

STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES

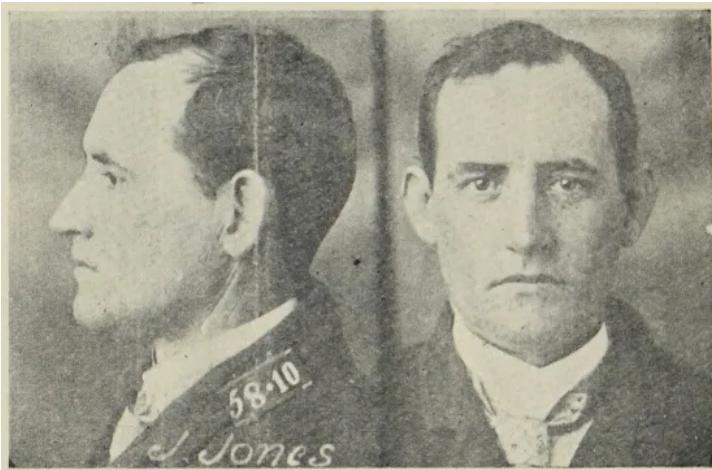
Queensland State Archives

Escape from St Helena Island

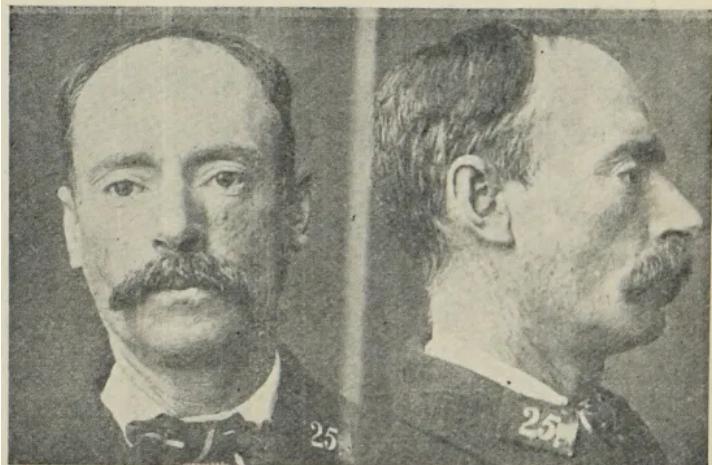
21 APRIL, 2021 BY QUEENSLAND STATE ARCHIVES



Sitting isolated, surrounded by the dangers of Moreton Bay, St Helena Island Penal Establishment was a fortified prison. Despite this, numerous prisoners still attempted to escape.



Taken in 1910.



Taken in 1906.

ITM519924 David McIntyre (top) and
Henry Craig.(bottom)

distributed to other inmates in the hospital.

Using the tools from the tailor shop, Craig and McIntyre chiselled out the door jamb during the night. They started their escape at 4am. By leaving the door intact, the alarm was not raised until 5.25am.

On the first day of their escape, Craig and McIntyre moved from the hospital through the lumberyard, before hiding in the tinsmith's workshop roof. From 6 to 15 November, Craig and McIntyre remained hidden in the cavity. Food was secretly delivered by a fellow inmate.

After nightfall on 16 November, Craig and McIntyre left the roof and acquired tools from the workshops to scale one of the prison gates. Once out, they made their way to the boathouse where they attempted to move two boats. They

One of the greatest escape attempts lasted 11 days and was carried out by two prisoners: Henry Craig and David McIntyre. The response to their escape was unprecedented, with police forces across Australia placed on high alert.

In November 1911, Craig and McIntyre planned their escape. Coordinating to be in the hospital on the same night, McIntyre had secured the tools required for the escape from the tailor shop. Craig had been gifted three-quarters of a cup (six ounces) of whisky from Warden Rawlinson. On the night of 5 November, the escape began with the whisky being

were unsuccessful. After failing to coerce a horse into dragging the smaller boat to shore, they gave up.

141
5308

GENERAL RECORD AND DESCRIPTION OF PRISONERS.

512

Henry Craig	
Offence	1. Breaking and entering into an occupied dwelling house with intent to commit a felony or criminal damage. 2. Stealing a horse with a servant to assist him.
By whom Tried	Chief Justice Court
Where Tried	S.E. Province
Date of Sentence	12th February 1906
Sentence	2 years for each offence mentioned 2. liberty before sentence on 2nd instant
Date of Admission	7th March 1906
Date of Discharge	18th May 1907 <i>After an unsuccessuful examination by Dr. V. S. Williams</i> 6 months off coast 6 months
6 months extra remission 6. 9. 2. 3. 17	
Previous Convictions	
12th August 1905 Being housebreaking implements & tools to Maris 1st. 19. 1905 Stealing a horse from Mr. H. H. 150/- because he was drunk inside left hand bare back 2nd Offense Red mottled 3. October 1905 For lack of old enough to stand because of going after his back neck Red mottled shoulder blade hairy che Red neck of boy breaking glass, the first 20/- Because you are not available 4th. 19. 1905 Stealing from Mr. G. 5. 6. 10. 1905 Stealing from Mrs. Wright and 8/- you are	
Arrived in Colony	Overland 1906
Native of	Noticed
Trade	Turner
Complexion	Ruddy
Height	5 Feet 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ Inches
Make	Right
Age	41 yrs (1902)
Religion	Ch. Ch.
Education	R.W.
Colour of Hair	Light brown to grey
Eyes	Blue
Weight on Admission	7 St. 4 lbs. 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz

Photo No 20-86 PRISON OFFENCES AND PUNISHMENTS.

