



JONDARYAN WOOLSHED

## The 1891 Shearers Strike

In the main, the activities outlined in this module work towards student demonstration of the following outcomes:

TCC 5.3 Students collaborate to locate and systematically record information about the contributions of people in diverse past settings.

TCC 6.3 Students collaboratively identify the values underlying contributions by diverse individuals and groups in Australian or Asian environment

CI 5.4 Students describe how governments have caused changes to particular groups.

CI 6.4 Students describe instances of cultural change resulting from government legislation or policies that have impacted on cultural groups.

### Integration into a classroom teaching module

In addition to working towards outcomes from the **Time, Continuity and Change** and **Culture and Identity** strands of the SOSE syllabus, *The 1891 Shearers Strike* is well suited to classroom modules based on some of the 'conceptual organisers' of the **Systems, Resources and Power** strand. The significant role of the Jondaryan Woolshed in the lead-up to the 1891 Shearers Strike can be used as a case study in modules based on the conceptual organisers of Economy and Business; Citizenship and Government; and, Access to Power.

For example, students can investigate the economic conditions in Queensland that led to the strike; the economic difficulties faced by shearers; and the perceived economic affluence of the pastoralists, as background research to the creations that they are required to produce for **SRP 5.2** and **SRP 6.2**.

Similarly, students can work towards the demonstration of **SRP 5.4** and **SRP 6.4** by analysing the legal and political background to the Jondaryan Affair and the disparities between the rights of the shearers and the rights of the pastoralists. Using the Jondaryan Woolshed as a case study can also be extended to **SRP 5.5** and **SRP 6.5**, where students develop understandings of social justice and democratic process.

Teachers should also refer to a number of related QSCC modules for ideas in developing their own classroom modules. Using the events surrounding the Jondaryan Woolshed as a case study is particularly well-suited to Activity 3 – “No laws, many laws, fewer laws” of **Module 5.3** *Revolution to redeployment: Work*; to Activity 9 – “Legal and gender issues” of **Module 5.4** *Industrial Revolution: Societies and Change*; and to Activity 6 – “Trade Unions” of **Module 6.3** *The future of work: Work*. QSCC modules are available at:

[http://www.qscq.qld.edu.au/kla/sose/sourcebook\\_modules.html](http://www.qscq.qld.edu.au/kla/sose/sourcebook_modules.html)

## OVERVIEW

(N.B. This overview should be read in conjunction with the *Teacher Information for SOSE* document that outlines how the Jondaryan Woolshed SOSE units are intended to be used.)

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw four great industrial struggles in the Australian colonies. One of the most economically, politically and culturally significant events was the Queensland Shearers Strike of 1891. The Jondaryan Woolshed played an important part in the battle between the pastoralists and the shearers. *The 1891 Shearers Strike* module develops students’ understandings of the industrial tensions and the rise of unionism that marked the late 1800s, using the Jondaryan “Affair” and the 1891 Queensland Shearers Strike as a case study. Students investigate the industrial conflicts at the Woolshed and identify the people involved in them, as well as exploring the role of the government in breaking the 1891 strike.

Before visiting the Jondaryan Woolshed, classroom activities build on student knowledge of life in rural pre-federation Queensland. In particular, students explore the difficulties of life as a shearer. Using the Jondaryan Woolshed website, students gain an understanding of the significant role that the woolshed played in the strike activities of the Queensland Shearers Union, identifying the Jondaryan personalities involved in the dispute. Students also develop knowledge of the other Great Strikes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to gain a better appreciation of the significance of the 1891 Shearers Strike. There is scope in this phase of the module for students to collaboratively work on a research project.

Activities during the visit to the woolshed allow students to tap into a sensory experience of life as a shearer on the Darling Downs. Students gain first hand experience of this historically significant site, with particular emphasis on the personal stories of the Jondaryan area. Students view demonstrations and participate in activities that allow them to form a greater appreciation of the demanding nature of the shearing occupation. If engaged in a research project, students can conduct further research during their visit.

Post-visit activities extend students’ field experiences and pre-visit knowledge and offer opportunities for extension work. If students are engaged in a research project, this is the consolidation phase for their project, where they can make links between the Jondaryan dispute and the 1891 strike and a current issue of concern.

## PRE VISIT ACTIVITIES

### Background knowledge:

Prior to their investigation into the Jondaryan dispute, students should have (or should develop in the early stages of the activities) a sound understanding of pre-federation political, economic and social structures in Australia, with particular reference to Queensland history. That is, students should be aware that, before federation in 1901, Australia consisted of separate colonies and that Queensland was not established as a self-governing colony until 1859. Students should have an understanding of the social and economic difficulties that separate self-governing colonies, rather than states, created.

### Introducing the Jondaryan Woolshed:

- Introduce students to the historical importance of the woolshed with **Resource 1**. After reading Stuart's piece, students can identify where Jondaryan is on a map and then move to identifying the different stages of the Jondaryan dispute as outlined by Stuart. That is, the union instigated a strike at Jondaryan for better wages and conditions but was unsuccessful as the management brought in non-union workers from Brisbane. However, even though the management were able to get the sheep shorn, the teamsters refused to haul the wool. After management found a way to get the wool to the rail yards and transported to Brisbane, the carters in Brisbane refused to handle it, and so on.

At this early stage, students should simply be developing a sense of the historical significance of the woolshed and the widespread effect of the dispute at Jondaryan in order to raise their interest. After progressing further with the suggested activities and building a broader knowledge base, students could come back to this reading. At this later stage, students should have a better understanding of, for example, what Stuart meant when he wrote, "the manager tried to play off one union against the other".

