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THE RED RIBBON MEN AND DEMOCRACY ON THE GOLD FIELDS

Marjorie Theobald

Dissatisfaction with the licence fee of 30s a month and its administration simmered across the goldfields of central Victoria throughout the alluvial mining period until the system was abolished after the Eureka Rebellion in December 1854. Bad feeling between the miners and the authorities was inevitable as gold commissioners and police struggled to uphold the law and to extract from the migratory miners the revenue needed to fund the ever-increasing cost of goldfields' administration and infrastructure. Behind the scenes not one of the top goldfields administrators had a good word to say for the licensing system, regarding it as an unworkable law which they were obliged to uphold. Possibly no more than 50% of the men ever paid the fee and they devised ingenious methods to avoid it.

Though skirmishes were a daily occurrence, there were three major campaigns against the license fee: at Mt Alexander in December in 1851 (now known as the Monster Meeting protest), at Bendigo in mid 1853 (the Red Ribbon protest) and at Ballarat in December 1854 (the Eureka Rebellion). Of these three campaigns, Eureka has been written into history, over time morphing into a claim for Ballarat as the birth place of democracy in Australia. This is hardly surprising as Ballarat was the site where the unthinkable happened. On 3 December on the evening of the Sabbath ordinary citizens were slaughtered by the Military, an outrage which had been anathema to the British people since the massacre at Peterloo in Manchester in 1819. So powerful has the Eureka legend become that it has been co-opted by organisations as diverse as the Builders Laborers Union, the Australian Communist Party and the Catholic Church. Even Karl Marx got in on the act, declaring Eureka to be a genuine uprising of the workers against their capitalist oppressors.

Yet this claim for Eureka as the cradle of Australian democracy does not stand close scrutiny. I will mention only three matters today, none of which were known to me when I began my research on the Mt Alexander goldfields.

Firstly: In August 1850 the British Government passed an Act 'for the better government of Her Majesty's Australian colonies' which granted separate status and legislative councils to Van Diemens Land (re-named Tasmania in 1855), the Port Phillip District (re-named Victoria in 1851) and South Australia. Crucially, the Act gave these legislative councils (which were part elected and part nominated) the power to legislate for parliaments with two houses and to widen the franchise as they saw fit. So Westminster and Queen Victoria enabled democratic government in the Australian colonies when gold had not been discovered. So startled was I that I obtained a copy of the Act just to make sure.

There is a case for considering that in Victoria the dislocation caused by the gold rushes actually delayed the constitutional reform allowed for under this 1850 Act, as the hordes of itinerant miners, many of them newly arrived in Victoria, were not seen as potential citizens worthy of civic responsibilities.

Throughout 1852 and 1853 Governor La Trobe and members of his Legislative Council muddied the waters, inferring that only the British Parliament had the power to enfranchise the miners. This was true only in the limited sense that all legislation emanating from the colonies had to be rubber-stamped by Westminster.

The second challenge to the Eureka legend is this. The new Victorian constitution, widely admired as the most democratic in the English speaking world, was dispatched to Westminster for royal assent on 25 March 1854, eight months before the Eureka incident occurred. I checked that over and over again as well.

For this audience I will pass over the Mt Alexander Monster Meeting of December 1851, except to mention that it forced Governor La Trobe to back down on his intention to double the licence fee and spooked him into thinking that he was about to lose the Australian colonies in a re-enactment of the American war of independence. From that moment onwards the miners knew that collective action got results.

The Bendigo Red Ribbon protest

The third spanner in the well-oiled works of the Eureka legend is the part played by the Bendigo Red Ribbon men in forcing the hand of the ruling class to take advantage of the Act of 1850. In contrast to the protest meetings at Mount Alexander, the Red Ribbon movement on the Bendigo field in 1853 came out of bad times, not boom times, when relationships between the miners and the Camp were tense in the extreme.ⁱ The movement could only have been accomplished in something approaching a community, which allowed for much greater sophistication of its organisation and the better articulation of its claims. Direct negotiations between its leaders and Governor La Trobe in Melbourne, if abrasive and unproductive, ensured that the historian has access to far greater documentation in the press and in the surviving official papers. The Red Ribbon protest was the first to spawn its own parliamentary select committee (the minutes of evidence were published in full) and La Trobe's dispatches back to Westminster are a rich source of confidential information which might not otherwise have seen the light of day.

