

# Characters of the Goldfields



One of Sovereign Hill's volunteers at the Sly Grog Tent

The following pages contain information about people who actually sailed to Australia to become part of the Victorian Goldrushes. Some went back home and some stayed. We know a lot about some and just a little about others.

## Ah Koon



The Store in Sovereign Hill's Chinese Village  
Ah Koon may have been the owner of this store

Ah Koon was Headman of the Golden Point Chinese Village when the Ballarat Chinese protested against the Residence Tax in 1857 and 1858. He was also the interpreter for the Chinese Protector at this time.

We know very little about his personal history. The various ways in which a Chinese person's name could be written in English create further complications in tracing Ah Koon's history. While newspaper articles refer to him as 'Ah Coon', he was also known as 'A. Koon' and 'Hacoon'.

By 17 July 1858, Ah Koon was no longer Headman of the Golden Point Village; however, he seems to have remained in the role of interpreter until at least 1861.

From Sovereign Hill Research, 2009  
Author: Anna Kyi

## Ellen Clacy



A Tent on the Red Hill Diggings at Sovereign Hill

Ellen Clacy set off from England to accompany her brother to the Victorian diggings in 1852. She seemed an 'ideal girl' to take to the diggings. One author said, '*She noticed everything, enjoyed everything, and willingly turned her hand to cooking, camping or washing for gold*'.

Ellen filled a diary with descriptions of goldfields life and 'adventures' involving bushrangers, orphaned children, falling in love and getting married. She published her diary called *A lady's visit to the gold diggings of Australia* almost as soon as she arrived back in England, in 1853, and it quickly sold out.

Further biographical details remain sketchy. New research indicates that her husband may have left her, and that she may have borne an illegitimate child at sea. This suggests that her life was in fact less 'respectable' and more complex and difficult than the one she constructed in her published account.

Adapted from Egold website, 2009  
<http://www.egold.net.au/biogs/EG00054b.htm>

## Anastasia Hayes

Anastasia Hayes was born in Ireland and survived the Irish potato famine (1846-1851). She married and began a family before she and her husband decided to move to Victoria to search for gold.

On 5 October, 1852, at the age of 34, Anastasia arrived in Melbourne with her five children and husband Timothy. Timothy, Peter Lalor and Duncan Gilles formed a mining partnership on the Ballarat goldfields where Anastasia gave birth to her sixth child, Ellen, in the family home – a tent.



St Alipius Diggings School at  
Sovereign Hill

Anastasia took on a job teaching at a nearby Catholic school to make ends meet. She was known as a firebrand on the goldfields, frequently complaining about how the miners were treated by the authorities. In 1854, she encouraged her husband Timothy to take a leading role amongst those in Ballarat who were expressing their dissatisfaction with conditions on the goldfields. Timothy Hayes became chairman of the Ballarat Reform League and, on Wednesday 29 November, at Bakery Hill, he chaired the 'monster meeting' which set the scene for the Eureka Rebellion.

After the rebellion was crushed, Anastasia was at the forefront of the resistance. She was involved in the operation when Peter Lalor's arm was removed to save his life. Anastasia was disappointed that her husband was one of those arrested and when she approached the troops, she told them, '*I wouldn't have been taken by the likes of you*'. She took her six children to court in Melbourne and sat in the court suckling her youngest while her husband was on trial for High Treason.

Soon after Timothy was acquitted, their marriage disintegrated. He moved to South America for a number of years, and she was left to bring up their six children alone. A difficult task at the best of times, but almost impossible in a society where there were no social security benefits and survivors of the Eureka Stockade were shunned by a community that wanted to forget!

Anastasia Hayes continued to work as a school teacher, living in Ballarat until she died on 6 April 1892 in her King Street home, just days after her 74th birthday.

