

1977

Western Australian readings

James M. R. Cameron (Ed)

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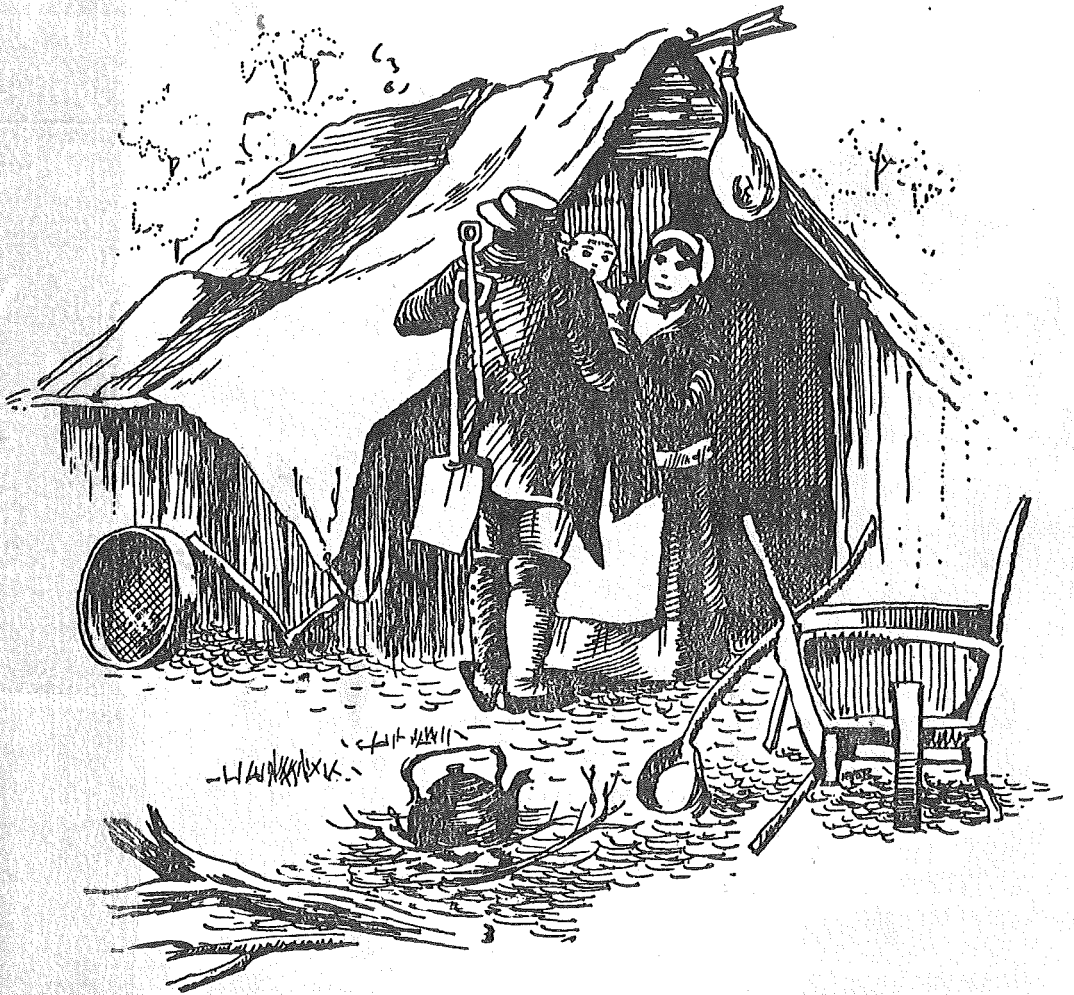
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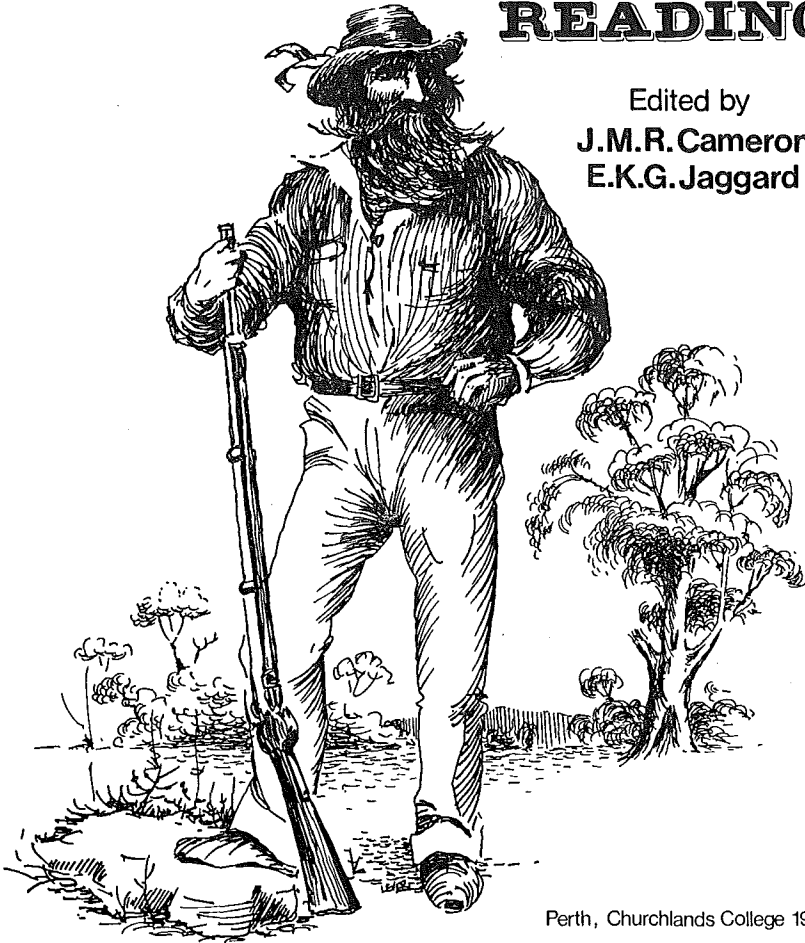
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN READINGS





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Edited by
J.M.R. Cameron
E.K.G. Jaggard



Perth, Churchlands College 1977

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When Churchlands College of Advanced Education opened in February, 1972 the first students undertook a short course in West Australian history, with particular emphasis on discovery, settlement and the gold boom of the 1890's. The course has gradually expanded and **Western Australian Readings** is an attempt to compile a limited collection of source material to which students can refer.

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Churchlands,
January, 1977.

J.M.R. Cameron
E.K.G. Jaggard

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PRE-SETTLEMENT WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The first confirmed European contact with the Australian landmass was made in the early months of 1606 when the Dutch ship the *Duyfken* sailed along the western fringe of Cape York Peninsula. Ten years later, Dirck Hartog explored Shark Bay. With the establishment of the Dutch East India Company's headquarters at Batavia in 1619, Dutch contact with the coastline increased. By the end of the seventeenth century, the general outlines of the northern, southern and western coast had been determined. The interior remained unknown.

The conviction that Australia existed pre-dated its discovery by at least 2,000 years for this was the legendary Great South Land, the Terra Australis Incognita, of the classical cosmographers. The Greeks, with whom this conviction originated, believed that this southern continent was at least equal in quality, if not superior, to the most favoured areas of the known world; that it was, in fact, an 'antipodean paradise'. This myth of a 'paradise' was one of the most enduring illusions of European geographic thought and explains much of the character of Australia's pre-settlement history. Even though James Cook's major voyage of 1768-1771 delimited the extent of the continent, showing it to be much smaller than imagined, the several accounts of that expedition were unable to eradicate the belief that the southern lands were superior to their northern counterparts. The 'South Seas' continued to be praised as the home of the 'noble savage', and visionaries could still forecast a bright future for eastern Australia, although it had been converted to a gigantic penal colony in 1788. As late as 1829, it was believed that Western Australia, particularly the Swan River area, was one of the most desirable unoccupied parts of the globe.

The equating of Western Australia with an 'antipodean paradise' must, at first sight, appear paradoxical and contrary to all that was known of the area prior to its settlement. Since the first contacts by the Dutch in 1616, its coastlines had earned an unenviable, but well deserved, reputation for their barrenness and the dangers they posed to shipping. High cliffs alternated with low, sandy dunes and were flanked by a string of offshore islands and fringing reefs which made all approaches difficult and dangerous. Rivers were small, un-navigable and frequently had bar mouths. Vegetation was stunted, sparse, dull green in colour, and as unattractive as it was unfamiliar. The inhabitants, although rarely seen, appeared to be barbarous and extremely hostile. The appearance of these coastlines gave no indication that they bordered a superior landmass. They were more to be feared than praised.

The Dutch made extensive examinations extending over a period of more than 100 years. They found nothing of value. Vlamingh even explored Swan River, the site later chosen for the colony, but it was reported that "he found little beyond an arid, barren and wild land". Subsequent explorations by the English and the French confirmed this assessment. Dampier firmly condemned the coast on his first encounter in 1688. Yet the authorities in England were sufficiently impressed by the area's potential to grant him a pardon for his buccaneering and give him command of the *Roebuck* so that he could make a second and more detailed examination. His later impressions were even less favourable. The results of the French investigations, conducted by competent scientists, were equally unrewarding. An example from the Freycinet expedition of 1818 aptly sums up the reactions of the three groups. While at Shark Bay, the point where Hartog had landed more than 200 years before, Gaimard, one of the scientists with the expedition, went in search of aborigines to test his theory that their metabolism was adapted to the drinking of sea water. He could see no other means of survival in such an arid and desolate environment.

Yet, in spite of this damning evidence, the myth of Australia's superiority persisted and was ultimately to affect James Stirling who was so influential in the formation of the colony of Western Australia. In fact, it could be said that the whole period from discovery to settlement was characterised

by the conflict between the stark realities of the Western Australian coast revealed through explorers' descriptions and the various myths and theories about its wealth. Matthew Flinders, perhaps the greatest of Australia's maritime explorers, reflects this conflict. Writing in 1814 of his expectations of Western Australia, he observed:

As to the soil and vegetable productions upon several points near the sea, from Rottneest, northward to 16½, there was tolerably good general information; the inhabitants, also, had been seen; and at one place, communication with them had been obtained. The accounts, did, certainly, not give any flattering prospect, that such interesting knowledge was likely to be acquired under these heads, unless a strait, or inland sea, were found; but these accounts were not only confined as to place, but, with the exception of Dampier's, were very imperfect; and the greatest extent of the coasts, in the richest climates of the world, excited hopes that a close investigation would not only be of an advantage to natural history, but would bring to light something useful in the mineral or vegetable kingdom.

In the case of penetrating the interior of Terra Australis, whether by a river, or a strait leading to an inland sea, a superior country, and perhaps a different people might be found, the knowledge of which could not fail to be very interesting, and might prove advantageous to the nation making the discovery. (Flinders, 1814, Vol. I, p. 1xvii.)

Eighty years later, Ernest Favenc, another noted explorer, commented:

In one respect all the dreams of the early days resemble one another. There seems to have been a refusal to accept the idea of Australia as being what it really is.

(Quoted in Heathcote, 1965, p.24.)

References: Flinders, M., 1814: *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (London: Nicol).
Heathcote, R.L., 1965: *Back of Bourke. A Study of Land Appraisal and Settlement in Semi-arid Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press).

THE MYTHS

The belief in a southern continent had its origins in classical times. It developed from a view among Pythagoras and his supporters that, as a sphere was the most perfect form, then the earth must be spherical. Symmetry was a condition of that perfection and this, coupled with the need for equilibrium, led to their postulating the existence of a landmass in the southern hemisphere of equal size and shape to that north of the equator. As the southern hemisphere was a reflection of its northern counterpart, it followed that it must be inhabited by equally civilized people, have a similar richness of flora and fauna and an abundance of fertile lands. These beliefs lay dormant during the stringent religious orthodoxy of the Middle Ages until rekindled with knowledge gained from the Arabs and from such adventurers as Marco Polo. Vespucci's discovery of Tierra del Fuego in 1502, Gonneville's 'Southern India', discovered in 1503, and Magellan's epic voyage of 1519-1522 all pointed to the existence of a southern landmass. The beliefs in the southern continent then re-emerged and, by the middle of the sixteenth century, were a firmly entrenched feature of European thought. The several extracts below have been selected to demonstrate the diverse character of these beliefs.

MEDIAEVAL REJECTION OF GREEK THEORIES

But should one wish to examine more elaborately the question of the Antipodes, he would easily find

them to be old wives' fables. For if two men on opposite sides place the soles of their feet against each, whether they chose to stand on earth, or water, or air, or fire, or any other kind of body, how could both be found standing upright? The one would assuredly be found in the natural upright position, and the other, contrary to nature, head downward. Such notions are opposed to reason, and alien to our nature and condition. And how, again, when it rains upon both of them, is it possible to say that the rain falls down upon the two, and not that it falls down to the one and falls up to the other, or falls against them, or towards them, or away from them? For to think that there are Antipodes compels us to think also that rain falls on them from an opposite direction to ours; and any one will, with good reason, deride these ludicrous theories, which set forth principles incongruous, ill-adjusted and contrary to nature.

Source: McCrindle, J.W. (ed.), 1897: *The Christian Topography of Cosmas, an Egyptian Monk* (London: Hakluyt Society), p. 17.

THE LURE OF OPHIR

Mendanna and later Spanish adventurers scoured the southern seas in search of the biblical lands of Ophir and Tharshish which had paid tribute in gold, silver and ivory to King Solomon. While their discovery proved elusive, they continued to foster a belief in antipodean wealth. The biblical entries are very brief but clearly illustrate the motivating power of imagination.

And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from there gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon.And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almuq trees, and precious stones. And the king made of the almuq trees pillars for the house of the LORD.

Source: 1 Kings 9:27-8; 1 Kings 10:11-2.

MARCO POLO'S LOCAC

On leaving this island of Java, one sails between south and south-west for 700 miles, after which one finds two islands, one larger and one smaller. The one is called Sondur, and the other Condur. They are two uninhabited islands, and therefore we will pass on.

One leaves these islands, and proceeds for some 500 miles to the south-east. One then reaches a continental province called Locac which is very large and rich. There is a great King in it. They are idolaters, and have a language of their own. They pay tribute to no one, for their land is so situated that no one can enter it to do any mischief. If it were possible to do so, the Great Kaan would soon make it submit to him. In this country, there grow immense quantities of brazil-wood and ebony. They have great abundance of gold, so great, indeed, that no one could believe it without seeing it. They have elephants, and game, both beasts and birds, in great plenty. From this region comes all the porcelain shells that are used as money in different countries, as I have told you.

There is nothing else worth mentioning, except that it is a wild region, with few travellers go. The King himself does not wish anyone to go there, so that no one may know the wealth it possesses, and what its conditions are.

Source: Benedetto, L.F., 1931: *The Travels of Marco Polo* (London: Routledge), p.280.

A SOUTHERN PARADISE

The southland is a truly blissful place. Its climate is temperate; it never experiences rain storms or gales, and it is only rarely that there are light snow falls. It contains no flies, caterpillars or any other sort of insect and one never catches sight of spiders, snakes or any other venomous beast. In a word, it is a country which encompasses all the delights which are absent in the other parts of the world and is exempt from all the inconveniences which are to be found everywhere else.

Source: de Foigny, Gabriel, 1676: *Les Aventures de Jacques Sadeur dans la decouverte et le voyage de la Terre Australe* (Vannes), p.112.

CLIMATE FIVE

Purry, a Frenchman employed by the Dutch East India Company at Batavia, made in 1718 the first recorded proposal to settle part of Western Australia. He was specifically interested in Nuyts Land which was the Dutch name for that part of the south coast between Cape Leeuwin and the Gulf St. Vincent.

For my part, I reckon, my Lord, that to find the best Countries of the Earth, we should look for them in the Middle of the fifth Climate, under the 33^d Deg. of Latitude. For tho' it is certain it is the Sun alone that gives Spirit to Wines; yet neither the hottest nor the coldest Countries are remarkable for Vines, or even any good Fruits, and it is the Region only of a temperate Heat, which agrees with them. Now as the longest Days are 24 hours at 66 Deg. 31 Min. if we take the middle of these two Extremes from 1 to 66, which is 33, it follows that the Degree of Fertility and Temperature of Air, which we search for, must be, as I said, at 33 Deg. of Latitude.

Experience confirms the Truth of what I have now advanced: For I am persuaded, that, as little as we know of the World, it will be allowed without Hesitation, that the Countries of Barbary, of Syria, and Chaldea, Persia, of the Great Mogul, China, with the Islands of Candia, Cyprus and Japan, contained in the fifth Climate between 30 and 36 Deg. of Latitude, are the best Countries of our old Continent: And that those Parts of all these Countries, which come nearest to the 33^d Degree, much exceed the other in Fruitfulness.....

Who knows what there is in New-Holland, and whether that Country does not contain richer Mines of Gold and Silver, than, perhaps, Chili, Peru, or Mexico? And what should hinder, but that all that Coast, called NUYTS LAND, containing five or six hundred Leagues in Extent, and all of it contained within the fifth Climate, may be equal to Barbary, Chili, and all the best Countries both of the Old and New Continent? Whence should it be, that all the Other Countries of the Earth which are situate under this Climate, should be good, and this alone worth nothing?

Source: Purry, Jean Pierre, 1718: *Memoire sur le Pais des Cafres, et la Terre de Nuyts* (Amsterdam: Pierre Humbert), pp.16-7 and p.45.

LATITUDINAL COMPARISONS

It is impossible to conceive a Country that Promises fairer from its Situation than this of Terra Australis; no longer incognita . . . but the Southern Continent Discovered. It lies Precisely in the richest Climates of the World . . . If Peru overflows with Silver, if all the Mountains of Chili are filled with Gold, and this precious Metal & Stones much more precious are the product of Brazil, this Continent enjoys the benefit

of the same position and therefore whoever perfectly discovers and settles it will become infallibly possessed of Territories as Rich, as fruitful, and as capable of Improvement, as any that have been hitherto found out either in the East Indies, or the West.

Source: Campbell, John (ed.), 1774-8: *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca* (London: Woodward), Vol. 1, pp.324-5.

REALITY

THE REACTION OF THE DUTCH

A. VOLCKERSEN'S DESCRIPTION OF THE SWAN RIVER AREA, 1658.

The South-land has sandy dunes forming many points of the sea-side; the dunes all consist of loose sand overgrown with grass into which a man will sink up to his ankles, and leave deep footprints on withdrawing his feet.

About a mile more or less offshore, there is as a rule a rocky reef, on which the breakers may be seen to dash violently in many places, the depth above the reef being in several places, 1, 1½ and even 2 fathoms, so that pinnaces and boats may get over it for the purpose of landing, there being deeper water close inshore, but all of it with a rocky, sharp coral bottom, so that it is difficult to land theré, and much harder still to keep a pinnacle at anchor with a drag; except in a place about 9 miles north of the island, where there are three rocks close to the shore, which are connected by a rocky reef, behind which you may conveniently lie at anchor and effect a landing with pinnaces or boats; but the bottom is foul and rocky everywhere.

Inward, the land is pretty high, with hills of even height, but barren and wild to look at, except near the island, where a great many trees are seen.

In slightly under 32°S. Lat. there is a large island, at about 3 miles' distance from the mainland of the South-land: this island has high mountains, with a good deal of brushwood and many thornbushes, so that it is hard to go over; here certain animals are found, since we saw many excrements, and besides two seals and a wild cat, resembling a civet-cat, but with browner hair. This island is dangerous to touch at, owing to the rocky reefs which are level with the water and below the surface, almost along the whole length of the shore; between it and the mainland there are also numerous rocks and reefs, and slightly more to southward there is another small island.

Source: Heeres, J.E., 1899: *The Part Borne by the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia, 1606-1765* (London: Royal Dutch Geographical Society), p.79.

B. VLAMINGH'S DESCRIPTION OF ROTTNEST ISLAND, 1696-1697.

The ground is covered with little or no soil, but chiefly with white and rocky sand, in my opinion little adapted for cultivation. There are very few birds there and no animals, except a kind of rat as big as a common cat, whose dung is found in abundance all over the island. There are also very few seals or fish, except a sort of sardine and grey rock bream. In the middle of the island, at about half an hour's distance, we found several basins of excellent water, but brackish, and six or seven paces further a fountain of fresh water fit to drink.

Source: Major, R.H., 1859: *Early Voyages to Terra Australis, Now Called Australia* (London: Hakluyt Society), p.121.

C. VLAMINGH'S GENERAL IMPRESSIONS

Generally speaking with respect to the South Land . . . nothing has been discovered but a barren, bare, desolate region; at least along the coast, and so far as they have penetrated into the interior. Neither have they met with any signs of habitation, some fires excepted, and a few black naked men, supposed to have been seen on two or three occasions at a distance, whom however they could neither come up with nor speak to. Neither again were any remarkable animals or birds observed, except principally in the Swan River, a species of black swans three of which they brought to us alive and should have been sent to Your Nobilities had they not died one by one shortly after their arrival here . . . A singular memorial was seen by them. On an island situated on or near the South Land, in 25° latitude was found a pole nearly decayed but still standing upright, with a common middle-sized tin plate, which had been beaten flat and attached to the pole, and which was still lying near it. On this plate the following engraved words were still legible:—

Anno 1616, the 25th of October, arrived here the ship De Eendragt, from Amsterdam, the upper-merchant Gilles Mibais from Luyck, Captain Dirck Hartog from Amsterdam; the 27th ditto set sail for Bantam, under-merchant Jan Hijn, upper-steersman Pieter Dockes from Bil. Anno 1616.

Source: Major, R.H., 1859: *Early Voyages to Terra Australis, Now Called Australia* (London: Hakluyt Society), pp.114-5.

DAMPIER'S EXAMINATION

SHARK BAY, 1699.

The land is of an indifferent height, so that it may be seen nine or ten leagues off. It appears at a distance very even; but as you come nearer you find that there are many gentle risings, though none steep and high. 'Tis all a steep shore against the open sea; but in this bay or sound that we were now in, the land is low by the sea side, producing a sort of samphire, which bears a white flower. Farther in the mould is reddish, a sort of sand; producing some grass, plants, and shrubs. The grass grows in great tufts, as big as a bushel, here and there a tuft; being intermix'd with much heath, much of the kind we have growing on our commons in England. Of trees or shrubs here are diverse sorts, but none above ten feet high: their bodies about three foot about, and five or six foot high before you come to the branches, which are bushy and composed of small twigs there spreading abroad, tho' thick set and full of leaves, which were mostly long and narrow. The colour of the leaves was on one side whiteish, and on the other green; and the bark of the trees was generally of the same colour with the leaves of a pale green. Some of these trees were sweet scented and reddish within the bark, like sassafras, but redder. Most of the trees and shrubs had at this time either blossoms or berries on them. The blossoms of the different sort of trees were of several colours, as red, white, yellow, etc. but mostly blue; and these generally smelt very sweet and fragrant, as did some also of the rest. There were also beside some plants, herbs, and tall flowers, some very small flowers growing on the ground, that were sweet and beautiful, and for the most part unlike any I had seen elsewhere.

There were but few land fowls; we saw none but eagles, of the larger sort of birds, but five or six sorts of small birds. The biggest sort of these were not bigger than larks, some no bigger than wrens, all singing

with great variety of fine shrill notes; and we saw some of their nests with young ones in them. The water fowls and ducks (which had young ones now this being the beginning of the spring in these parts), curlews, galdens, crab-catchers, cormorants, gulls, pelicans, and some water fowl, such as I have not seen anywhere besides.

The land animals that we saw here were only a sort of raccoons, different from those of the West Indies, chiefly as to their legs; for these have very short fore legs, but go jumping upon them as the others do (and like them are very good meat); and a sort of guano, of the same shape and size with other guanos, but differing from them in three remarkable particulars: for these had a larger and uglier head, and had no tail, and at the rump, instead of the tail there, they had a stump of a tail, which appear'd like another head; but not really such, being without mouth or eyes; yet this creature seem'd by this means to have a head at each end, and, which may be reckon'd fourth difference the legs also seem'd all four of them to be fore-legs, being all alike in shape and length, and seeming by the joints and bending to be made as if they were to go indifferently either head or tail foremost. They were speckled black and yellow, like toads, and had scales or knobs on their backs like those of crocodiles, plated on to the skin, or stuck into it as part of the skin. They are very slow in motion, and when a man comes nigh them they will stand still and hiss, not endeavouring to get away. Their livers are all spotted black and yellow, and the body when opened has a very unsavory smell. I did never see such ugly creatures anywhere but here. The guanos I have observed to be very good meat, and I have often eaten of them with pleasure; but tho' I have eaten of snakes, crocodiles, and alligators, and many creatures that look frightfully enough and there are but few I should have been afraid to eat of if prest by hunger, yet I think my stomach would scarce have serv'd to venture upon these New Holland guanos, both the looks and the smell of them being so offensive.

Source: Dampier, William, 1703: *A Voyage to New Holland in the Year 1699* (London: Knapton), pp.121-4.

FRENCH IMPRESSIONS, JUNE 1801.

A. ROTTNEST ISLAND

Rottnest Island is of middling height. Its shoreline is generally rocky, being composed of outcrops of limestone and sandstone. These outcrops, however, do have some patches of very white sand separating them. This island is, in general, very well wooded; the country, although everywhere sandy, appears to support an abundant and sturdy vegetative cover. The view of the interior of the island, interrupted by many small hills, is often most attractive. Unfortunately, we have been unable to locate a source of fresh water, and we are inclined to believe that the island has none.

Source: Péron, M.F., and de Freycinet, L.C.D., 1807: *Voyage de Découvertes Aux Terres Australes* (Paris: l'Imprimerie Impériale), Vol. I, p.188.

B. SWAN RIVER

Swan River cannot be considered to meet the requirements of an anchorage. Firstly, its entrance is very difficult and its course is too frequently interrupted by sand banks and shallows. In addition, it is necessary to sail a great distance up-river from the mouth before fresh water is available.

Source: Péron, M.F., and de Freycinet, L.C.D., 1807: *Voyage de Découvertes Aux Terres Australes* (Paris: l'Imprimerie Impériale), Vol. I, p.191.

PRELUDE TO COLONIZATION

At the time of Western Australia's foundation there were only two colonies in Australia. New South Wales, founded in 1788, was then administered by Governor Ralph Darling. Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), first settled in 1803, had only recently been separated from New South Wales. Both were convict colonies. This made Western Australia quite distinctive for it was the first British colony in over a century to be established exclusively for private settlement. This fact, and the subsequent chain of events, have focused a lot of attention on the reasons for its foundation.

A number of explanations have been put forward. There is a grain of truth in all of them for they can all be supported to greater or lesser degree by the available documentary evidence. Whatever explanation is accepted, two events leading up to the settlement of the colony are of particular importance. The first is the establishment of a convict outpost of New South Wales at King George's Sound (Albany) in December 1826. The second is Captain James Stirling's examination of the Swan River area in March 1827.

REASONS FOR SETTLING WESTERN AUSTRALIA

PROPOSAL TO EXAMINE SHARK BAY AS THE SITE OF A PENAL OUTPOST

Earl Bathurst to Governor Darling,
Downing Street, 1st March, 1826.

Sir,

In my Dispatch No. 16 of this day's date, you were instructed to commence immediate preparations for the formation of a settlement at Western Port by directing a Survey to be made of the adjoining Country, or by sending from Sydney a certain number of Convicts for the purpose of clearing the ground for future Settlers, should you be of opinion that sufficient Information has already been obtained to justify your taking steps for its immediate Settlement.

After you shall have adopted the necessary measures in execution of this Service, you will endeavour to procure accurate information respecting the Country immediately adjoining to Sharks Bay, situated on the Western side of New Holland in Latitude $25^{\circ}30'$ South, Longitude 114° East, in order that, should it be deemed advisable to establish a penal Settlement at some distant point, to which those Convicts may be sent whose offences might not require their rigorous confinement in Norfolk Island, His Majesty's Government might have the means of accomplishing that object, and that possession may be gained of a Port, which it may hereafter be found important to have retained. Moreton Bay, the Settlement which is already employed as a second place of Punishment on the Eastern Coast, might then become that to which Prisoners convicted, for the first time, of offences in the Settlement and Convicts occasionally from hence may be consigned; and Port Macquarie, which is now devoted to that purpose, may then be thrown open to general Colonization as suggested by Sir Thomas Brisbane in his Dispatch of the 21st May, 1825.

The Surveyor General should accordingly be directed, so soon as he shall have completed a Survey of Western Port, to proceed to Sharks Bay for the purpose of examining the fitness for such an Establishment as that which is proposed; and he should also be directed to survey the Coast adjoining to the Bay to a certain distance inland, in order to ascertain what facilities it may afford for the maintenance

of those persons, whom it may be determined to send to that spot, as well as to prepare a rough Estimate of the expenses of the undertaking with a view to the objects to which I have alluded.

I have, &c.,
BATHURST.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, pp.193-4.

FEAR OF THE FRENCH?

Earl Bathurst to Governor Darling.
Downing Street, 1st March, 1826.

Dear Sir,

In addition to my dispatches of this date, I deem it necessary to address to you a private Communication in order that you may be apprised of the motives, which have induced me to select this particular time for sending out the Instructions, which will be conveyed to you by the present opportunity.

The sailing of Two French Ships on a Voyage of discovery have led to the consideration how far our distant possessions in the Australian Seas may be prejudiced by any designs, which the French may entertain of establishing themselves in that quarter, and more especially on that part of the Coast of New South Wales, which has not as yet received any Colonists from this Country. I allude to that line of Coast, which extends to the Westward from the Western point of Bathurst Island in 129° East Longitude, where the North West boundary of the New South Wales government has been lately fixed in order to comprize, within its Jurisdiction, the newly made Settlement on Melville Island, to the Parallel of 129° East Longitude, at the point where the territorial boundaries of the Government are fixed to the Southward. As this Tract of Shore is understood to be for the most part barren and devoid of all circumstances, which could invite a Settlement, it is probable, if the French Government should entertain any serious intention of forming an Establishment on that side of the Continent of New Holland, that so advantageous a point as Western Port would not be neglected by them; and it is therefore with a view of avoiding any pretensions to which the touching at that Port by either of the Discovery Ships in question, might give rise for the formation of a Settlement there, that your attention has been so earnestly directed to the formation of a Colony at that place in the manner and for the objects pointed out in my Instructions. In giving that Instruction, you will observe that I have carefully avoided any expression, which might be construed (in the event of the Instruction being hereafter referred to) as an admission of there not having been a pre-occupancy by us, before the French may have attempted to establish themselves there; and you will regulate your language accordingly.

The Establishment to be formed at Sharks Bay is, as you are aware, partly for a different object; but it is equally necessary that our projects in that quarter should not be anticipated.

I remain, &c.,
BATHURST.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, pp.194-5.

PROPOSAL TO EXAMINE KING GEORGE'S SOUND

Earl Bathurst to Governor Darling,
Downing Street, 11 March, 1826.

Sir,

With reference to the dispatch, which I did myself the honor of addressing to you on the 1st Instant, directing a Survey to be made of the Country around Shark's Bay on the Western Coast of New Holland, I have to instruct you, previously to your making the Survey as therein directed, to cause one to be made of the Land bordering on King George's Sound, in Latitude 35° South, Longitude 117°50' East, in order that if the Soil should be found good (that around Shark's Bay being by every information extremely barren) and if the circumstances of the place be in other respects favorable, a Settlement may be first made in that quarter. Among other advantages which it is understood to possess, it has that of lying in the tract of Vessels from England, and by that means enjoys an easy communication with Port Jackson.

I have, &c.,
BATHURST.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, p.218.

GOVERNOR DARLING'S REACTION TO HIS INSTRUCTIONS

Governor Darling to Earl Bathurst,
Government House, 10th October, 1826.

My Lord,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's (Duplicate) Dispatches, numbered 16, 17 and 22, dated in the month of March last, with respect to establishing Settlements at Western Port, and Shark's Bay or King George's Sound; and I shall not fail to carry into effect, with the least possible delay, the Instructions, with which your Lordship has been pleased to honor me with.

I am very apprehensive King George's Sound will be found totally unfit for the purpose, even of a Penal Settlement. I have not been able to obtain any precise information respecting it: but the communication must I understand, be at all time tedious and difficult, and during a part of the year will be hardly practicable. I shall, however, make arrangements as soon as possible for having it examined and taking possession of it.

The Communication with Shark's Bay would be still more difficult; and would be attended with very serious expense.

I am informed that the Country around both Shark's Bay and King George's Sound is perfectly barren and destitute of vegetation. The French would, therefore, find it difficult to maintain themselves at either of these places; and I understand that the part of the coast about Shark's Bay is frequently under water.

I have, &c.,
Ra. Darling.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, pp.640-1.

LOCKYER'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING KING GEORGE'S SOUND

Colonial Secretary MacLeay to Major Lockyer.
Colonial Secretary's Office,
4th November, 1826.

Sir,

It being intended to establish a Settlement at King George's Sound on the South West Coast of New Holland, I am directed by His Excellency the Governor to signify to you His commands to proceed thither on board of the Government Brig Amity now ready to receive you with the Detachment of Troops placed under your Command, and, in fulfilling the intentions of Government, you will be pleased to govern yourself by the following Instructions:

Besides the Troops, the Convicts and Supplies intended for this Service are embarked on board the Amity, which Vessel will leave the Port in company with His Majesty's Ship Fly under the Command of Captain Wetherall, as soon as the necessary arrangements are completed. After arriving off Western Port, Captain Wetherall will either proceed with you to King George's Sound or send Lieut. Festing of the Fly with you, and you will lose no time in selecting, in conjunction with Captain Wetherall or in his absence with Lieut. Festing, such a site as may be most eligible for a Penal Settlement, having due regard to a safe anchorage and a good supply of fresh water, with fertile soil in the neighbourhood and such other conveniences as can be obtained.

When the Site is determined upon, you will display the Colors, with which you are furnished for this purpose, cause the Troops to fire a "feu de joie", and observe all other formalities which are usual on such an occasion.

The Soldiers and Convicts are then to be employed in putting up huts for their accommodation and for the reception of the Stores with all convenient expedition.

When this is done and the People and Stores landed, you will dispatch the Amity to this Port with a detail of your proceedings, an account of the place, with a sketch of the proposed Settlement and neighbouring Country, and a full report on all other matters worthy of attention, particularly such observations as you may consider useful in enabling the Government to decide upon the steps, which it may be proper to take with respect to a more permanent establishment.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, Vol. vi, pp.453-4.

LOCKYER'S SECRET INSTRUCTIONS

Governor Darling to Major Lockyer.
Government House, 4th November, 1826.

Sir,

As the French Discovery Ships, which are understood to have been preparing for these Seas, may possibly have in view the Establishment of a Settlement on some part of the Coast of this Territory, which has not yet been colonized by us, I think it necessary to apprize you, confidentially, of what may possibly be their object; and I am to desire, in the event of their touching at King George's Sound, that you will be careful to regulate your language and Communication with the Officers, so as to avoid any expression of doubt of the whole of New Holland being considered within this Government, any division

of it, which may be supposed to exist under the designation of New South Wales, being merely ideal, and intended only with a view of distinguishing the more settled part of the Country.

Should this explanation not prove satisfactory, it will be proper in that case to refer them to this Government for any further information they may require. But should it so happen that the French have already arrived, You will, notwithstanding, land the Troops agreeably to your Instructions, and signify that it is considered the whole of New Holland is subject to His Britannic Majesty's Government, and that orders have been given for the Establishment of King George's Sound as a Settlement for the reception of Criminals accordingly.

I have, &c.,
Ra. Darling.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, p.701.

JAMES STIRLING'S PROPOSAL TO EXAMINE THE POTENTIAL OF THE SWAN RIVER AREA FOR SETTLEMENT

Captain Stirling to Governor Darling.
His Majesty's Ship Success,
Sydney, N.S. Wales, 14th Decr., 1826.

Sir,

Your Excellency having decided upon delaying the removal of the Establishment from Melville Island to Croker's Island until the termination of the Rainy Season in that Quarter, I have, in consequence, been led to consider in what way His Majesty's Ship, under my Command, may in the mean time be most beneficially employed in furtherance of My Lord Bathurst's wishes. In the prosecution of these considerations, certain Ideas have been suggested to me by Professional observation, relative to the necessity of immediately Seizing upon a position on the Western Coast of this Island near Swan River, in the 32nd Degree of Latitude. The various advantages, resulting from a Settlement in that Situation, and the reasons for occupying it, I now beg leave to submit to Your Excellency's notice.

On reference to a Chart of the Indian Ocean, it will be perceived that there is a constant Westerly Perennial Wind between the parallel of 32° South and the region of Ice; that it generally blows with considerable force; that the portion of it, which reaches the Shore of New Holland, alters its direction, and taking the line of Coast becomes a Southerly Wind, until it reaches the parallel of 28° where, uniting itself with the S.E. Trade, it quits the Coast of New Holland in a direction nearly opposite to that, by which it arrived. These two Streams of Wind offer great facilities to Navigation on those Shores; for it is evident that Vessels, whatever may be their destination, may thereby be assured of Fair Winds and speedy Voyages across the adjacent Seas. Another advantage in Navigation, peculiar to the Neighbourhood of Swan River, is its position with respect to Europe, Cape of Good Hope, Isle of France, the Peninsula of India, and the Malay Islands.

Vessels, bound from those places to Swan River, would reach it in Three weeks less time than they could reach Port Jackson; and Vessels, bound from Swan River to those places, would reach them in Six weeks less time than from Port Jackson; in fact, the Eastern parts of New Holland, including Van Diemen's Land, are cut off from all Commercial communication with the Indian Seas to the Eastward during the greatest portion of the Year, for Merchant Vessels cannot beat up against the Strong Westerly Winds and Lee Currents, which prevail on the Southern Coast of New Holland in all Seasons except January and February.

The third advantage, peculiar to that position, arises from its being very little out of the Track of Ships, bound to China through the Eastern Passages; they generally make the outward Voyage lightly laden, in consequence of the great difficulty of making up a Cargo for the China Market; but, if there were a Settlement at Swan River, its Supplies from England might be brought out in those Ships at a cheap rate, and they might there find some articles suitable to the wants of the Chinese, such as Oil, Seal Skins, Ship Timber, and Trepang, beside obtaining for themselves the refreshments rendered necessary by so long a Voyage.

The fourth advantage, as to Navigation, attributable to that Neighbourhood, results from the Fine Weather and Tranquil Seas, in which it would be carried on: these, together with the shortness of the Voyage to India, the Mauritius, and all the Malay Islands, would admit of the employment of Small Vessels, an important advantage to a Young Colony, where there is not Capital for the construction of large Ships, or distant Speculation. I shall conclude my observations, relative to the Navigation of that Coast, by the following estimate of the length of time, in which Voyages may possibly be made to and from it:—

To the Cape of Good Hope	Six weeks, back a Month.
To the Mauritius	Three weeks, back a Month.
To the Madras	Three weeks, back a Month.
To the Java and the Islands adjacent	Ten days, back Fourteen Days.
To the Van Diemen's Land	Seven days, back Two Months.

Your Excellency is aware that the Coast, between Cape Leeuwin and Shark's Bay, has never been explored by any British Officer; its Soil and Productions are as yet unknown; but, as it is situated in the same parallel as New South Wales, in the same climate and on the same Island, it is fair to assume that it is in other respects similar to this Country; if this assumption be correct, it will admit of labour by Europeans, and produce commodities well suited to the wants of neighbouring Countries, which being situated between Tropics are in a condition to exchange Tropical productions for those of the Temperate Zone; it might, for instance, supply India with Horses and wheat, and possibly Coal and Iron; it might supply the Mauritius with Live Stock and Grain; it might supply the Malay Islands with various articles, adapted to their wants, and China with Wool, Hemp, Shipping, and the produce of the Ocean; with respect to its Productions generally, I do not think it too much to say that it may hereafter be to the various Countries in India that which the Colonies in North America once were to the West Indian Settlements.

As a Naval and Military Station upon a great Scale, the neighbourhood of Swan River would be of the highest importance. A Force placed there, while employed in the protection of that Country, would at the same time command India, the Malay Islands, and all the Settlements in New Holland, because, from the nature of the Coast and Winds, such Force would be speedily transported from that point to any one of those various places. The Troops and Seamen, moreover, would there be situated in a healthy and bracing Climate, and be constantly kept in condition to pour upon any Surrounding Country, either for the Annoyance of an Enemy's Settlements, or the protection of our own. A Force, kept there, would also prevent or counteract any hostile views, entertained by an Enemy upon India; for a Vessel Sailing Singly from England would reach Swan River, as soon as an Enemy's Fleet quitting Europe at the same time could reach the 80th Degree of Longitude, to which they must come before hauling to the Northward; and our Forces, despatched thence, might encounter such Enemy's Fleet within a few days of its arrival in the Indian Seas, debilitated probably by a long Voyage and Scurvy. As a Convalescent Station for His Majesty's Troops and Ships, employed on the Indian establishment, and for the Civil and Military Servants of the Company, it would be of great Value, rendering long and expensive Voyages to Europe unnecessary on the score of Health; and, while such Persons would be highly benefited by such a change of Climate, a Colony settled there would rapidly spring up into Wealth, stimulated by the Sums of Money expended during such Visits.

It does not appear that the expense of maintaining a Settlement in that position would be great; all the Necessaries of life in its Infancy might be obtained cheaply from Timor or Java; the Convalescent Troops and Ships from India might be its Guard; the China Ships would convey Stores from England at a low rate, or Prisoners, if it were thought proper to make it a Penal Settlement; and a very few Years would render it in all probability fit to maintain itself.

Finally, Sir, at a time when we have one French Vessel of War in these Seas with objects not clearly understood, and when we hear of an American Vessel of War being also in this neighbourhood, seeking a place for a Settlement, it becomes important to prevent them from occupying a position of such Value, particularly as you were pleased to say that His Majesty's Government is desirous of not being anticipated in such views by any Foreign Power.

I shall not trespass further on Your Excellency's time than to suggest that there is no position, Nautically considered, which presents such attractions as the neighbourhood I have pointed out; for Shark's Bay, being near the Tropic, is too hot for labour by Europeans, and also for a Convalescent Station; while, on the other side, King George's Sound can never be a place for the China Ships to touch at; nor can either of these places offer the facilities for Navigation and Trade, which the Coast between Cape Leeuwin and Swan River affords.

I, therefore, respectfully request Your Excellency's consideration of this Subject; and I beg leave to offer my most zealous exertions in furthering any decision, you may be pleased to come to relative to a measure so important to the Public Service.

I have, &c.,
JAMES STIRLING, Captain.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, Vol. xii, pp.777-80.

REASONS FOR SETTLING WESTERN AUSTRALIA: INTERPRETATIONS

FEAR OF THE FRENCH

Although the existence of the western side of the continent had been known for certainly two, and possibly three, centuries, it was not until the third decade of the nineteenth century — some forty years after the foundation of the colony of New South Wales — that the British Government decided to take steps to found a settlement there. That the matter had not previously engaged the attention of the Home authorities was in all likelihood due to the unsatisfactory reports of the new territory brought back by navigators, who, confining themselves to the uninviting coastline, seem to have had neither the time nor the inclination to make any examination of the interior, and so missed the fertile inland districts. When, however, a strong suspicion arose that other nations were casting their eyes towards the Southern Seas, the English Government seems to have realized that a few settlements on the eastern coast would be deemed scarcely sufficient, in the opinion of others, to establish a claim to the whole of this vast continent as British territory. There is very little doubt that the settlements at King George's Sound and the Swan River were, in the first place, due to the activity being displayed by the French in Australian waters.

Source: Battye, J.S., 1924: *Western Australia: A History, from its Discovery to the Inauguration of the Commonwealth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p.57.

THE COLONY OF A COMPANY – WESTERN AUSTRALIA

On Christmas Day, 1826, Major Lockyer occupied King George's Sound and laid the foundation of what is now Albany. This settlement was made through fear of the French. It was as if the British had hung up a sign saying 'Trespassers will be prosecuted. This land belongs to us.' It is doubtful if the French, or anyone else, wanted to settle in Western Australia. It was the oldest known part of the continent. For 200 years the Dutch had known about it, but they had never wanted to take it. Nor was Dampier very charmed with it. But after all it was a part of the continent, and the British did not want to share this continent with anybody. That is why Albany was founded. For two years this little signpost settlement hung on to the south-west corner of Australia, like a mosquito on a man's toe. And if the matter had been left to the British Government, this little settlement would have been the only British occupation of Western Australia for a long time. But it was not left to the British Government.

In 1827, Captain James Stirling was exploring the west coast – that old strip known to Dirck Hartog and Dampier. He came to the Swan River, so called by William Vlamingh 130 years earlier because of the black swans he saw there. The black swan is Western Australia's badge to this day. Stirling sailed up the Swan and was charmed.

He could talk of nothing else. This was the place for a settlement. It was far better than Albany. He got Governor Darling so interested in it that the Governor sent him to England to try to persuade the British Government to form a new colony on this famous Swan River. But no matter how sweetly Stirling sang about his 'Swanee River' the old folks at home would not listen. It would cost too much money. Already people were grumbling about the money being spent in Australia. But if any one else liked to start a colony there, the Government would see what could be done.

So Stirling went round among some rich people and began to talk of the chance of starting a new British colony. He told them about his beautiful river and the rich, rolling, fertile lands. Thus he made several rich men interested. They decided they would start a colony – a new and different sort of colony. No convicts this time. They would only take people who could afford to put some money into the new colony, and free labourers as well. The colony would thus be rich and prosperous from the start.

The chief mover in the new scheme was Thomas Peel. He formed a syndicate, or company, which said it was prepared to take 10,000 immigrants to Swan River. This would cost £300,000 and the Government was to give an acre of land for each 1s. 6d. that was spent in this way. That would have meant a grant of 4,000,000 acres of land. The Government shook its head. It was a bit too much. Why, 4,000,000 acres was half the size of Holland! But the Government was willing to grant land up to 1,000,000 acres. Each settler could have a block of 40 acres for every £3 he put into the colony. If he farmed it and spent money on it, the farm would become his very own.

The company did not accept these terms, but Thomas Peel did. He put £50,000 into the scheme, and persuaded others to invest their money. He hired ships and took out 300 labourers to work the 250,000 acres he was getting. Captain Stirling was made Lieutenant-Governor of the new colony, and he had enough faith in it to take his salary in the form of a grant of 100,000 acres. He left England with the first shipload of new colonists and arrived at the Swan River in June, 1829.

Source: Portus, G.V., 1932: *Australia Since 1606* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press), pp.98-9.

STIRLING'S AMBITION AND DRIVE

Among those officers who at the end of the Napoleonic War had found themselves relegated to dull garrison duty, or even duller – placed on half pay, was Captain Stirling. Like a greater sailor, Nelson,

before him, he was left on shore for eight years, eating his heart out for a ship, and wondering whether he had been forgotten at the Admiralty. To his delight, in 1825 he was given command of H.M.S. *Success*, twenty-eight guns, and ordered to Sydney. In this year a French expedition consisting of the *Thetis* and the *Esperance*, commanded by Bougainville and Camper, was cruising along the southern coasts of Australia. The presence of these vessels again made the British Government suspect that France was contemplating the establishment of a colony in the vast southern land. Despite the fact that French voyages of exploration had been taking place for the last twenty odd years, distrust of an enemy so old and so recent caused the Colonial Office in London to accede to requests from Sydney Town for settlements to the north and south-west, to prove Britain's ownership of the whole continent of Australia. So a small convict settlement was formed on Melville Island to the extreme north of Australia, and the commission of the Governor of New South Wales was extended to the 129th parallel so as to take in the island, though it still did not take in the western coasts. Unhappily the settlement, Fort Dundas, did not flourish, and Captain Stirling's orders on arrival at Sydney were to proceed to Melville Island and remove the settlement to a more suitable spot. Stirling, however, discovering that he would have to wait until after the monsoonal rains to do so, suggested to Governor Darling that he should make use of the delay to explore the western coast of the continent. He pointed out that there was no settlement in that region beyond a small military outpost in the south. The French might easily forestall Britain there. They had explored the coast around Swan River twenty years earlier, and it was this particular part that Captain Stirling proposed to examine.

Three months later he returned to Sydney and gave glowing accounts of Swan River as an 'eligible spot for a settlement'. After sailing north and removing the Melville Island settlement to Raffles Bay (which was abandoned eighteen months later) Stirling returned to London with his report on Swan River, together with a despatch from Governor Darling warmly seconding his recommendations. These documents then had to pass to and fro between the Colonial Office and the Admiralty; they had to be read by Secretaries and Under-Secretaries and by the Lords of the Admiralty. These cautious gentlemen foresaw great expense to the Government in the founding of a colony, and the proposal was shelved.

Stirling was a sick man when he reached London and the disappointment of having his plan rejected when he was so sure of its merits must have been a blow. No doubt he talked about Swan River and its potentialities among his friends, and they persuaded him not to give up the attempt to interest the Government. Through some friend or acquaintance, he met with several gentlemen of means who were willing to invest in the place if they were sure of the Government's intentions. At all events, from August to November of 1828, Stirling communicated with the Colonial Office, his task made easier by the fact that the new Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Mr. Horace Twiss, was a friend of his. By emphasizing the colonizing designs of the French Government and by showing that there were men of capital willing to risk its investment in a new country in the form of a syndicate for financing migrants, Stirling at last had the triumph of stirring the Colonial Office to direct the Admiralty to send a ship of war to take formal possession of the west coast of Australia in the name of His Majesty, King George IV. H.M.S. *Challenger* under Captain Fremantle left Spithead in December 1828 for that purpose, and in the same month Stirling was informed that he was appointed to the command of the new settlement

When His Majesty's Government had reluctantly been persuaded by the enthusiastic Captain Stirling to found a colony at Swan River, it was determined that the colony was not going to be a liability. In drafting regulations for the new colony, it expressly stated that only persons possessing capital were required as settlers.

Source: Hasluck, Alexandra, 1956: *Portrait With Background* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press), pp.15-16.

A MULTI-FACTOR EXPLANATION

When the first settlement was made in Western Australia in the year 1826, there was no Adelaide, no Melbourne and no Brisbane. Only on the eastern coast of Australia near Sydney were there any white settlers. About half of them were convicts from the gaols of the British Isles. Most of the others were ex-convicts, or the Australian-born children of former convicts. Apart from several detachments of the British Army on duty in this isolated colony, there were only a few officials, farmers, pastoralists, merchants and professional men. Neither the British Government in London, nor the settlers in New South Wales knew much about the interior of the Australian Continent and its aboriginal inhabitants. They knew nothing about New Holland, as Australia's western third had been called for nearly two hundred years. Indeed, the British Government had only claimed the eastern part of the Continent when it had founded the penal colony on the coast of New South Wales in 1788.

Late in 1826 Governor Darling sent two small military garrisons from Sydney to establish outposts on the southern coast of Australia to prevent any other European government from 'trespassing'. One of these expeditions landed at Western Port in south-eastern Australia, but withdrew not long afterwards. The other, led by Major Edmund Lockyer, arrived in the brig *Amity* at King George Sound in the south-western corner of Australia on Christmas Day 1826; this was the sheltered anchorage which Captain Matthew Flinders had charted in 1801. At sunrise on the 21st January 1827 the Union Jack was unfurled, a salute was fired from a battery of eighteen-pounder cannon, and a volley discharged by the red-coats of the 39th Regiment. The convicts who had arrived with the garrison as a working party were issued with an extra allowance of flour, raisins, and suet to celebrate the occasion, and the few curious aboriginal spectators were presented with a ration of fresh fish. In such a way began the permanent occupation of Western Australia by the British.

This small outpost, later known as Albany, was not intended to prepare the way for a new colony, and the troops and convicts were withdrawn to Sydney in 1831. Before then, however, it had become part of a full-scale colony which had been established in Western Australia with its headquarters on the banks of the Swan River, some two hundred and fifty miles from Albany on the western coast. This was due in a great measure to the enterprise of an enthusiastic Scottish naval officer, thirty-five-year-old Captain James Stirling, R.N. In 1826 Captain Stirling had been sent to New South Wales on official duties in command of H.M.S. *Success*. Whilst at Sydney, he was given leave by Governor Darling to make a brief visit to the Swan River district, which had been discovered by the Dutch navigator Vlamingh many years earlier. Stirling wanted to see whether the district might be suitable for a settlement to forestall any European government intending to begin a colony on the western coast. His report, and that of the New South Wales government botanist Charles Fraser, were full of praise for the agricultural and pastoral lands which they saw in March 1827. Although Governor Darling was impressed with the idea of having a new colony in the region, neither the British Government nor the British East India Company were prepared to act on Stirling's suggestion, and the matter lapsed for the time being.

On his return to England in 1828, Stirling spent much of his time trying to persuade influential officials that the British Government ought to occupy the western part of Australia as soon as possible. He suggested that a private company be allowed to organise it, and offered to lead the necessary expedition himself. The Government refused to grant a charter to private investors. But it had taken notice of the rumour that France was interested in New Holland, and of the need to protect British interests in the Pacific. It was therefore decided to establish a Crown colony under direct Government supervision. Early in November 1828 Captain C.H. Fremantle was sent in command of H.M.S. *Challenger* to take possession of the territory. On the 2nd May 1829, on the south head of the mouth of the Swan River, he formally annexed for Great Britain the whole of that part of Australia which was not included within the boundaries of New South Wales. A small fort was erected to protect the one million square miles of land which Captain Fremantle had added to the map of the British Empire.

The publicity given to Captain Stirling's proposals throughout the year 1828 had attracted much public attention in the British Isles. In fact, the Colonial Office was so overwhelmed with enquiries about the proposed new colony that the newspapers described the sudden interest in the western coast of Australia as the 'Swan River Mania'. To meet the situation, special regulations were published by the Government late in 1828 stating the conditions under which settlers could go to Western Australia. Land was offered to investors in proportion to the value of the stock and farming equipment which they took with them, land being reckoned as worth 1s. 6d. an acre. As this was not to be a 'pick-pocket colony' relying on convict labour, settlers could claim an extra two hundred acres for every workman they took with them. Ships were soon engaged to take out the investors with their families, servants, stores and equipment, and many had set sail by the middle of 1829. Thus it was a combination of three different factors which was ultimately responsible for the first free settlement in Australia — the optimism and zeal of Captain Stirling; the rumours of foreign interest in New Holland leading to the official annexation of the territory; and the enterprise of settlers who were prepared to run the risk of pioneering a virtually unknown land in the Antipodes.

Source: Crowley, F.K., 1959: *A Short History of Western Australia* (Melbourne: Macmillan), pp.9-12.

JAMES STIRLING'S EXAMINATION OF SWAN RIVER

It is a widely held view that the Swan River Colony (Western Australia) was founded for strategic reasons: the British government, fearing that supposed French designs on the western and southern coasts might endanger the security of its two eastern colonies, established penal outposts of New South Wales at Western Port and King George's Sound in 1826 and consolidated its control by founding a colony at Swan River in June 1829.

Equally widely held is the view that these coasts were seen to offer few benefits to a colonizing country. The experiences of early navigators fully confirm this. Since the Dutchman Hartog examined the western extremity of the continent in 1616, both coastlines had earned an unenviable, but well-deserved reputation for their forbidding barrenness and the dangers they posed to shipping. Although several theorists and navigators, including Matthew Flinders, were subsequently attracted by their apparent potential, this reputation continued unchanged into the 1820's.

It is surprising, therefore, that notice of Swan River Colony's formation should have generated such a high level of excitement in Britain that contemporary observers termed this 'Swan River Mania' by which they implied that a 'great rage for emigration' existed. This 'rage' can be explained in part by the growing appreciation of benefits of colonization, of particular significance in this instance because Western Australia was the first British colony to be founded solely for private settlement since before the American War of Independence. Yet, the high level of excitement was accompanied by even higher expectations which indicate that prospective settlers believed the Swan River area offered them immediate and tangible rewards. This view is reinforced by the subsequent flood of immigrants who numbered more than two thousand in the first twelve months — more than a third of the total free migration to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land in the previous eight years.

Bathurst, the Secretary for the Colonies, certainly instructed Governor Darling in March 1826 to forestall any French territorial ambitions by establishing an outpost at Western Port. As a rival base there could control shipping through Bass Strait, it had considerable strategic significance. At the same time, he told Darling to assess the potential of Shark's Bay and King George's Sound as possible future sites for a penal settlement to complement Norfolk Island and Moreton Bay. If defence was a motive for these examinations, it was of secondary importance for Bathurst believed that rival claims to the whole

area west of 129°E., the part still unclaimed by Britain, would be minimal as it was 'for the most part barren and devoid of all circumstances which could invite a Settlement'. Darling concurred with this assessment, but, no doubt because the *Astrolabe* under Dumont d'Urville was known to be in Australian waters, reacted by sending 20 soldiers and 23 convicts to King George's Sound prior to its examination, and by instructing the commandant Lockyer to tactfully inform any visiting Frenchmen that the whole coastline was under British control. In fact, the area was not formally annexed until 2 May 1829 and then by Captain Fremantle who commanded the advance party for the Swan River settlement. Darling's repeated requests for annexation had been previously disregarded.

With the departure of the French, and with the area being found unsuitable for settlement, Western Port was relinquished in January 1828. The outpost at King George's Sound was maintained until 1831 when it was taken over by the Western Australian administration, but the garrison never rose above 20 men and it was so poorly equipped that it even had difficulty controlling the sealers who operated along the coast. Experiences at King George's Sound amply fulfilled Bathurst's and Darling's assessments of its unsuitability, and Darling had no hesitation in rejecting Lockyer's recommendation that it become the site of a permanent settlement.

While the occupation of King George's Sound can be attributed to Darling's reaction to d'Urville's presence, previous French examinations elicited no similar response. Freycinet's presence along the western coast eight years before, for example, produced no retaliatory action. Most significantly, Baudin's exploration of Van Diemen's Land, made at the height of British-French hostility, led to its occupation in 1802 by free settlers hurriedly transferred from Norfolk Island. Yet, his examination of the west and south coasts, the most detailed to that time, provoked no alarm. It would appear that their unsavoury reputation made the occupation of these coasts by a rival power extremely unlikely and this reduced their strategic significance.

Apart from their general proximity, there is little to suggest that the settlements at Swan River and King George's Sound were connected in any way. Swan River Colony was designed to foster agricultural settlement by attracting middle class investors who were offered generous land grant terms as an incentive for their migration and as compensation for the high risks they undertook. If strategic reasons had been a major factor in the colony's foundation, it is surprising that the Colonial Office refused to bear any responsibility for its failure. It had previously, and consistently, refused to consider the colony's formation until convinced that private support would obviate a financial commitment by the government. Investors were aware of the riskiness of their undertakings and that they bore sole responsibility for them, but their substantial interest and support suggests that they believed the potential advantages from settling at Swan River considerably outweighed the disadvantages.

Against this background, Captain James Stirling's examination of the Swan River area, made in March 1827, assumes significance. Stirling not only discovered an area which he believed would support a substantial agricultural and commercial settlement, but was able to convince Darling and Arthur, officials at the Colonial Office, and John Barrow of the Admiralty, the recognized British authority on the southern hemisphere, of its suitability. More importantly, he attracted the support of several groups of speculators, particularly Thomas Peel and his associates, for his colonization proposals. His report, albeit modified and distorted, formed the substance of the promotional accounts circulated throughout 1829 and early 1830 and in that form was extremely influential in attracting additional support. Thus, the view is held here that Stirling's examination of Swan River, rather than the establishment of a penal outpost at King George's Sound, is the prelude to Western Australia's colonization

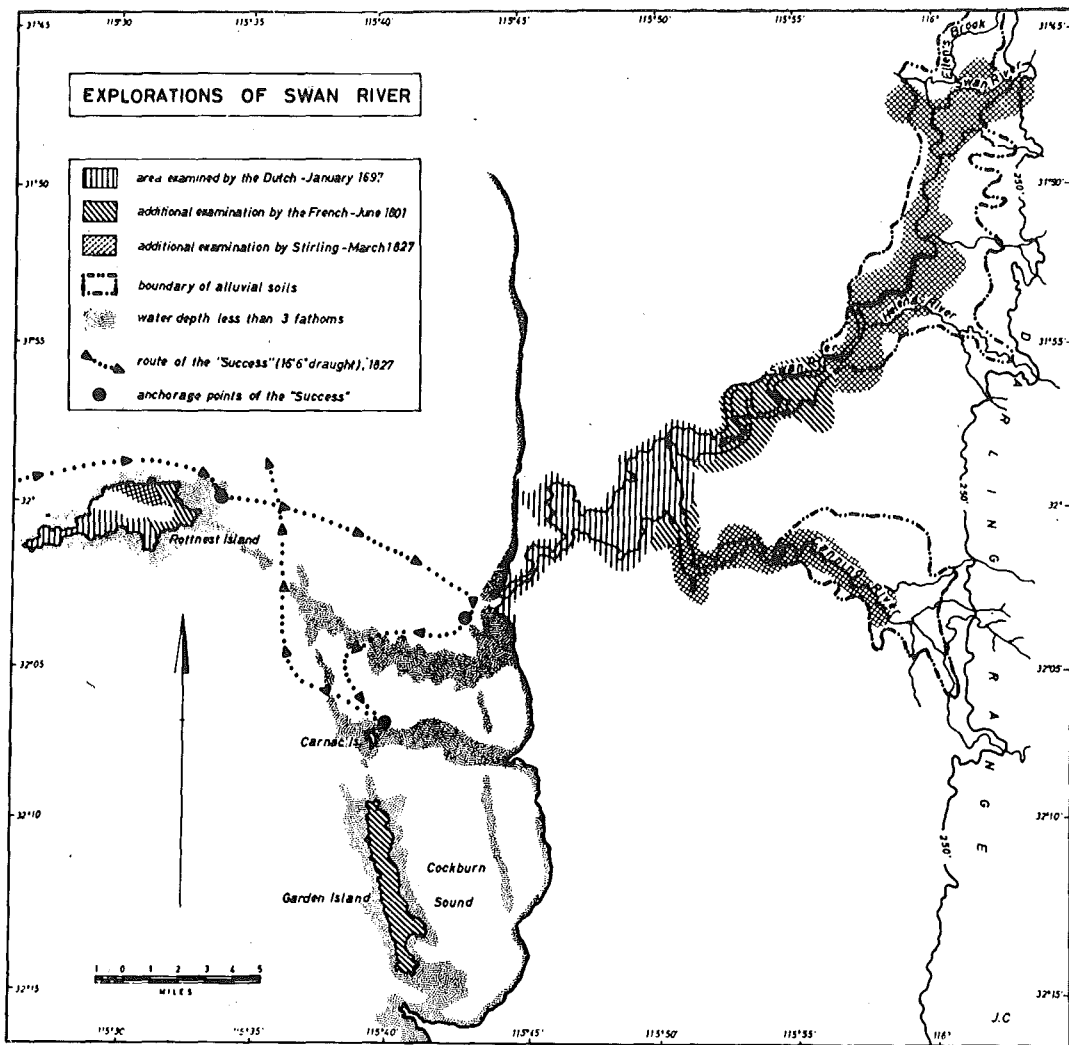


Figure 1. Explorations of Swan River.

Stirling's Examination

When the *Success* anchored off Rottneest Island on 5 March 1827, Stirling had two criteria to satisfy if his proposal to settle the area was to be considered. He had to demonstrate that a large, safe harbour existed and that there was sufficient fertile land to ensure a sizeable and stable colony. He wasted no time in attempting to do so. On 6 March, the *Success* was moved inshore, the master was sent to sound the approaches to Carnac Island and Stirling made a short sortie of five or six miles up the river. On the following day, the *Success* was moved to its permanent anchorage near Carnac Island and the survey

of Cockburn Sound was commenced. From 8 March to 16 March, Stirling, Fraser and 16 others explored the Swan River as far as its junction with Ellen's Brook, just below its exit from the Darling Range. A smaller party also made a brief survey of the Canning River. The full extent of these examinations and the nature of their commentary is shown in Figure 2. The remaining five days were spent completing the survey of Cockburn Sound and examining Garden Island and, on 22 March, the *Success* sailed slowly southwards. Two days were spent exploring Geopraphe Bay. By 2 April, the ship was anchored in King George's Sound. It arrived back in Sydney on 15 April 1827.

The *Success* had been away for a total of 89 days. Only sixteen of these had been spent in the Swan River area and a further seven between Rottnest Island and Cape Leeuwin. Noting this and the obvious

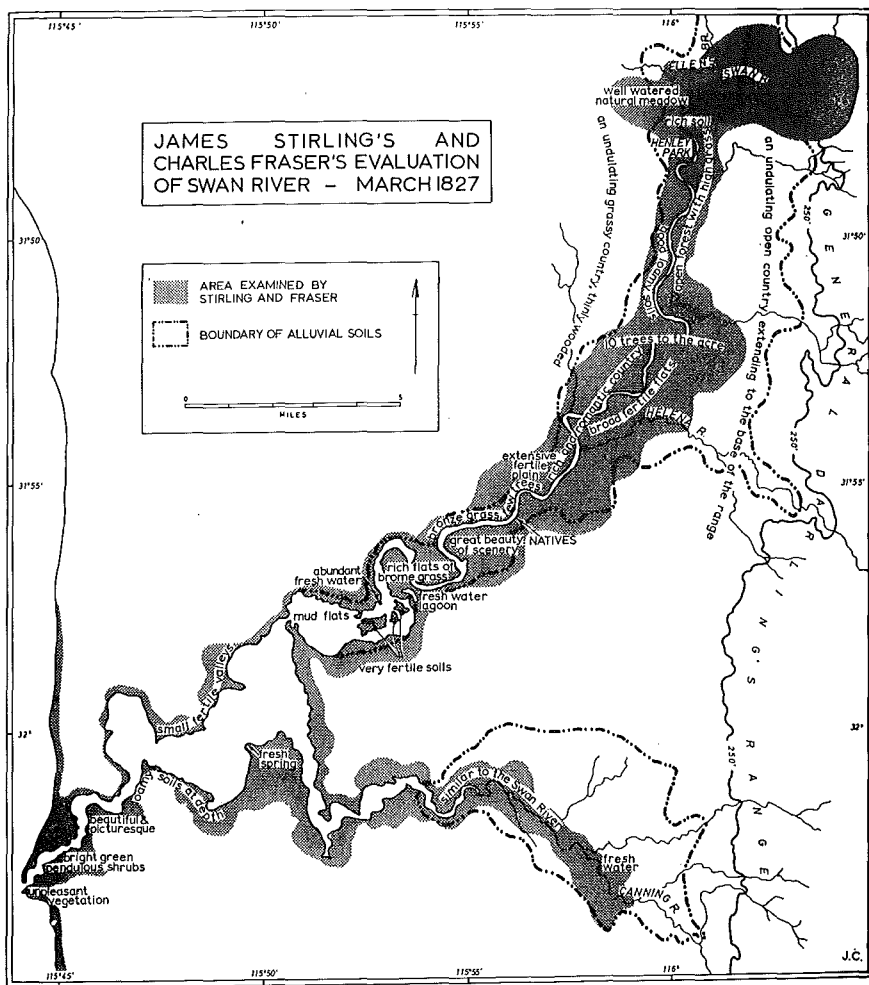
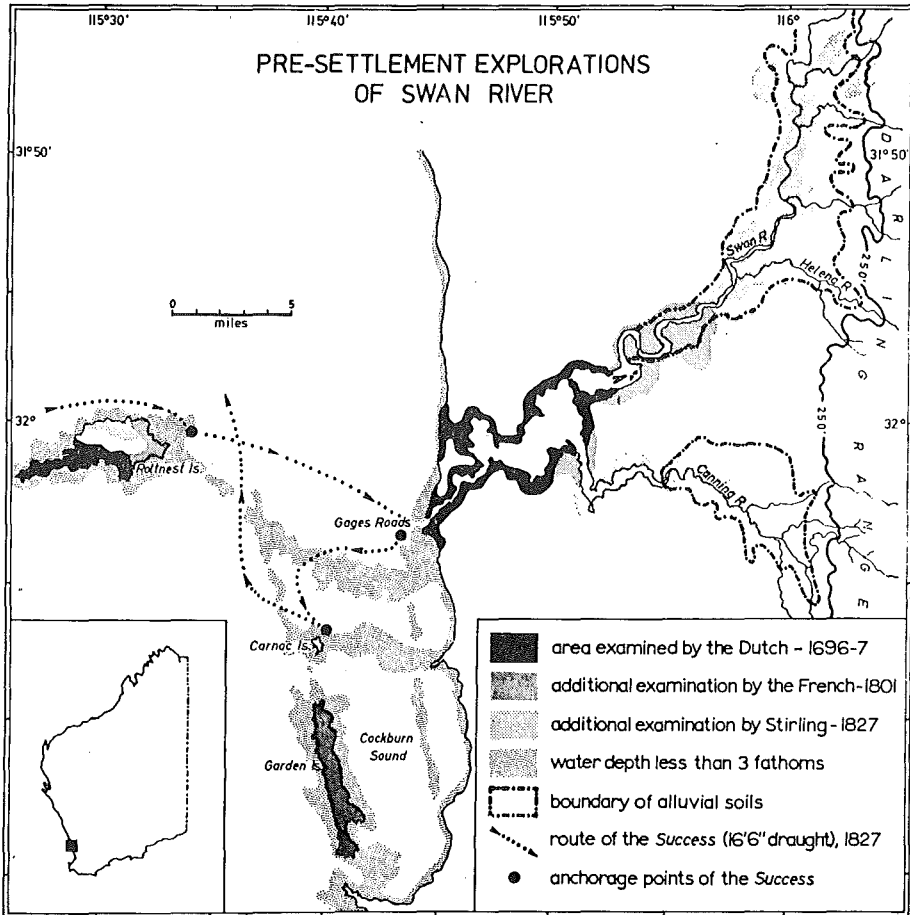


Figure 2. Evaluation of Swan River by James Stirling and Charles Fraser, March 1827.



Pre-Settlement Explorations of Swan River.

jubilation of the crew, Marnie Bassett has described the affair as a 'picnic episode' and observed that it was a very flimsy basis for founding a colony. There is some justification for this, but while Stirling spent little more time than either the Dutch or French at Swan River, he used it intensively for the solution of specific objectives. It should also be noted that this examination was considerably more detailed and far reaching than any other preceding the formation of an Australian colony (Figure 2).

The examination was certainly fortuitous. The *Success* narrowly missed running aground on several occasions (Figure 1). Of the nine days spent exploring the river, six were spent above Heirisson Island in the fertile alluvial triangle. In fact, the area of most intensive examination was at the junction of the Swan River with Ellen's Brook which is now the most favoured vine-growing area in Western Australia. The climate during their stay was exceptionally mild. Day time temperatures were never high and were always moderated by an early afternoon sea breeze.

Criteria for Evaluation

Stirling, acknowledging Fraser's great expertise, left the bulk of the detailed assessment to him, being content to judge the general character of the country only. The similarity of his conclusions with Fraser's suggests close co-operation and that he was strongly influenced by Fraser's judgment.

Stirling only occasionally directed attention to soils. More commonly, he described the vegetation, but, in neither instance, were his comments specific. For example, he recorded of the alluvial lands below the junction of the Swan and Helena Rivers: 'The Plants, which inhabit sandy districts, were becoming rare, while those which flourish in Loamy soils, were frequently appearing.' Generally, however, his evaluations were based on aesthetic criteria. Vegetation which was 'unpleasant to the eye' indicated poor soil while he noted that scenic beauty increased simultaneously with improvement in soils. He was attracted to several tree species, particularly the peppermints and the Swan River Cypress, believing that the beauty of the river banks 'is enhanced by the lofty trees, which occasionally adorn them and by the bright green foliage with which the shrubs are covered.' Variety of foliage and soil colour, as well as relief, added much to the quality of the landscape. The openness of the forest added to his visual enjoyment while suggesting that the area would be easy to clear and move through. The beauty of the river, which he recognized as having an important role as a transport link, framed the whole scene and he paid considerable attention to it in his description.



SWAN RIVER 50 MILES UP

(J.W. Huggins)

from the original in The Mitchell Library

Fraser was conscious of the beauty of the area and responsive to aesthetic aspects but, unlike Stirling, used several specific criteria including soils, vegetation and variety of relief in his assessment. The distinction between these is not clear cut, however, as he frequently used a combination rather than individual elements. He also concentrated on those elements with which he had the greatest familiarity, particularly vegetation types. Implicit in his evaluation is clearly ranked order of fertility (Table I).

Soils were initially classified by grain size into sands, earths, loams and alluvials. In a few areas at the base of the Darling Scarp, Fraser also distinguished gravels. These major soil types were further subdivided on the basis of colour so that the term 'barren sands' was applied to the whitish sands of the calcareous dunes, while the deeper yellow and grey sands of the inland dunes were simply called 'sands'. Grey sands with a darker colouring through the profile were termed 'virgin earths'. A full colour range from light to dark red through light brown to 'richest brown' was used to differentiate loamy soils. Alluvial soils were considered to be of equally high fertility, although Fraser considered that areas with less vegetative cover had more value because they could more quickly be brought into production. Soil depth was used as a further criterion of fertility, being mainly applied to loams of similar colour and texture.

Vegetation was often used to confirm an assessment of soil quality. So, for example, Fraser recorded of the coastal dunes: 'The appearance of the *Gnaphalium* . . . is in some measure confirmatory of the sandy character which the French gave of these hills.' Frequently, however, it was used as an alternative. The major types and their corresponding soils are listed in Table I.

Frequent use was made of high vantage points to examine areas not directly covered by his traverse and here vegetation was the sole criterion. He willingly admitted to being perplexed by the character of the vegetation, however, as relationships established in New South Wales did not appear to be valid:

It is worthy of remark that, in New South Wales, the presence of *Banksia*, *Zamia* and *Xanthorrhoea* are considered sure criterions of bad soil; and such being the impression on my mind, I pronounced all the land on which they were seen to grow to be sterile, until I examined a ridge on the banks producing them in great luxuriance, when, to my astonishment, I found the soil to be a red earth of great depth, producing the most luxuriant *Brome* grass.

The great height of these three species further added to his perplexity and this, in so small measure, confirmed his opinion of the high fertility of the region. In fact, he took a 'thistle' measuring 11 feet 6 inches back to Sydney as evidence of the superior quality of the soil. In addition, the great floral diversity and a relief characterized by hill and dale implied that the Swan River area would support a wide variety of crops including vines and cotton.

He found the luxuriance of the vegetation in marked contrast to the 'Gverbrown' of New South Wales and used such adjectives as 'vivid', 'brilliant' and 'rich' to describe the greenness of the foliage. This luxuriance not only confirmed the fertility of the soils but was a clear indication that the country was well watered:

The very trees furnished sufficient proofs of the abundance of moisture from the uniformly vivid green appearance, whilst the vast abundance of herbaceous plants set the matter beyond a doubt.

Stirling was to go even further, claiming:

The verdant appearance and almost innumerable variety of Grasses, Plants and Trees show that there is no deficiency in the three great sources of the Sustenance, Soil, Heat, or Moisture.

Thus, on the broad level, vegetation set the seal on the character of the area.

TABLE I
CHARLES FRASER'S SOIL CLASSIFICATION
SWAN RIVER MARCH 1827
(arranged in increasing order of soil fertility)

Main Soil Group	Sub Group	Associated Major Vegetation Type
Sands	barren sand sand	Gnaphalium (<i>Calocephalus brownii</i>)* Banksia, Angophora (<i>Eucalyptus calophylla</i>)
Earths	fine virgin earth	Callitris (<i>c. preissii</i>), Agonis (<i>A. Flexuosa</i>)
	sandy loam	<i>Banksia grandis</i> , stunted eucalyptus (<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>)
Loams	red sandy loam	<i>Hakea spp.</i>
	light red loam	Stringy bark (<i>Eucalyptus marginata</i>)
	rich red loam	Angophora (<i>Eucalyptus calophylla</i>), <i>Xanthorrhoea spp.</i>
	fine light brown loam richest brown loam	Acacia (<i>Acacia cyanophylla</i>) Brome grass (<i>Danthonia spp.</i>) Bastard gum (<i>Eucalyptus rudis</i>) Blue gum (<i>Eucalyptus redunca var. elata</i>)
Alluvials	alluvium	Brome grass (<i>Danthonia spp.</i>) Bastard gum (<i>Eucalyptus rudis</i>) Metrosideros (<i>Melaleuca raphiophylla</i>) Acacia (<i>Acacia diptera</i>)

* The current botanical name is shown in parentheses where this differs from Fraser's terminology.

