

Eureka Stockade

DIGGERS' MARCH



CHARLES DOUDIET
SWEARING ALLEGIANCE TO THE SOUTHERN CROSS 1854
COLLECTION: BALLARAT FINE ART GALLERY

C O M M E N T A R Y

BY EMERITUS PROF. JOHN MOLONY


Eureka**AUSTRALIA**
DESCENDANTS AND SUPPORTERS



Picture – Michael James Wilkin

EUREKA STOCKADE: THE DIGGERS MARCH

The route of the Diggers' March retraces that actually taken by the diggers on the afternoon of the fateful day (Thursday 30 November) in 1854 when, having sworn their allegiance under 'the Southern Cross' on Bakery Hill, they then marched to the Eureka Lead where they built their stockade and elected their leaders.

It was in 2001 that Eureka's Children, now Eureka Australia, who were instrumental in seeing the Diggers' March returned to Ballarat. Phillip Moore, our President at that time and local Ballarat identity Jack Harvey researched the route for the march from Bakery Hill to the Eureka Stockade, selecting appropriate key sites for the trail and writing a basic narrative.

Eminent historian and member of then, Eureka's Children, Emeritus Prof. John Molony who passed away in 2018, selected seven of those key points along the trail and enhanced the narrative with the following commentary.



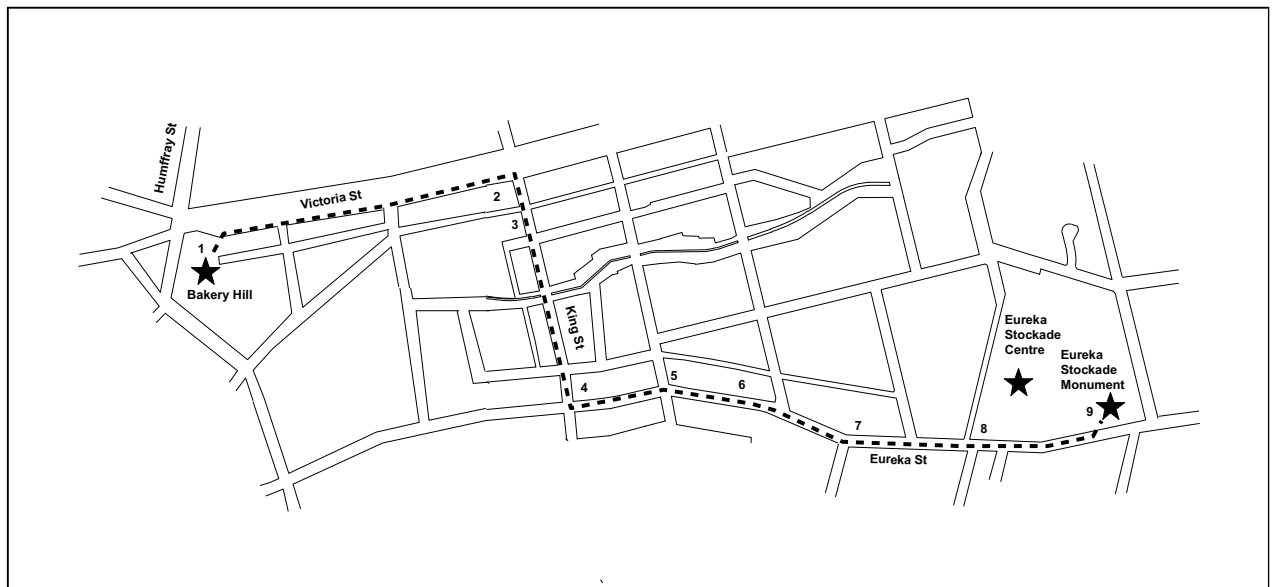
EUREKA DIGGER'S MARCH

Route of the Diggers' March

Points of Interest and Stopping Points
Refer Site map

1. Bakery Hill - **Start Point 1**
2. St. Alipius Church - **Stop Point 2**
3. Hayes' tent site - **Stop Point 3**
4. Carboni's vantage point
5. Bentley's Eureka Hotel plaques - **Stop Point 4**
6. Site of Bentley's Eureka Hotel
7. Eureka Lead – **Stop Point 5**
8. Eureka Stockade - **Stop Point 6** (Adjacent to Contemplative Place – Cnr Eureka & Rodier Sts.)
9. Eureka Stockade Monument - **Stop Point 7** (near Cnr. Eureka and Stawell Sts.)