By mid-1853, Bendigo had surpassed the Mount Alexander diggings, sprawling over apparently inexhaustible new and lucrative fields. The commissioner's estimate of the population on the field by August of 1853 was 29,000 compared with 19,000 in Castlemaine.ⁱⁱ In its public discourse Bendigo had already assumed the mantle of 'the great centre', or the heart of the Victorian diggings, a claim disputed with ever-decreasing conviction by the citizens of Castlemaine over the next decade.ⁱⁱⁱ At what is now the central business district of Bendigo three miles of stores and businesses flourished, the 'good will' of small commercial frontages on Crown land changing hands at inflated prices. Each of the outlying gullies and flats was a little township unto itself.

Bendigo had also become the centre of miner activism. In the harsh winter of 1853 the discovery of new fields stalled, while the stream of newcomers from overseas and interstate continued unabated. The falling yield per miner and the continuing provocative behaviour of the police under the command of the egregious David Armstrong provided a fertile ground for activists who began to organise in July.

The momentum of the protest, its reach and the effectiveness of the organisation caught the authorities by surprise. Chief Commissioner Wright later admitted that it was 'far beyond anything I could have expected. The whole agitation was carried on in a way that I was certainly not prepared for.'^{iv} Commissioner Bull of Castlemaine, who still had oversight of Bendigo at the time, was also caught by surprise, privately sceptical that anything would come of the protest.^v

The Anti-Gold Licence Tax Society was in existence by mid-July 1853 with branch committees on all the goldfields and a central committee in Bendigo led by George Thomson, Dr D.G. Jones and 'Captain' Edward Brown. George Thomson was a well-educated man, a lawyer and a life-long socialist; he had taken part in the anti-corn law and Chartist movements before migrating to Victoria for his health.^{vi} He had been a miner at both the Mount Alexander and the Bendigo diggings (and always dressed the part), he was the founder and first editor of the *Diggers Advocate* and he later returned to Castlemaine as a legal partner with F.E. Paynter. Dr Jones arrived on the diggings from Sydney in 1852. He was also a miner on the Mount Alexander and Bendigo diggings but at the time of the protest movement he was practising as a surgeon at Bendigo. He claimed that his daily travels through the diggings gave him an intimate knowledge of the miners and their concerns. Bowden's directory of goldfields doctors gives no details of his qualifications but his obituary in the *Australian Medical Journal* in 1876 does not question his *bona fides*.^{vii} He was an eloquent speaker who was at home with the broad sweep of history and politics as well as the immediate situation on the goldfields. He later became a newspaper proprietor and journalist in the Riverina district.

Thomson credited Captain Edward Brown with creating the Bendigo movement in only six weeks and building it from small beginnings into a mass movement. Brown too was a well-educated man, though he was a more exotic critter than Thomson or Jones. According to the historian of Bendigo, Frank Cusack, he was Irish-born but American by choice, a combination which would have confirmed the worst fears of the La Trobe administration.^{viii} He had apparently bestowed upon himself the title of 'Captain' and he claimed to have served with the paramilitary Texas Rangers, a stint which would have included the massacre of the Indian tribes. He also claimed to have taken part in an attempted invasion of Cuba in August 1851. More ruthless and ambitious for power than his colleagues, he was abandoned by the Bendigo men when he was arrested for threatening a storekeeper who refused to contribute to campaign funds, tried in Melbourne and sentenced to three months imprisonment. Brown was the only goldfields leader ever to be convicted of any offence though Henry Seekamp, flamboyant editor of the *Ballarat Times*, was found guilty of seditious libel in March 1855 and served three months in prison. La Trobe commented to the Secretary of State the Duke of Newcastle:

As usual in these cases [the Red Ribbon movement] brought into immediate notoriety and to the aid of the ordinary agents, fresh force in the persons of certain individuals hitherto unheard of; but, however worthless, evidently adept in the science of popular agitation. Public meetings were called in all quarters, and the miners harangued, evidently with some success, in the usual popular style, upon their wrongs, rights, and grievances.^{ix}

In the winter of 1853 the miners at Bendigo turned out in their thousands, determined to pay no more than ten shillings per month for the purchase of a licence from the first day of September. Rumours of bloody revolution were rife (according to one report, two commissioners had been shot) and the 'Fighting Fortieth' regiment under the aptly named Captain Thomas Valiant was dispatched to Bendigo. Valiant later published his dissenting view that the reduction of the licence fee was the sole object of the Bendigo miners and that they were 'the most orderly and well disposed body' he had ever seen in any part of the world where it had been his honour to serve Her Majesty.^x Nevertheless, on his orders mounted police and military formed up provocatively at the rear of the diggers' meetings and spies reported assiduously to the Gold Commissioner's Camp. The looming crisis caused the *Argus* to station a reporter in Bendigo for the first time, relieving the Mount Alexander man of responsibility for reporting on both the fields.