Adapted from CFMEU web site, 2009

<http://www.cfmeu.asn.au/construction/proudpast/Eureka.html>

## Emmanuel Steinfeld

[Click here for a portrait](#) from the Sate Library of Victoria

Emmanuel Steinfeld was born on 1 November 1828, in Prussia (now Germany). In 1847, he went to London to learn the business of the exporters, Krohn Bros, who sent him to represent them in Victoria in 1853. Steinfeld arrived in Melbourne on 28 September aboard the *Ballarat*. He then settled in Ballarat where he opened his own furniture warehouse in 1856. Naturalised in 1857, he took a leading role in business and civic life, and was influential in introducing a local water supply and in the foundation of the orphanage and public library. He was also a prominent Freemason. On 23 January 1861, he married Theresa Levinson in Ballarat; there were no children of the marriage.

Steinfeld went on to become a local politician on the Ballarat East Council. From 1871, he was listed in Melbourne directories as an agent for 'La Silencieuse' sewing machines. By 1875, he had established a furniture warehouse in Melbourne as well and, by 1876, he had premises in Elizabeth and Lonsdale Streets. Steinfeld left the Ballarat shop in the hands of two nephews and lived at St Kilda, in Melbourne, from 1881. He retired from business in 1888.

Visiting Adelaide to speak about inter-colonial free trade, Emmanuel Steinfeld died of apoplexy on 16 April 1893. His estate was valued at £22,781.

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, 2009

Author: Weston Bate

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A060200b.htm?hilit=E%3BSteinfeld>



Steinfeld's Furniture Factory at Sovereign Hill

## Eugène von Guérard

[Click here for a portrait](#) from the State Library of Victoria

Eugène von Guérard was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1812. He showed artistic talent as a young man and travelled around much of Europe studying and painting.

In 1852, he sailed from England aboard the *Windermere*, lured by the Gold Rush. He arrived at Geelong on 24 December and left for Ballarat two weeks later. His diary describes his luckless year on the goldfields, but he made many pencil sketches (now held in the State Library of Victoria). On 15 July 1854, he married Louise Arnz of Dusseldorf at St Francis's Church, Melbourne.

For sixteen years, von Guérard travelled and sketched in the wilds of Victoria, Tasmania, New South Wales, South Australia and New Zealand, sometimes with scientific expeditions. Later, he transferred many of his pen and pencil sketches to canvases commissioned by wealthy patrons. Some of his most important early paintings were inspired by the places he visited.

In October 1856, he was an active founder of the Victorian Society of Fine Arts. In 1870, he was appointed first master of painting at the National School of Art, Melbourne, and curator of the National Gallery of Victoria, but he was a better painter than teacher and he resigned because of ill health in 1881.

In 1882, von Guérard returned to Europe where his wife died in London on 12 January 1891. When the Australian banks crashed in 1893, he lost all his investments and apparently lived in poverty until he died aged 89, in Chelsea, on 17 April 1901.

Click here for [one of von Guerards sketches](#) from the State Library of Victoria

Adapted from the Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, 2009

Author: Marjorie J. Tipping

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040347b.htm>

## Freeman Cobb



Cobb & Co Coach Office at  
Sovereign Hill

Freeman Cobb was born on 10 October 1830 at Brewster, Massachusetts, in the United States of America. Around May 1853, he arrived in Melbourne with George Mowton to establish a branch of Adams & Co, express agents. However, this coach company never fully established itself in Victoria, so Cobb joined up with three other Americans to form a carrying partnership known as Cobb & Co.

Using two Concord thoroughbrace wagons that Cobb had imported, the partners (who called themselves 'the boys' as their average age was only 22) commenced carrying between Melbourne and Liardet's Beach (Port Melbourne) in July 1853.

Unfortunately, the wet winter made the primitive road virtually impassable, and the business was abandoned. Cobb and his partners converted their carrying business to the famous coaching firm of Cobb & Co. On 30 January 1854, they began to operate a passenger line using the latest Concord thoroughbrace coaches. Except for Sunday, the service ran daily in each direction between Forest Creek (Castlemaine), Bendigo and Melbourne. The firm operated very profitably for two years and four months and acquired a great reputation for efficiency and reliability.

