

THE BIRTH OF WHITE AUSTRALIA



THE BATTLE OF CAMBING #LMA 1860

The Birth of White Australia

The Battle of Lambing Flat

Frank Clune

The Lambing Flat rebellion of 1861 was one of the major stepping stones to the establishing of the White Australia Policy.

The White miners on the goldfields were being swamped by droves of Chinese, who were entering the Australian colonies in their thousands. Like many White immigrant miners, the Chinese were attracted by the lure of the goldfields, and therefore it was expected that this Chinese flood would continue. The White population were facing the possibility that Australia would be overrun by these people by the sheer weight of their numbers. The miners did not want large numbers of Chinese to be allowed into the country.

The White miners were unimpressed by the Chinese miners' poor standards of hygiene, their pagan ways, and opium smoking. They were also angered by the wasteful use of water (which was in short supply) by the Chinese. Also, as the Chinese had entered the goldfields in such large numbers, it was seen that these alien hordes were taking over the gold producing areas that otherwise would have been available to the existing mining population. This was damaging the economic prospects of the White miners. However, it was the racial and cultural issues that were most important. At Lambing Flat, matters came to a head; racial tensions heightened; and the resultant clashes were inevitable.

This historical dramatisation of the events at Lambing Flat has been extracted from *Wild Colonial Boys*, written by Frank Clune, with P.R. Stephensen. The original manuscript was completed in 1943, following twenty years of extensive research; however — due to wartime shortages of paper — it was not published until 1948.

Chapter 1

Eureka talk at Lambing Flat

The miners on the Burrangong gold diggings are in a fever of excitement and rage. They are as enraged as a nest of ants after a mischievous boy has stirred it suddenly with a stick. The miners hurry hither and thither, and gather in little groups of angry discussion, neglecting their gold holes for the time being. Something is radically wrong. Insurrection is in the air. The word "Eureka" is frequently heard. "I tell you," says an elderly miner, "it's only by direct action that you'll make the government sit up and take notice. That's what we did at Eureka in '54. Well I remember it, and hundreds of others on this field remember too. The diggers of Ballarat stood up and fought for their miners' rights. And we got them, too - a pound a year instead of thirty bob a month. But there had to be bloodshed before we got our rights. Great work it was. Two hundred diggers in the stockade, led by Peter Lalor, Fred Vern, Alf Black, Raffaello Carboni, J.B. Humffray, declaring the Republic of the Flag of Stars, with only a few old muskets and pikes and pickhandles for weapons! There were three hundred military and police on the other side, with bayonets and cannons and all. We fought a hopeless fight, but we fought it well. Twenty-two of our men were killed in the Battle of the Eureka Stockade, hut we made the government take notice of our grievance! We lost the battle, but we won what we fought for. Something similar will have to be done right here and now at Lambing Flat...."

The Chinese question

The grievance which fermented the miners of Burrangong to the verge of revolt in 1861 was caused by an influx of thousands of Chinese coolies to the new diggings, where they pegged claims and worked side by side with the whites. For several years previously there had been a phenomenal immigration of Chinese to the Australian gold colonies. About forty thousand were in Victoria and about fifteen thousand in New South Wales. They were a new and very disturbing feature of Australian life, a prominent minority on all the diggings, working in gangs of a hundred and upwards in a community or "tong" system, under foremen of their own race. At first they were content to work claims or parts of a field abandoned by white miners, sluicing dirt which had already been washed, and gleaning a second harvest. Later they pegged or bought new claims and by their mass-mining methods won fabulous fortunes. On the highways of the two colonies gangs of Chinese were to be seen jogging along in single file, clad in blue trousers and jackets. Wearing wide-brimmed high-pointed straw hats and wadded slippers, with their "pig-tails" hanging down their backs, they carried their belongings on a pole or yoke balanced across their shoulders. Jog, jog, jog, ching-chong-chinamen - how the diggers hated them!

They lived in a special Chinese quarter on the diggings, built temples and installed images of the Sacred Dragon - "joss-houses" with "idols" as the whites called them. They played fan-tan all through the night, smoked

opium and practised strange vices. Their living habits were filthy: they fouled the earth and the water; they were heathens and aliens; they couldn't speak English; and - worst of all - they were getting plenty of gold and sending it all back to China.

Birth of White Australia Policy

Ill-feeling against the yellow trespassers had been steadily on the increase for five years throughout the gold-fields of the two colonies. On 4 July 1857, at the Buckland River diggings, sixty miles from Beechworth, in Victoria, seven hundred white miners attacked two thousand Chinese, burned their temple, looted and burned their camps. The Chinese fled into the bush in panic. The white miners on 5 July formed an Anti-Chinese League and invited the co-operation of mining communities everywhere in expelling the "Chows" from Australia. Police reinforcements were hurried to the Buckland River and thirteen alleged rioters were arrested, but juries refused to convict them. From this incident the White Australia policy took its origin.

Chapter Two

The first riot, December 1860

Ill-feeling against the Chinese mounted steadily as thousands more arrived in Australia each year, despite government attempts to curb the immigration by poll taxes and landing taxes. In faraway Shanghai, Canton and Hongkong, the tongs recruited gangs, paid their expenses to Australia - and took the profits. Persecuted in Victoria, the Celestials in hordes crossed the Murray northwards in 1860 and descended like locusts on the Burrangong fields. Tension increased and a racial clash was inevitable.

At Lambing Flat, in December 1860, race prejudice moved to a climax. The parsimonious government of New South Wales had not provided sufficient police protection on the diggings. In consequence, the miners had two great grievances. One was the hordes of hocusers, who robbed and cheated them of their gold dust. The other was the influx of Chinese, who had heathen habits. To guard against these twin evils, the European miners formed a Vigilance Committee - and took the law into their own hands.

On Saturday and Sunday, 8 and 9 December, a crowd of seven hundred diggers, headed by a brass band, paraded through the diggings and burned down six grog shops which were known as special resorts of thieves. They then proceeded to Stoney Creek and surrounded Harris's sparring saloon, headquarters of the hocusers. Within five minutes the building was pulled down and set on fire, while a handful of police, impotent to prevent the arson, took Harris under their protection to save him from having his ears cropped. The diggers then raided Clay's dancing saloon at Spring Creek and burned it to the ground. Clay escaped with his ears by mounting a racehorse and galloping away.

The diggers' dander was now up and they made a mass attack on the Chinese quarter. Some of the Celestials showed fight, but the majority preferred flight. The fracas developed into a serious riot, as the smoke of burning Chinatown rose in the air like acrid incense to the god of gold. Two Chinese were killed and ten seriously wounded in the affray.

So ended the first Lambing Flat riot. The police were powerless to give protection to the yellow aliens, and mob rule triumphed over law and order. The government had provided only three constables to assist the Commissioner in preserving the peace. Even after the serious affray of 8 and 9 December, the officials of Sydney, complacently swathed in red tape, could not be moved to send sufficient police reinforcements to uphold the law's prestige. For what followed, the authorities were mainly to blame.

Zouch and Sanderson

So matters continued throughout the overheated months of December 1860 and January 1861. The temper of the diggers rose again to boil-over point as more and more Chinese kept on arriving and a new Chinatown arose like a phoenix from the ashes. This it was that led to the talk of another Eureka.