Source: H.R.A., III, vi, pp.578-84; Hay, 1906, pp.6-19; S.G., 18.4.1827.

Results of the Survey

Stirling reported with obvious jubilation that former objections to the utilization of western New Holland, specifically 'the reported Sterility of Soil, the absence of fresh Water and the impossibility of finding a safe anchorage', were completely negated by this examination. On the contrary, he found that there were at least five safe mooring points near the mouth of the Swan River while Cockburn Sound, with its extensive, protected water, was as safe as any harbour on the Australian coast. Soils near the river were rich, the country was well-watered and the fertile Plain of Quartania, extending from Cape Leeuwin northwards and up to 50 miles wide, was an additional and unexpected bonus.

His earlier conjecture about wind patterns was confirmed and he saw no impediment to shipping. Clause, the surgeon on board the *Success*, endorsed his opinion of the healthiness of the climate and confirmed his belief that the area had great potential as a trade and convalescent station. He accordingly requested the government to speedily annex the area as it was the only suitable site between Shark's Bay and Cape Leeuwin.

Stirling had to confess that resources were 'neither numerous nor very valuable', but he saw no reason to be alarmed at this for 'the Country is more valuable for that which it might produce than for its actual productions.' He came to this conclusion by transposing known facts about other countries in similar latitudes and, as in most of his arguments, climate was singled out as the most important factor. What the future productions might be he did not specify but left it to the suggestion of analogy and the reader's imagination.

Not all Stirling's conclusions were based on verifiable fact. As the coldest land breezes came from the E.N.E., he concluded that 'Snowy Mountains' were situated in that direction. He considered the sea breeze to be the cause of rain. The vapour it carried was condensed by the colder air along the base of the Darling Scarp and fell as gentle showers. While this may have been a reasonable assumption, no rain fell during his time at Swan River. Similarly, he believed that the ample supply of water indicated that a large river would be found over the mountain range and flowing to the north. Perhaps the most illuminating of his speculations related to coal. He was convinced that the only reason coal was not discovered was that 'it was not particularly sought for.' This suggests that his high expectations of Swan River had been fully met. In this land of plenty, everything was possible.

Of the land in general, he differentiated three broad zones:

First, the Limestone ridge of an average breadth of 3 miles on the Sea Shore, then the plain, an undulating Valley of an average breadth of 30 miles, and lastly the mountain range rising abruptly from the plain to the height of 1,200 feet and extending North and South on a line parallel with the Coast and apparently co-extensive with it As the Hills are descended, the Soil improves, and, at about a Mile from their base, fragments of Rocks and large grained Quartz or Sand give place to a red loamy Soil, which gradually passes into the general average Soil of the plain.

It is clear from Stirling's summary of the advantages of Swan River that he had enlarged his initial conception of the importance of a colony based there. Rather than an appendage of British possessions in the Indian Ocean, it should be seen as an independent colony and an important part of Britain's much larger sphere of international activity.

Fraser's outlook, on the other hand, was more limited. He concentrated on the advantages the area held for settlers who would engage in agriculture. These were fourfold. The good soil; the open nature of the country, 'a state which allows not a greater average than 10 trees to an Acre'; the abundance of springs and fresh water and, finally, the ease of sailing up-river, considerably added to the desirability of the area. He carefully stipulated, however, that these comments only applied to the area up-stream from the Swan's confluence with the Canning.

Source: Cameron, J.M.R., 1973: *Prelude to Colonization: James Stirling's Examination of Swan River, March 1827*, Australian Geographer, Vol. 12 (4), pp.309-27.

MOVES TO FORM A COLONY AT SWAN RIVER

STIRLING'S FIRST APPLICATION FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP OF A COLONY AT SWAN RIVER

Captain Stirling to Earl Bathurst.
H.M.S. Success, Sydney, 15th May, 1827.

My Lord,

The Mail, by which I have at present the honor to address your Lordship, will convey, through

the medium of His Excellency General Darling's Report, some important and interesting information relative to the Western Coast of New Holland.

The Part, which the performance of my duty induced me to take in the Exploration of those Shores, and the successful result of the investigation these effected, emboldens me to apply to your Lordship and to solicit, in the Event of an Establishment being formed on that Territory, the honor of its Superintendence and Government.

In making this application, I feel that I have but little Claim upon Your Lordship's notice. I possess, however, some knowledge of the Country, to which I allude; and I pledge myself, should your Lordship be pleased to consider that knowledge as a recommendation for the Employment, I solicit, to promote with zeal and Industry the Wishes and Views of His Majesty's Government.

My Lord, I have, &c.,
JAMES STIRLING, Captain, R.N.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series I, vol. xiii, p.307.

COLONIAL OFFICE REJECTION OF HIS APPLICATION

Under Secretary Stanley to Captain Stirling.
Downing Street, 29 Novr., 1827.

Sir,

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Huskisson to acquaint you, in reply to your letter of the 15th. of May last, that as it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to form an Establishment on Swan River, it is not in his power to comply with your wishes in the manner to which you allude.

I am, &c.,
E.G. STANLEY

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, p.584.

REASONS FOR THE COLONIAL OFFICE DECISION

The contents of this document were sent verbatim to Governor Darling to explain the Colonial Office decision not to form a colony at Swan River.

Barrow to Horton.
13th October 1827.

It is abundantly clear from the reports of Capt. Stirling and Mr. Fraser that all the physical Elements required for a Settlement exist in the neighbourhood of that river – a safe and extensive anchorage – an immense inland basin easily made accessible for small Craft – a luxuriant vegetation superior to any on the Eastern Coast – plenty of building materials – timber, limestone, &c. and abundance of fine fresh water, with a climate similar if not superior to that of Sydney; but here I think the advantages end; and that Captain Stirling's anticipation of a commercial intercourse with India, with the Malays &c. are quite fallacious. The whole range of the Western Coast, even that part of it in question, is full of danger, and ships bound to India will avoid rather than seek it; nor can it be supposed

that our Indian Gentlemen would ever think of repairing to a penal Settlement on the Western coast of New Holland to recruit their health, as Captain Stirling has vainly imagined; and we know that neither Malays, nor Chinese ever trust themselves to the Southward of Torres Straits. It must not be looked at therefore solely in the light of a New Colony, almost as much separated from that of New South Wales, as it would be from England; for so difficult and uncertain is the passage through the Bass Strait that in the most favourable Season (of *Three Months* in the Year) it requires a passage of three Months for a Coasting vessel and they frequently cannot make it at all.

It appears however that an establishment is already formed in King George's Sound where there is also good anchorage in a safe and convenient harbour, and the same kind of advantages which exist at Swan River. If this settlement be intended to be continued, I would most certainly establish another on Swan River. There can be little doubt that the intervening country is equally good, and that the fine grassy plains which stretch along the feet of the continuous range of blue mountains would support a very numerous population, which proceeding the one part from the South Northerly, the other from the North Southerly, would speedily be united, and form an extensive and valuable settlement but wholly isolated, and would require all the machinery of an independent Colony to govern it.

It may be a question however whether it would be advisable to form such a Settlement while so many millions of acres of a rich Country remain unoccupied on the Eastern side, which is found to improve in beauty and fertility as we advance to the Northward, where every new location is a connecting link with the old established Colony and its Capital. No other motive I conceive than the political one of preventing other Nations (as the French or Americans) from possessing themselves of the South Western Corner of New Holland should induce us to anticipate them; and even in the event of its falling into the hands of the one or other of these powers, it would be a long series of years, before they could give our other Colonies much annoyance.

Source: *Swan River Papers*, Folio 3 (J.S. Battye Library of Western Australian History).

STIRLING'S SECOND APPLICATION

A THE ADVANTAGES OF SWAN RIVER

Captain Stirling to Under Secretary Hay.
18 Baker Street, 30th July, 1828.

Sir,

I beg leave to lay before you the following observations relative to the Western Coast of New Holland, and the eligibility of a certain portion of it for the purposes of Settlement.

You will be pleased to recollect that the first discovery of the region, comprehended between Shark's Bay and Cape Leeuwin, was effected by the Dutch. The Report, which they gave of it, was in the highest degree unfavorable. They represented it as affording neither fresh Water, fertile Soil, nor Safe Anchorage. The French under the Command of Monsieur Baudin, at the beginning of this Century, visited that Shore, And rendered an account of it more circumstantial, but equally unfavorable as that of the Dutch. The Report, which I had the honor to make last year to His Majesty's Government, differs so widely from that of the preceding Dutch and French Navigators, that it will scarcely be believed that we undertake to describe the same country, for, while they report it as Sterile, forbidding and inhospitable, I represent it as the Land which, of all that I have seen in various quarters of the World, possesses the greatest natural attractions.

Without entering upon the consideration of its prospective advantages or future Importance, I beg leave to state briefly that the Climate is equally healthy as that of the Cape and New South Wales: that it permits Europeans to labor throughout the day and in every Season of the Year; That, according to the Testimony of an experienced Person who accompanied me, the Soil is admirably calculated for every Species of Cultivation; That the Territory is abundantly supplied with fresh Water; And finally that, in the Neighbourhood of Swan River, there is a safe Anchorage, which may easily be converted into one of the finest Harbours in the World.

The above mentioned recommendations point it out as a spot as eligible for Settlement, that it cannot long remain unoccupied. It is not inferior in any natural essential quality to the Plain of Lombardy, and, as by its position it commands facilities for carrying on Trade with India and the Malay Archipelago, as well as with China, and as it is moreover favorably circumstanced for the Equipment of Cruizers for the annoyance of Trade in those Seas, Some foreign Power may see the Advantage of taking possession, should his Majesty's Government leave it unappropriated . . . I am not aware that there is any Part of New Holland better adapted for the Purpose of a Penal Settlement than the Country in its Vicinity.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.585-6.

B HIS COLONIZATION PROPOSAL

Captain Stirling and Major Moody to Under Secretary Hay.
23 Bolton Street, 21st Augst., 1828.

Sir,

For reasons, which we have had the honor personally to mention, we presume to address you on matters connected with the Colonization of the Western part of New Holland.

We are persuaded that the occupation of that territory by British Subjects would prove to be a measure highly beneficial to the Individuals concerned in it, and important to the interests and future welfare of His Majesty's Possessions in that part of the World. But, as the expense of maintaining Settlements in that Quarter may be thought a reason sufficient to prevent their formation by Government, we venture to ask whether, in such cases, any objection would be made to the unsupported employment of Private Capital and Enterprise in the occupation and improvement of that territory; and whether we may be permitted to form an Association, with a view to obtain a proprietor Charter, upon principles similar to those formerly adopted for the Settlement of Pennsylvania and Georgia.

From our personal experience in matters connected with Colonies, and from the local knowledge which one of us possesses relative to the Country in question, we confidently anticipate, from such an enterprize, advantages of a public as well as of a private nature; and, on these joint grounds, we respectfully recommend our present application to the notice of His Majesty's Secretary of State for War and Colonies.

We have, &c.,
JAMES STIRLING, Captain, R.N.
THOMAS MOODY, Bt.Maj.,
Roy. Engineers.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.586-7.

SUCCESS!

Mr. J. Barrow to Under Secretary Twiss,
Admiralty Office, 7th November 1828.

Sir,

In reference to Secretary Sir George Murray's letter of the 5th Instant signifying to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty His Majesty's Pleasure that immediate Orders be given to the Officer commanding His Majesty's Naval Forces at the Cape of Good Hope to dispatch one of the Ships of War under his Command, without the smallest loss of time, to the Western Coast of New Holland, with directions to take formal possession of the Western side of New Holland in his Majesty's Name; I am commanded by their Lordships to acquaint you, for the information of Sir George Murray, that the Senior Officer at the Cape has been directed to send His Majesty's Ship *Tweed* to execute this Service.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.587-8.

PEEL'S PROPOSAL TO THE COLONIAL OFFICE

Memorial from Mr. Thomas Peel, Sir Francis Vincent and others to Sir George Murray, 14.11.1828.

The Capabilities of this most important Possession to the British Interest are too numerous for the undersigned here to set forth, more especially as it is presumed the Vigilance of His Majesty's Government has put them in full Possession of the many great and peculiar Advantages this Part of that extensive Territory possesses, being in the Centre of the Eastern Trade, and forming a suitable Depot for Vessels navigating those Seas.

The undersigned beg leave to observe, that, in colonizing, there are more Difficulties to encounter than an abstract Description can set forth.

They trust their Proposals will be looked at as coming from British Subjects who are willing to render their Fortunes and Lives in furthering His Majesty's Views in making the Swan River a Colony, where the willing industry of His Majesty's Subjects may find that Honesty and Obedience will secure the fostering Arm of Government to every Class of His Majesty's People.

The undersigned propose to provide Shipping for the Purpose of taking out 10,000 of His Majesty's Subjects from England, Ireland and Scotland, to the Settlement at Swan River, and to find them in Provisions and every other Necessary usually allowed to Emigrants.

That they will bring to the Settlement 1,000 Head of Bulls, Cows, Bullocks and Calves for the Purpose of further Improvement and have Three small Vessels running from Sydney to the Settlement as Occasion may require.

They respectfully beg leave to call the Attention of His Majesty's Government to the present proposal, which they flatter themselves will stand unequalled, as they will have to take Ships to a Place where there is no Back Freight or Prospect of a Cargo.

It necessarily follows that the expense of the Conveyance of Families from England to Swan River will be much higher than it is to Hobart Town or Sydney. These Considerations bring the undersigned to make a nominal estimation that each Person will cost them £ 30.

The promise to complete within the Period of Four Years the taking over of the 10,000 Men, Women and Children from England, Scotland and Ireland.

They do not ask His Majesty's Government either to give or make a loan for the Purpose of completing their Undertaking; but, as a Payment for the Outlay, they are willing to take Grants of Land there, at a valuation of 1s. 6d. per Acre, to the full Quantity as a Payment in the Value for their Trouble, estimating, as before stated, 10,000 Souls at £30 per Head, to be received by a free Grant, as before stated.

They respectfully submit that, should His Majesty's Government be pleased to approve of this Arrangement, the undersigned shall, at their own Expense, provide proper Surveyors for the Purpose of locating to every Male not less than 200 Acres of Land from the Quantity they will have to receive, and that the respective Governors of the Settlements will sign the Grant as a Gift from the Crown.

The Wish of the undersigned in this Stage of the Arrangement is that they may have a Right to hold out the Promise of a Grant, by the Government Authority, to such Persons as they may select for the Purpose of emigrating to the Settlement.

It may not be unnecessary for the undersigned to give a partial Statement of their Objects in wishing to have large Tracts of Land.

It is well known that the Soil of Swan River, from its moist State, is better adapted to the Cultivation of Tobacco and Cotton than any other Part of Australia. Both of these Articles are intended to be cultivated upon a large Scale, as also Sugar and Flax with various important Articles of Drugs that the Climate is peculiarly adapted to the Growth of.

The undersigned are satisfied that, should they succeed in sending Home to the Mother Country that Produce with at the Moment the Government are indebted to Powers which would be their Policy to suppress, were they in a Condition so to do, they will have forwarded not alone the views of His Majesty's Government, but effected a national Good, which neither Time nor Circumstances can erase from the Annals of British History.

Their grazing Operations will go very extensively into the rearing of Horses for the East India Trade, with the most important Establishment of large Herds of Cattle and Swine for the Purpose of supplying H.M.'s or other shipping with Salt Provisions, as the Proximity of Salt Mines of the best Description hold out a great inducement towards its Success.

Thos. Peel
Francis Vincent
Edward W.H. Schenley
T. Potter MacQueen.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.588-90.

COLONIAL OFFICE REPLY TO PEEL AND ASSOCIATES

Under Secretary Hay to Mr. T. Peel, Sir F. Vincent,
Mr. T.P. MacQueen and Mr. E.W.H. Schenley.
6 December 1828.

Gentlemen,

I am directed by Secretary Sir George Murray to acquaint you, in answer to your Memorial dated

the Fourteenth of last Month, that the Terms upon which the free Grants of Land will be made in the proposed Settlement in Western Australia are those contained in the Paper, a Copy of which I enclose.

His Majesty's Government, however, are desirous that the Experiment should not be made in the first Instance upon a very large Scale, on account of the extensive distress which would be occasioned by a Failure in any of the Objects expected from the Undertaking and they therefore consider it their Duty to limit the Grant, which you request to a Maximum of One Million Acres. Half a Million of these will be allotted to you as soon as possible after the Arrival of the first Vessel taken out by you which may contain not less than 400 Persons of both Sexes, in the Proportions of not less than Five Females to Six Male Settlers; and if you shall cover this Grant by investments, in accordance with the enclosed terms, before the Expiration of the Year 1840, the remaining Half Million will be allotted to you by Degrees as fresh Importations of Settlers and Capital shall be made, in accordance to the Terms already mentioned. But, in order that you may suffer no ultimate loss by any reasonable retardation of your Investments, His Majesty's Government intend that the Allowance of Forty Acres for every 3 pound invested shall not be reduced on your Second Half Million of Acres, although your Claim to such Second Half Million may not arise before the Expiration of next Year, which is the Period limited to other Settlers applying for free Grants: but they will reserve your Claim at the original rate of 1s. 6d. per Acre until the Expiration of the Year 1840, after which Time no Part of your Grant will be held binding, upon which the whole required Sum of 1s. 6d. per every Acre shall not have been actually invested. A convenient Allotment of Land will be reserved for the Town and Harbour for Public Buildings, and for the Accommodation of future Settlers and a Priority of Choice to the extent of 100,000 Acres will be allowed to Captain Stirling, whose Surveys and Reports of the Cost have led to the Formation of the Settlement. The remaining Land will be chosen by the Settlers in the Order of their Arrival, those who arrive together drawing Lots for the Priority of Choice.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.593-4.

LAND REGULATIONS

Regulations for the guidance of those who may propose to embark, as Settlers, for the new Settlement on the Western Coast of New Holland.

1. His Majesty's Government do not intend to incur any expense, in conveying Settlers to the new Colony on the Swan River, and will not feel bound to defray the cost of supplying them with Provisions, or other Necessaries, after their arrival there, nor to assist their removal to England, or to any other place, should they be desirous of quitting the Colony.
2. Such persons as may arrive in that Settlement, before the end of the Year 1830, will receive, in the order of their arrival, Allotments of Land, free of Quit Rent, proportioned to the Capital which they may be prepared to invest in the improvement of the Land, and of which Capital they may be able to produce satisfactory proofs to the Lieutenant Governor, or other Officer Administering the Colonial Government, or to any two Officers of the local Government appointed by the Lieutenant Governor for that purpose, at the rate of 40 acres for every Sum of 3 pounds which they may be prepared so to invest.
3. Under the head of investment of Capital will be considered Stock of every description, all Implements of Husbandry, and other Articles, which may be applicable to the purposes of productive industry, or which may be necessary for the establishment of the Settler on the Land where he is to be located. The Amount of any Half Pay or Pension, which the applicant may receive from Government and which he may be prepared to invest as before mentioned will also be considered as so much Capital.

4. Those, who may incur the expense of taking out laboring persons, will be entitled to an allotment of Land, at the rate of 15 pound, that is, of 200 Acres of Land for the passage of every such laboring person over and above any other investment of Capital. In the class of "laboring persons" are included Women, and Children above 10 years old. With respect to the Children of Laboring people under that Age, it is proposed to allow 40 Acres for every such Child, above 3 years old, 80 Acres for every such Child above 6 years old, and 120 for every such Child, above 9, and under 10 years old. Provision will be made by Law at the earliest opportunity for rendering those Capitalists, who may be engaged in taking out laboring perons to this Settlement, liable for the future maintenance of those persons, should they from infirmity or any other cause become unable to maintain themselves there.

5. The Licence to Occupy will be given to the Settler on satisfactory proof being exhibited to the Lieut. Governor, or other Officer administering the local Government, of the amount of property brought into the Colony to be invested as above specified. The proofs required of this property will be such satisfactory vouchers of Expenses, as would be received in auditing Public Accounts. But the full Title to the Land will not be granted in fee simple, until the Settler has proved, to the satisfaction of the Lieut. Governor, or other Officer administering the Local Government, that the Sum required by Article 2, viz. 1s. 6d. per acre, has been actually expended in some investment of the nature specified in Art. 3, or in the cultivation of the Land or in solid improvements, such as Buildings, Roads, or other Works of that kind.

6. Any Grant of Land, thus allotted, of which a fair proportion, of at least one fourth, shall not have been brought into Cultivation, or otherwise improved or reclaimed from its wild state, to the extent of 1s. 6d. per Acre, to the satisfaction of local Government, within three years from the date of the License of Occupation, shall, at the end of the three years, be liable to one further payment of 6d. per Acre for all the land not so cultivated or improved into the Public Chest of the Settlement; and, at the expiration of 7 years more, so much of the whole Grant as shall remain in an uncultivated or unimproved state, will revert absolutely to the Crown. And in every Grant will be contained a Condition, that, at any time, within 10 years from the date thereof, the Government may resume, without compensation, any land not then actually cultivated, or improved as before mentioned, which may be required for Roads, Canals, or Quays, or for the site of Public Buildings.

7. After the Year 1830, Land will be disposed of, to those Settlers, who may resort to the Colony, on such Conditions as His Majesty's Government shall determine.

8. It is not intended, that any Convicts, or other description of Prisoners, be transported to this new Settlement.

9. The Government will be administered by Captain Stirling of the Royal Navy, as Lieutenant Governor of the Settlement and it is proposed that a Bill should be submitted to Parliament, in the course of the next session, to make provision for its Civil and Judicial Administration.

Colonial Office, 3^d February, 1829.

Source: *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vi, pp.606-8.

SWAN RIVER MANIA

Rumour . . . flourishes only when ego involvement is felt and when objective evidence or knowledge does not place rational constraints upon judgement and report.

(Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman, 1947: *The Psychology of Rumour*. New York: Henry Holt, p.33.)

The announcement that a colony was to be formed at Swan River, and the publication of the land regulations which were to apply, generated such an air of excitement in England that contemporary observers termed this 'Swan River Mania'. Several features contributed to this excitement but the most potent was the nature of the descriptions of Swan River which were circulated. Although based on Stirling's and Fraser's 1827 report, these descriptions became less like the original with each re-telling. They revealed, in fact, all the characteristics of a 'rumour situation' and had the effect of stimulating the imagination and expectations of prospective emigrants. While potential employers and shipping agents could be expected to paint Swan River in glowing terms as they stood to gain by so doing, it will be obvious from the extracts below that the Colonial Office and respectable newspapers and magazines also let the excitement of the occasion over-rule more rational judgement.

It is important to realize that there could be no check on the quality or content of the descriptions until first-hand accounts from the first wave of colonists reached England. The area, with the exception of Stirling's report, was completely unknown and, in any event, this report, being an official document, was confined to government circles.

PUBLICITY AND ITS EFFECT

It appears that John Bull-like, an excessive expectation has been excited throughout all parts of England, of the vast advantages to be derived by emigrating to the Swan River. Advertisements and placards were spread about in all directions, stuck in the first columns of newspapers, and pasted on the posts and church doors of all the poor and most remote and populous parishes. Overseers, church-wardens and country magistrates were invited to defray the expense of transporting hundreds and thousands of their starving population, of their diseased and decrepit poor, both in houses of correction and outdoor regiments of ragged obstreperous beggars. Steady going farmers, who had grown to the soil of old England for generations immemorial, threw up their leases and packed up to embark for the Australian paradise as they thought – Cockneys who had never from their birth handled any other tool than a goose's feather, and who knew no more of rural affairs than the green man at Blackbeatch, or the clipped vegetation automatons at Cumberland gardens, or the mermaid at Hackney, threw up their clerkships and shouted hurrah! for Swan River. The very idea of a black swan, that hitherto unknown and rare bird was a charm they could not resist. Off they all set, and after a 3 or 4 months view of the boundless watery horizon, they cast anchor in Gage's roads at the mouth of the Swan River.

Source: *Hobart Town Courier*, 31 October, 1829.

THE COLONIAL OFFICE

This document answers questions asked of the Colonial Office by a prospective settler. Emphasis is in the original.

Q.1 Is the climate supposed to be good?

A. The climate . . . is highly salubrious.

Q.2 Is it more moist than New South Wales?

A. It is worthy of remark that the Sea Breeze on the Coast is usually at SSW and is therefore *charged with moisture* and very cool. This moderates the Action of the Sun in Summer while, at the same time, when condensed by the colder air of the mountains behind the Coast, the vapour it conveys descends like Showers.

Q.3 Is the soil supposed to be equally good?

A. The Superiority of the Soil is mentioned as one of its greatest advantages, added to which is the facility with which a Settler can bring his farm into cultivation, owing to the open state of the Country, a state which allows not a greater average than 10 Trees to an Acre.

Q.4 Is the Country supposed to be well watered?

A. The general abundance of Springs producing water of the best quality, and the consequent *permanent humidity* of the Soil are two advantages which do not exist on the Eastern Coast.

Source: Colonial Office to Major Gray, 14.3.1829, *Swan River Papers*, Folio 16.



CAPTAIN DICK DEMI-SOLDE
(S. Stoutshank)
from the original in The Mitchell Library

THE ROLE OF THE PRESS

The newspapers of January 1829 all carried articles about the proposed new settlement at Swan River. In the ensuing months the *London Quarterly Review*, the *Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, the *Dublin Satirist*, the *Manchester Guardian*, the *Devonshire Chronicle*, and provincial papers in Worcester, Cheshire, Derbyshire – in fact, all over England – published articles on the advantages of Swan River. Interest was widespread through all classes of the population. To all those officers on half pay and soldiers on pensions too small to be of much use, the new land offered a challenge again in a life that had grown difficult and dull after the excitements of war. The agrarian revolution and the land enclosures had forced a great number of small yeomen to become no more than farm labourers; to these the prospect of owning their own land again was alluring. The industrial revolution had produced a state of poverty and depression from which numbers wished to escape. The crowded slums of manufacturing cities made an uninhabited and savage wilderness seem infinitely preferable. Gentleman, soldier, farmer, tradesman, poor man, adventurer – the vast empty new land attracted them all.

Source: Hasluck, Alexandra, 1955: *Portrait with Background* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press), pp.16-17.

NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, JUNE 1829

Mr. Fraser describes this country, which contains more than three millions of acres, as being generally, as far as he had an opportunity of ascertaining, very well adapted for agricultural purposes. It consists of a succession of low undulating hills, of which the soil is a fine brown loam, alternating with broad valleys of the finest alluvial soil; the hills appeared finely timbered; the valleys produce an immense variety of herbaceous plants in the greatest luxuriance, and through each of them generally flows a small stream, affording abundance of excellent water From the open state of the country and mildness of the climate, settlers cannot arrive at any season of the year without finding themselves enabled at once to plant some sort of grain – wheat, barley, and oats at one time, Indian corn at another, and potatoes and all kinds of vegetables throughout the whole year; so that, if they proceed with moderate prudence and industry, they can have little or no occasion to depend on others for these articles.

WESTMINSTER REVIEW, JANUARY 1830

It must be confessed that the character of the coast in the neighbourhood of Swan River is exceedingly different from that which the older navigators attributed to the whole western coast of New Holland. From lat. 31 to Cape Leeuwin, the soil has been found to be so fertile, the air so balmy and refreshing, and the scenery so fine, that it has been proposed to bestow the name of Australian Hesperia on this country The 'Australian Hesperia' is estimated to contain from five to six million acres, of which the greater part is supposed to be fit for the plough. On this tract of land it is calculated that at least a million of souls might find comfortable subsistence. The climate appears to be somewhat humid. The Summer winds are said to be invariably accompanied by rain, and the land and sea breezes create a moisture in the atmosphere, which renders the climate cool and agreeable and mainly contributes to the keeping up of that rich and romantic appearance which Captain Stirling so much admires.

SPECULATORS

THOMAS PEEL

Swan River is situated in a delightful and congenial climate, on the western coast of Australia, in Lat.

32° South, 90 days sail from England, and the country consists of many million acres of fine pasture, intersected with navigable rivers, and averaging ten trees upon the acre. The soil is capable of producing any crops, and the Colony will be situated in midst of the India and China markets.

Source: *The World*, 30 September 1829.

THE SHIPPING AGENT H.C. SEMPHILL

The new settlement on Swan River is in one of the finest climates of the Universe, about 3 months sail from England, highly suited for the production of cotton, silk, tallow, provisions, linseed, hemp, flax, and corn and the culture of the vine.

The country is of an open and undulating character, with excellent soil beautifully but not too much wooded; well adapted for wool-growing and the raising of stock. The coast and river literally teem with fish.

The shortness of distance between Swan River and the Cape of Good Hope, the Mauritius, the Indian Peninsula, Timor, Batavia, New South Wales, and many other important places, must open a door for commercial enterprise of a vast magnitude.

It has been calculated that rice, at one penny per pound, sugar at 3 pence per pound, coffee at 4 pence per pound, tea at 2 shillings and sixpence per pound, and many other commodities and live stock at equally low prices can be imported from Java in 5 weeks.

The harmless kangaroo seems to be the only wild animal in the occupation of this immense and beautiful country; while the splendid river and neighbouring lagoons are covered with myriads of swans and wild duck.

The fine teak-built ship *Lady Campbell*, Henry Murphy, Commander, burden 800 tons, possessing all the safe, splendid and roomy accommodation which a first-rate Indiaman is capable of affording, with more than half her cargo of goods and passengers already engaged, will sail for Swan River, Cockburn Sound, Port Vasse, and Port Leschenault on the 15th June next.

A Commissioner, furnished with the Government information, which includes the knowledge of the seat and situation of Swan Town, *the exact position* of all grants already made, the conditions of location, the regulations of the new Colony, its capabilities, woods, soils, fisheries and advantages, will sail in the *Lady Campbell* and accompany emigrants to their destination for the sole purpose of assisting in their settlement, and otherwise affording them the benefits of his information *on the spot*.

Engagements with young, stout and healthy labourers and mechanics of good character, are in the course of arrangements: and settlers sailing by this ship may be supplied with such labourers and mechanics on very advantageous terms.

Settlers will have no purchase money to pay for their lands, nor will they be chargeable for any rent whatever; their Grants will be conveyed to them in fee simple and will descend to their assignees or heirs for ever, in the same manner and way as any Freehold in England; thereby affording them the satisfaction of knowing that their labour will be wholly expended on their own property, and that the results of their patient endeavours will be enjoyed by their children, and their names transmitted with such estates to distant posterity.

The Emigrant will not have to wage hopeless and ruinous war with interminable forests and impenetrable

jungle, as he will find prepared by the hand of nature extensive plains ready for the ploughshare. He will not be frightened from his purposes by beasts of prey and loathsome reptiles. He will not be scorched by tropical heat nor chilled by the rigours of a Canadian winter. He will not be separated from the lofty protection of his native country, nor hardened in his heart by the debasing influence of being obliged to mingle with, and employ those bearing the brand of crime and punishment; and as no convict or any description of prisoner will be admitted into the Colony, those who establish property and families will feel that their names and fortunes cannot be mixed hereafter with any dubious ideas as to their origin.

Settlers will be provided at the Settlement with live stock and all kinds of agricultural implements on the lowest possible terms. Credit will be afforded to respectable Persons for a part of their passage money, should they require it, that they may not be crippled in providing themselves with necessaries for their location and the immediate commencement of cultivation.

Land so situated, *without tythes, taxes or rent*, under the special care and protection of His Majesty's Government, and where the British laws will be rigidly and uprightly administered, cannot fail being worth the attention of every industrious and discerning Briton.

Apply personally, or by letters post paid, to:

H.C. Semphill,
East India Chambers,
Leadenhall Street.

Source: *Swan River Papers*, Folio 5.

THE FIRST ARRIVALS

The publicity about Swan River attracted a population which was socially, vocationally and demographically atypical of its source. Most migrants were drawn from the lower middle classes or upper working classes. They were young, urban and predominantly masculine. Three-quarters were less than 30 years of age. A half was adult male. Children comprised one-third and had a high masculinity ratio of 1.9 : 1. These characteristics are consistent with the early stages of a migration flow and cannot be directly attributable to the effects of information alone. Three features do stand out, however. Firstly, dissemination had been most active in urban areas, particularly London. Nearly three-quarters (74.1%) of the migrants had urban origins, half came from within 50 miles of London and 23 percent came from the capital itself.

Secondly, because information had emphasized the benefits of early migration, not the difficulties, and had presented little constructive, practical advice, few colonists foresaw the hardships associated with pioneering. Their planning was both rushed and inadequate. Many intended to practise their urban trades. Although most planned to raise crops, few had farming experience and even less had previously supervised labour. They were as incompetent as they were inexperienced. Their equipment was frequently faulty, unsuited to local conditions, and superfluous. Most expected to immediately cultivate their land and, thus, had brought inadequate provisions and were quite unprepared for delays while land was explored and surveyed. On the whole, the migrants' attitudes and skills were those of a sophisticated urban society. They, therefore, had few of the attributes necessary for pioneering and were almost totally unprepared, psychologically or materially, for the conditions they encountered. Their inadequacy is most aptly illustrated by the example of the settler who invested solely in pointers, greyhounds, pheasants and rabbits. He planned to recruit servants from India and live a life of ease.

The migrants' expectations and their picture of Swan River were the most important products of the information, and are indicated by the example of one hopeful settler who wrote from Cape Town:

After our arrival at the land of promise we shall probably find temporary homes prepared for us by the Tweed and Challenger, which have been sent there for the purpose. Various exploring parties will be sent out. We expect the discovery of a large river, and a range of snow capped mountains.

These hopes were completely delusive but were common. As the colonial surgeon T.B. Wilson later observed: "many expected to be inducted into a land, if not flowing — easily made to flow — with 'milk and honey'". This is matched by the surveyor general's remark: "all come here expecting to find a perfect paradise". Stirling commented: "people come out here expecting to find the Garden of Eden". Not finding it, they were "in a state of disappointment and some in despondency".

In several instances, expectations were narrowly limited to financial returns, or to a simpler way of life. However, the major expectations and, consequently, the major disappointments, were of the fertility of the soils and the temperate quality of the climate. Colonists had been led to believe, or let themselves believe, that the good land extended from the coast to the mountains and stretched north and south in an immense fertile plain. On arrival, they found the coast was flanked by dunes of 'brilliant white sand', and that this sandiness and a scrubby vegetation continued inland for at least twelve miles. The winter was dominated by violent storms. These gave way to a hot, dry summer. All features were quite unexpected.

Most confusing was the appearance of Western Australia. It was so totally unlike anything the immigrants had previously encountered, that they reacted to it most unfavourably.

THE COLONISTS – THEIR CHARACTER

INCOMPETENT

A great number of the emigrants . . . were totally incompetent to undertake the management of land; most of them expected to be met with the luxuries in a wilderness, and fertile land on the very edge of the sea. But they soon found that the means of subsistence could not be obtained without labour; and that rich land, as in other countries, is less abundant than poor. Then many “gave themselves up to despair”, and left the Settlement without ascertaining its resources, or attempting to overcome those difficulties which are the invariable attendants upon the establishment of a new Colony.

Source: Powell, J. Giles, 1831: *The Narrative of a Voyage to the Swan River* (London: John Westley), p.xi.

INEXPERIENCED

The greater part of our Colonists are very unfit persons for the undertakings, in fact, they know nothing of what I term roughing it.

Source: *Shaw Letters*, 14.3.1830 (Mitchell Library, B164).

GENTEEL

Many passengers had arrived by the Atwick, who, it appeared, were now to be presented. The first was a gigantic, fierce-looking gentleman, dressed, I suppose, in the newest London fashion, who had been at some pains with his toilette; and it was very evident that he considered himself to be of no small importance. I thought at first, that he was ill adapted for the line of life into which he was about to enter; but on further consideration I concluded that if he took as much pains to cultivate the land, as he appeared to have successfully bestowed on the culture of his whiskers, he might surpass those less careful in their attire; especially as his martial frown might tend to keep his servants in due obedience.

Next came a pert-looking, smartly-dressed gentleman, who seemed to plume himself on his white kid gloves, neatly-tied cravat, well-polished boots, and scented white handkerchief. I thought he would have been more at home, behind the counter of a fashionable London repository, distributing ribbons and lace to the fair damsels than wandering about the wilds of Australia, in fruitless search of land, abounding in ready-made houses, and growing corn.

Next came a stout-looking personage, having all the appearance of a substantial English yeoman, whose jolly features, albeit a little shrunk from his sea fare, indicated a long acquaintance with beef and ale. He had not half told his story, when he was interrupted (contrary to all the rules of etiquette) by the dapper-looking gentleman, who, doubtless, thought his conversation more interesting and agreeable to his Excellency; but he was in turn, interrupted by the yeoman, who appeared determined to have his ‘say’ out.

Then came a modest-looking man, who presented two letters to his Excellency, and looked round the surrounding throng, with an expression of face that seemed to say ‘My fortune is made’. He appeared confirmed in this opinion, by a few civil words from his Excellency who put the letters in his pocket, perhaps never to be opened; or, if so, not attended to, the common fate of letters of introduction.

Many more had an interview; the greater part of whom did not at all appear adapted to undergo the privations and fatigues necessarily attendant of settling in a new country, even under the most favourable circumstances.

Source: Wilson, T.B., 1835: *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper), pp.193-4.

A CHOSEN PEOPLE

There is said to have been a desire among many people to make the settlement as select as possible; to embrace only well-connected, thoroughly educated gentlemen and their servants. This may have weighed with some, but was not general Nor were all the intending emigrants ignorant of the trials they would have to meet, nor were they unfitted by habit and experience to bear the heat and burden of colonial life. These men possessed considerable knowledge of farming, were ready to toil and suffer themselves, and with the help of suitable labour could as quickly as Nature would allow render Australian wilds productive. They carefully reflected on what was before them, and did not come to a decision in ignorance or by haphazard means They were, too, experienced, hard working agriculturists from the best farming counties of Great Britain, men of practice as well as theory. By them, the real foundations of Western Australian productive industries were laid, and only fortuitous, and therefore unforeseen, circumstances prevented their inaugurating an immediate era of great and wide-reaching agricultural prosperity. Substantially, Western Australia had for its pioneers more highly educated men of good society than perhaps any other British dependency. It would certainly have been better had the first arrivals been all simpler-minded men, inured to constant labour, and possessing in their determined minds and strong bodies the essentials of a character which would not be daunted, which will reduce the waste to beneficent productiveness, which will penetrate to the ends of the earth to serve its purposes.

Source: Kimberley, N.B., 1897: *History of Western Australia. A Narrative of her Past Together with Biographies of her Leading Men* (Melbourne), pp.38-9.

AN UNCOOUTH WORKING CLASS

Those who came as settlers, having a certain amount of capital, were on the whole highly respectable and independent persons, but the same could not be said of their workmen and servants. In many cases these seemed to have been recruited from parish outcasts, or engaged without any reference to character, and had consequently caused great inconveniences by their drunken and disorderly habits. So troublesome had these people become, the Governor reported, that he had found it necessary to appoint a magistracy and to engage a number of constables, for the purpose of preserving order in the settlement.

Source: Battye, J.S., 1924: *Western Australia: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp.97-8.

STIRLING'S VIEWPOINT

Among the Settlers who have since arrived some disappointment has arisen in consequence of their being in general little accustomed to encounter hardships and in all cases too sanguine in the expectations they have entertained respecting the Country.

Source: Stirling to Murray, 10.9.1829, *Swan River Papers*, Folio 4.

In this particular current of Emigration there are more than an usual number of men of property and Family: but at the same time it contains every description of person, and many who will be ruined by their own groundless expectations and helpless inefficiency.

Many of the Settlers land wholly unprovided with Food, and I am therefore forced to keep a large stock on hand to prevent want.

Source: Stirling to Twiss, 26.1.1830, *Swan River Papers*, Folio 4.

Among the settlers who arrived, there were many indentured servants, who had been recommended to their employers by parish officers, and whose habits were of the loosest description. To control these and to protect their masters in their just rights, as well as to secure the safety of persons and property, I was obliged before the conclusion of the year to appoint a magistracy and a body of constables; the first, from among the most wealthy and prudent of the settlers; the latter, including the steady and most respectable part of the working class

Since these appointments, I am happy in saying there have been fewer irregularities; and as the population of the Settlement is now generally diffused over a large surface, and as part have commenced agricultural labour, drunkenness and similar evils will be less frequent than when the people congregated in one or two towns with little to do.

Source: Stirling to Murray, 20.1.1830, *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, vol. vi, pp.615-7.

EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS

I'LL BE A BUTTERFLY

We copy the following extract of a letter written at the Cape, on the passage out, as evidence of the prospects entertained by the Swan River settlers:—

“After our arrival at the land of promise we shall probably find temporary homes prepared for us by the Tweed and Challenger, which have been sent there for the purpose. Various exploring parties will be sent out. We expect the discovery of a large river, and of a range of snow-capped mountains. If we can find the former, communications will be afforded throughout the length of a fine and generally open country, as extensive almost as Europe. So large a portion of inhabitable country, without a large river, is unknown in any other quarter, and contrary to the received rules of nature The natives may trouble us a little, but they are not in large numbers from the absence of sustenance, are naked and fear the water, having not even a raft or a canoe. We shall send to Timor for a supply of ponies, they say they are beautiful and strong, easily fed, and cost on the spot 3 pound or 4 pound each, which, with the expense of freight will come to about 8 pound They say the fruits and flowers are rich and rare; then ‘I’ll be a butterfly’.”

Source: *Hobart Town Courier*, 13.2.1830.

A SOUTHERN CIVILIZATION

Among the baggage and investments putting on board the numerous vessels bound for the new settlement on the Swan and Canning rivers, were numbers of fashionable coaches and carriages. We fear that

the expectations of some of the settlers may be disappointed, as it is not improbable that the springs may get rusty before the roads on which they are intended to run are formed.

Source: *Hobart Town Courier*, 22.8.1829.

A LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

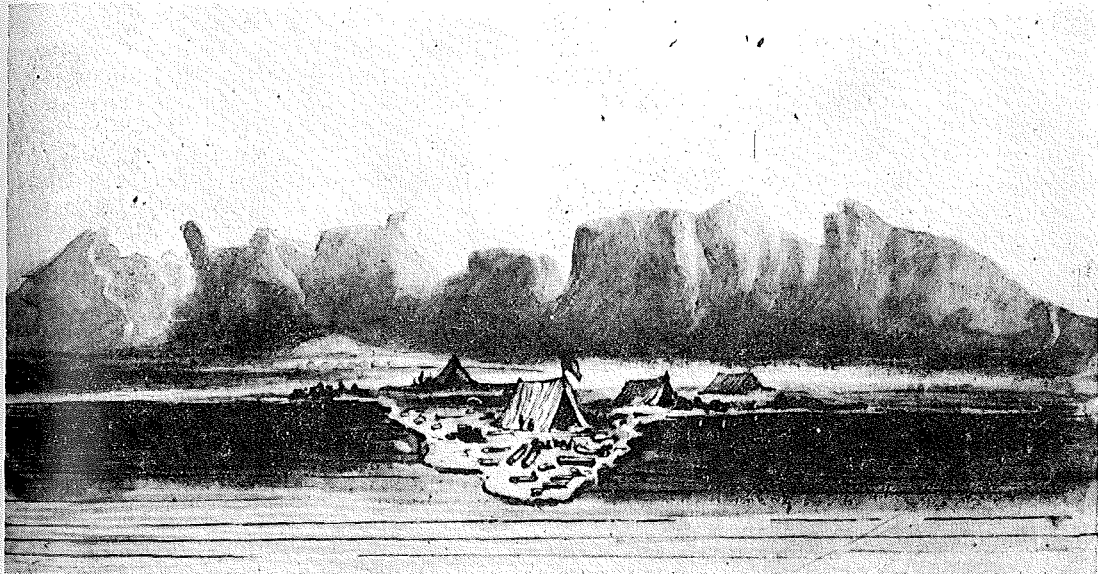
Much disappointment has already been felt by many, who, from the favourable report they heard in England, expected to be immediately inducted into a land, if not 'flowing — easily capable of being made to flow — with milk and honey'. On their arrival they find all the land, of which they had heard so much, already disposed of, and that they must discover good land for themselves if they can.

Source: Wilson, T.B., 1835: *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper), pp.224-5.

A GARDEN OF EDEN

People came out expecting to find the Garden of Eden and some of the working class were astonished at finding hard work an indispensable preliminary to meat and drink All in fact were in a state of disappointment and some in despondancy Of the earlier visitors, some went away and some took to work.

Source: *Stirling Letters*, 2.4.1831 (J.S. Battye Library, 449A).



CARNAC ISLAND ON WHICH THE STORES OF H.M.S. SUCCESS WERE LANDED
(Unknown Artist)

from the original painting in the Western Australian Art Gallery

SETTLERS' REACTIONS

THE VIEW FROM THE SEA

A mariner for the first time approaching Australia on its western coast finds little to allure the eye. A monotonous plain, bounded in the distance by a chain of bleak hills, stretches from the sea, and over the surface of this vast level are scattered sweeps of ground blackened by the passage of flames. The few wandering tribes leading a nomad life frequently, by accident or intentionally, kindle the tall dry grasses, or low bush. The fire, seizing greedily on the parched vegetation, travels with great rapidity, and driven by the wind, spreads to the base of the hills, where the conflagration spends its fury. Generally, in one direction or another, the navigator may perceive the smoke or flame of one of these prairie fires.

Source: Blair, David, 1879: *The History of Australia From the First Dawn of Discovery* (Glasgow: McGready, Thomson and Niven), p.194.

DISAPPOINTMENT

On the 14th of last month (Feb.) we anchored opposite the Land which was to have flowed with milk and honey, elated with distant hopes of having our expectations realised, which were heightened, when instead of white cliffs which are represented as forming the coast, we beheld a shore as far as we could judge from the deck of the vessel, green and with fine trees growing upon it. The following morning (Monday) Shaw made the best of his way up to the Governor for the purpose of beginning business The females, among others myself, waited the return of the gentlemen with breathless expectations, not doubting but the Land of Promise was to be a nonesuch After being away two days, they returned to the ship with countenances blank and disappointment on all their brows the governor told them there was no land to be given away on the Swan River, and he would advise all who could to go to the Southward where the land was reported much better than here. By the bye, it would cost as much or nearly so to go there as to come from England, the fact is simply this, all the land that is good for anything and that is but a small patch here and there is kept as government reserves and what land is given is given to Jews, Stock Brokers, Men of Wars Men etc., etc., and out of 180 souls now come to this Colony in hopes of living, or at least of not being starved to death, there are not a dozen who know what to do, and where they are to go; on your arrival here you are told to go look out for land and perhaps after fagging through impenetrable brushwood you have found a little patch of land which is not entirely sand you are told that *land is not open for location*.

There are some who have been here 9 months and have sown different seeds at different times, but they have all invariably died away and there is not one who has been able in the colony to raise either potato, cabbage, or any other vegetable. That man who reported this land to be good deserves hanging 9 times over The fact is this, each side of the river is nothing more or less than sand, white sand, incapable of being made to produce anything for the sustenance of man; the sheep find something among the bushes to keep them just alive. You will think I am giving you a woeful description, but I live in hopes that something may yet turn out better here.

Source: *Shaw Letters*, 10.3.1830 (Mitchell Library, B164).

INJUDICIOUS ASSERTIONS

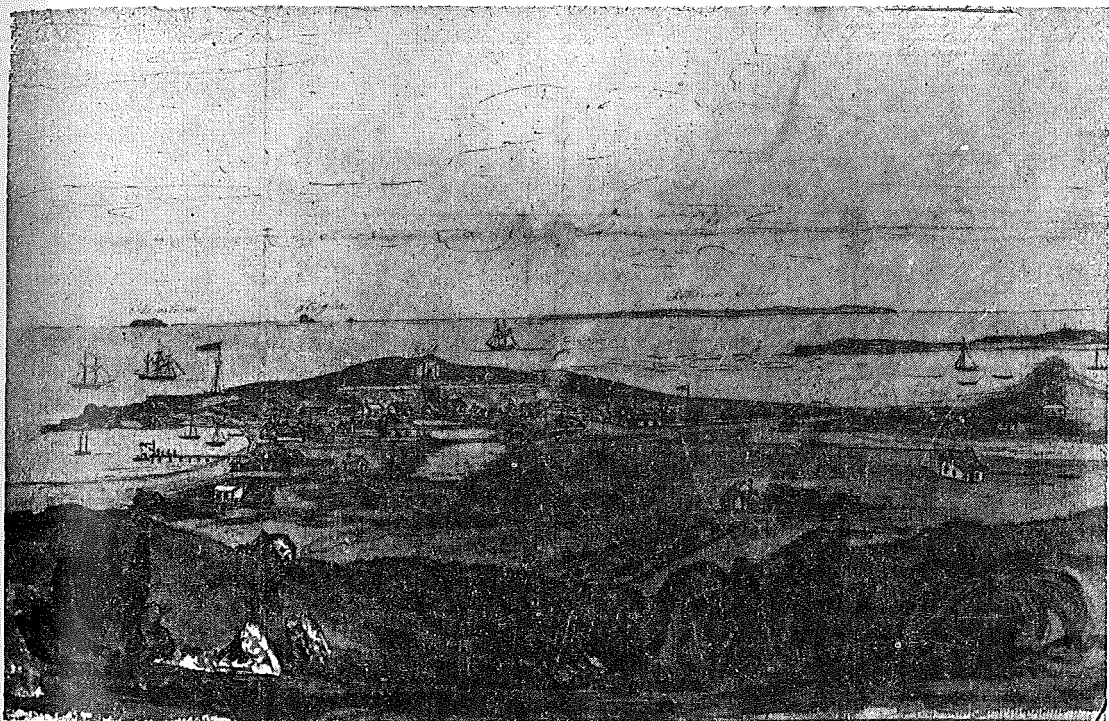
The land immediately in the vicinity of the Sea coast is decidedly bad and quite unfit for cultivation of any sort; but there is a great deal of very good herbage feed for cattle, and abundance of water.

There had been so much injudiciously (I think) asserted about the luxuriance of the soil, that many who have already arrived, and seen no farther than the immediate vicinity of the place where they landed, have professed much disappointment and you will likely hear very exaggerated accounts from different sources. I am, however, quite persuaded in my own mind that there is much to hold out encouragement to persevere.

Source: Dance to Twiss, 9.9.1829, *Swan River Papers*, Folio 4.

PALPABLE AND UNPARDONABLE DELUSIONS

The general aspect of the surrounding country, as far as the eye can reach from the anchorage, is truly appalling; and I am told by those who have been into the interior, that very little better is to be found even there. The seat of their commercial town, which is named Fremantle, is a perfect bed of sand, and all the manuring in the world will not produce anything in the shape of a garden for many years to come, anywhere within a circle of at least 20 miles. The water, too, which the poor creatures now drink is of the very worst description, procured from a small lagoon which is daily drying up as the summer advances Gage's Roads is without exception, the worst anchorage I ever lay in I have just returned from the headquarters (Perth), which is about 12 or 14 miles inland, on the north bank of the



VIEW OF FREMANTLE FROM CHURCH HILL EAST OF THE TOWN, 1832

(Richard Morrell)

from the original watercolour in the Western Australian Art Gallery

Swan, where you have one of the most delightful demi-panoramic views, I suppose, in the world; but this is all that can be said of it. Not a blade of grass to be seen — nothing but sand, scrub, shrubs, and stunted trees, from the verge of the river to the tops of the hills . . . I may say with certainty, that the soil is such, on which no human being can possibly exist. Indeed, so palpable and unpardonable a delusion is not to be met with in the whole annals of Gullism.

Source: Samuel Taylor, 15.11.1829, quoted in the *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 12.2.1830.

ANTIPODEAN CONFUSION

My first theory was upon the amount of evaporation at Perth during the summer months.

The excessive dryness of the atmosphere proved that the evaporation at the end of the rainy, or winter season must be very great indeed. My friend, Mr. H. had an hygrometer, which he kept in a small room adjoining that in which he usually sat; and this hygrometer afforded the ground-work for our theories. It proved most satisfactorily that the evaporation exceeded every thing of the kind known in any other part of the globe. It was clear that our atmosphere was drier than that of a brick-kiln when burning its best. But the great beauty and novelty of the theory was, that the evaporation was greater at night than in the day time.

This certainly puzzled us a good deal at first; but when once you are sure of your facts, it is astonishing how soon you come to mould your theory so as to make it perfectly agree with them, and manage to reconcile yourself to the most startling contradictions. After satisfying himself of the truth of the fact — that the evaporation was really greater by night than by day — Mr. H. proceeded to prove philosophically that nothing could be more reasonable than such a circumstance. From all that I could make out of his arguments, which were extremely logical and ingenious, it seemed clear that as everything in this country is diametrically opposite to everything in the old country, it was perfectly consistent with the regulations of nature in Australia, that evaporation should be greater at night than during the day time. Moreover, he placed great reliance upon the attraction of the moon

Men usually appeared incredulous when the theory was first broached to them; but when convinced of the fact, as proved indisputably by the hygrometer, they were compelled to acknowledge the truth, and forthwith looked upon it as a matter of course.

As the weather grew warmer — when the thermometer stood daily at about 86° in a cool room — the nocturnal evaporation increased. At length it grew to such a pitch, that the tube of the hygrometer containing the water was exhausted in a couple of nights. Notwithstanding the astonishment of Mr. H. he was enraptured at the triumphant confirmation of his theory. He devoted every moment he could spare from public duties, to the compilation of a learned and voluminous treatise upon the subject. He looked upon himself as destined to be considered one of the master-philosophers of the age, the promulgator of a new and wondrous theory, based not only upon sound argument, but upon long observation and indisputable facts.

Suddenly, however, the philosopher secluded himself from the vulgar gaze. The public wondered, and then became alarmed. The philosopher had taken to his bed. After some days I was admitted to his presence, and found him greatly enfeebled for want of rest. It was evident there was something that weighed upon his mind. After many ineffectual efforts, many sighs and some blushes, he faltered forth a confession that he feared our theory . . . of evaporation being greater at night than in the day time was not well founded. What did he mean? He continued, that one night whilst engaged upon a new hygro-metrical treatise, he had sat up till a very late hour; the door of the room which contained the

instrument was open, and the light from his lamp fell directly upon it. Absorbed in profound speculations, his eye occasionally rested upon the little instrument which stood upon a table. Suddenly, his vision was broken, and his thoughts were recalled from the future to the present, by seeing a living object move along the table, and quietly approach the foot of his column. Appalled and paralyzed, he sat immovable whilst he beheld an actual mouse, unrestrained by any scientific considerations, place its profane snout in the bowl of the hygrometer, and drink deliberately until its thirst was satisfied. It then retired, and other mice soon came trotting along the table and did the same.

Source: Landor, E.W., 1847: *The Bushman; or Life in a New Country* (London: Richard Bentley), pp.323-8.

THE ENVIRONMENT DESCRIBED

I will now make a few remarks on the appearance of the country, the nature of the soil and other matters about which the most erroneous notions are entertained in England, even by those who are conversant with the most approved writers on Australia, or who have been intimately associated with others who have resided in the colony. You must then, kind reader, divest yourself for a time of many of your English notions and prejudices. The appearance of the coast of Western Australia as you approach from the sea is most uninviting. It consists entirely of white sand, wherever rocks do not make their appearance. The sandhills, which rise gradually in the background, are very little varied in form and height and are for the most part covered with stunted trees and the scrub peculiar to the climate. These I am unable botanically to describe, but I will mention what I know whenever this, my humble attempt at a narrative, may seem to require it. Here I may mention that all the trees, although evergreens, want freshness; their foliage is of the most sombre uniform hue imaginable and the paucity of it causes their trunks and stems to bear a very undue proportion compared with the leaves. In short (speaking of timber trees only) nothing as a whole can be more at variance with English notions of the grouping of trees, producing a variety of tints and beautiful outlines, than any view of a portion of an Australian forest which it has yet been my lot to behold. Here and there are very agreeable home prospects but these are rare and always in the immediate vicinity of rivers or swamps.

Apparently an impervious mass everywhere presents itself of one uniform colour, a dark dirty green, over which on a hot day the hazy, African-looking atmosphere hangs like a pestilence. Where stems and trunks are visible, they are white, or red, or black, long and lanky, the two first being those of the White and Red Gum, the latter of trees burnt and scorched. Fire is most destructive here and well prepares the way for the wind, which continually levels the half-burnt trees. For 50 miles through the forest a tree is hardly to be found which has not the mark of fire upon it. 'The bush' presents a most striking and instructive picture of life and death. An immense timber tree is often seen with half of its trunk and branches, black, ragged and hollowed out by fire; while the other half is supported by a strip of bark, and sends forth more than the usual quantity of foliage, as if the destruction by fire of one half infused more life and vigour into the remainder. All the trees contain gum and are therefore very inflammable. In summer, when the dried-up grass and scrub are designedly, or accidentally, fired by the natives, many catch the flame and burn for weeks together, until they are either levelled with the ground, or their trunks remain hollowed out like the flue of a chimney. A large white Gum tree or Tuart tree which has died a natural death is a most frightful object — the stem and every branch being perfectly white.

In Van Diemen's Land, I am told, there are forests of these dead trees, presenting a most singular and even awful appearance. It may be readily imagined therefore that the general aspect of the country on this side of Australia at least, is by no means inviting.

Of some particular spots I shall be able to speak much more favourably, inasmuch as they have the advantage of greater variety of foliage. The Peppermint tree is very graceful and fragrant -- not unlike our weeping willow in England; the Tea tree also, either single or in clumps, is ornamental and there are many varieties of smaller trees, and shrubs. The Tea tree is most remarkable for its bark which is of a light fawn colour or dirty white; and peels off in strips, like sheets of paper and is frequently seen flapping in the wind, as if the stem had been enveloped in rags. The shrubs and plants, when examined in detail, are, many of them, curious and beautiful; the flowers brilliant and characterised generally by great delicacy of texture. The Grass tree (or Black Boy) is most curious; the Zamia, or Palm, beautiful and graceful. Yet, notwithstanding, I am very loath to believe there is any scenery to be found in the whole of this immense country at all equal to that in the picturesque parts of England. The leaves of many of the trees and shrubs grow in a vertical position to the stem -- which is more curious than ornamental.

I had always entertained a wish to see a country in a state of primitive nature and now that wish has been granted, but the impression on my mind has been very different to what I anticipated. Nothing can be more depressing than the loneliness of the bush away from any settlement. This feeling is greatly increased by the apparent absence of all animal life; sometimes not a bird or beast are to be seen for several miles and above all such an awful silence prevails, except when broken by the horrid screech of the great black, or white, cockatoo, that I have been almost tempted to shed tears at the desolateness of the scene, had I not called to mind the ubiquity of the God of Nature, who can make 'a wilderness like Eden and a desert like the Garden of the Lord', and cause 'joy and gladness to be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody'. Before, however, this happy time can come, the moral wilderness of the world must be broken up and cultivated. This forcibly reminds me of my clerical duties and the great responsibility resting upon me, the first of Christ's ordained ministers who has officiated in this extensive district.

But to return; the soil of this country varies in a remarkable manner, sand, however, greatly predominating, and I do not think there is, taking the country throughout, one acre in twenty, although they may naturally produce scanty herbage for sheep and goats, worth cultivation. On the flats, the borders of estuaries and banks of rivers, where alluvial soil has collected for ages and there are few, if any, trees of large size, the earth will produce spontaneously heavy crops of grain. There is much excellent wheat land too on the borders of rivers, but requiring great labour and expense to bring into cultivation, being heavily timbered. Choice spots for farms are immediately taken up by all who discover them and have the means to purchase. Such, however, is the scarcity of money and labour that many proprietors' large estates in this country are almost useless and even burdensome. In the fertile tracts the general character of the soil is patchy, rarely continuing the same over any great extent of ground, loamy, of red brick earth, or stiff clay. Lime and ironstone rocks protrude occasionally, but there is no such thing as a stone the size of a pea to be seen. All the rest of the country is sand

All one's English notions of gardening must be reversed. Seeds and crops in general must be put in for winter production for as summer commences everything quickly ripens and goes off. With fruits it is different, but of these we have as yet gathered none. We shall, I hope, in the course of time have abundance of grapes, figs and peaches, if I may judge by the luxuriant state of my young trees.

Few common English fruits thrive here, except apples. All the gooseberries and currants I brought out were quite dead. Many of my seeds have not come up, but some were sown too late. I have realised three strawberry plants from seed given me by Dr. Carpenter. How these will get on, time will show, but I fear they will not bear.

In regard to climate, Western Australia is very changeable. This winter has been unusually severe, but still there are always very sudden changes, unpleasant to the feelings, though not unfavourable to health.

A burning sun by day is succeeded by a cold, chilly, moonlight night, when often two blankets and a coverlid are necessary to keep the body warm. I feel less of these extremes than others and my general health is certainly better than when in England. I have experienced no cold feet or chills, which used to be the case with me.

The worst of it is there is no enjoyment in walking of an evening, or by moonlight, for the mosquitoes are then so troublesome that you are driven into the house. Nightfall, too, comes on so suddenly that when there is no moon you must calculate upon nothing but darkness immediately after sundown. We have repeated hoar frosts and rain has descended in torrents, and hail also. When away from shelter in unsettled weather you are wetted completely in a few moments; the least cloud which rises instantly discharges its contents, often so heavily that I can compare it to nothing better than a shower bath, only of longer continuance. Yet the atmosphere is so dry that colds are seldom caught unless the body be overheated. Dampness is never left in anything. I think the prevalence of influenza is to be ascribed to checked perspiration. Upon the whole, so far from being the 'finest climate in the world' which the one we are now living in has been represented, I cannot but think there are many parts of Europe far superior to it. In this climate the necessity for great labour and exertion in those unused to it should be taken into consideration. I am describing exactly what I feel, with some prejudice no doubt (for we are all more or less prejudiced), but still correctly according to my feelings.

As in all countries so near the tropics, insects here are a great plague and none more so than fleas; against which we wage a perpetual bloody war; and towards which we entertain none of Tullie's considerable mercy, by wrapping them in a piece of paper and handing them out of window as he used to do at Balsham. Were he now with us he would hardly find waste paper enough for the purpose and his whole time, day and night, would be occupied in this benevolent employment. If he were to step incautiously for one moment into a deserted hut in the bush, he would find his trousers covered with these vermin, which he would have to sweep off as well as he could. Seriously, they are a great drawback and so are the mosquitoes and sand flies. On uncleared land they are ten times worse.

But entirely setting aside these minor objections as to climate and insects, there are many things to be endured by the emigrant, even under the most favourable circumstances, which everyone ought to be well aware of before he leaves his native country from choice. Great expense of living for the first few years, incessant labour, constant necessity for exertion, want of servants; all of these should be taken into consideration by those who have hitherto been unused to such trials, before they venture upon a settler's agricultural life. The only other pursuit open to gentlemen is store-keeping, a dishonest and degrading trade and too often iniquitously carried on. I should mention, however, general agency and auctioneering which is the best business, if confined to these employments. The young do not so much feel their hardships -- but a colonial life uncivilises them most lamentably and while we are compelled to live as day labourers, literally earning our bread in the sweat of our brow, some omission of civilised forms cannot be avoided. I must own, Mary and I are often so oppressed with the weight of labour, care and anxiety, which it has pleased God we should undergo, that we should utterly despair of going on. If we were not mercifully supported by One who has promised that 'as our day so shall our strength be'.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals (1841-1844)* (Perth: Lamb Paterson), pp.3-8.

THE NEAR COLLAPSE OF SWAN RIVER COLONY

The chaos and confusion which surrounded the colony's formation had catastrophic results. Immigration almost ceased by August 1830. By then, many of the first arrivals had already returned to England, or had gone on to other colonies. They took their disappointments and their tales of woe with them. Thus, rumours of the colony's total failure were circulating in London as early as January 1830. This was less than eight months after Stirling had sailed so confidently into Cockburn Sound with the government officials, their wives, and their children. From then onwards, the colony became increasingly viewed as a poor place to which to emigrate. The flow of shipping dried up, the settlement became more and more isolated and in fact, it nearly collapsed.

Why the colony should have come so close to failure has been the subject of much debate. Most influential at the time, and for a long time after, were the explanations put forward by Edward Gibbon Wakefield who was then actively promoting the settlement of South Australia in line with the theory of colonization he had developed. Wakefield's argument was distorted, however, for he exploited the mistakes made in Western Australia, particularly the generous system of land grants, to gain government support for his theory and his proposed settlement. However, other explanations, particularly those put forward by the settlers, were very different. Later scholars like Staples and Cameron, who have paid particular attention to conditions within the colony itself, strongly refute Wakefield's explanation and present radically different points of view.

CONTEMPORARY EXPLANATIONS

EDWARD GIBBON WAKEFIELD'S EXPLANATION, 1836

590. *Chairman:* What do you consider the most striking practical case of evil resulting from too great a profusion in granting land? The most striking, because it happens to be the last, is the new settlement of Swan River in Western Australia.

591. **In what way is that the most striking?** — That colony, which was founded with a general hope in this country, amongst very intelligent persons of all descriptions, that it would be a most prosperous colony, has all but perished. It has not quite perished, but the population is a great deal less than the number of emigrants; it has been a diminishing population since its foundation. The greater part of the capital which was taken out (and that was very large) has disappeared altogether, and a great portion of the labourers taken out (and they were a very considerable number) have emigrated a second time to Van Diemen's Land and New South Wales. The many disasters which befell this colony (for some people did actually die of hunger), and the destruction of the colonists taken out to the Swan River, and the second emigration of the people who went out, appear to me to be accounted for at once by the manner in which land was granted. The first grant consisted of 500,000 acres to an individual, Mr. Peel. That grant was marked out upon the map in England — 500,000 acres were taken round about the port or landing-place. It was quite impossible for Mr. Peel to cultivate 500,000 acres, or a hundredth part of the grant; but others were of course necessitated to go beyond this grant, in order to take their land. So that the first operation in that colony was to create a great desert, to mark out a large tract of land, and to say, "this is a desert — no man shall come here; no man shall cultivate this land". So far dispersion was produced, because upon the terms on which Mr. Peel obtained his land, land was given to the others. The Governor took another 100,000 acres, another person took 80,000 acres; and the dispersion was so great that, at last, the settlers did not know where they were; that is, each settler knew that he was where he was, but he could not tell where any one else was; and, therefore, he did not know his own position. That was why some people died of hunger; for though there was ample supply of food at the

governor's house, the settlers did not know where the governor was, and the governor did not know where the settlers were. Then, besides the evils resulting from dispersion, there occurred what I consider almost a greater one; which is, the separation of the people and the want of combinable labour. The labourers, on finding out that land could be obtained with the greatest facility, the labourers taken out under contracts, under engagements which assured them of very high wages if they would labour during a certain time for wages, immediately laughed at their masters. Mr. Peel carried out altogether about 300 persons, men, women and children. Of those 300 persons, about 60 were able labouring men. In six months after his arrival he had nobody even to make his bed for him or to fetch him water from the river. He was obliged to make his own bed and to fetch water for himself, and to light his own fire. All the labourers had left him. The capital, therefore, which he took out, viz. implements of husbandry, seeds and stock, especially stock, immediately perished; without shepherds to take care of the sheep, the sheep wandered and were lost; eaten by the native dogs, killed by the natives and by some of the other colonists, very likely by his own workmen; but they were destroyed; his seeds perished on the beach; his houses were of no use; his wooden houses were there in frame, in pieces, but could not be put together, and were therefore quite useless and rotted on the beach. This was the case with the capitalists generally. The labourers, obtaining land very readily, and running about to fix upon locations for themselves, and to establish themselves independently, very soon separated themselves into isolated families, into what may be termed cottiers, with a very large extent of land, something like the Irish cottiers, but having, instead of a very small piece of land, a large extent of land. Every one was separated, and very soon fell into the greatest distress. Falling into the greatest distress, they returned to their masters, and insisted upon the fulfilment of the agreements upon which they had gone out; but then Mr. Peel said, "All my capital is gone; you have ruined me by deserting me, by breaking your engagements; and you now insist upon my observing the engagements when you yourselves have deprived me of the means of doing so." They wanted to hang him, and he ran away to a distance, where he secreted himself for a time till they were carried off to Van Diemen's Land, where they obtained food, and where, by the way, land was not obtainable by any means with so great facility as at the Swan River.

592. **There are some small settlers remaining at the Swan River, have they taken means to secure combinable labour in the way of slaves?** — They have not attained that object, but they have sent a deliberate petition to the Government here, praying that one of the conditions under which the Swan River colony was founded, namely, that convicts should never be sent there, might be abrogated in their favour; that they might be favoured with the service of convicts from England; for that unless that were granted to them, it was quite impossible for them to do any good in the colony.

593. *Mr. Gladstone:* **Do you know whether large portions of the land which were given to individuals, have been broken up since?** — Not broken up, I think, because the colony was so far ruined that there has been no demand for land. But some of these large tracts have been forfeited to the Government in consequence of the non-fulfilment of the conditions attached to them. I believe that Mr. Peel never obtained the whole of his grant. I believe that he arrived too late; that he did not fulfil one condition, which was, that he should arrive in the colony at a certain time.

594. **How many acres did he obtain?** — He forfeited that grant; but as everybody could obtain an unlimited quantity afterwards in proportion to the capital taken out, and as he had taken out a sufficient capital to obtain 500,000 acres, he probably did obtain them in another spot, though not in the spot fixed upon in England.

595. **Are you aware what has been the disposal of those 500,000 acres, do they remain uncultivated?** — I should imagine that they do, and that they have reverted to the Crown.

969. **To return again to the case of Swan River; do you think that the great reason of the dispersion in**

Swan River was the easy acquisition of land? Was it not, in the first instance, the contrary, that all the best land had been monopolized? — I think not. The ruin of the Swan River took place through two processes. First, from the dispersion, arising, as I believe, from those large grants to individuals. Every new grantee was obliged to go beyond the former grantee in order to obtain his land. That of itself dispersed the colony; but the more important cause, as I believe, of the ruin of the Swan River, was, not the dispersion of the settlers over a great space, but the separation of their labour into fractions, by means of there being no hired labour. Labour never has been combined, except by one of two means: either by means of slavery, or by means of hire. One cannot conceive any other means by which labour should be combined. The moment labour in the Swan River colony was no longer hireable, all labour was cut up into the weakest possible fraction; and, to put the case extremely, I know, but still in a way which, I think, will illustrate this point, I believe that if one man should have two minds, and that man should be able to cut himself into halves, each having a separate will, then the great facility of obtaining land would induce each half of a man to separate itself from the other half; and thus, in colonies where there was no restriction upon land, we should see the people divided into fractions, so weak as to have but one hand each. Nature produces some combinable labour. Nature makes two hands together; but more combination than that never occurs, without slavery, where land is extremely cheap. The great cheapness, therefore, of the land at Swan River seems to have led the settlers to divide themselves into isolated fractions, and so to reduce the power of production to the minimum.

Source: Edward Gibbon Wakefield's evidence to the Select Committee on the Disposal of Waste Lands in the British Colonies, *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1836 (512), Vol. xi.

A SETTLER'S VIEWPOINT, 1834

It will not be disputed that amongst the earlier class of settler, forming at the present time by far the larger number of inhabitants of this Colony, I mean those who arrived within the first twelve or eighteen months after its establishment, great delusions prevailed regarding the character of the country chosen for their future homes. The proximate causes of this delusion were — the description given of it by the botanist Fraser during his transient visit in the year 1827; . . . the eagerness displayed by certain great speculators in England for obtaining large grants of land here; the interested puffings of ship owners and agents regardless of any result beyond obtaining freight and passengers to this or any other part of the world; and, to crown the whole, the article in the 'Quarterly Review' of 1829.

In this agreeable vision, every thing known or conjectured in painted "en beau", the sanguine temper of the writer concealing extenuating such disadvantages as were ascertained to be in existence or ought reasonably to be expected, brings forward into prominent light every circumstance favoured to his purpose. The river was to be navigable, inconvenienced, but not impeded, by a bar, practicable for small vessels, affording the facility of landing the settlers; property immediately on his estate; its numerous shoals, sinuosities and intricacies remained unknown or undescribed; an immense extent of land, unvisited or seen only through a telescope, was flashily laid down on the map as "undulating grassy plains", mineral coal was to be found when sought, the "mornings and evenings cool and refreshing" and trees exactly two to the acre.

These I take to be the proximate and immediate, although not the primary, sources and origin of the then prevailing delusion

Reasoning on these premises, they [the settlers] were not blameable in their anticipations that a large, an unbounded, extent of fertile land in the immediate vicinage of the Swan and navigable rivers lay waiting for distribution, where abundance, independence and wealth were attainable by the simplest operations of husbandry, or grazing. Hence, too large a part of their resources were expended in elegant

preparations for this expected life of ease and affluence; too small a reserve kept back for the possibility of failure or disappointment. As they were immediately to be fixed on their respective grants without delay or hinderance, too many goods were embarked of a bulky, and perishable quality; as the land was to be highly fertile, and the climate favourable, a small stock of provisions only was deemed necessary for their sustenance until an early produce and increase of stock should set them at ease on this head. The stock embarked were of the most improved and expensive breeds, with a large supply of agricultural implements; some harps, pianofortes, ottomans, sofas, and carriages, and not a few marriages, were fitted up and contracted for the situation. On these objects their funds were greatly impaired or expended, and as ready money was to be useless in this happy state of existence, few made a reserve of that essential article. Similar errors occurred in the class of persons selected as indentured servants, agricultural or mechanical; little discrimination or inquiry being made regarding their fitness for the undertaking by habits of industry, steadiness and sobriety.

Some less sanguine, widely husbanded their resources when they had surveyed the actual character of the country, and these at the present time may be esteemed amongst the most thriving and beneficial members of our little commonwealth.

Embarking this punctum saliens of a young nation in good ships, snug in the cabins six-feet-by-six, we will leave them for five months with prosperous gales, dreaming of twenty thousand acres of land all fertile, Italian climates, Arcadian lives, flocks, herds and whale fisheries, and again visit them on their arrival on these shores where too soon these visions were dissipated by realities.

Source: 'Colonus' to the editor of *Perth Gazette*, 28 June 1834.

MODERN VIEWS

RECKLESS LAND LAWS

Western Australia (Swan River) was the third of the colonies in point of time and was important at this stage not so much as a colony but as an object lesson of the old colonial methods which 'the theorists of 1830' attacked. The settlement presented an example of a colony strangled by the excesses of the initial years and, until the revival at the end of the century, its history was marked by long-continued lethargy.

After Captain Stirling had examined the Swan River country in March 1827, and after the botanist Fraser had indulged in rhapsodies of 'the evident superiority of the soil', the Home Government resolved to anticipate French designs by founding a colony. Various schemes were proposed. Two gentlemen wanted a proprietary charter and a syndicate of four asked for a grant of four million acres in return for the introduction of 10,000 small farmers. But the Government refused the one and broke up the other by its modifications. One member of the syndicate, Peel, was left to proceed alone.

The administration therefore stepped in and at once commenced to alienate the land recklessly, at the rate of 40 acres for every £3 invested (the 'Old Terms' of December 1828). Not until 1830 was this ratio diminished, although two new sets of regulations in 1829 introduced reasonable conditions of cultivation and effective punitive sanctions. In addition to these three codes, there were other factors in the land policy of the young colony. Civil and military officials were allowed to accept land in lieu of salaries, the Governor, Stirling, leading the way with a grant of 100,000 acres. In addition, there was Peel who had stepped into the place of the syndicate. After protracted negotiations, he had obtained a priority right over 250,000 acres, with increments up to a million acres in proportion to later investments. But it was understood that, if he failed to land 400 settlers before November 1829, he was to be

entitled to no advantage whatever. Peel in his turn, issued a set of land regulations providing for farms of 200 to 1,000 acres. The novel feature of his plan was that labourers were indentured for five years but were to be settled on small blocks after three years of that term. Peel thus provided for a hierarchy of middle-class farmers and small peasant proprietors and, assuming that the indenture could be enforced, allowed expansion in proportion to the growth of the settlement.

There was thus four sets of Government land laws and one private code, alike only in their common fate. All went awry. Not one of the premises on which the arguments were based was true in fact and not one of the clauses of land regulations resulted in settlement. Adverse circumstances combined with inappropriate theory to retard development.

The land itself was forbidding. In place of the grassy undulating plains expected, most of the land near the coast was sandy soil, 'a miserable region' scarcely more valuable for the purposes of cultivation than the deserts of Africa. On the horizon, the granite mass of the Darling Hills prevented advance and confined the settlement for the time being to the arid coastal region. The banks of the Swan and the Canning were soon taken up and the startling position was reached that, in a country where land was virtually given away, 'want of land is the chief objection'. Five months after settlement, a new arrival could find no land.

