

HIST150: Colonial Australia

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

School of Humanities

Assignment 1: Research and Essay Planning Exercise

Due Date: April 10, 2012

By Christiaan Dodemont

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Comment [d1]: Good, but not a requirement for an essay.

Marker's Comments: 97% (High Distinction)

	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
An introduction that outlines your approach to the selected question, and which demonstrates the features of a good essay introduction.					✓
Clearly stated series of 5 to 8 points which you would discuss in an essay which answers the selected question					✓
Research – adequate number and range of sources					✓
Annotations for five sources each of which:					✓
- provides full reference details				✓	
- identifies the source as primary or secondary					✓
- briefly describes the contents					✓
- evaluates the usefulness of the source in answering the set question.					✓
Grammar, spelling and expression					✓
Bibliography				✓	

This is a very well written and researched essay plan, which demonstrates your overall understanding of the topic and excellent research skills.

You provided a strong and articulated introduction that covered the main aspects of the topic. Your discussion points were well set out and substantiated though a few examples would have added depth to your analysis. You also sufficiently evaluated and analysed your selected sources. However, there were a few minor referencing problems, please refer to the guidelines in the SHUM policy booklet. Nevertheless, this essay plan has the potential of becoming a very good assignment indeed.

1. Essay Question

“What does the 1854-1855 Commission of Enquiry into the Conditions of the Goldfields of Victoria reveal about the possible causes of the Eureka?”

2. Introduction

In March 1855 the Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Conditions of the Victorian goldfields was released. It was scathing in its appraisal of the administration of the goldfields from the revenue hungry government and corrupt local officials, to local and government authorities. It cited the expensive monthly gold license fee as the first issue of concern. The report described the excessive policing of the licenses and police corruption as major issues contributing to the “estrangement and distrust between authorities and the people”¹. The complicated system of gold commissioners played a large part in the frustrations of the locals, as did the lack of available land for purchase. The commission found that local and government officials worked towards their own ends creating a passionate desire for political representation on behalf of the people on the goldfields. This combination of issues culminated in the infamous Eureka Stockade of December 3rd 1854. The subsequent concessions granted as a result of the commission have ensured the Eureka Stockade remains a pinnacle of political change in Australian history.

Comment [d2]: Use inverted commas for direct quotes – not “xx”

¹ Findings regarding Goldfield Administration in Report from the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Gold-Fields of Victoria, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, 1854-55, Vol. 2, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1855, para. 12 p. 7.

3. Essay plan

In order to alleviate debt, the Victorian government set a high price for monthly gold mining licenses. Discuss how the miners despised the exorbitant fee, particularly as the amounts of alluvial surface gold diminished. Demonstrate that miners would have been happy to pay an annual miner's right as well as an export duty on gold instead of the monthly license. ✓

The constant and heavy-handed police "digger hunting"² tactics led to tensions between miners and authorities. Show how the government had a role to play in the high frequency of license searches. Give examples of police corruption and brutality on the goldfields contributing to miners' revulsion of authorities. ✓

Comment [d3]: Single quotes

The ad hoc nature of administration of the goldfields led to "needless extent and complicity"³ frustrating miners and adversely affecting government revenue. Show how these establishments worked independently for their own interests, breeding corruption that further alienated miners. ✓

Comment [d4]: Single quotes

With the strong influence of members of the Chartist movement, the Ballarat Reform League and its charter were formed. Discuss the class differentiation between government, officials and the miners. Using examples such as the Scobie affair, demonstrate how corruption of officials further enhanced the desire for justice and a voice for the miners. ✓

Comment [d5]: When referring to an individual for the first time, give their full name (ie James Scobie)

Miners desired the ability to "invest the small capital gained"⁴ from mining into land. Demonstrate the miners' frustration and hardship at the unavailability of land occupied by squatters, which the miners could have purchased for their own livelihood. Demonstrate how this lack of land worked contrary to government desires for workers' pastoral livelihood over gold mining. ✓

Comment [d6]: Single quotes

² B.C. Hodge, 'Goldrush Australia.' *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol. 69, no. 3, 1983, p. 164.

³ Findings regarding Goldfield Administration in Report from the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Gold-Fields of Victoria, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, 1854-55, Vol. 2, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1855, para. 78 p. 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 16 p. 7.

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4. Annotated sources

4.1 Source 1

Report from the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Gold-Fields of Victoria, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, Session 1854-55, Vol. 2, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1855.

