



MONASH University

**Women and Community
on the
Upper Goulburn Goldfields**

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Abstract

This thesis explores how women (and men) made different kinds of community on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, between Jamieson and Woods Point in north-east Victoria, in the mid to late nineteenth century. Beginning chronologically with the early gold rushes in the 1860s and concluding with the nostalgic re-visiting of goldfields history in the 1930s, my thesis makes a focused study of women's lives in the 'communities' of Jamieson, Gaffneys Creek and Woods Point in the boom and bust phase of alluvial and quartz mining activity on the goldfields.

Beginning with an analysis of classical theories of community, particularly Ferdinand Tönnies' now famous distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society), this thesis explores how the relationship between women and community has evolved. Tönnies' idea of community as a static, homogenous rural locality where family, friends and neighbours lived and worked together and shared common beliefs and practices reinforced a patriarchal structure in which women's roles were confined within the family. While these ideas influenced early sociological and historical scholarship, later studies of gender and class have helped us question these ideas.

In Australian histories of the nineteenth century gold rushes the ways in which women and families made 'goldfield communities' have not been fully explored, especially beyond the extensively studied terrain of the central Victorian goldfields. Using a microhistorical approach, and drawing on materials recently made accessible through digitisation and other technological changes, this thesis addresses the geographic gap in Victorian goldfield scholarship. It extends what is meant by the term 'goldfield community' revealing the different ways in which women and families were regarded, in the nineteenth century — and in later scholarship — as essential to community making.

The thesis focuses on three key themes. The first centres on the relationship between a shared geographic locality and community making. I argue that though the correlation between a shared geographic location and community has been challenged by later sociological and historical scholarship, we still need to be mindful of how the physical

characteristics of a space informs community making. Exploring individual women's (and men's) experiences of the physical characteristics of the goldfields produces a more nuanced argument of the trope that respectable women and families came late to the goldfields. In considering the mobility of goldfield populations, and exploring the later nostalgic revisiting of the goldfields, this thesis also highlights the variety of communal ties that were not dependent upon a shared geographic space.

The second theme is gender and community. The patriarchal family, with its gendered division of roles, was a powerful basis for much of the community making on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. Nevertheless, my thesis shows that a close study of sources on individual women's lives reveals that the interaction and relationships of women and men were far more varied and conflictual than the static, homogenous ideal in classical community theory. Extending this argument further, this thesis argues that a masculine understanding of leadership predicated on men occupying formal positions of authority in civic and social institutions did not reflect the lived experience of women's participation in society. This is also evident in women's later writing on the goldfields which *drew on* the tropes of the bush and pioneer legends established by men while *expanding* their definitions to better reflect women's experiences and activities. This nostalgic revisiting of the goldfields also addresses the third theme of belonging and community that examines the extent to which women made, and were accepted into, a community that was both dependent — and independent — of a shared geographic locality.

Reaching for a neat explanation of what a 'goldfield community' was, and the ways in which women and men helped to make them we risk flattening out some of the rough and raggedy edges of life on the goldfields. The rich details of women's lives that are highlighted using a microhistorical approach also add further texture to future scholarship exploring a range of questions about women, family, and community. Being alert to how individuals interact, form social relationships, and develop a sense of belonging opens up other ways of exploring how individuals make, or imagine community, in all types of settings. This approach allow us to reflect more fully upon such ideas as respectability and the proper place of women that accompanied the women and men who settled the British colonies in the nineteenth century, especially in the 1850s and '60s.

By narrowing our focus and asking different questions of familiar narratives, by reflecting upon the relationship between our physical and digital sources and their impact on our historical practice, and by drawing out the nuances and complexities that emerge from such sources, this thesis shows we can produce much richer narratives that highlight the agency of our subjects, particularly those whose voices have been excluded.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



Louise Blake

2019

Publications during enrolment

Blake, Louise. "Chasing Eliza Miles: An Archive Story." *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* 21 (August 2015): 78-92.

Blake, Louise. "Women on the Woods Point Goldfields: A Case study in Microhistory." *Journal of Australasian Mining History* 14 (October 2016): 1-20.

Acknowledgements

This research began as a family history project to interpret a scrapbook created in the late nineteenth century by my paternal great-grandmother, Margaret Hester née Knopp when she lived in Woods Point. I hope that Margaret would have approved of the use I have made of her scrapbook, and I am thankful that members of my father's family preserved it, and a handful of other family records. I appreciate their support for my decision to later donate the scrapbook to Museum Victoria, and I thank curators Deborah Tout-Smith and Charlotte Smith for their interest and assistance in facilitating this donation to the Museum.

Any research on the goldfields in north-east Victoria owes a debt to the work of engineer and historian, the late Dr Brian Lloyd. Dr Lloyd's many books on the mines and settlements of the Upper Goulburn, and surrounding goldfields, are comprehensive references on mining in this region. That I have noted that there are gaps in his account of women's experiences is not meant as criticism, but an acknowledgement that we all bring particular interests and expertise to our research; Dr Lloyd's engineering expertise has been invaluable in broadening my understanding of mining activity. Much of Dr Lloyd's research, and that of other local historians, was conducted prior to the developments in digital and online technologies that have enhanced historical scholarship in recent years. The digitisation of primary sources, some of which are accessible online through resources such as Ancestry, and National Library of Australia's Trove, has enabled me to extend the work of local historians by exploring in more detail the experiences of women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In researching women on the Victorian goldfields, I also owe a debt to the work of Dr Clare Wright and Dr Dorothy Wickham, who in their separate studies on women on the Ballarat goldfields demonstrate that asking different questions, and drawing on a broader array of sources, can expand our understanding of familiar narratives.

When I ventured into the mountains of the Upper Goulburn region I was fortunate to receive the assistance of volunteers at Mansfield and District Historical Society, Jamieson and District Historical Society, and the Woods Point Progress Association. I also wish to thank Bernard Bolch, and the many other volunteers dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of Walhalla, Woods Point's more famous goldfield neighbour, which was

originally included in the scope of my project. That my focus shifted away from Walhalla is no reflection on their assistance, and I hope in the future that other researchers take up the opportunity to uncover the experiences of women from Walhalla and other Gippsland goldfields. Likewise, Linda Barraclough, who for many years published the *Gippsland Heritage Journal* in conjunction with Dr Meredith Fletcher at Monash University's Centre for Gippsland Studies, was also of assistance at various stages of my research, as were other members of the AUS-VIC-GIPPSLAND discussion list on Rootsweb.com. I also wish to thank Dawn Cowley and the Mid-Gippsland Family History Society for inviting me to speak about my research at one of their monthly meetings.

Over the course of my research I also met other academics and family historians (including descendants of some of the women mentioned in my thesis), who were generous in sharing their research. In no particular order I thank Dr Patrick Morgan, Dr Madonna Grehan, Dr Lloyd Carpenter, Robyn Annear, John Mitchell, Dr Kathleen McPhillips, Tony Forsyth, Roma Strahan, Dale Simpson, Coleen and Rod Bower, Robert Ashley, John Pilkington, Marilyn Jenks, Andy Moffat, Chris Moffat, Edward Finucane, Corrie Kemp, Rhonda Willmetts, Jack Ruffin, Rudi Paoletti, Dr Brad Bitossi, and Laurie Davis. For various reasons I have been unable to include all the information they have shared with me, but I hope to expand on this work in future projects. Until her sudden death in September 2018 Dr Joan Hunt was also a generous and supportive fellow traveller on the journey to understanding 'goldfield communities', and like many in what I knowingly describe as the Victorian local history community, I will miss swapping research stories with her.

Sometimes, in our enthusiasm and obsession with research, some scholars (myself included) have used the term 'discovery' when discussing our searches for sources. Although unintended, this terminology can sometimes devalue the breadth of work conducted by the many staff and volunteers in collecting institutions which has enabled us to find evidence to support our research questions. Many institutions have assisted me through their expertise in collecting, preserving, and providing physical and online access to the historical sources I have drawn upon in my research. I wish to thank the staff and volunteers of: National Archives of Australia, National Library of Australia, Public Record Office Victoria, State Library of Victoria, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Centre for Gippsland Studies,

Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria Police Museum, State Library of New South Wales, City of Newcastle Local History Library, New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, State Library of Queensland, Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, and New Zealand Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages.

Throughout my candidature I have had been supervised by three dedicated, generous, and attentive scholars: Dr Julie Fenley, (formerly of Monash University and Federation University, now at Victoria University), Professor Emerita Marian Quartly (Monash University) and Associate Professor Seamus O'Hanlon (Monash University). Their individual expertise, guidance, and unwavering support has helped me make what I hope is a worthwhile contribution to historical scholarship on women, gender, family, and community. I am also grateful to Professor Erik Eklund (Federation University) who provided feedback in the early stages of my research, and pointed me in the direction of some valuable sources on microhistory. Members of the Monash Postgraduate milestone review panels also provided constructive feedback during my candidature. Thanks also to Monash Graduate Research Administrator Sascha Burnside who always responded with a reassuring email when I queried some of the idiosyncrasies of my candidature. My research was also partly supported by an Australian Postgraduate Scholarship awarded through Monash University.

I should add that I commenced my candidature in 2012 at what was then Monash University's Churchill campus, which was home to the Centre for Gippsland Studies. As my research initially incorporated the Walhalla goldfields in Gippsland, I wished to contribute to the ongoing research of this Centre. When the Churchill campus became part of Federation University in 2013 I retained a connection to the campus. In 2014 and 2015 I was given an opportunity to teach and coordinate a number of units in History/Politics in Federation University's School of Applied Arts and Sciences. Although I later transferred my candidature to Monash Clayton, I am thankful for the support I received from my administrative and academic colleagues at Federation University and value the opportunity to contribute, albeit briefly, to its teaching program.

During my candidature I completed journal articles for the *Journal of the Australasian Mining History Association*, and *Lilith: a Feminist History Journal*. I appreciate the feedback of the editors and referees who participated in the double-blind refereeing process. I also delivered papers at the annual conferences of the Australian Historical Association. I wish to thank the students and academics I met (and interacted with via Twitter) at these conferences who provided constructive feedback and support for my research, especially Dr Catherine Bishop, Dr Kate Bagnall, Dr Keira Lindsay, and Dr Jennifer Caligari.

I also wish to thank Mel Davies, Robert Ashley, Dr Ken McQueen, Dr Ross Both and the other members of the Australasian Mining History Association for the feedback they provided on my paper at the 2013 Beechworth conference, and at other times during my research. One of the moments of serendipity in my research that I am thankful for occurred on an excursion to Rutherglen ahead of the 2013 conference. During our lunch break at All Saints Winery in Rutherglen, the late folk singer Danny Spooner performed “The Emperor of Wahgunyah”, a song by nineteenth-century goldfields balladeer, Charles Thatcher. Some months after the conference, I became aware (while searching newspapers on Trove) that one of the subjects of my thesis, Mrs Oakey, had appeared alongside Thatcher when he had performed the original song in Rutherglen in 1860. By way of thanks to Danny for his interest in my project, in May 2016 I tentatively performed what turned out to be one of Danny’s favourite goldfield folk songs, “The Colonial Widow” at his last appearance at the Victorian Folk Music Club before his death in 2017.

In addition to being a doctoral student I am also a consulting historian and member of Professional Historians Australia. I wish to thank my colleagues in PHA (Vic), now PHA (Vic & Tas), for their encouragement and support, particularly the members of the Biography reading group, and Employment and Professional Development sub-committee who kindly and patiently encouraged me when I felt weighed down by ‘imposter syndrome’. Undertaking a thesis on women and community has reminded me, more than ever, of the sense of belonging I feel as part of a PHA community.

Lastly but most importantly, my family and friends have been loyal supporters and loving companions on this journey, and I thank them wholeheartedly for their patience. My love

and thanks especially to my husband, Chris who has always encouraged me to 'be the best that you can be.'

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Part 1: Historiography

Introduction: ‘Woods Point is my dwelling place’: Women and Family on the Upper Goulburn Goldfields.

“Place” exists when the individual can tell a story about a specific locality, something that indicates personal meaning. Place exists when ‘house’ becomes ‘home’. Places exist when we start naming them.¹

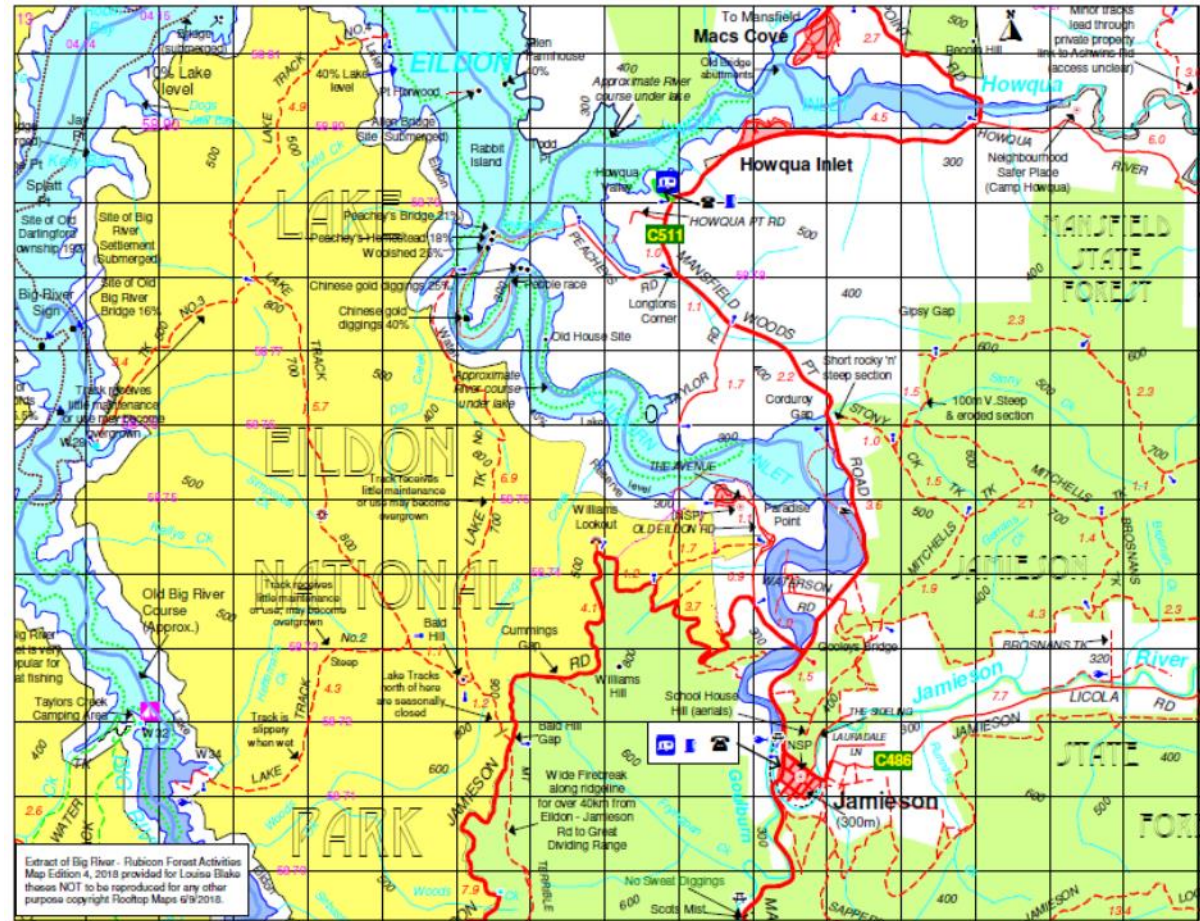


Fig. 1: Portion of a topographical map of the Big River-Rubicon-Woods Point region, 2011
[scale 1:50 000]
Courtesy Rooftop Maps.

On my study wall is a contemporary topographical map of part of the Great Dividing Range east of Melbourne, from the Big River valley south of Lake Eildon to Woods Point. [Fig. 1] In the north-western corner of the map the pale blue waters of the Goulburn and Howqua Inlets seep out from Lake Eildon and snake their way between the Howqua River valley and

¹ Frank Vanclay, “Place Matters,” in *Making Sense of Place: Exploring the Concepts and Expressions of Place through Different Senses and Lenses*, eds. Frank Vanclay, Matthew Higgins and Adam Blackshaw (Canberra: National Museum of Australia, 2008), 4.

the eastern shoreline of Lake Eildon National Park. A thin purple line follows the curve of the inlets marking the rough course of the Goulburn and Howqua Rivers now submerged under the lake, and expands to fill the space adjacent to the National Park on the west, and Jamieson State Park on the east. As the space narrows the thin purple line meets a bright blue line marking the course of the Jamieson River that flows east from the Alpine National Park. Where the Goulburn and Jamieson Rivers meet is a grid of red lines marking the township of Jamieson.

The natural features of this region were first used by the Taungurung, one of the five clans of the Kulin nation. From the late 1830s Europeans claimed Taungurung country, establishing pastoral stations along the Goulburn, Delatite and Howqua Rivers. In his address on the discovery of the Woods Point goldfields to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria in 1965, H.J. Stacpoole suggests that the pastoralists had no use for the ranges further south as they were not suited for grazing.² This changed with the discovery of gold in Victoria in the 1850s, opening European eyes to the rich mineral resources in the ranges. Unmarked on my map, with its artificial representation of rivers, rugged mountains and the settlements in between, is a spot that became known as either Cashine's or Ration Point.³ It was here, in August 1854, that a small party of miners from the Buckland diggings found about six ounces (or 170 grams) of gold in the Goulburn River. More of a trickle than a rush, this find did tempt a few miners from the Beechworth and Buckland diggings and other men labouring on nearby pastoral stations to search for more gold amongst the alluvial gravel along stretches of the Goulburn and Big Rivers. A few years later the trickle of miners along the river — and the storekeepers and packers who supplied them — gathered momentum. It was not until the 1860s, however, that gold was found in sufficiently payable quantities, particularly in the quartz reefs embedded in the surrounding hills, to encourage to the region a larger population that included women and children.

² H.J. Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields," *The Victorian Historical Magazine* 37: 1 (1966), 52.

³ One account of the Big River and Enochs Point diggings recalled that the location was known as Ration Point, see *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 22 December 1896. Former quartz miner John Nolan wrote that the spot was later known as Cashine's Point, see Richard Mackay, "Recollections of the Early Gippsland Goldfields," *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, 26 February 1915, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92015721>.

Recent scholarship on the Victorian goldfields, and mining history more generally, refers to settlements that formed on goldfields, or at the sites of other mineral deposits, as ‘communities’.⁴ In his historiographical survey of the relationship between the mining industry and community Erik Eklund writes that geology determined where mining communities were established. He writes that ‘[w]ithout large payable finds of valuable mineral resources then the social and economic infrastructure to work the ore bodies would simply have never developed’.⁵ If I apply Eklund’s argument to my map, the settlements of Jamieson, Gaffneys Creek and Woods Point along the Goulburn River, and what remains of the settlements on the Big River, might not have existed without gold and the men, women and children whose livelihoods depended upon mining, but what did community mean in these settlements? Drawing on sociological scholarship on the various meaning and uses of community suggests that transforming these settlements into communities required more than a payable supply of gold and a population to support its extraction.⁶ Susan Lawrence and Alan Mayne have argued in separate studies of goldfields in central Victoria that women and families were integral to community formation, and Mayne in particular suggests that this focus should expand to include other goldfields around Australia.⁷ My study builds on this scholarship to question the meanings of community on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, and how — in the nineteenth century, and in later scholarship — women and families were regarded as essential to community formation.

Although not as familiar and visible in recent goldfield scholarship as the extensively studied terrain of the central Victorian goldfields in the 1850s, the Upper Goulburn goldfields between Jamieson and Woods Point were another stop on the well-trodden trail of gold that extended across the globe in the nineteenth century. However, the rugged terrain —

⁴ Susan Lawrence, *Dolly’s Creek: An Archaeology of a Victorian Goldfields Community* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2000), 14-15; Erik Eklund, “Mining in Australia: an Historical Survey of Industry-Community Relationships,” *The Extractive Industries and Society* 2 (2015): 179, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.exis.2014.09.003>.

⁵ Eklund, “Mining in Australia,” 179.

⁶ Scholarship on the meaning and uses of community is extensive, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. However, one oft-cited source that provides an overview of some of the sociological debates regarding community is D. B. Clark, “The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination,” *Sociological Review* (August 1973), 397-416.

⁷ Lawrence, *Dolly’s Creek*, 16; Alan Mayne, “Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields,” in *Gold Tailings: Forgotten Histories of Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields*, eds. Charles Fahey and Alan Mayne (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 237.

depicted on my contemporary map by a swirling patchwork of narrow contours and warnings to avoid particular tracks in winter — made accessing these goldfields more difficult, and the living and working conditions were somewhat different to those of other more accessible Victorian goldfields. Yet, as local historians show the remaining tangible evidence of the goldfields set amidst this challenging terrain has been part of the region's appeal. Some have spent their childhoods living in the mining settlements or visiting on holidays to camp alongside the rivers and explore the surrounding bushland.⁸ Others have been bushwalkers attracted to the region's mining history who have traipsed through forests overgrown with blackberries to locate abandoned mining equipment and recover evidence of the people who established houses and businesses in the settlements that developed to support mining activity.⁹ Bringing a variety of historical skills and expertise to their investigations of the region's mining history, these local historians have, with a couple of noteworthy exceptions, contributed the main body of works on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.¹⁰ In revealing their sense of belonging, or connection, to the region the authors of these works show that we can discern something of the meanings of community not only from those who lived on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, but from those who have drawn on their own personal connections to the region to shape the history of the goldfields. On this point, my study of the women and community on the Upper Goulburn goldfields is no

⁸ Brian Lloyd, *Ten Mile Dreaming: Photographs and Families* (Hampton East: Histec Publications, 2010), 1-3; John Pilkington, *Big River Days: A History of the Golden Times of the Big River Valley and the Long Gone Townships of Darlingford and Enoch's Point*. 2013 ed. (Clifton Hill: J.K. Pilkington, 1996), xi-xii.

⁹ Owen Tomlin, Marysusan Bosa and P.G. Chamberlain, *Gold for the Finding: A Pictorial History of Gippsland's Jordan Goldfield* (Melbourne: Hill of Content Publishing Company, 1979); Anne Bailey and Robin Bailey, *A Windy Morn of Matlock: the History of a Victorian Mountain Goldfield* (Melbourne: Mountain Home Press, 1998).

¹⁰ In describing the authors of these works I am endeavouring to avoid patronising labels, such as 'amateur historian', which have been used in the past to describe non-academic historians or those not working as paid professional historians. While labels can still be problematic, my purpose in using the term 'local historian' is to make a historiographical distinction between the work of academic historians, and independent authors with a variety of historical skills and expertise who have written histories of parts of the region for general audiences. In this context 'local' means that they have written about the locality, but not necessarily as residents. Academic exceptions to this local body of work include: Tom Griffiths, Victoria. Dept. of Conservation and Environment. Historic Places Branch, and Monash Public History Group, *Secrets of the Forest: Discovering History in Melbourne's Ash Range* (St. Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1992), later revised as *Forests of Ash: an Environmental History* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Helen Doyle, "Australia Infelix: Making History in an Unsettled Country" (PhD thesis, Monash University, 2005), and Annamaria Davine, *Neither Here nor There: Italians and Swiss-Italians on the Walhalla Goldfield, 1865-1915* (Macleod: Italian Australian Institute at La Trobe University, 2009).

different. I may have spent more time staring at this map on my wall than I have getting my feet dirty, but I too have a personal connection to the region.



Fig. 2: My paternal grandmother, Catherine Hyland née Hester, outside her home in Drouin, Victoria, ca. 1960s.
Venise Hyland.

My paternal grandmother, Catherine Hyland née Hester [Fig. 2] was born in Woods Point on 6 May 1901.¹¹ Catherine died when I was five and, growing up outside Victoria, I heard few family stories from my father's extended family, but I do recall seeing the name of Woods Point amongst the few records we had of my father's family history. Woods Point remained a name on a birth certificate until I inherited a scrapbook compiled by Catherine's mother, Margaret Hester, after I moved to Victoria in 2000. Margaret was born near Woods Point in 1870 and was the eldest surviving daughter of John Knopp [Fig. 3] and Katherine Foley [Fig. 4], who came to the region separately in the mid-1860s.¹² John was originally from Koblenz in what was then part of Prussia (now Germany), while Katherine came to Victoria from County Kerry in Ireland.¹³ Between 1869 and 1883 Katherine gave birth to seven children in or near Woods Point.¹⁴ Only Margaret and her brother John Patrick survived infancy.¹⁵ Royal Standard, where Margaret was born, is marked elsewhere on my map as part of the Woods Point Historic Gold Reserve, and a boiler associated with the nearby Leviathan reef, where Margaret's father and brother once worked a mine, has been added as a point of interest on the Leviathan Track. As important as this abandoned machinery may be to the history of mining activity in this region, we need to look more broadly to find traces of the women like Margaret and her mother whose activities in these remote settlements supported mining activity.

¹¹ Catherine Mary Hester, 6 May 1901, Births in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹² Margaret Knopp, 25 July 1870, Births in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹³ John (then known as Johann) and his brother, Peter arrived in Victoria on 17 July 1860 on board the *Magdalena*, PROV, VPRS 7667 (microfiche copy of VPRS 947), Inward Overseas Passenger Lists (Foreign Ports). Katherine's arrival date has not been identified from shipping lists, but the registration of her death in 1908 notes that she had been in Victoria for at least forty years, Katherine Knopp, 20 July 1908, Deaths in the District of Gisborne, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹⁴ Catherine Knopp, 10 March 1869 (died 1870), Margaret, 26 July 1870, Unnamed female, 23 May 1872 (died), John Patrick Knopp, 14 May 1873, Unnamed female, 30 April 1875 (died), Unnamed male, 1 March 1880 (died), Thomas Knopp, 1883 (died). Details obtained from birth and death registrations held by Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹⁵ John Patrick Knopp did not marry or have children. He died in a bushfire near Yarra Junction in 1932, *Argus*, 22 February 1932, 8, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article4412115>. Other newspaper reports on his death were preserved by the family together with Margaret Knopp's scrapbook.



Fig. 3 & 4: Photographs of framed portraits of my great-great grandparents, John and Katherine Knopp held by descendants, ca. 2007.

Louise Blake.

Margaret began compiling her scrapbook in 1884 at the age of fourteen. She filled it with decorative scraps, greeting cards, newspaper clippings, and handwritten poetry, but did not include many biographical details or local references. On one page, though, featuring a number of handwritten quotations and a birthday card illustrated with what appear to be purple daisies and correa, Margaret has written ‘Margaret Knopp is my name, Victoria is my nation, Woods Point is my dwelling place and Heaven is my expectation.’ [Fig. 5] The inclusion of this quotation, described by Kevin J. Hayes as an ‘identification rhyme’ and often followed by variants of the lines ‘when I am dead and in my grave and all my bones are rotten, this little book will tell my name when I am quite forgotten’, suggests to me that Margaret understood Woods Point as a place that she wished to remember.¹⁶ In the example that Hayes provides in his discussion of the rhyme he equates ‘dwelling place’ with community, but does the phrase in Margaret’s scrapbook suggest that she had a sense of belonging to community in Woods Point in a sense that transcends place?¹⁷

¹⁶ Kevin J. Hayes, *Folklore and Book Culture* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 99-100, https://books.google.com.au/books/about/Folklore_and_Book_Culture.html?id=-_Q77yLPK9cC&redir_esc=y.

¹⁷ Ibid.



Fig. 5: Margaret Knopp, Scrapbook, Woods Point, 1884.

Museums Victoria, <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/1479453>.

The page on the left features the 'dwelling place' reference to Woods Point, as indicated in the bottom left corner.

Tanya Evans writes that '[w]e can learn something about the everyday lives of mothers and children in the past from material culture' but suggests that we should be alert to the processes that have shaped its preservation and interpretation.¹⁸ After Margaret died in 1937 the scrapbook, together with a small collection of family records and photographs, passed down to Margaret's daughter, Catherine and then to my aunt Margaret. A few years after my aunt died in July 2000 the scrapbook and other records were offered to me because of my interest in family history. My knowledge of family history, together with my professional experience working in libraries, museums, and archives, meant that the scrapbook became more than just a precious family heirloom; it was an artefact to study and interpret. The processes that shaped the preservation of Margaret Knopp's scrapbook support Evans's argument that 'different family members [have] created their own cultural scripts to construct and relate their family histories and played diverse roles in the

¹⁸ Tanya Evans, "The Use of Memory and Material Culture in the History of the Family in Colonial Australia," *Journal of Australian Studies* 36: 2 (2012), 208, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14443058.2012.678584>.

memorialisation of their genealogy'.¹⁹ Evans has written elsewhere of 'how family history woven carefully with academic history has the potential to change the way in which Australians think about the past', and this has been the impetus behind much of my research on the women in my family.²⁰ This personal and professional interest in the collaboration between family historians, academic historians, and collecting institutions is also why I later donated the scrapbook to Museums Victoria. A digitised reproduction of the scrapbook is now accessible on their website, and I would be delighted if the scrapbook was of interest to other researchers with questions different to my own.²¹ What I learnt through researching the scrapbook and Margaret Knopp's family history sparked a wider interest in uncovering the stories of other women who lived in Woods Point and the surrounding goldfields during the nineteenth century, and the extent to which they felt a part of a community on the goldfields.

My female ancestors were among hundreds of women who weathered the boom and bust cycles of alluvial and quartz mining on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the nineteenth century, but you will not find their stories or those of any women from the region in the traditional histories of the Victorian goldfields.²² Their absence from these narratives is not unusual. Until recently, the stories of women on the goldfields were overshadowed by a masculine Anglo-centric mythology of men, mining, and political activism. Since the 1970s, when feminist scholars began addressing the marginalisation of women in Australian history, goldfields scholarship has broadened, drawing on a wider range of sources including material culture to provide evidence of the experiences of women and families on the goldfields. In Victoria, this recent goldfield scholarship is dominated by the central Victorian

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Tanya Evans, "Secrets and Lies: the Radical Potential of Family History," *History Workshop Journal* 71 (Spring 2011), 52, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41306811>; Louise Blake, "The Ties That Bind: Investigating the Bond between Four Generations of Women in my Family," (Masters in Biography and Life Writing Research Project, Monash University, 2004); Louise Blake, "Shaping a Family Archive," *Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians* 2 (2011), 62-67.

²¹ Margaret Knopp, "Scrapbook – Margaret Knopp, Woods Point, 1884," Museums Victoria Collections <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/1479453>, accessed 27 April 2018.

²² Scholarship on the Victorian goldfields is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, but the major traditional works are: Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended: A History of Australian Mining*, 3rd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1978); Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age: A History of the Colony of Victoria, 1851-1861* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1963).

goldfields.²³ Other goldfields like the Upper Goulburn, the subject of this study, have not received the same scholarly attention. Local histories of the towns and mining settlements on the Upper Goulburn have acknowledged the presence of women and families, but in these histories and goldfield scholarship more generally, the complexities of community making are not fully explored.²⁴ In addressing the geographic gap in Victorian goldfields scholarship my thesis questions what is meant by the term ‘goldfield community’, and the ways in which women and families were regarded, in the nineteenth century — and in later scholarship — as essential to community making.

This thesis also draws on a microhistorical methodology to highlight the experiences of a number of women in the boom and bust phase of alluvial and quartz mining activity in a geographically bound mining region. Definitions of microhistory vary, but in general it may be characterised as small-scale historical analysis that makes comprehensive use of primary sources to establish intimate and wide ranging connections between particular people, places and events to illuminate broader historical themes.²⁵ In drawing on a variety of sources, outlined in Chapter 1, I demonstrate that a narrow focus and attention to the agency of individual women (and men) allows some of the complexities and nuances of community making to be revealed. Such an approach has relevance beyond the study of nineteenth-century geographically bound populations and could inform contemporary community making. Being alert to how individuals interact, form social relationships, and develop a sense of belonging opens up other ways of exploring how individuals make, or imagine community, in all types of settings.

²³ This scholarship is discussed in Chapter 1, but notable works include: Fahey and Mayne, eds., *Gold Tailings*; Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*; Ian McCalman, Alexander Cook, and Andrew Reeves, eds., *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Dorothy Wickham, *Women on the Diggings, Ballarat 1854* (Ballarat: BHS Publishing, 2009); Clare Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2013).

²⁴ Scholarship on the Upper Goulburn and surrounding goldfields is discussed in Chapter 1.

²⁵ John Brewer, “Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life,” *Cultural and Social History: The Journal of the Social History Society* 7:1 (2010), 89; <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/147800410X477359>; Francesca Trivellato, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History,” *California Italian Studies* 2: 1 (2011), no page numbers, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; Jill Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography,” *The Journal of American History* 88: 1 (2001), 129-144, DOI: 10.2307/2674921.

In piecing together the experiences, activities, and memories of women on the Upper Goulburn my thesis also draws on feminist scholarship and social history, as well as on ongoing technological developments that have enhanced our access to primary source material. The rich details of women's lives that are highlighted using this methodology add further texture to future scholarship exploring a range of questions about women, family, and community. In drawing on my familial connection to the Upper Goulburn goldfields, my thesis is also part of a revitalised conversation between family and academic historians about how, together, our work can offer new insights into the history of the family.²⁶ This conversation builds on other collaborations, such as the community engagement between individuals and groups with collecting institutions.²⁷ As I noted earlier, my family's donation to Museums Victoria of Margaret Knopp's scrapbook is another example of this kind of collaboration. Although outside the scope of this project, such conversations and collaborations could be studied as another example of community making. That my thesis includes the experiences of a number of women who did not have children, or whose children did not survive into adulthood, also complicates the theory posited by some scholars that family history is typically written by 'winners' (those who survived to produce descendants), reminding us that belonging and community is as much about exclusion as it is inclusion.²⁸

²⁶ Tanya Evans, "Secrets and Lies," 52; "Related Histories: Studying the Family," 28-29 November 2017, National Centre for Biography, <http://history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/ncb/events/related-histories-studying-family>. See also Laura King, "Family History and Academic History – the Value of Collaboration," posted February 6, 2018, accessed April 27, 2018. <https://livingwithdying.leeds.ac.uk/2018/02/06/family-history-and-academic-history-the-value-of-collaboration/>.

²⁷ One example of this kind of collaboration is Museums Victoria's Biggest Family Album in Australia project, which solicited copies of family photos documenting everyday life in Victoria. Among the over 9000 photos collected between 1985 and 1991 are a number of photos of Woods Point and Jamieson dating from the early 1900s; Fiona Kinsey, "The Biggest Family Album in Australia Collection in Museums Victoria's Collections," (2009), <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/2975>, accessed 1 May 2018.

²⁸ Janet McCalman, "Family History en Masse: Demographic Prosopography as a Tool for Social and Medical Research," recorded paper at *Related Histories: Studying the Family*, National Library of Australia, 28 November 2017, <https://soundcloud.com/ncb-adb/related-histories-conference-28-november-2017-session-2>.

Chapter outline

The thesis is structured in four parts: Historiography, Beginnings, Boom, and Decline. The first part establishes the historiographical and methodological scaffolding of the study, beginning in Chapter 1 with an overview of the evolving concept of community in sociological and historical scholarship. This chapter establishes that in much of the classical social theories the concept of community was of a static, geographically bound and patriarchal structure in which women's roles were confined within the family. While this shows that women were thought necessary for some types of community formation there was no consideration that this model might have been restrictive for women (and men) who sought other roles. Drawing on later scholarship that has drawn attention to other factors involved in community formation, including the importance of a sense of belonging, I then explore the progression from traditional goldfields scholarship to more recent histories in which women and community are more central to the narrative. In so doing I note the influence of feminist scholarship, social history, and the ongoing technological developments that have enhanced our access to primary source material. The chapter concludes by outlining the microhistorical methodology that has brought together evidence of the experiences, activities, and memories of women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields to explore the meanings of community, and women's role in community making.

The remaining three parts are divided chronologically, beginning with the early rushes in the 1860s and concluding with the nostalgic re-visiting of goldfields history in the 1930s. Though this structure directly references the familiar 'boom and bust' narrative in goldfield history, I argue that just as community can have many meanings, there are nuances to this narrative which can be revealed by an intense focus on a geographically bound goldfield population. In each of the following chapters I endeavour to illuminate some of these nuances.

Part 2, Beginnings, focuses on the initial phase of alluvial and quartz mining on the Upper Goulburn goldfields between 1860 and 1863. Chapter 2 explores the relationship between locality and community by discussing the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn, and the circumstances that led to the discovery of gold in the region. I establish in this chapter that the challenges posed by the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn,

including its geography, geology, and climate, helped to shape a masculine idea of community based on mining activity in the settlements of Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek. In Chapter 3 I build on the relationship between the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn and the making of a gendered community. Drawing on unpublished writings, mining reports, census data, civil registration records, court records, and newspaper articles I establish a connection between these physical characteristics and the gender imbalance on the goldfields in this period. In the second half of the chapter I complicate this idea that the early diggings were a masculine community by exploring the economic and reproductive activities of a small number of women who resided in the settlements of Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek in this period.

Part 3, Boom, focuses on the quartz mining boom on the Upper Goulburn in the mid-1860s with particular attention on the settlement of Woods Point. Although a small number of women were present on the early diggings, the increased settlement of larger numbers of women and families in this period allows us to examine how — in the nineteenth century, and in later scholarship — women and families were regarded as essential to community making. In Chapter 4 I explore the intersection between masculinity, femininity and respectability inherent in the ideology of separate spheres, and the interaction and relationships of women and men in this period. I argue that a close study of women's interactions and relationships making homes, families, and businesses in Woods Point show that a variety of communal ties were established. In Chapter 5 I draw on community scholarship and feminist studies on gender, the ideology of separate spheres, and citizenship to explore women's contribution to civil society in Woods Point.

Part 4, Decline, explores how the collapse of the quartz mining boom in the late 1860s affected the meanings of community for those residing on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, and those who left the region. In Chapter 6 I explore the effects that fluctuating employment in the mining industry had on family relations and settled community. Here I draw on the rich and under-utilised correspondence of one miner, Lawrence Chubb, who worked in a number of mines at Gaffneys Creek in the 1870s and '80s, to explore how miners adapted to the inconsistencies of mining employment in this period. Using Lawrence's account of Esther's activities, I then show how women's unpaid work in

establishing and maintaining a home were essential to supporting fluctuating mining activity. The chapter concludes by reflecting upon what the couple's relationships with family, friends, and neighbours tell us about the kinds of community, geographic and otherwise, that helped sustain families in this period. The final chapter moves forward in time to explore the nostalgic revisiting of the goldfields in the 1890s and 1930s. In the first half of the chapter I focus on the way in which Woods Point-born writer, Marion Miller Knowles, drew on her recollections of the township to imagine community, and in the second half I extend this by looking at her work in the context of the 'Back to' reunions in Victoria in the 1930s. In so doing I demonstrate that though classical theorists suggested that social change led to a loss of community, these examples suggest that community was not lost, but was being remade by writers and reunion participants as they imagined it; an idea of community that existed in their memories of the goldfields, and an evolving idea of community that was not bound by place. Moreover, this chapter concludes that a critical analysis of the relationship between nostalgia and community helps to expand our understanding of how a 'goldfield community' was made, and women's role in that making. The thesis concludes by revisiting my family history, and reflecting upon the findings of my study.

Chapter 1: 'Goldfield Communities': the Concept of Community in Historical Scholarship

1.1 Introduction

On 5 January 1865 up to seventeen homes and businesses in Woods Point were destroyed by a fire that started in Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel. [Fig. 1.1] No-one was hurt in the fire, but a number of employees, lodgers, and business owners lost belongings, stock, and the roof over their heads.¹ Among them were several women engaged in the hotel trade. A week after the fire the local newspaper, the *Mountaineer*, reported on the 'determination and buoyancy of spirit' of those who were rebuilding their businesses.² The *Mountaineer* also called for the establishment of a fire brigade and a municipality for the township, declaring that it '[i]t is the duty of every member of the community to assist in promoting such measures as may prevent, as far as possible, such another conflagration in our town.'³ It was not the first time the term 'community' had been used to describe settlements on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. A mining official had used the term in 1861 when reporting on the needs of the region, and from at least 1862 some published letters by miners on the diggings had complained of the lack of support for the 'gold-fields' or 'mining community'.⁴ Other labels used by the *Mountaineer* when referring to Woods Point, the surrounding goldfields, or the people who lived there, included 'locality' and 'town', 'population' and 'inhabitants'.⁵ In using the term 'community' in the aftermath of the January fire the *Mountaineer* seems to extend its meaning beyond its connection with mining, and at least by implication to include women.

¹ PROV, VPRS 407/P0, Unit 2, File 59, Cameron, Mr Hotel of Woods Point.

² *Mountaineer*, 13 January 1865.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Argus*, 31 August 1861, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5703659>; *Age*, 11 August 1862, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155010028>; *Argus*, 2 March 1864, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5745054>. A search of newspapers on Trove covering the period of the 1860s showed that articles that directly made use of the term 'community' in connection with the Upper Goulburn goldfields in this period mostly related to mining activity.

⁵ In the same article published on 13 January 1865 the *Mountaineer* used the term 'town' to describe the physical infrastructure of hotels, stores, and other businesses, and the term 'inhabitants' to describe those who lived in the town.

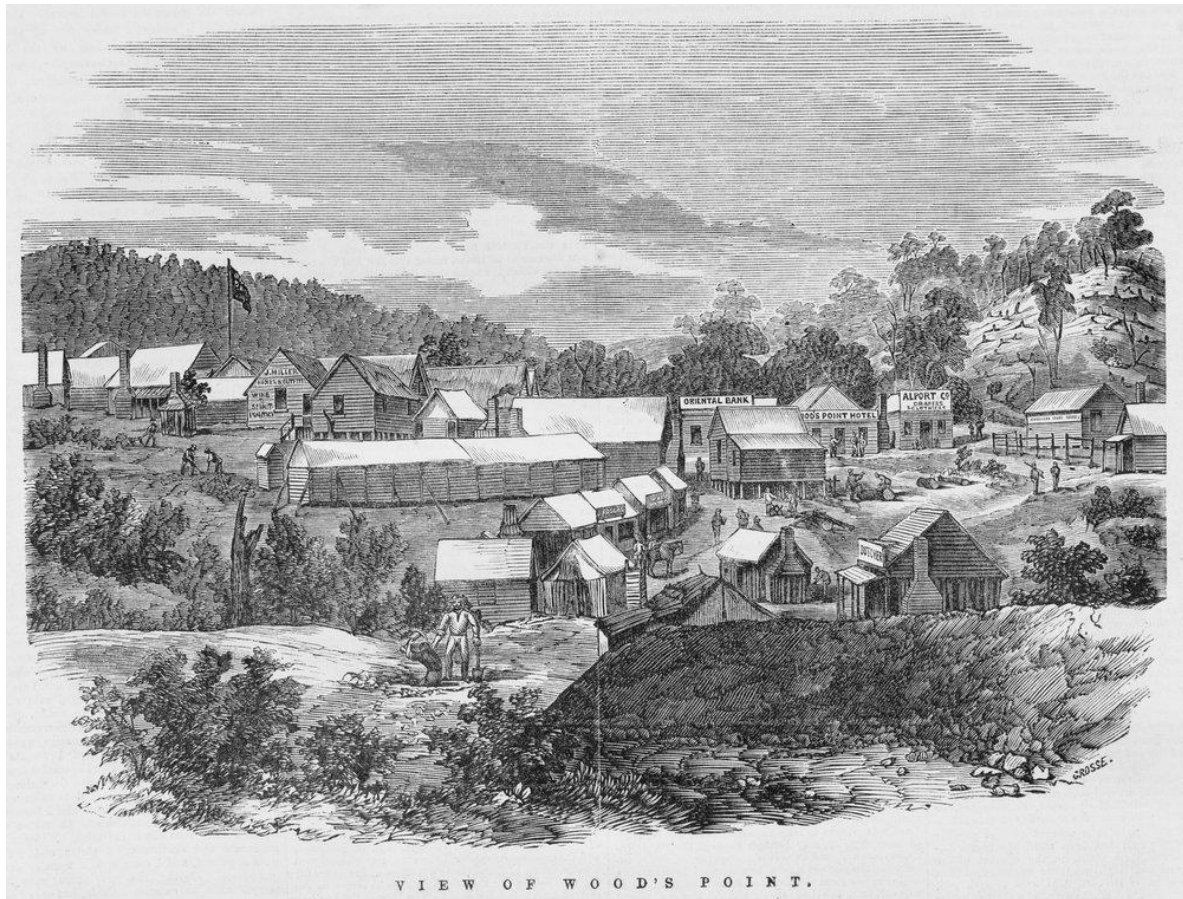


Fig. 1.1 Grosse, Frederick. View of Woods Point, 1864.

State Library of Victoria.

This illustration, published in *The Australian News for Home Readers* on 24 February 1864, features some of the business premises that were destroyed in the January 1865 fire. Though Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel is not identified in the illustration, witness accounts of the fire suggest that the long rectangular building left of centre may have been part of the hotel's boarding accommodation.

Before I explore the relationship between women and community that is central to this thesis, it is necessary to understand how these concepts have been used in earlier goldfields scholarship. In this chapter I begin by drawing on sociological literature to explore the history of the concept of community, before examining how it has been applied in historical scholarship, particularly recent scholarship on 'goldfield communities'. What does a critical examination of the study of community on the goldfields reveal about who has been included, and excluded, in Australian history more broadly? In some goldfield studies scholars have investigated the experiences of groups left out of the dominant narrative of earlier histories, such as non-Anglo migrants and Indigenous people. The focus of my study is women (including those from different class, ethnic, and religious backgrounds), but there

is scope for future scholars to extend this study to that of other marginalised groups on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

In exploring the progression from traditional goldfields scholarship to more recent histories in which women and community are more central to the narrative I note the influence of feminist scholarship, social history, and the ongoing technological developments that have enhanced our access to primary source material. In what ways do these scholarly and methodological approaches add to our understanding of women's experiences and activities, and what does this tell us about community formation on the goldfields? As earlier community studies focused on particular places to explore a variety of questions about society, this chapter argues that a microhistory of a specific goldfield allows us to explore some of the complexities of community formation posited in recent goldfield scholarship. Such an approach has relevance beyond the study of goldfield communities. By piecing together the evidence of individual women's experiences and activities on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the second half of the nineteenth century, microhistory allows us to explore the extent to which women 'belonged' in communities within a temporal and spatial framework. As Graeme Davison suggests, the question of belonging has been part of a 'long conversation in Western societies.'⁶ Studying the relationship between women and the making of community might help us to answer some of these broader questions about who and where we belong.

1.2 The Sociological 'rediscovery of community': Meanings and Uses of Community

Definitions of community note that the term derives from a fourteenth century Latin word for 'common', but as scholars in the social sciences have noted there is a complex relationship between how community has been defined, and how the term has been used or interpreted.⁷ In their 1971 introduction to the field of community studies, sociologists

⁶ Graeme Davison, "Do We Belong Here? Reflections on Family, Locality and Community Address to the Victorian Community History Awards 16 October 2017," *History News* 333 (November 2017), 5, <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/2017-11-History-News.pdf>.

⁷ Raymond Williams, *Keywords: a Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), 75, <https://books.google.com.au/books/about/Keywords.html?id=KnNWD9EYCGgC>. There is a vast amount of sociological scholarship on the origin of this idea and it is not within the scope of this study to review all of this

Colin Bell and Howard Newby argue that part of the confusion lies in the subjectivity of the term, or the ‘emotive overtones’ that are associated with it.⁸ This ‘lead to a confusion about what it *is* (empirical description) and what the sociologist feels it *should be* (normative prescription).’⁹

As Bell and Newby have noted, this subjectivity stems from the ideal of community that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the work of social theorists in Europe.¹⁰ This ‘rediscovery of community’, as Robert Nisbet earlier described it, was a critique of social and political changes throughout Europe, namely the industrial and democratic revolutions.¹¹ In summarising the ideas of key theorists such as Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Ferdinand Tönnies, Emilie Durkheim, Max Weber and George Simmel whose work influenced ‘the sociological tradition’, Nisbet notes that though these theorists had different ideological perspectives – ‘liberalism, radicalism, and conservatism’ – they all drew a distinction between the way of life in traditional and modern societies.¹²

The theorist whose work most notably shaped the subjective ideal of community that later emerged in sociology and historical scholarship was Tönnies. In his 1887 work *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft*, Tönnies now famously juxtaposed community (*Gemeinschaft*) with association or society (*Gesellschaft*).¹³ Tönnies’ definition of community was based on the ties between family, neighbours and friends who lived close together in a shared geographic locality, and who shared common beliefs.¹⁴ According to Bell and Newby, Tönnies’ view was that community was ‘homogenous’, static, and based on moral, co-operative, and loyal

literature. Rather I am highlighting the more frequently cited texts to provide some background to the concept of community before addressing its relevance to historical scholarship on community.

⁸ Colin Bell and Howard Newby, *Community Studies: an Introduction to the Sociology of the Local Community* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971), 21.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 21-22.

¹¹ Robert A. Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 2004 ed. (London: Heinemann, 1967), 47-48.

¹² Ibid., 9. 47-106.

¹³ First published in 1887, *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* was later published as *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft)* in 1957, translated and edited by Charles P. Loomis (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1957). A number of other editions have been published since, the most recent being translated by Jose Harris and Margaret Hollis and edited by Jose Harris (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Ferdinand Tönnies, “Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft,” in *The Sociology of Community: a Selection of Readings*, eds. Colin Bell and Howard Newby (London: Frank Cass and Co, 1974), 8-10.

social relationships.¹⁵ On the other hand, association, or society, was defined by relationships in public life, such as in business, where individuals co-existed in urban spaces but ‘remain[ed] nevertheless independent of one another and devoid of mutual familiar relationships’.¹⁶ Jose Harris’ introduction to the most recent translation emphasises that Tönnies’ dichotomy was more complex than this, and less rigid than suggested by later interpretations.¹⁷ Nonetheless, the ‘ideal types’ Tönnies posited were to have a significant influence on sociological thought.¹⁸

Durkheim, as Nisbet observes, posited a similar dichotomy which he described as ‘mechanical’ and ‘organic’ solidarity.¹⁹ Durkheim suggested that ‘mechanical’ solidarity existed in traditional societies where family, religious and neighbourhood ties produce a ‘moral and social homogeneity’ whereas ‘organic’ solidarity was based on individualism and the social division of labour.²⁰ Nisbet shows that the extent to which these theorists favoured traditional models or modernism differed according to their ideological perspectives, but in general the romantic ideal of community that emerged at this time was based on characteristics regarded as part of traditional societies; otherwise described by scholars as aspects of ‘the good life’.²¹ However, these theorists overlooked the notion that by insisting upon conformity to a common, moral way of life this rural ideal also reinforced the subordination of some groups, including women. Although, as Harris notes, Tönnies later revised his discussion of gender, his initial view was that women were better suited to roles in the domestic, rather than public sphere.²²

In contrast to Tönnies’ view of traditional societies, Marx, Weber, and Simmel argued separately that industrialisation created community in different types of settings. In Marx’s view the stratification of society based on the type of labour performed created distinct and

¹⁵ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 24.

¹⁶ Tönnies, “Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft,” 10.

¹⁷ Jose Harris, “General Introduction,” in *Community and Civil Society* by Ferdinand Tönnies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), xxviii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, xxix.

¹⁹ Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 84.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 19.

²² Harris, “General Introduction,” xxiii, xxix.

antagonistic classes, defined by their sense of class consciousness.²³ This class consciousness, or solidarity, was what Marx understood as community.²⁴ Neuwirth notes that in viewing class conflict as part of community formation Weber had a similar view to that of Marx. According to Neuwirth, Weber believed that 'competition for economic, political, or social interests is viewed as the source of community formation and communal relationships'.²⁵ Like Marx, Weber observed that solidarity could emerge 'as a response to "outside" pressures'.²⁶ The notion that competition, or conflict created community provides an alternative perspective to the cohesive model of community that stemmed from Tönnies' romantic ideal.

Recent sociological theory has challenged the classical preoccupation with shared geographic locality as the central determinant shaping community. Melvin Webber's 'community without propinquity' theory is a notable challenge to the 'community as locality' argument. In his 1963 essay Webber argued that the types of social interaction taking place in cities and in workplaces created a sense of belonging to a community that was shaped by common interest rather than a shared geographic location.²⁷ In their critique of Webber's argument Bell and Newby argued that while some individuals 'may have networks of social relationships that are not bounded by the locality in which they live [...] there is no study which has demonstrated that nobody has any local [or geographically based] relationships...'²⁸ Bell and Newby's added point that 'wives' were in the exactly opposite position because their social relationships were more likely to be bound by locality, will be taken up later when I discuss gender and community formation.²⁹ More recently scholars have extended Webber's argument with a 'non-place' or 'post-place' definition of

²³ Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 204-206. In his critique of Marx, Nisbet draws on T.B. Bottomore and Maximilien Rubel, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy* (New York: Macgraw Hill, 1956). Page numbers in this study refer to the 1961 edition of Bottomore and Rubel (London: Watts & Co, 1961).

²⁴ Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 67.

²⁵ Getrud Neuwirth, 'A Weberian Outline of a Theory of Community: Its Application to the 'Dark Ghetto'', *The British Journal of Sociology* 20, no. 2 (Jun., 1969), 148, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/588526>.

²⁶ Ibid., 149.

²⁷ Melvin M. Webber, "Order in Diversity: Community Without Propinquity," *Cities and Space: The Future Use of Urban Space*, ed. Lowdon Wingo Jr (Baltimore, London: John Hopkins Press, 1963), 29.

²⁸ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 18.

²⁹ Ibid.

community that encompasses social relations in a global and virtual world.³⁰ This scholarship may help to explain the experiences of a mobile goldfield population with varying attachments to people and place.

Sociologists concerned with the theory of community have added another determinant to the factors involved in community formation: as David Clarke has argued, shared location, social interaction, and common beliefs are not enough without 'a sense of belonging'.³¹ Here Clarke draws on scholarship on the notion of 'community as sentiment'.³² The two most important 'sentiments' that Clarke identifies are a sense of solidarity ('all those sentiments which draw people together') and a sense of significance (participation that leads to achievement or fulfilment).³³ He argues that in order to understand community formation we need to understand 'the degree to which the group members *themselves* experience both a sense of solidarity and significance'.³⁴ Clarke argues further that overlooking the *experience* of community, as well as activities and relationships, 'has often led to the use of the word 'community' as an ideological tool'.³⁵ Bell and Newby, too, made a similar point about the normative meaning of the term: community is what we, the observers, think 'it *should* be.'³⁶

It is important for the purposes of this thesis to stress the conservative force of classical community theory as it related to gender and relationships within the family. Nisbet shows that Comte, for example, held that a 'moral community' required the support of a patriarchal family.³⁷ Nisbet also draws attention to Le Play's discussion of family and community. Whereas Comte focused on family relationships, Le Play's study of family types, particularly of working-class families in Europe, looked at how the occupation in which different families were engaged determined their status, and this in turn shaped other

³⁰ Ted K. Bradshaw, "The Post-Place Community: Contributions to the Debate about the Definition of Community," *Community Development* 39:1 (2008): 9-10. DOI: 10.1080/15575330809489738.

³¹ Clarke, "The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination," 412.

³² *Ibid.*, 403. This includes the work of R.M. Mclver and C.H. Page, *Society* (London: Macmillan, 1961).

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 412.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 21.

³⁷ Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 60.

structures within community.³⁸ But like Marx, whose ideas he admired, Le Play assumed that a family's relationship to the means of production was determined by the male breadwinner. The restrictive effect of this understanding upon women has been extensively discussed by feminist sociologists and historians, and will be considered later in this chapter.

In Australian historical scholarship the concept of community has been used most commonly in local histories. This emphasis reflects the earlier trend in sociology of associating community with place, or as Bell and Newby observe, with the 'rural-urban continuum', the latter being associated with the loss of community.³⁹ Davison and Griffiths both observe many early local histories were written by individuals and local history organisations interested in preserving the locality they were writing about.⁴⁰ Griffiths posits that the writing of local history and formation of local historical societies in Australia sprang from periods of collective remembering 'characterised by popular yearnings for the intimate world of early colonial beginnings or for "lost" rural places, and by anxieties about geographical and generational succession.'⁴¹ Griffiths notes the 1930s was one such period where 'community' was evoked in some nostalgia for the earlier gold rushes.⁴² We can see from Griffiths and Davison that in the midst of social change the sense of nostalgia for characteristics of close-knit localities that we find in Tönnies' theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* is a recurring theme in some local history. Susan Marsden also observed that in many local histories there is an emphasis on the experiences of rural populations in the nineteenth century, rather than in later periods of community formation.⁴³

³⁸ Ibid., 65-66.

³⁹ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 42. This trend is also noted more recently, in Australia, by Lucy Taksa, " 'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism': Considering Community in Relation to Labour History," *Labour History* 78 (May 2000), 13.

⁴⁰ Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (St Leonards: Allen and Unwin, 2000), 197-198; Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 199.

⁴¹ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 197.

⁴² Ibid., 199. One example Griffiths cites is that of Tilly Aston, who grew up in the Victorian goldmining township of Maryborough. In her sketches of the township Aston writes that the 'old timers' on the goldfields in the 1860s and '70s 'laid the foundations of community, church, and commerce...'. See Tilly Aston, *Old Timers: Sketches and Word Pictures of the Old Pioneers* (Melbourne and Sydney: Lothian Publishing Company, 1938), 14, <http://www.apfa.esrc.unimelb.edu.au/objects/D00001052.htm>.

⁴³ Susan Marsden, "Communities within Communities," in *Community in Australia*, eds. Patrick O'Farrell and Louella McCarthy (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 1994), 43-44.

Marsden's observation was made in 1980, but as Davison later noted there are examples of local histories published after this date that place more emphasis on urban localities and their ethnically diverse populations.⁴⁴ Looking at other examples of urban local histories cited by Davison, such as John Lack's *History of Footscray* and Janet McCalman's *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond, 1900-1965*, we find a sense of nostalgia for characteristics of community that are thought to have disappeared, such as the close proximity of work and home in geographic localities.⁴⁵ However, unlike Tönnies' homogenous model of traditional society, these communities are more like those observed by Simmel, where groups connected by more varied ties form new social spaces within cities.⁴⁶ At the same time labour historians, as Taksa observes, also began to expand their discussion of class from a focus on economic and political structures to concepts such as community, a shift she attributes to E.P. Thompson's celebrated study of the English working-classes.⁴⁷

Lucy Taksa's work is particularly useful as a dynamic model for understanding community formation. Taksa suggests that understanding the relationship between 'social processes and spatial forms' can inform how we analyse community.⁴⁸ In Taksa's view the 'spatial form' cannot be isolated from a complex array of social processes that shape relationships, activities, and identity. Taksa's particular focus is class, but she is also alert to the ways in which gender and space intersect in community formation.⁴⁹ Other scholars also point to useful new directions. A group of historians involved in the University of Otago study of Caversham, a suburb in Dunedin, have argued that the sites they examined were 'used and occupied in ways that were shaped by the dominant understandings of gender at the time;

⁴⁴ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 217-218. Davison cites the examples of: Cutten History Committee of the Fitzroy History Society, *Fitzroy: Melbourne's First Suburb* (Melbourne: Hyland House, 1989), and Helen Penrose, ed. *Brunswick: One History Many Voices* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1994).

⁴⁵ John Lack, *A History of Footscray* (North Melbourne: Hargreen Publishing in conjunction with the City of Footscray, 1991), 116; Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond, 1900-1965*, 1998 ed (Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 1984), 13.

⁴⁶ Ira Katznelson, *Marxism and the City* (Oxford University Press, 1992), 20, https://books.google.com.au/books?id=IJVwpwAACAAJ&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=3#v=onepage&q&f=false.

⁴⁷ Taksa, " 'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism' ," 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 25.

but gender might also be performed differently according to different sites.⁵⁰ This scholarship suggests that an examination of the ways in which men and women interacted with varying spatial forms (such as private dwellings, public buildings, and the tracks linking the various settlements on the Upper Goulburn goldfields), might allow us to explore how men and women made community differently.

Marx's discussion of class consciousness also alerts us to the notion that conflict borne from competing values and beliefs can help shape a community. Taksa has highlighted this in her discussion of identity and community formation, drawing on examples of industrial conflict.⁵¹ In his study of gender and community drawing on records of assault cases in nineteenth century Auckland, Dean Wilson notes that '[a] shared collection of values and assumptions does not imply that all members of the community agree upon and conform to them. Behavioural norms may be subject to constant renegotiation and transgression, even though they are commonly understood.'⁵² Staying in New Zealand, Tony Ballantyne's study of the rural township of Gore draws attention to how debates within various mutual improvement societies over 'competing visions of development, rival agendas for improvement, and divergent visions of where moral and political authority ultimately lay' helped facilitate community formation.⁵³ This scholarship is of particular importance to this study of the Upper Goulburn as it allows us to interpret how conflict with government authorities over the needs of the region during the early rushes helped facilitate some collective action. Understanding the nature of conflict over individual and group identities, as discussed by Taksa, is also useful in interpreting instances of public conflict within Woods Point in the mid-1860s, and how these shaped community formation.

⁵⁰ Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper, and Robin Law, "Situating Gender," in *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890-1939*, eds Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper, Robin Law, 11 (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003).

⁵¹ Taksa, "'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism'," 24.

⁵² Dean Wilson, "Community and Gender in Victorian Auckland", *New Zealand Journal of History* 30, no. 1 (1996), 25, <http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/>.

⁵³ Tony Ballantyne, "Thinking Local: Knowledge, Sociability and Community in Gore's Intellectual Life, 1875–1914," *New Zealand Journal of History* 44, no. 2 (2010), 151, <http://www.nzjh.auckland.ac.nz/>.

1.3 Women and Community Formation in Goldfield Scholarship

We can see now that in much of the classical social theories the concept of community was a patriarchal structure in which women's roles were confined within the family. Women were thought to be necessary for some types of community formation, but little consideration was given to whether this model might have been restrictive for women (and men) who sought other roles. Scholars, some influenced by Marxist theory, have shown that the characteristics of community expanded in modern, industrial society but, as Taksa notes, there was no consideration of the varied roles (and identities) that women may have performed in communities of work, or other public spaces.⁵⁴ As Bell and Newby remind us, 'community' has been used as a normative term, but the early scholarship accepted an ideal which was restrictive in its acknowledgement of women's contribution to community formation.⁵⁵

The nineteenth-century gold rushes, which attracted tens of thousands of immigrants and led to the establishment of transient and more permanent settlements throughout Victoria and other states, as well as in New Zealand, provide us with an opportunity to expand our understanding of the relationship between women and the making of community. Histories of the nineteenth century gold rushes in Australia have, until recently, overlooked community formation and instead focused on a masculine Anglo-centric mythology of men, mining, and political activism that focused on a more limited range of productive and political activities, relationships, and values shared by those on the goldfields. Central to this mythology was the relative absence of women and families. In this section I outline how women have been depicted in traditional, and more recent, goldfield scholarship. I argue that though recent scholarship has begun to explore the experiences of women and families in goldfield settlements, the relationship between women and community formation is yet to be fully explored.

⁵⁴ Taksa, "'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism'," 19. On this point Taksa draws on Liz Bondi's critique of Marx in Bondi's discussion of feminism and identity politics. See Liz Bondi, "Locating Identity Politics," in *Place and the Politics of Identity*, eds. Michael Keith and Steve Pile, 90 (London: Routledge, 1993).

⁵⁵ Bell and Newby, *Community Studies*, 21.

1.3.1 Traditional Goldfield Scholarship

Clare Wright posits that the masculine Anglo-Centric mythology of the goldfields dates back to 1870 when William Withers highlighted the scarcity of women on the diggings, which he described in his *History of Ballarat* as ‘womanless crowds’.⁵⁶ Withers, as Wright points out, was referring to the absence of women on the early diggings in 1851 and 1852, but the masculine image of the goldfields throughout the 1850s gold rushes prevailed as writers and historians continued to shape a mythology in which the presence and activities of women were mostly invisible.⁵⁷ David Goodman addresses this historiography in his study of the Victorian and Californian gold rushes in the 1850s. He observes that the dominant memory of the gold rushes was influenced by ‘the masculinist “Australian legend” between the 1890s and the 1950s, a set of stories about the freedom of the digging life and the egalitarian spirit of the gold diggers, which culminated in their “fight for freedom” at the 1854 Eureka Stockade.’⁵⁸ Later, W.K. Hancock’s *Australia*, and Russel Ward’s *The Australian Legend* both referred to these qualities of the [male] diggers and the impact they had on national identity.⁵⁹ Ward, whose sources included folklore and contemporary accounts of the diggings, draws on one contemporary account written by a woman — Ellen Clacy’s *A Lady’s Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53* — but does not identify her in the text, or consider how her experiences reflected those of other women on the diggings.⁶⁰ Likewise, in many of the recollections of the Upper Goulburn and Gippsland goldfields published in the 1890s and early 1900s the activities of the small number of women who were identified on the early diggings were overshadowed by a nostalgia for the masculine

⁵⁶ Clare Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* (Melbourne: Text Publishing Company, 2013), xi; William Bramwell Withers, and Ballarat Heritage Services, *History of Ballarat and Some Ballarat Reminiscences* (Ballarat Heritage Services, 1999), 38.

⁵⁷ Wright, *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*, xi.

⁵⁸ David Goodman, *Gold Seeking: Victoria and California in the 1850s* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11-12; W. K. Hancock, *Australia* (London: Ernest Benn, 1930; Brisbane: Jacaranda Press Pty Ltd, 1966), 35-36; Russel Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 1964 ed. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1958), 109, 111-112.

