks, he was transferred to Pentridge stockade.
- 1862** Released, but ignored the conditions of release and headed to the North East.
- 1862** Power escaped , and lived at Middle Creek in the Ovens District, where he was assisted by the Kelly, Quinn and Lloyd families.
- 1864** Arrested on a charge of horse-stealing, he was sentenced at Beechworth 19 February 1864 to seven years on the roads.
- 1864** Seven years for horse stealing under the name of Harry Power at Beechworth.
- 1869** Escaped from Pentridge by hiding in a rubbish cart. He is thought to be responsible for a spate of robberies of coaches, travellers, and horses.
- 1869** Became known as “The Gentleman Bushranger”.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- 16 February 1869** Power again escaped from Pentridge. He was assisted briefly by *Ned Kelly*, who was then 13, but the arrangement proved unsatisfactory and thereafter Power operated independently. He held up the mail-coach at Porepunkah 7 May and another coach on the Longwood-Mansfield Road 22 May. These were the first of over a year's depredations, during which Power claimed to have committed over 600 robberies.
- 7 May 1869** Power held up a mail coach at Porepunkah.
- 21 May 1869** Power held up Mr Wilson's boundary rider. Offered the man 100 pound if he would help him hold up the Merton Mail.
- 22 May 1869** Harry Power held up the Merton Mail near Longwood. It was reported in the Alexandra Times.
- 1869** In September the Victorian Government offered a reward of £200, which was soon increased to £500, for Power's arrest; as a result he moved to New South Wales. Soon after he returned to Victoria where police efforts to capture him proved fruitless.
- 4 March 1870** Power held up a Mounted Constable and Mr McKenzie (a sheep inspector) near Doyle's farm on King Parrott road near Yea. They had intended to take a fresh horse off the mounted Constable though did not in the end. They did take around £30 cash.
- 15-18 April 1870** Power and the young Ned Kelly visited Little River and Geelong, where they ventured brazenly into the Easter Volunteer Encampment at Little River a military expo, mind you where he rubbed shoulders with the chief clerk of the stockade, a military captain and two warders, all unbeknown to them. "Power bragged after this event that he had even won bets because he dared to show his face in Geelong." (Geelong Advertiser 30 April 2012). *'I will teach you things you would pay guineas to learn! Give attention to me Ned , and I will reveal to you every secret of me daring trade Ned.'* (*The Last Outlaw*).



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

- 1870** Power was arrested 5 June 1870 by Superintendents Nicolson and Hare, who with Sergeant Montford and a black tracker, surprised Power in his hide-out (Power's Lookout) overlooking the Quinn property on the King River. The police were led there by James Quinn, who received the reward of £500. Power was sentenced at Beechworth to 15 years hard labour on three counts of bushranging and was again held at Pentridge.
- 1877** After accounts of Power's ill health by the 'Vagabond' in the *Argus*, he was released on the application of several women, including *Lady Janet Clarke* (Lady Janet Clarke was born on Doogalook Station near Yea and Granddaughter of John Cotton who worked on the Clarke property at Sunbury).
- 1880** *Alexandra Standard* 3 September 1880 *Power, the notorious bushranger, is likely to receive a mitigation of his sentence of fifteen years' imprisonment, at the same time being provided with a comfortable home for the remainder of his days. Recently he was visited by the ex-Minister of Justice and two ladies who are well-known for their charitable and benevolent disposition. It appears both of these ladies came in contact with Power during his bushranging exploits. On one occasion he stole a favourite horse from one of the ladies, who is the wife of a squatter, but as soon as Power heard to whom it belonged, he sent it back by Wild Wright, with instructions not to receive any reward for the act. The other lady was driving in a carriage with a friend and was stuck up by Power. When he looked in the carriage, however, and saw who were its occupants, he begged pardon, and let them pass on. When the two ladies visited Power at the prison hospital, he was informed by them that if liberated they would provide for him a comfortable home during the remainder of his days. The old bush ranger appeared to be greatly pleased with the interest his benefactors have taken in him, and if liberated, will reside in that part of the country where his daring deeds compelled the*

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

Government to place £500 on his head.

