

APPENDIX 1

UNPUBLISHED REPORTS FROM LAUNCESTON CITY LIBRARY

PART 1

Contents

BESSELL, G. No date, Discovery and life on the Lisle Goldfields. Unpubl file Launceston City Library

EDWARDS, V.M. 1952. Lisle. Unpubl file Launceston City Library.

HOLMES, H.B. no date, The Lisle Goldrush. Unpubl file Launceston City Library.

LSC
994.68
BES

**Discovery and life
on the
Lisle Goldfields:**

**discovered 1879
by
the Bessell Brothers**

George Bessell

Discovery and life on the Lisle goldfield; discovered in 1879 by the Bessell Brothers.

Introduction

There would be a lot of people in Tasmania now that don't really know where Lisle is situated. Well, it is a large valley, about 8 mile from Nabowla, near the foothills of Mt. Arthur, about 3 miles from Myrtle ~~Bank~~ and, by road, about 20 miles from Scottsdale. I will describe it as it was when the gold was discovered there. It was a thick forest of Mountain ash, or stringy gum as it is best known, blackwood, myrtle, sassafras, musk, dogwood, wattle and manfern. It was described as magnificent scenery. Surrounded by ranges approximately 1000ft high, the valley to the foothills is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile long by 2 mile wide. There is a large creek leading out through a narrow gorge, and joining the Little Forester River near Ferny Hill.

-
1. I think I should start by explaining where the Bessell brothers came from. In the first place they came from Bristol, England, and arrived in Australia in 1853. There was 17 of them altogether in the family. There was six born in England and the rest was born after they landed, at Newnham. They settled in a little cottage on Georgetown Road, near the junction of Alanvale Road and the road leading to Pinkie Farm. The cottage, although altered a bit, still stands and is occupied by -- . The father was a bootmaker by trade, and most of the sons learnt the trade. Two joined the railway soon after the railways started, and I think there has been descendants in the railways ever since, and the rest, I suppose, worked wherever work was available.

LSC 994.68 BES (not for lo
Bessell, George Edward, 19
Discovery and life on the
Lisle Goldfields discovere
127016855 idf... PLA/LMN
127016855

2. I should mention here there was nine Bessell brothers, but the four that went prospecting was Charlie, Alfred, Thomas, Edwin and a man named Mark Gibbs. They walked for miles through the bush for days at a time, camping out. They went out through the bush past Underwood, North Lilydale, Wyena, Lone Star to Tobacco Creek. It was all thick bush at that time; no tracks or roads. They discovered gold at Tobacco Creek first, and built a camp there. It was patchy; some good and some very poor. I think that's how it got it's name - they only just made their tobacco out of it. They went home to Newnham for the weekend and told a younger brother, Allen, he should walk back with them on the Monday morning. He was only about 15, and he told me that the 35 mile walk through the bush killed any ambition he had to go prospecting. He laid on a bunk the next day too stiff and sore to move.

Tobacco Creek is between Golconda and Lisle.

3. Charlie Bessell and Mark Gibbs set out into the bush to search further afield. Mark Gibbs was looked on as being an expert bushman. They found gold in the main creek in Lisle, and returned to the camp at night, and the other brothers, Alfred, Tom and Ted, all went in the next morning. I think Mark Gibbs left the party and took no further part. He went to Victoria to continue his bushcraft and prospecting further afield.
4. Well, they started to obtain gold in fairly good quantities for a few days, then one day heard sticks cracking in the bush, and knew there was someone else about, and saw a man looking through the bush at them. It was a man named Brewer, from Bowood near Bridport. As the Lisle creek joined the Little Forester River and the dirty water went down towards Bridport through his

property, he followed it up. In those days he would have had a long rough walk, but walking was the only way to travel through that type of country.

5. Well, Charlie Bessell set off to Launceston to report the find. He walked to Myrtle Bank through the bush, borrowed a horse off a man named Millwood, who had a hotel at Patersonia, and rode in to Launceston and reported the discovery. Ofcourse, Brewer had to go back to Bridport to get his horse and he was about four hours too late, so Charlie Bessell got what was called a Reward Claim, which was about $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre. By the way, he said the horse ride done him more harm than walking. It was the first time he had ridden a horse and he was so stiff and sore that he was glad to get back on his feet again.

Well, before they had time to prospect further, men started to come in from the districts around the area. At that time there was a class of men who followed new gold finds wherever they were. I should mention here that Lisle was an alluvial field with a granite bottom; no reef or hard rock mining. The Mining Act only allowed of an $\frac{1}{4}$ acre each, but there was what they called Amalgamated Miner's Rights where they could peg several claims together, and a party work them together. A miner's right was 5/-, which allowed you to peg a $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre.