⁶⁰ Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 108; Mrs Charles Clacy, and Patricia Thompson, *A Lady’s Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53: Written on the Spot / by Mrs. Charles Clacy; Edited by Patricia Thompson* (Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1963).

diggings life. These masculine narratives influenced later local histories of the Upper Goulburn goldfields.⁶¹

Examining these sources through the prism of community scholarship suggests that the masculine diggings were a type of community, based on shared locality, a shared activity in gold seeking, and a common purpose in fighting for political rights. This was not the static, homogenous rural community of Tönnies' ideal but one defined by shared values, foremost among them being what Ward described as a 'group solidarity' of mateship.⁶² Nonetheless, in these sources the independence of the diggers is also highlighted. There is also evidence of conflict: between individual miners, between miners and government authorities, and between European and Chinese miners.

These nostalgic accounts of the gold rushes were followed in the 1960s by the work of historians Geoffrey Blainey and Geoffrey Serle.⁶³ Although significant gold rush histories which drew on a range of published and archival sources, their work continued to depict the goldfields as a male domain. Blainey's broad scope reflected the doctrine of separate spheres — men's activities were dominated by work and production, and women were involved with the home and family — that was prevalent in colonial Victoria, and focused on the sphere occupied by men, ignoring the role women played in the goldfields economy.⁶⁴ Women featured more prominently in Geoffrey Serle's work on the impact the gold rushes had on the development of Victoria. Serle argued that while the early diggings may have been predominantly populated by men, the immigration of young single women attempted to redress the gender balance.⁶⁵ Unlike Blainey, Serle drew upon published accounts written by women who lived on or visited the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s, including Ellen Clacy, though these accounts were overshadowed by those written by men.⁶⁶ For Serle, it was the

⁶¹ These recollections include the accounts of James Armstrong and others published in the *Gippsland Miners' Standard* between 1896 and 1899, and Richard Mackay's recollections first published in 1915 as a series in the *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, and as a book in 1916. See Richard Mackay, *Recollections of Early Gippsland Goldfields* (Traralgon: The Author, 1916). These accounts, and other local histories are discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

⁶² Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 109.

⁶³ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*; Serle, *The Golden Age*.

⁶⁴ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 154.

⁶⁵ Serle, *The Golden Age*, 54.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 360.

characteristics and quality of male migrants with which he was most concerned; men who recreated 'British institutions' and traditions, brought diverse skills and talents, and who were the fathers and grandfathers of many prominent Australians.⁶⁷ Both Blainey and Serle have a much broader focus: Blainey on the economics of mining, Serle on demographics and class. While these characteristics are also relevant to community formation the scope of their respective works do not allow for an analysis of community formation on specific goldfields.

The gold rush histories of Blainey and Serle were followed in 1978 by Weston Bate's *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901*, which began with the goldfields but moved beyond them to chart the development of the city of Ballarat.⁶⁸ With *Lucky City* goldfields scholarship moved from the national story to a regional context. Bate's work was also notable for its thorough use of local government records, including correspondence, rate books, reports and plans, as well as other archival sources.⁶⁹ These records enabled a more detailed picture to emerge of the ways in which gold transformed the land and the people who lived and worked in the region. In writing what was a social history, Bate acknowledged the presence of women on the early goldfields more fully than Serle, noting their role in the goldfields' economy together with the supportive role they played from the 1860s, when their numbers in the colony increased through immigration.⁷⁰ Bate did more than Blainey and Serle in mapping out what a goldfield community might look like, but confined his focus on women to demographic activities in forming community. This reflects earlier classical theories on community that associated family relationships with community formation. It would take the work of feminist and more recent goldfield scholars before a more detailed picture emerged of women's activities and family life on the goldfields.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 381.

⁶⁸ Weston Bate, *Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat, 1851-1901* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1978). Bate's work is notable for its thorough use of archival sources which enable a more detailed picture to emerge of the ways in which gold transformed the land and the lives of those who lived in the region.

⁶⁹ Jane Mayo Carolan, "Professor Weston Arthur Bate: Cause Celebre," *History News*, no. 303 (Nov-Dec 2012), 5.

⁷⁰ Bate, *Lucky City*, 32, 44, 104, 107, 146.

1.3.2 Feminist Scholarship

In the 1970s the marginalisation of women in Australian history was challenged by feminist scholars. Their work had a political agenda; to bring an historical interpretation to the causes of women's oppression and their roles in Australian society which would embolden the women's liberation movement and shape mainstream historiography. Ann Curthoys's influential 1970 essay, "Historiography and Women's Liberation" — framed within a critique of capitalist society shaped by a gendered division of labour — argued that it was necessary to look at the roles occupied by both men and women in public and family life, and integrate this analysis within mainstream historiography.⁷¹ Curthoys's essay was followed in 1975 by four influential works that helped redress the marginalisation of women in Australian history: Miriam Dixon's *The Real Matilda*, Anne Summers's *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Beverley Kingston's *My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann*, and Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon's *Gentle Invaders*.⁷² Kay Daniels criticised these early feminist texts as lacking the methodology to adequately convey the experiences of women.⁷³ The sources they used were too often those of the observer, not the ordinary women whose stories they sought to tell. In drawing attention to the lives of ordinary people and a broad range of evidence, Daniels posited that an alliance between feminism and the new field of social history suggested a methodology that might be more successful in integrating women into mainstream historiography.⁷⁴ The relevance this had for feminist history was a shift away from public history to domestic life where women were 'of central rather than marginal importance'.⁷⁵ But Daniels was also part of the research team that produced *Women in*

⁷¹ Ann Curthoys, *For and Against Feminism: A Personal Journey into Feminism and History* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988), 8. The article, republished in this edited collection of Curthoys's work, was originally published in the Marxist journal, *Arena* under the title "Historiography and Women's Liberation".

⁷² Miriam Dixon, *The Real Matilda: Women and Identity in Australia 1877 to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Ringwood: Penguin Australia, 1994); Anne Summers, *Damned Whores and God's Police: the Colonisation of Women in Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin Books Australia, 1975); Beverley Kingston, *My Wife, My Daughter, and Poor Mary Ann: Women and Work in Australia* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1975); Edna Ryan and Anne Conlon, *Gentle Invaders: Australian Women at Work 1788-1984* (Melbourne: Thomas Nelson Australia, 1975).

⁷³ Daniels, "Feminism and Social History," *Australian Feminist Studies* 1:1 (1985), 31, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08164649.1985.10382903>.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 33-34. Susan Magarey, "What is Happening to Women's History in Australia at the Beginning of the Third Millennium?", *Women's History Review* 16, no. 1 (2007), 8. Here Magarey also noted the influence that the 'new social history' had on women's history.

⁷⁵ Daniels, "Feminism and Social History," 34.

Australia: An Annotated Guide to Records, which highlighted a range of archival records pertaining to women's participation in domestic and public life.⁷⁶

Another study relevant to this thesis was *Double Time: Women in Victoria – 150 Years*, a collection of biographies of women to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the State of Victoria.⁷⁷ Among the women featured was Martha Clendinning from the Ballarat goldfields, later cited in Wickham's study of women on the Ballarat goldfields, while Patricia Grimshaw wrote about temperance activist Bessie Harrison Lee (who spent part of her childhood on the Upper Goulburn goldfields).⁷⁸ Since the 1980s a number of scholars, partly influenced by feminist ideology, have also sought to recover the work of women writers — published and unpublished — in Australia. A number of these works highlight the work of Harrison Lee, and her contemporary on the Upper Goulburn, Marion Miller Knowles.⁷⁹

While scholars would continue to draw on women's published and unpublished writing, an important example of the alliance between feminism and social history's interpretation of new and existing source material was *Families in Colonial Australia*, a volume which included the work of Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Fahey.⁸⁰ Grimshaw and Fahey utilised sources such as shipping lists, directories, electoral rolls, wills, and census records to provide detailed evidence of the pattern of family and community life in Castlemaine during the

⁷⁶ Kay Daniels, Mary Murnane, and Anne Picot, eds, *Women in Australia: An Annotated Guide to Records* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1977), iii. The less successful documentary histories include: Beverley Kingston, *The World Moves Slowly: a Documentary History of Australian Women* (Camperdown: Cassell Australia, 1977); Kay Daniels, *Uphill all the Way: a Documentary History of Women in Australia* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1980), Kay Daniels, and Mary Murnane, eds, *Australia's women, a Documentary History: From a Selection of Personal Letters, Diary Entries, Pamphlets, Official Records, Government and Police Reports, Speeches, and Radio Talks* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1989).

⁷⁷ Marilyn Lake, and Farley Kelly, eds, *Double Time: Women in Victoria, 150 years* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985).

⁷⁸ Louise Asher, "Martha Clendinning: a Woman's Life on the Goldfields," in *Double Time*, eds. Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985), 52-60; Wickham, *Women on the Diggings*, 35-36; Patricia Grimshaw, "Bessie Harrison Lee and the Fight for Voluntary Motherhood", in *Double Time*, eds. Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1985), 139-147.

⁷⁹ Patricia Clarke, *Pen Portraits: Women Writers and Journalists in Nineteenth Century Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988), 200-202; Dale Spender, *Writing a New World: Two Centuries of Australian Women Writers* (London, New York: Pandora, 1988), 202; Joy Hooton, *Stories of Herself when Young: Autobiographies of Childhood by Australian Women* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1990), 38, 129-131, 253.

⁸⁰ Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwen, eds, *Families in Colonial Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985).

nineteenth century goldrushes.⁸¹ This detailed study was not possible prior to the improved access to civil registration records that had been led in part by the family history boom. The research of Grimshaw and her colleagues did not tell us much about Indigenous families or those of non-Anglo backgrounds in Castlemaine, but their approach would influence later scholarship that built on the study of family and community by looking at the Chinese and Aboriginal people on the goldfields.⁸²

Grimshaw and Fahey's study highlights the value, but also the limitations, of demographic sources. In their study the characteristics of community were locality, family and kinship networks, and the formation of institutions, but they did not address the sense of belonging individuals may have felt towards 'a community' in Castlemaine. Focusing on family structure also overlooks other ways in which women might have participated in community. More recent scholarship by scholars such as Kate Bagnall has demonstrated how a close reading of demographic data alongside other sources helps us to see something of the women behind the data. In her research on intimate relationships between Europeans and Chinese on the goldfields Bagnall argues that 'despite the challenges of a patchy historical record, it is possible to uncover who goldfields women were and what their experiences of colonial life were like, as long as we take family [sources] seriously'.⁸³ Bagnall's research suggests that using these sources to connect the fragmentary evidence of individual women's experiences is one way to work with the challenges of limited subjective sources. As my study also demonstrates, we might not hear what these women 'felt about their

⁸¹ Patricia Grimshaw and Charles Fahey, "Family and Community in Nineteenth-Century Castlemaine," in *Families in Colonial Australia*, eds. Patricia Grimshaw, Chris McConville and Ellen McEwen (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 83-104. While Bate had conducted demographic research in his study of Ballarat, an important distinction between his work in the 1970s and Grimshaw and Fahey's work in the mid-1980s was the latter's access to the civil registration records of births, deaths, and marriages, which enabled a study of the reproductive life of women in the region.

⁸² Chinese communities are discussed in a number of contributions to Charles Fahey and Alan Mayne, eds, *Gold Tailings: Forgotten Histories of Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields* (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010). The relationships between Chinese men and European women on the goldfields also features in Kate Bagnall's wide ranging research on Chinese migration and family life, see Kate Bagnall, "Rewriting the History of Chinese families in Nineteenth-Century Australia", *Australian Historical Studies* 42, no.1 (2011), 62-77; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2010.538419>. Aboriginal people on the goldfields are discussed in the recent work by Fred Cahir, *Black Gold: Aboriginals on the Gold Fields of Victoria* (Canberra: ANU E-press, 2012).

⁸³ Kate Bagnall, "'To his home at Jembaicumbene': Women's Cross-Cultural Encounters on a Colonial Goldfield," in *Migrant Cross-Cultural Encounters in Asia and the Pacific*, eds. Jacqueline Leckie, Angela McCarthy and Angela Wanhalla (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 67.

social situation' (as Clarke argued we ought to do) but by piecing together their relationships, activities, and the way they were viewed by others we might get some sense of the extent to which women belonged in temporally and spatially specific communities.⁸⁴

Something of this question of belonging, or as Clarke described it — a sense of solidarity and significance — is evident in recent appraisals of the participation of women in the Eureka uprising at Ballarat in 1854 and the movement towards democracy.⁸⁵ Wickham, as discussed above, took the more balanced approach to women's history advocated by Grimshaw and studied the life cycles of women in Ballarat, demonstrating how women exercised agency within the patriarchal goldfields society, including their involvement at Eureka.⁸⁶ Wright's research reflected the nationalist interpretation of the gold rushes that dominated earlier histories, but unlike the earlier masculinist approach Wright wrote women into the Eureka narrative. In this interpretation women were not simply consigned to the domestic hearth and actively participated in public life.⁸⁷ Here Wright draws on John Bohstedt, who argued in his work on English riots in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that 'women [...] had always been involved in the expressive and tactical defence of their communities.'⁸⁸ Wright argued that women's involvement in Eureka demonstrated that they were 'a significant part of a mining community' shaped by a shared geographic location, economic circumstances, and shared values.⁸⁹ Wright's interpretation of community expands the Marxist model of solidarity through class conflict by including women like poet Ellen Young and theatrical entrepreneur Sarah Hanmer in the Eureka narrative.⁹⁰

Other feminist scholars have also demonstrated that despite the numerous restrictions on women's opportunities in the public sphere, some women negotiated these restrictions in order to better support themselves and their families. In her study of colonial

⁸⁴ Clarke, "The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination," 412.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 403.

⁸⁶ Wickham, *Women on the Diggings*, 101-105.

⁸⁷ Clare Wright, " 'New Brooms They Say Sweep Clean': Women's Political Activism on the Ballarat Goldfields, 1854'," *Australian Historical Studies* 39, no. 3 (2008), 317-321, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10314610802263307>. This argument is also reinforced throughout Wright's *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*.

⁸⁸ Cited in Wright, " 'New Brooms They Say Sweep Clean'," 310.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 321.

businesswomen in Sydney Catherine Bishop adds to this scholarship by highlighting the work of a visible minority of women running businesses that contributed to the colonial urban economy, complicating the distinction that women's activities in this period were confined to the private sphere.⁹¹ Bishop's research utilising the increasing abundance of digitised and online sources reveals that many of these women negotiated the boundaries between work and family by conducting businesses from home.⁹² The needs of an urban population such as colonial Sydney were slightly different to the goldfields. However, as Dorothy Wickham points out in her study of women on the Ballarat goldfields in the 1850s, census records reveal that women were engaged in a variety of paid and unpaid work in the public and private spheres, including occupations outside the usual gendered divisions of labour.⁹³ Wickham notes that once the rushes were over and 'society returned to "normal"' women resumed more traditional gendered occupations, reminding us that though some women were able to negotiate these norms the goldfields were still a patriarchal society.⁹⁴

1.3.3 Recent Goldfield Scholarship

In addition to the contribution of feminist scholars, by the 1980s new themes and disciplines were emerging leading to new interpretations of goldfields history that would later be used to interpret women's activities and community making on the goldfields. The heritage movement, assisted by government legislation to record and protect heritage sites, remained largely focused on the built heritage of mining, but it also introduced other forms of evidence such as archaeology. By studying the physical evidence and spatial characteristics of goldfield settlements these disciplines tended to emphasise mining activity and geographic location above other characteristics of community making. However, some scholars were alert to the presence and activities of women and families in goldfield settlements and their work has helped to expand this understanding of community making on the goldfields.

⁹¹ Catherine Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business: Colonial Businesswomen in Sydney* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2015), 2-3. This work is based on Bishop's doctoral thesis, "Commerce Was a Woman: Women in Business in Colonial Sydney and Wellington," (PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 2012).

⁹² Ibid., 15-20.

⁹³ Wickham, *Women on the Diggings*, 79, 83.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 79.

Susan Lawrence's study of the subsistence diggings at Dolly's Creek between Geelong and Ballarat made a notable contribution to this scholarship, making use of 'written documents, landscape and artefacts' to reveal the ways in which both the paid and unpaid work of women, as well as men, was necessary to the survival of subsistence mining communities.⁹⁵ Lawrence paraphrases anthropologist G. P. Murdock's definition of community as 'a group of people who live in the same place and interact daily with one another' to highlight a number of characteristics, she argues, that define community on the goldfields.⁹⁶ In Lawrence's view, shared geographic location, daily interaction, and shared activities transform a settlement, which Lawrence defines as the physical space, into a community.⁹⁷ As noted earlier, Lawrence argues that on a goldfield, geology and the type of mining required to extract gold had an influence on settlement and community structures.⁹⁸ Alluvial mining was characterised by small groups of independent miners and this 'fostered a complex mix of individualism, co-operation and egalitarianism in community relationships.'⁹⁹ Deep lead and quartz mining, however, was led by mining companies who employed wage labour, and this led to 'stratified social groups based on income and occupation and more structured forms of interaction'.¹⁰⁰ Barry McGowan, too, discusses the stratification of goldfield settlements in his study of goldfields in south-east New South Wales. Drawing on the examples of Currawang and Frogmore, he argues that on smaller goldfields, stratification based on class 'is not supported strongly by the material evidence'.¹⁰¹ McGowan argues instead that hegemony (defined in this instance by the imposition of middle-class values through institutions such as churches and schools) together with localism (where local interests supersede other divisions such as class) are more useful in interpreting the spatial and social organisation of smaller mining communities.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 12; George Peter Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1949), 79, <https://archive.org/details/socialstructurem00murd/page/78>.

⁹⁷ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 12-13.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 14.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 15.

¹⁰¹ Barry McGowan, "Hegemony, Localism, and Ethnicity: The 'Welsh' Mining Communities of Currawang and Frogmore in Southern New South Wales," *Journal of Australasian Mining History*, 5 (Sept 2007), 63. See also Barry McGowan, *Dust and Dreams: Mining Communities in South-East New South Wales* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2015).

¹⁰² Ibid., 41-42.

Lawrence posited that the range of activities in which men and women were engaged in on the diggings, and the close proximity between public and private spaces, demonstrates that '[d]espite the ideological separation of men's and women's roles, in everyday life they were not so far apart'.¹⁰³ McGowan, too, notes that the extent to which women were acknowledged for upholding middle-class values varied in the two settlements he cites.¹⁰⁴ The separate studies made by Alan Mayne and Bronwyn Hanna of the tangible and intangible heritage of the Hill End goldfield in New South Wales also examine the (in)visibility of women's activities in the goldfield settlement.¹⁰⁵ Mayne, as Lawrence noted earlier in her Dolly's Creek study, pointed to the moderating influence of families in the subsistence phase, though Hanna adds that Mayne's emphasis on examples of the relative 'stability' of the community 'surely masks a less respectable side to colonial life involving extra-marital affairs, prostitution and the like'.¹⁰⁶

Mayne's work also features in *Gold Tailings: Forgotten Histories of Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields*, edited by Mayne and Charles Fahey.¹⁰⁷ This volume built on the significant work of Geoffrey Serle and Weston Bate, but tightened its focus to the making of homes, families and communities on the central Victorian goldfields from the 1850s to the 1930s. Scholars in this collection again drew upon the disciplines of archaeology and heritage studies to demonstrate that women played a central role in the goldfield communities.¹⁰⁸ Others such as Sara Martin utilised oral sources and material culture to illuminate the story of a single family on the central Victorian goldfields.¹⁰⁹ Material culture and the contribution of women were also discussed in *Gold: Forgotten*

¹⁰³ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 101.

¹⁰⁴ McGowan, "Hegemony, Localism, and Ethnicity," 52, 62.

¹⁰⁵ Alan Mayne, *Hill End: An Historic Australian Goldfields Landscape* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 30; Bronwyn Hanna, "Re-gendering the landscape in New South Wales", New South Wales Parks and Wildlife Service (NPSW), 10, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/cultureheritage/genderedLPLitrev.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶ Hanna, "Re-gendering the landscape", 45.

¹⁰⁷ Fahey and Mayne, eds, *Gold Tailings*.

¹⁰⁸ Alan Mayne, "Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields," in *Gold Tailings*, eds. Charles Fahey and Alan Mayne (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 237.

¹⁰⁹ Sara Martin, "Staking a Claim: Using Oral and Material Sources in Goldfields History," in *Gold Tailings*, eds. Charles Fahey and Alan Mayne (Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), 197-198.

Histories and Lost Objects of Australia.¹¹⁰ As Margaret Anderson observes in her chapter, drawing on the published and unpublished writing of a few women who came to the central Victorian goldfields, the paucity of sources on women's lives means that often we can catch only glimpses of women's activities in fragmentary sources.¹¹¹ However, the multi-disciplinary nature of this recent goldfields scholarship demonstrates that piecing together these fragments reveals goldfield communities that were more complex than the traditional Anglo-centric masculine scholarship has suggested. More recently, Lorinda Cramer has added to this scholarship on material culture and the goldfields with her doctoral study, "Needlework and Gentility in Gold-Rush Victoria."¹¹²

Traditional goldfields scholarship established that the Victorian gold rushes were part of the well-trodden trail of gold that led around the globe in the nineteenth century. The focus of recent goldfield scholarship on women and families identifies the extent to which women followed this trail. While not studying migration between California and Victoria, Goodman's comparative study of the Victorian and Californian gold rushes in the 1850s discussed the ideological influences that shaped the contemporary response to the gold rushes, including their impact on domestic life.¹¹³ Goodman cites Eliza Farnham's discussion of the impact the Californian gold rush had upon domestic life, and Farnham also features in Jo Anne Levy's study of women on the Californian goldfields.¹¹⁴ Levy's *They Saw the Elephant* draws on letters, diaries, newspapers, court records, and a few published accounts by women to demonstrate that among the women who can be identified on the goldfields some women were motivated by the adventure of the gold rushes as much as men, and

¹¹⁰ Ian McCalman, Alexander Cook, and Andrew Reeves, eds, *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia* (Cambridge, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001). The contributions in this collection that addressed the lives on women on the goldfields include: Susan Lawrence, "After the Gold Rush: Material Culture and Settlement in Victoria's Central Goldfields," 250-266; Suzanne R. Hunt, "Vegetable Plots and Pleasure Gardens of the Victorian Goldfields," 267-282.

¹¹¹ Margaret Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grog-seller: Glimpses of Women on the Early Victorian Goldfields," in *Gold: Forgotten Histories and Lost Objects of Australia*, eds. McCalman, Cook, and Reeves (Cambridge, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 225.

¹¹² Lorinda Cramer, "Needlework and Gentility in Gold-Rush Victoria," (PhD Thesis, Deakin University, 2015). See also Lorinda Cramer, "Keeping Up Appearances: Genteel Women, Dress and Refurbishing in Gold-Rush Victoria, Australia, 1851-1870," *Textile* (2016), 4-20, doi: 10.1080/14759756.2016.1209876.

¹¹³ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 149-187.

¹¹⁴ Goodman, *ibid.*, 182-183; Jo Ann Levy, *They Saw the Elephant: Women in the California Gold Rush* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 191-192.

undertook a variety of paid and unpaid work, including mining.¹¹⁵ In a study drawing on a wide variety of women's goldrush experiences the formation of specific communities is less of a concern, but Levy's focus on women's experiences and activities in goldfield settlements influenced later scholarship that addresses notions of gender (and ethnicity) in community formation on the goldfields.¹¹⁶

Soon after Levy's work was published two academic studies of women on the Central Otago goldfields in New Zealand drew on feminist ideology to investigate women's paid and unpaid work on the goldfields. Jennifer Dickinson's honours thesis, "Picks, Pans and Petticoats: Women on the Central Otago Goldfields" was limited to demonstrating that women were present on the goldfields and the extent to which the women she identified conformed to the stereotypes of either 'prostitute' or "'Colonial Helpmeet'".¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, Dickinson established the foundation that Sandra Quick built upon in her Master of Arts thesis on women in the liquor industry on the Central Otago goldfields.¹¹⁸ Both studies demonstrate that women's paid and unpaid work was part of the goldfields economy, and Quick in particular highlights how a number of women running hotels were recognised for the support they gave to charitable and other local causes in their communities.¹¹⁹ Though Quick does not define what she means by 'the community' this scholarship demonstrates the opportunities that the gold rushes gave some women to participate in a wider variety of activities than those outlined in classical theories of community.

The relationship between women's activities and community formation is more fully explored by Lyndon Fraser in his research on Irish women on New Zealand's west coast

¹¹⁵ Ibid., xxii, 110-113.

¹¹⁶ Susan Lee Johnson, *Roaring Camp: The Social World of the California Goldrush* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000); Nancy J. Taniguchi, "Weaving a Different World: Women and the California Gold Rush," *California History* 79, no. 2 (2000), 141-168, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25463691>.

¹¹⁷ Jennifer Dickinson, "Picks, Pans and Petticoats: Women on the Central Otago Goldfields," (BA Honours Research Essay, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1993), 7.

¹¹⁸ Sandra Quick, " 'The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram': Women Participants in the Central Otago Goldfields Liquor Industry 1861-1901," (Master of Arts Thesis, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1997), 5.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 45-47.

goldfields, some of whom had travelled to New Zealand via the Victorian goldfields.¹²⁰

Fraser investigates how Irish women's experiences and activities on the west coast goldfields were shaped by kinship networks, ethnicity, and religion, and to what extent ethnicity shaped community formation. Fraser draws on Handleman's typology of four ideal stages of ethnic organisation (category, network, association, and community) in which 'community', the final stage, exists 'within comparatively permanent territorial boundaries'.

¹²¹ Fraser found that these women's experiences showed that the diversity of the goldfield population meant that ethnicity had less influence on community formation than other 'loyalties such as religion, family, class and locality.'¹²² Though Fraser adopts the framework of geographically bound communities, his study highlights what we can learn about the complexities of community formation on the goldfields by focusing on women's experiences and activities.

Fraser and Quick's work, alongside the work of other contributors, also features in *Rushing for Gold: Life and Commerce on the Goldfields of New Zealand and Australia*, a new contribution to Australasian goldfields scholarship that reflects on the complexities of the central Victorian and New Zealand gold rushes.¹²³ This work demonstrates that trans-Tasman connections were more fluid than suggested by earlier scholarship on either the Victorian or New Zealand rushes, with Daniel Davy's chapter providing evidence of gold seekers crossing back and forth across the Tasman throughout the nineteenth century.¹²⁴ Fraser's research on Irish women builds on Philip Ross May's work on the West Coast goldfields to reveal the kinship connections that made Hokitika almost another suburb of Melbourne during the 1860s rushes.¹²⁵ McConville, Reeves, and Reeves posit in their chapter that this trans-Tasman research demonstrates that 'regional connections permit a

¹²⁰ Lyndon Fraser, "Irish Migration to the West Coast, 1864-1900," *New Zealand Journal of History* 34: 2 (2000), 197-225, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612020500530323>.

¹²¹ Ibid., 460. Don Handelman, "The Organization of Ethnicity," *Ethnic Groups* 1 (1977), 197. ResearchGate.

¹²² Fraser, "Irish Migration to the West Coast, 1864-1900," 471-472.

¹²³ Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser, eds., *Rushing for Gold: Life and Commerce on the Goldfields of New Zealand and Australia* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2016).

¹²⁴ Daniel Davy, ' "A Great Many People I Know from Victoria": the Victorian Dimension of the Otago Gold Rushes', *Rushing for Gold*, eds. Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser (Dunedin: Otago University Press), 43.

¹²⁵ Lyndon Fraser, "'Pity Fare Trade at Present": Irish Women, Mobility and Work on the West Coast Goldfields', in *Rushing for Gold*, eds. Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser (Dunedin: Otago University Press), 176-187; Philip Ross May, *The West Coast Gold Rushes*, 1967 ed. (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1962), 462-465.

better linkage of these histories than does a comparative, national one.’¹²⁶ However, in these and other chapters discussion of the Victorian goldfields is again confined to the central Victorian rushes and does not consider the extent to which other Victorian goldfield regions, such as the Upper Goulburn and Jordan goldfields further south, formed part of this trans-Tasman linkage. My study also reflects on these trans-Tasman connections, while echoing Fraser’s argument that studies of women’s lives and experiences on the Australasian goldfields need to consider their mobility and ‘contribution to goldfield economies.’¹²⁷ As Fraser’s point about mobility reminds us, this trans-Tasman scholarship alerts us to other questions about the meaning of community on the goldfields: did individuals need a permanent or long-lasting residential connection to a goldfield settlement to experience a sense of belonging to community? In the next section we are reminded of how these questions of belonging have shaped some local histories of the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

1.3.4 Local History

Despite the geographic gap evident in Victorian goldfields scholarship the Upper Goulburn goldfields have not been completely overlooked. Traditional goldfields scholarship such as Blainey’s *The Rush That Never Ended* referred to the 1860s gold rush at Woods Point and Walhalla, as well as the resurgence in mining in the 1890s, but much of Blainey’s attention in Victoria was focused on the central and western Victorian goldfields.¹²⁸ Published around the same time as Blainey and Serle, but with a narrower focus, Raymond Paull’s history of Walhalla and Harry Stacpoole’s account of the discovery of the Woods Point goldfields reflected this masculine celebratory narrative of the goldfields.¹²⁹ Paull identifies a few women and families in Walhalla, and Stacpoole draws upon his personal connection to Woods Point to highlight the activities of two women at Gaffneys Creek, but in general

¹²⁶ Chris McConville, Keir Reeves, and Andrew Reeves, “‘Tasman World’: Investigating gold-rush-era historical links and subsequent regional development between Otago and Victoria”, in *Rushing for Gold*, eds. Lloyd Carpenter and Lyndon Fraser (Dunedin: Otago University Press), 39.

¹²⁷ Fraser, “‘Pity Fare Trade at Present,” 187.

¹²⁸ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 71-72.

¹²⁹ Raymond Paull, *Old Walhalla.: Portrait of a Gold Town* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1963), 1; Stacpoole, “The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields,” 52.

women's activities are overshadowed by men and mining activity.¹³⁰ Patrick Morgan's more recent regional history, *The Settling of Gippsland*, drew attention to gold mining in Gippsland, including the goldfields between Jamieson and Walhalla, and he too noted that these goldfields were often overlooked in broader goldfields scholarship and popular history.¹³¹

The Upper Goulburn and surrounding goldfields region has also featured in scholarship on environmental history and heritage. Conflict over the use of historic mining sites and the increase in mining activity in the 1980s raised concerns about the impact of modern mining on the natural and cultural environment. This led to the establishment of a consultative committee to oversee the documentation of historic mining sites, which included representatives from mining and conservation groups.¹³² Contributors to Tom Griffiths's *Secrets of the Forest* also drew on heritage and archaeological methodologies as well as traditional literary and archival sources to explore the environmental history of the region.¹³³ Some of Griffiths's contributors published local histories based on their research, such as Anne Bailey and Robin Bailey's history of the original township of Matlock, and Luke Steenhuis's research on Donnelly's Creek.¹³⁴ Although not part of the *Secrets of the Forest* project, John Pilkington's history of the Big River goldfield also drew on his exploration of mining sites and other extant reminders of the settlements.¹³⁵ The field work conducted by the Baileys, Steenhuis, and Pilkington demonstrates the shift from traditional goldfields

¹³⁰ Paull, *Old Walhalla*, 70-71; Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields," 56.

¹³¹ Patrick Morgan, *The Settling of Gippsland* (Leongatha: Gippsland Municipalities Association, 1997), 65. Elsewhere, Morgan's separate studies of Gippsland poets include the work of Marion Miller Knowles who features later in this thesis, see Patrick Morgan, *Foothill Farmers: The Literature of Gippsland* (Ensay: Ngarak Press, 2010), 49-50, 55-62.

¹³² R.G. Supple, "Inventory and Assessment of Victoria's Historic Mining Sites," in First International and Eighth National Engineering Heritage Conference, Newcastle, 1996, 145, <http://search.informit.com.au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=625657316121005;res=IELENG>. As Supple explains, the project was led by the Historic Places Branch in the Victorian Department of Conservation and Environment and combined historical research with field work. It resulted in the assessment of approximately 5000 historic mining sites. Among those identified were the Long Tunnel Mine at Walhalla, the Sir John Franklin mine at Woods Point, and a number of former township sites. See Heritage Victoria, "Victorian Heritage Database," <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/>.

¹³³ Griffiths, *Secrets of the Forest*; Griffiths, *Forests of Ash*. The latter work retained, and added to, Griffiths' thematic chapters, but the contributions in Part 2 of *Secrets of the Forest* were replaced with 'Spotlight' chapters written by staff of Museum Victoria.

¹³⁴ Bailey and Bailey, *A Windy Morn of Matlock*; Luke Steenhuis, *Donnelly's Creek: From Rush to Ruin of a Gippsland Mountain Goldfield* (Wonthaggi: L. Steenhuis, 1990).

¹³⁵ Pilkington, *Big River Days*.

scholarship to the recent work of Susan Lawrence and Alan Mayne. This field work did uncover evidence of women and families on the goldfields, but does not consider how their presence and activities shaped public and private spaces, and the nature of community life. For a discussion of some of the complexities of community formation on the Upper Goulburn and surrounding goldfields we have to look to other scholarship that uses localities in the region as case studies. This includes Anna Maria Davine's study of Italian and Swiss-Italian migrants in Walhalla in the gold mining period, and Helen Doyle's discussion of the relationship between gold mining and historical consciousness in the early twentieth century.¹³⁶ Doyle's work in particular helps us to interpret the sense of belonging to a community that some former residents retained long after they left the Upper Goulburn region.

As I observed in the introduction to this thesis, some historical scholarship on community has suggested that, until recently, local history has had an unproblematic understanding of the concept of community. Some of this criticism is directed at histories written by residents, or those with a familial attachment to a locality, who produce celebratory narratives that overlook the many kinds of community in localities.¹³⁷ If we take the Upper Goulburn goldfields as an example, aside from the exceptions discussed above much of the local history written about this region to date would fit this description. Yet though the work of these authors, much of it undertaken without the vast array of digital and online sources now available, might be missing much of the theoretical basis for understanding community they have nevertheless provided a solid foundation for later research. As discussed below, in acknowledging their subjective connection to the region, we can see in the work of some of these authors how in the writing of history the meaning of community also evolves. Though not a local history, my familial connection to the region means my study also has

¹³⁶ Davine, *Neither Here nor There*; Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 173-203. Doyle's chapter on former mining towns includes Woods Point and Walhalla.

¹³⁷ Taska, " 'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism' ," 15. Here Taska draws on Raphael Samuel, "Local History and Oral History," *History Workshop* 1 (Spring 1976), 197, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4288044>. Drawing on H.P.R. Finberg, the first Professor of English Local History at Leicester University, Samuel referred to histories of English localities written by enthusiastic local researchers who regarded community, in the words of Finberg, as the people who lived in the same place and shared common interests.¹³⁷ Later, in Australia, Graeme Davison noted a similar generic use of community in local history, see Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 197-198.

something of a subjective perspective, while at the same time it expands this local scholarship to add a theoretical basis to the history of women's experiences and activities on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

One of the most prolific local historians of the Upper Goulburn goldfields was engineer and mining historian Brian Lloyd, whose extensive study of alluvial and quartz mining activity in the region during the nineteenth and twentieth century demonstrates to some extent how the boom and bust in mining activity affected the goldfield communities.¹³⁸ Lloyd's early work used traditional literary sources together with oral histories and anecdotes from former residents of the townships, but his later work did benefit from the boom in family history. With improved access to civil registration records and a wide network of family history societies and genealogists sharing information, Lloyd included information on many of the families who settled on the Upper Goulburn goldfields and established the townships between Jamieson and Woods Point.¹³⁹ However, his focus on mining activity overshadows his discussion of the women and families who helped make community on the goldfields. Instead, Lloyd's histories give more attention to the interaction and shared activities of men engaged in mining, business, and other professions who supported local institutions as examples of 'community makers', particularly in the 1860s and '70s.¹⁴⁰ That women were present and, at times, involved in some of these activities is acknowledged, but how they too may have been 'community makers' is not considered. There is also an emphasis on cohesion, and little reflection on how disagreement or conflict arising from different values or beliefs played into the formation of community. The work of Janette G. Rogers is also an invaluable reference source on women as she drew extensively on genealogical and archival sources in her work on the mining settlement of Jericho, and the cemeteries at Woods Point

¹³⁸ Brian Lloyd, *Gold at the Ten Mile* (Wangaratta: Shoestring Press, 1978); Brian Lloyd and Howard Coombes, *Gold at Gaffneys Creek*, (Wangaratta: Shoestring Press, 1981); Brian Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges: Jamieson to Woods Point* (Hampton East: Histec Publications, 2002); Brian Lloyd and H. Coombes, *Gold in the Walhalla Region, West Gippsland, Victoria* (Hampton East: Histec Publications, 2010); Brian Lloyd, *Jamieson: Founders and Families* (Hampton East: Histec Publications, 2011); Brian Lloyd, *Kevington: Miners and Families* (Hampton East: Histec Publications, 2012).

¹³⁹ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, vi-vii.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 105-111, 134-141.

and Matlock.¹⁴¹ The work of Rogers and Lloyd is complemented by a number of more narrowly focused local histories that also provide some evidence of women's lives.¹⁴²

While these local histories are invaluable references the information they contain on women remains fragmentary. However, rather than lamenting these glimpses of women's lives this study uses a microhistorical methodology to demonstrate that when woven together fragments can reveal much about women's experiences and activities on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In the next section I outline what microhistory is, and how its narrow focus and attention to the agency of individuals allows the complexities and nuances of community formation to be revealed.

1.4 Methodology: Microhistory¹⁴³

Definitions of microhistory vary, but in general it may be characterised as small-scale historical analysis that makes comprehensive use of primary sources to establish intimate and wide ranging connections between particular people, places and events to illuminate broader historical themes.¹⁴⁴ As a historical methodology it has most notably been used by scholars of European history, often drawing on extensive court records to investigate different aspects of the society in which these cases occurred. Prominent examples include Carlo Ginzburg's *The Cheese and the Worms* that examined the religious beliefs of an Italian miller in the sixteenth century, and Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre* that explored the intimate world of French peasants in the village of Artigat in sixteenth-century

¹⁴¹ J.G. Rogers, *Jericho on the Jordan: A Gippsland Goldfields History* (Moe: J.G. Rogers, 1998); *Woods Point Cemetery: Burials 1864-1920 and Transcriptions* (Moe: J.G. Rogers, 1995); *Matlock Cemetery: Burials 1864-1946 and Transcriptions* (Moe: J.G. Rogers, 1999).

¹⁴² Dorothy Morgan and Marjorie Morgan, *Happy-go-Lucky: A Gippsland Gold Town* (Blackburn: Acacia Press Pty Ltd, 1987); Graham Goulding, *The Former Walhalla Post Office: A Brief History* (Walhalla: Walhalla Board of Management, 2011).

¹⁴³ This section draws on material previously published in Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles: An Archive Story," 78-92, and Blake, "Women on the Woods Point Goldfields," 1-20.

¹⁴⁴ For alternative definitions of microhistory see John Brewer, "Microhistory and the Histories of Everyday Life," *Cultural and Social History: The Journal of the Social History Society* 7: 1 (2010), 89; <http://dx.doi.org/10.2752/147800410X477359>; Francesca Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History," *California Italian Studies* 2: 1 (2011), section III, <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; Jill Lepore, "Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography," *The Journal of American History* 88: 1 (2001), 133, DOI: 10.2307/2674921

France.¹⁴⁵ Jill Lepore has suggested that microhistory is similar to biography, using narrative techniques to portray historical subjects as characters with agency; though unlike biography, individual subjects ‘however extraordinary’ are more important as *representative* figures within a society rather than for their uniqueness.¹⁴⁶ Icelandic scholar Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, who makes use of personal sources such as diaries rather than the court records commonly associated with the Italian school of microhistory, draws on the term ‘“normal exception” ’ to describe the typical subject of microhistory, a ‘somewhat unusual human being, but at the same time a perfectly average person’.¹⁴⁷ This terminology derives from the work of Italian microhistorian Edoardo Grendi who, as Trivellato notes, suggested ‘extra-ordinary documents — that if subjected to the proper micro-analytical reading — could nonetheless illuminate broad trends.’¹⁴⁸ Scholarly nuances aside, microhistory — understood as an intimate study of primary sources revealing aspects of individual lives within a broader social context — has not been extensively used to explore the experiences of women and families in community formation on the goldfields.

In his work on Australian mining towns Erik Eklund has argued that reducing the scale of historical analysis to microhistories of communities or towns enables a more detailed examination of the relationship between the mining industry and community formation.¹⁴⁹ Eklund argues that micro themes such as ‘family, community, gender and locality’ can also be applied to the study of global changes:

¹⁴⁵ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1983).

¹⁴⁶ Lepore, “Historians Who Love Too Much,” 135.

¹⁴⁷ Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon, “The Life of a Working-Class Woman: Selective Modernization and Microhistory in Early 20th-century Iceland,” *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 36 no. 2 (2011), 188, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03468755.2011.564727>.

¹⁴⁸ Trivellato, “Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History,” section II.

¹⁴⁹ Erik Eklund, “Scale and Place in History,” unpublished paper presented to the Australian Historical Association conference, 9-13 July 2012.

Detailed portraits of local society can be placed within a web of wider social and political relationships. Mining towns can be understood with respect to the movement of capital, changes in world commodity prices, city-based demand for the products that are fashioned from the mined ore, and national and global movements of working people to labour in these places.¹⁵⁰

Though Eklund highlights the importance of understanding the relationship between mining and community formation, his emphasis here is on economic factors, and does not fully consider the influence of other activities and structures on the making of community. As discussed earlier, some recent goldfield scholarship has demonstrated that drawing on a range of archival records, material culture, and personal correspondence to weave the stories of individuals, families and networks into an analysis of goldfield settlements can illuminate broader themes associated with the global phenomenon of the nineteenth century gold rushes, such as class, gender, and ethnicity. My study builds on this scholarship by highlighting the influence of gender, and to a lesser extent of class, on the making of community on the goldfields. However, the extent to which we can weave together the intimate connections between individual women and family networks depends on the richness and availability of our sources. Unlike micro-historians studying prominent court cases documented in voluminous records those studying women's experiences and activities are typically dealing with meagre and unconnected sources.

In her study of the work of the Greek poet, Sappho classics scholar Page DuBois reminds us that all of the past is fragmentary, and that our scholarly desires for these incomplete sources of the past can never realise 'a dream of wholeness, transparency, perfect access to what we desire to know.'¹⁵¹ She suggests that rather than viewing such sources through the loss or absence of what we know, we read them for what they are, and what they can tell us about our relationship with the past.¹⁵² She also suggests that scholars 'look also at our own desires, our investments in these lost objects, these shattered fragments of the past'.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Page DuBois, *Sappho is Burning* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1995), 39.

¹⁵² Ibid., 53-54.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 35.

DuBois's invitation suggests a powerful approach for micro-historians dealing with fragmentary sources.

Discussing the methodology for her study of the inmates of Yarmouth Gaol in the nineteenth century, Helen Rogers outlines a strategy which she describes as 'intimate reading'.¹⁵⁴ Rogers weaves together 'biographical reconstruction with prosopography, or group biography [to view] individual lives in the context of their spatial location, social networks, and the circumstances and characteristics they shared with others'.¹⁵⁵ As Rogers posits, her strategy of cross-referencing evidence from unconnected sources 'provides a framework to decode fragmentary scraps of evidence of words and actions, scattered across unconnected collections.'¹⁵⁶ Rogers's 'record linkage' strategy is not dissimilar to some of the techniques used by family historians and scholars of the family.¹⁵⁷ She combines these techniques with a biographer's interest in individual lives and a micro-historian's focused study of the fragmentary sources in which her subject's 'voices and actions' are more visible.¹⁵⁸

Rogers's research, like that of many scholars, benefits from the technological developments that have made it easier to access and piece together fragments of our subjects' lives preserved in physical and digital archives. As Bishop points out in her study of colonial businesswomen, the accessibility of a wider variety of quantitative and qualitative sources means it is far easier to track some women's activities 'across time and from place to place' to find answers to new questions about women's experiences and activities in the public and private spheres.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ Helen Rogers, "Making Their Mark: Young Offenders' Life Histories and Social Networks," in *Law, Crime and Deviance since 1700: Micro-Studies in the History of Crime*, eds David Nash and Anne-Marie Kilday (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 229. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. Rogers uses genealogical sources to expand on the fragmentary references to two brothers recorded in a journal by a visitor to Yarmouth Gaol cross-referenced with the data sets of specific prison records (including transcripts of the tattoos of prisoners transported to Van Diemen's Land).

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 230.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 229.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 241.

¹⁵⁹ Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*, 15.

The microhistorical methodology for my study of women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields adopts the small-scale analysis and intense focus on primary sources typical of microhistory. The foundation of the project is a database recording personal data on women who can be identified on the Upper Goulburn goldfields between 1860 and the 1890s. This data is drawn from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources including personal correspondence, census records, rate books and directories, mining reports, civil registration records, passenger lists, wills and probate, inquests, courts and police records, school correspondence, newspapers, images, and material culture. Secondary sources, including published and unpublished contemporary literature, manuscripts, and family histories, help to piece together some of the details of women's lives obtained from these primary sources. My sources are drawn from the physical and digital collections of public and government libraries and archives, such as the National Library of Australia, State Library of Victoria, Public Record Office Victoria, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Victoria Police Museum, Museum Victoria, Centre for Gippsland Studies, State Library of New South Wales, and National Library of New Zealand. The records of genealogical societies and local history societies have also been accessed, together with information obtained from private sources, such as family descendants.

Using this data my study draws on some of the techniques described above by Rogers and Bishop to analyse the experiences and activities of women who can be identified on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the second half of the nineteenth century. Reflections on this period in secondary sources, such as published and unpublished literature, also helps to expand our understanding of how women imagined community in later periods, such as the eras of collective nostalgia for the goldfields in the 1890s and 1930s. Some women's stories are more visible than others because of the richness of the source material, while other women's stories rely on more limited, and unrelated, sources. In either case we need to be mindful of how we interpret individual case studies and the extent to which they can reflect the broader experiences of women making community. This microhistorical methodological approach nonetheless helps to illuminate the complex interactions and relationships of some women (and men), the individual and collective expressions of their values and beliefs, and the extent to which these demonstrate a sense of belonging to different kinds of community on the goldfields in the second half of the nineteenth century.

1.5 Conclusion

Though much debated, the concept of community remains a relevant category of analysis in historical scholarship. The *Mountaineer's* use of the term in the aftermath of the Woods Point fire in January 1865 predates some of the classical theories on community in the nineteenth century. However, understanding the characteristics of community outlined in this (and later) scholarship helps us to interpret examples of community making on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the second half of the nineteenth century. Three key themes emerge from this study of community scholarship. The first is locality and community, which centre on the relationship between a shared geographic locality and community making. The second is gender and community, which highlights the relationship between gender roles and how men and women made community. The third is belonging and community, that examines the extent to which an individual was able to help make, feel a connection to, and be accepted within a community.

In the chapters that follow I explore the interaction of these themes in three periods of mining activity on the Upper Goulburn, beginning with the early period of alluvial and quartz mining between 1860 and 1863. In Chapter 2 I focus on the relationship between these themes and men's mining activity, and in Chapter 3 I turn my attention to women's activities and experiences.

Part 2: Beginnings

Chapter 2: Community as Locality: the Rush to the Upper Goulburn Goldfields, 1860-1863.

2.1 Introduction

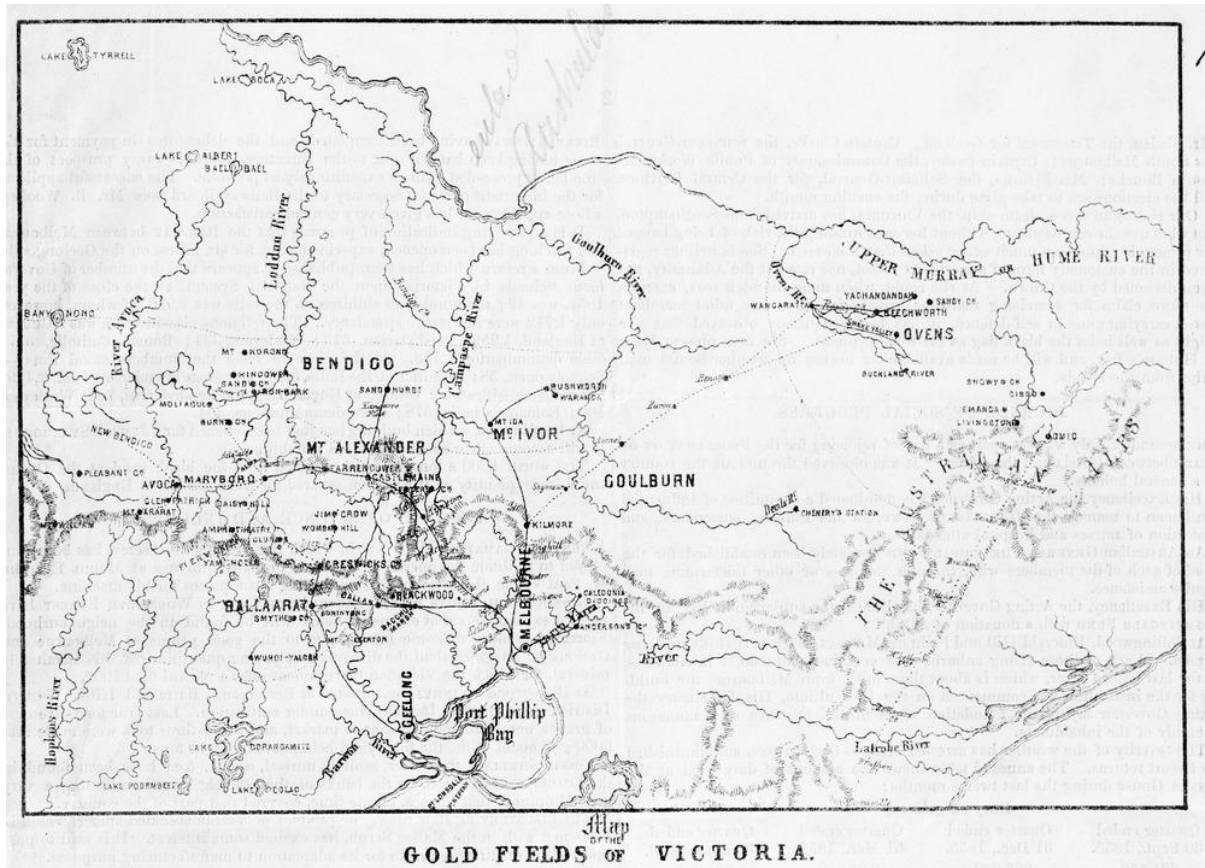


Fig. 2.1: Map of the Goldfields of Victoria, 1856.

State Library of Victoria.

The main centres of mining activity in central and north-east Victoria are marked in red. The approximate location where the Upper Goulburn goldfields would develop is marked in green, south of Alfred Cheney's station on the Delatite River.

On 8 August 1860 Walter Butler, acting warden in the Beechworth mining district, set off from the mining township in north-east Victoria to report on gold diggings on the Goulburn River south of Mansfield [Fig. 2.1].¹ Small parties of miners had been working the Goulburn and Big Rivers since the mid-1850s, but limited returns and difficulties getting into the steep and thickly timbered ranges meant that there had been little interest in the diggings compared to others in central and north-east Victoria. However, by 1860 at least two parties

¹ *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>.

had traversed the divide between the Big and Goulburn Rivers (now known as Mt Terrible) to establish claims on a tributary of the Goulburn River that became known as Gaffneys Creek.² Rumours of a new gold discovery prompted the Victorian Government to send a series of officials to report on the diggings. Unlike California, the Victorian goldfields had been closely administered by the Government from the early 1850s and, in the wake of Eureka, mining activity had been subject to a number of changes in policing and legislation.³ Such official visits were a reflection of the role of the state in helping establish civil society on the Victorian goldfields, creating a different kind of goldfield community to that of California where, as Goodman notes, order was understood as being maintained by individuals rather than imposed upon by institutions.⁴ Individuals also made community on the Victorian goldfields, but as this chapter shows they also sought the support of the state in creating an ordered, more civil community.

The first of the official visits to the Upper Goulburn goldfields was made by Francis McCrae Cobham, Superintendent at Benalla police station who visited Jamieson, the settlement that supplied the diggings, in June 1860. A few weeks later the publication of Cobham's cursory but encouraging assessment of the region's prospects sparked a rush of hundreds of miners from nearby diggings.⁵ Despite the winter weather, some gold seekers were unprepared for the rigorous journey over the rugged mountain ranges, and criticised Cobham and the Government in accounts of their journeys published in metropolitan and regional

² Irishman Thomas Gaffney was later rewarded for the discovery of the goldfield after having established a water race on the Goulburn River; see James Flett, *The History of Gold Discovery in Victoria* (Melbourne: Hawthorn Press, 1970), 98. However, as John Nolan later explained in a letter to former mining agent Richard Mackay, Nolan and his friend John Dempsey were also in the region at the same time and discovered a quartz reef they named Dempsey's reef, which they registered in October 1859; see Richard Mackay, "Recollections of the Early Gippsland Goldfields, Chapter II," *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, 26 February 1915, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92015721>.

³ The administration of the Victorian goldfields is discussed at length in Ralph W. Birrell, *Staking a Claim: Gold and the Development of Victorian Mining Law* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1998). Goodman discusses the role of police on the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s in *Gold Seeking*, 74-79.

⁴ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 104.

⁵ Victoria. Parliament. *The Victorian Hansard containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Council & Assembly of the Colony of Victoria, Session 1859-60*, Vol. 6 (Melbourne: William Fairfax & Co, 1860), 12 July 1860, 1522; 7 August 1860, 1669. Among the newspapers who published copies of Cobham's report were *Age*, 13 July 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154841366>; *Bendigo Advertiser*, 14 July 1860, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article87945079>; *Mount Alexander Mail*, 16 July 1860, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199604317>.

newspapers.⁶ Alarmed that the modest prosperity of the diggings was being misrepresented, some miners holding claims in the region also contributed to this flurry of criticism.⁷ Walter Butler was the latest official sent to report on the 'Goulburn Rush'.

After arriving in the colony from Ireland in 1853, Butler had spent the last four years in the Beechworth mining district, where he was employed by the Victorian Government to help administer law and order on what were known as the Ovens goldfields.⁸ In 1858 Butler had written to his mother, describing his frustration with his role as 'a kind of "factotum" [...] being called upon to do anything and everything when any of our wardens etc are on leave or away elsewhere.'⁹ Despite being promoted to acting warden and Chinese protector, he was disheartened that the expenses he incurred in attending to the scattered diggings made it more difficult for him to send money home to his family.¹⁰ Gaps in the family correspondence between this letter, and the next in October 1860, mean we do not know Butler's private thoughts of this latest task, but in the official report of his almost ten day journey he described the landscape of the Upper Goulburn goldfields as 'the most rugged country I have ever travelled'.¹¹ Over the next two or three years other officials, miners, and travellers would make similar observations.

This chapter draws on the accounts of miners and officials on the early Upper Goulburn goldfields, together with later scholarship, to explore the relationship between the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn goldfields and the making of community on the early diggings. In recent scholarship on community Taksa observes that community is no longer defined 'as a fixed social entity generally encompassed in a specific place'.¹² Within

⁶ Examples included: *Mount Alexander Mail*, 10 August 1860, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article199604165>; *Bendigo Advertiser*, 3 August 1860, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article87945584>.

⁷ *Argus*, 8 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687520>.

⁸ Walter Butler to Mother, December 1853, Butler Family Collection, University of Melbourne. All letters in Butler Family Collection cited were accessed using *Early Experiences in Australasia Primary Sources and Personal Narratives 1788-1901* database via State Library of Victoria.

⁹ Letter from Walter Butler to his mother, Camp Beechworth, 10 July 1858. Catalogue suggests letter was written on 10 July, but letter appears to be dated 10 June.

¹⁰ Letter from Walter Butler to his mother, Camp Beechworth, 12 November 1858; *Victorian Government Gazette* 153, 12 November 1858, 2263, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>.

¹¹ As with other reports of 'the Goulburn rush', Butler's report was also published in the press. See *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>.

¹² Taksa, " 'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism'," 13.

geographic or administrative boundaries there may be many kinds of community based on varied social relationships and activities held together by ties of class, gender, religion, or ethnicity. The extent to which individuals feel a part of a community or are recognised as belonging to a community depends upon more than their residence of a particular place. However, accounts of the early Upper Goulburn goldfields suggest that one of the common experiences shared by the diverse mix of people on the goldfields in this initial phase of alluvial and quartz mining was adapting to the physical characteristics of the remote, heavily forested region. Did this common experience extend to the making of a community that was defined by a shared geographic space? Or did the ways in which the inhabitants adapted to these physical characteristics help to shape more complex ideas of community that were dependent on other ties? And to what extent did these ideas of community exclude individuals, or groups, from belonging on the goldfields in this period?

In the first section of this chapter I set the scene by focusing on the geology, topography, and climate of the region, before moving on to explore how these characteristics shaped mining activity in this period. I then consider whether the published accounts shared by some miners, together with examples of communal action by miners and storekeepers, can be interpreted as exercises in community making. The chapter concludes by investigating whether these examples suggest that the sense of belonging some inhabitants felt to a community was, in part, shaped by the unique physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn.

2.2 Rivers, Rocks, and Ranges: the Physical Characteristics of the Upper Goulburn Goldfields

In his 1860 report on the Gaffneys Creek diggings Walter Butler described the geological characteristics of gold formation he observed in the region:

The gold is large and flaky, taking its shape from the cleavages of the slate into which it has found its way by gravitation. The bottom, or bed rock, is either sandstone or, more frequently, slate, the cleavages of which are nearly perpendicular. In some places the bed rock is 14 feet from the original level of the creek, in others not so

many inches, and in places exposed to the eye. Nevertheless, I am informed that gold is found in the latter case quite as often as in the former.¹³

Butler was not a geologist, but he had been on the Victorian goldfields long enough to recognise gold-bearing rock. As on other goldfields, the gold in this 'rugged country' along the Goulburn River was formed by millions of years of geological changes above and below the earth's surface. In their overview of the evolution of Victoria's goldfields Hughes and Phillips explain that the gold that miners extracted in Victoria in the 1850s and '60s was found in quartz veins and reefs that had formed in the Devonian period (between 420 and 360 million years ago) and the earlier Silurian period.¹⁴ They note that as the oceans retreated, the earth compressed to form mountain ranges and exploding molten rock created volcanoes and granite plateaus (including the Powelltown-Baw Baw Ranges in the vicinity of the Upper Goulburn goldfields).¹⁵ As part of this movement in the earth's surface, faults opened up in the ranges which were filled by quartz veins comprising minerals such as gold and silica. The gold in these veins was known as the 'primary gold deposit'.¹⁶ As the earth's surface eroded over subsequent millennia (in the later Cainozoic period) these gold deposits were exposed and found their way into creeks and valleys. This 'secondary gold deposit' was the alluvial gold that was extracted in the first stage of mining activity; the gold remaining in quartz reefs was typically extracted at a later stage of mining.¹⁷

Hughes and Phillips note that quartz veins formed in all types of rocks in the Devonian period, but that the extent of the gold in particular regions varied. They argue 'that black, carbon-rich slates were the most effective hosts in causing gold to precipitate, and these slates occur at many of the larger gold deposits.'¹⁸ To support their argument they cite the examples of Stawell, Woods Point and Walhalla where the presence of iron facilitated the formation of gold.¹⁹ At Woods Point and Walhalla this iron was found in 'dykes', which Hills

¹³ *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>.

¹⁴ Martin J Hughes and Neil Phillips, 'Evolution of the Victorian Gold Province: Geological and Historical', *Victorian Historical Journal* 72, no. 1-2 (2001), 138-139.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 136.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 136-138.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 140.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

describes as '[i]gneous rocks that solidified in fissures in the crust'.²⁰ This characteristic was noted by geologist Oliver Augustus Leslie Whitelaw in the first of the two studies he made of the topography, geology and mines of the Woods Point goldfield in the early 1900s.²¹ Whitelaw argued that 'the economic importance of Wood's Point, as a gold-field, may be said to be entirely due to the intrusion of so-called dykes of igneous matter into the lower palaeozoic sediments that constitute the main rock formation of this portion of the State.'²² This field of dykes extended from Walhalla in the south to Alexandra in the north. Woods Point was in the centre of this field. Later geological studies have extended Whitelaw's work, one of the most recent being a 2006 study of the Woods Point, Walhalla, and Tallangallook goldfields (west of Mansfield).²³ While noting some differences between the Woods Point and Walhalla goldfields, this study nonetheless highlights the significance of the region as the largest gold producer east of the Bendigo Zone, one of ten geological structural divisions identified in Victoria.²⁴ [Fig. 2.2]

²⁰ E. Sherbon Hills, *Physiography of Victoria: An Introduction to Geomorphology*, 1975 edition (Marrickville: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1940), 5.

²¹ O. A. L. Whitelaw, "The Wood's Point Gold-field, with Plates and Figures / by O. A. L. Whitelaw; with Appendix on the Propylitic Diorites and associated Rocks of the Wood's Point Gold-field by Professor J.W. Gregory," *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Victoria* 3, Department of Mines, 1905, 11, <http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/geology-of-victoria/geological-survey-of-victoria>; See also O. A. L. Whitelaw, 'The Topography, Geology and Mines of the Wood's Point District with Plates and Figures', *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Victoria* 13, Department of Mines, 1916, <http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/geology-of-victoria/geological-survey-of-victoria>.

²² Whitelaw, *The Wood's Point Gold-field, with Plates and Figures*, 11. Palaeozoic is an era of geological time from 570 to 280 million years ago; see Hills, *Physiography of Victoria*, 373.

²³ A.H.M Vandenberg, R.A Cayley, C.E Willman, V.J Morand, W.R. Seymon, C.R Osborne, D.H Taylor, S.J. Haydon, M. Mclean, C. Quinn, P. Jackson, and A.C. Sandford, *Walhalla – Woods Point – Tallangallook Special Map Area Geological Report. Geological Survey of Victoria Report* 127. GeoScience Victoria. Department of Primary Industries, 2006, <http://earthresources.efirst.com.au/product.asp?pid=168&cid=39>.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 50. The report also notes that the Woods Point and Walhalla goldfields are in the Melbourne Zone, which encompasses an area of around 40 000 square kilometres north and east of Melbourne, 47-48.

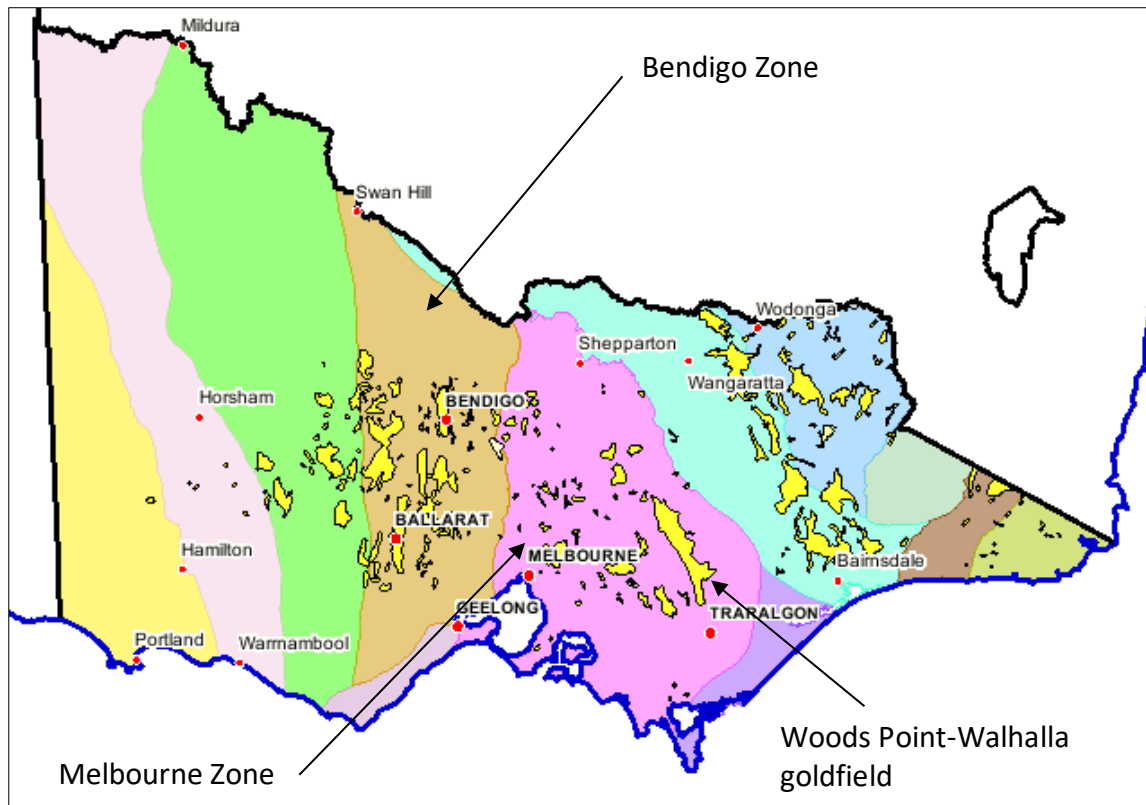


Fig. 2.2: Map of Victoria showing geological structural zones with the location of gold and base metals marked in yellow, 2018.

Created from GeoVic, Department of Economic Developments, Jobs, Transport, and Resources, Victoria, Australia, <http://earthresources.vic.gov.au/earth-resources/maps-reports-and-data/geovic>. I have identified the Bendigo and Melbourne zones, as well as the approximate location of the Woods Point-Walhalla goldfield. The Upper Goulburn goldfields are located in the northern half of this goldfield.