At the police station at Lambing Flat, on 25 January 1861, five men with serious faces sat in conference. They were Gold Commissioners Griffin, Cloete and Dixon, Captain Henry Zouch and Senior-Sergeant Sanderson. The three Commissioners were magistrates and so were responsible for the preservation of law and order on the goldfields, and the police force was under their local control. Unfortunately, this force now consisted of only a dozen men - six troopers, comprising the mounted patrol under the command of Captain Zouch, and four foot constables and two detectives, in the charge of Senior-Sergeant Sanderson.

In normal times this force might have been sufficient to uphold the law and collect taxes among the forty thousand or more miners on the field; but these were not normal times, and that is why the Commissioners and police chiefs were in anxious conference. Before them on the table was a printed notice, copies of which had been distributed widely throughout the diggings. It was a leaflet printed on the hand press of the *Burrangong Miner*, a newspaper which had followed the rush to Burrangong from Kiandra, where it had been published as the *Alpine Miner*. In large type the handbill announced:

Notice

A Public Meeting will be held on Sunday, the 27th instant, at 12 o'clock, in the vicinity of Golden Point, Lambing Flat, for the purpose of taking into consideration whether Burragong is a European goldfield or a Chinese territory. A numerous attendance is requested.

"There'll be trouble, all right!" said Captain Henry Zouch, thoughtfully pulling the ends of his long moustache. Aged forty-eight years, he had been thirty-four years in New South Wales since he had arrived as Ensign Zouch, a fourteen-year-old cadet, on board the convict transport *Midas* which had also brought Benjamin Hall, Senior, to the colony in 1827. Ensign Zouch was thereafter stationed at Newcastle for a while. He was a member of the military jury which tried the case of Hitchcock, Pool and the other mutineers of Castle Forbes at Sydney in 1833. Although juryman, he gave evidence as to Hitchcock's good character. In the following year Zouch was posted to the Mounted Police - a detachment of the military forces - stationed at Bathurst. He was promoted to lieutenant, but, when his regiment sailed for India, he resigned from the Army and became a pastoralist at Lake George, near Goulburn. In 1852 he was appointed Goldfields Commissioner at the Turon. Two years later, with the rank of captain, he was made superintendent of the Mounted Patrol in charge of all horse police in the western districts. In that capacity he arranged and supervised the armed escort of the heavy consignments of gold from the diggings to Sydney, and never an ounce had been lost, stolen, or strayed from the many millions of pounds' worth entrusted to the escort of Zouch's troopers.

"Yes, there'll be trouble, all right," agreed Senior-Sergeant Sanderson. "I think it advisable to send a messenger on horseback to Yass, with telegram to be sent to Inspector-General McLerie in Sydney asking for reinforcements."

"They could not reach here in less than a week," said Zouch.

"Then we'll have to use tact," said Sanderson. "We haven't enough force to handle this trouble."

Sanderson, thirty-two years of age, was a Cockney born and bred. In the year 1848 he joined the London police, then newly established by Sir Robert Peel and known as Peelers. He won rapid promotion and came to New South Wales in 1855 under three years' contract to the government. He was sent to the goldfields, liked the life and remained in the force after his three years had expired, being raised to the rank of senior-sergeant. A policeman to the core, by training and temperament, he was one of the most reliable officers in the force, steadfast in his duty, the scourge of criminals, as brave as a bulldog, and completely lacking in imagination, as a good policeman should be. There was need of men like Sanderson to steady the police force at a time when constables were hard to recruit and harder to keep - for who would be a policeman at 5s. 6d. a day when fortunes were being made by diggers from the golden gravel? Dozens of constables had deserted their posts during the decade of golden glory. The substitutes, hastily recruited to cope with the ever-expanding population and increase of crime, were seldom satisfactory. Many a constable was dismissed for drunkenness and other vices. A policeman's lot was "not a happy one" in New South Wales in the Furious Fifties and Sensational Sixties.

A drastic reorganization of the force was being planned, but had not yet been put into effect. The police in January 1861 were still organized, under Governor Bourke's Act of 1833, as a semi-military, semi-civil body. The foot police had evolved from the old-time watchmen of Sydney Town. Their uniform was a black coat, white trousers and bell-topper hat. The mounted patrol, established by Governor Brisbane in 1825, were volunteers recruited from the garrison regiments, and remained on the strength of their regiments, on loan, as it were, for work as road patrols and gold escorts. They wore the uniform of the 13th Light Dragoons, scarlet tunic, white breeches, basil leggings and black helmet, and were armed with musket, horse-pistol and sabre. For twenty-three years, from 1828 until 1851, the police force had been under the general control of Superintendent Morisset, responsible to the Colonial Secretary. Locally, however, the resident constables were under the orders and control of the magistrates, while the trooper police were under control of the Crown Lands Commissioners and Goldfields Commissioners, with ultimate responsibility to the military authorities. The multiple control was a source of much inefficiency, which was increased by the poor pay offered and the ever-present lure of the goldfields. These conditions put a premium on crime.

John McLerie, formerly an adjutant in the Mounted Patrol and governor of Darlinghurst gaol, was appointed Superintendent of Police in 1856. He tightened up discipline and endeavoured to increase the efficiency of the force, but was hampered by the archaic organization, a survival of the convict and pastoral periods, unsuited to the turbulent goldrush phase of development.

Gold Commissioner Griffin stroked his silky beard. "Yes," he said. "I agree with Sergeant Sanderson. We must use tact, until reinforcements arrive."

"Tact be blowed!" said Commissioner Dixon. "Tact is weakness. If we show weakness, there will be bloodshed. I am in favour of preventing the meeting from being held!"

"We can't do that!" said Commissioner Cloete. "I was in charge at Kiandra and my experience is that the miners are a respectable law-abiding lot if they're not unduly interfered with. We have no power to prevent the meeting from being held!"

"In that case," said Commissioner Dixon, "we can only do our best to prevent a big roll-up. I propose that we send constables around the diggings to remove and destroy these notices."

The others at the conference agreed that this would be a good idea.

Chapter Three

Second riot, January 1861

Sunday, 27 January, was a hot and cloudless day. From early morning groups of white miners, some carrying firearms, others with sticks and stones, marched grimly to the place of the meeting at Golden Point, Lambing Flat. In the Chinese quarter there was stillness and fear, with much muttering of prayers and curses. Incense was burned before the statue of the Dragon, the all-powerful protector of China.

Shortly before twelve o'clock, a crowd of about a thousand white men assembled at Golden Point, sweating in the blazing sunshine, murmuring like a hive of angry bees. Captain Zouch, appalled in all his glory of scarlet and white, was riding with his force of six dragoons hither and yon through the crowd, the sabres drawn and flashing in the sunlight. At a quarter to twelve Commissioner Griffin, in top-hat and frock-coat, and escorted by top-hatted Sergeant Sanderson and two or three top-hatted constables, mounted on a soap-box and raised his hand. Silence fell on the crowd.