An extension of this activity is to have students look at the famous photograph of the 1891 Strike union prisoners, taken in 1893. Julian Stuart is in the back row, far right. This photo was reprinted in the 1967 publication of *Part of the Glory* and in a number of books related to the 1891 strike (see the other Resources for a range of sources). It is also available on the *Australian Workers Heritage Centre* website (<http://awhc.alp.org.au/index.html>). Go to the "Freedom's on the Wallaby" page and scroll down to Picture 5. Students will also enjoy looking at Picture 4 - an image of the front page of "The Worker", which is mentioned in Stuart's excerpt.

- Before looking into the Jondaryan dispute into more detail, students should form a solid understanding of what life was like as a shearer in the late 1800s. Teachers can develop activities and inquiry-based worksheets to help students to examine the social, political and economic conditions of the shearing profession. In the first instance, students can explore the Jondaryan Woolshed website (<http://www.jondaryanwoolshed.com>). There are a number of good historic and contemporary photographs on the website as well as descriptions of the tasks involved in shearing.

Further insight into the shearing life can be gained through other web-based research. See the **Useful Websites** for suggestions. For example, the “Freedom’s on the Wallaby” page of the *Australian Workers Heritage Centre* website begins with three good images related to shearing and the wool industry while the *Australian Shearer’s Hall of Fame* website has additional images and many personal stories.

To encourage students to use other “intelligences”, teachers can develop activities around the readily available large number of Australian bush poems and folk songs. Using the websites suggested in the **Useful Websites** resource, consider songs such as “Freedom’s on the wallaby”, “Union Boy” and “Brisbane Ladies”. Additionally, students can be encouraged to take a more critical look at “Waltzing Matilda”.

Finally, **Resource 2**, which details the rules of the shearing shed, can be used as a stimulus for a range of activities. Activities should move beyond the traditional “Question and Answer” worksheet to approaches that are more creative. For example, after analysis of the rules, students can create a visual image of the shed rules, such as a mural that depicts certain rules being broken and certain rules being followed.

- Using the “Timeline: Shearers’ Union and Jondaryan” page of the woolshed’s website ([www.jondaryanwoolshed.com/03\\_the\\_woolshed/shearersunion.htm](http://www.jondaryanwoolshed.com/03_the_woolshed/shearersunion.htm)), students can begin their research into the Jondaryan dispute. The information on this page is a good starting point for students as it provides a succinct overview of the dispute. It is important to note that it presents a different point of view to that expressed in some of the resources provided with this module. For example, it suggests a different approach by management to that suggested by Julian Stuart in **Resource 1**. This is, therefore, a good opportunity for teachers to explore with students the diverse values and perceptions that different stakeholders bring to a situation. As this is an important part of SOSE, these conflicting images of the Jondaryan Woolshed should be openly discussed. Similarly, students can evaluate and discuss the different actions taken by the different stakeholders (such as arson attacks on the woolshed) using the SOSE values as criteria. This would address the outcome **TCC 6.5** *Students develop criteria-based judgments about the ethical behaviour of people in the past.*

To work towards demonstration of **TCC 5.3** and **TCC 6.3**, after familiarising themselves with the information on the web page, students can work in groups to create a timeline of the activities described. As part of this timeline, students can develop a *character profile*, using the “People” link from the “Jondaryan Woolshed Timeline” page. Again, this can be extended to a more creative approach by encouraging students to artistically represent the people involved in the dispute, including an expression of their nature as well as their physical

characteristics. Students can identify the part that each personality played in the dispute (TCC 5.3) or can identify the values underlying those contributions (TCC 6.3).

- **Resources 3 to 7** are information sheets that teachers can use as a stimulus for student activities. Activities can be designed to suit the focus of the classroom teaching module. For example, if the classroom module has an economic focus (perhaps drawing on SRP 5.2 or 6.2) questions can be developed that focus student attention on the economic aspects of the information outlined in each resource. Again, teaching and learning activities should move beyond a Question and Answer worksheet and should develop student understandings through other intelligences.

Depending on the nature of the classroom module, teachers may wish to use some of the resource sheets as post-visit activities.

- The pre-visit phase is a good time to introduce a **student research project**. A research project is well-suited to a number of the outcomes identified at the beginning of this module. Please note, if wishing to work towards outcomes **TCC 5.3** or **TCC 6.3** through a research project, this should be done as a group project as both outcomes require students to work collaboratively. The “Timeline” activity, mentioned earlier, is a good starting point for a project based on these two outcomes.

Following an inquiry approach to SOSE, one approach to the project is to give students a question to research that is related to the classroom module and uses the Jondaryan dispute and/or the 1891 Shearers Strike as a case study. This question can be linked to a modern issue, with an emphasis on asking students what lessons can be learnt from the industrial disputes of this time period and how they can be applied to an issue of concern to students.

Prior to their visit to the woolshed, students can conduct preliminary research into their issue and develop thoughtful questions that they can ask during the visit.

During their visit, students can ask questions of the guides and gain first-hand experience of the site.

After the visit, students consolidate their preliminary research and their field research and then apply their understandings to, and engage in further research about, the current issue.