Route of the Diggers' March



Points of Interest

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | Bakery Hill | 4 | Carboni's vantage point | 7 | Eureka lead site |
| 2 | St. Alipius Church | 5 | Bentley's Eureka Hotel plaques | 8 | Eureka Stockade site |
| 3 | Site of Hayes' tent | 6 | Bentley's Eureka Hotel site | 9 | Eureka Monument site |

STOP POINT 1 – BAKERY HILL

I am delighted and honoured to be among you today. I last spoke in this kind of a forum at the Stockade in 1988. So much has changed since those days when we were a small band of Eureka's children. We now have the new Stockade but, above all, there is a new recognition that Eureka lies at the heart of the formative spirit of our nation. Here we are all Eureka's Children, here we are all at home because Bakery Hill remains our place, the place where we assemble to restate and renew our ideals. From here we will go together to the other place that forever belongs to the diggers and the nation- the Stockade. In both places we set aside all divisions of race, politics, social status and religion. Eureka has no political allegiance. Its unique allegiance, its unflawed and lasting allegiance, is to Australian democracy.

During October and November 1854, the diggers of Ballarat, and many of their women, stood here on Bakery Hill in their thousands at a series of four 'Monster Meetings'. Except in our imagination, we cannot look across the valley of the Yarrowee and see the Government Camp on the other side. In late 1854 the Camp stood out clearly to the diggers. The Camp, where the military and police were sworn to uphold good laws and a just order, was in fact a place of oppression, injustice and corruption. From the Camp, government spies were sent to Bakery Hill to hear and report on the words and intentions of the diggers at their meetings. Twice weekly the Commandant unleashed his hunters to harass the diggers by demanding they produce their licences to dig for gold. Within the Camp plans were made to crush the democratic agitation of the diggers at one blow. On Sunday morning, 3 December 1854, the forces of Queen Victoria came forth from the Camp to begin the work of crushing the bodies of the diggers, and of many others innocent of any involvement in the whole affair.

We do well to pause and think upon the reasons why the diggers came here to their old spot and why they left it for the Stockade. No honied words, no soft-sounding argument can ever excuse oppression, injustice and corruption, then or now. In the end the diggers had no alternative if they were to retain a vestige of their human dignity. They had to make a stand.

When the diggers asserted their equal right to have a part in the political and social fabric of the colony of Victoria, they laid down the foundation stone of Australian democracy. Furthermore, on 11 November 1854 at this place they called the old spot, they publicly and solemnly expressed their allegiance to the fundamental principal of republicanism. The Charter of Bakery Hill, read out and consented to by the affirmation of the thousands here present stated, 'the people are the only legitimate source of all political power'. Henry Seekamp, editor of the Ballarat Times spoke truthfully when he said in those far off days that, here on Bakery Hill, the seed of Australian independence was sown. We must not grieve that the Tree of Liberty has not yet yielded up its fruit. We must work to create our independence in the certain knowledge that no structure of the powerful has ever, or will ever, freely grant independence to a sovereign people.

At Bakery Hill, on the morning of 30 November 1854, the decision was made to remove to the Stockade as the place where the diggers would defend their rights and liberties. At sunset some 500 of them came back here where they raised the Southern Cross. Unfurled in its simple beauty the Southern Cross was the symbol of Australian independence because, for the first time in Australian history, men who were mostly British subjects swore an oath beneath a flag that was not British, but Australian. It is a privilege for us to repeat their words, but we must be conscious that we not engaged in an empty gesture. We do a sacred thing when we swear that we will stand together 'to defend our rights and liberties'. The diggers stood true to their oath; history will judge us if we fail it.