"I will now read the proclamation of the Riot Act of 1714," said the Commissioner in a steady voice. In a deadly hush he read aloud:

"Our Sovereign Lady the Queen chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled immediately to disperse themselves, and peaceably to depart to their habitations or to their lawful business, upon the pains contained in the Act made in the first year of King George the First for preventing tumultuous and riotous assemblies. God save the Queen!"

The crowd buzzed excitedly. "The Riot Act!" "He's read the Riot Act!" "That means the troopers will fire!" "To hell with the Bobbie-Jacks, the dirty peelers!"

Charles Allen, a storekeeper, climbed on a box.

"Miners of Lambing Flat!" he said in a stentorian voice. "This meeting stands adjourned until three o'clock this afternoon. Our mates from Stoney Creek and Spring Creek have not yet arrived, but they are on their way here. The meeting will be held as advertised, but at three o'clock instead of twelve noon. God save the Queen!" he concluded. amid a tumult of loud cheering.

The crowd dispersed quietly.

About two o'clock the sound of military music was heard in the distance. A brass band came into sight, riding on a wagon drawn by two horses. Above the wagon were two poles, each bearing a large Union Jack. Behind the band was a procession of several hundred miners from Stoney Creek, some riding in carts and buggies, others on horseback, and a couple of hundred on foot, stepping out briskly to the martial music. The procession halted in the main streets of Burrangong town, then dispersed for a much-needed cooling drink. Soon afterwards another procession marched up the street - the miners from Spring Gully, led by a burly digger carrying a Union Jack, and another beating a drum made from a tin can.

As three o'clock neared, a crowd of diggers, estimated at six thousand, assembled at Golden Point, where on a knoll a platform of packing cases was erected, flanked by two Union Jacks. It was a brilliant scene, as the band played and the flags floated in a refreshing breeze. The red tunics of Captain Zouch and his troopers were out-redded by the scarlet Crimea shirts worn by most of the diggers. As Charles Allen raised his hand for silence, thousands of heeded faces were upturned in attention. Commissioner Griffin sat on his horse twenty paces from the platform. The editor of the *Burrangong Miner* sat on a box, with pencil poised for note-taking.

"Miners of Burrangong!" said Allen. "This meeting is convened for the purpose of taking into consideration whether Burrangong is a European goldfield or Chinese territory. As chairman of the meeting I want to say that the diggers on this field have always maintained good order and I am sure that today's proceedings will not be a libel on our past good conduct. There have been some assaults during the past month on gambling houses and shanties of Chinese ownership. This proves that the miners only wish to be rid of a nuisance to us all. If any breach of the peace should occur at this meeting, I shall be the first man to assist the Commissioner and his staff in quelling it..."

"Hear! Hear!" said Commissioner Griffin loudly. The crowd laughed and applauded.

"I now," proceeded the chairman, "call on Mr Stewart to address you."

A storm of cheering broke out as a powerfully built digger, with a spade beard, and wearing a red Crimea shirt and moleskin trousers, stepped on to the platform. Stewart, with two other diggers, named Cameron and Spicer, were the convenors of the meeting.

Stewart mopped his brow with a blue-and-white spotted handkerchief, then spoke in a thunderous voice.

"Mr Chairman, gentlemen, and fellow miners! If it had not been for treachery on the part of a person unknown to me, who pulled our notices down, we should have had six times the gathering here today." (A voice: "It was the Commissioner.")

"Commissioner or no Commissioner, it was an unconstitutional act, but it matters little now since we are sufficient in numbers to do what we want to do." (Vehement cheering.)

"Proud I am to see that you have so nobly responded to this roll-up. We have assembled to discuss a very important and serious question - shall the Burrangong goldfield become a Chinese territory or a European diggings?" (Cries of "European diggings!" and "Down with the pigtailed!")

"There are not less than fifteen or sixteen hundred Chinese at present on this field, and thousands more are already on the road hither." (Cries of "Stop them!" "Turn them back!")

"Now, gentlemen, shall the Chinese monopolize the goldfield that we have prospected and developed?" (Cries of "No! No! Down with them!")

"...and shall we, as men and British subjects, stand tamely by and allow the bread to be plucked from the mouths of ourselves, our wives and children by those pigtailed, moon-faced barbarians" (Uproar and shouts of "Drive them out!")

"...men who would not spend one farthing in the colony if they could avoid it? Men did I say? Oh, my prophetic soul, my comrades! Monkeys I ought to have said!"

Hurricane cheers burst forth as the orator, thoroughly warmed up by now, mopped his brow with his bandana, then continued with fervour: "The behaviour of these Chinamen verifies the words of the popular song by Charles Thatcher:

"Blow 'em I say;
Scores arrive every day,
Get all they can,
Then hook it away!"
(Cheers.)

"And these are the beings whom the government class as the companions of civilized Christians!" (Cries of "We won't have them!") "These are the beings who, in a court of justice, are allowed to rank equal with a European, whose very life, more than once, has trembled in the balance of these miscreants' oaths!" (Shouts of "Away with the wretches!")

"Oh, horrible mockery and disgrace to the British Constitution! A Christian's very life may be affected by an oath - now, keep your ears open, gentlemen - an oath sworn by cutting a cock's head off, breaking a saucer, or blowing out a candle, which is now known to be only a piece of complete humbug in their own country." (Vehement cheering, and cries of "Shame!")

"That is what happens when you have only a Chinaman's word against a Christian's in a court of justice." (Renewed cries of "Shame! Shame!")

"We are now, I may safely say, on a goldfield which has every appearance of being a permanent one, the only goldfield in this colony on which the hard-working miner, the mainstay of the country, can eke out more than a bare subsistence. Now, our livelihood is about to be torn from our grasp. How, and by whom? By the curse, the plague of the country, namely Chinamen!" (Shouts of "Never! Never!" "Down with them!")

"How long will the Burrangong diggings continue to be the support of thousands upon thousands of poor men, making an honest livelihood. if the Chinese are allowed to pour in upon us in countless numbers? Why, six months would see the field worked out! What then, could the diggers do? Where could they go? God help the poor men who have wives and families depending on them. I will tell you what they can do. They can starve!" (Great uproar and execrations at the Chinamen.)

"Perhaps you would like to go and work for the squatters at six or seven shillings a week and rations." (A tumult of hisses and groans.)

"Well, that is what will happen unless we take some measures to stop this gross outrage on our rights." ("Hear, hear!")

"Then, men and fellow miners, let us assert our rights before God and man - in the clear face of day - like freeborn Britons - and prevent ourselves from being trampled to the dust like dogs." (Great confusion and prolonged uproar.)

"I now have pleasure in moving the following resolution."

The speaker took a piece of paper from his pocket and read aloud: "Since the government will not protect us, our wives, families and occupations, from the incursions of a race of savages, we bind ourselves, to a man, to give all Chinese two days' notice to quit the Burrangong goldfields; and in the event of their not complying with that request, we bind ourselves to take such measures as shall satisfactorily rid the mining community of the Burrangong for ever of such pests and nuisances."

Stewart stepped down from the rostrum and a digger named Dayton stood in his place, to second the resolution. But the crowd, raised to fury by Stewart's eloquence, wanted no more speeches. They yelled, whistled and threw their hats in the air.