The report from the commission into the Victorian goldfields is a primary source outlining the reasons for problems as well as recommending courses of action. It argues that the causes were the expensive gold license fee and its over-zealous police collection, lack of available property for sale and the want for political status of the people. The report recommends: an export duty on gold and annual miner's right to replace gold licenses, police numbers be cut, land be made available for sale and locals be eligible for legislature. The report is highly critical of the corrupt and poorly planned system of gold commissioners responsible for minimising revenue and alienating the people. It recommends utilising a single gold warden for each district. There is a focus on revenue generation inherent in all sections of the report and suggestions for future profit sources such as deep-lead mining and mining companies are discussed in depth. The report contains depositions of locals demonstrating not only their discontent, but also their educated and intelligent arguments. As basis for the assignment, this source contains essential information on causes of issues on the goldfields as well as examples of how the opinions of the locals were taken into consideration. ✓

4.2 Source 2

~~Copy of 'Petition from Ballarat Residents to Governor Hotham', 23 October 1854, VPRS 5527 Eureka Stockade - Historical Collection P0, Unit 1, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Petition_from_Ballarat_residents_re_Scobie_murder.~~

This primary source is a petition from the people of Ballarat to Governor Hotham with regards to the acquittal of James Bentley over the murder of James Scobie. The residents feel that justice has not been served by the magistrates and suggest that the affair should have been sent to jury. The petition explains the events of the night of 6th October 1854 and includes the supposed eyewitness account of a ten-year-old boy Walshe implicating James Bentley and his wife as perpetrators of the crime. Also included is the description of evidence heard in

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Bentley's defense, suggesting that all of these parties were partial to Bentley. Questions are raised over the validity of the whole affair and requests that Governor Hotham take further action. The petition is a good example of how residents felt corruption was present within their officials as well as the use of a petition as a means by which the people sought justice.



4.3 Source 3

~~Copy of~~ 'Principles and Objectives of the Ballarat Reform League', 11 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 4066/P Unit 1, November ~~No.~~ 69, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Ballarat_Reform_League_Charter.

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This primary source is the charter of the Ballarat Reform League. It proposes changes for political representation as well as removal of the more damaging elements of the goldfields. It discusses "the utter want of confidence in the political honesty of government"⁵ officials and how the people had been "tyrannised"⁶ over. It outlines five requests for political change: fair representation, the right of all men to vote, no property qualification of members for the Legislative Council, the payment of members and shorter durations of parliament. It also requests the removal of the license fee as well as the gold commissioners. This is an excellent source demonstrating first-hand how the people on the goldfields felt towards government and what action they deemed was required for change.

4.4 Source 4

Beggs-Sunter, Anne. 'Eureka: Gathering 'the Oppressed of All Nations'', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, Vol. 10, 2008, pp. 15-34.

This secondary source discusses how the Eureka Stockade involved people from many countries as well as Eureka's legacy in Australian history. Beggs-Sunter argues that Eureka has been used by political and protest groups to represent differing versions of equality. She demonstrates how the Ballarat Reform League and its leaders comprised many nations. Beggs-Sunter gives examples of triggers for the Eureka stockade such as the framing of an

⁵ Excerpt from ~~Copy of~~ 'Principles and Objectives of the Ballarat Reform League', 11 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 4066/P Unit 1, November no. 69, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Ballarat_Reform_League_Charter, p. 3.

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⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

American shopkeeper and the arrest of Father Smythe's Armenian servant. She then discusses how the memory of Eureka has been used by 'white Australians' to garner support against the Chinese immigrants in the late nineteenth century and by political organisations both for and against immigration during the twentieth century. The article provides an overview of the countries represented at Eureka as well as relevant specific examples of corruption on the goldfields. It offers an excellent insight into how historical events can be construed to support political and other ideals seemingly contradictory to their original meanings. ✓

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4.5 Source 5

Goodman, David. ~~'Chapter 1: Making an Edgier History of Gold'~~, in ~~his~~ *Gold : forgotten histories and lost objects of Australia*, ed. Iain McCalman, Alexander Cook and Andrew Reeves, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.

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Comment [d7]: For book chapters you need to cite the author, a chapter title, then provide details of the editor followed by publican details.