STOP POINT 2 – ST. ALIPIUS CATHOLIC CHURCH

The most tightly knit national group on Ballarat in 1854 was that of the Irish Catholics whose young, learned and devout priest, Father Patrick Smyth, was much esteemed. He lived on this site in a modest tent next to his chapel, a frail wooden structure which could not hold the numbers who came to Mass.

On 10 October 1854, the priest's crippled Armenian manservant was arrested for the non-possession of a licence. This was a misuse of the law because, as the servant of a minister of religion, he was not obliged to have one. The charge was changed and the Armenian was fined five pounds, paid by Father Smyth, for assaulting the arresting

constable. A respectable witness swore that, in truth, the constable had assaulted the cripple and allowed his horse to trample on him.

The Camp connived in this travesty of justice and Governor Hotham refused to act on a petition from the Catholics, signed on their behalf by the leading layman, Timothy Hayes. This event was a turning point in the relations between the authorities and the Catholics. By it, according to their bishop, the Catholics were forced 'into the ranks of the disaffected'. That simple, but stark, injustice done to both priest and servant, and by extension to the Catholic faith, ranks with the killing of young Scobie as a decisive event in the weeks leading to Eureka.

On Monday 4 December Father Smyth arranged that Peter Lalor be brought here secretly to his tent where two doctors amputated the leader's injured arm, thus saving his life. A few days later Peter escaped to Geelong where, restored to health, he married Alicia Dunne on 10 July 1855 at St Mary's Church.

STOP POINT 3 – HAYES' TENT SITE

At the time of Eureka, Timothy and Anastasia Hayes, both Irish born, lived in a tent on this spot. Timothy was a digger vainly trying to support their six children, one a babe in Anastasia's arms. Together with John Basson Humffray and George Black, Tim was a leading member of the Ballarat Reform League. He became a member of the 'council of war for the defence' of the diggers' rights which met in the Stockade.

He probably heeded the plea of Father Smyth and slept in his own tent on the Saturday night so that he was not in the Stockade on Sunday morning. Despite this, Tim was rightly regarded as a leader in the whole movement. He was arrested, gaoled and tried for his life with twelve other diggers and, like them, acquitted by Melbourne juries.

Anastasia Hayes was one of the most remarkable women on Ballarat. Courageous, forthright and loyal, she supported her husband and the diggers' movement throughout the whole episode called Eureka, she helped sew the Southern Cross, she upbraided Tim for his meekness in allowing himself to be arrested saying that she would have resisted with all her might, and she stood by him and the others throughout their trials.

Anastasia's tragedy was that Tim lacked her great and noble spirit. Soon after Eureka he left Ballarat to seek a fortune in America for himself and the family. Timothy Hayes never returned to them.

STOP POINT 4 – MELBOURNE ROAD & BENTLEY'S EUREKA HOTEL STOPPING AT HOTEL PLAQUE SITE

As a sea port, Geelong was Ballarat's major link with Melbourne for several years after the first discoveries of gold in this area in 1851. For that reason, the entry into Ballarat from Geelong was called Main Road, as it still is. Furthermore, to travel here from Melbourne through Geelong was considerably easier than coming through Bacchus Marsh and passing over the Pentland Hills, especially on foot. Even by 1854 this road, the Melbourne Road, now Eureka Street, was little more than a bush track. In this exact locality the principal events occurred which bring us here today.

Eureka was opened as a new field in mid – 1852, at the same time that Ballarat was proclaimed a town. Named after the word used by the famous Greek mathematician, Archimedes, who exclaimed, Eureka, I have found it when he solved a problem, the field proved as rich as Golden Point. Here the Diggers, working in parties, began following the deep leads of the ancient creek beds. Being forced to dig down, perhaps to thirty metres, before bottoming out on a bed. They created a stable work force and, by 1853, some diggers had even started to replace their tents with log huts. The population on Eureka included a large proportion of Irish.