"No notice!" yelled a man in the rear and the crowd took up the cry: "No notice! Don't give the yellow b_____s two days' notice! Sweep them out now! Out with the Chinamen! No more Chinamen at Burrarigong!"

The band began to play and the band wagon, with its Union Jack flying, moved slowly away towards the Chinese quarter, followed by a dense cloud of miners. The Commissioner and his escort galloped around the edges of the crowd, haranguing and admonishing - but in vain. The miners were determined to sweep the Chinese like chaff

before the wind. Now they were silent and sullen in their determination.

The Chinamen saw them coming. In a frenzy of panic they rushed from their tents and shanties, burdened with their belongings slung on poles. Chattering, they formed into long files and jogged away into the bush. Some of their huts and tents were set afire, perhaps by the Chinese themselves. The European diggers formed a lane through which the departing sons of Han filed, helped occasionally by a kick if they dallied. There was no bloodshed and very little violence. The Chinese went quietly. By nightfall every Chinaman had cleared out from the Burrangong fields.

The *Burrangong Miner* ran the story under a headline of its biggest type — FLIGHT OF THE CHINESE! And with the comment:

The miners and the Commissioner and his force deserve commendation in this serious affair; the former for their peaceable and orderly bearing, the latter for the absence of the rigid and extreme authority which at a time like this tends to create a breach of the peace.

So ended the second Lambing Flat "riot". The Chinese were peace-fully put to flight.

But not for long.

Soon they drifted back to the diggings and the government refused to declare their presence illegal. Hatred grew again and seethed towards another boil-over. Police reinforcements arrived.

Chapter Four

Third riot, February 1861

Early in February the Burrangong miners forwarded a petition to the government, requesting that the field should be proclaimed a European diggings. The Commissioner gave an undertaking that no Chinese would be allowed on the diggings until an answer had been received to the petition. In the meantime, however, busybodies in Sydney, who knew nothing at first hand, were writing to the press complaining of the "lawlessness" of the Lambing Flat rioters. The government yielded to this pressure and instructed the Commissioners to permit Chinese to dig for gold for the time being until the matters were investigated more fully. It was considered that discrimination against Chinese in Australia would be contrary to Britain's treaties with the Chinese Emperor.

On Sunday, 17 February, a crowd of white miners assembled at Blackguard Gully, near the Chinese quarter. Insults were exchanged and a brawl developed, as the Chinese showed fight, hurling stones at the whites. The magic cry "Roll up! Roll up!" spread through the Flat and a big crowd attacked the Celestials and put them to flight. Two tents were burned. Commissioner Griffin and Captain Zouch, with an escort of troopers, arrived and took fifteen white miners under arrest. After an inquiry, at which the witnesses were Ah Foo, who swore by breaking a saucer, and Ah San, who swore by blowing out a candle, the fifteen accused were admitted to bail.

The Miners' Protective League

As news of the arrests spread through the diggings, thousands of the miners formed a procession, with bands playing and banners flying, and paraded the diggings from end to end, expelling the Chinamen, who fled to their bush camp on Robert's Currawong station, several miles away. Agitator Stewart, leader of the anti-Chinese movement, now took the initiative in drawing up a constitution for a Miners' Protective League and held mass meetings in support of the new League at the various camps on the diggings. The prospectus of the Miners' Protective League was printed and widely distributed. The subscription was fixed at two shillings and sixpence entrance fee, and a shilling a month contribution from members. The objects included Parliamentary representation for the miners; protection of Australian industry by an import duty on goods manufactured in Britain and the U.S.A.; the expulsion of Chinese from the diggings; and the general protection of miners' interests and property against "thieves, robbers and ruffians".

The prospectus continued as follows:

The neglect, indifference, and apathy shown by the Government about everything pertaining to the Mining Interest has been great, culpable and unjust. Complaints have been repeatedly made to the Government of the many serious injuries that Europeans have sustained from the presence of vast masses of Chinese on the goldfields - that they waste precious water required for mining, that they filthy and destroy water set aside for domestic purposes, and that they destroy immense quantities of auriferous ground. The desolate state of the older goldfields is due to the admission of this abominable race into this country. The habits and customs of the Chinese are repugnant to all civilized men, and they are tainted with the terrible and dangerous disease of leprosy.

The incursions of a swarm of Mongolian locusts has forced us to retreat from all the

other diggings in the Colony, and now we are obliged to turn at bay upon this our latest resting place, and to drive the moon-faced barbarians away.

We now call upon all the miners of Burrangong, and of every other digging in the country, to become members of the Miners' Protective League - to join us in our efforts to elevate and improve the conditions of our race. We invite men of all nations, except Chinamen, to enrol in our League. Let us lift up our voices and exclaim "Fair-play for all," in one grand harmonious shout that will be echoed from the north to the south, from the east to the west, until the deafening sound is responded to by an acknowledgment of our rights as freeborn men, the descendants of the patriots of the old world.

Mass meetings in support of the League were held on Saturday, 16 February, at Spring Creek and Stoney Creek. The speakers at Spring Creek were Allen, Kerr and Harrison. Among the huge audience was Darkie Frank Gardiner, the cheapest butcher on the diggings. He was greatly enjoying the anti-Chinese agitation, as it kept the police busy. The meeting opened with three hearty groans for a storekeeper named Docker, who had supplied provisions to Chinese, and three hearty cheers for Robertson and Lucan, who had refused to supply them.

Charles Allen made a thoughtful speech. "It is true," he said, "that the League has sprung from the Chinese question, but the League will extend to other grand reformations. Labour will have its due weight in our Parliament. Seeing that Labour is the only wealth of any country, it must and it shall have the corresponding power!" (Cries of "It will, too!" "Go on, Allen!" "That's the style!" "Hurrah for the League!") "As for the Chinese, their manners and customs are so different from ours that we can have no social intercourse or feelings of friendship for them. Their treachery, cruelty and perfidiousness are well known. One thing and one thing only keeps them quiet here - and that is fear. I urge you to remain civil to the Commissioner and his staff. It is not their fault that we cannot work amicably with the Chinese. The government of the country is to blame. The frightful disease named leprosy is prevalent in the Chinese camp at this moment and it is for you to decide whether we shall have that disease as heirlooms to our children!"

The mass meeting at Stoney Creek was addressed by diggers Stewart and Spicer. In vigorous style they roused their hearers to a frenzy of enthusiasm. Said Stewart: "As Australians we have ample cause to hate and despise the Chinese. Descendants from glorious old England, we cannot tolerate their manners, customs or creed. By their filthy habits they have made themselves repulsive and they have contracted that awful disease called leprosy." (Sensation.) "We must rid ourselves of this barbarous race." ("Hear, hear!") "Our feelings have been outraged. The time has come for their expulsion." (Continued cheering.) "Fellow miners, you all know that unity is strength. Let us unite in making our voice heard. As long as we remain mere footballs to the government, we shall be spoken of with derision!"

Stewart stepped down from the rostrum amid protracted cheering. Then a hush fell as the next speaker stepped up.

He was a digger named Spicer, an unknown quantity as an orator. He soon showed his mettle.

"Let us overcome every obstacle in our path!" he shouted, as the crowd "hear-heard" encouragingly.

