



# EUREKA STOCKADE



Marion  
Littlejohn



# Licences

In an effort to regulate the goldfields, Governor La Trobe introduced a licence scheme whereby every man on the diggings had to purchase and carry a licence. His reasoning was sound enough, as he needed revenue to run the new colony and cope with the rapid influx of migrants. He also wanted to resolve the labour crisis caused by men leaving their jobs to rush to the new goldfields. To try to stem this flow he deliberately made the licence fee extremely high £1.10.0 (one pound, ten shillings) - the equivalent of an average week's wage - for a one-month licence.

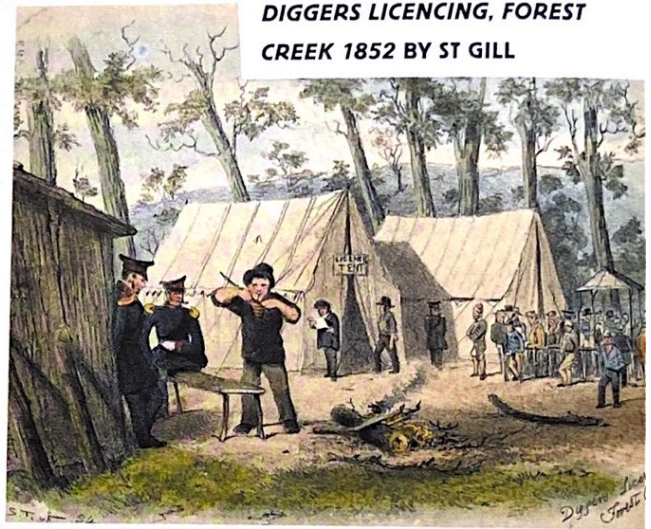
This was an unreasonable amount, far higher than the licence fees squatters paid for their huge landholdings. To make matters worse, gold-diggers had to carry their licence at all times and it had to be renewed monthly.

**LICENCE INSPECTION BY ST GILL**



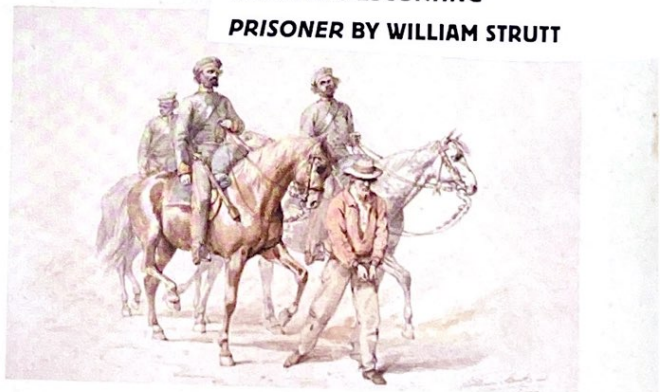
× Frequent licence inspections angered the diggers but failure to show your licence resulted in a fine of £5.0.0 (five pounds) or time in gaol. The troopers, who were rewarded with half the fines they collected, were corrupt and ruthless. Between 1852 and 1854 licence hunts in Ballarat increased from once a month to twice a week.

**DIGGERS LICENCING, FOREST CREEK 1852 BY ST GILL**



× Every month men had to stop work and line up at the police camp to renew their licences. The goldfields mounted police were known as troopers and the foot police as traps.

**TROOPERS ESCORTING PRISONER BY WILLIAM STRUTT**



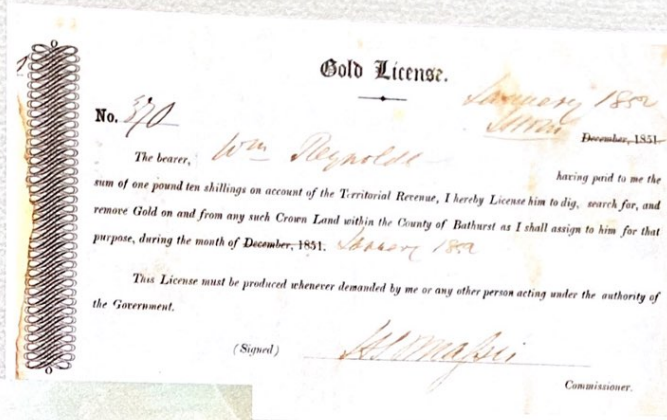
× An unlicensed digger is handcuffed and led off to gaol, in this case by members of the Native Police who were sent to the goldfields until 1853.