Scholars of mining history have routinely pointed out that geology — and the circumstances that led to the extraction of mineral resources — determined where settlements were established and the type of community that formed in these settlements.²⁵ As Eklund notes, Australia is a continent rich with mineral resources and under particular circumstances these resources were extracted for various purposes.²⁶ Citing examples ranging from ‘large ore-rich provinces’ such as coal in northern New South Wales and copper in South Australia to the boom and bust cycles of gold mining in Victoria, New South Wales, and Queensland, Eklund argued that geology ‘underpinned the development of a range of “mining regions”’.²⁷ The field of dykes identified by Whitelaw, one of many features identified in this

²⁵ Eklund, “Mining in Australia,” 179; Lawrence, *Dolly’s Creek*, 14.

²⁶ Eklund, “Mining in Australia,” 179.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

and later studies, provides some evidence to support Eklund's argument that the spatial boundaries of goldfield regions, and the settlements within them, were influenced by geological characteristics such as the extent of the mineral deposit.

Europeans were not the first to become aware of, or make use of the mineral resources in Victoria. Challenging earlier gold rush scholarship that placed Aboriginal people on the margins of the goldfields, Fred Cahir notes that European accounts of the Victorian gold rushes provide evidence that Aboriginal people had quarried a range of minerals for use in ceremonies and for trade prior to and after European settlement.²⁸ Cahir's study of Aboriginal people on the Victorian goldfields spans the period between 1850 and 1870, coinciding with the period of the Upper Goulburn rush in the 1860s. However, the scope of his work does not allow for a focused study of Aboriginal people's use of the mineral resources in this region.

Much of what we know of the Taungurung in this region prior to the gold rushes comes from earlier studies that draw on the work of Europeans who kept records of their observations of and encounters with members of various clans. These observers included Aboriginal Protector William Thomas, anthropologist and explorer Alfred Howitt, and mining official Robert Brough Smyth.²⁹ As Catherine Upcher notes in her 1990 archaeological study of the Big River and Upper Goulburn valleys, these observations have been helpful in studying the lower Goulburn but 'there is little to even remotely suggest movement into or occupation of the more rugged mountainous country which incorporates the upper reaches of the Goulburn, the Black and the Big Rivers.'³⁰ Brough-Smyth's observations, cited by Upcher, of the number and location of Aboriginal people in Victoria suggest that the mountain ranges, though 'held in awe by the Aborigines', were only visited seasonally in

²⁸ Cahir, *Black Gold*, 7-8.

²⁹ William Thomas's observations are included in *Letters from Victorian Pioneers: a Series of Papers on the Early Occupation of the Colony, the Aborigines, etc. addressed by Victorian Pioneers to His Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria* (South Yarra: Currey O'Neil, 1893), 398-437; Alfred Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (London: Macmillan, 1904), <https://archive.org/details/nativetribesofso00howiuoft>; Robert Brough-Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria with Notes Relating to the Habits of the Natives of Other Parts of Australia and Tasmania* (Melbourne: Govt. Printer, 1878), <https://archive.org/details/aboriginesofvict01smyt>.

³⁰ Catherine Upcher, *Northern Diversion Sites Archaeological Survey Preliminary Report* (Department of Conservation and Environment, February 1991), 12.

order to obtain supplies for food and other productive purposes.³¹ In her study Upcher provided more substantive evidence that support Brough-Smyth's general observations, identifying artefact scatters in the Big River valley. However, the stone Upcher identified – silcrete – does not occur in the Big River valley, and she suggests that it was brought into the area.³² Less is known of the Upper Goulburn valley, as Upcher's identification of sites was restricted by the steep terrain, and ground disturbance from traffic, mining activity, and wildlife.³³

Limited as it was by the terrain, Upcher's study nevertheless suggests that the Taungurung may not have made much use of the rivers, rocks, and ranges where the Upper Goulburn goldfields were later established. However, as Upcher and earlier sources suggest, the Taungurung's connection to country did not depend upon permanent occupation in one place within the locality. This notion that a semi-nomadic use and ownership of land could support Indigenous concepts of community challenges classical theories of community based on long-term occupation and agricultural use. The omission of the Taungurung in later recollections of the goldfields, and in early historical accounts, also supports Cahir's general argument.³⁴ While being alert to written sources on Aboriginal people during the Upper Goulburn gold rushes, the extent of their participation and interaction with miners requires further research drawing on a wider range of sources, and is outside the scope of this study.

According to Stacpoole, pastoralists who took up the 'rich flats and rolling foothills from Yea to the Jamieson Flat' in the 1840s also avoided the ranges between the Buckland valley and the Upper Goulburn.³⁵ Stacpoole does not cite the experiences of specific pastoralists, but we know from other sources that at least one party of overlanders crossed the ranges in this region prior to the discovery of gold. Edward Bell, who worked for Alexander McLean

³¹ Ibid, 14; Brough-Smyth's observations do not appear to refer specifically to the Upper Goulburn ranges, but to mountain ranges more generally in Victoria, see Brough-Smyth, *The Aborigines of Victoria*, 33-34.

³² Upcher, *Northern Division Sites*. Upcher notes that closest source of silcrete is between Aberfeldy and Mt Lookout, east of the Big River and Upper Goulburn valleys.

³³ Ibid., 28-29.

³⁴ Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields." Cahir, *Black Gold*, 1.

³⁵ Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields," 52.

Hunter and James Watson on their run on the Delatite River, described how in 1840 he and Hunter, accompanied by overseer Archibald Jamieson and an Aboriginal guide known as Pigeon, attempted to establish a stock route into Gippsland.³⁶ The party succeeded in reaching the Latrobe River, but Bell concluded that their return journey descending the ranges from the headwaters of the Goulburn River 'was considered too steep for stock, and the idea of bringing a herd by that route was abandoned'.³⁷ Though Bell's account provides evidence that some pastoralists did not avoid the ranges entirely, his description of the difficult terrain generally supports Stacpoole's argument that there had been little exploration of the region by Europeans prior to the discovery of gold.³⁸

Bell's emphasis on the difficult terrain is echoed by later first-hand accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In accounts of the 'Goulburn rush' (and in most accounts of the region published since) some of the most common characteristics referred to are the topography and vegetation. For miners keen to reach the gold diggings the absence of well-formed tracks along the river banks and through the wet sclerophyll forest was an impediment that forced many to turn back.³⁹ Walter Butler took the time to note the peppermint and box trees, two of the *Eucalyptus* species that would have formed part of the upper canopy of the forest, and the 'wattle' (probably silver wattle) and 'light wood' (probably blackwood) that was growing along Gaffneys Creek.⁴⁰ Miners and travellers who later took the Yarra Track, via Healesville, to Woods Point and the Jordan goldfields also passed through towering canopies of mountain ash (*Eucalyptus regnans*), a hardwood tree with a 'smooth white or greenish grey' trunk and 'rough fibrous stocking' base.⁴¹ Griffiths writes that the mountain ash inspired awe, and later scientists and tourists would visit the region to marvel at the height of the trees.⁴² As awe-inspiring as the forest may have been to some miners and

³⁶ Sayers and Bride, *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, 282-300.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 289.

³⁸ Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfield," 50-52.

³⁹ *Bendigo Advertiser*, 3 August 1860, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article87945584>.

⁴⁰ *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>.

⁴¹ Griffiths explains that part of this track became known as the Blacks' Spur, after the journeys the Woiwurrung and Taungurung (referred to by Griffiths as Daung wurrung) made through the mountain ash forest to establish a separate settlement, or what Griffiths describes as 'a safe refuge amidst the maelstrom of European invasion', see Griffiths, *Forests of Ash*, 50.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 12, 16.

travellers on the early goldfields, it was also an impediment to travel, as well as a productive resource they could use as fuel, to construct dwellings, and create tools for mining, such as water races.⁴³



Fig. 2.3: View of vegetation along the Goulburn River between Woods Point and Gooleys Creek, 2017.

Louise Blake.

Mining activity had an impact on the environment - trees were cut down, river terraces were washed away by sluicing, and water diverted into races and polluted by sludge and chemicals – so the revegetated landscape we see today is likely to differ in some respects from what the first miners in the region encountered.

⁴³ A number of scholars have addressed the environmental impact of gold mining activity. These include: Barry McGowan, "Mullock Heaps and Tailing Mounds: Environmental Effects of Alluvial Goldmining," in *Gold: Forgotten Histories*, 85-100; Don Garden, "Catalyst or Cataclysm? Gold Mining and the Environment," *Victorian Historical Journal* 72 (2001): 28–44; Susan Lawrence and Peter Davies, 'The Sludge Question: The Regulation of Mine Tailings in Nineteenth-Century Victoria', *Environment and History* 20 (2014), 385–410, doi: 10.3197/096734014X14031694156448; Kathleen Anne Raulings, "Landscapes of the Mitta Mitta Valley 1830-1914: An Environmental History," Masters of Arts Thesis (2016), Monash University.

The climate, too, was a notable feature. In the account of his experiences on the Delatite run in 1840 Bell observed that in one night up to 500 sheep died as a result of catarrh (an influenza virus that commonly affected sheep and was exacerbated by cold weather).⁴⁴ Along the route via Jamieson that Butler and others took to the diggings, some travellers paused long enough to admire the sharply dissected ranges partly obscured by vapour-like clouds.⁴⁵ Upcher noted in her archaeological report that the rivers in this region are at an elevation of between 400 and 600 metres above sea-level, but the ridges rise to a maximum of just over 1000 metres.⁴⁶ Annual rainfall then was between 800 and 1400 mm.⁴⁷ The 'Goulburn rush' occurred in the middle of winter in 1860, when the weather was at its most severe, but even in the adjacent seasons the weather was unpredictable, as Upcher herself noted when conducting field work in February and March.⁴⁸ When I visited Woods Point in March 2017 I also felt the effects of the cool damp air as I walked on the wet grass along the banks of the Goulburn River. The sun was out so there was no precipitation, but the steep, thickly timbered slopes on the north-west side of the valley cast a cool shadow along the river.

In his study of the Dunstan gold rush in the Central Otago region of New Zealand, Tom Brooking argued:

that *the place* provided most of its distinctive features in that it possessed the harshest environment of all the locales that attracted miners during the Australasian gold rushes. The Dunstan was steeper, higher, colder in the winter and dustier in the summer than any other major field in New Zealand, Victoria or New South Wales.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Fahey and Bride, *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, 288.

⁴⁵ *Age*, 7 August 1860, 5-6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154842966>.

⁴⁶ Upcher, *Northern Diversion Sites*, 7. The 2006 geological survey of the Woods Point-Walhalla-Tallangalook goldfields noted that 'some of the higher points [on the northern side of the Great Dividing Range] are on the Big River-Goulburn River divide', with the elevation of Mt Terrible (over which some early miners travelled) rising to 1316 metres above sea level, see Vandenberg, Cayley, Willman, Morand, Seymon, Osborne, Taylor, Haydon, Mclean, Quinn, Jackson, and Sandford, *Walhalla – Woods Point – Tallangalook*, 35.

⁴⁷ The earliest annual rainfall figures currently accessible via the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website shows that the annual rainfall at Woods Point in 1885 was 1592 mm, reaching a peak in August of 172.8 mm, Commonwealth of Australia, Bureau of Meteorology, Climate Data Online, 2018, <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/data/>, accessed 28 May 2018.

⁴⁸ Upcher, *Northern Diversion Sites*, 7.

⁴⁹ Tom Brooking, "Harsh Environment, Softer Sociology: The Dunstan Gold Rush 1862-2014 and the Need for a Fresh Assessment," in *Rushing for Gold*, eds. Carpenter and Lloyd, 206.

With elevations of around 1500 metres (about 200 metres below that of Mt Terrible, the highest peak on the Upper Goulburn) the Dunstan Mountains are, indeed, a harsh environment.⁵⁰ However, an argument could be made that the conditions gold seekers experienced there were no harsher than those of the Upper Goulburn goldfields. Brooking's point that '*the place* provided most of its distinctive features' could equally be made of the Upper Goulburn. But to what extent did these features influence community making? Brooking suggests that in contrast to the "'rough and wild mythology'" of the Dunstan gold rushes, the harsh environment on the Dunstan prompted gold seekers to establish community quickly, citing such examples as 'self-improvement' institutions (mechanics' institutes, literary societies), local government, sporting clubs, and newspapers as evidence of 'community building'.⁵¹ In this example, Brooking's interpretation of community making is broad and obscures the many kinds of community that were created on the Dunstan. Nonetheless, his argument that the harsh physical characteristics of the Dunstan prompted the establishment of civil institutions will be explored elsewhere in my study. Brooking's consideration of the particular effects of the physical characteristics of the Dunstan, alongside the development of mining activity, further highlights the value of microhistory; of narrowing the historical focus to individual goldfields in order to explore some of the complexities of community making overlooked in earlier scholarship. Before I consider some of the complexities of community making on the early Upper Goulburn goldfields it is necessary to explore in more detail how the steep terrain, dense forest, and harsh climate of the Upper Goulburn influenced when and how mining developed, and the population that came to support it.

⁵⁰ New Zealand Government. Land Information New Zealand, "Topo50-CB14, Dunstan Peak," (2015), <https://www.linz.govt.nz/land/maps/topographic-maps>. Some of the goldfield settlements in the Dunstan Ranges were at a lower elevation; the Bendigo (Otago) goldfields, which included the settlements of Logantown and Welshtown are around 500 to 600 metres above sea level, see Land Information New Zealand, "Topo50-CB13, Tarras," (2017), <https://www.linz.govt.nz/land/maps/topographic-maps>.

⁵¹ Brooking, "Harsh Environment, Softer Sociology," 204.

2.3 Making 'fair wages': Establishing Claims and Making Returns on the Early Upper Goulburn Goldfields

Goldfields scholars such as Lawrence and Fahey have observed that goldfields generally developed in three stages: the first being the initial discovery, followed by a rush when the discovery became publicly known, and thirdly, after alluvial gold had been worked out, the goldfield either went into decline or moved into deep lead or quartz reef mining.⁵² By the end of the 1850s mining activity on the established goldfields in Victoria was progressing from the second stage into deep lead and quartz reef mining, which required capital to purchase the more advanced machinery necessary to obtain gold from underneath buried rivers and embedded in quartz reefs. Changes to mining legislation also allowed public companies to form to fund this mining activity.⁵³

If we look at accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields published in metropolitan and regional newspapers, together with mining returns in the same period, we see that the goldfields did progress from alluvial to quartz reef mining. However, the challenges posed by the rugged terrain meant that the transition from alluvial to quartz mining was not straightforward, and many of these changes were slow to take effect. In the next chapter we explore the impact of these challenges on women's settlement and community making on the early goldfields, but in this chapter our focus is on how the physical characteristics shaped mining activity, and the extent to which this may have influenced the making of a 'goldfield community' in this period.

Miner's recollections, mining reports, and contemporary newspaper reports provide few details of alluvial mining activity in the 1850s but what evidence we do have suggests that the number of miners on the Big and Goulburn Rivers was small, there was limited access to

⁵² Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 23; Fahey, "Peopling the Victorian Goldfields: From Boom to Bust, 1851-1901," *Australian Economic History Review* 50, no. 2 (2010), 151-152, <http://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8446.2010.00298.x>. 151-152.

⁵³ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 59-60; Serle, *The Golden Age*, 224-225; Fahey, "Peopling the Victorian Goldfields," 152.

supplies, and miners had to contend with the frequent flooding of their claims.⁵⁴ Further details of the impact the terrain and climate had on mining activity was provided by miners, officials, and other travellers to the Gaffneys Creek diggings during, and following, the 'Goulburn rush' in 1860. One of these challenges was establishing a claim in the steep and heavily forested region. In his report Walter Butler accounted for about 400 men along the 14 mile (22 kilometre) stretch of Gaffneys Creek, each of whom was entitled to a claim of 200 yards (or 180 metres).⁵⁵ In Butler's view the size of the mining population was 'not very large' because the sharp bends of the creek restricted the number of claims that could be established. Another 40 men were working the nearby tributary of Raspberry Creek. A mile further on another two claims had been established, but Butler indicated they were likely to have had only a small number at work: 'the prospects obtained from it not being so good.' We do not know how Butler arrived at these numbers, but we must assume that given the difficulties of travelling in the steep and thickly forested country he could not have accounted for all the miners working the rivers and creeks between Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek.

Walter Butler's conclusion that 'miners accustomed to creek workings' on the Buckland River diggings near Beechworth, or the Snowy River diggings near Omeo, should have no more difficulties with the Gaffneys Creek diggings does not reflect the experience of some miners. One anonymous correspondent for the *Ovens Constitution* who visited the diggings in July reported that a considerable amount of work was required to establish a claim on the Upper Goulburn:

In the first place the track has to be cut to the creek, and then a branch track from the main one down to each particular claim; a space has then to be cleared for the hut, and after these preliminaries the creek claim has to be looked over, and the best mode of working decided.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 22 December 1896; Victoria, Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports* (December 1859), 11.

⁵⁵ *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>. This was the entitlement according to the rules of the Sandhurst mining district which was then issuing licences to miners in the region.

⁵⁶ *Age*, 7 August 1860, 5-6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154842966>.

Another report suggested that this preliminary work took at least six to eight weeks before any gold could be obtained.⁵⁷ The *Ovens Constitution* correspondent noted that most of the ground was being worked by a method of sluicing using water supplied by flood races or wing-dams with the timber required to construct the sluice boxes obtained from nearby trees, 'this high price being occasioned by the impracticability of carrying the timber'.⁵⁸ A later report from another miner who had been on the Ovens diggings noted that the steep terrain and loose soil on the Upper Goulburn made it more difficult and expensive to construct water races than it was on the Ovens.⁵⁹



Fig. 2.4: Scott, Eugene Montague. Pack-Horses Loading for Woods Point, 1864.
State Library of Victoria.

⁵⁷ *Argus*, 15 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687951>.

⁵⁸ *Age*, 7 August 1860, 5-6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154842966>.

⁵⁹ *Ovens Constitution*, 18 September 1861.

Many reports also note that another major obstacle was getting supplies of food and equipment to the early diggings. Horse-driven coaches, and bullock wagons could travel as far as Jamieson, but the tracks further south were too steep and narrow for wheeled vehicles. Teams of pack horses, each horse wearing a distinctive bell around their neck to alert other travellers on the steep and narrow tracks, were the only means of transporting supplies.⁶⁰ [Fig. 2.4] One traveller observed that each horse carried loads of between two hundred and three hundred pounds (90 to 136 kilograms). Flour and alcohol were common loads, but he also noted shovels and tools used in sluicing. Near one of the steeper sections of the track, known as Flour Bag Hill, this traveller also observed the remains of several horses that had slipped off the track and rolled down into the river below.⁶¹

While hazardous for humans and horses, the difficulties of supplying the diggings also had implications for quartz mining activity. By the end of 1861 there were a number of quartz mine claims at Gaffneys Creek, and further south at Woods Point a party of quartz miners was developing the Morning Star reef. In a later letter to Richard Mackay, Gaffneys Creek quartz miner John Nolan recalled that the cost of carting the eight-head battery he and partner John Dempsey required to crush quartz was 'awfully expensive' at 35 shillings per 100 pounds.⁶² Although the battery was put to use, one contemporary report noted that it was still necessary for half the party to work the alluvial section of the claim in this initial phase of activity.⁶³ According to Ainsworth's later account of the gold discoveries at Woods Point, the Morning Star partners also decided to pack and transport their machinery themselves, taking three months to transport the various sections from Jamieson.⁶⁴ The first crushing of the Morning Star reef did not take place until August 1862, and, as Ainsworth tells the story, the gold was hidden in the scrub and transported to Jamieson at night to avoid attracting the attention of the 'wildest' representatives of the mining population.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ *Argus*, 15 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687951>. *Age* 31 August 1861, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154902328>.

⁶¹ *Argus* 19 May 1862, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5715023>.

⁶² *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, 26 February 1915, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92015721>. Mackay draws on Nolan's letter in his article, but the location of the original letter is unknown.

⁶³ *Age*, 1 October 1861, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154901816>.

⁶⁴ Robert Brough Smyth, *The Gold Fields and Mineral Districts of Victoria*. rev. ed. (Carlton: Queensberry Hill Press, 1978), 304-308.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.

Stacpoole suggested later that when alluvial miners departed the Upper Goulburn for the Jordan diggings in 1862, 'a veil of silence descended on the upper Goulburn', leaving the Morning Star owners to patiently work their mine.⁶⁶

Ainsworth and Stacpoole's accounts suggest that in this period the Morning Star owners were working independently of other miners in pursuit of their own interests. The sparse details provided in mining surveyors' reports suggest that the 'veil of silence' that Stacpoole attributed to the McDougall's 'secretive' activity may not have been entirely deliberate, despite their earlier attempts to hide their gold. These reports suggest that in addition to the high cost of transporting equipment, lack of water had delayed the crushing of quartz. In December 1862 the West Buckland surveyor reported that lack of water and machinery was a 'great drawback' and that quartz was being crushed by hand.⁶⁷ Activity was also reportedly quiet between February and April 1863 due to the lack of water.⁶⁸ No quartz was crushed at all at Drummonds Point or Woods Point during April.⁶⁹ These reports highlight how dependent mining activity was on water. Floods could damage water races, while insufficient water meant that the batteries could not be powered to crush the quartz. The challenge of managing water on the goldfields was not unique to the Upper Goulburn, as Davies and Lawrence suggest in their study of water rights and gold mining in Victoria.⁷⁰ However, when we take the water supply into consideration alongside other physical characteristics of the region we can see something of the influence that geographic variations had on mining activity.

The inconsistent nature of mining activity in this period also extended to the income miners were earning. Lawrence, and other scholars, have argued that in the first two stages of mining gold seekers regarded mining as a temporary occupation to be abandoned once they

⁶⁶ Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields," 62.

⁶⁷ Victoria. Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports* (December 1862), no page no.

⁶⁸ Victoria. Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports* (February 1863), 5.

⁶⁹ Victoria. Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports* (April 1863), 5.

⁷⁰ Peter Davies and Susan Lawrence, 'A "mere thread of land": Water Races, Gold Mining, and Water Law in Colonial Victoria,' *Journal of Australian Colonial History* 16 (2014), 170-173, <https://search-informit-com-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=449213487698551;res=IELAPA>.

had made sufficient money to make (or return) home.⁷¹ James Armstrong claimed that between September 1854 and March 1855 there were about 50 men on the Big River getting what he described as 'fair wages, which signified three to six ounces per week'; two of Armstrong's friends, he wrote, did well enough to return home.⁷² Serle suggests that the majority of independent diggers in the 1850s did not make a fortune. From 1852 'eight out of ten made no more than the equivalent of reasonable wages, paid their way, or lost money.'⁷³ If Armstrong's recollections are accurate, his two friends who returned home were the exception.

The transition from alluvial to quartz mining on established goldfields meant a change in the mining workforce with a shift from the independence of the early alluvial diggings to the more secure and skilled employment for wages offered by the establishment of deep lead and quartz mines. Serle writes that between 1856 and 1861 the wages of miners working on established goldfields had dropped, but this drop in wages also corresponded with a decrease in the cost of living, leading Serle to suggest that '[r]eal poverty in the established mining-towns was now almost unknown'.⁷⁴ Miners were earning between two and four pounds per week, which was 'two or three times as much as those on the meagre new rushes were averaging.'⁷⁵ If wages and the cost of living had improved on established goldfields, how do we explain the rush to Gaffneys Creek in 1860?

Lawrence writes that in the later rushes '[p]articipation was influenced by the perception of the likely rewards and by the 1860s most people saw that the days of winning the golden lottery had passed'.⁷⁶ She suggests that while some of those who rushed to the Dolly's Creek diggings in 1857 and later in 1859 were there for short-term gains, those that 'remained knew that they were working for subsistence, not instant wealth'.⁷⁷ Cobham's report that miners were earning up to seven pounds per week at Gaffneys Creek,

⁷¹ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 23-24.

⁷² *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 3 November 1896.

⁷³ Serle, *The Golden Age*, 85.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 29.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

significantly more than what Serle suggests miners were earning elsewhere, provides one explanation for the motives of the hundreds of miners who left other goldfields for Gaffneys Creek.⁷⁸ However, as noted earlier, some miners claimed that Cobham or his informants had misrepresented the prosperity of the diggings and blamed the Government for falsely raising their hopes. Warden Walter Butler's complaints to his mother about his salary and working conditions show that some mining officials also blamed the Government for making it difficult to make ends meet.⁷⁹

The establishment of quartz mining alongside the alluvial diggings in this period did not offer more lucrative returns. According to the census that was conducted in April 1861, though the majority of the adult male population was engaged in mining activity only five miners on the Jamieson, Big River and Upper Goulburn diggings identified themselves as quartz miners; most defined themselves as sluice miners or diggers.⁸⁰ [Table 3 & 4] After yet another visit by an official in August 1861, this time by Warden P.H. Smith, miner Absalom Lehman responded with a letter to the *Ovens Constitution* providing what, he argued, was a 'plain, straightforward account of affairs as they actually are upon this field'.⁸¹ Lehman estimated in September 1861 that there were was employment for no more than 50 or 60 men on his and about half a dozen nearby claims while perhaps 20 men were employed on claims elsewhere in the region. The employment was dependent on the weather, and often only available when the partners in the claims were absent from the diggings and required men to carry on their work. Smith had concluded that miners were earning between three and six pounds per week, but it is not clear from his report how much gold (in ounces) this amounted to. Lehman suggested instead that on the 'older, properly worked' claims miners were earning on average about '1 to 2 oz. per man per week', while the ounce per man per

⁷⁸ Victoria. Parliament, *The Victorian Hansard containing the Debates and Proceedings of the Legislative Council & Assembly of the Colony of Victoria, Session 1859-60*, Vol. 6 (Melbourne: William Fairfax & Co, 1860), 1522.

⁷⁹ Letter from Walter Butler to his mother, 12 November 1858, Butler Family Collection.

⁸⁰ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XVIII.—Showing the Occupations, in Classified Arrangement, of Males of all ages in the Parishes, Townships, and Principal Places situated within each County or Pastoral District," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-05_193. 452 adult males were recorded in the census as miners.

⁸¹ *Ovens Constitution*, 18 September 1861.

week that Smith suggested miners on new claims were earning was more likely to 'represent the weekly earnings of 20 men, rather than of one'.⁸²

With no mining surveyor appointed for the region it is difficult to verify exactly how many men were engaged in quartz mining on the Upper Goulburn at this time. However, reports of the West Buckland subdivision which took in Benalla as well as the Upper Goulburn reveal that, aside from the July 1861 estimates when there were 1300 quartz miners recorded compared to 400 alluvial miners, quartz miners only made up about 10 per cent of the mining population between 1861 and late 1863 when quartz mining activity increased.⁸³ Lehman's descriptions of the inconsistent nature of mining activity, at least in 1861, appear to be a fair assessment.

These accounts of mining activity on the early Upper Goulburn goldfields tell us that the rugged terrain made the working conditions for both alluvial and quartz miners challenging. Together with the inconsistent returns miners were making in this period, these conditions meant that the mining population fluctuated. We might deduce from this that there was not yet sufficient interest in the collective needs of the region for the kind of community making that Brooking observed on the Dunstan. We might also question the extent to which it was possible for a transitional population to establish any sense of community. However, if we take another look at the accounts of mining activity in this period we can catch glimpses of other kinds of community making that drew, in part, on shared geographic space.

2.4 'We Gaffney's Creek miners...': Making a Mining Community?

Lawrence writes that by the 1860s 'gold seekers [...] brought with them the existing threads of community to any new dig.'⁸⁴ Something of these ties can be glimpsed in the terms that some miners used to describe themselves, and other miners, in accounts of the early Upper Goulburn goldfields. 'We Gaffney's Creek miners...' and 'Upper Goulburn Digger' are just

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Victoria, Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports*. Data drawn from reports for the West Buckland Division published between July 1861 and August 1863.

⁸⁴ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 29.

two of the terms used by authors of accounts of the Upper Goulburn, alongside references to miners on other goldfields, such as 'The Buckland diggers...'.⁸⁵ One miner at Gaffneys Creek in November 1860 noted that there were other 'Morse's Creek boys...' on the diggings with him.⁸⁶ Here the authors have defined themselves — and other miners — by the location of the diggings on which they worked. Do these descriptions suggest that by defining themselves, and others, in this way that they had a sense of belonging to a geographic goldfield, or rather to the miners with whom they worked on these goldfields? Given the mobility of the mining population how flexible were these descriptions? Under what circumstances if at all did a 'Buckland digger' or a 'Morse's Creek' boy become a 'Gaffney's Creek miner'? Many of these accounts contain insufficient detail to identify the authors, making it difficult to answer these questions. But if we examine these accounts we can see that some authors have associated particular characteristics with miners on specific goldfields.

One anonymous correspondent for the *Ovens Constitution* who provided a somewhat grandiloquent account of the establishment of mining on the Upper Goulburn, detailed what he regarded as the characteristics of the 'original Goulburn digger'.⁸⁷ The typical miner working the Big and Goulburn rivers prior to 1860 was 'a shearer, bush-man, or "rouse-a-bout man" on a station' who usually did not make enough money from mining to pay for his rations, but who was nevertheless prepared to share 'a billy' with passers-by. When he did make a profit of a few ounces of gold he rushed off to Mansfield where he spent all his money on grog and new clothes, returning to his claim or work on a pastoral station to make ends meet. In other words, he was an independent digger barely making rations whose only interest in the locality was its gold bearing prospects. After establishing the history (as this author described it) of mining in the region, the correspondent described the current working conditions at Gaffneys Creek and some of the characteristics of his fellow miners. He observed that '[w]e Gaffney's Creek miners (with grief I confess it) are a beery

⁸⁵ *Ovens Constitution*, 6 February 1861, *Age*, 11 August 1862, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155010028>.

⁸⁶ *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 8 December 1860, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112915983>; Victoria, Board of Science, and Victoria, Mines Department, *Mining Surveyors' Reports* (May 1860), 110. Morse's Creek was a gold diggings on the Ovens goldfield in the Buckland division of the Beechworth mining district.

⁸⁷ *Ovens Constitution*, 6 February 1861.

generation [...] a groggy race'. This view was reinforced by a Jamieson storekeeper he quoted, who noted that '[t]he Buckland diggers [...] were good drinking men', but the miners at Gaffneys Creek could 'beat them hollow'.⁸⁸ Though he does not use the term 'community' this correspondent appears to be suggesting that to be recognised as a 'Gaffneys Creek miner' one must be a hard-drinking miner. In this case, belonging to community extends further than a shared geographic location to shared behaviour. But what of those who did not share these traits or were excluded because of age or gender? Could they too belong to this community? This example can be seen to support Lawrence's argument elsewhere that 'shared goals, ideals and group identity' could be viewed as evidence of a larger 'mining community' that did not depend upon residence of a particular goldfield, while also suggesting that those who did not — or could not — participate in the same activities might have been excluded.⁸⁹

Other accounts do use the term 'community', and these allude to the role of the state in supporting civic community making. In August 1862 a miner at Drummonds Point who signed himself 'An Upper Goulburn Digger' drew attention to the bad behaviour of 'a mob of between twenty and thirty ruffians' at Drummonds Point to support his argument that there ought to be a police station in the area.⁹⁰ Citing the oft-mentioned poor weather and difficulties in receiving supplies, this miner's particular grievances were lack of police protection, and the absence of a common area where miners and packers could graze their horses. 'An Upper Goulburn Digger' noted that 'we make an addition of some thousands per annum to the revenue of Victoria, and still we are the most badly treated and the worst looked after of any gold-field community.' By drawing attention to the need for police and a legislated common area, the author suggests that law and order were a necessary component of a 'gold-field community'. The need for law and order was also highlighted by another miner whose letter was published in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* the following year. Patrick O'Neil, a miner at Gaffneys Creek, wrote in response to criticism of the

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Susan Lawrence, "Gender and Community Structure on Australian Goldfields," in *Social Approaches to an Industrial Past: The Archaeology and Anthropology of Mining*, eds. A. Bernard Knapp, Vincent C. Piggott, and Eugenia W. Herbert (London: Routledge, 1998), 43. Google Books.

⁹⁰ *Age*, 11 August 1862, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155010028>.

conduct of Warden Cogdon on the Jordan diggings.⁹¹ O'Neil noted that Cogdon was doing his best to deal with disputes across a widespread region, pointing out that

amongst those prospecting and mining in these remote localities there are many bad characters, as will be found in every community, and these men being removed from places where law and order can be enforced, of course take advantage of their position, to the great detriment of the respectable portion of the miners, &c.⁹²

Here, O'Neil appears to suggest there was 'a community' in the region, which included both the 'bad characters' and 'respectable' miners. At the same time there was an expectation that law and order was necessary to support community. In his study of the Dunstan Brooking also noted the role of the state in community making, noting that while voluntary organisations and self-government helped to build community, this 'was tempered by the habit of turning to central government to sort out disputes...'⁹³

Drawing on Lawrence's argument about goldfield networks, we can read these accounts as evidence of the 'threads of community' that had developed on the Victorian goldfields prior to the Upper Goulburn rush. However, these accounts are also subjective, and we do not have sufficient evidence to determine if their views were shared by the readers of the newspapers, or the inhabitants of the goldfields to which they referred. Importantly for this study, one of the obvious exclusions in these accounts is references to women and families. As we shall see in the next chapter, although there was a gender imbalance on the early goldfields, there is evidence that there were small numbers of women and families living on the goldfields at this time, some of whom were known to at least one of these authors. However, by describing themselves as 'miners', 'diggers', and 'boys' from particular goldfields what the authors of these accounts were doing was reinforcing a masculine idea of community based on mining activity.

The accounts of some miners, together with officials and other travellers, allow us to see something of the impact that the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn had upon

⁹¹ *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 14 April 1863, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112893287>.

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Brooking, "Harsh Environment, Softer Sociology," 204.

the development of mining. For some miners this extended to the shaping of an identity based on shared geographic location, goldfield networks, and shared behaviour. In some of these accounts we can also see the impact that the physical characteristics had on business activity; the rugged terrain helped to establish Jamieson as a supply base for the Upper Goulburn diggings. However, after gold discoveries on the Jordan River in 1862 led to the establishment of supply businesses on the Gippsland side of the ranges, traders in Jamieson became concerned about losing trade to these new businesses. They were concerned that the opening of new entry and exit routes from the south would disrupt existing trade from Jamieson. In July 1862 a group of storekeepers at Jamieson held a public meeting to establish a Jamieson Prospecting Association, and the following month a deputation visited the Chief Secretary in Melbourne to petition for more support for the mining region, including the establishment of a gold escort, a separate mining division, resident police, and court administration.⁹⁴ Further meetings were held in November.⁹⁵ The following year a public meeting in Woods Point gathered the signatures of around three hundred inhabitants petitioning for similar government infrastructure to support mining and business activity.⁹⁶ As with the earlier Jamieson meetings, reports of the Woods Point meeting suggest that those leading the campaign were predominantly storekeepers and other business owners in the township. However, in Lloyd's transcription of this petition we can see that a number of the signatories were miners.⁹⁷

The accounts of the Jamieson Prospecting Association and the Woods Point petition again highlight that shared interests, and not simply geographic location, helped to make community on the goldfields. They show that some miners may have belonged to more than one community: a community of traders as well as a community of miners. They also highlight the relationship between voluntary civic activity and the role of the state in

⁹⁴ *Argus*, 2 July 1862, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5717585>; *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 1 July 1862, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112900884>; *Age*, 16 August 1862, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155010850>.

⁹⁵ *Argus*, 21 November 1862, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6481314>.

⁹⁶ *Argus*, 28 April 1863, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6485348>.

⁹⁷ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 46. Lloyd has not cited the source of this petition, and my research has not located the original, though it is most likely held by Public Record Office Victoria. Among the 29 miners listed on the petition were brothers-in-law Thomas Cox and James Rae. Their wives, sisters Catherine and Jessie McLaren are referred to later in this thesis.

supporting community making. The absence of state infrastructure such as police and courts helped to initiate the collective action of some miner and traders, but at the same time these structures were needed to support the kind of civic community the inhabitants were seeking to make. However, these early examples of voluntary collective action on the Upper Goulburn goldfields again reinforce the gendered nature of community making; the needs of women and families on the diggings are not publicly addressed.

2.5 Conclusion

Social theories upon which the concept of community is based have emphasised a shared geographic locality as one of the characteristics that shape community. Although later scholarship has challenged this view, in this chapter we can see that the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn, such as the geology, topography, and climate delayed the transition from alluvial to quartz mining activity. Some miners did not adapt well to the conditions, or to the inconsistent returns and wages, while others focused on developing their mines, finding ways around the difficulties of accessing supplies and transporting gold. Eventually these difficulties would prompt some miners and storekeepers to campaign publicly for better support for mining activity in the region, demonstrating a shift from focusing on their individual needs to a more collective interest in the region. While this might suggest that some inhabitants had a sense of belonging to a community on the goldfields, the focus on mining activity suggests that it was a masculine idea of community, producing a masculine form of civil society. As we shall see in the next chapter, we have to look at other sources to explore how women adapted to the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn, and the ways in which they made community on the early goldfields.

Chapter 3: 'Hotel keepers and bar maids galore': Women and Community Formation on the Early Upper Goulburn Goldfields, 1860-1863

3.1 Introduction

In the unpublished memoirs she wrote for her family in the early 1900s Eliza Whitelaw recalled a frightening journey from Melbourne to join her husband, John in Woods Point.¹ After describing an uncomfortable two-day coach journey from Melbourne to Jamieson, on the junction of the Jamieson and Goulburn rivers, Eliza recalled that as their coach approached the settlement she became concerned about the steep cliff on one side of the track and the sheer drop to the river on the other. One passenger, Mrs Ford, marvelled at how beautiful the river looked, but Eliza was too frightened to look and turned her face to the cliff. Earlier Mrs Ford had attempted to comfort Eliza by telling her that if the coach did slip off the track 'we should know nothing about it for we should be dead before we got to the bottom.' Eliza's recollection suggests that her travelling companion was not as perturbed by the journey as she was, but perhaps Mrs Ford was trying in a roundabout way to comfort herself as much as Eliza. We know from miners' accounts of the early Upper Goulburn goldfields that the steep terrain was difficult to traverse on foot and on horseback, and that some miners were unprepared for the challenging conditions. However, the impact these conditions had on the number of women and families on the early goldfields is rarely reflected upon in these men's accounts. Eliza Whitelaw's recollections provide us with a glimpse of how women experienced the journey, allowing us to explore how the physical characteristics of the Upper Goulburn might have influenced the gender imbalance on the early goldfields.

The following day Eliza rode from Jamieson to Woods Point, accompanied by her husband, but found it difficult to control the small horse on the steep and windy track. More than once she feared she would fall off. When her horse stopped too close to the edge of the track Eliza could see the remains of several pack horses which had slipped off the track and into the river below. Eliza thought for a moment she was about to join them, but her horse

¹ Eliza Whitelaw, *Reminiscences*, 1900. [manuscript]., State Library of Victoria, no page number.

soon stepped away from the edge and resumed its journey. The last obstacle — a section of the track known as Barrett's Spur a few kilometres north of Woods Point — was too steep to ride so Eliza dismounted and walked. Concluding her account of the journey, Eliza wrote that she was one of the 'first' ladies to arrive in Woods Point but added that before her there had been 'hotel keepers and bar maids galore'.² Eliza's suggestion that she, and other married women, were of a different social status than women supplying alcohol and entertainment on the early goldfields offers us a glimpse of the making of feminine community on the goldfields, and how this was as variable as masculine community on the early diggings.

Eliza Whitelaw's recollection of her journey to Woods Point in 1864-65 is rare. In my research I found only one other first-hand account by a woman who travelled to the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the 1860s, and no first-hand accounts by women on the goldfields in the initial phase of mining activity.³ This differs to accounts of the Victorian gold rushes in the 1850s. Some scholars have noted that women's writings on the Victorian goldfields are fragmentary, or of questionable veracity in the case of several notable published accounts.⁴ Nonetheless, scholars have had access to a larger collection of women's accounts of the central and north-east Victorian gold rushes in the 1850s — published and unpublished — than those of the Upper Goulburn goldfields. Explanations for the paucity of women's accounts is beyond the scope of this study, but we might speculate that such gaps have contributed to the geographic focus on the central Victorian goldfields in both traditional, and more recent goldfield scholarship.

² Eliza Whitelaw, "Journal," (unpublished transcript, 2016), 48. Private Collection.

³ Isabella Webster to friends, 2 June 1865. William Edwin Hooker papers, 1857-1860, MLMSS 1820, State Library of New South Wales.

⁴ Margaret Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grog-seller," 225-249. Anderson includes the published works of Ellen Clacy, Emily Skinner, and Elizabeth Ramsay-Laye, as well as the unpublished accounts of Lucy Hart, Sarah Davenport and Martha Clendinning. Scholars have long debated the personal circumstances and authenticity of Ellen Clacy's work, with Susan Priestley recently concluding that Clacy *did* visit the goldfields but may have omitted or altered some of the details of her personal circumstances, see Susan Priestley, "Identifying Ellen Clacy — a Cautionary Tale," *Victorian Historical Journal* 85, no. 1 (June 2014), 126. Likewise, the veracity of Elizabeth Ramsay-Laye's *Social Life and Manners in Australia by a Resident* has also been questioned, but Wright suggests that though the author was probably a Mrs Elizabeth Massey, she *did* visit Victoria, see Wright, *Forgotten Rebels*, 484.

Reading these rare accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields alongside those of the 1850s rushes we can see the familiar tropes of women's (and men's) accounts of the goldfields, namely that they were 'no place for ladies, especially in the early phase of any rush'.⁵ This builds on earlier scholarship on colonial women's writing about 'the bush' which observed how gender shaped perceptions of rural or frontier landscapes in Australia.⁶ Just as this scholarship has highlighted the variety of (mostly middle-class) women's experiences of 'the bush', recent research has suggested that the distinction made between so-called 'camp followers', often barmaids and prostitutes, and respectable married women who arrived later to civilise the diggings is not as straightforward as previously imagined.⁷ Some scholars have drawn on women's writings on the 1850s gold rushes to explore this supposed distinction, and others have used the techniques of archaeology and ethnography.⁸ More recent technological developments that have enhanced access to a wider range of primary sources allows scholars to expand this interpretation of women's experiences of the early gold rushes.⁹ If we apply this methodology to a later — and less familiar — goldrush such as the Upper Goulburn goldfields we can see that though there was a significant gender imbalance in the initial phase of mining activity there is also evidence of women married to miners, packers, and storekeepers as well as 'hotel keepers and bar maids' who had been on the diggings since the early rushes. Exploring why these women became part of the initial phase of mining activity despite concerns about the rugged landscape, basic living conditions, and the excesses of men's behaviour adds a broader spectrum of voices to the brief accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields provided by educated, middle class women such as Eliza Whitelaw.

This chapter extends the discussion of locality, gender and community formation on the early Upper Goulburn goldfields by exploring the relationship between the physical

⁵ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogger," 239.

⁶ Lucy Frost, *No Place for a Nervous Lady: Voices from the Australian Bush* (Melbourne: McPhee Gribble/Penguin Books, 1984), 18.

⁷ Ildikó Dömötör, "British Gentlewomen's Perception of the Australian Bush," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 12, no. 1-2 (Fall, 2006), 94, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41274350>. Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogger," 226-243; Wickham, *Women of the Diggings*, 36.

⁸ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogger," 225-249, Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 5-10.

⁹ Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*, 15. Bishop's focus is on how these sources have enhanced scholarship on colonial business women, but as this thesis argues, the same techniques can be applied to a range of questions about women's experiences, including on the gold rushes.

characteristics of the region and women's presence on the early diggings. In the first half of the chapter I draw on quantitative sources to examine the extent of the gender imbalance on the early diggings, before considering some of the reasons why women might have delayed their settlement on the goldfields. In the second half I complicate the idea of a masculine community centred on mining activity by exploring the activities of some of the married women who lived on the early diggings. Drawing on a number of historical studies on the interaction between locality, gender and community, I investigate how conditions on the early diggings affected the making of a *feminine* community located in time and place. How might this have differed from the community which, as we shall see later in this thesis, Eliza Whitelaw suggests was created by the arrival of respectable, married women?

3.2 Accounting for Women on the Early Upper Goulburn Diggings

With four censuses undertaken in Victoria between 1851 and 1861, scholars of the 1850s gold rushes have been able to analyse the changing demographics of the goldfields. They show that while there was a significant gender imbalance in the early 1850s, by the end of the decade the number of single women in the colony had increased and this led to widespread family formation.¹⁰ As Bate notes, by 1861 there were 56 women to 100 men on the goldfields, while the gender imbalance for the colony was 70 women to 100 men.¹¹ The Victorian censuses demonstrate that women and families were becoming a larger proportion of the goldfields population, but were these demographic changes evident in later gold rushes? In her analysis of the population of the Dolly's Creek diggings between Geelong and Ballarat, which were established around the same time as the Upper Goulburn goldfields, Lawrence argued that '[w]omen and children made up half the population on at least one diggings and there is no reason to expect that that was not case elsewhere.'¹²

¹⁰ Weston Bate, *Victorian Gold Rushes* (Fitzroy: McPhee Gribble Publishers Pty Ltd, 1988), 29; Fahey, "Peopling the Victorian Goldfields," 149. Victorian census returns quoted by Serle note that the population increased from 77,345 in 1851 (excluding Aborigines) to 540,322 in 1861. Over this time the female population (excluding Aboriginal women) increased from 31,143 in 1851 to 211,671 in 1861, see Serle, *The Golden Age*, 382.

¹¹ Bate, *Victorian Gold Rushes*, 29.

¹² Lawrence, "Gender and Community Structure on Australian Goldfields," 54.



Fig. 3.1: Excerpt of Victorian census map preserved in Chief Secretary's correspondence on the Jamieson-Jordan goldfields.

PROV, VPRS 1189/P0, Unit 667, 62/7701 - 62/8785; Reproduced with permission of the Keeper of Public Records.

The map was later annotated (in blue) to indicate the gold workings on the Jamieson-Jordan goldfields, ca.1862.

On the Upper Goulburn goldfields the population rose and fell between 1861 and the next available census in 1871, and therefore the pattern of population growth in response to mining activity is not as well documented as on the 1850s goldfields. However, if we examine the 1861 census we are able to extract some details of the population on the early diggings located between Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek. On the Jamieson goldworkings in April 1861 the population was reported at 325 people, 67 (20 per cent) of whom were female.¹³ If we examine the age range of the female population, together with the figures for males and females under the age of 15, we find that women and children made up 28 per cent of the population recorded at Jamieson. [Table 7] On the Upper Goulburn and Big

¹³ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XVII: Ages of the People," http://hccda.adn.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_02-11_69.

River gold diggings (which also included figures for the Jerusalem Creek diggings west of the Big River) women and children under the age of 15 made up only 16 per cent of the population.¹⁴ [Table 8] When the Victorian census was undertaken in April 1861 mining activity in the region was concentrated on the Big River and Gaffneys Creek; the Woods Point and Jordan discoveries were yet to come. Difficulties in accessing the region are likely to have meant that not all of the people on the diggings at this time were recorded. Nonetheless, comparing these figures to the percentage of women and children under the age of 15 in the Victorian mining districts (46 per cent), and in the colony overall (55 per cent), reveals that the gender imbalance at Jamieson and the Upper Goulburn and Big River diggings was significantly higher than average, and not typical of the population of the Dolly's Creek goldfield that Lawrence studied.¹⁵

How do we then account for the gender imbalance on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in this period? Eliza Whitelaw's recollections suggest that women experienced the journey to the goldfields differently to men. In separate studies of women's experiences on the goldfields drawing on literary and archaeological sources, as well as in other historical studies of locality, gender and community, gender is shown to influence how men and women interact with particular spaces within localities.¹⁶ As Brookes, Cooper and Law note in their study of gender in the southern suburbs of Dunedin between 1890 and 1939, space 'was used and occupied in ways that were shaped by the dominant understandings of gender at the time; but gender might also be performed differently according to specific sites.'¹⁷ In her earlier study, Lawrence also observed similar distinctions in the uses of space on the Dolly's Creek diggings.¹⁸ Sometimes men and women had separate spaces based on gendered activities and norms — women shopping and men attending public meetings in the hotels — and at other times they shared the same spaces but used them in different ways.¹⁹ Later in this

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XI: Ages of the People, The Colonies, Municipalities, Mining Districts – Proportions of the Sexes," http://hccda.adu.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_02-11_11.

¹⁶ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grog-seller," 239; Lawrence *Dolly's Creek*, 58-59. Brookes, Cooper, and Law, "Situating Gender," 2; Wilson, "Community and Gender in Victorian Auckland," 27.

¹⁷ Brookes, Cooper, and Law, "Situating Gender," 11.

¹⁸ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 58-59.

¹⁹ Ibid., 59.

thesis we will explore how this interaction between locality and gender helped to make community in the boom period on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, but our concern in this chapter is with the gender imbalance on the early goldfields. In the next section, which draws on women's written accounts of the goldfields, and a close reading of archival sources, we can see that though men and women navigated some of the same spaces on the goldfields, women responded in different ways to the physical hardships of these spaces.

3.3 Getting to the Diggings

Men's and women's accounts of the 1850s gold rushes often referred to the poor condition of the roads to the diggings. William Howitt described numerous encounters with swamps, pot-holes, stones, and tree trunks on the roads out of Melbourne.²⁰ Travelling to the goldfields on top of a loaded dray, Ellen Clacy observed near Mount Macedon, on the road to the goldfields north of Melbourne, that 'no *distinct* road is ever cut out, but the whole country is cut up into innumerable tracks by the carts and drays, and which are awfully bewildering to the new-comer as they run here and there, now crossing a swamp, now a rocky place, here a creek, there a hillock...'²¹ [Fig. 3.2] Emily Skinner's recollection of her journey by coach to the Ovens goldfields in north-east Victoria was that the 'steep and stony' country from Wangaratta was somewhat easier to travel than the 'flat boggy land' earlier in the journey.²² This sentiment was probably shared by Mrs Campbell, who dwelt on the numerous obstacles she and her family encountered traversing a similar route to the Ovens goldfields, also by coach, but escorted by mounted troopers.²³ Although men and women traversed the same boggy, pot-holed roads to reach the goldfields, these accounts highlight that some women used different modes of transport to men in order to reach the goldfields. As we shall see later in this chapter, one of the reasons for this distinction was

²⁰ William Howitt, *Land, Labour, and Gold: Two Years in Victoria: with Visits to Sydney and Van Diemen's Land, Volume I and II, 1855*. facsimile ed. (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1972), 70-73, 298-299.

²¹ Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53*, 36-37.

²² Emily Skinner and Edward Duyker. *A Woman on the Goldfields: Recollections of Emily Skinner, 1854-1878* / Edited by Edward Duyker. Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1995, 46.

²³ Mrs A. Campbell, *Rough and smooth: or, Ho for an Australian gold field* (Quebec: Hunter Rose & Co, 1865), 61-66.

probably the differences in men's and women's clothing. While men dressed in moleskin trousers and boots could navigate the muddy pot-holed tracks, albeit with some difficulty, women dressed in voluminous skirts, sometimes with a crinoline frame underneath, found it far more uncomfortable to walk or ride to the goldfields, hence their preference to travel by coach.



Fig. 3.2: Gill, Samuel Thomas. The Rush to the Ballarat Goldfields in 1854, 1872.

State Library of Victoria.

In the centre of this illustration Gill has included a woman seated on top of a wagon, while two women rest on the side of the road. One of these women appears to be nursing an infant.

By the 1860s routes between the central Victorian goldfields were more established.²⁴ However, on the Upper Goulburn there were no tracks into the mountains beyond the pastoral stations, known to Europeans at least, until the gold discoveries in the late 1850s and 1860s. Studying men's accounts of the 1860 rush to Gaffneys Creek we have seen how the rugged terrain and alpine climate made it difficult to reach the diggings and access

²⁴ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 28-29.

supplies, but these accounts rarely reflect on the impact these conditions had on the presence of women and families.

One exception is an account published in the *Argus* under the name of 'Veritas' describing a journey from Longwood to the Jordan diggings, south of Woods Point, in July 1862.²⁵ Accompanying a 'respectable digger, Mr McPherson' and his wife to Gaffneys Creek, 'Veritas' praised Mrs McPherson for the admirable way in which she coped with the rough track and continuous rain, walking several sections of the 'frightful' track when it was too dangerous to ride. He also observed another 'respectable couple' who camped out on the road between Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek with 'the husband carrying a heavy swag, and the woman a fine boy over twelve months old.'²⁶ As with accounts of the routes to the goldfields in the 1850s, this account tells us that men and women travelled the same tracks to reach the Upper Goulburn goldfields. However, in contrast to the accounts of Clacy, Skinner, and Campbell, the steep and rugged terrain between Jamieson and the goldfields further south meant that women were required to ride or walk, rather than travel by coach or dray. These differences in women's modes of travel also highlight the interplay between gender and distinctive localities; the absence of coach travel from Jamieson meant that it was probably more uncomfortable, and less respectable, to travel to the Upper Goulburn goldfields. By drawing attention to the respectable status of these women, 'Veritas' also suggests that values and beliefs associated with class — respectability being commonly associated (but not exclusively) with the middle classes — also shaped how men and women interacted with space.

We may not know whether these women regarded their experience of the journey as 'Veritas' did. However, Eliza Whitelaw's later reminiscences provide us with further insight into the discomfort women might have experienced during the crowded, jolting coach journey, as well as concerns for their safety riding over the steep and rugged terrain to Woods Point. On the route via Jamieson small children, and women who could not ride (or were only used to riding side saddle) often travelled in panniers (baskets) strapped on either

²⁵ *Argus*, 16 July 1862, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5718317>; *Argus*, 9 August 1862, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5719906>.

²⁶ *Argus*, 9 August 1862, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5719906>.

side of a pack horse. Eliza's account suggests that this mode of travel was also dangerous, as she noted how a baby travelling in this manner died after a rope cut through its throat.²⁷ Another woman's account, published in a Hamilton newspaper in 1864, described how the packer employed to take her laughed at her intention to ride from Jamieson to Woods Point, and insisted his passenger be strapped onto the horse as she 'had not been used to this kind of riding'.²⁸ Adding to the discomfort of the journey was the crinoline she was wearing — a fashionable style of dress in this period that used a hooped frame in place of multiple petticoats to create the effect of a full skirt. Having experienced the journey the unknown author of this account advised her readers that it would be more comfortable for women to remove the frame for travel.²⁹ When illustrator James Waltham Curtis travelled to Woods Point almost two decades later, in 1881, he was informed that panniers were still used to transport 'servant maids and other young ladies whose equestrian abilities were not of a high order'.³⁰ His illustration 'Nervous Travell' published in the *Illustrated Australian News* captures something of the fear that women such as Eliza Whitelaw felt on the journey Point.³¹ [Fig. 3.3] Eliza was fortunate to reach Woods Point without injury. In October 1864 the *Mountaineer* newspaper reported that the horse ridden by another woman, a Mrs Thomas Badger, fell on her when one of its feet got caught between two tree stumps as they travelled down Barrett's Spur.³² Fortunately, Mrs Badger was not seriously injured but the newspaper noted that such accidents were a regular occurrence.

²⁷ Whitelaw, "Journal," 49.

²⁸ *Hamilton Spectator and Grange District Advertiser*, 16 July 1864, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article194724150>.

²⁹ An excellent description of the crinoline is featured in the *Gold Rush: 20 Objects, 20 Stories* exhibition held at the Old Treasury Building, Melbourne in 2018. See '1850s Day Dress', Gold Treasury Museum <http://www.oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/1850s-day-dress/>, accessed 7 September 2018. See also Marion Fletcher, *Costume in Australia 1788-1901* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1984), 97, 114-115.

³⁰ *Illustrated Australian News*, 29 January 1881, 10. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page5731222>.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 25, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page5731237>.

³² *Mountaineer*, 24 October 1864.



PACKING TO WOOD'S POINT - "NERVOUS TRAVELL"

Fig. 3.3. Appleton, Frederick, and James Waltham Curtis, *Packing to Woods Point - Nervous Travell* [i.e. Travel], 1881.

State Library of Victoria.

When the Yarra Track was opened to wheeled traffic in 1865 the *Mountaineer* newspaper celebrated the news that more wives and families would now be able to settle in Woods Point and on the surrounding goldfields. Edited by Eliza Whitelaw's husband John, the newspaper was keen to promote the effects of domesticity on the goldfields and, as we shall see in the next chapter, the news of the coach's arrival was one of several stories drawing attention to the arrival of women and families in the township.³³ However, the

³³ *Mountaineer*, 24 February 1865.

newspaper's understated description of the journey, which suggested that passengers experienced 'no more fatigue than used to be felt in the old days when coaching from Melbourne to Sandhurst' is not supported by the account of one woman, Isabella Webster, who travelled to Woods Point via this route in June 1865.³⁴ A map of the track prepared a few months later may give us some indication of the steep terrain, but Isabella Webster's first-hand account of the journey fills it in with vivid detail of the landscape and climate.

[Fig. 3.4]

According to her letter dated 2 June 1865, Isabella Webster's 118 mile (189 kilometre) journey from Melbourne via Lilydale, Healesville and the Black Spur took fourteen days due to the frequent delays caused by heavy rain, mud and snow. At one stage the passengers were forced to get out and walk while the driver took the empty coach along another route to avoid the large stones that had earlier threatened to overturn the coach and its passengers. The journey was frequently delayed by snow and the need to change horses fatigued by the journey. The final stage of the journey — from Matlock to Woods Point — was deemed unsafe for the coach, so Isabella and her fellow passengers rode. Unlike Eliza Whitelaw, Isabella found that she enjoyed the ride. Nonetheless after being told that she and her female passengers were 'the first ladies who had ever come that way', she added that 'I am sure till the roads are better we had better be the last.'³⁵

³⁴ Webster, 2 June 1865. Webster's account has been transcribed into an exercise book that forms part of Hooker's papers. My attempts at identifying a connection between Webster and Hooker have failed to uncover who Isabella was, or why the letter was transcribed. Nonetheless, Isabella's description of the challenging journey to Woods Point is vivid and detailed enough to set aside questions about the letter's provenance.

³⁵ Ibid.



Fig. 3.4: Noone, John, and J.A. Panton. Sketch Map, Upper Yarra Waters and New Bridle Track to Woods Point, from Lillydale to Traveller's Rest on Great Mountain Road, 1865. 1872.
State Library of Victoria.

Conditions like these would surely have deterred any women from making the perilous journey, but Eliza Whitelaw's and Isabella Webster's accounts suggest that the physical hardships may have been more off putting for some women than others. In drawing a distinction between themselves and women whom they regarded of a lower social status who had arrived in this initial phase, Eliza and Isabella suggest that these physical hardships challenged their respectability. As the educated daughter of an English pottery manufacturer Eliza identified as a respectable middle-class woman despite the misfortunes she and her family had encountered since arriving in Australia in 1841, as discussed later in this thesis. While Isabella's background is unknown, the details in her letter suggest that she was of a similar status.

The experiences of both women were probably shaped by gender distinctions identified by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall in their study of the English middle classes in the eighteenth and nineteenth century.³⁶ In one example, the authors note how gender distinctions in men's and women's activities began to affect women's physical mobility. Wheeled vehicles became the respectable mode of transport for women, rather than walking or riding long distances; the latter 'placed modesty in question; it was suitable only for the most backward farmers' wives.'³⁷ Ensuring single women were accompanied by a male relative or older woman when travelling by public coach, and finding separate accommodation for men and women on long journeys to avoid 'sexual and social advances' were standards that Eliza and Isabella would have been familiar with.³⁸ While these social constraints did not deter all respectable women from travelling to the goldfields, some women's accounts in the 1850s nevertheless acknowledge the standards they were negotiating in this unfamiliar environment. As Anderson notes, women such as Ellen Clacy and others 'were careful to preserve their reputations as ladies, even when they found themselves to be engaged in (or actively sought out) unusual occupations'.³⁹ Women, more so than men, also prefaced their accounts by self-deprecatingly 'justifying the undertaking'.⁴⁰ Eliza Whitelaw and Isabella Webster similarly sought to preserve their reputation. Given that they had to travel through much of this rugged country on horseback or on foot, the Upper Goulburn goldfields may have been a more challenging goldfield for respectable middle-class women to navigate than others. These accounts of the physical hardships of the journey to the goldfields suggest that the kinds of community men and women would go on to make on the Upper Goulburn goldfields were not only shaped by locality and gender, but also by values and beliefs associated with class.

³⁶ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 1987), 403.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 404.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogseller," 239.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

3.4 Finding Accommodation



Fig. 3.5: Ham, Thomas, and D. Tulloch. Golden Point, Ballarat, 1851.
State Library of Victoria.

Among the striking images of the Victorian goldfields in the early 1850s are the sprawling ‘tent cities’ of Bendigo and Mount Alexander [Fig. 3.5], as well as more intimate studies of the timber and canvas dwellings occupied by miners.⁴¹ Because of the transient nature of the early diggings — when the rumour of a new rush meant packing up quickly and travelling light, and never being certain if a claim might be sufficient to settle — the style of accommodation on the diggings was simple and based on materials that were readily available.⁴² Goodman writes that some contemporary observers regarded this transience, and the destruction of the landscape, as further evidence of the threatening masculinity of

⁴¹ Henry Winkles, “Interior of a digger’s tent [picture]”, ca. 1853, National Library of Australia. The library holds a collection of 80 of Winkles’ artworks, which include sketches of the gold diggings, exterior and interior sketches of huts and tents, and landscape studies, mostly around central Victoria in 1853.

⁴² Lawrence, *Dolly’s Creek*, 112-113.

the goldfields.⁴³ Drawing on the separate, but complementary ideologies of domesticity and agrarianism reformers argued that women and families were necessary to transform these transient diggings into rural settlements.⁴⁴ In the view of some contemporary observers the early diggings were regarded as 'no place for a lady', and yet at the same time respectable married women and families were regarded as a necessary presence to encourage independent, wealth-seeking diggers to adopt a more rural lifestyle.⁴⁵ Here we see something of later classical theories of community that suggested that women's domestic activities were necessary to a rural, kinship based ideal of community. However, unlike this latter ideal inspired by static, rural communities that had developed over generations, the goldfields were a new and disturbingly industrial landscape populated by diverse individuals with various kinship and ethnic ties.

What did it take to create a 'home' on the goldfields, and were women prepared to tackle such a challenge in the initial phase of mining activity? Some of the images of the goldfields show women in domestic roles, such as the studies of family life made by Samuel Thomas Gill. [Fig. 3.6] Accounts of women such as Ellen Clacy, Martha Clendinning, Emily Skinner, and Mrs Campbell also show that some women were prepared to make a home on the goldfields, be it a tent or more substantial hut, creating domestic spaces as their circumstances allowed.⁴⁶ As Anderson suggests, these — and other — accounts of the goldfields are by resourceful, determined women who did not want to be 'left behind in Melbourne.'⁴⁷ Other women may have had little choice in whether or not they came to the goldfields.⁴⁸ Individual circumstances could also determine the presence or absence of women on the early goldfields.

⁴³ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 160-161.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 153.

⁴⁶ Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings of Australia in 1852-53*, 56, Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 154. Martha Clendinning is quoted in Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogseller," 230; Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 38; Campbell, *Rough and smooth*, 80, 84-85.

⁴⁷ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogseller," 239.

⁴⁸ Goodman quotes the furious letter of Janet Kincaid whose husband was on the Maryborough goldfields while she and their family remained in Scotland, Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 150-151.



Fig. 3.6: Gill, Samuel Thomas. Digger's hut, Canvas and Bark, 1852.
State Library of Victoria.

Newspaper accounts and official records provide us with some clues as to where and how the population were living, and this includes a small number of women. The rugged topography of the region meant that there was little space for the extensive 'tent cities' of the central Victorian goldfields. The most extensive flat land on the Upper Goulburn goldfields was at Jamieson. During the 1860 rush some miners and officials observed a public-house, a number of stores, and about nine huts occupied by the wives of miners working elsewhere on the diggings. In August Detective John Westerdale from Kilmore was less than impressed by the condition of the public-house, which he described as 'a rough construction of slabs and bark, with the roof partly off, and in a most filthy state inside; accommodation for horses is also very bad, not having either hay or straw'.⁴⁹ About a week earlier a correspondent for the *Ovens Constitution* was more diplomatic, describing it as 'a regular, old-fashioned rough slab public-house', adding that it was run by 'a very obliging

⁴⁹ *Argus*, 11 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687730>.

host and hostess'.⁵⁰ This correspondent also observed a number of miners' tents which the occupants were using to camp in on their way to and from Gaffneys Creek.

At Gaffneys Creek the *Ovens Constitution* correspondent observed that the huts on the diggings were more comfortable and substantial than those they had observed on other goldfields. On the 1850s goldfields signs of comfort were viewed as evidence of the presence of women, but this correspondent declared that there were 'no women' on the diggings.⁵¹ However, a police report a few months later demonstrates the presence of at least one woman on the diggings during the 1860 rush. In October 1860 miner Thomas Smith and a mate were attempting to fell a tree alongside Raspberry Creek, when the tree came down on Smith's tent and killed his wife, Charlotte.⁵² We know little of Thomas and Charlotte's circumstances other than the sparing details reported by Constable John Duggan, who travelled the 62 miles (100 kilometres) from Mansfield to investigate when a magistrate could not be obtained. According to Duggan's report Charlotte was twenty-five, and had been married to Thomas, with whom she was said to be 'on good terms', for seven years.⁵³ Charlotte's presence on the Gaffneys Creek diggings shows that the basic accommodation had not deterred her from joining her husband, but the circumstances of her death help explain why other wives and families might not have made the same decision in this perilous phase of mining activity.

