

NEW DUBBO EXHIBITION SHINES LIGHT ON CRIMINALS FROM 1870 TO 1930



A new exhibition developed by the NSW State Archives that explores the criminal pasts of NSW lawbreakers from 1870 to 1930 opens today at the Old Dubbo Gaol.

On until Friday 1 February 2019, ***Captured: Portraits of Crime 1870-1930*** shines a light on the ordinary men, women and children caught on the wrong side of the NSW criminal justice system, whether by choice or circumstance.

Among the stories featured in the exhibition is that of **Arthur Astill** (pictured), a 16-year-old apprentice labourer from Orange imprisoned in the Dubbo Gaol in 1893 for the murder of Jessie Hamling – the wife of his boss William Hamling (a selector with land at Coalbaggie Creek near Dubbo) – who was found dead at her home.

From the time Astill was first questioned by police, to the time of his trial, his story changed considerably – at first he told police that he'd found the body after returning from fixing a water tank, however on being charged confessed that 'the truth' was that he had been aiming for a hawk but stumbled over a pet kangaroo causing him to fire the shotgun in the direction of Mrs Hamling.

Old Dubbo Gaol's Visitor Experience Officer Chris Anemaat said the exhibition tells some extraordinary stories of ordinary people.

"The Captured exhibition highlights the untold stories of individuals in the historic NSW justice system," said Mr Anemaat.

Exhibition curator Dr Penny Stannard said the exhibition features a wide selection of records and images sourced from 46,000 inmate records contained in 199 gaol photographic description books.

"These records have all been digitised to ensure we can preserve history and protect this information for future generations," Dr Stannard said.

"Our expert staff and research archivists have peeled back the layers of these historical records and illuminated the events that led these people to commit a crime."

"We looked at the offence type, gender, age and location of crimes to piece together a collection of compelling stories for the exhibition and catalogue."

For more information visit the NSW State Archives website or view the exhibition catalogue.

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Editor's note: Exhibition images can be downloaded via Dropbox and Video News Release overlay footage can be downloaded via VIMEO.

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