The scarcity was aggravated by the large grants to officials who had no intention of using the land, and by the deception practised to obtain large holdings. 'In almost all instances, men received a much larger quantity of land than they were justly entitled to. Every article of provisions, furniture, household effects, and even wearing apparel, were taken in account.' Dispersion, therefore, was inevitable, its naturally evil results being intensified because many settlers were 'quite unqualified for such a life, knowing nothing of agriculture'. Still immigrants kept pouring in, only to add to the discontent and to swell the numbers of the disillusioned. The young colony seemed to consist of speculators who had land and farmers who wanted land, of officials who worked for land and of traders who battered on those who were clamouring for land. Land hunger was the keynote; land use was not thought of.

Even those restrictions necessary in the social interest were rigorously opposed. For example, the restriction on river frontages and the derided 'ribbon grants', though a source of trouble for years, were a tribute to the first Surveyor-General, Lieutenant Roe. His, too, was the idea of subdividing grants and giving part over the mountains.

But these restrictions were insignificant, for the great evil had been wrought before the first vessel left England. At the time of Stirling's first report, when the colony was but six months old, 525,000 acres had been actually allotted, yet, with a population of 850 permanent residents, only 39 locations had been effected. 'They got land and they starved'. No stronger condemnation of such principles of colonization could be obtained than in this first report from Swan River.

In the meantime, Peel, who had seemed an intrepid adventurer a few months before, had encountered ruin in a strange manner. He did not arrive by the stipulated date, whereupon the Governor insisted on the letter of the contract and at once threw open the land over which Peel had obtained a priority right. On his arrival, therefore, he found himself treated as a common settler and obtained a holding of 250,000 acres stretching from the Murray to Cockburn Sound and partly to the south of his previously selected land. But from his landing, his conduct was 'inexplicable' and 'capricious' and, deserted and dejected, he saw his scheme of a southern principality collapse in ruins. His land regulations were not strong enough to prevent the escape of his labourers and he himself lacked the executive ability needed to force a way to greatness in a new colony. The Peel of the negotiations commands respect; the Peel of Swan River only a pity mingled with contempt.

The colony thus seemed in the grip of a reaction but there were some hopeful features. Much good land

was found along the rivers and, in August 1830, Ensign Dale's passage of the mountains opened the York Country. On the coastal side, too, land was alienated in the Leschenault and King George's Sound districts by the end of 1830.

But the root fact remained that 1,200,000 acres had been alienated and only 160 acres were cultivated. Land was now a drug and could not be sold at any price. The new regulations (July 1830) were too late with their restrictions and the farmers were 'nearly mad with melancholy'. In 1831, the chief characteristic of the colony was 'an unavoidable lack of energy and activity' and the Swan River settlement had amply proved the folly of large grants and dispersion of settlement.

Source: Roberts, S.H., 1924: *History of Australian Land Settlement, 1788-1920* (Melbourne: Macmillan), pp.48-50.

LIMITED POTENTIAL

Between 1820 and 1850 three new Colonies were settled in Australia: the experimental free colonies of Western Australia and South Australia, and Port Phillip, the pastoral offshoot of the convict colonies. The settlement of Western Australia was the least successful of these ventures in colonization. The British government assented to the settlement largely through suspicion of French activities in Western Australian waters and because of its desire to claim the whole of the Australian continent as part of the Empire. Fears of the French had prompted occupation of King George's Sound by a small military force in 1826. A more permanent private settlement, which would lay claim to the western mainland and which would not heavily involve the treasury, was therefore welcomed as a solution to an awkward imperial problem.

The settlement was suggested by a syndicate of well-to-do speculators who were impressed by Stirling's favourable account of the Swan River which he visited in 1827. Stirling wrote to Hay that the Swan River was "a spot so eligible for Settlement, that it cannot long remain unoccupied. It is not inferior in any natural essential quality to the Plain of Lombardy, and, by its position, it commands facilities for carrying on Trade with India and the Malay Archipelago, as well as with China." The syndicate offered to settle the Swan River with 10,000 people, if they were granted four million acres of land at 1s. 6d. per acre. The British government offered a million acres, refused the syndicate a monopoly of the land, and promised no more assistance than a small military force. The government made it quite clear that it would not undertake an extensive and expensive scheme of colonization, nor would it underwrite any failure or loss by the syndicate; the Colony would have to depend on the support of capitalists at home and the efforts of settlers in the Colony. The speculators demurred, three withdrew, but the fourth, Thomas Peel, accepted the terms and land and lost his personal fortune in the venture. Stirling was appointed the first Governor, and the settlement began in 1829.

From the beginning the Colony had a precarious existence. Western Australia did not possess the economic potential of the eastern Colonies; it could not offer a quick return to enterprise. Moreover, the British government refused assistance to prospective emigrants, who, in the thirties, could get assisted passages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land. Furthermore, once the Colony had been decided on, Stirling's original extravagant report was never checked. The Colony was established without further investigation of the land or its possibilities; and, unfortunately, the land did not prove to be as rich as Stirling described it. The system of colonization depended on liberal land granting. The original scheme allowed forty acres (reduced in 1831 to twenty acres) for every three pounds invested, with an obligation to improve the land within ten years. Extravagant grants were made in the first three years; half a million acres were allotted to about seventy settlers within eighteen months, and by 1832 a million acres, much of it unexplored and unsurveyed, had been granted. But without adequate labour

the land could not be worked quickly, and there were too many landholders and too few agricultural workers. After an initial burst of immigration, the settlement remained almost static for twenty years. The population in 1849 was still below 4,500.

The original settlers had not the slightest idea of the pioneering difficulties they would have to face. They all under-estimated the economic and personal costs of colonization. Their numbers included only a few experienced farmers; the background of most was middle-class, respectable in character and property, but unaccustomed to the problems of making virgin country habitable and profitable. They dreamt of a squirearchy, but their attempts to reproduce British society in the wilderness were brave and pathetic. Their plans were often hopelessly unpractical.

Thus, even after ten years' experience, when the Australind settlement at Leschenault Inlet was planned in England, the town plan made provision for six churches, a town hall, a barrack, a vegetable market, a corn market, a wool market, a fish market, a general market, a cattle market, a hospital, two colleges, a museum, a library, a Friends' meeting house, an observatory, and all the other facilities of an English county town. The settlers came to an empty country. Their goods and chattels were weather-beaten on the beaches until they would be housed in the most primitive of huts. There were no roads. The land was poor and difficult to work. Labour was scarce. Even Peel, and others who brought labourers with them, could not afford to employ them. There was, in general too little labour to improve estates quickly, so that the proprietors and their families had themselves to turn to rude farming. Many were ruined, many left, but those who stuck it out prospered moderately in the long run.

Gradually colonial life assumed order and land was brought into economic use. By 1833 sheep farming proved profitable, and thereafter the sheep spread inexorably outwards from Perth. The discovery of good land to the south and east, towards the Peel and Leschenault Inlets, and in the Avon Valley, enabled the growth of both agriculture and sheep farming. By 1835 the period of greatest uncertainty was over, and by 1839 the Colony was almost self-sufficient in foodstuffs and had an established pastoral industry. But progress was slow, and the Australia-wide depression of the forties brought the slow advance almost to a halt. Harvests were good, but prices were low. Exports in 1849 were a mere £ 20,000. The colonists wanted a substantial immigration, but had neither the means to provide it nor the incentive to attract it. And so they turned to transportation at a time when eastern Australia was revolting against the convict system. The colonists needed capital and labour, and they were prepared to risk the social stigma of convictism for the economic benefits which they hoped would flow from cheap convict labour and the British government's necessary expenditure in the Colony on the convict establishment. At the colonists' request, an order-in-council of 1st May 1849 made Western Australia a penal Colony. The move had almost universal assent in the Colony. "We believe," wrote the *Perth Gazette*, "the present time to be a crisis in the affairs of the Colony — that it is now on the verge of ruin and abandonment and that it requires all the fostering in the power of Government to enable it to stand." It was a desperate remedy for a desperate situation.

Source: Hartwell, R.M., 1955: 'The Pastoral Ascendancy, 1820-50', in Gordon Greenwood (ed.), *Australia: A Social and Political History* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson), pp.70-72.

THE PROBLEM OF LAND

Throughout the first twenty years of settlement in Western Australia the land problem overshadowed all others. The unavoidable delays in the exploring and granting of the land, and the generally unpromising appearance of much of it, did not impress those amongst each fresh batch of optimistic colonists who had hoped to make quick profits and build stately mansions in the midst of their vast estates. Finding no ready-made colony, they looked for some object on which they could pour their

scorn. This they soon found in the land system. In fact, the chief subject of discussion amongst the colonists and investors at that time, and in the years which followed, was whether or not the land had been granted in the way it should have been, and to the people who should have received it. This discussion was taken up in the home country soon after the first letters came back from the colony. It was the subject of many articles, editorials and letters in English newspapers, and of numerous books later published about the early history of the colony. Many exaggerated statements were made, and the settlement suffered very much from the bad publicity it received. Chief among the colony's critics were E.G. Wakefield and the 'systematic colonisers', who were at the same time busily preparing to launch a new colony in South Australia, taking care to avoid the 'errors' made in the West. To them, the Swan River Settlement was the best example of the worst method of colonisation, and the scheme of Thomas Peel they ridiculed as the most foolhardy that was ever set afoot. About both they were poorly informed, and unfortunately for the colony their general condemnation was listened to by many at home.

The critics of the Swan River Colony -- as it was known for more than fifty years -- claimed that too much land was given to too few people, too close to Perth. They also believed that naval officers had received grants which they had no intention of cultivating, and that Stirling, his officials and their families were entitled to far too much land.

It was said that the settlers were not given their grants in the strict order of their application, and the Governor had reserved some of the choicest land for public purposes, and even for a race-course. These complaints are to be found in much of the bulky correspondence between the settlers and the government officials, and there was an element of truth in all of them. Many of the grants were very large, enormous by English standards, and Stirling had the right to select 100,000 acres in addition to his salary. But the method of allocating the land grants does not fully explain the circumstances under which the colony had got into difficulties as early as a year after the first landfall. The main problem for the settlers was to get a grant which was of practical use; as far as the future of the colony was concerned, the size of the grants and their location mattered little. In the Swan River region the soil was very patchy in quality and much of it was not suitable for agriculture then or even in modern times. The colony did not have good wheat and pasture lands close to the coast or to its capital, as did the later colony of South Australia. The scrub-covered limestone and sandy western coast, with its picturesque grass trees, sweet-smelling boronia and brilliantly coloured kangaroo paws was of little immediate value. The rainfall was good; 35 in. in a year, mostly falling in the winter. The vegetation, too, was botanically interesting to such collectors as Charles Fraser, John Gilbert and Georgiana Molloy. But it was almost useless as fodder and frequently poisonous. Western Australia, had, in fact, more poisonous plants than any other Australian colony, the most toxic varieties being found in the south-western districts. Only along the frontages of the small river systems emptying into the sea on the south-western coast were there small areas of grassy pasturage and rich soil which could quickly be brought under the plough, and there were not enough of those to go around. Even so, much of this land was low-lying and liable to be flooded or water-logged in winter. The Swan River, too, was salty for many miles upstream. On the coast in the extreme south-west appearances were deceptive, and this was not the first time in Australian history that scenery had been confused with fertility. There were few natural pastures, and many square miles were covered with a dense hardwood forest which, though majestic in appearance, was extremely difficult to clear. The wheat and pasture lands which were pioneered in later years lay to the east across the Darling Range or to the north in the Champion Bay district. The deficiencies of nature, rather than the land system, were chiefly to blame for the slow start of agriculture, and there was therefore an element of truth in the hackneyed comment about Western Australia that it had 'the best country ever seen to run through an hour-glass.'

Source: Crowley, F.K., 1960: *Australia's Western Third* (London: Macmillan), pp.11-13.

THE FIRST TEN YEARS IN THE SWAN RIVER COLONY

(Some old errors corrected)*

By A.C. STAPLES, M.A., Dip. Ed.

By all the rules of colonisation, the early settlement on the Swan River should never have survived. It did more than that: it gave rise to a collection of myths which confuse historians and students to this day.

After the arrival of the first settlers in June 1829, the flow of colonisation continued for barely 18 months, bringing 1777 people as a promise of a satisfactory population to come. But the flow dropped to a trickle and ceased so that by the end of 1832 only 1970 persons had arrived and over 100 had left. For 10 years these few people persisted in their folly until attention was again directed to W.A., and organised efforts were made to assist the pioneers. In 1838 the population was still less than 2000. Then in 1839, the 2000 mark was passed and the population began to increase steadily, doubling itself by 1844.

Many attempts were made at the time to explain the 10 years of stagnation. These theories have degenerated into myth based on an uncritical acceptance of old stories. The settlers blamed the misrepresentations of those who left in disgust. Stirling pointed to the number of settlers who lacked all pioneering qualities. Then the prophet spoke; all listened to him and repeated his words from generation to generation. Edward Gibbon Wakefield insisted that the troubles at Swan River arose from the scarcity of labourers caused by the dispersion of settlement over a large area, and from the unwise distribution of land by Governor Stirling.

When Wakefield's evidence is being considered, it must be remembered that at the time of making these statements he had not visited Australia – or any colony, for that matter. He based his opinions on information which he gleaned from settlers who had returned to England and on written description which came into his hands. "A Letter from Sydney" was written before any information was received from the Swan River settlers. Speaking before the Select Committee which examined British colonisation in 1836, Wakefield said –

"The ruin of the Swan River took place through two processes. First, from the dispersion, arising as I believe from those large grants to individuals. Every new grantee was obliged to go beyond the former grantee in order to obtain his land. That of itself dispersed the Colony, but the more important cause as I believe of the ruin of the Swan River was not the dispersion of the settlers over a great space but the separation of their labour into fractions The great cheapness of the land at Swan River seems to have led the settlers to divide themselves into isolated fractions, and so to reduce the power of production to a minimum."

Wakefield was an expert at splitting hairs in argument. Note that he says here "The first reason for failure was the dispersion of settlers over a great space, but the more important cause was not the dispersion of the settlers over a great space, but the separation of their labour into fractions." If the second reason means anything, it is that the greater the area they took up, the less labour could be applied to each acre, thus fragmenting the labour available. But his whole argument runs like this -- "The first reason for failure was the dispersion, but the more important cause was not the dispersion, but the separation." This curious characteristic was a feature of all Wakefield's writings, but was more clearly evident when he spoke before the committee of enquiry.

* Reprinted from *Early Days*, Vol. V, part VII, 1961, pp.83-96.

He described the distribution of land in these words in "England and America" which he published anonymously in 1833:

"In disposing of the waste land in W.A. the government began by granting 500,000 acres (nearly half as much as the great county of Norfolk) to one person. Then came the governor and a few other persons with grants of immense extent. The first grantee took his principality at the landing-place; and the second of course could only choose his outside this vast property. Then the property of the second grantee compelled the third to go further off for land, and the fourth again was driven still further into the wilderness. At length, though by very brief process, an immense territory was appropriated by a few settlers, who were so effectively dispersed, that, as there were no roads or maps, scarcely one of them knew where he was positively: but his relative position, not to his neighbours for he was alone in the wilderness, but to the other settlers, to the seat of government and even to the landing place of the colony, was totally concealed from him."

Note the play on words "neighbours" and "settlers".

Speaking before the Committee he used these words to express his ideas about the settlers not knowing where anyone was:

"Though there was ample supply of food at the Governor's house, the settlers did not know where the Governor was and the Governor did not know where the settlers were. The dispersion was so great that at last the settlers did not know where they were; that is each settler knew that he was where he was, but he could not tell where anyone else was; and therefore he did not know his own position."

This odd logic seems to have built up for Wakefield the reputation of being a very clever man with an acute intellect.

The responsibility for the wrong decisions he laid upon Stirling and Peel; Stirling for the unwise distribution but Peel for the nature of the regulations under which the land was distributed. "The five or six gentlemen who projected the foundation of the Swan River colony had in point of fact, the power of settling the regulations under which land was disposed of in the colony . . . Mr. Peel was the head of the colony though in England. The power was virtually granted to him and his associates to frame the regulations. They framed the worst possible regulations." They were in fact British Government regulations. In this way W.A. came to be identified with Peel's company and was later referred to as "The Colony of a Company", a "company" whose Peel Estate failed so notoriously.

Many of us recognise this as the story we grew up with; it is the story we were taught in school; it is being taught to children now attending school. It is a myth – a fictitious legend or tradition, accepted as historical. It is based on incorrect information, on distorted information and special pleading. The person chiefly responsible was Edward Gibbon Wakefield. Some attempt must be made to destroy this myth, even at the risk of offending those who prefer old stories because they are old. It is necessary to examine closely the foundations upon which myth rests. The questions which must be answered refer to conditions which affect W.A. during the first 10 years, from 1829 to 1839, during which time the colony might well have been abandoned.

1. *What kind of colony was it?* Was it a colony of a company or a government colony?
2. *How many investors initiated the colony?* How many were told they might select land under the land grant regulations? How many actually received grants?

3. *How much land did they obtain?* What was the average size of the grants allotted?
4. *How was the land distributed among the investors?* Did large grants force late comers to select in distant areas?
5. *What were the causes of stagnation?* The answer to this must satisfy these further questions:— Why did people cease coming in 1831-1832? Did they hear stories from earlier colonists, or did they read Wakefield's opinions? Was it because of bad conditions on the Swan River? Or must the cause be sought outside the Colony? Was there a significant scarcity of labourers?
6. *Did any real development take place during the period?*

A colony was founded in W.A. largely as a result of British suspicions of the activities of the French Government in the South Seas. W.A. could have developed as an outpost of N.S.W., but the military post at King George's Sound was recalled to Sydney. The foundation of the permanent settlement of the Swan River we owe chiefly to the enthusiasm of the young naval officer James Stirling who was sent to investigate the possible existence of good sites for settlement on the south-west coast of Australia. He was enchanted by the eleven miles of country stretching northwards from Guildford on either side of the Swan River which he was the first to trace any distance beyond the mud flats which had turned back the Dutch and the French.

After returning to Sydney and making his report on this visit Stirling went to England with the aim of persuading the government to permit a settlement on the Swan River. The proposal by Thomas Peel to found a company colony so nearly came about that Stirling was prepared to leave England as Civil Superintendent — the British Government's representative. The Company ran into difficulties, so, at the last minute, the colonists left England in a venture to found a Crown Colony under Stirling as Lieut. Governor. When Peel eventually arrived, it was as one of the colonists. He was certainly the largest investor, originally with priority of choice — but he was not a company. He was an individual proprietor, like all other settlers. For his expense of transporting capital and 400 or so people to the Swan River he was to receive a very large grant of land. When he did not arrive by the specified date the British Government's representative, Stirling, revoked the tentative grant of 500,000 acres in the Canning area and offered him half the area many miles south of Fremantle, on a stretch of barren land.

Perhaps we should give some credit to Peel for pushing the British Government into its decision to permit investors to take themselves to the Swan River if they entertained such odd notions. There they took up land under British government regulations, but no help was given in transport to the Colony, and no help was offered for the future. The Government was not interested in the Colony and resolved to spend no money on it. "The Government do not intend to incur any expense in conveying settlers or in supplying them with necessaries after their arrival nor to assist their removal to England or any other place should they be desirous of quitting the Colony." It agreed eventually to pay some salary to government officials in the colony and to maintain a military regiment to protect these mad Englishmen. At first, the Government seems to have believed that Stirling would be satisfied with a grant of 100,000 acres of land for his services, but such were his powers of persuasion that he obtained a salary, a full governorship, a knighthood and subsequent promotion in the Royal Navy. The Government resisted all the colonists' claims for assistance. Though W.A. was certainly not a company colony, it was a government colony only by favour to some officials in the colony.

The peculiar characteristic of the Swan River was that it was formed by a number of small investors, without any corporate existence, each acting on his own initiative but expecting to make use of a set of Land Regulations which promised them large areas of fertile land for investing capital in the Colony. Good soil was promised, but no trade from natives, no mineral wealth, no forest wealth, no wide pastures. W.A. was a colony of individual private enterprise but no one really knew how the profits

would be made. In adversity it was therefore in the weakest possible position, because it had no representative group in London to press its claims – no company head office – no Colonial Office official whose reputation hung on its success.

The colony was founded and maintained by those immigrants who invested in land according to the Land Grant Regulations which operated until the end of 1831. During that time 1970 immigrants arrived, and at least 103 left. Two sets of Regulations were published in the Colony, the first in August 1829 and the second in 1830, to operate during 1831. The most important difference was that the earlier set allowed land grants at the rate of an acre for every 1/6d. worth of capital or labour invested for purposes of colonisation, whereas the later set allowed an acre for each 3/- invested, halving the amount of land previously allowed.

Because each investor had to submit in writing an application and an account of the capital and labour he introduced, it is possible after some tedious checking through original documents to gain particular information about each person who received permission to select a grant of land. The Audit Board carefully distinguished between capital useful in colonisation and other capital, and issued a summary of the applicant's claim endorsed with the acreage he was permitted to select. Under certain circumstances the governor could dispense with the rules and make special grants.

As few as 302 persons received permissions to select. 221 of these were regular applicants. The Governor exercised his right to give 36 special grants to official personnel, naval and military officers and some others, and a further 45 to deserving persons, generally labourers who had given good service. These 302 investors brought out 1469 dependents, either as families or servants (labourers), making a total of 1771. Some allowance has to be made for double counting, as for a farmer, brought out by Peel and therefore counted as a servant, who later obtained a small grant in his own right. Thus we can account for about 1710 persons of the 1970 who arrived, leaving 260 still to be identified. These would have been merchants and other middle men, unindentured labourers and adventurers of all kinds, usually town-dwellers.

The receipt of a permission to select did not necessarily mean that the investor actually selected land. Fortunately, the Surveyor-General left records showing who selected land in Western Australia up to 30 June, 1832. The number of actual grantees (including a few partnerships) was 246 of whom 63 are recorded as having left the Colony by 1837.

Western Australia was therefore founded and maintained for 10 years by a small group of about 250 investors. In the tenth year, 1839, the population finally passed the 2000 mark. Compare this with South Australia with a population of 25,000 for the tenth year. The 246 investors who were granted land received what seems to be a tremendous acreage, one and a half million acres in all. Nearly half a million acres had been taken up by four men, Thomas Peel, Peter Lautour, Governor Stirling and James Henty. If the remaining million acres (1,161,000 acres) is shared between the other 242 grantees, the average is 4,380 acres each. Was this an unduly large area? If you lived in England, as Wakefield did, it would seem a fantastic acreage. It should be compared with later W.A. figures. After the Colony had survived its early troubles and had boosted its economy by the injection of convict labour and British money, settlers in the Southern Districts up to 1890, used anything from 10,000 to 20,000 acres each to pasture a herd of beef and dairy cattle which provided their chief income. They owned only about 200 acres and leased the rest from the government. By this realistic test, the average of 4,380 acres of the original grants was too small for the successful operations. It must not be forgotten that the most profitable operations during the 19th Century were sheep and cattle raising. The early criticism of W.A. implied that the grants were so large that there was no room for many more settlers. What really happened was that as population increased, larger areas of land were used for the kind of activities which employed the early settlers.

Governor Stirling achieved some remarkable results by his method of distributing the grants. Wakefield, of course, told everyone that Peel received 500,000 acres based on the landing place at Fremantle, that the other large grantees came next, so that soon $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million acres were granted to the first four settlers along the Swan Valley forcing the majority out into the wilderness. The facts are these. Peel received only 250,000 acres of the poorest land, miles south of Fremantle. Lautour, Stirling and Henty selected in the Port Leschenault Area, nearly 100 miles south, where they could not inconvenience the less wealthy investors.

The coastal plain area, from the Darling Range to the sea, was divided into four sections – first, the Swan and Helena Districts on either side of those Rivers eastwards from the confluence of the Canning River; second, the Canning District, on either side of the Canning and south along the foothills of the Darling Range; third, the Large Lakes District, around the lakes just north of Perth, and, presumably the coastal sand area westwards to the sea and north of the Swan River; and fourth, the Cockburn District west of Canning and south of the Swan River, i.e. the coastal area around Fremantle. There were very few grants on the coastal sand – 10 to the north of the river averaging about 1,000 acres each and 12 in the Fremantle area averaging about 700 acres each. Most of the selections were made along the Darling Range foothills and the clay flats of the rivers where they flowed out from the hills. On the Swan there were 94 grants, 16 on the Helena and on the Canning, 31. The settlers avoided the sandy soils.

The Darling Range was a barrier to the eastward expansion of the settlement on the coastal plain, but the finding of routes through the hills was not difficult. Beyond lay the fertile region through which flowed the Avon River, the name given to the upper reaches of the Swan River. The Avon District, "over the hills", soon attracted selectors. The central part of the Swan River Colony should be pictured as being divided into two by the escarpment of the Darling Range with the large Avon District to the east, and westwards to the sea the five smaller districts, Swan, Helena River, Canning, Large Lakes and Cockburn. There were just 100 grants selected on the Avon and 165 in the five western districts. In the five outlying districts to the south, Murray, Leschenault, Sussex, Plantagenet and Interior, 83 grants were allotted. Many settlers had grants in several districts.

The most attractive district was, without any doubt, the Swan, and within that district the most fertile areas were the river banks. Stirling's task was to see that the land was fairly distributed among the settlers. First, he limited any grant to half a mile on one bank of the Canning River. These grants were therefore narrow, stretching far back into the poor sandy country. Settlers generally were not permitted to select on both the Swan and the Canning.

In order to distribute the Swan River land as widely as possible, Stirling directed settlers to select only part of their land in that district. Two thirds (67) of the 94 Swan grantees selected land in other districts. Forty-one had land in Swan and Avon, only one fifth of their land being in the former. In this way Stirling kept the Swan grants down to an average size of about 1,600 acres, which should be compared with the colonial average of 4,380 acres. The average size in the five small districts around Perth – between the Darling Range and the sea – was 1,800 acres (after the exclusion of two grants totalling 270,000 acres in the far south of Cockburn District). The average of the 100 Avon grants was 4,440 acres. In the outlying districts to the south the averages were all large. (When compared with the Colonial average of 4,380, these district sizes seem rather small until it is noted that 102 of the 246 selectors had grants in more than one district.)

Stirling's great achievement was to impose a sensible distribution of selection. The largest grantees were sent off to distant areas, chiefly to the Southern Districts. The average grantees were allowed to select in either Swan, Canning or Avon, but many of those who selected on the Swan were permitted to take only a small portion of their land in that desirable area. 70% of the Swan grantees received their land before February 1831, while 60% of the Avon grants were allocated in that period. Of the

100 Avon grantees, 59 had no grant on the Swan. Slightly less than half of these received their grants in the earlier period. The large investors did not have a monopoly of the desirable selections.

Perhaps this is the place to pause and recapitulate. W.A. was not a company colony, but one of individual initiative; it was founded by a pathetically small number of investors who, excepting a few, received grants of a practical size; the land was very fairly distributed among the settlers. The task now is to attempt an explanation of the slow development from 1831 to 1839.

In its early years a colony must expect to acquire by immigration a population which will create a community large enough to survive. From June to December 1829 there arrived 652 persons: during 1830, a further 1,125 disembarked. During the next six years the nett increase was only 57–553 arrivals less 496 departures. Immigration into W.A. ceased, therefore, early in 1831. The decisions not to come must have been made in England during the second half of 1830. For these decisions to have been influenced by news from the Swan River, the information must have been sent from the colony, at the latest, between March and June, before the colony was a year old.

In the Colony the fluctuations in immigration were followed closely by the number of "Permissions to Select" issued in each six month period. To December 1829 there were 77 granted; during 1820, 89 and 49, a marked drop in the second half year; during 1831, 12 and 14. Beginning with January 1832, the land grant regulations lapsed and sale at 5/- p.a. was introduced, but Stirling continued to grant small areas, 13 grants by June and another 42 during the last six months. He even gave 6 more grants after 1832. These were chiefly to poorer settlers or to deserving labourers, but also to a few investors who had arrived during the land grant period.

We have information about the amount of emigration from the U.K. to Australia and New Zealand at this time. From less than 500 in 1825 the annual figures increased to just over 4,000 in 1833. In 1829, 2,016 people left for the South Seas, 652 for the Swan River. In 1820, 1,242 left England, while 1,125 disembarked at Fremantle, many of them having left England at the end of 1829. Out of the 2,200 in the two years, most of them – 1,700 – came to W.A. But in 1831, when 1,561 left the U.K., almost all of them bypassed the Swan River for some attractive destination further east. In the next year the numbers more than doubled to 3,733. The flood continued through 1833, but no-one stopped at Fremantle. At this time everyone in N.S.W. knew precisely how to make very big profits – by purchasing sheep and pasturing them free on Crown land. British investors soon came to hear of Botany wool and Botany profits. A well known sheep man, James Henty, brought his establishment to W.A. and made the error of selecting his land here. He soon discovered his mistake and pulled out as much of his investment as Stirling would allow, and moved East in 1831, with a number of his friends. It is hard to resist the conclusion that potential Swan River emigrants changed their minds in late 1830 and in 1831 and took passage for N.S.W. and Van Diemen's Land in order to participate in the profits of the wool boom.

Another factor entered, at this juncture. After 1833, emigration from England to Australia and N.Z. fell sharply until in 1835 the annual figure, 1,800, was less than half the 1833 figure. Did something go wrong with the N.S.W. sheep industry? The answer is found elsewhere. Emigration from the British Isles to all parts of the World – chiefly to America and Canada – reached a peak of just over 100,000 in the year 1832. After that it declined rapidly, until in 1835 the annual flow (44,000) was less than a half that of 1832. This decline cannot be explained by anything that might have happened anywhere in Australia or even in America. The cause was undoubtedly to be found in England which during the middle Thirties suffered from an economic depression, not of great severity, but sufficiently serious to make the investors of the day chary of risking speculations in the colonies. The only people who wanted to leave England were the unemployed and those working on starvation wages, but the only way for them to get to Australia was on a convict transport, or as "bounty" immigrants when that scheme was organised.

✓ In July, 1830, the British government published in London its proposal to halve the amount of land which would be granted for the investment of capital in W.A. The new regulation was to come into force in January, 1831. This action may have been the result of Stirling's observation that the very generous land grants had attracted to the Swan River a number of quite incompetent people who threatened to be a burden on the Colony. Even without the increasing competition from other colonies, the halving of the amount of land to be granted would no doubt have caused a decline in emigration to the Swan River, but when it coincided with the growing attraction of N.S.W., it no doubt persuaded many emigrants to seek a more attractive goal. The influence of this new set of regulations needs further examination.

It is doubtful whether the failure of the large ventures of Peel, Lautour and Henty was a factor in the collapse of immigration so early in 1831. Certainly Peel had his original grant cancelled in November of 1829 and his new grant assigned in January 1830, many miles from the Swan River. The misfortunes of his *Rockingham* settlers commenced with a shipwreck in May, but this was caused by bad weather. It is doubtful whether the tales of misfortune would have had much influence within the next six months. The reverses of Lautour and Henty do not seem to have arisen until late 1830 or early 1831, too late to have caused the initial fall in immigration.

Following Wakefield's propaganda it is customary to describe W.A. as being so chronically and seriously short of labourers during this early period that progress was impossible. This is true only in the sense that the whole of Australia has suffered from scarcity of labour during the whole of its history. As well as this general shortage there have occurred; from the earliest days of settlement, fluctuations in economic conditions which at one time would cause a fall in demand for labour accompanied by a fall in wages and sometimes by unemployment, and at other times, a rise in the demand for labour, higher wages and an outcry from employers.

There seems to have been some demand for labour during 1831, 1832 and 1833, though it was not the most serious disability. In 1831 the Royal Agricultural Society presented a Memorial to the Governor listing the chief requirements of the Colony. The most urgent requirement was a Bank because they had no currency; after that they wanted a greater supply of agricultural labourers. The shortage was in their view occasioned by the number of labourers who had left for the other Colonies, and by those indentured servants who had deserted their masters. In the First Annual Report of the Society, presented in January 1832, part of their troubles was put down to "the scarcity of manual labour and the want of horses and oxen for the plough".

Prominent investors who had introduced large numbers of indentured labourers found that they could not meet their obligations to pay their employees because production was too small and a market non-existent. They were therefore only too pleased to release their men from their contracts so that they could leave the Swan River for the eastern settlements where employers were more firmly established. This flight of labour immediately affected the smaller investor, a third of the total, who had brought out a little capital and no labour, but he soon learned to accommodate himself to the prevailing conditions. The Second Annual Report of September 1833 makes no direct mention of the scarcity of labour, but it attributes the over-stocking of many farms to the increased amount of labour that would be required to grow sufficient fodder. The phraseology of these reports suggests that, though there was insufficient labour in 1831, the position eased throughout 1832 and 1833.

There was no outcry for labour during the next four years, 1834-37. On the contrary, there was a short period of unemployment. The Agricultural Society Reports for 1834 and 1835 do not mention labour difficulties, though in 1835 there is a reference to workmen having left for the Eastern Colonies, surely indicating a surplus. In 1836 the Society still had nothing to say about any scarcity, but they were "happy to observe the spirit of Mechanics in turning out from the towns to assist with the harvest, with-

out whom we rather feared a scarcity of hands". The Governor's Address of March of that year reveals that the Colony had recently passed through a short depression with noticeable unemployment. He recalled to the memories of the Councillors the earlier conditions when "towns were . . . crowded with impoverished and unemployed workmen", but he assured them that, at the time of his address, he was happy in the belief that there was not an individual in the Settlement who could not find profitable employment. There were others in the Colony who attributed the scarcity of labour to the fact that some of the men, who had earlier been available for employment, were now proprietors or tenants on small farms. But even the colonists did not refer to the shortage of hands as a matter requiring urgent attention. The position does not seem to have been any worse in the next year, 1837. The Governor made an unsupported reference to high wages but not to labour, and the Society reported that farms had suffered because men had found employment in the new bay whaling venture. They also discussed the advisability of encouraging immigrants by a careful use of the land fund as a security, but the immigrants they referred to were farmers not labourers. Here we see the correct diagnosis of the Colony's ills — the scarcity of employers.

The chief problem facing the employer was to make enough money to be able to employ labourers. The necessity was a market — people with money to buy the goods and services produced. With a total population of less than 2,000, and before the discovery of a commodity which could be exported, the market was too small to provide stable prices. A small market meant violent fluctuations; a small decline in production called forth high prices, and a small increase in production to reap the benefit, caused a collapse of prices. To this difficulty was added the absence of a currency. No-one had thought of providing coins. I.O.U.'s and notes proved unsatisfactory: for a short time partial barter was used, value being expressed in money terms. All this emphasises once again that it was not labour that was the first necessity, but population in general, in order to create a more stable market. A company, a proprietor, a lobby, or a government committed to the development of a colonial economy would have organised an increased flow of settlers from the British Isles. The British Government's policy was that emigration to W.A. must be financed by the colony; the 250 hard pressed colonists were expected to finance their own schemes. It was not until 1839 that the Home Government became active.

By 1837, it was clear that the Colony would survive. The first attempt at a census was made, showing a population of 2,000. Numbers fell slightly in 1838 but passed 2,000 finally in 1839. The Bank of W.A. was formed, establishing for the first time a suitable currency of W.A. £1 notes. (In W.A. history this should occupy the important place given to the Bank of N.S.W. in the history of that Colony.) What was this confidence based on? 1,200 acres of wheat were sown in 1837, increasing to 1,400 acres in 1839. 770 pigs increased to 1,300. Here was food. Sheep numbers doubled from 10,000 to 20,000 in these two years. Besides meat they provided the all important export commodity. £1,000 worth of wool was exported in 1835, and more than £2,000 worth in 1839. One set of figures shows total exports increasing from £1,025 in 1835 to £6,840 in 1838. An important contribution which must not be overlooked is the steady though small expenditure by the British Government on the colonial government and the military regiment in the form of salaries and other payments, which were passed on to the local producers in return for household supplies. In 1839, over £1,000 was received for the sale of Crown lands. Here was steady progress and clear signs of survival.

As in the small commodity market so in the small labour market: a slight increase in the demand for labour forced up wages and caused the employers to complain about shortages. It seems that quite a serious situation developed in 1838. In May, the Governor, Sir James Stirling, showed his concern by presenting to his Legislative Council a Memoir on the Supply of Labour, which commenced with these words.

"In the present state of the Colony, there is such a deficiency of labour as to impede its advancement." In a special report in October, the Royal Agricultural Society insisted that "The want of an

adequate supply of agricultural labour has been severely felt for some years", but in the light of the earlier reports this can be regarded as an overstatement used for emphasis, because the sentence proceeds, "and is becoming more pressing every season". The true state of conditions was no doubt that the supply of labour had been becoming rather more scarce until, in 1838, it was a matter of general concern. This shortage of labour continued to cause serious trouble for the colonists during the short period of prosperity which lasted until the end of 1842. Public opinion urgently demanded that steps be taken to obtain labour from overseas. Because of the increased sale of land, the colonial government was able from the proceeds to make arrangements to pay the passages of labourers from the United Kingdom.

By now even the settlers had adopted Wakefield's cry "Shortage of labour". Nevertheless, the colony's capacity to absorb labour still depended chiefly upon the number of colonial employers. For the next 30 years — right through the convict period — the arrival of nearly every other ship was followed by a period of unemployment, during which panic letters were sent to England pleading "Please don't send any more labourers for the present".

Ironically enough, the only realistic policy was adopted by the Wakefield-inspired Australind Company which planned to send out employers (investors) with the labourers, in order to guarantee employment. That is another story.

These and other schemes such as the Bounty Regulations of 1839 were foreshadowed, but we cannot follow them now. The original settlers had proved their mettle. It was clear the W.A. would become one of the wool growing colonies of Australia, capable of attracting capital because of guaranteed profits. She was assured of a future. This story of the first ten years may be closed. We may now survey our conclusions. Thomas Peel had little real influence on the early development of the Colony. The Land Regulations did not provide for unusually large grants, and probably served to point the way to later successful pastoral activities on large areas. Stirling portioned out the land with considerable care to provide a fair distribution of favourable sites. Some of the smaller settlers may have found labour scarce, but mainly because the larger investors allowed their servants to leave for New South Wales. Even the poor soils near the coast had little influence because, apart from Peel and those who selected on the lower Canning, the large majority took their land in relatively fertile areas — near the Darling foothills and in the Avon Valley "over the hills".

The Swan River Colony's chief difficulty seems to have been that insufficient people came in the first place so that there were too few people to create a suitable market, either for goods or labour. The British Government refused to be held responsible, and denied assistance, because the colony had been initiated by private investors who were expected to organise their own salvation. Immigration was cut off in 1831, chiefly because New South Wales was more attractive, and its resumption proved impossible because emigration from the United Kingdom so markedly declined after 1833. Until about 1836 the employers in the colony could not employ all the labour they had introduced either because the market was too small or because of an economic depression which caused unemployment.

Here is an explanation of W.A.'s early difficulties based on facts which Wakefield would have discarded as unsuitable for his argument. The tiny band of settlers who remained were mostly those who could not get away — the reluctant pioneers. They discovered in themselves unsuspected fortitude. Necessity bred initiative until they adopted the personal characteristics and production methods which the Australian wilderness imposes on all who wish to exploit it. Those worthy people deserve to be seen clearly, not through the distorting haze of myth.

REAPPRAISAL

The view is taken here that the reasons for the near collapse outlined in the preceding discussion are, at most, contributory to the main cause which was the cessation of effective migration in August 1830. Although he does not take as strong a position, Staples also holds this view: 'The Swan River Colony's chief difficulty seems to have been that insufficient people came in the first place so that there were too few people to create a suitable market, either for goods or labour' (Staples, 1961, p.96).

According to Staples, three factors – all external to the colony – explain the drying up of migration. Firstly, many potential immigrants directed their attention to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land which were then beginning to experience a pastoral boom. This reduced Swan River's attraction which was further reduced by the introduction of revised land regulations which halved the amount of land to be granted. The third factor was the decline of all British emigration in the period from 1833 to 1835 as a result of unfavourable domestic economic conditions (Staples, 1961, pp.90-2).

These factors presuppose that there was widespread British knowledge of the benefits of the Australian wool industry in the early 1830's but this does not seem to be the case as Abbott (1971) has recently demonstrated. They also presuppose that a high level of British interest in Swan River was sustained until at least June 1830 when the revised land regulations were announced, and that immigration continued, albeit at a progressively reduced rate, until the general decline beginning in 1833. Reference to Figure 3 and Table III indicates, however, that immigration virtually ceased in August 1830 (not early in 1831 as Staples suggests) and that interest in Swan River as a potential relocation area declined markedly after January 1830 (see Figure 4 where requests to the Colonial Office for information provide a crude 'interest curve' in Swan River Colony). Another explanation must obviously be sought.

The cessation of migration in August 1830, and thus the near collapse of the colony, can be readily accounted for but three features require particular emphasis if this is to be fully appreciated. Firstly, very little was known of the Swan River environment prior to its settlement. Stirling and Fraser, the government botanist from New South Wales, had examined the area in March 1827 and had made an optimistic, and somewhat inaccurate, assessment of its suitability for settlement (see Cameron, 1973) but their findings were not made available to the public until April 1829 when they were published in modified and increasingly inaccurate form in a variety of handbills, pamphlets, journals and newspapers. Because of the prevailing ignorance, there were no constraints on the quality of the descriptions of the Swan River area and these became increasingly more attractive and distorted (see Cameron, 1974a). A short extract from the *Westminster Review* of January 1830, the last of the favourable accounts, effectively demonstrates this point:

From latitude 31° to Cape Leeuwin, the soil has been found to be so fertile, the air so balmy and refreshing, and the scenery so fine, that it has been proposed to bestow the name of Australian Hesperia on this country . . . The 'Australian Hesperia' is estimated to contain from five to six million acres, of which the greater part is supposed to be fit for the plough. On this tract of land it is calculated that at least a million of souls might find comfortable subsistence. The climate . . . appears to be somewhat humid. The summer winds are said to be invariably accompanied by rain, and the land and sea breezes create a moisture in the atmosphere, which renders the climate cool and agreeable . . . and mainly contributes to the keeping up of that rich and romantic appearance which Captain Stirling so much admires (*Westminster Review*, January 1830, pp.170-1).

Secondly, and most importantly, Swan River Colony was the first British colony to be established exclusively for private settlement since early in the preceding century. This is clearly evident in the structure of the 1828 land regulations which Wakefield so strenuously condemned: they were designed

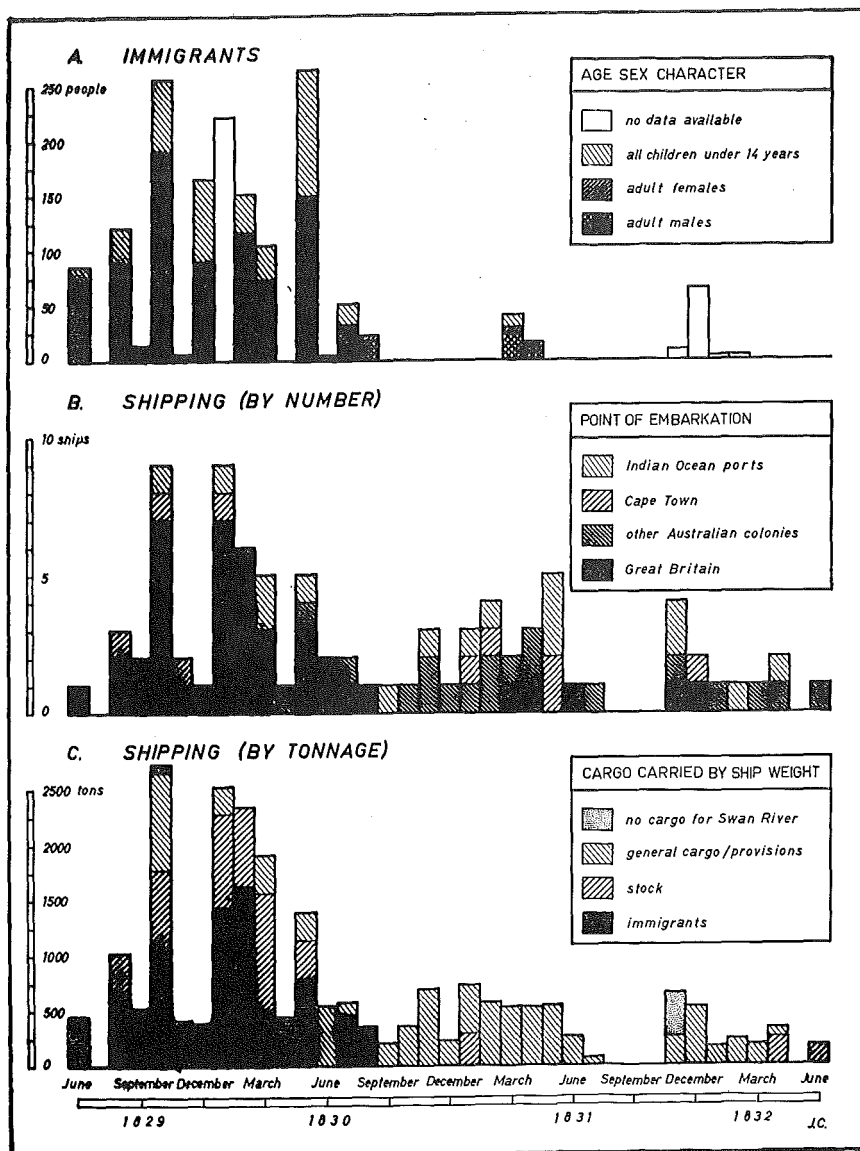


Figure 3. Arrivals at Swan River Colony, June 1829 – June 1832.

to foster settlement by private and small-scale investors who were willing to accept total responsibility for their undertakings. As Swan River Colony was, by this definition, a speculator's colony, there was no need for its formation so its success was dependent on the creation of demand through the titillation of individual expectation.

TABLE III
ARRIVALS AT SWAN RIVER COLONY BY MONTH, 1829-1830

	SHIPPING				IMMIGRANTS	STOCK		
	United Kingdom	Australian Colonies	Other	Total		Sheep	Cattle	Horses
1829								
June	1			1	84			
July								
August	2		1	3	120	320	77	40
September		2		2	15	7	6	
October	3	4	2	9	256	549	37	24
November		1	1	2	6	600	15	
December	1			1			7	3
1830								
January	5	2	2	9	220	826	156	11
February	4	2		6	371	1,434	129	8
March		1		1	105	2,822	114	4
April		1		1				
May	3	1	1	5	265	23		4
June		2		2	3	1,400	35	
July	1	1		2	52			
August	1			1	21			
September			1	1				
October		1		1				
November		2	1	3				
December		1		1				

Source: *Colonial Secretary's Office Records*, folios 2, 4-21; *Historical Records of Australia*, Series III, Vol. 6, pp.638-40; *Western Australian Year Book for 1892-3*, pp.12-3.

This gave rise to the third feature, described by contemporaries as 'Swan River Mania', which was the massive publicity campaign which followed the announcement of the colony's formation. The present author has reported this campaign in depth elsewhere (Cameron, 1974b), so particular details need not be repeated. The importance of the publicity cannot be understressed, however, for irrespective of its quality, it provided the potential colonists with the only substitute for direct, personal experience of actual conditions. From the available information, they had to determine not only the relative advantages of their intended actions but also the range of roles which had to be played. The information on Swan River had emphasised the fertility of the coastal plain (this was assumed to extend in a 60 kilometre wide arc from Shark's Bay to King George's Sound), the healthiness of the climate, and the safety of the several anchorages at the mouth of Swan River and in Cockburn Sound. These three aspects of the environment, as well as others, were built into settlers' expectations which were clearly excessive. Assessing the effect of the publicity, one settler later observed:

The settlers were not blameable in their anticipations that a large, an unbounded, extent of fertile land in the immediate vicinage of the Swan and navigable rivers lay waiting for distribution, where abundance, independence and wealth were attainable by the simplest operations of husbandry, or grazing. Hence, too large a part of their resources were expended in elegant preparations for this expected life of ease and affluence; too small a reserve kept back for the possibility of failure or disappointment. As they were immediately to be fixed on their respective grants without delay or hindrance, too many goods were embarked of a bulky and perishable quality; as the land was to be highly fertile, and the climate favourable, a small stock of provisions only was deemed necessary for their sustenance . . . and as ready money was to be useless in this happy state of existence, few made a reserve of that essential article. Similar errors occurred in the class of persons selected as indentured servants, agricultural or mechanical; little discrimination or inquiry being made regarding their fitness for the undertaking by habits of industry, steadiness and sobriety ('Colonus' in *Perth Gazette*, 28.6.1834).

Clearly, many settlers were completely unsuited, materially and psychologically, for the rigours of colonization and it is not surprising that Stirling should comment 'people come out here expecting to find the Garden of Eden'. Not finding it, 'some were in a state of disappointment and some in despondency' (*Stirling Letters*, 2.4.1831).

These three features form the backdrop against which the pattern of activities following Stirling's arrival at Swan River in June 1829 should be reviewed. However, an additional factor must also be considered as this places developments in a broader, more meaningful context.

Colonization is innovative behaviour and goes through distinct stages (see Lee, 1961, p.291; Petersen, 1970, pp.62-5) which are consistent with the pattern of innovation acceptance identified by Rogers and others (Rogers, 1962; Emery and Oeser, 1958). This has considerable significance, for, unlike most innovations which can be evaluated from direct observation or reports of other innovators prior to acceptance, the likely outcomes of colonization can only be fully evaluated after movement has taken place. The decision to colonize is, therefore, relative, anticipatory, and lacking in reinforcement, and is clearly a high-risk venture. Where an area is completely untested, as in initial colonization situations like Swan River, the high risk factor is clearly perceptible and the problems of evaluating comparative advantages are immeasurably increased. As decisions have to be made on vague statements of 'potential' advantage, there is a strong tendency among the more cautious to postpone their final decision until reports from the first wave of emigrants, the high-risk takers, are available. These reports, termed here 'information feedback', assume considerable importance for they provide the most effective and acceptable substitute for direct, personal experience. They function as regulators of a migration flow (see Wolpert, 1965, 1966), their nature being determined by the potential colonist's reaction to the conditions encountered at his destination. If the actual conditions differ substantially from expectations, unfavourable, or negative, feedback will be generated and this will dampen the flow of colonists. The point to be stressed is that favourable first impressions are crucial to the continuation of a migration flow. This highlights the importance of the first few months at Swan River Colony.

CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COLONY

The success of the colony was placed in jeopardy from the outset. When he arrived with the official party in the *Parmelia* early in June 1829, Stirling confidently entered Cockburn Sound and almost immediately ran the ship onto a sand bank (Cottesloe, 1928, pp.58-9). Because of the storminess of the weather, the officials, their families, and the bulk of the cargo were landed on Garden Island where they stayed because the continued stormy weather made their transfer to the mainland impossible (Stirling to Murray, 10.9.1829, S.R.P., 4). Believing he had ample time to make preparations for the

reception of immigrants, and wishing to avoid similar mishaps, Stirling gave the survey of Cockburn first priority (Stirling to Twiss, 25.8.1829, S.R.P., 3). J.S. Roe, the surveyor-general and his assistant H.C. Sutherland, aided by men from the *Challenger*, commenced work there on 9 June (*Proceedings of the Survey Department*, folio 1 [hereafter P.S.D., 1]). In the ensuing weeks, the encampment on Garden Island was consolidated and a short transect of the coastal plain south of Swan River was made (Cross, 1833, pp.1-5).

The unanticipated arrival of the *Calista* on 5 August, with forty-seven privately sponsored immigrants on board, caught Stirling and his officials completely off-guard. By 10 August, the Garden Island establishment was hurriedly transferred to a makeshift encampment on the mainland near to where Captain Fremantle and the crew of the *Challenger* had landed in May (P.S.D.,1). The government store had to be left behind and, although communication between it and the main body of settlers was extremely difficult, there it remained until the end of 1830. Roe was ordered to cease his work in Cockburn Sound, even though approach routes and safe anchorage points had not been determined, and commence surveying the mainland (Cottesloe, 1928, p.68; P.S.D.,1). On 11 August, accompanied by Stirling, most of the officials and some of the newly arrived settlers, he examined the site of Perth, its foundation being marked the following day by the cutting down of a tree. For the next fortnight, Roe surveyed the site and marked out allotments, the work being completed on 25 August (P.S.D., 1). In the meantime, on 23 August, the *Marquis of Anglesea* arrived with a further seventy-three settlers. Roe was hurriedly recalled to Fremantle to survey town lots there. He completed this work on 18 September, but Stirling, in response to public pressure, had begun locating settlers on these town lots three days before.

In mid-September, three ships, the *Amity*, *Calista*, and *St. Leonard*, prepared to leave the colony. The situation was still chaotic. As yet, no rural land had been examined, let alone alienated. In fact, no accurate plan of the area existed. The transfer of the seat of government to Perth had not begun. The majority of the settlers were huddled in tents on the barren coastal dunes at Fremantle, exposed to the full force of the still frequent westerly gales, their goods heaped around them. Scurvy, although not severe, was common, and dysentery had already broken out (*Morgan Letters*, 4.1.1831). The sandy soil made living conditions difficult and sand fleas were troublesome. No settlers had been further inland than the site of Perth. Few had explored beyond the immediate vicinity of Fremantle. While some of these were attracted by the beauty of the scenery, all were appalled at the infertility of the sandy soils that they saw. In the words of one newcomer, the majority of the settlers 'chiefly employed themselves in smoking cigars, drinking brandy-and-water, and abusing Mr. Fraser' (Wilson, 1835, p.198). There was already a noticeable and growing feeling of unrest. Most of the settlers were confused, they lacked purpose, and gave vent to their extreme disappointment. To add to the chaos, a violent storm sprang up on 3 September. All seven ships at anchor offshore suffered some damage. Several dragged anchor. The *Marquis of Anglesea* was completely wrecked. On shore, tents were torn. Possessions were lost or totally spoiled. Most settlers had left England before publicity about Swan River had reached a peak, but their experiences had already cast strong doubts about the three most highly praised attributes: the soil was not fertile, the anchorage was unsafe and the climate seemed anything but healthy. It was this picture that the three ships took with them. This was the information, the feedback, the more cautious had been awaiting. XY

INFORMATION FEEDBACK

Towards the end of October, the *Amity* and the *Calista* arrived in Hobart where it was reported shortly after: 'some settlers go so far as to say it will not answer and must eventually be abandoned' (H.T.C., 31.10.1829). By December reports filtered through to Sydney where they elicited the observation:

Depend upon this, that the very instant the first account of the disasters reaches London, the whole will fall to the ground — the speculators will abandon the project — the ship owners pocket the money — the captains laugh at the folly, and the poor deluded sufferers either starve — be at the mercy of the Governor for returning home — or come out here for something like a habitable place to exist on (*Sydney Gazette*, 14.1.1830).

Prophetic as this observation turned out, it was a natural reaction, for British colonial activities had been characterised by the failure of speculative enterprises. The extensive joint-stock collapse of 1824-5 was sufficiently recent to make investors suspicious of any schemes where the slightest doubt was raised.

Reports reached London on 24 January 1830, either through letters carried by the *St. Leonard* or from the outspoken comments of its master, Captain Rutherford. Rutherford arrived at Swan River a day behind the *Calista* and so saw the general confusion and was able to assess the quality of both the immigrants and the environment. His own experiences had not been favourable. His ship was damaged in the 3 September storm, and he had been widely abused for losing 33 of the 60 bullocks he was commissioned to import (Stirling to Twiss, 29.4.1829, S.R.P., 3; Cottesloe, 1928, p.70). In Mauritius by mid-October, he informed residents of Port Louis of the barrenness of the soil, the serious navigational hazards, and the settlers' inactivity and shortage of money (Cross, 1830, pp.16-8). He transmitted similar information at the Cape before arriving in St. Helena on 25 November. His discussions here resulted in one merchant sending a frantic note to London stating: 'he reports the total failure of the Establishment' (Solomon to Freeling, 27.11.1829, S.R.P., 4).

Potential emigrants' reactions to Rutherford's reports were extremely swift. Two days after his arrival, Solomon Levey, Thomas Peel's newly recruited partner, contacted the Colonial Office for the official version (Levey to Murray, 26.1.1830, S.R.P., 6). The *Rockingham*, with a shipment of Peel's settlers, was due to sail and he had been disturbed by the reported condition of the colony. The day following, a representative of migrants due to sail on the *Juno* also requested 'official confirmation respecting the late disastrous reports' (Ronald to Twiss, 27.1.1830, S.R.P., 6). The *Rockingham* sailed and became the second major shipwreck in the colony. The *Juno*, whose passengers bore all the risks of their venture, did not.

Press reaction was equally rapid. Within four days of Rutherford's return, newspapers widely condemned Swan River's infertile soils and the hazards it posed for shipping. Epithets like 'bubble' and 'gullism' were common (for example, *Bell's Messenger*, 30.1.1830; *Herald*, 28.1.1830; *London Herald*, 28.1.1830; *Times*, 28.1.1830). After reviewing several letters, the *Herald* observed: 'the prospects held out to emigrants were completely delusive . . . Instead of the land about the coast being a sort of Paradise, it is for the most part little better than a barren waste. It seems indeed that the Paradise is yet to be discovered beyond the Hills' (*Herald*, 28.1.1830). The editor of the *London Herald* was even more critical: 'if this be all that can be said of it, the settlers had much better have gone to Ireland and cultivated the bogs' (*London Herald*, 28.1.1830). Not all comments were condemnatory for the *Glasgow Courier* reported on 13 February that 'Swan River would require the language of a poet to describe it' (see also *New Monthly Magazine*, March 1830, p.92), but, with the arrival of another cargo of letters and some settlers at the end of March, the evidence of imminent failure was overwhelming (see *Times*, 27.3.1830). Ample confirmation was also received from Cape Town and other Australian colonies.

Within the colony, conditions worsened after Rutherford's departure and gave rise to a steady outflow of adverse criticism. In the last three days of September, all the fertile land examined by Stirling in March 1827 was allocated to twenty-one grantees (Ogle, 1839, Appendix XIV). There were then only 135 private settlers in the colony. No further suitable rural land was available until Peel's promised grant on the Canning was resumed and thrown open for selection on 2 November 1829 (P.S.D., 1). By 15 November, the most favoured parts of this were given to eleven grantees (Ogle, 1839, Appendix XIV). Future land applicants were directed to settle to the south, the nearest location being 50 kilo-

metres away. This they were loath to do and they congregated in Fremantle where they indulged in urban land speculation and gave vent to their many dissatisfactions (Cross, 1830, p.27).

The situation at Fremantle rapidly deteriorated with the onset of summer and the arrival of more immigrants. General lawlessness, thieving and brawling were common, being largely attributable to drunkenness (Wilson, 1835, p.223). Feed for stock was in short supply. Tents frequently caught on fire as did the thatched roofs of the few houses which had been erected (*Currie Diary*, 10.8.1829, 5.12.1829). Unaccustomed heat and drought replaced the winter storms and were accompanied by an increase in the numbers of sand fleas, flies and mosquitoes (C.T., 2.4.1830; Cross, 1830, pp.9-11). Scurvy and ophthalmia were severe. There was an acute shortage of palatable drinking water (C.T., 2.4.1830, 9.7.1830; H.T.C., 7.8.1830). This, with poor hygiene, somewhat crowded conditions, and unbalanced diets, resulted in dysentery reaching epidemic proportions, its severity increasing as summer progressed.

With such a sight greeting new arrivals, it is not surprising that many did not even disembark but sailed on to Van Diemen's Land or returned to England where they broadcast the settlers' tales of woe (see Henty, 1.5.1830, in S.R.P., 6). Although a modicum of order was established by mid-1830, by then it was too late. The colony had already earned the unsavoury reputation for barrenness that persisted until the end of the nineteenth century.

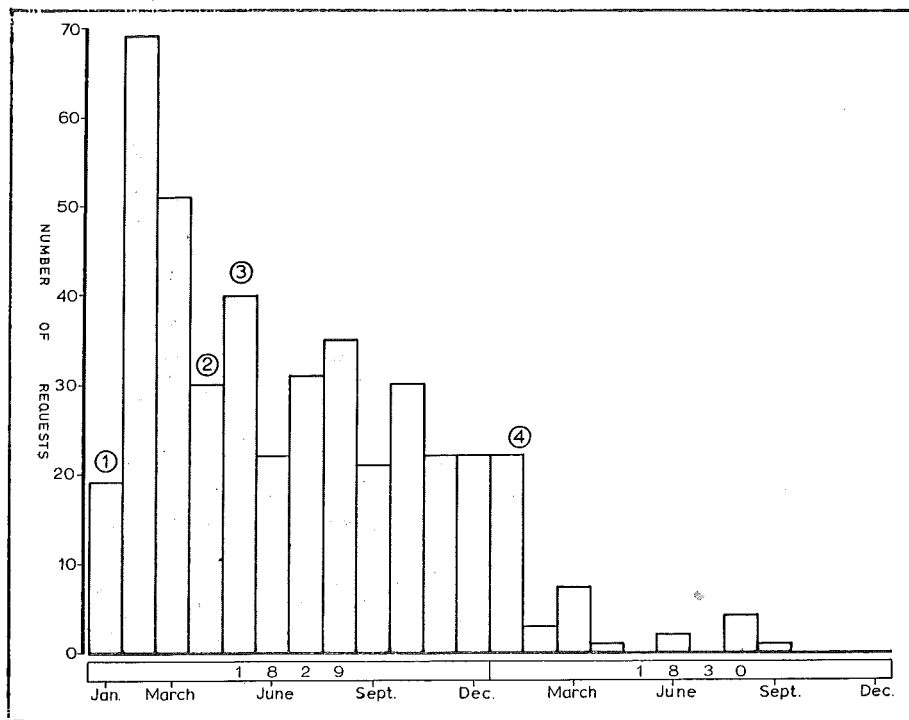


Figure 4. Requests to the Colonial Office for information about Swan River Colony.

THE EFFECTS OF INFORMATION FEEDBACK

The unfavourable accounts of Swan River had four immediate and inter-related effects. Firstly, as previously indicated, there was a dramatic reversal in the previously favourable attitudes towards, and interest in, the colony. This is evident in Figure 4 which shows the impact of Rutherford's original report. Secondly, also previously indicated, immigration virtually ceased. The last significant influx, 265 in all, arrived in May 1830. Only two other ships, the *Medina*, arrived 5 July, and the *Edward Lombe*, arrived 26 August, landed settlers in the colony in 1830 and more than half of their passengers had disembarked at the Cape (*Colonial Secretary's Office Records*, folio 8, pp.104 and 106). Only 13 immigrants arrived in 1831. Thirdly, shipping from all areas fell off (Figure 3, Table III). Ship owners found it increasingly difficult to find merchants willing to consign cargo. This had serious repercussions for the colonists for it forced them to rely solely on the inadequate resources (food, equipment and stock) imported before mid-1830.

Fourthly, Swan River's apparent collapse benefitted Cape Colony and Van Diemen's Land, its major competitors. Reports were widely current at the Cape in December 1829 and were immediately effective for they provided emigrants with an opportunity to re-assess their actions while still enroute (Roberts, 1834, p.38). Many elected to stay there or return direct to England. In Van Diemen's Land, initial reactions to the formation of the colony were favourable (H.T.C., 23.5.1829; *Tasmanian*, 12.6.1829), but, when it became evident that the adverse reports would affect its own immigration rate, attitudes changed (C.T., 16.7.1830; H.T.C., 10.7.1830). Successful efforts were made to attract as many of the disgruntled settlers as possible and visitors from Van Diemen's Land sowed and nurtured seeds of discontent. This was particularly true of ship owners looking for a back-cargo. The effectiveness of both colonies in attracting away potential Swan River settlers is summarized in Table IV.

TABLE IV
LOSS OF IMMIGRANTS TO COMPETING COLONIES

SHIP	Date of Arrival at Swan River	Number Embarked London	Number Disembarked Swan River	Number Disembarked Competitors
<i>Nancy</i>	9.1.1830	120	45	75
<i>Minstrel</i>	20.1.1830	80	49	31
<i>Egyptian</i>	23.1.1830	110	58	52
<i>Protector</i>	25.1.1830	100	63	37
<i>Warrior</i>	12.3.1830	196	81	115
<i>Brittania</i>	5.5.1830	106	39	67
<i>Medina</i>	6.7.1830	120	52	68
TOTAL		832	387	445

Source: *Colonial Secretary's Office Records*, folios 2, 4-10; Cross, 1830, p.24; Gooch, 1829, p.3.

The major long term effect of the feedback was that it virtually isolated the colony so that its development was largely dependent upon the people and resources landed before the second half of 1830. It cut off the migration flow before it had properly developed. This left the colony with a socially and vocationally skewed settler group which had few of the skills necessary for effective and efficient colonization. It had also reduced the possible size of the local market for primary production, thereby limiting the degree to which the economy could specialize, and had curtailed the population increase, a vital element of economic growth.

In retrospect, Swan River Colony's formation had many of the attributes of the recent mineral boom in Western Australia. Interest, enthusiasm and investment, in this case the flow of settlers, remained at a high level until the first suggestion of doubt was raised. This was what Rutherford had done. He destroyed investor-confidence and this precipitated the collapse. It could be argued, however, that the prime cause was the original publicity, for this boosted settlers' expectations of Swan River to unrealistic levels and induced the rush of immigration which so highlighted the inadequacy of Stirling's preparations and the shortcomings of the environment.

Source: Cameron, J.M.R., 1973: The Near Collapse of Swan River Colony: Review and Reappraisal, *Social Sciences Forum*, Vol. I (i), 1973, pp.7-31.

COMING TO TERMS

THE PROBLEMS

The decision to remain at Swan River, whether by choice or from necessity, compelled colonists to come to terms with an environment that was totally unfamiliar if not completely hostile. They had a number of needs to satisfy and a number of problems to overcome. Some of the problems were due to the unfamiliarity and harshness of the environment itself. Others arose from their own inexperience and ignorance of the things to do and were thus of their own making. Yet others were imposed by an unsympathetic government at home in Britain.

THE PROBLEMS: THE COLONISTS' SUMMARY, 1849

The principal natural disadvantages of the Australian colonies appear to be the comparative absence of surface water, navigable rivers, and useful animals, vegetables and fruits. — The presence of large tracts between the settled districts unfit for the products to the cultivation of which English farmers are accustomed. — The great distance from Europe, offering every motive to prefer the American colonies, the United States, or South Africa; a disadvantage unjustly and ruinously aggravated by Government offering land in Canada at a fifth, and Africa at a tenth of the price. This disadvantage may be briefly thus summed up; even with fair play, not such cruel favouritism against Australia, her very distance deters the emigration of capital, and prohibits that of labour.

The principle natural disadvantages peculiar to this colony, or present in a peculiar degree, may be summed up as follows:— The absence of sheltered harbours, of which there are within the present settlement only two of any large size naturally perfect; viz. King George's Sound and Careening Bay. There are, however, several others of various capabilities. Under this head may also be classed the bars existing at the mouths of all our rivers and estuaries. But as an instance of the counterbalance to which we have above alluded, we would refer to the vast advantages of the position of our west coast line, over the coast of almost any other colony. We have a fair course to every part of the Indian and Chinese seas. When the ships from the other colonies reach our position on their way to the common markets, they consider they have accomplished half the time and three-fourths of the danger of their voyage. But in some respects the difference is even more, on account of our neighbourhood to the trade-winds and monsoons rendering our voyages to the north and west almost as easy and rapid as those of steamers. A remarkable instance of this exists in our export trade to Mauritius, in which it is not uncommon not to shift a sail or touch a rope from shipping the stock and produce here, to landing it at Port Louis. The effect of this on the profits of rearing horses for India must hereafter be enormous.

A heavy natural disadvantage results from the sandy character of the plain outside the Range; which, although capable of yielding many important products, with suitable culture and a large population, is, in our circumstances, a mere useless obstacle between the tillage districts and the ports. Had this colony been originally peopled by persons accustomed to the culture of Mediterranean products, it is more than probable that this sandy and coralline district would now be covered by the vine, olive and mulberry; but before our countrymen learned this, they had passed beyond it in disgust, and invested their all in the interior. We shall have occasion presently to explain why this cannot now be remedied by the present settlers. The barren appearance of this plain has also discouraged visitors, and been made a constant engine for deterring immigration.

A formidable evil (only beginning to exhibit its full importance, but which, perhaps, admits of more easy remedy than some of less present moment), arises from what we are compelled to designate as the

worthless character of our native grasses. There can scarcely be a grass less suited to a pastoral country than the Australian spear-grass; yet, though an annual, growing thinly, producing seed alike injurious to the wool and the health of the sheep, and so feebly rooted as to be destroyed by the feet of the stock, it is still the principal dependence of the stock-owner, and, as a necessary consequence of its worthless qualities, it is rapidly disappearing, instead of improving under pasture. The immediate remedy is obviously extensive exploration, and it may be hoped that a more permanent and effective cure will be found in the introduction and encouragement of pasture-grasses suited to hot countries and similar soils.

We must here notice an evil apparently peculiar to the colony, which has injured nearly all, and almost ruined some of our stock-owners; we allude to the two species of (what are commonly called here) "poison-plants". The variety of ways in which this scourge has injured the colony are too numerous to detail. It fortunately does not affect horses; and it is true that we are, on the other hand, free from the fearful catarrh and similar evils of other colonies; but it is necessary here, as in all our references to stock, to bear in mind that the immense expense attending the introduction and keeping of stock in this colony (as compared with South Australia and Van Diemen's Land in the first, and New South Wales, with her assignment system, in the second respect) renders each casualty here, allowing for the loss of increase by loss of time, equal to that of 20 in any eastern colony. The ruinous consequence of an hour's negligence by a servant may be imagined, at a time when 30£ was a common price for a cow, and 5£ for a sheep. To this it may be added, that from the combination of three causes, the variety of the vegetation where it is found, and the facts that it is not at all seasons noxious (thus oversetting the result of experiment), and that horses are not injured by it, the destruction had been going on for 15 years before its cause became positively ascertained. In the mean time, and even now, it is a heavy loss and formidable difficulty to the stock-owner, and through him to the consumer and the colony. Before we dismiss this important subject of natural vegetation, it is right, however, to observe, that immense tracts wholly useless for sheep or cattle are covered by a dense coarse scrub, perfectly suited to the tastes of several most valuable animals, as the mule, camel, alpaca, &c; and it is also true that a natural instinct seems to prevent stock from touching the poison-plant, unless where other food is scarce. Unfortunately, however, it is most luxuriant, tempting and deadly at the driest season, when other vegetation fails. Another obstacle to the flock-owner consists in the constantly varying character of the country; no large extent of good land together being now open for occupation. Hence almost every flock requires a separate establishment.

Source: *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1849 (593), vol. xxxviii, pp.256-7.

THE PROBLEMS: AN OUTSIDER'S VIEW

And there were many other troubles in the young settlement which, as we read the record, make us feel that it was no easy thing to be an early colonist. Food for the newcomers was often wanted. The young crops of wheat, on which so much depended, were destroyed by moths and red rust. There was great lack of any circulating medium. The soil, though good in many places, was good only in patches which were distant from one another; and there were no roads, — so that the settler who produced meat in one place could not exchange it for the corn and wheat produced elsewhere. And there was no labour. That of all evils, was perhaps the one most difficult to be encountered and overcome. The black man would not work; and the white man who had his block of ground thickly covered with gum trees and blackboys . . . could not clear it and till it and sow it with sufficient rapidity to procure sustenance for himself and his family. It must be remembered in regard to all the Australian colonies that the country . . . produced almost nothing ready to the hands of the first comers. There were no animals giving meat, no trees giving fruit, no yams, no bread-trees, no cocoa-nuts, no bananas. It was necessary that all should be imported and acclimatized.

Source: Trollope, Anthony, 1875: *South Australia and Western Australia* (London), p.92.

BUSHFIRES

I have heard of some cottages and tents being burnt down in various parts of the Settlement owing to sparks being blown from the fires which are all out of doors and lodging on the thatch and canvas During February and March, we continually saw smoke in all directions from fires kindled by the Natives, being the dry season they spread quickly for miles till stopped by a swamp or River. Some say it is done to drive us out of the country. That is inconsistent with the general character of these savages, besides the trees bear marks of similar conflagrations having taken place in former years before any intruders made their appearance. John thinks they do it to facilitate their progress in hunting &c., but I cannot fancy them clever enough for that. I think that these fires must be accidental. We found in the dry season that if a fire stick was thrown on the grass it would catch alight directly and if not prevented the flames spread very fast. Whatever be the cause, the effect is extremely disagreeable to the eye as the beauty of the trees is destroyed.

Source: *Whatley Diary*, 23.4.1830 (J.S. Battye Library, 326A).

AND THEIR CAUSES

I have been busy getting trees burned and the ground prepared for a wheat crop I was setting fire to some stumps of trees to-day, when, a spark communicating with the grass, in a few minutes the whole scene appeared one sheet of living fire. It was in the heat of the day.

Source: *Moore Diary*, (J.S. Battye Library, 263A), 21.3.1832.

FLOODS

Like all the Australian rivers with which we are yet acquainted, the Swan is subject to sudden and tremendous floods, which inundate the corn lands in its vicinity, and sweep away all opposing obstacles with irresistible impetuosity. The first settlers had a most providential escape from a calamity of this kind: they had originally selected for the site of their new city, a low lying piece of land, which, during the first winter after their arrival, was visited with one of these strange and unexplained invasions from the swelling stream: had the deluge been delayed for another year, these luckless inhabitants of a new world would have shared the fate of those to whom Noah preached in vain; but, warned in time, they chose some safer spot, from whence, in future, they and their descendents may safely contemplate the awful grandeur of similar occurrences, and thankfully profit by the fertility and abundance which succeed to such wholesale irrigation.

Source: Stokes, J. Lort, 1846: *Discoveries in Australia* (London), vol I, pp.54-5.

FLEAS

The greatest annoyance I experienced in Australia was certainly the host of fleas that infest the country: the very sand and surface of the country abound with them, and the houses generally being floored with clay require a degree of cleanliness which they seldom get to keep them free of these noxious animals.

Source: *De Burgh Diary*, undated (J.S. Battye Library, 248A).

CATERPILLARS

We began cutting our little barley yesterday, though this can hardly be called the beginning of harvest. Ours is much more forward than Scott's (we are the only two corn-growers in this neighbourhood) and the caterpillars having made such havoc, we thought it best to secure what was left for seed. It was a fine crop. The caterpillars attacked it in a curious manner; they crawl up the stalk, eat through the straw under the ear, which falls to the ground, so that in many places there appears nothing but headless straws. The ground is covered with immature grain. To obviate the waste, I have this evening been contriving to fold it with our sow and pigs. By tethering the sow and enclosing the pigs with hurdles (George's making) I think the double purpose will be answered in fattening the animals and clearing the ground; (for every grain left will shoot again) to say nothing of the manure.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals*, 1.12.1842, (Perth: Lamb Paterson) p.118.

DINGOES

During our haymaking we experienced another loss from the native dogs, owing to the carelessness of Joe, the shepherd. Two of these cunning and voracious animals attacked the sheep in open day, when at too great a distance from their keeper and killed two lambs, one of which only we recovered and this by pursuit of Joe on foot, the other he saw nothing more of. They worried besides three others, one of them so much, that we were obliged to kill it. This is the first mutton of our own we have tasted and if we may judge from this specimen, our Down sheep, for eating, will far surpass the Merino. The fleece we know, is much inferior. One of the lambs was an ewe. We have never had the sheep attacked before although the goats have suffered frequently. Not that old settlers would think anything of these things, but to us, in our little way, who have to cherish every increase it pleases God to send, the loss is no trifle.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals*, 28.11.1842 (Perth: Lamb Paterson) p.116.