"Many of these Chinamen have not arrived here on their own hook. They have been imported by Melbourne merchants, acting on behalf of Chinese bosses." (Cries of "Shame!")

"Gold mining is not easy work. We sink duffer after duffer; then, as soon as we find a good field, we are disturbed and annoyed by an inferior race. When one Chinaman comes, a thousand follow, and the poor Briton has no chance. Men of Burrangong, shall this continue?" ("No! No!")

"We don't fraternize with Chinamen. We don't like them. We won't have them. Nobody likes them. Even the blackfellows don't like them. In their own land the Chinamen are nursed in the lap of vice. In their country bribery, corruption and cruelty reign supreme. We intend to be civil towards the authorities, but, I ask you, what do you think of Mr Commissioner Dixon?" (A voice: "He's crazy!")

"He has actually been seen helping a Chinaman to rock his cradle." (A voice: "Cammon.")

"No, it's a positive fact. We want another Commissioner instead of Old Mother Dixon." (Laughter.)

"I must say that Captain Zouch and Mr Cloete have behaved as gentlemen and they are respected by all classes." ("Hear, hear!")

"If the Commissioners want any help, we will cheerfully give it. One of the objects of the League is to suppress crime on the diggings. Hocusers should be hunted off the diggings, the same as Chinamen." ("Hear, hear!")

"It's a hard case when a digger, after working all day, gets knocked down with a waddy at night. We want to root out from our midst the eye-openers, stickers-up, tent-cutters and horse-lifters, who have for so long pursued a career of crime!"

Early in March the leader of the government, "Slippery Charlie" Cowper, visited the Burrangong diggings to investigate the miners' grievance. He received deputations, made speeches and promised that the government would consider the matter. At the same time - a typical action of Jack-in-office - he instructed the Commissioners to preserve order and to protect the Chinese. For this purpose the police force was now increased to fifty troopers and

constables. Furthermore, Slippery Charlie sent a military detachment to encamp at Lambing Flat - a company of the 1st Battalion of the 12th Regiment. This show of force had the effect of making the diggers doubly infuriated. Then the military officers, as well as many of the privates, became infected by gold fever, deserted from the regiment and merged with the diggers as gold-getters. Protected by the government, the Chinese drifted back to the diggings as often as they were driven away.

Chapter Five

Census of 1861

On 7 April 1861 a census was again taken in New South Wales, but a lot of scamps, seallawags, deserters, free roamers and Chinese managed to dodge the count. The official figures showed a total population of 350,860 persons in the colony, an increase of 81,753 since the count of five years previously. This large increase occurred despite the fact that Queensland was scissored off on 10 December 1859, hereby the mother colony lost 30,059 people.

Sydney now had a population of 95,789 and was still growing strongly. The native-born whites had increased to 160,298 as compared with 158,581 born in the British Isles. This was the first census in the history of New South Wales which showed a preponderance of Australians over British Islanders. The birth-rate was mounting even faster than the immigration rate. Foreigners totalled 22,954, including 5467 Germans, 1067 American - and 12,988 Chinese.

The Goldfields Act and the Chinese

The diggings of Lambing Flat did not need a census to inform them that 12,988 Chinese were 12,988 too many. In April 1861 the Cowper government passed a Goldfields Act, limiting aliens to certain areas on the goldfields, such areas to be proclaimed by the Commissioners. This was an attempt at compromise - but it wouldn't work. Ploughed furrows and pegs marked out the boundaries of areas reserved for Chinese, but the whites alleged that the yellows were trespassing, stealing washdirt, fouling water, spreading leprosy, and making a general nuisance of themselves, the same as before. Despite the presence of a military detachment encamped at Lambing Flat, clashes and fights occurred daily between the two hostile races and the cauldron of trouble seethed and bubbled.

Throughout the months of May and June, 1861, the Chinese question at Burrangong continued to simmer and seethe. The government considered that the question was settled by the Goldfields Act, which limited the Chinese to certain areas - in theory. It was enacted on 24 April, and Slippery Charlie Cowper assured the House that it would prevent a recurrence of the troubles at Lambing Flat. To make doubly sure he sent from Sydney, on 23 February, a force consisting of two officers and forty-two men of the Royal Artillery with two twelve-pounder cannon, seven officers and a hundred and twenty-three men of the 12th Infantry Regiment, and twenty-one extra mounted police.

While the military force was encamped at the Flat, there were no more big riots or demonstrations by the miners. At the end of May, therefore, the artillery and infantry were withdrawn. The soldiers marched the three hundred miles back to Sydney, where they arrived on 8 June, travel-stained, weary and careworn, and minus several deserters. One of the deserters had been recaptured and was marched back to barracks under escort.

When the redcoats were safely out of the way, the suppressed resentment of the Lambing Flat diggers, which had been smouldering all the time, began to flare up again. There were at this time about twenty thousand whites on the field and about two thousand Chinese. The diggings extended in patches over an area of about a hundred square miles, with Lambing Flat in the centre. There were mining camps at Demondrille Creek, Stoney Creek, Spring Creek, Wombat Back Creek, Victoria Hill, Petticoat Flat, Chance Gully, Tipperary Gully, Blackguard Gully, and at the Five-mile, Seven-mile and Ten-mile Gullies along the road to Bathurst. The Commissioners in their wisdom decided to set apart at each of these diggings an area reserved for Chinamen. Gangs of from a hundred to two hundred Chinese were accordingly camped in proximity to the whites at each of these fields. It seemed to the white miners that the government was deliberately forcing the Chinese on to every payable field.

Even with a police force of fifty men now at their disposal, the Commissioners could not patrol all the scattered camps in the area. Day after day, with ever-increasing intensity, clashes occurred between whites and Chinese. The whites complained that the Chinese were encroaching. The Chinese complained that they were being beaten and robbed. Race hatred rose to fever point once again, and the Miners' Protective League held indignation meetings far and wide. Noble was the idealism of the diggers' leaders - Stewart, Spicer and Cameron - but they could not control the larrikins of the League, who stoned the Chows, cut off their pigtails and burned their tents. Gangs of ho-cussers mingled with the miners' mobs and robbed many a Chinaman of his gold-bag.

Riot of 30 June

On Sunday, 30 June, a mass roll-up was called by the League, to be held at Tipperary Gully. A crowd of diggers assembled and marched to Lambing Flat township, led by the band playing "Cheer, Boys, Cheer". Their numbers swelled to three thousand and the diggers rushed the Chinese camp at Victoria Hill, where about three hundred yellow men dwelt. The Chinese fled and the diggers burned their tents to the ground, returning to the town with cut-

off pigtailed held aloft as banners. The mounted police - not having orders to shoot - were powerless to prevent the destruction.

Chapter Six

The big riot of 14 July

The Commissioners issued warrants for the arrest of Stewart, Spicer and Cameron but the three leaders were forewarned and went into hiding. On the following Sunday, 7 July, the police dispersed several small crowds of diggers. From their hiding places, Stewart, Spicer and Cameron then issued a call for a monster roll-up to be held at Blackguard Gully on Sunday, 14 July. They announced that the meeting would be held, police or no police. Hastily the Commissioners sent to Sydney for reinforcements - but it was too late. It was impossible for the military to reach Lambing Flat in time to attend the miners' roll-up called, by significant coincidence, for 14 July - the anniversary of the storming of the Bastille.