Six months later, when the 1861 census was conducted, some of the population on the Upper Goulburn goldfields were still living in tents. However, the majority were living in more solid constructions. According to the data gathered, the number of dwellings in Jamieson was reported to be 55, with 66 per cent of the population living in a wood, iron or slab construction, and 25 per cent living in tents.⁵⁴ In comparison, there were 82 dwellings recorded on the Upper Goulburn and Big River gold workings (the latter is likely to have

⁵⁰ *Age*, 7 August 1860, 5-6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154842966>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 92, Item 1860/271 Female, Charlotte Smith, 23 October 1860.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive*, *Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XXXVIII: The Murray Pastoral District: Showing the Population of the Principal Places &c," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-02_124.

included the supply settlement of Darlingford and Enochs Point on the Big River). The percentage of those living in wood, iron, or slab constructions compared to tents was similar: 64 per cent to 27 per cent. Half of the dwellings at Jamieson consisted of one room, while on the Upper Goulburn and Big River 52 of the 82 dwellings (or 63 per cent) were one room. While individual household census returns have not survived, making it impossible for us to identify the occupants of individual households and how they were living, population statistics suggest that despite these more solid constructions, women and families were still a minority on the early diggings.⁵⁵

For some women and families, difficulties in obtaining the right to occupy their land may have been a factor in their decision about whether to settle in this initial phase of mining activity. Land ownership had been a notable issue on the 1850s goldfields. However, as Fahey and Mayne point out, the introduction of the miner's right (a licence to mine) following the Eureka rebellion was a significant improvement, giving miners 'a licence to occupy crown land at a nominal rent, and the eventual right to ownership of improvements placed on this block.'⁵⁶ Residence areas gave miners a further incentive to settle their families on the goldfields. However, the absence of any court infrastructure or local mining surveyor on the early Upper Goulburn diggings from which to obtain a miner's right made it more difficult for families hoping to settle on these goldfields. When Warden Butler visited Jamieson in August 1860 he reported that miners were anxious to get miner's rights, and that 'the storekeeper and women residing at Jamieson's Flat have been warned by the Commissioner of Crown Lands to take out occupation licences, on pain of being fined or removed from the land.'⁵⁷ Examining the surviving records from the Mansfield Court of Petty Sessions reveals that this court, located almost forty kilometres away on rough tracks, appears to have issued some liquor licences but it is not clear if miner's rights could also be obtained here.⁵⁸ When Jamieson residents petitioned the Chief Secretary in July 1862 for

⁵⁵ Terence H. Hull notes that the Victorian Government destroyed the existing census returns in 1891 in response to privacy concerns about how the data on individuals might be used in future. See Terence H. Hull, "The Strange History and Problematic Future of the Australian Census," *Journal of Population Research* 24, no. 1 (2007), 4-5.

⁵⁶ Fahey and Mayne, "All that Glitters," 38.

⁵⁷ *Argus*, 27 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5688650>.

⁵⁸ PROV, VPRS 8633/P1, Unit 1, Court of Petty Sessions Cause List Books. Few records detailing the allocation of miner's rights on most Victorian goldfields in this period survive. However, some individual miner's rights from

administrative support they noted that some miners were forced to travel to Kilmore to obtain miner's rights and business licences, and even further to Beechworth to resolve mining disputes.⁵⁹ We do not know if any of the wives Warden Butler observed at Jamieson took out the recommended occupation licences, but they would have found it difficult to travel to Mansfield or Kilmore given the distances involved, the absence of their husbands working on the goldfields further south, and their caring responsibilities.

When Eliza Whitelaw arrived in Woods Point in late 1864, the sale of Crown land had created some sense of permanence in the township, but in Eliza's view the quality of construction did not instil confidence. Her new home in Woods Point was a three-room dwelling, consisting of a bedroom, sitting room, and kitchen, on the edge of a steep bank overlooking the Goulburn River and was surrounded by other buildings 'of a flimsy nature'.⁶⁰ Although a more substantial dwelling than what Emily Skinner and Mrs Campbell initially occupied, this house probably differed to the Gisborne farm she had just left where there had been sufficient room for her to offer an 'English education' and accommodation for young ladies.⁶¹ Eliza's recollections contradict some of the contemporary observations of the early diggings, made a few years prior to her arrival, that noted that the dwellings appeared to be sturdier and more comfortable than those on other diggings in the initial phase of mining activity.⁶² Eliza may not have been familiar with the living conditions on most goldfields prior to her arrival in Woods Point, having not joined John on his gold seeking adventures in the 1850s, but a woman's impression of comfort was probably different to that of men travelling to the diggings without wives and families.

This perspective is also evident in Isabella Webster's response to the sleeping arrangements provided in the accommodation houses she and her fellow passengers stayed in along the Yarra Track. The six women (including Isabella) and an unnamed number of children mostly

later periods have been collected by museums, including a miner's right in the Museums Victoria collection issued to Ralph Hogarth at Jamieson in 1865 [Museums Victoria Collections <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/1308713>, accessed 13 June 2018]. Others may be found in government records relating to land selection and ownership, including one issued to Richard Mines of Woods Point in 1885, PROV, VPRS 5357/P0, Unit 638, File M42358.

⁵⁹ PROV, VPRS 1189/P0, Unit 667, 62/6195, Jamieson and Jordan Goldfield.

⁶⁰ Eliza Whitelaw, "Journal," 51.

⁶¹ *Argus*, 16 January 1864, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5742558>.

⁶² *Age*, 31 August 1861, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154902328>.

slept together in one room, in stretchers or on the floor. At one establishment known as 'Dirty Dick's' the passengers had to sleep sitting up in front of the fire, or on bags on the floor.⁶³ Although Isabella's sleeping companions were women and children, the proximity of their accommodation to the male patrons of these establishments (some of whom Isabella observed smoking, drinking and reading newspapers on a Sunday) was something of an affront to her social and moral standards.⁶⁴ Isabella's reaction to her accommodation on the newly constructed Yarra Track may help to explain why some women had chosen not to travel along the Jamieson to Woods Point route a few years earlier, when the standard of accommodation would have been much the same.

The challenging terrain and climate of the Upper Goulburn goldfields meant that getting to the diggings and finding accommodation was an uncomfortable and dangerous experience for women (as it was for men). However, though men and women occupied many of the same geographic spaces on the journey to the diggings, gendered norms such as respectability that shaped women's and men's behaviour made it especially difficult for some women. These conditions provide one explanation for why some women may have delayed their settlement on the goldfields or did not come to the region at all. Accounts by women who arrived later reinforce the trope that the early diggings were not suitable for respectable women. Yet, although there was a significant gender imbalance on the early diggings, quantitative sources show that some women and families were present in this initial phase of mining activity. In this next section a close reading of archival sources shows that the interaction and relationships established by these women helped to create opportunities for *feminine* community that were separate to, but nonetheless supported mining activity, while also revealing that *some* women did not fit neatly into either the idea of feminine *or* masculine community.

⁶³ Webster, 2 June 1865.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

3.5 'Keep[ing] the hungry mob quiet'⁶⁵

Among the reports on the Jamieson and the Gaffneys Creek diggings published in mid-1860 was the account of James Smith, a miner from Bendigo.⁶⁶ Smith did not believe that the diggings warranted the bad press they had received, but he acknowledged that things had been difficult due to the cost of supplies, the poor weather, and the rush of miners that had taken up a lot of the ground. At Jamieson he observed that 'flour was so scarce that Mrs. Edwards, the wife of a publican, was doleing [sic] it out in pannicans at a high figure in order to keep the hungry mob quiet.'⁶⁷ Although other correspondents commented upon the business, James Smith was the only one to identify Mrs Edwards by name.⁶⁸ Drawing on civil registration records, court records, and local and family histories we can identify her as Margaret Edwardes née Guinane, an assisted immigrant who arrived in Victoria in 1853 from County Tipperary in Ireland.⁶⁹ Margaret and her husband, George Mortimer Edwardes were married at Sebastopol, one of the settlements on the Woolshed diggings in the Beechworth mining district, in 1856.⁷⁰ By August 1860 they had moved twice — from the Woolshed diggings, to the Dry Creek diggings near Mansfield, and then to Jamieson — and had two children.⁷¹ When she was 'doleing' out flour to hungry miners Margaret was around two months short of giving birth to their third child.⁷²

⁶⁵ *Argus*, 15 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687951>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Age*, 7 August 1860, 5-6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154842966>; *Argus* 11 August 1860, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5687730>.

⁶⁹ Contemporary records note several variants on the spelling of Margaret's maiden name, including Quinane, and Ginnane, though sources on Irish family names note that the original spelling was Kinane; see Michael O'Laughlin, *The Book of Irish Families Great and Small*, Vol. 1, 2002 ed. (Kansas: Irish Genealogical Foundation, 1997), Google Books, 169. In this study I used 'Guinane' as this is the spelling adopted by Margaret's descendants.

⁷⁰ Ted Edwards, *A Pen of Gold* (Scarborough: T. Edwards, c1987), 11. Family histories suggest that the couple met on the voyage to Australia, but this has not been confirmed by contemporary sources.

⁷¹ Elizabeth Mary Edwards, 13 July 1860, Births in the District of Mansfield, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria. Elizabeth's birth registration appears to record her birthplace as 'Milton Diggings', while her father gives his residence as 'Dry Creek, Milton Diggings'. While the Milton Diggings have not been identified, a Dry Creek was part of the Hell's Hole diggings, east of Merton, where gold is said to have been found in 1851, and rushed again in 1860, see Alan Wylie, *Gold in the Shire of Mansfield: An Outline of the Smaller Discoveries*, 2nd ed. (Mansfield: Mansfield Historical Society, 1987), 5.

⁷² Edward Edwardes, 25 September 1860, Births in the District of Mansfield, Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Victoria.

Wright notes in her study of female publicans that hotel-keeping was a respectable occupation for women on the goldfields.⁷³ By providing food and accommodation the activities of female hotel keepers addressed some of the concerns of colonial reformers by bringing some domesticity to the masculine goldfields. Although George was the licensee of the hotel, James Smith's observation of Margaret shows that she too contributed to the business, and was both obliging and astute.⁷⁴ Margaret provided food, and perhaps bedding and laundry as well, adding a domestic touch to a space typically occupied by men. After George died in 1867 Margaret retained the hotel and her activities probably expanded to include other tasks within the business.⁷⁵

Family histories and other records suggest that Margaret's interactions extended beyond the hotel and encompassed kinship connections that reflect the more typically feminine role that women occupied in community making. Research by descendants shows that Margaret's siblings, Elizabeth and John later joined her on the goldfields, and Elizabeth's marriage to another Irish immigrant, John Moffet, expanded their familial network on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.⁷⁶ After Elizabeth later died in childbirth at Donnelly's Creek, another goldfield in the region where the two families had temporarily relocated, Margaret took over the care of her sister's three children.⁷⁷ Back in Jamieson with five children of her own and a hotel to run after George's death, Margaret must have been a strong and determined woman, but family histories do not tell us any more about how she managed. We know from studies of some Victorian and New Zealand goldfields in the 1860s that kinship networks influenced the mobility of some gold seekers, creating opportunities for community making.⁷⁸ Margaret's experience suggests that these kind of kinship networks may have encouraged some women to travel to the Upper Goulburn goldfields in this initial

⁷³ Clare Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia's Female Publicans* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 31.

⁷⁴ PROV, VPRS 8633/P1, Unit 1, Mansfield Court of Petty Sessions Cause List Book. George Edwardes was granted a licence for the Goulburn Hotel at Jamieson Flat in April 1860.

⁷⁵ Lloyd, *Ten Mile Dreaming*, 97; Edwards, *The Pen of Gold*, 13.

⁷⁶ Edwards, *The Pen of Gold*, 12-13; Andrew Kingsley Moffett, "Guinane Family" (unpublished manuscript, 2015), 33-34. Moffett, "Guinane Family," 14.

⁷⁷ Moffett, "Guinane Family," 4.

⁷⁸ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 29, Fraser, "Irish Migration to the West Coast, 1864-1900," 467.

phase of mining activity. However, more permanent, geographically based communities took time to develop because of the mobility of the goldfield population.

While the Edwardes and Moffet families provided accommodation to travellers in Jamieson, the time it took to traverse the narrow windy tracks meant that accommodation was also needed on the route to the diggings. In the 1850s some accommodation had been made for married women and families along the various routes to the central Victorian goldfields, with Ellen Clacy noting that at least one establishment offered separate bedrooms for families.⁷⁹ Many of the early accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields suggest that the hotels and boarding houses were mostly patronised by men. However, there is evidence that at least one establishment provided accommodation to a couple travelling to the diggings. 'Veritas', the packer who accompanied Mr and Mrs McPherson to Gaffneys Creek in 1862 found accommodation for them at Kelly's accommodation house, which was located between Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek in the vicinity of what is now Kevington. Here 'Veritas' was 'agreeably surprised' to find a Mrs Kelly and her family in residence.⁸⁰ The family, he wrote was 'as elegant and orderly as any in the colony [and] Mrs Kelly in the midst of these wilds compares to great advantage with persons who have civilization more within their reach.'⁸¹ We learn nothing more about Mrs Kelly from Veritas's account, but cross-referencing the sparing details he provided with civil registration records and shipping lists identifies Mrs Kelly as Ellen Kelly née Dundon. Like Margaret Edwardes, Ellen was an Irish immigrant who had moved from goldfield to goldfield with her husband and family before arriving at the Upper Goulburn, with some sources suggesting they may have been on the McIvor diggings near Heathcote prior to coming to the Upper Goulburn.⁸² No evidence of kinship connections in the region have been established, but there was at least one Kelly and one Dundon from County Limerick in the region.⁸³ We do not know what

⁷⁹ Clacy, *A Lady's Visit to the Gold Diggings*, 37.

⁸⁰ *Argus* 9 August 1862, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5719906>.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Public Record Office Victoria, *Register of Assisted Immigrants from the United Kingdom* [online database], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. Ellen and Patrick Kelly arrived in Victoria on 15 June 1856 on board the 'Atalanta'. Their fourth child, Patrick was born on the Upper Goulburn in 1864, see Patrick Kelly, 4 April 1864, Births Registered in the District of Jamieson, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

⁸³ Annie Mary Kelly, 11 February 1863, Births Registered in the District of Jamieson, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria. Annie's parents were Thomas Kelly and Mary Spelacy. Mary Ann Jenkinson, 8 September 1863, Births Registered in the District of Jamieson, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages,

standard of accommodation the Kelly's provided but, as with his assessment of Mrs McPherson, 'Veritas' suggests that Mrs Kelly provided a 'civilising' influence on the early goldfields.



Fig 3.7 Photographer unknown. Drummonds Point at Gaffneys Creek, looking north, ca. 1865.

Courtesy Rudi Paoletti.

Close inspection reveals at least two unidentified women on the right side of the street: one in the foreground outside L.J. Lee's store, and the other outside the building at the end of the street.

When 'Veritas' and the McPhersons reached Drummonds Point on the Gaffneys Creek diggings there were at least three hotels where the weary travellers might have found refreshments and accommodation. On the eastern side of Bank Street, the narrow track that ran through Drummonds Point, was the Thistle and Shamrock Hotel, as well as the Albion Hotel. On the opposite side of the street was the Mountain Queen Hotel, also known as Mrs Hutcheson's Hotel. A photo of Drummonds Point in 1865 shows a modest assortment of timber buildings, some featuring a covered verandah and the name of the business fixed above. [Fig. 3.7] One local historian has identified the Albion Hotel, perched

Victoria. Mary's father is not listed, but her mother was Annie Dundon. A John Kelly also ran the Homeward Bound Hotel at Gaffneys Creek, but his birthplace is not known, see John Dixon and Henry Young, *Butler's Wood's Point and Gipps Land General Directory 1866* (Bairnsdale: Kapana Press, 1985), 56.

on the edge of a slope on the eastern side of the track, with the Court House Hotel and Star Hotel opposite. Further up the track on the opposite side of was John Kelly's Homeward Bound Hotel, complete with verandah, sign and kerosene street light.⁸⁴ If we look closely at the figures in the street facing the photographer we can also see that at least two of these figures are women.

Not depicted in this 1865 photograph is Mrs Hutcheson's Hotel. Warden for the Jamieson goldfields, John Cogdon, stayed in the hotel in 1862, but was not impressed by the communal nature of the accommodation.⁸⁵ Later accounts highlight the rough behaviour of some of her patrons. The author of the nostalgic 'Woods Point Revisited' and 'Memories of the Early Days' columns published in the *Gippsland Miners Standard* in 1899 recalled being drawn out of a poker game at 'Mother Hutchinsons' to witness a fight between two men, known as Leicester Bill and Harry the Butcher.⁸⁶ Drummonds Point was then, he wrote, 'a "buck" assemblage where Delilah had not as yet spread her flounces.'⁸⁷ The author's recollection places emphasis on masculine activity — drinking, card playing, and fighting — but the biblical reference to the Samson and Delilah story suggests the unwelcome presence of *some* women on the goldfields. This emphasis on masculine activity is similar to some contemporary accounts of the hard-drinking men of Gaffneys Creek.⁸⁸ In highlighting the masculine nature of the space, the author fails to consider Mrs Hutcheson's presence in this 'buck assemblage'. A close reading of Mrs Hutcheson's activities in contemporary sources reveals a more nuanced interpretation of this 'assemblage' and Mrs Hutcheson's place within it.

⁸⁴ Rudi Paoletti, *Gold for the Taking: A Pictorial History of the Heyday of the Walhalla-Wood's Point Gold Belt: 1860s-1960s* (Langwarrin South: Paoletti's Maps and Videos, 2007), 56.

⁸⁵ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 67. Lloyd has drawn on an unpublished letter Cogdon wrote while at the Junction Inn at Jamieson on 26 August 1862 but provides no further detail on the letter's current location. According to the *Victorian Government Gazette*, John Cogdon was an experienced mining warden, having held official appointments on the central Victorian goldfields since 1854. He was appointed warden and police magistrate of the Jamieson goldfield in March 1862, see *Victorian Government Gazette* 36, 25 March 1862, 530, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>.

⁸⁶ *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 28 February 1899.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ovens Constitution*, 6 February 1861.

In March 1863 a dispute in Mrs Hutcheson's hotel between two miners, John Dunn and John Pritchard led to Pritchard shooting Dunn, who died soon after. At the initial inquest, the questions asked of the witnesses necessarily focused on the circumstances of Dunn's death, but reading their statements other details emerge that highlight the role of women on the early diggings.⁸⁹ Firstly, the dispute began while Pritchard was eating his midday meal. Sharing dinner with him was Mrs Hutcheson (identified here as Hannah Hutcheson), her husband, John, and several other miners. A barmaid and cook were also present. Such a convivial daytime gathering — at least in the beginning — over a home-cooked meal highlights the domesticity that women such as Mrs Hutcheson brought to the goldfields, as Wright, Bishop, and Quick have observed in separate studies.⁹⁰ As Wright notes, it was this kind of 'domesticated backdrop to masculine enterprise and endeavour' that hotels — and their proprietors — provided to miners.⁹¹ Though Mrs Hutcheson may not have been preparing the meals herself she probably oversaw its preparation and other activities involved in providing bed and board to the miners who did not have wives or female relatives with them on the diggings. Secondly, Mrs Hutcheson's statement reveals that she was involved in the claim under dispute, having purchased John Dunn's share for him for which she was to receive the profits.⁹² It is not clear if this detail had anything to do with the dispute between the two men, but it highlights Mrs Hutcheson's ambiguous legal and financial status. While married women's right to property and income was curtailed by the law of coverture, Mrs Hutcheson's purchase of John Dunn's mining claim also suggests that she may have had some financial control over her income.⁹³ John Hutcheson was listed in directories as the proprietor of the hotel, but his wife appears to have been the public face of the business.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ PROV, VPRS 30/P0, Unit 260, 14, Beechworth, The Queen vs John Pritchard, Murder, 1863.

⁹⁰ Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge*; Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*; Quick, "'The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram'".

⁹¹ Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge*, 31.

⁹² PROV, VPRS 30/P0, Unit 260, 14, Beechworth, The Queen vs John Pritchard, Murder, 1863. Deposition of Witness, Hannah Hutcheson, 4 March 1863.

⁹³ For a discussion of how the law of coverture affected women in business, see Catherine Bishop, "When Your Money Is Not Your Own: Coverture and Married Women In Business in Colonial New South Wales," *Law and History Review* 33, no. 1 (February 2015), 182-183, doi:10.1017/S0738248014000510.

⁹⁴ J. Hutchison is listed as the proprietor of a restaurant in Gaffneys Creek in 1866, see Dixon and Young, *Butler's Wood's Point and Gipps Land General Directory, 1866*, 55.

Other records provide evidence of Mrs Hutcheson's reputation within Drummonds Point. Following Dunn's murder, a letter written by a number of Mrs Hutcheson's neighbours and fellow business proprietors was published in the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* in response to an earlier report that had criticised her character and business.⁹⁵ The author of the earlier letter was Patrick O'Neill, whose letter in support of Warden Cogdon (discussed in the previous chapter) had been published a few weeks earlier.⁹⁶ Mrs Hutcheson's neighbours disputed some of O'Neill's claims and concluded their letter with praise for her 'good conduct, industry, and perseverance'.⁹⁷ The public defence of her reputation supports Wright's claim that the activities of female publicans was generally accepted as an extension of their civilising influence on domestic life.⁹⁸ Together with a close reading of the record of Dunn's inquest, these details challenge later recollections of the hotel, and Drummonds Point more generally, that emphasised masculine activity.

We might also view this support for Mrs Hutcheson as a form of collective action in defence of a business community being created by her fellow business proprietors. Perhaps in defending her reputation as a hard-working woman of 'good character' they were also defending themselves and the poor reputation of Drummonds Point advanced by correspondents such as Patrick O'Neil and Warden Cogdon. However, the available evidence of this incident only tells part of the story and we do not know to what extent this developing community extended beyond this group of traders. Was it predominantly a gendered community — with Mrs Hutcheson an exception — or did it also extend to the wives of the other traders who publicly defended her reputation, and were presumably involved in these businesses in some capacity? In such a small settlement there were probably other interactions and relationships between the men and women who ran businesses at Drummonds Point — and elsewhere on the Gaffneys Creek diggings — which may emerge from a close reading of disparate sources. For now, we will leave Mrs Hutcheson and her fellow traders and focus on other married women with a less visible

⁹⁵ *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 9 May 1863, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112893454>.

⁹⁶ The issue in which this letter appeared is missing from the microfilmed copy of the *Ovens and Murray Advertiser* held by the State Library of Victoria.

⁹⁷ *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, 9 May 1863, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112893454>.

⁹⁸ Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge*, 31.

public presence. Exploring these women's activities reveals the makings of a different kind of gendered community.

3.6 Mothers, Midwives and Nurses

Margaret Jolly was one of Hannah Hutcheson's neighbours. Margaret's husband James was the licenced proprietor of the Albion Hotel at Drummonds Point and one of the men who signed the letter defending Hannah Hutcheson's reputation. Like a number of other couples identified in this study, Margaret and James Jolly had immigrated separately to Victoria and married on another goldfield – the Reedy Creek diggings near Kilmore – before arriving on the Upper Goulburn in the early 1860s.⁹⁹ Margaret may have worked alongside James in the hotel, but it is her nursing skills with which we are more concerned. Together with the activities of midwives on the goldfields, these skills provide some evidence of an emerging *feminine* community that supported the population in the initial phase of mining activity.

In December 1862 the Jollys engaged Barbara Ann Campbell, a 17 year-old woman from Melbourne, as a servant in their hotel. About three weeks after she arrived, Barbara was tending the fire in the kitchen when her dress caught alight burning much of her body. A Dr Norris initially attended Barbara but left for Benalla the following day, telling the Jollys that Barbara was not in any 'present danger'.¹⁰⁰ However, as James Jolly stated at the inquest into her death, the young woman suffered for about a week before she died.¹⁰¹ In the absence of a medical professional Margaret Jolly dressed Barbara's burns, and appears to have sat with her and tried to comfort her in the days until she died. Margaret had known the young woman for four years, and no doubt felt responsible for her welfare.¹⁰² Although the jury found that Dr Norris was partly to blame for not properly caring for Barbara, it is worth noting that such absences were not unusual given the rugged country through which doctors had to travel to tend to patients in the remote mining region. In this instance Dr

⁹⁹ James Jolly and Margaret Kedzie, 13 March 1860, Marriages solemnized in the District of Dalhousie, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria; Laurie Davis, personal correspondence, February 2016.

¹⁰⁰ PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 122, File 1862/339.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. In his statement taken on 31 December 1862 James Jolly stated that Barbara 'struggled on in great agony' until her death.

¹⁰² PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 122, File 1862/339, Margaret Jolly, deposition, 31 December 1862.

Norris was travelling to Benalla, around 140 kilometres north of Gaffneys Creek, rather than elsewhere on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. However, the coroner overseeing the inquest, Dr Nash, regularly travelled between Jamieson and the Jordan diggings — a distance of around 40 kilometres — in the course of his duties.¹⁰³ This meant that the nursing care provided by women such as Margaret Jolly was essential — if not always properly acknowledged — in supporting the mining population.

Other details in the inquest highlight some of the ways gender distinctions affected the way men and women shared the same spaces. The questions Margaret Jolly was asked are not recorded in the inquest file, but we can assume from her responses that Margaret was questioned about Barbara's character, a reminder perhaps of the reputation of those 'hotel keepers and bar maids' on the early diggings.¹⁰⁴ However, Margaret replied that Barbara was a very sober girl, and that she had never seen a sign of liquor on her. Margaret also appears to have been questioned about Barbara's appearance, commenting that the girl was wearing hoops under her light muslin dress. This would have been the crinoline that the *Argus* suggested was the cause of the accident in its report of the inquest's verdict.¹⁰⁵ As some scholars note the size and lightweight nature of the frame meant that it was not only impractical for the goldfields, but dangerous near open fires.¹⁰⁶ Barbara's death at Gaffneys Creek was one of a number in Victoria attributed to this fashionable dress.¹⁰⁷ This tragic event suggests that there were circumstances and spaces for women's activities and relationships on the early goldfields; caring relationships which could help to create a feminine community.

¹⁰³ Dr Nash was then based in Jamieson, but had been appointed coroner for the Jordan goldfields in July 1862, *Victorian Government Gazette* 87, 22 July 1862, 1251, <http://gazette.slv.vic.gov.au/>.

¹⁰⁴ PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 122, File 1862/339, Margaret Jolly, deposition, 31 December 1862.

¹⁰⁵ *Argus*, 10 January 1863, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6482566>.

¹⁰⁶ '1850s Day Dress', Gold Treasury Museum, <http://www.oldtreasurybuilding.org.au/1850s-day-dress/>, accessed 7 September 2018.

¹⁰⁷ A brief search of newspaper reports of deaths attributed to crinoline include: *Mount Alexander Mail*, 21 February 1862, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197095247>; *Mount Alexander Mail*, 15 April 1863, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article200380179>, *Kyneton Observer*, 16 February 1865, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article240653656>, *Mount Alexander Mail*, 22 March 1865, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207000810>.

The surviving evidence of Margaret Jolly's activities on the Upper Goulburn goldfields does not include her work as a midwife, a service she continued to provide when she and James moved to New Zealand in the late 1860s.¹⁰⁸ However, twenty-two women can be identified as either a nurse or witness in a sample of 46 births registered in the region between 1860 and 1863.¹⁰⁹ According to this sample, four births (8 per cent) were not attended by a doctor or nurse, eight births (17 per cent) were attended by a doctor (at two of these births there were no nurses or witnesses recorded), and the remaining 34 births (74 per cent) were attended by women acting as nurses or witnesses, with seven women attending multiple births.

Grimshaw and Fahey's trailblazing work on family formation on the goldfields, and that of other scholars who have followed in their footsteps, has shown that studying the reproductive activities of women allows us not only to identify individual women but also to reconstruct some family networks that helped to make community on the goldfields.¹¹⁰ We have already seen how the kinship network established by the marriages of Margaret and Elizabeth Guinane later supported their families on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. One of the more addictive challenges I have had in this microhistory of women on the Upper Goulburn is making connections out of these fragmentary records; the interactions of some of the women in this sample are easier to establish than others.

A number of the women identified in this sample are mentioned in local histories. Mrs Rae, for example, is recorded as the nurse who attended three women — Fanny Jackson née Campbell, Alice Stapley, and Eliza Beckton née Pearson — when they gave birth in Jamieson

¹⁰⁸ Laurie Davis, personal correspondence, 6 February 2016.

¹⁰⁹ This data was obtained by searching the Victorian Pioneer Index, and indexes to Victorian births available via Ancestry for births that could be identified in Jamieson, Gaffneys Creek, and Woods Point between 1860 and 1863, and then purchasing a sample of relevant registrations. With more than one Victorian locality in this period abbreviated to 'Wood' in the indexes it has not been possible to acquire a representative sample of Woods Point births, but a number of births in the township were included on other registrations. It should also be noted that it was not until August 1862 before a local registrar of births, deaths and marriages was appointed at Jamieson. This means that births that took place in the region before this appointment may not have been registered or may have been registered in other nearby localities, such as Mansfield. Births registered outside the region have not been accessed as part of this sample.

¹¹⁰ Grimshaw and Fahey, "Family and Community in Nineteenth-Century Castlemaine," 83-104.

between June and September 1862.¹¹¹ In 1864 Mrs Rae, whom we can identify from other sources as Jessie Rae née McLaren, was living at Woods Point where she gave birth to a daughter attended by midwife Mrs Dean, another well-known midwife in the region.¹¹² The sample of birth registrations show that Mrs Dean had been in Woods Point since at least August 1862 when she attended Johanna Higgins née Delaney and Jane Behrens née Jennings when they gave birth. As with Mrs Rae and Mrs Dean, these women were married to miners: Jane's husband, Dittmer was one of the party that first found quartz gold at Woods Point.¹¹³ There are limits to what this sample of early birth registrations can tell us about the relationships between all of these women, but later in this thesis I show how a close study of these birth registrations alongside other sources can reveal the intricacies of the networks established by the women in Woods Point. For now, I wish to focus on the activities of another woman identified in this sample to show how some of the connections between women evident in these birth registrations may have been established prior to their arrival on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

Of the 46 births in the region sampled between 1860 and 1863 nine were attended by Mrs Morck, and this suggests that her services were valued, or at least easier to obtain. Tracing her activities in more detail reveals that she had followed a similar pattern of migration from Ireland, and from goldfield to goldfield, to other couples on the Upper Goulburn. Mrs Morck, whom we can identify from civil registration records as Margaret Marian Haveley [recorded elsewhere as Haivey or Falvey] from County Carlow, married Adolphus Anders Morck, from Norway, on the Woolshed diggings near Beechworth in 1856.¹¹⁴ By 1859 they were on the Dry Creek diggings near Merton where their daughter, Emily was born on 18

¹¹¹ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 31, 36. Lloyd identified Mrs Rae, in a footnote to her husband's activities, as Janet (Jessie) McLaren, the wife of James Rae who worked for Drysdale & Co's mine at Woods Point. The couple had previously been on the Ballarat goldfields. Dorothy Wickham refers to the McLarens and their connection to Woods Point in *Women of the Diggings*, 216-217.

¹¹² Rogers, *Wood's Point Cemetery*, 39. Rogers identifies Mrs Dean as Sarah Dean née Mayo who arrived in Australia with her husband, Robert around 1861. Sarah Dean may have still been providing midwifery or nursing support in her seventies, as a Mrs Dean is recorded as the nurse at the birth of my grandmother, Catherine Hester at Woods Point in 1901, Catherine Mary Hester, 6 May 1901, Births registered in District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria. Sarah Dean died in Woods Point in 1911.

¹¹³ Brough Smyth, *The Gold Fields and Mineral Districts of Victoria*, 304.

¹¹⁴ Adolphus Anders Morck and Margaret Marian Haveley, 8 June 1856, Marriages solemnized in the District of The Murray, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.

April.¹¹⁵ Margaret and George Edwardes had followed a similar path of family formation on the Beechworth and Dry Creek diggings between 1856 and 1859, and we might speculate that Margaret was the 'Mrs Edwards' who is recorded as the nurse at Emily Morck's birth in 1859. A stronger argument can be made for a connection between Mary Morck and a Mrs H. Jones who also attended Emily Morck's birth at Dry Creek. One of the births Mary Morck attended in Jamieson in 1862 was that of Mary-Anne Jones, the daughter of John Jones and Honora Cashen.¹¹⁶ Like Mary Morck, Honora Jones was from Ireland and had been on the Beechworth goldfields around the same time as Mary. In 1863, when Mary Morck gave birth to her son Thomas, a Mrs Jones was again recorded as the nurse.¹¹⁷ Although we do not have any personal accounts to draw upon, nor other evidence to confirm that the Mrs Jones present at both births was Honora it is a likely connection picked up through the close study of civil registration records. These records are one of the foundations of family history research. This study shows that they can also be used to identify the communal ties between women on the goldfields.

Mary Morck's activities as mother and midwife provide a glimpse of the mutually supportive relationships that childbearing women established on the early diggings. This suggests that alongside a masculine idea of community based on mining activity, there was also opportunities for women to establish a feminine community that was separate to, but nonetheless supportive of the broader population. Other records of Mary Morck's activities provide evidence of how the interplay between gender and space could sometimes create more contested relationships between women. In a court register of cases scheduled for the Jamieson Court of Petty Sessions is an entry on 24 June 1864 listing nine cases of violent assault, and abusive and insulting language involving Mary and Adolph Morck, Catherine and Henry Asling, and Julia and Peter Peters, together with a George Badin.¹¹⁸ None of the parties appeared in court, and with no other available court records of the incident the

¹¹⁵ Emily Margaret Morck, 18 April 1859, Births in the District of Benalla, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria. A son, Ludvig Frederick had been born two years earlier.

¹¹⁶ Mary Ann Julia Jones, 26 March 1862, Births in the District of Jamieson, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.

¹¹⁷ Thomas William Morck, 4 January 1863, Births in the District of Jamieson, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹¹⁸ PROV, VPRS 8635/P1, Unit 1, Jamieson Courts, Court of Petty Session Cause List Books, 24 June 1864.

cause is unclear. However, if we draw on other studies of gender, locality, and community we can see similar patterns of interaction.

Dean Wilson, who made a study of gender and community in nineteenth-century Auckland using court records, argues that the disputes working class men and women brought before the Auckland Police Court were ‘the result of tensions which arose out of established relationships.’¹¹⁹ There was often a gender distinction with these disputes: men’s participation in the wider economy meant that competition defined some of the relationships (and conflicts) between men, whereas women’s relationships were much closer due to their more limited mobility and reliance on one another for support. This did not prevent conflict between women; rather, it meant that court cases involving women often involved close neighbours.¹²⁰

Drawing on Wilson’s study we might speculate that as three of the men involved — Morck, Asling, and Peters — worked as packers, the conflict may have stemmed from competition for business. However, the evidence for these men’s activities is too sparing for a more definitive explanation. If we focus on the women involved, civil registration records show that aside from being allies in the assault Mary Morck and Catherine Asling had known one another since at least March 1862 when Mary had attended the birth of Catherine’s (Kate’s) daughter, Ann, and perhaps even earlier than that, as Kate and Henry Asling were also on the Beechworth goldfields in 1856. Julia Peters, who does not appear to have been on friendly terms with Mary in this instance, was a more recent arrival, having married Peter Peters in 1862.¹²¹ The midwife at the births of her children in Jamieson in the 1860s has not been traced, but she need not have gone far; according to an 1866 directory, Adolph and Mary Morck lived next door.¹²² While their husbands were away carting supplies to the goldfields, these women may have interacted more closely, and perhaps this led to conflict as well as more friendly relationships.

¹¹⁹ Wilson, “Community and Gender in Victorian Auckland,” 27.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ These details are drawn from the 1860-1863 sample of births registrations.

¹²² Dixon and Young, *Butler’s Wood’s Point and Gipps Land General Directory 1866*, 48.

We may not know what caused the dispute between these parties in Jamieson in 1864, but drawing on Wilson's study we can see that the gendered division of labour —and its impact on men's and women's mobility — meant that men and women sometimes occupied separate spaces on the goldfields, and established separate networks. These networks could offer support, as well as be a source of conflict, and both tell us something about the complexities of community making on the goldfields in this initial phase of mining activity. While there is evidence of conflict between both men and women on the goldfields in the quartz mining boom, relationships and conflicts between women may have been more intense given the smaller population on goldfields at this time.

3.7 Conclusion

The physical hardships created by the rugged geography of the Upper Goulburn goldfields were certainly a challenge to the respectability of some women, but others were not so deterred. As the examples in this chapter highlight, the making of community on the early Upper Goulburn goldfields was not straightforward. The need for accommodation on the early goldfields allowed some women working in hotels and boarding houses to navigate masculine and feminine spaces. The case of Mrs Hutcheson also suggests that community was not exclusively defined by *mining* activity, and extended to the idea of a *business* community. The beginnings of community based on women's reproductive activities is evident in the mutual support midwives and nurses provided during childbirth and other illnesses. Although the specific geography of the region and the lack of reliable medical assistance facilitated the creation of this network, tracing the mobility of the women involved highlights that this feminine community was not confined to a specific locality. Nor was it a singular, or static, feminine community. When quartz mining boomed in the mid-1860s and more women and families settled in the region, women (and men) engaged in a range of activities that helped to form new relationships of friendship and support, as well as opposition and exclusion. In the next part of this thesis we leave Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek and head south to Woods Point to explore some of the kinds of community that women and men made in the next stage of mining activity on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

Part 3: Boom

Chapter 4: 'Wives, sisters and sweethearts': Interaction, Relationships and Community Formation, 1864-1870

4.1 Introduction

On 1 July 1865 several hundred of the inhabitants of Woods Point gathered opposite Reefers Hotel to hear speeches from the candidates in the first Woods Point Borough Council election. The two-storey hotel, established by Joseph Foos and William Oats in the previous year, occupied a prominent position on Bridge Street and its verandah, as the *Mountaineer* reported, provided an 'excellent platform' for the candidates to address the crowd.¹ One of the candidates speaking at this pre-election meeting was Eliza Whitelaw's husband, John. Whitelaw immediately made clear his intended audience, remarking how satisfied he was to see 'so large an assembly of the burgesses'. He then declared that his first order of business, if elected as a councillor, would be to fix the streets. Whitelaw argued that the streets were 'very well for bachelors [sic] who could manage to struggle through the mud in long boots; but he was glad to see that the family population was increasing daily. Wives, sisters and sweethearts were joining their relations and adding to the comfort and attraction of the town'.² Whitelaw also suggested further modifications to allow for the construction of 'private residences': '[t]hey were all longing for domesticity and they must set to work and form sound dry paths up to such spots on the hills where they could form gravel walks, and plant trees, and make themselves happy with the objects of their choice.'³ Streets were among the responsibilities of the new Borough Council so it is unsurprising that Whitelaw would make this commitment. As an auctioneer there was also some self-interest in his appeal to domesticity — men bringing their wives and families to the township might wish to upgrade from a tent to a more comfortable dwelling. Nevertheless, his argument suggests a broadening of earlier calls for government support for mining activity to include the needs of the increasing number of women and families who had arrived in the township.

¹ *Woods Point Times & Mountaineer*, 5 July 1865.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Classical theories on community generally regarded the family as one of the most important types of social relationships that made communities. Inherent in these discussions of family structure was the idea that it was certain types of families — monogamous, patriarchal — that were necessary for community formation.⁴ Later sociological and historical scholarship has argued that communities were not the static, homogenous models they were in Tönnies' ideal.⁵ Instead, they could be based on an array of social interactions and relationships. However, in the classical model of community the idea that families were essential to the making of close-knit, geographically based communities meant that, for women, their sanctioned role in community formation was mostly confined to the making of homes, families, and other domestic activities. While this gendered division of labour — which we know as the ideology of separate spheres — has been shown to be both influenced by social factors and more flexible than earlier sociological and historical scholarship has suggested, we can see its influence in contemporary responses to the nineteenth-century gold rushes.

As David Goodman has shown, colonial reformers in the 1850s believed that the gold rushes threatened settled family life by encouraging men to abandon their families, or not marry at all, to chase dreams of independent wealth on the goldfields. Critics responded to the social disruption created by the gold rushes by drawing upon the middle class ideology of separate spheres to promote 'the beneficial social effects of women, of the power of domestic life to soften and ameliorate the harshness of gold-rush society'.⁶ Drawing upon Davidoff and Hall's study of the middle classes in England, Goodman points out that the nineteenth century gold rushes in Victoria and California occurred just as evangelical religion was beginning to reshape middle class ideals of family life, including the gendered division of labour. Reformers drew upon a version of masculinity that focused upon 'responsibilities, on sociability, and on the proper, home-centred uses of wealth, and on the responsibility to support and nurture a family.'⁷ Goodman is less concerned in his study with definitions of

⁴ Nisbet, *The Sociological Tradition*, 60.

⁵ Clarke, "The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination," 410-411; Taksa, " 'Like a Bicycle, Forever Teetering between Individualism and Collectivism'," 13.

⁶ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 153.

⁷ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 172; Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 114.

femininity, but Davidoff and Hall note that in this period femininity was tied to a woman's dependence and role as a moral guardian within families.⁸ Middle-class reformers who observed the gold rushes in Victoria and elsewhere drew upon these ideals to encourage domesticity in order to reshape gold rush society.

As we have seen in our discussion of the early Upper Goulburn goldfields, the concerns expressed by these reformers about 'a rootless unsettled [male] population' did not reflect 'how things really were in gold rush society.'⁹ Family formation was evident on the early Victorian diggings, and rapidly increased later in the 1850s and 1860s as more single women and families arrived in the colony.¹⁰ Yet as this study of the Upper Goulburn goldfields shows, the physical hardships created by the rugged landscape and concerns about the suitability of the early diggings meant there were some differences between the 1850s rushes and those that came later. John Whitelaw's campaign for further infrastructure to make the goldfields more comfortable for women and families suggests that by the mid-1860s more attention was being focused on the domestic comforts provided by women and families in order to transform the Upper Goulburn goldfields into permanent settlements. Nonetheless, if we look more closely at the circumstances of some of the women and families in Woods Point in the quartz mining boom in the mid-1860s, we can see that the values that shaped John and Eliza Whitelaw's marriage and family life did not necessarily shape the lives of other women and families to the same extent, that other women were making for themselves rather different communal ties.

This chapter explores the intersection between masculinity, femininity and respectability inherent in the ideology of separate spheres, and the interaction and relationships of women and men during the quartz mining boom on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In this chapter I consider whether the focus on patriarchal families and 'respectable' women meant that only certain kinds of women were involved in community making, or whether differences in social status, ethnicity, and religion, created a variety of communities. Some scholarship on gentility in colonial Australia has applied Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural

⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 114.

⁹ Fahey and Mayne, ' "All that Glitters"', 30.

¹⁰ Ibid.

capital, or as Linda Young describes it, ‘the correct practice of a repertoire of values, tastes and habits’ to explore the motivations of the middle-class, including those on the goldfields.¹¹ In considering whether the different kinds of community created on the Upper Goulburn goldfields I build on this scholarship to explore whether the desire for ‘cultural capital’ was behind some of the conflict over appropriate gendered behaviour evident in this period. The chapter focuses on the mining settlement of Woods Point, partly because of the range of available sources on Woods Point in this period — including civil registration records, rate books and directories, maps and illustrations, newspapers, and published and unpublished writings — and the fascinating and complicated individuals and relationships that emerge from these sources. The chapter is divided into three sections, beginning with interactions and relationships that led to marriage and family formation, before moving on to explore the communal ties evident in some homes and neighbourhoods. The chapter concludes by exploring the experiences of one woman whose circumstances challenged the making of a respectable, middle-class community, and the desire of some inhabitants for cultural capital.

4.2 Courtship, Marriage and Family Formation

On 4 April 1865 the *Mountaineer* published a letter attributed to a woman, known only as ‘Emily’, requesting that ‘quadrille parties’ be held regularly in the township.¹² In the eighteenth and nineteenth-century the quadrille was a popular dance involving sets of couples, and ‘quadrille parties’ were respectable social gatherings featuring dancing, and music sometimes performed by quadrille bands.¹³ According to the letter, what Emily was seeking was:

¹¹ Linda Young. “Extensive, Economical and Elegant’: The Habitus of Gentility in Early Nineteenth Century Sydney.” *Australian Historical Studies* 36:124 (2004), 201, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10314610408596285>, Linda Young. “Subversive Jewellery: Challenges to Conservative Power from the Victorian Goldfields.” *reCollections* 7, no. 1, no page number, http://recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/volume_7_number_1/papers/subversive_jewellery; Cramer, “Keeping Up Appearances,” 9.

¹² *Mountaineer*, 4 April 1865.

¹³ Heather Clark writes that the quadrille was ‘a suite of four or five *contredanses* in a square formation for four couples’ that developed in France and became popular in Australia from the 1820s. See Heather Clarke, “The Quadrille Arrives,” *Australian Colonial Dance: The History of Music and Dance in Australia, 1788-1840*, posted 8 February 2013, <https://www.colonialdance.com.au/the-quadrille-arrives-1097.html>.

the pleasure of enjoying in this cold, unfriendly climate, occasional re-unions, which contributing as they do to the healthful recreation and the innocent enjoyment of ourselves and our neighbours, and are calculated to engender a reciprocity of kind and generous feelings, whilst at the same time affording a considerable amount of pleasure in a township which does not abound in places of amusement which we can, with propriety, patronize.¹⁴

In the next issue the *Mountaineer* published a letter in response, this time from a 'Mary Jane' who was also looking for 'innocent winter evenings' amusements'.¹⁵ A week later the two women were provided with such an opportunity, with the first in a series of 'private quadrille assemblies' held at the London Tavern, and featuring Radford's Band.¹⁶ [Fig. 4.1] The party was said to have been well-attended despite a 'damp and disagreeable evening'.¹⁷

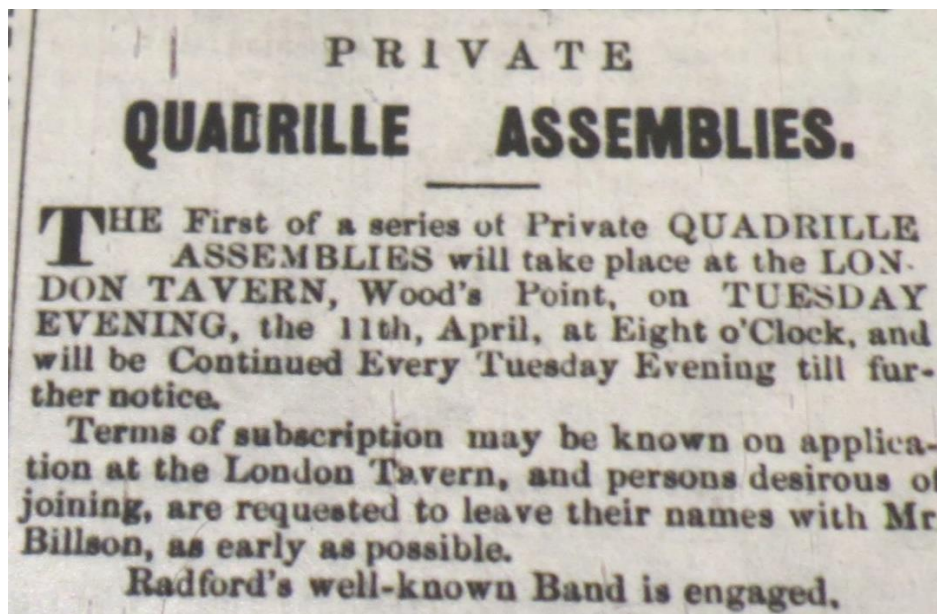


Fig. 4.1: Advertisement for Private Quadrille Assemblies at the London Tavern, Woods Point.

Mountaineer, 11 April 1865.

¹⁴ *Mountaineer*, 4 April 1865.

¹⁵ *Mountaineer*, 7 April 1865.

¹⁶ *Mountaineer*, 11 April 1865

¹⁷ *Mountaineer*, 13 April 1865.

In the quartz mining boom of the mid-1860s there was no shortage of entertainment in Woods Point. Along Scott, Bridge, and Hurley streets there were more than 20 hotels, some of which regularly hosted balls and concerts by visiting and local performers, as well as picnics and games for Christmas and other special occasions. However, the letters by 'Emily' and 'Mary Jane' suggest that the hotels were not places respectable young women could ordinarily patronise on their own— and together with the harsh climate — there were limited opportunities for them to interact 'with propriety' with the young men of the township. Though it would not have been respectable for them to say so publicly, 'Emily' and 'Mary Jane' may have also hoped that such 'innocent' gatherings might lead to marriage.

While we do not know if 'Emily' or 'Mary Jane' formed a lasting attachment at these quadrille parties, a close reading of local newspapers provides us with other evidence that young women and men were beginning to pair up in the township. Local businesses advertised wedding cakes and associated produce, marriage notices were placed in local and metropolitan newspapers, and attention was given to the significance of at least one local marriage.¹⁸ According to a report in the *Mountaineer* newspaper, business in Woods Point was suspended on the second Tuesday in November 1864 as a procession of invited guests, said to be 'the principal ladies and gentlemen of the town' instead gathered outside the home of butcher, Phil Young to accompany his daughter to the church where she was to be married.¹⁹ The newspaper did not include the names of the happy couple in its celebratory report, but local readers were probably already familiar with Phil Young, his wife Mary Ann, and their daughter, Sarah, who we can identify from civil registration records.²⁰ Sarah's groom, Walter John Nicholas, was a 21 year-old farmer from Sale. We do not know the circumstances of the couple's courtship, but a reading of other sources suggests that there may have been a connection between Phil Young's butchery and Walter Nicholas'

¹⁸ For examples of advertisements for wedding cakes see *Mountaineer*, 3 October 1864. For marriage announcements see *Mountaineer*, 26 September 1864, *Mountaineer*, 29 October 1864; *Argus* 30 December 1864, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page214472>; *Argus* 30 January 1865, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page210921>.

¹⁹ *Mountaineer*, 14 November 1864.

²⁰ Sarah Young and Walter John Nicholas, 8 November 1864, Marriages solemnized in the District of Beechworth, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

farming background.²¹ The newspaper also reported that among the procession were other young couples soon to be married, including two of the six bridesmaids. We do not know the identities of these couples, but civil registration records show that Church of England minister, Reverend William Henry Cooper conducted at least two other weddings the following week, although Sarah and Walter's wedding was the only one to take place on church grounds.²² After the ceremony, during which the 'bridegroom looked happy [and] the bride beautiful' the wedding party and guests celebrated with a champagne breakfast and dancing at Reefers Hotel. The celebrations continued into the evening with a ball at Power's Commercial Hotel. The occasion, so the *Mountaineer* reported, created 'a general glow of happiness [...] throughout the town'.²³

Emily Skinner recalled in her recollections of living on the Beechworth goldfields that a wedding on the diggings 'would enliven the community' with festivities lasting all day and sometimes into the following week.²⁴ The *Mountaineer* suggests that the wedding of Sarah Young and Walter Nicholas was not only an opportunity for a celebration, but argued that it was evidence of the interaction and (mostly) friendly relationships of the inhabitants of Woods Point. Yet, by referring to the 'principal ladies and gentleman' of the town who were invited to the celebration, the *Mountaineer* suggests that this was an occasion for the respectable inhabitants, and not open to everyone who resided in the township.

Davidoff and Hall write that '[m]arriage was the economic and social building block for the middle class; it was the basis of a new family unit. On marriage men assumed economic and jural responsibility for their wives and the expected brood of children. With marriage

²¹ *Argus* 27 March 1865, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5736489>; *Mountaineer*, 12 September 1864. These reports reveal that Walter Nicholas worked as a cattle dealer and we may speculate that he met Sarah while supplying her father's business with cattle; just two months prior to the marriage Phil Young had advertised that he had recently arranged supplies of the 'best fat cattle' from squatters in the Murray and Gippsland districts.

²² William Stuart, a 28 year-old miner from Aberdeen, and Elizabeth Dickson, 27 years-old and also from Scotland, were married on 12 November in a private house at Matlock. George Henry Baden, a 32 year-old miner from Germany, and Sarah Ann Sharp, 25 years-old from Sydney, were married on 16 November at the Miner's Hotel in Woods Point, see Marriages solemnized in the District of Beechworth, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria. Sarah and Walter's wedding took place at the Church of England schoolhouse, built prior to the construction of St Mary's Church of England which opened in 1865.

²³ *Mountaineer*, 14 November 1864.

²⁴ Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 83.

women assumed their full adult status.²⁵ They observe that ‘men and women expected to contribute to a marriage but not in the same way.’²⁶ When men married they were expected to become providers for their wives and children, while women, though financially and legally dependent upon their husbands were responsible for raising children and providing the domestic comforts that defined femininity.²⁷ Davidoff and Hall’s study focuses on the middle-class in the eighteenth and nineteenth century in England, but as Wickham notes, these values were mostly adopted in Australian society.²⁸ Although some relationships did not reflect these values, marriage ‘was the most common form of cohabitation’ on the goldfields.²⁹ This is confirmed by Grimshaw and Fahey’s study of the Castlemaine goldfields population which shows that by 1861, the majority of adult women in their sample were married.³⁰

As an official census of the Woods Point population was not conducted between 1861 and 1871 we do not know the proportion of married women and families at the peak of the township’s population during the quartz mining boom. However, analysing the 1871 census shows that of the 1059 people counted in the census, over 60 per cent were married women and children under the age of 15.³¹ [Table 23] If we compare this later data with a sample of 60 births registered on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in 1866 we can see that despite an earlier gender imbalance on the goldfields, the rates of family formation observed in Victoria in the 1850s and early 1860s were eventually replicated in the quartz mining boom on the Upper Goulburn.³² [Tables 17-22] Of these births, only two children

²⁵ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 322.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 323.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁸ Wickham, *Women of the Diggings*, 45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Grimshaw and Fahey, “Family and Community in Nineteenth-Century Castlemaine,” 88.

³¹ Victorian Government, “Table XVI, Cities, Towns, and Boroughs – Showing the Numbers and Ages of the Unmarried, Married, Widowed, and Unspecified, of both sexes, in each City, Town, and Borough,” *Census of Victoria*, 1871, 38. The census shows that in Woods Point there were almost equal numbers of married men (176) and married women (177), as well as 475 children (male and female) under the age of 15. Only 24 unmarried women, between the ages of 20 and 35, were recorded.

³² This sample was obtained by searching the Victorian indexes for births registered at Jamieson, Gaffneys Creek, and Woods Point in 1866. This search yielded a total of 183 entries in the index, and of these, the registration of 60 births were purchased. As indicated with the earlier sample of births on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, between 1860 and 1863, this may not be a complete list of births that occurred in the region at this time. Some births may not have been registered, some may have been registered late, or registered in a different locality. However, the presence of local registrars in Jamieson and Woods Point meant that it was far

were born to women who recorded that they were not married.³³ The majority (75 per cent) of the couples in this sample were married in Victoria, with 60 per cent of these couples forming in north-east Victoria or the Upper Goulburn region, providing further evidence of the family formation that was taking place as a result of the gold rushes. While we do not know the individual circumstances of most of these families, the details provided by the parents reveal many families had at least one parent born in Ireland, England, or Scotland (as well as a few born in Germany) and almost half the fathers were engaged in mining.³⁴ Others worked in various trades and professions dependent upon mining. Any work the mothers had engaged in prior to marriage is not recorded on these birth certificates, but other sources suggest that at least one woman — Sophia Maillet — had worked as a barmaid on the Upper Goulburn prior to her marriage to German-born Charles Henry Hempel.³⁵ This suggests that, as on the Ballarat and Castlemaine goldfields, most couples in this sample conformed to societal expectations around marriage and family formation regardless of their ethnicity, occupation, or social status.

Yet even for some couples, there were challenges in conforming to these expectations. Jessy Mason, who gave birth to daughter Constance (known as Carew) in Woods Point on 14 January 1866, was a widow when she arrived in Victoria with two children in 1853.³⁶ According to the family history compiled by one of Jessy Mason's granddaughters, Jessy had been married at the age of fifteen or sixteen to a widow almost 50 years her senior, an arrangement apparently made in part payment for gambling debts incurred by her father,

more convenient for births, deaths, and marriages to be officially registered in this period than it had been earlier.

³³ Elizabeth Davis and Joseph Gribben were not married when their daughter, Ada Emily was born at Woods Point on 18 May 1866. Elizabeth Forster did not provide any information on the father of her daughter, Emma Heaton, born at Slaty Creek on 13 June 1866.

³⁴ Most of the mothers in this sample were born overseas, predominantly in Ireland (35 per cent), England (26 per cent), and Scotland (16 per cent), with 7 mothers (or 12 per cent) born in Australia. All the fathers were born overseas, mostly in England (50 per cent) or Ireland (23 per cent), though the third-largest group (12 per cent) were born in one of several German states. Almost half of the births occurred in Woods Point and mostly reflect the demographics of the overall sample.

³⁵ Emillia Johannah Hempel, 23 July 1866, Births in the District of Wood's Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria. Emilia's parents, Sophia Maillet and Charles Henry Hempel were married in Woods Point in 1865. In May 1865 Sophia Maillet had sued her employer, Emma Sinclair, a hotelkeeper in Matlock, after she was dismissed due to a lack of available work. Maillet sought six months' wages, but was instead awarded one month, see *Woods Point Times*, 1 April 1865.

³⁶ Constance Mason, 14 January 1866, Births registered in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

John Elphinstone Campbell.³⁷ The family history provides no further details on the circumstances that led to this marriage, but sources at the time suggest that the situation was more complicated, with Jessy's aristocratic new husband, George Conway Montagu of Lackham House in Wiltshire, in debtor's prison when they married.³⁸ When asked later whether it had been 'an ordeal being married so young', Jessy appears to have glossed over some of these details, telling her family she 'enjoyed the importance of having her own establishment and being called "madam"'.³⁹ Jessy's family background and first marriage also highlight some of the complexities in the relationship between economic and cultural capital; as Linda Young notes, one did not necessarily mean the other.⁴⁰ Whatever the circumstances Jessy probably had little choice in her first marriage because the law of coverture meant she was legally and financially dependent upon the men in her life. After George Montagu died in 1847 Jessy appears to have sought some independence, taking her two daughters to Australia. She was also accompanied by her sister Stephanie (known elsewhere as Fanny). The family history suggests that Jessy intended to open a school. However, this legal and financial independence did not eventuate for on the voyage Jessy met and became engaged to lithographer Cyrus Mason, a fellow Londoner and a cousin of poet Robert Browning.⁴¹ According to the recollections of their granddaughter, Cyrus Mason was asked by a mutual friend to 'look after' Mrs Montagu and her children 'and he used to say that he looked after them for ever after.'⁴² The couple were married soon after their arrival in Melbourne and initially lived in a tent on the beach at St Kilda because of the shortage of accommodation caused by the gold rushes. Mason continued to work as a lithographer, and his work included a number of illustrations of the Victorian goldfields. [Fig. 4.2] Later he worked in a succession of business partnerships, before joining

³⁷ Dora Mason Laseron, "Mason Family History Papers," Mason Family Papers, MS 12625, State Library of Victoria. Other sources refer to Jessy Mason's earlier marriage, see Tony Pratt, *The Manor of Lackham, Two Georgian Montagus*, 2003, 29, Wiltshire College and University Centre, "A Further History of Lackham, <https://www.wiltshire.ac.uk/Portals/0/Lackham%20House%20History/Georgian%20Montagus.pdf?ver=2017-01-06-150016-697×tamp=1483715768920>.

³⁸ *The Standard*, 27 July, 1841, 1, Issue 5328. *British Library Newspapers, Part II: 1800-1900* [online database]. According to Pratt, Montagu was a spendthrift whose first marriage to Margaret Wilson ended in separation after his adultery; see Pratt, *The Manor of Lackham*, 23-30.

³⁹ Laseron, "Mason Family History Papers."

⁴⁰ Young, "Extensive, Economical and Elegant," 202.

⁴¹ Laseron, "Mason Family Papers."

⁴² Ibid.

the Victorian Railways in 1856.⁴³ In 1864 he left to go to Woods Point where he worked as a mining agent and sharebroker. Jessie, whose sister Fanny was already living on the goldfields with her husband, William Jackson, joined Cyrus shortly before her daughter Constance's birth.⁴⁴ The Mason family left Woods Point a few years later when the collapse of the quartz mining boom, and other financial arrangements Cyrus had entered into, led to him being declared insolvent.⁴⁵



Fig. 4.2: Mason, Cyrus, and W.H.O. The Lucky Return, 1855.

State Library of Victoria.

Mason's illustration depicts a successful digger returning to his family with a bag of gold.

⁴³ Thomas Darragh, "Cyrus Mason," Design & Art Australia Online, 1992, last updated 2011. <https://www.daao.org.au/bio/cyrus-mason/biography/>.

⁴⁴ According to the registration of Constance's birth, Jessie and Cyrus Mason had lost three children to date. Fanny and William Jackson's son, Wilfred was born at Jamieson in 1860; Wilfred John Jackson, 21 August 1860, Births registered in the District of Mansfield, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria. Advertisements for William Jackson's Eureka Restaurant, 'The Oldest Established House on Wood's Point', appear in an early issue of the *Mountaineer* newspaper, see *Mountaineer* 15 August 1864.

⁴⁵ In September 1867 Cyrus Mason was declared insolvent, citing unpaid wages and costs associated with two mines, as well as liabilities he incurred through his financial support of the Common School, see *Argus*, 7 September 1867, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5777279>. In 1871 Mason published a children's book, *The Australian Christmas Story Book* that includes one story set in 'the Ranges'. See Cyrus Mason, *The Australian Christmas Story Book* (Melbourne, George Robertson, 1871). Though this story provides some detail on the hardships experienced by women and children on the goldfields, it was Cyrus and Jessie Mason's descendants who later provided a fuller account of Jessie's experiences on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

Though the family connections of Jessy Mason's first husband suggests that they were upper, rather than middle-class, her experiences, particularly once she arrived in Victoria, reflects other studies of colonial women's experiences of marriage and family life. Scholars who have built upon Davidoff and Hall's argument about women's roles within families show that the particular circumstances of colonial life meant that the ideology of separate spheres, as Penny Russell notes, 'was more a matter of ideological prescription than of lived social experience.'⁴⁶ This is also true of John and Eliza Whitelaw's marriage and family life, detailed in the reminiscences Eliza wrote for her children and grandchildren in the early 1900s.⁴⁷ Their courtship, which arose through mutual acquaintances, Andrew and John Dunmore Lang of New South Wales, dominates the entangled threads of her family's arrival in Sydney in 1841.⁴⁸ Eliza recalled that John, whose immigration to New South Wales was sponsored by John Dunmore Lang, read the letter she wrote to her father's agent and an acquaintance of the Langs, Mr Miller, informing Miller that her father had died on the voyage.⁴⁹ John, Eliza wrote, 'fell in love with me through that letter and said to Mr. M I must have that young lady for my wife.'⁵⁰

Eliza provides no further detail on the content of the letter so we can only speculate on what might have prompted this response from her future husband. In her story of their courtship Eliza suggests that John initially pursued her, but when they met at Dunmore, Andrew Lang's property north of Maitland in New South Wales, she 'admired his step and figure and gentlemanly way in which he ignored me to go up first to Mr. Lang', telling her

⁴⁶ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 117; Penny Russell, 'Travelling Steerage: Class, Commerce, Religion and Family in Colonial Sydney', *Journal of Australian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2014), 391, DOI: 10.1080/14443058.2014.952763 391. See also Angela Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies: Self Government and Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). 144-145.

⁴⁷ Whitelaw, *Reminiscences*.

⁴⁸ Ibid. For more detail on John Dunmore Lang see: D. W. A. Baker, "Lang, John Dunmore (1799–1878)," Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lang-john-dunmore-2326/text2953>, published first in hardcopy 1967.

⁴⁹ John Whitelaw had commenced training to become a Presbyterian minister at the University of Glasgow before being recruited by Lang to teach at the Australian College he established in Sydney in 1831. He arrived in Sydney in 1837 and later taught at the school established for the Scottish immigrants the Langs had settled at Dunmore. When he met Eliza in 1841 he was a storekeeper at Maitland. See H. Morin Humphreys, *Men of the time in Australia: Victorian series / compiled by H. Morin Humphreys* (Melbourne: M'Carron, Bird & Co, 1882), 423-424, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-13818998>.

⁵⁰ Whitelaw, *Reminiscences*.

mother that he was 'the man for me.'⁵¹ Had John recorded his own version he might have told the tale differently. Perhaps what had provoked John's response to Eliza's letter was his masculine desire to be her protector. With his economic prospects far from settled John did not fit the middle-class ideal as a suitor, but given that Eliza's family had arrived in a new and unfamiliar place 'without the head of the family' marriage was the most respectable option open to 21 year-old Eliza.⁵²

Davidoff and Hall write that long engagements were not preferred by the middle-class English families in their study. However, they also note that 'couples were less willing to start marriage without sufficient resources.'⁵³ The evangelical notions of masculinity and femininity that informed the courtship of the English middle-classes may in part explain Eliza and John's eight-month long engagement. In the 1840s New South Wales was in the midst of an economic depression and John's business affairs appeared to suffer as a result.⁵⁴ Eliza suggests that at one stage John offered to end their engagement, but she refused and they eventually married on 16 July 1842 in Hopewell, near Maitland.⁵⁵

As Eliza Whitelaw's story of their subsequent marriage suggests, being a 'helpmeet' entailed more than keeping house for her husband and raising a family that eventually numbered six children. Theirs was a social and economic partnership that, due to changing financial circumstances, extended beyond the home. By 1856 Eliza and John were teaching at a school in Gisborne, north of Melbourne.⁵⁶ While Eliza's teaching helped to support the family, and John's appointment may have also been dependent on his wife's teaching, her recollections suggest that teaching gave her a sense of accomplishment and was not simply

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Davidoff and Hall. *Family Fortunes*, 324.

