

MOONDYNE JOE

HASS, English

Who was Moondyne Joe, and how do we know about him?

Students will:

- Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources of information.
- Use historical sources to collect information and make inferences about the past.
- Evaluate the usefulness of sources.
- Write a poem inspired by historical events.

ENGAGE

Show students, first, the compass pouch and, second, the compass from the Toodyay local history collection. Ask if students can guess what the items are.



EXPLAIN

- The compass and pouch are believed to have belonged to a convict, Joseph Bolitho Johns, otherwise known as Moondyne Joe. He became infamous after repeatedly escaping from prisons in Fremantle and in Toodyay.
- The compass was donated to the Newcastle Gaol Museum by May Hall, when it opened in 1961. May's father, Charles Samuel Hall, was a senior warder at Fremantle Prison and took an interest in Moondyne Joe, who had carried out gardening duties for the family. The donated items are an example of a primary source of information.
- A primary source is an artefact, document, diary, manuscript, autobiography, recording, or any other source of information that was created at the time under study. In contrast a secondary source of information is one that was created later, by someone who did not experience first-hand the time and events you are researching. An example is an [information leaflet about Moondyne Joe](#) created by the Newcastle Gaol Museum. Both sources of information are useful when learning about the past.
- You can read [The legend of Moondyne Joe](#), and explain that the author, Mark Greenwood, would have used both primary and secondary sources of information to research and write the story.



EXPLORE

Show students a photo of Moondyne Joe, and discuss:

- What can we learn – or guess – about Moondyne Joe by looking at this photo? (*eg. that he wasn't very rich; he may have observed how Aboriginal people used kangaroo skins to make cloaks and copied them*)
- What are some questions about Moondyne Joe that this source doesn't help us answer? (*eg. We don't know where he came from, or what he did*)

Working in small groups, pairs or individually, get students to use a selection of primary and secondary sources of information to find out more about Moondyne Joe.

- <http://www.wanowandthen.com/Moondyne-Joe.html>
- https://wiki.kidzsearch.com/wiki/Moondyne_Joe
- https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moondyne_Joe
- <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/johns-joseph-bolitho-3859>
- http://purl.slwa.wa.gov.au/slwa_b1926736_1
- <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article106235225> See extract included in this resource

- <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3751097> See extract included in this resource
- <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article72377474> See extract included in this resource

Discuss:

- When were the sources produced, who by and why?
- What information about Moondyne Joe does each source provide, and what information is missing?
- How did the authors of the secondary sources know about Moondyne Joe?

EXTEND

Moondyne Joe has become a legend, inspiring poems, books and songs to be written about him, as well as community events such as the [Toodyay Moondyne Joe Festival](#). Show students some examples of [poems written about Moondyne Joe](#), and get them to write their own poem using the information they gathered.

EVALUATE AND REFLECT

- What have we learned about Moondyne Joe?
- Do you think an object like the compass would have been valuable to Moondyne Joe? Why?
- Why should we try to use a variety of sources when trying to find out about the past?



Shire of Toodyay local history collection 2000.50a-c



Joseph Bolitho Johns, aka Moondyne Joe

[Wikimedia Commons](#)

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Moondyne_Joe.jpg

FREMANTLE POLICE COURT.

BEFORE JOHN STONE, ESQ.

MARCH 20TH.

J. Newman, t.l., charged with breach of the Ticket-of-Leave Regulations. Cautioned.

P. C. James Healey charged *Henry Phillips*, t.l., with idling about the town. Cautioned.

P. C. Holloway charged *George Dixon*, ex-piiree, with being drunk, and using abusive language to his employer, Mr. Robert King. The charge was not pressed, Mr. King stating he intended to discharge the prisoner from his employ forthwith.

P. C. James Healey charged *Susannah Lewington* with being drunk and disorderly. Fined 5s.

Charles Edwards, t.l., was charged with being drunk, out after hours, and committing a nuisance in front of the National Bank. Sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

MARCH 22ND.

Michael Meagher, free, was charged by P. C. James Healey, with being drunk and using obscene language. Fined 10s.

Andrew Smith, free charged with being drunk and incapable. Fined 5s.

MARCH 23RD.

Maria Tozer and *Jenny Cox*, two young girls, aged respectively, 14 and 12 years, were charged with stealing a dress the property of Mrs. G. W. Leake, from the bathing ground on the 22nd inst. Tozer sentenced to 14 days imprisonment, and Cox to 7 days.

Thomas Adams, t.l., was charged with being drunk and out after hours, first offence. Fined 5s.

