

## Lonely Deaths

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Many of the convicts sent to WA never married and died alone. One such person was James SMITH who arrived on the *Clara* in 1857. He was an unmarried brick maker, convicted on the 3rd Sept 1855, at Kingston on Thames, for being a pick pocket and received 14 years transportation. The Quarterly Prison Returns say he was convicted at Newington and boarded the *Clara* from Portsmouth prison.

In the Police Gazette No 11, page 44, 15 March 1882, a Special Inquiry was reported into the death of an unknown man.

*On the 9th inst., a man, name unknown, was found dead in a field near the Race Course, York. Description—slight, age about 60, length 5ft 2 or 3 in, long hair turning grey, blue or grey eyes, long visage, fair complexion, anchor and cleaver left arm, below elbow, dressed in a light tweed trousers, plaid shirt, nearly new boots and black felt hat; a long black coat was by his side, also a strap with brass buckle pouch, and a bag made of an oil coat, striped inside, white outside; any information that will establish identity of the deceased to be reported to the Detectives Office, Perth.*

The Eastern Districts Chronicle on the 17 March, p3b, reported that the inquest found the unknown man had died of starvation.

The notice in the Police Gazette was repeated in Nos 12, 13, 14, 16 and 19. The Gazette of the 17 May 1882, page 80, it was reported:

*The remains found near York Race Course, on 9th March, are supposed to be those of James Smith, exp, late 4367*

Another case was that of Robert GRUNDY (542)

Robert was convicted in Lincoln on 6<sup>th</sup> Jan 1849 for larceny and received 7 years transportation. He boarded the *Pyrenees* on its first voyage to WA, from the Stirling Castle hulk, at Portsmouth. 6 months after he received his Conditional Pardon on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1854 he was re-convicted, for forgery, and received another 7 years imprisonment.

Richard Taylor, Lance Corporal of Police, Carnarvon, was the informant on the death of Robert Grundy, who died on or about 10<sup>th</sup> March 1884. He reported:

*The remains of Grundy were found alongside the road on Messrs JT & A Russell's run, three miles north of Millie Millie. From the fact that this was the same place where Redfern was murdered and that Grundy's dog was lying close alongside him, the affair looked suspicious. As the remains were a fortnight old on being found, it was hard to say how the unfortunate man met his death. He was travelling up the river with Mr Ward, but he left before the team did next morning, that being the last time he was seen alive. Anyhow the poor fellow's remains were buried and in all probability that was all the enquiry that was held in the matter. The Resident Magistrate was in the Murchison and as there was no Justice of the Peace there at the time, no law was administered for two months.*

Lonely Graves by Yvonne and Kevin Coate, p153

The Police Gazette, No 24, 11 June 1884, p100-1

Inquest

Gascoyne – On the 20<sup>th</sup> ult., at Millie Millie, before CDV Foss RM and Coroner, on the remains of Robert Grundy, who was found dead near Millie Millie, on the 14<sup>th</sup> March last. Verdict – That the deceased was murdered on or about the 10<sup>th</sup> March 1884, by aboriginal natives Nowaraba alias Big-headed Harry and Gnalbee. (Vide Warrants Issued and Apprehensions)

Murder

On the 10<sup>th</sup> March last, the body of Robert Grundy, an aged shepherd, was found at Millie Millie, Gascoyne. On examining the body, the front of which was covered with blood, a spear wound was found in the throat and another very low in the stomach, apparently inflicted with a

kylie, and, from tracks visible at the findings of the remains, was evidently the work of natives.

The Police Gazette No 43 (22 October 1884) reported:

Apprehension

Gnalbee alias Billy, ab, native, at Upper Gascoyne, on the 12<sup>th</sup> July. Committed for trial  
Nowaraba alias Big-headed Harry, ab. Native, brought up at Gascoyne, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> ult,  
committed for trial

Grealer and Yankagoora at Gascoyne, on the 12<sup>th</sup> July, by LC Wall and PC Turner; murder of  
Robert Grundy. Former committed for trial, latter discharged.

The prisoners were tried at the Supreme Court, Geraldton on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1884. All were  
found Guilty and sentenced to death.

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References and Notes:

Perth Gazette is available on microfilm at the Battye Library, Perth, Western Australia

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Interest Group, Western Australian Genealogical Society Inc.