- 1885** Released from prison at age 66, an old and sick man, he acted as a tour guide on the Prison Hulk 'Success' on which he had once served a sentence. The Vagabond commented that he was 'sick nearly unto death' during a visit to Pentridge. He also commented that one can scarce recognise that *'this slight, weak, grey, meanlooking man is the desperado who laid the whole colony under contribution, in the full power of his manhood possessing the endurance and hardihood of an Arab'*.
- 1887** Complaint from his sister Mrs. SLATER of Oakleigh, that local constable is bringing people to see him – he is living with her.
- 1890** An unexpected visitor - from Malvern Historical Society.
- On one occasion, around 1890, a Sister answered the front door bell and spoke to an elderly man with a quiet voice and a respectable appearance. He was remarkably well dressed. He wore a 'Bell-topper', carried a silver topped umbrella, new gloves and wore an elegant suit in an up-to-date style. He wished to speak to the Mother Superior. He was conducted to the parlour to wait. The Mother Superior was not available and two of the Sisters were asked to interview the gentleman. The Sisters listened as he spoke about wishing to attend Mass in the Convent Chapel. As the conversation continued he revealed his identity. He was Harry Power the bushranger! Frightened, the Sisters excused themselves quickly and went in search of the Mother Superior. Alarmed for the safety of her convent, she hurried to the parlour, where Power shared his story and the way he had turned his life around. He was to become a frequent visitor to the Convent.*
- 1891** He became a guide of the hulk *Success*.
- 11 October 1891** His body was found in the Murray River; he died 'on or about 11



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE

October 1891 ... near Swan Hill from drowning... there is nothing to show how he came into the river'.

2013

Artwork started work on this factsheet. The body of this factsheet is based on a school research project completed by student Amity Lees.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER



In 1856, Johnson was confined to the hulk Success, after he was implicated (along with Captain Melville and others) in the murder of Owen Owens and John Turner on 22 October 1856. He was later found not guilty. After two and a half years in the hulks, he was transferred to Pentridge stockade.

When Power's law breaking days had finally come to an end in 1885, he became a tour guide on the Hulk Success.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

WILLIAMSTOWN BLUESTONE QUARRY



As a youth, Ned Kelly learned the art of hard labour and stone masonry while in leg irons at the Williamstown Gellibrand Bluestone Quarry.

As a prisoner based labour force, he helped build the 'Battery Road' bluestone retaining wall.

Other prisoners to work here included bushrangers Mad Dog Morgan, Thunderbolt, and Ned's mentor bushranger 'Harry Power'.

In 2012, beautiful historic signage highlighting this past was erected at the site of the old Bluestone Quarry, where Ned once laboured. This is now a beautiful children's playground and picnic area.

(Left) Ned pictured in leg irons.



The bluestone quarry in front of you began in 1831 and supplied ballast to weigh down empty ships on their return journey.

Ballast was also supplied to the railways for lining tracks.

Broader ballast, bluestone blocks cut from Gellibrand Quarry were used to build many of the first piers and buildings around here and Melbourne.

Gellibrand's Bluestone Quarry

Masonry marks and murder

The massive stone of most buildings you will see in town at Battery Road. It was built with labour from the quarry in the early 1850s and the remaining part, such a remarkable masonry in height, was transported each stone from the quarry.

Bluestone marks appear right along the wall. These markings are the remains of the quarry's 1831 stone masonry, which was the first masonry in the colony. The stone was cut on the site of the first masonry on the island, in 1831, and was used to build the first masonry in the colony. The quarry was used to build the first masonry in the colony. The quarry was used to build the first masonry in the colony.

