

LUKE JEFFREY (56)

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Luke JEFFREY arrived on board the *Scindian* after being sentenced to 15 years for burglary. He was listed as being an unmarried labourer. A Ticket of Leave was granted on 8 June 1851 and a Conditional Pardon on 7 October 1861. According to Volume 3 of "Bond" Settlers, he was a sawyer in 1873, and in partnership with a MOFFAT in 1876.

Luke lived with my great, great grandmother, Elizabeth STINTON (nee Eacott). No marriage record has yet been found and it is possible that they never married. In 1875, Luke junior was born in Mandurah, followed by Tamar Abigail in 1876, Rebecca Joanna in 1880 and Emily May in Fremantle in 1882.

Luke committed suicide on March 30, 1883. The following articles appearing in the newspapers.

THE HERALD, MARCH 31, 1883

A rather well known character, Luke Jeffrey, a sawyer, committed suicide by shooting himself in the bush, at a place known as Robbs Swamp yesterday. Information being given to Police a conveyance was sent out to bring in the body and an inquest will be held today.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN, TUESDAY 3 APRIL 1883

A man called Luke Jeffrey was found on Friday last, not far from his dwelling near Bibra Lake, shot through the head and dead. Evidence taken at the inquest on Saturday showed that the deceased had taken his own life while in a state of mental depression.

At the inquest, Elizabeth Stinton was required to give evidence and on oath swore that she had lived with Luke Jeffrey for 10 years and that he had been down-hearted since he was fined for smoking in a railway carriage.

A document written by Luke was produced which read:

28th March 1883.

"I cannot live any longer. My mind is loaded with more than I can bear. My last prayer is that Providence will favour my children, three in number. May the mother live long to see them, and give them a kind word in the right way. I know well what I am going to do. I am in a sound state of mind this day".

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The Colonial Surgeon, H.C. BARNETT LRCP, gave medical evidence showing that deceased had met with his death from being shot in the head. The jury returned a verdict on suicide whilst in a state of unsound mind.

For any family touched by suicide, the question is always "WHY". I have always wondered why Luke says in his suicide note that he has three children, when there were four. Perhaps Luke discovered he was not the father of one of them? One of his prayers was answered, as Elizabeth lived to the ripe old age of 84. Luke was aged 58 when he died.

References and Notes:

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