## DURING THE VISIT TO THE WOOLSHED

- First, it is important to remind students that during the hey-day of the Jondaryan Woolshed, the property was much larger and that most of the buildings on the present site have been moved there.
- Students should not be encumbered by worksheets and the like while they are visiting the woolshed. However, if students are engaging in a research project it is worth reminding students that, when they are on the tour, they should pay particular attention to the areas that are significant to their research topic and may need to bring an easy-to-carry small notebook, etc. in order to record their field research.
- Students may like to bring their own cameras (disposable cameras are well-suited to this) or, if the school has a digital camera, use could be made of it. Students can then use the photos for the post-visit activities or their research project.
- During the tour, students will be shown around the different buildings, most of which are relevant to particular occupations. Similarly, around the grounds and in the display sheds are numerous artefacts that are specific to different jobs. Students will also view demonstrations of shearing, blacksmithing, damper making and sheep dogs being worked. Additionally, students may participate in a pony-drawn cart ride. While engaging in all of these experiences, questions can be put to the students that will focus their attention on the core learning outcomes that the visit is working towards.
- Students should be encouraged to be “hands on” as much as possible, in order to tap into other learning styles. That is, their attention should be drawn to the sights, sounds, and smells of life on a sheep station. They should be given opportunities to lift many of the tools in order to experience their weight and the physically demanding nature of much of the work. They can be encouraged to consider conditions inside the shearing sheds (again, thinking about the sounds, the heat, the smell and so on). They can make connections between the isolation of rural life and the social and emotional effects that this had on pastoralist and shearers alike.
- Particular mention can be made of the “Lock up”. Students can contemplate what it would have been like being arrested as a strike leader and spending time in the local lock-up.
- Lunch could be eaten at the overnight stay area. Here students will experience what accommodation and eating facilities were like for many shearers.

## POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

- The class can reread **Resource 1**. Students should now have a greater understanding of the content and should be able to answer questions that delve into it at a deeper level.
- Depending on the nature of the classroom module, teachers may wish to use some of the resource sheets (**Resources 2 to 7**) as a stimulus for post-visit activities.
- If students have engaged in a research project, further research into the project's issue and consolidation of pre-visit and field research activities should take place.
- Post-visit classroom activities should continue to encourage students to consider the range of perspectives that were brought to the Jondaryan dispute and to the 1891 strike. A role-play in the form of a debate, a union meeting or a "conference" between the pastoralists and the union leaders could take place. Teachers should promote the idea that a **range** of perspectives need to be considered, rather than taking a two-sided approach to the role play. That is, rather than saying "Let's look at both sides", teachers should encourage students to see that there are a number of "sides" to any issue. Teachers could use sections of the play, detailed below, to illustrate this.
- Errol O'Neill's (1991) play *On the Whipping Side* (Playlab Press: Brisbane) is based on the 1891 strike and, in fact, begins with a song that makes reference to "the veterans of Jondaryan". Sections of the play could be used to illustrate a number of points, such as the conflicting perspectives of the shearers, as outlined, above. In the first instance, check with the English Department of the school to see if they hold copies of the play, as a number of schools do use it. Teacher's notes are also available.
- Many of the events surrounding the Shearers Strike are seen as the beginning of the Australian Labor Party. Students can formalise their understanding of this and investigate the formation and early history of other Australian political parties.
- Students can investigate other significant places, personalities and artefacts related to the strike. For example, they can research the role of St. Helena Island as a prison. (This is where the union prisoners were sent to.) They can look into the important role that the Moreton Bay Courier played in the days of early white settlement in South East Queensland. Students can read further about the writings of Julian Stuart or the interesting life of William Lane (editor of "The Worker), including his attempt to set up a communal society, "New Australia" in Paraguay in 1896. To achieve a greater gender balance, the life of Dame Mary Gilmore, who is remembered on the \$10 note, can be explored. See the **Useful Websites** sheet for some internet-based research starting points.



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## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Information for volunteer staff

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw four great industrial struggles in the Australian colonies. *The 1891 Shearers' Strike* develops students' understandings about the Queensland Shearers Strike of 1891 - one of the most economically, politically and culturally significant events of the late 1800s. Students learn about the important part that the Jondaryan Woolshed played in the battle between the pastoralists and the shearers. The *1891 Shearers Strike* module develops students' understandings of the industrial tensions and the rise of unionism that marked the late 1800s, using the Jondaryan "Affair" and the 1891 Queensland Shearers Strike as case studies. Students investigate the industrial conflicts at the Woolshed and identify the people involved in them, as well as exploring the role of the government in breaking the 1891 strike.

Before visiting the Jondaryan Woolshed, classroom activities build on student knowledge of life in rural pre-federation Queensland. In particular, students explore the difficulties of life as a shearer. Using the Jondaryan Woolshed website, students gain an understanding of the significant role that the woolshed played in the strike activities of the Queensland Shearers' Union, identifying the Jondaryan personalities involved in the dispute. Students also develop knowledge of the other Great Strikes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in order to gain a better appreciation of the significance of the 1891 Shearers' Strike. There is scope in this phase of the module for students to collaboratively work on a research project.

Activities during the visit to the woolshed allow students to tap into a sensory experience of life as a shearer on the Darling Downs. Students gain first hand experience of this historically significant site, with particular emphasis on the personal stories of the Jondaryan area. Students view demonstrations and participate in activities that allow them to form a greater appreciation of the demanding nature of the shearing occupation. If engaged in a research project, students can conduct further research during their visit.

To build their background knowledge of the Jondaryan dispute and the 1891 Shearers' Strike, volunteer staff can read through **Resources 1 to 7** and the "Timeline: Shearers' Union and Jondaryan" page on the Jondaryan website ([www.jondaryanwoolshed.com/03\\_the\\_woolshed/shearersunion.htm](http://www.jondaryanwoolshed.com/03_the_woolshed/shearersunion.htm)).