In July a huge petition was drawn up, signed, La Trobe observed darkly, by 'foreigners of every class and nation'.^{xi} The original has survived, on calico and forty feet long, in the State Library of Victoria.^{xii} It is also reproduced in Geoff Hocking's book, *The Red Ribbon Rebellion*. It began with the customary assurances of loyalty to Queen Victoria – and they were loyal to the Queen. Then it put before La Trobe the following grievances:

- that in the present impoverished condition of the goldfields most miners could not afford to pay the licence fee of thirty shillings a month;
- that diggers and storekeepers wasted much time every month in procuring a licence;
- that the privations of life on the goldfields entailed much sickness and heavy expenses;
- that newly-arrived diggers lost time and money before they earned anything from gold;
- that in consequence of the squatters' monopoly successful diggers could not invest in land;
- that much ill-feeling was engendered by the 'notoriously bad character' of many of those who policed the licence system;
- that the ill-treatment, imprisonment, and enforced labour on the roads of those who could not afford to pay was against British law;
- and that the licence fee was unfair because it was imposed alike on the successful and the unsuccessful.

The reforms demanded of La Trobe can be read in mirror image from these grievances. Most urgently, they requested that the licence fee be reduced to ten shillings a month with an option to pay on a quarterly basis, greatly reducing the time involved and the bad feeling engendered by the monthly licence hunts. They also requested that the practice of sending armed men to enforce it be discontinued. The petitioners reminded La Trobe that, although they contributed more than any other class to the exchequer, they were unrepresented and had no option but to approach him with a petition. With this oblique reference to the franchise the issue of political rights entered the public discourse of the miners for the first time.

Thomson, Brown and Jones took the petition to La Trobe on 1 August, sent off by a huge rally of 6,000 men at View Point near the Commissioners Camp, bearing banners, flags of many nations and cartoons executed by artists on the field.^{xiii} The deputation overnighted at Castlemaine, holding a meeting on Agitation Hill to obtain the signatures of their fellow miners.^{xiv} A temporary peace descended on the Bendigo diggings.

Meanwhile, in response to the rumblings from the goldfields, Governor La Trobe had already sent Chief Commissioner Wright to report first-hand on how things stood. On 21 July Wright arrived at Bendigo, accompanied by Commissioner Bull, where he found 'the same degree of good order apparent' as he had found in Castlemaine. Bendigo Gold Commissioner Joseph Panton, still at this time under the jurisdiction of Bull at Castlemaine, confirmed what was common knowledge from the columns of the *Argus*, that well attended meetings calling for the reduction of the licence fee had been held by Jones, Brown and Thomson. Panton had personally attended the meeting on View Hill the previous Saturday and pronounced it to be very orderly. Again, Wright misread the feeling of the miners. He wrote to La Trobe:

But it by no means follows that all who attended these meetings were opposed to the present amount of the licence fee, and from the reports of the officers on the fields, and the results of my own inquiries I do not believe the majority of residents coincide with views of Messrs Jones, Brown and Thompson [sic] even on the gold fields, these persons have in some instances signally failed to disturb the public on the subject.

While in Bendigo, Wright had obtained a copy of the petition before it reached La Trobe. As Cusack comments, Wright's report, dated 8 August 1853, is curiously uncomprehending and seemingly blind to the fact that good order and the daily grind could co-exist with a determination to bring about change in the licensing system.^{xv} His failure to read the mood of the miners seriously misled La Trobe. He commented at length on the miners' demands and this formed the basis of La Trobe's own response to the petition.. In Wright's responses we can see reflected back the indignation of Commissioner Bull at Castlemaine and Commissioner Panton at Bendigo at this unflattering report card on the administration over which they presided. Wright's comments on the miners' requests reveals the chasm which had opened up between the men and the Camp by mid-1853. Wright did not agree with the miners that the goldfields were in an impoverished state or that the yield per miner had fallen. Calculations of the yield per miner were misleading, he claimed, as up to one third of the adult males on the fields were now engaged in service pursuits other than mining. Nor would he concede that miners and storekeepers must waste valuable time each month paying the licence fee. Licensing tents were pitched at each assistant commissioner's camp and if any gathering of miners took place at any distance from the main camp, further tents were pitched for the issuing of licences, or commissioners gave notice that they would attend at a store or other convenient place. Besides, he pointed out, it was well known that one miner frequently took out licences for upwards of twenty men, obviating the need for all to attend in person.