# Protests begin

The injustice of the licence system aroused discontent almost immediately. In August 1851, men gathered at Buninyong to participate in one of the first of many anti-licence protests.

However, these early protests didn't gain much support. Gold was still plentiful and, for many, dreams of "striking it rich" buoyed spirits. Besides, the chaos of goldfields life made the licence system difficult to police, as men could easily dodge the police by slipping away into the bush.



## LICENCE HUNT 1852 BY G LACY

× Some men avoided buying a licence by hiding from the troopers. The diggers' nickname for the goldfields' police was "Joes", after Governor Charles Joseph La Trobe. Across the goldfields warning cries of "Joel Joel" became a signal to hide because a licence hunt was on!

Governor La Trobe visited the Ballarat goldfields late in 1851 and, after being shown a rich claim, mistakenly believed there was plenty of gold for everyone. As a result he decided to double the licence fee. This prompted large protest meetings at Golden Point, Chewton and Forest Creek. Alarmed at this show of anger La Trobe backed down and didn't raise the licence fee – but he didn't abolish it either and discontent simmered.

## The Red Ribbon Rebellion

In 1853 angry Bendigo goldfields miners petitioned for the licence fee to be reduced and for some squatters' land to be opened up for sale. Those involved wore red ribbons in their hats as an act of defiance and cries of "no taxation without representation" began to be heard across the goldfields.

On Saturday 27 August 1853, after their petition was rejected by Governor La Trobe, 10,000 Bendigo diggers held a protest meeting. A truce was negotiated between the Bendigo authorities and diggers, and to reduce tension the licence fee was suspended for a month on the Bendigo field, but the relief was only temporary. This was the calm before the storm.



Gold License.

No.

570

January 1852  
1851  
December, 1851

The bearer,

Wm. Reynolds

having paid to me the

sum of one pound ten shillings on account of the Territorial Revenue, I hereby License him to dig, search for, and remove Gold on and from any such Crown Land within the County of Bathurst as I shall assign to him for that purpose, during the month of December, 1851. January 1852

This License must be produced whenever demanded by me or any other person acting under the authority of the Government.

(Signed)

H. M. M. M. M.

Commissioner.



# Ballarat Reform League

## 11 November 1854

**O**n 11 November, the Ballarat Reform League met at the Star Hotel in Main Road. Inspired by British Chartist principles, they drew up a list of demands they called the Ballarat Reform League Charter. The group included some who had been active members of the Chartist movement in Britain, such as bookseller John Humffray, journalist John Manning, George Black and the fiery Scotsman Thomas Kennedy. Also present were the Irishmen Peter Lalor and Timothy Hayes. All educated, thinking men who were not happy with the government of Victoria.

The Ballarat Reform League Charter asked for the immediate end to the licence system for miners and shopkeepers plus the Chartist principles of:

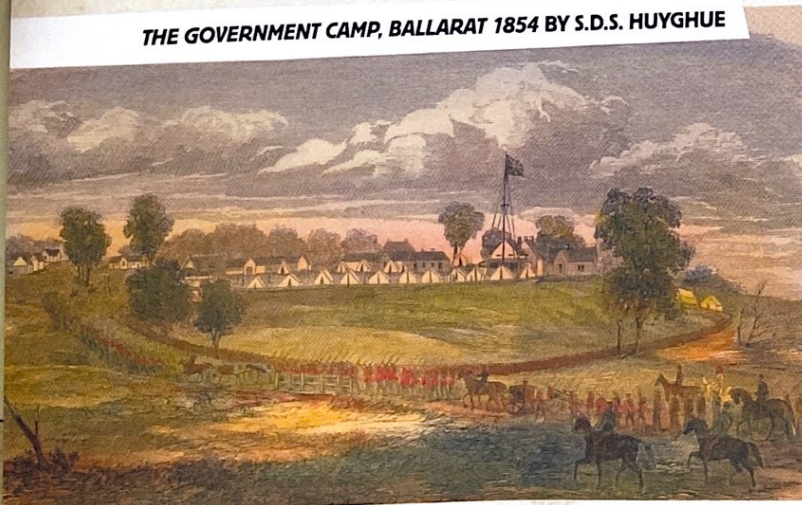
- 1 A full and fair representation
- 2 Manhood suffrage (votes for all)
- 3 No property qualification for members of the Legislative Council
- 4 Payment of members of parliament
- 5 Short duration of parliament.