POISON PLANTS

Sheep and cattle have been attacked by a disease, the symptoms of which, in both, are very similar; and, although considerable attention has been given to this disorder, the remote cause has not yet been clearly ascertained; no particular diathesis is observable. It has chiefly appeared in flocks recently imported and in feeble condition, and in cattle engaged in long journeys in the bush, where the food is scrubby and coarse. Flocks kept on low damp ground near the coast, or in high scrubby ground, destitute of healthy grass, or in driving them across the Darling range of hills into the interior, through scrubby country, have, too, been principally affected, owing probably to a deficiency of a requisite bitter stimulative quality in this kind of food, of difficult digestion in stomachs, so peculiarly formed, as those of ruminating animals. Horses are fed on the same ground, without the least injury. The disorder seems the most frequent at the commencement of the wet season, the immediate cause being the condition of the stomachs, overloaded with hard indigestible food, in a state of fermentation, from food eaten after rain, and consequent pressure on the heart and lungs. The mode of treatment is urgently indicated, — namely, bleeding, and stimulants, spirits of turpentine, and afterwards a little salt; but, as death ensues a few minutes after the attack, which affects many at the same time, the utmost activity is required. This disease closely resembles that which, in England, is called resp, or blood-sticking. Although the losses sustained by individuals, from this disease, have been great, yet one good has arisen, it has stimulated the flock-owners to increased exertions to occupy their more intensive grants in the fine interior districts, where this disease is entirely unknown; nor has an instance occurred among sheep driven from those countries to the butcher, owing, no doubt, to their better condition.

Source: Western Australian Association, 1837: *Second Report* (London: John Cross), pp.40-1.

SOILS

An ingenious but sarcastic Yankee, when asked what he thought of Western Australia, declared that it was the best country he had ever seen to run through an hour-glass. He meant to insinuate that the parts of the colony which he had visited were somewhat sandy. It is sandy. The country round Perth is very sandy. From Freemantle, the seaport, the road up to Perth, the capital, lies through sand. From Albany . . . the distance to Perth is about 260 miles, and the traveller encounters a good deal of sand on the way. The clever Yankee who thought of the hour-glass probably did not go beyond Perth. There is much soil in Western Australia which is not sandy, — which is as good, perhaps as any land in the Australian colonies, — but it lies in patches, sometimes far distant from each other; and there is very much desert or useless country between. In this is, probably, to be found the chief reason why W.A. has not progressed as have the other colonies. The distances from settlement to settlement have been so great as to make it almost impossible for settlers to dispose of their produce.

Source: Trollope, Anthony, 1875: *South Australia and Western Australia* (London), p.85.

EARTHS — NOT SOILS

The surface of the country generally is covered with those substances which are technically called earths, in contradistinction to soils. Of the latter, as far at least as relates to those of a vegetable origin, a very small portion exists, and that only on moist grounds. The extreme drought of the climate, and the summer conflagrations, appear to prevent the growth of succulent plants, as well as any great accumulation of soil from decayed vegetation. But although the country is not remarkable for richness of soil, it is favourable in other respects to farming purposes. In its natural state there is scarcely any part which does not produce some description of plant, and its defects appear to be of that class which art, aided by climate, will be enabled hereafter to overcome.

The districts which have been examined, and in which settlers have been located, will be found described, as far as official information extends, in the Plans herewith transmitted.

It is always difficult to form a just estimate of the value of soils in new countries, and it is hazardous to give opinions, on which the settlers' operations may be founded. The reports and statements of explorers, recorded on the Plans, must therefore be viewed with much caution, and as liable to error, even where every wish has been felt to observe closely, and report truly.

Upon a general view of that portion of the territory which has fallen within my own knowledge, I am under the necessity of saying, that a very large portion of its surface, extending probably to three-fifths of the whole, is poor, and comparatively unprofitable, and unlikely to be cultivated, or to yield any return except in timber, until a dense population, and low wages, aided by abundance of cattle, shall enable the farmer to bring it into use.

The best districts at present known are those on the Avon, the Hotham, the Williams, Arthur, Beaufort, and south-east river, together with the portions of country adjacent to the Swan, the Murray, the Harvey, Brunswick, Preston, Capel, and Vasse.

It is to be remembered, however, that these remarks apply only to the very small part of this vast country which has been as yet explored, and that in the progress of settlement, circumstances are continually arising to give value to lands, which, while wages are high, and roads wanting, are not of the slightest value.

Source: *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1837-8 (687), vol. XL, pp.5-6.

IGNORANCE IN THE COLONY

Farming has hitherto been carried on here after a very slovenly, rambling manner; here a piece and there a piece, according as the soil promised best, and there were fewest trees, but a small quantity of ordinary land near home, well and annually cultivated, will yield great and better crops than this lazy method Great ignorance too of common agriculture and horticulture has prevailed. A little anecdote will illustrate this. Captain Coffin (of whom I bought this place) one day desired his man to dig a piece of ground, and signified his intention of sowing it himself; the man, curious to know what his master could thus reserve for his own skill, on inspection found it was pearl barley, which the Yankee actually sowed accordingly. I suppose he anticipated some extraordinary return in the sale of an article never before grown in Western Australia. This was pretty well for one who, Jonathan-like, was always boasting of what his garden would produce. The mountain did not bring forth even a mouse.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals* 16.3.1843 (Perth: Lamb Paterson), p.165.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Initial attempts to wrest a living from the Swan River environment had been such complete failures that an air of gloom was cast over the whole colony. This persisted for some time. But slowly at first, valiant efforts were made over the next twenty years to understand the environment and use it effectively to satisfy basic needs of food and shelter. In the process, numerous difficulties were overcome.

The story of these efforts is not of epic proportions. Resources were too scanty and the numbers involved were too small for that to be the case. But neither is it the unmitigated failure that it has so often been represented. Progress was slow, certainly up to 1835 and during the depression of the 1840's, but the settlers' competence in handling the unfamiliar conditions continued to grow. With it came a renewed, if tentative, optimism in the colony's future.

FIRST ATTEMPTS

AMBITION'S FIRE

Beside the Swan, beneath a time-worn gum,
A squatter sat dejected, pale and glum,
Speared were his pigs, and poisoned were his flock,
Far in the bush had strayed his other stock,
His wheat, his pride, was blighted by the smut,
A native fire had burnt his mud-built hut;
He thought on times by Thames' silvery stream,
And drew from Memory's page a pleasing dream.
'Twas evening; and the pelican began to leave
The sedge, and screamed the dark black swan;
The bittern, too (who as historians say
Frightened from hence our Gallic foes away)
Bemoaned her requiem to departed day.
The pale moon rose and lighted up the scene,
The squatter mused on what he might have been.
Ambition's fire, wrecked on barren sand.

Source: Quoted by Sir John Kirwan in *Early Days*, December 1943, p.12.

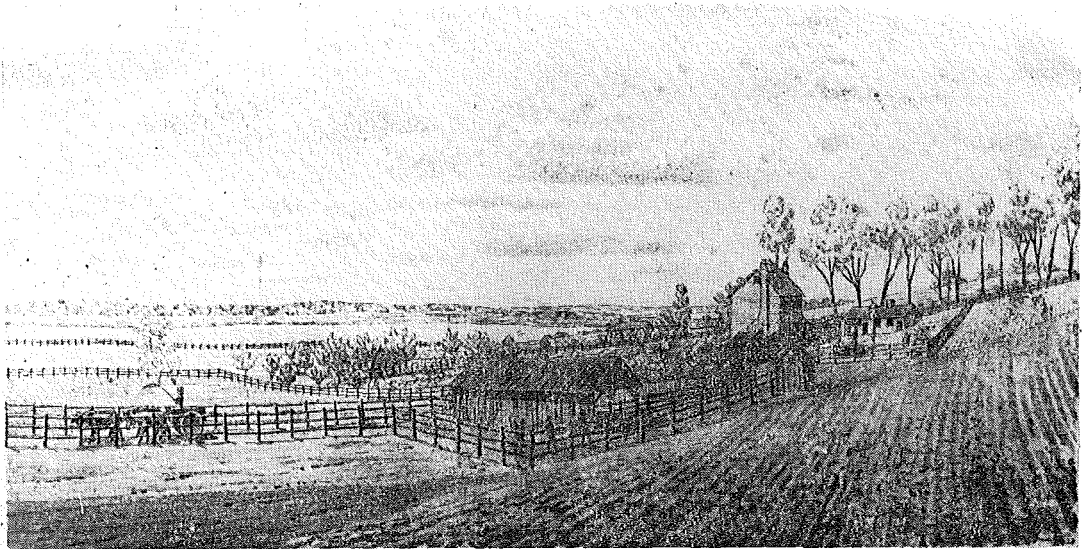
FAILURE

We have been here nearly four months, and though we have put seeds into the ground four or five different times, in various soils (excepting two or three occasions in quite moist land and which it is expected must be flooded by the first heavy rains) we have not a cabbage, blade of wheat, or indian corn, a potato, in fact, we have come out in the wrong season of the year. What the next year shall produce, God only knows . . . our provisions of course are daily wasting, what we are to do when they are gone I know not.

Source: *Camfield Letters*, 1.2.1830 (Mitchell Library, D30).



TOP: ALBION HOUSE, AUGUSTA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA
(Thomas Turner)
from the original watercolour in the Western Australian Art Gallery



BOTTOM: TURNWOOD ON HARDY'S INLET AFTER SETTLEMENT
(Thomas Turner)
from the original watercolour in the Western Australian Art Gallery

FARMYARD ORGANIZATION, SEPTEMBER 1830

I have fenced in about 4 acres of this 60 acres; it had 90 large trees on it and covered with brushwood which I have cleared off (not the large trees). What was worse — a grass tree covering more than two acres of it, as thick as four or six on a yard square, and horrid things they are to get up tho' death and destruction to our spades and hoes. I have now only two good spades out of seven new ones. Where this plant grows they must be grubbed before the plough is put in; four horses and plough could not move some of them. I have got about an acre dug up in wheat, $\frac{1}{2}$ of it I sowed once with my own wheat but it did not come up, it got damaged in the ship's hold. Since, that the rains have been such that I could do nothing with it, until ten days ago when I put in about two pecks. I now intend to sow the remainder, late as it is, *if I can purchase the seed*; with you it would seem madness to sow wheat in April, it is late, but what are we to do? I have got about an acre of garden ground dug up which I have planted potatoes in seven or eight different times and so many times have they failed me; I have given 18/- an cwt. for them — excepting a peck, the whole of mine rotted, they do not do anything. I have as often sown garden seeds, 6, 10, 14, and the last time, 21 different kinds, but they will not grow. Of my last sowing, Aug. 3^d I have two small beds of radishes, and about 30 cabbages. I have not eaten any vegetables of my own growing, indeed excepting twenty radishes transplanted and about twice that number of turnips and a peck of potatoes now growing, I have nothing more in my garden Now for the reason why they have not grown — when I first came out it was too late in the year, the seeds grew up and withered for lack of moisture; during the winter, the floods came and covered the lower part of my garden and since then it has been too wet and cold, *another year we must ditch and bank* indeed my seeds have been kept too long, my onions, carrots, parsnips, lettuces with several others never once came out of the ground

RESULTS

On my return from the mountains I discovered all my turnips were eaten off by the caterpillar, also my cabbages, also my potatoes in part. I have dug up my potatoes. I shall not get half the seed in quantity and half of those are not so large as walnuts, and began to rot by the time they had been dug up for three days From 1 acre of wheat — 4 bushels, 2 acres of indian corn — not one cob not a quart each of peas and beans. I did save one cabbage which, with my rotten potatoes, is all the plants I have eaten from my garden Henty never gathered a handful of wheat.

Source: *Camfield Letters*, 5.9.1830 and 3.2.1831 (Mitchell Library, D30).

FURTHER DIFFICULTIES

March 4th — Prices have risen to a very serious height just now, and there is consequently a great outcry in the colony. Some of our friends appear to think that we are so well off that we cannot possibly want for anything; and others probably imagine we are so far gone, that it is hopeless to send us any thing; so we fall between the two stools. Can you picture to yourself a new colony? You cannot. It is impossible for one, in the midst of the luxurious refinements of the old country, to conceive the actual state of a new one. Not that there are intolerable hardships, nor even great privations; but people's fancy will play them the trick of supposing that from throwing seed into the ground we can ensure a crop without any other trouble; whereas our culture, and all our operations, are most laborious: my two men have been now nearly a month looking for thatch and putting it on two houses, which are not near finished yet. As to breaking ground, it is easy when you have cattle; but, generally speaking, we are not so provided. It occupies a man twenty days to break up an acre with a hoe, from its wild state, though

this could be done easily with cattle. But, as I have already observed, we have few of them, and the neighbouring colonies will not send them, either from jealousy or fear; and individually we cannot afford to charter vessels and import them, and we are not yet strong enough to form a company. What can we then do? two or three hundred head of cattle, and two or three thousand sheep, would be purchased by us, if they were sent by Government at a fair rate; and this would establish the colony.

Source: *Moore Diary*, 4.3.1831 (J.S. Battye Library, 263A).

ORDER OUT OF CHAOS

LEARNING BY DOING

Experience has long convinced us that our land on the Blackwood was neither calculated for the plough or for pasture. Intense labour . . . brought a few acres into subjection, sufficient, however, to convince us that a life-time would make little or no impression on the vast surrounding forest. Our grant on the Vasse is of a description perfectly different. — It abounds in rich meadow-land on which the most luxurious grass is growing and the trees are scarcely any where too numerous for the progress of the plough. Thither our thoughts are now directed . . .

Hitherto, our success has, it must be allowed, not been transcendent. A house burnt, crops failing, and cattle straying are circumstances which a casual observer would pronounce as the consummation of calamity. But, we think otherwise. A few failures is the price which the inexperienced almost always has to pay for the knowledge he obtains. Experience is a severe but, at the same time, an excellent preceptor. And so we have found him . . . for we have had a better harvest this year than many of our neighbours.

Source: *Bussell Papers* (Charles) (J.S. Battye Library, 337A), December 1833.

A SWAN RIVER FARMER, 1834

With a view of showing what can be done by a single energetic mind, it may be useful to give a sketch of what Edwards has accomplished. One of the first things he set about was, to prepare materials for a substantial house, for which purpose he made and burnt bricks and tiles out of the clay required to be removed to clear the foundation of the house, thereby saving the expense and labour of carriage. He had to explore the country to ascertain where the best lime could be procured. This he found, at the time, no nearer than in one of the bays of Melville Water, below Perth; whence, after burning, he brought it up in boats. The timber, which was mahogany, cut down on the estate, was sawn and prepared by his son, the carpenter, with the assistance of another man; while he himself was the brick-layer and builder. The house is double, consisting of two stories, and is one of the largest in the colony.

In the improvement of the gardens he takes peculiar delight, and is very successful; having a good knowledge of horticulture, acquired by serving an apprenticeship to a market gardener. The spot he fixed upon for his first one was a somewhat elevated morass, on sloping ground, separated from the house by a ravine, and covered with rank vegetation, owing to latent springs. These, after burning off the surface, he dug out, and formed into circular wells of close and substantial brick-work, rising several layers above the surface: from these walls, at different elevations, he is enabled to conduct the water in channels to almost every part of the garden. When the last accounts left, he was constructing earthen pipes for the purpose of completing his plans of irrigation, and also for conveying water across the ravine to the height on which the house is situated. In this garden, and in another large one, hereafter

to be noticed, almost every kind of vegetable, and as many sorts of fruit-trees as have been introduced from tropical and extra-tropical countries, are found to flourish. Among the former was the mangel-wurzel, already mentioned as having a root six feet in circumference; the tomato grows here luxuriantly, weighed down with the load of its beautiful fruit, which gives so fine a flavour to sauces, soups, &c. Among the fruit-trees, he has raised many hundred almonds and Cape-gooseberries, the latter a delicious fruit, producing every month; and also figs and vines in abundance, the latter bearing grapes of a fine and rich flavour.

In the farm-yard he has many ingenious contrivances to meet the wants and habits of its various tribes. His geese and ducks are provided with ample ponds, in the sides of which he has constructed dwellings suitable to them, where they find protection from the heat, and security from the native dog, the only animal they have to fear. His cattle and pigs are kept in fine order.

In front of the house are about two hundred acres of rich meadow, encircled nearly by the river. The situation of a part of this meadow attracted his notice, from its being inclosed between the river, and a natural moat of a semicircular form. This moat he dug out, to a considerable length and breadth, throwing the soil of the inner banks of the inclosure, which he faced with a firm wall of green turf, and made to slope down gradually on the inner side. Along the whole extent of this sloping bank, which is of the finest alluvial soil, are planted in profusion vegetables and fruit-trees. The bank shelves down to a walk made all round within the inclosure, an area of about thirty acres. Most of the interior is now under cultivation, bearing crops of wheat, oats, and barley. He intends, both here and in the garden before mentioned, to shelter some of the walks from the sun by trellised vines.

There is also, adjoining this latter garden, and separated from the house by the ravine before alluded to, a small rocky hill, favourable for vines, and which he has marked out for a vineyard. In addition to the above, is laid-out in front of the house, and on the slope of the hill, where there are no springs a winter garden, in which he has displayed considerable ingenuity and taste. His two smaller gardens are from one to two acres each.

In his agricultural pursuits Edwards has been equally successful. He seems to have acquired his knowledge of farming, while following his trade of a master-brickmaker in Gloucestershire, in consequence of having purchased a few acres of the Forest of Dean, which he reclaimed and made into a farm. At times when the necessaries of life have been very scarce and dear in the colony, he has provided for his family in abundance; and has added to their comforts within the last two years by availing himself of his knowledge of malting and brewing. This indefatigable man has found time for performing the location duties on an adjoining estate, the half of which, amounting to from two to three thousand acres, he obtained as a return from the owner, himself a merchant at Fremantle. He also made the bricks, and constructed the walls, of a dwelling-house recently erected by Mr. Bull, who resides within a mile of him. The writer has occupied a much larger space than he intended with these minute details, partly to do justice to a faithful and valuable servant, and principally with a view of conveying some useful instruction to those who may have yet to learn what are the requisites for a successful colonist.

Source: Irwin, F.C., 1835: *The State and Position of Western Australia* (London), pp.57-60.

AGRICULTURE IN 1847 – THE REPORT OF THE YORK AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY

To His Excellency Governor Irwin, Patron.

Sir,

We, the Committee of the above Society, have the honor to lay before your Excellency, as our patron, this our Seventh Annual Report up to the 1st of January last, on the agricultural proceedings

and prospects of the Colony, which we trust your Excellency will find in as prosperous a state as could be expected under the many disadvantages we have had to contend with.

We have much pleasure in stating that the crops of last harvest were not so short as had been expected, in consequence of the great scarcity of rain, and where they had been sown in time, say April or May, were as productive as those of any former year. We trust that this most satisfactory proof of the great advantage of early sowing will induce our brother settlers to get in their corn much earlier than is the general custom of this district. The sample has in general been good, and in consequence of using blue-stone as a pickle, little or no smut has been seen.

Sheep, we regret to say, are not in such good condition as they have been in former years, in consequence of the long-continued dry weather, but still keep on steadily increasing. Our exports of fat sheep have been small, through the great absence of shipping to carry them away, though profitable markets have been within a few weeks' sail of us. In no way does the settler suffer more than from the great want of shipping enterprise among the merchants or traders here; in fact, the great majority of stock that has been carried away has been taken in the South Australian vessels. Our last clip has been rather light in comparison with former years, but well got up, and we trust that our wool-growers will still continue to improve in this most essential point. From the account sales of the wool shipped by the *Unicorn*, the year before last, the great advantage arising from having it well got up brought as high a price as those of the former year by the *Halifax*. Scouring fleece wool does not seem to answer, as it does not bring as high a price as that washed on the sheep's back, in proportion to the expense. But we would strongly advise the scouring of all the locks and the refuse wool which lies about the shearing-house and are, we regret to say, too often allowed to go waste, as they have sold in England as high as 1s. 1½d. per lb.; and this operation can be performed on the farm at a very little expense. We recommend that more attention should be paid to the judicious crossing of the different breeds of sheep; where the wool is short and scanty, long-woolled rams should be put in, and where coarse, merino rams.

The numerous dogs of European breed in possession of the natives, are now become a source of great annoyance and apprehension to the flock-owners, and if something is not done to check this evil in time, it will get beyond control. We, therefore, most respectfully suggest, that some legal enactment be made preventing persons from giving dogs to the natives, and that some immediate steps be taken to get rid of those in their possession.

We suggested in our last year's Report, that something ought to be done on the part of the Government to prevent persons from setting fire to the bush or grass, as such serious losses had occurred to several persons at harvest time, but we regret to find that as yet no efficient steps have been taken to prevent the recurrence of such a serious evil. Very great difficulty is experienced by the flock-owners in procuring shepherds, and we earnestly hope something will be done to procure an importation of labour as speedily as possible.

Horned cattle, we are happy to say, are daily improving, the breeders now finding it their advantage to purchase or hire well-bred bulls, high-bred cattle being the best for the dairy, and being fit for the butcher at an early age. An importation of fresh blood is much required, otherwise we shall be breeding too close. The local Act against bulls running at large has already proved its good effects, and we hope it will be attended to by all breeders of stock. Through want of proper paddocks bulls are obliged to be kept up at an enormous expense, and until we get a better supply of labour we have no chance of remedying this evil. In this as in every other branch of farming we seriously feel the want of an adequate supply of labour.

Horses are also improving, more attention being paid by the breeders to the selection of suitable stallions, so far as the few good ones we have admit of a choice. A handsome, compact Arab stallion, of high caste, was introduced into this district last year by Mr. Thomas Browne, of Grassdale, and is

likely to be brought here again this year by the same gentleman. Good horses are in demand at advance prices on last year's quotations. None have been exported lately, in consequence of the high shipping charges, and the great expense of sale at foreign markets. Although the Margeaux blood most satisfactorily proved at our last annual races its superior qualities, still an importation of fresh blood is much required. Here we again suffer from want of paddocks as it is utterly impossible to breed horses to advantage without them. Great inconvenience is experienced in consequence of horses and cattle not being generally branded, and considerable difficulty is found in disputed cases, in ascertaining to whom the animals really belong. We therefore most respectfully suggest that an Act be passed, making branding compulsory.

Wheat. — No considerable increase in the cultivation of this essential article of food has taken place this last year, from the impossibility of obtaining hands for the cultivation of new lands.

Barley has been rather a bad crop when not sown early, arising from the absence of rain for such a long-continued period. We would strongly urge our brother settlers over here to sow it, if possible, in April, particularly the English variety; Cape may be sown as late as May. All barley for seed should be pickled with blue-stone, the same way as wheat. Hay has been a very light crop, no rain having fallen from the time it was sown until October. This also should be sown early: we would strongly recommend the sowing of wheat for hay, as it makes the most nutritious fodder, barley hay being very apt to give the animals eating it sore mouths, which makes them fall off in condition. Refuse corn should not be sown, as it is sure to make the land foul, whereas the hay crop is what should be looked to for clearing the ground.

Vineyards are still increasing, the short trial made giving the most encouraging results. Even as severely trying as this season has been the plants, and even cuttings, have stood uncommonly well, and, in general, grown luxuriantly, producing a highly flavoured fruit. This confirms our former opinion, that our soil and climate are peculiarly favourable to the growth of the grape, and the producing of a fine flavoured wine.

It gives us much pleasure to state, that the general improvement of the district continues steadily progressing, as also the prospects of the settlers, notwithstanding the many difficulties they have had to contend with. Labour has been very scarce, and ruinously high, necessarily preventing the employment of it to advantage, and no community can prosper where a profit does not arise from the employment of labour; it may exist, but can never progress rapidly.

The annual importation of lads from the Parkhurst Institution has also ceased; it was the only source from which we derived any supply of labour, and we trust you will use your influence to have it renewed; but we respectfully suggest to your Excellency, as we had done to our late lamented patron, the urgent necessity of removing depot from the neighbourhood of Perth, as the vicinity to a town is certain to prevent the reform of the lads, and also tends to encourage those placed out in the country to behave badly, so as to be sent back to Perth; it is notorious they will do anything, or suffer any punishment, so as they can only get back to town.

We return your Excellency our sincere thanks for so kindly becoming the patron of the Society, and we rest assured that you will endeavour, as far as it is in your power, to promote its views and interests.

Signed by order of the Committee,
W. Burges, Hon. Secretary.

Source: *York Agricultural Society Minutes*, 28.4.1848.

HOW MUCH PROGRESS WAS THERE?

That the farming has been and is atrociously bad, there can be no doubt. Men continue to crop the same ground with the same crops year after year without manuring it, and when the weeds come thicker than the corn, they simply leave it. Machinery has not been introduced. Seed is wasted, and farmers thrash their corn with flails out on the roads after the old Irish fashion. I need hardly say that there is no reason why this should continue to be so. That the land would soon pay for good farming I have no doubt even though the surplus grain were sent home to England. At present the colony, which should above all things strive to be an agricultural colony, actually imports flour and grain.

Source: Trollope, Anthony, 1875: *South Australia and Western Australia* (London), pp.127-8.

AGRICULTURE DAY BY DAY

CLEARING

The weather having been unsettled we have been afraid to proceed with our thrashing, so have been clearing instead. This clearing must go on for some years yet since we can only accomplish a small space at a time. The trees that were fallen last year were so hard they turned the edge of the axe; we can only subdue them by sawing and burning. Today we have been attacking a huge prostrate gum tree 60 feet in length without the top. It has taken several days to drag away with bullocks all that was moveable and now the stem remains, which we must tackle in some way or other. There are three more trees nearly as large which we must remove before we can begin to plough the piece we have been clearing. The stumps we cannot get up, so they must remain; some branching tough roots however will have to be cut and dug up. The land is valuable when you get it into cultivation, but where it requires such labour and expense to clear, Government ought to thank anyone for taking it for nothing. I cannot but think it a providential mercy, considering what new hands we were, that none of our limbs have been broken, nor any serious accidents befallen us in the use of tools.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals* 30.12.1843 (Perth: Lamb Paterson), p.133.

AND MORE CLEARING

The land here is fertile, the grand difficulty is clearing away trees of stupendous magnitude, and great hardness. Horticulture is all we attempt at present.

Source: *Bussell Papers* (John) (J.S. Battye Library, 337A), August, 1830.

MAKING USE OF FIRE

We have enclosed about 15 acres of my 100-acre block and have cleared and ploughed a large piece. It is severe work moving the fallen trees and stubbing the stumps and blackboys. The wood here is so full of splinters that the hands suffer much and almost all wounds are apt to fester. Fire is our most efficient agent. We make large piles in the fork of a fallen tree with pieces which five men can just move with levers and these burn for days together and relieve us of much labour. This labour, if we paid for it, would cost 5/- per man per day. We have not yet paid a single extra labourer. John is weak and poorly at times but will improve in health and strength when the weather gets cooler and is better already for the change in the season I have mentioned.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Picton Journals* 18.3.1842 (Perth: Lamb Paterson), p.63.

FENCING

The pioneers of Toodyay were among the first to fence their land with what is known as the 'bush' fence. This was constructed by driving pairs of jam timber posts about 15 inches into the ground, with a space of about 12 inches between the posts and about six feet between each pair. The spaces between the posts were then filled with sticks and brush, and the pairs of posts were tied at the top to keep the material in place. There was a tremendous amount of labour in building these fences, but the material

cost nothing, and some thrifty farmers, when getting the sticks and brush for the fence, used to take them out by the roots, thus helping to clear the land at the same time. This class of fence served its purpose for some years and was proof against anything but bushfires, which caused a good deal of trouble in those days. Later, a better type of fence, known as the 'Harper' fence, came into use. The posts were used in much the same way as for the 'bush' fence, but they were heavier and went deeper into the ground. They had a space of about six inches between them, and this was filled with round bush timber to a height of two and a half or three feet, with a top rail about 12 inches above that. This made a good solid fence and was less likely to be destroyed by fire.

Source: Hammond, J.E., 1936: *Western Pioneers, The Battle Well Fought* (Perth: Imperial Printing Co.), pp.123-4.

GROWING WHEAT

Spades, shovels, hoes, or anything that would break the surface of the ground, were employed in planting the first wheat crop I saw sown. The actual sowing was literally done by hand, and the seed covered with the various implements I have mentioned. Some of the settlers managed to construct rough wooden ploughs . . . and they were always willing to lend them to others who could not make them, perhaps through lack of suitable tools. Those who had improvised ploughs were able to sow 10 or 15 acres, which would be quite a big field for those days.

It seldom happened that the farmers had to wait after the beginning of May to start breaking the soil, for the land that was chosen for wheat growing did not require much rain to soften it, and had to be suitable for the wooden ploughs and other implements used to get the crop in. The greatest task in farming in those days was the clearing of the land for the plough. All roots and stones had to be cleared to a depth of at least four inches, otherwise the plough could not be used; the first root or stone it bumped against meant the end of the flimsy plough. This class of clearing made the use of hand implements much easier.

The trouble often did not end with the clearing of the land, for many of the fields, though very small, had to be drained of flood waters as well. When the wheat or barley was ripe, it had to be reaped by hand with reaping hooks or sickles, usually by all the members of the family who were able to work, but sometimes by natives. It was placed in stooks for a few days, then carted and put into a stack like a haystack, near a place where it could be threshed with hand flails. The chaff was cleaned out by holding dishfuls of grain up in the wind, the chaff blowing away and falling some distance from where the wheat fell. When this operation was finished, the wheat, which was allowed to fall on a groundsheet, usually made by sowing corn sacks together, still contained a little grain with husks on it. These were sifted out with a sieve. When the sieve was shaken the grain with husks on it came to the surface and was scooped off by hand. This was a slow job, as it had to be repeated many times before a clean sample was bagged for the mill or for next season's seed.

Source: Hammond, J.E., 1936: *Western Pioneers, The Battle Well Fought* (Perth: Imperial Printing Co.), pp.15-6.

THE PROPER CARE OF SHEEP

The proper classification of sheep into separate flocks is most essential to the maintenance of equality of condition, and requires particular attention. The health of the animals is also greatly promoted by an occasional change of pasture, which is considered of so much importance in Spain

that the annual migrations of the flocks are there regulated by numerous enactments. The change of pasture in this country might probably take place with most advantage from the months of December to May.

The next point which calls for attention is the necessity of eradicating Scab from amongst the flocks. This disease is so insidious and so injurious to the interests of the sheep farmer that no precaution should be omitted to guard against it. This cannot be effectually done without considerably diminishing the number of sheep at present kept in some flocks; but where the expense of the cure, the unsaleable portion of the wethers, and the deterioration in the quality of the wool are considered, the expense of additional shepherds will be found light in comparison. To have a remedy constantly at hand, it is advisable that each flock-master should cultivate a small quantity of tobacco; by this precaution, and by maintaining a constant supervision over the shepherds, the disease will soon disappear.

It is of much consequence that the shearing should take place before any of the grass seeds begin to shed, as their admixture with the wool greatly deteriorates its value . . . Few flocks are thoroughly well washed, and an alteration of the present system, by which the work is generally performed by contract, may be worth a trial. Much loss is also sustained by neglecting to sort the wool previous to packing. When entire fleeces are put up without removing the discoloured or coarser parts, or when three or four qualities are packed together, the buyers will only give the price of the worst quality. The method of packing has been recently much improved by some individuals, but much yet remains to be done by others in this respect.

Source: *The Journal of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society of Western Australia for the Year 1842* (Perth, 1843), pp.42-3.

MAKING BUTTER

The process of making butter in those days was to place the milk in large open dishes and let it stand for 24 to 30 hours, and then skim the cream off with a skimmer made for the purpose, and keep it until there was sufficient to churn about 20 lb. of butter. In the full milking season, when 50 or 60 cows were being milked, the cream was put right into the churn from the dishes and churned up as soon as possible so as not to have too much cream waiting to be churned. It took a great many milk dishes to run a dairy with so many cows, because they had to stand for so long before the cream was skimmed and they could be made ready for use again. The churn was made like a cask, with a crank handle at one end attached to a spindle with beaters for churning the cream. The churning was difficult and the churns took a long time to clean after they had been used.

Source: Hammond, J.E., 1936: *Western Pioneers, The Battle Well Fought* (Perth: Imperial Printing Co.), pp.35-6.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR A FARM ON SWAN RIVER, 1839

JANY. Keep carts going with mould for compost, limestone and marl and mix clear land — burn grub trees, make sod fires with pipes filled with wood 20 feet long and 2 feet wide and high. Cross plough to get sods for same — on moist land cabbage seeds for plants with a declining moon.

FEBY. Sow beans and peas plough in rye *skinless barley* — this I find to come before any other kind — and white mustard on well prepared land plant, potatoes with rows of beans or peas between to keep off the frost, water well the dung, sow mango-wurtzel turnip winter vetch for green food, make

sod fires and prepare land deep ploughed for carrots — sow raddish for pigs cabbage seeds for plants, heap and well attend to manure if rain falls — sow $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of all sorts of cabbage for plants 1 acre of turnip or more — Thrash out to avoid moth and thatch your straw.

MARCH. Roll in white mustard on red land peas beans &c., as above (no potatoes unless a wet season). Cart out dung and mix with the first rains — heap manure if you have not a full years lying over — note well and journalize the quantity of rain at the opening of the season for the close generally resembles it — for instance March to October and February to November.

APRIL. Sow wheat in red land plough in — plant 6,000 cabbages, an acre of mango-wurtzel, acre of turnips or more — plant sunflower between beans and peas — sow oats and barley on your prepared land — turnip rape clover and gigantic pea; try parsley on a large scale in drills, mango-wurtzel and sweet turnip.

MAY. Sow peas, rape gigantic pea, vetch, carrots, clover, sow wheat and barley both well picked and pickled in strong brine to float an egg one third above the solution and lime well; too much trouble cannot be taken; you may now in the general average of seasons cut green food and cabbage sprouts to stall feed bullocks or milch cows, which will well repay you.

JUNE. Sow wheat on your best lands, oats, barley, and stall feed milch cows and litter well — plough in your grain (on light lands only). Potatoes plant this month as July is late. Salt Oat hay layer about with clean straw (not smutty) to increase quantity.

JULY. The best of flat (only) may be sown this month and rich land (as it is too late). Plant potatoes first week and beans &c., in intervals say $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet, a quantity of cabbage say 2 acres — water furrow and drain. Years of failure convince me even first week in July is too late for potatoes — plant in June.

AUGUST. Roll all crops plant Kaffre melon next river and potatoes and cabbage on moist land or next river — all spare time fallow and burn — plant out cow cabbage.

SEPTEMBER. Plant potatoes a few on moist land or next river — grub land *fallow* plough very deep, harrow roll and replough land for green crop next year and for burning, put up dung — *fallow* — plant out cow cabbage on moist land — kaffre melon. Lime, burn and mix with black soil and cart up mould.

OCTOBER. Fallow plough, cross plough, prepare dung, sew if moist weather cabbage seed for next year for early plants. Late crop of garden turnips — prepare stands for stacks, sow cabbage for plants next year on dry land. Cart up mould.

NOVEMBER. Cut oat hay and fallow ground — keep turning and preparing your land for spring crops — burn off roots, and prepare dung heaps if any moist weather — attend well to this as it is the basis of farming fallow your green food land immediately after cutting.

DECEMBER. Harvest month — put wheat in stacks upon stands in bags or divisions so as to take apart into your barn at once. Thatch your ricks, salt oat hay 20 or 40 lbs. to the ton. Thatch your hay ricks or your loss will be great.

Source: *Samuel Moore's Farm Journal* (J.S. Battye Library, A209).

SHELTER

The provision of shelter was one of the first tasks settlers attempted. Tents were common at first but they were too flimsy. They let the rain in in winter and were likely to catch on fire in summer. Many settlers had imported pre-fabricated timber houses from Scandinavia but these quickly warped or were attacked by termites and had to be replaced. But skilled builders were scarce, as were glass, iron and all the other building materials so readily available in England. Settlers had therefore to build their own houses from the materials they found around them. The result in most cases was a small and simple thatched mud cottage which blended into the landscape and was surprisingly well suited to the climate.

Equally important were temporary shelters for some settlers lived in the bush for long periods of time with little more for protection than a blanket and rifle. A house was too great an investment. Something less substantial satisfied their needs during the cold and wet weather. The first (and very crude) bush huts were built in September 1831 when a party of land holders made their first trip to the inland pastures of the Avon Valley. Improvements were rapid and it became quite usual for shepherds and others to live for months at a time in a hut of branches and blackboy thatch. In fact, it is probable that the raising of sheep would have been impossible without them.

TEMPORARY SHELTERS

THEIR INVENTION, SEPTEMBER 1831

The First Night Out:

The Governor on his departure was saluted with three hearty cheers, and we then proceeded to bivouac under a large gum tree, near which were two native huts; and this was my first actual experience of bushing. I found the excitement delightful, as the evening was very fine: a kangaroo was killed, a roaring fire kindled, and we enjoyed a delicious fry of steaks. Our hammocks were slung in front, from trees called blackboys, and the scene altogether was such as I thought I should never tire of; however, when going into my hammock it fairly capsized — a moral hint that there are ups and downs in the happiest scenes; and the cold, which was intense towards morning, gave still further evidence that perfect enjoyment is rarely to be found.

The Third

Halted in the valley. Heavy rain. Found great difficulty in lighting a fire under a tree. My hammock fell in the night; all my clothes were wet, and being in dread of the falling of the tree (pleasant sensations altogether), I lay down by the fire, my head on *a soft log* and my feet to the fire; and thus I composed myself to sleep.

The Fourth (It was fine!)

One of the party slept in the hollowed part of a tree, and made a tent of his blanket, tied by ropes to two of the trees called blackboys.

The Fifth Night:

The day had been rainy, which rendered it difficult to light a fire, so that we were exceedingly uncomfortable; but the evening became moderate, and the genial warmth of a blazing fire made us soon feel comparatively happy. Here some of the party began to make small huts, like the wigwams of the natives,

which often afterwards proved useful; the process of forming which is very simple. Blackboy poles are stuck in the ground, forming three-fourths of a circle, and meeting in a common point at top; these are covered with grassy tops of the blackboy: it is a good temporary shelter in rain.

Source: Doyle, Martin (ed.), 1834: *Extracts from the Letters and Journals of George Fletcher Moore* (London: Orr and Smith), pp.92-5.

ELABORATION, 1834

The shed is made thus: 2 trees or blackboys are found rather nearer together than the length of the blanket, a stick is put across (& tied in place at each end) about 4 feet from the ground, from this to the ground on the windward side some rods are placed by way of rafters over which the blanket is laid & this is tied in two places, hanging down at the ends, thus making a sloping roof like one side of the roof of a house, the blanket being longer forms the ends, thus one side of the shed is open, on the sheltered side. Opposite to this, about 8 or 10 feet from it, a little fire is made to cook & the last thing it is lengthened to the same length as the shed, putting on a large limb for a back to strike the heat towards us, an immense fire is made up & any one who wakes up in the night replenishes it from the neighbouring heap if it is burning low. Of course, unless the country has been lately burnt, a space all round the fire is just burnt to prevent fire spreading We spread a good bed of blackboy rushes over the bottom of the shed and lay with our heads under the low parts feet towards the fire, each covered with his cloak, & thus sleep very comfortably. On my former trip we sometimes had the fire 3 or 4 feet from our feet & so got nearly roasted, but experience teaches.

Source: *Tanner Letters*, 4.4.1834.

BUSH HUTS

Our bush method of building is very simple and expeditious, if one can get either rushes or grass tree tops for thatch; we form what are colonially termed 'V' huts, but they are rather V reversed or 'A' huts. First we cut two strong poles with a fork at one extremity for the ends -- the length depending on the height we require - which are placed from 12 to 16 feet apart, a long ridge pole resting in the forks; other poles are placed sloping against the ridge pole with one end nailed or tied to it with rope yarn and the other buried in the ground; rough wattles as battens are then tied or nailed lengthwise across these poles or rafters and the whole thatched over; and the back is then fitted up with rushes, and part of the front leaving a gap to serve as door and window and to admit the warmth of the fire blazing outside The battens inside are extremely useful to stick one's tools, tobacco pipes, dressing things etc. in between; a hammock slung across forms one's bed and the rest of one's furniture is but scanty; one or two camp stools, a portable table (or in lieu thereof the tailboard of a cart or any rough plank answers the purpose) supported on four stakes driven into the ground, a small canteen, and a trunk of clothes, completes one's equipment for the bush, besides the necessary supply of stores. In such an habitation did I live for several months at Pinjarrup. I afterwards built a similar one on the Vasse where I resided three months, but as the weather became very cold and wet, I was about to build a chimney to it when I left.

Source: Bunbury, W. St. P. and Morrell, W.P. (eds.), 1930: *Early Days in Western Australian, Being the Letters and Journals of Lieut. W.H. Bunbury* (London), pp.122-3.

PERMANENT HOUSING

WATTLE AND DAUB, UPPER SWAN, 1833

The house seemed to have no sawn timber in it, except for the doors and windows. The walls were constructed of stakes driven into the ground, and interlaced with wattles, the space being filled with mud-mortar and the whole plastered so as to present a smooth surface Many of the farm houses are of this description, and are erected at trifling expense; they are every way preferable, both in summer and winter, to wooden houses.

Source: Irwin, F.C., 1835: *The State and Position of Western Australia* (London), p.53.

BUSSELLS' HOUSE, THE VASSE, DECEMBER 1837

I mentioned that this was of two stories, but it is as yet in a very unfinished state, only one room on the ground floor being habitable which serves as both kitchen and parlour in bad weather, when the cooking cannot go on in the open air. The large chimney is made of rammed earth, but all the rest of the building is of what is colonially termed wattle and dab, the quickest and easiest method of building, but not very substantial. The plan is to fix small uprights between the strong corner and other upright posts of the house and between them to weave wattles, or in fact sticks, the best of which for the purpose are of spearwood: this forms a very strong kind of basket work, the interstices of which are filled up with a plaster of sand and clay which may be smoothed on the surface or covered over with lime plaster at leisure. The dab generally cracks as it dries, which makes the house very airy and pleasant in summer but in winter too much so, but the chinks can be filled up. Shingles are the universal covering of houses by all advanced in civilisation in Australia. In some respects I prefer thatch, which keeps out the sun best in summer and the cold in winter, but it is dangerous in so dry a climate and invariably lets in the wet when the first rains commence.

Source: Bunbury, W. St. P., and Morrell, W.P. (eds.), 1930: *Early Days in Western Australia, Being the Letters and Journals of Lieut. W.H. Bunbury* (London), pp.108-9.

THATCHING

You ask "of what is the thatch of our houses composed?" every one uses whatever suitable material is most easily procured in his neighbourhood. I used long sedge and bulrushes, some straw, and the tops of the grass-tree; battens or wattles, like laths, are nailed at regular distances across the rafters; the thatch is laid on these, and tied or sewed down with a long needle and rope yarn. The bark of trees has been tried for thatch, and it answers pretty well, if carefully applied. Mr. Brown has an outside covering of it, about fourteen inches in thickness, over a shingled roof, to keep out the heat; but it is expensive.

Source: *Moore Diary* (J.S. Battye Library, 263A), 14.9.1832.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ASPECT

The front of our house is to the South East, the coolest point in these hot climates, so that we have not a moment's sun during the day in the front door or window. Besides, I believe, we are the only ones in the Colony who turn their back upon the river, but they will find out. Many of them now, who would

have been most comfortable as we, are most tremendously hot here in the months of January and February, I may say December also.

Source: *Shaw Letters*, 21.1.1832 (Mitchell Library B164).

VERANDAHS AND FLIES

The present roof of the house is canvas strained over the boards, with very little slope. Over this I am erecting a roof to be thatched . . . & brought down *all round* as a veranda 5 or 6 feet wide, with porches opposite those doors and windows that require them, whether for letting in more light or breaking the stiffness of the straight line of the eaves. Under the veranda it is intended to erect a pantry on the South side to be entered from without as bringing in meat &c. indoors introduces flies. Our kitchen is a mere makeshift being only a piece of canvas strained over 2 poles as a roof and having a turf chimney topped with an empty cask. In 12 months, I hope to have just detached from the house a kitchen, storeroom and pantry.

Source: *Tanner Letters*, 10.10.1831.

CONVICTS

The suggestion that the introduction of convicts would solve some of Western Australia's most pressing problems was made as early as 1830 but, apart from some brief support among settlers at King George's Sound, it was not seriously considered. The disadvantages were seen to far outweigh the advantages. The suggestion was not raised again until the early 1840's, when the effects of the economic depression of that time became quite strongly felt. Support was great among the most influential pastoralists of the Avon Valley to whom the economic advantages of convict labour were greatest and most readily evident.

A FORMAL REQUEST

To the Right Honourable THE LORD STANLEY,
Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies &c. &c. &c.

The humble memorial of the undersigned Land Owners, Merchants and Inhabitants of the Colony of Western Australia, respectfully sheweth —

That, Her Majesty's Ministers for the time being having founded this Colony in 1829, upon certain principles which were considered advantageous to settlers, thereby caused a considerable number of capitalists to emigrate hither, upon the faith of those principles being adhered to by the Home Government.

That, through mismanagement, inexperience, and ignorance of the seasons, great numbers of the early settlers lost or expended the greater part of their capital, before they were able so to invest it, as to live upon the interest or produce thereof; but that from the year 1838 to the beginning of 1841, after struggling with unparalleled difficulties, they began to surmount the evils which had encompassed them, and entertained a reasonable hope that the then steadily increasing influx of emigrants would prove the means of imparting a sound marketable value to land, stock and other property, and thus ultimately realise the hopes of the original settlers.

That, after the formation of the Colony, and prior to the year 1841, Her Majesty's Government thought proper to raise the price of Crown Lands in this Colony, first from 1s. 6d. an acre (their full value) to 5s. subsequently to 12s. and ultimately to £1 per acre; in consequence of which the sale of Crown Lands has entirely ceased, and the fund which had been formerly produced from this source and was made applicable to the introduction of labour, no longer existed. The introduction of labour therefore ceased, and as the principle upon which the colony was founded (of granting land to those who introduced capital and labour) was no longer acted upon, the immigration of both capitalists and labourers ceased simultaneously.

That, from the cessation of the influx of capital and labour, the settlers of this colony, whose full exertions for many years were necessarily confined to producing the means of their own support, have been entirely disabled from extending those operations so as to produce a sufficient amount of Exports to counter-balance the drain which has been made upon the specie of the Colony by the introduction of necessary Imports.

That, emigration has now commenced from this Colony to the other Australian Colonies, and that there is great reason to apprehend this evil will shortly become of serious magnitude and importance.

That, the scarcity of labour which is now to be apprehended, will necessarily advance the rate of wages, curtail the operations of the agriculturist and flock owner, reduce the quantity of land which has been annually brought into cultivation, arrest the increase of our flocks and herds, and of all other sources of wealth, and enhance the price of provisions and other necessaries to those whose means of procuring them are rapidly diminishing.

That, the state of things to which your Memorialists have thus referred, has for some time past had the effect of depriving land and other property of any marketable value; the want of money necessarily precluding the possibility of purchasing; and the want of confidence in the intrinsic value of property preventing all disposition, to purchase.

That, there appears under existing circumstances no probability of the future arrival in this Colony, to any extent, of the combined essentials to prosperity — capital and labour — unless sufficient inducement be again held forth to Emigrants.

That, Your Memorialists most respectfully entreat your Lordship and Her Majesty's Ministers to consider the importance of this Colony to the British Empire, from its geographical position, and from its inexhaustible stores of ship timber, as well as its other resources; that, from its position in time of war it would be highly desirable, both for the honor of the Crown, as well as, perhaps, for the security of Her Majesty's Eastern Possessions that this Colony should become a populous and powerful settlement; whereas at present a single frigate would be sufficient to wrest the Territory from the British Empire.

That, your Memorialists and the early settlers of this Colony have been long averse from the necessity of making it a Penal Settlement for Convicts; and that if any other remedy for the evils under which they suffer might be obtained, they would be strenuously opposed to such a measure; but, that unless Her Majesty's Government will reduce the price of land to its original standard, and resume the principle upon which this Colony was founded, (and act upon that principle judiciously and not lavishly — as was formerly the case) or will devise some other expedient as shall cause the reintroduction of capital and labour, your Memorialists conceive that this Colony must become absolutely useless to the British Crown, an incumbrance upon the Empire, and ruinous to those individuals who have been led to embark in it the whole of their fortunes, under an erroneous belief that the British Government would abide by those principles of colonization which alone give confidence and hope to the Emigrant.

That, if her Majesty's Government refuse to accede to these suggestions, your Memorialists will be obliged to admit that the only probability which then remains of giving a marketable value to land and other property in this Colony — of attracting to it a fresh influx of settlers, and even of inducing the majority of the present settlers to remain in the Territory — is to be found in the hope that Her Majesty's Government may be induced to convert the Colony into a Penal Settlement on an extensive scale.

That, the distance of the pastoral districts from the coast, and the sandy nature of the soil between the coast and the Darling Range of Hills, render the formation of good roads most necessary and at the same time most expensive, and perhaps only to be accomplished by convict labour; that it is also by convict labour that the port and harbour may be improved — bridges, wharfs, jetties, light-houses, and other public works, be constructed — facilities for the advantageous establishment of a Timber trade secured — and an inland market guaranteed for agricultural and pastoral productions.

Your Memorialists therefore humbly pray, that if Her Majesty's Ministers shall refuse to re-adopt those measures which were just beginning to be felt at the time when the inducements to immigrants were withdrawn, or to devise some other good and speedy measure of relief — they will be pleased to advise Her Majesty at as early a date as possible, to make and declare this Colony A PENAL SETTLEMENT UPON AN EXTENSIVE SCALE. WESTERN AUSTRALIA, FEBRUARY 1846.

Source: *Perth Gazette*, 2.1.1847.

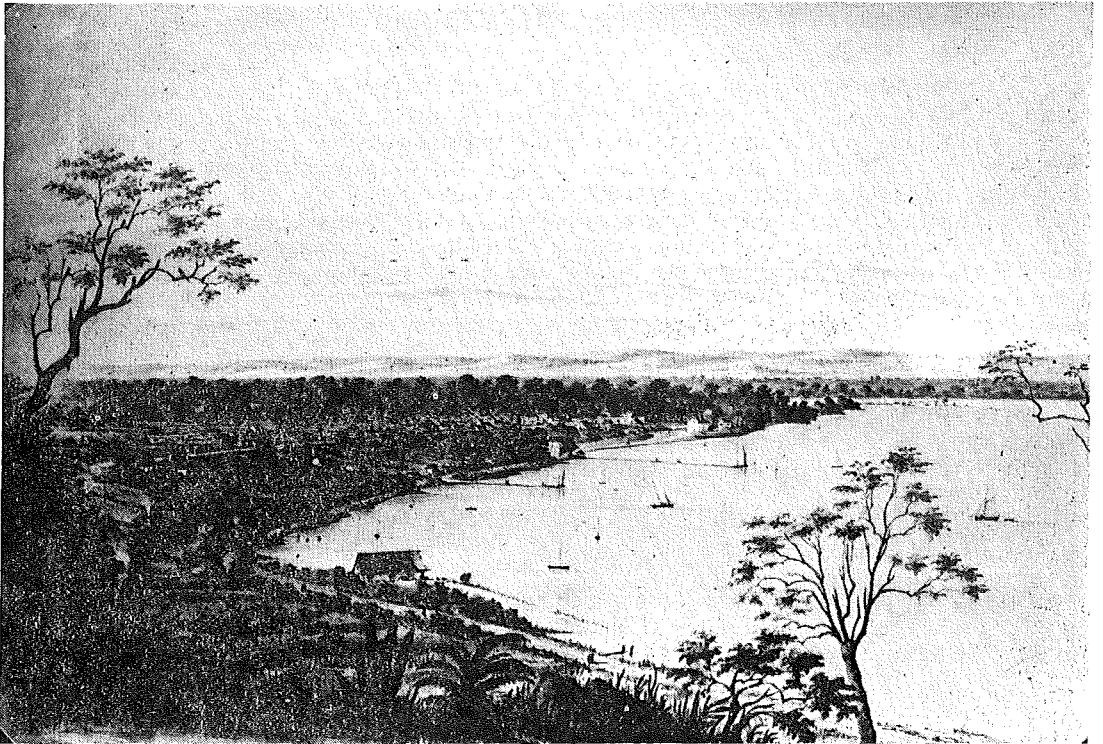
TOWN AND COUNTRY

PERTH AND FREMANTLE, 1830

Perth, the embryo capital of Western Australia, situated on the right bank of the river, about twelve miles from the sea, has, as yet, only the appearance of a straggling tented field; but I have no doubt its aspect will, in a short time, be very different. The Governor has got a commodious wooden house nearly finished, and the government officers were commencing to follow his example

Freemantle, the seaport town, is situated on a low sandy point, at the mouth, and on the left side, of the river. At present, the inhabitants live in tents: there are, however, a few wooden houses, which have been brought from England.

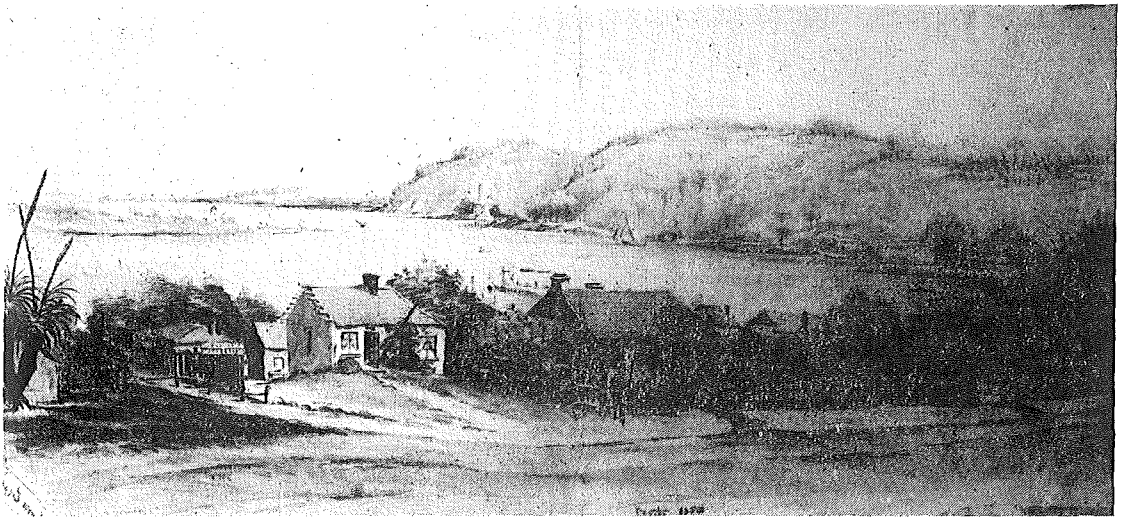
The greater part of the settlers yet remain here, not one having gone to his farm. It is a very bad place, owing to the idleness, roguery, and thieving of those people brought out as servants, and also



PERTH, 1847

(Horace Samson)

from the original watercolour in the Western Australian Art Gallery



PERTH, 1850

(A. Taylor)

from the original in the Western Australian Art Gallery

of some others of a higher denomination. It is so bad that the Governor designated it a "sink of iniquity", and stated that he took no measures to make it better, on purpose to force people to go to their farms.

The servants are, for the most part, hulking, lazy fellows, and exceedingly insolent; but what else could be expected, from their previous character, having been, I believe, mostly taken from the work-house.

Source: Wilson, J.B., 1835: *Narrative of a Voyage Round the World* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert and Piper), pp.222-3.

PERTH AND FREMANTLE, 1837

The first appearance of the country, near the town of Fremantle, is not inviting, though the approach to it from the sea is imposing. The first object which indicates the site of the town is an octagonal building of white stone, built near the edge of a precipice overhanging the mouth of the river. The town is yet very limited in extent; the streets are wide, laid out at right angles with each other, and some of them macadamized. Limestone of a fine quality is to be procured from Arthur's Head, and in all probability will constitute the chief material in the construction of all future buildings. There are several inns, where accommodation and provisions are to be procured, of such a character as to have received the approbation of luxurious invalids from British India. The shops and stores contain nearly all the commodities and implements which a settler is likely to require. . . . Perth is the next city, and is the seat of government. A winding estuary, from two furlongs to a mile in breadth, runs for several miles through pleasing or romantic scenery, varying the views by the circuitous course round long spits of sand, it being necessary to keep in deep water. Rocks of grotesque shapes constitute, in many places, the prominent features of the banks; some decked in the profuse embroidery of nature, others lurking

amid shrubs and trees, and many standing out bare and precipitous. This variegated estuary opens into Melville Water, a beautiful expanse, six miles long and four wide, which has a fine background composed of the Darling range. The mouth of the river Canning is seen nearly four miles from the estuary on the right; a narrow strait is then threaded, and at the foot of a hill richly clothed with wood is seen the town of Perth, built on one of its declivities, and stretching along the arms of a curving bay. Passage-boats regularly ply between Freemantle and Perth, performing the distance in about two hours. Should the journey by land be preferred, horses are easily procured: the traveller has to cross a horse-ferry at Preston Point, about a mile and a half higher than Freemantle; and from the opposite side a road runs to Perth, along a loose sandy track, passing through an open forest.

In good taste, some fine trees have been left, which partially conceal the town. A ridge runs parallel with the water's edge, on which the main street is built, extending nearly one mile. If due attention could be paid to architectural elevation, there are few places whose beauty would compete with this esplanade. As stone can be easily transported from Mount Eliza, and bricks made on the spot, the temporary wooden buildings will soon disappear; more particularly as during the summer they are many degrees warmer than a house of stone or brick. The barracks, the commissariat stores, and the first church ever built in the colony, under the directions of that exemplary man, Archdeacon Scott, are the most conspicuous structures.

Source: Ogle, Nathaniel, 1839: *The Colony of Western Australia* (London), pp.29-31.

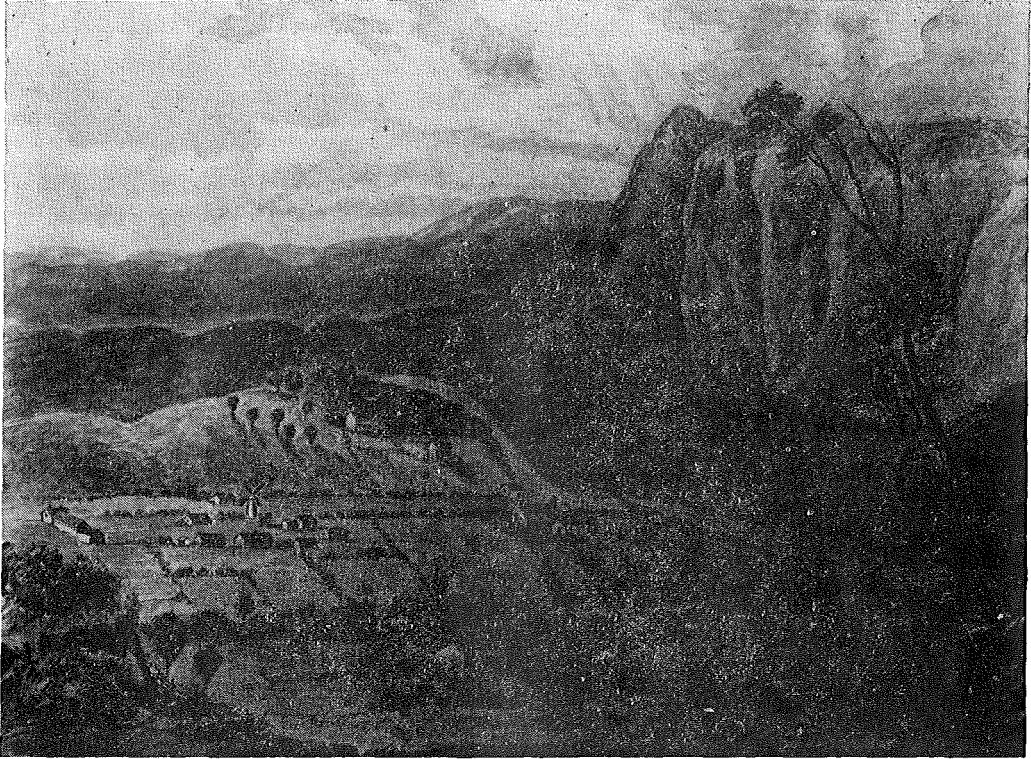
IMPRESSIONS OF PERTH, 1843

That arid appearance which first meets the settler on his arrival cannot but prove disheartening to him: particularly if, as is generally the case, his own sanguine expectations of a second Paradise have been heightened by the interested descriptions of land jobbers and emigration agents. However, when he ascends the river towards the capital, this feeling of despondency will gradually wear away; its various windings bring, to his eager and anxious eye, many a bright patch of park-like woodland; while the river, expanding as he proceeds, till the beautiful estuary of Melville water opens out before him, becomes really a magnificent feature in the landscape; and the boats, passing and repassing upon its smooth and glassy bosom, give the animation of industry, and suggest all the cheerful anticipations of ultimate success to the resolute adventurer. From about the centre of this lake-like piece of water, the eye first rests upon the capital of Western Australia, a large straggling village, partly concealed by the abrupt termination of a woody ridge, and standing upon a picturesque slope on the right bank of the river, thirteen miles from its mouth. The distant range of the Darling mountains supplies a splendid background to the picture, and the refreshing sea breeze which curls the surface of Melville water every afternoon, adds to the health, no less than comfort, of the inhabitants.

Source: Stokes, J. Lort, 1846: *Discoveries in Australia* (London), vol I, pp.53-4.

IMPRESSIONS OF YORK

As a little time was required to give the ship a slight refit and the crew some relaxation, it afforded an opportunity of visiting York, situated about sixty miles east from Perth, and at the extremity of the colony. Accordingly, one murky afternoon a small party of us were wending our way over the Darling Range. . . . Our road lay in some places over tracts of loose white sand, and in others round and over low ironstone hills. Descending from one of these heights to a rich narrow flat, the presence of three or four houses informed us we were within the township of York. The position of the level it occupies forms the western bank of the river Avon, which is now and has been for some time past nothing more



YORK, 1857

from the original in the Dixson Galleries, Sydney

than a chain of water-holes. In this neighbourhood the hills lie detached from one another in irregular directions, and are composed of granite; from the summit of one on the western side of the town we looked over a vast expanse of undulating forest land, densely wooded, with scarcely a grassy patch to break the monotony of the view. To give an idea of the personal labour early settlers are obliged to undergo, I may mention that we found Mr. Bland, the most wealthy colonist in Western Australia, engaged in holding the plough.

Source: Stokes, J. Lort, 1846: *Discoveries in Australia* (London), vol. II, pp.231-2.

ALBANY, 1848

The site of the town is beautifully chosen, between two hills, sloping down to the white sands of the harbour, of which it commands a full view, with the hills on the other side next to the open sea! The white stone houses are picturesquely scattered about with their gardens, like an English village. No mud hovels as at Bunbury. The trees, what few there are, are Casuarina and Dwarf Gums; the native shrubs, herbaceous plants, and other flowers for the most part new to me, curious and beautiful. Gardening however, seems to be in its infancy. Fine vegetables are produced and all bulbous roots thrive surprisingly. The soil for the most part, a sandy peat moist, but water cannot stagnate. A water spout

broke on the top of the hill above the town two years ago, and in a few hours washed a deep gully down the main road into the harbour, undermining a cottage and some fencing and carrying away a great quantity of soil. I advise this gully's being kept clear as an outlet in case of future accidents, the sides sloped down and planted with native shrubs, which will soon interlace their roots, consolidate the earth, and be ornamental as well as useful. Of the climate, experience must enable me to speak, but all I hear of it is very delightful and there is no annoyance from mosquitoes assuredly no trifling recommendation.

Source: Burton, A. (ed.): *Wollaston's Albany Journals* (Perth: Lamb Paterson), p.40.

FARMS IN THE AVON VALLEY, 1837

In the York District there are at present the following farming establishments; their numbers are likely to increase rapidly, but at this time, Octr 1837, those I mention are the only grants of land actually located.

To commence with the upper end: near Beverley there is a farm established by two young men named Barker and Sewell on a large grant belonging to Mr Lennard, one of the most considerable settlers in the Colony. They have about twenty acres of land sown with corn this year, most of which looks very well, but his land, like most in the district, requires some sort of manure to yield a good crop of wheat. There is at present no permanent house built, as they are about to remove the farm to a very fine spring, distant about a mile and a half from their present establishment. They have a considerable quantity of cattle and about a score of horses, most of which belong to Mr Lennard; they have the use of them for ploughing and carting and the milk from the cows for making butter and cheese, together with a fourth of the increase of all the stock.

Hardworking settlers of the middle class like these, who are both able and willing to work hard and live frugally, are much more likely to succeed than gentleman settlers who know nothing of farming practically, and who have not the inclination, or perhaps the strength, to labour hard themselves.

There are, at present, no sheep at this farm of Mr Lennard's, the small flock of imported merino ewes that he sent over here about a year ago having been lost in the bush and afterwards eaten by the natives who subsequently brought the sheep bells back to the farm.

About six miles lower down the River there are nine or ten acres of land broken up and partly sown with wheat this year. Messrs Isaacs and Johnson established themselves here last year to do the location duties on the grant of Mr Stone, which being completed, Mr Isaacs removed across to the left side of the river on to his own land, where he has this year sown several acres of wheat on a piece of land newly broken up, about a mile back from the river, in a pretty situation on the hill side close to a spring of water. There is here a considerable flock of sheep belonging to Mr Carey and other individuals, and some cattle. Both Mr Isaacs and Carey are very religious — the latter I believe sincerely and conscientiously so; the former a thorough rogue and hypocrite.

Two miles lower down, on the right bank of the Avon, at the confluence of the Dale and Avon, is the farm of Mr Pratt, better known by the name of Solomon's, a Mr Solomon having formerly been the proprietor. There are here about 4,000 acres of land, which formerly belonged to Mr Walcott. He gave up this quantity to Mr Solomon in consideration of the location duties being performed for the whole of his grant, so that he could obtain the fee simple without settling upon it himself. . . .

The next farm, following the course of the Avon, is one belong to Mr G.F. Moore the advocate general. It is on the left bank three miles below Addington, situated on a very fine pool with ten acres of good land in corn on the bank, but behind it is a cold wet plain of York Gums in which large pools

of water stand in the winter: this is very injurious to sheep, causing foot rot, and altogether I do not consider it a good grant, but the hills at the back I believe to have good feed on them. Ben Robins, Cook, Flay, and Walter Heep, four working men, have taken this place for a term of years, during which time they are to effect certain improvements and have a fourth of the increase of the sheep for taking care of them. Mr Moore is, I believe, the largest flockholder at present in the Colony, having about 800 fine woolled sheep.

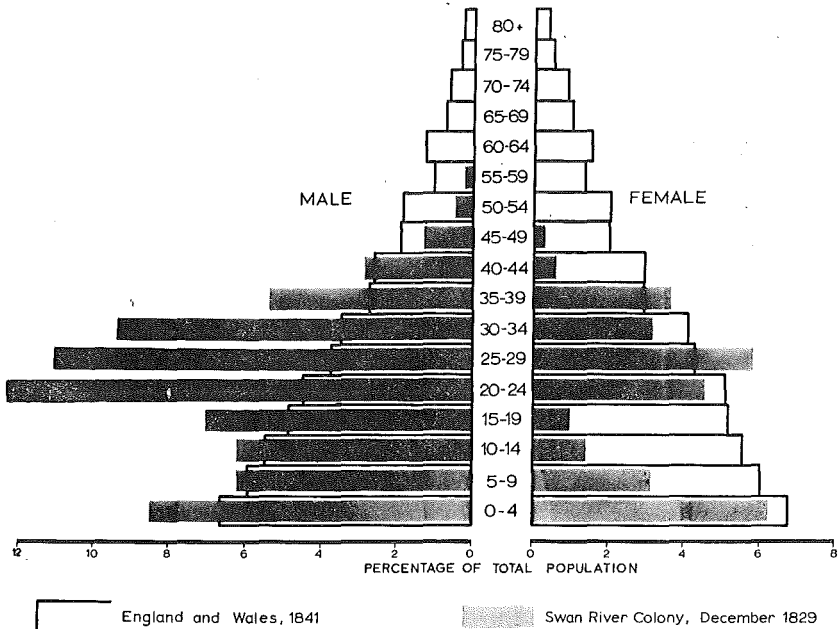
The next farm on the river belongs to the Revd Mr Wittenoom, the Colonial Chaplain, and has lately been established by his sons and a Mr Carter, one of the most laborious and active settlers in the colony. A large quantity of land has been broken and sown with corn this year and appears likely to yield a good return; the buildings are progressing rapidly and are being built of rammed earth, or Ramjam as it is called, a mixture of clay and sand, which being properly moistened is well rammed down between parallel boards, kept in their places by light iron bolts which are removed with the boards as the wall dries, round and round the building, a fresh layer being formed as soon as the last is sufficiently solid. This is a very cheap, substantial and durable way of building, the principal difficulty being the mixing the earth, which must not be too stiff: the common fault is to put too great a proportion of clay with not enough sand, when it is sure to crack very much as it dries. . . .

The situation of Mr Wittenoom's farm is picturesque, on a flat between a very fine pool, nearly a mile in length, and the Cave hill, as it is called on account of some singular caverns in the granite rocks, great shapeless masses of which protrude in all directions, mixed with Jam trees, the bright green and delicate foliage of which contrast well with the gloomy colour of the York gums and rocks. In these caves are some curious specimens of native drawing such as men's hands, evidently traced from the original, and other things the meaning of which is unknown to us.

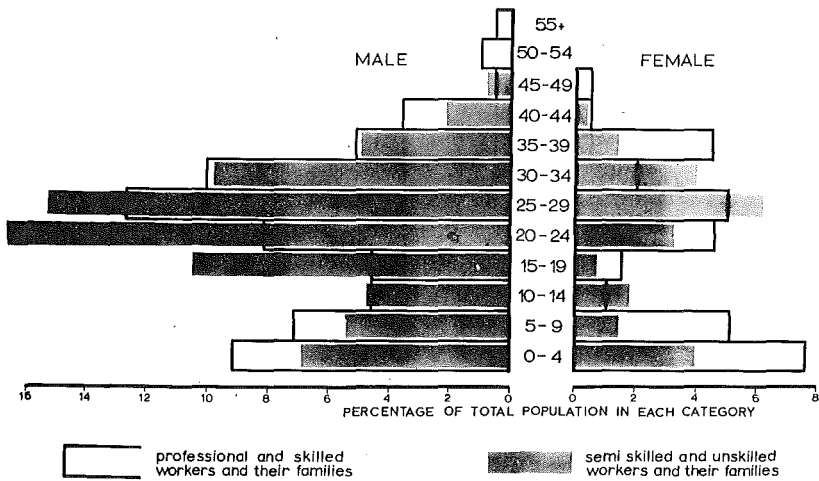
Source: Bunbury, W. St. P. and Morrell, W.P. (eds.), 1930: *Early Days in Western Australia, Being the Letters and Journals of Lieut. W.H. Bunbury* (London), pp.36-46.

MAPS AND FIGURES

THE FOUNDATION POPULATION

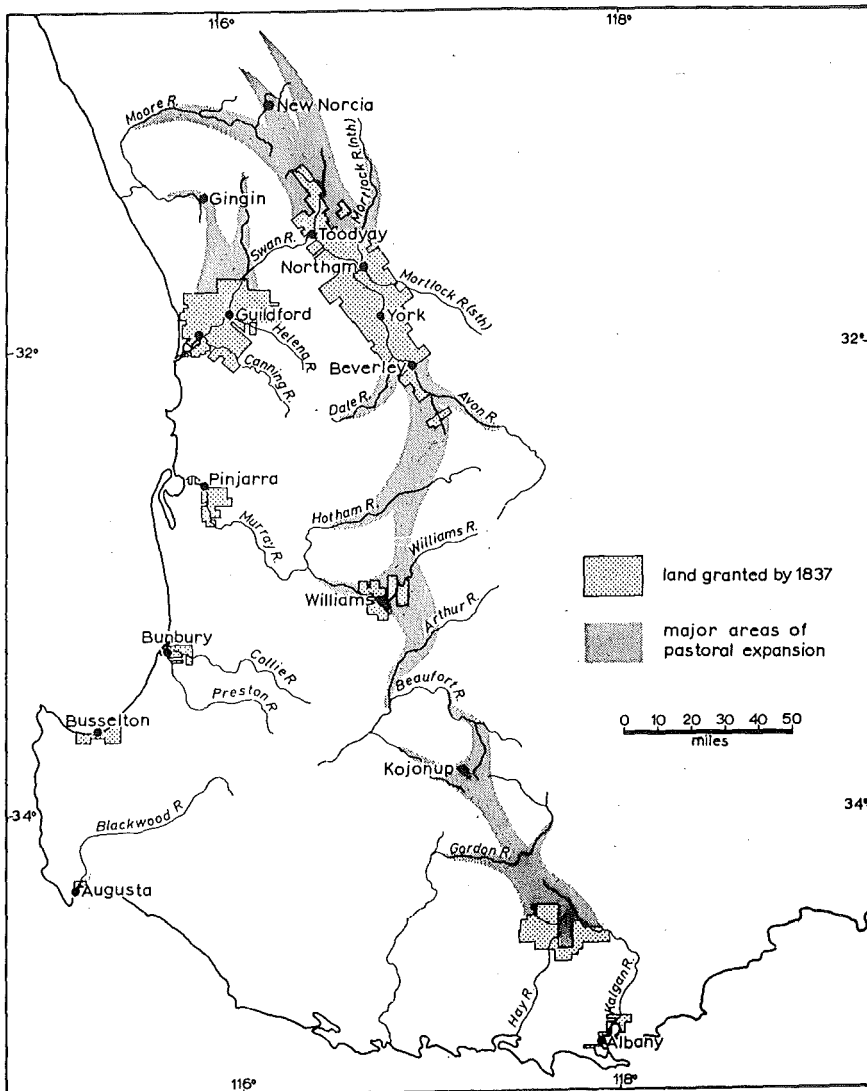


Demographic comparison of the source population
with that of Swan River Colony, 1829

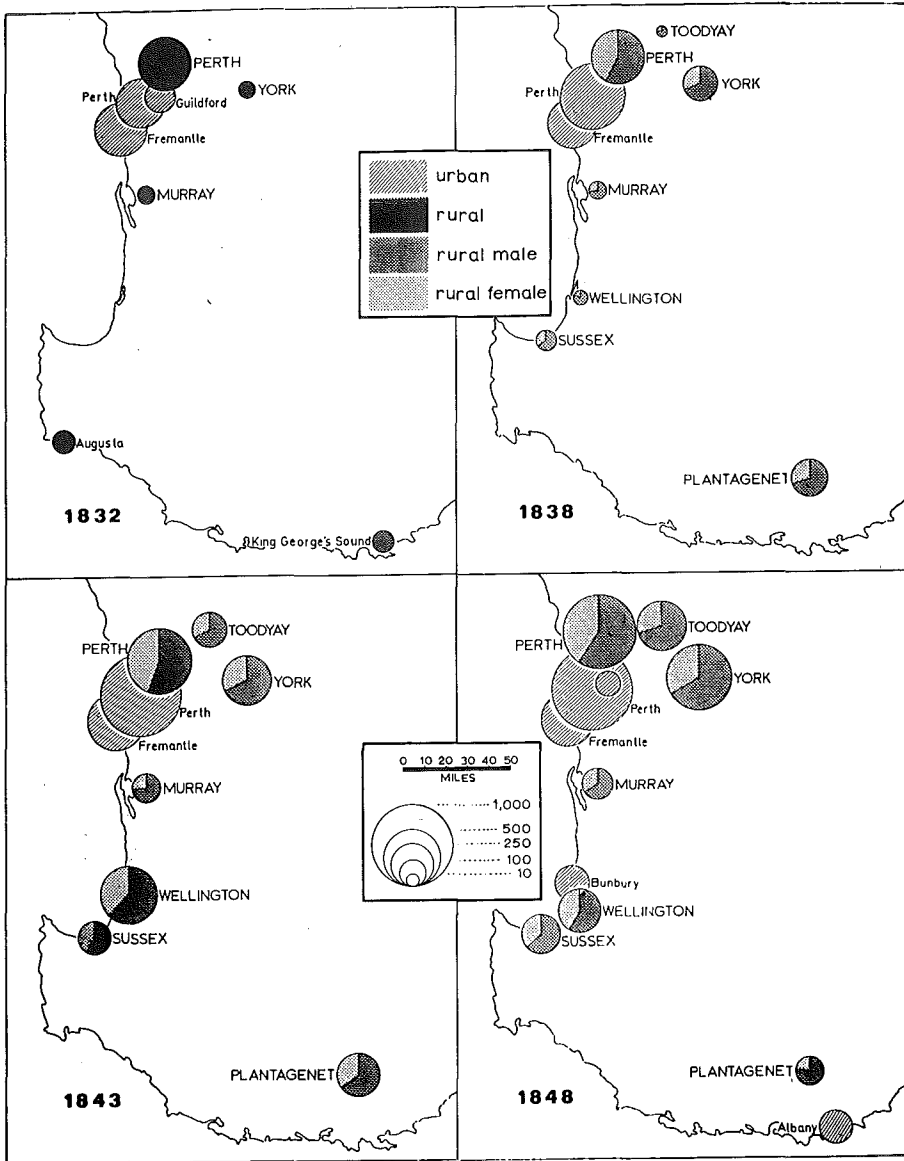


Age-Sex structure by social and occupational group

Pastoral expansion, 1841-1848

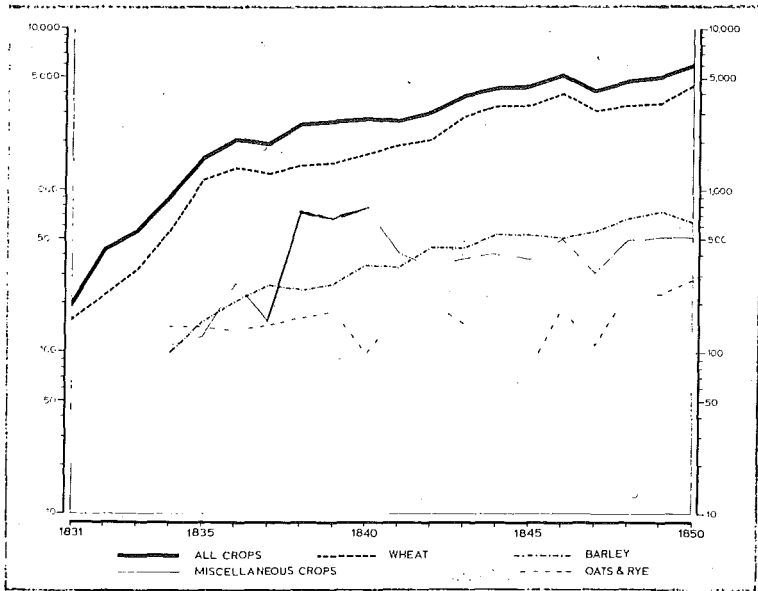


PATTERNS OF GROWTH: POPULATION

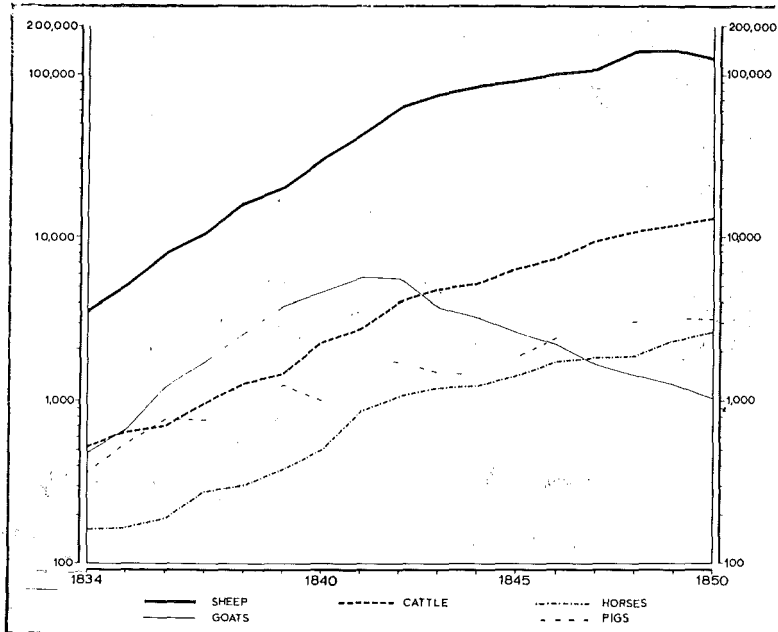


Population distribution, 1832-1848

PATTERNS OF GROWTH: PRIMARY PRODUCTION



Crop expansion in acres, 1831-1850



Livestock growth, 1834-1850

STATISTICAL SUMMARY, 1829 – 1850

Arrivals at Swan River Colony, 1829-1830	I
Population Growth, 1829-1850	II
Population Growth from Migration, 1833-1840	III
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TABLE I
ARRIVALS AT SWAN RIVER COLONY, 1829-1830

	Number of Ships	Colonists			Total
		Male	Female	Children	
1829 June	1	40	30	21	84
July	0	—	—	—	0
August	3	63	20	37	120
September	2	14	1	0	15
October	9	151	42	63	256
November	2	6	0	0	6
December	1	—	—	—	0
1830 January	10		No data		220
February	6	162	53	106	371
March	5	55	21	29	105
April	1	—	—	—	0
May	5	106	44	115	265
June	2	3	0	0	3
July	2	24	8	20	52
August	1	19	2	0	21
September	1	—	—	—	0
October	1	—	—	—	0
November	3	—	—	—	0
December	1	—	—	—	0

Source: C.S.O., 2, 4-21, H.R.A., III, vi, pp.638-40.