The day dawned cold and frosty, but the mood of the miners was overheated beyond boil-over point. At the meeting place in Blackguard Gully, the band played "Rule Britannia" and the crowd sang a parody extemporized by a wag:

"Rule, Britannia!
Britannia, rule the waves!
No more Chinamen allowed
In New South Wales!"

Commissioner Griffin and Captain Zouch sat like statues on their horses near the platform. At their disposal was a force of twenty-four mounted troopers under Sub-Inspector McLerie (a son of the Inspector-General), and Sergeant Martin Brennan. In addition there was a squad of sixteen foot police, under Senior-Sergeant Sanderson. It was an impressive display, but not as impressive as the crowd of between four and six thousand miners who assembled for the roll-up.

When the time came for the meeting, three red-shirted diggers stepped forward to the platform. They were Stewart, Spicer and Cameron.

At a nod from Captain Zouch, before the crowd realized what had happened, Sergeant Sanderson and his squad surrounded the three leaders and took them under arrest. The troopers rode forward in a phalanx, their sabres flashing, and the whole body of police escorted the three prisoners to the lock-up at Lambing Flat court-house, followed by a huge mob of diggers, shouting, "A rescue! A rescue!"

Leaderless, the mob did not know what to do. They surrounded the court-house, shouting and yelling.

Captain Zouch issued muskets to the foot police and ordered the troopers to get ready for a sabre charge.

"A rescue! A rescue!" yelled the crowd. "Let those men go! Let them go!"

Captain Zouch stood on the court-house steps in full view of the crowd. He took off his sword and pistol, handed these weapons to an orderly, then advanced alone towards the diggers, raising his hand for silence.

The crowd listened intently. "I warn you," said Captain Zouch, "to cease this unlawful demonstration. It is our duty to preserve the peace and we mean to do our duty. By my orders three men have been taken under arrest and they will be given a proper trial according to law..."

"Let them go!" "Release them!" yelled the crowd.

Commissioner Griffin, standing on the court-house veranda, then read the proclamation of the Riot Act. "Our Sovereign Lady the Queen..."

"Boo-oo !"

"...chargeth and commandeth all persons being assembled..."

"Boo-oo !"

"...immediately to disperse themselves..."

"We want Spicer !"

"...and peaceably to depart..."

"We want Stewart!"

"...to their habitations or to their lawful business..."

"Boo-oo !" "Traps!" "Joe, Joe!" "Dirty peelers!" "A rescue!" "Get them out!" "Burn down the court-house!"

"Boo-oo!" yelled the crowd.

Suddenly a shot was fired, and a terrible silence followed. Somebody in the crowd had discharged a pistol into the air. In the stillness the calm voice of Captain Zouch was heard.

"Sergeant Sanderson, give them a volley."

The sergeant ordered, "Squad, prepare to fire!"

The sixteen foot police cocked their carbines. They had previously been instructed to fire high for the first or warning volley - but the crowd didn't know that.

"Take aim!"

The carbines were levelled and the men in the front ranks of the crowd tried to fall back, but were pushed forward by those in the rear.

"Fire!" ordered Sergeant Sanderson, sharply.

The carbines spoke, staccato. The smell of powder was acrid in the crisp winter air.

"Re-load!"

Pandemonium and stampede broke like a thunderburst over the surging crowd of diggers. Two men on the outskirts of the crowd fell to the ground, hit by bullets. One of them was a digger named Lupton.

"Inspector McLerie," said Captain Zouch. "Disperse the crowd!"

At the word of command the twenty-four troopers, led by Sergeant Brennan, drew their sabres, spurred their horses and charged the infuriated leaderless mob. Slash! Slash! The troopers wielded their weapons with savage skill and many a digger staggered before the charge, with head or face bleeding. An irregular volley of pistol shots greeted the troopers. Four of them and Sergeant Brennan were wounded, as well as several of the horses.

It was now late afternoon, and dusk fell like a curtain on the climax of the drama. Organized force won the victory as the crowd stampeded in panic, rolling and tumbling down the steep banks of Burrangong Creek before the furious onslaught of the sabre men. In the Chinese camps there was panic, for all police protection had been withdrawn to guard the court-house and lock-up. In frenzy the Celestials fled away to the darkness of the bush before onslaughts of infuriated diggers, who raided every Chinatown on the field. Soon a thick pall of smoke smudged the starry sky as fires from hundreds of Chinese huts and tents glowed redly in the gullies of Burrangong Creek. At dawn there was not a Chinaman remaining anywhere on the diggings.

During the night, digger Lupton, who had been shot through the chest, died - a martyr. Men with heads cut and faces disfigured by sabre-strokes walked the streets calling for revenge. Blood had flowed and the diggers' dander was up. The police dared not move from the official camp, where they remained in a state of siege. A crowd of ten thousand attended Lupton's funeral and impassioned speeches were made on the sacred theme of vengeance. Said an elderly miner: "He died, as the men of Eureka died, a martyr in the miners cause. By their deaths we won our miners' rights, and now our mate Lupton has died for a great cause - White Australia!"

"White Australia!" murmured the diggers, and the words reverberated like a magic talisman. "White Australia!" "Australia for the white man!"

Revenge, revenge.

Reports reached the police camp that the miners were mustering for an armed assault; that all available fire-arms, gunpowder, caps and bullets had been bought from the stores; that men were busy casting leaden slugs; and that the diggers were being drilled by ex-soldiers and ex-policemen for organized attack. Captain Zouch realized that he was out-numbered and that in an organized attack he would be outgunned. The diggers could probably muster not less than a thousand men with pistols and guns, mounted, if they wished, on horseback. Moreover, he well knew that there were plenty of men among the diggers who would not flinch in an armed clash with the police; for there were many who had old scores to pay.

A frightful carnage - the worst in Australia's history - loomed imminent. Captain Zouch knew that his small body of trained men would fight bravely, but he knew, too, that they would be annihilated - and for what? For on the the Chinese! In his heart Captain Zouch was sympathized with the miners on the racial issue. A hard decision was his - to stand and fight, in defence of the Chinese, or to retreat before unlawful riot and revolt. No coward, he hated the idea of retreat, but he had a big responsibility. Five of his men, and several of their horses were injured. It would be a fortnight before reinforcements or military help could reach Burrangong. Could he stand siege in the court-house for that period, or resist even one strong and determined assault by the armed diggers? Well he knew that he could not!

After consultation with the Commissioners and his brother officers, Captain Zouch reached his decision. The officials of the various banks on the diggings had already brought their currency and specie to the police camp for protection. This, added to the gold awaiting escort, made a treasure of up to a hundred thousand pounds liable to be looted or lost if the police camp were taken by storm. Prudence prevailed. By dead of night Zouch opened the lock-up doors and allowed Spicer, Stewart and Cameron, together with an assortment of hocusers, to go at liberty. The entire police force then withdrew with the treasure to Yass, sixty miles away.