⁵⁴ John was working as a storekeeper in Maitland when he was declared insolvent in 1842. See *New South Wales Government Gazette* 18, 4 March 1842, 368, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article230660953>.

⁵⁵ *Sydney Herald*, 25 July 1842, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12876351>.

⁵⁶ PROV, VPRS 13718, Teacher Record Books (Microfilm Copy of Teacher Records, VPRS 13579 and 13974, 13973, 11481, 14005, 11469, 14012, 13971 and 13970), No. 2194, Whitelaw, Eliza, No. 2198 Whitelaw, John. Earlier in their marriage Eliza and John had both taught at a school in Port Macquarie, and Eliza continued to teach there after John left for the goldfields in New South Wales. See State Records Authority of New South Wales, *Returns of the Colony ('BlueBooks'), 1822-1857, Series 1286 (1852)*, Ancestry, <https://www.ancestry.com.au/>.

a financial necessity. This is highlighted in Eliza's account of her acrimonious departure from the Gisborne school in 1864. Eliza writes that she had objected to the school committee's decision to mix the classes, arguing that 'many of the girls were of a superior class, and that if they were taught and sat on the same form as the boys, parents would take them away.'⁵⁷ This change also meant that Eliza would be teaching mixed classes and would be subordinate to the male teacher, whose skills she criticised in her reminiscences of the dispute. Despite her disagreements with the school committee, Eliza's work appears to have been appreciated by the parents and children. A report of Eliza's farewell published in 1864 notes that she was given 'a highly complimentary address and a purse containing thirty-four sovereigns'.⁵⁸ Eliza noted the farewell in her reminiscences, but in this 1864 report we have a rare contemporary account of her farewell speech, during which she noted that 'I trust that I may have many years to spend in this pleasant occupation.'⁵⁹ Eliza continued her 'pleasant occupation' teaching in a private schoolroom she established at the family's Gisborne farm. Advertisements indicate that she provided boarding accommodation for 'young ladies' and 'the usual branches of an English education, including French and drawing', plus classes in piano and harp.⁶⁰ This work came to an end, however, when John wrote to her from Woods Point sometime in 1864 about his 'glowing prospects' as an auctioneer in the township.

Without John's personal account of their marriage Eliza's reminiscences inevitably privilege her interpretation of their marriage and family life. However, in the *Mountaineer's* editorials and articles that address domesticity and family life on the goldfields we can see that John and Eliza shared the same values, even if Eliza's activities prior to moving to Woods Point suggest that she took a more pragmatic approach to the ideology of separate spheres. The Whitelaws, and the Masons had acquired cultural capital through their upbringing and education, but the uncertainty of mining activity meant that they struggled to maintain their economic capital. Drawing on Cramer's study of dress and gentility on the goldfields, both families probably identified as genteel, a term that Cramer writes has been employed by

⁵⁷ Whitelaw, "Journal."

⁵⁸ *Leader*, 9 April 1864, 14, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article197293572>.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Argus*, 15 January 1864, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5742476>.

some scholars to more accurately describe the values, behaviours, and practices of the middle classes in the colonies.⁶¹ Drawing on the work of Dianne Lawrence, Cramer writes that this definition is more applicable to colonial circumstances 'where in the movement of individuals from their original contexts to new locations, many material markers of class were unreliable.'⁶² Quantitative sources suggest that marriage and family formation appears to have been the norm across all levels of society in Woods Point in the mid-1860s, with personal accounts such as that of Jessy Mason and Eliza Whitelaw illustrating some of the complexities of these relationships. In the next section we look more closely at some of the homes and neighbourhoods women and men created in this period to explore how the interaction and relationships beyond the family extended to the formation of other communal ties.

4.3 Homes and Neighbourhoods

In her reminiscences Eliza Whitelaw provides very little detail about her home in Woods Point, or her interactions with her neighbours.⁶³ Likewise, the family stories Jessy and Cyrus Mason's descendants recorded note only that Jessy gave birth to Constance 'on the floor of a shack in Woods Point.'⁶⁴ Accounts by women from other goldfields give more detail about home and neighbourhood, such as Emily Skinner and Mrs Campbell's separate accounts of their homes and neighbours on the Beechworth goldfields.⁶⁵ Lawrence's study of the Dolly's Creek settlement on the Moorabool goldfields also explores the spatial features of the settlement, noting how some buildings clustered around particular features, such as a mine, while others were more spread out.⁶⁶ In the absence of detailed personal accounts or archaeological studies of the settlement of Woods Point we have to draw on other sources of the settlement and its population, such as maps, rate books, and directories, as well as unrelated sources such as inquest records, to piece together a picture of the homes and neighbourhoods that helped to shape communal ties.

⁶¹ Cramer, "Keeping Up Appearances," 9.

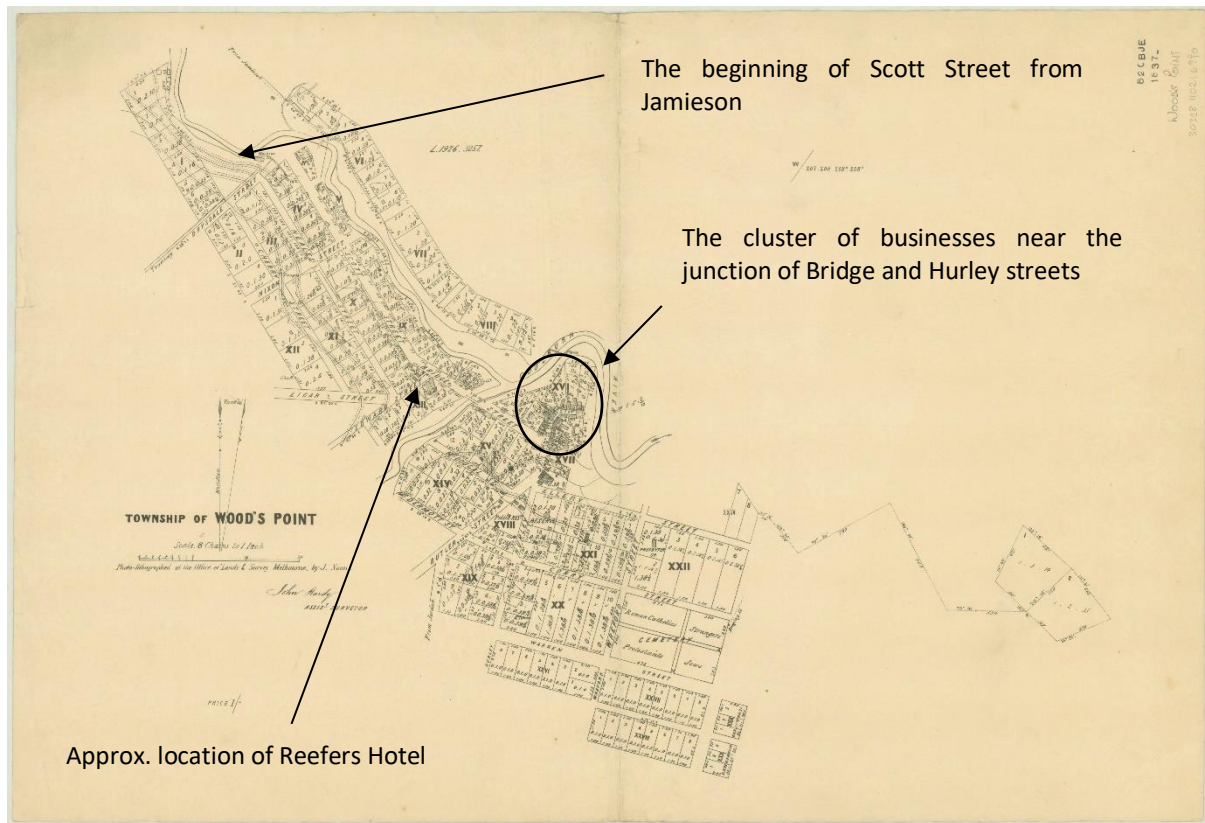
⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Whitelaw, "Journal, Part 2."

⁶⁴ Laseron, "Mason Family History Notes."

⁶⁵ Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 51-52; Campbell, *Rough and Smooth*, 80, 103.

⁶⁶ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 55-56.



4.3. Victoria. Office of Lands and Survey. Township of Wood's Point, 1860.

State Library of Victoria.

Some of the features discussed in the text below are marked.

John Hardy's 1863 plan of Woods Point [Fig. 4.3] featured outlines of the existing buildings and mining infrastructure overlayed by streets and allotments, and this is our first indication of where the population of Woods Point was living and working.⁶⁷ Along the main track through the settlement from Jamieson — named here as Scott Street — Hardy marked a few buildings as well as machinery connected to the tramway that formed part of Drysdale and Co's mine on Morning Star Hill. As Scott Street veered left to form Bridge Street — so named for the bridge over one branch of the Goulburn River — several buildings are marked on allotments on both sides of the street. Though it is not clear from Hardy's map, on one of these allotments was the Reefers Hotel, where in July 1865 candidates in the Borough Council elections would address the township's inhabitants. Over the bridge to Hurley Street

⁶⁷ Victoria. Office of Lands Survey, *Township of Wood's Point [cartographic Material] / Photo-lithographed at the Office of Lands & Survey, Melbourne, by J. Noone; John Hardy, Assist. Surveyor (Melbourne: Office of Lands and Survey, 1860).*

a tight cluster of buildings occupied a peninsula that overlooked a bend in the Goulburn River. Based on the close proximity of the buildings, this appears to be one of the most defined neighbourhoods on Hardy's survey, and in his field book — and other sources — we can see it was occupied by hotels and an array of stores.⁶⁸ [Fig. 4.4] This was the neighbourhood that was partially destroyed by the fire that started in Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel on 5 January 1865, prompting the *Mountaineer's* use of the term 'community' in its campaign for a fire brigade and a municipality.⁶⁹ The resulting investigation, required under Section 4 of the Act for Preventing the Careless Use of Fire 1858 to determine the cause of the fire and any parties responsible, gives us a peek inside to the hotel's occupants and some of the communal ties in the neighbourhood on the night of the fire.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ PROV, VPRS 16685/P1, Unit 1, Bundle 4, Book 96.

⁶⁹ *Mountaineer*, 13 January 1865.

⁷⁰ PROV, VPRS 407/P0, Unit 2, File 59, Cameron, Mr Hotel of Woods Point.

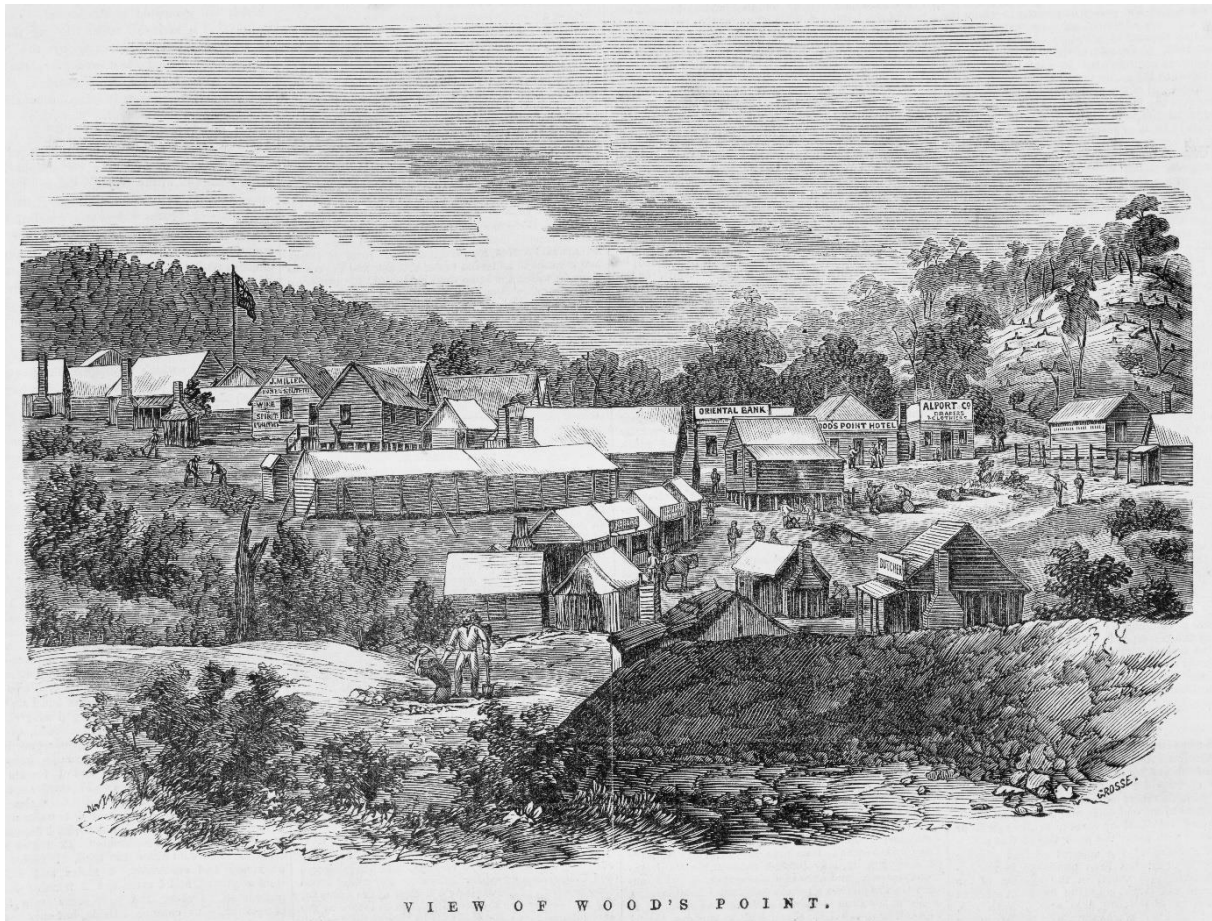


Fig. 4.4: Grosse, Frederick. View of Woods Point, 1864.

State Library of Victoria.

This illustration, published in *The Australian News for Home Readers* on 24 February 1964, features some of the business premises that were destroyed in the January 1865 fire. Though Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel is not identified in the illustration, witness accounts of the fire suggest that the long rectangular building I have identified left of centre may have been part of the hotel's boarding accommodation.

Shortly before ten pm on Thursday 5 January 1865 barmaid Caroline Russell retired to her bedroom in Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel on Hurley Street in Woods Point. We do not know when, or under what circumstances Caroline Russell arrived in Woods Point, but she may have responded to an advertisement placed with one of the servant registries in Melbourne. Since the 1850s the goldfields had always provided employment to young single women despite the concerns of colonial reformers about the respectability of the work offered in hotels frequented by supposedly disreputable diggers. Columns of news print had been devoted to the plight of women lured to apparently 'first-class' positions on the goldfields, only to find that that they were required to work in unlicensed shanties and dancing saloons. However, some women showed that they were more than capable of

looking after themselves.⁷¹ Perhaps Caroline Russell had visited Mrs Elderton's offices in Collins Street, or Mrs Main's office in Bourke Street, both of which had been advertising for waitresses and barmaids in Woods Point and on the surrounding goldfields.⁷²

In addition to Caroline Russell, Cameron employed two other women, Margaret Gilbert and Mary Maher, as well as waiter William Barnes, all of whom lived in make-shift rooms in the hotel. Caroline's bedroom, described by other witnesses as the 'dark room', was at the rear of the hotel and was no more than a small room separated from the pantry and bar by a timber and canvas partition.⁷³ Although the partition was papered on the bedroom side there were gaps between the boards, and it was possible to peer into the room through a small hole above the door. Beside Caroline's bed was a small washstand where she usually kept a candle burning shortly before she went to sleep. Occasionally she read before bed, perhaps a letter from family or friends or something she acquired from Mr Collou's Victoria Express Circulating Library a short walk away in Bridge Street. Two weeks earlier Caroline had fallen asleep with the candlestick on her bed and the candle still alight. Cameron was fastidious about ensuring that candles were not left to burn overnight, and when he noticed the light in Caroline's room he and Barnes tried to wake her. When she did not stir the two men paced the passage outside her door until they could see that the candle had safely burnt down. Caroline was cautioned the following day about reading in bed. But, as she later explained, she was adamant that on 5 January she did not read before bed and the candle was out before she went to sleep.

Sometime between eleven pm and midnight Cameron was outside on the hotel veranda when he heard 'a crackling noise'.⁷⁴ Rushing inside, he found the partition near the pantry on fire. After trying to douse the flames, Cameron probably realised it was futile to try and save the flimsy timber building so he alerted his staff and guests and tried to salvage what he could of the business, rescuing a few ledgers and crates of wine. Caroline grabbed a small

⁷¹ Wright, *Forgotten Rebels of Eureka*, 150-151.

⁷² *Argus*, 13 December 1864, 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5748117>; *Age*, 14 December 1864, 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155017766>.

⁷³ PROV, VPRS 407/P0, Unit 2, File 59, Cameron, Mr Hotel of Woods Point. Philip Young and Robert Cameron both described Caroline Russell's bedroom as the 'dark room'.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

box and a bag containing some dresses. It was not long before the fire quickly spread to neighbouring buildings to form 'one blazing mass'.⁷⁵ Woods Point did not have a fire brigade. However, a chain of hundreds of men is reported to have formed up the hill from the Goulburn River to Hurley Street to gather buckets of water to throw directly on the fire, or dampen blankets to smother the flames.⁷⁶ Hotelkeepers whose businesses were not under threat shared refreshments with those fighting to put out the fire. Others retrieved goods from a number of stores which were then cast into the street, and gold (a precious commodity in the mining settlement) along with other currency and financial records were rescued from the Oriental Bank before it too burnt down. It was fortunate that no-one was killed or injured. The investigation concluded that the fire was an accident, and that there was 'not the slightest evidence' that anyone connected to the hotel was responsible for the fire.⁷⁷ This was probably a relief to Caroline Russell. The evidence given by Cameron and his other employees suggest that they believed she was at fault.

Although concern was expressed in the *Mountaineer* about families who lost homes or businesses in the fire, the response from other businesses suggests that communal ties had formed in Woods Point beyond those based on marriage and family. In the days that followed the fire a relief fund was established and subscription lists were circulated to banks, insurance companies and hotels on the surrounding goldfields, as well as in Melbourne, where local reports of the fire had been circulated in the metropolitan newspapers.⁷⁸ An evening of entertainment was held in the Concert Hall of the Reefers Hotel with performances by professional entertainers Mrs Oakey, Clara Browning, John Black, and a Mr Martin accompanied by Austin Sacqui on piano.⁷⁹ Further up Scott Street, there was a Scottish theme to the entertainment at the Alpine Botanic Gardens, overlooking the Stewart's Glasgow Arms Hotel. Though it was not as well attended as the Reefers Concert the Highland dancing may have helped the Stewarts to raise some money to support their fellow hotelkeepers and their families.⁸⁰ By May the fund had distributed

⁷⁵ *Argus*, 10 January 1865, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5735295>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ PROV, VPRS 407/P0, Unit 2, File 59, Cameron, Mr Hotel of Woods Point.

⁷⁸ *Argus*, 10 January 1865, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5735295>.

⁷⁹ *Mountaineer*, 13 January 1865.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

amounts ranging from one to fifty pounds depending upon what each victim had lost in the fire.⁸¹ Eliza Whitelaw later suggested that the barmaids took advantage of the fire by claiming compensation for evening dresses, night gowns, and other clothing, an observation that questioned their respectability while reaffirming Eliza's genteel status.⁸² One wonders, though, if Caroline Russell saw an upside to her escape from a burning building and later interrogation about her bedtime reading. Rather, she was probably seeking compensation for the loss of her job, a place to live, and the few possessions that were truly hers. For single barmaids such as Caroline Russell 'home' was probably not the place in which they worked and slept; rather their work in the hotels was a means to marriage, their own home and family, and respectability. Caroline Russell's fate, however, has not been determined from the available sources.

If I was writing an uncritical local history I might be tempted to describe the response to the fire as evidence of the single 'community' of Woods Point; the *Mountaineer* did much the same in its reporting of the fire. But if we look closely at the sources of this event we can see a variety of interactions and relationships that could form communal ties (as well as those that excluded) shaped by: locality (the cluster of buildings where the fire took place), work (in the businesses affected by the fire, and those that offered support), class or status (Eliza Whitelaw's later response that questions the respectability and taste of the barmaids) and ethnicity (the Scottish theme at the Stewarts' fundraiser). Later in this chapter I look in more detail at one of the victims of the fire — hotelkeeper Bidelia Calcutt — to explore what her circumstances tell us about the kinds of community created by women and men in Woods Point.

The fire and its aftermath produced little evidence of communal ties based on gender, amongst women at least. More personal sources from other goldfields recall the companionship and support married women received from other married women. In her account of the Beechworth goldfields, Emily Skinner recalled swapping childrearing advice,

⁸¹ *Mountaineer*, 12 May 1865.

⁸² Whitelaw, "Journal." Cramer, "Keeping Up Appearances," 9. Cramer discusses how 'the codes and complexities of dress' were used to signify gentility or 'good taste'. Eliza Whitelaw was probably suggesting that the barmaids were not genteel because they did not dress modestly.

sharing her handiwork, and the care she and her children received from other women at times of illness.⁸³ Emily recalled how grateful she was for this support, especially from her long-time friend, Alice. When Emily and her family moved to more isolated diggings, or friends and neighbours moved away, she recalled how much she missed the companionship of other women.⁸⁴ Emily Skinner's recollections of the Buckland diggings highlight the importance of a female support network on the goldfields, especially for those married women who may not have had a close kinship network nearby. Though we do not have as intimate a source as Emily Skinner's recollections with which to study the support networks of married women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, glimpses of these networks can be found in more disparate sources. A close reading of newspapers, supplemented by archival sources, provide us with a glimpse of the everyday interactions and relationships established by some married women (and men) in Woods Point in the quartz mining boom.

Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence had been neighbours in Woods Point since about 1864.⁸⁵ Among their daily activities, the two women were accustomed to retrieving water from a well near the river below their houses. It was on one of these regular trips to the well, on the afternoon of 30 June 1868, that Catherine Lawrence discovered her neighbour's body face-down in the well. Her husband later recalled that Catherine Brew been in good spirits that morning, and neighbour Thomas Joyce noticed her walking back down the hill from Woods Point about 11 o'clock. No one saw what happened next, but sometime after Catherine Brew returned home she must have gone to the well. When she found her neighbour's body, Catherine Lawrence called out to her husband, and he and neighbour, Robert Esler retrieved the body from the well. Although they thought she was dead, they sent for Dr Nash in case he was able to revive her. When Dr Nash arrived twenty minutes later there was nothing he could do, and at the inquest a day later he concluded that Catherine Brew probably fell and hit her head on a stone in the well and drowned.⁸⁶

⁸³ Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 67-68.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁸⁵ PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 216, File 1868/193, Catherine Brew, Woods Point, 1 July 1868.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Drawing on other sources, we can expand on the inquest's brief examination of Catherine Brew's death to highlight some of the interactions and relationships that formed part of her, and her neighbours, everyday lives. Catherine Brew lived along a stretch of the Goulburn River at the eastern end of Woods Point known as Richmond.⁸⁷ Beyond the boundaries of the township surveyed by John Hardy in 1863, but recorded in the Woods Point rate books, Richmond had been home to 64 rateable properties when the Borough of Woods Point was formed in 1865, but by 1868 the number of rateable properties had dropped to 49, probably because of the decline in mining activity.⁸⁸ Rate books suggest that throughout this period most of these properties were occupied by miners, and if we draw on civil registration records and other sources we can see that some were joined by their families.⁸⁹ William Brew and John Lawrence were two of these miners. We do not know if they worked independently on alluvial claims along the Goulburn River, which mining surveyor Albert Ainsworth reported in 1868 were doing well, or for one of the company mines still operating in Woods Point.⁹⁰ Wherever they were working they must have been making enough to keep their families in the region. Robert Esler and Thomas Joyce, also miners, lived nearby with their wives, Catherine and Susan, and knew the Brews.⁹¹

While their husbands set off each day to work, wives such as Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence undertook a variety of domestic activities at home, and elsewhere, to support their families. In his study of the experiences of Irish-born women on the west coast goldfields in New Zealand Lyndon Fraser writes that '[t]he chronic instability of everyday life in the region's goldfields communities made the paid and unpaid activities of women essential' and women's lives were 'shaped by work and the family-centred concerns of childbearing and child-raising'. Fraser adds 'family survival depended on the emergence of a

⁸⁷ PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Rate Book, Borough of Woods Point, 1868.

⁸⁸ PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Rate Book, Borough of Woods Point, 1865-1868. In 1865, when the first record of ratepayers was made, there were 64 rateable properties in Richmond. By 1868, the year Catherine Brew died, there were 49.

⁸⁹ A search of genealogical sources and local histories has not been able to identify all of the property owners — at Richmond and elsewhere — but some men and their families have been identified. The family of Thomas and Catherine Cox (nee McLaren) is one example. Catherine's sister was Jessie Rae, one of the midwives referred to in Chapter 3.

⁹⁰ Victoria, Mines Department, *Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars*, April 1868, 16, June 1868, 18.

⁹¹ Robert Esler married Catherine McInnes in 1866 and a son was born the same year. Thomas Joyce married Susan Butler in 1867; "Australia, Births, Deaths and Marriage Index, 1788-1950," [online database], Ancestry <https://www.ancestry.com.au/>. See also Rogers, *Wood's Point Cemetery*, 44, 60.

strong female role within colonial households and the economic interdependence of the conjugal unit'.⁹² The work that women from a range of ethnic backgrounds undertook in Woods Point, where the living conditions were as just as remote and harsh as New Zealand's west coast goldfields, was equally necessary. The water Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence retrieved from the well would have been used for cooking, cleaning, and washing, as well as in the gardens both women had. Almost certainly this regular contact at the well helped to establish a familiarity, even a friendship between the two women. The only clue we have to their relationship is Catherine Lawrence's statement to the inquest that her neighbour was 'a very good industrious woman [who] lived most happily with her husband'.⁹³ We might read into this statement that the jury were enquiring whether alcohol or violence had played any part in Catherine Brew's death. While there is no suggestion elsewhere in the inquest that this was likely, Catherine Lawrence's response suggests that she wished her neighbour to be remembered as a respectable married woman who worked productively in a loving marriage. As we shall see later in the thesis, a close study of less supportive partnerships (in which alcohol and violence *were* involved) highlights some of the more restrictive characteristics of the ideology of separate spheres.

In her archaeological study of Dolly's Creek, Lawrence notes how gender shaped the way men and women interacted with public spaces. While men's mining activities took them into particular stores, such as the blacksmith to have their tools repaired, women's activities in the home and garden saw them frequenting other stores to purchase a range of goods for the home, or to sell produce from their gardens.⁹⁴ Reading Emily Skinner's recollections of the Beechworth goldfields we can also glimpse some of the informal interactions that took her, and other women in the region, beyond their homes – getting supplies from local stores, meeting friends, caring for sick neighbours, sharing domestic tasks — as well as more formal occasions such as attending church and social events.⁹⁵ At Woods Point, married women would have moved about in much the same way, and Catherine Brew may have been doing any number of things when Thomas Joyce saw her returning from Woods Point

⁹² Fraser, "Irish Women's Networks," 465.

⁹³ PROV, VPRS 24/P0, Unit 216, File 1868/193, Catherine Brew, Woods Point, 1 July 1868.

⁹⁴ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 59.

⁹⁵ Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 52, 57, 66, 68, 75.

on the morning she died. Rate books show that there were several Chinese gardeners in Richmond, and at least one store, but other stores, banks, and the post office were all located in Woods Point.⁹⁶ While we do not know exactly where Catherine Brew had been, speculating on her movements reminds us that there were different kinds of community operating in Woods Point, both separate and overlapping.

As we have seen in our discussions of family formation, women's caring responsibilities also created opportunities for interaction and the development of social relationships. Catherine Brew did not have children but she may have had some experience with childbirth, as a Mrs Brew attended the birth of Constance Mason — Jessy and Cyrus Mason's daughter — in January 1866.⁹⁷ Another Richmond resident, Sarah Dean, was also in demand as a midwife and had assisted one of Catherine Brew's neighbours, Susan Esler, when she gave birth in August 1866.⁹⁸ Other sources hint at some of the complexities of the relationships between women, midwives, and female relatives in the broader social context, such as when Dr Nash was later accused of improper behaviour towards Ellen Bell who had recently given birth with the assistance of Sarah Dean. Accounts of the subsequent court case — the complexities of which could extend to a separate microhistory on gender and community making in itself — suggest that the accusation created some awkwardness between the patient and her two sisters, Jessie Rae and Catherine Cox, who continued to be attended by Dr Nash.⁹⁹

Other interactions between women were equally complex, as the earlier analysis of Jamieson court records reveal. Official court records for Woods Point have not survived, but local newspapers published some details of court activities, and within these there a few examples of some contested interactions and relationships between women in Woods

⁹⁶ PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Rate Book, Borough of Woods Point, 1865-68. Among the Chinese gardeners that can be identified in the rate books in this period are Ah Yin and Ah Chee.

⁹⁷ Constance Mason, 14 January 1866, Births registered in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

⁹⁸ 22 August 1866; Births registered in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria. Some of the details are missing from this registration, such as the name of the child, but we can see that Mrs Dean was recorded as the nurse.

⁹⁹ *Argus* 3 June 1870, 1-2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5822040>; *Argus* 4 June 1870, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5822208>.

Point. Of those we can identify these appear to have been workplace, rather than neighbourhood disputes.¹⁰⁰ The newspapers also show that women were caught up in the contested interactions and relationships between men.¹⁰¹ Later, Marion Miller Knowles, who was born in Woods Point in 1865, suggested in her semi-autobiographical novel, *Barbara Halliday* that the relationships established between women were based on the relative status of their husband's occupations.¹⁰² Miller Knowles suggests that miners' wives were on the bottom of this social hierarchy, but observed that some women were known to contest this status by teasing their betters using wit and sarcasm.¹⁰³ Although there were some circumstances in which women of all 'classes' interacted, she suggests that they mostly mixed with women of a similar social status.¹⁰⁴ In the next chapter we will test this hierarchy against accounts of some women's activities in public life.

While the inquest into Catherine Brew's death provides us with the briefest of glimpses into her interactions and relationships with her neighbours, it is a more public account of her death that gives us a firmer indication of how these interactions and relationships helped to make a community. According to a local correspondent who provided a report of the inquest and funeral to the *Alexandra Times*, Mrs Brew's death was said to have 'caused a profound sensation in this place' as both she, and her husband, were 'well-known' and 'respected'.¹⁰⁵ About two hundred people are said to have attended the funeral, including many miners who had taken time off work 'to attend the melancholy occasion'.¹⁰⁶ Frustratingly, the article does not provide us with any clues as to why Catherine Brew, or her husband, were so well-regarded. However, the attendance of miners — perhaps friends, neighbours, or workmates of William Brew — suggests that Catherine Brew was accepted in more than one community. Catherine Brew's domestic activities helped her to create a female network of friends and neighbours, while her husband, William probably had his own network of fellow miners. As most of the occupants of properties in Richmond were

¹⁰⁰ *Mountaineer*, 4 April 1865.

¹⁰¹ *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 2 May 1866,

¹⁰² Miller Knowles, *Barbara Halliday*, 46.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁰⁵ *Alexandra Times*, 7 July 1868, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59794452>.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

engaged in mining, or dependent upon men engaged in mining, these two networks probably overlapped in a shared geographic space. With the oblique reference to ‘this place’, the correspondent who supplied the account of Catherine Brew’s death to the *Alexandra Times* suggests that there was a local characteristic to this community, but we do not know if it was Richmond, or Woods Point more broadly, that they were referring to.

One final observation of how Catherine Brew’s social interactions and relationships illustrate the complexities of community making draws on her death certificate.¹⁰⁷ This tells us that Catherine was born in Fermanagh, Ireland and had married William Brew in County Clare prior to their arrival in Victoria in 1860. The burial service was conducted by Woods Point’s Catholic Priest, Father Patrick Courtney, and was witnessed by James Miller and John Bowen, two prominent Irishmen in the township.¹⁰⁸ Fraser’s study of Irish women on New Zealand’s west-coast goldfields argues that ethnicity did not play as prominent a part in the formation of social networks as other ties, such as ‘religion, family, class and locality’.¹⁰⁹ Fraser’s study draws on personal correspondence to examine these Irish women’s sense of identity and belonging, but with no first-hand account of Catherine Brew’s experiences in Woods Point it is more difficult to uncover whether her Irish-Catholic background influenced her sense of identity and belonging in Woods Point. The most we can say is that her death certificate suggests that she was at least recognised as an Irish-Catholic, even if her sense of belonging to community was more varied than this. Nonetheless, as we shall see later in this thesis, accounts of the accidental deaths of local miners provide some evidence of reciprocal relationships among Irish-Catholics, both within and outside Woods Point.

Although an Irish miner’s wife accustomed to physical labour may not have fit the middle-class ideal of respectability, Catherine Brew’s activities — and those of other miner’s wives in Woods Point — nonetheless provided their families with some domestic comforts, and

¹⁰⁷ Catherine Brew, 30 June 1868, Deaths registered in the District of Woods Point, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹⁰⁸ James Miller (father of Marion Miller Knowles) and John Bowen were related by marriage — James was married to John’s sister, Anne — and the two men were also engaged together in business and on the local council, providing us with another example of how social interaction and relationships helped to make community.

¹⁰⁹ Fraser, “Irish Women’s Networks,” 472.

together their relationships helped to create fragile webs of community on the goldfields. In the next section we explore the activities of other married women who provided domesticity on the goldfields, but whose circumstances challenged the middle-class notion of masculinity and femininity built upon men as providers and women as dependents.

4.4 Desertion, Widowhood, and Work

In their study of the English middle classes Davidoff and Hall observe that in addition to women's unpaid work running a household, some middle-class women contributed their labour to the family enterprise by running complementary businesses with their husbands, or drawing upon their domestic skills and education to entertain clients, care for staff, and assist with clerical tasks.¹¹⁰ Bishop's study of colonial business women in Sydney builds upon Davidoff and Hall to show that women from a variety of backgrounds were invisible in the colonial economy. Evidence from a range of records shows that women supported themselves and their families by running a variety of small and larger businesses, such as stores, hotels, schools, servants' registries, theatres, and brothels, some independently and some with their husbands.¹¹¹

Woods Point was not a heavily populated urban centre such as Sydney, but a close study of a range of sources, including rate books, directories, and newspapers, reveals married women working in business, with or without their husbands, supplying some of the goods and services that other women used to create respectable homes, and thus establish cultural capital.¹¹² As the example of Caroline Russell shows, glimpses of the activities of young women who worked as servants in homes and businesses to provide domestic comfort can also be found in disparate sources. These reveal that, at times, their single status and perceived sexual vulnerability meant that their respectability was often questioned. Searching the rate books, directories, and licence notices in the local

¹¹⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 282-283

¹¹¹ Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*.

¹¹² PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Rate Book, Borough of Woods Point; Dixon and Young, *Butler's Wood's Point and Gipps Land General Directory*, 1866; *Mountaineer*, 1864-65; *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 1865-1867.

newspapers also reveals a number of women who operated licenced hotels or boarding houses in Woods Point.¹¹³ Eliza Whitelaw might not have regarded these women as respectable, and therefore part of the community she and her husband were attempting to make. But if we look more closely at some of these women's lives we find that although their backgrounds may have differed in class, religion or ethnicity, these women's circumstances were not that far removed from Eliza's experience, and those of other married women who accompanied their husbands to the goldfields.



Fig. 4.5: Gill, Samuel Thomas. Coffee Tent & Sly Grog Shop. Diggers Breakfast 1852.
State Library of Victoria.

¹¹³ PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Rate Book, Borough of Woods Point; *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 1865. Among the business women listed in the rate book are: Honoria Nugent (hotelkeeper, Scott Street), Mary Ann Young (butcher, Hurley Street), Mary Ayling (hotelkeeper, Scott Street), Elizabeth Lunness (or Lunnis) (hotelkeeper, Scott Street), Elizabeth Howard (hotelkeeper, Scott Street), Margaret Gilbert (hotelkeeper, Scott Street), and Ellen Kennedy (hotelkeeper, Scott Street).

Contemporary observers of the goldfields, such as William Howitt, Charles Thatcher and Samuel Thomas Gill [Fig. 4.5] helped immortalise the sly grog selling widow or deserted wife as a familiar trope of traditional goldfields scholarship.¹¹⁴ Recent feminist scholarship has untangled this myth to reveal the varied circumstances and agency of women in the liquor industry on the goldfields. Examples cited by Wright and Quick show that while individual women's circumstances varied, liquor licencing legislation and social mores generally supported widows women running hotels and boarding houses as an extension of their domestic responsibilities.¹¹⁵ Although women's hotel keeping activities, as Quick points out, 'blurred the space between a private domestic life typically seen as the preserve of women and the public life of commercial transactions and communal drinking typically seen as the preserve of men' some women were respected for the contribution their activities made to commercial community on these goldfields.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Howitt, *Land, Labor and Gold*, 339. In his account of the McIvor diggings near Heathcote in Victoria, William Howitt observed one well-known sly grog seller, Mrs Bunting. Later scholarship, discussed in my 2015 paper at the Australian Historical Association conference, has identified Mrs Bunting as Agnes Buntine, a farmer and bullock driver from Gippsland who drove cattle to the Stringer's Creek (Walhalla) goldfields, south of Woods Point, in 1862. For an account of Mrs Buntine relevant to this thesis see an excerpt from Richard Mackay's series, "Recollections of Early Gippsland Goldfields," *Gippsland Farmers' Journal*, 13 April 1915, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article92015359>. Charles Thatcher's song 'Poll, the Grog Seller' was initially published in *Colonial songster containing parts 1, 2, & 3 including all the choice local songs, parodies etc. of the celebrated Charles R. Thatcher* (Melbourne: Charlwood, Printers, 1858).

¹¹⁵ Wright, *Beyond the Ladies' Lounge*, 30-31; Quick, " 'The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram'," 152

¹¹⁶ Quick, " 'The Colonial Helpmeet Takes a Dram'," 152.

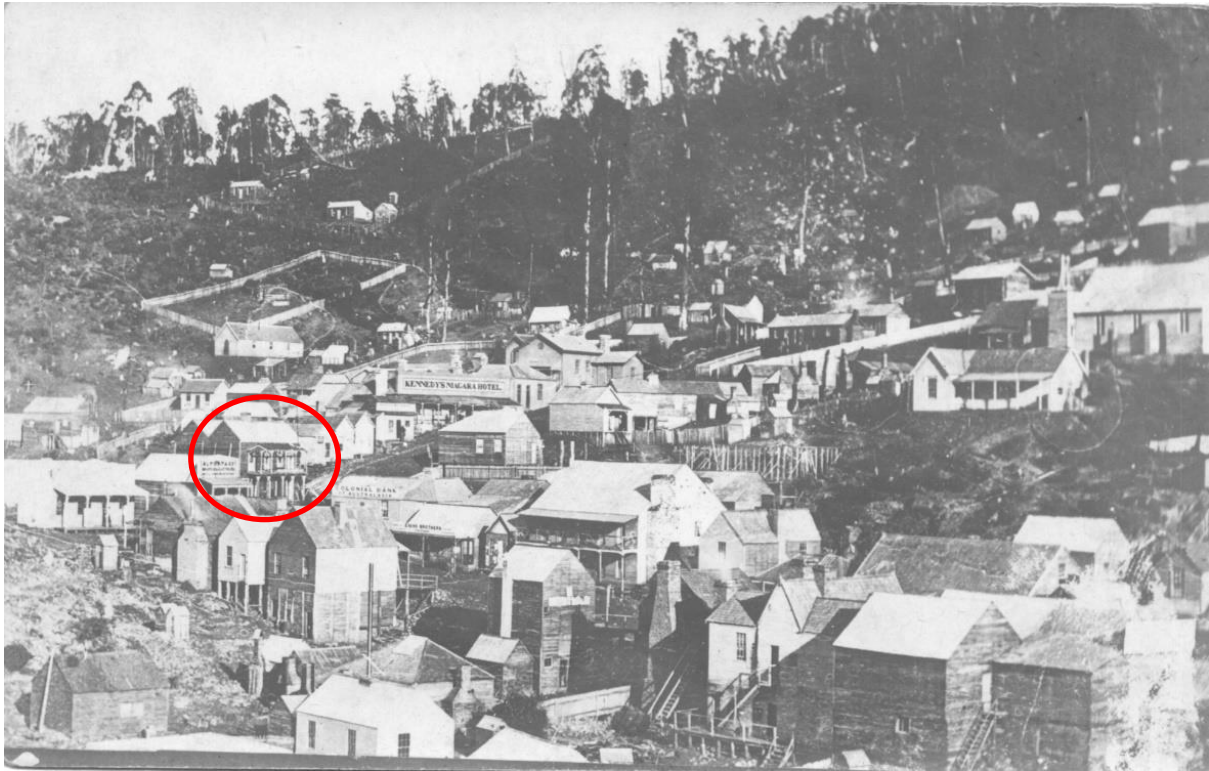


Fig. 4.6: Photographer unknown. Woods Point, ca. 1865.

Courtesy Rudi Paoletti.

The two-storey building on the corner of Bridge and Hurley streets I have identified may have been Bidelia Calcutt's Club House Hotel.

The most visible of the Woods Point hotels run by women — in the historical sources at least — was Bidelia Calcutt's Club House (or Club) Hotel on the corner of Bridge and Hurley streets. Her original hotel was torn down in the January 1865 fire, but she later rebuilt with the assistance of mine owner, John Drysdale. [Fig. 4.6] Since arriving in Victoria from Ireland in 1853 with her husband, William Hogan and daughter, Laura (also known as Maud), Bidelia had been both widowed and deserted. Hogan died in Melbourne less than a year after their arrival, and Bidelia's second husband, William Henry Calcutt — also Irish — deserted her in 1862.¹¹⁷ In her study of deserted wives in colonial Victoria Christina Twomey addresses the ways in which 'the deserted wife came to embody the domestic upheavals and transgressions on masculine and feminine roles that so worried middle-class moralists and

¹¹⁷ Details provided by Bidelia Calcutt on birth and marriage records suggest that William Hogan died in January 1854, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria. Hogan's desertion in 1862 is noted in probate records following Bidelia's death in 1873, PROV, VPRS 28/P0, Unit 130, File 11/406, Probate of Bidelia Calcutt, 1873.

reformers.¹¹⁸ The circumstances of Bidelia's desertion are unclear, but her response highlights some of the legislative changes made to support deserted wives and widows on the goldfields, and elsewhere in the colony. In April 1864, when she was living in Woods Point, Bidelia applied for an order under the newly legislated Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Statute 1864 to protect the earnings and property 'acquired by her own industry' since her desertion.¹¹⁹ Twomey explains that this Act consolidated the earlier Deserted Wives and Children Act 1840, which allowed deserted wives and mothers to sue for maintenance of their children, with divorce legislation passed in 1861.¹²⁰ Twomey notes that prior to this legislation some women who worked in business with their husbands could – and did – apply for maintenance payments from their husbands to protect property and earnings 'they felt were threatened by separation or desertion by their husbands' but most women who sought such orders under this earlier legislation were seeking to support their family.¹²¹ Bidelia and William Calcutt did not have any surviving children of their marriage. Nevertheless, the order – made by Warden Walter Butler, who was posted to Woods Point after his brief visit to Gaffneys Creek in 1860 – allowed her to better support her daughter from her first marriage.¹²²

Twomey points out that though deserted wives were generally regarded sympathetically by magistrates – the emphasis being that the husband had abandoned his moral responsibility to provide for his family – deserted wives who transgressed the boundaries of acceptable feminine behaviour might still be regarded as lacking respectability.¹²³ This, writes Twomey, 'was directly related to the dichotomous nature of contemporary femininity – chaste yet

¹¹⁸ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, xv.

¹¹⁹ PROV, VPRS 28/P0, Unit 130, File 11/406, Probate of Bidelia Calcutt, 1873.

¹²⁰ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 9.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹²² Walter Butler was later appointed warden to the Jordan goldfields. In August 1864 a farewell dinner was held for Butler at Reefers Hotel, attended by a number of mine owners and business men in the township, including Bidelia Calcutt's business partner, John Drysdale. In a report on the dinner Drysdale is said to have observed that since his own arrival in Woods Point he had become an 'independent man, and hoped every person present might become the same.' *Mountaineer*, 15 August 1864. Although toasts were made at the dinner to 'the ladies' it is not clear how many women were present. Nevertheless, Drysdale's use of the term 'person' in his wish for independence is noteworthy, and we might speculate that he was including women as well as men.

¹²³ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 86.

deeply sexualised, nurturing yet in need of male guidance and control.’¹²⁴ This was the dichotomy Bidelia Calcutt experienced in Woods Point. Despite the apparent support of Warden Butler, who probably issued her liquor licence as well, not everyone in Woods Point regarded Bidelia as a woman of ‘good fame and character’ as required under the terms of her liquor licence. Wright points out that in interpreting the ‘fame and character’ clause in the liquor licencing legislation magistrates were not concerned by a female licensee’s sexual conduct unless it interfered with her management of the public house.¹²⁵ But this legal interpretation did not always extend to public opinion. As part of their financial agreement over the rebuilding of her hotel, John Drysdale boarded at the Club House hotel when he stayed in Woods Point. Providing domestic comforts in her hotel and boarding house might have been regarded by some as an acceptable feminine activity, but in the opinion of some men in Woods Point Bidelia was more than a kindly landlady to Drysdale and other male boarders in her hotel.¹²⁶ Nonetheless, like some of the women in Twomey’s study Bidelia was forthright in making use of the legislative changes introduced to support deserted wives and children, and other legal options available to her, to support herself and her daughter.

Bidelia’s assertion of her rights may have contributed to the reputation she had among some men in the township, including Dr Nash. In the diary he kept between 1867 and 1873 Dr Nash described her as a woman of loose moral character, and the hotel as the place where ‘all the mischief of the town was hatched’.¹²⁷ The mischief to which Dr Nash was referring to was probably the bitter internal politics between members of the Woods Point Borough Council, which in 1866 led to Dr Nash being tried, and acquitted of the attempted rape of one of his female patients.¹²⁸ Lloyd writes that some of Dr Nash’s council rivals, including John Whitelaw, met in the Club House Hotel, and in 1867 when Whitelaw was elected Mayor a champagne lunch was held at the hotel to celebrate.¹²⁹ This suggests that

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge*, 26-27.

¹²⁶ Andrew Nash, diary, 24 June 1873, no page number, *John Brady Nash - Papers, 1867-1915*, MLMSS 245, State Library of New South Wales.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ *Age*, 2 April 1866, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155043158>. Elizabeth Naumburg accused Dr Nash of ‘exposing his person’ and throwing her onto her bed during a consultation at her home. Much was made in the trial of Mrs Naumburg’s delay in reporting the incident, and her former occupation as a barmaid at a grog shanty on the Jordan diggings.

¹²⁹ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 89.

despite Whitelaw's vision of a respectable middle-class community based on notions of masculinity and femininity he too moved between different kinds of community. Other reports support Dr Nash's view. In 1868 a fight in the hotel involving John Bowen and a stranger in the township provoked a correspondent to the *Mansfield Courier* to describe the Club House hotel as 'the usual "convincing" ground' for such 'scrimmages'.¹³⁰ Although the report does not lay specific blame on Bidelia Calcutt, the report suggests that she was probably guilty by association as Bowen and his 'satellites' and 'hangers-on' regularly drank at her hotel.

Bidelia Calcutt left Woods Point in 1870. From 1866 there had been a steady trickle of families and businesses leaving Woods Point due to the decline in mining activity. Some families, such as the Whitelaws, relocated to new goldfields at Alexandra, near Mansfield.¹³¹ Dr Nash and his family remained until about 1873, leading him to boast in his diary that he had successfully forced Bidelia to leave the township.¹³² Bidelia went to Melbourne instead, where she died on 18 October 1873.¹³³ Her daughter, her only surviving child, died seven years later.¹³⁴ Bidelia Calcutt's experience adds to our understanding of men's and women's community making in Woods Point. Bidelia's hotel, and perhaps Bidelia herself, played a part in facilitating the interaction and relationships that formed between a group of councillors. Eliza Whitelaw suggests in her reminiscences that the hotel was a kind of landmark for this part of the township, and this is supported by other sources.¹³⁵ Although the name of the lane behind Bidelia's hotel does not appear on John Hardy's official survey of the township in 1863, other sources suggest that it was known as Calcutt Street.¹³⁶ What this all suggests is that locality can form part of community making, but it is the individuals who interact and form relationships that primarily make community within these spaces.

¹³⁰ *Age*, 6 May 1868, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article176997608>.

¹³¹ Whitelaw, "Journal, Part 2."

¹³² Nash, diary, 24 June 1873, no page number.

¹³³ Bidelia Calcutt, 18 October 1873, Deaths registered in the District of Emerald Hill, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

¹³⁴ *Argus* 18 March 1880, 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5978763>.

¹³⁵ Whitelaw, "Reminiscences."; *Age*, 2 April 1866, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155043158>. Elizabeth Naumburg was questioned at Dr Nash's trial about the proximity of her house to the hotel. This is unsurprising given the hotel was nearby, but it might also suggest that there was some familiarity within the township about the location, and going on, at the hotel.

¹³⁶ *Wood's Point Time and Mountaineer*, 15 September 1866. In an advertisement for the public auction of the Naumburgs home and furnishing the allotment is noted as being located on 'Calcutt street'.

These are also gendered spaces. The name of Bidelia Calcutt's hotel – the Club House – is suggestive of a masculine space. However, like many women running hotels on the goldfields Bidelia was able to occupy this space, even if men like Dr Nash questioned her 'civilising' influence. Nevertheless, Bidelia could occupy this masculine space in ways that the wives of the councillors who met there could not.

What we do not fully know is the extent to which Bidelia Calcutt herself experienced a sense of belonging to a community in Woods Point. There are clues in some newspaper reports, but with no direct descendants to preserve a first-hand, subjective account that might have allowed us to study Bidelia's thoughts and feelings we have to rely on the subjective sources created by others. As his diary reveals, Dr Nash felt that Bidelia did not *belong* in his ideal of a respectable, middle-class community in Woods Point. Nor for that matter did Dr Nash include John Whitelaw in this ideal, which suggests that ethnicity or religion, as well as social status, may have been among the determinants shaping Dr Nash's view.¹³⁷ However, through this diary Dr Nash has helped me to unpick the interactions and relationships of women such as Bidelia Calcutt and include her in a story of community making that differed to his ideal.

4.5 Conclusion

Bidelia Calcutt's story is one example of subversive community making in Woods Point that challenged the attempts of Whitelaw and some of his contemporaries to make a respectable, middle-class community built upon the ideology of separate spheres. Although marriage and family formation was more evident in the goldfield township in the mid-1860s, the types of community that the interaction and relationships between women and men created were far more varied and conflictual than the static, homogenous ideal in classical community theory. Kinship was important, but so too were the relationships established between neighbouring businesses and families in shared geographic localities. Although the richness of some archival sources has meant that I have focused predominantly in this chapter on working-class Irish to highlight some of this diversity, there are glimpses of the

¹³⁷ Nash, diary, 23 June 1873.

interactions and relationships of other culturally diverse groups in other sources. This includes the activities of a number of Jewish families engaged in business, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, as well as some evidence of relationships between Chinese men and European women.¹³⁸ This suggests that there is further scope for other scholars to explore how diverse groups made community in Woods Point, and on the surrounding Upper Goulburn goldfields.

This diversity reminds us that Woods Point was not 'a goldfield community', but many separate and overlapping webs of community shaped by shared localities, gendered activities, values and beliefs. The patriarchal family, with its gendered division of roles, was a powerful basis for much of this community making, but the experiences of deserted wives and widows shows that this structure was also restrictive for women who had to support themselves and their families. Some women in these circumstances turned to other kinds of social relationships for support, at the risk of exclusion from the ideal community which some men and women imagined for Woods Point. In the next chapter we explore the impact of ideas about respectability and the gendered division of labour on the opportunities women had to contribute to the formation of civil society in Woods Point.

¹³⁸ *Age*, 2 April 1866, 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article155043158>. According to Elizabeth Naumburg, Dr Nash is said to have claimed that her servant, Susan Richey, was involved with a Chinese man.

Chapter 5: Taking the Lead: Citizenship and Community Formation, 1864-1870

5.1 Introduction

In March 1864 a tea party was held in Woods Point to celebrate the opening of the new Church of England schoolhouse. A brief report of the occasion forwarded to the *Argus* by a local correspondent noted that the party commenced with a feast of 'cakes, buns, biscuits and tea' for the children, who were then joined by a large number of 'ladies, reefers, miners, and professional gentlemen'.¹ A local band provided musical entertainment and speeches were made by Reverend F. C. Platts, local Member of the Legislative Assembly Mr Sinclair, and several others who were unnamed in the report. The correspondent noted that it was 'strange, yet true [that] the fair sex were nearly as numerous as the gentlemen.'² The surprise that this correspondent expressed at the number of women present was probably a reflection of the gender imbalance in the township at the time more than a commentary on women's public support for the school. This is suggested by other details in the report drawing attention to the activities of three married women, Mrs Badger, Mrs Behrens, and Mrs Mullens, 'whose industry and good humour contributed in no small degree to the success of the feast.'³ It is a treat for this historian to find a few married women individually identified and acknowledged for the contribution they made; too often they are simply referred to in newspaper reports as 'the ladies'.

The praise these three women received (two of whom have been identified in local histories as Helen Badger née Jacob and Jane Behrens née Jennings) is suggestive of middle-class notions of respectability, their public activities to support the school being an extension of their domestic activities and role as moral guardians to their families.⁴ However, in drawing on other sources to explore the family backgrounds of Helen Badger and Jane Behrens we find that their cultural identities were more complex than this: Helen was born into a Jewish

¹ *Argus* 28 March 1864, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5746323>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Gold in the Ranges*, 95, 29. Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 115-116.

family in Sheffield, England, while Jane was Irish and married to a German miner, Dittmer Behren.⁵ Mrs Mullens' background has not been identified. Nonetheless, these three women contributed their unpaid labour to support the Church of England school, regardless of their religious, cultural, or ethnic background, providing yet another example of the complexity of communal ties in Woods Point in this period.

In his history of the Upper Goulburn goldfields Brian Lloyd writes that 'it *was* [his emphasis] the men who took the lead' in establishing civil society in the region.⁶ Though he does not define what constituted 'civil society' in Woods Point his argument focuses on institutions such as courts, schools, and churches. He adds that though women's contributions were crucial they are, with the exception of teachers, mostly invisible in the historical record.⁷ However, the *Argus's* identification of Mrs Badger, Mrs Behrens, and Mrs Mullens suggests a more nuanced interpretation of women's (in)visibility is needed. Other more narrowly focused local histories do provide some evidence of women's activities, but they do not explore in detail how these activities might have contributed to the establishment of civil society more broadly in this period.⁸

In reflecting upon Lloyd's understanding of civic leadership I refer back to David Clark's discussion of 'community as sentiment', outlined in his 1973 overview of sociological theories of the concept of community. Clark writes that '[t]he two fundamental *communal*

⁵ Drawing on a range of online sources available via Ancestry and other genealogical websites, I have expanded on Lloyd's research on the Badgers and these sources suggest that Helen's parents, Samuel and Eve Jacob, were Jewish, see <http://www.cemeteryscribes.com/getperson.php?personID=I14066&tree=Cemeteries>. The scope of this study has not allowed for more detailed research on Helen's Jewish heritage using primary sources. However, school correspondence records and digitised newspapers confirm that the family of Helen's sister, Clara, who was living in Woods Point with her husband, Wolf Cohen, identified as Jewish, see PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 335, School Number 789, application dated 8 July 1865; *Hebrew Standard*, 8 June 1917, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page13439048>. Thomas Badger's background has not been identified. Some of the complexity of the religious identity, kinship and communal ties of Jewish families in Britain in the mid-nineteenth, including Sheffield where Helen and Clara were brought up, is addressed in Alysa Levene's "Jewish Households and Religious Identity in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain," *Journal of Family History* 43: 3 (2018), 281-301, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0363199018760658>. Jane Jennings's family background has not been established, but she is said to have been born in County Cavan. She married Hamburg-born Dittmer Behrens in Kilmore in 1862, see Eliza Jane Behrens, 1 November 1864, Births registered in the District of South Melbourne, Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

⁶ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 99.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Other examples of women's activities in support of education include: Morgan and Morgan, *Happy-Go-Lucky*, 20-27; Bailey and Bailey, *A Windy Morn of Matlock*, 52-55.

[his emphasis] elements of any social system are a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance.’⁹ Drawing on the work of Maclver and Page, Clark observes that solidarity can be defined as ‘all those sentiments which draw people together (sympathy, courtesy, gratitude, trust, and so on)’.¹⁰ Significance, he observes, refers to a group member’s participation and recognition by the group of the roles or functions they fulfil, which can lead to ‘a sense of achievement and a sense of fulfilment’.¹¹ While Tönnies’ ideal of community was of a fixed (and restrictive) hierarchy of roles and functions, Clark acknowledges different kinds of community.¹² Further, he suggests that both a sense of solidarity and a sense of significance are necessary for an individual to feel a sense of belonging to community.¹³

However, Clarke’s overview does not consider how gender might influence an individual’s sense of solidarity and significance. This is unsurprising given his study predates the widespread use of gender as a category of analysis in sociological and historical scholarship.¹⁴ Nor does Lloyd, whose focus was on mining activity, fully explore the ideological influences that have placed limits on the rights and opportunities for women to take a leadership role in public life and help shape civil society. However, looking at the public praise given to Helen Badger, Jane Behrens, and Mrs Mullens for their contribution to the opening of the Church of England schoolhouse allows us to consider how gender influenced the kind of roles and functions women had within gendered, religious, or locally-based communities. This suggests that they were acknowledged for their *supporting* role within the congregation befitting the ideology of separate spheres.

⁹ Clark, “The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination,” 404.

¹⁰ Ibid.; R.M. Maclver and Charles H. Page *Society: An Introductory Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1961), 293. Among the elements of ‘community sentiment’ Maclver and Page outline is what they describe as ‘we’ feeling or sentiment, a ‘collective participation in an indivisible unity’. However, by noting that this sentiment ‘is found whenever men have a common interest’ their argument reflects the gendered nature of earlier sociological analysis of community.

¹¹ Clark, “The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination,” 404.

¹² Ibid., 409.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ In drawing on Hilda Jennings’ study of Barton Hill, an area of social housing in Bristol, Clark does refer to the different spaces and activities in which men and women derive a sense of significance, but understandably does not take this further, see Clark “The Concept of Community: A Re-Examination,” 405-406.

In extending Clarke's scholarship, this chapter draws on feminist studies on gender, the ideology of separate spheres, and citizenship to explore the relationship between the public acknowledgement of women's paid and unpaid labour and women's sense of solidarity and significance within various kinds of community in Woods Point. Feminist scholars have re-examined the middle decades of the nineteenth century to explore the connections between gender and citizenship, arguing that there is a connection between women's public activities in business and philanthropy in this period and later campaigns for women's rights.¹⁵ Studies on the connections between gender and citizenship in the nineteenth century are not new, but typically they have focused on campaigns for political rights which reached their peak in the latter decades of the century. However, some scholars have argued that the impetus for these campaigns began much earlier.¹⁶ Though not specifically focused on goldfield settlements, this recent scholarship suggests other ways of interpreting women's contributions to civil society; as citizens.

In this chapter I question Lloyd's argument that women's contributions to civil society on the Upper Goulburn are invisible in the historic record by making a close study of local newspapers, together with a number of archival sources, to identify women's paid and unpaid activities that supported local churches, schools, and hospital. Lloyd suggests that teachers are the exception to the argument that women's contribution to civil society is less visible in historic sources, but though some are mentioned we learn little about the married and single women who taught in the denominational and Common school system in Woods Point in the 1860s.¹⁷ Feminist scholarship has done much to make women's teaching activities more visible by drawing on sources such as Education Department correspondence and personal papers; the connection between women's education and later suffrage campaigns made teachers a pertinent subject for this earlier scholarship on women's

¹⁵ Catherine Bishop and Angela Woollacott, "Business and Politics as Women's Work: The Australian Colonies and the Mid-Nineteenth Century Women's Movement," *Journal of Women's History* 28, no. 1, 2016, 84-106. This article forms the basis for Woollacott's chapter, "Settler Women, Work, and Debating the Gender of Citizenship", *Settler Society in the Australian Colonies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 123-151. ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁶ Wright, " 'New Brooms They Say Sweep Clean' ." 310; Woollacott, "Settler Women," 128-129; Bishop and Woollacott. "Business and Politics as Women's Work," 92.

¹⁷ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 100-105.

rights.¹⁸ Other studies that explore women's activities in public life during the nineteenth century such as the work of Glenda Strachan et al on women's work in the Hunter Valley region, Annette Shiell's study of charity bazaars, and Anne Doggett's work on musical life in Ballarat offer further insights to add to our understanding of women's public activities as an expression of citizenship.¹⁹ In adding to this scholarship I draw on similar types of sources to highlight the visibility of women's public activities in Woods Point, while also being mindful of Doggett's caveat that sources such as newspapers tell us more about '[t]he special, rather than the everyday'.²⁰ In using gender to study the kind of civil society the inhabitants were attempting to establish in Woods Point I also apply gender to Clark's discussion of solidarity and significance in community formation. What does public recognition of women's activities tell us about how gender influenced the roles and functions in which women could achieve a sense of solidarity and significance, and therefore a sense of belonging, to community in Woods Point? In addressing these questions, the chapter begins with a brief overview of the evolving meaning of citizenship and its application in feminist scholarship, before addressing two examples of the ways in which women in Woods Point acted as citizens: in education, and fundraising.

5.2 Women and Citizenship

Historians and sociologists have discussed how the meaning of citizenship has changed over time and in different places. Helen Irving writes that prior to 1949 the legal term for those people born in Australia, Britain or its colonies, and those who became naturalised, was

¹⁸ Marjorie Theobald, *Knowing Women: Origin of Women's Education in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Cambridge: New York, Cambridge University Press, 1996). Some scholarship on teachers and suffrage campaigns draw on the case study of Clara Weekes, part of the Weekes-Tisdall family of teachers who taught at Walhalla, see Judith Biddington, "The Weekes Family" in *Not So Eminent Victorians*, ed. R.J.W. Selleck and Martin Sullivan (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1984), 132-148; Deborah Towns, "'Youth and Hope and Vigour in Her Heart': Clara Weekes, a 'Born Teacher' and First-Wave Feminism," *Victorian Historical Journal* 79:2 (2008), 277-295.

¹⁹ Glenda Strahan, Ellen Jordan, and Hilary Carey, "Women's Work in a Rural Community: Dungog and the Upper Williams Valley, 1880-1900," *Labour History* 78 (2000), 33-52, <https://search.informit-com-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=200010869;res=IELAPA>; Annette Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation and Fancywork: Charity Bazaars in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012); Anne Doggett, "'And for harmony most ardently we long': Musical Life in Ballarat, 1851-1871, Volume 1" (PhD thesis, University of Ballarat, 2009).

²⁰ Doggett, "'And For Harmony Most Ardently We Long'," 20.

‘subjects’, rather than citizens, of the British Empire.²¹ While noting that definitions of citizenship are complex, American scholar Nancy Cott also points to a minimal definition of a person, in this case an ‘American national’ who owed allegiance, and was guaranteed protection, by the state.²² However, the complexities of citizenship arise when examining the extension of rights to persons by the state.

In his oft-cited essay “Citizenship and Social Class” T.H. Marshall argued that there are three components of citizenship — civil, political, and social rights — and pointed to the expansion of these rights for individuals in Britain, with a particular focus on the nineteenth century.²³ Marshall’s argument is problematic for feminist scholars, or those studying race, because, they argue, his definition of a citizen is too narrow, focused on the acquisition of civil and political rights, such as the right to own property, control one’s income, and vote in parliamentary elections, that have benefited White men.²⁴ Crawford and Maddern argue that ‘any history limited to formal citizenship rights ignores the myriad informal ways in which citizenship is acted out by various groups of people within one community at any one time.’²⁵ Focusing on women, the contributors to Crawford and Maddern’s *Women as Australian Citizens* highlight the ideological influences that have shaped women’s exclusion from citizenship, and the formal and informal ways some women contributed to civil society that contested this exclusion.²⁶ In addressing the connections between rights and duties their study reflects the parallel focus of much feminist scholarship on citizenship in Australia, Britain and the United States, exploring the different ways women were already acting as citizens through their participation in public life and how they dealt with their exclusion from full citizenship. As Kim Rubenstein writes elsewhere in her discussion of women’s leadership as an expression of citizenship, ‘citizenship activity occurs as much in

²¹ Helen Irving, “Citizenship,” in *The Oxford Companion to Australian History*, eds. Graeme Davison, John Hirst, Stuart Macintyre (South Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 126.

²² Nancy Cott, “Marriage and Women’s Citizenship in the United States, 1830-1934,” *The American Historical Review* 103, no. 5 (1998), 1448.

²³ T.H. Marshall, ‘Citizenship and Social Class’, 1950, 30, <http://academtext.narod.ru/MarshallCitizenship.pdf>.