On 16 May 1856, Cobb announced that the business had been sold and on 24 May, he left Melbourne in the *Royal Charter* for America. Although Freeman Cobb spent only three years and one month in Australia, he became a legend in his own lifetime, and Cobb and Co. coaches became an important part of Australian history.

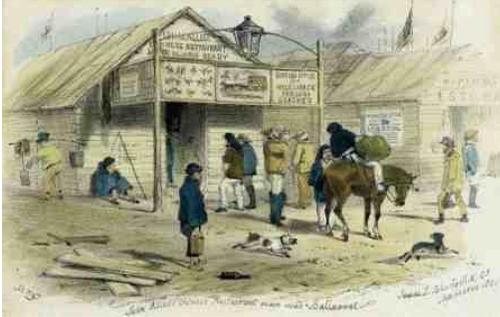
After his return to Brewster, on 6 May 1858, Cobb married Annette Cobb, who was his cousin. They had two children, Walter Freeman and Emily. Early in 1871, he took his family to South Africa and settled at Port Elizabeth. He died there at his home in Havelock Street on 24 May 1878. After a year, his family returned to Brewster, where his widow died in 1921.

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, 2009

Author: K. A. Austin

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030404b.htm>

## John Alloo



John Alloo's Chinese Restaurant, Main Road , Ballarat, 1855  
by ST Gill

Reprinted with kind permission of the Gold Museum, Ballarat



John Alloos Restaurant  
Main St. Sovereign Hill

Accounts differ as to when John Alloo arrived in Australia. Some historians think that he arrived in Victoria in 1844 as a contract worker, but his descendants claim he arrived later – in 1846. Either way, he arrived before the Gold Rush and had time to develop his English before he was appointed as an interpreter in 1855. According to Alloo family history, John was the adopted son of an English sea captain.

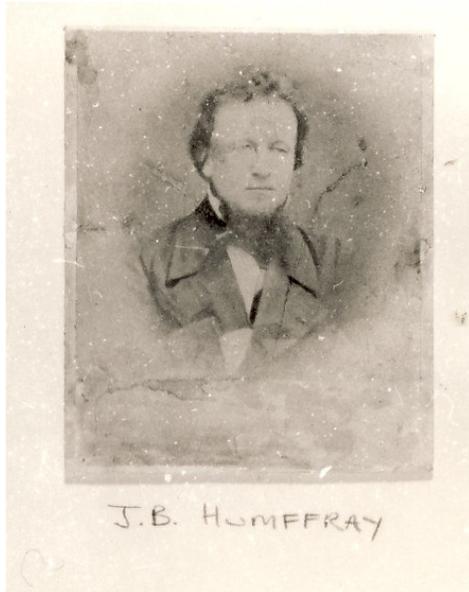
In 1854, he established a restaurant which he operated in Ballarat until 1858. The restaurant provided European food – plum puddings, jam tarts, roasted and boiled joints, all kinds of vegetables and soup. It served as a booking office for Melbourne and Geelong coaches and, when Alloo obtained a theatrical licence, it staged many entertainments, some of which appealed to Europeans as well.

Alloo was appointed Chinese interpreter to Ballarat's Chinese Protector, William Henry Foster, between 1855 and 1856. In 1856, he married Margaret Peacock from Scotland. Family history suggests that he took on other official roles which involved him acting as a 'go-between' between Victoria's Chinese and European communities. John Alloo (who was also known as the 'Christian missionary to the Chinese'), was respected as one of the 'chief' men of Ballarat.

In the 1860s (most likely 1868), he re-located to New Zealand. In February 1868, he was appointed Constable-Interpreter for the Goldfields Department of the Otago Police Force. In 1877, he became the first ethnic Chinese to be sworn in as a Police District Constable. John Alloo was discharged in October of the same year, due to ill health. He died two years later, on 30 August 1889.