Wright rejected out of hand the claim that miners were subjected to ill-treatment by armed officials, many of bad character, sent out to hunt down evaders. On the contrary, directions had been given that the search for unlicensed miners was to be conducted 'with as little display of force as possible'. He pointed out that the police had only been armed in the first place because the miners themselves were armed at all times. He denied categorically that unlicensed miners had been chained to logs or sentenced to terms of hard labour on the roads, though he conceded that miners themselves sometimes applied to work out their fine in this way. As to the request of the petitioners that the licence fee be reduced he proposed to La Trobe that 'rather than reduce the licence fee it would be preferable to abolish it altogether and substitute some other mode of obtaining a revenue from gold'. He had no objection in principle to the issue of quarterly licences, but he advised that it would not be expedient to grant an exemption to those newly arrived on the field. He simply did not believe that sick miners were dragged out of their beds and into the police courts, nor could he see any good reason to reduce the fines inflicted on those who evaded the licence fee. On the matter of police brutality he advised La Trobe that:

Statements have been put forth by the Petitioners which would not stand the test of truth if submitted to the slightest examination – I am satisfied that no instances of oppression, or even official mismanagement have been exhibited without the offending parties having been brought under censure or punished by removal from office and reparation made for any injury occasioned by official neglect or misconduct.

Nevertheless, he had given orders that henceforth police were not to proceed in search of unlicensed persons 'except under command of a Superior Officer who will see that this duty is performed without rudeness or violence'.^{xvi} While in Bendigo Wright had indeed investigated one of these cases, that of a blacksmith who had been taken into custody for the crime of answering back, and ordered the instant dismissal of the sergeant concerned.^{xvii}

In dismissing the miners' requests so decisively Wright was undoubtedly influenced by the resident commissioner Joseph Panton. He later wrote his memoirs in which he was adamant that his officers and police behaved with utmost decorum at all times, and that the majority of the miners had no interest in the licence affair.^{xviii} The storm in a tea cup was, he claimed, entirely concocted by the malicious and sensationalist press bent on destroying Governor La Trobe. Indeed he spilt more ink in his memoirs over the first Bendigo races and the performance of his own horses on that day. Thus Wright seriously misled La Trobe who subsequently refused the Red ribbon petitioners' demands in toto.

The scene was set for a confrontation between the miners and the authorities on the Bendigo field, a ritual encounter long in the planning at which a selected group of miners would proffer to Commissioner Panton a payment of ten shillings for the September licence. When the delegates arrived back from their meeting in Melbourne with La Trobe they found to their consternation that the movement had been hijacked by a militant Republican group led by the painter of the diggers' flag and disciple of the French Revolution, William Dexter.^{xix} George Thomson regretted this in his later account of the affair.^{xx} There was indeed talk of armed resistance and the store keepers had sold out of guns and ammunition.

So the final meeting of 27 August 1853 went ahead, beset with fears on the miners' side that its leadership could not control a minority of extremists and on the Government side that the Bendigo Camp was an indefensible island garrison, easily surrounded and pinned down by snipers in the shafts that pockmarked the landscape for miles around.^{xxi}

From inside the Bendigo Camp on a miserable, wet and squally morning Chief Commissioner Wright, Commissioner Panton and Chief Commissioner of Police William Mitchell watched as 15,000 men came together from the far reaches of the diggings in their final march up to the Camp. There was, as Cusack put it, something of the predictability of a Greek drama about what followed. The delegates were courteously admitted to the Camp. The ten shillings was offered; Wright refused it. The delegates then reported back to the miners waiting patiently in the drizzle outside the Camp. The meeting passed the resolution that: 'this meeting pledges itself to effect no compromise with the authorities respecting the 10s licence, and as proof of the sincerity of the men adopting it they do wear in their hats a piece of red cloth or ribband.' In a situation where one provocative move on either side could have triggered a blood bath, the men dispersed as peacefully as they had come to await the response of the Government in Melbourne. No arrests were made; indeed both sides well understood that no arrests could be made as payment was not due until the first day of September. So the miners' resolve to rescue any man taken into custody was not put to the test. In the light of what happened later at Eureka, the encounter on that day was managed by both sides with tact and restraint.

