

# MEET MARK JEFFREY

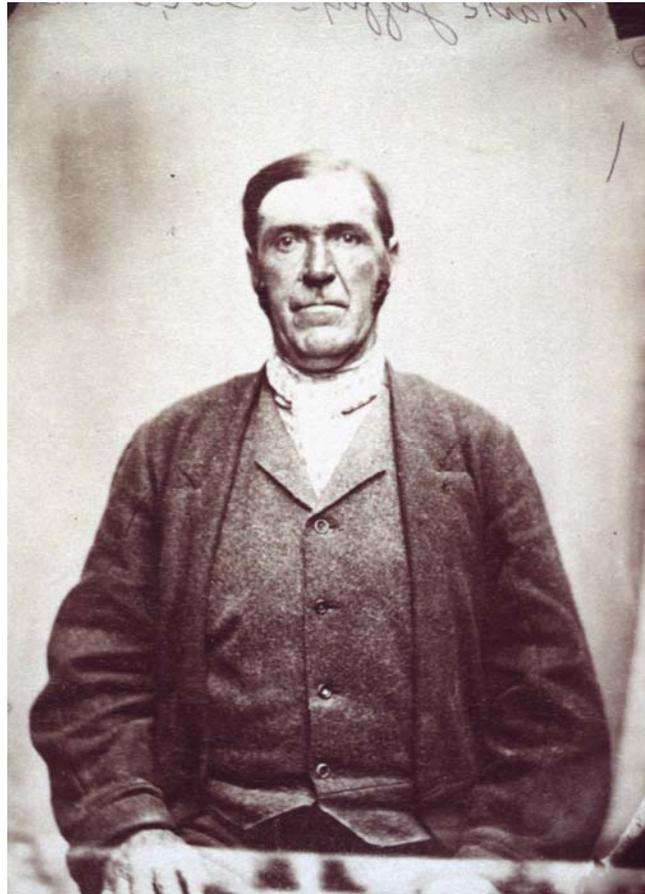
**“My heart sickened at the inhuman tyranny that surrounded us”**

*Big Mark Jeffrey was a terror to those in authority. He always fought against injustice, and he paid the price with a wasted life.*

Mark Jeffrey was a lamb when his belly was full, but a ‘wild beast’ when he was hungry, and disputes over food shaped his life. Originally transported for burglary, Jeffrey’s determination to stand up for his rights earned him constant punishment. After a life of torment on Norfolk Island he was sent to Port Arthur, where he spent six months in the Separate Prison for asserting his rights over rations. In 1866 he received his freedom, but he could not work because of an injury to his leg, and he was sent back to Port Arthur as an Invalid. He was finally freed again in 1870. But after a fight in a pub, which he said was self-defence, he was convicted of manslaughter and sent back to Port Arthur for Life.

Once again in the Separate Prison, in agony from his ulcerated leg and furious at what he saw as injustice, he smashed up his cell and then tried to murder the doctor. By now the authorities were thoroughly tired of his alarming outbursts, and he was sent to the Isle of the Dead as the gravedigger. There Mark had a terrifying experience. The Devil, ‘His Satanic Majesty’, appeared in his hut and spoke to him; he was so frightened that he begged to be removed from the island.

Sent up to Hobart Gaol in 1877, he continued to find himself the victim of injustice, and racked up more convictions for assault. Finally he was sent to the Launceston Invalid Depot, where he died around



*Mark Jeffrey, circa 1875, photograph attributed to Boyd  
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1903 aged about 78. He had been in the convict system all his adult life.

Around 1,100 people – convicts, soldiers, free settlers and their families – were buried on the Isle of the Dead. They are remembered daily as visitors tour the cemetery island and hear the stories of their lives and deaths at Port Arthur.

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