TABLE II

POPULATION GROWTH, 1829-1850

	Population at 31 December			Arrivals	Departures	Births	Deaths
	Civilian	Military	Total				
1829	683	105	788	769		19	--
1830	1,753	106	1,859	1,127	2	22	76
1831	1,867	144	2,011	214	66	46	42
1832	1,780	146	1,926	15	141	57	16
1833	1,771	183	1,954	293	295	52	22
1834	1,826	187	2,013	143	125	54	13
1835	1,879	193	2,072	97	69	50	19
1836	1,900	200	2,100	50	58	45	9
1837	1,833	195	2,028	10	112	50	20
1838	1,886	201	2,087	42	1	45	27
1839	2,151	205	2,356	239	2	50	18
1840	2,344	206	2,550	383	210	37	16
1841	2,813	214	3,027	421	2	85	27
1842	3,466	219	3,685	675	101	126	42
1843	3,843	251	4,094	286	11	182	48
1844	4,098	243	4,341	410	289	183	57
1845	4,103	244	4,347	0	131	188	51
1846	4,250	257	4,507	92	64	184	52
1847	4,509	187	4,696	363	307	194	61
1848	4,764	162	4,926	166	57	181	60
1849	5,102	167	5,269	383	164	163	39
1850	5,434	172	5,606	204	0	203	70

Source: Statham, P.C., 1970: *Arriving at Population Figures for the Swan River Colony, 1829-1850*, Seminar Paper (mimeo), Faculty of Economics, University of Western Australia.

TABLE III

POPULATION GROWTH FROM MIGRATION, 1833-1840

Year	Total Population	Immigrants	Emigrants	Net Growth From Migration
1833	1,771	73	149	- 76
1834	1,826	142	124	+ 18
1835	1,879	96	69	+ 27
1836	1,900	49	58	- 9
1837	1,833	9	102	- 93
1838	1,866	41	1	+ 40
1839	2,151	238	1	+ 237
1840	2,344	179	1	+ 178

Source: Statham, 1970.

TABLE IV

BIRTHS AND DEATHS PER 1,000 POPULATION, 1838-1850

Year	Total Population	Total Births	Total Deaths	W.A. Births 1,000	British Births 1,000	W.A. Deaths 1,000	British Deaths 1,000
1838	1,928	93	36	48.23	30.8	18.72	22.4
1839	2,154	82	24	38.06	31.8	11.14	21.8
1840	2,311	54	20	23.36	32.0	8.65	22.9
1841	2,760	62	27	22.46	32.2	9.78	21.6
1842	3,476	72	29	20.71	32.1	8.34	21.7
1843	3,853	158	41	41.00	32.3	10.64	21.2
1844	4,350	193	53	44.35	32.7	12.18	21.6
1845	4,479	184	55	41.08	32.5	12.27	20.9
1846	4,547	117	39	25.73	33.8	8.57	23.0
1847	4,717	192	69	40.70	31.5	14.62	24.7
1848	4,622	186	68	40.24	32.5	14.71	23.0
1849	5,254	180	61	34.25	32.9	11.61	20.1
1850	5,886	186	54	31.54	33.4	9.15	20.8
AVERAGE				34.72	32.34	11.56	21.97

Source: Statham, 1970.

TABLE V

ABORIGINAL NATIVE POPULATION, 1848

COUNTY	Native Population Casually and Regularly Employed by Colonists			Estimated Aboriginal Native Population in the Located Districts			
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Children	Total
Perthshire	130	32	162	282	214	37	553
Yorkshire	65	10	75				134
Wellington	65	11	76				300
Plantagenet	53	7	60	300	150		450
Toodyay (district)	52	53	105				300
Sussex	47	8	55	100	50		150
Murray	6	2	8	25	29	19	73
Totals	418	123	541				1,960

Source: 1848 Census.

TABLE VI

CROP PRODUCTION IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1831-1850

	Grain Production				Other Crops (acres)	Total Crop Acreage
	Wheat (acres)	Barley (acres)	Oats & Rye (acres)	Total Grain (acres)		
1831	160	n.d.	n.d.	179	21	200
1832	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	435
1833	320	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	560
1834	564	100	145	809	110	919
1835	1,156	156	143	1,455	124	1,579
1836	1,363	210	136	1,709	364	2,073
1837	1,275	259	147	1,681	254	1,935
1838	1,436	245	163	1,844	726	2,570
1839	1,481	263	180	1,924	654	2,578
1840	1,670	343	98	2,111	771	2,882
1841	1,899	335	173	2,407	402	2,809
1842	2,040	444	201	2,685	342	3,027
1843	2,884	447	152	3,483	376	3,859
1844	3,283	538	107	3,928	407	4,335
1845	3,313	529	78	3,920	369	4,289
1846	3,977	506	184	4,677	495	5,172
1847	3,075	554	110	3,739	408	4,147
1848	3,317	671	234	4,222	490	4,712
1849	3,456	740	228	4,424	517	4,941
1850	4,416	637	279	5,332	502	5,834

Source: Annual Returns of the Agricultural Society, 1831-1842, *Blue Books*, 1837-1850.

TABLE VII

LIVESTOCK NUMBERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1834-1850

	Sheep	Cattle	Horses	Goats	Pigs
1834	3,545	500	162	492	374
1835	5,138	646	167	657	550
1836	8,119	728	191	1,231	764
1837	10,815	991	280	1,744	777
1838	16,816	1,301	301	2,611	905
1839	20,809	1,394	382	3,814	1,269
1840	30,961	2,324	504	4,604	1,002
1841	43,451	2,827	878	5,647	1,894
1842	60,380	4,122	1,069	5,613	1,713
1843	76,191	4,861	1,202	3,733	1,495
1844	86,482	5,316	1,231	3,227	1,462
1845	92,673	6,508	1,430	2,632	1,873
1846	102,084	7,583	1,745	2,223	2,363
1847	109,134	9,475	1,841	1,666	2,963
1848	141,123	10,919	1,895	1,437	3,107
1849	142,054	11,921	2,359	n.d.	3,201
1850	128,111	13,074	2,635	n.d.	3,179

Source: *Perth Gazette, Blue Books, 1837-1850.*

TABLE VIII

WOOL EXPORTS, 1834-1850

	Quantity (pounds)	Value (£)		Quantity (pounds)	Value (£)
1834	5,884	500	1843	122,495	6,125
1835	8,438		1844	140,158	7,008
1836	14,564		1845	145,260	7,757
1837	21,120	1,684	1846	291,368	13,362
1838	24,580	1,935	1847	229,247	11,467
1839	36,450	2,278	1848	301,961	9,666
1840	50,000 (a)		1849	267,473	8,601
1841	60,000 (a)		1850		15,482
1842	86,640				

Source: Agricultural Society, *Annual Reports, Blue Books; Perth Gazette.*

Notes: (a) Colonial estimates only.

TABLE IX
CROP PLANTING TIMES, 1839 and 1849

	1839	1849
January	Plant cabbage seeds on moist lands "with a declining moon".	Plant and weed maize and potatoes on moist land.
February	Sow beans, peas, rye, barley mangel-wurtzel, turnips, winter vetch, radishes, cabbages and potatoes.	Prepare ground for wheat, turnips, etc.
March	Roll white mustard on red land. No potatoes "unless a wet season".	Sow wheat, oats, barley and rye on moist land for early green food for cattle.
April	Sow wheat, oats and barley on red land. Plant cabbages, peas, mangel-wurtzel, turnips, rape, clover, sun-flower.	Sow wheat, oats, barley and peas.
May	Sow wheat, barley, peas, rape, vetch, carrots, clover.	Finish sowing wheat and barley. Break up new land.
June	Sow wheat, oats and barley "on your best lands". Plough in grain (on light lands only). Plant potatoes this month "as July is late".	Sow English barley on fine soil only; break up new ground.
July	The best of the flats and rich land only may be sown this month "as it is too late".	Keep the weeds under; continue breaking up new land. Towards the end of the month commence planting potatoes for a summer crop.
August	Plant melons, potatoes and cabbage on moist land next to the river.	Finish planting potatoes.
September	Plant out cow cabbage on moist land.	Potatoes may be planted in moist soils. Prepare ground for maize.
October	Plant late crop of garden turnips. Sow cabbage for next year's plants on dry land.	Earth up potatoes. Sow maize; plant out tobacco.
November		Thin and earth maize.
December		Continue to thin and earth maize.

Source: *Moore Farm Journal*, General Directions for Farm on Swan River; Shenton, A. (ed.), 1849: *The Western Australian Almanack for the Year 1849*, Perth.

TABLE X

LAND ALIENATION BY DISTRICT, 1829-1837

		1829	1830	1831	1832	1833	1834	1835	1836	1837	TOTAL ACREAGE
SWAN RIVER AREA	SWAN RIVER	103,017	36,918	17,173	3,743				1,070	1,531	163,452
	CANNING RIVER	32,212	19,326	26,329	14,787						92,654
	HELENA RIVER	3,570	7,426	6,900	5,000			120	480	1,636	25,132
	LAKES DISTRICT				1,188		826			341	2,355
COASTAL COUNTIES	MURRAY COUNTY		274,533	56,329	19,154				276	1,200	351,492
	WELLINGTON COUNTY		205,902	3,560							209,462
	SUSSEX COUNTY				47,085						47,085
INLAND DISTRICTS	AVON VALLEY		228,077	200,124	36,166				1,257	5,398	471,022
	PLANTAGENET COUNTY		17,463	26,663	54,096	8,833	14,000				121,055
	WILLIAMS RIVER				45,276				4,520		49,796
TOTAL ACREAGE		138,799	789,645	337,078	226,495	8,833	14,826	120	7,603	10,106	1,533,505

Source: Ogle, 1839, App. XIV; *Government Gazette*, 1837.

TABLE XI

SIZE OF LAND GRANTS BY QUARTER –
SWAN RIVER COLONY, JULY 1829 – JUNE 1832

Quarter	Number of Grants	Size of Grants					More than 10,000 acres	
		Less than 250 acres	250-499 acres	500-999 acres	1,000-4,999 acres	5,000-9,999 acres		
1829	3	15	0	1	1	6	6	1
29	4	47	1	2	1	23	12	8
	1	34	4	5	2	11	7	5
1830	2	41	7	5	5	14	3	7
30	3	11			6	2	1	2
	4	32	3	3	4	19	3	
	1	6		2	2	2		
1831	2	1				1		
31	3	3		1		1		1
	4	4	1			3		
1832	1	2	1		1			
32	2	0						
TOTAL	196	17	19	22	82	32	24	
PERCENTAGE		8.7	9.7	11.2	41.9	16.3	12.2	

Source: C.S.O., 2, 4-21; H.R.A., III, vi, 638-40; Ogle, 1839, App. XIV.

TABLE XII

DEPARTURE OF ORIGINAL LAND HOLDERS

Value of Investment (£)	Total Number of Owners	Total Number which Left	Percentage Left
1 99	60	32	53.3
100 299	47	27	54.4
300 499	33	17	51.5
500 699	16	7	43.8
700+	23	11	48.0
TOTAL	179	94	52.5

Source: C.S.O., 2, 4-21; H.R.A., III, vi, 638-40; Ogle, 1839, App. XIV.

INTRODUCTION

A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE EASTERN GOLDFIELD IN THE 1890's

"Gold tax switch may not save Fields", "Goldmine closure costs 490 jobs" and "Kalgoorlie Vows to Fight to Last".¹ West Australian newspaper headlines of August 1976 proclaimed yet again the final phase of the State's ailing gold industry. Earlier, production had ceased on the famous golden mile, and with the mines on care and maintenance water was steadily flooding the underground maze of shafts and drives. But now it was the end for the Mt. Charlotte mine, two miles north of the main cluster of mines and close to the site of Paddy Hannan's original find of June 1893. Despite stringent economies and a highly mechanised operation, Kalgoorlie Mining Associates comprising Homestake (a U.S. Company) Kalgoorlie Lake View Pty. Ltd., and Western Mining Corporation decided the mine could no longer be worked.² Because of rising costs and a decline in the world market price of gold, Mt. Charlotte was losing \$50 on each ounce produced and without massive government assistance no other decision was possible. So the gold industry which had overcome earlier slumps in 1914-18, 1928-29 and 1965-67 appeared to come to its belated end in 1976. Only the Telfer mine remained to represent the most valuable industry in Western Australia's history.

One fascinating feature of the decline in production has been an accompanying revival of public interest in the grimy and rusting splendour of the eastern goldfields which once were a magnet for thousands of immigrants from interstate and overseas. There has been a growing nostalgia for the boom days of the roaring nineties, a nostalgia which has been promoted through many forms, possibly beginning with Geoffrey Blainey's *The Rush That Never Ended* (Melbourne, M.U.P. 1963) and continued by Casey and Mayman's *The Mile That Midas Touched* (Adelaide, Rigby, 1964). The history of the region has also been revived in the wide ranging writings of Norma King and H.H. Wilson.³ The re-issue of *Short Shift Saturday* (originally, *It's Harder For Girls*) and the publication of Ted Mayman's *View From Kalgoorlie* (Perth, Landfall, 1971) provided collections of short stories which illustrated the humour, drama and sadness of life in mining communities. Recent T.V. documentaries such as *The Golden West* (directed by Bill Peach) and *Hands of Gold* (Richard Oxenburgh) have recreated the best and worst features of earlier years, and finally, a wide range of material for tourists has nurtured the revival. Of necessity, much of this recent material has been narrative rather than interpretive, therefore it seems appropriate that some of the major events in the development of W.A.'s eastern goldfields should be re-examined.

II

One of the most popular misconceptions about the period is that the eastern goldfields were found by chance, and that there was relatively little connection between gold discoveries in eastern Australia, and those which came much later in the west. In fact the eastern goldfields were the last step in a series of Australian discoveries which were probably triggered by the rushes to California in

1. See *The West Australian* 20.8.1976 and 1.9.1976, and the *Daily News* 20.8.1976.
2. See the *Daily News* 3.9.1976.
3. King, Norma., 1972: *Nickel Country - Gold Country* (Adelaide, Rigby)
Wilson, H.H., 1969: *Gateways to Gold* (Adelaide, Rigby)
Wilson, H.H., 1973: *Westward Gold!* (Adelaide, Rigby)

1848-49. The California fields were the first where experienced prospectors made the early discoveries of alluvial gold which provided the principal attraction; the pattern continued in Australia, South Africa, and Alaska. In each case as the surface gold was worked out and companies moved in to search for gold further underground, the first prospectors on the fields moved on, turning their backs on regular wages. The best of the bushman prospectors were always eager to search for a new El Dorado while many of the unsuccessful and less experienced were content to stay and work for the companies.

Geoffrey Blainey has vividly re-created the progression of the Pacific Ocean gold trail from Summerhill Creek in N.S.W. in 1851 to Victoria and then Queensland where the discoveries at Croydon, Palmer River and Charters Towers in the 1870's and 1880's proved the springboard for discoveries in the Northern Territory, and eventually, Western Australia. Australian gold discoveries usually occurred in areas where the pastoralists had already settled, and after the Duracks had opened up the East Kimberley area (1883-1885)⁴ the discovery of gold quickly followed. The rush to Hall's Creek in 1886 was followed by even greater excitement at the discoveries in the Pilbara (1888), Yilgarn (1888) and the Murchison (1890). However all were predominantly alluvial fields which had limited riches, so that by 1892, many of the most astute prospectors in Western Australia were in Southern Cross, wondering whether the Indian Ocean gold trail had ended, but hoping for a new find, perhaps to the east.

There have been few attempts to systematically examine the geographical, sociological, economic and demographic dimensions of the growth of the eastern goldfields, in order to gain a broader understanding of the significant developments. The geological and climatic environments forced prospecting groups, mining companies and the West Australian government to be innovative in their solutions to problems, and were responsible for the settlement patterns of the region. As Kalgoorlie-Boulder and other centres became permanent, climate, isolation, the nature of the industry and other factors combined in the development of a society with significant differences from that in Perth and with a distinctive goldfields ethos. When Western Australia's embryo economy began to develop in the 1890's, the gold mining industry, bolstered by British capital, occupied a key position in the expansion and maintained this position for more than 50 years. Finally, the population explosion which occurred was due mainly to immigration from other Australian States. However, the movements of people illustrated some of the most important features of migration models.

Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie-Boulder are located in a region where the annual rainfall is less than 10" and the temperature ranges from a mean maximum of 93.2°F in January to 62.5°F in July. The vegetation is xerophytic, sparse and stunted in character, with salmon gums, mulga and sandalwood predominating. Grass is usually non-existent except for a short period following moderate or heavy rains. There are many salt lakes in the area, e.g. Yindarlgooda, Lefroy, Cowan, Goongarrie, Hannan's and Gidgee, most of them being shallow depressions and comprising the main drainage lines of the area. It is because of the high evaporation rate that deposits of salt and gypsum make up the lake beds. Geologically, granites predominate with some of the large outcrops providing 'gnamma holes' where fresh water is found. The predominantly flat nature of the landforms of the region makes transportation easy by road or rail.

Each of the above features influenced the settlement and development of the eastern goldfields. Because of its generally arid nature and because by 1892 there had been no pastoral penetration into the desert east of Southern Cross, prospectors were confronted with different conditions from those on the Hall's Creek, Pilbara, Murchison and Yilgarn fields. The absence of both food and fresh water daunted even some of the most experienced prospectors in Southern Cross, and ensured that there would be few successful individual prospectors in the region. It is not surprising therefore that the first discoveries at Fly Flat (June, 1892) and Hannan's (June, 1893) were made in early winter by

4. See Mary Durack's, 1974: *Kings in Grass Castles* (Hawthorn, O'Neil).

groups of men who were capable bushmen and experienced prospectors. Bayley for example had been born on the Loddon goldfield (Vic.) and later moved from the Croydon and Palmer River fields (Qld.) to work the Pilbara, Murchison and Yilgarn fields.⁵ His mate Ford was also a Victorian who had either prospected or worked on mining fields from Broken Hill to Southern Cross. Hannan, Flannagan and Shea had similarly varied prospecting backgrounds.⁶

The alien geographical environment reinforced the Australian male's belief in the creed of mate-ship. Only the foolhardy travelled alone in the desert and so Bonnivale was found by Vance, Bonny and party, Bulong by Smith and Mohr, White Hope by Barnes and party, Golden Valley by Colreavy and Huggins and Vosperton by the Hayes brothers.⁷ The exception seems to have been the ubiquitous Leslie Menzies after whom the town of Menzies was named. Most prospectors realised their chances of survival and success were greatly enhanced if they were in a small party, and mates were also required in the working of the small shows which might be discovered. The men ate, drank, yarned and played sport together and were at all times honest with, and loyal to each other.

Because of the lack of rainfall fresh water was extremely scarce until the opening of the Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme in 1903. The numerous salt lakes often appeared as tantalising mirages which drew men away from the granite outcrops where water was regularly found. Granite became as much sought after as gold and the first track from Southern Cross to Coolgardie followed the granite front, "Reen's Soak at Yellowdine, Karalee, Boorakin, Woolgangie and then on to Gnarlbine".⁸

In their search for gold some men misjudged distances between soaks or flocked to areas where no water was available. The Siberia rush of October 1893 was a tragic demonstration of this point; at least ten men perished because of their haste to cover the 70 miles from Coolgardie, without sufficient water.⁹ Some shrewd prospectors realised they could make their fortunes by selling fresh water and up to 1903 prices often fluctuated wildly, according to the supply which was met by government or private bores, condensers and infrequent downpours. The water shortage and flies ensured that typhoid and dysentery periodically claimed hundreds of victims.

The goldfields' press was continually concerned with the shortages of fresh water and the problem became even more acute when companies began deep mining on the golden mile. The high price of water forced up production costs because tremendous quantities were used in the treatment process and a regular and abundant supply of water was needed as much for the mines as for the people who worked them. The pipeline scheme appears to have had its genesis in a letter to the editor of the *West Australian* published on the 8th March, 1894. The signatory, "J.S.T." recognised the severity of the shortage of fresh water on the eastern goldfields, and the permanency of the supply in the upper waters of the Swan River. Therefore, "A pumping station at some suitable locality near Northam, a water tower to furnish the necessary elevation and a pipeline along the railway would be all that is required, unless the altitude of Coolgardie necessitated the creation of a second pumping station." The writer envisaged that such a scheme could be undertaken by private enterprise, would pay its way, and provide incidental benefits.

5. Blainey, Geoffrey, 1963: *The Rush That Never Ended* (Melbourne, M.U.P.) p.173.
6. *Ibid.*
7. The W.A. gold discoveries are listed in Raeside, Jules, 1929: *Golden Days* (Perth, Colortype) pp.148-153.
8. Casey, G. and Mayman, Ted., 1964: *The Mile That Midas Touched* (Adelaide, Rigby) p.43.
9. Harris, C.M., 1947: "Water . . . Tragedy and Triumph on the Western Australian Goldfields" *Early Days*, vol. 9, December.

Between 1894-1896 there were references to other, similar schemes but there is no doubt that the final construction was due to the political tenacity of Sir John Forrest and the engineering acumen of C.Y. O'Connor.¹⁰

The benefits of the scheme were immediately apparent. The eastern goldfields became the greatest gold producer in Australia's history because successful treatment was assured and Kalgoorlie-Boulder could hold a stable under-ground workforce. However, as the industry declined other long term benefits became more apparent. The pipeline became an integral part of development of the central and eastern wheatbelt, with Wyalkatchem, Koorda, Bruce Rock, and Kondinin some of the settlements dependent on the scheme.

The geological formations were entirely responsible for the growth and development of the eastern goldfields, and they also caused the rapid rise and fall of many boom towns. Initially it was the readily accessible deposits of alluvial gold which attracted eager prospectors and nowhere was this more clearly shown than at Coolgardie where men gambled against the environment with their specking and dry-blowing skills, hoping for rich finds. Coolgardie became the centre of the first boom period and by 1898 it was a bustling town with twenty six hotels, three breweries, a refrigeration works, fourteen churches, sixty stores, government and private schools, a stock exchange and several newspapers.¹¹ However it was already waning in importance, because its vast alluvial wealth was soon exhausted, and there were no deep leads. There were very few large mines employing a substantial underground workforce, and when Coolgardie couldn't compete with Kalgoorlie as a supply point for surrounding fields it shrank in size and importance. Originally the final reservoir of the Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme was to be built upon Mt. Burges just north of Coolgardie,¹² but by 1901-2 when the pipeline reached the town it was apparent that Kalgoorlie-Boulder would be the centre of the fields, and so the reservoir was built on Mt. Charlotte.

Similarly, I.O.U. (Bulong) White Feather (Kanowna) Broad Arrow, Black Flag, and many lesser towns died almost overnight for the same reasons. The prospectors moved on to the latest finds leaving masses of rubble, rusting cans, blackened head frames and mullock heaps in their wake.

Different geological structures (particularly the deep leads) at Kalgoorlie-Boulder demanded the resources of large scale mining activity. Below Fimiston there were greenstones instead of quartz, and the lodes provided the source of more than 80 years of continuous mining. While the names of the many ghost towns are a reminder of the heyday of the small prospector, Great Boulder Perseverance, Royal Mint, Ivanhoe, Lake View Consols, Oroya-Brown Hill, Iron Duke and Croesus convey the impressiveness of the big mines which crowded onto the golden mile. As long as they survived the future of the twin towns was assured.

III

The goldfields await the studies of sociologists, however some obvious features of the society should be noted. Soon after the first discoveries a distinctive goldfields ethos began to develop. It was made up of such elements as a willingness to take a chance on almost anything and a sporting disregard for the law and authority. Most of those who came to the fields in the nineties were lured by thoughts of quick wealth, however they readily accepted the fact that they might be unsuccessful. Gold stealing

10. The biography of C.Y. O'Connor is about to be published (1976) by the University of W.A. Press.

11. Crowley, F.K., 1960: *Australia's Western Third* (London, Macmillan) p.123.

12. Casey and Mayman *Op cit.*, p.124.

from prospecting camps was unknown and no doubt the bonds of mateship contributed to this. But the big, impersonal mining companies were regarded very differently and gold stealing was widespread for many years. Much of the legal and illegal wealth was spent on gambling. Two-up, cards, horse-racing, professional cycling, and footrugging also attracted the bettors. Laws relating to gambling, prostitution, and drinking hours were consistently flouted, partly because of the unusual environment, and partly because as long as the region was productive, the coastal politicians were content to ignore the situation.

The unusual ethos was also shaped by the fact that so many of the miners were 'othersiders' from South Australia, Victoria and N.S.W. Ted Mayman has recalled how the men who came to the golden mile from interstate invariably settled among others from the same local region, hence those from Moonta (S.A.) and Clunes (Vic.) lived and worked together.¹³ In the predominantly masculine society of Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie-Boulder, a man depended on his mates who could be certain to help him if he was short of money, out of work or sick.

Women who ventured to the goldfields had to be prepared for a life of hardship in the hessian and corrugated iron housing which was cheap and easy to build, but certainly not suited to the climatic extremes. Because all the timber for miles around Kalgoorlie-Boulder had been cleared for use by the mines, and there was no re-planting programme, the regular dust storms were dreaded by the women. Houses were regularly smothered inside and out, and the heat aggravated the discomfort of cleaning up.¹⁴ Wives had to cook on wood stoves, even in the above century temperatures of summer, and because washing was done with a scrub board and copper this meant they constantly toiled near fires. Few of the miners' homes had a sink and running water in the kitchen. The woman also served as "God's Police"¹⁵ and they provided stability for the men. Many of the women belonged to church groups which ran regular socials. Their husbands protested about being pulled from the pubs but they went to the socials because they respected their wives for their work, responsibility for the children and their companionship.

Reading, and a genuine interest in literature, were also features of goldfields life. The local newspaper with editors such as Vosper, Hales and Kirwan,¹⁶ were widely read and very influential. Most households came into contact with the Sydney *Bulletin*, a paper which embodied the nationalism of the nineties, and which published Lawson, Paterson, and other well known balladists of the period. A busy paperboy on the Boulder Block could sell up to 12 dozen copies of the *Bulletin* to miners coming off shifts.¹⁷ Papers and good books circulated widely and were read from cover to cover because there was a deep respect for the printed word. The Kalgoorlie Mechanics' Institute had a comprehensive Library and on Saturday afternoons old prospectors trooped into town to browse through its papers. Many such men were contributors of verse and stories, in an age when Australian ballads were memorised and later recited, for the enjoyment of other people.

In their early years the goldfields mirrored the wider Australian society. Attitudes towards coloured immigrants were rigid and clear cut, and opposition was based on economic and racial grounds. "The new Jap, insignificant in himself, is quite capable of spying out the land, and having an ear well attuned to the chink of specie, the date is not far distant when he will be followed by hordes

13. Interview with Ted Mayman, 9th July, 1976.

14. *Ibid.*

15. See Summers, Anne, 1975: *Damned Whores And God's Police* (Penguin).

16. The influence of rich men is described by B.J. Smith in "Western Australian Goldfields Literature" *University Studies in History*, vol IV, No. 2, 1963-64.

17. Interview with Ted Mayman, 9th July, 1976.

of his country men”¹⁸ Even the Afghans who toiled to bring food and water to the prospectors, were included in these views and the *Coolgardie Miner* told its readers that it feared that a low degenerate mongrel race of human beings would follow where the Afghan led.¹⁹

Some of the attitudes mentioned earlier were peculiar not only to W.A.’s eastern goldfields, but the geographic isolation from the remainder of the State’s population, the climatic extremes, harsh working conditions, and the development of a two class society based on mine management and shop-keepers, and those who worked for wages on the mines, ensured some distinctive qualities which were sharpened by political and other grievances, which upset t’othersiders in particular.

Perhaps the most important of the grievances was the crucial issue of whether or not W.A. should join the impending Federation, and when the State Parliament at first refused to allow the electors the right to vote for or against the acceptance of the Commonwealth constitution, despite a petition signed by 23,000 people in favour of the referendum,²⁰ the goldfields were stunned. All the complaints of the preceding years – the tariffs on food and other commodities, special taxes on the mining industry, failure to provide a Norseman to Esperance railway (Forrest’s forthright views on centralization were reported in the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, July 13th, 1898. “I do not think that there is anything wrong in radiating from a centre, and the centre of this colony is Perth and Fremantle, and everything radiates there from.”!) or to spend sufficient money on public works in the region, came to a head over the alternative. “Federation or Auralia”. To the t’othersiders the issue was quite straight forward; Forrest and his friends could procrastinate, but the goldfields would join. Some writers have argued that the goldfields agitation was indirectly responsible for women gaining the vote in W.A. in 1899, a complex question which may be answered when Professor F.K. Crowley completes his biography of Forrest. The Separation issue, fomented by Sir John Kirwan and the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, was climaxed by the forwarding to the Queen of a petition signed by 27,733 adult residents of the Goldfields.²¹ Pressure from Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for Colonies finally brought about the referendum, at which there was a decisive “Yes” majority.

In the future social scientists will no doubt pinpoint the underlying reasons for the goldfields ethos. Certainly the willingness to gamble, love of sport, dislike of class distinctions, and most forms of authority, as well as a blunt, refreshing honesty will be some of the components. Economic and political factors have also contributed to that “sense of place” so well described by Ted Mayman.²² Democratic principles were always observed and from the time when goldfielders comprised the bulk of State football teams there was a firm belief that men from Kalgoorlie-Boulder were rather better than anybody else. Families such as the McKenzies, Robinsons; Dicks, Osmettis and Tysons to name only a few, typified the sporting prowess of the area.

IV

The economic boom in W.A. in the 1890’s was undoubtedly due to the large companies which operated on the golden mile. Their demand for labour was almost insatiable. While the Eastern States languished in a depression which forced many men out of work, there were abundant opportunities for employment in W.A.

18. *Coolgardie Miner*, 17.10.1894.

19. *Ibid.*, 16.6.1894.

20. The struggle is described in Crowley, *Op. cit.*, pp.150-3.

21. Kirwan, Sir John, 1949: “The Story Of A Goldfields Newspaper” *Early Days*, vol. IV, Pt. 1, p.16.

22. Mayman, Ted., 1976: “Sense of Place” *Westerly* No. 3, September, pp.51-56.

The value of Western Australian gold production increased from £880,000 in 1895 to £6,247,000 in 1899, fell to £6,008,000 in 1900, then further increased to a peak of £8,771,000 in 1903. In this period 1895-1903, 52% of production was from Kalgoorlie and the remainder from fourteen other goldfields of which Murchison, Mount Margaret and Coolgardie were the biggest, and with the exhaustion of the big mines production declined to £5,140,000 in 1915, Kalgoorlie supplying about 58% of total production each year.²³

During the same period dividend payments rose from £82,000 in 1895 to £606,000 in 1898, and then to a peak of £2,066,000 in 1899. After a slump they recovered to a plateau of £2,000,000 from 1903-6 but by 1915 were down to £792,000. The proportion of dividends to total production in the same period ranged from 15% to 33%.²⁴

No discussion of the value of production should omit mention of the leading role played by the Kalgoorlie companies in both mining methods and metallurgy. Two of the men most responsible for this were Richard Hamilton, the first manager of the Great Boulder Proprietary, and Herbert Hoover who managed the Hannan's Brownhill mine for a short time, but who was better known for his work with a London mining engineering firm, Bewick Moreing and Company. Hamilton insisted that mine development of the Great Boulder should be financed from internal profits, supervised the selective mining of the company's rich ore bodies, and was the first to overcome the difficulties of extracting tellurides from the ore body. "In 1900 Hamilton started the first successful sulphide-cyanide plant in Kalgoorlie, which obtained high extraction from the sulphides and also made it profitable to rework the rich slime dumps accumulated from previous years."²⁵ By 1912 Great Boulder had produced gold worth £8,400,000 and paid £4,100,000 in dividends.²⁶ There was no better monument to Hamilton's skill, and belief in the advantages of mass production.

Herbert Hoover made equally important changes to mining practices on the golden mile. Efficient management was Hoover's ultimate objective and he had the ability to choose and inspire the best young men to run mines managed by Bewick Moreing. As well Hoover began centralised inspection of these mines and centralised buying of equipment. Mine development became much more systematic, "and detailed scientific control of metallurgical processes replaced the rule-of-thumb methods of the older generation of Australian mine managers."²⁷ Hoover also pruned the underground work forces in some mines, improved the efficiency of the labour force by paying high wages, and managed overall reductions in costs which resulted in the mines having a much longer working life.²⁸ His foresight and demand for forward planning were best seen on the Sons of Gwalia mine where production continued until 1963. Only because of the far reaching improvements developed by Hoover, Hamilton and others was the golden mile able to survive for so long.

For the State as a whole there were significant economic benefits from the gold boom. To service the new inland centres the State's railway system was extended to Coolgardie in 1896, and later to Kalgoorlie, Kanowna, Boulder and northwards through Kookynie to Leonora and Laverton. As well there were extensions in the south west of the state. The Forrest government's capital was poured into the laying of sleepers and rails, the construction of platforms and stations at Smithfield, Bardoc, Comet

23. McCarty, J.W., 1961-62: "British Investment In Western Australian Gold Mining 1894-1914" *University Studies in History*, vol. IV, No. 1, p.14.

24. *Ibid.*, p.14.

25. *Ibid.*, p.16.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*, p.21.

28. Blainey, *Op. cit.*, p.202.

Vale, Tampa, Melita, Burbanks and many others, the purchase of rolling stock, and wages for those who ran the system. The colony's new found wealth inspired the government with the confidence to press ahead with the construction of the artificial harbour at Fremantle. Within three years of its opening in 1897 it surpassed Albany as the busiest port in the colony. Between 1890 and 1900 the number of ships arriving in W.A. trebled, and in the same decade the annual value of exports rose from £671,813 to £6,852,054, a phenomenal rate of increase after the semi-stagnation of the previous 60 years.²⁹ Steamships cut shipping time between Fremantle and European ports, and the development of refrigeration allowed Western Australian primary industries to expand. There was also rapid economic development of the south west and southern agricultural districts, a policy strongly criticised on the goldfields. By the Land Act of 1898 the programme of land settlement in unoccupied areas was expanded, and many disappointed diggers were encouraged to participate in the agricultural expansion of the State. The pastoral industry also revived during the nineties, and embryonic secondary industries such as breweries, tanneries, gasworks and boot and shoe shops employed some 13,000 people by 1900.³⁰

V

There have been no demographic studies of the goldfields but it is certain that the initial rush illustrated all the classic features of national and international migratory movements. The depression of the 1890's was the force of repulsion which prompted many men in eastern Australia to try their luck in the west. The force of attraction was naturally the lure of large deposits of alluvial gold. For those who came from Europe and the U.S.A. the gambling element was probably upper-most. The influx of people in Western Australia was on a scale never seen before, for it had taken 61 years for the population to rise to 46,290, yet ten years later it had almost quadrupled to 179,708.³¹ The number of males entering the colony was far greater than females yet by 1900 the proportions of each in the total population were roughly the same. Perhaps a more significant feature of the immigrants was their comparative youth. Most appear to have been under 30 years of age, an assertion based more on contemporary impressions than detailed statistical analysis.

Mossenson's figures for the population of the goldfields from 1893-1902 provide an accurate picture of the growth.³² There was an increase of approximately 11,100 between 1893 and 1894 the bulk of the influx going to the fields around Coolgardie. The East Coolgardie field, including Kalgoorlie, had a much slower rate of growth, with the population reaching 10,000 three years after the find by Hannan.³³ In the same year (1896) Coolgardie reached its peak, with 32,000 men in the town and its surrounding fields, but then began the inevitable decline, so that by 1900 there were only 6,780 while on the East Coolgardie field the population had risen to 25,900 and there were also substantial numbers of men on the North Coolgardie, Broad Arrow and Mount Margaret fields.³⁴

29. See Western Australian Yearbook, 1957, p.321.

30. Crowley, *Op. cit.*, p.140.

31. See *W.A. Yearbook 1957*, p.322.

32. Clark, C.M.H., 1971: *Select Documents in Australian History 1851-1900* (Sydney, Angus & Robertson) p.82.

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

The figures also help to explain why Coolgardie has been referred to affectionately as the "big town of small men".³⁵ It was the first boom town of the eastern goldfields and in 1896 60% of all people were in the region and around Coolgardie. The town and its buildings reflected the optimism of the diggers, and today's visitors can only stare in wonderment at its former size. Kalgoorlie-Boulder were wages towns where individual fortunes were more often made from the stock exchange, gambling, or illegal gold dealing, rather than from easily worked alluvial deposits. The towns never had the same allure as Coolgardie, nor the same dominance. Coolgardie was always a prospectors' town, and ". . . for thousands it was the scene of the greatest adventures of their lives. It was a place of endless excitement, wild rumours, and boundless optimism, remembered and loved by those who moved on."³⁶

At their peak Kalgoorlie-Boulder had a population of slightly more than 30,000 and the twin towns were connected by the loop railway line, running through the stations of Hannan St., Kallaroo, Golden Gate, Boulder, Kamballie, Trafalgar, Hill End, Brown Hill and Williamstown. It has been claimed that Golden Gate may have been the busiest station in Australia at the turn of the century, for with three mine shifts Golden Gate handled a train each way every 10 minutes for twenty four hours each day. There was a staff of 26 in 1904 and the total earnings from the station were £106,579 the highest of any in W.A.³⁷ Besides being immensely popular for Sunday picnic excursions the loop-line reflected the bustling optimism prior to World War I, when the mines stretched in an unbroken line from Mt. Charlotte to the southern limits of Fimiston, and motor cars were rarely seen.

While the loopline was a measure of the population of Kalgoorlie-Boulder prior to 1914, the extensions of the State railway system to Kanowna, and via Kookynie, to Leonora and Laverton reflected the substantial population outside the main centres of the eastern goldfields. Red Hill, St. Ives, Ora Banda, Siberia, Kurnalpi, Golden Ridge and Carbine were other towns where alluvial gold attracted prospectors who left when the most accessible gold was worked out. In fact one dimension of the goldfields history has been the constant ebb and flow of population, yet no-one has made a detailed study of the movements.

Hopefully this brief and superficial analysis of the eastern goldfields prior to 1914, may add to the current revival of interest in the region's exciting past. The extracts and documents which follow are intended to highlight the richness and diversity of goldfields history, and to stimulate those who complacently believe that little more can be added to the records of the 'roaring nineties'. For example, mining history has been almost completely neglected, and there are no studies of major mines like the Great Boulder which for decades was the showpiece of the golden mile. Personalities like Richard Hamilton, Zebina Lane, Claude de Bernales and Ben Leslie need to be written up and there is an urgency in the task of reconstructing the lives of the underground work force, the women of the goldfields and the businessmen. Just as the big mines are closing down, so memories are fading and with them a rich store of reminiscences and anecdotes. For the oral historians time is short.

There are many other fertile fields for the historian and the social scientist. Vosper, Hales and Hayward were only three of many who played a part in the goldfields press which moulded opinions in an age when newspapers were widely read and discussed. The sporting teams, choirs, churches, trade unions, fellowship and benefit associations were part of the rich community life, and the hotels played a pivotal role in this. All deserve investigation for they, like politicians and parsons, miners, madams and gamblers contributed to the boom of the 'roaring nineties' when gold successfully launched Western Australia into the prosperity of the twentieth century.

35. An expression used by Gavan Casey in Casey and Mayman *Op. cit.*, p.45.

36. *Ibid.*, p.45.

37. *Annual Report of the W.A. Government Railways*, 1904.

AN EARLY DESCRIPTION OF THE GOLDFIELDS REGION

Jutson's description was published in 1934, however the manuscript, completed in 1929, was based on many sources published at the beginning of the twentieth century.

VEGETATION

The xerophytic and frequently stunted and sparse character of the vegetation has been mentioned above. The vegetation is divided into two main groups, corresponding with differences of latitude, and the result therefore apparently chiefly of differences of temperature, although there is a somewhat greater rainfall in the south than in the north. These two groups occupy nearly equal areas. The dividing east and west line runs from Lake Moore in the west, easterly past Mt. Jackson, Broad Arrow, Pinjin and a little to the north of Queen Victoria Spring. The southern belt is bounded on the east by the Nullarbor Plains.

The southern (salmon gum) belt extends southwards from the east-west dividing line to the coast, and the northern (mulga) belt extends northwards to the northern boundary of Salinaland.

The salmon gum belt is characterised by the predominance of eucalypts of various kinds of which the salmon gum (*E. salmonophloia*) is the type and commonest species. These eucalypt forests have been of great value to the gold mining industry for both mining timber and firewood; but the forests have been largely cut out, especially in the neighbourhood of Kalgoorlie.

The mulga belt, as its name denotes, is characterised by the great predominance of the "mulga" scrub, small trees up to about 15 feet in height of various kinds of acacias, with eucalypts strictly subordinate. The mulga timber has also been useful for firewood for the mines, and, to some extent, as mining timber.

The sandalwood (*Santalum spicatum*) grows throughout the division, and it has been much cut for export to China.

Most of the trees afford little shade, but there are some fine shady salmon gums on the goldfields. In small patches, the she-oak and the native pine occur, lending some variety to the landscape. Mention should also be made of the graceful and shady kurrajong tree, which usually grows singly.

Grass is generally absent except for a short period after moderate or heavy rain, so that the spaces between the shrubs and trees are bare. (The writer believes that he is well within the mark in stating that at least half of the ground — excluding the bare areas of the salt lakes — is quite naked during most of the year.) After heavy rains, numerous small annuals thrive for a time and carpet the country for miles.

The detailed character of the vegetation is often an important guide to the nature of the underlying rocks in areas, as in Salinaland, where outcrops are scarce.

THE SALT LAKE DIVISION OR SALINALAND

BOUNDARIES

This physiographic division is the second largest, and it occupies a very considerable portion of the southern half of the State. It corresponds roughly with the administrative Central Division.

The division approaches close to the sea on its southern boundary, being separated from the ocean by the narrow river-bearing strip running westerly from Israelite Bay to the mouth of the Pallinup River. On the west its boundary is the line separating the rivers of the coast, as far north as the Murchison, from the interior drainage. The division on its western side approaches close to the Great Southern and Midland railways, but recedes to the east on meeting the Murchison River basin. Its approximate northern boundary is latitude 25° (some distance north of Wiluna), and its eastern boundary is between longitudes 123° and 124° , nearly reaching to a point a little north of Cape Paisley. The boundaries on the north and east are approximate only, as there are no well defined natural features to draw a sharp line between this division and Sandland, although to the north and east of the division the characteristic sand ridges and sand plains of Sandland soon attract attention.

The division comprises portions of Clarke's Kalgoorlie, Wheat Belt, and Murchison natural regions.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The general characteristics of Salinaland are:—

(1) The occurrence of a plateau (the "new plateau") of arid erosion. On this new plateau stand the remnants of the "old plateau". Those remnants consist of flat-topped mesas and buttes, the rocks of which are commonly granite, although greenstones and practically unaltered sedimentary rocks also occur. The greenstones and granite are in many places highly decomposed, and all the different kinds of rocks may be capped by laterite, which may be siliceous, ferruginous or aluminous.

The transition between the mesas and buttes of the old plateau and the new plateau is in many places by steep cliffs which are locally termed "breakaways".

Other remains of the old plateau are isolated hills and ridges ("island hills") of various undecomposed rocks, the chief of which are granite and greenstone; their outlines are usually well rounded.

The height of the old above the new plateau is probably from 30 to 100 feet (although there are exceptional cases in which the difference may be as much as 200 feet). It must, however, be remembered that there is probably a planing down of the surface of the old plateau, and that therefore its present surface may not represent the actual original one.

The old plateau is a portion of the Great Plateau of Western Australia.

Above the old plateau, its monadnocks or residuals rise. These consist principally of rocks resistant to erosion, the chief of which are greenstones and quartz-haematite rocks.

No block-faulting in this division has been recorded.

(2) No permanent streams exist, and such intermittent ones as occur cannot be dignified by the name "river". They generally run only immediately after heavy rain, and frequently lose themselves on the plains. Those that enter the salt lakes are often short. The division may be described as riverless.

(3) Such drainage as exists is almost entirely interior.

(4) The occurrence of the salt or "dry" lakes in great numbers. They are merely shallow depressions on the new plateau of various size and shapes. They are usually found along and in fact constitute the main drainage lines of the division; and they may be a few hundred yards or several miles wide (using this term where the length is much greater than the width) or in diameter (if the lake is more or less circular). The lakes may be isolated, but in some places they are strung loosely

together, with divisions of varying width. They are usually dry, but, after heavy rain, a thin sheet of water may spread over their surfaces. Unless, however, the rain be continued, the water evaporates with extraordinary rapidity, leaving a deposit of salt and usually of gypsum on the floors of the lakes. The use of "dry" and "salt" as applied to these so-called lakes is thus explained.

Some lakes are wholly or in part rock-floored, others may possess detrital material of considerable thickness.

The lakes constitute the chief physiographic feature of the division, and one of the most striking physical phenomena in Western Australia. They are of great geographical interest.

(5) The fairly widespread occurrence of sand or sandy loam plains and, to a comparatively limited extent, of sand ridges, the latter being in many places confined to the borders of the salt lakes.

(6) The scanty rainfall. In the greater part of the division the average fall is about 10 inches per annum, and in the south-western portion it is from 10 to 15 inches per annum.

(7) The xerophytic vegetation, which in many places is stunted and sparse, and which over wide areas is remarkably uniform as a whole.

(8) The occurrence of very ancient rocks, which form a complex of granites, gneisses, greenstones, schists and sediments, generally regarded as of Pre-Cambrian age. Those rocks occupy practically the whole of the division, the granites greatly predominating. The trend of the greenstone belts, the general strike of the sedimentary rocks, and the general direction of the foliation planes of the metamorphic rocks are about north-north-west, and consequently the topographical features largely follow the same direction. Associated with the rocks are many large projecting quartz "blows" which usually are barren of gold.

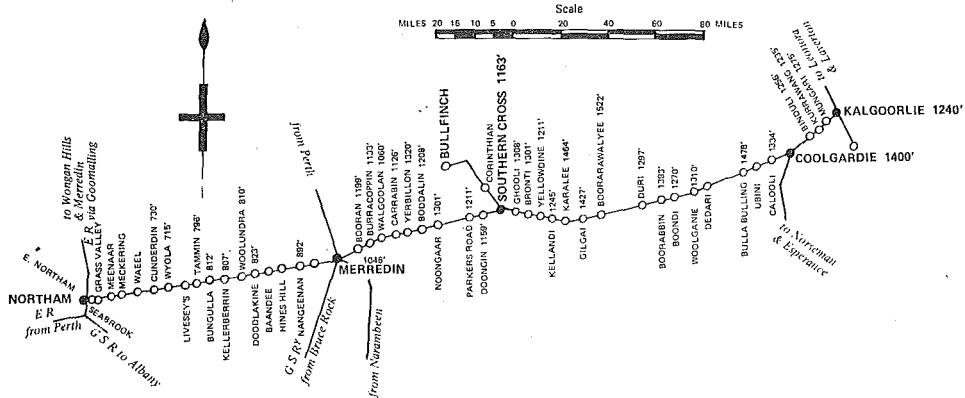
(9) The great abundance of mineral wealth consisting almost entirely of gold. The division as a whole is one of the richest goldfields in the world, the famous Kalgoorlie field being in this division.

(10) The high temperatures but low humidity in summer, and the mild, but bracing winters. The mean annual temperatures vary from 60° F., in the south to 75° F., in the north.

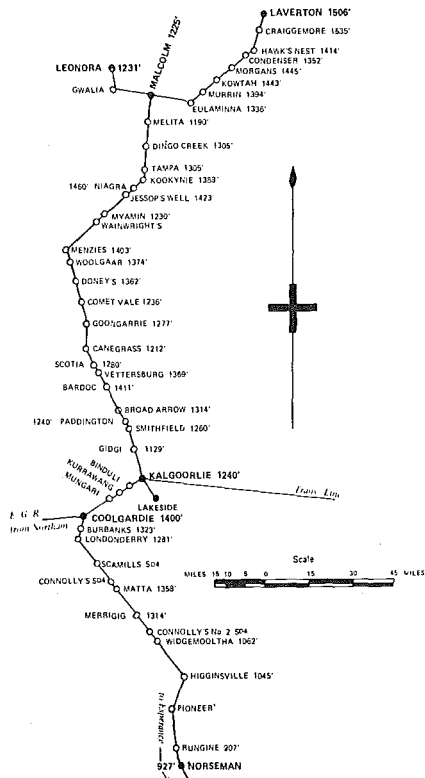
(11) The abundance in places of rock detritus on the surface of the ground, as a result of the disintegration of the harder rocks, such as the fine-grained greenstones, quartz and ironstone. The detritus is so widespread on some hill slopes and plains that "stone fields" have been formed.

CONTOUR

The height of the new plateau in the division is difficult to determine. It possibly varies from about 700 feet to 2,000 feet. The railway heights are very instructive. Thus taking the Kalgoorlie line from Cunderdin (730 feet above sea-level) near the western boundary of the division, to Koorarawalyee (1,522 feet), a distance of 175 miles, there is a rise of 792 feet, an average of 4½ feet per mile. From Koorarawalyee to Kalgoorlie the heights fluctuate, now rising, now falling, but Kalgoorlie (1,240 feet) is the lowest railway station, as Koorarawalyee is the highest. From Coolgardie (1,400 feet) south to Norseman (927 feet), a distance of 108 miles, there is a fall of 473 feet, giving an average of almost 4½ feet per mile. From Kalgoorlie northward to Malcolm railway station (1,225 feet), there is no continuous rise, the country fluctuating mainly between 1,200 and 1,400 feet, and reaching its highest point 114 miles from Kalgoorlie at Niagara (1,460 feet), which, however, is only 60 feet above Coolgardie. From the Malcolm railway station eastward to Laverton (1,506 feet) 64 miles, there is a rise of



Map of portion of the Eastern Goldfields railway, showing the heights of the stations in Salinaia from Cunderdin to Kalgoorlie, illustrating the low average fall of the plateau from east to west.



Map of portion of the Eastern Goldfields railway, showing the heights of the stations in Salinaia from Norseman to Laverton, illustrating the low average fall of the plateau from north to south.

281 feet, giving an average again of almost $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet per mile, a remarkable coincidence with the other averages taken. Considering the railway much farther north, the Meekatharra line, and taking from Pindar (1,075 feet), east to Mt. Magnet (1,400 feet), a distance of 133 miles, there is a rise of 325 feet, an average of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet per mile. From Mt. Magnet north to Meekatharra (1,708 feet), a distance of 118 miles, and a rise of 308 feet, there is an average of a little over $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet per mile. From Mt. Magnet east to Sandstone, a distance of 93 miles, there is a rise of 355 feet, an average of about $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet per mile. These figures bring out very clearly that the country rises to the east and to the north, but very gradually.

The orographical map published by the Commonwealth Meteorological Bureau in 1918 shows that almost the whole of the division is between 1,000 and 2,000 feet above sea-level, thereby demonstrating the fact of its being a plateau. In the northern portion there is a narrow east-west belt shown on the same map as between the 2,000 and 3,000 feet contours.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Water in small quantities is obtainable from "gnamma holes" and "soaks", and it can also generally be found as well water, but the latter varies from fresh to brackish and salt. The character of the underground water in regard to its salinity has had an important influence in the use of the land for pastoral purposes, as it is on the underground water that stock have mainly to depend.

From a mining standpoint, the salt water has often caused much difficulty. The geological structure of the country, so far as known, forbids any possibility of artesian water.

The water supply difficulty has been largely overcome (1) by the magnificent water scheme provided by the Western Australian Government, by which millions of gallons of water are pumped through pipes from the Mundaring Reservoir, near Perth, to Kalgoorlie, a distance of about 350 miles, and a height of many hundreds of feet, the water also being distributed along the route by side-lines; and (2) by the comprehensive system of tanks, wells and dams in the more outlying parts, established by the Government.

The plateau character of the division, and the absence of close-cut forests, render transportation easy by road or rail. The arid nature of the country, however, made the early exploration, prospecting and mining of the country difficult and full of hardship.

The undissected and arid nature of the plateau with its cover of laterite, travertine, clays and sands has had an important effect on gold mining, in that many of the lodes are quite hidden, and have often been discovered only by the merest chance; in that few lodes can be worked from tunnels or adits, as may often advantageously be done in more dissected countries; and in that the absence of streams has caused much difficulty and expense in obtaining the necessary water for mining purposes. Against these serious disadvantages, is the great advantage of easy transportation by road and rail. It may also be pointed out that over considerable areas there is not much accumulation of surface detritus; consequently the bedrock and its contained lodes in those areas are quite close to the surface, although unfortunately a thin cover of laterite or of other superficial deposits often conceals the lodes. This cover, however, is a small difficulty compared with that which would arise if great thickness of detritus existed to any extent. That such thick deposits do occur is shown by the records of the "deep lead" workings.

The division has produced an enormous quantity of gold, and is still producing a moderate amount.

In the western portion of the division wheat-growing is being extensively developed despite the low rainfall, and throughout the division sheep and cattle are grazed, the sheep now displacing cattle from areas formerly occupied by the latter alone. It must, however, be remembered that on account of the arid nature of the country, the number of sheep or cattle to a given area are few, compared with well-watered countries.

Source: Jutson, J.T., 1950: *The Physiography (Geomorphology) of Western Australia* (Perth, Government Printer).

THE FIRST DISCOVERIES

In 1892 Southern Cross appeared to be the end of the Pacific and Indian Ocean Gold Trails. To the east of the town the desert was a formidable barrier which was eventually broken by men who had spent a lifetime prospecting on remote fields.

THE DISCOVERY OF COOLGARDIE

A halo of romance hangs around the discovery of goldfields. There is much that is fascinating in the idea of adventure seeking individuals going off, as they did in Western Australia, into trackless, foodless and waterless wilds to search for gold. It is a venture into the unknown and is associated with glorious uncertainties.

HUNT'S EXPLORATIONS

In Western Australia in the "sixties" of the last century a curious story became current and continued for some decades afterwards. It was that during one of the exploration expeditions of C.C. Hunt, gold was discovered a considerable distance east of York, but the fact was concealed because the authorities at that time, for reasons of their own did not think it wise to make it public. Hunt's expedition in 1864 traversed portions of what is now the Eastern Goldfields beyond Kalgoorlie and visited Lake Lefroy and the Northerly hills of the Dundas Range. Lake Cowan and other places were named. The following year he led another expedition that cut a track over the huge plains from Southern Cross through Gnarlbine, north of Lake Lefroy to the Hampton Plains. In 1866 he led a third expedition that reached the Kurnalpi country. Unfortunately Hunt died in 1868 at the early age of 35 years, the colony thus losing a public servant who had done valuable exploration work. Today at the White Hope and elsewhere on the Goldfields there are trees that were marked by him and also there remain intact wells and reservoirs by granite rocks that were constructed by him. The story of one of Hunt's expeditions having found gold may not be true but if gold were found it would not be surprising. Certainly the story was firmly believed by very many old West Australians. Prospectors heard the story and the early discoveries of gold at Coolgardie followed the tracks of Hunt.

YILGARN FINDS

In 1887, more than 20 years after Hunt's exploration expeditions, gold was found in various places in Yilgarn. The following year two men were camped in the vicinity of Southern Cross when one afternoon a distressed prospector arrived at their camp. He had come from outback, he had with him a black boy and five horses. The new arrivals had had a trying experience. It was the middle of summer. The appearance and the condition of their horses told their own tale of privation and suffering. True bush hospitality was extended to them. The horses were unsaddled and taken to water and fed, and the man and boy were given a good meal which they both badly needed.

That night over the camp fire the stranger talked freely and long. He had heard that Hunt's expedition had struck gold and he followed Hunt's trails and some 130 miles East of Southern Cross he had found gold but the country was devoid of water and he was forced to return. He showed them specimens of gold he had brought back with him.

One of his hosts at the camp was specially interested and plied him with questions as to the nature of the country, the route he followed and the location of his find. This information was readily given.

The stranger was G.A. McPherson who was prospecting for Dr. Hope, of Fremantle. The man to whom McPherson gave the information was Arthur Bayley whose name will ever be associated with the Coolgardie gold discoveries. He was then young, but 22 years of age, and he never forgot what McPherson had told him. The story stuck in his mind for years. He was determined that some day he would follow the tracks of Hunt and McPherson and seek gold East of Southern Cross.

Bayley had a strong personality. Full of energy, he was persevering, determined and extremely likeable. A mate describes Bayley as "never having much sense as to the value of money". He was too big hearted to concern himself with a few ounces at any time but "he was game and a stayer and that was why he often found gold where other men said there was none."

Born in 1866, Bayley gained mining experience at Charters Towers. In 1888 he arrived in Perth with thirty shillings in his pocket. He applied to Holman, Haynes & Co., representatives of a Perth mining syndicate, for a job and he was sent by them to Southern Cross.

BAYLEY'S ADVENTURES

Bayley for some years travelled much about West Australia. In January, 1889, he went to the Nor'West, visited the Nullagine diggings and Roebourne. He was practically penniless when some seven miles from Roebourne, a Chinese discovered the Nichol Field by picking up a nugget weighing 7 lbs. The locality was covered by the sea at high tide. Bayley went there and got 20 ozs. in a fortnight. After that he travelled to Perth where he spent money freely. Subsequently he went again to Southern Cross where he got work at the Central Gold Mine.

When news was received of gold being found on the Ashburton, there was a rush there and Bayley left Southern Cross for Perth again and went Northwards. A friend of his, A.D. Edwards, says he met him at Ford's Creek with Tom Kegney after they had divided with a tomahawk a 68 oz. slug. Whilst prospecting in the Murchison, Bayley found Bayley's Island in Lake Austin from which a considerable amount of gold was taken.

It may here be mentioned that Bayley was remarkable for his athletic prowess. When at Roebourne there was a sports meeting and he won the Sheffield handicap and throwing the hammer. Whilst he was at Southern Cross, he ran short of cash. There was a crack runner there, so Bayley backed himself to run him for £30 a side. The challenge was accepted. The mines did not pay in cash - "shin plasters" was the only paper currency available - and Bayley borrowed from a friend enough "shin plasters" to back himself. He beat the local champion.

The friend from whom he borrowed the "shin plasters" was Bill Ford, whom he first knew at Croydon, North Queensland and whom he met later at different places in Western Australia.

The two men were altogether different types. Ford was 14 years older than Bayley. Ford was as reserved, cautious and careful in money matters as Bayley was indifferent, but for Bayley the older man had a love and respect that amounted almost to reverence.

FORD'S AMBITIONS

Ford was born in 1852 in the Ararat mining country of Victoria. He had extensive mining experience in Queensland, Broken Hill and elsewhere before coming in 1889 to West Australia where he secured employment at Southern Cross.

Ford was not long at Southern Cross before he too became ambitious to prospect the country East through which Hunt's tracks led. The mines had closed down for three weeks during Christmas time and he, with three others, named George Withers, Jacolette and Campbell, in order to fill in the time during the holidays went prospecting between Southern Cross and Parker's Range at a place called Blackfellow's Grave. They found gold and pegged out a claim which they sold to an old man named Salter for £300. The purchaser wanted two men to look after the show and Ford and Jacolette decided to stay.

George Withers got a black boy, horses and supplies, and travelled Eastward prospecting. He returned in three weeks with a wound in his shoulder. He had been speared by a black. Ford saw him and found that he had brought back 7 dwt. of gold. Withers said there must be more gold where he found it and that it was good prospecting country but the blacks were too dangerous and he could not remain.

Withers' story impressed Ford just as McPherson's experiences had impressed Bayley. Ford, like Bayley, made up his mind that some day he too would inspect the country East of Southern Cross.

It was a couple of years afterwards that Bayley told Ford what he had learned from McPherson, and Ford confided in Bayley the information he had gained from Withers. They were both keen on exploring the country Eastward of Southern Cross, both were experienced prospectors and neither of them feared blacks or other dangers. They were brave men ready to face the perils of the wilderness whatever those perils might be. They decided to become mates and follow Hunt's tracks towards the rising sun. This decision it was, that led them both on to fortune.

ENTERPRISE REWARDED

With five horses and provisions for some months the two men left in June, 1892. They had no difficulty in following Hunt's tracks. Hunt, as he progressed, had sunk wells and stoned them up. They advanced from water supply to water supply prospecting the stoney ridges as they travelled onward. After a time they sighted Mt. Burges and they left Hunt's tracks. Next day they saw Withers' tracks and followed them, and the day after that they reached what is now known as Coolgardie.

They pitched their camp. Some distance from where they were camped they found that a mining claim had been pegged years previously. To one of the pegs was nailed a tin notice, the writing on which was indistinct, but so far as it could be made out, it stated that Ansdan, on behalf of Scott, had pegged the ground. The date was 1888. Later a pathetic discovery was made. Not very far from where the notice had been fixed, the skeletons of two white men were found in a gully. Their axes were lying near them; evidently they had been killed by blacks. They had died within sight of the wealth for which they had long toiled and struggled.

Ford in his account of what happened says:— "We reached Coolgardie at 5 p.m. and in the morning we went out for the horses in order to give them a drink. I was leading my horse over what was later called Fly Flat when I picked up a piece of gold, weighing half an ounce. I think we were more excited about that little bit of gold than any we found afterwards. That day we picked up about 80 ozs. of gold on the flat, the largest of the nuggets being about 5 ozs."

Ford continues that Withers had evidently walked over Fly Flat and did not see the gold adding that another man had been also there but he tried the gullies, thus missing the right spot.

Bayley and Ford were not unmindful of the blacks. Ford writes: "We had very wet weather and had to sleep in wet blankets for more than a month. It was lucky for us that it was wet as the blacks made for outback where feed as well as water was plentiful."

For days Bayley and Ford continued to unearth gold. They realised they had made a valuable find.

PROSPECTING SUBTERFUGE

Ford then relates how Bayley and he did not want to let it be known that they had found rich alluvial gold. He writes: "One afternoon up came a party of four men with a black boy. They camped a little way away from us. Bayley and I walked down to them. I knew two of them – Jack Reidy and German Charlie. In the morning they brought their horses, and we asked them to stop as we could get colours of gold, and it would only take a few more days to prospect the country, and then we could all go on together. They would not stay, and when we saw the last of them we threw our hats up! They were very green – a blind man could tell we had found gold, otherwise we would never have stayed there. We had between 200 and 300 ozs. of gold at the time."

About 10 days after that, Bayley and Ford ran short of supplies and they went back to Southern Cross. They had decided to say nothing about their find as they wished to secure all the gold they could themselves rather than have the place ruined. Ford writes: "When we were at Southern Cross the miners were on strike. We bought a lot of provisions and said we were going out to see what Jack Reidy and his party were doing. Chaps gave us a hand to pack up and wished us luck. It was raining when we started back on our journey to Fly Flat. We met Reidy's party coming back to Southern Cross. Reidy said – 'Hullo where have you been?' We told him we had been to the Cross for supplies, and said we were going to see what he had found. He told us they had no luck, and we said that as that was so, we would make northwards to the Murchison. With that, we got on our horses and started for our camp at Fly Flat. Reidy said afterwards that he followed us as he thought that, notwithstanding what we said, we might be getting gold. After travelling a few miles he felt that perhaps his suspicions were unfounded, and thus changing his mind he turned back."

It was when Bayley and Ford had returned to Fly Flat that what was known as Bayley's Reward Mine was discovered. Previously, only alluvial had been found. Here is how Ford describes the discovery of the famous reef:– "After we reached Fly Flat, Bayley was over at what was afterwards our prospecting area when he found rich gold in a leader. We shifted our camp there and got about 200 ozs. The gold was in decayed quartz. I prospected the big blow and found gold at the north and south ends. I saw gold in the reef, but did not touch it as we had enough gold in camp. I commenced to make bags to pack the gold we had and we felt we must report the find. Bayley was away horse hunting. He had his work cut out in attending the horses as there was very little water."

BAYLEY'S REWARD

Such is the story written down by Ford. Bayley and Ford unquestionably were the discoverers of alluvial gold at Fly Flat, but there is much doubt about the finding at Bayley's Reward reef. There is a different story to that told by Ford. It has been current since the early days of Coolgardie, and its truth is vouched for by numbers of early day Coolgardie prospectors.

When Bayley and Ford, after discovering alluvial gold at Coolgardie, visited Southern Cross for supplies there were at Southern Cross three young men who, by reason of the strike, at the principal mines, were out of work. Two of them were Englishmen, namely Harry Baker who came from London, and Tommy Talbot, then 21 years of age, who hailed from Devonshire. The third was a Swede — Dick Fossier. They were tired of hanging round Southern Cross doing nothing, waiting for the strike to end. The spirit of adventure was strong in them. They talked together, and finally they, too, decided to go prospecting.

They bought four horses (brumby types), three pack saddles and bags, one riding saddle and bridle, tools and rations and got a black boy. They packed three of the horses with about 180 lbs. each of rations and their swags. With only one saddle horse between the four of them, three of them had to walk taking turn about for a ride. They had talked with Bayley and Ford and followed their tracks.

Their troubles began on the second day out from Southern Cross as the black fellow absconded. His skill as a tracker and knowledge of the country were invaluable. Serious as they felt the loss to be they determined to carry on.

The only difficulty they had in following the tracks was at rock catchments where the hard ground made the tracks almost impossible to see, especially as the three men had but little acquaintance with the bush.

At the Gnarlbine Rock they met Reidy's party who were returning to Southern Cross. They camped together, and Reidy showed them where Bayley and Ford's tracks turned north-east off Huni's track. Some days later, Talbot who was leading the way on foot over hard country, watching the ground in an endeavour to follow the tracks, was surprised to hear the words "Good morning" and looking up, saw Bayley. They had a talk, Bayley told them that he and Ford had found nothing worth while, but pointing to country not far away Bayley said — "That country is worth a trial."

The three pitched camp, and began looking round. That afternoon they picked up about an ounce of gold.

Talbot in a lengthy statement relates that Bayley and Ford were camped at the north-west end of the huge quartz blow, known as the "Big Blow". It was a small leader about worked out, being a surface show, but good. Bayley and Ford gave the new arrivals the impression that they would like them to move on.

Talbot describes Bayley as often having a yarn with the three of them, but refers to Ford as "an old hatter who would never have a conversation and looked on us as if we had no right to be there."

"GOLD GALORE"

Talbot's story continues:—

"On a very fine morning in September, 1892, we were out as usual prospecting. We went to a place where we had picked up a few specks of gold, also a few specimens the evening before. We returned to this place to give it a trial, thinking there may be a leader or a payable reef about. We were not on the spot long when one of us picked up a very rich specimen. We all specked about following the traces up the side of a hill, but before we got to the top of the hill we found gold galore, in fact gold all around us. We could see it glittering in the sunlight, for at least 20 yards in front of us. Our excitement was great. I think we were off our heads for quite a few minutes.

"In less than half an hour we gathered £1,700 worth of gold specimens. On the top of the ridge was the cap of the reef studded with gold in plenty in the hard quartz.

"This El Dorado was the famous mine Bayley's Reward.

"After calming down we decided to return to our camp, get more tools, also our miners' rights and the Mining Act which were all there, read the Act, find out how to peg a lease, etc., and get forms to put on the pegs with the numbers of our miners' rights which no claim is legal without.

"Hundreds have asked me, 'Why didn't you peg the ground?' The reason is, we were only lads and knew practically nothing of mining or how to peg ground.

"After deciding to return to our camp, we arranged to carry back with us as many specimens as we could. We had our coats off and we tied the sleeves, filled them with golden quartz and started for our camp.

"Before leaving we planted the balance of the specimens in a hole we had sunk in a hollow when trying for the alluvial the day before. We carried down to this hole about a sugar bag full of specimens. Foolishly one of us threw some fresh dirt from the side on top of the specimens. This was the means of losing the famous mine. In this heap there was not less than £700 worth of gold.

"When leaving with our load for our camp it was about 12.30 p.m. We were all talking, planning and building castles in the air. After walking for about half an hour we began to realise we were lost — bushed — being too excited to heed where we were going. The scrub was very thick. We wandered all the afternoon and became tired and knocked up. Just before dark we climbed the highest hill we could see to try to locate our camp. The rise we climbed was later called Toorak. The night was calm and still. There was not even a light breeze blowing. About mid-night we heard a horse bell. After listening carefully we thought the sound was like our horse's bell. Off we went in the direction of the sounds and found the horses about half a mile away right at our camp. They were standing at the rock hole waiting for a drink. We watered them, had a meal and turned in thoroughly tired out.

A FORTUNE MISSED

"We slept rather late next morning. After breakfast we started for our reef find taking with us tools, our miners' rights and copy of the Mining Act. by this time we had returned to sanity. On our arrival to our dismay we found Bayley busy pegging in our find. We tried to explain things to him and Ford but they said all was fair in this game and that we were three damn fools for not pegging the ground.

"Bayley said:— 'There will be a great boom here soon; you fellows peg on to our pegs on the South of the lease we have pegged and if you don't make a mess of things you will get £5,000 or £6,000 for it. We have only pegged a few feet south of the rich chute.' This that Bayley said was right as I think it was about 100 feet."

In the course of discussions between the five men, Bayley seemed agreeable to allow Baker, Fosser and Talbot to share in the find, but Ford stood firm and would not consent.

When the three men showed a bellicose attitude, Ford took out a revolver, but Bayley said "Put up that revolver, Bill. We will have no shooting." They were three young inexperienced men, strangers to the country with no knowledge of mining law and according to Talbot they were bluffed. The specimens the three brought to the camp contained 340 ozs. of gold. They acted on Bayley's suggestion and pegged the lease, afterwards known as Bayley's South, but as Bayley predicted they made a mess of it — the partner whom they had taken in persuaded them to sell it for £800. He got his share which was £200, but later, they learned that he was in league with the purchasers.

Source: *Early Days* Vol. 3 December, 1941, pp.10-18.

RUSH TO COOLGARDIE

Work had ceased at Southern Cross owing to the strike, and men were simply killing time. There had been about the township an air of listlessness, but from this apathy the sensational reports of the find aroused everyone to feverish activity. Heaps of bright shining precious lumps of gold were at the local bank premises to be seen by all who wished to view them. A report spread that in the vicinity of where they came from, tens of thousands of ounces were lying about to be had for the picking up. The gold fever grew in intensity. Bold spirits got away within an hour or two of Bayley's arrival. Others hastened to follow. Food prices rose rapidly. The value of horses increased ten-fold. Enterprising men



Camel Team on the Goldfields.
(Courtesy Batty Library)

with drays carried stocks of 100 lbs. weight for £5 whilst the owners walked. Within two or three days practically all the adult male population of Southern Cross were following Bayley's tracks eastward. For weeks and months the rush continued. Men hastened from Perth, and from the Eastern States.

It was a rough toilsome journey. It was a struggle onward through the bush. Some on foot carrying sacks, tools, billy cans and water bags. Others riding horses. A few had spring carts. There were men pushing wheel-barrows; anxiety to get on quickly was expressed on every face. The earliest arrivals are supposed to get most of the gold though that does not always happen. It was a race for prizes that the competitors thought might mean wealth as vast as that of the Rothschilds. They pushed along through scrub, under shadeless gum trees, skirting clay pans, across heavy stretches of sand-plain, round stony ridges and over low ranges. When rock holes or soaks with water were reached, there was a halt, but not for long. There was no time to waste. Many were foot sore, all were dead tired but they battled on.

There were the bodies of horses, killed by over-work on the track. Much baggage had been cast away; also abandoned vehicles that had been injured beyond repair. Fortunately, the weather was good. It was the second half of September, and there were spring buds and shoots among the scrubby growth. The gnamma holes had water and there was feed for horses. Several of the bushes and trees were in flower, and the sand-plains were gay with bright colours of countless blooms, but the thoughts of the men as they struggled forward were not of the beauties of nature, but of life's stern realities, and wondering if they would arrive in time to get what would give them all the things and joys they longed for.