During the guided tour and demonstrations, volunteer staff can:

- Talk about the life of a shearer in the late 1800s in Queensland, explaining how shearers would travel by foot for weeks in order to get to stations, describing and demonstrating the nature of their work, discussing their living conditions and so on. Students should be encouraged to handle as many of the tools as possible in order to get a sense of the physically demanding nature of the work.
- Contrast the life of the shearer with the life of the pastoralists and station managers. Although you may note that it was less difficult than that of a shearer, the challenges and difficulties that even wealthy landowners faced should still be pointed out.
- Talk about the various Jondaryan characters of the 1890s period. It is likely that students will have researched the personalities using the Jondaryan website.
- Recite poems or ballads that were a part of the shearing life.
- Talk specifically about the Jondaryan dispute. Staff can point out the bullock dray to students to help them to understand how hard it was to cart wool to the rail yards and why the refusal of the teamsters to cart the wool caused inconvenience.
- Confirm with the classroom teacher whether the students are engaged in a research project, as suggested in the Teacher Information. If students are involved in a project and are using their visit to the woolshed as a research opportunity, staff can talk to the students about their particular research topics.
- When touring the woolshed, discuss the woolshed arsons of the shearers' strikes and the particular instance of arson at Jondaryan.
- Point out the 'Lock up' to students and explain that many of the arrested unionists may have had to spend time in similar lock ups while awaiting trial.
- Tour the overnight stay area so that students get a sense of what the accommodation and eating facilities were like on many stations.



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### REFERENCES AND FURTHER SOURCES FOR TEACHERS

- Fahey, Warren (Ed.) (1984) *Eureka: the songs that made Australia*, Omnibus Press: Sydney.
- Harris, Joe (1970) *The Bitter Fight: A pictorial history of the Australian Labor Movement*, University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.
- Kerr, Ruth (1990) *Freedom of Contract: A history of the United Graziers' Association of Queensland*, United Graziers' Association of Queensland (Union of Employers): Brisbane.
- Murphy, D.J. (Ed.) (1983) *The Big Strikes: Queensland 1889 – 1965*, University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.
- O'Neill, Errol (1991) *On the Whipping Side: A story of the 1891 Queensland Shearers' Strike*, Playlab Press: Brisbane.
- Stuart, Julian (1967) *Part of the Glory*, Australasian Book Society: Sydney.
- Svensen, Stuart (1989) *The Shearers' War: The story of the 1891 Shearers' Strike*, University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.
- Svensen, Stuart (1995) *Industrial War: The Great Strikes 1890 – 94*, Ram Press: Wollongong, NSW.
- Walker, Jan (1988) *Jondaryan Station: The relationship between pastoral capital and pastoral labour 1840 – 1890*, University of Queensland Press: St Lucia.



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### USEFUL WEBSITES

#### ***Life as a shearer***

In the first instance, use the Jondaryan Woolshed's website (<http://www.jondaryanwoolshed.com>) as it contains a good range of historical and contemporary photos and an abundance of information about shearing as an occupation. The following three websites add to student understanding of the wool industry.

<http://www.shearoutback.com.au/>

The Australian Shearer's Hall of Fame website.

<http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au/sheep/>

The Queensland Department of Primary Industry's website, with useful information about the sheep and wool industry in Queensland and historical information about the beginnings of the industry in colonial Australia. Students should be able to work through most of the information themselves.

[www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/macarthu.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/btn/australians/macarthu.htm)

Identifies the important role that Elizabeth Macarthur played in the development and growth of the merino sheep breed in Australia.

#### ***The shearers' strike***

<http://awhc.alp.org.au/index.html>

The Australian Workers' Heritage Centre, Barcaldine, Queensland.

Look at "About the centre" but also "Freedom's on the Wallaby" – History of the Australian Labor Party 1891 – 1991 with some good photos.

### **Songs and poems**

<http://www.khadija.de/australia/australiasonthewallaby.htm>

A website with sound. A limited but significant collection of Australian folksongs with lyrics and the tune provided. Suitable for student use and as a resource for teachers.

<http://www.crixa.com/muse/songnet/songs.html>

A more extensive collection of folksongs. This site has both the lyrics and the music notes, with many of the songs also accompanied by a sound file. Also suitable for student use and as a resource for teachers.

<http://purl.library.usyd.edu.au/setis/id/v0030>

Web link to *The Old Bush Songs*, edited by A. B. Paterson, 1905. Better suited as a resource for teachers.

<http://www.matildacentre.com.au/>

The Waltzing Matilda centre in Winton, Queensland. Contains photographs and information about the song and its characters.

### **Queensland History**

<http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/jol/index.htm>

The John Oxley Library of Queensland History. Includes online collections and exhibitions, with a number of exhibitions of photographs from 19<sup>th</sup> century Queensland.

<http://www.library.uq.edu.au/archives/internet.html>

The University of Queensland archives. This page has links to numerous other internet-based resources.

<http://rhsq.dynamics.net/>

The website for the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. The "Tour through Time" page is a good starting point for students as it outlines the major events in Queensland colonial history.

## **Other**

### **Links to St Helena Island**

<http://www.queensland-holidays.com.au/pfm/sites/0002522/main.htm>

[http://www.sthelenaisland.com.au/StH\\_History.htm](http://www.sthelenaisland.com.au/StH_History.htm)

<http://www.env.qld.gov.au/cgi-bin/w3-mysql/environment/culture/tourism/mssqlwelcome.html?page=shi.html>

### **Links to the life of Dame Mary Gilmore**

<http://dargo.vicnet.net.au/ozlit/writers.cfm?id=314>

A brief biography of Dame Mary Gilmore. Students should be able to glean the important information from it.

