

The Eureka Stockade



The 'Eureka Stockade' was a rebellion that took place in Ballarat, Victoria, in 1854. Eureka was the name given to the mining place or diggings. A stockade was the structure that the gold miners built during the conflict to protect themselves from the colonial troopers.

At the centre of the conflict was gold and the ability to mine it. A licence was issued by the government. It allowed the miner to dig for gold in a certain area. Each month, the miners needed to buy a new licence whether they had found any gold or not. If they mined without it, they risked being fined or arrested. The police made sure everyone followed the mining laws. They would often check miners' licences. They were very expensive as it cost one pound ten shillings a month to purchase a licence – the miners felt this was too expensive.

How Much Would £1 10s Be Worth Today?

In 1854, £1 10s would be worth the same as £56 today. This is approximately \$100. That means the miners had to pay around \$100 a month to even start looking for gold!

Minor battles took place between miners and police. The miners created a flag with a white cross which joined the five stars of the Southern Cross on a dark-blue background. The flag represented the miners' struggle.

Peter Lalor, an Irish Australian, was elected the leader of the rebellion only days before the major attack. The miners took an oath on Bakery Hill to fight together against the colonial troopers. After the oath, they constructed the Eureka Stockade and waited for the troopers to arrive.

The police and troopers attacked the miners in the stockade early on Sunday 3rd December 1854. Although the miners were well prepared and had about 150 men, there were 400 well-armed police and troopers. When the battle ended, six of the colonial troopers and at least 22 miners had lost their lives. The other 125 miners, many of whom were wounded, were taken as prisoners.

Most of the miners were set free. Their position on the unfairness of licensing laws brought about a royal commission. From this investigation, a new system, where miners paid a tax on the gold they found, was introduced. Miners were also given the right to vote and the right to own the land they mined. Peter Lalor went on to become a politician in the Victorian Upper House.



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The name 'Eureka Stockade' originates from a rebellion that took place in 1854 in Ballarat, Victoria. Eureka was the name given to the mining place or diggings. The stockade was the structure that the gold miners built during the conflict to protect themselves from the colonial forces, such as the police or the military.

There was one critical issue at the heart of the conflict: the ability to mine gold. The government issued licences, which allowed the miners to dig for gold in a certain area. Every month, each miner needed to purchase a new licence, regardless of whether they had found any gold or not. If they mined without a licence, they would either receive a fine or face arrest. The police enforced the mining laws rigorously. In addition, a licence was very expensive as it cost 1 pound 10 shillings a month. The miners believed that this was an unreasonable price to pay.



How Much Would £1 10s Be Worth Today?

In 1854, £1 10s would be worth the same as £56 today. This is approximately 100 Australian dollars. That means the miners had to pay around \$100 a month to even start looking for gold!

Minor skirmishes took place between miners and police. The problems were escalating. The miners created a flag which had a white cross joining the five stars of the Southern Cross on a dark-blue background was created. The flag symbolised their unity in a common cause against the government. Peter Lalor, an Irish Australian, was elected leader of the rebellion by 500 miners only days before the major attack. The miners took an oath on Bakery Hill to fight together against the colonial forces. After the oath, they constructed the Eureka Stockade and waited for the police and military to arrive.

Police and troopers attacked the miners in the stockade on 3rd December 1854. Although the miners were waiting in anticipation and had approximately 150 men, they faced a force of 400 well-armed police and troopers. When the battle ended, six of the colonial forces and at least 22 miners had lost their lives. The other 125 miners, many of whom were wounded, were captured.

The government acquitted the majority of miners after the trial. The injustice of licensing laws brought about a royal commission. It introduced a new system. It decreed that the miners should only pay tax on the gold that they had found. The commission granted the miners the right to vote and the right to own the land they mined. Peter Lalor became a prominent politician in the Victorian Upper House.

Glossary

Diggings: The site of a mine or goldfield that has been dug out.

Colonial Forces: The colonial period was between 1788 and 1901. During this time, separate colonies had their own troops who enforced the law. After Federation in 1901, the colonial forces formed part of the Commonwealth forces – the army and navy.

Oath: A solemn promise for a future action or behaviour.

Acquitted: To free someone by declaring them not guilty from a criminal charge.

Injustice: An action that is unfair.

Royal Commission: Appointed by the crown from a recommendation of the government to inquire into major incidents.

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The name 'Eureka Stockade' derives from a rebellion that occurred in 1854 in Ballarat, Victoria. Eureka was the name given to the mining place or diggings; the stockade was the structure that the gold miners built during the conflict to protect themselves from colonial forces.

The conflict revolved around gold and the licences that were required to mine it. The government distributed them and they allowed the miner to dig for gold in a certain area. Each month, miners needed to purchase a new licence no matter if they had not obtained any gold during the month. Mining without one would result in a fine or arrest. The police rigorously enforced the mining laws. They would often search miners to check that they carried the correct documents with them at all times. A licence was very expensive – it cost one pound and ten shillings per month. The miners felt that the licence system was a gross injustice.



How Much Would £1 10s Be Worth Today?

In 1854, £1 10s would be equivalent to £56 today. This is approximately \$100. That means the miners had to pay around \$100 a month to even start looking for gold!

Minor skirmishes arose between miners and police; the situation deteriorated rapidly. The rebellious miners created a flag, which depicted a white cross joining the five stars of the Southern Cross on a dark-blue background. The flag symbolised their unity in their pursuit of a more just licencing system. Only days before the major attack, Peter Lalor, an Irish Australian, was elected to lead the rebellion by 500 miners. The miners swore an oath on Bakery Hill, under the war flag, to fight together against the colonial forces. After swearing the oath, they constructed the Eureka Stockade and waited for the police and military to arrive.

Shortly after dawn, on 3rd December 1854, the police and troopers attacked the miners in the stockade. Although the miners were well prepared and had approximately 150 men, they were overwhelmed by an ominous force of 400 police officers and troopers. When the battle came to a halt, six of the colonial forces and at least 22 miners had lost their lives. The other 125 miners, many of whom were wounded, were imprisoned.

After the trial, the majority of the minors were acquitted. Their stance on the injustice of licensing laws led to the creation of a royal commission. As a result of this investigation, a new system, where miners paid a tax on the gold they had found, was introduced. Miners were

also given the right to vote and the right to own the land they mined. Peter Lalor became a significant politician in the Victorian Upper House.

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