SUBSEQUENT HAPPENINGS

When Bayley arrived back from Southern Cross, Ford had nice gold to show him. Whilst Bayley was absent, Ford went fossicking with a pick, struck a nugget of 200 ozs., also one of 100 ozs., and one of 50 ozs. These occurred in one pot-hole about three yards from the cap of the reef. The place was indeed phenomenally rich in gold.

Within a few months Sylvester Browne and Gordon Lyon for a substantial sum in cash and one-sixth interest secured Bayley's Reward mine. The property was floated into a company in Melbourne for £24,000. Later, Bayley's South was floated for £40,000.

Bayley and Ford left Coolgardie. Bayley married and went to Melbourne where not long afterwards he died, whilst still a young man. According to Ford he was but 27 when he died. Bayley was a native of Victoria.

Ford lived to be over eighty years of age. He died on October 16, 1932, at his residence in Anderson Street, Chatswood, New South Wales. After his success at Coolgardie he lived quietly in well-to-do circumstances, and when he died he left a widow, one son and one daughter.

Cassidy, subsequent to his arrival at Coolgardie prospered. When Hannan reported the discovery of gold at Kalgoorlie he immediately went to the find and pegged out the first mining lease on that field on the site of what is now known as Cassidy's Hill. There is also in Kalgoorlie a Cassidy Street, named after him. He was a shrewd and cautious man, acquired considerable wealth and having married lived for many years in New Zealand, and after that in Melbourne, where he died a few years ago.

Baker and Fosser are dead but Talbot is still with us in Western Australia. He perhaps has done better financially than if he had acquired Bayley's Reward Mine. Most of his life he was engaged in the pastoral industry, and today he is possessed of valuable properties throughout the State. He was at Coolgardie a few weeks ago, and I had hoped that he would have been with us tonight.

During the months subsequent to Bayley reporting the discovery of gold thousands of ounces continued to be unearthed weekly at Coolgardie. Nearly every man working on Fly Flat was getting gold. A coach service was established between Southern Cross and Coolgardie, camel teams in charge of Afghans helped to lessen transport difficulties. Two enterprising individuals arrived with a flock of sheep, the meat of which was sold at a good price. Later cattle were driven to the field. The first white woman and her daughter arrived in November. There were cases of typhoid in December – the beginning of a scourge that for some years caused havoc to human life, the strongest of the young men being the most frequent victims.

Before the end of the year the water supply began to fail. Many men felt it would be dangerous to remain and began rushing back to Southern Cross. The authorities posted notices asking the people to leave Coolgardie in parties, and also to use sparingly, and not exhaust what water there was at places along the track. During the close of the old year, and the beginning of the new, welcome thunder storms occurred filling the water holes and soaks. Numbers of men rushed back to Coolgardie to where water had been carted from as far as 50 miles. The price of water rose to 2/- a gallon. At the end of January as a water famine was feared, there was another rush away from Coolgardie. Rains fell in March and water was fairly plentiful. Licences had been granted and four hotels were opened. In April, flour was 1/- a pound and water 1/6 a gallon. By May there had been good rains, and there were a thousand men at Coolgardie, whilst thousands were on their way there. By this time adventurers were rushing to Coolgardie from all parts of the globe. The population continued to grow rapidly and Coolgardie soon had a remarkable collection of cosmopolitan individuals. They ranged from "cook's son to duke's son" and were of the type of whom Kipling wrote:

The legion that never was listed
That carries no colours or crest
But split in a thousand detachments
Is breaking the road for the rest.

The men at Coolgardie did not know it but they were pioneers in the true sense of the term. Cheery, generous and open-hearted, they ever showed kindness in another's trouble and courage in their own. A wonderful camaraderie existed amongst them.

Source: *Early Days* Vol. 3 December, 1941, pp.10-18.

INTERVIEW WITH P. HANNAN

The names of Hannan, Bayley, Menzies and Cue have already been put on permanent record in Western Australia. The two last named have towns named after them. In Coolgardie, in addition to the mines which have the name Bayley, the principal thoroughfare is called after him. Kalgoorlie is equally well known by the name of Hannans. The leading thoroughfare is called Hannan Street and a great many mines are similarly designated. Considering the importance which Kalgoorlie or Hannans has attained as a mining centre, owing to the extraordinary richness of its ore deposits, it is easy to understand the very great interest that should be shown towards Mr. Patrick Hannan or "Paddy" Hannan as he is known to his old friends and brother prospectors, he having been the first to pitch his tent at the foot of Maritana Hill, four years ago.

Was there anything of particular note which suggested the undertaking of the expedition which terminated so successfully at Hannans? remarked the pressman by way of introduction.

"Yes there was", replied Mr. Hannan.

“Some news had reached Coolgardie of the existence of rich gold at Mount Ewel, in the direction of Kalgoorlie, and a great many prospecting parties left Coolgardie in search of the new find. The report, however, turned out to have been altogether without foundation, and the field has not yet been located.”

Do you remember the date on which you left Coolgardie?

“My mate Thomas Flannigan, and myself left Coolgardie on June 7, 1893. This was a few days after the report had been received of the new discovery.

Well, on June 10 we got to the north end of Maritana Hill. There were a large number of men travelling all over the country then. Only Bayley’s claim was working at Coolgardie, the alluvial having become exhausted just about the time I left. When we came to Mount Charlotte, my mate and I decided to stop and prospect the country roundabout, as we had found two colours of gold. This was on June 10. On the 14th we shifted down to the place where Miss Snell planted the tree yesterday.”

What sort of luck were you having?

“We got gold more or less from the north end of Mount Charlotte to down south of Maritana Hill. There was another man, by the way — Dan O’Shea was his name — to whom we gave an equal share in our prospecting claim.”

And when did the rush set in?

“Well, I started for Coolgardie to apply for a prospecting claim. This was on June 17, and on the following day, which was Sunday, the news of our find soon got abroad, and people began to set out for Kalgoorlie. There was a good deal of excitement over the new rush, and there were 1,400 or 1,500 men here in about a week. In fact, most of the men who had got beyond Southern Cross were on the field.”

Were there many people coming into the colony then?

“It was about this time that the big rush set in for West Australia. In Coolgardie there were about 600 or 700 people altogether.”

Many privations must have been suffered then?

“The water difficulty was solved for us. Rain began to fall when I was on my way to Coolgardie and continued for some time, the fall being fairly large and of course exceedingly welcome. The downpour left plenty of water in the lake and the supply lasted till the following November.”

In reply to another query Mr. Hannan said:

“The population of Hannans, although mostly made of t’othersiders, included not a small sprinkling of West Australians.”

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4.8.1897.

DAN SHEA’S STORY

“I came down from the Ninety-Mile to Coolgardie about the beginning of June, 1893. I intended to go to Lake Lefroy, but hearing of the Mount Youle rush, I made inquiries, which resulted in my borrow-

ing a couple of horses; and with Pat Hannan and Flannigan, I started for the Ninety-Mile Rocks the same afternoon. We camped at the rocks that night, and resumed our journey on the following morning. Four miles further on we found about two hundred men together with teams camped. Seven miles further on there was another large body of men camped beside some gnama-holes. A mate of mine was camped with them, and from him I made further inquiries concerning the rush. He advised us to push on. Two miles further, and we met a prospector and black boy with nine horses. I remarked to Hannan, 'There's something on, anyhow.' We pushed on to the ridges north of Mount Charlotte. The country resembled Nannine slightly, and I said to Hannan, 'I believe we have struck golden country, and I am going to tucker here till I get water.' We went in search of water, and while walking along Hannan said, "This is golden country, all right." Flannigan had picked up a five-pennyweight piece.

"In the morning I picked up a quartz specimen on the east side of Mt. Charlotte, containing, roughly, about four ounces of gold. Hannan and I went in search of water along what was afterwards the old White Feather road, and came across two claypans about four miles distant, but we could obtain only about a quart of water.

"Hannan and I then decided to retrace our footsteps in the direction of Coolgardie, leaving Flannigan behind. We camped that night eighteen miles nearer Kalgoorlie, beside some claypans, four miles off the track. It rained heavily all night. Next morning we were up at daylight. We secured a supply of water, and I was back at Mt. Charlotte by half-past ten. There was a number of parties camped on the flat at the time, and some of the men were playing nap. I said to Flannigan, 'I see a big sugar-loaf hill; I have never yet known those hills fail for gold. I'm going down there.' Flannigan replied, 'You stay here; I'll go and have a look.' He went in the direction of the hill, and returned about an hour later. He beckoned to me as he approached the camp, and I went to meet him. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a handful of red gold, which he said he found in the second gully beside the hill. I asked what it looked like, and he replied 'specks of gold all over it.'

Hannan reached the camp that night with four bags of water. We pegged three men's ground on what is now Hannan's Reward, and subsequently did a bit of hand prospecting, getting about ten ounces. By that time the men and teams camped on the flat below Mount Charlotte had left for Mount Youle. Next morning we loaded up tucker and went on to Red Hill and camped there.

On the following day we got about 94 ounces of gold by hand prospecting. We treated a pile of dust by the fire-drying process and started dry blowing next day.

Hannan got about 1 pound of gold, and Flannigan and I about 8 ounces. We held a consultation with the result that Hannan went to Coolgardie and applied for a reward claim, after satisfying himself that he was outside the Hampton Plains boundary.

Source: Raeside, J., 1929: *Golden Days* (Perth, Colortype Press), pp.226-228.

HANNAN'S DEATH

So Paddy Hannan has gone to his fathers.

It will be slow broadcasting, but the mulga wireless, the smoke signals of the old fossickers, will take the sad news to the uttermost ends of the auriferous fields of Australia and New Zealand — and what remains of the Klondyke rushes of the day of Kalgoorlie.

There are not many dry blowers left on Fly Flat, Coolgardie these days, and all too few at Red Hill and the gullies of Bulong, but wherever the old men are shaking the alluvial dust, amidst the flies

and the corks that dangle from their hat brims, the death of Hannan will bring back crowds of memories and glories and regrets of their early days. And by the smouldering embers of their lonely camp fires these brave old remnants of a past but magic day will recollect a thousand things that time had covered with the mists of age. The battery stamps that thundered at Fraser's, at Bayley's and many a far-out wealth wonder, are silent today, but the annals of our goldfields history will ever remember at the pinnacle of the roll of honor the name of Patrick Hannan, the discoverer of the richest goldfield in the world, to which flocked in an incredibly short time the most cosmopolitan crowd that riches ever beckoned from the far corners of the earth.

All the amazing splendour, the wild and woolly nights of extravagance and riotous outburst have gone, but the state owes today to Hannan and the kind of men who were contemporaneous with him in gold discovery and all the hardship it meant, a debt which it can never repay. This unassuming, hard-living little man we last saw at Brunswick (Vic.), where he spent the evening of a life rich with achievement and brilliant with romance. His name shall live whilst the wealth of Western Australia, in its every phase, exists. May he rest in peace.

Source: *The Sunday Times*, 8.11.1925.

DISCOVERY OF TELLURIDE AT KALGOORLIE

Sir, — A most interesting feature of the occurrence of gold appears on Block 45.

I have taken samples from the dump said to be from the 108 ft. level from the mine. The ore consists principally of calcite, carrying a large percentage of rich gold-bearing telluride. From the experiments so far made by me I have come to the conclusion that this telluride is of sylvanite, carrying 30 to 40 per cent of gold.

Specimens may be seen at Tinley, Holroyd and Co.'s office, and I shall be pleased to demonstrate my experiments to any chemist or metallurgist on the field.

The ore gives but poor prospects in the dish (in comparison with the value of the ore), but the assays are very high.

The occurrence of telluride of gold is very rare in Australia, and is therefore a very interesting feature to mining men. I am, etc.

ARTHUR J. HOLROYD
Assayer and Mining Engineer.

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 1.6.1896.

OTHER DISCOVERIES

DISCOVERER	DISCOVERIES
Hannans	Hannan, Shea and Flannigan
Erilstoun	Tom Bates
Coolgardie	Reef Gold: Talbot, Fosser and Baker, Alluvial: Bayley and Ford.

Kimberley Goldfield
Hawk's Nest
Dundas Goldfields
Mulwarrie
Murchison Goldfield
Yilgarn Goldfield

Bonnivale
White Feather (Kanowna)
Yerilla
90-Mile (Goongarrie)
Norseman
On the Island of Lake Annean
Mt. Burgess
Bulong

Hall and Slattery
Bob McKenzie and Ross
Mawson
Paddy Higgins
Peterkin and McPherson
Alluvial: Charles Glass (accidentally), Ted Payne. Reef:
Colreavy, Huggins, Anstey, Richard Graves, Thomas
Riseley, Fraser and others.
W.H. Vance, Dick Bonny and party.
Jerry McAuliffe
Jerry McAuliffe or McGregor
Jerry McAuliffe
Larry and Jim Sinclair
Bayley (one of discoverers of Coolgardie)
Oliver Page
Smith and Jack Mohr (their nigger, "Tiger", found the first
gold).



The Halford Family Arriving at Bulong from South Australia, December, 1903.

Broad Arrow	Reison and his son.
Bardoc	McDonald
The Forty-Five Mile	Alluvial: J. Grant, a surveyor. Reef Gold: George See.
Mt. Morgans	Lily
Lake Way (Wiluna)	The Leonard Brothers (backed by "Camel" Thompson).
Mt. Monger (1915)	Huffer and Geissney
White Hope (between Lawlers and Darlot)	Billy Barnes and his mates.
Siberia	Billy Frost
Ives's Find	Alfred Ives
Menzies	Bob Menzies. It has been stated that his nigger found the first gold.
Woolgar (known as the Four Mile)	J.J. Brown
Carbine	Jimmy Smith, Thompson, and Gaffney
Cue	Cue
Mulgarrie	The Hayes Brothers
Vosperton	The Hayes Brothers
Mestonville	Fred Merton
Southern Cross	T. Riseley, Michael Toomey, Frazer, Charles Crossland.
Edjudina	Richard Peat
Eenuin	Anstey
Golden Valley	Colreavy and Huggins
New England	Oliver Page
Lawlers	Lawler
Abbots	Abbott
Londonderry	Mills, Gardner, Carter, Dawson, Elliot and Huxley
Wealth of Nations (Dunnsville)	The Dunn Brothers
Feysville	Harry Fey
Lake Darlot	Rogers and Parkes
McMasters (near Darlot)	McMasters
Kurnalpi	Jack Reidy
Ives's Find	Alf Ives
Burbanks	W. Burbank
Black Flag	John Micklejohn
Higginsville	Paddy Higgins
Hampton Plains (1920)	Bert Hansen and Rob Ireland
Leonora	Edward Sullivan

freely, Huffer settled down to examine the country between that place and his camp. It was here that he picked up several pieces of auriferous stone, which he dollied the morning following his return to the camp, and which gave a splendid "prospect" in the dish. The reef from which the floaters had been shed, which was afterwards located by the two prospectors, would probably have never been discovered but for the encounter with the bull.

This discovery led to a rush, but only a few claims struck gold. The "veins" though small, were phenomenally rich, crushing up to 15 ounces to the ton. This rush was unique for the reason that the various shafts and costeens of its prospecting were put down in the heart of Jerry Creedon's homestead paddocks, occupied by herds of cattle. The success of Huffer and Geissner led to further discoveries on this field just about five years later.

WHITE HOPE — (between Lawlers and Darlot) — This discovery (1910) caused a mild sensation at the time, and looked like proving a second Londonderry but like the latter, it was only a surface enrichment and soon petered out. One day Barnes, the discoverer, who had often previously used this big "buck" quartz outcrop as a shield for shooting rabbits, decided to put a shot into it, which revealed a veritable jewellers shop. It was called the "White Hope" for the reason that at that time, the sporting world had found a "White Hope", who, it was thought, would wrest the world's boxing championship from the negro Johnston. Just after Barnes made his discovery, the writer, who was next on the field, found a second reef which bore the name of a species of back country fauna, the Bungara. This lease produced a number of highly payable crushings.

LAWLERS — Outside Lawlers stands the grave, marked with a railing now almost decayed, of one of the pioneer prospectors of this district. The story as related to the writer, is that this brave battler perished from thirst when almost within sight of water.

A relation of the writer's mother, named Miller, died of thirst somewhere on the goldfields of Western Australia. I have never been able to ascertain the circumstances of his death, but I am hoping to learn of these through the circulation of this book.

WHITE FEATHER (Kanowna) and **THE NINETY MILE** (Goongarrie) — The widow of the late Jerry McAuliffe, now resident at Swanbourne, near Perth, has in her possession the first gold found by her late husband at White Feather (Kanowna), and the Ninety Mile (Goongarrie).

BONNIVALE Named after one of the discoverers, Dick Bonny.

HANNANS — Mrs. Lynch, late Mrs. Williams, nee Saunders, of early Coolgardie, but now residing at Noman's Lake, near East Narrogin (W.A.) has in her possession the first gold found by Paddy Hannan at Hannans (Kalgoorlie).

SOUTHERN CROSS — Southern Cross derived its name from the fact that prospectors working south, steered their course by the constellation of that name.

GOLDEN VALLEY — On August 17 in this Centenary year of Western Australia, when this book was being prepared, a memorial tablet was unveiled at Golden Valley marking the site of No. 1 Gold-Mining Lease. It bears the simple lettering: "This tablet, erected by the citizens of Yilgarn, is on the first gold-mining lease on the Eastern Goldfields, and was unveiled by the Hon. Philip Collier, M.L.A., Premier of W.A. 17.18.1919."

WESTONIA — The discovery of gold by Messrs Weston and Bodycoat was made by accident, whilst engaged in the work of cutting firewood.

LEONORA The author is indebted to Mr. Edquist, superintendent of the Sons of Gwalia Gold Mining Company at Gwalia, near Leonora (W.A.), for the following information:

"About a mile outside the boundary of the Leonora Road Board District lies the grave of Edward Sullivan, the discoverer of Leonora. It has no railing, only a circle of pieces of white quartz (symbolical of the pursuits of its owner's life) marking the spot. It is carefully tended by the local civil authorities, an act worthy of emulation by other roads boards and municipal councils throughout the goldfields of Western Australia."

Mr. Edquist told me that only a few days before he gave me this information, he had taken his young son specially to view the grave of Leonora's brave pioneer and discoverer. He related to his son the history of the grave, and told him of the exploits of the pioneer who slept his last long sleep beneath. This he did as an object lesson to him in order that this boy might be stimulated, as he grew to manhood, to emulate the spirit of the dead pioneer, and to acquire a true knowledge and appreciation of the significance of Longfellow's words that:

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time."

Source: Raeside, J., 1929: *Golden Days* (Perth, Colortype Press), pp.148-153.

KANOWNA

Today Kanowna is one of the best known ghost towns in W.A. At its peak in 1898-99 it was a thriving centre with 12,000 people, and the scene of one of the most curious events of the times -- the 'Sacred Nugget Hoax'.

THE KANOWNA BOOM

I was at Kanowna -- or White Feather -- early last July. It was then a fairly thriving but quiet goldfields town of red dust, canvas, and hessian, 12 miles from Kalgoorlie. Things generally were going quietly. In August the alluvial was discovered and the rush commenced. It was in the middle of September that I saw Kanowna again.

For some time reports in the Kalgoorlie district had been rife as to the richness of the finds out at the Feather, and departures were taking place every day. The unemployed from Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie all made their way there by traps and coaches. Many went on foot, carrying their swags. Some from the settled towns left their billets and made for the new rush, hoping to find speedy fortune there. Company promoters from Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, and Perth journeyed out, and a boom set in.

At 10 o'clock one morning we left Kalgoorlie by carrier's conveyance. It was no use thinking we could get a seat in the coach. Up to a few weeks previously the single coach to Kanowna was seldom full. Now seats were booked days ahead. Dust was blowing in clouds, and the road was lined with vehicles coming and going. There were waggons laden with baggage, provisions, and tools drawn by horses driven in single file. There were one-horse carts often carrying as many as half-a-dozen miners with their accoutrements; there were buggies and dog carts. We passed two four-in-hands and innumerable swagmen, and we were highly amused at the sight of two elderly diggers, whose accent proclaimed that they were Greeks, who had tools, provisions, and outfit packed on to a wheelbarrow, one of them manipulating the handles, while the other pulled in front with a rope. We passed several troops of camels: some in the charge of Afghans, some in charge of Europeans. The camels keep to a pad to themselves off the main road, for the reason that horses on the fields are terrified at camels, and seem to regard them with as much fear here as they do the snakes in Victoria. Notwithstanding that we passed them at some distance, our nags showed great uneasiness when camels were in view.

At Kanowna I was at once impressed with the altered conditions of the place. The quiet township had been transformed into a busy, bustling town, crowded with visitors. The streets were filled with newcomers. Waggons, lorries, camel teams and donkey carts passed up and down. It was estimated that over 2,000 persons had come into Kanowna since the rush began. The stores and business places were flourishing, boarding-houses and restaurants were full. In front of the hotel at which our conveyance stopped men were standing about in knots, others sitting on empty barrel and spirit cases, while discussing the prospects of the new rush. At the rush itself, men were in swarms. For two miles along the flat and hillside the ground was pegged out and being worked. It was called an alluvial rush, though you had to go down 60 ft. as a rule, before you came on gold. Some claims were being worked by companies of three or four on a partnership basis, others were being worked by two mates, and there was the man bent on making a fortune all on his own, working his claim by himself. Kanowna Cemetery which adjoined the scene of the rush, had all been pegged out under miners rights, but the Government refused to allow the ground to be worked, or the graves to be disturbed. There were all kinds of diggers on the field -- practical miners who you could see at a glance understood their business -- "gentlemen diggers", whose blistered hands and general appearance proclaimed them to be novices. Company promoters were strolling round anxious to pick up the first information of a good thing.

Many went to Kanowna with the object of starting business at the claims, as had been done at Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie, but they were disappointed, for the authorities would not let business places be erected on mining leaseholds. This worked well for the storekeepers in Kanowna, all of whom have done and are doing very well. Stores and shops have been booming: the crowds at the coffee palaces and cafes must have brought little fortunes into the pockets of the proprietors, the hotels and wine and beer saloons were crowded night and day. Rents have gone up: to get a business stand of any sort in the town now you have to pay a tremendous rent. Several of the businesses have been disposed of at handsome figures.

When night came at the scene of the rush, the landscape was dotted with campfires, giving it the appearance of an army in bivouac. Men could be seen standing around the fires cooking the evening meal, jesting and singing. Much good-natured fun was made at one another's expense: all were on the tiptoe of expectation, hoping great things and dreaming golden fortunes. Scores of men were hanging about the claims watching for an opportunity of "jumping", and discussing points over campfires. By and by the fires would die down, with the exception of one here and there, and the diggers would betake themselves to the town. The Kanowna hotels were all busy. In the streets were crowds of men; inside, every room was full, and customers lined up several deep in front of the hotel bars. The billiard rooms and barber's shops were crowded too, and late at night many unsteady pairs of feet moved toward the camps.

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 3.2.1898.

THE 'SACRED NUGGET' HOAX

Preface:— The writer was present at this memorable happening, but this account is written from the notes of a newspaper reporter also present.

"News of the finding of an exceptionally rich slug of gold, weighing nearly a hundred pounds, by some prospectors near Kanowna, has just been received from Father Long, of Kanowna. The reverend gentleman, however, is unable at present to divulge the names of the finders, or the locality where it was obtained, owing to his having been pledged to secrecy." Such was the startling statement which appeared in the Goldfields' newspapers one morning about the middle of July, 1898. The news threw the thousands of diggers into a state of intense excitement. The locality in which the alleged nugget was found was kept a profound secret; and despite the most searching investigations by the police and "Mines Departments", no definite information respecting it could be obtained.

About the time the nugget was supposed to have been found, mining was slackening at Kanowna. Several of the latest rushes had turned out duffers, and the healthy spirit of enterprise that had prevailed was beginning to grow feeble. But the news of the great slug put fresh life and energy into the people especially in the immediate neighbourhood of Kanowna, and prospecting was vigorously carried on for miles around the town. As the weeks passed, public excitement, instead of abating, actually increased; and hundreds arrived by every boat from the Eastern States, drawn, of course, by the reported find of the monster nugget. At last the excitement rose to such a feverish pitch that the authorities feared that there would be a serious disturbance, and Father Long was pressed to disclose where the alleged nugget had been found. After a time, he publicly stated that on Thursday, August 11, at 2 p.m., he would reveal the locality of the mysterious find.

That was enough. From a very early hour on the morning of that eventful day vast crowds of excited men gathered in the vicinity of the hotel where the explanation was to be given, eagerly discussing whether the whole affair would be a hoax or not. Many of them had not forgotten the McCann Rush

and its outcome - the many thousands of pounds it cost, the many men whom it ruined, and the all but disastrous results of the mob's vengeance. The men reasoned thus: All efforts to sound the reverend gentleman respecting either the locality of the discovery or the names of the finders, or the alleged finders, had so far been futile. And yet no reasonable excuse for all this secrecy could be given, unless the finders were guilty of larceny or murder, or both. The sceptical -- and there were many such -- were of the opinion that no nugget had been found, that the whole affair was either the result of a practical joke or a deliberate hoax, or the offspring of an over-drawn imagination, and that authority had been given to the matter on account of the position and sacred calling of the gentleman who reported it. There were a great many present who thought that, very likely, there would be serious trouble. By one o'clock there were several thousands in the street, of whom at least a thousand were provided with means of immediate conveyance to the locality of the alleged find.

There were buggies galore, from the stylish turnout with dashing horses to the sorry crock with only three sound legs. On the edge of the crowd were grouped large numbers of vehicles, with parties of men having the necessary appliances to peg out claims. All, in short, were ready for the mad rush which was expected to take place. Never had such an array of bicycles been seen on the field before. At ten minutes to two, another large contingent, numbering at least two thousand persons, arrived from Kalgoorlie.

Extraordinary precautions were taken by the police to prevent any but representatives of the press and a very few others from getting on to the balcony. As one looked upon the great sea of earnest faces, comprising some of the most resolute men on earth, and saw written there eager expectancy and intense excitement, one trembled inwardly. This vast crowd, calm and self-contained and orderly as it then appeared, needed, I felt sure, but a mere spark to rouse it to a flame of devilish fury, for it was certain that if the men were persuaded that they were being fooled by a madcap orator, they would tear him from limb to limb.

Punctually as the clock struck two, Father Long appeared on the balcony of the hotel. He approached the railway, and the densely-packed crowd surged forward. Considerable cheering greeted Father Long's appearance. Pale, agitated and trembling, he stood waiting until order was restored, his rather mobile and expressive features showing the excitement under which he laboured. He began by addressing the crowd as "Men of Kanowna and adjoining fields", and he remarked that "he was placed in a most unenviable and disadvantageous position." Continuing, he spoke for a time in an inconsequent and irrelevant vein. He asked the people to promise that after he made his statement they would ask him no further questions respecting the "Sacred Nugget", as it had been termed. Further he asked all who would promise this to hold up their hands. Up went unnumbered thousands of hands -- those, in fact, of every man present. This scratch vote having been taken, the reverend gentleman proceeded to blame the newspapers for the grossly exaggerated reports they had spread. He next apologised for not having properly estimated the height which the gold fever would reach.

"And now", he proceeded, "I will tell you where I think the nugget was found, and the truth about it. I cannot tell you the names of the men who found it, because I have not their permission. The nugget, however, is at present unsullied and almost untouched. It is not in this town, but is, perhaps, in one of the other towns, and may be brought back to Kanowna." Then slowly, impressively, and deliberately, he said: "The nugget was found a quarter of a mile on this side of the nearest lake on the Kurnalpi road." Scarcely had the last words left his mouth when a great roar was heard. The vast mass of men, densely packed together, suddenly broke and scattered, as if they were fleeing from impending destruction. All, however, raced towards the common goal. This was the end of Larkin Street, round the corner of which the Kurnalpi road lay. Surely, never was such a mad, headlong rush witnessed, although to the more thoughtful such an impotent and incredible story must have seemed an insult to their intelligence.

Meanwhile the race was of the wildest, most dare-devil, and break-neck character. All struggled as though their very lives depended on their pegging out a claim near to the magic spot. To those who watched the maddened crowd from the balcony, it seemed as though the pace must inevitably result in some person being killed, or at least maimed. Many injuries were received owing to the breakdown of bicycles, collisions between traps, and the unseating of horsemen; but no serious accident took place. It must be remembered, however, that nearly everyone in the rush was a picked man, whose nerves and skill had been tried on many a rough journey.

After the crowd stampeded, Father Long tried to finish his statement. Quiet having been restored, he concluded in a distinct and impressive tone of voice by saying, "The nugget was found not far from the road, at a depth of five or six feet; and it weighs between ninety-five and a hundred pounds." He then retired from the front of the balcony, amidst the thunderous plaudits of the remaining diggers, many of whom appeared to be perfectly satisfied. A cordial vote of thanks to the reverend gentleman for his statement was then carried, amidst some ominous mutterings, however, from a small, but by no means unimportant section.

Meanwhile the excited crowd was racing helter-skelter towards the spot, a distance of about six miles from Kanowna. They were the motliest crew on the maddest rush ever seen or perhaps will ever be seen in history. The first to reach the spot was one of the alluvial diggers, mounted on a magnificent horse. He immediately started to peg out a claim. Hundreds of others were soon on the ground, and the work of pegging out was carried on with tremendous energy. The manner of taking possession of a mining claim is (according to the strict formula) by fixing in the ground firmly at each corner or angle thereof (or as nearly as practicable thereto) a post not less than four inches in diameter, projecting above the surface not less than three feet, and set in the angles of an 'L' trench, the arms of which shall not be less than three feet in length and six inches deep; and the trench shall be cut in the direction of the boundary lines."

It will be easily seen that a considerable amount of work was entailed in performing this strictly defined operation. However, in little more than an hour after the driving of the first peg, the diggers had taken possession of several hundred mining claims; and what had previously been a deserted waste of sand was now a forest of pegs and network of trenches.

Then the race back to town began, each man excitedly trying to outpace his fellows. But the road was more suitable for the horsemen, who were the first to return, with their poor beasts lathered with sweat, bleeding, and exhausted. More than one valuable horse died from the fearful strain, having been literally ridden to death. For hours after the return of the first party, hapless cyclists could be seen straggling into the township, their machines having broken pedals, smashed forks, twisted handle-bars and punctured tyres; the drivers returned leading their helpless horses, with their mates pushing the various vehicles from behind.

Source: Raeside, J., 1929: *Golden Days* (Perth, Colortype Press).

THE WATER PROBLEM

From June 1892 when Bayley and Ford discovered gold on Fly Flat, the shortage of fresh water was a perennial problem. Bores did not overcome the problem and a high evaporation rate meant that natural catchments were rarely filled. Condensers supplied the needs of the mines and the people until January 1903 when the Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme was finally opened. The origins of the scheme were obscure; the implementation of the plan brought forth such criticism that C.Y. O'Connor, the Engineer-in-Chief, finally committed suicide in 1902.

"Sir, - It does not require a vast amount of intelligence to perceive that the chief cause of apprehension, in considering the future of the Coolgardie Goldfields, lies in the danger of the water supply completely giving out. It is within the bounds of possibility that the autumn and winter seasons may pass without the miners' hearts being gladdened by the eagerly looked for rains, and the cessation in yield of salt or brackish water may compel the condensers to discontinue their production. The means to find the fluid by boring or well sinking, and of conserving it by the use of catchments and tanks, have been frequently and freely discussed, but the possibility of constructing an aquaduct to Coolgardie from some place of water has not -- at least to my knowledge -- been yet considered. Being a stranger in the land I cannot give an opinion as to the permanency of the supply of the upper waters of the Swan, but from what I saw of the river near York some four months ago, it struck me there would be at all seasons a sufficient quantity of water for such an undertaking as I am about to suggest. A pumping station at some suitable locality near Northam, a water tower to furnish the necessary elevation, and a pipeline along the railway, would be all that is required, unless the altitude of Coolgardie necessitated the erection of a second pumping station. Looking at the place with an unprofessional eye, there does not appear to be any physical difficulty that it would be impossible to overcome, and if competent authority, our Engineer-in-Chief for instance, were to pronounce the undertaking practicable, there ought to be no difficulty in finding the pecuniary means to carry it out, without appealing to the Government of the colony for aid. It is only reasonable to infer, that if the inhabitants of Coolgardie and outlying districts can afford to pay 1/- a gallon of water, a pipeline could supply the fluid at a rate that would pay a handsome dividend, while infinitesimally lower than the above mentioned price. Pipelines such as I suggest have, unless I am mistaken, been constructed in the oil regions of America for a greater distance than that between Northam and Coolgardie, and I am informed that paper pipes are now manufactured which in many respects are superior to iron, and could be used to advantage in the construction of the line I venture to propose. Of course Southern Cross could also be supplied by a tap -- so to speak; and there is little doubt that the value of property would be increased all along the line by a permanent supply of good water. There are pros and cons to every proposition, and my ideas may be scouted by many, still they are worth considering and by publishing them in the columns of the 'West Australian' you would much oblige."

(Signed) J.S.T.

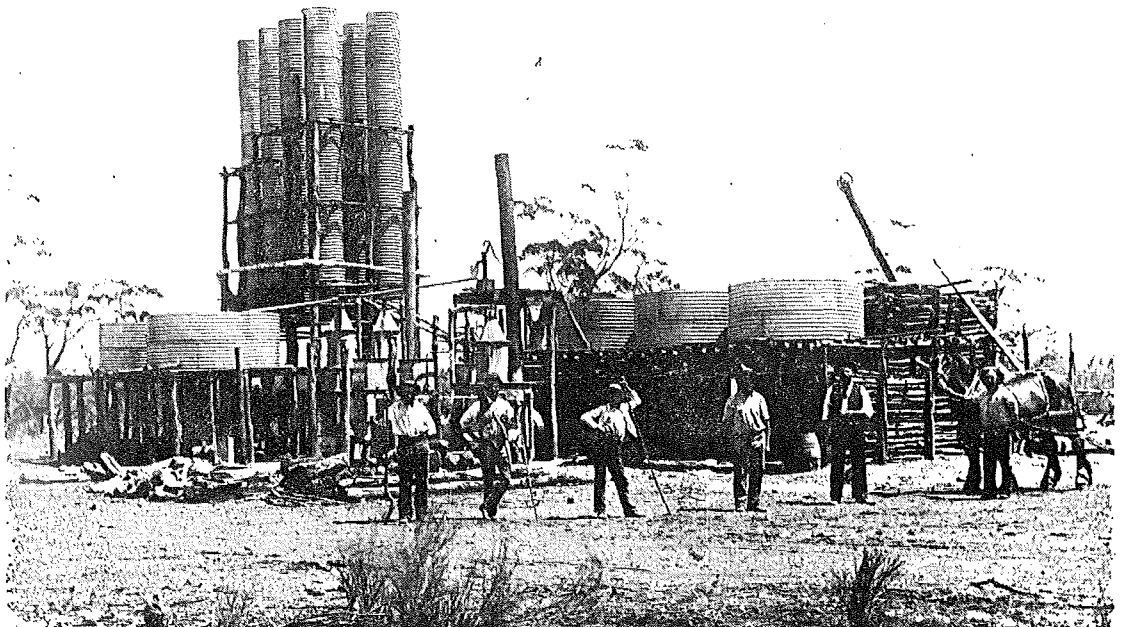
Source: *West Australian*, 8.3.1894.

MAHER'S PROPOSAL

"Towards the end of 1893 the possibility of taking fresh water from the coast to the Coolgardie Goldfields was discussed in my office in Swan Chamber, Barrack Street, Perth, for the first time, there being present Mr Henry Wright, Engineer, Mr John Maher, contractor, and Hugh McKernan, (myself). No

other person was present. The business, it was determined to keep absolutely private. A scheme for lifting the water by pumping to elevations to be fixed upon to be provided with several reservoirs (sic) and gravitation (sic) through metal pipes was evolved, and Mr Wright proceeded early in 1894 to take a final view of the country and on the prospects of the undertaking. He returned about May, and reported his undoubted confidence in the scheme to Mr Maher and myself. The source of supply was discussed next, and several localities were named as likely to suit, but the difficulty of dealing with the owners of private property was regarded with apprehension. This work was left to Mr Maher to negotiate while Mr Wright was to proceed to England for the purpose of securing the necessary capital, and I was to attend to executive matters between the three of us and any others interesting themselves in the project. We estimated that the scheme would cost 2½ millions of money and that we could sell the water on the Goldfields at 3/6 per 1,000 gallons. Mr Wright proceeded to England at once, and Mr Maher set about interviewing certain land owners: he also had two Bills prepared to submit to the Legislative Assembly — one a prive (sic) Bill, which it was pointed out would entail the expenditure of an enormous sum of money — the other a public Bill authorising the Government to do the work or contract it out (thus avoiding the expense regarding Bill No. 1) but no member of the Assembly could be found to introduce either of the Bills, because all regarded the project as a mad proposal and would not therefore be associated with it.

In consequence of a cable message received by me from Mr Wright in London early in August, as follows:— “Get Act passed immediately, two million and a half of money ready to put water into



Condensers, Used for the Production of Fresh Water.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

Coolgardie." I saw Maher, and we decided that the first thing to be done was to ascertain whether the Government had any scheme under consideration, and I at once gave notice of a question on the subject in the Legislative Council, so as to clear the way before taking definite action. (The question and answer will be found in "Hansard" Parliamentary Debates Vol. VI, 25 July to 1 October, 1894, page 152.) Outside the Chamber Mr Maher was waiting for the answer. I immediately went out, and acquainted him of the fact that the Government had no scheme, and that he could proceed at once and if possible get one or other of the Bills accepted in the Legislative Assembly. His efforts were again futile. I then directed him to interview Mr Alex Forrest, the Premier's brother, but with the strict injunction not to disclose the secret of the scheme, namely the pumping plan. At first and every time Mr Forrest wanted to know "how it was to be done", but consented to mention the matter to the Premier, Sir John Forrest. Mr Maher made repeated visits to Mr Forrest, who kept repeating the question, "But how is it to be done, Maher?" I then told Mr Maher to tell Mr Forrest that "it didn't matter to the Government if we put the water there (Coolgardie) by Ballon (sic) for all we wanted was the right to put it there and charge for it, and that we had 2½ millions of money to say we could do it.

(Mr Maher's account of Sir John Forrest's attitude towards the scheme at this juncture is very amusing) Sir John poo poed the whole (sic) thing as mad and impracticable. "It must have emanated from the brain of a lunatic at Fremantle," said he. Next I counselled (sic) Mr Maher to take Mr Alex Forrest into his confidence to the extent of telling him that there were only three of us in the scheme, that we expected to make a profit of £70,000 out of the 2½ millions, and to ask him how much he would expect to stand in with us, and the reply came £20,000. This amount I told Mr Maher to tell Mr Forrest we would allow him provided we got through. Thereupon Mr Forrest invited Mr Maher to dinner the next day when he claimed full details as one of the syndicate. This Mr Maher only considered fair, and at once sketched the pumps, pipes, reservoirs and, right from the source to Coolgardie on a sheet of paper, and thus left Mr Forrest in full possession of our plans, in the hope of getting Government sanction for the scheme. The skeleton plan was handed to Sir John Forrest the next day by his brother; Sir John put it in his pocket to show the late C.Y. O'Connor, Engineer-in-Chief, who pronounced the scheme "perfectly practicable, perfectly feasible." Later, at the annual show at Newcastle, Sir John Forrest asked me for a walk. "I want to have a talk with you," he said. In the course of conversation he referred to something stupendous, which he was going to bring before the next Parliament, "something to stagger old settlers," he exultantly exclaimed. It was our water scheme. I believe Sir John Forrest has never once revealed whence he got his conception of the great water scheme."

Source: Crowley, F.K., Alexander, F., and Legge, J.D., 1954: *The Origins of the Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme In Western Australia* (Nedlands, Uni. of W.A. Press), pp.21-22.

1. The solution of the goldfields water problem by pumping from the coast was not arrived at suddenly by any one man. The solution emerged slowly from an accumulation of ideas and actions spread over a considerable period of time. At no single point might it be said with confidence that the idea of the water scheme had then been conceived and by such and such a person. (p.83)

2. There is abundant evidence to prove that, in its essential principles, as distinct from some important details (p.95) the idea of pumping water from the coast to the goldfields had been much discussed in unofficial and departmental circles and in Parliament for more than a year prior to Forrest's 1895 visit to the goldfields — perhaps from as far back as 1893. (p.18)

3. The earliest known published reference to the idea was that of "J.S.T." in the West Australian of 8th March, 1894, (p.18) and the earliest reference on departmental files is that relating to Maher's scheme in August 1894 (pp.20-29). The authenticity of the documentary evidence regarding the latter is unquestioned. (pp.83-4)

4. Before he left for a tour of the goldfields in November 1895, Forrest was not only well aware of the Maher and other proposals for privately operated pumping schemes (pp.84-5) but had also committed himself in Parliament to consider the desirability of the adoption of a pumping scheme as a Government project. (pp.32, 34, 88)

5. It is not known exactly when Cabinet instructions were given to O'Connor to proceed with technical investigations regarding a pumping scheme but the evidence is convincing that before November 1895 an instruction had been given by the Government to the Engineer-in-Chief. (pp.40-42)

15. Broadly speaking, therefore, the Goldfields Water Scheme may well be described as politically Forrest's and technically O'Connor's though neither man was responsible for the original idea of solving the goldfields water problem by pumping water from the coast, credit for which may not safely be given to any one individual.

Source: Crowley, F.K., Alexander, F., and Legge, J.D., 1954: *The Origins Of The Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme In Western Australia* (Nedlands, Uni. of W.A. Press), pp.105-109.

Some few questions we intend to advocate are, first, a greater devotion upon the part of the Government to deep boring for fresh water for supplying this district. It is not sufficient that in a locality like this, which has admittedly one of the least average rainfalls of any inhabited portion of the Australia's, the putting down of one bore at any particular point will test the whole surrounding district, and so far this is the whole length the Government seem disposed to go to obtain water by such means here. Even this work, which was let by contract several months ago, has only progressed to a depth of between 300 and 400 feet, operations having been suspended the whole of this year owing to the contractors being without proper material. Deep boring is of a national and vital importance in this riverless interior, but the Government seem unable to rise to the occasion, and are acting the parts of mere parochial guardians instead of statesmen fully alive to their responsibilities. The increased gold production of the colony due principally to mining operations on this field, demand that "the powers that be" shall use every endeavour to assist and foster the industry of gold getting, and in no way can this be better done than by the Government undertaking works of deep boring, with proper appliances, for water.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 14.4.1894.

NO WATER NO PERMANENCY

There has been a great deal too much of the milk and watery element about the politicians of this colony during the past, and we can assure them that the time has arrived for something a little bit stronger. We want water. We want it badly, and if the Parliament, as at present constituted, does not give it to us, we can assure them that there will shortly be trouble in their dovecot

The good old Biblical fashion of damning opponents and defiling the graves of their ancestors with flowers of speech is a trifle out of date, and we, as the only newspaper published upon one of the greatest goldfields on this continent, are, and mean to remain, ahead of the times. Still, we will let ourselves loose a trifle, and say that if the Government of West Australia can not, or will not, sink wells, open dams, and otherwise obtain water in all parts of the Coolgardie Goldfields, they are not fit to rule over a woodheap, and have not sufficient brainpower and mental energy to be entrusted with the important task of driving a mule out of a meadow by moonlight.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 9.6.1894.

THE ETERNAL WATER QUESTION

The columns of this journal – or, indeed, of any other making any pretension to be considered an authority on goldfields matters – would be woefully incomplete unless some reference were continually being made to this “burning” but withal, somewhat monotonous matter. Recent new developments however, render it incumbent upon us to revert to it, and we are glad to be able to do so in a more hopeful strain than heretofore. During the past three weeks the price of the invaluable fluid has shrunk from 1s. per gallon to 5d., and the supply is greater all round. The interval has been characterised by an untoward event, which occurred at Hannan’s. The water supply of that community is derived from the condensation of the brine of Lake Camballie, and, as may be expected, there has been no little rivalry amongst the various condenser owners. This had, at the time we speak of, the effect of keeping the price within bearable limits, until one gentleman struck the brilliant idea of intercepting the water-carriers on their way to the town and buying up their entire supply, thus constituting himself the sole purveyor and arbiter of prices. A meeting was called, more or less, inflammatory speeches were made, and on the following evening a large crowd gathered with rage and whisky, adopted the *lex talionis*, and made things particularly warm for the “bloated monopolist” his effigy being burnt and his tanks burst open. Very reprehensible conduct, no doubt, but quite in accordance with the traditions of the field; and, what is better, highly successful, for the price of water fell immediately to a little over the normal, the remaining differences ceasing with the cessation of the abnormal demand from Coolgardie. We have heard much, too, of schemes for the amelioration of the trouble. That shepherded by the Hon. Hugh McKernan seems to be hanging fire. This, it will be remembered, was a plan for pumping water from the Swan River, a distance over 300 miles, and the idea was made the subject of some ridicule at the time. We may be sure, however, that the matter was not taken up by practical businessmen without first consulting those competent to judge of the feasibility of the scheme, and this view seems to be thoroughly borne out by some correspondence which has recently been received by a Coolgardie resident from an eminent engineer, who, in the first letter says, after referring to a similar scheme – “It will be necessary to keep the matter quiet, except by immediately making application to the authorities for grants to obtain the water from rivers or lakes, and concession of lands for carrying pipes the whole distance from the rivers or lakes to the most important points in the discovered (gold-bearing) regions. The concession must empower us to monopolize such rivers or lakes for the purposes above described. The undertaking will cost a fabulous sum of money but we can raise it in this country, and we can put down pipes of sufficient size and powerful force pumping engines which shall carry enough water to supply 100,000 people (or one-fourth more than the entire population of the colony – Ed C.M.) distance being no material object.” A week later the learned gentleman wrote – “I have put myself in correspondence with some big financial people, and I do not think there will be any difficulty in raising the money required.” Whatever doubts the writer may have had were removed, as later on he writes to our friend – “More than £2,000,000 will be required for the undertaking, and _____’s people can do it easily.” As Mr. McKernan’s people had already made their application, the necessity for secrecy vanishes, as also all chance of hearing from the Government for the recipient for the correspondence, who otherwise, he informs us, would have been only too glad to have been the means of importing so large a sum of English capital into the colony. The extracts we give above are, however, intensely interesting, as showing, first – the great and widespread interest which is taken in this matter which in the view of many narrow-minded persons, amongst whom we must, unfortunately, include the Government and some of its resident officials, is regarded as purely local, and of no national moment: and secondly – as showing that the scheme with which Mr McKernan is identified is not so wild and visionary as some people were at first inclined to imagine. Next we have Mr O’Brien’s scheme for condensing the salt water of Lake Lefroy at some suitable spot on the lake and thence pumping it into Coolgardie a distance of only thirty-two miles. This is, perhaps, the most feasible method which has been brought under our notice. But the rebuffs recently given by the Premier to the members of two railway syndicates, and the indifferent evasion of his reply to Messrs McKernan, Maher and their

colleagues, distinctly indicate that, with his usual blind inconsistency, the Premier is now rank Socialist and strongly opposed to private enterprise of any kind, the only exceptions being made when "Brother Alex" has a finger in the pie. As the family have no say in any of these proposals, they are not likely to be regarded with favor by the present Ministry, which is Forrest first, Forrest last, and Forrest all the time. If the "firm" cannot monopolize all of Western Australia, they'll take all sorts of care that nobody else shall. The Government have now announced their intention to put down a 3,000-foot bore for an artesian supply. They may strike water — most sincerely don't we wish it, but we own to being among the doubters. We need not recapitulate the arguments pro and con; we are glad to know the core is coming, if only to end the everlasting wrangle. Meantime, the question appears to be settling itself; the man who, according to some, was acting in defiance of law, reason, common sense or science, and who dealt not in theory, and laughed hypothesis to scorn — has struck fresh water, and is now turning out 1,200 gallons a day — not much, certainly, amidst so many, but as an indication of possibilities, and an incentive to others, it is simply invaluable. While we shall yet have to keep the Government up to the mark; yet have to insist vigorously upon rapid and wise action upon the part of the Water Department on all parts of the field; yet any private enterprise which has the smallest chance of success, will have our heartiest commendation and support, whether it hail from London, Perth, or Coolgardie, provided always that the efforts are not made to curse the country with a monopoly more oppressive than the prevailing conditions of affairs.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 30.10.1894.

THE GOLDFIELDS WATER SCHEME

The success of Sir John Forrest's Goldfields Water Scheme has always been very much doubted by a large section of the people of the goldfields, first on account of the great magnitude of the undertaking in the hands of the people who were busying themselves in the ostensible plan of carrying it through, and secondly because too much confidence was not placed in its originator. During the last year or so, while the business of laying the pipes has been in operation, there have been various adverse rumours and reports, leading to the conviction, or almost conviction, that the affair was being conducted very much on the blind. It has been felt almost universally, not only on the goldfields, but elsewhere, that the Government themselves knew very little about the matter, and that anyway, the bringing of the scheme to a successful ending was far beyond the capacity of the Cabinet in its combined wisdom, and certainly much beyond the capacity of any of the gentlemen likely to be employed by Cabinets such as have hitherto kept the upper hand in this State. Numerous feeble jokes have been bandied as to the future destination of the pipes, whether to be used in a metropolitan water scheme, left scattered over the country as camping facilities for the blacks, or put in a treasury balance sheet to make up a million or two's shortage in the revenue. Not long ago, when it was asserted that the pumping between Cunderdin and Merredin had resulted in merely flooding the surrounding country and threatening to wash away the railway line, the Government essayed to allay comment by attributing the unpleasant reports to "retrenched and discredited civil servants". During the last few weeks a warning has been sounded by an apparently reliable authority which would make it appear that the "retrenched and discredited civil servants", whoever they might be, knew practically more about what has been going on than some civil servants who have not yet been either retrenched or officially discredited perhaps even a great deal more than a Government that has not thus far been retrenched, whatever else it might be. On the 10th of this month there appeared in our columns a letter signed by James Leonard, C.E., Cottesloe, under the heading "The Goldfields Water Scheme — A Forecast", which would seem to give the whole show away and prove it to be worthless and impracticable, anyway under the present management. The letter referred to had also been published in Perth papers besides being printed and distributed in pamphlet form. Sufficient time has elapsed for the Government to make some sort of a reply to Mr.

Leonard's letter, but thus far the Government has made no sign, possibly appalled at the particulars oozing out a few months too soon. There has certainly been an official report from the Engineer-in-Chief just published, but there have been many official reports, even from the very start, and people are beginning not to think much of them. According to Mr. Leonard the chief trouble is at the fountain head, the Helena Reservoir, which, in his words, "has utterly failed in its functions as a source of supply". Now it stands to reason even a non-expert can see this -- that if the source of the whole supply can be shown to have thus failed -- and Mr Leonard, who appears to know quite well what he is writing about, seems to have no manner of doubt on the matter -- if the source of the supply can be shown to have thus failed, there is only one of two things that should be done, either ascertain if it can be rectified or chuck the whole thing and send no more good money after bad. In view of the apparent romance of the whole thing from beginning to end; in view of the more than doubtful capacity of any men that have yet been at the head of affairs in this country to organize or carry out any great or good work, perhaps the latter plan would be the wiser and better. Six years ago, when the originator of this wretched affair was at the zenith of the power which he adopted such strange methods of retaining, the Helena Reservoir was spoken of in raucous and spluttering tones as destined to contain "an inexhaustible supply". If Mr Leonard is anything like accurate in his calculations, the most that can reach the fields is less than one-seventh of the quantity necessary to make the thing pay; and at the worst, after all the pumping and fuss, a bare trickle of water, or none at all, may ever reach Coolgardie. Among the details it seems that it will take 57 million gallons to fill the pipes from Helena Vale to Mount Charlotte, and another 34 million gallons to fill the reservoirs en route. Possibly this fact had escaped notice. The loss by evaporation at the Helena and other reservoirs will be 214 million gallons. Thus the total supply unavailable would be 305 million gallons, to which would have to be added the loss by leakage on the way, a quantity that might be assumed to vary according to the vicissitudes. According to Mr. Leonard's calculations there would be left only 358 million gallons to be pumped to the fields from the beginning of next year till the middle of June, when rain might be looked for to replenish the Helena Reservoir. It would seem as if there were something wrong with the holding capacity of this latter, as only some 16 per cent of the supply to be available as formerly reckoned on is now forecast by Mr. Leonard, who takes the quantities of the last two years as a basis. Of course, as he says, an abnormally big flood might fill the Helena Reservoir in twenty-four hours. That, however, is not the point; the point is as to whether the supply thus gained would remain in evidence or not. It can be calculated to a nicety how much the reservoir can hold when it is filled, but there is evidence apparently that the water escapes in some mysterious way that has not been foreseen. It was reckoned at the initiation of this marvellous undertaking, "when every tree was green, and every goose a swan", that the fields could be supplied with five and a half million gallons a day at 3s. 6d. per thousand gallons, which of course, would be very handsome and do a vast deal of good. Looking at things now in the cold light of science confirmed by the results to date, it would seem that the most that can be looked for is about one-seventh of that quantity, which would have to be sold at some 25s. per thousand gallons to pay interest, sinking fund, expenses, etc. Even the quantity alluded to might be reduced to none at all, which of course would not yield any money whatever. But the people would have to be still more heavily taxed to pay the cost of the 'Forrest Folly', which may perhaps be the future name of the thing. Mr Leonard says that long ago eminent engineers "came and looked, shook their heads, and walked away". What have Governments been doing whose business it was to enquire what this shaking of heads and walking away meant?

Doubtless a good many people have been writing and docketing on the matter; thousands of letters have been written in which one nincompoop conveyed the pleasing intelligence to another nincompoop that he had the honour to address him and be his obedient servant; and these letters have been endorsed with much pains and pigeon-holed and forgotten. And returns and reports have been compiled in duplicate and triplicate and quadruplicate, and so on. But what about the water? The tax-payers by-and-by might fail to be elated at the knowledge that all these things had been done. The proper course to have

pursued as soon as the old set of governing practitioners had been got rid of was to review the whole scheme and get some reliable expert opinions on the venture. Instead of that there has been a sort of laissez-faire indifference, and cheering word now and again to the inquiring public, and a contempt for responsibility and probable results suggestive of the empty traveller who sings before the robber. "After us the Deluge" was the idea; but it doesn't appear as if there were going to be any deluge at all.

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 26.9.1902.

ATTITUDES TO ASIATICS

The diggers on the Eastern Goldfields were determined to resist any Asiatic invasion. The local press reflected this, and even the Afghans were unpopular despite their water carrying services. The location of the two Afghan graves in the Coolgardie Cemetery tells modern visitors much about the attitudes of the 1890's.

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Camels for Sale and Hire. Passengers carried to every New and Old Rush

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J.J. BOWEN, Agent.

THE BEGINNING OF TROUBLE

We calmly arise to protest in language simple and unadorned against the opening of our doors to aliens of Asiatic extraction. At present we have little to complain about in this respect, but shadows guide wise men better than solid substances direct fools, and we see the shadow of a great evil at our doors in the presence of large numbers of Afghans upon this field. Afghans are not all bad men, any more than Australians are all angels, but their presence here is an infringement of the spirit of the Act passed by Parliament prohibiting Asiatics flocking to our fields to compete with the men of our own race and blood. In our streets we daily see these dark skinned men of the far-off East dressed in voluminous pantaloons of snowy white calico and jackets of fantastic fashion, whilst their heads are surmounted by turbans coiled gracefully round brows that are not devoid of intelligence. As a rule they are peaceful, obliging, industrious fellows, who interfere with no man's right; and if we were certain that no more of their brood would follow them from the burning home of the Hindoo race we should say nothing against them, but everything points to a rapid influx of this people.

Those Afghans who have pitched their tents amongst us seem a most exemplary lot of men, and this article is in no wise (sic) levelled at them, but we fear that a low degenerate mongrel race of human beings will follow where they lead, and for the protection of our Anglo-Saxon race we say and say emphatically "ooshtah", which being interpreted, means "lay down", we have no use for you at present.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 16.6.1894.

SIR,

There seems to be an ill-feeling towards our colored brethren, the Afghans and the Chinese; the laborers and storekeepers may complain, but they are not the only section of the community to be considered and I think it only right that, as a purchaser of labor, I should be permitted that which suits me best. Many

claims here can afford to use what is considered the best article, but they have to pay a corresponding price. I may say I do not consider miners are overpaid on this field, but I assert that we can buy either Afghan or Chinese labor much cheaper, and some of our claimholders, may yet be glad to avail themselves of this class of workmen. We know that in the Northern Territory there are numbers of first class claims held, and manned, by Chinese. Surely if we find some of our claims not good enough to pay the current wages we should be allowed to work our properties with the cheaper labor. The laborer must not think to rule the roost by any means. I trust others interested as I am will not be behind when the time comes for action.

Thank you for publishing, I am

C.A.S.H.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 28.7.1894.

SERVILE LABOR

In another column appears a letter by a writer disguising his identity beneath the nom de guerre of "Nemo", who for the second time calls attention to the fact that a Japanese has been imported here to act as cook for a highly placed Government official.

The effect which the importation might produce upon the community has never been considered. Without raising any of the stock arguments against the importation of the Chinese or Japanese we may be permitted to call attention to the indisputable fact that servile labor means cheap labor — a low working wage, which in its turn implies a low standard of comfort, and consequently, of civilization. We may therefore view with alarm the insertion of "the thin end of the wedge." Japanese servile labor is in some respects more objectionable than Chinese. In the first place the quick intelligence of the former renders him not only a formidable competitor, but enables him to organise, through the medium of his countrymen a combined opposition to the business people already established. The new Jap, insignificant in himself, is quite capable of spying out the land, and having an ear well attuned to the chink of specie, the date is not far distant when he will be followed by hordes of his countrymen, who, if left unchecked, will overrun the field, driving before them the white storekeeper and the white miner, involving all alike in a common ruin.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 17.10.1894.

THE AFGHANS

The last word has not yet been said concerning the Afghans, and from the present position of these gentry on the field it may be a very long time before it is said. Like the fever and the drought, and just as paralysing, they have come to stay. In defiance of the lessons learned by the experience of Asiatic aliens on the fields of Northern Queensland and the Territory, and in fact, on every Goldfields in Australia, they are permitted to range on this settlement — unbridled and unchecked. For this is what it is coming to. We have seen the advocates and supporters of cheap labor in the Perth Legislative Chambers openly flouting and nullifying the attempts of earnest and far-seeking members to place some check upon the importation of these undesirable immigrants; we have seen them owning freehold property, and we have seen them attempting to usurp water rights, already refused to our own people; and, to our sorrow, we have seen the slaves of these semi barbarous foreigners working at footpath

making in the streets of Coolgardie while men of our own kith and kin — our own blood — hungry with longing for remunerative employment to tide over exemption — have had to stand and look on impotently, with the rage of despair in their hearts.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 18.12.1894.

(The Anti-Asiatic League was formed at Coolgardie on Saturday, December 22nd, 1894.)

THE YELLOW CURSE

THE triumphal progress of the veteran Chinese statesman Li Hung Chang through Europe, and particularly his reception in England, is one of those things that make it plain that the Imperial policy of Great Britain does not at all times synchronise with what Australians consider to be vital to their country's healthy expansion. A literary lady of cosmopolitan experience writes as follows, in a letter just received from the old country, on this subject:— "I am amused to think of the disgust which Australians will feel at the hearty welcome the City of London (and the English Government generally) has given to him. His speech at the great gathering of Chinese merchants and bankers in the Fishmonger's Hall will make the Germans and French not a little jealous. He has been carefully made much of in all capitals; but in none has he given himself away as here, and the bid he makes for English friendship and commercial support will, I think, be successful."

Now, if this commercial support is accorded by Britain, what does it really mean to us Australians? Well, for one thing, we may be pretty sure from the remarks lately made by this same Chang in America, that any treaties entered into will include certain clauses dealing with the unrestricted immigration of Chinese to British possession.

W.T. Stead, two years since, in his annual story *The Splendid Paupers*, sounded a note of alarm concerning the impending eclipse of England's fabric manufacturing industries through the competition of rice-fed labor in China and Japan. The Sage of Mowbray House has, indeed, for one of his chief characters in this story — the Chinese billionaire, who makes a vast tiger reserve of the ancestral homes of the impoverished nobility — taken this very Li Hung Chang, who is probably by far the richest man in the world. Australia — that is, working Australia — has, ever since the Palmer in '78, made periodic little uneasy twists and turns wherever and anon the yellow parasites have made their growing importance uncomfortably patent. But the time is even now at hand when more energetic movements must be made. There is little difference, probably, between the unpatriotic and selfish attitude of the merchants and bankers we read of assembled in Fishmonger's Hall and those of Australia. Both are quite willing, apparently, to sacrifice the national birth-right which every artificer holds in his native land for the mess of trade-pottage which the celestials offer as a sop to the commercial Cerberus. But in Australia we have seen more of the evils that follow in the trail of the Dragon's tail. And, moreover, that class which suffers most to-day by the presence of these children of the Flowery Land, and which will feel the full weight of the threatened blow, is more enlightened, and more politically powerful than the corresponding order in the older country. We can hardly blame the home authorities if they discredit our sincerity in this matter. Even those members of the Imperial Parliament who, like Sir Charles Dilke, have visited our shores and formulated our statistics, must have been impressed with the fact that a nation with a Port Darwin and a Thursday Island, practically Chinese and Japanese settlements, a people content to depend for its vegetables upon the Chinese, and the air of whose cities is acrid with the heavy odors of pestilential Oriental quarters, can hardly really be in earnest in its expressed wish to be quit of John Chinaman. No better opportunity is likely to offer than the present one in which for Australia to speak with no uncertain voice. But to show she speaks from the heart, action should accompany ejaculation.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 26.9.1896.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE GOLDFIELDS PRESS

There has been no detailed study of the foremost papers in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie. Sir John Kirwan's memories are an invaluable starting point, and B.J. Smith's "Western Australian Goldfield's Literature", *University Studies in History*, IV, 2, 1963-64, indicates many possibilities for future researchers.

KALGOORLIE EARLY DAYS

By Sir John Kirwan, K.C.M.G.

A remarkable feature of the early days of the Eastern Goldfields was the astonishing spate of newspapers that were issued in the various centres. During the second half of the 'Nineties of the last century (sometimes, and not inaptly, called the "Roaring 'Nineties") I can recall the names of almost a score, including several dailies, that were published within that area, an area that but a few years previously was a remote, waterless, foodless, trackless wilderness, hundreds of miles from a railway, and inhabited only by a few tribes of half-starved nomadic aborigines.

In Coolgardie during those years there were two dailies and a couple of weeklies; Kalgoorlie had two dailies and two weeklies, Menzies also had two dailies, and Kanowna one daily; whilst Norseman, Bulong, Broad Arrow, Leonora and Southern Cross each had weeklies. At the port of Esperance, from which prior to the railway reaching Coolgardie in 1896, most of the Goldfields supplies were brought by teams, there were two newspapers. It is not surprising that amongst so many there was a keen struggle for existence. A high standard had to be maintained to live, especially as the Goldfields community was cosmopolitan, amongst them being numerous well-educated, adventurous and enterprising spirits attracted from all parts of the world by the lure of gold. None but the most readable could survive. Of all those publications, only one is alive today — The Kalgoorlie Miner, which several years ago celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its first issue.

The story of that paper, which I edited for the first thirty years of its existence, is one of the romances of the Australian Press. The story begins seventeen months after Paddy Hannan picked up the piece of gold that made his name famous. The scene of the find was still called Hannans. It had become a collection of hessian humpies and tents with little or no resemblance of a town. There was a miserable erection that served as a Post Office; trees stood in what is today Hannan Street. There were a few bag shanties, at one of which liquor was sold, and at others such stores as canned foods, tin dishes and digger requirements. Dust and flies were prevalent, and there was a great scarcity of water, which was mostly condensed and very expensive.

Life was strenuous and hard. What had to be endured by Goldfields pioneers had to be experienced to be realised. Scores of men lost in the bush perished of thirst in dreadful agony; many others died speared by blacks, and countless numbers of the healthiest and strongest were the victims of typhoid, in the absence of doctors, nurses and proper food. Still, notwithstanding these tragic troubles the community, consisting almost exclusively of young men, was bright with hope. Gold was plentiful, and a great activity prevailed from daylight to dark. The alluvial workings were as full of life as beehives. In the immediate vicinity of Mount Charlotte, Cassidy's Hill, Maritana, Hannan's Reward and other mines were rich near the surface, and promised to be permanent.

THE WESTERN ARGUS

About this time, two brothers named Mott, printers from the Eastern Colonies, thought the locality could support a newspaper, and on November 24, 1894, they published the first issue of the

Western Argus as a four-page weekly. There were pessimists about in those days, as always is the case on goldfields. The writer of the leading article in the first issue wrote:

“We have been told that the paper won't pay or last. Our reply is that we are quite prepared to risk it and that we are come to stay.”

The news items in the first issue reported that a Money Order Office had been opened at Hannans and a telegraph messenger had been appointed. A later issue reports a meeting of the committee of the Racing Club, at which a suggestion was made that a racing track be laid out near the township, as “the present course is too far away.” Mr. C. Cutbush is mentioned as Honorary secretary. Another issue reports a meeting at which a committee was appointed to raise funds to establish a hospital. A few days afterwards £8/15/- was collected for the hospital at a boxing match in Hannan Street. Subsequently, a summons was issued against the participants, but because of the charitable purpose of the match, the summons was withdrawn. An issue during December, 1894, gives interesting glimpses of the life in those days. It says:

“Hannan Street presented a gay and festive appearance on Wednesday afternoon. On one side of the street cricketers were engaged in practice, watched by many spectators, whilst opposite an interesting quoit match was being played by a local auctioneer and a well-known boniface. Several sums changed hands on the event.”

Early in 1895 the name of Kalgoorlie was officially adopted instead of Hannans. The leading article of January 5, 1895, begins with this statement: “The time has arrived when Hannans, or Kalgoorlie as it is now called, should be formed into a municipality.” Numerous issues deal with the scarcity and high cost of water; with the need for police and for local courts instead of litigants having to go to Coolgardie (24 miles distant); with reports of meetings of the Progress Committee; with accounts of the alarming number of deaths from typhoid fever, mostly of young men; with the proclamation in February, 1895, of Kalgoorlie as a municipality; with the starting of the Great Boulder battery on April 10, 1895; with the first elections for mayor and councillors and with the commencement in July, 1895 of the construction of a railway from Southern Cross to Coolgardie.

A RECESSION

Towards the middle of 1895 the prospects of Kalgoorlie were not as bright as had been hoped. In fact, it was rapidly going downhill; hundreds of people were leaving each week. The alluvial had given out. The mines of Mount Charlotte, Hannan's Reward, Cassidy's Hill and the Maritana, which had promised well, proved disappointing. Most people regarded the Great Boulder and neighbouring mines, which were a couple of miles southward, as mere “wild cats”. What is now “The Golden Mile” was constantly referred to as “Brookman's sheep farm”. There was a proposal to remove the Government offices from Kalgoorlie to Kanowna, a mining centre 12 miles to the east. For months the Western Argus was a losing proposition financially.

At this time Mr. Sydney E. Hocking, with his brother Mr. Percy S. Hocking, were the chief owners of the Golden Age (daily) and the Coolgardie Courier (weekly), both journals being published at Coolgardie. Mr. Percy Hocking was a business man. The brothers came from South Australia and were both young, able, energetic and enterprising.

Mr. Sydney Hocking was an experienced journalist. He had been a member of the literary staff of the Adelaide Advertiser and had also done considerable reporting for the Press at Broken Hill. He visited Kalgoorlie to secure “copy” for his papers on the prospects of the district. He went underground at the Great Boulder and other mines, met the mine managers, and having a shrewd, almost penetrative

judgment of the value of mines, he immediately realised the wealth of the Boulder group. He became quite convinced that this group was immensely rich and was certain of long life. In his opinion the mining future of Kalgoorlie was vastly better than that of any other mining centre in Western Australia. When he returned to Coolgardie, he said to his brother: "Let us sell everything here and shift to Kalgoorlie". This was arranged. Their friends said they were making the mistake of their lives. Their partner, Mr. McCallum Smith, did not view the future of Kalgoorlie with optimism, and did not join their new venture.

Mott Bros. readily agreed to sell the Western Argus. They were glad to get rid of it. They had become disheartened. The future of the locality to them seemed gloomy, their health was not good, and they were anxious to return to the Eastern Colonies. They were agreeably surprised that there should be anyone prepared to purchase their interests, and so the Western Argus, together with the building (a ramshackle hessian, wood and iron structure) also the land on which it stood and a small handpress, with some old type, changed hands for £250. Many wisecakes were quite satisfied that Mott Bros. had the best of the deal. The transfer was effected on August 12, 1895. The Hocking Bros. made plans for the immediate improvement of the plant and building.

The fortnightly return from the Great Boulder on August 22, 1895 (ten days after the Western Argus was purchased) showed a yield of 1310 oz. of gold from 160 tons. The Ivanhoe yield was 187 oz. from 96 tons. On September 5th following, the Great Boulder yield for the fortnight was 2212 oz. from 302 tons. The shares had a rise of 50/- in a few days. Mr. Sid Hocking, in the Western Argus, commenting on the return observed:

"The mine has only just commenced its career as a gold producer, but it promises to beat the world's record for average richness."

From that onwards the consistent and rich crushings from the Boulder mines began to convince the world that an Eldorado had been found. Progress and prosperity returned to Kalgoorlie. The Western Argus grew in size, circulation and value. The rapidly increasing gold yield, the influx of population and the expansion of business soon made it apparent that a weekly publication would no longer be sufficient to serve the needs of the public.

KALGOORLIE MINER

On Saturday, September 14, 1895, Messrs Hocking and Co. published the first issue of the Kalgoorlie Miner, whilst the Western Argus continued to appear weekly. The new daily comprised four pages, and the price was twopence. In the light of what has happened since, the leading article in the first issue was prophetic. It stated:

"This town is rapidly taking its place as the capital of the goldfields of Western Australia and has already become such an important centre that the appearance of the "Kalgoorlie Miner", the first and only daily paper published on the East Coolgardie field, will cause no surprise. Already the mines of the district are so remarkable that they have thrown into the shade all properties in less favoured localities. Now this district is being appreciated at its true worth as the greatest gold mining camp of the century. Already the town is assuming the importance of an inland city and all the mercantile houses of the Colony are falling over one another in their eagerness to secure business sites in the main street. The price of land, that sure barometer, has gone up by leaps and bounds, and on all sides the noise of builders' hammers makes noise, if not music, day and night. It is not too much to expect that within a short space of time Kalgoorlie will have a population of 20,000.

. This journal will be an entirely independent organ, owing allegiance to no political party and devoted to advancing the interests of the goldfields."

A partnership had been formed between the Hocking Bros., Mr. Walter Willcock and myself. The firm became a private company under the title of Hocking and Co. Ltd. Mr. Percy Hocking was business manager. Mr. Willcock, who was a practical printer, was head of the mechanical department, Mr. Sydney Hocking attended to the columns dealing with mining, and I, as editor-in-chief, had complete literary control of both papers. All four were directors of the company; I survived the others.

The success of both the Kalgoorlie Miner and the Western Argus, financially and otherwise, was phenomenal. What is now "The Golden Mile" revealed vast riches. Crashings from the Great Boulder group of mines yielded more and more gold. People flocked to Kalgoorlie; the railway had reached Kalgoorlie in September, 1896, and was extended to Menzies; the great water scheme was projected; businesses of all kinds were established; millions sterling were spent lavishly opening up new mines; circulation figures of both papers rose and advertisers readily paid high prices.

Our resources in the way of production equipment could not be secured in Australia to meet the increasing demand, so Mr. S.E. Hocking was sent by the owners to England, where he purchased what was then the best available printing and stereotyping plant, as well as several linotypes. The equipment was, in fact, far in advance of anything of the kind then in Western Australia. On its arrival it was installed in the present commodious three-storey brick and stone Hannan Street premises, which had just been completed ready for its reception. As skilled men could not at that time be secured in Australia, Mr. Hocking engaged capable hands in London, and paid their passages to Kalgoorlie. Readers of the Kalgoorlie Miner were supplied with the same cablegram service from London as the great dailies of the Eastern Colonies, and it was published on the same day that reports appeared in Sydney and Melbourne. In addition, it maintained an Australian telegraph service with news from the various centres of the Continent, besides reporting local happenings.

At the beginning of this century Hocking and Co. Ltd. did not owe one penny of debt; in fact, the firm had abundance of ready money in banks, and wisely refused an offer of £150,000 (walk-in, walk-out) for the purchase of the property that had been bought five years previously for £250. A still higher offer made a few years later was also declined. The pound sterling was vastly more valuable in those days than at present, but nothing occurred subsequently to occasion the owners other than satisfaction over the refusal of tempting offers of purchase. From the beginning to the present day the property has continued in the possession of the original owners or their descendants.

THE ROARING NINETIES

When I remember the many tens of thousands who, during the closing years of the last century, rushed to the Goldfields, I compare what happened there with the complaints today about the shortage of housing accommodation. In the late hectic "Nineties" men brought wives and families with them. Houses were very primitive and few in number, but there was no grumbling. No outcry for accommodation was raised. With timber cut in the bush, galvanised iron and hessian, men knocked together shelters in which men, women and children lived for years, and they did not moan about having to do it. Happily, there were no restrictive building regulations, and Goldfields pioneers speedily solved the housing problem, and without the aid of any Government.

In 1895 and for some time afterwards I lived in a somewhat ragged hessian structure that looked as if it might fall down at any moment. It was deep in the bush, and was near a hole of an abandoned mine which was well-named the "Hidden Treasure", for after more than half a century the treasure is

still hidden. There were two or three camps not very far away from mine, and the occupants, like myself, hailed from the Old Country. With a sense of humour, and in contrast to the absence of life and silence of the bush, we used to jokingly call the locality after the busiest part of London's West End, Piccadilly, a name that it retains to this day.

When more camps came, in order that each should be identified, boards with names were put up. In front of my shack I painted Buckingham Palace. Not to be outdone, a friend whose place was even shabbier called his Windsor Castle. What was our amazement to find, a few days later, that in our vicinity there were (also in a deplorably and sadly dilapidated condition) both Westminster Abbey and even the House of Lords. I may add that in time Piccadilly became the main residential suburb of Kalgoorlie. Buckingham Palace was one day lifted sky-high by a strong but festive and cheeky willy-willy, and blown miles away. On its site a fine spacious home stands in the centre of a beautiful garden, and it is known as The Palms. It is the residence of the widow of my old colleague and partner, Mrs. S.E. Hocking.

In 1895 Sir John Forrest made me a member of the first Kalgoorlie Cemetery Board — a position that was unsought by me. The first work to be undertaken was to remove to the cemetery the remains of men who had been buried near where they died in the bush. The names of several of them could not be ascertained. In 1896 Sir John Forrest also had me gazetted a Justice of the Peace. I had protested strongly that I did not want either appointment, and explained that my newspaper work kept me so occupied that I had no time at my disposal. He insisted, and replied that every man should find time to do some work for the public.

THE DANGER OF FIRE

Especially in the very early days, owing to the inflammable nature of most of the buildings, there was the constant dread of fires. For years after the erection of the edifice where the Kalgoorlie Miner is printed and published, many of the Hannan Street buildings were still of flimsy material. There was the constant dread of the fires destroying whole blocks, especially as there was no water supply to quench the flames or a properly organised and equipped Fire Brigade. Fire insurance rates were so high as to be almost prohibitive. Like most of the business people, the owners of the Kalgoorlie Miner preferred to risk remaining uninsured. The property more than once narrowly escaped destruction.

On one memorable night the dread cry of "Fire!" rang out, and buildings adjoining the Kalgoorlie Miner office were quickly enveloped in fierce flames that lit up the literary and compositing rooms where the staff was busily working. The heat was stifling; it was feared the fire would spread, but happily the wind changed, the conflagration was checked and the danger passed. It was a narrow escape, but the work of the office went on as usual, and next morning the Kalgoorlie Miner appeared with a full report of the fire.