It was customary for the Victorian authorities to imagine that the population of the goldfields was made up of unruly, rough and uneducated scum. In fact, the level of education among the digger population was higher than that generally pertaining in the British Isles. For the greater part the diggers were law abiding, aware of their civic responsibilities and intensely interested in the building of a well ordered and peaceful society.

Unsurprisingly, commerce quickly followed the success of Eureka and, among the first business premises was the Eureka hotel, owned by the ex-convict James Bentley and partly financed by the magistrate John D'ewes. Costing 20,000 Pounds and, with its American bowling alley covering half an acre, the hotel was nonetheless a house of very bad fame although its patrons included many government officials and police.

On the 7th October 1854, two young Scottish diggers, James Scobie and Peter Martin, arrived at the hotel at night. Both were drunk and thirsty. Their request for further refreshments was refused and a scuffle followed, leaving Scobie dead from a head wound. Despite the widespread conviction that Bentley was responsible, he was exonerated with the complicity of D'ewes. Public outrage in the community was immense and, on the 17th October, the hotel was burnt to its stumps. With the arrests and imprisonment of three innocent diggers, the final events of Eureka had begun.

Despite the general air of good order on Ballarat, in late November Governor Charles Hotham, determined to crush the democratic movement here, dispatched additional troops from Melbourne. By the 28th November there were 435 officers and men under arms in the Camp. On that same evening a small party of the 12th Regiment, accompanying wagons carrying ammunition and other baggage of war, foolishly taunted the diggers on Eureka by entering Ballarat on this road. A group of Gravel Pits men attacked them, overturned wagons, and inflicted injuries, including one on the regimental drummer. The attack, although provoked, was cowardly but the widespread impression that the drummer boy had died from his wounds was false. It was used at the time, and until very recently, as grounds for accusing the diggers of murderous brutality. The historical record has now been set straight and the memorial to him in the Old Ballarat Cemetery removed.

STOP POINT 5 – EUREKA LEAD SITE

A place of Irish miners, where mining changed, and where families became more established.

The Eureka Lead was named by Dr. Timothy Doyle, an Irish medical man, following the discovery apparently by a Wathaurung person.

We are now standing on part of the Eureka Lead field. In California the name Eureka was used at a number of diggings. In Ballarat the Eureka Lead and the Eureka Hotel were considered to be Yankee, although a year later it became an Irish stronghold, often referred to as the 'Tipperary Mob', and in proximity of St. Alipius chapel and school. And it was nearby on December 3rd 1854 that the diggers under the leadership of Peter Lalor, an Irishman, built their Eureka Stockade to defend their rights and liberties.

The Eureka Lead was mined from August 1852. It was traced under the Yarrowee River and Victoria Street, going deeper and deeper, until by the time it reached the area where we are standing, the lead was around 150 feet deep. This created greater difficulty in mining and uncertainty in finding the direction of gold leads. It now required team effort, capital investment, and resolution. Miners had to form small companies of mates to work their claims. Imagine the resentment felt by miners at the bottom of a shaft being called up to show their license to the ever-increasing license hunts by troopers.

The depth of shafts along the Eureka Lead led to a change in the mining community. The diggers were becoming miners, making a real commitment to Ballarat. This led to a more settled community and with women and children becoming much more common on the goldfields, families could establish themselves here and throughout the Ballarat district.

In September 1854 the Resident Commissioner reported that there were 25,000 people living on the Ballarat goldfield, including 4,000 women and 4,000 children.

At least four schools were operating in this area by 1854 – the National School on Bakery Hill, St. Alipius Catholic School alongside Eureka Lead and St. Paul's Anglican school and the Specimen Vale Presbyterian School elsewhere in the goldfield region.

As well as the men, many women, as we have seen with Anastasia Hayes, have played important roles in the 'affairs at Eureka'. Their stories have been recorded by Eureka's Children as well as such women authors that include Christine Lalor Gillespie, Laurel Johnston, Dorothy Wickham, Vivienne Worthington and Clare Wright.