From Sovereign Hill Research, 2009  
Author: Anna Kyi

## John Humffray



John Basson Humffray  
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of the Gold Museum, Ballarat

John Basson Humffray was born in Newtown, Wales, in 1824. After a good education, he was articled to a solicitor, but abandoned his studies and went to the Victorian goldfields. He arrived at Melbourne aboard the *Star of the East* on 19 September 1853.

Humffray soon settled at Ballarat and set up a bookstore. He made his first public speech in November 1854 in the lead-up to the Eureka Rebellion. He became secretary of the Ballarat Reform League and worked hard to make the Governor aware of the problems diggers were having paying for expensive gold digging licences. He believed the diggers' problems could be solved if they were allowed to vote for representation in the parliament of Victoria. Humffray did not believe in violence and argued against taking up arms at Eureka. After the uprising, he was elected to parliament with Peter Lalor and others.

Humffray spent years in parliament, but lost money in mining speculations and, in his last years, was dependent on charity. After a long illness, he died aged 66, on 18 March 1891, survived by his wife Elizabeth and by one son. At his own request, he was buried near the diggers who fell at Eureka.

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography Online, 2009

Author: Diane L. Langmore

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040501b.htm>

## Martha Clendinning



Sovereign Hill's Waterloo Store

Martha Clendinning was an adventurous woman of Irish background. Her husband, George, was a doctor who brought his family to Victoria from England, in 1852. He ventured to the goldfields with his brother to look for gold, leaving his wife and daughter in Melbourne. Martha and her sister decided to make the 95- mile trip to Ballarat on foot. They brought with them bedsteads, mattresses, blankets, chairs and cooking utensils and set up a store in the diggings. This idea was met with ridicule from their husbands. It was not considered acceptable for respectable women of the time to operate a business.

Despite the men's objections, the sisters opened their store in the front of their tent, selling tea, coffee, sugar, candles, tobacco, jam, bottled fruit, cheese, dress materials and baby clothes. They were very proud of their flourishing store which, unlike many other stores on the diggings, did not sell 'sly grog' (illegal alcohol).

After her sister returned to Melbourne, Martha continued to run the store on her own until 1855. She then decided to close her small business, which now faced competition from larger businesses. The cost of a storekeeper's licence (£40 per year) was also becoming too expensive. Martha's husband could now afford to support the family, and social attitudes towards appropriate roles for middle class women were quickly changing as Ballarat became a more settled community.

Martha and George built a wooden house, and she went on to live a more traditional life as a doctor's wife. During 1865, she and her sister travelled to London and Europe. When she returned to Ballarat, Martha helped to establish the Female Refuge there in 1857. The Clendinnings eventually moved to Toorak in Melbourne.



A wooden cottage at Sovereign Hill

Adapted from  
*Martha Clendinning: A Woman's life on the Goldfields* by Louise Asher in  
*Double Time Women in Victoria – 150 Years*  
ed. By Marilyn Lake and Farley Kelly, Penguin Australia 1985 and

[Sovereign Hill Education Service](#) online Research Notes, [Women on the Goldfields](#).

## Peter Lalor



Peter Lalor

(Montrose Collection)  
Reprinted with kind permission  
of the Gold Museum, Ballarat

Peter Lalor was born on 5 February 1827 in *Tenakill*, the family home in County Laois (formerly Queens County) in Ireland. He was the youngest of 11 children. Lalor was educated at Carlton College and then trained as a civil engineer at Trinity College, Dublin.

With his brother, Richard, Peter Lalor immigrated to Australia in October 1852. He initially worked on the construction of the Melbourne-Geelong railway line, but joined the Victorian Gold Rush and began mining in the Ovens Valley, and then on the Eureka Lead at Ballarat.

