

Ned kelly-hero or villian

People



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ned Kelly is an iconic Australian legend who is known as one of the most famous outlaws in Australia. Some know of him as a villain, others know him as a hero. But what was he really? The 2003 film "Ned Kelly" featuring Heath Ledger as Ned, portrays the famous outlaw as a tragic hero rather than a murderer and a thief. By researching Ned's events, accomplishments and endeavours, it tells us that Ned was in fact a villain rather than a hero. The following essay will highlight why it is that Ned Kelly is seen as both a villain and a hero.

In 1854 Edward Kelly was born in Victoria to Irish parents, John (Red) Kelly and Ellen Quinn. He was the eldest of eight children and was brought up on rural property. At the age of 12 John Kelly died and Ned had to take responsibility for the man of the house. Having a large family with no financial income was tough for the Kelly family. Faced with poverty, many poor families just like the Kelly's were forced to steal horse and cattle from wealthy residents. Being Irish and having a father who was an ex-convict, the Kelly's were seen as lower class folk and so work was hard to obtain.

At just age 16, Ned was convicted of stealing cattle and horses and was sent to jail for three years. He was released in 1874. During this time his mother had re-married to a man named George King who Ned began to work with. However this "work" consisted of stealing horses. Ned's way of living as a criminal was not because he necessarily wanted to, it was simply the only way he could provide for his family. This is the reason Kelly supporters see Ned as a hero as he stood up for his family and did all he could to keep them alive and safe. As Ned grew up he began to take on the role as an Australian criminal.

At the age of 24 his actions towards the police, his family and the community allowed everyone to see that he was becoming a dangerous person. It was this point in time that Ned was accused of shooting a police officer in the wrist and his mother was sent to jail for 3 years. The accusations against Ned were false and it turned out he was never actually at the scene of the crime. However this did not stop Ned from feeling hatred towards the police, and naturally he wanted to rebel and stand up to them. He and his brother Dan escaped to the bush as they knew they were no longer welcome in their town.

They were later joined by good friends, Joe Byrne and Steve Hart. The four were camping when they came across a police camp out at Stringy Bark Creek. It was here that Ned committed his first murder. From then on, Ned and his three friends were known as outlaws and had an eight thousand pound reward right on their heads. Being an outlaw meant that anyone was allowed to kill them or bring them in and in reward gain thousands of pounds. Ned and his gang however did have supporters. These supporters were mainly lower class folk who had also been treated badly by the police and could relate to Ned when it came to poverty.

It was through these supporters that the Kelly gang remained out of reach from the police for almost two years. It was during these years that the gang robbed two banks and burnt a lot of the mortgages that the poor owed. It was actions like these that made some people see Ned as a hero. As Ned became known to the majority of Australia his actions became larger and more treacherous. In 1880 Ned launched a plan that would cause terror

among the community at Glenrowan. At a local hotel the gang took in 60 hostages and had prepared for a special train to run off the tracks.

The police became aware of the plan and the gang was surrounded. The hostages escaped and the building began to burn. Steve Hart, Joe Byrne and Dan Kelly all died in the burning building. Ned escaped but was shot 28 times until he surrendered. He was hung on the 11th of November 1880. Despite attempts to label Ned Kelly as a tragic hero, he was in reality a murderer and a thief who caused harm and fear to many Australians. He is still called a legend, but not because he was a hero, it is because he did what no other Australian outlaw did.