On the morning of 16 July there was not a policeman, and not a Chinaman, left on the Burrangong goldfields. In the frosty air the smoke of the burning court-house ascended and swirled like incense to the Joss of Revolution. It is said that one of the freed prisoners - a lunatic - had set fire to the buildings soon after the police departed.

A long march for the troops

Three hundred miles away in Sydney, the government acted, advised by telegraph from Yass. They took two urgent measures. The first was to dispatch military reinforcements for Captain Zouch. This rescue party marched out of Sydney on 16 July, two hundred strong, commanded Colonel Kempt. It was a mixed force, consisting of a detachment of the 12th Infantry Regiment, a party of Royal Artillery with a twelve-pounder cannon, twenty police, and seventy-five Royal Marines from H.M.S. *Fawn*, commanded by Captain Cator, R.N.; the marines had with them a snub-nosed ship's gun, named the Bull Pup. The route of the march was southward through Goulburn and

Yass; but progress was painfully slow. averaging only twenty miles a day.

New name for Lambing Flat

The second emergency measure taken by the government, as a reprisal against the rioters, was to expunge the name of Lambing Flat from the map of New South Wales. Henceforth and for evermore, by solemn proclamation, the shrine of White Australia was to be known by the name of Young - unsuitable as a town name, maybe, but a nice compliment to the Queen's representative, Sir John Young, Governor of New South Wales and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Crown.

Chapter Seven

The troops arrive again at Burrangong

At Lambing Flat - now officially renamed Young - all was peaceful and quiet for a fortnight following the withdrawal of the police and expulsion of the Chinese. The miners resumed their digging for gold, and waited in suppressed excitement for developments which were bound to occur when the police returned - as return they must. The newspapers in Sydney and other faraway places printed sensational allegations that the riots had been organized by a band of robbers, and that chaos, confusion, murder and anarchy now reigned on the goldfields in the absence of any police protection. These stories originated in the ever-fertile brains of special correspondents who were nowhere near the scene of action. The fact is that life was completely normal at Burrangong during the "interregnum" of a fortnight when the Miners' Protective League ruled the diggings. The Lambing Flat *Miner* was published twice a week as usual. On 24 July it contained a large advertisement:

BURTON'S GREAT NATIONAL CIRCUS
60 Men & Horses
will enter Lambing Flat
Preceded by the GREAT BAND
In their Georgeous Dragon Chariot,
and will perform
on 24th and 25th July.
Also at TIPPERARY GULLY,
on 26th and 27th July.
Boxes 6s., Pit 4s., Children half price.

The diggers rolled up to watch the antics of the acrobats and the cavortings of the clowns, as though the circus spectacle were the most interesting event of the year.

On Wednesday, 31 July, a different kind of circus arrived - the armed forces of the Crown, comprising artillery, infantry, marines and police. They were weary and worn by their long route march from Sydney, and were a week later than had been planned. The *Miner* sent its special reporter to glean the news on the spot:

ARRIVAL OF THE TROOPS

On Wednesday, between 1 and 2 p.m., intelligence reached us that a party of troops and police had arrived. On approaching the camp, we found there was some truth in this report. A few sailors and soldiers were to be seen, and they were received by the assembled crowd with cheers, and cries of "Joe".

By 4 o'clock all had arrived, and with astonishing rapidity tents were pitched. The soldiers and sailors were in high spirits and seemed to have enjoyed the trip. Not so the police, who looked haggard and weary, and did not appear to relish the duty when they were posted on guard.

Hundreds of people from all parts of the diggings came to have a look at the troops. The day was unpropitious, the sky was inky black, and heavy showers of rain fell. This, however, did not abate the ardour of the wonder-loving people of Lambing Flat, who remained spectators of the scene, even amidst the pelting rain. "Jack Ashore" was the observed of all observers the way in which he carried his musket, the curious swing of his body, and the peculiarity of his walk were vastly amusing.

As the riots had completely subsided, there was not much work for the troops to do. The Commissioners exerted their re-established authority by immediately issuing notices preventing any public meetings from being held - but, as none were convened, it didn't matter. Music and dancing in public places were also prohibited; but martial law was not proclaimed, and all was quiet.

On Friday, 2 August, the "bluejackets" marched with their swaying gait to Tipperary Gully, accompanied by

a troop of police. There was no resistance as the troopers arrested a storekeeper named Stinson, a pugilist, Barney Byrnes, a cook, Patrick Sweeney, and two diggers, Owen and Moore, on a charge of having taken part in the attack on the police camp on 14 July.

The three ringleaders, Stewart, Spicer and Cameron, were in hiding and could not be found - except by their friends. On the following day the police arrested three musicians, William Cannon, W. Bellonzer and P. Weber, who had played in the band which led the attack on the Chinese camps. Bail was refused to all the prisoners.

All was quiet on the Lambing Flat front and the naval gun, the Bull Pup, did not bark, as there were no more riots. The eight prisoners were remanded and removed to Goulburn for trial. Two Sydney barristers, Mr Isaacs and Mr Holroyd, were engaged for their defence.

Rewards offered for capture of miners' leaders

The police gazette, *Reports of Crime*, No.62, of 8 August 1861, contained a sensational front-page story:

£300 REWARD

Warrants have been issued by the Burrangong Bench for the apprehension of the undermentioned persons for having on 30th June last, at Burrangong, feloniously, unlawfully and riotously assembled and wilfully destroyed the property of divers Chinese:-

1st. Charles Stewart. about 40 years of age, about 5 feet 8 inches high, full face, brown whiskers and moustache, chin shaved clean, rather good looking, generally wears light clothes and black California hat.

2nd. William Spicer, about 40 years of age, 5 feet 9 inches high, sandy complexion, dark, grizzly hair, beard and moustache, full and intelligent eye; native of West of England, well-educated; dressed as a digger; well-known at several diggings in these Colonies and California.

3rd. Donald or Dugald Cameron, about 35 years of age, about 6 feet high, dark brown hair, whiskers and beard, full face, long features, high cheek bones; speaks with a strong guttural voice and Scotch accent; stout limbs; very fond of drink, and very talkative in company.

These men are supposed to pass through Victoria, en route for Adelaide. A reward of £100 will be paid by Government for the apprehension of each of these offenders.

The fugitive orators were not in Victoria at all, but were in hiding on the Burrangong diggings. Their friends had spread the story that they had gone to Victoria.

On the front page of the same issue of *Reports of Crime* was another sensational item, reprinted from the issues of 25 July and 1 August:

£120 REWARD

Attacking and wounding the Patrol with Firearms

BATHURST DISTRICT

On the 16th July, Sergeant Middleton and Trooper Hosie, of the Western Patrol, were attacked and severely wounded at the Fish River, by Francis Clarke, alias Gardiner, a Ticket-of-leave holder illegally at large. He was wounded in the above affray on temple by pistol-ball or whip. He was captured, and was afterwards released by two armed men, John Piesley and another. A reward of £20 is offered for Gardiner's apprehension, and £50 for Piesley's. A further sum of £50 is now offered by Government for such information as shall lead to the conviction of those concerned in the above outrage.