6. One of the miners put several ounces of gold on a saucer and had it put in a shop window in Launceston. That caused the rush, and it was not long before there was about 2,000 people there; tents, bark huts and any type of shelters went up all over the bush. They used to have to walk to Launceston for supplies for

a while, and then there was a rough pack track from Lilydale and pack horses were used to pack supplies in. Once they could get flour, bacon, tea and sugar in quantities, it was a big help. Then there was a road formed from Myrtle Bank. It was very rocky and badly graded, but drays could get through, and the people could order supplies in larger quantities, and it was brought in by drays, but the route crossed private property belonging to one of the Faulkners and he used to charge 5/- a wheel royalty to cross his property. But the government made it a government road right through the private property.

7. There was a Thomas Faulkner who started killing meat at Myrtle Bank, and carting it in. He also had a store and butcher's shop there. There were four hotels trading there - Faulkner had one of these. There were also sly grog shops.

Those with large families used to walk via Myrtle Bank, Patersonia, Nunamara, to Launceston (about 25 miles) and order their supplies. They used to get enough for six months. There were several large families; 14 in our family. I can remember my father getting 1 ton of flour, 4 bags of sugar, 2 large bags of rice etc. in one order.

8. There were various methods of obtaining the gold. In some cases, for instance, the ground was about 12 feet deep and 2 feet of the bottom was gold bearing, so the ground could not be sluiced by gravitation. The top ten feet had to be shifted by pick and shovel and wheelbarrow, and some of those miners had a lot of hard work. The pay dirt was then lifted and put through a box about 10 feet long and 1 foot wide; a false bottom was put in

- the box. They would put the wash through the box all day and clean up each night; but where the lay of ground was suitable for sluicing by gravitation, you could shift much more ground, and some of them used to work longer before cleaning up. There was estimated to be between 400 and 500 thousand ounces taken out
9. of the field. There is still a few fossickers there. There is a large area of gold bearing alluvial flats. After the rush quietened down, dredging was carried on for a while over a large area of the flat, and there was quite a lot of individual claims worked for years, which I will deal with later. One of the richest areas was what was known as Donnely Terrace, quite close to where the Bessells first found gold. It was only about 3 feet deep and went $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce to the bucket. I don't know how many Donnely brothers there was, but the old miners used to say that they would go to the hotels after each clean up and put it over the bar.
10. With the boom of the rush over, and some of the claims worked out, Tom and Ted Bessell started to prospect further afield. They found gold at the Camden, which was, at that time, thick bush. It was very patchy, they got some good patches, but they soon cut out. Then they went back to their camp at Tobacco Creek. and about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile over a steep hill they discovered gold in a dry creek bed, which was later named Cradle Creek. It was rich, but the gold bearing wash was only about 1 foot. They pegged claims for Alf and Charlie and some mates. The gold was much coarser than the Lisle gold; they got specks up to 16 Pwds. There was
11. a mild rush there; about 600 men. For a while there was a store. There was no water, so they would get water in buckets and puddle it in the cradle until the gold was more or less separated from the wash. The Bessell brothers claims were at the head of the creek, which was about 1 mile long. As they had to cradle the

gold, it was named Cradle Creek. The head of the creek was about 8 to 6 feet deep. It was worked open, but when it got deeper, they tunnelled and sunk shafts to bring the wash up and act as air shafts also. It went to a depth of 35 feet in some places. I worked there about the 1930s for a company who brought water from Lisle by cutting a race. Alf Watts was foreman; he was looked on
12. as being one of the best alluvial gold miners around there at that time.

When the Bessell brothers was working at Cradle Creek, the railway got as far as Golconda and there was a pack track put through to Lisle, and a lot of people got their supplies in that way. One humorous incident was: Clay Watson, who was living with the Furlongs, used to ride a horse through carrying goods. There was a swarm of bees settled under a thin shell log and he asked Tom and Ted Bessell how he could get them. So they told him to get two chaff bags and put a frame in it, and they would put them in it, and he could carry it on horse back. Well, by the time he got ready the bees had been there about 2 weeks and made several
13. slices of honeycomb full of honey. They got him to hold the bag under the bees and they hit the log with an axe and the swarm dropped into it. He put it on his back like a knapsack and the honey ran out all over the saddle and the horse. When he got back into Lisle he was severley reprimanded by Mr. Furlong. By the way, it was the same Mr. Furlong who had the store at Cradle Creek.