William Hyde, free, was charged with being drunk, and assaulting the police. Seven days' hard labor.

P. C. Sullivan charged *Thomas Carter*, t.l., with idling about the town and neglecting to report his change of lodgings. One month's imprisonment.

Thomas Carter, was again brought up, and charged with carrying firearms, contrary to the Ticket-of-Leave Regulations. Sentenced to three month's imprisonment.

John McCall, pensioner, was charged with being drunk and incapable. Fined 5s.

Margaret Coady was charged with being drunk and using profane, obscene, and abusive language to Captain and Miss Finnerty. Sentenced to pay a fine of 40s., or in default, one month's imprisonment.

The same respectable individual was also charged with using profane, obscene, and abusive language to Mr. William Vincent. Fined 20s., or in default of payment 14 days' imprisonment.

P. C. Gardiner charged *Josiah Jackson*, t.l.,

with violently assaulting him, and also rescuing a prisoner from his custody. Jackson was also charged with being absent from his reported place of abode on the night of the 23rd instant. Sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

John Gittings, t.l., was charged with leading an immoral life. Sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

Moondyne Joe of the 'Hole in the Wall' notoriety has again made his appearance, having returned, (under police escort), to his old quarters in Fremantle Prison under the following circumstances:—Some time last month a man in the employ of Mr. Charles Ferguson, of the Swan was found drowned in the river. It being late when the body was recovered Mr. Ferguson suggested that a glass of wine would do the party, who had been engaged in the search, no harm, and forthwith proceeded to the cellar to get a supply. On entering the cellar he saw a man crouched between the casks, and Mr. Ferguson called out to the party above who came down and succeeded in arresting Moondyne Joe, whom they handed over to the police. Before he was secured Joe managed to strike one of the men over the head with a loaded whip. On being searched a bunch of skeleton keys and pick locks were found on him, and in a bag in the cellar were two wooden kegs and a dark lantern with matches and candle—on his feet he had a pair of Moccasins made of sheepskin, with the wool outside, evidently worn for the purpose of blinding his tracks. The keys found on Moondyne were examined by Mr. Sub. In-

spector Snook, and some of them fitted the lock of the cellar door, which is one of Chubbs'. Had Joe been a member of the Temperance Society he would not have come to grief, and he evidently had not read Fielding's remark, "that wine is a turncoat; first a friend and then an enemy."

On the 22nd inst., *Moondyne Joe* was charged at the Fremantle Prison before John Stone, Esq., J.P., with having broken into and entered the premises of Mr. Charles Ferguson on the Swan, for the purpose of committing a robbery. For this offence he was sentenced to 3 years in irons, having previously been sentenced to 12 months in irons for absconding through the hole in the wall some time back.

The Perth Races come off on Thursday and Friday next, and they promise to be the best ever yet run in the colony—the number of horses entered being much larger than on any previous occasion—while some of them are of the best blood in the colony. The entries were made

On Monday night a prisoner named Johns, rejoicing in the alias of Moondyne Joe, managed to effect his escape from his cell in the Convict Establishment, cleared the walls and got clear away without alarming any of the officers of the prison. From particulars I have gained it appears that he managed to detach the iron bars of the window and made his exit, taking part of his bed-clothes with him which he used to descend on the outside, having ascended by means of a post placed against the wall. The Police took up his track and followed it up to the Canning, but I have not yet heard of his re-capture.

FREMANTLE. (1866, August 10). *The Perth Gazette and West Australian Times* (WA : 1864 - 1874), p. 2.

National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article3751097>

POLICE NEWS.

CITY.—Before Mr. Cowan, P.M., last Saturday, John Jones, better known as “Moondyne Joe” was charged with being unlawfully possessed of a plough and a quantity of iron the property of William Atkins, a contractor. W. Atkins said that he left a plough at Kelmascott station with other machinery, which he had left there, and it was removed to accused’s tent. P. C. Warnecke gave evidence that he found the article in the possession of accused. Mr. Cowan fined him £5 in default 3 months imprisonment. Thomas Meetford and Hartly Blakely were discharged for drunkenness. Sarah Eaton, on a charge of false pretences, was further remanded, as she is still unable to attend.

FREMANTLE.—Before Mr. Fairbairn E.M., this morning, Thomas Walton was fined 5s. for drunkenness.

POLICE NEWS. (1895, November 1). *The Inquirer and Commercial News* (Perth, WA : 1855 - 1901), p. 4.

National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article72377474>