Goodman's secondary source looks at gold's effect on Australian society at the time of the goldfields. Goodman believes that although gold transformed Australia from a pastoral society to a world centre, the view of the future within Australia was one of uncertainty. Using primary and secondary sources he portrays the upper class' concept of the working class' wealth. The single-mindedness of the quest for gold removed the link between work and wealth changing the nature of classes as well as detrimentally affecting the economy. Using examples from the time Goodman demonstrates how the view from abroad of Australian workers was that of miners living the high life, reversing the class order with "men of education... in rags."⁷ Goodman then looks at how the government tried to enact social balance through Gold commissions, though even Governor La Trobe felt the push for democratic rights seemed inevitable. Goodman finally compares democratic rights of the miners for land with that of the Aboriginals. The article provides a good overview of the impact of gold and the supposed roles of workers in Australian society at the time, though it tends to look from an upper-class point of view. ✓

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⁷ Excerpt from Report from the Select Committee of the Legislative Council on Intemperance, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, Session 1854, Vol. 38, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1854, p. 26, reproduced in David Goodman's 'Chapter 1: Making an Edgier History of Gold', in his *Gold : forgotten histories and lost objects of Australia*, ed. Iain McCalman, Alexander Cook and Andrew Reeves, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 28.

5. Bibliography

5.1 Primary Sources

- ~~Copy of 'Depositions from the Scobie Murder', 7 October 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 5527/P0, Unit 1, Item 1, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Depositions_from_Scobie_Murder.~~

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- ~~Copy of 'Duplicate Despatches from the Governor to the Secretary of State', 2 April 1855, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 1085/P0 Unit 9, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Lieutenant_Governor_Hotham_comments_on_the_Report_of_the_Commission_appointed_to_enquire_into_the_management_of_the_Gold_Fields_of_Victoria.~~

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- ~~Copy of 'Hotham's Reply to Patrick Smythe's Letter', 1 December 1854, VPRS 3219/P Unit 2, 3426, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Hothams_reply_to_Patrick_Smyth's_letter.~~

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- ~~Copy of 'Letter from Patrick Smythe to Governor Hotham Requesting Temporary Suspension of License Fee', 30 November 1854, VPRS 4066/P Unit 1, December no. 3, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Letter_from_Patrick_Smyth_to_Hotham_requesting_temporary_suspension_of_licence_fee_to_avoid_bloodshed.~~

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- ~~Copy of 'Petition from Ballarat Residents to Governor Hotham', 23 October 1854, VPRS 5527 Eureka Stockade - Historical Collection P0, Unit 1, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Petition_from_Ballarat_residents_re_Scobie_murder.~~

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- ~~Copy of 'Principles and Objectives of the Ballarat Reform League', 11 November 1854, Public Record Office Victoria, VPRS 4066/P Unit 1, November no. 69, http://wiki.prov.vic.gov.au/index.php/Eureka_Stockade:Ballarat_Reform_League_Charter.~~

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Report from the Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Condition of the Gold-Fields of Victoria, *Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria*, Session 1854-55, Vol. 2, Melbourne, Government Printer, 1855.

5.2 Secondary Sources

Atkinson, Jeffrey and Roberts, David Andrew. 'Men of Colour: John Joseph and the Eureka Treason Trials', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, [Vol. 10](#), 2008, pp.75-98.

Beggs-Sunter, Anne. 'Eureka: Gathering 'the Oppressed of All Nations'', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, [Vol. 10](#), 2008, pp. 15-34.

Blainey, Geoffrey, *The Rush that Never Ended : a History of Australian Mining*. 5th edn, Carlton, Melbourne University Press, 2003.

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Goodman, David. ~~Chapter 4: Making an Edgier History of Gold~~, in his *Gold : forgotten histories and lost objects of Australia*, ed. Iain McCalman, Alexander Cook and Andrew Reeves, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 23-36.

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Pescod, Keith. 'Irish participation in Victoria's union movement, 1850-1900', *The Australasian Journal of Irish Studies*, 11, 2011, pp. 7-27.

Rando, Gartano, 'Raffaello Carboni's Perception of Australia', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, 10, 2008, pp. 129-144.

Pickering, Paul. 'A lesson lost? Chartism and Australian Democracy', *Agora*, 46, no. 4, 2011, pp. 4-10.

5.3 Other Sources

Blainey, Geoffrey. 'Introduction', *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, 10, 2008, pp. 1-14.

[An excellent selection of sources!](#)