²⁴ Patricia Crawford and Phillipa Maddern, eds., *Women as Australian Citizens: Underlying Histories* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 2-3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 6.

civil society and in broader social issues and is not reliant on the formal expressions of citizenship through voting and political office'.²⁷

When it comes to studies of women's activities in the nineteenth century, feminist scholars have not always agreed on the extent to which women contested their exclusion from formal citizenship. Rita Farrell observes that amidst the establishment of self-government in some Australian colonies, women's activities were increasingly confined to the domestic sphere, but that this included informal citizenship activities such as philanthropy.²⁸ As Twomey notes, 'women's moral guardianship of their homes and families [...] justified the extension of these qualities to the more public practice of charitable work.'²⁹ While Quartly has shown that some women became politically active within a frame of gendered ideas of citizenship late in the nineteenth century, she argues that in the mid-nineteenth century when men gained more rights as citizens, most women accepted their continuing exclusion, or did not contest it publicly in order to preserve their respectability.³⁰ This argument has been contested more recently by scholars such as Wright, Bishop and Woollacott. In separate studies they have argued that some women did speak publicly about their desire for political rights, and acted in other ways to advance women's status as citizens.³¹ Drawing on a wider range of evidence from the contemporary press than was accessible to earlier feminist scholars this recent scholarship points out that these debates were taking place in metropolitan and rural areas.³²

²⁷ Kim Rubenstein, "Epilogue: Reflections on Women and Leadership through the Prism of Citizenship," in *Diversity in Leadership: Australian Women, Past and Present*, eds. Joy Damousi, Kim Rubenstein, and Mary Tomsic (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 338.

²⁸ Rita Farrell, "Women and Citizenship in Colonial Australia," in *Women as Australian Citizens*, eds. Crawford and Maddern (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 139.

²⁹ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 96.

³⁰ Marian Quartly, "Mothers and Fathers and Brothers and Sisters: The AWA and the ANA and Gendered Citizenship," *Journal of Australian Studies* 17, no. 37 (1993), 30, doi: 10.1080/14443059309387138; Marian Quartly, "Making Male and Female Worlds," in *Creating a Nation*, eds. Patricia Grimshaw, Marilyn Lake, Ann McGrath, and Marian Quartly, 102 (Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1994).

³¹ Wright has written extensively on this in relation to Victoria, see Wright, "New Brooms They Sweep Clean," Wright, "Golden Opportunities: The Early Origins of Women's Suffrage in Victoria," *Victorian Historical Journal* 79, no. 2 (November 2008), 210-223, and Wright, *Forgotten Rebels*. Bishop and Woollacott focus more broadly on the Australian colonies in "Business and Politics as Women's Work," 84-106.

³² Bishop and Woollacott, "Business and Politics as Women's Work," 91.

However, a close study of Woods Point newspapers has shown that while political issues, featured regularly in the newspapers, there is little evidence that women's rights in particular were being publicly debated in Woods Point in the mid-1860s.³³ This does not suggest that the inhabitants of the township were not aware of, or did not have a view on the subject, but rather that those editing the newspapers did not make a feature of such debates. That said, when the Borough of Woods Point held its first election in July 1865 the *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer* did report that about twenty of 'the fair sex' voted, which they were entitled to do as property owners or ratepayers under the 1863 Municipalities Amendment Bill.³⁴ The newspaper does not make any further comment on the presence of these women at the election, but by drawing attention to them the newspaper was probably highlighting their exceptional status as voters. Comparing this report with the earliest available Burgess (ratepayers) roll, in 1866, suggests that most of these women were hotelkeepers, among them Bidelia Calcutt of the Club House Hotel.³⁵ We have seen already how some of Bidelia's informal citizenship activities set her apart from other married women in the township, and this is also true of her formal citizenship activities. The varied response from some men in the township to these activities suggests that, despite the various ways some women used the limited legal and political rights available to them, the public recognition of women's roles and functions in community making were still firmly limited to the domestic sphere. If Bidelia — or the other women who voted in the 1865 council election — objected to their further exclusion from political rights then evidence for this has not survived in the available sources.

³³ Among the political news addressed in local newspapers was the general election for the Victorian Legislative Assembly held between December 1865 and January 1866. Mine owner and sometime boarder at the Club House Hotel, John Drysdale was induced to stand for the Murray District but later withdrew. Brewer (and later Queensland parliamentarian) Patrick Perkins was another local candidate, but lost to the incumbent John Orr, see *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer*, 22 December 1865, 2 January 1866, and 16 January 1866.

³⁴ *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer*, 8 July 1865. Woollacott also discusses early voting rights in Woollacott, *Settler Society in the Colonies*, 102. See also Victoria. Parliament., "No. CLXXXIV. An Act to Consolidate and Amend the Laws relating to Municipal Institutions, Section XLIV," 221, http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/vic/hist_act/tmca1863291/.

³⁵ PROV, VPRS 1278/P, Unit 1, 1866. Other women listed on the Burgess roll for 1866 were: Mary Ayling (Hotel, Scott Street), Margaret Campbell (Hotel, Scott Street), Margaret Gilbert (Hotel, Scott Street), Elizabeth Jobson (Hut, Corry Street), Ellen Kennedy (Hotel, Scott Street), Elizabeth Lunness (Hotel, Scott Street), Margaret Moore (Hut, Morning Star Hill), Mary Robinson (House, Scott Street), Mary Ann Spiller (Hut, Morning Star Hill), and Susan Williams (House, Scott Street).

Formal expressions of citizenship — albeit limited to voting in municipal elections — were available to only a small number of women in Woods Point. Instead, what we find in local newspapers, and other sources, are examples of women's informal citizenship activities. In this next section we explore how some women expressed their citizenship through education — as teachers, and as parents — and what this tells us about women's community making in Woods Point.

5.3 Religion, Education, and Women's Citizenship

In October 1864 the *Mountaineer* addressed the importance of religion and education to the development of the Upper Goulburn goldfields.

We look upon the progress of religion, the erection of places of worship, and the establishing of schools in any district as the surest and most satisfactory evidence that can be offered in proof of the good character of the inhabitants as well as the present and future prosperity of such district.³⁶

Serle writes that though earlier histories of the gold rush period exaggerated the impact gold had upon religious observance, by the late 1850s the number of clergy and churches around Victoria had increased and 'adherence to religion may well have been proportionally much greater than before the gold rushes, despite the secular tendencies of the time.'³⁷ As the *Mountaineer's* editorial suggests, religious observance was also intertwined with the provision of education. However, as Serle notes, the support of religion in the education system in Victoria in the 1850s was inconsistent, with the State supporting both 'denominational' (church) and 'national' (secular, but with some religious instruction) schools until the introduction of the Common Schools Act in 1862.³⁸ According to Serle, the tension between the two systems stemmed from differences about the purpose of education: to indoctrinate children into a preferred religion, or to educate 'future citizens'.³⁹

³⁶ *Mountaineer*, 24 October 1864.

³⁷ Serle, *The Golden Age*, 337.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 346.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

The Common Schools Act was the first step towards State-funded secular education, which later became free and compulsory with the introduction of the 1872 Education Act.⁴⁰

While we do not have firm evidence of the religious affiliation of the residents of Woods Point in the boom years of the mid-1860s, the data from the 1861 census suggests that the wider Upper Goulburn goldfields region was predominantly a mix of Protestant and Catholic faiths.⁴¹ [Tables 9 & 10] In 1861, around 47 per cent of the 385 inhabitants of the Upper Goulburn region identified as Church of England and Episcopalian Protestants, 29 per cent were Catholic, and 13 per cent were Presbyterian.⁴² If we compare these figures with the goldfields population more generally in 1861 we can see that the Church of England and Catholic population were more numerous on the Upper Goulburn, but the percentage of Presbyterians was the same at around 13 per cent.⁴³ We know from other sources that inhabitants came to the region in the mid-1860s from a variety of religious backgrounds. A number of families with Jewish heritage can be identified in the township; among them, the family of Helen Badger's sister, Clara Cohen.⁴⁴ However, when the next census was conducted in 1871 the population remained predominantly Christian.⁴⁵

If the above figures reflect the religious beliefs of the majority of the Woods Point population in the mid-1860s boom it helps explain why the Church of England and Catholic churches were the first to establish churches and denominational schools in Woods Point.

⁴⁰ The introduction of 'free, compulsory and secular' education is described in L.J. Blake, *Vision and Realisation: a Centenary History of State Education in Victoria* (Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973), 167-207.

⁴¹ Victoria. Parliament, *Census of Victoria, 1861. Population Tables*. "Table XII: Religions of the People," (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1863), 182-183.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Victoria Parliament, *Census of Victoria, 1861*, "Religions of the People," ix. Serle writes that Methodists were the most successful denomination on the goldfields, particularly at Bendigo, because a congregation could be established with a lay preacher, see *The Golden Age*, 342. However, the number of Methodist inhabitants on the Upper Goulburn in 1861 were not as numerous as they were elsewhere on the goldfields.

⁴⁴ In addition to Helen Badger and her sister, Clara Cohen, storekeeper Edward Naumburg can also be identified as Jewish, see *Hebrew Standard of Australasia*, 5 August 1898, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article121633676>. There were probably other families of Jewish faith as well, as the *Mountaineer* made a point of noting the local observance of the 'Day of Atonement' [Yom Kippur] on 8 October 1864, see *Mountaineer*, 17 October 1864.

⁴⁵ Victoria Parliament, *Census of Victoria, 1871. Population Tables*, "Table XIII, Summary of Cities, Towns, and Boroughs-Shewing the Religions of Persons, Males, and Females, living in each City, Town, and Borough," (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1874), 35.

As Lloyd outlines in *Gold in the Ranges*, in 1863 the township gained both its first Church of England clergyman, Reverend F. C. Platts, and its first Catholic clergyman, Father Patrick Kavanagh, and work soon began on establishing churches and denominational schools.⁴⁶ Aid was also sought for the establishment of a Common School.⁴⁷



Fig. 5.1: Dale, Charles William. Ch. of Eng.[i.e. Church of England] Woods Point. 1907.

State Library of Victoria.

St Mary's Church of England opened in 1865.

However, Lloyd's overview suggests that establishing churches and schools in the township was not straight-forward, and depended on much more than 'the good character of the inhabitants', as asserted by the *Mountaineer*. Lloyd writes that in March 1864 a committee of local men associated with the Church of England petitioned the Board of Education for aid for the Common school.⁴⁸ This petition was unsuccessful but the schoolhouse opened regardless with Mr and Mrs Butler as teachers. Lloyd notes that the during the Butlers' time

⁴⁶ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 102-103.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

at the school the Board of Education did not inspect the school, and as a result the Butlers did not receive the government salary they were entitled to. A misunderstanding with Church of England minister Reverend Cooper and his wife, who also undertook teaching duties, over the use of the schoolhouse added to the Butlers' difficulties and led to Mr Butler resigning from the school and appealing again to the Board for payment of his salary, which he eventually received in June 1865. However, when I reviewed the school correspondence files compiled by the Board of Education that Lloyd drew upon in his précis of the saga I found several details that he did not mention; Elizabeth Butler's letter in support of their case, and James Edward Butler's appeal for his wife's work to be compensated.⁴⁹

In her 1996 study of women's education in nineteenth-century Australia, Marjorie Theobald observes that a close study of Education department correspondence can yield evidence of the 'material circumstances of teachers' lives'.⁵⁰ In one case study of two Victorian teachers Theobald shows that correspondence between teachers, school committees and the Education department can, at times, provide glimpses of teachers' personal lives and relationships with the communities in which they worked.⁵¹ Such finely grained studies of women's lives drawn from archival sources are now conventions of feminist scholarship thanks to the earlier work of scholars such as Theobald. Further developments in digital technology that have enhanced our access to archival sources have meant that the fragments we find in these files can be more easily pieced together with other records to provide a more comprehensive understanding of teachers' lives. The school correspondence relating to Woods Point reveals similar details about James and Elizabeth Butler's 'material circumstances'.

On 11 March 1865, just over a year to the day that they were appointed to Woods Point, Elizabeth Butler wrote to Richard Hale Budd, Inspector-General of the Board of Education, seeking answers to her husband's repeated questions about the non-payment of his

⁴⁹ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, File 788, Building Files: Primary Schools, Elizabeth Butler to Mr Budd, 11 March 1865; J.E. Butler to Mr Summer, 3 June 1865.

⁵⁰ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 174.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

salary.⁵² Under the Common Schools Act 1862 teachers were paid an annual salary by the Board of Education based on their qualifications, but also received school fees from parents and bonuses based on student attendance figures and results.⁵³ As head teacher with a first division of competency James Butler was entitled to a minimum payment of 100 pounds but if average attendance figures reached 40 or more he was entitled to further bonuses.⁵⁴ Payment for results was contingent on the visit by an Inspector. As Elizabeth reminded Budd, despite assurances to the contrary the Woods Point school was never inspected by the Board in the eleven months she and James ran the school. Elizabeth wrote that they had kept the school open until January 1865 but 'could not continue to waste our time and health any longer with out [sic] payment.'⁵⁵ Elizabeth noted that she was writing, rather than her husband, as he was unwell owing to 'anxiety at not being able to meet his expenses.' Woods Point was a 'very expensive place to live in' and it was 'most unjust' to delay payment for work that was 'hardly earned'. Elizabeth concluded her letter by adding that she did not have money herself to meet their expenses, and therefore her husband's salary was desperately needed. In turn, James drew attention in his letters to the Board to the eleven months Elizabeth had 'devoted' to teaching at the school without payment.⁵⁶

Theobald notes that under the National and Common School systems there was a preference for married couples to work as teachers, particularly in small country schools with a mixed student population.⁵⁷ Married female teachers were regarded as a civilising influence and bestowed respectability upon the school; single male teachers were thought to be an immoral threat to female students. Although this status gave married women some 'market value' in the system, Theobald argues that they remained inferior to male teachers and this is evident in the limited responsibilities and salary they were given.⁵⁸ This is also confirmed by Elizabeth Butler's teacher record. We can see that she was employed as sewing mistress in the East Brighton and Portland schools where James was head teacher

⁵² PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, Elizabeth Butler to Mr Budd, 11 March 1865.

⁵³ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, Vol. 1, 120-121.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, Elizabeth Butler to Mr Budd, 11 March 1865

⁵⁶ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, J.E. Butler to Mr Summer, 3 June 1865.

⁵⁷ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 141.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 142.

(as she was at the Sheepwash school, near Clunes, after they left Woods Point), but her teaching work at Woods Point was not recognised by the Board of Education.⁵⁹

The *Mountaineer's* editorial in October 1864 also addressed the difficulties Mr and Mrs Butler were having in supporting themselves and the school since it opened in March 1864.

That a man of education and intelligence, with his wife, should be induced to give their time and talents for a period of nine months, in such an expensive place as this, and that the question of their daily bread should so frequently be referred to in an inspector's report, is nothing short of gross injustice, and a direct violation of the important trusts which have been placed in the hands of the Board of Education.⁶⁰

However, the editor's distinction between Mr and Mrs Butler (highlighting James' 'education and intelligence' but not Elizabeth's) is a further reminder of the gendered nature of citizenship, and of the imagined inferiority of women. Like the women at the Church of England school opening earlier in the year, Mrs Butler was in a supporting, rather than a leadership role, at the school. This view is illustrated elsewhere in the editorial on the Butler case when the *Mountaineer* criticised parents who did not send their sons and daughters to school.⁶¹ The editorial suggested that education made children good citizens, though it was the public benefit that sons were educated for – 'the means of gaining an honourable livelihood, of proving a creditable member of society, and of greatly benefitting his fellow creatures' – that the editorial focused upon.⁶² This suggests that the newspaper's definition of participatory citizenship — respectable employment and public service to the broader community — was restricted to men.

This distinction between men's and women's education is also evident in the Common School curriculum. When Reverend Platts visited the Woods Point school in May 1864 he noted that there were 29 children in attendance and that the Butlers 'appeared to be quite conversant with the methods and subjects of a sound English education [and] discipline was

⁵⁹ PROV, VPRS 13579/P1, Unit 2, Teacher Record Number 453, Butler, Elizabeth.

⁶⁰ *Mountaineer*, 24 October 1864.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

quite satisfactory.’⁶³ As Theobald notes in her discussion of female education the phrase ‘a sound English education’ referred to ‘a comprehensive program in all the elements of the English language – literature, grammar, composition, elocution, and calligraphy – with history, geography, arithmetic and the elements of natural science.’⁶⁴ Alongside this was the ‘accomplishments curriculum’ aimed at girls, which focused on music, art and modern languages.⁶⁵ The curriculum offered under the Common Schools Act was not that different and was dominated by, as Blake notes, ‘reading, handwriting, arithmetic, grammar, and geography’.⁶⁶ Singing and drawing classes were special subjects, but needlework was compulsory for girls by 1869.⁶⁷ If we look more closely at the petitions and attendance records we can identify some of the parents supporting this ‘sound English education’ for their children. At the same time, we can see that some families’ circumstances made it difficult to send their children to school.

School correspondence files, which can include petitions for aid and attendance rolls can help to piece together the everyday lives of the families whose children attended these schools. If we examine the petitions signed by the parents and guardians in support of aid for the Woods Point school we find that though the *Mountaineer* credited fathers for supporting their children’s education as ‘good citizens’ there is fragmentary evidence of the practical support that some women gave for their children’s education.⁶⁸ Midwife Sarah Dean added the name of her 14 year-old daughter, Mary Ann to a petition for aid in July 1864.⁶⁹ Mary Harris and Sarah McWaters also added the names of their respective children to the same petition.

Among Sarah McWaters’ neighbours in Scott Street were hotelkeepers Susan Williams and Honoria Nugent, who also added the names of their children to the petitions supporting funding for Woods Point schools. Unlike some of the mothers whose children attended the

⁶³ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, daily roll for quarter ending 30 June 1864.

⁶⁴ Theobald, *Knowing Women*, 14-15.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁶ Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, Vol. 1, 108.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 110-112.

⁶⁸ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788; VPRS 795/P0, Unit 335, School Number 789, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 436, School Number 930.

⁶⁹ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, 64/7474, 27 July 1864.

school, Susan and Honora were independent women, though not by choice. Susan had been married twice: widowed by her first husband, and probably deserted by her second.⁷⁰ By 1864 she was running a hotel in Scott Street, and was probably one of the women who voted in the first Borough Council election in 1865.⁷¹ Susan's daughters Cecilia and Susan attended the Common School for only two weeks in the April to June quarter in 1864, and the attendance roll shows that Susan Williams did not pay the two shillings she was charged.⁷² The cost of sending her two daughters to school may have been one reason they did not attend more regularly, and she may have preferred to have the girls help out in the hotel. When Honoria Nugent signed a petition in October 1865 supporting funding for a Catholic school in Woods Point she was trying to support herself and her four children through hotel keeping after her husband died.⁷³ That same month she found herself temporarily in the Woods Point lock-up after being declared insolvent.⁷⁴ For the *Mountaineer* to suggest that support for schools was an indication of the 'good character of the inhabitants' — and by inclination suggesting that those who did not support the school were not of 'good character' — seems churlish when some of these women were doing their best to support their families in difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, this account suggests that a variety of circumstances influenced the making of community — and for some, the exclusion from community — in Woods Point in this period.

James and Elizabeth Butler's experience in Woods Point illustrates the gendered nature of citizenship, in particular the tension between the role of female teachers as 'moral guardians' and educators of 'future citizens', and their exclusion from formal citizenship. While the *Mountaineer* did give Elizabeth Butler some public recognition for her work as a teacher, the conditions of her employment under the Common Schools Act meant that she could only play a supporting role to her husband. Nevertheless, Elizabeth's appeal to the Board of Education provides us with a brief glimpse of her agency in navigating these

⁷⁰ Susan Williams, 6 October 1902, Deaths registered in the District of Bairnsdale, Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria.

⁷¹ PROV, VPRS 11458/P1, Unit 1, Borough of Woods Point rate book, 1865.

⁷² PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 334, School Number 788, Daily roll for the quarter ending June 1864.

⁷³ PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 436, School Number 930, 65/11014, 4 October 1865.

⁷⁴ PROV, VPRS 759/P0, Unit 94, File 9399, Proceedings in Insolvent Estates, Insolvency Schedule, Mrs Honoria Nugent, 1 October 1865.

restrictions. A signature on a petition, or a child's name on the roll, does not tell us about the specific aspirations some mothers may have had in sending their children — boys and girls — to the school, but these sources too provide some evidence of these women's agency. Drawing on other sources to identify these women's 'material circumstances' suggests that there were many reasons why parents did — and did not — send their children to school. While girls were undoubtedly being educated to be 'good citizens', the curriculum suggests that in this period their roles and functions as citizens were understood to be predominantly in the domestic sphere. This is also suggested by the inconsistent attendance of some girls whose unpaid labour may have been of more value to their parents. While I have been unable to identify if any of the girls who attended the Woods Point schools were involved in later campaigns to achieve women's formal citizenship rights in the early twentieth century, in the last chapter we shall see how at least one schoolgirl — Marion Miller — became an active and engaged citizen in this period through informal citizenship activities, including in positions of leadership.⁷⁵

5.4 Bazaars, Concerts, and Choirs: Fundraising as Citizenship

The opening of the Church of England schoolhouse in March 1864 was not the only time we see married women in Woods Point acknowledged for their public contribution, in a supporting role, to civil society. In November 1865 Father Patrick Courtney hosted a charity bazaar to raise funds for extensions to the Catholic Church on Ellery Street.⁷⁶ A report of the bazaar published in the *Wood's Point Leader* noted that Father Courtney particularly credited the bazaar's success to women. [Fig. 5.2] Mrs Perkin, Mrs Nash, Mrs Christian, Mrs Calcutt, Mrs Rogers, Mrs Riordan, Mrs Evans, Mrs Butler, and Misses Knight, O'Shea, Reagh, Murphy, and Browning were all acknowledged for the 'cheerful and untiring energy they

⁷⁵ Other schoolgirls educated on the Upper Goulburn and in Gippsland were involved in formal citizenship campaigns. Temperance campaigner, Bessie Harrison Lee, spent part of her childhood near Enochs Point. Harrison Lee later wrote that she attended school at Enochs Point, but because of her delicate constitution only lasted six months, see Harrison Lee, *One of Australia's Daughters*, 23-24. Mary Fullerton, who was educated at Glenmaggie in Gippsland, was later involved in suffrage campaigns, see Barbara Lemon, "Fullerton, Mary Elizabeth (1868 - 1946)", *The Australian Women's Register*, <http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/AWE3690b.htm>, last modified 27 October 2008. Mary's aunt, Annie Fullerton was married to Richard Mackay and lived in Woods Point, see Morgan, *Foothill Farmers*, 51.

⁷⁶ *Wood's Point Leader*, 28 November 1865.

displayed at their respective stalls'.⁷⁷ Two hundred pounds are said to have been raised for the church building fund.

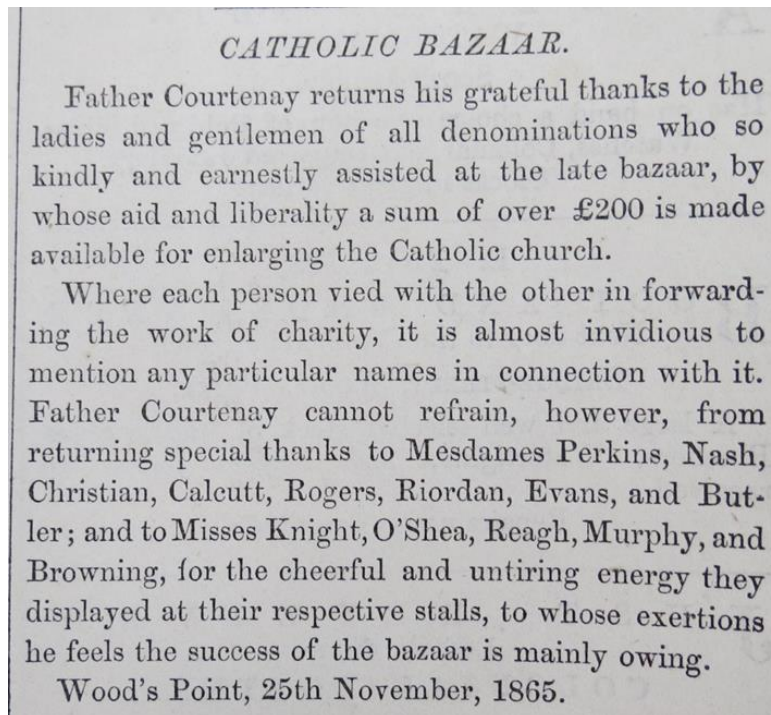


Fig. 5.2: Report on the Catholic Church Bazaar in Woods Point, *Wood's Point Leader*, 28 November 1865. PROV, VPRS 795/P0, Unit 335, School Number 789.

This issue of the newspaper contained complimentary reports on the Catholic school and was sent to the Education department, probably by Father Courtney, to support his case for funding for the Catholic school.

In separate studies Twomey and Shiell have both observed that charity bazaars had their origins in England in the early nineteenth century.⁷⁸ They were typically organised by middle and upper-class women who sold a range of hand-made items to raise funds for charitable causes. Such activities, Twomey notes, reflected the 'blurring of the boundaries between the much-vaunted 'separate spheres' of men and women.'⁷⁹ Shiell writes that the charity bazaar was 'unequivocally the domain of women', though there is some evidence that a few men had roles on the committees.⁸⁰ This is also true of the Woods Point bazaar, with advertisements indicating that Richard O'Reardon was the secretary of the

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 95; Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation, and Fancywork*, 17.

⁷⁹ Twomey, *Deserted and Destitute*, 96.

⁸⁰ Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation, and Fancywork*, 73.

committee.⁸¹ Differences in class structures between Britain and Australia meant that local charity bazaars rarely had aristocratic patrons, but Shiell argues that their organisation still reflected a social hierarchy with the wives of prominent citizens forming the basis of the bazaar committees.⁸² The *Woods Point Leader's* report does not indicate which women comprised the Catholic Church bazaar committee but we can assume that those women identified were involved in the organisation. Drawing on local histories and civil registration records has allowed me to establish that some of these women were indeed the wives of local councillors and professional men.⁸³ Mrs Perkins was Ellen Hickey, wife of brewer and Woods Point Borough councillor, and then Mayor, Patrick Perkins; Mrs Nash was Margaret Brady, wife of Dr Andrew Nash, a councillor and editor of the *Wood's Point Leader*; Mrs Evans was probably the wife of either George or John Evans, printers of the *Wood's Point Leader*; Mrs Rogers was probably Catherine McGowan, wife of draper and councillor Bernard Rogers, and Mrs Riordan was probably the wife of Richard O'Reardon. Mrs Butler was probably the wife of James E. Butler, who appears to have had a role in organising the bazaar, and it is possible that this was the same James and Elizabeth Butler of the Church of England school. If so it shows that their commitment to educating future citizens outweighed religious difference.

My research has pieced together much fuller accounts of some of these women's lives than there is space to include here, and they were much more than the wives of prominent men. It is an ongoing source of frustration that I cannot make *all* the women — and the variety of their experiences — I have researched more visible in this thesis. Nevertheless, Shiell's suggestion that it was typically middle-class *leisured* women involved in charity bazaars is not borne out by research on the other women publicly acknowledged in the report. Miss Reagh was a teacher at the Catholic school, Miss Browning was Clara Browning, a local singer of some renown who regularly performed at balls and fundraising concerts, and Mrs Calcutt, as I have discussed elsewhere, was the proprietor of the Club House Hotel.⁸⁴ Shiell

⁸¹ *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer*, 14 October 1865.

⁸² Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation, and Fancywork*, 73.

⁸³ *Wood's Point Leader*, 28 November 1865.

⁸⁴ "Miss Reagh's School," *Wood's Point Leader*, 28 November, 1865; Clara Browning's performance as part a fundraising concert in aid of the hospital fund is one example, see *Mountaineer*, 3 October 1864.

notes that charity bazaars in Australia adapted to suit ‘local conditions and circumstances’ and this may be true of the Woods Point bazaar.⁸⁵ In such a remote location there was neither a large population nor as rigid a social hierarchy to support the kind of charity bazaar participants may have been more familiar with in Britain.

Lloyd writes that in identifying the women who took part in the Catholic Church bazaar ‘it was the first time the *Mountaineer* mentioned the contributions of women’.⁸⁶ He may have been suggesting that it was the first time the *Mountaineer* referred to the contribution of individual women in support of the Catholic Church, and in this he may be right. However, my study of the local newspapers shows that it was not the first time the local newspapers had referred to individual women’s fundraising activities. For example, in March 1865 the *Wood’s Point Times* reported on the opening of St Mary’s Church of England and acknowledged Mrs Cooper, Mrs Whitelaw, Mrs Nash, Mrs Tomlinson, Mrs Evans, Mrs Bew [or Brew], Mrs Scott, Mrs Windsor, Mrs Solomon, Mrs Wood, Mrs Naumburg, and Mrs Oliver who ‘did all in their power for the comfort and accommodation of their guests’.⁸⁷ Readers may note that two of these women — Mrs Nash and Mrs Evans — contributed to both the Catholic Church bazaar and the Church of England opening. Shiell notes that some church activities received broad support within communities, and these reports suggest that in Woods Point there was also some religious cooperation in support of school and church activities.⁸⁸ Rather than seeing this as evidence of ‘the community of Woods Point’, this cooperation highlights women’s movement between different kinds of community in Woods Point.

In their research on women’s paid and unpaid labour in Dungog, a town in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, Strahan, Jordan and Carey have also drawn on local newspapers to highlight the extent of women’s voluntary labour in the community. They argue that ‘[m]uch of the spirit of community in Dungog and its surrounding area was created by its female

⁸⁵ Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation, and Fancywork*, 73.

⁸⁶ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 103.

⁸⁷ *Wood’s Point Times*, 24 March 1865.

⁸⁸ Shiell, *Fundraising, Flirtation and Fancywork*, 98. Doggett too makes this point about the broad support for church activities, see Doggett, “ ‘And for harmony most ardently we long’,” 118.

inhabitants.⁸⁹ Women's unpaid labour for the Sunday school, churches, Annual Show, School of Arts, cottage hospital, and so forth 'did much to make Dungog a worthwhile place to live and survive the vicissitudes of depression and poverty.'⁹⁰ This study provides a good overview of the extent of 'women's unpaid work as part of the total economy', but I am curious about the authors' argument that the separation of spheres, as discussed by Davidoff and Hall, was 'fully articulated in this rural community.'⁹¹ As more recent feminist scholarship has shown investigating individual women's circumstances has highlighted the flexibility of this ideology, and I wonder what we might have learned from more detailed case studies of the women who supported community in Dungog. Other studies of women's philanthropic activities show that, in some circumstances, this ideology gave some women the opportunity to take on leadership roles.

In her discussion of women's fundraising as part of musical life in Ballarat, Anne Doggett argues that the ideology of separate spheres influenced women's participation in musical life in Ballarat and allowed them a degree of power 'both in the performance situation and in the community, and they could publicly celebrate their femininity.'⁹² Drawing on newspapers as a principal source, Doggett notes that she was mindful when interpreting them because they tend to be mediated accounts of community life written for particular purposes.⁹³ She observed in her study that accounts of musical life tended to focus on '[t]he special, rather than the everyday', revealing less about the meaning of music in the home, or everyday religious practices.⁹⁴ Doggett's caveat is a reminder of the historians' task to critically evaluate our sources.

Woods Point newspapers similarly ignore everyday activities like the domestic practice of religion, and women's role in that practice. Any reading of their accounts of public activities such as fundraising concerts, tea meetings, and musical entertainments must recognise that

⁸⁹ Strahan, Jordan, and Carey, "Women's Work in a Rural Community: Dungog and the Upper Williams Valley," 47.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid., 48.

⁹² Doggett, " 'And for harmony most ardently we long'," 133.

⁹³ Ibid., 21.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 20.

these accounts overlook the many people who attended, rather than organised them, but whose participation nevertheless supported the creation of civil society. Nevertheless, with few other surviving sources with which to study the public activities that created civil society these newspaper accounts provide some evidence of women's participation. Scrolling through the Woods Point newspapers on microfilm in the State Library of Victoria I encountered one woman whose fundraising contributions to civil society in Woods Point proved to be a diverting — and illuminating — case study.⁹⁵

Among the professional entertainers who performed at the fire relief concert at Reefers Hotel in January 1865 was a Mrs Oakey. Accompanied by '[t]he admired tenor' George Martin, 'Irish and Scotch Comic Vocalist' John Black, and 'Pianist and Musical Conductor' Austin Sacqui, 'Sentimental and Serio-Comic Vocalist' Mrs Oakey had been performing in Woods Point for at least a month.⁹⁶ She was not the only woman who appeared as a professional entertainer in the township. Opera singer Madame Carandini, together with her own company of performers had visited Woods Point in August 1864 as part of an extensive touring program.⁹⁷ Miss Lizzie Winterbourne (known as 'the Yorkshire Nightingale') also gave several performances in April and May 1865 alongside Clara Browning, John Black, and Austin Sacqui.⁹⁸ At fundraising concerts and dramatic performances professional entertainers Clara Browning, Mrs Oakey, and Kate Keeley also sang alongside amateurs.⁹⁹ A Mrs Felex was also identified in several accounts of these fundraising concerts.¹⁰⁰

As I have detailed elsewhere, my research on two of these women — Mrs Oakey and Mrs Felix (or Felex) — led me to conclude that they were the same woman, Eliza Miles.¹⁰¹ The

⁹⁵ For a more comprehensive account of this case study see Louise Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles: An Archive Story," *Lilith: a Feminist History Journal* 21 (2015), 78-92, https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=485616627346939;res=IELAPA_

⁹⁶ *Mountaineer*, 9 January 1865.

⁹⁷ *Mountaineer*, 15 August 1864. See also Ann K. Wentzel, 'Carandini, Marie (1826–1894)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/carandini-marie-3162/text4729>, published first in hardcopy 1969.

⁹⁸ *Mountaineer*, 28 April 1865, *Wood's Point Times*, 2 May 1865, *Mountaineer*, 16 May 1865.

⁹⁹ *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 18 July 1868.

¹⁰⁰ *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 16 June 1866, *Alexandra Times*, 17 July 1868, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article59794499>.

¹⁰¹ Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles."

vital clue was Dr Nash's diary, in which he had recorded an account of Eliza Miles' past.¹⁰² This led me to undertake further research using digitised newspapers available via Trove, which revealed that Eliza Miles had some public recognition as a performer on the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s and early 1860s.¹⁰³ As 'Mrs Oakey' she appeared alongside her husband, pianist Alfred Oakey, and with well-known goldfield balladeer, Charles Thatcher and singer Annie Vitelli, also Thatcher's wife.¹⁰⁴ However prior to her arrival in Woods Point in 1864, Eliza and Alfred appear to have separated. Though I have been unable to ascertain the circumstances of their separation, newspapers, civil registration records, and probate records have allowed me to at least trace their movements.¹⁰⁵ In April 1864 Alfred toured New Zealand as part of Thatcher's company, but settled in Nelson after the tour. Eliza remained in Victoria, arriving in Woods Point in late 1864 with Black, Martin, and Sacqui. Sometime between 1864 and 1866 Eliza became romantically involved with John Felix, who also had some experience as a performer.¹⁰⁶ Although they never married, as Eliza remained legally married to Alfred, she became known as 'Mrs Felix'. As a couple John and Eliza later took over Reefers Hotel, where they had both performed when the hotel was under the ownership of Joseph Foos and William Barber Oats. [Fig. 5.3] Eliza continued to use her skills as performer, as did John, to support charitable causes such as the Upper Goulburn and District Hospital.¹⁰⁷ They left Woods Point in 1872.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² Nash, diary, 4 February 1872, no page number.

¹⁰³ Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles," 86.

¹⁰⁴ Charles Thatcher's career has been documented in numerous publications, most notably in Hugh Anderson, *The Colonial Minstrel* (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1960). Anderson mentions Mrs Oakey briefly, but his focus was understandably on Thatcher's career, and to a lesser extent, his relationship and career with Annie Vitelli.

¹⁰⁵ Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles," 87-88.

¹⁰⁶ *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, 29 August 1866. John Felix is reported to have been involved with the newly formed Woods Point Dramatic Club.

¹⁰⁷ Upper Goulburn District Hospital, *Annual Report of the Upper Goulburn District Hospital, Woodspoint: With the Financial Statement and List of Contributions for ...*, (Melbourne: Evans Brothers, 1871), 6.

¹⁰⁸ Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles," 88-91.



Fig. 5.3: Dale, Charles William. Reefers Hotel. Woods Point, 1907.
State Library of Victoria.

Doggett writes that women who performed professionally ‘lived and worked in a different world from the local amateur female singers, and followed different conventions in lifestyle and performance.’¹⁰⁹ She suggests that audiences welcomed professional singers despite transgressions in their personal lives, while single and married women performing as amateurs were respected if their talents were directed towards charitable purposes. Eliza Miles did not have the same level of recognition or notoriety as performers such as Madame Carandini, who only made a brief appearance in the region before moving on to audiences elsewhere. Nonetheless, newspaper reports suggest that, as Mrs Oakey and later Mrs Felix, Eliza was appreciated by local audiences and her fundraising gave her a degree of respectability in the township. However, some residents in Woods Point were less appreciative. Given what we know of Dr Nash already, it is not surprising that he was one of Eliza’s critics.

¹⁰⁹ Anne Doggett, “Beyond Gentility: Women and Music in Early Ballarat,” *History Australia* 6, no. 2 (2009), 37.7.

Dr Nash's account of Eliza Miles' personal background, as told to him by a performer who claimed to know her in England, included the suggestion that she had been a prostitute or brothel madam, and had 'mated with' several men in Victoria prior to her relationship with Felix.¹¹⁰ This account, he suggested, was offered as a 'prelude' to explain his judgement of her activities in Woods Point.¹¹¹ Among his observations was Eliza's attendance at St Mary's Church of England, where she led the orchestra. Although Dr Nash was suspicious of what he suggested was her religious conversion, his observation that Eliza became leader of the church orchestra is helpful in understanding the complexities of women's contribution to civil society in Woods Point. Doggett writes that in Ballarat's musical life women rarely held leadership positions, pointing to only four women in her sample of local newspapers that led choirs or directed other performers.¹¹² We do not know the circumstances in which Eliza is said to have taken leadership of St Mary's church orchestra, but we might speculate that her experience as a professional singer was relevant to her taking on the role. Other married women may not have been offered the same opportunity. Together with her fundraising activities for the hospital Eliza Miles stands out as an example of the kind of leadership, or informal citizenship, that some women demonstrated in Woods Point. Women's circumstances differed and therefore one case study is not representative of every woman's experience in Woods Point. Nevertheless, it highlights that although the ideology of separate spheres restricted women's public contributions to civil society, the philanthropic activities of some women allowed them to attain respectability despite complex personal relationships.

While Dr Nash excluded Eliza Miles and John Felix from his imagined respectable, middle-class community in Woods Point, less clear is whether Eliza Miles personally felt a sense of belonging to a community in Woods Point. Tracing her activities suggests some evidence of communal ties — to fellow performers, St Mary's Church, and the Upper Goulburn and District hospital — but did these give her a sense of belonging? If we draw on Clarke's notion of solidarity and significance, as well as Doggett's discussion of women's leadership roles through music, we might suggest that the public recognition of her fundraising role as

¹¹⁰ Nash, diary, 4 February 1872, no page number.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Doggett, "And for harmony most ardently we long," 138.

a performer gave her a sense of belonging to various groups in the township. That some of these connections may have continued after she left Woods Point is suggested by an advertisement in the *Gippsland Miners' Standard* in 1896. By then Eliza was the licensee of the Imperial Hotel in Melbourne where, according to the advertisement, 'Special Attention [was] given to Visitors from Woodspoint and District.'¹¹³ Advertising in a region where she had once lived to generate business shows that Eliza was an astute business woman, but perhaps — over twenty years after she left — she also retained other ties to — or within — the township. In the last chapter I look in more detail at what nostalgia, including other examples from the *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, can tell us about the relationship between locality and community making.

5.5 Conclusion

Lloyd's argument that 'men took the lead' in establishing civil society reflects a masculine understanding of leadership predicated on men occupying formal positions of authority in civic and social institutions, such as local government, courts, school and church committees; positions that women were not then able to hold due to their limited legal status as citizens and to social mores limiting their participation in public life. Nevertheless, as feminist scholars have pointed out, this notion of leadership does not reflect the lived experience of women's participation in society and the ways they have expressed their citizenship. While much feminist scholarship has focused on the latter decades of the nineteenth century, when women established organisations to campaign more formally for full citizenship rights, scholarship on women's participation in civil society in the middle decades of the nineteenth century has typically focused on middle-class women's engagement with philanthropic and charitable causes.

A close reading of local newspapers alongside other historic sources reveals that women in Woods Point in the 1860s contributed to civil society in a variety of ways. While only a few women had formal (and limited) citizenship rights as voters, many more engaged in informal citizenship activities. Some married and single women taught in the common and

¹¹³ *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 3 November 1896.

denominational schools, and a few women signed petitions to send their children to school. At formal and informal church functions women supplied the catering or performed part of the musical liturgy. Funds were raised for the schools, churches and hospitals by selling fancywork and other goods made and sold by women at local bazaars, while other musically trained women organised and performed in concerts and theatrical events attended by a broad spectrum of society. While most of the married women identified performed a supporting role, at least one woman had a leadership role. Eliza Miles' experience in particular blurs the boundaries between respectability and the ideology of separate spheres. While we do not know if these women regarded their activities as expressions of citizenship, later generations of suffrage campaigners — and feminist scholarship much later — would point to these activities as evidence of women's civic duty and fitness for full civic rights.

Exploring women's informal citizenship activities also allow us to explore the variety of ways women made community, or were regarded as *belonging* to community in Woods Point in the quartz mining boom of the mid-1860s. The public recognition the local newspapers gave to some women for their informal citizenship activities might be read as an example of the sense of significance that Clarke argued is necessary to developing a sense of belonging to community. However, given that this public recognition was mostly restricted to activities that reflected women's role as moral guardians, or as a civilising influence, it reinforces an idea of community predicated on the ideology of separate spheres. In the absence of women's first-hand accounts of these activities what we find in newspapers and other sources are how some members of 'the community' felt about these women's contributions, rather than how the women themselves felt. Nevertheless, the case study of Eliza Miles shows how, in some circumstances, these sources allow us to see how the public recognition of women's contribution to community in Woods Point could accommodate the diversity of some women's experiences. More than twenty years later Eliza was able to draw upon this public recognition, and the relationships she had established in the township to advertise her new business.

Part 4: Decline

Chapter 6: Fluctuating Fortunes: Mining, Family, and Community, 1870-1882

6.1 Introduction

Lawrence Chubb was impatient. After months of delays caused by illness and bad weather his wife, Esther had still not arrived in Gaffneys Creek, the mining settlement north of Woods Point where he had been working for the last nine months. Writing to his mother in London in December 1870, as he did almost every month, Lawrence wrote

[f]or the tenth [...] time I have to inform you that she is still at her Mother's place at Wehla [north-west of Bendigo]. Of course she is most anxious to join me and I am just as anxious to have her with me, but she cannot travel alone; if I go for her the gap I leave will be immediately filled up and there would be little good in returning here: and no one with whom I could have trusted her has been coming up for months past.¹

Lawrence Chubb married Esther Collins, the daughter of a Church of England clergyman, in 1868 after a five-year protracted courtship. Lawrence came from an educated middle-class family in England, but when they met he was a transient independent miner working in central Victoria, and Esther's parents disapproved of the match. Esther was determined to marry him nonetheless. Lawrence might not have been seen to conform to what Davidoff and Hall have maintained was a middle-class English notion that 'a man's ability to support and order his family and household lay at the heart of masculinity [and] a woman's femininity was best expressed in her dependence'.² So before they married in 1868 Lawrence gave up mining and took up work as a bookkeeper in Melbourne. However, by April 1870 Lawrence had returned to mining, accepting a position as an assistant manager of the Rose of Denmark mine in Gaffneys Creek on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In addition to this waged employment Lawrence planned to join a tribute party, a more independent method of working where miners rented a mine and paid the mine's owners a percentage of

¹ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 4 December 1870, 4238/2:9; Letters of Lawrence Chubb from the Victorian goldfields [manuscript], 1864-1883, MS 14647, State Library of Victoria.

² Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 114.

profits in lieu of wages.³ This combined income, Lawrence reassured his mother, would allow he and Esther to finally set up home together. However, inclement weather, the challenging terrain, and Lawrence's concern that Esther travel with a male relative or friend meant that it took longer than expected for her to arrive in Gaffneys Creek. By May 1871 a far happier Lawrence was writing to his mother about how much Esther's arrival had boosted his spirits. 'I have had a very dull time of it all the months', he wrote, 'and only that my Wife is with me and keeps me jolly I dont [sic] know what I should have done.'⁴

Scholarship on the Victorian gold rushes has shown that following the alluvial rushes of the 1850s the development of quartz mining — and its reliance on waged labour — provided miners with more opportunities to settle, and with their families they established homes and communities along the quartz reefs.⁵ However, despite this progression from the transient alluvial rushes to a wage earning workforce, difficulties in raising capital and declining gold yields meant that employment in the mining industry in Victoria still fluctuated.⁶ Some miners were forced to move to find other types of employment, or took up farming under land selection acts introduced in the 1860s. Others sought independence from waged labour by taking up mines under the tribute system. Though tribute mining attracted contemporary criticism for exploiting workers for short-term gains some scholars later argued that by keeping profits within mining settlements — rather than being entirely paid out to distant shareholders — the system helped sustain tributers, their families, and the broader community in these lean times.⁷ Alan Mayne argues that there is still much to be learnt about how this system of mining affected mining families and communities, and this is also true of the Upper Goulburn goldfields.⁸ However, a close reading of the letters that Lawrence Chubb wrote to his family in England in the 1870s and '80s shows that at

³ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 122-123.

⁴ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 14 June 1871, 4238/2:16.

⁵ This transition is discussed in various case studies in Fahey and Mayne, eds, *Gold Tailings*.

⁶ Fahey and Mayne, '“All that Glitters”,' 48.

⁷ Mayne, "Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields," 242. Mayne writes that tributing 'can be interpreted both as a symptom of class exploitation and as a strategy embraced by mining communities in order to sustain their towns through bad times.' Lloyd also refers to criticism of tributing in the reports made by mining surveyor Albert Ainsworth and geologist R.A.F. Murray; see Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 113, 283.

⁸ Mayne, "Family and Community on the Central Victorian Goldfields," 242.

Gaffneys Creek tribute mining was one of range of activities and relationships that helped mining families survive the fluctuating fortunes of mining activity in this period.

Much of the existing scholarship on the Upper Goulburn goldfields in this period has drawn upon official mining reports, which provide some clues about the difficulties mining families might have been experiencing more generally, but the work that women did to support their families was outside the scope of these official reports.⁹ Earlier in this thesis we have seen how a feminist analysis of the gold rushes has highlighted how women *made* community differently during the early and boom periods of mining activity. This chapter extends this feminist analysis by drawing on Lawrence Chubb's letters to show how women *sustained* family and community when the boom was over. Although a mediated source of Esther Chubb's activities, Lawrence's letters nevertheless reveal the ordinary intimacies of family life, the complexities of their relationships with family, friends and mutual acquaintances, and the broader impact of inconsistent mining work in this period. The letters show that though Lawrence and Esther Chubb sought a more settled community, their familial networks also tied them to other kinds of community that were not dependent on the classical theorists' ideal of a shared geographic location. At the same time, we see the couple establish relationships with friends and neighbours in and around Gaffneys Creek that provided material and emotional support during this period of fluctuating fortunes in the mining industry. While other studies of miners' experiences in this period suggest that Lawrence Chubb's mixed fortunes may not have been fully indicative of mining activity more generally in this period, I argue that a feminist analysis of the details Lawrence shares of his family life, and of Esther's role in particular, can help to illuminate the experiences of other women and families who are less visible in historical sources.

As a microhistory within a microhistory, this chapter begins by drawing on Lawrence Chubb's letters to explore how miners adapted to the inconsistencies of mining employment in this period. Using Lawrence's account of Esther's activities, I then show how women's unpaid work in establishing and maintaining a home were essential to supporting

⁹ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 113-125. Lloyd also includes an explanation of the tribute system in his overview of mining technology, see *Gold in the Ranges*, 283-284.

fluctuating mining activity. The chapter concludes by reflecting upon what the couple's relationships with family, friends, and neighbours tell us about the kinds of community, geographic and otherwise, that helped sustain families in this period.

6.2 Settlement and Independence: Waged Labour and Tribute Mining

According to Fahey and Mayne, the 1870s and '80s was an uncertain period in Victoria's mining industry.¹⁰ While the years it took to develop deep lead and quartz reef mining made it an attractive prospect for miners with families to support, insufficient capital to develop and sustain some quartz mines meant that waged employment was still insecure.¹¹ One Cornish miner, writes Fahey, worked for a total of 14 mines over a period of just under three years.¹² In this period tributing became an alternative to waged employment in the mining industry. As Blainey notes in his earlier history of Australian mining, tributing was brought to Australia by Cornish miners, firstly to South Australia's copper mines where it was widespread, and then to Victoria.¹³ Instead of paying employees a wage a company could rent their mine, or parts thereof, to individuals or a party of miners who paid a percentage of the profits they won from gold.¹⁴ Blainey described tributers as the 'aristocrats amongst miners', independent miners who could set their own hours and work as much or as little as they needed to extract a profit during the terms of their lease.¹⁵ Yet the system also attracted criticism for exploiting workers for short-term gains at the expense of long-term investment in mining.¹⁶ However they earned their income from mining in this period, Blainey suggests that those men who persisted with mining did so because they still dreamed that gold would give them independence from a 'master'.¹⁷

¹⁰ Fahey and Mayne, ' "All that Glitters" ', 12.

¹¹ Ibid., 17, 12. See also Charles Fahey, ' "A poor man does not improve his position much by emigrating to this country": The Cornish on the Victorian Goldfields, 1861-1901', in *Gold Tailings*, eds, Fahey and Mayne, 172-173.

¹² Fahey, ' "A poor man does not improve his position much by emigrating to this country" ', 172.

¹³ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 122-124.

¹⁴ Ibid. See also Fahey, ' "A poor man does not improve his position much by emigrating to this country" ', 173-174.

¹⁵ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 123.

¹⁶ Ibid; Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 283-284.

¹⁷ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 294-295.

Lawrence Chubb's family were probably understood in the nineteenth-century as belonging to the lower middle-class. His father, who died a month after Lawrence arrived in Melbourne in 1852, had progressed from being a 'roadside traveller' in 1826 to an upholsterer in 1841.¹⁸ Lawrence's mother, sisters, and brother also appear to have worked in the trade.¹⁹ In that time the family had moved across the Thames from the slums of Whitechapel to the increasingly urbanised areas of south London around Camberwell.²⁰ The Chubb family's background is not dissimilar to many of those discussed in Davidoff and Hall's study of the middle classes in England, and as we read Lawrence's letters we can see something of the struggle they observe in men between masculine self-determination and the demands of capitalism.²¹ With no surviving letters from the first decade or so when he was in Victoria we do not know what Lawrence's initial intentions were, but in letters written in 1864 he told his family that he wished to make enough money from gold to 'settle in England'.²² Like men of similar background, Lawrence probably regarded the gold rushes as an opportunity to escape the uncertainty of wage labour. His use of the term 'settle' also suggests that Lawrence intended to return to England to establish a *permanent* home once he was more financially independent. However, as his relationship with Esther Collins

¹⁸ When Lawrence's sister, Elizabeth was baptised in 1826 their father's occupation was recorded as 'roadside traveller', see London Metropolitan Archives, *Whitechapel St Mary, Register of Baptism* [online database], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. On the 1841 census he was recorded as an upholsterer, see *1841 England Census* [database online], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. Lawrence Wensley Chubb snr died on 22 December 1852 in Camberwell, see *London, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813-1980* [database online] Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. Lawrence arrived as an unassisted passenger on board the *Northumberland* on 16 November 1852, see Public Record Office Victoria, *Inward Overseas Passenger Lists (British Ports) [Microfiche Copy of VPRS 947]* [database online], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. One of Lawrence's travelling companions was friend George Allan, whom he refers to periodically in his letters. Allan was later associated with the musical warehouse company, Allan & Co, see Andrew May, "Allan's Music," <http://www.emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00056b.htm>.

¹⁹ On the 1861 English census Lawrence's sisters Anna and Elizabeth were working as milliners and his brother James was recorded as an undertaker, see *1861 England Census* [database online], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au.

²⁰ Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century: 'A Human Awful Wonder of God'* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007), 31-35, 84, 86. We do not know the precise location of the Chubb family's residence in Whitechapel, but drawing on White suggests that the move to Camberwell may have been the result of slum clearances that began in the late 1830s. Graeme Davison, whose ancestors also included London needlewomen, describes how his Fenwick family were also forced to move from Westminster in the same period, but the prostitution and gambling going on in their new neighbourhood of Mayfair meant it was 'no place for a respectable family man to bring up teenage daughters.' See Graeme Davison, *Lost Relations: Fortunes of my Family in Australia's Golden Age* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2015), 42-45.

²¹ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 229.

²² Lawrence Chubb to Anna Chubb, 19 June 1864, 4238/1:3. The whereabouts of any earlier letters — if they survived — is unknown.

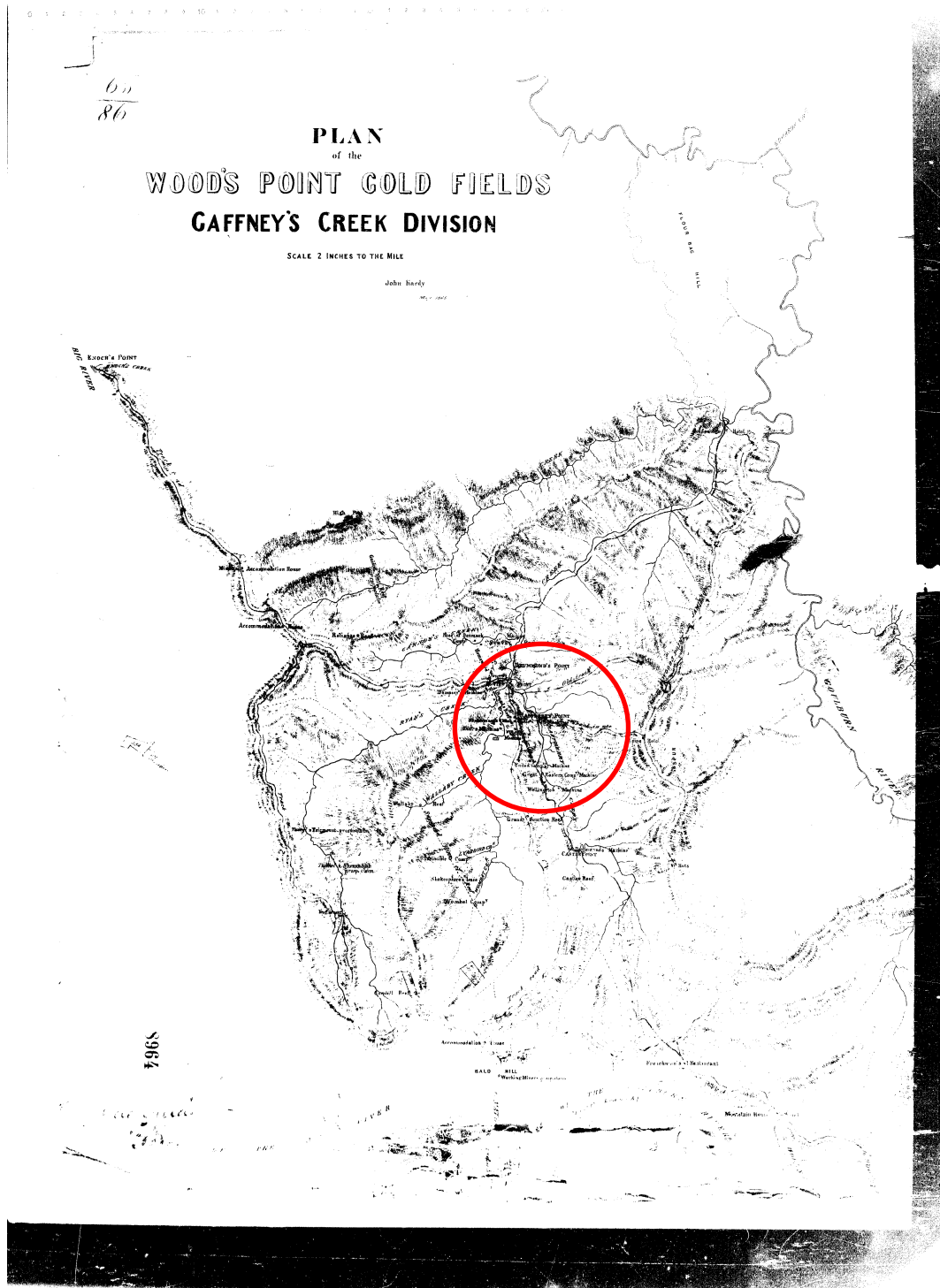
developed — with additional pressure from her family for him to find more secure employment — Lawrence chose to give up mining to take up a clerical position in Melbourne. Despite receiving a more regular wage than he had had as an independent miner, Lawrence's letters reveal that he was unsatisfied with the amount he was being paid and did not get on with his employer. This led him to change jobs on several occasions.²³ Although Lawrence's frustrations with his work were exacerbated by his protracted courtship with Esther, his letters suggest that he had not lost the desire for a more independent working life. Despite the inconsistency of mining employment in Victoria, Gaffneys Creek offered Lawrence that opportunity, but he would need the support of his wife to survive.

When Lawrence Chubb arrived in Gaffneys Creek to take up a position at the Rose of Denmark mine, four surveyed settlements surrounded the dozen or so mines located along Gaffneys Creek and its tributaries: Survey Point (also known as Paradise Point), Drummonds Point, View Point, and Raspberry Creek, collectively described as the township of Lauraville. [Fig. 6.1 & 6.2] Located near the junction of Gaffneys and Cannon's Creeks, the Rose of Denmark mine had been established in 1863 and, despite periods of limited capital and poor management, had survived the speculative boom and bust phase of mining activity in the 1860s.²⁴ The quarterly returns submitted by mining surveyors show that the mining population in the Gaffneys Creek subdivision had steadily declined from its peak of 790 miners in December 1864 to 316 miners in March 1870.²⁵ In the January to March quarter for 1870 there was evidently sufficient work to employ Lawrence as assistant manager.

²³ Between 1866 and 1870 Lawrence worked at the Intercolonial Exhibition in Melbourne, as a bookkeeper for Wilkie, Webster & Co (the musical warehouse company later associated with George Allan), and for a Mr Isaacs, proprietor of the London Tavern. His last employer before moving to Gaffneys Creek was a George Wright.

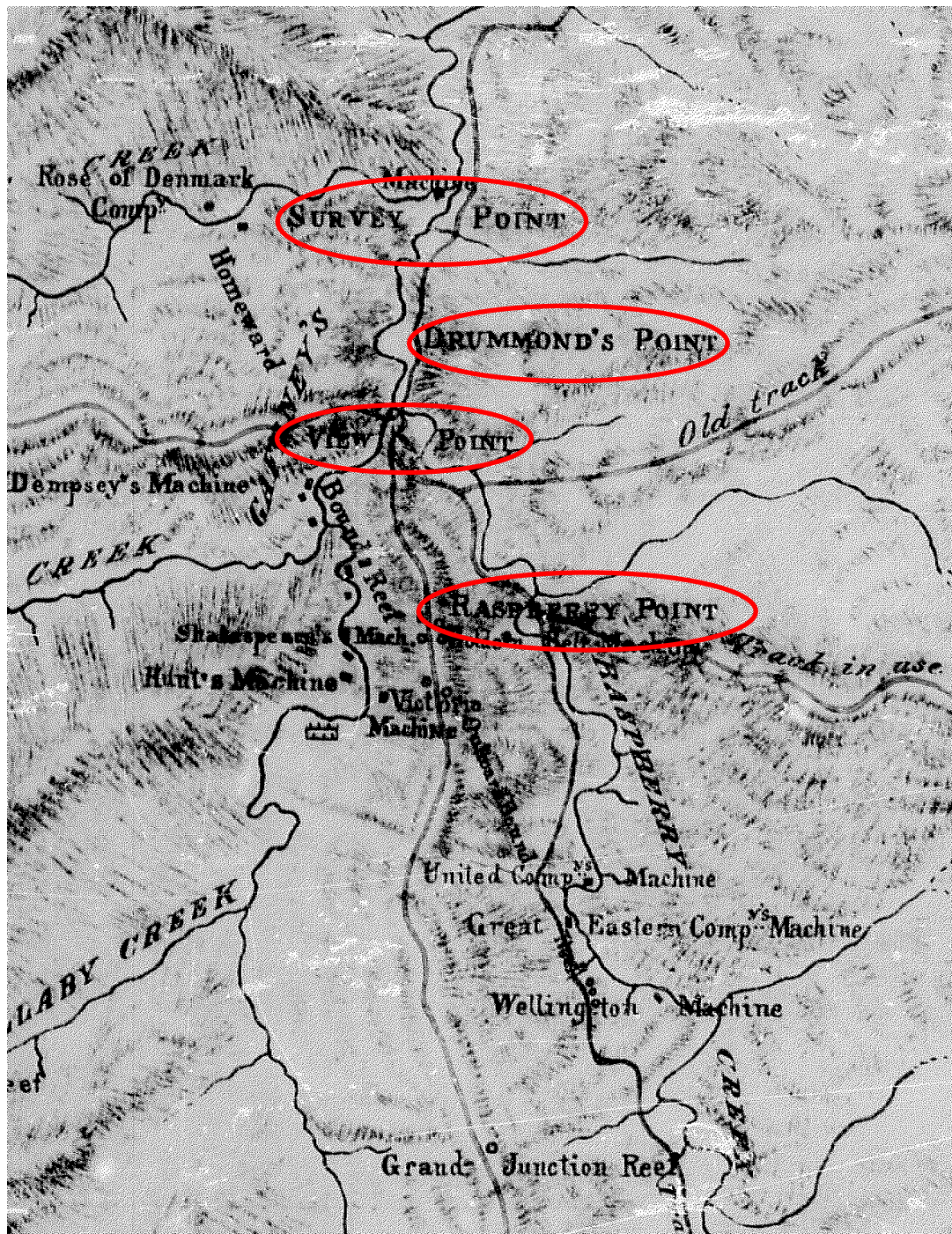
²⁴ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 68-69.

²⁵ Victoria. Mines Department. *Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars*, December 1864, 31; March 1870, 18.



6.1 Plan of the Wood's Point Goldfields Gaffney's Creek Division.

PROV, VPRS 8168/P5, Historic Plan Collection, GF 58; Woods Point Gold Fields Gaffneys Creek Division, reproduced with permission of Keeper of Public Records.
The main settlements in division are shown as marked.



6.2 Portion of Plan of the Wood's Point Goldfields Gaffney's Creek Division.

PROV, VPRS 8168/P5, Historic Plan Collection, GF 58; Woods Point Gold Fields Gaffneys Creek Division, reproduced with permission of Keeper of Public Records.

The four main settlements are shown as marked.

Although he was a recent arrival on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, Lawrence Chubb had some familiarity with the region. William Dillinger, the American-born manager of the Rose of Denmark mine, was a friend.²⁶ We do not know how they met but it may have been when Lawrence was working as an independent miner in central Victoria.²⁷ Lawrence's brother-in-law, Charley Collins had been mining at Enochs Point, on the other side of the Mt Terrible ranges from Gaffneys Creek, since the early 1860s.²⁸ One other familial connection was through Charley's (and Esther's) sister, Elizabeth Wilton. Until recently Elizabeth had been living with her husband James in Woods Point where they both taught at the Woods Point Common School.²⁹ Lawrence was not on especially good terms with Esther's family, but having a familial connection to the region may have helped to persuade Esther that Gaffneys Creek was a suitable place for them to settle.

Despite the reassurance these connections may have provided, the initial letters Lawrence sent from Gaffneys Creek reveal the precarious nature of mining employment in the region. This is highlighted in Lawrence's account of a strike that occurred at the Rose of Denmark mine in 1871, one of a number of industrial disputes that were beginning to take place on the Victorian goldfields. Fahey and Mayne write that as yields declined on the central Victorian goldfields some mine owners sought to reduce costs by cutting wages, or leasing mines under tribute, and tensions between owners and miners led to several strikes in Bendigo.³⁰ Similar disputes occurred on the Upper Goulburn goldfields. In 1870 miners employed by the Hope Mining Company at Woods Point went on strike over a reduction in their three-pound weekly wage. The miners argued that their hours were longer and the

²⁶ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 23 April 1870, 4238/1:18.

²⁷ Lloyd writes that Dillinger was at Dunolly in 1864, see *Gold in the Ranges*, 80. Although Chubb was courting Esther in Kingower, 40 kilometres south of Dunolly, in 1864, his peripatetic way of life at this time suggests that it is possible that two men encountered one another somewhere on the central Victorian goldfields.

²⁸ An obituary published on Charles Collins's death in 1904 suggests that he arrived at Enochs Point around 1863 when he was 17, see *Alexandra and Yea Standard, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express*, 29 April 1904, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article57652071>.

²⁹ James and Elizabeth Wilton's departure from Woods Point is noted in Lawrence's letter to his mother describing his wedding to Esther, see Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 4 January 1869, 4238/6: 2. According to reports in the *Wood's Point Times and Mountaineer*, the Wiltons experienced similar difficulties to James and Elizabeth Butler, whom they replaced at the Woods Point Common School, see *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer*, 19 December 1866.