When the brothers had worked out their claims, they spent most of the money they got for the gold looking for the lode that it came from. They drove tunnels into the hill and cut trenches, but only found several narrow leaders. As the head of Cradle Creek and Tobacco Creek are only a few chains apart and the gold

14. in both was coarse, with quartz specimens, I still think it is the best chance of finding a reef in that area.

I worked some of it on tribute with my cousin, Bill Bessell, after the syndicate ceased operations, and altogether, including what the company got, we got about 400 ounces. The syndicate that started the sluicing cut a water race from Lisle, a distance of about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Instead of taking the levels from the head of the gold bearing wash, they went into Lisle and picked the best place to start the headrace, and the water only reached about half the gold bearing wash, so I reckon there is about as much gold left there as we got out of it, but the Forestry has filled the race up and the cost of getting water back on would be too great to warrant it.

15. The Lisle township, as it was called, was built along one side of the road for about $3\frac{1}{2}$ mile. There was a police station, hotels, stores, post office, school and cottages; but a lot of the people lived scattered through the bush. There was a church back off the township on what was known as the town road; the road that went through to Myrtle Bank. The road through the township was paved with split slabs, as it used to bog up in winter, and the people who lived around the rest of the field used to gather on this area of a Sunday, and instead of saying, "We will go down that street." they would say, "We will meet you on the slabs."

16. I think the ministers that used to come in were mostly Church of England. The first one I can remember was the Reverend Wilkinson, who was Chaplain at the Church Grammar School when it was in Elizabeth Street. He used to ride on horse back from Launceston about once a fortnight; he used to stay the night; my family mostly put him up. Another one was the Reverend Rowe. A lot of

older people would remember him. He was well known around Launceston. Being that there was 7 brothers in our family, we always had a set of boxing gloves, and Reverend Rowe was a well taught boxer. He used to love to put the gloves on with my older brothers, but they were no class for him.

17. The Salvation Army was very prominent in the early 1900s. They had a Corp in Lilydale, and quite a lot of Lilydale people joined them, and they used to walk through the Lilydale pack track, about 9 miles. It was a great night when they came in for the younger members of the field. There was generally about 6 used to come with their brass instruments. You could hear them playing coming over the ranges quite a long way off. They mostly stayed Saturday night and Sunday night. My family and Charles Bessell's family used to accommodate them. They would have what they called coffee suppers; the miners gave quite freely to them.
18. Tragedy struck one evening. A man named Archer collapsed and died about 3 miles from Lisle, and he had to be carried down into Lisle on a stretcher. He was quite a big man. I was only a kid at the time. Two of my brothers were in the carrying party, but I can remember watching out of the window at the lights coming down through the bush. Every family that took part in that carrying party had a photo of him.
19. The families that settled there and stayed on after the rush for years were the ones that the later life of the field depended on. There was also quite a few bachelors stayed on, some of whom were interesting people. I will try to describe them in their different ways, one at a time, including the families, later.

19. There was one thing I will say; the people that lived on the field were, on the whole, honest, reliable, hard working people, and it didn't matter whose home you called on, you were treated as one of the family.
20. The first woman to come to the gold field was Mrs William Watts; the family came from Victoria, from the Bendigo gold fields. There was three children born in Victoria, and the rest were born in Lisle - eight sons and two daughters. The sons were all big, well built men and Mrs. Watts was a very fine lady; a wonderful cook. If you were asked to a meal any time, it was just like a Xmas feast. They, like of the some of the other pioneers, built their house out of timber cut from the bush; split palings and pit sawn timber. The husband done a lot of gold mining. A feature of the house was a huge fireplace, about 12 feet wide, built from stone and clay. I have seen two of the sons carrying a back log in on their shoulders; about 3 logs would burn for a night and a day. When the fire died down, they would hang their wet clothes around inside the fireplace to dry. As there was 9 men working in the water, there was plenty of clothes to dry. Their two daughters - one married William Langley and lived on Lisle for years; the other married Thomas Kelly and lived at Golconda.
21. The next family I'll describe is the Furlongs. They also built a big rambling house out of bush timber. They came from England. There was six daughters and two sons. One of the sons, Charles, was the first baby born on the field. Four of the daughters were school teachers; there was only one married. Mr Furlong didn't do much gold mining. He was the first post master, and they had the post office for years. He selected some land and went orcharding as a side line. He used to send apples to England

sometimes he would get a cheque and sometimes a bill, as the price of apples was not enough to pay the expences.

22. There was a road put out to Lisle Road, as it was called then. It is now called Nabowla. The road was about 8 mile. This was when the railway went through. When it (the road) was first made my father and uncle was two of the contractors. It was all done by contract; pick and shovel, wheelbarrows, and some of the trees they had to grub were up to ten feet diameter.