Bushrangers and bluestone

Prisoners, for example, did they are often (especially) referred to as 'stone' and 'prisoner' labour and used for the quarry, both stone walls and paved roads.

Most likely, the quarry was masonry built as a prison and helped build Battery Road containing (the best). Other bushrangers had their heads on the ground include Mad Dog Morgan, Harry Power and Thunderbolt.

The second incarnation of all the bushrangers was the 1850s (the 1850s). Working the quarry was masonry work. It is not to be confused with the quarry. Some masonry is done in the quarry. Bluestone was used to build the first masonry in the colony. The quarry was used to build the first masonry in the colony.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER

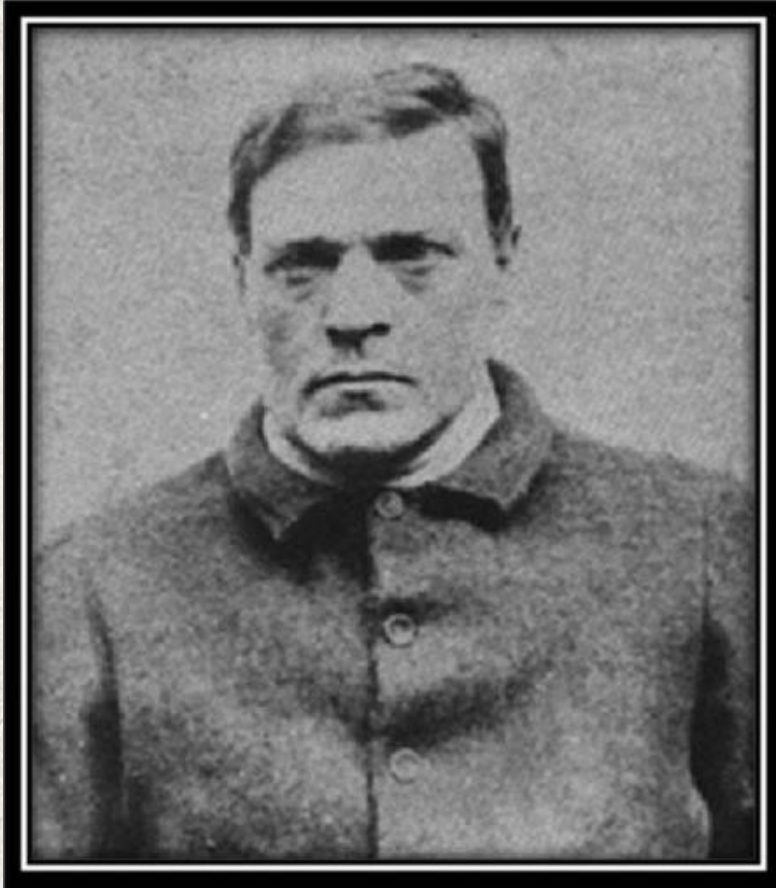


Australian Bushranger Harry Power with an Elegant Female Victim.