³⁰ Fahey and Mayne, 'All that glitters', 48.

cost of living was higher in the region than it was elsewhere.³¹ Limited sources on the strike make it difficult to determine how the dispute was resolved, but reports by mining surveyor Albert Ainsworth suggest that the economic impact the strike had on the township may have prompted the miners to return to work on reduced wages.³² Aside from Ainsworth's observation, none of the sources on this dispute provide us with any detail on how the strike affected individual mining families in the township.

Lawrence Chubb's account of the Rose of Denmark strike in 1871, also in response to reduced wages, provides more insight on miners' motivations on the Upper Goulburn goldfields.³³ Lawrence and his boss, William Dillinger sought to resolve the dispute, eventually securing from the mine owners the wages the existing miners were owed. Many of the 'old hands' then left the region to look for work elsewhere. Lawrence and William stayed, but refused to sign the new agreement with the mine owners who offered them a lower weekly wage, but with a percentage of the profits.³⁴ As Lawrence told his mother, the agreement would make them '[s]ervants of the Company for little over half wages, and could be turned away at any moment'.³⁵ This remark — and the strike more generally — is further evidence of the uncertainty of waged employment in the mining industry in this period. Lawrence's use of the term 'servant' also supports Fahey and Mayne's argument that the tension between miners and owners that led to discord on the goldfields was partly motivated by understandings of class.³⁶

Fahey and Mayne argue that earlier historians such as Geoffrey Blainey 'downplayed class relations on the goldfields' by suggesting that there was consensus between miners and their employers; that they were all interested in profit.³⁷ They write that in 1865 and 1866 when Bendigo miners unsuccessfully sought to obtain an eight-hour working day 'the

³¹ *Leader*, 14 May 1870, 13, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article196691982>.

³² Victoria. Mines Department, *Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars*, June 1870, 30. See also *Advocate*, 2 July 1870, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article170150747>.

³³ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 26 February 1871, 4238/2:12.

³⁴ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 18 May 1871, 4238/2:15; 14 June 1871, 4238/2:16; 12 July 1871, 4238/2:17.

³⁵ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 14 June 1871, 4238/2:16.

³⁶ Fahey and Mayne, 'All that glitters', 48.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

language of class antagonism was openly voiced'.³⁸ Fahey and Mayne do not elaborate on this language, but we can see in Lawrence's account of the Rose of Denmark strike that there was a disparity between the needs of the miners to earn a decent wage and a mine owners' interest in a profitable mine. Although Lawrence's education and managerial position at the mine might have placed him socially somewhere between the lower-middle and middle classes, his position as a waged employee meant that he saw himself as a 'worker' at the behest of 'capitalist' employers. He also felt this way about his family in London, some of whom were working in waged employment. Writing to his sister about the long hours his brother was working in a workshop, Lawrence wrote that it was '[t]he tendency of capital [...] to make slaves of Britons, to grind labour down as near as possible to starvation point.'³⁹ Other details in Lawrence's letters suggest that his family were not as badly off as some in London, but his observation nevertheless supports Davidoff and Hall's argument that families who would come to be understood as middle-class could also feel exploited by the growth of capitalism.⁴⁰ On the goldfields, individual understandings of class may not have been as clearly defined in this period as Fahey and Mayne suggest, but Lawrence's observations nevertheless support their argument that class conflict influenced industrial relations on the goldfields in this period.

By August 1871 the Rose of Denmark strike was over but the dispute prompted Lawrence Chubb to leave waged employment at the Rose of Denmark mine and take up the Lauraville mine on tribute. Lloyd writes that the Lauraville mine had been let on tribute to several parties in the late 1860s but with low yields it was regarded as 'a failure'. While Lloyd's sources tell us little about the mine's activities from the 1870s, Lawrence's letters give us some insight into the ongoing work the tributers put into the mine, as well as some of the tensions that characterised tribute mining in this period.⁴¹ Writing to his mother in August 1871 Lawrence told her that his party of ten men had taken a three-year lease on the mine and had agreed to pay the owner, Jacob Cleal, fifteen per cent of the gross yield.⁴² In

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Lawrence Chubb to Anna Chubb, 24 October 1864, 4238/1:5.

⁴⁰ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 229.

⁴¹ Ibid., *Gold in the Ranges*, 118.

⁴² Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 9 August 1871, 4238/3:1.

addition Chubb was to be paid about seventy pounds to move the tramway and undertake other maintenance on the mine. This work took a couple of months, and by October Lawrence reported that the mine was looking promising and they were endeavouring to crush as much as possible before water levels dropped in the summer, even though they risked breaking their machinery to get it done.⁴³ As Blainey suggests, these were the kind of independent decisions tribute miners could make.⁴⁴ Despite the mine's success being uncertain, Lawrence's letters suggest that having more independence in his working life — albeit in consultation with other members of the tribute party — made him far happier than he had been as a waged employee.

However, in December Lawrence wrote that the tribute party's work had been for 'next to nothing' and four of his party 'have left us in disgust and most of the others are fainthearted'.⁴⁵ Lawrence told his mother that he disagreed with some of his party on the best way to tackle the mine, saying that he wanted to put in a bit of effort to break through in order to properly ventilate the mine, while others in his party wanted to tackle other less well-ventilated locations that they believed would yield gold quicker. This disagreement reflects some of the contemporary and later criticism of the tributing system — owners wanted quick returns and miners couldn't afford to prepare for the future — but Lawrence's account suggests that some tributers did have long-term aims.⁴⁶ As Lawrence's letters reveal he was soon to become a father and the need to provide for his growing family's future may have influenced his strategy at the Lauraville mine. Unfortunately, ongoing poor returns on the Lauraville mine prompted the partners to dissolve their agreement in July 1872, and Lawrence returned to waged employment as the agent and manager of the mine.⁴⁷ In addition to this work he was employed to manage the accounts of two other mines, and was appointed secretary of the local branch of the Ancient Order of Foresters, one of the Friendly Societies in the region.⁴⁸

⁴³ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 8 October 1871, 4238/3:3.

⁴⁴ Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, 123.

⁴⁵ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 3 December 1871, 4238/3:5.

⁴⁶ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 283.

⁴⁷ Lawrence Chubb to mother, sisters, and brothers, 14 July 1872, 4238/3:14.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 6 October 1872, 4238/3:17.

Unlike other miners who were forced to move from goldfield to goldfield looking for work Lawrence wrote that his previous experience as a bookkeeper in Melbourne meant that he now had better employment prospects, and this is supported by his account of his working life in Gaffneys Creek.⁴⁹ With few personal accounts of mining on the Upper Goulburn in this period it is difficult to say if Chubb's range of skills meant that his employment in the region was unusual. However, Fahey's study of Cornish miners on the Victorian gold fields notes that only a minority of Cornishmen were like Richard Pope — the subject of Fahey's case study — in being promoted to mine manager. Other tribute miners combined mining activity — as miners or shareholders — with running a business.⁵⁰ Lawrence Chubb's letters suggest that though he sometimes felt exploited as a 'worker', and preferred the more independent working life of a tribute miner, he had a range of skills he could draw on to adapt to the inconsistent employment offered by mining activity in this period.

Mining surveyor Alfred Ainsworth might have been describing miners like Lawrence Chubb when he praised the character of the miners in the Gaffneys Creek subdivision. The miners 'here, more than in other parts of the district, show a readiness to stand by their mines through good or ill fortune, and are ever prepared to take them on tribute, which, in the face of the small averages obtained, deserves commendation.'⁵¹ While tribute miners such as Lawrence Chubb *were* resilient in spite of inconsistent returns, what is overlooked in traditional goldfield scholarship that relies on mining reports such as this is that many miners had *equally* determined and resilient wives who employed a variety of strategies to help their families survive. Lawrence's letters reveal that Esther Chubb was one such wife.

⁴⁹ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 10 August 1870, 4238/2:4.

⁵⁰ Fahey, ' "A poor man does not improve his position much by emigrating to this country", 173.

⁵¹ Victoria. Mines Department, *Reports of the Mining Surveyors and Registrars*, June 1874, 29.

6.3 '...she will be baking scrubbing washing and mending all day long...': Creating a Genteel Home and Garden



Fig. 6.3: Dale, Charles William. Raspberry Creek Just Above Junction with Gaffney's Creek, 1907.
State Library of Victoria.

Esther Chubb arrived in Gaffneys Creek in April 1871 in the middle of the strike at the Rose of Denmark mine. For the first time in their seven-year relationship she and Lawrence had an opportunity to make a home together. While the strike meant that the timing of Esther's arrival was unfortunate, it did not dissuade them from their plans. By August 1871 they had moved to Raspberry Point, closer to the Lauraville mine. Here Esther's support becomes more visible in Lawrence's letters, as he describes their everyday life in their four-room weatherboard hut and Esther's efforts in creating a genteel home.

As Susan Lawrence observed in her investigation of the Dolly's Creek diggings, much of the scholarship on women's activities, and the segregation of space, in the domestic sphere has focused on the middle-classes in metropolitan centres.⁵² Lawrence expanded on this scholarship by exploring the activities of women on subsistence diggings, and her study shows that working people, too, 'transformed gentility into a pragmatic respectability that accommodated the circumstances of their lives.'⁵³ In England Lawrence and Esther Chubb might have been understood as belonging to the middle-classes, but their circumstances in Victoria meant they had far more in common with the families on the subsistence diggings discussed in Susan Lawrence's study. As Susan Lawrence shows, the evidence of the houses and household goods at Dolly's Creek suggest that though many families did not 'settle' in one place, women nonetheless found ways to create a comfortable home on the diggings for however long they were there.⁵⁴ While she drew upon archaeological evidence and material culture to recreate the homes that women created at Dolly's Creek, Lawrence Chubb's letters allow us to witness Esther's home-making activities at Raspberry Point.

Together Lawrence and Esther papered walls and covered sofas, and Esther was kept busy crocheting various items to decorate the home, so much so that Lawrence joked with his mother 'at the present rate I should say will soon have enough to reach from here to England'.⁵⁵ With mining equipment stored in one room of the four-room hut, Esther's crocheted items may have been one way of separating work from home. In her doctoral research on women's needlework and gentility in goldrush Victoria, Cramer writes that fancywork, or decorative needlework, also helped women to assert their genteel status, particularly in remote locations or 'when uncertain incomes generated financial strain.'⁵⁶ Lawrence's letters might not include Esther's thoughts on their uncertain income in this period of fluctuating mining activity, but his gentle teasing of her crochet work are evidence — albeit through a husband's eyes — of the ways women on the goldfields created domestic spaces that maintained their genteel status.

⁵² Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 135.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 155.

⁵⁵ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 3 December 1871, 4238/3:5.

⁵⁶ Cramer, "Needlework and Gentility in Gold-Rush Victoria," 159-160.

Much of Esther's early years at Raspberry Point were focused on making a home and raising their young family. While many of Lawrence's letters suggest that they worked well together as a team, some letters hint at the physical and emotional toll that making a home on this remote goldfield had upon Esther. In one letter Lawrence wrote to his sister he observed that although Esther 'is a wonderful woman for work I wish she would take things a little easier, but its [sic] no good me talking, she will be baking scrubbing washing and mending all day long...'⁵⁷ In other letters he commented how Esther's domestic responsibilities prevented her from writing to his family.⁵⁸ In a middle-class English home tasks such as cooking and cleaning might have been done by women of a lower social status employed as servants, giving wives more time for genteel leisure activities such as letter writing. The family did hire the daughter of a local hotelkeeper to help Esther, and as the children grew older they also assisted with some tasks, but Lawrence's letters suggest that this help was needed when Esther's workload increased because of a new baby, rather than any wish to for Esther to have more time for letter writing.

For many mining families making a home on the goldfields also included the establishment of a garden, and this is also true of the Chubbs. Women's accounts from the other Victorian goldfields show that a productive garden was necessary due to the high cost of obtaining fresh fruit and vegetables on the goldfields.⁵⁹ Recent historical scholarship on gardening suggests that gardens were also integral to notions of settlement. Holmes, Martin and Mirmohamadi write that in addition to producing food, establishing a garden 'was also a way in which settlers left their imprint on the land they claimed'.⁶⁰ By the mid to late nineteenth century, as Goodman notes, gardens were regarded as a 'civilising force', and evidence from gardening advice literature shows that greater emphasis was being placed on people cultivating their own patch of land.⁶¹ Some of this literature was directed at men who might demonstrate their 'work ethic' through the creation of a neat and orderly

⁵⁷ Lawrence Chubb to Anna Chubb, 1 July 1882, 4238/5:17.

⁵⁸ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 24 & 25 March, 1872, 4238/3:10.

⁵⁹ Emily Skinner and Agnes Campbell provide accounts of establishing gardens on the Ovens goldfields; see Skinner, *A Woman on the Goldfields*, 53, 103; Campbell, *Rough and smooth*, 80, 87.

⁶⁰ Katie Holmes, Susan K Martin, Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Reading the Garden: the Settlement of Australia* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 8.

⁶¹ David Goodman, "The Politics of Horticulture," *Meanjin* 47, no. 3 (Spring 1988), 405-406.

garden. By the late nineteenth century gardens were considered part of the domestic sphere and writers such as Mrs Rolf Boldrewood (the author of *The Flower Garden in Australia* published in 1893) encouraged the creation of cottages gardens to encourage husbands, who might have abandoned their homes for work elsewhere, to rejoin their families in order to create 'greater domestic happiness'.⁶²

This scholarship points to some of the ways that notions of settlement, civilisation, and the ideology of separate spheres influenced the meanings invested in creating and maintaining gardens, but to what extent did the division of labour in the garden also reflect these ideologies? Davidoff and Hall write that in middle-class English homes men and women worked together in the garden, but their activities were tied to notions of masculinity and femininity.⁶³ Men undertook physical work such as mowing lawns, pruning and trimming hedges while women tended flower gardens, decorating the home with colourful and fragrant blooms. Working in the garden was problematic for respectable women because of the manual labour involved, but as contemporary gardening writer Jane Loudon wrote, women could undertake some physical labour, such as digging, and still retain their femininity.⁶⁴ Davidoff and Hall write that in this period women's work on farms was also curtailed by the growing division between work and the domestic sphere, increasingly bringing women's work indoors and out of sight.⁶⁵

The scholarship on Australian gardens discussed above, together with other scholarship on goldfields and women's work in rural settings, shows that the differing circumstances of colonial life meant that women often did more productive work in gardens and on farms than the English middle-class families discussed in Davidoff and Hall's study. In her study of subsistence mining Susan Lawrence shows how a reading of a range of documentary and archaeological sources reveals the economics of subsistence mining and the role of women

⁶² Ibid., 407. Goodman cites Mrs Rolf Boldrewood, *The Flower Garden in Australia* (Melbourne: Melville, Mullen and Slade, 1893).

⁶³ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 373-374.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 374. Loudon wrote that creating a flower garden involved minimal physical labour, and therefore it was ideally suited to women, see Mrs Loudon, *Instructions for Gardening for Ladies* (London: John Murray, 1850), 244. Google Books.

⁶⁵ Davidoff and Hall, *Family Fortunes*, 275.

in the family enterprise.⁶⁶ She writes how legislation governing the use of Crown land, such as the introduction of the Miners' Right and the selection acts of the 1860s (the 1869 Land Act in particular) enabled miners to engage in farming to support their families.⁶⁷ She argues that 'this combination of mining and farming was best able to succeed when there was a family unit to support it.'⁶⁸ She also points to the activities of wives who 'ran small farms as well and tended vegetable gardens and a few chicken and goats in order to produce food for their families and for sale and barter.'⁶⁹

Studies of later agricultural settlement also point to women's work on farms managing gardens, dairies, poultry and orchards.⁷⁰ Marilyn Lake argues that in some contemporary literature there was shame in women's unpaid work on farms, which was reinforced by the census categorisation of women's work as 'home duties'.⁷¹ However, Grimshaw, Fahey, Janson and Griffiths have noted that though women were subordinate to men their work made a material difference to the success of farming selections and, as a result, wives also shared 'in the improved standard of living and material security that they helped to achieve'.⁷² These latter studies focus on land selection in Victoria in the 1870s and '80s, a period of agricultural settlement coinciding with the era of tribute mining on the Victorian goldfields. If we examine sources for evidence of women's activities on the goldfields at this time we can see that the work that women were doing to support their families was similar to that of women on farms.⁷³

⁶⁶ Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 92-97.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁷⁰ Marilyn Lake, "Helpmeet, Slave, Housewife: Women in Rural Families 1870-1930," in *Families in Colonial Australia*, eds Grimshaw, McConville, and McEwen, (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin: 1985), 179; Patricia Grimshaw, Charles Fahey, Susan Janson, and Tom Griffiths, "Families and Selection in Horsham," in *Families in Colonial Australia*, eds Grimshaw, McConville, and McEwen, (North Sydney: Allen and Unwin: 1985), 131.

⁷¹ Lake, "Helpmeet, Slave, Housewife: Women in Rural Families 1870-1930," 179.

⁷² Grimshaw, Fahey, Janson, and Griffiths, "Families and Selection in Horsham," 130.

⁷³ More recent research on contemporary women's experience on farms is being undertaken by the ARC-funded *Invisible Farmer Project*, a collaborative project with universities, collecting institutions, community organisations, and government agencies. See Invisible Farmer Project, <https://invisiblefarmer.net.au/>

Holmes, Martin and Mirmohamadi note that while men and women cultivated gardens it is largely women who have written about them, which suggests that Lawrence Chubb's account of his garden is unusual.⁷⁴ In his letters Lawrence Chubb described the establishment of the family's garden at Raspberry Creek, though it is *his* work and pride in 'my garden' that is initially more prominent.⁷⁵ He writes of the variety of produce that was planted, his work to irrigate the garden, and the progress of particular crops.⁷⁶ Lawrence's letters suggest that the extent of his garden was unusual for the area, where the ground was usually too hilly to cultivate a garden. He wrote that some families relied upon the Chinese gardeners who grew vegetables on the flat land alongside the Goulburn River and carted their produce 'on the backs of Mules and horses. We have no markets for anything and it is a very unusual thing for anything on wheels to find its way up here.'⁷⁷

Part of the reason for this level of detail about the garden may have been Lawrence's family's interest in what was familiar, and unfamiliar, about his lifestyle compared to their own work and home life in London. Much of Lawrence's work in the garden occurred in the early years of establishing their home at Raspberry Creek when Esther's time was involved in rearing their young children and Lawrence was working nearby. We know from women's accounts written on other goldfields that mothers were wary of the various hazards the mine workings posed for young children, and perhaps it was too difficult to both watch the children and work in the garden. Nevertheless, that Lawrence does not comment on Esther's presence in the garden might suggest that she may not have been actively involved at this time.

However, in 1877 Lawrence wrote

[i]n spite of my remonstrances Esther will potter about in the garden and although I come home as often as I possibly can and do the heavy work such as digging &c she

⁷⁴ Holmes, Martin, Mirmohamadi, *Reading the Garden*, 8.

⁷⁵ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 5 November 1871, 4238/3:4.

⁷⁶ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 29 January 1872, 4238/3:7.

⁷⁷ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 25 February 1872.

will persist in hoeing and sowing and planting and upon my word my garden would be very back-ward but for her.⁷⁸

While Esther's childbearing years were not yet over, what had changed was Lawrence's work. Sometime prior to 1877 he had taken up the Wallaby mine on tribute and the distance between the mine and his home meant that it was more convenient for him to stay at the mine during the week and come home on the weekend. This left Esther to manage the home, garden, and their children on her own. We do not know whether Esther undertook more work in the garden because she wanted to, or because she needed to in order to support the family. However, Lawrence's letters suggest that she also took pride in her achievements, urging him in one letter to tell his family that she had slaughtered her second pig which weighed over 174 pounds (or 78 kilograms).⁷⁹

Accounts of women's work in gardens and on farms note that women usually managed the dairy and poultry because they were often close to home and didn't require as much physical labour as other farm work; these tasks were therefore deemed more feminine. The labour involved in slaughtering a pig suggests that this was not typically women's work. We know from newspaper advertisements that some women operated as butchers in the region in the 1860s.⁸⁰ Bishop's study of colonial businesswomen in Sydney makes the distinction between 'retail butchers', those who purchased the already killed meat, and 'carcass' butchers' who butchered the meat themselves, but we do not know if the women identified as butchers in Woods Point were retail or carcass butchers.⁸¹ Bishop points to the account of one carcass butcher, Ritta Macnamara, who was much admired for the physical strength she displayed in her work, and in my research I have identified accounts of Gippsland farmer and bullock driver Agnes Buntine that claim she was the first person to take packhorses into Stringers Creek (later known as Walhalla) and was 'the first to butcher a beast there'.⁸²

⁷⁸ Lawrence Chubb to brother and sisters, 29 October 1877, 4238/4:17.

⁷⁹ Lawrence Chubb to brother and sisters, 31 August 1877, 4238/4:15.

⁸⁰ *Wood's Point Leader*, 28 November 1865. Mary Ann Young (nee Collins) was trading as 'Mrs Young's butchery' in Woods Point following the death of her butcher husband, Phil in 1865, but she may have had assistance in the business from other members of her family. Her son, Phil also worked as a butcher and her son-in-law, Walter John Nicholas was a farmer.

⁸¹ Bishop, *Minding Her Own Business*, 153.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 154; "Mother Buntine of Gippsland," *Parade* 190 (September 1966), 7.

However, these women are regarded as exceptions and their physical achievements were cast as manly. Nevertheless, Lawrence's letter suggests that both he and Esther took pride in her work with the pigs and there is no suggestion that she was any less feminine because of it.

In addition to the pigs, Esther farmed goats that supplied them with milk, as their land was not suited to cows. Some of the surviving letters suggest that the family shared some of their produce with neighbours but there is no evidence that they sold any of their produce, which Susan Lawrence notes was a strategy used by some mining families to supplement their income from mining.⁸³ Newspaper advertisements in *The Jamieson and Woodspoint Chronicle and Upper Goulburn Advertiser* show that at least one woman, a Mrs Cassidy, was selling milk from her dairy herd to hotels and families, and there are reports that a Mrs Joseph of Woods Point gave all her goat's milk to 'a most estimable lady in extreme delicate health here', complaining when the local police officer destroyed the goat presumably for some kind of municipal infringement.⁸⁴ In Marion Miller's novel, *Barbara Halliday* several women are noted for sharing the produce from the garden. A Mrs Ruffy, whom she describes as the 'fat vegetable woman at the Bend', was known for delivering eggs to the hospital and bunches of flowers to Halliday's store.⁸⁵ Another woman supplied the Halliday family with apples, and another sent Cornish pasties to the store. These economic survival strategies are also examples of kinds of communal ties that women established on the goldfields, as we saw earlier in the account of Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence at Woods Point.

Creating a garden as part of their home at Raspberry Creek provided the Chubbs with much needed fresh produce, but it also suggests that they were seeking a kind of settled community, as much as this was possible given the uncertainty of employment in the mining industry in this period. Earlier commentary on domesticity on the Upper Goulburn goldfields suggested a connection between the presence of women and families and the making of

⁸³ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 25 February 1872, 4238/3:9, Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, 59.

⁸⁴ *The Jamieson and Woodspoint Chronicle and Upper Goulburn Advertiser*, 23 March 1872; 14 November 1874.

⁸⁵ Miller Knowles, *Barbara Halliday*, 54.

settled communities, and Lawrence's also letters support this, revealing Esther's work to create a home, family, *and* garden. In the next section we explore how these activities also allowed Esther to establish mutually supportive networks that were separate from mining activity, and perhaps more important in shaping community. At the same time, the letters also show that the couple's support networks extended beyond those established at Gaffneys Creek. For Esther in particular, relationships with family and friends elsewhere meant that sometimes there was tension between her ties to her family, and the couple's wish to be part of a settled, geographically located community.

6.4 Family, Friends, and Neighbours.

In a letter written about eighteen months after the Chubb family's move to Raspberry Creek, Lawrence described his arrival home one evening after work.

... I found the place locked up and the key planted and when I opened the door the perfume of my dinner simmering in the fire place saluted my nostrils. I take this to mean that Mrs C will not be home before dark. I imagine she has gone to get the pets [their daughter, Ettie] portrait taken today and if so Mrs Dillinger or Mrs Mountford or some of them are sure to keep her till I go to carry the child home. They always do it because Esther so seldom goes out so far....⁸⁶

As we saw in the case study of Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence in Woods Point, the everyday interaction of married women in goldfield settlements created the circumstances for friendships to develop between some women. Lawrence's letter shows that Esther, too, had made friends since her arrival in the region, and that some of these friendships extended beyond her immediate neighbourhood. Drawing on maps and rate books suggests that Elizabeth Dillinger lived at Survey Point, and Mary Mountford at View Point, less than three kilometres from the Chubb's home at Raspberry Creek.⁸⁷ Although not far apart in

⁸⁶ Lawrence Chubb to Mother, 30-31 December 1872, 4238/3:20.

⁸⁷ PROV, VPRS 11452/P1, Unit 1, Shire of Howqua Rate Book, 1871.

contemporary terms, the women's homes were clearly far enough away for Lawrence to regard Esther's outing as unusual.

Gaps in the correspondence make it difficult to determine the extent and regularity of Esther's interactions with her female friends and neighbours, but what evidence we do have suggests that most of these interactions took place at home or in their immediate neighbourhood of Raspberry Creek. Neighbours helped when one of the children was sick; two young women, one of whom had worked for the Chubbs, visited to share clothing with Esther; and the arrival of a package from Lawrence's family in London that included ribbons, needlework, and baby clothes created some excitement with the wives in their immediate neighbourhood.⁸⁸ The children also made friends with their neighbours, but Lawrence was uncomfortable with their interaction with the McPherson children because the family was Irish.⁸⁹ This suggests that everyday interaction and relationships between neighbours — among the adults at least — could be complicated when there were cultural differences involved. Trying to unravel these — and other — relationships the Chubbs had with their friends and neighbours further highlights the complexity of community making, making it impossible to describe community in Gaffneys Creek within a single frame.

The strongest relationships displayed in Lawrence Chubb's letters are those of family, and — within the correspondence at least — these often sit in opposition to located community. Chubb wrote regularly to his mother and siblings in London from when he first arrived in Victoria in the 1850s, and these letters continued as he moved from goldfield to goldfield. Amongst his accounts of mining, and later of family life, he exchanged news and gossip about family, friends, and acquaintances in England and Victoria. This extensive network, too complicated to unravel in this chapter, is a further reminder that miners and their families brought with them a variety of communal ties to the Upper Goulburn goldfields in this, and other periods of mining activity, that were not dependent on a shared geographic space. Lawrence had a close relationship with his family, but his letters suggest that he was also content making a living and a home on the goldfields. Describing the play of light and

⁸⁸ Lawrence Chubb to mother and siblings, 23-24 February 1874, 4238/4:3; Lawrence Chubb to siblings, 27 February 1882, 4239/5:13; Lawrence Chubb to siblings, 3 December 1882, 4238/5:23.

⁸⁹ Lawrence Chubb to siblings, 6 November 1881, 4238/5:9.

colour on the snow-capped ranges to his mother, Lawrence noted that he preferred the solitude there to life in the city.⁹⁰ He added that many of the women he met in the region found the solitude and rugged country confronting at first, but grew to prefer it to the open country elsewhere.⁹¹ Esther, it seems, did not. The glimpses Lawrence gives us into Esther's relationships with her family, particularly after she and Lawrence married and moved to Gaffneys Creek, suggest that Esther missed the everyday interaction and support of her family. Mindful as I am that we only have Lawrence's interpretation of Esther's feelings, his letters nevertheless suggest that her ties to her immediate and wider family appear to have been more important than any of the relationships she established at Gaffneys Creek.

6.5 Conclusion

The last of Lawrence Chubb's letters in the collection held by the State Library of Victoria was written on 3 December 1882.⁹² As Lawrence describes the excitement caused by the arrival of a parcel of gifts sent by his family in England, there is no hint that they would soon leave the Upper Goulburn goldfields. However, other sources tell us that the following year Lawrence took up a mining position in Copeland, in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales.⁹³ Esther and the children joined him in 1886. With no further sources on this move we do not know how Lawrence and Esther negotiated their ties to family and community, but we might speculate that the three-year delay in Esther's move to Copeland suggests that she was reluctant to move further away from her extended family. Sadly, six months after her arrival Esther died, leaving Lawrence with their six children ranging in age from fourteen to four.⁹⁴ Again, we have no further sources on how the family managed without Esther, but newspaper reports suggest that Lawrence Chubb later took up mining in Western Australia, returning to Copeland shortly before he died in 1915.⁹⁵ How the letters he sent to his family

⁹⁰ Lawrence Chubb to mother, 6 September 1871, 4238/3:2.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Lawrence Chubb to brother and sisters, 3 December 1882, 4238/5:23. However, the collection also contains several letters written by Lawrence and Esther's son, Lawrie, from London.

⁹³ *Australian Town and Country Journal*, 13 October 1883, 22, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article71004530>. In 1883 Lawrence was appointed manager of the Centennial and Bel Gammon Company.

⁹⁴ *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 16 November 1886, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article18899462>.

⁹⁵ *Dungog Chronicle: Durham and Gloucester Advertiser*, 4 June 1915, 10, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article138019208>.

in England came to be returned to Victoria has not been established from the available sources, but eldest son Lawrence's later move to England suggests one thread for further research.⁹⁶

Lawrence Chubb's letters provide us with an intimate view into the lived experience of one mining family in the period of waged labour and tribute mining in Victoria in the 1870s and '80s. With a pen in one hand and a foot rocking a cradle, Lawrence takes us into his home where we find Esther at work in the kitchen or the garden, giving birth and tending to their children's illnesses, and her interaction with family, friends, and neighbours. Reading his account of Esther's activities, we can glimpse something of the effect that Lawrence's variable income, working conditions, and the remoteness of the region had on her experiences as a wife and mother. As Lawrence's account of their long courtship reveals their relationship was predicated on the middle-class ideology of separate spheres in which men were associated with work and women with home and family, with husbands as providers and women as dependents. However, even within this ideal there was scope for Esther to take on and celebrate less feminine tasks, such as the slaughtering of their pigs. Lawrence's letters also show that 'community' is not static, as Tönnies later envisaged. As the mining industry continued to fluctuate, families moved in and out of the region and new communal ties formed. At the same time, Lawrence's letters show that his family maintained and valued kinship relationships that were not dependent on a shared geographic locality, nor on permanent settlement of a shared location. These ideas are taken up in the next chapter, drawing on the collective nostalgia for the goldfields in the 1890s and in the 1930s with a particular focus on women's writing on the goldfields.

⁹⁶ Lawrence (known to his family as Lawrie) Wensley Chubb jnr was later knighted for his work with various organisations to preserve open spaces in England, see Elizabeth Baigent, "Chubb, Sir Lawrence Wensley (1873–1948)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32411>.

Chapter 7: 'Old happy days of unity to joy in, and recall...': Women, Nostalgia, and Community, 1890s-1930s¹

7.1 Introduction

*The Bells of Recollection peal and summon each and all –
Old happy days of unity, to joy in, and recall;
To celebrate the glories gone that wave to Woods
Point town
A place of pride among its peers in riches and renown.*²

In 1933 Marion Miller Knowles penned this verse in one of her characteristically nostalgic poems about Woods Point. Then aged in her seventies and living in Kew, in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, Marion was something of an unofficial poet laureate for some who had lived in the mining township. The daughter of James and Anne Miller had left the mining township almost fifty years earlier to work in education, but in her later writing career as a poet, novelist, and journalist she drew extensively on her recollections of Woods Point and the surrounding goldfields. A typewritten transcript of this poem, among the notes on the early days of mining made by former Woods Point resident Alf Holliday, notes that it was written for a reunion on 23 September, but Holliday provides no further details.³ A search of digitised newspapers confirms that a 'Back to Wood's Point and District' reunion was held on 23 September 1933 at the Manchester Unity Hall in Swanston Street, then located opposite the State Library of Victoria.⁴

At first glance it might seem unusual that the reunion was being held in Melbourne rather than in Woods Point. However, as Helen Doyle's study on European settlers' place making in Victoria explains, the 'Back to' reunions began as informal gatherings in Melbourne for

¹ Marion Miller Knowles, untitled poem written for a Woods Point reunion on 23 September 1933, Alf Holliday, "Notes on the early days of mining ..., 1985," MS 12050/12051, State Library of Victoria.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Age*, 27 July 1933, 1, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article204378671>.

former students and residents of country towns, particularly mining towns, and later became part of formal celebrations in the townships themselves.⁵ Other accounts of the 'Back to' reunions in metropolitan newspapers suggest that the 1933 reunion at the Manchester Unity Hall was the first such reunion for Woods Point, but later in the decade reunions were also held in the township itself.⁶

In sociological and historical scholarship the idea of a static community based on a shared geographic location has evolved to include various sites in which community is made. However, in recollections of the Victorian gold rushes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century we can see something of the connection the classical theorists made between social change and a perceived loss of some of the characteristics of community in close-knit, rural locations. In his study of amateur historiography in Australia Griffiths identified four distinctive 'waves of nostalgia', periods of collective remembering that were 'prompted by loss, depression or disruption'.⁷ One of these periods, in the 1880s and '90s, was characterised by the recollections of gold rush immigrants who began to reflect on 'the changes they had initiated and observed, and worried about what would be lost with their deaths'.⁸ In the 1930s, as Griffiths and Davison observe in their separate studies, it was the now adult children who fostered a collective nostalgia for the rural townships they had left.⁹ Doyle's study of the 'Back to' movement furthers this scholarship, noting in particular the popularity of the reunions in mining towns.¹⁰ This nostalgia for the gold rush, gold rush towns, and the past more generally might suggest that the urban participants felt a loss of community as they understood it: geographically bound, formed by social relationships and regular interaction. Yet, as this chapter shows, written recollections of the goldfields, and the 'Back-to' reunions in Melbourne and country towns highlight that community was not lost, but was rather remade by the writers and participants as they imagined it; an idea of community as it existed *in their memories* of the goldfields. Their nostalgia was for a settled

⁵ Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 246.

⁶ *Weekly Times*, 25 May 1935, 19, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223353264>; *Argus*, 30 December 1938, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12081500>.

⁷ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 197.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 199. Griffiths notes that Graeme Davison had observed that this nostalgia later led to a style of local history writing he described as 'pioneer history', see *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 197-220.

⁹ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 200; Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 204.

¹⁰ Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 247.

community bound by place, but their imagining produced an idea of community transcending place.

These periods of collective nostalgia can tell us about a central concern of this thesis: the extent to which women made and imagined community differently to men. As Griffiths and Davison note, there have been other periods of collective nostalgia that have influenced the expression of historical consciousness in Victoria, but in this chapter I focus on the period beginning in the 1890s, and again in the 1930s.¹¹ In both periods we can see the influence of two national stories: the masculine and egalitarian ‘bush legend’ defined by Russel Ward, and the more conservative and inclusive ‘pioneer legend’ later defined by John Hirst.¹² Both legends reflected contemporary debates on citizenship and national identity, including contesting notions of masculinity and femininity that were central to feminist campaigns at the time. Though it was men’s creative work that largely shaped the bush and pioneer legends, a few women, like Marion Miller Knowles, drew on their memories of the Upper Goulburn in fictional and autobiographical accounts written in this period.

In the first half of this chapter I argue that in examining these alongside recollections of men’s activities in the same period we can explore how women *drew on* the tropes of the bush and pioneer legends while *expanding* their definitions to better reflect women’s experiences and activities. That some women responded to these legends differently in their writing on the goldfields reflects other scholarship on colonial women’s writing about ‘the bush’.¹³ While recognising that the women perceived the landscape differently to men, what I am concerned with in this chapter — and in the thesis — is how women’s writings about a *specific* rural locality helped to make community, and what this can tell us about the relationship between locality and community making more generally.¹⁴ In the second half of

¹¹ Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors*, 197; Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 197-199.

¹² Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 1-2; John Hirst, “The Pioneer Legend,” *Historical Studies* 18: 71 (1978), 316-337, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10314617808595595>.

¹³ This includes Frost, *No Place for a Nervous Lady*; Delys Bird, “Gender and Landscape: Australian Colonial Women Writers,” *Working Papers in Australian Papers* 49 (1989), Dömötör, “British Gentlewomen’s Perception of the Australian Bush,” 93-103.

¹⁴ Bird, “Gender and Landscape,” 14-15. Bird suggests that while men had an ‘exploitative’ relationship to the land, women’s domestic activities facilitated an intimate understanding of the landscape. She argues that some women also embraced the differences in the landscape and the more physical work this required.

the chapter I look at the influence of the pioneer legend in the collective nostalgia of the 1930s, in particular the participation of the Upper Goulburn region in the 'Back to' movement. I argue that though a once shared geographic location was the basis for these reunions, the idea of community they celebrated was more complex than this. In drawing on these periods of collective nostalgia, this chapter argues that a critical analysis of the relationship between nostalgia and community helps to expand our understanding of how a 'goldfield community' was made and remade, and women's role in that making.

**7.2 '[She] was a woman of no little importance in the Cherry's Point of those days...':
Recollections of Women and the Goldrush on the Upper Goulburn Goldfields, 1890s-
1910s¹⁵**

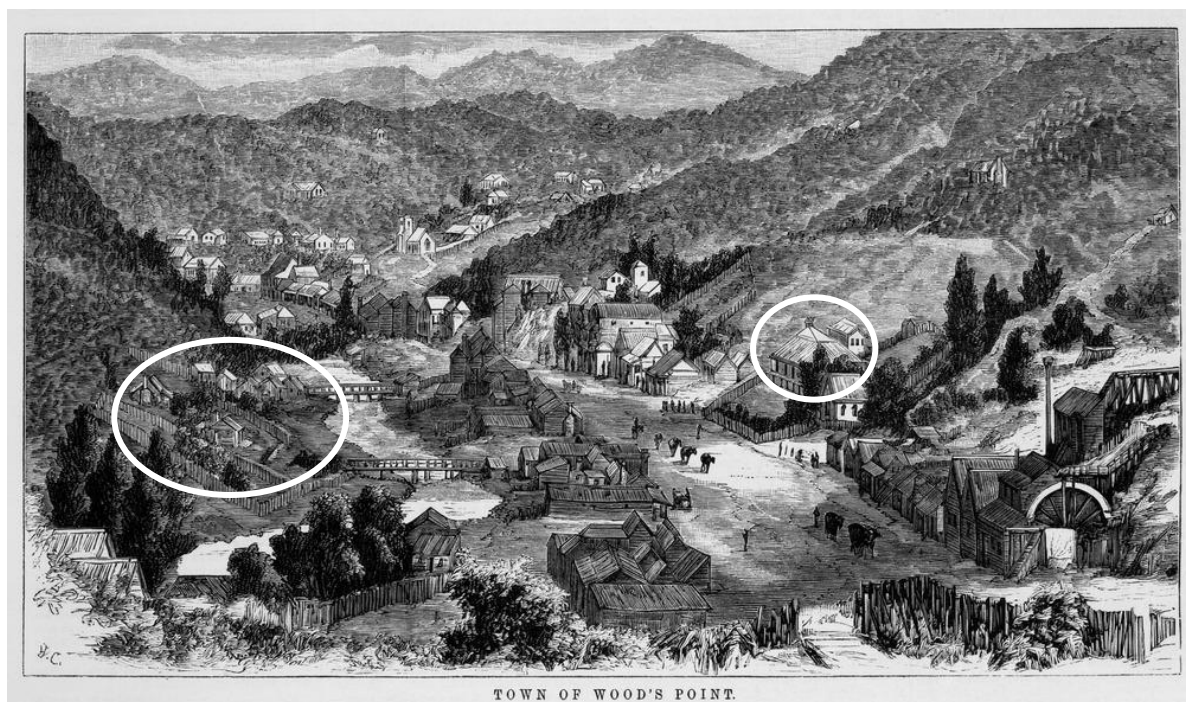


Fig. 7.1: Curtis, James Waltham. Town of Wood's Point, *The Illustrated Australian News*, 29 January 1881

State Library of Victoria.

As I have marked on the illustration, Woods Point State School no. 789 is on the right side of the main street overlooking the team of bullocks in the centre of the illustration. Marion Miller's family home may have been one of the homes on the left overlooking the two bridges over the Goulburn River.

¹⁵ Miller Knowles, *Barbara Halliday*, 10.

In January 1886 Marion Miller (then known as Minnie) wrote to the Secretary of the Victorian Education Department requesting a transfer from Woods Point State School No.789.¹⁶ Marion, the eldest daughter of James and Anne Miller, had been a teacher at the weatherboard school, situated on the lower slopes of Morning Star Hill overlooking Scott Street, for the last seven years. The school was a short walk from her family home on the opposite side of the valley along the banks of the Goulburn River, and not far from her father's store in Bridge Street. James Miller's first store had burnt down in the fire at the 'old Point' in 1865, and in 1883 he was again forced to rebuild after another fire destroyed his store and stock, but Marion's letter suggests that by 1886 the family had decided to move on.¹⁷

In neat cursive handwriting, Marion pleaded her case for a transfer: her family was moving to Melbourne and her salary was not sufficient to pay for her board in Woods Point.¹⁸ Comparison with other letters from teachers at Woods Point, preserved in the Education Department's correspondence files, make it clear that Marion was more accustomed to the living conditions than some of the men and women who were transferred to the isolated township.¹⁹ However, without her family home and her parent's support Marion felt it would have been difficult for her to remain at the school on a pupil teacher's salary and she asked to be transferred to 'a similar position in any school in either Melbourne or suburbs'.²⁰ After a second pleading letter, Marion was transferred to a temporary position at Sandridge State School in Port Melbourne in May 1886.²¹ If Marion's parents had intended to settle in Melbourne they did not remain there long. By late 1886 James and

¹⁶ PROV, VPRS 640/P0, Unit 435, School Number 789, Minnie Miller to Secretary, Education Department, 4 January 1886.

¹⁷ *Argus*, 10 January 1865, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5735295>; *Argus* 2 November 1883, 10, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11833654>.

¹⁸ PROV, VPRS 640/P0, Unit 435, School Number 789, Minnie Miller to Secretary, Education Department, 4 January 1886; PROV, VPRS 13718, Teacher Record Books, No. 8711, Miller, Minnie Marion. According to her teacher record, Marian may have been ranked as a 3rd or 2nd class pupil teacher at the time of her request. According to other sources on teacher salaries under the Public Service Act 1886, Marian was entitled to an annual salary of either 24 or 32 pounds, see Blake, *Vision and Realisation*, 286.

¹⁹ PROV, VPRS 640/P0, Unit 434, School Number 789, Mary Doyle to Secretary, Education Department, 17 January 1879.

²⁰ PROV, VPRS 640/P0, Unit 435, School Number 789, Minnie Miller to Secretary, Education Department, 4 January 1886.

²¹ PROV, VPRS 640/P0, Unit 435, School Number 789, Minnie Miller to Secretary, Education Department, 25 February 1886.

Anne Miller were running the Black Spur Hotel at Narbethong, one of a number of hotels and boarding houses established on the Yarra Track route to Woods Point in the 1860s.²² Though their lives would be far from settled, Narbethong became a home to various members of the Miller family for the next forty years.²³

Before she married in 1901 Marion taught in a total of thirteen state schools in Melbourne and regional Victoria, sometimes filling in for a couple of months, at other times a year or more.²⁴ As she later wrote, the frequent moves and her dislike of the Mallee in particular prompted Marion to find solace in writing poetry and stories inspired by her Woods Point childhood, nature, and her Catholic faith.²⁵ After she moved to Box Hill State School No. 2838 in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne in 1893 Marion began seeking publication of her work. This writing led to a second career as a poet and journalist, (under the name of Marion Miller Knowles after her marriage to Joseph Knowles) most notably for the Catholic newspaper, the *Advocate*.²⁶ What emerges from a close study of Marion's writing is that she may have left Woods Point, but she never lost her attachment to her childhood home.

Marion Miller's family remained in the township longer than some families (over 20 years in total), but by the late nineteenth century the population of Woods Point, like many other goldfield townships, was declining.²⁷ As Graeme Davison highlights in his study of 'Marvellous Melbourne', many children of the goldrush generation left the goldfields to be educated, to find other types of work, and to establish homes and families of their own in Melbourne's booming suburbs.²⁸ When the population of the Borough of Woods Point was counted in 1881, five years before the Miller family left, there were 562 people (290 males,

²² *Age*, 29 November 1886, 3; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article196016859>.

²³ John F. Waghorn, *Narbethong Post Office Centenary 1883-1983* (Thomastown: John F Waghorn, 1983), 8.

²⁴ PROV, VPRS 13718, Unit 29, Teacher Record Books, No. 8711, Miller, Minnie Marion.

²⁵ Marion Miller Knowles, "Biographical notes," Papers, 1929-31, Manuscript Collection, State Library of Victoria.

²⁶ *Advocate*, 22 September 1949, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article172506527>.

²⁷ According to the registration of their marriage James and Anne Miller had lived in Woods Point since at least 1863, James Miller and Anne Bowen, 27 November 1863, Marriage, Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages, Victoria.

²⁸ Graeme Davison, *The Rise and Fall of Marvellous Melbourne*, 2nd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1978), 14.

272 females), almost half the population counted in the 1871 census.²⁹ A decade later in the midst of the economic depression, the population had again almost halved to 290 (149 males, 141 females).³⁰ Of the sixteen Victorian cities, towns or boroughs in mining areas whose populations were reported as having decreased between the 1881 and 1891 census, Woods Point had the highest rate of population decline at 48 per cent.³¹

Despite this evidence of decline, at least one inhabitant was sufficiently optimistic to start a new business in Woods Point. In 1896 David Thomas Henderson, nephew of Woods Point mining agent Richard Mackay, commenced publishing the *Gippsland Miners' Standard*.³² Woods Point had been without a local newspaper since the closure of the *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer* in 1868, though the *Jamieson and Woodspoint Chronicle and Upper Goulburn Advertiser* featured some news from Woods Point and the surrounding region.³³ Among the features of the *Gippsland Miners' Standard* were regular recollections of the early days of mining on the Upper Goulburn supplied by local correspondents.³⁴ Some of the correspondents who shared their memories described the men who established tracks and mines in the region in heroic terms which are suggestive of stories that shaped the 'bush' and 'pioneer' legends.³⁵ Drawing on Goodman, we can see the influence of nineteenth century American author Bret Harte (1836-1902) and his stories of 'masculine camaraderie' on the Californian goldfields.³⁶ In one recollection in the *Gippsland Miners' Standard* the

²⁹ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria, 1881*, "Table XX, Population in Cities, Towns and Boroughs, 1871-1881," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1881-census_01-03_135.

³⁰ Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria, 1891*, "Table X, Cities, Towns and Boroughs in which population decreased between 1881 and 1891," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1891-census_01-03_34.

³¹ Ibid. Clunes was second, with a population decline of 40 per cent.

³² Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 133. Richard Mackay was married to Annie Fullerton, and in 1921 their niece, poet Mary Fullerton, published *Bark House Days*, a retelling of her childhood at Glenmaggie. The connection between Mackay and the Fullerton family has been noted by a number of authors including Morgan, *Foothill Farmers*, 51.

³³ State Library of Victoria has an incomplete set of this newspaper between 1871 and 1916, but the content of the available issues suggest that this newspaper did not make a feature of goldfield recollections.

³⁴ These include the "Big River Gold Fields" (1896) and "Woods Point Re-Visited: Memories of the Early Days" (1899) series. These and many other accounts are unattributed but Lloyd and Pilkington identify James Armstrong as the author of series on the Big River and Enochs Point goldfields; see Lloyd, *Gold on the Ranges*, 6; Pilkington, *Big River Days*, 7.

³⁵ "Sketches of Mining Days, Reminiscences of Woodspoint District, The Old and New Times Contrasted, by The Old Timer," *Gippsland Miners' Standard*, 12 May 1896.

³⁶ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 4.

author directly references Harte, Mark Twain ‘and a host of their followers and imitators’.³⁷ However, this author argued that the violence and criminal activity sometimes depicted in these stories was not typical of how things were on the Upper Goulburn; he suggests the men here were better behaved.³⁸ With the exception of a few women working in hotels and occasional references to unidentified married women the activities of women rarely feature in these recollections. It is men who are the protagonists.

Other published recollections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were in the form of edited compilations and published memoirs. A chapter on “The Rise and Fall of Wood’s Point” was published in George Sutherland’s *Tales of the Goldfields* published by George Robertson in 1880.³⁹ In 1912 W.E. Adcock, who moved with his family to Gaffneys Creek in the 1860s, published *The Gold Rushes of the Fifties* based on articles he had written for the *Australian Journal* in the 1890s.⁴⁰ Goodman identified Adcock’s work as another example of nostalgia for ‘a lost heroic age’ and in Adcock’s description of the 1850s rushes as a ‘golden era [...] during which our pioneers were founding a nation’ we see a direct reference to the pioneer literary tradition.⁴¹ It is notable that Adcock did not widen the scope of his work to include the Upper Goulburn, where he had also lived, and this might suggest that in Adcock’s view, or in the view of his sources, the later rushes were not as much a part of this ‘heroic age’.

³⁷ “Woodspoint Revisited: Memories of the Early Days, No. III,” *Gippsland Miners’ Standard*, 28 February 1899. Goodman writes that ‘Harte was a major influence on nineteenth-century Australian writers’ depiction of the gold rush’ and refers to Marcus Clarke’s 1871 review of Harte’s *The Luck of the Roaring Camp*, see *Gold Seeking*, 7.

³⁸ According to Goodman, Clarke wrote that the men depicted in Harte’s story were not dissimilar to those on the Victorian goldfields, giving Woods Point as an example, a view that differs to that of the *Gippsland Miners’ Standard* author, see *Gold Seeking*, 7.

³⁹ George Sutherland, “The Rise and Fall of Wood’s Point” in *Tales of the Goldfields* (Melbourne: George Robertson, 1880), 73-79. Sutherland appears to have drawn on Robert Brough Smyth’s *The Gold Fields and Mineral Districts of Victoria*, published in 1869, for much of the detail on the gold discoveries at Woods Point. This account of the activities of the McDougalls and their partners, supplied by mining surveyor A. B. Ainsworth, draws on some of the tropes of the pioneer legend, such as their status as ‘the first diggers’ in the region, though it does not use the term ‘pioneer’. See Brough Smyth. *The Gold Fields and Mineral Districts of Victoria*, 303-312.

⁴⁰ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 5; Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 78. W.E. Adcock, *The Gold Rushes of the Fifties* (Melbourne: E.W. Cole, 1912). In the preface Adcock noted that earlier versions of some stories appeared in the *Australian Journal* as part of “The Early Days of Victoria” series in 1894-95, and in a later series on ‘The “Rushes” of the Fifties’ in the same journal.

⁴¹ Goodman, *Gold Seeking*, 5; Adcock, *The Gold Rushes of the Fifties*, 8.

Charles Bird thought differently. In 1915 he published his reminiscences of the gold rushes in Australia and Zealand, which included the Upper Goulburn and other 1860s gold rushes.⁴² Bird directly referenced the pioneer legend by publishing under the pseudonym 'Alpha, the Pioneer Prospector' though he made no claim that he was the 'first' to discover gold on the diggings he worked, or that he 'cleared the way' for others to follow. Bird's reminiscences are also notable, in this study at least, for his memories of Elizabeth 'Lizzie' Cross who worked as a barmaid in Marcus Baker's shanty on the Jordan diggings, and who later married Woods Point storekeeper Edward Naumburg. Bird's account of Cross notes his admiration for Lizzie and acknowledges the contribution that she made to the success of Baker's business.⁴³ This differs to the account of Mrs Naumburg in newspaper reports, and in the diary entry Dr Nash made in 1873 after Mrs Naumburg and her husband accused Dr Nash of attempting to rape her in 1866.⁴⁴ If Bird was aware of the incident (the trial and Dr Nash's subsequent acquittal were published in metropolitan and regional newspapers) his omission is a reminder of the selectiveness of these goldfield reminiscences. Nevertheless, Bird was more generous in his assessment of the contribution that women made to the goldfields than other authors.

The tropes of the pioneer legend were repeated in Richard Mackay's recollections of the early Gippsland goldfields, first published in 1915 as a series of articles in the *Gippsland Farmers' Journal* and republished as a book a year later.⁴⁵ Mackay highlights the activities of the men who cut tracks, found gold, and established businesses on the goldfields, but his account of bullock driver Agnes Buntine suggests that some women could be more directly included in the pioneer legend.⁴⁶ Mackay recalled seeing Mrs Buntine drive her bullock team, plough and sow on her farm, and, using her stockwhip, flog a man at Bald Hills for insulting a young woman.⁴⁷ She was, Mackay said, 'a representative of the best of the old

⁴² 'Alpha', *Reminiscences of the Goldfields in the Fifties and Sixties: Victoria, New Zealand, New South Wales, Part 1, Victoria* (North Melbourne: Gordon & Gotch, 1915). Like Adcock, Bird had been published earlier in the 1890s in the *Gippsland Miners' Standard*.

⁴³ 'Alpha', *Reminiscences*, 113-114.

⁴⁴ Nash, diary, 24 June 1873; *Ballarat Star*, 14 February 1866, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article112867311>.

⁴⁵ The articles originally appeared in the *Gippsland Farmers' Journal* between February and October 1915, before being published as a collection, see Mackay, *Recollections of the Early Gippsland Goldfields*.

⁴⁶ Mackay, *Recollections of the Early Gippsland Goldfields*, 33.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

business pioneers'.⁴⁸ However, Don Watson observes that amongst accounts of nineteenth century pioneers of Gippsland Agnes Buntine was an exception to how women were usually depicted.⁴⁹ Watson argues that many women went unnoticed because physical achievement was more valued, and so women 'were therefore cast as manly or not recognised at all'.⁵⁰ Sue Rowley notes that in the 1890s bush mythology women who undertook physical labour outside the home were depicted as physically hardened and objects of pity, but although Mackay and other contemporary authors cast Buntine's physical achievements and appearance as manly, they appear to admire rather than pity her.⁵¹ John Hirst's more inclusive national story acknowledged that women could be pioneers, citing the importance of Lawson's 'The Drover's Wife' 'in the pioneer canon', but Hirst does not reflect upon the contemporary notions of masculinity and femininity that shaped these depictions.⁵²

Women's goldfields and bush poetry, memoir, fiction, and journalism was being published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by some of the same newspapers, journals, and book publishers as men's accounts of the goldfields.⁵³ Nonetheless, Susan K. Martin suggests that until recently, literary scholarship of the nationalist literature of this period has focused on men's writing that conformed to the 'features of the masculine tradition'. This meant that women's writing was largely overlooked.⁵⁴ Literary scholars have addressed this gap by re-examining women writers from the late nineteenth and early

⁴⁸ Ibid. Other accounts of Agnes Buntine include: George Dunderdale, *The Book of the Bush, Containing Many Truthful Sketches of the Early Colonial Life of Squatters, Whalers, Convicts, Diggers and Others who Left Their Native Land and Never Returned*, 1898 (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1973), 281; John Joseph O'Connor, "The Memoirs of J.J. O'Connor," 1966, Manuscripts Collection, State Library of Victoria.

⁴⁹ Don Watson, *Caledonia Australis: Scottish Highlanders on the Frontier of Australia* (North Sydney, Vintage Books, 1997), 187

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Sue Rowley, "Things a Bushwoman Cannot Do", in *Debutante Nation*, eds. Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley, Susan Sheridan, 188 (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

⁵² Hirst, "The Pioneer Legend." 322.

⁵³ Literary scholars of Californian women writers in the mid nineteenth century have also noted a similar trend. See Ida Rae Egli, ed. *No Rooms of their Own: Women Writers of Early California, 1849-1869*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1992), xix.

⁵⁴ Susan K. Martin, "National Dress or National Trousers?", in *The Oxford Literary History of Australia*, eds. Bruce Bennett, Jennifer Strauss, Chris Wallace-Crabbe, 94 (Oxford University Press, 1998).

twentieth century to show how some women's writing contested this tradition.⁵⁵ However, with the notable exception of Margaret Anderson's work, goldfield scholarship has yet to fully explore how these literary conventions might have influenced women's writing in this period, and what this adds to our understanding of how women made community.⁵⁶

Among the women who wrote about the goldfields in poetry and prose published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Mary Gaunt is a notable example.⁵⁷ As Patricia Clarke writes, Gaunt's father was a Goldfield Commissioner on the Buckland diggings in the late 1850s, and the author drew on the 1857 Buckland riot in her article, "The Riots at the Packhorse", published in the *Australasian* in 1890.⁵⁸ Bronwen Hickman's later biography of Gaunt notes that the author was inspired by her father's stories of the goldfields and the novel was her way of 'preserving images of her father's world that were — in the 1880s — alive in the memory of his generation.'⁵⁹ Hickman's critique of the story suggests that Gaunt was drawing on the nostalgia for the goldfields in this period, while also subverting aspects of the masculine narrative by creating strong female characters.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Examples include Patricia Clarke's *Pen Portraits: Women Writers and Journalists in Nineteenth Century Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1988); Susan Magarey, Sue Rowley, Susan Sheridan, *Debutante Nation: Feminism Contests the 1890s* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1993).

⁵⁶ Anderson, "Mrs Charles Lacy, Lola Montez and Poll the Grogger."

⁵⁷ Prolific crime writer Mary Helena Fortune was also writing in this period, though as Lucy Sussex's research shows, her publishing career commenced earlier, in 1865; see Lucy Sussex, "Mary Fortune: the Only Truly Bohemian Lady Writer who has Earned a Living by her Pen in Australia", *Overland* 183 (2006), 54.

⁵⁸ Clarke, *Pen Portraits*, 190. The story was later incorporated into her novel, *Deadman's*, published in 1898, see Mary Gaunt, *Deadman's* (New York: New Amsterdam Book Co., 1899), <<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks15/1500021h.html>>.

⁵⁹ Bronwen Hickman, *Mary Gaunt: Independent Colonial Woman* (Melbourne: Melbourne Books, 2014), 52.

⁶⁰ Ibid.



Fig. 7.2: Marion Miller [Knowles] / Melbourne Photographic Coy, City Chambers, 114 Elizabeth St, Melbourne, 30 Aug 1900.
State Library of New South Wales.

Like Mary Gaunt, Marion Miller Knowles had a love of the landscape in Victoria's north-east and drew on personal and family recollections of the goldfields in her later published writings. Her parents' move to Narbethong, 90 kilometres west of Woods Point on the Yarra Track, partly explains Marion's ongoing attachment to the ranges, but her experiences as a temporary teacher, adrift from her family and friends in a landscape she could not connect to, probably heightened her sense of belonging to a community she recollected in Woods Point. After being transferred to Box Hill State School in 1893, Marion became acquainted with *Argus* editor Alfred Martin Ebsworth, who lived in Box Hill, and Marion's poetry and stories were subsequently published in the *Australasian* and a number of other newspaper

and journals.⁶¹ She also entered her work in literary competitions, on several occasions winning first prize in the 'Original tale' section in the South Street competition at Ballarat, and prizes in other competitions.⁶² We do not know any of the details of the stories Marion entered in these competitions, but she probably submitted work inspired by Woods Point that later appeared in the *Australasian*, *Austral Light* and *Advocate* in the 1890s and early 1900s. Some of these stories were included in her second edited collection *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom* (1900), and later formed part of her novel, *Barbara Halliday: a Story of the Hill Country in Victoria* (1914).⁶³

In her introduction to her biography of Mary Gaunt, Bronwen Hickman writes that it is 'dangerous' to read Gaunt's fiction for 'biographical evidence', given a writer's propensity to rework their experiences to better suit the story they wish to tell.⁶⁴ Reading Marion Miller Knowles' writing as a historical source is equally fraught. But in this chapter we are concerned with how men and women drew on their memories of the goldfields to imagine community and, as the extensive scholarship on the bush and pioneer legends shows, literary sources were central to the way in these legends were made and remade. Miller Knowles drew on her memories in her poetry, but it is the literary devices of her short stories such as plot and characterisation that allow us to explore more fully the interaction between these legends and her recollections of the goldfields.

⁶¹ Marion Miller Knowles to J.K. Moir, 1 March 1937; Marion Miller Knowles, Papers, 1929-1931, MS 5705/5707/5668, State Library of Victoria.

⁶² *Ballarat Star*, 20 July 1894, 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article209216198>; *Ballarat Star*, 24 July 1896, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article207489615>; *Argus* 22 February 1894, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article8729676>.

⁶³ Marion Miller's first book was a collection of poetry titled *Songs from the Hills* published by Melville, Mullen and Slade in 1898. It has long been thought that her semi-autobiographical novel, *Barbara Halliday: a Story of the Hill Country in Victoria* was her first book, with several authors citing a publication date of 1896 (see Cecily Close, 'Knowles, Marion (1865–1949)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/knowles-marion-6988/text12147>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 14 February 2018; Brian Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 109; Morgan, *Foothill Farmers*, 49.) However, subsequent research by AustLit cites reviews that point to a publication date of 1914 following its serialisation in the *Advocate* in 1910 under the title 'Child of the Ranges', see *Auslit* [database online]. Marion herself adds to the confusion by describing in undated biographical notes held by the State Library of Victoria that *Child of the Ranges* was her first novel and was published by Joseph Winter, though she does not indicate when it was published; Marion Miller Knowles, "Biographical notes," Papers, 1929-1931, 5705/5707/5668, State Library of Victoria.

⁶⁴ Hickman, *Mary Gaunt*, 7.

Many of the stories Miller Knowles set on the goldfields were narrated by male characters. Here her work is more typical of men's recollections than Mary Gaunt's central female characters. Some of the narrators were miners, but other characters included surveyors, storekeepers, and packers whose work was nonetheless dependent on mining activity. However, though there is a strong theme of mateship evident in the stories it is not the *independent* masculinity found in stories that form part of the 'bush legend' but a mateship that *extends* to the support of wives and children. We see this version of mateship in "Echoes of the Old Mining Days: The Boss's Wife", when miner Bill Halliday adopts the child of his employer, Jack Errington after Errington is killed in a mining accident and his grief-stricken widow, Maddelena drowns herself.⁶⁵

A similar scenario of mateship is found in "Tom Rodgers' Wife: a Mining Tale" where another Bill marries the widow of his best mate, who was also killed in a mining accident.⁶⁶ In this story funds are raised to enable the widow to establish a store to support herself and her children, but at the end of the story we learn that she later married Bill, her husband's friend. "Tom Rodgers' Wife", which was published in the *Box Hill Reporter* in 1897 and later featured in *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, may have been drawn from the real life death of Thomas Joyce who, together with his claim partner Michael Purcell was killed in a mining accident at Gooleys Creek in 1874.⁶⁷ Newspaper reports of the accident reveal that funds were raised to support Joyce's widow (identified in other sources as Susan or Susanna Joyce née Butler) and their children.⁶⁸ These and other sources of the case do not tell us whether the conclusion Marion describes in her story was inspired by Susan Joyce's real life experience, but we know from other sources in this study of the Upper Goulburn goldfields that remarriage was a common survival strategy employed by widows in order to support their families.

⁶⁵ Marion Miller, "Echoes of the Old Mining Days: The Boss's Wife," in *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, 20-26. Halliday was the surname Marion later gave to the protagonist of her novel, *Barbara Halliday*, but here the character was a storekeeper.

⁶⁶ Marion Miller, "Tom Rodgers' Wife," *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, 173-180.

⁶⁷ *Box Hill Reporter*, 23 July 1897, 3; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article93277742>; *Australasian*, 25 July 1874, 15, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article139122312>; *Argus*, 4 August 1874, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article5875740>. Marion later reworked this story in her novel, *Barbara Halliday*, using more of the real life details from the Joyce and Purcell case.

⁶⁸ *Jamieson and Woodspoint Chronicle and Upper Goulburn Advertiser*, 3 October 1874; J.G. Rogers, *Wood's Point Cemetery*, 60-61.

“Echoes” and “Tom Rodger’s Wife” differed from the stories and poems in publications such as the *Bulletin* that celebrated independence and mateship by reflecting contemporary notions of a masculinity that was tied to domesticity. Marilyn Lake argues in her discussion of gender and the ‘bush legend’ that the male writers of the *Bulletin* rejected the ‘cult of domesticity’ and the ‘Idealisation of Domestic Man’, and celebrated men’s independence.⁶⁹ However, as Lake points out, men who enjoyed ‘the carefree roaming life’ left wives who were forced to find other means of supporting their families.⁷⁰ Lake links this rejection of domesticity to the masculine habit of hard drinking, and its corollary of domestic violence.⁷¹ Marion Miller (as she was then known) addresses this issue in “A Wild Night in June, 1883” in which a woman is accidentally shot by her husband after seeking refuge from his violence in a neighbour’s house.⁷² As the woman lay dying she implores her neighbour, who tried to intervene, not to judge her husband harshly as it was ‘the drink’ that made him treat her badly.⁷³ One of Marion’s contemporaries on the Upper Goulburn goldfields, temperance advocate Bessie Harrison Lee, also drew attention to alcohol abuse on the goldfields in her autobiography, *One of Australia’s Daughters*, though it is the miners who are shown to suffer from its effect rather than their wives.⁷⁴

In the preface to *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom* Marion Miller apologises for the tragic theme of many of her tales, which she attributed to ‘old memories’ of the frequent tragedies that occurred in the mining town in which she spent her childhood.⁷⁵ In taking this tragic tone Miller followed the lead of other women who were writing about the hardships women experienced in the bush. Barbara Baynton is one example. Her short stories, such as “Squeaker’s Mate”, are often cited for their criticism of the masculinity of the bush legend.⁷⁶ As Robert Dixon notes, ‘[t]he physical and psychological entrapment of women by men is a

⁶⁹ Marilyn Lake, “Historical Reconsiderations IV: The Politics of Respectability: Identifying the Masculinist Context,” *Historical Studies* 22, no. 86 (1986), 117-118, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10314618608595739>.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid., 123.