On another occasion, about January, 1918, as the printing of the paper was nearing completion in the grey dawn of the early morning, a fire broke out in a newsprint storehouse at the back of the Kalgoorlie Miner buildings. Scores of rolls of paper for printing were stacked in the store and the fire blazed fiercely. When the fire burnt itself out, nothing seemed to be left but a pile of smouldering rubbish. It was felt that a heavy loss had been sustained, as the paper was valuable, the price having risen during wartime from £14 to £80 per ton. A few days after the fire, a close examination revealed that only the outer layers of the rolls were burned and the rest of the paper could be used. For many months after that, each printed copy of the Kalgoorlie Miner had burnt edges. Newsprint took some months to obtain at that time, and stocks once or twice went down to a few days' supply before a shipment arrived.

SOME LEGAL CASES

The Kalgoorlie Miner has not escaped law cases, though in number they have been singularly few. In October, 1898, I, as editor, and Mr. S.E. Hocking as publisher, were cited for an alleged breach of parliamentary privilege, at the instigation of the then Government. Instead of being heard before the bar of the House, the Legislative Assembly decided that the case be brought to the Supreme Court in Perth.

The alleged breach of privilege arose through the Kalgoorlie Miner publishing a telegraphed report of a bout of fisticuffs that was supposed to have taken place between two members of Parliament, one of whom was a Minister. The report was telegraphed from Perth late at night by Mr. (now Sir Hal) Colebatch, who was a reporter on the staff of the Kalgoorlie Miner and at the time was the paper's Perth representative. Numbers of other newspapers in Western Australia and the Eastern Colonies published a similar report, but the Kalgoorlie Miner, which was a severe critic of the Government, was the only one proceeded against.

The evidence given in the case clearly showed that an Inspector of Police had given information about the fight to the Press, also that neither of the defendants were in the office at Kalgoorlie on the receipt of the telegram, which arrived very late at night, or had known nothing about it until it had appeared in the paper. The Inspector when examined admitted that he had supplied the information as he had heard it and also he mentioned the name of the parliamentarian who, it was said, had got the best of the fight. As it was clearly proved that the defendants were not in any way to blame, the case was almost laughed out of Court.

Mr. (afterwards Sir Winthrop) Hackett, editor of the West Australian, who was much older than I, was ever kindly and in fact almost paternal in his disposition towards me, and although on many questions we differed politically yet we remained close friends. As a result of his recommendation to me, the brilliant Irish barrister, Mr. Moorhead, who subsequently was raised to the Bench, was lawyer for the Kalgoorlie Miner and during the proceedings he had everyone, not excepting the judge, in a simmer of merriment.

The police officer was reduced in rank by his superiors and banished to Kimberley. Mr. Colebatch was most unjustly forbidden access to the Houses of Parliament that he entered subsequently as a member. He later had long terms of Ministerial office, became Premier, was a member of the Federal Senate, represented the State in London for nine years as Agent-General, on his return was re-elected to Parliament, and he is today one of the best respected of Australia's elder statesmen.

In a famous libel case the Kalgoorlie Miner was proceeded against in the Supreme Court, Perth, by three Goldfields Ministers of the Crown who had been denounced as "rotten sticks" for having violated their election pledges regarding the Esperance Railway. It was a political party case. There was much antagonism then between Perth and the Eastern Goldfields, especially Kalgoorlie. A Perth jury gave damages against the Kalgoorlie Miner, damages that were subsequently reduced to an almost trifling amount when the venue was changed to Albany. What the general public of Western Australia thought of the Ministers concerned was shown at the general elections which took place soon afterwards. Not merely was the Government defeated, but nearly all its members and followers were wiped out of public life.

TEN-FOOT REGULATIONS

Towards the end of the last century the Kalgoorlie Miner came into prominence as the result of the promulgation of the "Ten-Foot Regulation", which limited the depth to which alluvial miners could

work in certain circumstances to ten feet. The paper championed the cause of the alluvial miners, of whom many thousands were then working their own claims, in some cases the gold being found at a depth of 100 feet and even deeper. Mining had not reached the advanced stage of today. The law then permitted what were called dual titles. It allowed diggers to work on leases to within 50 feet of a defined reef or lode, and large numbers of men were successfully working alluvial gold on leases. An immense sensation was suddenly caused by the issue of the Government's Ten-Foot Regulation. The Kalgoorlie Miner declared that the regulation was ultra vires, also that it was grossly unjust and ridiculed it as absurd. It asked if a nugget were found, one half of which was 10 feet from the surface and the other half below that depth, had the digger who unearthed it no claim to the lower half?

The regulation came as a bolt from the blue, for the Government had been encouraging the search for deep alluvial gold. It had, in fact, offered a reward of £500 to any person discovering gold in alluvial at a depth of 30 feet or more below the surface, the money to be paid after 1,000 oz. had been taken from the find. What tended to lend an ugly significance to the act of the Ministry was that it was done at a time when the hearing was pending of a dispute between a number of diggers and a mining company, on the directorship of which was a member of the Ministry, whilst the chairman was a strong Government supporter in Parliament. The question involved was whether the property contained alluvial gold. The Kalgoorlie Miner did not impute that these facts influenced the issue of the regulation, but the circumstances inflamed the minds of men who were suddenly deprived of livelihood.

There was considerable public indignation. Numbers of men were arrested for disregarding the ten-foot regulation and were sent to gaol, but immediately their places were taken by others, who also were imprisoned. It was believed that there were thousands willing to accept imprisonment in defence of their rights — so many, in fact, that the gaol accommodation would not be sufficient to hold all who were ready to be incarcerated. There were those who indulged in wild talk of another Eureka Stockade, and large bodies of police were drafted to the Goldfields. The Kalgoorlie Miner kept constantly pointing out throughout the trouble that the law should be obeyed whether it was just or unjust and that the ten-foot regulation was the law, even if it was ultra vires, until the Supreme Court said it was beyond the powers of the Ministry for Mines to enforce it. These wiser counsels prevailed. The Kalgoorlie Miner promoted a fund to pay the expense of testing the legality of the regulation. Eventually the Government annulled the regulation; the Supreme Court held that it was ultra vires and the diggers were released. Ultimately the law was amended, abolishing dual titles.

FEDERAL UNION

In the struggle for Federal Union at the beginning of the century, the Kalgoorlie Miner was a most potent influence. The Western Australian Parliament refused to afford the people a similar opportunity to that given to those of the rest of Australia, namely, the right to vote for or against the acceptance of the Commonwealth Constitution, which had been drafted at a convention at which Western Australia was represented by ten delegates. A petition in favour of holding a referendum, which was signed by 23,000 electors, had been presented to Parliament and contemptuously ignored. This petition was promoted by Mr. George Leake, Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) James, Mr. James Gardiner and other enthusiastic supporters of Federal Union. It was called "The Bill of the People Petition". Parliament was prorogued and it appeared as if there was no hope of West Australia joining the Federation as an original State.

It was then that the Kalgoorlie Miner in a series of articles urged the separation of the Goldfields from Western Australia. All aspects of the question were fully dealt with. At its suggestion a meeting of Goldfields representatives, including members of Parliament, mayors, chairmen of Road Boards, also leaders of employers' and employees' organisations, assembled at Coolgardie and by 90 votes to one

decided that a petition addressed to Her Majesty Queen Victoria be drawn up, asking that the Eastern Goldfields, including the port of Esperance, be created a separate colony in order that it might join the Commonwealth as a State.

In furtherance of this purpose a powerful organisation was formed called "The Eastern Goldfields Reform League". It was supported by the Labor Unions and the Chamber of Mines, also by every Goldfields local body and Goldfields members of Parliament. Whatever money was wanted for propaganda and other purposes was readily subscribed. A branch of the League was formed in London, and unofficial communication was established with the Colonial Office. Circulars were sent to members of the House of Commons, also to prominent individuals and newspapers in England and in Eastern Australia. An article of mine in the Review of Reviews for Australia dealing with the matter together with a map of the proposed new State attracted wide attention and was commented on favourably in the Eastern Press. At the request of the Reform League a lengthy petition to the Queen was drafted by three eminent Australian lawyers, Sir Joseph Symon, the Right Hon. C.C. Kingston and Mr. P. McM. Glynn.

Albany showed a keen desire to be included within the boundaries that had been defined for the Goldfields State. At a public meeting held in the Albany Town Hall a resolution was unanimously carried to form a local Separation League to act in conjunction with the Goldfields in petitioning Her Majesty the Queen for separation from "The Swan River Settlement". A lengthy petition was prepared by lawyers and extensively signed in Albany and the district, the concluding words of the petition being a humble prayer that Her Majesty "may be pleased to include the territory within the boundaries hereinbefore defined in the proposed new colony with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of self-government."

The Goldfields "Separation for Federation" Petition was signed by 27,733 adult residents of the Goldfields and forwarded through His Excellency the Governor to Her Majesty. It was enclosed in an artistically designed casket mounted with local gold. The then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, in a despatch to the Western Australian Governor, plainly intimated that its prayer would receive sympathetic consideration if the electors of Western Australia were not allowed to vote for or against the Colony joining the proposed Federal Union. The prospective loss of the Goldfields to Western Australia frightened the Government. A special session of Parliament was hastily called, the bill for a referendum was passed, and when a referendum of the electors was held on July 31st, 1900 there was an overwhelming "Yes" majority. It was the first occasion that adult suffrage came into operation. The majority in favour of union was more than two to one. Perth and Fremantle gave substantial majorities in support of Federation, but on the Goldfields the "Yes" vote was fifteen to one.

GREAT INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPERS

Half a century ago, and further back than that, newspapers guided public opinion to an extent that can hardly be realised today. People then largely took their ideas and politics from the particular newspaper they read. In those days an immensely larger percentage of the Colony's population lived on the Eastern Goldfields than at present. It was therefore not altogether surprising that for several years the Kalgoorlie Miner was most influential in the political life of Western Australia. By means of its initiation and advocacy of the Separation for Federation movement, the Government unwillingly was forced to submit the question to the electors of voting "Yes" or "No" as to the Colony's joining the proposed Australian Commonwealth. Despite the wishes of the vast majority of people of Western Australia, as shown by the referendum, it is certain that the electors of Western Australia would not have had the opportunity to come into the Commonwealth as an original State were it not for the separation movement. The Government would not have given the electors the power to vote on the question but for the well-grounded fear that if that were not conceded, the Eastern Goldfields prayer

for "Separation for Federation" would have been granted. The sympathy of the Imperial authorities, as well as the strong support of the Eastern Colonies Federal leaders, were with the Goldfields. In fact, the Secretary of State for the Colonies made no secret of his desire for the Federal Union of all the six Australian Colonies. In a despatch to the Western Australian Governor referring to Federation he wrote:

"Your responsible advisers will also, of course, take into consideration the fact of the agitation by the Federal Party, especially on the Goldfields, if Western Australia does not enter as an original state. It appears to me of the utmost importance to the future of Western Australia to join at once."

In the *West Australian* on July 14, 1900, Mr. (afterwards Sir Winthrop) Hackett is reported as saying in the course of a speech in the Perth Town Hall:

"He could not conceive an English Government which contained a Chamberlain in its councils, refusing to give the Goldfields, not a right to separate, but a right to federate with their own brothers in the East. And if they wanted proof of it, they had it in the veiled invitation to Western Australia to come into the Commonwealth or to take the consequences."

INFLUENCE IN POLITICS

For several years after Federation the Kalgoorlie Miner was a power in State politics, whilst strictly maintaining its independence of all parties. Rightly or wrongly, it was supposed to have been responsible for more than one so-called "Goldfields Government". From 1911 to 1916 there was a State Government in office that included no less than six Eastern Goldfields Ministers.

The Kalgoorlie Miner was always a strenuous advocate of decentralisation, a question that was fought on the construction of a railway to the Goldfields' natural port of Esperance. Strong opposition to the project was offered by powerful business interests in Perth and Fremantle and the construction of the railway did not take place until it was too late to be of much avail, for by then Fremantle was firmly established as a port and centralisation today exists to such an extent that one half of the people of Western Australia are crowded together in the area comprising Fremantle, Perth and adjoining suburbs. This concentration of population in so small an area is truly deplorable in a State that covers no less than one-third of a great continent.

Source: *Early Days*, Vol. IV, Part 1, 1949, pp.4-22.

GOLDFIELDS' GRIEVANCES

The boom of the 1890's in Western Australia was due solely to the wealth of the eastern goldfields. The colonial government, led by Sir John Forrest, had great difficulty balancing the demands from the goldfields with the necessity for development elsewhere in the State. Forrest eventually became a focal point of goldfields discontent.

ORGANISE!

A proposal for a "Goldfields Protection and Advancement League"

Its declared objects should be:— (1) To agitate for and insist upon reform in the mining law of the colony in the direction approved by the majority of the association; (2) to persistently bring under the notice of the Government and the entire press of the colonies the condition of our mail and telegraphic service; (3) to obtain and disseminate information concerning the water question, the possibility of artesian or other supplies, and to keep the matter prominently before the Government of the colony; (4) to protest, when necessary, against magisterial or official tyranny; (5) to endeavour to bring about a reduction of freight charges between Northam and Southern Cross; (6) to agitate for a revision of the Customs tariff, especially where it affects the goldfields population; (7) to demand the charting and development of Esperance, the natural port of the fields; (8) to take into consideration, discuss and consider the feasibility and necessity or otherwise of the erection of other eastern districts into an independent colony.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 8.11.1894.

Sir John Forrest

We know thee John, thou oily one; Ha! ha! thou soft and slippery one. We've watched thee treading ambition's path as a he cat treads the house tops, John; smooth and silky, yet stubborn, John with a heart all guile and a level head — few dare follow where you can tread, ho! ho! old John. Your foes may sneer and club the fool, but you have the wit and will to rule and you calmly smile as you give them gruel; he! he! smooth John. Your promises are writ in sand, and you only fight for your own strong hand, the most selfish man in this western land — cold, crafty, John. We would not touch thy private life, we scorn *that* John; but, as a powerful public man, we'll do thee all the good we can. — You trust us John. The giver of all good hath said that every parent born, and bred, who spares the rod doth spoil the child, so give the castigation mild presumptuous John. Why ape a mighty statemen's airs when governing the small affairs of a tin pot town on a third-class coast, and strut the town like a backyard ghost — Climb down now John. Ha! ha! fat John, you rouse our mirth; are you the Premier of the earth, and did the lightning give thee birth, to rule and reign as God in Perth — We're splitting John. Napoleon at Austerlitz held half the world in chains; — he fell because he had not, like thee sire a Forrest full of brains — God help us John. We sit and worship thee afar, as wise men worshipped Bethlehem's star — Saints shield us, John.

Source: *Coolgardie Review*, 17.8.1895.

THE FORREST IMPOSITION

We may be pardoned for again drawing attention to the attitude of the Premier in regard to his policy of protection — a policy which is likely to stir up a strong and bitter feeling among the people of these

goldfields. Already the miner, the prospector, and the capitalist are taxed to straining point, and to perpetuate these imposts in order to bolster up the few hundreds of men who are engaged in the agricultural industry, is to commit a political crime which is sure to bring swift retribution.

The cost of living here by which we mean the purchase of absolute necessities is heavy in the extreme, nor does there appear to be any prospect of lessening it for some time to come. While the high prices which at present prevail are maintained, there must be a corresponding maintenance in the rate of wages. Miners in West Australia receive as a rule £4 per week with water, and even then are able to save precious little money. This is at least 40 per cent higher than the rate paid in any of the other colonies, save North Queensland. In Victoria the rate of wages is £2 5s to £2 8s per week; in New Zealand £2 5s to £3; in New South Wales £2 5s to £3; in Queensland £2 12s 6d to £3 10s.

In writing of West Australian mines this feature is frequently lost sight of by our Eastern contemporaries, but it touches us here very closely, and is a serious drawback to the development of our mines. It is the difference indeed between profit and loss. To this high rate of wages has also to be added the heavy prices incurred for transit, together with a 5 per cent tax on machinery, and a 10 to 15 per cent tax on other mining requisites. In no other part of the world is gold-mining such a costly matter as it is on the West Australian goldfields. For this reason it is necessary to highly capitalise our mines, in order to provide working capital and contingent expenses. The mere carting of machinery to the mine is one of the heaviest charges which a company has to provide for, and not a few companies have found themselves heavily handicapped by this initial and unavoidable outlay. Then, again, there are climatic difficulties to overcome of a severe and trying character. But to have added to these a stinging Customs impost is to place upon our already overweighted backs a burden too grievous to be borne.

It is impossible, under existing conditions, to reduce wages, nor would we advocate such a step for one moment. The £4 per week paid to the miners is quite little enough for the work they have to perform, the hardships which they are called upon to endure, and the risks to health which an insufficiency of nourishing food and a scarcity of water imposes upon them. Consequently no relief can be looked for in this direction. Transit charges must, also, from the very circumstances of our surroundings, remain at a high rate. Teamsters find the road expenses very oppressive, and although the loading rates appear to be excessive, there is not in reality a wide margin of profit. Good wages are earned, but that is all. The one direction in which relief may be afforded is that of taxation, and especially in the way of those articles which are essential to our living. To pay duties ranging from 10 to 25 per cent on the common necessities of life is to place a strain upon us which the financial resources of the colony do not warrant. The exigencies of the case will not be met, as the Premier supposes, by remitting the duty on mining machinery, which is only 5 per cent. A similar concession, it significantly appears, is to be made on all machinery, so that ploughs, scarifiers, and sheep-shearing machines will be allowed to come in free of charge. We do not object to this, but we strenuously object to the farmers being pap-fed to the extent which the Premier proposes while we are taxed to an unjust and inequitable extent. Probably it is highly desirable to populate the agricultural lands of the colony, but even to obtain this state of things it is not politic to violate every principle, and to make fish of one set of toilers and flesh of the other. The Premier by his action is not only discounting our possibilities of success, but he is well nigh rendering them impossible.

We have to fight against a complicated Mining Act, an arid country, expensive labor, ruinous rates of transit, and a monstrously high tariff. Sir John Forrest when he laid before the country his parochial and protective bucolic policy, strangely forgot that the mining industry is the only profitable industry in the colony. The financial opulence of West Australia is directly and solely due to the operations of that industry; upon the success of that industry the future prosperity and permanency of West Australia depends. If the mining industry fails West Australia will sink to a degree of colonial degradation which will render her position despicable. And yet, Sir John Forrest appears willing to jeopardise the very

existence of the colony in which he was born, in order to assist a few hundred farmers and to secure a few hundred more settlers in the south-west district. His action is incomprehensible, indeed it is political insanity.

We trust a movement will be set on foot having for its object the abolition of the duties on all eatables. That at least is our due. This question is one in which everyone is interested — the London investor, the mine manager, the prospector, the miner, and the townsman. At present each and all are taxed heavily and unnecessarily, and the Government should be forced to yield up much of its illegitimate revenue. To continue to pay nearly £10 per head per annum in the shape of Customs taxation is to court ruin.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 7.5.1896.

HALF A LOAF

The old saying that “half a loaf is better than no bread” has been worked on a great deal lately in connection with the proposed Norseman railway. The worst of these old adages is that people often use them instead of argument. When they find themselves in a corner they quote some antiquated saw or other, which perhaps never had any truth in it, and, even if it had, does not in any way apply to the case in point. If they can give no better reasons for what they want than that some dolt in the dark ages made some abstract assertion seeming to favour their contention, they had better go back to their trades, whatever they may be, and leave argument to those who can find something newer and more to the purpose.

One feature of the antiquated sayings is that there is generally a little truth in them if read the right way, and indiscriminating people get fogged in trying to make out what is “the right way”. If a man, for instance, were begging for half a loaf of bread and someone gave him half a loaf he might have no cause of complaint because he was not really entitled to any, and what was given him was merely as an act of grace. But if someone owes him a whole loaf and gives him only half a one, the giver cannot get justly out of his engagements by saying half is better than none. No tradesman, for example, would be satisfied to receive ten shillings in the pound and have the old proverb flung at him to keep him quiet. Nor would the workman on going for his week’s wages think everything was as it should be if his employer gave him a half and a text or quotation for the other half. A good many of those who say half a loaf is better than no bread when applied to the belongings of other people, find that the adage loses a great deal of its force when used in reference to what is due to themselves. No one objects to his neighbour being liberal — in fact he rather encourages him to be so, and pats him on the back and advises him to go on giving. Now those amongst the Norseman residents who advocate the acceptance of the Premier’s latest Coolgardie-Norseman railway suggestion have one stock phrase and play freely on the half a loaf ticket. They quite overlook the fact that there are other people largely interested to whom the scheme does not give even a fractional part of the loaf. These goldfields would gain nothing whatever, neither would the Esperance people. The latter would really lose a great deal, for their whole loaf would be taken from them, about one tenth of it handed over to Norseman, and the remaining nine tenths distributed amongst the business people and land owners of Perth and Fremantle.

Norseman herself is entitled to a railway to the nearest and most reliable port, so that her fields may have the advantage of cheap carriage for her machinery, supplies of food and clothing, and low grade ores, and that her people may be brought within a reasonable distance of a sanatorium. Esperance is entitled to a whole loaf and those who tender her half a one instead — or one tenth of one — are wilfully and deliberately proposing to rob her of her undeniably just dues. Esperance, in all fairness and honesty, as a unit in the country, is entitled to all the bounties with which nature has endowed her: and

those who are scheming to subvert nature, for sake of putting pounds, shillings, and pence into the pockets of persons at a distance, are taking advantage of a position they have arrogated to themselves to threaten an act of heartless and cruel despoilment.

These goldfields, which have wrested the country from its old humdrum days and given it a place amongst the Australian provinces, have a just and inalienable claim to a short cut to the seaboard, cheap transit for themselves and their goods, and a place where they can retire occasionally for a holiday during the dust and flies and sand and heat of summer months. They have a whole loaf belonging to them of which they are being ruthlessly defrauded; and they don't intend to take Sir John Forrest's advice or follow his dictum and "radiate" to Perth or Fremantle. The half a loaf wording therefore does not apply in the smallest degree to the three districts most interested and even if it did none of them have the right to be put off with ten shillings in the pound. This bringing in of expediency and compromise where one's just rights are concerned is a wretched, yielding subterfuge that should be cited by all free citizens - that is if the citizens here "were" free, which they are not, but they will "have" to be.

All commonsense and reason and justice proclaim that a railway should, as speedily as possible, begin from Esperance and be continued with all haste to the goldfields. If begun from that end the whole 240 miles could be constructed for almost the same money as that from Coolgardie to Norseman would come to, on account of being able to carry on the sleepers and other material by the line itself as constructed. Anyway no reasonable person is satisfied with the half a loaf proposal in this instance, and, even if he were, he wouldn't get what is being dangled before him.

Source: *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4.8.1898.

ELECTORAL REFORM

We are indebted to the "West Australian" for a very interesting summary of the new electoral rolls, which shows convincingly the utter inadequacy of the present representation of the goldfields. Hitherto, when he has been approached on this subject, the Premier has urged that we had a redistribution of seats in 1897, and that it was too soon to again disturb the electorates or the Parliament, but that objection is fast fading out of sight. The present Assembly was elected in May, 1897, and the coming session will be the third in the life of the House, so that the existing anomalies will have been unwillingly tolerated for three years. In the natural order of things there will only be one more session left to the Parliament after this year. That is to say, the Assembly will expire by effluxion of time after the session of next year. Now, when an anomaly grows into a great political injustice, we take it that the proper thing to do is to anticipate the ordinary constitutional remedy by amending the Electoral Act in conformity with the altered condition of affairs. No violence is done to any one or any institution by adopting a proceeding so clearly dictated by common sense. Indeed the Constitution Act provides for amendment as occasion requires, for the preamble to the Amending Act of 1896 says: "Whereas it is provided by the 73rd section of the Constitution Act of 1889 that the Legislature of Western Australia shall have full power and authority, from time to time, by any Act, to repeal or alter any of the provisions of the said Act," &c. Here the words "from time to time" distinctly indicate that the electorates may be altered at any time, and there is special provision for creating new electorates whenever they are necessary. Then the Year Book for 1899 states that members hold their seats for the "duration of Parliament, and the existence of which is limited to four years from the date of the return of writs."

From these authorities it will be seen that it was contemplated that Parliament might be dissolved at any time, and in fact we believe that the Parliament which existed prior to the present one was cut short in its career by one year. At all events, if it was not, there is no reason why this House should not be

dissolved at the end of the third year of its existence. There is more than ample justification. The anomaly to which we have referred has continued now for over two years, and it ought to be removed without further delay. In 1897 the total number of voters on the rolls was 21,810, while today the number stands at 43,000, or just double as many as there were two years ago. The obvious thought which occurs to one is that the 44 gentlemen who legislate for us down in Perth represent only half of the electors in the colony, and it is equally obvious that there are 21,000 electors who are not represented at all. If that is not in the first place an intolerable anomaly, and secondly an irrefutable justification for a dissolution and a new election, imagination fails to supply the deficiency. Supposing, for example, that the number of electors in Great Britain were doubled within two years, can there be any doubt that the House of Commons would be immediately dissolved? We have not any doubt on the question -- there would be a general election at once in order to secure the proper representation of the great body of voters.

An examination of the figures will show how necessary it is that the question of a redistribution of seats should be no longer deferred. The four Coolgardie electorates have now a total of 14,118 voters, being an increase of something like 9,000 which simply means that there are about 9,000 voters on the Eastern goldfields who are not represented in Parliament. When it is seen that the seven constituencies of Ashburton, De Grey, Irwin, Kimberley East, Kimberley West, Roebourne and Murchison, with a total number on the seven (new) rolls of 744, have seven members, while the four Coolgardies, with 14,118 electors have only four members, the enormity of the anomaly will be realised. Ashburton with 42 on the roll, has an equal representation with East Coolgardie with its 5,674 voters, or Coolgardie with its 3,864. Then, here is another comparison. The eight constituencies at Perth and Fremantle have got an aggregate of 14,561 (approximately) on their rolls, or just about an equal number with the four Coolgardies, and yet the Perth and Fremantle have eight representatives to our four. There is no reason that we can discover why the metropolitans should have twice as much political power as we enjoy -- or don't enjoy.

The Mayor of Coolgardie introduced the subject into his fortnightly report presented to the meeting of the Town Council held last night, and it was resolved to write to the Premier once more. On one occasion when Sir John Forrest was interviewed with reference to the question, he said in effect, "Get your people on the rolls," implying that, when we had the argument of numbers, we should get further representation. Well, we have done what he suggested. The goldfields constituencies have the strongest voting power of any in the colony, with no chance of being allowed to exercise that power, and we now appeal to the Premier to include a Redistribution Bill in his programme for the session which will open next week. There can be no satisfactory legislation by a Parliament which represents but half of the electors.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 15.6.1899.

SEPARATION

Petition to Her Majesty the Queen from Persons residing on the Eastern Goldfields.

To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty.

We, Your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful subjects, inhabitants of that portion of the Colony of Western Australia lying to the South of the 24th parallel of latitude and East of the 119th meridian of East Longitude, and known as the Eastern Goldfields, humbly approach Your Majesty with every assurance of our loyalty and devotion to Your Majesty's Crown and Person, and humbly entreating Your Majesty's gracious consideration to this our Petition.

1. At the time of the establishment of the present constitution of the Colony of Western Australia, it was contemplated and declared that circumstances might arise and render expedient the division of the Colony by separating any portion thereof and erecting the same into a separate Colony. The probability of such division was expressly reconsidered by Sections 61 and 62 of the Western Australian Constitution Act, 1889 (assented to by Your Majesty on 21st October, 1890), which specially reserved powers on that behalf. We humbly submit that, as regards the Eastern Goldfields, circumstances calling for Separation have now arisen for the following among other reasons:—

2. Since the establishment of Responsible Government in Western Australia many of Your Majesty's subjects have come from outside the Colony to reside on the Eastern Goldfields. They now compose almost the entire population of that district, which was previously uninhabited and unproductive. By their energy, enterprise, and capital, mines have been discovered and developed, and industries built up and established; and what was previously regarded as a desert has been converted into a populous and prosperous district. The inhabitants of the remaining portion of Western Australia, who are chiefly the settlers before Responsible Government, possess representation in both Houses of Parliament greatly in excess of what they are entitled to, and have thus acquired a power which they have used, and continue to use, towards the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields harshly, arbitrarily, and unjustly, and not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution. They have passed laws and applied public moneys for their own special benefit and to our detriment; and have otherwise, by unfair and wrongful legislation and administration, oppressed the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields. In particular:—

3. (1) They have denied, and continue to deny to the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields, that fair and reasonable representation in Parliament to which such inhabitants are entitled by their number, wealth, and resources, through the power of domination thus secured to and retained by themselves.

(2) They have imposed unfair and unequal burdens on the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields, of which the following are instances:—

- (a) Heavy Customs taxation on food and other commodities, so devised as to place the burden chiefly on us, and to oppress us for the advantage of their monopolies.
- (b) Preferential railway rates, imposing special and unequal taxation, intended to establish and support, at our expense, monopolies for their special advantage.
- (c) Special taxes on the gold mining industry.
- (d) Refusal of railway communication with our natural port on the Southern Coast, in order to force our trade into their portion of the Colony and to distant ports.
- (e) The expenditure of a large portion of public moneys in their district, while our larger and more pressing needs are comparatively neglected and ignored.

4. The inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields are unanimously in favour of joining the Federal Union of the Australian Colonies, and of accepting for that purpose the Bill for the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia recently adopted by the Parliaments and people of five other Colonies. That Bill was drafted by an Australian Convention in which Western Australia was represented equally with the other Colonies. It was finally settled at a Conference of the Premiers of six Australian Colonies, at which this Colony was represented by its Premier, who accepted the Bill in its final form and promised to endeavour to procure the passing of an Act submitting it to the electors of Western Australia for acceptance or rejection. Instead of this the Bill was referred by the Parliament of Western Australia to a Joint Committee of both Houses, who suggested amendments. A petition signed by 18,000 adult males, resident on the Eastern Goldfields, and 5,000 adult male residents of the Western Districts, was presented to both Houses of Parliament asking that the Bill might be submitted for acceptance or rejection by the people of the Colony, but the Houses of Parliament nevertheless refused

by large majorities to grant the prayer of the petition, and the Upper House refused to submit the Bill as adopted by the other Colonies. We are thus prevented, by the arbitrary action of the dominant party in the Parliament of Western Australia, comprised as aforesaid, from realising our intense desire to join the Federal Union and participate in the moral and material advantages of Australian National life.

When the Western Australian Constitution Act of 1889 was passed the population was 43,000. Queensland obtained responsible Government when its population was 28,000. The population of the Eastern Goldfields, on whose behalf we humbly address Your Majesty, now numbers 80,000, and is rapidly increasing. The district contains by far the greater portion of the wealth, and contributes most of the revenue of the Colony. The area of the Colony, which is 975,920 square miles or about one-third of Australia, owing to growth of population and diversity of interests, is too large to be properly governed as one Colony. We therefore humbly pray Your Majesty that the Colony of Western Australia may be divided by separating the Eastern Goldfields therefrom according to the boundaries hereinbefore defined, and by erecting the same into a separate Colony, with a full measure of representative and responsible Government, and we, Your Majesty's most loyal and dutiful Subjects, will as in duty bound ever pray.

Source: *Minutes and Votes and Proceedings of the Parliament of W.A., 1900, Special Session.*

JOHN FORREST'S REPLY

To His Excellency the Administrator.

I propose to analyse the statements made in the Petition, and I think I shall be able to show that the whole of the assertions contained in it are unfounded, and a tissue of misrepresentations.

I am of the opinion that the statements in this petition do not represent the views of the signatories, or of people living in the large area herein described, and the signatures have, principally, been obtained in Kalgoorlie and its neighbourhood, and, in a smaller degree, in Coolgardie and other towns. I am glad to say the Coolgardie Press is absolutely opposed to the movement. It is in reality an agitation manufactured by the Kalgoorlie Press.

Paragraph 1. — By the Imperial Act 53 and 54 Vict., Chapter 26, and the Western Australian Constitution Act, 1889, power is given to divide the Colony, subject to certain conditions, but the Imperial Colonial Boundaries Act, 1895, subsequently passed, expressly provides that no alteration of the boundaries of Western Australia shall be made without the consent of the Parliament of the Colony. I submit, therefore, that before anything could be done in the direction of dividing Western Australia, the approval of the local Parliament would have to be obtained, and the appointment of the Public Debt, together with many other important matters, would also have to be considered by Parliament. I submit, further, that no circumstances whatever have arisen for the separation of the Eastern Goldfields from the rest of Western Australia, and I challenge the fullest enquiry into the statements made in the Petition, which I have no hesitation in saying are not based on facts, and are wholly misleading.

Taking the population of the Eastern Goldfields as stated in the petition as 80,000 (which is, however, about 25 per cent too great) there would be over 70,000 adults (as there are certainly not 10,000 minors on the Eastern Goldfields), and of this number it is stated 28,000 have signed this petition — what, may I ask, has become of the 42,000 who, by the Petitioner's own showing, have not signed it? It must be remembered that a large number of the people on the Eastern Goldfields are in favour of Australian Federation, and that it was represented that the object of this movement was to bring pressure on the rest of the Colony to support the Federation Bill as amended by the Conference

of Premiers, and the movement was designated "Separation for Federation." When this is considered, and the fact that the actions of the Government and Parliament have been persistently misrepresented by the Kalgoorlie Press, and every means possible taken to warp the minds of the people, it is a matter of surprise, taking into consideration the extraordinary and strenuous means used to obtain signatures, that so small a number of people signed the petition.

It is worthy of note that the representatives of British and Foreign capital resident on the Eastern Goldfields have not joined in the petition, and that the member of the Legislative Assembly for Kalgoorlie, Mr. C.J. Moran, M.L.A., and the member for Coolgardie, Mr. A.E. Morgans, M.L.A., are both opposed to the movement.

Paragraph 2. - The statement that those who signed the Petition have developed the goldfields by their "capital" is, I think, inaccurate as the mines have been developed for the most part by British and outside capital, and are nearly all owned by British Companies. If it were possible to analyse the signatures, it would, I think, be found that the amount of capital brought to this Colony and used in the development of the gold mines, by those who signed the petition, was very small, and that for the most part the signatories have no real cause to regret that "they came from outside the Colony to reside on the Eastern Goldfields."

The Petitioners attribute the "converting of a desert into a populous and prosperous district" to their "energy, enterprise, and capital"; but I think the facilities granted through the expenditure of immense sums of money on building railways, telegraphs, public buildings, water conservation, etc., by the Government, and the introduction of a large amount of British and foreign capital for the development of the mines, have been the main factors in attracting population and in making the Eastern Goldfields productive.

The statement that "the inhabitants of the remaining portion of Western Australia are chiefly the settlers before Responsible Government" is inaccurate and misleading, inasmuch as in 1891 there was only a population of 50,000 in Western Australia, and now there is a population of 175,000. There are, in my opinion, 111,000 people living outside the Eastern Goldfields, about one-half of which have come to the Colony since 1891, and, of course, some of the old population now reside on the Eastern Goldfields. There are, in fact, as many newcomers since 1891 residing outside the area of the Eastern Goldfields as there are residing inside the area of those goldfields.

The statement that the representation in both Houses of Parliament for the people residing outside the Eastern Goldfields is greatly "in excess of what they are entitled to" is, I think, exaggerated, but, as it is an important matter, I will deal fully with it.

I believe the population of the Eastern Goldfields may be fairly estimated as 60,000 and the Metropolitan area, within a radius of 15 miles of the City of Perth, as having a population somewhat larger. I find that the representation for the Metropolitan area in the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly, under the Constitution Act amended last session, which now awaits the Royal assent, is nine and twelve, respectively, and for the Eastern Goldfields six and ten respectively.

At first sight it may be thought that to give the people on the Eastern Goldfields only one-fifth of the representation in both Houses is not quite equitable, seeing that about one third of the population reside there, but it must be remembered that a population basis for representation in Parliament has not been accepted in this Colony, nor throughout Australia, and that the population of many of the districts on the Eastern Goldfields is constantly changing. In 1894 one member in the Assembly, and none at all in the Council, was considered sufficient; in 1897, with the approval of the people of the Eastern Goldfields, this was increased to six members in the Assembly and three in the Council, and in 1899 the representation was further increased to ten in the Assembly and six in the Council.

It may also be pointed out that of the thirty members of the Legislative Council, under the amended Constitution Act now awaiting the Royal assent, six are direct representatives of the Eastern Goldfields, while nine others are partially representative of gold mining and the mining industry.

There has been no disposition shown by Parliament to unduly limit the representation, though owing to the uncertainty as to the permanency of certain localities and the conditions of a shifting population, difficulty has been experienced in satisfactorily arranging the boundaries of constituencies, following on the population of a goldfield sometimes quickly changing — for a place where there is a population of several thousands may in a few months be deserted, and I regret to say there are several instances of this kind on the Eastern Goldfields.

The fact that there is only one industry on the goldfields, viz., mining for gold and other minerals, also requires consideration in dealing with this question, and also the fact that there are other goldfields besides the Eastern Goldfields which are represented in Parliament. Out of a total of fifty members there will be under the new Constitution fourteen members in the Assembly who are purely goldfields representatives, and one who will represent a gold, coal, and tin mining constituency, while there are several others who have gold and other mining industries carried on in their constituencies. The representation, therefore, from the industries point of view gives to mining a very fair proportion of representation, more especially when it is remembered that nearly every member of Parliament is permanently interested in the goldfields and in gold and other mining. I may add that the difficulties of government are far greater when one industry has so large a representation.

As to the statement that the representatives of the other portions of the Colony “have acquired a power which they have used and continue to use toward the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields harshly, arbitrarily, and unjustly, and not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution”, it is difficult to restrain oneself in dealing with such untruthful and ungenerous charges.

If one single definite instance had been given — if one single remonstrance or petition to Parliament had ever been made — if a single instance of any motion in Parliament could be produced to support such charges, it might be possible to deal with the matters brought under notice, but as this cannot and is not even attempted to be done I can only reply to such general charges by an absolute denial of their truth.

The statement that the majority in Parliament “have passed laws and applied public money for their own special benefit and to our detriment, and have otherwise by unfair and wrongful legislation and administration oppressed the inhabitants of the Eastern Goldfields”, is an unworthy accusation, without any foundation whatever and devoid of truth. Such an accusation has never been made in Parliament by any one, nor has it ever been made by any public body on the Eastern Goldfields; on the contrary it has been stated many times by representative persons and others that in no country in the world has so much been done for the people of any goldfields as has been done in this Colony. In the short space of five or six years, in a country devoid of any permanent water, 400 miles of railways have been completed to most of the important places on the Eastern Goldfields; telegraphs have been erected to every important centre; public buildings have been erected in every township, those in Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie being in many cases finer than those in the metropolis; schools have been erected and opened at all important places; hospitals and qualified men supplied at every centre; Wardens' Courts have been established; police protection and postal arrangements have been furnished everywhere; roads, water supplies, public batteries, telephones, etc. have been provided — and all this in the brief space of five or six years. On the Murchison Goldfield, 270 miles of railway have been constructed, and all the above-named works and facilities have been also provided. A project for supplying the Coolgardie Goldfields with water is also in full course of being carried out at an estimated cost of two and a half million sterling; a dam is in course of construction across the Helena River, and will be completed in a year's time, which will cost £200,000, a contract for 60,000 steel pipes, to cost over

a million sterling is in hand, and one-seventh of the contract already completed. A contract for the pumps, to cost £242,000, has been let.

It is intended to pump five millions of gallons of fresh water per day to Kalgoorlie, via Coolgardie, distance of 360 miles, from a place about 25 miles from Perth, where a reservoir containing 4,600 millions of gallons of water will be conserved. This gigantic work was approved by Parliament in September, 1896, and will be finished in about 18 months time, and for which the Colony as a whole has made itself responsible.

It will be noted that no mention is made in the petition of this great work, or indeed of any of the works that have been completed or are in course of construction at the present time.

Paragraph 3. — From the generalities contained in paragraphs 1 and 2, of the Petition, it is satisfactory to find some particulars of what is complained of, which I will deal with seriatim.

Sub-Paragraph 1. — I have already dealt with this matter (vide Paragraph 2.)

Sub-Paragraph 2. — (a) This statement is absolutely incorrect.

The tariff of Western Australia (excepting New South Wales) is the lowest in Australia, and of course presses equally on the people of Perth and Fremantle and the rest of the Colony as on the people of the Eastern Goldfields. The Tariff Act was passed in 1893, soon after the Coolgardie goldfields were discovered, and when they were scarcely known, and long before most of the signatories to the Petition came to the Colony, and it has been amended three times since, but only in the direction of abolishing duties, and not by increasing duties, so that the taxation has been decreased and not increased ever since the Eastern Goldfields became prominent.

There has been no “increased taxation on food and other commodities” since 1893, but there have been several of these duties abolished, such for instance, as tea, sugar, kerosene, cocoa, coffee, molasses, rice and farinaceous foods, and dozens of other materials and commodities placed on the free list, while many others have had the duties reduced, so that the statement that “these duties have been so devised as to place the burden chiefly on us and oppress us for the advantage of their monopolies” cannot be true, as since the majority, if not all of the petitioners came to this Colony, no increases whatever have been made in the Tariff, but many duties have been abolished and reduced.

Sub-Paragraph (b). — This also is incorrect (vide the report of the Commissioner of Railways, Enclosure A, herewith). It will be seen that the rates on the Western Australian Railways are, as a general rule, the lowest in Australia.

Sub-Paragraph (c). — I am not aware of any “special taxes on the goldmining industry”, and this assertion is absolutely without foundation. The Dividend or Profits Tax passed last year applies to all incorporated companies doing business in the Colony — and is practically the same law as has existed in Queensland for the past ten years, and corresponds with the Income Tax in Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. There is, therefore, nothing exceptional about it.

Sub-Paragraph (d). — The Government have opposed a railway from Coolgardie to Esperance Bay because it is not required, though the Government last session introduced and carried through the Legislative Assembly a Bill for a railway from Coolgardie to Norseman, which is nearly half-way to Esperance, but the Bill was rejected by the Legislative Council. It is worthy of notice that this Bill did not receive the support of some of the representatives of the Eastern Goldfields in the Legislative Assembly, and was opposed by the leader of the Opposition. A railway to Esperance Bay is neither necessary nor justifiable, and would not pay, and I am of opinion that the Press agitation on the Eastern Goldfields for this railway is kept alive for political purposes and for no other reason.

Sub-Paragraph (c). - Without some detailed information it is difficult to deal with a general statement of this kind. The discovery of gold has necessitated the opening up of the country for agricultural purposes and for the development of the coal and timber trade. It has also necessitated works all over the Colony to meet the requirements of the people on the goldfields and elsewhere throughout the Colony. Harbour works have had to be provided in several places, and especially the port of Fremantle has been made available for the mail steamers at a cost of a million sterling. I am not aware of any "large and pressing needs on the goldfields being neglected", and give the statement an emphatic denial.

Paragraph 4. This paragraph infers that the Legislative Assembly and myself were opposed to the Commonwealth Bill being submitted to the vote of the people, and in so far as this inference is concerned, it is incorrect, as the Legislative Assembly approved of the Commonwealth Bill being referred to the people, together with the same Bill with the amendments proposed by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament, in order that the people might have the opportunity of expressing their opinion on both Bills, and be able to choose the one they considered best protected the interests of Western Australia. Even if a petition from 18,000 adult males residing in the Eastern Goldfields was rejected by the Parliament representing the people of the whole Colony, it is surely not a reason for granting the prayer of the petitioners, nor can such action be considered arbitrary, or in any way exceptional, seeing that the number was but a small proportion of the adult males on the Eastern Goldfields, and even with 5,000 adult males of the Western Districts, formed but a very much smaller proportion of the adult males of the whole Colony.

It may be possible for Western Australia to join the Australian Federation, but in the event of that hope not being realised at once it cannot be urged as a sufficient reason for the Petitioners to ask for Separation from this Colony, seeing that they have neither "discovered" the country in which they live, nor has "their capital" developed it.

Source: *Minutes and Votes and Proceedings of the Parliament of W.A., 1900, Special Session.*

RECOLLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS OF THE GOLDFIELDS

Most contemporary observers of goldfields life were men involved in prospecting or engineering. Few women wrote about their experiences, nevertheless extracts from two accounts have been included to provide different perspectives of goldfields life.

PROSPECTING METHODS

In countries blessed with abundant rainfall the nuggets can be separated from the dirt by a comparatively simple arrangement of sluices and cradles. In the drought-stricken west of Australia other means must be adopted, which I will endeavour to describe.

Having picked and dug out a certain amount of alluvial ground which, it is hoped, contains nuggets of various sizes, the digger then breaks up any lumps of clay or earth by means of a heavy billet of wood, or like implement, and this prepared dirt, as it is called, he treats in one of the following ways:—

1. By means of two iron dishes, in diameter 15 to 18 inches, and in depth 4 to 5 inches.

One dish is placed empty on the ground, the other, filled with the prepared dirt, is held up at arm's length above the head, with the mouth of the dish turned to the wind; the earth is then allowed to fall gradually into the dish beneath, all light particles and dust being blown away by the wind. Exchange of dishes having been made, the same process is repeated again and again. When there is only a small amount of dust left, the full dish is held in both hands, and given a circular movement, which causes the larger stones and pebbles to come to the surface; these are cleared away with the left hand, and a sharp look out is kept for nuggets or quartz specimens. This is repeated until nothing is left in the dish but a small quantity of dust, ironstone-gravel, and possibly fine gold, or small nuggets. The dish is then held up at an angle, and shaken from side to side until a compact little heap remains, to the bottom of which the gold will have sunk. The next and final operation is to hold the dish up to the mouth nearly horizontally, and blow the little heap across the dish. Any fine gold will then be seen lying on the bottom just under the nose of the operator.

Given a good hot summer's day, flies as numerous as the supply of water is scanty, clouds of dust, little or no breeze, and the same quantity of gold, and a few score of men working within an area of nine or ten acres, one is sometimes tempted to think that gold may be bought too dear. But the very lowest depths of despair, cannot compare with the heights of satisfaction, attained after a successful day's "dry-blowing".

2. By means of two dishes, and a tripod stand and pulley.

A tripod, twelve or fifteen feet high, is set up over a hard and smooth piece of ground. By a rope and a pulley the full dish is hauled up as far as required; the rope is then made fast and a string, fixed to the edge of the dish, is pulled, and the dish tipped up allowing the dirt to fall on to the prepared surface below, where it is swept up and treated as in the first method described. With a fair breeze this is a very effectual way of getting rid of the fine dirt.

3. By means of a sieve.

This method is only suitable when the soil is wet and sticky, or when the nuggets are fairly large and are not too rare.



Dry Blowing for Gold.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

On the first rush to Kurnalpi, when more alluvial gold was found in a short time than on any other field, sieves were almost the only implements used.

A sieve is very useful for prospecting the surface soil, being more portable and more rapidly worked than the dishes.

A combination of these three methods is found in the Dry-Blowing Machine.

Source: Carnegie, D.W., 1898: *Spinifex And Sand* (London, C.A. Pearson), pp.131-33.

EXPERIENCES ON THE EASTERN GOLDFIELDS AND MINING AREAS IN SOUTH WEST AUSTRALIA

While at Nannine in August 1892 there were rumours that gold had been found 120 miles east of Yilgarn. I met Mr. Woodward, the Government Geologist, who had just arrived in Nannine and he said that gold had been found by Arthur Bayley at Coolgardie. The news spread and men began to make for Geraldton.

I sold my horses and Clifton and I got away with the first crowd. We landed at Fremantle where Joe was met by his brothers Cecil and Waller. The next day we met Mat Crowe, Jack Doyle and others and decided to leave for York that afternoon.

The railway to York was the only line out of Perth at that time. The diggers made things lively in York. While there I went into a watchmaker's to get a key for an old watch, and he asked me if I would take a watch of Arthur Bayley's to him.

Mat Crowe, Joe Clifton and I mated together, and we left York September 1892, with a number of others from the Murchison. We gave a teamster £2/10/- each to cart tools, swags and tucker, amounting to one hundred-weight. We were told that rain had made the lakes boggy, so we took a supply of rope, to give the team a lift through any soft ground. (The first night, in throwing the swag off the waggon, my medicine got broken, but I got well without it.)

The distance to Yilgarn was about 160 miles, and on to Coolgardie about 120 miles. We made a record trip of 16 days, when we got a start the team had to travel. Tramping over the sandplains was tough going, and the weather was fairly warm. When near Yilgarn, we began to meet men of all sorts returning and they said there was no gold except in Bayley's claim.

At Yilgarn I visited Warden Finnerty, and when I told him that Jack Doyle, Jack Marr and other old Kimberley men were with me, he came and spoke to them and told us enough to encourage us to go on. From Yilgarn on, water was a trouble and we met dozens of poor devils, footsore and miserable, returning; some had not reached the Field. Gnarlbine Rocks, 18 miles from Coolgardie, was the last water, and from there it was carted to the 'find', and sold at 1/- a gallon. At times it was hard to get, as you had to wait your turn behind 50 or 100 men, as the water was measured out. As I had a watch for Bayley, I went to his camp, and he showed me a quantity of rich specimens which satisfied me as to there being gold in the country.

The three of us had only 30/- and a bit of tucker, so we had to stick in and get a few pennyweights where we could. At the end of the first week we had got enough to carry us on; two stuck to Fly Flat, while the other prospected for something better. We were camped near a tough crowd who were called "The Twelve Apostles" and Jimmy Reid was one. I found a good patch of surface alluvial on a rise near Bayley's claim, and Clifton and Crowe got their pegs in before it was rushed. Next morning we found that a man named Cook had pegged a quartz claim round us, so we had a roll up. Paddy Lawler was spokesman, and, as Warden Finnerty had arrived from Yilgarn the day before, we marched down to put the position before him, which I did.

He informed us that the surveyors had not decided whether the Field was on Crown Lands or Hampton Plains property, and that he was uncertain how to act. I said, "May we work the alluvial in the meantime?" And he said, "No, you must lodge your objection, and I will hear the case on my next visit, when the survey will be completed." We then left and started to work her out, which we did in three weeks, going over our tailings twice. If we had not worked the ground, others would have done so. We got 60 oz. out of the patch, which we needed. On the Warden's return the survey was completed, which made the Hampton Plains boundary about 1½ miles South of Bayley's and Ford's claim, which gave the Warden jurisdiction, as the find was on Crown Lands. The case was the first heard at Coolgardie; the Court House was a bush shed, and several hundred men rolled up. Just as proceedings started, a teamster got his team foul of a stump, and his language was blue. The Warden yelled, "Silence in the Court"; the crowd laughed, passed remarks and barracked the teamster.

Finally order was restored, and the case proceeded with. At that time, you were not supposed to work alluvial gold within 50 feet of a reef; this regulation was brought in by the then Minister of Mines, who the diggers dubbed "50 ft. Ned".

The Warden asked me if I had worked on the cap of the reef, as alleged by Cook, who had pegged us in with a Quartz Claim. I said "Yes". But the gold was alluvial, as at some period a water course had cut through the reef, which formed a bar, which caught the gold. I was asked to produce a sample, so I opened the usual dirty bit of rag, which had a few pennyweights in it. When the case was decided we got the alluvial and Cook the Quartz Claim, which he sold for a good price after Sylvester Brown floated Bayley's Reward Claim. We also found a fair amount on what was called the "Potato Flat", as there were some large nuggets found there.

There was no water to wash with, so those that had a change of clothes put on the clean ones on Sunday, and dry-blown those worn during the week by beating them against a tree to knock the stiffness out.

The process of dry blowing for gold was done with two dishes, and was a dusty job, especially so if there was no wind; with the wind one could put through more wash dirt, than by washing with water. You filled one dish with dirt and lay the other dish empty on the ground, then you held the full dish well up and let the contents fall gradually into the dish on the ground; the wind carried the light dust away, and the heavier fell in the dish, and this was done several times. Then with an action of the hands, the heavy material was shaken to the bottom of the dish, and the lighter worked to the top; then with the hand you rubbed the light stuff off; this was done a number of times till reduced to about a quarter of a dish. With a twist of the wrist, you kept throwing the dirt up, catching it, and each time you got rid of more of the lighter stuff. If there was any heavy gold, you knew by the sound when it fell in the dish. When the stuff was well reduced, by another action of the wrist the fine dirt was thrown to one side of the dish, and gold on the other side.

I remember when I was a new hand at dry blowing on the Kimberley Field, old Mick Murphy looked into the dish as I was wetting my fingers to pick up the fine gold, and said: "Boy, if you don't give them back to their mother to get more suck, I will report you to the Warden."

The men from the Northern Fields had an advantage over the new hands till they got into the way of dry blowing. We got a fair bit off Fly Flat by blowing the tailings left by the new hands. At this time water was getting short, and men were leaving for the coast.

I may mention here that Bayley and Ford did not claim to be the first to find gold in the Coolgardie country. Some two or three years before Bayley's find, MacPherson came into Yilgarn and he told Bayley that he had found gold over 100 miles East, but had to return owing to having nearly perished for want of water. MacPherson and Peterkin were the prospectors of Annean on the Murchison in 1891. They did not apply for the reward, but a man, I think by the name of Connelly, applied and got it. Bayley was at Annean, and he and Ford got enough gold on what was called Bayley's Island to fit them out with horses etc. to try their luck in the country east of Yilgarn, which MacPherson had told them about. The season was a good one for rain, so they made the great discovery which was the means of making Western Australia famous, as a gold producer, and which was also the forerunner of her continued prosperity. Jim Speakman was another fine bushman and prospector, and found gold north-east of Coolgardie in 1891. Some of the first men on Bayley's tracks were Jack Reidy and mate, Talbot, Baker and Fosser. J. Reidy later found Kurnalpi, about 90 miles east of Coolgardie; he was a fine bushman.

What was known as the "Big Blow" on Bayley's Reward was very rich, and yielded hundreds of ounces of specimen stone.

There was a mystery about the finding of Coolgardie. The skeletons of two men were found about 1 1/2 miles south of Fly Flat, and old pegs which had been in the ground for years. The men may have perished for water, or been killed by the blacks. Yilgarn was found by H. Anstey, and the principal men associated with Yilgarn in the early days were T. Risely, Cotreavy and Huggins.

About this time water was very short, as the soak at Gnarlbine was giving out, so men were leaving for the coast. We were getting a little gold, so stuck to it as long as possible; there was a moon so we tramped 18 miles to Gnarlbine at night, and next day a large number of men were waiting their turn to get a little water to carry them on to the next soak. Clifton and Crowe decided to camp at Gnarlbine, hoping it would rain and lay water in the rock holes. H. Cornish and I came on to Yilgarn, and on to York. The weather was hot, being in December, 1892, we had two days' spree and then took train to Fremantle.

Cornish and I had some oysters and stout, which made me ill for a week, not being accustomed to such luxuries. I took a passage in the S.S. "Rob Roy", for Busselton (Vasse as the place was called at that time).

I had some gold from Clifton to hand over to his brother Cecil Clifton, who was then Under-Secretary for Lands. The morning I went to take the train from Fremantle to Perth she whistled, and I ran across the line and jumped aboard without a ticket, and got into trouble over it. The station master told the guard to take my name and address. I told him that after 3 p.m. my address would be the S.S. "Rob Roy", bounded for the Vasse. The guard said: "Your luck is out, as you will be charged by the Department for crossing the line, getting on a train while in motion, and for not having a ticket." The guard asked me to spell my name, which I did. He thought I was giving him a false one, and said so. That annoyed me, and we had quite an argument which amused the other passengers. I reached the Lands Office about 10.30 a.m. and after handing over the gold to Mr. Clifton, I told him of my trouble in the train, so he rang up the station master at Fremantle, and spun him a yarn which squared things for me, so I got away on the boat. Harry Yelverton was a passenger. Glin Layman met me, and took me to his home at Wonnerup, where I stayed some weeks, and put on a bit of condition.

I then went to Greenbushes and fossicked for tin, and camped with Jim Walker, who later had a station on the Lyons River. His brother, Jack Walker, was well known in the North-West and died there. While at Greenbushes I had a wire from Maitland, who was with his brother in Mildura, N.S.W., saying he was coming to Murchison. Through that wire I received a letter from G.L. Marsden, who was in the Perth Telegraph Office, and had been on the "Barque Gateside" with Maitland and me in 1884. When on my way again to Coolgardie, a few weeks later, I looked Marsden up, and also met Will Cummins, who was in the Government Service, and had known my sister in New York. Cummins was afterwards Warden of the Kimberley Field, and died there, and Marsden died in Singapore. They had both knocked about the world a lot, and their tales would fill a book. Sylvester Brown had floated Bayley's Reward. After returning to Perth I called on Winthrop Hackett (the Mr. Hackett whom I had met with Mr. Cecil Clifton) and he gave me a letter to Sylvester Brown, who was at the Weld Club. I told Mr. Sylvester Brown that I wished to get a job on Bayley's so he gave me a letter to the manager, Beaglehole, and I went to York, and tramped again to the Field in July, 1893. The day after reaching Coolgardie, I went to Bayley's, and the manager told me to start on the following Monday. He showed me 300 oz. in a prospecting dish; asked me if I could use a hammer and drill and explosives, which I answered to his satisfaction. Hannan's (now Kalgoorlie) had just been found, but the trouble was water, and that was 2/- a gallon, carted from a soak in Hampton Plains. On thinking it over I decided to give Beaglehole's job the 'go by', so I carried my swag the 25 miles; took two days to do it, and landed at Hannan's after a dry and dusty tramp. There was rain at this time, which put water in Hannan's Lake, which is about 3½ miles away, and also filled some holes.

I got a few ounces in a week, but the best ground I worked was on a run near the Red Hill. The Red Hill run was about the richest, and some thousands of ounces were won. There was also a lot of surface patches that were good, and easily worked. I think Hannan's (Kalgoorlie) turned out more alluvial than Coolgardie.

The following finds were made later: The White Feather (Kanowna) prospectors, Percy Larkin

and Jerry McAuliffe. Percy and Larkin also found the Red Hill on Lake Lefroy. They were both old North-West men. Other finds were Broad Arrow, Kurnalpi, Bardoc, Menzies, Bulong, Norseman, and a number of finds on the Hampton Plains blocks.



Prospecting 'Show' near Coolgardie.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

Dick Egan found a rich leader about two miles from the main camp, and called it the "Croesus". The mulga was very thick all over the run of the country. One day after paying a visit to the Croesus, I came on a camp where there were two men. One was Jim Kelly, who offered me a job at £4 per week and water, to help him sink a 50 ft. shaft. I asked him if they paid in cash or shin plasters (cheques); he said cash. I took the job on as I liked the country, and wanted to get away from the crowd. It was water I was after, as I would be able to prospect on Sundays and any spare time.

Pearce had pegged the Boulder and other blocks for Brookman who represented an Adelaide syndicate. They were called Brookman's sheep runs, and were held for weeks without manning them, and all sorts of points worked to hold them. M.H. Jephson was the first Warden.

One Saturday and Sunday I prospected, which led to my finding the "Brown Hill". I had sunk an 8 ft. shaft on the flat below the Croesus, blew the bottom and got a few colours. The weather was red hot, so had a bit of tucker, which I remembered was some damper and sardines. I filled the pipe and picked up a small bit of quartz to strike a match; looked it over and threw it away. I picked up another small piece of iron stone and quartz, and it had a couple of colours of gold in it. I then traced the stone up the rise, and when they cut out, I started to dry-blow the loam, and got a few spotty colours up to a certain point, where they ended. I had finished my work with the Block 45 men and on the Monday started a costean across the country. There was no outcrop where the small stones and

colours ended, but farther up the rise there was an outcrop of white quartz, which ran east and west. I had not cut the costean more than ten feet, when I struck the quartz and iron stone leader, which had shed the small specimens I had picked up lower down the rise. I pegged and applied for six acres, which made a block claim on the True Blue, held by Murray Dixon and Cruikshanks. I sank on the leader and where she junctioned with the lode material she carried nice gold, and I dollied some ounces. I found that the lode matter carried a little gold, so started a shaft, which carried down 15 ft. by throwing the dirt from shelf to shelf and finally on to the surface. This shaft led me to be the first to discover what later proved to be the lode matter which made the Golden Mile famous. The lode was composed of iron stone, with small quartz veins, greenstone, diorite, and porphyry, all decomposed in the shallow workings.



Miners' Bush Camp — Circa. 1900.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

About this time water got very scarce, and general exemption was granted, so I came to the coast, and put in some time at Greenbushes Tin Field, and it was on this visit that I first met Graham Price, and we formed a friendship which lasted till his death.

Returned per boot to the Field (1894) and took Ted Mansfield and Bill Jones in as mates with me in Brown Hill. Neither of them knew much about the game, but Jones was a fine worker. One day I found on the south boundary of our lease, a few colours, and Jones and I put in a couple of shots and blew the cement capping of the lode, which showed nice fine gold. I applied for another six acre lease, and had the luck to get the whole of the underlay inside our pegs. I believe the lode was worked to 800 ft. before she ran out of the leases.

As Mansfield's and Jones' money went in tucker and water etc., they got their tails down, but I felt sure that we had a good show and used to say: "It will marry all of us." Which it did.

I still have a memo from the Warden of the East Coolgardie Goldfield: "To F. Cammilleri, Registered holder of Mining Leases No. 165 and No. 596. Kindly inform me at your earliest convenience whether the Survey of your leases are to your satisfaction or not.

M.H. JEPHSON

Date: 6/11/1894. Warden, Kalgoorlie."

The lode material at the north end of the Brown Hill did not continue into the Croesus, as a fault occurred in the country. The Croesus men did a lot of work without success. Tom Duff, who now runs the Merredin Hotel, was one of them; he was a good worker, and was the best of the Croesus men. They dollied a lot of gold at that time, but some of them knocked it down as they got it, at cards and the two-up schools, which hundreds patronised.

On one occasion Beaglehole, who was still manager of Bayley's Reward, turned up to see what we had. He said: "You are the man who brought a letter from Sylvester Brown." I said: "Yes, but decided to chance my luck at Hannan's." Paddy Hannan and two others were with him. I showed them a prospect of very fine gold, dollied out of decomposed diorite. Hannan appeared to doubt it being genuine so he crushed and washed a prospect, which showed a fine tail of gold in the dish. I remarked that the old Cornish saying of 'where it is, there it is', applied to the Western Australian Fields generally and Hannan's (Kalgoorlie) in particular.

On Saturday evenings we went into Hannan's for our week's supply of tucker, and one night met Ned Saunders, who had just arrived on the field. He had come down from the North-West with a fair chamois of gold, but had knocked it down in Perth, and had not a bean. I told him that I wanted a man, and if he liked to take a job and keep away from the pubs, he could come along. He was a fine worker and good company, and kept his word for two months about the drink.

Before the condensers were started we used to carry water twice a week, from the Lake to the claim, in two large waterbags on a yoke, as the Chinamen do. We used to meet others at the same game, and several times met an elderly man named Williams. In talking, he mentioned that he came from Port Adelaide, and I told him that it was the first place I came to in Australia, in the "Barque Outalpa" 600 tons, from London, in 1878, taking a cargo of wool from Lacedep (Kingston). Williams said he was one of the lumpers who jammed the wool into the old barque.

The first condensed water was rotten stuff, and tasted like ink, and was the cause of a good deal of sickness, but later on it improved.

I have heard it stated that the lode material was first opened up on the Great Boulder Mine, which is not correct, as the lode was first found on the Brown Hill Lease, No. 165, on the north-east boundary. On different occasions Pearce, Brookman, Cudmore, Bob Pettigrew and others, came to see what we had, and samples from the lode were dollied and washed. The lode matter was not located on the Boulder till the Company started to cut down an underlay shaft which had been sunk on a leader.

About this time things were unpleasant, and when Mr. Mercer of Berwick Moreing & Co., offered us a price cash, and shares on a three months option — they had to pay wages at £4 per week per man, and supply water, tools and explosives, we decided to let him have the option. At this time it was not a mine, but a good surface show. Before the option expired, the lode material improved wonderfully in size and values, so the deal was completed. The Great Boulder and Brown Hill, I believe, were the first mines floated at Kalgoorlie.

I had laid two old prospectors on to five acres, south of us and adjoining the Iron Duke. They sold the five acres to Captain Le Page, of the Hampton Plains, for £400, and it was floated in London for £60,000. This was the Brown Hill Extended. The lode was not found, or the Brown Hill rich shoot, till a depth of 800 ft. was reached, and then it was on the boundary of the lease, and soon dipped out of their ground.

Later a German Company erected a Dry Crushing Plant on the Brown Hill, and when it was started the manager sent me an invitation to be present, and said the Company would defray all my expenses. I was unable to attend. This Dry Plant was not a success.

The famous shoot which I opened up on the north end of the Brown Hill Lease, traversed through the corner of the Brown Hill about 1,000 ft. in depth, entered the Associated and cut out near the boundary. The length of the shoot, or ore body, was 3,300 ft., the width being about 150 ft. and the height about 70 ft. This ore body produced 1,325,000 tons, which yielded gold to the value of about £7,000,000. This pipe of ore was the richest found in Western Australia, and the telluride of gold was the highest on the Field.

Jones and I put in some time prospecting about the Lake, and got gold, ironstone and quartz near Mt. Robertson, but could not find what shed it. We then tramped to Broad Arrow, and got a few ounces of alluvial, and as water got short, we made for the coast. The railway to Southern Cross was up as far as Merredin, so we travelled to Northam in a ballast truck, and there we were both able to get a bath, which was badly needed.

From there I went to Perth and then went on to Wonnerup House near Busselton where I was married to Kate Layman in January, 1895; we then decided to visit my people in America and then go on to England; we returned to Western Australia in March 1896.

A few weeks later Glin Layman and I decided to go prospecting on the fields. At this time there was a supposed gold find at North Dandalup, and while we were in Perth getting an outfit of packs and other gear, we met Mr. William Patterson, of the Agricultural Bank, who told us that he had seen splendid specimens at Dandalup. We returned to Brunswick Junction with our outfit, and packed up our horses and blackboy. We went to Dandalup and found the Darling Range pegged for miles, and a large number of men. Menzies was one of the moving spirits, but he, and a number of Perth men were taken down by the man who had the supposed Golden Hole, which was guarded day and night.

We hung about and one morning, before daylight Layman and I got down the hole, and we saw gold in, or on the stone. Layman got stone from one side of the hole, and I from the other, and got away without waking the guard in the tent. We rubbed the gold off the stone with a knife, and then dollied with stone, and there was not a colour in it. We left, and let the others find the game out.

When gold was found at Donnybrook later on, it was thought that it was another Dandalup, and it was difficult to persuade people otherwise.

In June 1896, Layman and I left Brunswick for Coolgardie, with six pack-horses and three saddles and passed through the Williams and Narrogin, where there was only one store, run by one of the Chippers. We had a set of flat-sided billies made in Perth, but between Williams and Narrogin, one of the horses, which was a bit of an outlaw, got away with the pack, and although we put in a day on his tracks, we never got him. There was not a billy in the Narrogin store, so we used a jam tin to make tea in until we reached Coolgardie.

The weather and bush were very wet, and the blowflies were awful, and blew saddles and blankets, but were not so bad when we got out of the heavy timber. We made a fairly good course, from one granite rock to another, as Layman was a good bushman.

We struck the old Coolgardie Road a few miles from Gnarlbine Rocks. It was a tough trip, as water and grass were short. We stayed at Coolgardie for two days, and it cost thirty shillings per bag for chaff for the horses. Met Graham Price, and he told us that there was good grass at Broad Arrow, so we made for there. There had been a good rain, and we found the Broad Arrow Lake full, and there were hundreds of ducks on it; we shot a number. The horses soon picked up, as there was an abundance of grass.

A few days after arriving at Broad Arrow, we found some nice floaters not far from a show called the King of the Hills, and finally found the reef. We sunk a shaft to 40 ft. and then a hard bar cut her out. Captain Hamby and his son were managing a mine at the Arrow; they came out recently from England on the same ship as I did.

We then made for the Hampton Plains, and after putting in some months, without any luck, we sold our horses, and returned to Perth, and came on to Busselton. I then made a number of trips prospecting for tin in the South-West, and also visited the Eastern Goldfields, as I was interested in several mines, and travelled about with Graham Price. On one occasion we drove to Menzies to have a look at the Lady Shenton Mine, and from there to Speakman's where there was a fine plant of machinery, but up to that time the mine had not developed well. We returned to Coolgardie, where I met Tom Tobias, whom I had known on the Kimberley Field; also old Collie, from Hall's Creek, who had a vegetable garden on the flat near the town. He was a peculiar old chap, and never had a mate. I also met Bill Frost who had just returned from Klondike; he had gone there from New Guinea — from the Tropics to the Arctic regions, which shows what men will tackle after gold.

Graham Price was the legal manager of the Hampton Plains Co. and as he had to visit the Butterfly Mine at Red Hill, I went with him. The water in the mine was saltier than the sea, and caused sores on the miners' hands, or where their clothes chafed them. While there on a Sunday, the temperature was 108 under a large bush shed, but as there was a cricket match between Red Hill team and the boys from Tiger Bay, we went to see it. The match was played on Lake Lefroy, and when the ball was hit, it travelled a long way on the smooth and dry surface of the Lake. I remember one fellow singing out when the ball was hit: "She's off to Widgiemooltha", which was a mining camp on the south end of the Lake, and quite twelve miles away.

All the gullies worked for alluvial, empty into the Lake, and possibly gold will be found in it. The country is high and rough, and at night, when the wind was strong, from the south you could almost imagine you were close to the sea, as it made a similar noise, like breakers on rocks.

Source: *Early Days*, Vol. VII, Part 1 1969, pp.7-17.

MEMORIES OF A GOLDFIELDS MOTHER

In the second week of June my husband wrote to say they had received splendid rains on the fields and that I would soon be leaving Albany. I got busy right away and less than a fortnight later had made the necessary arrangements with my landlady, found a buyer to take all the goods I had no further use for, and cooked food for the two-day journey from Southern Cross to Coolgardie.

We left Albany by train on Tuesday afternoon, June 21, 1895, and late on Wednesday night reached Southern Cross. A couple on the train helped me to a boarding house they knew and I stayed there until Friday morning when Cobb and Company's bus coach left at 7.30 o'clock. It was cold and frosty. My children were all warmly clad with coats and gloves, but their feet were freezing, so dear old Tom Barnfield, a South Australian broker from Adelaide Stock Exchange, took my little boy, aged

three-and-a-half, and my five-year old girl by the hands and ran them up and down to warm their feet. He soon had them laughing and happy.

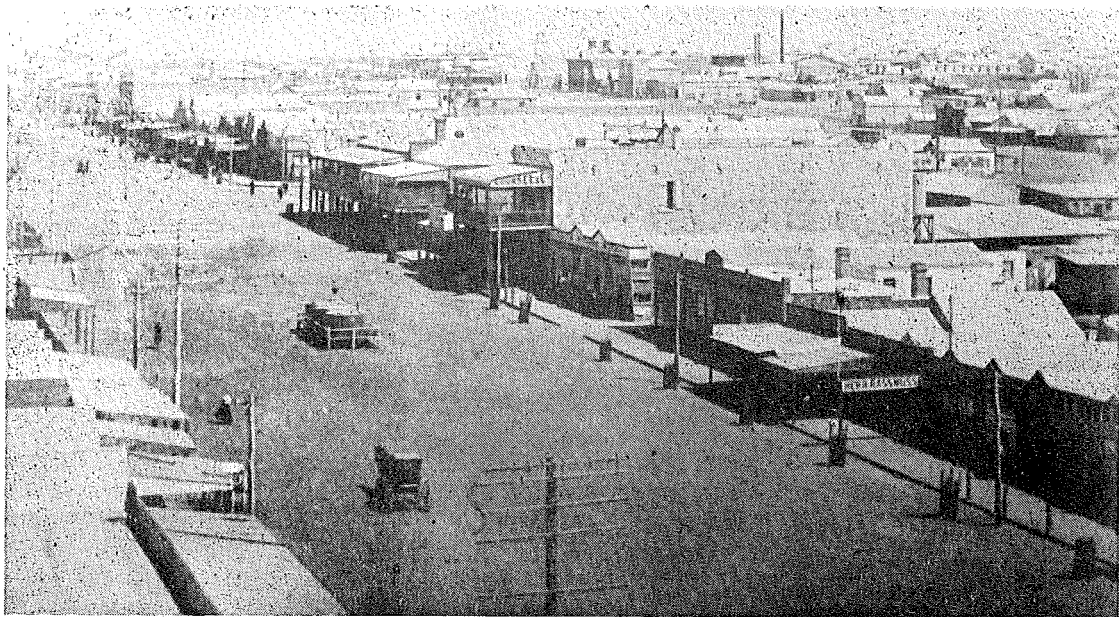
The coach passenger list included Mr. Shaw, the Mayor of Coolgardie, a French buyer just out from Paris, five other men, myself and four children. The Frenchman noticed a plate on the coach which read: "Licensed to carry six". Before we got on board I heard Mr. Shaw say to him: "A treat in store for us this morning – a mother and four children coming!"

French Courtesy

At midday there was a half hour for lunch. The Frenchman said: "May I take these little ones for dinner, Madame – yes? I have three just like this in Paris. You are a brave lady. Your husband he must be a happy man to have you take this journey."

I did not go to lunch as my baby wanted attention. When the men came back, three of them had tea, sandwiches and cakes for me so I did not have to go without. We had several changes of horses and our journey finished at midnight that night. As it did, the horse bell was ringing and a man's voice was inviting passengers to roast turkey and green peas.

I was shown a room with a double and a single bed, and after a hurried sponge down for my little ones and myself, we were all soon asleep. At 4.30 next morning the maid came in with hot water. She took my order for breakfast which she brought to the room -- even warm milk for the children. Everyone was exceptionally kind to me and helped me in so many ways that I was happy when the coach left at 6 a.m. just after the break of day. I cannot remember stopping for lunch, but recollect that it was only a matter of a few minutes while they changed the horses. It seemed a very long day, and my eight-months-old baby seemed so much heavier than the day before, but he was such a good little fellow.



Coolgardie at its Peak – Circa. 1898.
(Courtesy Battye Library)

About 7 p.m. Mr. Shaw said to me: "Well, Mrs. Richards, you will soon see your husband; there are the lights of Coolgardie. And before we part I must congratulate you on having the four best children I've ever travelled with." I said: "Thank you, Mr. Shaw. I heard your comment at Southern Cross!" He laughed and said: "I do heartily apologise."

No Town Accommodation

As I had sent a telegram from Southern Cross that I would arrive by Saturday's bus, my husband, my uncle and two cousins were waiting for me. We all went along to a restaurant and no one talked much until the meal was over. I sensed something was wrong and confirmed it when Puppa said to me: "My dear, why didn't you wait another month? I haven't a place ready for you, and there's not a shred of accommodation in the town."

In the town was a two-storied hotel, but it had not been passed for tenants and had neither staff nor appointments. Uncle knew the proprietor, so he went along and told him our predicament. The proprietor went upstairs with uncle and gave him mattresses and bedding in an empty room, for which we were truly thankful. We found the bathroom in the morning, but we had to go across the street for our breakfast.

It was a lovely bright morning, and after breakfast I persuaded Puppa to take us to his camp which was over half a mile out. There were three claims, Faith, Hope and Charity. The one Puppa worked was Faith. An Englishman was overseer, but knew nothing of mining and left everything in my husband's hands. Our camp was near a hill which they called Arizona, and what a camp! Puppa had a 6-by-8 tent and his bunk inside was four forked sticks driven into the ground with two 6 ft. poles across them and two oat bags for mattress. The table was a box turned upside down on four more sticks driven into the ground. What fascinated the children was the big bush shed with table and seats all made of poles in the ground, and boards nailed on for seats.

The hanging safe was a chaff bag; billy-cans and kerosene tins were the cooking utensils. The fireplace, about 6 ft. from the shed was built round with stones and tins to shelter the flames. In one corner of the shed a box was let into the ground, with a lid on it. That was for the bread and brownie (a cake) which Puppa had made the day before.

Making the Best of it

After we had something to eat, some of Puppa's friends came along and we had a talk, and I decided to stay and make the best of it. The two men, Frank and Alf Dobbie, who had been "batching" with Puppa, were splendid. They took some bags and went off to gather "West Australian feathers", which I found later were the tops of the shrub which grew about the place. They were put on the floor of the tent, which had been cleared out of everything, and then covered with clean bags which someone had brought. Uncle went into town and brought back two new rugs, for it was June, and the nights were very cold.