Lalor was elected to lead the miners in the armed uprising at the Eureka Stockade in December 1854. During the fighting, he was wounded in the left arm, which was later amputated. A warrant for Lalor's arrest was initially sought, but he was taken from Ballarat and hidden in Geelong by supporters. The warrant was withdrawn in June 1855 after juries had found a number of other miners involved in the Eureka Stockade not guilty of high treason. As a result of the uprising, a number of the miners' grievances were resolved.

After Eureka, Lalor was elected into the Parliament of Victoria where he held the role of Speaker from 1880 to 1887.

He married Alicia Dunne on 10 July 1855, in Geelong, and they had two children. Alicia died on 17 May 1887, aged 55 years. Peter died at his son's home 18 months later on 9 February 1889, aged 62 years.

Adapted from Wikipedia, 2009  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Lalor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Lalor)

## Raffaello Carboni



Carboni Raffaello ("Greatworks")  
Reprinted with kind permission of  
The Gold Museum, Ballarat

Raffaello Carboni was born on 15 December 1817 at Urbino, Italy. He attended University in 1835-36, but some time around 1837, he moved to Rome where he trained for the priesthood. Carboni studied French, German, Spanish and English. He later left the seminary and became a clerk in a bank. In the 1840s, he joined the Young Italy movement and fought for Garibaldi. In the Roman campaign of 1849, Carboni received three wounds, one of which, in his left leg, never properly closed and troubled him intermittently for the rest of his life.

After travelling through Europe, he was attracted to the gold discoveries in Australia and set sail for Melbourne in the middle of 1852.

Carboni began his career as a digger at Ballarat and had immediate success at Golden Point, but early in 1853 he moved, with many others, to Magpie Gully. However, when his 'washing stuff' was stolen, he and his comrade decided to separate. On the diggings, he was bothered by flies in his eyes and, after a bad bout of dysentery, he made up his mind to turn shepherd. He was a less successful sheep tender than he had been a digger and after briefly living with an Aboriginal tribe, he succumbed again to gold fever and returned to Ballarat.

Carboni became caught up in the events leading up to the Eureka Rebellion and was one of the leaders. He was a member of the diggers' inner committee, though he was absent when the soldiers attacked on the morning of 3 December 1854. He was one of the twelve charged with high treason, but acquitted since no jury would convict them. Carboni was elected with nine others, on 14 July 1855, to the new local court at Ballarat. He wrote a book about the Eureka Stockade and sold it on the first anniversary of the uprising.

Carboni left Australia on 18 January 1856 and returned to Europe. He travelled widely and wrote books, poems and plays. He died (probably on 24 October 1875) in Rome at St James's Hospital. In the death certificate most likely to be his, he is described as 'unmarried' and a 'man of letters'.

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2009

Author: Jennifer Lorch

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A030328b.htm?hilit=Carboni>

## Samuel Thomas Gill

[Click here for a portrait](#) from the National library of Australia

SAMUEL THOMAS GILL (1818-1880), painter, was born on 21 May 1818 in Somerset, England. He had some instruction in drawing from his father, who was an amateur artist. Gill was employed in London as 'Draftsman and Water Colour Painter' by the Hubard Profile Gallery, an establishment which produced silhouettes.

He reached South Australia in December 1839 in the *Caroline* with his parents and a brother and sister. In March 1840, he established a studio in Gawler Place, Adelaide.

In 1852, Gill went to the Victorian gold diggings and, in the next twenty years, produced drawings of Victoria and New South Wales. Many were published as lithographs. Gill produced some very important artworks that historians later used to study goldfields life.

After 1870, Gill fell into obscurity. He did, however, continue to produce work, some of it in the nature of cartoons. On 27 October 1880, he collapsed in Post Office Place, Melbourne, and was found to be dead when taken to hospital. His grave in the Melbourne General Cemetery was unmarked until 1913 when his body was moved to a private plot in the same cemetery and a stone erected. This was paid for by funds collected by the Historical Society of Victoria. Gill never married.