⁷² Marion Miller, “A Wild Night in June, 1883,” in *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, 34-41.

⁷³ Ibid., 39.

⁷⁴ Harrison Lee, *One of Australia’s Daughters*, 31-32.

⁷⁵ Miller, *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, 5.

⁷⁶ Barbara Baynton, *Bush Studies* (London: Duckworth, 1902), 15-43.

recurring trope' in her work.⁷⁷ Miller is not as brutal in her depiction of women's experiences as Baynton, but some of her stories nonetheless show the impact that the kind of masculinity described in the bush legend had upon women.

As Joy Hooton notes in her study of women's autobiographical writing, nineteenth century novels written by women were expected to conform to 'the stock feminine plot of love and marriage' and Miller Knowles' stories reinforce notions of femininity that are tied to purity, marriage and home.⁷⁸ Women are usually wives, sweethearts or daughters and marriage is the ultimate goal. An unhappy marriage, or not being married at all, were equally a cause of suffering. In "Barbara: a Mining Idyll" the central character marries Jack Rutherford 'the boss' of the New Chum mine.⁷⁹ A year later, Barbara is dissatisfied with not being as independent as she once was and her neighbours chide her for not being a good housekeeper, though she earns some respect as a singer at local fundraising concerts. Barbara's fundraising performances echo the experience of women such as Eliza Miles who performed at fundraising concerts in Woods Point. As Doggett observes, public performance by women was more respectable if it was undertaken for a charitable cause rather than personal gain.⁸⁰ When Barbara is unexpectedly reunited with her actress mother, who deserted Barbara and her father some years earlier, Barbara initially leaves her husband to join her mother's acting troupe. Barbara soon realises she has been foolish and returns to Woods Point, only to discover that her husband is dead. The story concludes many years later when Barbara is a famous singer but now 'lives the purest and noblest of lives' to atone for the pain she caused her husband. She returns to Woods Point each spring to tend her husband's grave.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Robert Dixon, "Literature and Melodrama," Bruce Bennett and Jennifer Strauss, eds, *The Oxford Literary History of Australia* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1998), 85.

⁷⁸ Hooton, *Stories of Herself when Young*, 4. Instead Frost argues that *unpublished* women's writing, such as letter and diaries, was much franker than the 'sentimental' women's writing published at this time that was stifled by literary convention, see *No Place for a Nervous Lady*, 8.

⁷⁹ Marion Miller, "Barbara: A Mining Idyll," *Shamrock and Wattle Bloom*, 117-137.

⁸⁰ Doggett, "Beyond Gentility," 37.7.

⁸¹ Miller, "Barbara: A Mining Idyll," 137.

Many of these sketches of women's lives later formed part of Miller Knowles' "Child of the Ranges" stories in the *Advocate*, and of her later novel, *Barbara Halliday*. In what Morgan describes as a 'lightly fictionalized autobiographical account of her days growing up at Wood's Point' Miller Knowles tells the story of Barbara, or 'Beebo' as she was affectionately known, the only child of storekeeper James (Jim) Halliday of Cherry's Point.⁸² Other characters include Barbara's family, friends, and the miners and employees associated with Halliday's store. In the second half of the novel Barbara becomes a teacher and leaves Cherry's Point to teach in a succession of small Victorian schools. After a thwarted romance with English scientist Anthony Hagelthorne, Barbara returns to Cherry's Point and is reunited with her childhood sweetheart, Denzil Lane, son of the local doctor and brother of her friend, Dreda.

Hooton writes that women's autobiographical writings of childhood, while diverse in region, class, and personal or family circumstances, were nevertheless similar in their focus on family, personal relationships, and everyday life. Men's autobiographies in the same period 'were usually committed to the public duty of early settlement and the narrator's role in its establishment.'⁸³ We can extend Hooton's argument to suggest that these narrative differences highlight the different ways in which men and women made, or imagined community; some of these differences have been highlighted in the case studies in previous chapters. Though Hickman suggests that writers often reworked their biographical experiences in fiction, Morgan argues that *Barbara Halliday* was partly autobiographical and therefore we can examine it for some of the traits that Hooton identifies.⁸⁴ Though Miller Knowles highlights the activities of Barbara's father, her mother's activities are given equal attention, describing her as 'a woman of no little importance in the Cherry's Point of those days'.⁸⁵ Men's recollections of the goldfields focused on the men who established tracks and mines in the region but in *Barbara Halliday* equal attention is paid to the women who

⁸² Morgan, *Foothill Farmers*, 49.

⁸³ Hooton, *Stories of Herself when Young*, 9.

⁸⁴ Morgan, *Foothill Farmers*, 49.

⁸⁵ Miller Knowles, *Barbara Halliday*, 10.

formed and maintained relationships within and between the various 'cliques' within the township.⁸⁶

Among the women Miller Knowles identified was Mrs Lane, the doctor's wife and mother to Barbara's friends Denzil and Dreda. She described Dr Lane as a 'mild, unassuming individual' who was good friends with Jim Halliday, but Mrs Lane was 'an aggressive, deep-voiced woman, who dressed loudly and entertained largely'.⁸⁷ This differs to what we know from other accounts of Woods Point doctor Andrew Nash, though we cannot be sure that Miller Knowles was drawing on Andrew and Margaret Nash in her portrait of the Lanes. The character of Mrs McKinstry, a dressmaker who did a bit of fortune telling and matchmaking on the side, was depicted as being much admired for her various skills and self-deprecating sense of humour.⁸⁸ Another 'character' Mrs O'Dea had a sharp wit and was known to voice her opinion in local elections, 'always managing to make her word-pellets strike the most vulnerable place in the character of her hearers'.⁸⁹ A close reading of the narrative alongside other sources has been unable to match these characters with real women in Woods Point. However, the details hint at the broad range of community activity in which women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields were engaged.

In real life sources on Woods Point, such as the local newspaper, the activities of Miller Knowles' father, James Miller are more easily identified because of his position on the local council and other local organisations, but we learn little about her mother, Anne Miller's activities in the township. Miller Knowles' 'lightly fictionalised' account of her childhood allows us a glimpse of how the activities of Anne Miller, and other women in Woods Point, made community. For instance, in her account of the deaths of Dave Boyce and Jack Nicholas (a version of which appears in her story "Tom Rodgers's Wife") we read how Mrs Halliday and a number of other women tend to Dave Boyce's wife, Kitty while the men are involved in recovering the two bodies, organising the inquest, and raising money for Kitty

⁸⁶ Ibid., 47.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 45.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 90.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 48.

Boyce and her children.⁹⁰ Here Miller Knowles suggests that men and women had separate networks of support shaped by notions of masculinity and femininity.

Despite accounts such as these, there are notable absences in the way Miller Knowles imagined community in *Barbara Halliday*. She tells us little about single women or deserted wives, focusing mostly on married women's relationships. This may have been a reflection of the need to conform to the conventions of women's writing that reflected contemporary notions of femininity, as Hooton suggests.⁹¹ Equally Miller Knowles may have wished to avoid drawing on some of the circumstances of her own life and that of her mother, details of which can be found in real life sources. A search of digitised newspapers shows that three years after James and Anne Miller moved to Narbethong James was sentenced to six months imprisonment for attempted murder after he attacked John McFarlane, described in one newspaper report as a 'half-caste' also known as 'French Jack', who was working at the hotel.⁹² Examining records of James Miller's trial and imprisonment confirms some of these details.⁹³ Sources on the family's circumstances after this date suggest that Anne Miller became the proprietor of the Black Spur Hotel, but was declared insolvent in 1896 as a result of debts incurred in the business.⁹⁴ Despite this setback Anne and most of her children remained in Narbethong and established a boarding house at St Fillans, the former country home of Premier James Munro. James Miller faded into the background and it was Anne who took centre stage.⁹⁵

Marion Miller Knowles also missed out on the happy marriage she gave some of her heroines. In 1901 she married Joseph Knowles, with whom she had three children (one died in infancy). The couple later separated, but they remained legally married probably because

⁹⁰ Ibid., 61-64.

⁹¹ Hooton, *Stories of Herself when Young*, 4.

⁹² *Argus*, 6 June 1889, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article6252595>.

⁹³ PROV, VPRS 3158/P0, Unit 60, no. 24, 1 July 1889.

⁹⁴ *Healesville Guardian*, 28 March 1896, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article60462863>.

⁹⁵ Waghorn, *Narbethong Post Office Centenary*, 37-39. Waghorn writes that James Miller purchased St Fillans shortly after Munro's financial collapse around 1893, but Waghorn's account, and that of visitor Alan Mickle make no other mention of James Miller's activities in relation to the guest house. See Alan D. Mickle, *Of Many Things* (Sydney: Australasian Publishing Company, 1941), 56.

Marion's Catholic faith prevented her from seeking a divorce.⁹⁶ Marion's circumstances were not unlike some of the deserted or widowed women she would have known growing up in Woods Point, endeavoring to support herself and her children with her paid work, and at times receiving financial support from friends and readers of the *Advocate*.⁹⁷ To what extent Marion's marital separation was public knowledge is unclear, but among her Catholic friends at least it appears to have made little difference to her acceptance within this community. Though outside the scope of this study, the ways in which Marion made community through her Catholic faith provide us with another example of the complex, multi-layered nature of community making, and the difficulties sometimes inherent in retaining a sense of belonging, and acceptance within community.

Marion Miller Knowles' published works idealise a static, rural community bound by close personal ties, everyday interaction, and shared beliefs: the *gemeinschaft* of the classical theorists. If we included sources other than her recollections of Woods Point we would also find other examples of community making, such as her relationships with other writers, editors, and literary organisations in Melbourne, her involvement in various Catholic charities, and an 'imagined community' of readers of her columns in the *Advocate*.⁹⁸ But it is the community she imagined in Woods Point with which we are most concerned, a site within which women established different relationships from men and made different kinds of community.

⁹⁶ Joseph Knowles died in June 1918 and was described in several obituaries as the husband of Marion Miller Knowles, see *Tribune* 27 June 1918, 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article154662327>, *Advocate* 29 June 1918, 18, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article152187387>. However, in the will Joseph made in 1913 he made provision only for the children of his first marriage, see PROV, VPRS 7591/ P2, Unit 583, item 157/753.

⁹⁷ *Advocate*, 26 January 1928, 25, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171646365>. A testimonial fund was established by a group of Catholics in 1918 to provide financial assistance for Marion Miller Knowles and her two sons. The fund wound up ten years later, having raised 334 pounds, much of which went towards the purchase of a house for Marion in Kew.

⁹⁸ Marion Miller Knowles's work on behalf of various Catholic organisations is well documented in Melbourne newspapers, and particularly in the *Advocate* for whom she wrote. This included fundraising for St Joseph's Home for Destitute Children in Surrey Hills, and the Catholic Women's Club, which was highlighted in a report on her retirement from the *Advocate* in 1927, *Advocate* 23 June 1927, 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171640184>. As a writer, her literary networks included the Henry Lawson Memorial and Literary Society of Footscray, as well as an informal network of publishers and fellow writers, which she alludes to in the brief personal papers held by the State Library of Victoria.

7.3 'Back to Woods Point': Reunions and Pioneers, 1930s

Richard Waterhouse writes that from the 1920s onwards the pioneer legend 'seemed less relevant a role model' for an increasing number of Australians living in cities and those from migrant backgrounds, though its influence could still be visible in popular culture and popular modes of history.⁹⁹ Waterhouse points to post-war examples in film, theatre, and the establishment of 'pioneer parks' as later uses of the pioneer legend. In the 1930s a number of states drew on the pioneer legend in their commemoration of anniversaries of European settlement, including the centenary of European settlement in Victoria celebrated in 1934. These commemorations did not overlook the role of women, but as Jemima Mobray notes in her discussion of popular representations of pioneer women, it was a particular mythic type of woman that was incorporated into the pioneer legend in the 1930s. These mythic women were depicted 'as literal and figurative mothers of a nation [...] a civilising force in the former frontier societies.'¹⁰⁰

Mobray writes that in this period 'women were honoured as pioneers through the erection of memorials, gardens and monuments, and the publication in several states of essays on the contribution of pioneer women in the Colonies' history.'¹⁰¹ In Victoria a Women's Centenary Council, associated with the National Council of Women, initiated commemorations that recognised women's contributions to the state's history. These included the Pioneer Women's Memorial in the Royal Botanic Gardens in Melbourne, and the *Centenary Gift Book* edited by Frances Fraser and Nettie Palmer.¹⁰² Among the women who contributed to this book was Marion Miller Knowles, who celebrated the qualities of 'Australia's Women Pioneers' with her poem "Tribute".¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Richard Waterhouse, "The Pioneer Legend and its Legacy: In Memory of John Hirst," *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society* 103, no. 1 (2017), 20, <https://search-informit-com-au.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/documentSummary;dn=910181823780489;res=IELAPA>.

¹⁰⁰ Jemima Mobray, "Examining the Myth of the Pioneer Woman," *Eras* 8 (November 2008), 1.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Frances Fraser and Nettie Palmer, eds., *Centenary Gift Book* (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens Limited, 1934).

¹⁰³ Marion Miller Knowles, "Tribute," *Centenary Gift Book*, 73.

Other uses of the pioneer legend in this period of commemoration were the 'Back to' reunions.¹⁰⁴ In Doyle's study of these reunions she notes that following the population decline from country towns, including mining townships, from the late nineteenth century '[e]stranged country folk sought to maintain connections with their home town by forming in Melbourne old boys' networks made up of those from the same country town or state school.'¹⁰⁵ Individual boys' and girls' associations held reunions in various locations around Melbourne, and by the late 1920s these associations became part of a Federation of Old Boys' and Girls', which by 1934 had 45 affiliated groups.¹⁰⁶ According to reports in metropolitan newspapers the reunions included picnics in a public garden, such as Fitzroy Gardens, and balls at Melbourne Town Hall.¹⁰⁷

Doyle draws on newspapers, local histories, and souvenir booklets of some of the 'Back to' reunions, but sources of the Woods Point reunions in this period are more fragmentary and they do not feature in her study. With the benefit of an increasing array of digitised metropolitan and regional newspapers it has been possible to find several accounts of reunions relating to the Upper Goulburn goldfields. Aside from Marion Miller Knowles' poem and the advertisement for the 1933 reunion we do not have any contemporary accounts of the first reunion at Manchester Unity Hall, but two years later two of the attendees recalled the event, and their experiences in Woods Point more generally, in letters to "The Women's Bureau" in the *Weekly Times*.¹⁰⁸ As Ruth Ford explains in her study of the settler experiences of women in Gippsland, the letters to this column were written for an 'imagined community' who read and wrote to the newspaper. Some writers addressed their letters to particular readers by name, corresponding with one another through the pages of the "Women's Bureau".¹⁰⁹ Responding to an earlier letter from 'Mary

¹⁰⁴ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 204.

¹⁰⁵ Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 246.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ A search of digitised newspaper has identified varied reports on the annual events, including the *Age's* brief report on the first annual social of the Federated Old Boys' and Girls' associations, *Age*, 24 August 1928, 14, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205473406>. More detailed coverage of subsequent reunions followed, *Age*, 21 August 1935, 13, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article203989782>.

¹⁰⁸ Ruth Ford, "'Nature is around us in her loveliness': Settler women in the Gippsland bush in 1930s Australia," in *Earth and Industry: Stories from Gippsland*, eds. Erik Eklund and Julie Fenley (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2015), 37-54. As Ruth Ford notes in her study, this section of the newspaper was edited by Sonia Hardie, under the name of 'Miranda', and commenced in 1931.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 39.

the Midge', an older man who described himself as 'The Old Pioneer' recalled the happy hours he spent at the reunion in 1933. He wrote that '[h]undreds moved and mingled together, all busy with kind and friendly greetings. Old friends met again and linked up the chain of long years since they last met.'¹¹⁰ In a handful of letters 'Mary the Midge' and 'The Old Pioneer' exchanged recollections of the reunion, and of their familial connections to the township. Mary offered to obtain a copy of Marion Miller Knowles' poem, "Woodspoint Memories", and 'Pioneer' told her about the book Marion wrote based on her Woods Point childhood.¹¹¹ Neither correspondent uses the term 'community' in their recollections of Woods Point. However, their exchange of stories about the remote mountain country they had once occupied, and the relationships they recalled, established a connection, albeit a brief one. That both correspondents commented on Marion Miller Knowles' writing also illustrates how the community she imagined in her writing helped to remake a lost community for those who attended the reunions, and perhaps for those who may have read about the township in the *Weekly Times*.

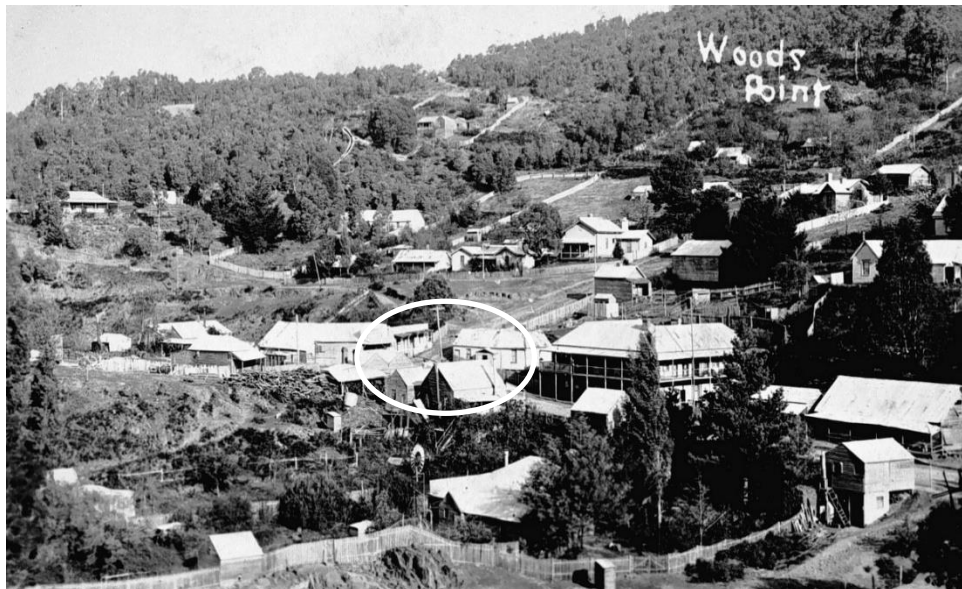


Fig. 7.3: Unknown photographer, Woods Point, 1932

Museums Victoria <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/768145>

This view from the northern side of the valley shows what remained of the gold rush township near the junction of Bridge and Hurley streets (marked in the centre of the photo). James Miller's store had once been located in this area of the township. Seven years later, after the Black Friday bushfires, most of these buildings would be gone.

¹¹⁰ *Weekly Times*, 2 February 1935, 19, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223886093>; *Weekly Times*, 25 May 1935, 19, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223353264>.

¹¹¹ *Weekly Times*, 18 January 1936, 19, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article224856507>. This exchange suggests that "Woodspoint Memories" was the name given to the poem transcribed by Alf Holliday.

The 'Back to' reunions, and recollections such as those of Marion Miller Knowles, support Doyle's argument that it was nostalgia for childhood — for homes and friendships — that sparked and sustained these country town reunions.¹¹² As Doyle explains,

What drew people *back* was the stirring of old memories, the ties to family and community, and the shared sentiment for lost youth and a lost past. People were connected to their old towns through a rich web of memory, history, nostalgia, and loyalty.¹¹³

Following the success of the 1933 reunion, former residents of Woods Point and the surrounding goldfields joined other Old Boys' and Girls' associations at annual gatherings held in Melbourne.¹¹⁴ Newspaper reports of the celebrations occasionally refer to the Jamieson, Gaffneys Creek, and Woods Point Old Boys' and Girls' Association, and local President, John McMahon was one-time President of the Federation.¹¹⁵ With few subjective sources it is difficult to ascertain the intricacies of the relationships renewed, or from what group the attendees derived their sense of belonging: their local association, the broader Federated network, or informal networks, such as school friends, that came together at these events. Nonetheless, these reunions make it clear that the connections that the attendees formed were not dependent on more conventional characteristics of community such as everyday interaction.

Davison writes that for the country townships that hosted the 'Back to' reunions, it was a chance to stave off the decline of their townships, and to revive community spirit. They were 'an opportunity for the "comebacks" to experience again the old-fashioned friendliness and hospitality of small town life; and it enabled locals to enjoy the illusion of dance halls and churches once again filled with the hubbub of vigorous community life.'¹¹⁶ To what extent was this true of Woods Point and the surrounding goldfields? If we look at Lloyd's account of mining activity in Woods Point in the 1920s and '30s we find a familiar

¹¹² Doyle, 'Australia Infelix', 247.

¹¹³ Ibid., 248.

¹¹⁴ *Argus*, 30 January 1934, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article11734528>, *Age*, 21 August 1935, 13, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article203989782>.

¹¹⁵ *Age*, 14 September 1938, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205195882>.

¹¹⁶ Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 204.

narrative of poor returns followed by a brief economic revival.¹¹⁷ Morning Star, the only mine in operation, closed in 1927 but a new company formed in 1932 to revive the mine. Lloyd does not expand on what affect this revival had on the township, but he notes that despite this revival a number of long-time residents left the township or passed away.¹¹⁸ A few long-time families nonetheless remained in the township, such as O’Keefe and Carey who, together, ran a store on Bridge Street.¹¹⁹ Scrolling through the Commonwealth Electoral Roll for the Gaffneys Creek sub-district in 1934 we find a few family names which, when cross-referenced with data from the 1860s, suggests a connection to Woods Point, and the Upper Goulburn more generally, spanning several generations.¹²⁰ However, many of the protagonists in this study, including Marion Miller Knowles’ family, were long gone.

If we look at the fragmentary evidence of the ‘Back to’ reunions held in Woods Point it would appear that some of the organisers were also no longer living in the township. According to a newspaper advertisement, the contact person for a ‘Back to Woods Point’ reunion on the Easter weekend in 1935 was John McMahon, Honorary Secretary of the Wood’s Point-Gaffney’s Creek Old Boys’ and Girls’ Association, who lived in South Melbourne.¹²¹ No further details on this reunion have been located, but in December 1938 McMahon was again involved in a reunion held in Woods Point at which more than 100 former residents attended. The *Argus* tells us ‘[t]he town was decorated with banners streamers and flags’, and the program of events included a ball in the local hall, a concert for former schoolchildren at the local school, and a picnic at the recreation reserve.¹²² As part of the week-long celebration two of the oldest residents, Mrs Edgar and Mrs Morgan, were presented with gifts.

¹¹⁷ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 184-185, 223.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Australian Electoral Rolls, Victoria [database online], Ancestry, www.ancestry.com.au. These include members of the Rae, Stacpoole, and Higgins families from Woods Point, and the Foots and Gerrans families at Jamieson.

¹²¹ *Argus*, 23 March 1935, 27, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12222257>.

¹²² *Argus*, 30 December 1938, 4; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12081500>.

Other than their status as elderly residents, the report is too brief to tell us any more about why these two women were honoured. However, other sources suggest that their longevity in the township may have accorded them 'pioneer' status; drawing on the tropes of the pioneer legend may have been another way participants at these reunions created an 'imagined community' separate to, but still retaining a connection to place. As Doyle notes in her study, Aboriginal people were not included as part of the 'Back to' reunions, and the 'firsts' inherent in the pioneer legend also excluded Aboriginal people, the first inhabitants of this country.¹²³ However, unlike men's recollections of the goldfields a few decades earlier, the reunions enabled some women to be included as pioneers. Mrs Edgar — identified from other sources as Annie Edgar née McMahon — had arrived in Woods Point when she was a child 'strapped to a gin case with her brother the late John McMahon'.¹²⁴ This was probably the same John McMahon who was President of the local Old Boys' and Girls' association, suggesting that despite his residency elsewhere he had retained a familial connection to the township. Annie's husband, John Edgar, whom she married in 1876, is also said to have arrived in the region in the 1860s and later worked as a miner. When Annie died in 1944 she was again described as an old and 'respected resident'.¹²⁵

¹²³ Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 253.

¹²⁴ *Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yarck, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express*, 2 June 1944, 2; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64706256>.

¹²⁵ *Alexandra and Yea Standard and Yarck, Gobur, Thornton and Acheron Express*, 2 June 1944, 2; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64706256>.



Fig. 7.4: This photograph of Mary Jane Morgan featured in a pictorial spread on 'Wood's Point People' in the *Weekly Times* in 1948.

Weekly Times, 7 January, 1948, 21, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article225976225>.

Mrs Edgar's honoured companion, Mrs Morgan, was also a long-time resident. According to Lloyd's research Mary Jane Morgan née Hine was the sister of Ann Stacpoole (and aunt of H.J. Stacpoole who in 1965 wrote one of the first historical accounts of the Woods Point goldfields).¹²⁶ The Stacpoole family had been mining in the region since the 1880s, and Mary's brother-in-law John Goode Stacpoole had had mining interests in Woods Point in the 1860s.¹²⁷ Lloyd tells us that in 1909, at the age of 58, Mary married another long-time resident, Ralph Sholto Douglas Morgan who had been active in mining, business, and civic activities since the 1860s. While Mary's familial connections, and those of Annie Edgar, might suggest they were also celebrated for their connection to male authority figures in the township, Lloyd provides us with a further glimpse of Mary's contribution to the township. He notes that after Ralph Morgan's death in 1916 Mary took over the State

¹²⁶ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 141. Stacpoole, "The Discovery of the Woods Point Goldfields."

¹²⁷ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 141.

Savings Bank branch.¹²⁸ He writes that '[d]espite her diminutive figure, she intercepted the tough miners and woodcutters on pay day on their way to the pub, and bullied them into putting some money into their bank accounts'.¹²⁹ Lloyd's account of Mary Jane Morgan from an unnamed (and undated) source does not reflect on the gendered nature of the description, but the contrast between Mrs Morgan's 'diminutive figure' and forthright behaviour in confronting the 'tough miners and woodcutters' reinforces something of the normative image of women on the goldfields, and in the pioneer legend more generally. Mary's 'diminutive figure' softens her less feminine bullying behaviour, reinforcing the notion that women were a civilising influence on the goldfields by curbing the excesses of men's masculine behaviour. By ensuring that the men did not spend all their money on alcohol, Mary was also supporting the men's families.

What these records do not tell us, however, is how Annie and Mary understood community, and the extent to which they felt a sense of belonging to community in Woods Point. However, they do hint at how their experiences were used by others to make, or imagine, community. The story of Annie's arrival in Woods Point suggests that she, or her family, may have taken some pride in her family's status as long-time residents. Their involvement in the 'Back to' reunions helped to shape a shared narrative that placed them among the township's pioneers.

Not all individual experiences of belonging necessarily became part of the shared narrative of community centred on these 'Back to' reunions. When my great-grandmother, Margaret Hester died in Koo Wee Rup in 1937 her obituary referred to her parents as 'pioneers of the Woods Point district', but there is no evidence that the family had any involvement in the reunions. There are also few references to the family in existing local histories, despite their almost forty-year residence in the region.¹³⁰ The subjective nature of memory making is also evident in other published obituaries and profiles of women who once lived on the Upper

¹²⁸ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 95

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ *Advocate*, 18 February 1937, 32, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171927084>. An exception to the family's absence in local histories is Rogers' inclusion of the Knopp family in her survey of burials in the Woods Point cemetery; see Rogers, *Wood's Point Cemetery*, 20, 62-63, 104.

Goulburn goldfields. As with Margaret Hester's obituary, the terms 'pioneer' or 'first woman' are used to emphasise a number of women's connection to the region, whereas other obituaries make no mention of the region at all.¹³¹ Eliza Whitelaw's obituary, for example, glosses over most of the places she lived, instead emphasising her dramatic sea voyage to New South Wales in 1841.¹³² While these and other accounts suggest that some of these women, and their families, felt a sense of belonging to the Upper Goulburn goldfields, others valued different connections.

That the 'Back to' reunions were complex exercises in community building is highlighted by Doyle's argument that they were predominantly organised by those of Protestant faith, suggesting that 'it seems that a strong Protestant code of community was responsible for generating the interest in reunions and civic commemoration.'¹³³ More limited sources on the Woods Point 'Back to' celebrations make it difficult to determine whether Protestants dominated the local celebrations, but surviving sources suggest that Catholics were involved. Marion Miller Knowles was a prominent Catholic of Irish descent, and John McMahon and his sister, Annie Edgar were of Irish-Catholic descent. In support of her argument Doyle suggests that Catholics, mostly of Irish-descent, were also less likely to be involved in the Victorian Centenary celebrations and other pioneer commemorations because of its association with Empire building. As Doyle notes, 'Protestant interest in reunions and celebrations of settlement was closely tied to ideas of Empire loyalty, the British Motherland, and Anglo-Saxon racial superiority.'¹³⁴ She notes that a few Irish Australian writers 'were eager to accommodate Irish-Catholics into a story of colonial success, but the pioneering narrative was overwhelmingly a Protestant one.'¹³⁵ The inclusion of Marion Miller Knowles' poem "Tribute" in the *Centenary Gift Book*, the National Council of Women of Victoria's contribution to the Victorian Centenary celebrations, and

¹³¹ Hannah Towers, who died in Tasmania in 1915, was described as 'one of the first women to live at Gaffneys Creek', *North Western Advocate and the Emu Bay Times*, 2 October 1915, 2; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article64611865>. Mary White, who died in Eltham in 1930, claimed 'to be the first white woman who came to Wood's Point, *Weekly Times*, 3 May 1930, 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article223995094>. Rosina Hillman, who was interviewed about her childhood in Jamieson in the 1860s, was described in 1944 as a 'Victorian Pioneer', *Australasian*, 24 June 1944, 12; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article142419145>.

¹³² *Argus*, 4 August 1914, 6, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article10800457>.

¹³³ Doyle, "Australia Infelix," 248.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 249.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

Marion's many stories of Irish Australian pioneers on the goldfields highlights that other Irish-Australians made personal contributions to this pioneer narrative.

The way in which individual meanings of community can be shared to form a collective understanding of community is also highlighted by Marion's poem for the 1933 reunion. With lines such as '...the bond of Brotherhood, so genial, kind/And free,/That barred not clime, nor class, nor creed, from/Its vast company' Marion was drawing on values such as the egalitarian spirit of mateship that had been enshrined in the bush legend.¹³⁶ Though she does not use the term 'community', Marion's emphasis on harmony and unity reflects the normative image of a cohesive, supportive community, yet as we have seen in earlier chapters by looking at the case studies involving the Whitelaw, Miller, and Nash families, conflict arising from social relationships could also make community.

Though she does not expand on the notion of community, Doyle's study of the 'Back to' reunions hints at some of the characteristics of community identified in earlier scholarship. The connection between social change and loss of community is suggested by how the dispersal of the mining population influenced the initial reunions, as former residents sought to renew social relationships they had formed in their childhood towns. On the one hand this might reinforce some of the classical theories on community which assumed that the type of close-knit relationships that had formed in rural towns were missing from urban life, but the establishment of the Old Boys' and Girls' associations demonstrate the evolution of a different type of community. Though we have limited sources on the sense of belonging that some participants appear to have had with the towns of their childhood their connections were not necessarily to the physical characteristics of the townships themselves, but to the relationships and values they formed there. Locating the reunions in the townships might appear to reinforce the connection between locality and community, but as Doyle shows not all 'Back to' reunions were held in the former towns, and this is also true of the Upper Goulburn goldfield reunions. These reunions suggest that new kinds of community were being formed that drew on a connection with a locality, but were not physically based in these locations. This provides us with further evidence of the multiple

¹³⁶ Marion Miller Knowles in Alf Holliday, "Notes on the early days of mining ..., 1985."

meanings of community, and the way in which some individual subjective experiences of community could be shared to help remake community.

Returning to Woods Point in 1938, the past and present residents who gathered at the 'Back to' reunion could not have known that the township they had come to remember would be destroyed by the devastating Black Friday bushfires on 13 January 1939. Tom Griffiths notes in *Forests of Ash* that of the 'great' fires named in Victoria's history, 'it was the fire of 1939 that burnt itself most fiercely into memory'.¹³⁷ A Royal Commission held into the causes of the bushfires found that across Victoria 71 people died, 69 mills were destroyed, millions of acres of forest were damaged or destroyed, and '[t]ownships were obliterated in minutes'.¹³⁸ Woods Point was one of those townships. Brian Lloyd, whose family survived the fires but lost their home at nearby Ten Mile, notes that most of the over 450 residents in Woods Point sheltered in the river, in mining adits, and tunnels.¹³⁹ There was one fatality: Nellie O'Keefe, whose family was associated with the O'Keefe and Carey store at the junction of Bridge and Hurley streets. Nellie's brother, Michael was one of the witnesses who gave evidence when the Royal Commission visited Woods Point on 17 February, but the transcript of his evidence suggests the circumstances of his sister's death were not discussed.¹⁴⁰ Of the approximately 150 buildings in Woods Point just seven survived the fires.¹⁴¹ Photographs of the charred remains of the town's main street formed part of a *Sun News-Pictorial* published to aid the Bush Fire Relief Fund.¹⁴²

¹³⁷ Griffiths, *Forests of Ash*, 129. This book predates the Black Saturday bushfires in 2009, which Griffiths has also discussed in later work, see Christine Hansen and Tom Griffiths, *Living with Fire: People, Nature, and History in Steels Creek* (Canberra: CSIRO Publishing, 2012).

¹³⁸ Victoria. Parliament. Transcript of evidence and Report of the Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of and measures taken to prevent the bush fires of January, 1939, and to protect life and property and the measures to be taken to prevent bush fires in Victoria and to protect life and property in the event of future bush fires (Melbourne: Govt. Printer, 1939), 5.

¹³⁹ Lloyd, *Gold in the Ranges*, 188.

¹⁴⁰ Victoria. Parliament. Transcript of evidence and Report of the Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of and measures taken to prevent the bush fires of January, 1939, 758-759.

¹⁴¹ Lloyd notes that there were 160 houses; the *Sun News-Pictorial* refers to 150.

¹⁴² "Bushfires: a Pictorial Survey of Victoria's most Tragic Week, January 8-15, 1939," *Sun News Pictorial* (Melbourne: L. Kay for Pictorial Newspapers, 1939), 4-7.

A few weeks later past and present residents of the devastated township gathered at an Old Boys' and Girls' reunion in Fitzroy Gardens. The *Argus* reported that in place of the local Association's usual banner, which was burnt in the fires, the group rallied behind a cardboard banner.¹⁴³ The reunion was also reported in the Women's Section of the *Age*. A report published on 31 January 1939 noted that instead of sharing 'old friendships and old memories' attendees found some comfort in sharing new memories of the recent bushfires.¹⁴⁴ The *Age* made its contribution to the collective memory of Black Friday by highlighting the efforts of one woman, Mrs Charles, 'whose story will long be remembered in the district'.¹⁴⁵

A widow, now well on in her sixties, she fought the fire single-handed to save her home, and when forestry officers arrived to aid her the danger was almost past — and not a thing in her house was lost. Mrs. Charles has lived for 40 years in the Wood's Point district, but in her long memory of the place nothing will ever stand out so vividly as that Black Friday.¹⁴⁶

A few months after the reunion, Heather S. McKellar's article in *Land* on 'Women Pioneers of 1939' highlighted the efforts of a number of women in the fire and its aftermath, including Mrs Ross of the Commercial Hotel and Sister Hearne, matron of the Woods Point hospital.¹⁴⁷ McKellar concluded that 'women in Australia one hundred years ago were pioneers, and to-day in the saddened bush fire areas of Victoria you'll still find them.'¹⁴⁸ McKellar does not explain her use of the term, but reading between the lines her account of the physical hardships these women were experiencing in the makeshift timber buildings and tents references the hardships endured by their nineteenth-century counterparts. Lloyd's later history refers to some of these women, but they do not appear to have formed part of later official historical commemorations of the Black Friday bushfires. In 1989 the Woods Point, Gaffneys Creek and Jamieson Association commemorated the 50th anniversary

¹⁴³ *Argus*, 31 January 1939, 4; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12091776>.

¹⁴⁴ *Age*, 31 January 1939, 3; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article205960228>.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* These international activities included the Pan-Pacific Women's Conference, the work of female sculptors at the New York World Fair, and an upcoming lecture by the General Secretary of the World Young Women's Christian Association.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Land*, 23 August 1939, 45; <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article104186771>.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

of the bushfires at a reunion in Woods Point on 14 January. The plaque, located in the Hector and Nell Stewart Memorial Park adjacent to Morning Star Creek, acknowledged the death of Miss Nellie O’Keefe and the ‘destruction’ of the township, including the loss of the Morning Star Mine and Charles Bros’ mill. [Fig. 7.5] Though outside the scope of this study, I argue that it is worth investigating the aftermath of the Black Friday bushfires to explore how women (and men) remade community in the twentieth century mining township.

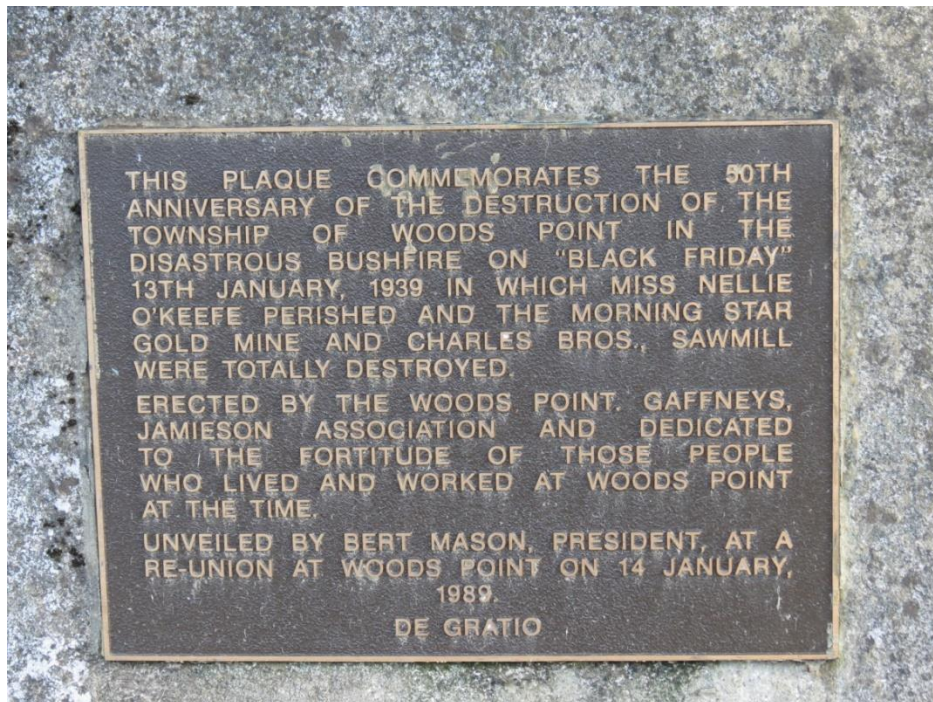


Fig. 7.5: Commemorative plaque erected in Woods Point in 1989 on the 50th anniversary of the Black Friday bushfires, 2017.
Louise Blake.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown that though some reminiscences of gold rush immigrants focused on a specific goldfield, their idea of community was based on a shared connection to the gold rushes more broadly, and was influenced by some of the tropes of the bush and pioneer legends. As Hirst and other scholars have noted, the bush legend typically highlighted masculine independence, whereas the pioneer legend was more inclusive, with some writers describing the hardships experienced by women in the bush. Both legends reflected contemporary debates on citizenship and national identity, including contesting

notions of masculinity and femininity that were central to feminist campaigns at the time. Though it was men's creative work that largely shaped the bush and pioneer legends, a few women, such as Marion Miller Knowles, drew on their memories of the Upper Goulburn in fictional and autobiographical accounts written in this period.

I have also extended the scholarship on the collective nostalgia for the goldfields that began in the 1890s and continued into the 'Back to' reunions of the 1920s and '30s, highlighting how these recollections and reunions helped to remake, or imagine community. Although the idea of community has broadened beyond the everyday interactions of people within a shared geographic location, in this chapter I demonstrate that a shared location was nonetheless the focal point for a certain type of collective nostalgia for childhood, and the close personal ties that individuals recalled from their childhoods in the goldfield towns. These reunions also drew on some of the tropes of the pioneer legend — the emphasis on being first — to include some women's experiences and activities in a shared sense of belonging to a community of gold seekers. These tropes are also evident in more personal examples of nostalgia and remembrance. However, it is important to remember that this sense of belonging to a community on the Upper Goulburn goldfields was not shared by everyone who lived in the region in the nineteenth century. There are many women who have been overlooked because their subjective experience has not survived, their experiences and activities have been excluded in favour of a more dominant narrative, or the sense of belonging to community they felt was not tied to their residence on the goldfields. In reaching for a neat explanation of what a 'goldfield community' was, and the ways in which women and families helped to make them we risk flattening out some of the rough and raggedy edges of life on the goldfields.

Conclusion

Margaret Knopp's inclusion of the 'dwelling place' identification rhyme in her scrapbook acknowledges her residential connection to Woods Point. But if you look more closely at the contents a far more complex story of belonging is revealed. In illustrating her scrapbook with Victorian imagery, poems and quotations on such themes as love, remembrance, and exile, by pasting in greeting cards that acknowledge the changing seasons and her family's religious practice, and adding newspaper clippings on random topics Margaret left us with a tantalising glimpse of a much broader range of connections, including her Irish heritage and her Catholic faith. There is little evidence in Margaret's scrapbook of her German heritage, but we must be careful not to read this absence as a rejection of this heritage; when only fragments survive we can only tell so much of the story.

When Margaret died in 1937 an obituary published in the *Advocate* referred to her parents as 'among the pioneers of the Woods Point district', where her father owned the Leviathan mine 'when mining was in its heyday at "the Point"'.¹ The obituary goes on to note Margaret's marriage and subsequent moves elsewhere in Victoria: from Woods Point to Gisborne, and then from Gisborne to Kooweerup. The family records that were passed on to me make little mention of Margaret's family life in Gisborne or Kooweerup. The process of preservation was clearly selective: the lasting impact of Margaret's brother's death in a bushfire near Yarra Junction, north-east of Melbourne, in 1932 is suggested by a small pile of torn and faded newspaper clippings carefully folded into a small envelope. The preservation of the scrapbook together with the clippings and a few family photographs suggests that Margaret (and probably her daughter and granddaughter) had a sense of belonging to the 'heyday' of Woods Point long after the family left the region.

In March 2017, about a decade after I inherited my great-grandmother's scrapbook, I travelled to Woods Point. Important as it was to see Margaret Knopp's 'dwelling place', it was not my familial connection to the region that compelled me to visit. Rather, it was the hundreds of women whose experiences of the boom and bust phases of alluvial and quartz

¹ *Advocate*, 18 February 1937, 32, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article171927084>.

mining activity on the Upper Goulburn goldfields provide the foundation for this thesis, that eventually forced me to overcome my fear of the rough roads and isolation of the region. If these women survived the journey strapped to a packhorse while wearing a crinoline, I could certainly manage a bumpy bus ride. The delay in making the journey turned out to be good preparation. The time I spent accessing sources in libraries, museums, and archives — online and in person — meant that I could amend my copy of the local map with copious notes about where particular women and families lived, details I may not have had if I had visited earlier in my research. In reflecting upon an early morning walk through the goldfield landscape of Golden Gully, Alan Mayne observes that '[o]ne needs to push beyond the abstractions of faded maps and pull on walking boots, in order to find traces from the hidden histories of everyday life and work that are still embedded in the relic landscapes of goldmining right across Australia.'² Likewise, Tom Griffiths has long advocated that a historian needs a stout pair of walking boots — a lesson borrowed from historian Keith Hancock — but to date I have rarely ventured from the bitumen in the pursuit of my subjects.³ I do not have their skills or experience at reading the landscape, but I knew I could not complete my research without putting on some boots and exploring Woods Point on foot.

Even before I arrived my visit was charged with memories drawn from the archives. As my bus bumped along the unsealed section of Mansfield-Woods Point Road past such landmarks as Flour Bag Hill I could not help but think of the descriptions of the steep and winding tracks, dissected valleys, mist and thick snow that dominated accounts of the Upper Goulburn goldfields in the 1860s, accounts that helped shape a masculine idea of community based on mining activity in the settlements of Jamieson and Gaffneys Creek. And I pondered how this masculine community excluded women, while at the same time creating opportunities for the small number of women who can be identified on the early goldfields to make their own kinds of community — processes described in chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

² Alan Mayne, "Golden Landscapes: an Ethnography," *Deeper Leads: New Approaches to Victorian Goldfields History*, eds Keir Reeves and David Nichols, 15 (Ballarat: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2007).

³ Tom Griffiths, *The Art of Time Travel* (Carlton: Black Inc, 2016), 55-56.



Fig. 1: Morning Star Creek and Bridge Street, Woods Point, 2017.
Louise Blake.

The day after my arrival in Woods Point I set out with my annotated map and a fully charged camera. Standing on the corner of Bridge and Hurley streets I looked beyond Bridge Street to where the peninsula formed by the Goulburn River was located. Here I thought of Bidelia Calcutt on the night her hotel was torn down to stop the fire that had spread from Robert Cameron's Junction Hotel, one of many setbacks she had experienced after arriving in Victoria in 1853. As I argue in Chapter 4, Bidelia Calcutt's story is an example of subversive community making in Woods Point. As a hotelkeeper and deserted wife her experiences challenged the attempts of her contemporaries — John and Eliza Whitelaw among them — to make a respectable, middle-class community in Woods Point. The patriarchal family, with its gendered division of roles, was a powerful basis for much of this community making, but the experiences of deserted wives and widows such as Bidelia Calcutt shows that this structure was restrictive for women who had to support themselves and their families. Bidelia Calcutt's encounters with John Drysdale and Dr Nash also show that the interaction

and relationships between women and men were far more varied and conflictual than the static, homogenous ideal in classical community theory.

The Club House Hotel that Bidelia Calcutt rebuilt was long gone — probably destroyed in the Black Friday bushfires of 1939, if not earlier — but I nevertheless walked around the site, hoping to find some evidence of the laneway that once bore her name, albeit the name she acquired from her deserting second husband. As I tried to reconcile the existing terrain with my earlier research, the difference between reading a map and reading the landscape became apparent. Just as the hotel was no longer visible, the location of the laneway was not obvious to me either. I did not have the skills — or time — for a detailed study of the landscape, so I took photographs from several angles to examine at a later date.

I then walked down the hill behind the site of the hotel, past the Upper Goulburn and District Hospital (rebuilt after the 1939 bushfires), where Catherine Brew and Catherine Lawrence had lived alongside one another in the suburb of Richmond. The two Irish women's everyday interaction as they went about their domestic activities fostered a relationship that was separate to the work of their husbands, and reflects the kind of feminine community that was separate to mining activity. Nevertheless, the story of Catherine Brew's death highlighted how these different kinds of community could intersect to provide mutual support in times of crisis. While this case study highlights the diversity of the kinds of community Irish working-class women and men established in Woods Point, other kinds of diversity on the goldfields have been beyond the scope — and available sources — of this thesis. Nevertheless, these gaps provide opportunities for future scholarship that might explore further the impact of race, class, and gender on community making on the goldfields, and to geographically located populations more broadly.

Later in the day I walked back along Bridge Street, pausing at the terraced hillside once occupied by the Reefers Hotel. As I discuss in Chapter 5, Eliza Miles was a regular performer at Reefers Hotel in the 1860s: firstly as Mrs Oakey and then as Mrs Felix, later managing the hotel with her partner, John Felix.⁴ Like Bidelia Calcutt, Eliza Miles is another of the

⁴ Blake, "Chasing Eliza Miles."

subversive women of Woods Point. Her experience as a professional actress and singer, together with her de-facto marital status, challenged the respectable middle-class ideal of community imagined by some residents. However, her leadership of St Mary's Church of England choir and fundraising for the Upper Goulburn and District Hospital shows how women whose experiences might have put them outside the boundaries of respectable femininity could make community through their participation in — and leadership of — informal citizenship activities. My study of Eliza Miles's experience adds to feminist scholarship by demonstrating how a masculine understanding of leadership predicated on men occupying formal positions of authority in civic and social institutions did not reflect the lived experience of women's participation in society and the ways they have expressed their citizenship.

Down on the banks of the Goulburn River, and near the site of the former Woods Point State School, I thought of Marion Miller Knowles, who never lost her attachment to her childhood home and wove details of real and imagined Woods Point women into her many stories and poems. One of the central concerns of this thesis has been the ways in which women and men made community differently, and in Chapter 6 I show how Marion Miller Knowles' writing *drew on* the tropes of the bush and pioneer legends established by men while *expanding* their definitions to better reflect women's experiences and activities. I argue that, as an example of the collective nostalgia for the goldfields that began in the 1890s and continued with the 'Back to' reunions of the 1920s and 30s, Miller Knowles' writing also shows how the idea of community has broadened beyond the everyday interactions of people within a shared geographic location. While a shared residential connection to Woods Point was the focal point for a certain type of collective nostalgia for childhood, it was the close personal ties that individuals recalled from their childhoods in the goldfield towns that helped them remake, or imagine community beyond this shared location.

Each of these women lived in Woods Point at the same time, but their diverse backgrounds and experiences reminds us that Woods Point was not simply 'a goldfield community', but rather a complex of separate and overlapping webs of community shaped by shared localities, gendered activities, values and beliefs. This is true of other women whose stories

feature in this thesis. I did not get the chance to visit Gaffneys Creek on foot, and it was only later that I identified where the Chubb family had made their home. Nevertheless, as I was driven through what remained of Gaffneys Creek I thought of Esther Chubb, and her insistence on telling her mother-in-law — via her husband's letters — that she had slaughtered two of the pigs she was raising. While Esther established mutually supportive networks that were separate to mining activity, the letters also show that the couple's support networks extended beyond those established at Gaffneys Creek. For Esther in particular, her relationships with family and friends elsewhere meant that there was sometimes tension between her ties to her family, and the couple's wish to be part of a settled, geographically located community.

As I walked around Woods Point and its environs I wished that others could see the town I 'saw': populated by dynamic, interesting women of all ages and from a variety of backgrounds who — for short or long periods — raised their families in the timber-built cottages that once lined the banks of the Goulburn River, who tended the terraced gardens on the hillsides, who navigated the unmade streets at all hours to care for other women and children whose families could not afford a doctor's fee, who worked in the hotels and stores along Scott and Bridge streets, and who trod the boards or made the refreshments for the fundraising concerts that supported the churches, schools, and hospital. In a sense this thesis is a written equivalent of that visual repopulation — an exercise in writing women back into the landscape.

A larger question remains. In wanting to re-populate the township with these women's stories was I trying to write women into 'a community' that they did not feel part of themselves? Just as early sociologists tended to see community 'as it should be', was I also getting caught up in an idea of community that had little meaning to the women whose stories I have told? For those women whose words I cannot access, this question is unanswerable. But the actions of the hundreds of women whom I have tracked through the records certainly show that they were making community for themselves and their families.

This thesis argues that in reaching for a neat explanation of what ‘a goldfield community’ was, and the ways in which women and men helped to make them, we risk flattening out some of the rough and raggedy edges of life on the goldfields. Such an approach is relevant not only to the study of the nineteenth-century goldfields, but to histories of women, gender, family, and community more broadly. We do not have subjective sources that show how all of these women experienced community, but the techniques of microhistory — aided by the increased availability of digital and online sources — have allowed me to show how they lived it. Beginning with my great-grandmother’s scrapbook — and my family history more generally — as inspiration, this thesis demonstrates the benefits to future scholarship that a micro-historical approach can bring to the study of geographically bound populations. While I have made use of a few qualitative gems — letters and diaries of several men and women — the experiences and activities of many of the women in my study have been pieced together from a range of physical and digital sources in libraries, archives, and museums, as well as information sourced from local history organisations and family historians.

The rich details of women’s lives that are highlighted using this microhistorical methodology add further texture to future scholarship exploring a range of questions about women, family, and community. By investigating individual lives in geographically located ‘communities’, this approach allows us to reflect more fully upon such themes as respectability and the proper place of women that accompanied the women and men who settled the British colonies in the nineteenth century, especially in the 1850s and ‘60s. By exploring the personal circumstances and mobility of these settlers we can also explore how these notions may have shifted over time and space.

In drawing on my familial connection to the Upper Goulburn goldfields, my thesis is also part of a revitalised conversation between family and academic historians about how, together, our work can offer new insights into the history of the family.⁵ That my thesis includes the experiences of a number of women who did not have children, or whose

⁵ Evans, “Secrets and Lies,” 52; “Related Histories: Studying the Family,” (2017); King, “Family History and Academic History – the Value of Collaboration,” (2018).

children did not survive into adulthood, also complicates the theory posited by some scholars that family history is typically written by ‘winners’ (those who survived to produce descendants), reminding us that belonging and community is as much about exclusion as it is inclusion.⁶

As I observed in a journal article on Eliza Miles:

our ongoing engagement with original materials, together with the development of digital sources offers us an opportunity to question and share our responses to the materiality of archival documents, the impact of digital sources on our research practices, and the ways in which we, as feminist historians, continue to shape the archival record of women’s history.⁷

The same could be said for other historical questions. This thesis shows that by narrowing our focus and asking different questions of familiar narratives, by reflecting upon the relationship between our physical and digital sources and their impact on our historical practice, and by drawing out the nuances and complexities that emerge from such sources, we can produce much richer narratives that highlight the agency of our subjects, particularly those whose voices have been excluded. Limitations on our sources and the constraints of historical practice mean that we can never give voice to all those who have been excluded from mainstream histories, but collectively we can continue to ask questions, and reflect upon how we tell the stories of people and places.

⁶ McCalman, “Family History en Masse,” (2017).

⁷ Blake, “Chasing Eliza Miles,” 89.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of Database

As I have noted at different times throughout this thesis, piecing together the lives of women on the Upper Goulburn goldfields from a range of quantitative and qualitative sources has had its challenges. One of the first was how to record the details I collected on women I identified in my study area, which initially encompassed the goldfields from Jamieson to Walhalla, for later analysis. Taking inspiration from prosopographical studies such as the Founders and Survivors project, and smaller studies of the central Victorian goldfields, I initially investigated a number of database and genealogical programs to collate data and sources on individual women.¹ However, the disparate range of primary sources I was drawing upon, each created for different purposes and covering different time periods and locations, made it impossible to find one program that was sufficient for the purposes of my study. Creating a purpose-built database was beyond the resources of this study so I settled on a combination of methods.

Drawing on genealogical methods I created an individual record sheet for each woman I identified in primary and secondary sources. [Table 1] Each woman was assigned a unique record number, and basic biographical details were added to an Excel spreadsheet. [Table 2] Attempts to include all the relevant data in a relational set of spreadsheets proved tricky for a number of fields, particularly where a woman had married multiple times, or was in a de-facto relationship where there was no official record of the commencement of this relationship. While genealogical software allows a user to record complex life events, they were less helpful when recording details of a more disparate group of women who were unrelated to one another, and was therefore the reason I chose not to persist with this method. In addition to the individual record sheet and basic biographical spreadsheet, separate files were created on my laptop where notes and copies of relevant sources were stored for each woman, identified by location of goldfield and individual record number, eg. 'Women/Woods Point women/1. Margaret Knopp'.

¹ James Bradley, Rebecca Kippen, Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, Janet McCalman & Sandra Silcot, "Research note: The founders and survivors project," *The History of the Family*, 15:4 (2010), 467-477, DOI: 10.1016/j.hisfam.2010.08.002; Hunt, "Piggoreet."

As the extent of the evidence on individual women varied, quantitative analysis across the data set — which remains incomplete — was difficult. However, discrete databases were created for the analysis of specific activities, such as the birth registrations discussed in Chapter 3. Creating an individual record number for each woman identified meant that I could also use this number to track them more easily in other systems, such as the list function on Trove where I added the number to my notes on digitised newspaper articles saved in the lists I created for the study.

While the methods outlined are probably not dissimilar to that of historians studying other historical subjects who are not well-documented, this study shows that there is further scope for developing methods, systems, and training to support individual scholars to make more sophisticated analyses and interpretations of the physical and online sources relating to studies of both discrete and disparate groups of individuals. Here, the digital humanities may offer some solutions, and I draw attention to the tools created by digital humanities scholar Tim Sherratt to support both academic and non-academic researchers in history as an example of how digital technology can not only enhance our access to historical sources, but expand our analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of sources.² These tools were not available when I commenced this study. However, exploring the potential of digital technology to make my research — and hence the women in my study — more accessible to other researchers is something I intend to explore as one of the outcomes of this thesis.

² Tim Sherratt, “Digital Heritage Handbook,” <http://timsherratt.org/digital-heritage-handbook/>.

Table 1: Individual Work Sheet

Name:

Goldfield Place/s:

[illegible]

Name:

Place/s:

Religion
Immigration, including date of arrival and name of ship
Residential history, eg. name of town or address and approx. years of residence
Education, eg. name of school and approx. years of attendance
Employment, eg. teacher, nurse, hotelkeeper, home duties
Community organisations, eg.
Significant primary sources, eg. artefacts, writing, images, material culture
Major references, sources consulted
<p>Information supplied by:</p> <p>Name:</p> <p>Contact details:</p>

Table 2: Excel Spreadsheet Fields

No.:	Individual Record Number
MN:	Maiden Name
FN:	First Name
MINING REGION:	Name of goldfield/s in study area they mostly lived
YOB:	Year of Birth
COB:	Country of Birth
FN:	Father's Name
MN:	Mother's Name
OCP:	Occupation
SNA:	Spouse's name
SOCP:	Spouse's occupation
YOM:	Year of Marriage
NOC:	Number of children
YOD:	Year of Death

Appendix 2: Population Analysis

2.1 1861 census.

Table 3: Male occupations on the Jamieson gold workings, 1861

Occupation	Number
Sluice miner	106
Miners, diggers, unspecified	55
Passenger traffic	15
Unemployed due to accident	10
Storekeeper	7
Builder	5
Animal produce	6
Blacksmith	4
Domestic servant	4
Innkeeper	3
Clerk or shop assistant	2
Teacher	1
Dispenser	1
Wine merchant	1
Woodsplitter	1
Other labourer	1
Cattle dealer	1
Carrying	1
Artisan	1

Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861, "Table XVIII.,—Showing the Occupations, in Classified Arrangement, of Males."*
http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-05_193.

Table 4: Male occupations on the Upper Goulburn and Big River diggings, and Jerusalem Creek District, 1861

Occupation	Number
Sluice miner	147
Miners, diggers, unspecified	132
Alluvial miner	7
Storekeeper	9
Builder	6
Quartz miner	5
Animal produce	5
Blacksmith	3
Clerk or shop assistant	3
Physician	1
Surveyor	1
Tailor	1
Domestic servant	1
Farmer or market gardener	1
Labourer	1
Unemployed due to accident	1

Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861, "Table XVIII.,—Showing the Occupations, in Classified Arrangement, of Males."*
http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-05_193

Table 5: Female occupations on the Jamieson gold workings, 1861

Occupation	Number
Wives	20
Domestic servants, cooks, housemaids	5
Shop/store keeper	1
Lodging house keeper	1
Needlewoman, milliner, dressmaker	1
Animal produce (butcher, poulter, fishing)	1

Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "TABLE XIX.—Showing the Occupations, in classified arrangement, of all Females," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-05_329

Table 6: Female occupations on the Upper Goulburn and Big River diggings, and Jerusalem Creek District, 1861

Occupation	Number
Wives	16
Domestic servants, cooks, housemaids	5
Lodging house keeper	1
Pastoral	2

Source: Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "TABLE XIX.—Showing the Occupations, in classified arrangement, of all Females," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_01-05_329

Table 7: Population of Jamieson gold workings, 1861

	Under 15	Over 15	Total
Males	42	216	258
Females	29	38	67
Total	71	254	325

Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XVII: Ages of the People," http://hccda.ada.edu.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_02-11_69

Table 8: Population of the Upper Goulburn, Big River gold diggings, and Jerusalem Creek diggings, 1861

	Under 15	Over 15	Total
Males	23	331	354
Females	16	26	42
Total	39	357	396

Source: Australian National University, *Historical Census and Colonial Data Archive, Census of Victoria 1861*, "Table XVII: Ages of the People," http://hccda.anu.ada.au/pages/VIC-1861-census_02-11_69

Table 9: Religions of population at Jamieson, 1861

Denomination	Male	Female	Total
Church of England, Episcopalian, Free Church of England, and Protestants (otherwise not defined)	120	30	150
Catholic	55	27	82
Objectors	34	33	1
Presbyterian churches	32	5	37
Chinese	10	0	10
Lutherans and German Protestants	3	0	3
Unspecified	3	0	3
Wesleyan Methodists	2	4	6

Source: Victorian Government, "Table XII, Showing the Religions of Persons, Males and Females, in the Parishes, Townships, and Principal Places, situated within each County and Pastoral District," *Census of Victoria*, 1861, 182. I have ranked the data in order of highest to lowest number, rather than in the order in which they are listed in the census.

Table 10: Religions of population on Upper Goulburn and Big River gold diggings, and Jerusalem Creek District, 1861

Denomination	Male	Female	Total
Catholic	104	11	115
Church of England, Episcopalian, Free Church of England, and Protestants (otherwise not defined)	161	23	184
Presbyterian churches	40	6	46
Objectors	18	2	20
Lutherans and German Protestants	7	0	7
Wesleyan Methodists	6	0	6
Unspecified, and no religion	6	0	6
Baptists	3	0	3
Individual/Congregationalists	2	0	2
Bible Christians	1	0	1
Society of Friends	1	0	1

Source: Victorian Government, "Table XII, Showing the Religions of Persons, Males and Females, in the Parishes, Townships, and Principal Places, situated within each County and Pastoral District," *Census of Victoria*, 1861, 183. I have ranked the data in order of highest to lowest number, rather than in the order in which they are listed in the census.

2.2 Sample of Birth registrations on Upper Goulburn goldfields 1860-1863

Table 11: Father's Birthplace, 1860-63

England	Ireland	Scotland	Germany	Germany	Wales	Norway	Poland	East Indies	No detail	Total
18	11	7	5	5	1	1	1	1	1	46

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 12: Mother's Birthplace, 1860-63

Ireland	England	Scotland	Australia	Total
21	18	6	1	46

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 13: Place of Marriage: Outside Australia, 1860-63

England	Ireland	Scotland	United States	Total
8	1	1	1	11

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 14: Place of Marriage: Within Australia, 1860-63

VIC	NSW	SA	TAS	Total
29	1	2	1	33

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 15: Place of Marriage: Within Victoria, 1860-63

Mansfield & Upper Goulburn	North & north-east	Melbourne and suburbs	Central & Western Victoria	Total
6	12	10	1	29

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 16: Number of children born prior to 1863 to couples who registered a birth on the Upper Goulburn goldfields

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
10	7	10	8	5	2	3	1	46

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

2.3 Sample of Birth registrations on Upper Goulburn goldfields, 1866.

Table 17: Father's Birthplace, 1866

England	Ireland	Germany	Scotland	Wales	Dalmatia	Canada	Not recorded	Total
30	14	7	4	2	1	1	1	60

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 18: Mother's Birthplace: Outside Australia, 1866

Ireland	England	Scotland	Germany	Wales	Total
21	16	10	2	1	50

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 19: Mother's Birthplace: Within Australia, 1866

VIC	TAS	NSW	SA	Total
3	2	1	1	7

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 20: Place of Marriage: Outside Australia, 1866

England	Ireland	Scotland	Wales	Total
6	5	1	1	13

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 21: Place of Marriage: Within Victoria, 1866

Upper Goulburn goldfields	North-east goldfields	Melbourne and suburbs	Geelong	Central & Western Victoria goldfields	Total
15	12	12	2	2	44

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

Table 22: Number of children born prior to 1866

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total
16	0	14	9	11	2	2	1	3	1	1	60

Source: Registry of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, Victoria.

2.4 1871 census

Table 23: Conjugal status of population of Woods Point, 1871

	Unmarried under 15	Unmarried over 15	Married	Widowed	Unspecified	Total
Males	227	166	176	8	2	579
Females	248	46	177	9	0	480

Source: Victorian Government, "Table XVI, Cities, Towns, and Boroughs – Showing the Numbers and Ages of the Unmarried, Married, Widowed, and Unspecified, of both sexes, in each City, Town, and Borough," *Census of Victoria*, 1871, 38.

Table 24: Religions of population of Woods Point, 1871

Denomination	Male	Female	Total
Roman Catholic	187	193	380
Church of England	187	151	338
Presbyterian Church of Victoria	84	75	159
Wesleyan Methodists	23	13	36
Objectors	16	6	22
Bible Christians	14	21	35
Pagans	13	0	13
Individual/Congregationalists	12	7	19
Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria	10	5	15
Baptists	9	7	16

Source: Victoria Parliament, *Census of Victoria, 1871. Population Tables*, "Table XIII, Summary of Cities, Towns, and Boroughs-Showing the Religions of Persons, Males, and Females, living in each City, Town, and Borough," (Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer, 1874), 35. I have ranked the data in order of highest to lowest number, rather than in the order in which they are listed in the census.

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This study has been conducted over a period of over six years and in that time access to physical and digital sources has continued to expand. This has meant that in some cases I have accessed finding aids and sources in multiple formats. For example, I have accessed indexes to shipping lists on both microfilm and online at Public Record Office Victoria, as well as via Ancestry, and have searched civil registration records on CD, electronic databases, and via Ancestry. In my footnotes I have cited the format that relates to the specific source I used at the time, but in the bibliography there may be instances where I have cited multiple formats of the same source.

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