The mail carriers used to come from Myrtle Bank for a long time. Jimmy Pearce was one of the first, and his sons used to ride horse back in. I don't think there was a paper for a long time. The mail used to come once a week for a long while.

23. The next contractor was Mrs McLaren. Mr Arch Alexander had the Post Office at Myrtle Bank. At this time it was also the changing stables for coaches going through to Scottsdale. Mrs McLaren had the contract for a long time. On one occasion, one of her daughters, who was carrying the mail on horse back, was thrown off and her leg was broken. Mrs McLaren was quite a versatile person, she used to carry a revolver with her; they lived up near the foot of Mt. Barrow; she used to do a bit of farming as well; she used to milk cows; she told me her husband was useless when it came to manual work; he used to sing a bit and play music; she tole me that they had 8 cows to milk so she had to teach him to milk, but she said when he had milked one or two he would forget which ones he had milked, and go back and sit down to milk the same ones again, so she used to tie a piece of rag around their horns so he would know which ones not to go back to.

24. The Furlongs left Lisle after a good many years and shifted to Nabowla, and selected a large area of land, and built a very nice house, and went in for orcharding again.
25. The mail was transferred from Myrtle Bank to Nabowla. The next mail contractor was Mr Thomas Cole, who was station master at Nabowla. His eldest son, Harold, used to carry it in on horse back. Furlongs still had the post office then, and when Harold enlisted for the 1st World War in 1915, his brother, Frank, left school to carry it. About that time the Furlongs left and Mrs Wurr, a daughter of Charlie Bessell, took the Post Office over for a while. Then Mrs J.H. Faulkner had it for quite a long time. The next mail contractor was Mr H.C. Watson, and he carried it for quite a long time. Then Mrs Faulkner gave it up, and Mrs W. Bessell took over and continued until the Post Office closed. Mr W. Broadhurst was the last mail carrier.
26. Mrs Bessell had a startling experience - one day when she was speaking on the phone, she heard something rattling under the counter and thought it was a kitten, but when she looked it was a large tiger snake. Snakes were always prevalent on the field. The Post Office closed about the mid 1940s; they only got the mail twice a week; the newspaper came with the mail.

Charles Furlong came back to Lisle after a good many years in Sydney. He enlisted for the 1st World War, and took his parents property when he returned from the war. He tried his hand at farming. He didn't make a success of it, so thought he would try his hand at gold mining, and started to work his own garden away. Of course, nobody knew the patch of gold was there. He got £500 worth the first winter and continued on the next winter. In those days, it must be remembered, gold was £3/17/0 an ounce

standard price.

27. Another old family on the field was named Gunner. In one of the very few tragedies on the field, one of them was killed by a fall of earth. There was two brothers; one had a family; his son later became Detective Gunner. One daughter married George Titmus; one was Mrs Wal Hudson; the other was Mrs J.H. Faulkner. She died early in life.
28. Well, Henry Faulkner lived on Lisle all his life; married Maud Rice (his second wife). He was better known as Brady, a nick name he got by mocking an old miner there named Jim Brady. Some strangers even used to make the mistake and called his wife Mrs. Brady. Brady was the son of Thomas Faulkner, who was the first man to start a butcher's shop and a hotel. Brady was the first person to drive a fat steer on to Lisle. He was pretty well educated. He went to Grammar School in Launceston and **was** a bright student, but his father gave him the choice of furthering his education or stopping on the gold field. He chose to stop, working for gold. He had two step-brothers, Sydney and Richard (Dick). They also put in a good part of their life in there working on the gold field and at saw-mills.
29. Brady was a small man but very versatile. A self taught blacksmith, he used to shoe horses, and if anybody had any problems in iron-work they would take it down to Brady. He built several houses in the district; put the brick chimneys up; he could mend boots; he had six in his family by the second marriage. When one of the dredges finished in Lisle, he went to Queensland with it to help assemble it at Stanthorpe. Two other men who worked on it went also. He had mixed success as a gold miner; he worked several sluicing claims. In later years, he selected

land and had a go at farming, but all he got out of that was experience; he ran a few cattle. However, he was looked on as the handy man of the field.