DATE	OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT
2. 3. 04	Being in possession of an unauthorised camp pistol	Confined 7 days
2. 3. 04	Attempting to escape from prison	2 days months 10 days
" 6	Gross insubordination	2 days months 10 days
Discharged by Special remission 6. 3. 17		
Remainder of sentence remitted.		
Attempted to escape 5. 11. 01		

13
5309

GENERAL RECORD AND DESCRIPTION OF PRISONERS.

112

David Mc. Intyre	
Offence	Breaking & Entering & Stealing from
By whom Tried	Judge Cooper
Where Tried	Supreme Court Probate
Date of Sentence	11th November, 1901
Sentence	10 years & 2
Date of Admission	25th November 1901
Date of Discharge	3rd November 1909
6 weeks special remission	
7 days extra special remission	
Arrived in Colony	Queensland
Native of	Queensland
Trade	Taylor
Complexion	Park
Height	5 Feet 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ Inches
Make	Middle
Age	27 (1874)
Religion	Roman Catholic
Education	Read Work
Colour of Hair	Dark Brown
Eyes	Brown
Marks	AB and DN and mole left ear and broken heart right ear hair round nose and black heart right ear hair round nose
Previous Convictions	12th April 1905 Being housebreaking Breaking & entering & stealing from Mr. H. H. 150/- because he was drunk inside left hand bare back 2nd Offense Red mottled 1st. 19. 1905 Stealing a horse because he was drunk inside left hand bare back 2nd Offense Red mottled 1. 1. 1905 Stealing a horse because he was drunk inside left hand bare back 2nd Offense Red mottled 1. 1. 1905 Stealing a horse because he was drunk inside left hand bare back 2nd Offense Red mottled
Weight on Admission	8 St. 13 lbs.

Photo No 25-98 (2) PRISON OFFENCES AND PUNISHMENTS.

DATE	OFFENCE	PUNISHMENT
13. 2. 03	Disorderly conduct by fighting. Disobedience of orders by refusing to stop fighting.	Seven days in a light cell or half ration - V. J. 17/2/03
13. 3. 04	Disorderly conduct by fighting	Limited
4. 7. 04	Disorderly conduct by smoking in S. J. Ward	Cantone
9. 3. 7	Insulting to Warden Brady about 10/12. 30 hours.	10 days or half ration
26. 7. 7	Smoking when Ward arrived (10 am)	Cautioned

Discharged

Extra special remission

ITM271423 General record and description
of male prisoners p.512

ITM271423 General record and description
of male prisoners p.112

Craig and McIntyre presented themselves back at the stockade on the morning of 17 November. They had managed to avoid authorities for 11 days without leaving the island. A formal inquiry into the escape was held. Warden Rawlinson expressed guilt over the gifting of the whisky. On 28 November 1911, before the inquiry had concluded and at only 34 years of age, Warden Rawlinson committed suicide by cutting his throat.

NAME.	AGE.	WHERE BORN.	RELIGION.	SOCIAL CONDITION.	PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT.
Rawlinson Wm Davis	1860 Apr. 25 1860	34 England C. & G. C. Married Diversified			
<i>"Date of appointment May 15th 1894. Recd. Wm Rawlinson ft. as a Warden"</i>					
DATE.	CHARGE.	BY WHOM PREFERRED, AND WITNESS (IF ANY).	PLEA.	DECISION.	
		<i>Suicide</i>			
		<i>Qued 25/11/11</i>			

ITM271614 Warders Defaulters 1882-1931

Building a gaol for Brisbane

By the 1860s, conditions at Brisbane Gaol on the mainland were deteriorating due to overcrowding. In 1867, prisoners stationed on the hulk *Proserpine* were building the St Helena Stockade which was to be Brisbane's new gaol.

Originally meant as a quarantine station, it was isolated from the mainland; the island itself was used for farming, its rich, volcanic soil ideal for growing maize, potatoes and other vegetables. The prisoners were made to learn trades, supporting the island with numerous exports such as bricks, clothes, rope, boots and sugar. At the time, St Helena was considered a model high-security prison.

To Be
RETURNED
17.11.09

PLAN
OF
THE ISLAND
ST. HELENA
H.M.PENAL ESTABLISHMENT
QUEENSLAND
Area
208 ACRES



See more buildings, plans and photographs from St Helena Island in [our album here](#).



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