[www.middlemiss.org/lit/authors/gilmorem/gilmorem.html](http://www.middlemiss.org/lit/authors/gilmorem/gilmorem.html)

A briefer biography of Mary Gilmore than the one above but this site contains a photograph and links to some of her poetry.

[http://members.ozemail.com.au/~enigman/australia/ten\\_dol.html#10](http://members.ozemail.com.au/~enigman/australia/ten_dol.html#10)

Information about the Australian \$10 note, including a good graphic of both sides of the note and brief biographies of A. B. Paterson and Mary Gilmore.

[http://www.rba.gov.au/CurrencyNotes/people\\_on\\_notes.html](http://www.rba.gov.au/CurrencyNotes/people_on_notes.html)

Further information about the \$10 note from the Reserve Bank of Australia.



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### Further Program Suggestions

- *The 1891 Shearers Strike* could easily be extended to an overnight visit, providing two days of activities. Students can stay in the 'Country Hall' dormitory or the 'Original Shearers' Quarters'. Making the evening meal with the 'open' cookhouse facilities greatly adds to students' experiences of life on a sheep station. An overnight visit also provides opportunities for campfire yarning in the evening.

The tour and activities suggested in the module could be extended, allowing students more time to engage in their research. Additionally, time could be allowed during the afternoon of Day 1 for students to develop skits, stories and songs for presentation during the 'campfire yarning' session. Day 2 activities could be developed around the suggested 'Post-visit Activities'. That is, students could engage in artistic activities that allow them to capture the sensory experiences of the Jondaryan Woolshed. Opportunities for quiet reflection can be built in, encouraging students to try their hand at a bush poem/song, a pencil sketch of one of the buildings (using Resource 3b as a model) or an abstract picture using colourful Craypas artists crayons. Students can collect wildflowers, leaves, and so on for other artistic endeavours such as collage or crayon rubbings.

An overnight stay could also allow time for students to have a hands-on session at the old school house, where they can experience schooling from the past.

Teachers should talk with the guides about the possibilities for activities during a longer visit as each volunteer brings their own unique skills to their work at the Jondaryan Woolshed.

- The class could revisit the Woolshed during the Heritage Festival at the end of August (see the Jondaryan website for details). As the photos on the website suggest, the woolshed literally comes alive with people and activities during this week long festival. Students would benefit from visiting a site that they are familiar with but which provides quite different learning activities to their first visit.
- To extend their learning experiences during their visit, students could be encouraged to dress in period costume. Suggestions for what to wear are outlined on the 'Education' pages of the Jondaryan website.



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## Resource 1

The following is an excerpt from *Part of the Glory*, written by Julian Stuart. Julian Stuart (born John Alexander Salmon Stuart, 1866) was the youngest of the Queensland Shearers Union leaders arrested for their involvement in the 1891 Shearers Strike. Julian Stuart was 24 years old when he was arrested and spent three years on St. Helena Island as a prisoner doing “hard labour”. He was charged with “conspiracy”.

Before his work as a shearer and his involvement in the union, Julian Stuart was a clerk and schoolteacher with aspirations of being a poet. In his later years, he continued with his writing. One of his well-known literary pieces, *Part of the Glory*, is a collection of some of his writings between 1886 and 1929, including reminiscences of the 1891 strike. This particular excerpt is about the role of the Jondaryan Woolshed in the union activities in 1890 in the Darling Downs area.

### *Jondaryan*

*Jondaryan is a name that always causes me to think mixed thoughts when I see it in print. If I remember correctly, it was in the year the “Worker” started that we had some trouble there, which was diverting while it lasted.*

*...Jondaryan on the Darling Downs near Dalby, was an early shed and we tried to get Q.S.U. rates but could not and though the manager tried to play off one union against the other, he did not succeed, and got a lot of riffraff from Brisbane, who “tommy-hawked” the wool off somehow; but the local teamsters refused to haul it to the railway. After a long delay the station teams got it there. When it arrived in Brisbane the city carters refused to handle it. When at last it reached the wharf...within thirty feet of the hold of the British India boat, ready to sail to catch the opening sales, the waterside workers, backed by the A.L.F., said it would stay there till the Day of Judgment and a day or two after, if the owners of Jondaryan did not give an undertaking to grant Queensland Shearers’ Union rates and conditions “henceforth and for evermore”.*

(Excerpt from Stuart, J. (1967) *Part of the Glory*. Australasian Book Society: Sydney, pp.98 – 99.)

**Q.S.U.** = Queensland Shearers Union

**A.L.F.** = Australian Labour Federation

The “Worker” was the monthly newspaper of the ALF, first published in March, 1890. It was edited by William Lane.