On 20 November, the Eureka Hotel publican Bentley, and his staff Farrell and Hance, were finally convicted of the manslaughter of James Scobie. But on the same day the miners Fletcher,

McIntyre and Westerby were also convicted and sentenced for the burning of the Eureka Hotel. The Ballarat Reform League met and decided to send a deputation, including Humffray, Black and Kennedy, to Melbourne to meet with Hotham on 27 November to demand the release of the three prisoners. Governor Hotham was outraged by their use of the word "demand" and would not even talk to the deputation.

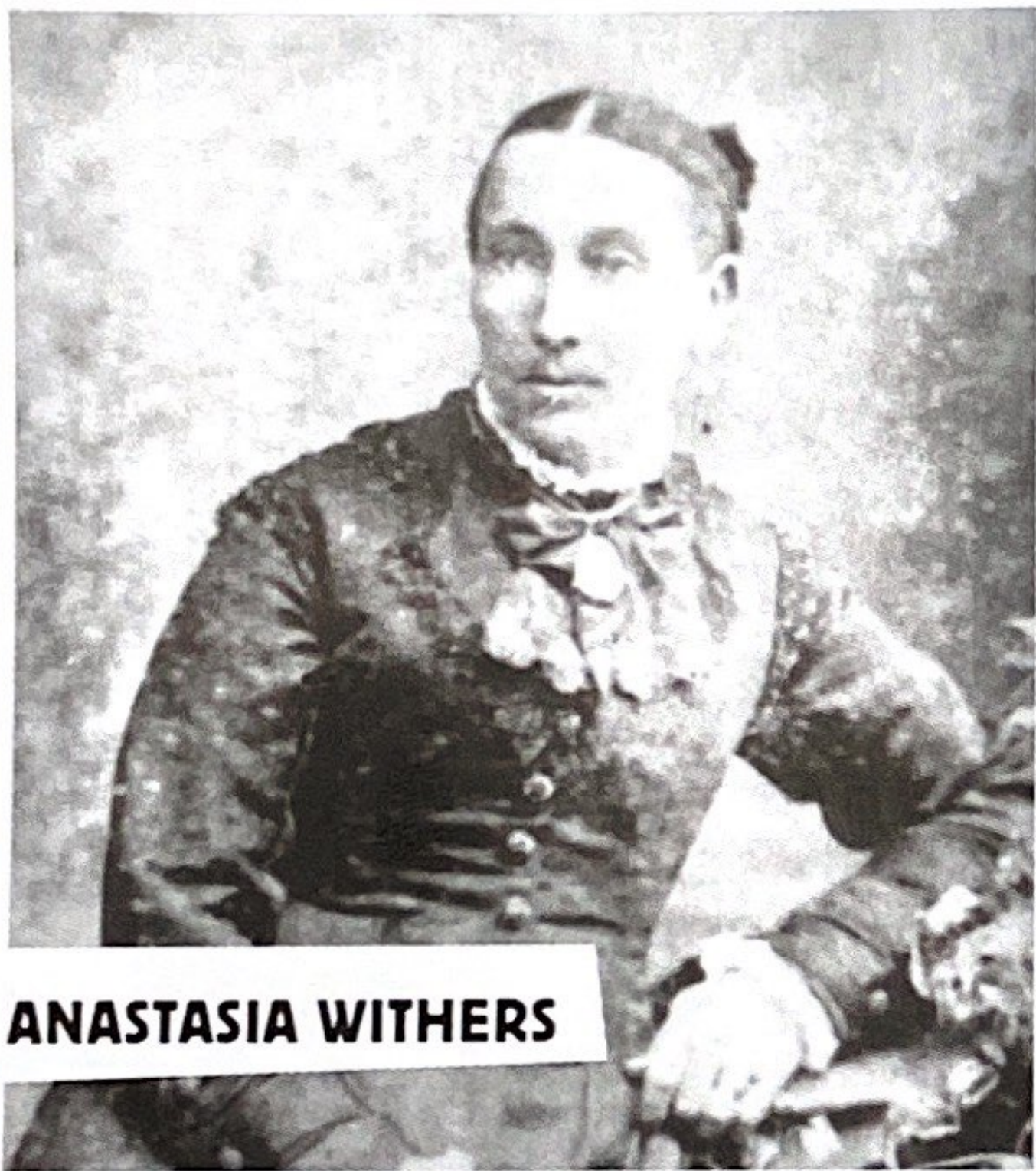
Back in Ballarat tension was growing and Father Smyth secretly informed Commissioner Rede that the government camp in Ballarat was in danger of attack.