By Maurice Graffenhagen

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER

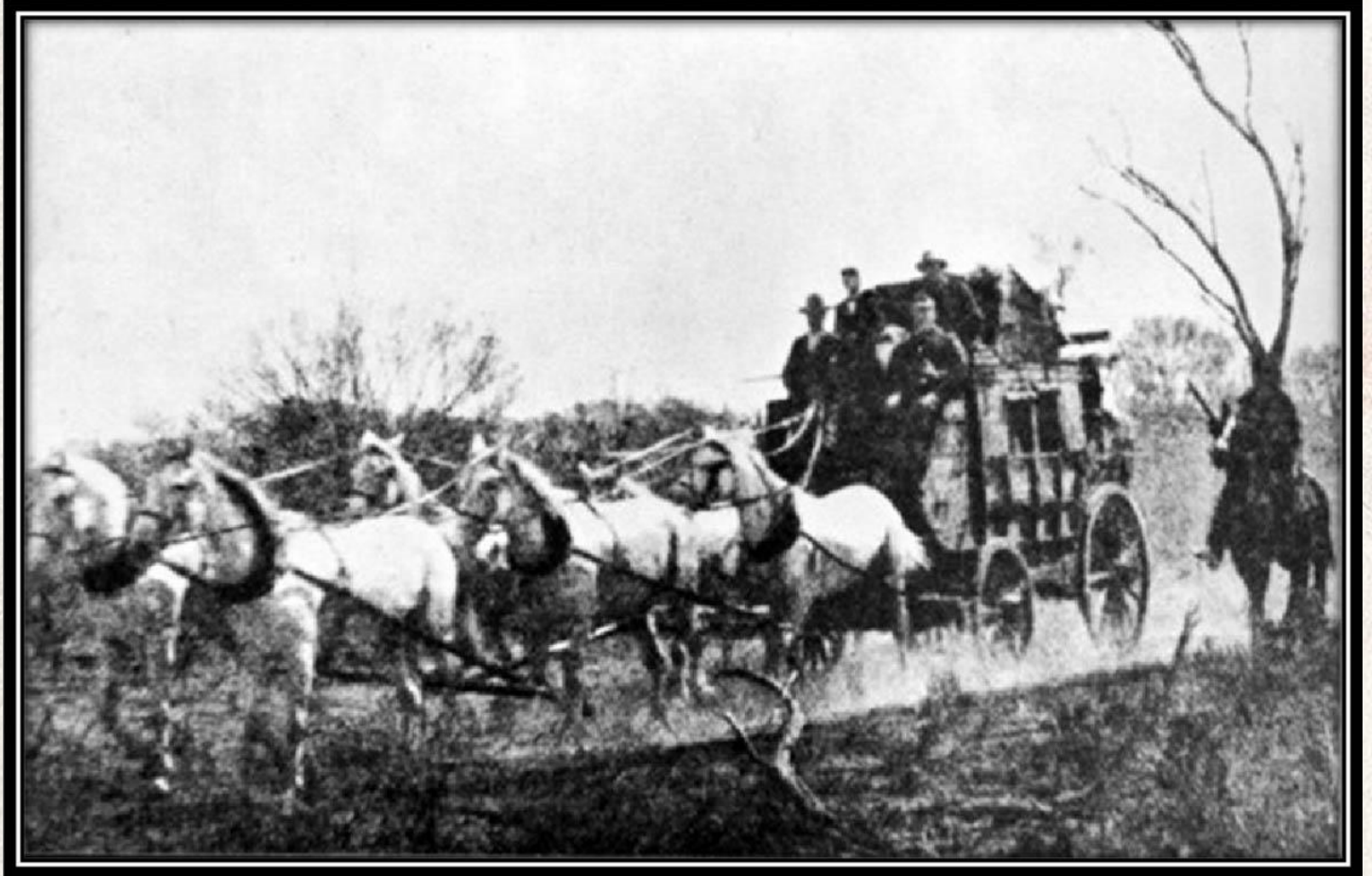


Harry power (top) and a young Ned Kelly (bottom).

Ned Kelly spent time as an apprentice with Harry Power, and it is believed that Ned's ability to later elude the police was due to training received in part from bushranger Harry Power.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER



**A scene similar to what a scene would have looked like,
when bushrangers bailed up wagons to rob the travellers of
their possessions.**

