



Three Murderers

On 12 May 1899, the bodies of three executed prisoners were exhumed from the Dunedin Prison yard where the new Courthouse was about to be built, and transferred to an unmarked grave at the Northern Cemetery. The site of the grave is unknown.

The case of William Jarvey - 1865

Captain **William Jarvey**, the skipper of the *Titania*, which ran between Dunedin and Invercargill, was said to be abusive to his suffering wife Catherine. Jarvey had often been seen with a younger woman at the Dunedin port, and when Jarvey stayed away from home two or three days a week, Catherine accused him of adultery.

A few days later, Jarvey bought a sublimate mixed with strychnine from Luke and Co. in Princes Street, claiming he wanted to rid his ship of rats. That night Catherine was vomiting but recovered, although complaining of a bad taste in her mouth. Four days later, Jarvey returned to the chemist and obtained pure strychnine to finish the rats off. At night he gave Catherine some 'quinine' to help her recovery. Later, Jarvey got the doctor, saying that his wife had taken a very bad fit, but the doctor arrived to find her already dead.

After three months, Jarvey's daughter Elizabeth went to the police, and the body was exhumed for forensic examination. The tests, which were carried out in Melbourne, showed traces of rat poison, and Jarvey was eventually found guilty of murder and was hanged on 24 October 1865.



Jarvey's death-mask

The case of John Jones - 1866

Richard Atkinson, a farmer and gardener at Waipori, was hanging up meat when he was stabbed in the abdomen for no apparent reason. The attacker was twenty-five year old **John Jones**, alias John Poole, alias John King. Richard's daughter was also attacked.

Richard died seven days later on 30 December 1865. Part of the defence was that he died as a result of his medical treatment. The jury took this into account when finding Jones guilty, and recommended mercy, but he was hanged on 6 April 1866.

The case of Ah Lee - 1880

On 4 August 1880, **Ah Lee**, a Chinese gold miner, was accused of the murder of a harmless and kindhearted woman called Mary Young. In a crime which became known as the Kyeburn murder, he was said to have bashed her with thirty- to fifty-pound rocks, and was arrested, along with Mary Young's gardener.

The gardener, Lee Guy, was set free, but Ah Lee was hanged on 6 November 1880, at the age of twenty-four, protesting his innocence.

Until this day, some uncertainty remains as to whether Ah Lee was the man who committed this crime. A police search of all the Chinese huts in the district had brought to light a bloodsoaked pair of trousers with a stone in one of its pockets in the hut of Ah Lee, but he had killed a sheep the day before, perhaps explaining the blood.

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Tragedy Trail



The Northern Cemetery abounds in tragic tales

Left: A headstone depicts the sunken **Taloroa**

Below: **William Larnach's** family tomb

