

## **‘Through George’s Eyes’**

### ***Examining Historical Sources***

In November 1892, a newspaper article titled ‘Backward Glances’ was published in the Launceston Examiner. This article was written by George Pullen about his memories of the Cascades Female Factory from the time he spent there as a young child. This article is one source of information used by Historians today to discover what life was like at the Factory.

The following is an extract from this newspaper article, in which George Pullen describes the conditions of the Crime Yard at the Cascades Female Factory.

*In describing the penal character of the institution, it may be affirmed that one of the most severe modes of punishment although comparatively short in duration was confinement in the cells. These were situated on the ground floor of an isolated building, and hemmed in by stone walls in which no opening existed through which a single ray of light could penetrate. A massive iron-bound door in the stone wall opened into a long narrow corridor, on one side of which were eight cells... about six feet by four. Each cell had its own door which was bolted and locked on the outside. A similar door, corridor, and cells adjoined, each divided from the other by a thick stone wall, thus providing accommodation for sixteen inmates. Cold, damp, dark as Egyptian night, and silent as a vault, the entombed wretch, after being supplied with her allowance of a pound of bread and small (flagon) of water, was left to her own reflections and introspection. For one half-hour out of the twenty-four, the occupant was allowed to walk in a solitary yard, taking nearly the whole of the short respite to accustom her eyes to the blinding sunlight before she was again shut up in her dungeon. The ordinary term of sentence was one week, but in a great number of instances the penalty imposed was fourteen days.*

1. This article is written using language which was common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, but may not be as commonly used today. To begin your analysis, underline any words or phrases in the extract which are unfamiliar and then use a dictionary or internet research to discover their meanings. Write the words and definitions below.

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2. The Cascades Female Factory closed in 1877. This newspaper article was published in November 1892. Is the 'Backward Glances' article a primary or secondary source? Give reasons for your answer.

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3. What do you think the purpose of this article was? (e.g. to inform, persuade, entertain) Give reasons for your answer.

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4. Do you think that George Pullen was biased? Why or why not? Use examples from the text to support your argument.

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5. What other types of secondary and primary sources could you use to discover how accurate the information in this article is?

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