Lawlessness on the Lachlan

Lawlessness in the Lachlan district, due to parsimony in not providing sufficient police protection in the first instance, was costing the government dear. The expense of the first military expedition was £11,000; of the second, £10,130. The government also had to pay £2099 to James Roberts, the squatter of Currawong station, for rations supplied by him to the fugitive Chinese. In addition there were claims made by 1568 Chinese for compensation, amounting to £40,623, in respect of losses sustained by them in the riots. These claims were submitted to arbitration and 706 were admitted, to the total value of £4240. Also, a new court-house had to be built at Young. These heavy drains on the taxpayers' purse made the government realize that money spent on improving the police force, as a preventive of crime, would be an economy in the end. Offering cash rewards to encourage informers was the cheap and nasty way of doing things - but it was an old colonial custom.

Chapter Eight

On the Burrangong... all was peaceful

On the Burrangong - alias "Young" - goldfields, all was peaceful throughout the month of August, as the diggers delved for a rich golden yield, while the red-coated soldiers and blue-jacketed marines yawned in idleness in their camps. The saloons and dance halls reopened, and life resumed its normal goldfields aspect.

The eight men who had been arrested in connexion with the riots were tried at Goulburn on 19 and 20 September. After eloquent speeches in their defence by Messrs Holroyd and Isaacs, barristers, they were found not guilty. Two of the miners' leaders, Stewart and Cameron, now came out of hiding and surrendered to friends, who obtained a reward of a hundred pounds each. This money was used to fee Messrs Holroyd and Isaacs for their defence. In due course Stewart and Cameron were tried. They also were acquitted by a jury of commonsense liberty-loving citizens. William Spicer, the most eloquent and stubborn of the miners' leaders, refused to give himself up to the police. He remained in hiding, changing his domicile frequently to escape detection.

On 18 September the marines departed from Young for Sydney, taking with them the Bull Pup on wheels. A detachment of fifty soldiers remained, comprising infantry of the 12th Regiment and artillery with one field-piece. As everything remained quiet, this force also was withdrawn early in October.

The police force in the interim had been considerably strengthened. On 1 October 1861 Sir Frederick William Pottinger was promoted to the rank of inspector and placed in command of the southern district, with headquarters at Young. The mounted patrol at his disposal consisted of a sergeant-major, seven sergeants, twelve corporals and fifty-seven troopers, in addition to a foot patrol under Senior-Sergeant Sanderson, consisting of a sergeant, a corporal and twenty-one constables.

Towards the end of September 1861 the colony of New South Wales was thrilled by the news or rumour that another goldfield had been discovered in the West - on the banks of the Lachlan River, fifty miles below the township of Canowindra and about ninety miles north of Young, at a place named Black Ridge on Bogabil station, the property of George Ranken. The find was made in July by Pierce Strickland, son of the Bundaburra squatter, whose property adjoined Ranken's. At a depth of two feet, near a lagoon of the Lachlan River, he unearthed a nugget of gold the size of his finger, and several smaller nuggets the size of peas. With the assistance of a prospector known as German Harry, Strickland probed the terrain extensively and found that nuggety gold existed over a wide alluvial area near the river, in a peculiar clayey gravel which seemed to dip deep. In the area there were also quartz outcrops with auriferous veins. It was impossible to keep the secret. The first-comers arrived in August and the big rush to the Lachlan diggings set in in September.

"Another Ballarat..."

"Another Bendigo..."

"Another Bathurst..."

"Another Burrangong..."

Rumours spread like magic and many a digger abandoned a good payable claim on the older fields to stake a duffer on the new - but "such is life". The brilliant successes outshone the unnoticed failures as the diggers delved into the rich, red soil of the Bogabil and Bundaburra flats - the earth upturned as though a tribe of gigantic ants was building a nest.

The news of Pierce Strickland's find was first published in September in the *Bathurst Free Press*, which optimistically commented:

This discovery has caused much excitement. Should it turn out to be a payable goldfield, there will be sufficient water for hundreds of thousands of diggers.

The *Burrangong Miner*, however, counselled caution:

The new rush to the Lachlan River is the all-engrossing subject of conversation. Although several hundred men have turned their steps thither, we have not yet heard anything sufficiently good to warrant persons in leaving Burrangong for the new locality. A four-horse coach starts a service on Monday next for the new scene of digging enterprise, but we warn our readers against the bad results that may ensue by rashly removing from a place where a livelihood is sure, for a place of which at present little is known.

Then a miner arrived in Young with the latest news from the new diggings. He announced that deep gold had been struck in three holes. The parties working them had gone down over a hundred feet and had made a thousand pounds each. At thirty feet they had struck water. One party had gone down to a hundred and fourteen feet into clay and red gravel, where they got fourteen ounces of gold out of one load of pay-dirt. Their mates in an adjoining claim had secured twenty-five ounces, mostly nuggets which had been sold for sixty-seven shillings an ounce. There was no lack of water, as the Lachlan River was near by, and there were pine trees aplenty for slabbing and building purposes. Food also was plentiful, as the squatters' runs near by were well stocked with cattle and sheep.

By 30 October there were fifteen hundred miners, thieves and vagabonds on the diggings. Law and order was supervised by the newly-arrived Commissioner, Captain Brown, and three troopers. An exodus started from Lambing Flat to the new El Dorado and the roads were crowded with men travelling in every type of vehicle, on horseback or afoot, all anxious to get rich quick - or quicker. Two miners, named McCarthy and Toby, late of Ballarat, returned to Burrangong with more glowing reports and the exodus was accelerated.

By 13 November the population of the new diggings had increased to five thousand seven hundred and still going strong.

At the end of November the editor of the *Miner* decided to pack up his printing press and his type, and follow the crowd to the Lachlan diggings. On 4 December, after having published eighty-two bi-weekly issues at Burrangong, the *Miner* recommenced publication on the new field. In the meantime the government, far away in Sydney, had decided to give a name to the Lachlan diggings. They discarded the sonorous aboriginal names which had served the local squatters for three decades - Bundaburra, Bogabil and Daroobalgie - and conferred on the place the name of Forbes as a compliment to the memory of Sir Francis Forbes, Chief Justice of New South Wales from 1823 to 1837, who had died in November 1841, twenty years before receiving this posthumous honour. An announcement appeared in the *Government Gazette* of 2 November 1861 to the effect that the name of the post office at Black Ridge, Lachlan River goldfields, should be Forbes. This appellation naturally was extended to the town which rapidly grew up on the diggings.

Gone now for ever was the pastoral peace and remoteness of the Lachlan district, as the twin goldfield towns of Young and Forbes developed into roaring centres of business and civilization, supporting between them a population of up to fifty thousand diggers and parasites. All roads led to the Lachlan, as fortune-seekers converged from north, east and south to the glittering West.

Ironbark Resources

Ironbark Resources is an educational resource to promote Australia's national identity and culture, and to offer criticism of mass immigration, multiculturalism, Asianisation and Islamification as major threats to our environment, our people, and our way of life.

A wide range of on-line publications and articles are provided on the above-mentioned issues, as well as on other issues of interest to Australian Nationalists.

There are articles on the site by Professor Andrew Fraser, Denis McCormack, Graeme Campbell, Pauline Hanson, and others.

For information on immigration, multiculturalism, Asianisation, Islamic extremism, democracy and freedom of speech issues, go to

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