JOHN MOLONY comments – “Our next pause will be on the ground where so much blood was shed on the 3rd December 1854. Before we step on that place let us remember the red-headed, outspoken and fiery Italian patriot, Raffaello Carboni. Next to his tent he had an outside fire place with a chimney from where, awakened by the first shots of the battle, he heard the commands of the military officers and of Peter Lalor in the Stockade, saw Lalor shot and watched the dying Thonen and others as they fell.

Carboni heard the soldiers shout “Hurrah” as the Southern Cross was torn down and witnessed the wanton slaying of many innocent bystanders after all resistance had ceased. On trial, among the thirteen, for his life, he was acquitted and Eureka and the events that led to it he set down in his book “The Eureka Stockade” which he sold here on the first anniversary in 1855.

The most telling words in his book are in the sub title: “The consequences of some pirates on quarter deck wanting a rebellion”. To Carboni, Hotham and his officers were the pirates assembled on the bridge at Toorak. They wanted, and crafted, a rebellion so as to be able to crush the diggers and their democratic movement with one blow. History has proved that Carboni was right. He returned to Italy, became a captain under Garibaldi in Sicily in 1860 and died in Rome in 1875”)

STOP POINT 6 – THE STOCKADE SITE

Welcome to Eureka. There are some few among us who are directly descended from the men and women who made this place blessed forever. The diggers, and let us always include the women who stood with them, would want to welcome you all in their name. The high values they fought for and for which many died—justice, human rights, personal dignity, responsible freedom, democracy – all the noble lodestars that guide our lives, belong to each and every one of us. They belong to all the people of Ballarat who increasingly treasure Eureka and its values as they do to those of our nation to whom the word Eureka is taking on its true meaning. We also speak in hope to those millions of Australians who, in a soon to come tomorrow, will embrace those same values as they flow to them from this place of Eureka.

There are some things we need to be clear on about Eureka. The Stockade, the name given to this place, has become a hallowed one to us. To those who gave it that name it was one of shame and derision. When the authorities in the Camp heard of the flimsy, wooden and earthen barricade the diggers had hastily thrown up around an acre of ground here, one of them called it a stockade. It was a name they had become familiar with in the old convict days of NSW. When the chain gangs making the roads ceased work at night, they were made to erect a similar barricade where they were confined at night. It was called a stockade, a place to contain criminals, a place of shame. To the diggers it was their place – the only place on Ballarat they could call their own. The name, Eureka Stockade, must never be lost to posterity.

You are all aware that there has been much gentle, and scholarly, argument about the precise location of the Stockade. It is possible that we will never know with certainty exactly where it stood except that it was on this ground where we now stand. Blood runs freely from hot and mutilated bodies. Carboni wrote of one digger’s body on which he saw 15 gaping wounds inflicted by bayonets. Wounded diggers fled in horror from the Stockade, some to die in the nearby bush. Many uninvolved bystanders were cut down mercilessly, some of them many metres away from the Stockade. Is it not enough for us to accept in our hearts today that all this happened in the place of Eureka?

We still ask ourselves why the diggers came to Eureka. They did not come to wage war, to plan an attack on the Camp or to overthrow constituted authority. Goaded beyond endurance by the cowardly and provocative licence hunt of Thursday when eight of their mates were arrested, the diggers came here to make it clear that they would never again be subject to the licence fee and to the manner of its enforcement. To them it was unjust on two grounds. It was a tax on their labour rather than on their produce. The digger who made nothing paid the same fee as the digger who made a fortune. It was a tax that gave them no right to stand for, vote for, or be represented in Parliament. Finally, it was inhuman, brutal and degrading in its extortion. From the Stockade they sent their representatives to the Camp to beg Commissioner Robert Rede to stop the licence hunts. They were sent packing with contempt.

After the rebuff the diggers said, in effect, to Rede in the Camp and to Charles Hotham at Toorak: “We will no longer beg fruitlessly for the redress of our grievances. Redress them now and we will lay down our arms and

return to work". Fearing that the diggers would be true to their word, Rede wrote to Hotham on Saturday afternoon to tell him it was absolutely necessary to catch the diggers with arms in their hands. By so doing the authorities would be free to crush them and their movement in a way that would warn others who held their same democratic values.