The key documents in understanding what happened next are Wright's letters of 28 and 29 August to La Trobe in Melbourne. In the first letter Wright warned that 'no force would avail to overcome the passive resistance which we anticipate will be the course acted upon by the instigators of the movement'.^{xxii} He did the arithmetic; if fifty unlicensed miners were brought to the Court each day, each case taking fifteen minutes, the presiding justices would have to sit for twelve hours. At the end of the month, 'after an enormous expenditure of money and labor', the licence would only have been extracted from 1,200 in a mining population of many thousands.

In the second letter he implied that, should the miners arm themselves and take to the shafts and tunnels in a guerrilla-style insurrection, the forces at the disposal of the authorities would again be powerless to act against them. He urged that 'the reduction of the Licence Fee if not its abolition altogether is inevitable. **If blood** should once be shed it is impossible to foresee the consequences, but it would very possibly throw serious obstacles in the way of establishing regulations to be enforced on the goldfields.'^{xxiii} La Trobe was evidently persuaded to Wright's view, as he later wrote to Westminster that by the end of August he and his advisors knew that it was out of the question to carry on the present system - that any further attempt to collect the licence fee would, on the Bendigo field at least, 'lead to bloodshed, and a state of disorder and disturbance of which the vicious and disorderly would be sure to take full advantage'.^{xxiv}

On this occasion the Legislative Council defied La Trobe and on the advice of a Select Committee into the Red Ribbon affair made only minor concessions to the licensing system. However, it is my conclusion that thereafter the officials on the Bendigo goldfields made their own concessions to the miners, even to the extent of fiddling the figures sent into HQ.

It was Governor Hotham, who succeeded La Trobe in June 1854, who lit the fuse at Eureka by once again mandating twice weekly searches for licences carried out by his henchman Commissioner Rede in precisely the manner objected to by the miners.

But that is not what I came to talk about today.

I come now to my claim that it was the Bendigo men, not the Ballarat men, who directly influenced the progress of constitutional reform in Victoria. It can hardly be coincidental that a few days after the huge meeting of the 27 August 1853, La Trobe caused to be published in the *Votes & Proceedings of the Legislative Council* a dispatch from Secretary of State Pakington in London, dated 15 December 1852, which made it crystal clear that Her Majesty had no objection to self-government in the colonies, though her preference was for an appointed upper house. Nor did she seek to restrict the franchise in any way. Evidently La Trobe had been sitting on this dispatch, as colonial governors were inclined to do. The next day the Legislative Council appointed a select committee of twelve members to begin the process of drafting the new constitution. The committee was dominated by the Colonial Secretary John Foster (who was unfairly scapegoated for the Eureka incident) and that *eminence gris* Attorney-General William Stawell.

Throughout the remainder of 1853 when the constitution was being drafted the men on all the gold fields were kept informed by the metropolitan press. There was widespread discontent both at the lack of consultation and at the decidedly undemocratic provisions contained in the draft - most notably the high property qualification for members of the Upper House and the requirement that miners take out a twelve month licence to be able to vote and in a particular electoral district only. The report, tabled on 9 December 1853, recommended that Victoria adopt the key components of the British Constitution, though an upper house (to be called the Legislative Council) elected by property owners, professional men and officers in the armed forces was substituted for the House of Lords. Eligibility for the lower house (the Legislative Assembly) retained the clauses to which the miners objected. Thus the draft Bill attached to the report was acceptable to the existing unrepresentative Legislative Council as members were assured that their power would be preserved by the constitution of the Upper House.^{xxv} On 25 March 1854 the Victorian Legislative Council signed its own death warrant by passing 'An Act to establish a Constitution in and for the Colony of Victoria'.^{xxvi} The Constitution Act was held up in the House of Commons for over a year (provoking an angry response from **of all sections** of colonial society) and was not proclaimed by Governor Hotham until November 1855. Elections took place in August-September 1856 and the opening of the first Victorian Parliament occurred on 21 November 1856.

The meaning of Eureka

I do not mean to imply that Eureka was devoid of symbolic meaning in the context of Australian democracy. Heaven knows democracy needs all the help it can get at the moment. In the months after the slaughter of citizens at Eureka by the Military acting in the name of the State the treason trials of the twelve men scapegoated (not all of them Irish) and the acquittals were taken up and transformed into a shared understanding that the old order must go.