In spite of the drawbacks I was happy and made the best of everything. The children were warmly clothed, but each day they stayed in the "cubby" as they called it, until nearly midday. We were there for six weeks before our luggage came by team from Southern Cross, and by that time the men had helped Puppa to erect a big 6 ft. walled room with an iron fireplace in the end. We were very happy and comfortable with our White Rose furniture (made from White Rose kerosene cases) with seats smartly dressed in red twill and floral cretonne.

I liked Coolgardie, although we were isolated some distance off the Burbanks road, and I was the only woman around for quite a way. My greatest inconvenience was the shortage of water. We had

a 50-gallon tank which cost £1/5/- to fill, and it had to last me three weeks. It was condensed water and it was some time before I enjoyed my cup of tea. Fruit was very dear and I missed it after our plentiful supply in South Australia, and vegetables were just as expensive. I remember paying 1/- for one potato which weighed a pound. One thing I did enjoy was the nice butter we got in bright 1 lb. tins for 1/8. In the winter it was quite hard and I could keep it so in a small cellar I had.

A Woman Neighbour

It was about six months before I had a woman neighbour. She came from Broken Hill looking for her husband. He had written her, sending money for the journey, telling her to wire him when leaving and he would meet her at Coolgardie. She did as he advised, but there was no one to meet her and her boy aged ten, when they arrived. She came to us and made enquiries, but we had not heard of him, and when she told us the name of the mine where he worked, my husband promised to go there and inquire. He did so, and found the woman's husband was taken ill some days before, and had been rushed into hospital. She was very distressed when she came back to us after visiting him. The doctor told her that her husband had the Broken Hill lead in his system, and that it was doubtful if he would ever work again. They had only a few pounds between them, so we helped them to move on to our lease. They erected two tents, a bedroom and a living room, within speaking distance of us, and thus I came to know my first neighbour. She was in her late fifties, but a hardy soul and quite a fine character. She said: "You know my dear, I can cook and I can wash, but I want to make a home for Bill when he is able to leave hospital and for my boy to go to school." For weeks she went to the town and washed five days a week, which paid her well, but I could see her gradually failing. It was the walking early and late which was too much for her. I advised her to call at the hotels and make arrangements to bring the washing home, but she said she could not write, let alone keep accounts. I then offered to count the things and make out the accounts, and she was truly grateful. The landladies were very delighted with the idea, and she got more washing than she could do with, and by the time her Bill came home to her, she was earning over £5 a week — a lot of wages for a woman in those days. From then on she only went to town twice a week, as her boy could bring the washing home twice a week when returning from school and deliver at odd times when going to school in the mornings. She soon became prosperous, and being a cheerful soul, was great company for me.

Bayley-street Blaze

One night a few months after she came I heard her calling. I had just put the children to bed. As I ran out I saw a bright reflection in the sky, and hurrying to the top of Arizona Hill, saw the whole of one side of Bayley-street was ablaze. What a sight it was! The shortage of water made it difficult to do anything, and the dwellings and most of the shops made only of canvas, were like so much tinder wood. They were throwing wet bags and rugs on to try to smother the flames. It burnt itself out at last, but did a lot of damage.

Soon after the fire the Faith closed down and Puppa went to Hannan's, as that was developing well. Our two elder children had started school at the Church of England school, and I was amazed one day to see my little girl being led home by a man dressed in Khaki. When he came closer I saw he was a clergyman. I went to the door and had my first meeting with Mr. (now Canon) Collick. He had seen my girl crying outside the school. Her brother had left her to see a fight between two boys around the corner, and she was frightened to come home alone. Mr. Collick said: "Do you know where you live?" She said: "Yes, sir, on the Faith." "Well that's a nice thing to live on. Can you take me there?" That was 52 years ago. Mr. Collick has no doubt forgotten that little episode, for he has done so many kindnesses since.

Our next move was to the mine at Boulder. We moved into a comfortable home which we really

appreciated, and we were very happy even though living on a mine meant eternal dust. My baby by this time was 2½ years old and such a bonnie little chap. He went out to play with the others one Saturday morning, and a couple of hours later I saw my eldest boy carrying him back inside. "Is he hurt?" I asked. "No", answered the lad. "He said he wanted to come home, and I saw blood on his legs."

My Heart Stood Still

When I looked at him my heart stood still. "Run and ask Mrs. Babbage to come over", I said. She was my nearest neighbour, and a fine capable woman. She said she had seen a similar case some time before, but advised me to get the doctor, which I did. The doctor attended the little fellow for three days, but he died on the Tuesday afternoon and was buried the next day.

I just don't know how I survived that time. I was in a delicate state of health, and for the little one to be taken from me at that time seemed the last straw. But I lived through it. We could not get help anywhere, but a few days after the funeral a friend sent me a woman to do the washing, for which I was truly grateful.

Source: *Early Days*, Vol. 10, December, 1948, pp.12-16.

KALGOORLIE – BOOM

Hannan's, or Kalgoorlie as it is now called, is 24 miles from Coolgardie, and as I took my comfortable seat in the railway carriage, sped along the once forsaken desert and arrived at the now famous City of Gold, with its broad streets and splendid buildings, it seemed incredible that such a transformation should take place in a few short years. It would be difficult to point to any place in the world that has developed so rapidly. During their short existence Kalgoorlie and the Boulder City have turned out over 31 tons of gold, and Coolgardie has been quite outstripped by her younger sister. I think, when gold is measured by the ton, the colony from which it comes may be fairly considered marvellous. It is only seven years since Hannan and Harrigan threw themselves down to rest on the ground at the eastern corner of what is now Kalgoorlie, and, fortunately for thousands of lucky people, discovered gold, and now, as far as the precious metal is concerned, Kalgoorlie is the hub of Australia. Kalgoorlie is a well-laid-out city. Bicycle tracks are laid down on the 30-foot wide paths, electric lights are everywhere, trees have been planted in the broad streets, and by-and-by will afford shade in the hot days for which Kalgoorlie is noted. The new post-office is a splendid building, and has cost £40,000. The warden's and other public offices are also on a grand scale. There are several magnificent hotels, especially the Railway, opposite the station, and the Palace, covering half an acre of ground, which I have made my headquarters. This hotel is far the best on the goldfields of Western Australia; every luxury is obtainable; it has a spacious dining-room with electric fans always going, exquisite drawing-rooms, and good attendance.

There are several newspapers, the chief of which is the *Kalgoorlie Miner*, edited by Mr. Kirwan, who identifies himself in every way with the interests of the people as well as with his editorial duties; the miners have a staunch friend in him. There are many fine shops, especially jewellers, where gold nuggets of all shapes and sizes made into handsome ornaments may be bought. Land at Kalgoorlie is daily increasing in value. An offer of £100 a foot was refused by an acquaintance of mine for a plot she is lucky enough to own. Some mining-men, including the well-known Mr. Zeb. Lane, were dining at the next table to myself on one occasion, and one of them remarked that he was sure that in a few years there would be 300,000 people in Kalgoorlie. You may be sure, holding that opinion, that the gentleman was looking out for investments. A handsome new theatre is being erected in Hannan's Street. At present the Miners Institute supplies the entertainments. The suburbs of Piccadilly and

Mullingar stretch far beyond the town site, and the three miles to Boulder City are fast being built on, and will shortly form one continuous busy road. Three fine breweries supply the needful refreshment to thirsty souls, and altogether Kalgoorlie is a splendid goldfields city, but the summer weather is almost indescribable. One of the days had been unbearably hot and oppressive; but dark clouds were overhead, and I said, "Soon we shall have a rain storm, which will cool the air." My friends whom I was visiting laughed, and one of them, with a merry twinkle in the eye, said, "There will probably be a storm, but you will soon get accustomed to this kind of weather; *wait awhile*." In the evening Fitzgerald's "Great World Circus" being in town, we decided to risk the "storm", make up a party, and go to the performance. All went well until about nine o'clock, when suddenly came "the dreadful thunder" - the clouds had broken; then came, not the rain, but dust, dust, *dust* - red, stifling, blinding, and terrible; for the roof of the "Great World Circus" had been completely lifted off by the red-dust fiend, while with his breath he had extinguished almost every light in the tent. Crash! whiff! whirl! and the "willy willy" had madly danced far away. One minute's terrified silence and then through the remaining red haze could be seen the circus performers bravely continuing their entertainment as if nothing had happened; and blended with the echo of the distant din could be heard the strains, "Gaily the music go-o-es, so gaily." But the vast audience of upwards of 3,000 people, who, though the roar had been so strangely "hush", had witnessed enough excitement for one night, gradually filed out through the rent of the swaying canvas wall, my friends and I amongst them, arriving home very white-faced, underneath the brown-red war paint so cunningly and weirdly distributed on us by the fiend. After wiping the dust out of my own eye, I remembered the twinkle that I had seen in some one else's, and I laughingly exclaimed, "Was that the 'thunderstorm' you recommended me to 'wait' for?"

"We had a narrow escape", tersely and grimly (I had almost written grimly), remarked my friend; but he must have rubbed the twinkle out of his eye and the dust into his temper for he declined to see the joke; however, as mirth is catching, we were soon a merry party once more, and I was regaled with "willy willy" stories of roofs being carried for miles, and of houses being torn down by these huge "dust spouts", and, as at intervals I heard the "thunder" in the distance, I could well believe the dancing, whirling devils capable of anything. Many good theatrical companies now visit the goldfields, but the expenses of a travelling company are very large, the railway fare from Perth being about six pounds each return ticket first class, and four pounds second (there is no third class in the colonies). The hotel tariff is from twelve shillings per day (Palace sixteen), the smallest drinks (a big item in such a hot and thirsty country) are a shilling each, and half a crown is the usual price for a bath, as before said. There are no large theatres on the fields, but the managers make the prices for admission high, the community not caring how much they spend if they really wish to see anything; in fact, that is one of their little worries, they are always looking out for something to spend their money on. Horses, yes, the best procurable, and they are a very high price. Champagne is from twenty-five shillings a bottle, and that is the first drink the lucky miner calls for; his great mania is "shouting", as they call it, that is treating wine to everybody they know. "Wives and families to spend it on?" "Oh, yes; but they are on the other side", meaning the Eastern colonies; "I always send them plenty to live on, and when I've made my pile (fortune) I'll go home with it; in the meantime I must do something to make life endurable here", and the Hebe at the bar smiles sweetly, and for it receives perhaps a diamond bracelet. I am not speaking of the miner who earns his weekly wages, but of the man who is lucky in his speculations of shares, or who owns part of a mine, and when they strike rich, as they call it, spends his money lavishly. I sat on the Palace Hotel balcony in Hannan Street one afternoon and watched the crowd passing up and down; I was surprised to see the women so richly dressed, elegant Redfern tailor-made gowns and Worth carriage costumes (although no carriages were to be seen, but plenty of buggies with dust-covered hoods) were much in evidence; many of the rich women send to London and Paris I am told for their gowns. Occasionally a plainly-dressed woman in a tweed or Assam silk costume with neat sailor hat would pass, probably a mine manager's wife or English visitor, but the majority of the women of the goldfields spare no expense in the style and richness of their dresses. At the present time the population of Kalgoorlie, its suburbs, and Boulder City is nearly 60,000. In a very short time electric tramways will be

running, and extensive swimming baths are now being built. There are many good churches, which shows that in the rush for gold the welfare of the soul is not neglected. Goldfields places are usually looked on as somewhat lawless. I can assure my readers, however, that those in Western Australia are an exception.

Over the hill, not to the poorhouse, but to the rich Mount Charlotte Mine, I one morning took my way. From the hill a splendid view is obtained, and for three miles beyond nearly all to be seen is mines, their poppet-heads and batteries showing distinct against the sky. The manager of the Mount Charlotte Mine was away, so I could not get much information, and so, like Jo in "Bleak House", I had to move on. The next mine is Hannan's Reward, where gold was first struck (found) at Kalgoorlie; and although such wonderful results came from this place at first, the mine has now been outpaced by many others. I passed dozens more of mines, but did not stop until I got to the Brown Hill Mine, under the control of Messrs Bewick, Moreing & Co., one of the finest on the field. This mine, as its name indicates, is on the top of a hill, and is a most imposing-looking one; wealth seems to speak from the buildings around it. The manager's house is a splendid bungalow style of place, replete, I believe, with every modern comfort. Outside is a tennis court and other evidences of the manager's tastes. The offices are large and convenient. The manager, Mr. Feldman, being away in England, I did not go down the mine, therefore cannot tell you anything about it; but Dr. Diehl, who represents the London and Hamburg Gold Recovery Company in connection with the Brown Hill Mine, has lately made a most interesting discovery *re* the treatment of sulphide ore, likely to be of much value in the mining world. From this place I went to the Croesus, thence to Block 45, another mine that has given big results. Of course there are many mines that have not proved as rich as those mentioned. Mining seems to be like fishing: there may be any number of fine fish, but it does not fall to the luck of all anglers to catch them.

Away again past more mines, down through Golden Valley, now past the Oroya, North Boulder, Bank of England, and Coolgardie Mint — all splendid mines; then up the highest hill at the Boulder, as this part of the goldfield is called, where I came to the great Australian mine (Associated). From this place one has a glorious view of the other great mines on the Golden Mile, so-called on account of the marvellous quantity of gold that has been and is still being extracted from its depths — Lake View, Great Boulder, Ivanhoe, Boulder Perseverance, and Golden Horseshoe. They present a magnificent spectacle. It is almost impossible to describe in words the wonders of the golden hills on which these wonderful mines are placed.

Close to the Golden Mile is a small square of business places — hotels, stores, different kinds of little shops, and a brewery; this was the beginning of Boulder City, but in consequence of the influx of people and the increasing prosperity of the miners, it was found necessary to establish the Miners' City, a mile farther away, the intervening ground being required for mining. According to mining laws any ground taken up for that purpose cannot legally be built on, but miners are allowed to camp there on sufferance, and the area is therefore dotted over with mushroom-like tents and canvas houses.

The Australia is the largest of the Associated Mines. Everything seen is of the latest date; every appliance that man's ingenuity can devise is here. To convey the stone along the open cut to the mill there is a wonderful aerial tramway composed of wire cables, on which the trucks run high up in the air; it is a marvellous way of conveyance, but more peculiar still is what is here called the "Flying Fox", which has an iron bucket on a single rope of twisted wire. Machinery on the top of the shaft and above the crushing mill conveys it to its destination; then the bucket empties as if by magic, and flies back to the bottom of the open cut, a quarter of a mile journey, to be again replenished. It seems almost incredible that a girl ever had the courage to take that journey, and yet one actually performed the perilous feat. The manager in jest had dared her to do it on her visit to the mine, and she, being a strong-willed Scotch girl, took him at his word, got into the new aerial car, flew through the air, and arrived quite safe at the bottom of the cut, while everyone present held their breath with amazement; and I believe that all the workmen, on seeing a pretty girl deposited at their feet in place of the usual prosaic empty bucket, stood in consternation and amazement, wondering what the clouds were going to rain

next. The underground workings of the Australia are brilliantly lit with electric light, which shows up the gleam of the rich gold through the ores so beautifully as you peer through the light into the magnificent chambers of oxidised or sulphide ore, you can almost imagine yourself in Aladdin's Cave. On the 300-foot level there is a magnificent chamber or stope, 16 ft. high and 40 ft. wide, from which thousands of tons of ore have been taken, returning 8 oz. to the ton. A specimen weighing 1½ cwt. had just been broken off. It was studded and seamed with rich telluride. Owing to the telluride lodes, mining presents wonderful possibilities. There is no knowing what marvels may any day come to light. The rock-drill, whose motive power is compressed air, had pierced down 550 ft. There was a large gang of men down the mine timbering, enormous great poles, almost tree trunks, were being put in position, propping up the earth to make it safe. It made me shudder to think of the dangers of a miner's life, and yet, comparatively speaking, there are very few accidents in the mines here. The genial underground-manager told me that every precaution was taken in all the mines nowadays. We emerged from the shaft once more into the light of day. The first thing to strike the eye on the top were the enormous looking cyanide tanks, then the amalgamator's rooms, where we saw all the modern appliances for extracting gold, wonderful vats of chemicals where the rich tailings were lying waiting for the chemical action to take place, ripple beds, then ball mills, pug mills, rock breakers, and enormous stamping batteries in their various houses; then last, but not least, the new roasting furnaces with their huge boilers, and other parts looking like some immense military fortifications.

Source: Vivienne, May., 1902: *Travels In Western Australia* (London, Heinemann), pp.204-211.

FACTS AND FANCIES

As I go along the three miles between Boulder City and Kalgoorlie, and think of the wonders I have seen, it seems quite safe to say that very soon the whole three miles will be covered with buildings and the predicted population of 300,000 an actual fact.

The scale of wages on the field is as follows:—

MINE MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION SCALE

OCCUPATION	RATE PER DAY s. d.	OCCUPATION	RATE PER DAY s. d.
Timbermen	13 4	Pitmen	16 8
Rock-drill men	13 4	Assistants	12 6
Miners (wet)	13 4	Miners (dry)	11 8
Bracemen	11 0	Plattmen.. .. .	11 0
Truckers	10 6	Tool sharpeners	13 4
Blacksmiths	15 0	Strikers	11 0
Labourers	10 0	Draymen	11 8
Carpenters	15 0	Fitters	15 0
Millmen	13 0	Masons	15 0
Batterymen	11 8	Feeders	10 0
Battery boys	8 4	Cranide labourers	11 8
Engine drivers, 1st	13 4	Engine drivers, 2nd	11 8

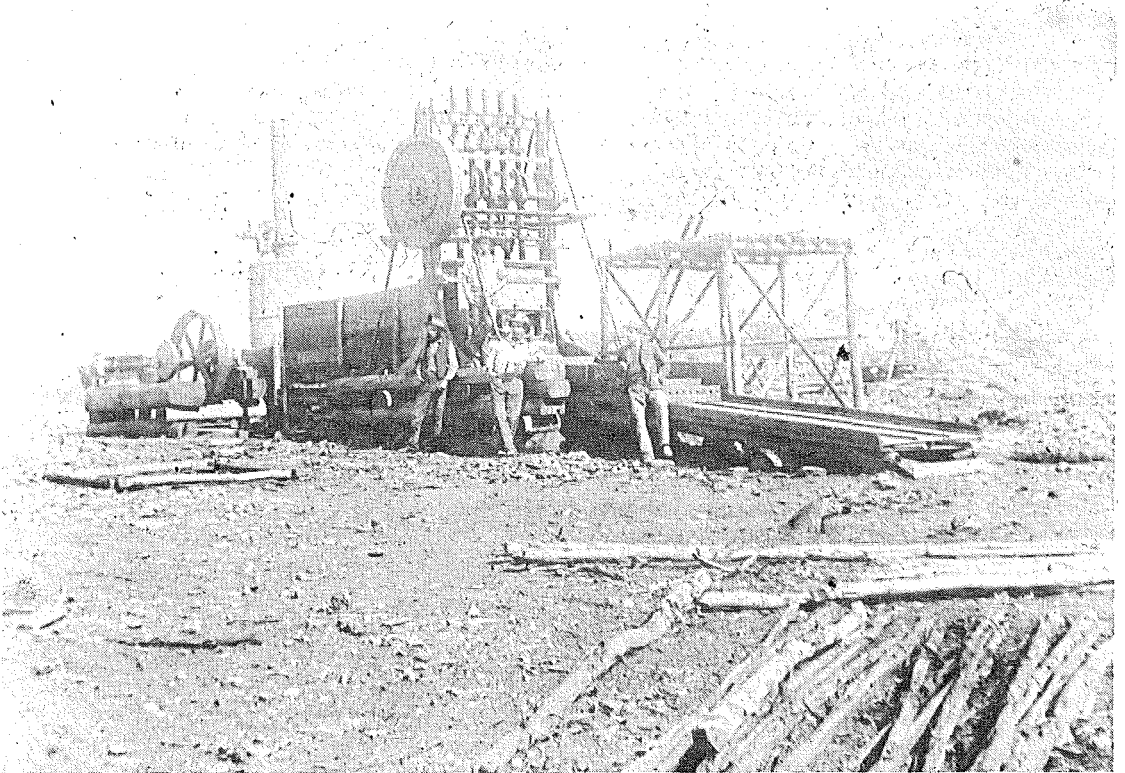
There are more than 6,500 men working in the Kalgoorlie mines, and over £28,000 weekly is paid in wages. The cable from the Government to the Agent-General for Western Australia, London, October 1901, gave the crushing returns of the colony for that year as 1,580,950 ounces, valued at £6,007,610, making a total gold production of £27,726,233 sterling. Several millions of money

have been paid to the shareholders of the various mines in dividends since the Adelaide and Coolgardie Syndicate took up the ground at the Boulder, and that ground, which was chaffingly alluded to by the prospector's friends as a "sheep farm", has certainly produced many "golden fleeces".

Source: Vivienne, May., 1902: *Travels In Western Australia* (London, Heinemann), p.235.

THE MINING OUTLOOK 1900

That the Western Australian mining industry is just now suffering from a temporary depression in London is indisputable. Still these, so called 'slumps' are inseparable from the conditions which surround any community that is mainly or partly dependent upon gold mining for the state of its financial barometer. From English files of newspapers received by the last mail, it might be supposed that the bottom had been knocked out of Westralia's goldfields. These London writers are inspired by too much mere rumour and are either not able to obtain trustworthy information or are indifferent to it when it is within their reach. They talk as if these goldfields were played out. But let us look at the bedrock facts. There can be no doubt that two of the biggest mines on Kalgoorlie Field are mainly responsible for the unsatisfactory condition of affairs in mining circles which exists at the present moment. Nevertheless it should be borne in mind that the Boulder "golden mile" by no means



A Small Crushing and Treatment Plant
(Courtesy Battye Library)

represents the sum total of the enormous auriferous tracts which exists in this colony. It must be admitted that Kalgoorlie "kept the Flag Flying" - to use the memorable words of Sir George White - on more than one occasion, when seasons of serious reaction occurred. But it would be absurd to guess which has been made in mining in other parts of the colony, and more particularly on the northern fields, taking the Mt. Margaret district is as one, which includes such centres as Mt. Malcolm, Leonora, Westralia Mt. Morgans, Laverton and other important places. The developments and results have been more than remarkable nor is the potentiality of the North country anywhere near exhausted. The area is so large and prospects so great that many new discoveries will inevitably be made in the near future. Then there are the Coolgardie Yilgarn and Dundas goldfields to say nothing of the Murchison, Peak Mill and Pilbara, which are all contributing a steadily increasing quota to the general returns. It would not be hard to prove the present monthly output officially that the croakers in London who are carping, at, this colony's mines have never taken the trouble to ascertain the true position of affairs. Because the Lake View and associated returns have fallen away by over 60 per cent they conclude that the whole industry has suffered. There never was a greater mistake. The monthly yield of gold for 1899 may be roughly set down at 135,000 oz. It is true that the first three months of this year have not averaged that total, but we may point out the two mines named are alone responsible for a decrease of some 30,000 oz. whereas the aggregate deficiency does not amount to more than 10,000 oz. This goes to show, although the yield from Kalgoorlie has for the time being dropped by almost 20,000 oz. per month, the remaining fields have turned out an increased quantity of gold. Besides, experience shows that in the early months of each year the returns are always below the mean for reasons that have never been properly explained and remembering that two or three new mines at the Boulder are about to enter the providing list. We may expect the Kalgoorlie Field will shortly renew its former monthly output of 100,000 oz. Taking this fact into consideration with the general expansion throughout other districts, it is pretty certain that last year's average will be fully maintained, if not improved upon, when figures for 1900 are made up. The truth is that the London Press is too apt to regard mining from the market instead of from the metals point of view, and in doing so they overlook the substantial all round progress which is apparent. The worst of it is that investors are frightened by the vagaries of speculators, and so the impetus of more development capital is deprived us. However we must never think that all will be well, and that the market stigma will be removed by the sound and satisfactory advance which is being made. There is no cause for uneasiness. Westralia is the largest gold producer of any portion of the Empire, the population is again increasing, the deficit of 1899 is now almost wiped out, the revenue maintain a cheerful bouyancy. The government can obtain all the money they want, and there are abundant signs of inherent prosperity.

Source: *Coolgardie Miner*, 20.4.1900.

A FAMILY OF FOOTBALLERS

To date goldfields sporting history has been completely neglected. The following details outline the contribution made by only one family in two of the principal sports. Hopefully others will be prepared to follow Ron Halcombe's lead.

A TRIBUTE TO THE TYSON FAMILY

From time to time I have spoken of what I regard as almost criminal neglect on the part of the various sporting organisations in Western Australia, to establish, for all time, histories of those sports as played in our State. One would think that these organisations would be only too proud to write factual histories, and have them published in one form or another, if only to place on record the deeds of those who made it possible for us to now play our games under immeasurably better conditions than they ever dreamed of. It is something which every parent sporting body in Western Australia should have attended to long years ago, and if it isn't done by them within the next few years, then it is quite obvious it's going to be too late, because already many of the old champions who pioneered our sports for us, have passed on to a well-earned rest, and the remainder will surely join them within a decade. If we don't, even at this late hour, draw on the remainder for records of what has transpired, then the glories of the past will be lost for all time.

I cherish very much, friendships I have made with many of the old brigade, and I am never happier than when relating something of their doings 50 and more years ago, for they were vivid times in the life of our State. If nothing else, there was plenty of colour in the sports of those times, so I do what I can to record something of the lives and games played by old champions.

It is doubtful whether Western Australia has known a more accomplished sporting family than the Tysons, and this story has been made possible by the willing co-operation of some of the members of that family.

John Edward Tyson was an Englishman who arrived in the colony of Victoria towards the end of the last century, and took unto himself a wife Sarah Ann Tyson. They lived at St. Arnaud, a small place up country in Victoria. They had 7 sons and 3 daughters, and all of them lived to a ripe old age, or are still in the land of the living. The 7 boys were Bill, Charlie, John (often called Jock), Walter (usually called Watty), George (frequently known as Tony), Sam, and Ted. The three girls were Mary, Clara and Nell.

Having in mind the large numbers of Victorians who surged on to the Eastern Goldfields in the early 90's when gold was discovered, I wonder some times how Victoria was able to keep going. The Tysons were caught up in the rush, and it was 1894 (by which time Mrs. Tyson had died) that the father (John Edward Tyson) arrived in Western Australia, accompanied by 3 sons — Bill, Jock, and Watty. They came by ship to Fremantle (the only way that anyone could come here in those times), took train to Southern Cross (which was the head of the line in those days), and then made their way by devious means to Black Flag, some 32 miles north of Coolgardie.

Although the father never distinguished himself on the field of sport, he never failed to encourage the boys, and it is a pity that he died in 1901 at Kalgoorlie before they had been able to repay him, by their deeds on the playing fields, for the kindly consideration he had always shown them.

Of the 7 boys, Bill, the eldest, learnt his football at St. Arnaud, and played on the fields at Bonnie Vale and other spots. He died in the 1940's.

Charlie, the second son, arrived on the 'Fields in 1894, a few months after the advance party comprising his Dad, Bill, Jock and Watty. Charlie was mining for a number of years, and later worked with the railways at Kalgoorlie. He played for Railways, and towards the end of his career had a couple of seasons with East Fremantle. He was a very fine all-round player — one of the types that a captain is glad to have to swing into any position to check a brilliant player who is dominating the game, or to give his own team that something which is lacking in the scheme of things.

He was a very solid bull-dog type of player who loved to tear through the crushes. He was a member of the 1908 Carnival team at Melbourne, in the days when West Australian teams were 50% representative of the Goldfields and 50% of the coast — he being one of the Goldfields contingent.

Charlie was born in 1872 and played continuously until 1926 — a period of 54 years. He had his first game when only 13, and finished up playing 3 seasons for the Melbourne Fire Brigade team. At the age of 48 he was best man on the ground against Boulder in the 1920 Grand Final in the Kalgoorlie Oval, and a son, Charlie, was on the field to back him up. When 63 he was awarded a shirt for good play in a match between the Foundry and a combined Municipal and Roads Boards team. Now, in his 80's, he still takes a keen interest in the game, and I'm reliably informed he slides down the pole at the Melbourne Fire Station 3 times every Saturday morning just to keep in touch. He loves dancing and is a Vice-President of the West Australian Association in Melbourne — a social club which does much good work keeping West Australians together. All this, mark you, after being knocked around on the iron-stone pebbles of the Eastern Goldfields.

Jock, the third boy, was a fine footballer — many regarding him as better than Charlie. Charlie was as tough as they made them, whereas Jock was more scientific. He was a solid athletic type who preferred to rove, but never hesitated to go in and get the ball if the rucks were not on hand. Jock played most of his football at Kanowna, Coolgardie, and Kalgoorlie, and on one occasion when he was mining at Black Flag with Charlie, the two of them ran and walked 32 miles from Black Flag to Coolgardie for a game. They left camp at 5 on a Sunday morning, arrived at Coolgardie at 1, had lunch, and then played. Jock was the star of the game and they would have walked back home but for his spraining an ankle so that the Father had to come in with the spring cart and take them home. It was a classic example of their enthusiasm, to say nothing of their physical fitness — for 32 miles in 8 hours across country was, in itself, a sterling performance without having to battle through 4 rugged quarters on a ground which would make present day players shudder even at the thought of practicing on it. In actual fact the boys did this return trip of 64 miles on their flat feet — just for a game of football — on a number of occasions. In those days there were many lonely spots on the Goldfields, and I suppose they said to themselves — “We'd better walk into the town to have a yarn and check up with what's going on, and have a game of football into the bargain.” Like Charlie, Jock went back to Victoria when his football days were over, and he died at St. Arnaud, his birthplace, in the 1940's.

It was 1896 when Charlie and Jock left Black Flag for Coolgardie where they played for the Civil Service team and came out Premiers. There was a lot of betting on the games in those days, particularly when the Civil Service and the Unions clashed. On the eve of the Premiership, a Civil Service supporter had an even £1,000 with Union fans, and you can well imagine what they all went through before the game ended in a draw. Charlie felt he had been very badly treated and threw the ball at the umpire — striking him hard on the nose. Anyway, nothing came of it, and for the replay, the Civil Service supporter laid another £1,000 to 800 — making 2,000 to 1,800. Charlie and Jock were laid 60 each and great was the rejoicing when they won.

Watty, one of the advance guard of the Tysons, was mining for a while, and then assisted in the surveying of Boulder City. It has been said that Watty (Walter, to give him his proper name) was one of the best full-backs ever seen on the 'Fields. He was very well put together, and particularly agile. He was a great high jumper, and more than once cleared 6'6" at Labour Day Sports Meetings which, in the early

days on the 'Fields, were great occasions, and you could always count on seeing the best of all the athletes in action at these meetings. He had many a tussle with Jerry Hare at high jumping, and somewhere in Ireland today is a beautiful cup which Tyson actually won, but which Hare took home. Watty was a very good foot runner, and he was keen on a game of Hurley which was played a lot at Kalgoorlie and one or two other spots in those early days. Many a time did Watty come home from a game of Hurley with all the bark stripped off his shins from the knee caps down to the ankles, and prevail on his good wife to patch him up for the next game of football or Hurley. He died in 1923.

George was the fifth boy, usually called Tony, and he came to the West with Charlie; so you have the picture of the old man and three boys arriving in the first contingent, and of Charlie and George coming a few months later. George reckoned there were enough Tysons working underground already, so he stayed up top as a Blacksmith Striker. At different times he was at Bonnie Vale, Kanowna, and with the railways at Kalgoorlie. He first played football on the 'Fields in 1898, and played continuously until 1912 when he joined the Perth Football Club. In 1919 he commenced playing with West Perth and finished with them in 1926, so George played 29 consecutive seasons of 1st class football. He was picked for 3 West Australian Carnival teams – 1908, 1911, 1914. He was a Kalgoorlie representative in the first 2, and he didn't actually take part in the 1914 Carnival as he toured to Brisbane with the Perth Football Club team. It was said that W.A. would have won the 1914 Carnival had the selected Perth players taken part, and I believe, that from this time onward, it was compulsory for a player selected for his State to play for it and not for a club team if it happened to be on tour at the same time. George played most of his football in the ruck or up forward, but he was a great utility man and could play any position on the field. He rucked 4 quarters for 8 years, so don't tell me this man wasn't fit. He played in either sandshoes, or white canvas boots with rubber soles and leather in-sole into which stops were clinched. When working at Bonnie Vale and playing football in Kalgoorlie, he used to push his bike or drive in a spring cart 8 miles to Mungari (where the Goldfields cadets used to train), then hop aboard the train to Kalgoorlie; and whenever he missed the train he pushed the extra 12 miles into Kalgoorlie. As recently as the 1945-6 season George and Vic King won the West Australian Pairs Bowling Championship, and today, George, who lives at 25 Woolwich Street, Leederville, is fighting fit – a just reward for a clean and hard life.

Sam – the sixth son – was a ruck and half-back of class, and was never happier than when the pressure was really on. He and Ted (the baby of the ten Tysons – remembering that there were 3 girls) came to the West about the turn of the century. He did some mining and was mixed up in the sandalwood trade for some time. He played for Coolgardie and then Kalgoorlie Railways for some years. In 1922, he commenced playing for West Perth and gave them valuable service over a number of years. This same Sam Tyson who died about 4 years ago, was the father of Ted who we best remember as the first West Australian and the 3rd in the Commonwealth to kick 1,000 goals in League Football in a career. Six have achieved that signal honour – Ken Farmer (S.A.) 1,418, Gordon Coventry (V.) 1,299, Ted Tyson (W.A.) 1,203, Harry Vallance (V.) 1,187, Jack Titus (V.) 1,095, George Doig (W.A.) 1,042. And there was a near-miss – Ron Todd (V.) 999 – something like a cricketer being bowled neck and crop for 99 in his first Test innings.

Ted was a forward. He played at Coolgardie and then with Kalgoorlie Railways. Later he went to N.S.W. and played some games there. For many years he was a Foreman Linesman and has just retired from the Postal Service in N.S.W.

The 3 girls, Mary, Clara, and Nell, grew sick of cooking for themselves after all the boys had cleared out, and feeling that they should be in on some of the profits from the mining, came over to the West. Two married West Australians, and the other a New South Welshman whom she met here.

Charlie Tyson Snr., is the father of Charlie who skippered Collingwood for a couple of seasons before transferring to South Melbourne, and another son Cliff, played in Kalgoorlie. Back in 1911, six

Tyson brothers were playing for Kalgoorlie Railways, and I have never heard of a family which had a greater representation in a team.

All the boys were more than average cricketers. Charlie, on one occasion, took all 10 wickets in a game in Victoria and for years he had a batting record on the 'Fields which was beaten by Poet Smith. That may surprise many listeners because we usually think of Poet as a champion footballer, a star stab kick and a most accurate place kick. Just as Charlie had played football until he was 63 – so he played cricket till then.

The Tysons would have a go at anything at any time – that is, in a sporting sense, and they certainly knew how to use guns. When Charlie was 13 and Jock 11 a brother-in-law nominated them for a pigeon match. It was a 5 bird one – 5 points for the 1st barrel and 3 for the 2nd. Charlie bagged all 5 on his 1st, whilst Jock missed only 1 on his 1st. A publican badly wanted to take the lads around the country shooting in matches but the 'Head of the House' refused, as they were still going to school. And that reminds me of another story. The father was working a mine, with others, and Charlie and Jock used to drive the old horse pulling the dirt up from down below, coupled with night school. One week Charlie would drive the old nag in the mornings and Jock would take over for the afternoons. The next week they'd change over, but always both had to go to school at night. Schooling was a bit cheaper in those days, and when, one night, Jock wasn't well, Charlie went alone and armed with 3/- to cover both their fees for the week. On the way, was a Merry-go-Round and a Shooting Gallery, and with the 3 bob burning a hole in Charlie's pocket he just couldn't resist the urge to have a go with a pea-rifle. He won 28 out of 30 pools, and had the pleasure of hearing the proprietor say to another that he's never, in all his years as a showman, seen anything like it, either by boy or man.

Truly it can be said that these Tysons made as fine a contribution to sport in Western Australia as any other family of boys of the one generation. Their playing days are over, and some are enjoying a well-earned rest in the land where all good sportsmen go; but we remember them, not only because of their great deeds on the playing fields, but for the fine spirit in which they played their games. Very few records are available to show, in cold black and white, what these Tyson boys actually did in sport. It doesn't really matter, the important thing being that there are many who remember them because of their being fine types. Sport is the richer for the part they played, and it has been a very great pleasure placing on record this story of such a notable sporting family.

Source: Halcombe, Ron., n.d.: A.B.C. Radio Script.

ORAL HISTORY

EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN TED MAYMAN AND EDWIN JAGGARD ON FRIDAY, JULY 9th, 1976, AT 55 ALDERBURY STREET, FLOREAT PARK. TOPIC: THE W.A. EASTERN GOLDFIELDS

Edwin: So, Ted, your father and grandfather came across from Victoria?

Ted: Yes, they came from the declining Victorian goldfields where the mines around Bendigo and Ballarat were played out. They came from the small town of Clunes, which is near Ballarat. Many Victorians were among the newcomers who flocked to the West in the 1890's just as many of their own fathers had migrated from mining areas of England, from Cornwall and Wales, when the Victorian goldfields were first discovered in the 1850's. My grandfather was about 50 years of age, and my father some 20 years younger. They came from Melbourne to Fremantle by ship. I think it cost £4 to get to Fremantle. The head of the railway line was through to Southern Cross by then. They walked the Coolgardie Track on to Coolgardie from the Cross. My grandfather died of typhoid fever on Coolgardie, and was first buried in the cemetery there. My father had little money however he was a skilled miner, of course, as most of the Victorian crowd were. Some ten years later, when he had found rather a good mine — the Hidden Secret, at East Kalgoorlie, — he had his father reburied in the Kalgoorlie cemetery, probably so he'd be near him again. When my own father died in 1932 he was buried in the same grave in the Kalgoorlie cemetery. Grandfather's name was David, and my father's name was George Mayman.

Edwin: So you've literally got your roots on the Goldfields?

Ted: Well, I was born there and went to school in Kalgoorlie. Incidentally, women followed the men across from Victoria. My own mother was one of four sisters who came with their widowed mother to Kalgoorlie in 1898. Their name was Morgan, and they came from Clunes, too. Much earlier their father had been killed in an accident in the Port Phillip mine on Clunes. His workmates came to the small cottage to break the news to his wife, and at the time a young artist from nearby Creswick was visiting Clunes. He painted a picture of the men (in their working clothes), at the open door of the cottage, telling the mother in the kitchen, with the young girls at her skirts. Many years later the Perth Art Gallery bought the painting from the Melbourne Gallery, I think in the 1930's. The young artist was John Longstaff, later Sir John Longstaff, who painted "Menin Gate", a popular painting, after World War One.

Anyway, my grandmother was asked to run the staff boarding house on the Lake View lease. The four girls, then aged from about 18 to 25, helped her.

Edwin: With the dust heat and flies, it must have been difficult?

Ted: It probably was as there were no refrigerators, of course, only a large Coolgardie safe. But they lived through it with laughter, as my mother used to say. They fed about 20 men for the midday meal, in a hessian lined dining room. One day a new boarder complained to my mother that the meat was blown. In front of the others, she whipped the plate away and ordered him out. Twenty years later he had become a well-known mining engineer in South Africa, and paid a return visit to Kalgoorlie. The local mine managers put on a dinner for him at the Palace Hotel, at which my father and mother were present. The engineer took my

mother aside. "Elizabeth", he said, "back in those Lake View days, that meat was blown. Why did you tell me not to come back?"

"It was, Joe", she confessed, "and it was the only time it ever happened. But if one man had complained, then the others would have found something to grumble about. You were told to leave as a lesson to the others."

Edwin: Women on the fields must have been brave in those hard conditions?

Ted: They certainly had their standards. Although the four girls had their young men, or "followers", to be old fashioned, they did not marry until after their mother had died – they felt they had to look after her. After their Lake View days, they ran the Railway Hotel in Boulder, then the Glen Devon Hotel in Kalgoorlie. When their mother died, they sent to Italy for the headstone; it's the tallest headstone in the Boulder cemetery, where my grandfather is buried. Then the four girls married the men who had waited so long. My father had known my mother as a girl back on Clunes ten years before.

It was a hard place for women to live in. There was far more dust around because to fire the old fashioned treatment plants the heavy timber around the town had disappeared, and they hadn't gone in for the replanting of trees, as they have now. Women cooked on wood fires in small houses with few household conveniences. After meals the washing up would be done in a tin dish on the kitchen table. Providing meals for a working man, the women worked hard day and night there was the washing of clothes with an old scrub board, and the wood copper in the back yard. Then the mending and ironing. They worked hard, but they gave stability to the social life of the town, helped to civilize it, particularly through their church groups, as I've mentioned before.

Edwin: Your father was working on the mines?

Ted: At times. He did prospecting trips following various rumours of gold in the bush when he had the money. I remember he told me once, when I asked him if he had ever met Paddy Hannan, that he didn't remember him in Kalgoorlie, but he met him one night out from Menzies. Paddy Hannan was prospecting west of Menzies, and he walked with his horses into the light of the campfire, where Dad was with two or three other men, to stay the night. Hannan was a quiet man, and didn't talk much. Later on when the mines of the Golden Mile went deep, and people realised what he had done in discovering the Kalgoorlie gold, he was feted and made much of, which apparently rather embarrassed him. Hannan never sought the limelight.

Edwin: Where did the various groups of interstate miners live around the Golden Mile?

Ted: They seemed to settle where their friends were. The men from Bendigo had their various camps around the Lake View hill. There were a number of men with a Cornish background from Bendigo. There was also a fair Cornish background in the men from the Moonta copper mines in South Australia. They seemed to camp on the Launceston flats in West Boulder. The Clunes crowd had camps on the South Boulder leases. And they all came together on pay nights in the hotels on the Boulder Block, or Fimiston. This was before Boulder City had been planned and laid out, of course. Many of the men had worked together or had known one another or their families in the Eastern States, so they planted themselves together on the mines around Kalgoorlie. It was not unlike European migrants these days, the Greeks and Italians and other nationalities. They often form enclaves within calling distance, to see familiar faces and exchange gossip about people they know.

Edwin: Even after going underground on the Hainault Mine, people today find it difficult to appre-

ciate the dangers and hard conditions which faced the early underground miners.

Ted: It was hard. The accident rate then was fairly high, the dust underground was bad, and the ventilation wasn't very good. Later there were forced draught Venturi fans and so on, and dry tap drilling by hand gave way to equipment with the water hose through the drill stem to keep the dust down. Miners' Silicosis, or "dust on the lungs" was quite common. I think the first chest X-Ray plant to pick up "dusted" miners was introduced in the Health Laboratory about 1923.

A small thing that the following generation like myself who grew up in Kalgoorlie remember are the cellars dug in the backyard of the miners' homes, particularly in Boulder, so that the men who were on night shift would have a cool room to rest and sleep in during the day. The cellars were like a wide grave, with four or five steps down, a corrugated sheet of iron for the roof, and gravel put over the top so there would be a small hump in the back yard. There would be a bunk or a stretcher underground. They must have been filled in quickly later on, probably when the mines cut out the full night shift, because there are very few cellars in Boulder these days.

Edwin: You often read about the fact that the companies literally ripped the ore out of the ground in the early days. Is that a fair comment?

Ted: It probably is. I think someone said that gold was better in the bank than in the ground. Probably one of the reasons is that there were too many small leases crowded on to the Boulder Belt, and the Golden Mile. They should have amalgamated and come together much earlier. There were too many small leases, and everyone was building their own particular treatment plant, and sinking shafts as fast as possible, getting the rich ore out as quickly as they could. Many of the leases had a short life because of the way they were worked. If the companies had rationalised things for the industry as a whole earlier, perhaps things may have been better in the long run. They did consolidate later, of course. I think the Golden Mile was so astonishingly rich that it puzzled everybody. Some of the companies just went hell for leather to produce as much as possible as fast as they could.

Edwin: It's an argument with hindsight to say that if the companies could have worked the area more efficiently, more systematically, then it would have lasted longer, and employment would have gone on longer. That doesn't really capture the euphoria of the times.

Ted: Perhaps not. Probably not many wanted to be rational about the thing because too much money could be made by their own methods at the time. A good deal of share manipulation went on in London say from 1897 to 1904, with the shares of the Golden Mile companies, that many people were not aware of. That was one way of making money from the mines without producing any gold.

Edwin: You mentioned you were at school at Kalgoorlie.

Ted: Yes, I went to Kalgoorlie Central School, and then on to Eastern Goldfields High School for four years. That was in the 'Hungry Twenties', when cost of production and the fixed price of gold caused the mines to slow down. The lights were going out in the many small mining towns of the back country, and Kalgoorlie itself was thought to be played out, and people were leaving town. The air was heavy with nostalgia for the bustling days of yesteryear; the days when fathers were young. Boys of the time grew up with echoes of "the good old days". And there was always some old mate of your father's (who had been out in the bush prospecting somewhere) coming down the street. He was always given a bed and a meal and

then given a stake to go back out again. I remember these mysterious characters often coming in at home, when mother would turn and cook an extra meal. Henry Lawson has handled this theme in his short story "An Old Mate of your Fathers". He wrote of the eastern states goldfields, of course, but it also operated on the Kalgoorlie goldfields, too. The backing of a prospector by storekeeper, or those of his mates who had made good was interesting. They would back him with stores and a horse and spring cart and away he'd go, to be away for months perhaps, with the promise if he found a good "prospect" that it would be shared with his backers. It was generally done by word of mouth — it was seldom that there was any written agreement. This was carried on with other nationalities too, who, as it were, absorbed the goldfields spirit. There was a multi-racial population even in the early days. Before the First World War there were lots of men from central European countries on the fields. Often they had left to avoid long years of compulsory army service in their countries, such as those which made up the old Austro-Hungarian Empire; Slavs, Macedonians, Austrians, Germans and others.

Later there were lots of Italians who'd come to work on the wood lines, and the outback mines around Leonora and Gwalia, and then drifted in to Kalgoorlie.

Before he died underground on his mine at East Kalgoorlie my father had an interest with a small Italian syndicate working a tribute on the Great Boulder Mine. At the time the Tributors' Association was taking a case, which they won, through the High Court and the Privy Council, for their share of the premium on the increased price of gold, which the big mines kept. Twelve months after my father's death one of the syndicate asked to see my brother in one of the hotels. He was given nearly £3,000 to be taken to my mother. It was Dad's share of the gold premium from the syndicate. We didn't have a clue that it was owing. Nothing need to have been said about it, as there was no written agreement. The windfall came at the right time, I might add, as my father died on one of his down swings of fortune.

That was one of the anxieties of living in a mining family, or at least with a father who preferred not to work for a boss. When a good crushing went through, we'd be in the money. When the crushing was poor, we'd be in the doldrums. It was a bit anxiety making, but somehow the wheel of fortune would turn.

Edwin: I suppose many people today see Kalgoorlie as a place where gambling is alive and healthy. It was obviously part of life, right from the time the fields began.

Ted: Probably. The environment and background made for that type of life for a number of people. I don't think it's a romantic attitude, but risk-taking did operate, and luck and chance factors developed a type of outlook among many goldfielders of that time. I hasten to add that I am no gambler, and try not to live on chance factors. But gold and the environment gave the people of the goldfields and its surroundings certain regional characteristics. Individualism and improvisation were aspects of the early day character, and it was passed on to other generations with the ebb-and-flow of life in and out of Kalgoorlie. I think goldfielders were practical and pragmatic, with an underlying nonchalance and a tender heart to take risks because luck and chance were factors in their way of life — I don't only mean the finding or not of gold, but in the work they did on the mines where ever they were — there was always the risk of an accident, or getting "dusted" lungs.

And if they made money, they generally spent it. Most of the characters I remember as being prominent in the town did not die wealthy; many earned good money; but spent it, and spent it cheerfully.

Edwin: You have mentioned this before and I think you made the image in my mind that those

characters who were left in the twenties had somehow shrunk down to human size, whereas in your mind, and the stories that went around about them, they were much larger than life.

Ted: As the young generation grew up, I suppose those characters shrunk a bit. Perhaps the stories we heard put a halo effect about them. I mean, a good story was never spoiled by only telling the truth, – it was generally embellished and exaggerated. In general terms it was a wages town. A few independent miners went out and made their rich strikes and came back. The search for gold in any place gives rise to good stories. Those that made a rich strike generally had this halo effect of being larger than life because they had come through.

My father made a rich strike (in 1903) in the Hidden Secret mine – it's about a mile from the East Kalgoorlie school. He and his mate, Louis Genini, were stony broke, and were in debt to one of the local stores. They blew another foot into the face of the drive, and struck it rich. He was still working it 20 years later when I was a boy, but by then the gold had more or less cut out, and he was putting money back into the ground. He worked mines in other places over the years. Old Spencer Cook, of the Palace Hotel, was one of his partners at times. He worked the Kanowna Deep Leads with Dr. C.W. Laver. Laverton, where the Windarra nickel mine is now, was named after Dr. Laver.

Edwin: Was gold-stealing really widespread?

Ted: I think so, at times. It was frowned upon in high places, but accepted at other levels. It added to the flavour and provided some of the spice of life around the place. It meant there was a certain amount of free spending money about the town, so the shopkeepers enjoyed it.

Apart from the wages money circulating through the town there was this little extra on top which didn't have to be accounted for, so it was jolly good fun while it lasted. It wasn't shouted from the rooftops, of course, but when some character appeared with a new car or took a trip overseas, the town seemed to know where the money came from.

It had its tragic side. As a boy I was in Hannan Street when the news of the Pitman-Walsh murder came through. The bodies had been discovered. The usual Saturday night crowds were walking up and down Hannan Street, but it was a very silent crowd. Someone they knew had broken the unofficial rules of the game that had been played for years – a sort of boys' "cops and robbers" game where nobody got hurt – and the town was very unhappy.

I think the police, through a stronger Gold Stealing Detective Branch, became more vigorous, particularly during the 1930's, and while some of the merry lads continued on their way, it wasn't as easy as it had been in the past.

Edwin: That seems to be another part of the way of life, almost a devil may care attitude and a willingness to take a chance. Another characteristic was the interest in sport. The goldfields seem to have been a great sporting community.

Ted: Yes. The climate – not much rain, long summers, sunny winters – made for an out-door sort of life. There were early types of radio and silent pictures, but no T.V. or talkies. And not many motor cars, and the roads were bad. People didn't hop into cars and nip down to Perth for the weekend. They stayed at home and made their own fun, and sport was part of the fun and way of life. Yes, they took tremendous pride in their sporting ability, particularly in the early days. Again, your mates – if you played sport with them – looked after you when you were out of work. And being a good athlete helped you get a job on the mines. Once upon a time half the members of the W.A. State football team was supplied from the goldfields. How times have changed!

Edwin: You've mentioned how Boulder was "laid out", and spoke of it as a gallant town. It seems a pity now with all the talk of attracting tourists back to the goldfields, that very little seems to be done about Boulder. Boulder is decaying, yet it is one of the places on the fields that has one of the greatest histories of all.

Ted: It has. Boulder was mainly the working man's town — a miners' town, whereas Kalgoorlie was the business and commercial centre. Kalgoorlie people sometimes jokingly referred to Boulder as "the suburb". Calling Boulder a suburb of Kalgoorlie always infuriated Boulder people. I don't think much can be done for Boulder now. It certainly looks decrepit and worse for wear now, but it has a gallant history.

Edwin: Did people read much on the goldfields?

Ted: We did have a good Mechanic's Institute library, and in my day it was run by a fine librarian called C.H. Le Mesurier, who influenced lots of young boys and girls like myself and Gavin Casey to read widely. At a time when we were keen on Edgar Wallace and Clarence Mulford, he would ease us over to take out modern English and American writers, Hemmingway, Steinbeck and so on. The Sydney *Bulletin* was still the most powerful Australian weekly, and we grew up against *The Bulletin* background. If men were in the bush, they carried *The Bulletin* with them. It was a swap paper. A *Bulletin* was worth two or three other papers in exchange. People used to recite the ballads and poems. Those old mates of your father — they could recite Lawson and Paterson and other poets.

At home, when my sister and I were washing up the dishes on the kitchen table we would recite Australian ballads to one another. I don't think that happens nowadays, perhaps children were more Australian then than now.

A well-known man on the goldfields, Mr. Eddy Oates who's now over 90 and lives in Boulder, came from Bendigo as a boy. When he was 12 he was selling newspapers on the Boulder Block, and he told me recently he used to sell over 140 copies of *The Bulletin* each week to the miners coming off shift. It shows the influence of the paper.

In my day, if you were trying to write and could get a story in *The Bulletin*, you had reached the height of achievement. Gavin Casey, myself, and our friend Wally Wynne, all first appeared in *The 'Bully'*.

I was mainly influenced in my reading by C.H. Le Mesurier, and perhaps by my father. We had a few volumes of Dickens in the house, and most nights he would put his slippers on and by the wood fire and re-read a couple of chapters of Dickens. I always felt it was a bit strange for a man who worked on mines so far away from England, to read about the London of Dickens. Apart from that, he could make up stories, and when we were children, before we went to sleep, he would make little yarns of when he was a boy in Victoria — lies, of course, about how he met Ned Kelly or Steve Hart, or how he "moonlighted" possums for their skins, or trained a whippet to win silver cups.

Edwin: Looking through the early goldfields newspapers there seems to have been a real sensitivity to people with coloured skins. I wondered what the attitude was — particularly as you say *The Bulletin* had a great influence on people and it was racial in outlook.

Ted: As regards *The Bulletin*, I think they were racial for economic reasons — the old 'White Australia' Policy. There were echoes of the anti-Chinese riots on the N.S.W. and Victorian goldfields, still about in those days. There were Chinese from Canton and south China on the Californian diggings, but didn't America bring in Anti-Chinese immigration laws some time

later, which was one of the reasons they were diverted to the Eastern States goldfields of Australia?

One of my mother's stories about Clunes was when the men on the Port Phillip mine -- I've forgotten the year -- were on strike for better wages. The management brought in several coaches of Chinese from Ballarat to break the strike. The wives -- the women of Clunes -- went out and barricaded the road, attacked the coaches -- and forced them to return to Ballarat.

Then there was the 'black-birding' from the Islands and the bringing in of cheap so-called Kanaka labour last century in Queensland, undercutting wages.

I don't think they wanted that to happen on the West Australian goldfields. There were some Japanese allowed on the goldfields of Western Australia. They were in laundries -- there were some Japanese laundries in Kalgoorlie at times -- but I don't think the Chinese were ever allowed on mining fields in Western Australia, mainly for economic reasons. There was the some ill feeling with some of the Central European and Mediterranean workers. There was always the suspicion that they would work for cheaper rates. The unions took a pretty firm rule on that and always made sure that they were getting the same wage rates. The unions were reasonably intelligent about that. They always have been on the Goldfields. Over the years unions and management have got on reasonably well.

Edwin: We have talked about Kalgoorlie and Boulder. Have you any memories of Coolgardie?

Ted: Coolgardie, even in the very early twenties was going down quickly but it was quite a prominent place and there were lots of people still there. We used to go down for picnics either by train or dray and have a picnic in the Coolgardie gorge or up at the park. The Coolgardie people were gradually coming up to live in Kalgoorlie in the 20's. The town was on the skids and there was a gradual drift of population. But everybody talked in loving terms about Coolgardie. It was always "the old camp" and in their yarnings to one another people would always be able to pull up some story about "when we were back in the old camp". People had a good deal of affection for Coolgardie. I think Gavin Casey called it "the big town of small men". Everybody felt big in Coolgardie, no matter how small he was. This was very much so for those who had been there in the nineties, because they had been there in the grand days.

Edwin: In the nineties Coolgardie must have been a really vibrant place. I suppose it was very much the centre of the goldfields in 1894-95? And Hannan's was just 20 miles east and growing.

Ted: Yes, Kalgoorlie was slow to get away. It took the people of Kalgoorlie 7 or 8 years to wake up and realise the wealth of the deep mines, the most continuing wealth of all the finds made in the area. There were far richer strikes than Kalgoorlie. Kanowna was a much richer show for a short period. Coolgardie was always regarded as a "come again" sort of thing.

Edwin: Both Kanowna and Bulong must have been great places in their heyday?

Ted: Yes, Bulong had three of four mayors. The Jones family were very prominent in the Bulong set-up.

Edwin: The Jones family are still out in the area today.

Ted: Yes, they would have some wonderful stories to tell, I'm sure. There's one thing I remember and it distresses me a bit, the old Bulong Cemetery. The Queen Margaret mine was out that way and quite a number of men were killed on the Margaret. Their mates buried them and

they cut rather nice wooden headstones. And it was one of the few places where I remember there were numbers of very good carved wooden headstones. Recently, when I've gone back to Kalgoorlie I've made a pilgrimage out to Bulong and the dam and also turned off to go to the cemetery and much to my annoyance, most of the wooden headstones have been souveniered by vandals or tourists. There were also interesting metal headstones made out of falt iron – corrugated iron beaten flat – cut with tin snips and they would be put on to wooden frames. All those have disappeared too.

Edwin: I think with Kanowna the thing that comes to everyone's mind is the sacred nugget hoax and I suppose the cemetery rush as well. Bill Peach in his episode on *The Golden West* managed to include an extract on the sacred nugget hoax – with a photo showing the crowd outside the hotel when Father Long made his announcement.

Ted: Unfortunately when my father was alive I was a teenager and not really interested in this local background. When I was there in the twenties, Kalgoorlie was going down, the mines were not very rich – the plants needed re-modernizing and so on and the price of gold was fixed and people were leaving the town. One felt that Kalgoorlie was going to be a ghost town in a few years. My father had experience of quite a number of the stirring incidents at the time but I never bothered to ask him because I thought it was just part of the boring background one lived in. I didn't realize just how interesting it was. I vaguely remember that he used to laugh about the sacred nugget. The main story as I remember, and people seemed to agree on this was that it was a joke by a bloke named Tassie O'Connor from Kalgoorlie. They had got an old iron can and painted it up. They were out for a wild weekend, he and a couple of his mates and they shot off to Kanowna and showed it to Father Long and so it began. That seems to be reasonably accepted.

Edwin: Kurnalpi, east of Kanowna seems to be that kind of remote area where all the big stories came from.

Ted: Yes, I've just written four little serials for the school papers and I based it on a ghost town which I have called Carnegie but I have it out beyond Kurnalpi. I don't know why Kurnalpi should have loomed large in the story telling set-up. I think it still shows occasionally on maps now. There's Kurnalpi Station. The actual township of Kurnalpi seems to have disappeared many many years ago. For all the people who seemed to have lived on Kurnalpi it must have been as big as New York. There was always someone just coming back from Kurnalpi or just going up to Kurnalpi, or – "I was attacked by the blacks out beyond Kurnalpi, and had to leave . . ." As a matter of fact I have never been to Kurnalpi myself. I must make an effort to get out there some time. Further out just beyond is Lake Perkollili a red lake where lots of motor car and motor cycle racing using to take place. When I was about 16 or 17 I rode with Gavin Casey on Lake Perkollili on an old A.J.S. motorcycle.

Edwin: In the twenties and thirties was there much consciousness of the declining goldfields areas around Kalgoorlie and Boulder?

Ted: I don't think so. We were fairly immobile. The motor car hadn't made its big impression and the roads were very bad, even the road to Perth. It was a shocking road, more or less up till the 1930's. It was still just a rough bush track and very boggy in the winter time, particularly from Kalgoorlie to Southern Cross. We lived at the end of the railway line and all the stores came in by rail. People had horse and traps and horse and spring cart, and would sometimes go to Kanowna or Coolgardie by rail for a picnic, but we didn't travel very far in to the bush because we had no means of conveyance. A favourite place for a picnic was Gnarlbine Rocks, although I didn't get there until 15 years ago when I went by car. I had always heard of

Gnarlbine where the main water holes were for the track from Coolgardie to Southern Cross! I'd heard of Queen Victoria Rocks too, but we never got there, either because of lack of transport. A couple of times I went with my father when he was prospecting out of Kanowna — he worked the Kanowna deep leads for a number of years. I remember driving up there in a horse and spring cart. We were in a small community, roughly 400 miles from Perth at the end of a railway line and we didn't get about very much. The railway went up to Leonora and Laverton, and that was the limit.

Only a few people had cars in the 1920's. The ordinary working class man went to work on his bicycle or took the tram out to Boulder block. In the 1930's the motor car became very fashionable. But then that was the same all over Australia. Prior to World War II it was common for people not to drive, unlike today.

Edwin: This then is why you had people making a Sunday trip around the loop railway line, and enjoying the sights, rather than going out in a car as we do today?

Ted: Yes. The big weekend deal was on Sunday to do the loop trip with the family. Mother, father and two or three children would catch the train and go on the loop line right round the Boulder block through Kamballi and Golden Gate. It was a very pleasant jaunt and it would take a couple of hours to do the round trip, with families greeting families, talking and children playing. You'd get off at one station and have your picnic basket and catch the next train. There was always a rush to catch the last train from Boulder, or from Kalgoorlie back to Boulder.

Edwin: In those days there must have been a great deal to see at the Boulder end of the loop?

Ted: Yes. It was a marvellous spectacle. There were quite a number of mines, there must have been a dozen or so and they hadn't amalgamated so much as they did later. Each mine would have its individual treatment plant, head frames would be pulling dirt and they would have their own furnaces going — big piles of wood and so on. It was quite a spectacle to go past mine after mine round the loop. There was great activity going on inside the loop. It was a very great pity they had to pull the rails up. I see there is some talk of putting some of the line back and making it a tourist attraction . . . I would think it would be too expensive to do. Also there wouldn't be the head frames and treatment plants that there were there in the early years. It would be a pretty dull outlook now.

Edwin: Of course there were trams travelling between Kalgoorlie and Boulder as well weren't there?

Ted: Yes, they knitted Kalgoorlie in rather well, because the trams went up to Lamington almost as far up as the golf course on the one hand, and then they went up to the top of Hannan Street and right down round South Kalgoorlie way.

Edwin: I see. So you literally had a network — as well as the straight route through to Boulder?

Ted: Yes, and the tram drivers were also great personalities. Once again, larger than life.

Edwin: I guess there is a whole legend about the trams and what happened on them. In fact I can remember in the 'Midas Touch', the drunken character that was loaded on at one end and just kept doing the trip back and forth to Boulder. The goldfields have been a great place for legends, haven't they?

Ted: Yes, it's a very great pity that they weren't written up at the time. It's a pity there hadn't been someone like a Jack London on the fields at the turn of the century to dramatize and

focus the activities. But what has come out, written from the 1890's by people on the spot, is not very comprehensive considering that there was such a marvellous press and very interesting papers on Coolgardie and the early stages of Kalgoorlie. The old *Western Argus* which up till about 1910 was printed in weekly form was a very interesting paper and every Christmas time they would bring out a Christmas issue which was almost as good as a Sydney *Bulletin* Christmas number. I've forgotten how many pages there were in the big Christmas number but it was a very very good publication. Considering the excitement that went on in the goldfields and the discoveries up till about 1910, nothing very realistic came out from a writing point of view. Some reasonably good verse came out in that era. You know those two articles by Beverley Nulty – she's about the only person I know who has done a fairly comprehensive job on the writing of that particular era. Gavin Casey is about the only chap who has really done it in an honest and realistic way.

Edwin: It's surprising too because it seems that the goldfields press had a tremendous impact on the early years of the State.

Ted: One of the most interesting journalists and one of the best who edited a paper on the fields was the famous Andre Haywood. He was on the Geraldton papers and eventually came down to Kalgoorlie. He was also the chap who wrote . . . "The Riot Where No One Was Hurt". Gavin Casey's father knew Andre Haywood on the fields and later on Haywood went across to the Sydney *Bulletin* and stayed for many years. About 1907, the *Bulletin* got out their very famous weekly called *The Lone Hand* which ran for about 3 years, and had the best writers and artists in Australia doing a very good job in it. The very first issue they got out they ran a competition with a prize of £20 to the person who picked out the most literary errors in the publications. The prize was won by Fred Casey who was a surveyor and Gavin Casey's father. And the money came at the right time because Gavin had just been born and his father as usual being a typical Kalgoorlie man had very little money to pay for it – so fortunately *The Bulletin* cheque paid for the birth of Gavin Casey. Many years later as Gavin grew up, he heard his father talk about his friend Andre Haywood when he was in Kalgoorlie. Fred Casey died when Gavin was young, but many years later when Gavin started to write, *The Bulletin* had a short story competition and Gavin won it. It was just at the time when he was expecting his first child. He was always broke too of course – the £35 *Bulletin* cheque arrived just the week that Gavin's son, young Fred was born so the cheque paid for the birth of another Casey child. One of the first people to write to him and congratulate him – was a person he had only heard about and never met, old Andre Haywood in Sydney.

Edwin: R.A. Hobson, the former Director of the School of Mines used to insist that students be given some appreciation of literature, so that no matter where they were, they could always sit down and read. That was in the mid sixties and it struck me as being a fairly sensible attitude.

Ted: Well, that's interesting. The mining fraternity, these blokes who were working underground, etc. did their reading in their own way. They were rather similar to the bushmen in some of the stock camps in the Northern Territory and the Kimberleys, about the same era. They were also quite well read those blokes. Just working men – but they would pass on reading material, one to the other. When I was roaming around up there about 25 years ago, you'd meet these old blokes and they'd have a tremendous reading background. I think many of these working men on the goldfields in the early days were quite remarkable. There were not so many books as there are now cluttering up the newsagents but there were rarer books and people read them with interest. It was good quality and so in general terms they had a fair reading background. They would read *The Bulletin* from cover to cover. Even in my day as a boy I remember going to the Kalgoorlie Mechanics Institute. There was a reading room and library upstairs and it had a nice balcony and newspaper room. Well on a Saturday afternoon,

a big time of the week, you would see a lot of the old prospecting types who would leave their camps, walk up to the library and start reading the papers. I remember lots of the old grizzled men browsing through the papers. I think there was a respect for the word in print. If it was printed, it had an authority. You would read it through and you might agree or disagree with it . . . but somehow it gave a challenge, a little piece of authority.

Edwin: You mentioned that Boulder was a place for the non-conformist -- was there a fairly strong religious streak in the town?

Ted: No, I wouldn't say so. The churches were semi-welfare organisations and meeting clubs, and they generally had fairly good Ministers. Now and again you would have a tent mission going through the town, the usual evangelistic thing and people would turn up, but I think it lacked that western frontier quality of the Americans, I don't think that happened here. They were a lot more cynical group . . . I think the churches did a marvellous job. If there was someone in distress, they went to the local cleric and then he would put them in touch with somebody else in the church who could help them so it was a sort of agency. There was naturally the other sort of feeling too, the respect that a number of people did have for the church, of course.

STATISTICS

TABLE I

WESTERN AUSTRALIA – POPULATION 1880-1910

YEAR	POPULATION			No. OF FEMALES TO 100 MALES
	Males	Females	Total	
1880	16,985	12,576	29,561	75.25
1881	17,316	12,840	30,156	74.33
1882	17,752	13,264	31,016	75.29
1883	18,335	13,751	32,086	76.06
1884	19,145	14,401	33,546	76.97
1885	20,688	15,271	35,959	76.03
1886	23,979	16,625	40,604	71.78
1887	26,039	17,781	43,820	71.27
1888	25,831	17,983	43,814	73.58
1889	26,890	18,770	45,660	74.33
1890	28,854	19,648	48,502	72.76
1891	32,176	21,001	53,177	66.22
1892	36,048	22,521	58,569	64.62
1893	40,975	23,948	64,923	61.86
1894	55,055	26,524	81,579	54.39
1895	69,733	30,782	100,515	51.19
1896	96,999	39,817	136,816	50.46
1897	107,655	52,840	160,495	55.65
1898	107,593	59,285	166,878	59.15
1899	106,816	63,442	170,258	61.44
1900	110,088	69,879	179,967	63.49
1901	117,885	75,716	193,601	64.23
1902	128,370	83,603	211,973	65.13
1903	134,140	90,608	224,748	67.55
1904	141,694	97,714	239,408	68.96
1905	146,498	103,640	250,138	70.74
1906	148,061	107,112	255,173	72.34
1907	146,264	108,276	254,540	74.03
1908	148,447	111,224	259,671	74.93
1909	151,325	114,350	265,675	75.57
1910	157,971	118,861	276,832	75.24

Source: *W.A. Yearbooks.*

TABLE II
MIGRATION
W.A. — MIGRATION 1887-1910

	<u>ARRIVALS</u>	<u>DEPARTURES</u>
1887	4,450	2,400
1888	1,598	2,794
1889	2,850	2,272
1890	3,567	1,996
	6,346	2,667
	7,440	2,978
	8,928	3,716
	25,858	9,923
	29,523	11,163
	55,275	19,324
	49,387	26,867
	32,709	28,845
	20,278	20,287
1900	24,921	19,078
	32,762	20,780
	37,860	21,001
	30,943	20,216
	31,517	19,563
	28,791	22,934
	25,396	25,077
	22,326	27,740
	24,594	24,339
	24,643	23,537
1910	31,403	25,091

Sources: *W.A. Yearbook 1890-91*, Official Yearbook of Western Australia 1957.

TABLE III
W.A. GOLDFIELDS 1896

GOLDFIELDS	DISTRICTS OF REGISTRY AND COURTS
Kimberley	Hall's Creek
Pilbarra	Nullagine
	Marble Bar
Pilbarra West	Roebourne
Ashburton	Mount Mortimer
Gascoyne	Bangemall
Peak Hill	Peak Hill
	(Cue
Murchison	(Daydawn
	(Mt. Magnet
	(Nannine
Yalgoo	Yalgoo
Murchison, East	Lawlers
Mount Margaret	(Mount Malcolm
	(Mount Margaret
	(Menzies
North Coolgardie	(Niagara
	(Yerilla
	(Kanowna
North East Coolgardie	(Bulong
Broad Arrow	Kurawah (Broad Arrow)
East Coolgardie	Kalgoorlie
	(Coolgardie
Coolgardie	(Kunnalling
Yilgarn	Southern Cross
Dundas	Norseman

Source: *W.A. Yearbook 1896-7*, p.412.

TABLE IV

THE POPULATION OF THE GOLDFIELDS OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA — 1893-1902

Year	Yilgarn (inc. Southern Cross)	Dundas	Coolgardie (inc. Coolgardie, Siberia, Wealth of Nations, Londonderry)	East Coolgardie (inc. Kalgoorlie, Boulder)	North East Coolgardie (inc. Kanowna Kurnalpi)	North Coolgardie (inc. Menzies)	Broad Arrow	Mount Margaret
1893	1,045	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1894	1,000	—	10,000	800	350	—	—	—
1895	1,200	100	13,000	7,000	6,600	3,000	800	—
1896	1,000	1,500	32,000	10,000	—	9,000	—	—
1897	1,500	1,341	—	14,000	7,680	5,566	1,750	300
1898	1,503	1,596	—	25,000	6,620	4,696	—	1,725
1899	1,388	1,400	6,599	24,475	3,254	4,655	—	4,715
1900	1,546	1,465	6,782	25,900	2,914	5,010	2,380	5,251
1901	1,444	1,450	5,962	26,100	2,606	5,040	1,350	4,700
1902	1,807	1,520	7,580	30,000	3,243	6,954	1,500	6,015

Source: Mossenson, D., 1953: *The Influence of the Eastern Goldfields on the Political Development of Western Australia, 1890-1904*. (University of Western Australia, M.A. Thesis).

TABLE V

QUANTITY OF GOLD, THE PRODUCT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA, ENTERED FOR EXPORT AND RECEIVED AT THE PERTH BRANCH OF THE ROYAL MINT, FROM EACH GOLDFIELD UP TO THE 31ST DECEMBER, 1902

Year	Kimberley	Pilbara	West (a) Pilbara	Ashburton	Gascoyne (b)	Peak Hill (c)	East Murch. (c)	Mur- chison	Yalgoo (d)	Mt. Mar- garet (c)	Nth. Cool.	Broad Arrow (e)
	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces
1886	302	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1887	4873	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1888	3493	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1889	2464	11170	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1890	4474	16055	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1891	2700	11875	—	839	—	—	—	2064	—	—	—	—
1892	1089	12893	—	1	—	—	—	24356	—	—	—	—
1893	1621	11699	—	467	—	—	—	21211	—	—	—	—
1894	588	16255	—	285	—	—	—	52947	—	—	—	—
1895	877	19522	—	541	—	—	—	65477	—	—	—	—
1896	892	11810	—	669	—	—	—	71283	—	—	17161	—
1897	554	11955	—	1039	—	5110	9454	82892	2035	8686	74556	4159
1898	288	11663	2028	450	—	13737	39563	93667	3756	43266	70625	24632
1899	1123	20526	1956	521	419	31995	41570	93518	10880	81817	105689	44524
1900	677	17141	721	524	86	28670	58370	108696	9368	141523	106193	47860
1901	663	11320	481	64	26	21607	77604	144694	9199	198808	142798	29105
1902	442	10706	3284	—	125	32737	91976	212570	5679	216637	187273	18381
TOTALS	27120	194590	8470	5400	656	133856	318537	973375	40917	690737	704295	168661

(a) Prior to 1st May, 1898, included with Pilbara

(c) From 1st August, 1897

(e) From 1st September, 1897

(b) Prior to 1st March, 1899, included with Ashburton

(d) Prior to 1st April, 1897, included with Murchison

QUANTITY OF GOLD, etc. — continued

Year	North East Coolgardie	East Coolgardie (f)	Coolgardie (g)	Yilgarn	Dundas (h)
	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces	(crude) ounces
1886 ...		--	--	--	
1887 ...		--			
1888 ...	--				
1889 ...		--		1,859	--
1890 ...	--	--		2,277	--
1891 ...	--	--	--	12,833	
1892 ...	--	--	--	21,209	
1893 ...	--	--		75,745	148
1894 ...	--	--	105,330	31,498	228
1895 ...	--	--	125,106	19,748	242
1896 ...	4,113	85,287	69,135	16,565	4,350
1897 ...	32,906	300,037	104,306	17,994	19,311
1898 ...	125,241	450,312	127,227	11,697	32,032
1899 ...	81,171	923,618	141,170	16,805	45,165
1900 ...	52,129	810,907	119,782	29,418	40,688
1901 ...	50,557	1,033,670	88,600	29,488	38,796
1902 ...	54,540	1,172,405	97,477	25,878	36,211
TOTALS	400,657	4,776,236	978,133	313,014	217,171

(f) Prior to 1st May, 1896, included with Coolgardie

(g) Declared 6th April, 1894, to which date included with Yilgarn

(h) Prior to 1893, included with Yilgarn

Source: *W.A. Yearbook* 1900-1901, pp.287-288.

TABLE VI
W.A. CRUDE GOLD OUTPUT 1886-1910

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>OUNCES</u>	<u>VALUE (£s)</u>
1886	270	1,148
1887	4,359	18,517
1888	3,125	13,273
1889	13,860	58,874
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1890	22,806	86,664
1891	30,311	115,182
1892	59,548	116,284
1893	110,891	421,385
1894	207,131	787,099
1895	231,513	879,748
1896	281,265	1,068,808
1897	674,994	2,564,977
1898	939,490	3,990,699
1899	1,434,570	5,451,368
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1900	1,414,311	6,007,611
1901	1,703,417	7,235,653
1902	1,871,037	7,947,661
1903	2,064,801	8,770,719
1904	1,983,230	8,424,226
1905	1,955,316	8,305,654
1906	1,794,547	7,622,749
1907	1,697,554	7,210,749
1908	1,647,911	6,999,882
1909	1,595,269	6,776,274
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1910	6,246,848	6,246,848

Source: *W.A. Yearbook 1912*

TABLE VII
W.A. SHIPPING 1887-1910

Year	Inwards		Outwards	
	Ships	Tons	Ships	Tons
1887	266	252,323	248	240,527
1888	263	402,807	266	409,586
1889	349	497,232	345	507,586
1890	281	484,534	267	420,327
1891	310	533,433	288	512,122
1892	356	572,090	320	552,475
1893	293	539,953	288	531,465
1894	372	675,775	349	653,303
1895	485	814,368	433	764,185
1896	768	1,105,907	683	1,030,471
1897	721	1,196,760	707	1,181,072
1898	633	1,199,894	631	1,189,732
1899	685	1,333,052	668	1,305,596
1900	769	1,625,696	747	1,606,332
1901			901	1,872,027
1902			765	1,686,905
1903			703	1,662,741
1904			655	1,777,186
1905			656	1,828,256
1906			609	1,792,176
1907			597	1,760,338
1908			592	1,816,805
1909			650	2,054,189
1910			726	2,372,260

Source: *W.A. Yearbooks 1896-7 and 1912.*