On Sunday morning at dawn on 3rd December 1854 a hundred or so diggers were asleep in the Stockade. None of them expected that the Christian forces of the Queen would attack them on the Sabbath day. (Regulation 3 of the Gold Licence states: "It is enjoined that all persons on the gold fields maintain a due and proper observance of Sundays") No Riot Act had been read, martial law was not proclaimed and no chance to surrender was offered. The well armed military and police, 296 in number, fell on the diggers who struggled to take up their weapons, many of which were primitive pikes. Within twenty minutes resistance had ceased, but the sadistic retribution and bloody vengeance continued, in and out of the Stockade. A few days later an observer condemned "the Government of Victoria" saying, "I am horrified at what I witnessed and I did not see the worst of it. I could not breathe the blood tainted air of the diggings, and I left them forever."

We have come here in peace and we will leave here in peace. Although the earth has soaked up the blood and the wounds no longer lie open, our hearts still grieve for the dead and our spirits remain restless until the injustice of Eureka is repaid by the greater justice of a free and democratic people. Yet before we leave here, let us pause for a moment to remember the dead – the fifty or more diggers and innocent bystanders who fell here or who died of their wounds afterwards and the five members of the military who suffered likewise.

Pause: May they rest in peace.

STOP POINT 7 – EUREKA STOCKADE MONUMENT

The monument we see here was erected in the mid 1880's and handed over to the Town Council of Ballarat East on 27th August 1886. The 64 pounder guns were a gift from the Victorian Defence Department. They then, and afterwards, served as a stark reminder of British imperial might and of the role played by British regiments in crushing the digger movement. Today they are an anachronism, but they have not lost their purpose of reminding us of that past.

Eureka quickly sent forth its first fruits. The thirteen men who had been put on trial charged with high treason, men whom Governor Hotham would have sent to the gallows had they been found guilty, never forgot their Melbourne juries who saw justice done by acquitting them.

Back on Ballarat, the day of the diggers was soon over with the introduction of machinery and company mining onto the fields. The diggers became miners working for large employers. The Gold Commissioners, with their autocratic powers were sent packing and the licence fee gave way to a duty on gold itself. Carboni was elected a member of the local Court set up to replace the Commission. Peter Lalor and John Basson Humffray were elected to a responsible Parliament which, after 1856, was a body with financial as well as legislative powers. Manhood suffrage, one of the rights asked for in the Charter of Bakery Hill had been granted.

Ballarat, built on gold, was transformed into a gracious city with pride in all aspects of its past, except for Eureka. Many of the worthy burghers who controlled the civic affairs of Ballarat regarded Eureka as a sordid episode, as an insult to their imperial pride. In short it was best forgotten.

Nothing, however, could stop the flight of the legend of Eureka, its inspirational Charter and its potent symbol, the flag. That painful march towards a democratic Australia, first undertaken by the diggers on Thursday 30 November 1854, had taken its halting steps. When reform began in the wake of Eureka, Peter Lalor mourned that nothing had been done to rectify matters "before this bloody tragedy took place". He went on: "Is it to prove to us that a British Government can never bring forth a measure of reform without baptizing it in a font of human blood?" With the diggers he would rejoice that others now fly their flag and others now formulate and strive for their vision, but it will ever remain the truth that the diggers were the standard bearers of a legend, fleshed out through the years and on into the future whenever the name of Eureka is spoken.

The diggers would also rejoice to witness the march today. They would ask us to remember that Eureka was only a beginning because democracy is born day-by-day in the hearts and minds of those who believe in it. They would be joyful to see the new Stockade that proudly flies the symbol of the Southern Cross, the Eureka flag which has

finally come home to its rightful place; the scene of the Battle, a place that is forever hallowed by the blood spilt beneath our digger's flag.

Finally, it is no idle fancy to believe that the day will yet come when an Australian republic will be proclaimed at this old spot where the diggers died for their ideals. Eureka will be a fitting place for that act. The Southern Cross, the chaste and beautiful symbol of resistance to tyranny, will then unfurl over a united and upright nation.