**THE GOVERNMENT CAMP, BALLARAT 1854 BY S.D.S. HUYGHUE**



× On 28 November, a detachment of the 12th Regiment arrived in Ballarat to assist the soldiers of the 40th Regiment, also recently arrived, to protect the city from the perceived threat of insurrection. As the 12th Regiment marched into town they passed too close to the diggers' camp at Eureka and shots were fired. The regimental drummer boy, several soldiers and a transport driver were wounded. Rumours spread that the drummer boy was dying but he recovered. In Ballarat tension was at fever pitch.





**ANASTASIA WITHERS**



# The women of Eureka

**T**hose who sewed the famous flag, fearing arrest, never came forward to admit their involvement, but most believe they were Anastasia Withers, Anastasia Hayes and Anne Duke, possibly assisted by others.



**ANASTASIA WITHERS**

Anastasia Withers was living on the Ballarat goldfields with her husband Samuel and two children in 1854. Samuel was involved in the Eureka Stockade battle and Anastasia was well known for her dressmaking skills. A small W which can still be seen near one of the stars is believed to be her mark. The Withers left Ballarat immediately after the battle as the police were ruthlessly hunting for all those involved. Both Anastasia and Samuel had served time as convicts in Van Diemen's Land so they would have been justifiably nervous at the thought of being arrested.

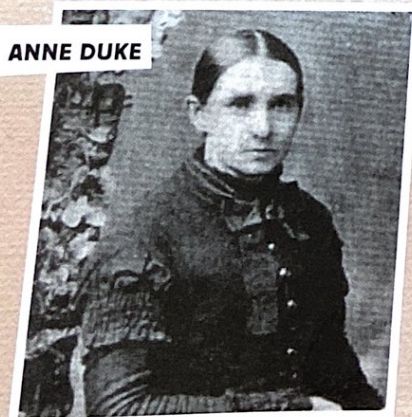
Anastasia Hayes arrived in Melbourne from Ireland in 1852

with her husband Timothy and their five children. The family lived in a tent close to St Alipius Church, where Anastasia worked as a teacher. Her sixth child, Ellen, was born mid-1854. Anastasia's husband Timothy led the meeting where miners burned their licences.

After the battle, Timothy was arrested and their tent was destroyed by the troopers. A fiery Anastasia shouted at the arresting trooper, "If I were a man I would'na been taken by the likes of you". Anastasia and her children were sheltering in the priest's residence when the injured Peter Lalor was brought in and Anastasia helped the doctor amputate Peter's arm.



**ANASTASIA HAYES**



**ANNE DUKE**

Anne Duke was born in Ireland and arrived in Melbourne with her family in 1844. Anne married George Duke and they moved to Ballarat in March 1854 and set up home in a tent on the Eureka goldfield. During the battle, as her husband and brother fought, she sheltered with another woman behind a log and could hear bullets hitting utensils inside her tent. Anne's brother Thomas saw Peter Lalor fall and helped hide him.

After the battle, George and Anne left Ballarat for Bendigo, travelling in a spring cart. Anne was heavily pregnant and during the trip she gave birth to their first child in a roadside tent.