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## Resource 2: Shed Rules

1. Any shearer being discharged during shearing (except in case of sickness) shall be charged one pound sterling per week for cook and mess account, which money shall be placed to credit of general mess account.
2. Any man getting drunk or being absent from the shed (except in case of sickness) without leave from the overseer to be subject to dismissal.
3. No shearer shall be allowed to kick, or otherwise injure or illuse any sheep, and in case he seriously injure or illuse any sheep, or cut the teat off any ewe or pizzle off any wether or ram, he shall forfeit or pay unto the said sheepowner the mess rate for such sheep so injured, and if such sheep be fit for food to go to the shearers' mess account, the sheepowner having the right to refuse the fine and keep the sheep.
4. All ewes to be carried, and all wethers and rams to be kept on their feet from the catching pen to the shearing floor.
5. No smoking allowed except at stated intervals.
6. No swearing or profane language or singing allowed during working hours.
7. Working hours to be mutually agreed on.
8. Belly wool to be taken off first and placed aside, and in opening fleece at the neck, shears to be kept under the wool and close to the skin, so as to avoid twice cutting, and shearers shall not be allowed to run the shears through the fleece so as to break it down the centre or back, and shall not stand on the fleece.
9. All rams to be paid for as 2 to 1 ("lambs under 8 months to be counted 1 for 1.") This to be submitted to the Blackall meeting for confirmation the shearers delegates agreeing.
10. Shearers cutting or wounding sheep must put on the dressing provided for the purpose at once and in a proper manner.
11. Any shearer not shearing to the satisfaction of the owner may be discharged.
12. No barrowing allowed in the shed.
13. No persons other than those employed in the shed to be allowed in the shed without the special permission of the overseer.
14. Tallies must be posted up in the shed every morning for the day preceeding, when objection must be made, as none will be recognised thereafter.
15. Employers shall select their own shearers.
16. No sheep to be stopped for bad shearing other than under Rule 3.

Extract from a photographic image of *Darling Downs Gazette*, 14 June 1890, as reproduced in Harris, J. (1970) *The Bitter Fight*, University of Queensland Press, p.73.



JONDARYAN WOOLSHED

## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Resource 3: The Great Strikes

Early Australian industry centred on the mining, pastoral and shipping industries. In Queensland, in particular, as well as these three industries, the sugar industry was also a major industry. The 1880s saw a growth of these industries. This growth increased the number of workers in the industry (mainly unskilled labourers) as well as the profits for many of the owners. It is not surprising then that the 1890s were marked by industrial disputes in three of these industries (with a Sugar Strike taking place in 1911).

Before 1886, unions had no legal status in Queensland, although they did exist. Even when they did gain legal status, they were commonly small groups of workers, the unions being specific to each trade. As a result, they had limited power in trying to change their working conditions. However, in 1889, a number of unions affiliated with the Australian Labour Federation (ALF). The ALF not only combined the industrial strength of the separate unions but was also a political organisation with its own newspaper, *The Worker*.

The 1890s were important years for the union movement as its newfound legal status and newfound strength were tested throughout Australia in various industrial disputes. Three great strikes were of particular importance to Queensland – The Maritime Strike of 1890 and the Pastoral Strikes (Shearers' Strikes) of 1891 and 1894.

#### The Maritime Strike of 1890

The Maritime Strike took place in August, not long after the ALF's victory over the Jondaryan dispute. The strike originated in the southern colony of Victoria and quickly spread to include the colonies of New South Wales and Queensland, involving an estimated 50,000 workers nationally. Ports across Australia and New Zealand were affected. The Australian colonies had not experienced a dispute of this scale and severity before. The Maritime Strike contributed to the economic depression of the 1890s – the greatest since colonial settlement.

The cause of the strike is debated and, indeed, was debated even at the time. Some say the workers provoked it over a longstanding pay claim, others say the employers provoked it by refusing to negotiate with maritime officers until their association (the Marine Officers' Association, which had recently strengthened itself by affiliating with the Melbourne Trades Hall) withdrew from their affiliation with the Trades Hall. What is clear, however, is that the issues surrounding the strike were contested not only between the employers and the employees but also between the members of each group.

By October, the unions were struggling to maintain the strike. As with the Pastoral Strikes, the strike became ineffective due to the availability of non-union workers, the difficulties in maintaining a strike wage for thousands of striking workers, and the use of police and special constables to arrest unionists. In late October, Queensland was the first colony to call off the strike.

### **The 1891 Shearers' Strike**

The 1891 Shearers' Strike involved around 8000 striking workers and was largely limited to Queensland, with a part of New South Wales also being affected. The central issue in the 1891 strike was the pastoralists' belief in their right to employ or not employ any worker, whether or not they were part of a union, and the Queensland Shearers' Union's belief that a 'closed shop' was the best way to ensure good working conditions.

A feature of this strike was the large strike camps around Queensland. In these camps, striking workers gathered not only to be housed and fed by the union but also to discuss strategies and to develop solidarity. The pastoralists' and government's response was to send large numbers of police, soldiers and special constables to the strike areas, where they established military camps. Before the strike was over, numerous unionists had been arrested, tried and punished for a number of offences, many of which were determined according to the Act of 1825 – an act that had already been repealed in Britain and would be repealed in Queensland in 1899.

The strike lasted six months, ending in June when the unions could no longer afford to support the union camps and the availability of 'free' labour made the strike ineffective.

### **The 1894 Shearers' Strike**

As with the other pastoral disputes (such as the Jondaryan dispute and the 1891 strike), the 1894 strike was largely about control – the control of the pastoralists over their woolsheds and the control of the labourers over working conditions and wages. However, unlike the other disputes where growth in the pastoral industries in the 1880s had led to financial success for the employers, in 1894, the economic depression and drought of 1893 were driving pastoralists to cut costs. Amongst other things, pastoralists wanted to pay shearers even lower wages than in previous years and wanted shearers to shear wet sheep, which was against the union rules due to the damage that it was believed to have caused to the workers. The 1894 strike was also more widespread than the 1891 strike. In 1891 the industrial dispute was essentially a Queensland dispute while in '94, the strike spread to the other colonies.

Again, heated disagreements between unionists and employers, at times leading to violence by both unionists and police, marked the strike. However, neither the large strike camps nor the military camps were present. Once again, though, it was the availability of non-union labour that defeated the unionists in the 1894 Shearers' Strike.