*Puddling* by S T Gill

Reprinted with kind permission of the Gold Museum, Ballarat

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2009

Author: E. J. R. Morgan

<http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010410b.htm>

## Antoine Fauchery

[Click here to see a portrait](#) at The Sate Library of Victoria

Antoine Julien Fauchery was born in Paris on 15 November 1823. He spent his early years trying his hand as an architect and a painter, before establishing himself as a writer.

At this time, he formed a close friendship with the greatest of the early French photographers – a man known by the pseudonym of Nadar. He also associated with a number of prominent writers.

Submitting to the call of adventure, Fauchery set out in July 1852 for Melbourne in the hope of making his fortune on the Victorian goldfields. After nearly two fruitless years in Ballarat, he returned to Melbourne to open the Café Estaminet Francais, a well-patronised restaurant where Europeans gathered. He returned to France in 1856. His *Lettres d'un Mineur en Australie* (a series of fifteen letters recounting his experiences in Australia) appeared in installments in a Parisian newspaper in January and February 1857. They were also published as a book in the same year.

Later in 1857, Fauchery was commissioned by the French Government to return to Melbourne with the purpose of reporting his impressions of Australia. He established himself in Collins Street, Melbourne, and advertised his skills in the new art of photography. Shortly after, his professional collaboration with Richard Daintree began. Together they planned to produce for sale a series of photographs consisting of views of life in Victoria and the notable members of the community. Their different backgrounds – Fauchery an artist and Daintree a geologist – combined to produce images of a remarkably high quality so early in the history of photography, and provided a rare and invaluable record of life in Victoria in the late 1850s.

Fauchery sailed from Melbourne for Manila in 1859, and then visited China, recording in his serialised *Lettres de Chine* a first-hand account of the 'Arrow War' and the sacking of the Summer Palace. In 1861, he left for Japan, where he died at Yokohama on 27 April 1861.



The French Flag at Sovereign Hill

Adapted from Australian Dictionary of Biography, 2009

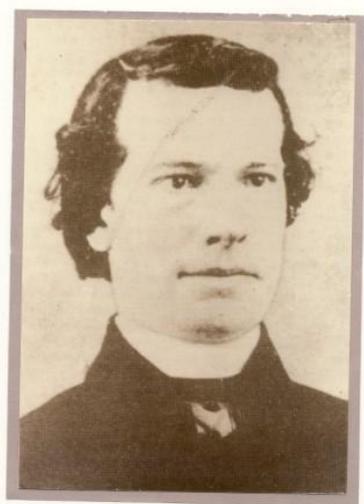
Author: K.M O'Neil

<http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A040167b.htm>

eGold (Electronic Encyclopedia of Gold in Australia), 200

[www.egold.net.au](http://www.egold.net.au)

## Father Patrick Smyth (Catholic Priest)



Fr. Patrick Smyth

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Patrick Smyth was born in 1824, in Ballina, County Mayo, on the west Coast of Ireland. He was ordained a priest in 1852. Hearing the appeal of Bishop Goold for priests in Victoria, he arrived in Melbourne in September 1852. He was first sent to Geelong and then to the Ovens diggings around Beechworth.



Sovereign Hill's St Alipius Church

In September 1854, he was transferred to St Alipius Church in Ballarat. There, he found himself in the midst of the events of Eureka. While cautioning moderation and peaceful means, he was elected one of the diggers' representatives to the Government. When he heard of the attack on the diggers' stockade (on Sunday 3 December), he rushed there to minister comfort and the last rites to the injured and dying. He was finally forced out under threat of death by troopers, but later sheltered the diggers' fugitive leader, Peter Lalor. Father Smyth was transferred to St Mary's Catholic Church, in Castlemaine, in October 1856.

He became ill with tuberculosis and died, aged 41, on 14 October 1865 in Sydney.

Father Smyth was described as a man of little eloquence, but without cant, firm in his opinions and of great kindness and charity.

Adapted from information from the Castlemaine Art Gallery and Historical Museum