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

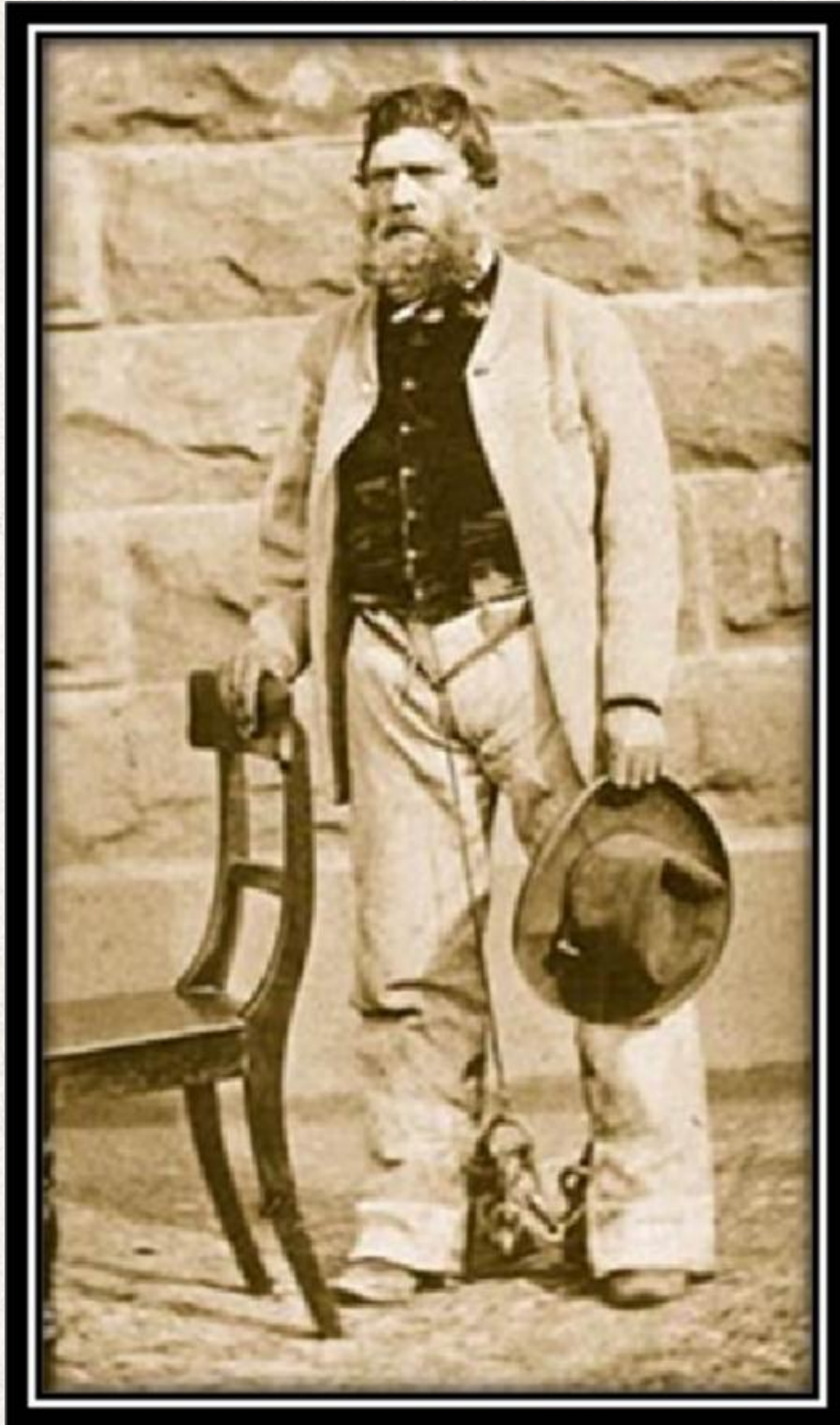
BUSHRANGER HARRY POWER



Superintendent Nicolson grapples with a sleepy Harry Power during a dawn capture in his mountain hideout at what is now known as Powers Lookout, while Superintendent Hare and Sergeant Montfort move in.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HARRY POWER



**An image of an incarcerated Harry Power, as an older man.
It is speculated that this image was taken at the Melbourne Pentridge Prison.**

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HARRY POWER



A scene on the Murray River near Swan Hill.