While all three strikes were essentially a failure for the unions, they did encourage Australian society to consider how the disruptions that the strikes brought to daily life could be avoided in the future. This contributed to the development of the modern Australian industrial arbitration system.



JONDARYAN WOOLSHED

## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Resource 4: The 1891 Shearers Strike

*"The sheds 'll be shore union or they won't be shore at all"*

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a number of great industrial struggles in the Australian colonies. One of the most economically, politically and culturally significant events was the Queensland Shearers Strike of 1891. The strike was held from January to June and involved around 8000 striking workers throughout Queensland. The strike was a failure and many men spent time in jail for their involvement in it.

As with the Jondaryan dispute, the 1891 strike centred around a clash between the 'freedom of contract' principle and the 'closed shop' principle. The Queensland Shearers' Union's (QSU) and Australian Labour Federation's (ALF) success with the Jondaryan dispute led them to believe that they had considerable industrial strength to push the 'closed shop' principle throughout Queensland. However, pastoralists Queensland-wide had learnt a number of lessons from the Jondaryan dispute. They had learnt that they lost too much when they entered into negotiations with the unions and were determined to stand their ground in future disputes. They also better appreciated the strength of unions and, in response, formed their own employers' union. In December 1890, the United Pastoralists Association was formed. As a result, the striking shearers faced much stronger, more determined employers in the 1891 strike.

The 1891 strike was marked by heated disagreements between the strikers and the station managers and owners, at times resulting in violence. Many unionists claimed that excessive force was used by police and soldiers in controlling the strikers. On the other hand, unionists were accused (often falsely) of a number of offences ranging from verbal intimidation and physical assault of 'free' labourers to the arson of station buildings, including the woolsheds.

Adding to the sense of opposition between the labourers and the owners/managers was the establishment of strike camps by the unionists and the despatch of 'peace-keeping forces' by the government, under pressure from the pastoralists. Union camps were established throughout Queensland and were a means of supporting the striking workers. The union housed workers in tents and provided them with rations. Union camps were also seen as a good way to develop solidarity amongst the workers and to provide them with a daily routine and discipline. However, the military style 'drilling' the workers practised in order to maintain discipline was seen as a threat to the pastoralists and to the government. Police and soldiers were sent to strike sights and military camps were established. Around 1100 ordinary workers were also sworn in as 'special constables'.

Jondaryan Station and other Darling Downs stations were not affected by the 1891 strike to the same degree as Western stations for two reasons. First, 'free' labour was more readily available for Downs stations than the stations further out due to government immigration programs that successfully recruited workers from the south and 'coloured' labour. Second, a number of Darling Downs shearers (many of whom owned small parcels of land, had families and had debts to pay off) had taken a stand at Jondaryan the year before and wanted to avoid the trauma of striking again.

Eventually, the costs of supporting striking workers in camps, the determination of the pastoralists (strengthened by the support of the government), the availability of 'free' labourers and continued arrests of striking workers wore down the union and the strike was called off on 10 June.

While many men were arrested throughout the strike, it is the arrests and conspiracy trials of the strike leaders that are best remembered. Twelve of the fourteen strike leaders were sentenced to three years' 'hard labour' on St Helena Island. They were arrested on the grounds of conspiracy under the Act of 1825. Even though this act had been repealed in Britain well before 1891, it was still used in Queensland. The act classified some union activities as criminal; even peaceful picketing could be interpreted to be illegal. The Act of 1825 was repealed in Queensland in 1899 by which time many men had served prison sentences for striking for fairer wages and better working conditions. At the same time, pastoralists were working toward better business success for themselves as they struggled with difficult environmental and economic conditions. However, the 1891 Shearers' Strike should not be viewed as a clash between only two sides. A wide range of perspectives, beliefs and values were brought to the dispute with unionists and pastoralists alike disagreeing with each other.



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## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Resource 5: Freedom of Contract

As part of investigating the Jondaryan dispute and the 1891 Shearers' Strike, it is important to understand two important issues – *Freedom of Contract* and *Closed Shop*.

#### Freedom of Contract

Throughout the various pastoral industrial disputes of the late 1800s, the pastoralists commonly claimed that they had a right to 'freedom of contract'. That is, they believed that they had a right to employ whomever they wished in the shearing sheds – union or non-union labour.

The 'freedom of contract' argument also included the principle that working conditions could be agreed upon by the pastoralists and the workers, rather than following union rules. Unfortunately, pastoralists often used their positions of power to abuse this principle. Often, however, station managers and owners did agree to follow union rules but were determined that they did not have to employ union labour only. Sometimes they even went as far as to follow union rules but to refuse to employ any workers who were members of a union. Therefore, the disputes over 'freedom of contract' were often disputes about control. That is, about the pastoralists wanting to retain control over their own sheds.

#### Closed Shop

The notion of 'freedom of contract' was in direct opposition to the Queensland Shearers' Union's (QSU) demand for a 'closed shop'. The QSU followed the principle that only union labour should be employed. Interestingly, the QSU demanded that shearing should be done by union labour only, following union rules and conditions while the Amalgamated Shearers' Union (ASU) only insisted that shearing be done according to their rules without demanding the 'union only' rule.

One of the main concerns of those unions that argued for a 'closed shop' was that employing non-union members would compromise working conditions. A particular issue at the time was the employment of 'coloured' labour, which included Chinese, Kanak and Aboriginal workers. These workers were commonly paid much less than 'white' workers. Aboriginal workers, for example, were often only paid in rations rather than money. It was feared that the use of these 'cheap' workers would reduce the already poor wages of the union workers.