The city, provincial and goldfields newspapers condemned the massacre and called for an end to the rule of military despotism on the goldfields. The Eureka royal commissioners later condemned the use of the Military as 'a misfortune alike to the soldier and the citizen of the same blood thus ingloriously brought into mutual strife'.^{xxvii} There were mass meetings of protest on the goldfields, in Melbourne and in Geelong. On 13 January 1855, the day the treason trials of 12 Eureka men began, a mass meeting in Melbourne called for a general amnesty. Hotham refused. Leading Melbourne barristers, not all of them Irish, offered their services gratis to represent to the prisoners. Despite the best efforts of the Crown prosecutor William Stawell, juries refused to convict. This is the symbolic meaning of Eureka. What La Trobe, Hotham and their gentlemen officials did not understand and could never accept was that the future lay with the clay-encrusted miners, the unbowed Irish, the despised alumni of the convict system, the artisans and labourers of Melbourne and Geelong, and all those men and women who, in the way of migrants everywhere, had risked everything to come to Victoria for a better life.

The Victorian Constitution, which began its journey into existence only when the Bendigo men made their stand, was the most democratic Constitution in the world at the time though it did not embody all the demands of the Chartists. But such was the democratic tenor of the first elected members that universal (that is, white male) suffrage, secret ballot and payment for members of Parliament followed soon afterwards. When the first Victorian Parliament sat in November 1856 did anyone present on that momentous day remember the Red Ribbon men who stood firm in their thousands in August 1853? They are remembered now by the people of Bendigo who meet each year on the same ground, and they are honoured for the stand they took and the example they set to oppressed people everywhere.

ⁱ The Red Ribbon movement has been largely ignored by academic historians; the best account is in Frank Cusack, *Bendigo: a history*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1973, chs 10-12. See also Geoff Hocking, *The Red Ribbon Rebellion!: decade of dissent*, New Chum Press, Castlemaine, 2001. This volume contains an alphabetical listing of the miners who signed the Red Ribbon petition in 1853.

ⁱⁱ Gold Commissioner's correspondence, unit 86, 53/6564, Bull to Wright, 2 July 1853.

ⁱⁱⁱ The term was first used by the *Argus* correspondent at Bendigo in the edition of 30 July 1853.

^{iv} Red Ribbon Inquiry, minutes of evidence, evidence of Chief Commissioner Wright, p.91.

^v Gold Commissioners' correspondence, unit 86, 53/8374, Bull to Wright, 15 August 1853 and 53/9072, 23 August 1853.

^{vi} For Thomson see *ADB*, vol.6.

^{vii} Bowden, *Doctors and Diggers*, p.203.

^{viii} Cusack, *Bendigo: a history*, chs 10 & 11.

^{ix} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, 12 September 1853.

^x *V & P, Leg. Council*, 18 October 1853; reprinted in *Argus*, 1 November 1853.

^{xi} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, 12 September 1853.

^{xii} The petition was reproduced in *Argus*, 28 July 1853.

^{xiii} *Argus*, 22 July 1853.

^{xiv} *Argus*, 28 July 1853.

^{xv} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, 12 September 1853 (the first dispatch to Westminster dealing with the Red Ribbon incident in detail), Wright's report to La Trobe, dated 8 August 1853, is attached.

^{xvi} Gold Commissioners' correspondence, unit 86, 53/7891, Wright to La Trobe, 7 August 1853.

^{xvii} Gold Commissioners' correspondence, unit 86, 53/8067, Wright to La Trobe, 6 August 1853.

^{xviii} Anderson (ed.), *Strength in Battle*, ch.6.

^{xix} For William Dexter see the entry on his wife Caroline, an early Australian feminist, in *ADB*, vol.4.

^{xx} George E. Thomson, 'Leaves from the diary of an old Bendigonian' in Leavitt and Lilburn (eds), *Jubilee History of Victoria*, pp.26-7, quoted in Cusack, *Bendigo: a history*, p.88; see also Howitt, *Land, Labour and Gold*, pp.224-5.

^{xxi} A lengthy account of the meeting appeared in *Argus*, 1 September 1853.

^{xxii} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, Wright to La Trobe, 28 August 1853.

^{xxiii} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, Wright to La Trobe, 29 August 1853.

^{xxiv} La Trobe's dispatches, no.150, 12 September 1854.

^{xxv} For a more detailed account see Geraldine Moore, *George Higinbotham and Eureka: the struggle for democracy in colonial Victoria*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, Melbourne, 2018.

^{xxvi} *Vic. Acts, 1854, 17 Vict.* (no number given), 25 March 1854, 'An Act to establish a Constitution in and for the Colony of Victoria.'

^{xxvii} Eureka Royal Commission report, cl.74.