Johnston (Harry Power) died in 1891 after drowning in the Murray River near Swan Hill. It is not known how he came to be in the river and the circumstances surrounding his death are unknown.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HARRY POWER

The view from Power's Lookout, east of Mansfield. Johnson spent time at this location, hiding from the authorities, and was also captured in his dwelling while sleeping, at one point during his bushranger days.



HARRY POWER

THE MAIL STUCK UP.

On Thursday last the Merton mail was stuck up near Longwood by a bushranger named Power, who was a mate of Blue-caps' in New South Wales. After opening one of the mail bags, taking whatever valuables the letters contained, he went off leaving the other bag unopened. On the day previous to stopping the mail, this same fellow stuck up Mr Wilson's boundary rider, and after trying his horse returned it, saying it was not so good as the one he had. He then offered the boundary rider £100 from a large bundle of notes he took out of his pocket, if he would join him in sticking up the Merton mail, remarking at the same time that it was a fine chance for a young fellow. The offer was perhaps judiciously declined, although a smart man might have profited by the opportunity by watching his chance of getting the scoundrel into the hands of the police. Several troopers are on the look out for this freebooter, and there can be little doubt but that his career will soon be brought to a close. He visited Maindample and spoke very contemptuously of the place as not being worth the trouble of sticking up.

Alexandra Times
Friday 28th May 1869
Courtesy National Library Australia



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

HARRY POWER

POWER, THE BUSHRANGER. The Argus "Vagabond," during his recent sojourn in Pentridge, obtained the following particulars from Harry Power, the bushranger, who is sick nearly unto death in the prison. "One can scarce recognise (says the writer) that this slight, weak, grey, meanlooking man is the desperado who laid the whole colony under contribution, in the full power of his manhood possessing the endurance and hardihood of an Arab. Power's history would make an interesting book. The following slight sketch of his career and adventures I had from his own lips, verifying many particulars from the warders, some of whom have known him for years, most of them having a great liking for the man." Harry Power is a County Waterford man, born of decent people. His education chiefly consisted in learning to ride. It is commonly reputed that he is an "old hand," and was sent out to Norfolk Island, but he strenuously denies this. "I came here from America a free man," says Power, but he is particularly reticent as to his early years. He was engaged driving cattle all over this colony and New South Wales, and afterwards with Captain Denman's party in exploring and cutting a track across the ranges. In a few years he became a splendid bushman, knowing almost every mile of the country. During all this time he appears to have been getting an honest living, even when he kept a horseyard at Geelong, which is ostensibly a respectable calling. One incident changed his whole career, and the man avers but for this he would have lived and died honestly. He was riding one of his own horses, near Sandhurst, when he was bailed up by two drunken German troopers. My own experience of the myrmidons of the law in Germany leads me to credit the following:—"I was going along quietly," says Power, "when down came the two troopers, hooting and shouting. I saw they were drunk, and pulled on one side, but they stopped me. 'Whose horse is that?' says one. 'It's mine,' says I. 'Are you going to shout?' says the other. 'No,' says I, for I didn't like the Germans. 'I believe you stole that horse,' says the first. 'You're a liar,' says I. 'You'll have to come along with us,' says the other. 'I won't do it,' says I, getting riled. On that one of them drew his hanger, and said he'd make me. 'You can't,' says I. He charged at me, and I'd only just time to draw my revolver, or he'd have cut me down. I shot him, and then the other fellow rode up and fired at me, and the powder singed my coat. I shot him, and then rode off. Now, if I had been sensible, I'd have ridden off to the nearest police station and given myself up. But

I was frightened, and rode across the colony, thinking to go and stay in New South Wales till the row was over. At the Murray I was stopped. I did not deny my name or resist. They arrested and brought me down to Melbourne, and I got 10 years. The men were not hurt much, and it was proved they stopped me without cause, or I'd have got more." Such is Power's account of his first conflict with justice, and warders have told me that it is substantially correct.

*Courtesy National Library Australia.
Gippsland Times
Monday 12 March, 1877*



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