JONDARYAN WOOLSHED

## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Resource 6: The Jondaryan Dispute

*There are anxious watching faces  
'mongst the workers of the South.  
There's hope in many bosoms,  
There's a prayer in many a mouth.  
We are waiting for the issues as the  
moments bring them forth,  
And we send a hearty greeting to our  
Brothers in the North.*

In May 1890, E.J. Brady wrote this poem to show support for the striking workers at Jondaryan Station. It was published in *The Worker*, the newspaper for the Australian Labour Federation (ALF), which was formed in 1889. However, this poem expresses more than support for the workers. It reflects the attitude of many unionists that the dispute at Jondaryan Station was an important test for the newly founded ALF and for unions in general.

In January 1890, the Queensland Shearers' Union (QSU) presented new demands for a minimum wage and a "closed shop" to the Pastoral Employers' Association (an organisation representing the interests of Queensland pastoralists). The QSU's demands for improved working conditions and wages were similar to those of the Amalgamated Shearers' Union (ASU) but differed on the point of "closed shop". As the ASU's working rules did not demand that the woolsheds employ only union workers, the pastoralists preferred to use the ASU's rules rather than the QSU's ones.

In 1890, William Kent and Edward Weinholt were the co-owners of Jondaryan Station and Charles Williams was the manager. The station's owners and management agreed to pay union rates but argued that they had a right to "freedom of contract" and could employ non-union shearers if they wanted to. As the QSU had affiliated with the ALF, a much bigger union organisation that included many other workers' unions, such as those of wharf workers, they felt that they had considerable strength and challenged the Darling Downs squatters' belief that they had a right to employ non-union labour.

Due to union rules, a worker that was a part of the union could not work in a shed that employed non-union workers. As they felt that their demands were not being met the QSU banned shearing at the Jondaryan Woolshed. However, the management at Jondaryan successfully managed to have the sheep shorn by non-union workers, many of whom came up from Brisbane, as had happened in the past. This time it was different though because the QSU was a part of the ALF and the Jondaryan dispute continued, even though the sheep had been shorn.

As the sheep were shorn by non-union labour, the local teamsters, whose union was also a part of the ALF, refused to haul the wool to the railway line. As Jondaryan Station had a considerable amount of permanent employees, the station teams eventually managed to get the wool to the rail line. In Brisbane, the Brisbane city carters' union also refused to handle the 'black' wool. Again, non-union labour was employed to get the wool from the rail yards to the wharves, for shipping to England. However, at the wharves, the waterside workers (whose union was also affiliated with the ALF) said:

*...it would stay there till the Day of Judgment and a day or two after, if the owners of Jondaryan did not give an undertaking to grant Queensland Shearers' Union rates and conditions "henceforth and for evermore".*

(Julian Stuart (1967) *Part of the Glory*, Australasian Book Society: Sydney, pp. 99.)

The dispute over working conditions at Jondaryan Station had a widespread effect and threatened to become even more complicated. In May, the squatters, shearers and shippers held a conference in an attempt to resolve the dispute. Eventually the Darling Downs pastoralists agreed to employ union labour only.

Feeling good after their perceived victory, the ALF even decided to pay a lump sum to the British India shipping company as compensation for its losses during the dispute.

The Jondaryan Dispute was a significant episode in not only Queensland history but also Australian history. It led the way to the Great Maritime Strike of 1890 and the Shearers' Strike of 1891. It also taught the unionists and the pastoralists a number of lessons that eventually contributed to today's industrial arbitration system.



JONDARYAN WOOLSHED

## The 1891 Shearers' Strike

### Resource 7: The Role of Government

During the great industrial disputes of the late 1800s, governments were often criticised for the support they gave to employers over employees. Government support for the employers' positions in the disputes ranged from lack of appropriate intervention, such as not encouraging conferences to be held between employers and unions, to direct inappropriate intervention, such as banning government employees from joining a union, sending in troops to protect 'free' labourers and making strategic arrests of unionists. The government support for employers is largely a result of the fact that, in colonial Australia, many of the members of the colonial parliaments were employers themselves in the various industries. This was particularly true in the 1891 Shearers' Strike where the degree of inappropriate government intervention was unprecedented.

Governments, however, also played an important role in improving situations for unions. For example, before 1885 the unions that did exist in Queensland had no legal status. Unions became legal organisations through the 1885 creation of the Trades and Labour Council and the passing of the Trade Union Act in 1886. Similarly, after the Great Strikes, colonial governments (and the new post-1901 federation federal government) sought ways to avoid such extensive industrial disputes and to remove governments from the process. The various laws and statutory bodies that were eventually put into place led to the distinctive Australian conciliation and arbitration system.

At times, though, laws can be used inappropriately by governments. During the 1891 Shearers' Strike, many men were arrested and tried under an act that originated in Britain but was no longer in use there. The 1825 Act was created by the British government in response to the violent industrial stoppages being experienced in England. As the Australian colonies were under English law, the 1825 Act was adopted in New South Wales in 1828 and taken up into Queensland law when Queensland separated from New South Wales in 1859. The 1825 Act defined some union activities as criminal acts. Broadly, attempts to alter working conditions were seen as illegal. Therefore, the act could be interpreted in such a way that even peaceful picketing was seen to be unlawful. It was this act that was used against the 1891 strike committee, allowing the government to arrest, send to trial and punish with three years imprisonment on St Helena Island, 12 of the 14 leaders. The act was repealed in Queensland in 1899.