30. I am writing about the families that stayed on because they were the people that kept the place going for forty or more years after the rush.
31. There was the family of George Faulkner's. There was five daughters and four sons. One of the sons was one of the first tram drivers in Launceston; one went to Queenstown when he was quite young; Jack and Jim stayed on the field. Jack had a large family. Old Mrs G. Faulkner was a grand old lady. There was skillion, built on the house, which was about 30 feet by 15 feet, and after the last hotel was pulled down (there was a ballroom in it), that meant there was no place for dancing, etc. Now, Mrs Faulkner who was known to everyone as Aunt Dora, she gave them the room and some of the men put a dance floor in it, and it was the only place of entertainment for quite a few years. The room was called The Ark. There was, at that time, some very good old dancers on the field. The music was supplied by self-taught melodeon and violin players. Aunt Dora sold soft drinks and cigarettes; 3d for drinks and 4d a packet for cigarettes. One of her daughters married Alf Watts and lived on Lisle for a good many years. Alf had a certain amount of luck gold mining. He and Jack Faulkner worked a claim, sluicing by gravitation, near where my family lived. I remember seeing them clean up once for 60 ounces, and I can tell you, it looked very nice in one prospect dish.

32. There was a family of Marshalls - four (?) sons and two daughters. Mrs Marshall died early, soon after they came onto the field, so the sons stayed on for a good many years. One of them married late in life to Hilda Collins. What I remember about George Marshall: my father supplied the district with meat in the later life of the field and I used to keep the accounts, and George was sluicing for gold and worked as long as he could, until the water cut out, then would clean up, and he only wanted his account at the end of November; that would be the only bill he would get for the year. He was a small meat eater, about 3 or 4 pound a week, and as meat was only about 3d and 4d a pound, his account would be between £2/10/0 and £3 a year.

33. Old Mr. Thomas Marshall, the father, was another one who got a nick name. They called him Christopher Colombus because he was always going to discover something unusual.

Charlie Bessell selected about three hundred acres of land as a side-line with the mining. He was also a boot snob. There was a family of nine - 5 daughters and 4 sons. The sons stayed on mining for some time and two (Chas and Bill) went to the 1st World War. They are both Anzacs. When they returned Charlie went to the North East Coast.

34. One of George Hudson's daughters went to work at the Zinc Works, and returned and stayed in Lisle till the mid 1940s. His wife was the last Postmistress. (i.e. Ruby Hudson, wife of Bill Bessell)

Alfred Bessell, my father, also selected 350 acres of land. Before he selected the land, they lived in 2(?) two romm huts, then he built a 6 roomed house; 4 rooms on the ground floor and two upstairs. All he bought was the windows, hinges and nails.

Then, a few years later, when the police station was closed, he bought a part of that and built a 20ft by 20ft kitchen and two more bedrooms. I will write more about my family because I have got first hand knowledge.

35. Well, he was a bootmaker by trade. He used to make a pair of full kip water tight boots for 8/-, and the miners used to wear them working in the water all the time, and they would last 18 months. But it was not all in the making; it was the tanning of the leather was the reason. The leather is ruined now in the tanning process. If you wear boots now 1 month in the water, they would fall to pieces.
36. He and some of my older brothers carried on mining for some time. I think one of the best claims he worked was the site of the old police station. When it was thrown open for mining, it was stipulated that it had to be pegged not before midnight on a certain date and you had to have a witness. As he was always one of the earliest to rise, it was no trouble for him. So he, with his witness, waited in the bush until the time was up and pegged it, and as they walked out onto the road, George Titmus and his witness met them, but he (George) was too late.

So, in with the mining, he started to clear the land; a tough task with one horse, as Lisle had some of tallest and largest timber in Tasmania; trees grew up to 300ft high and 14ft in diameter; there was one 18ft. The land was quite good, but a lot of gullies and hills. He went in for cows, and later was the only butcher in the district.

37. When we were kids we used to have to carry it (meat) around in sugar bags. Later we got a horse and used to ride around and carry a basket. We used to kill about 5 sheep, and sometimes a bullock and pigs. The price was from 3d to 4d a pound. I remember once it went up to 7d, and they thought that was outrageous. Of course, the customers then, as now, all wanted legs. Some of them used to get upset if you didn't take them the joint what they ordered. I remember one old woman bashed me with a wet floor cloth because I didn't deliver what she wanted. When we never had any stock, Father used to have to buy from Newstead; the sale yards were at Newstead in those days. He also bought corned beef from Smith and Hutchinson, and mutton birds; 200 in a cask; they worked out less than 2d each. Of course, there was no fancy cuts. It was a leg, a loin, neck and breast. The beef was roasts and steak; corned beef was briskets, roll and so on. Some of the larger families used to go for sheeps's head and pluck, bullock's shin; the head and pluck used to be 1/- and the shins 1/6. There was a mining company there and a English colonel, who was a shareholder, came out with his wife to look things over. However, his wife gave me an order one day for a little bit of sweet bread and a bit of tripe, etc., and Father held it out and read it and said, "You better hang the guts on the fence and let her take he pick". The meat was not boned in those days. We used to make sausages.
38. We also had about the only transport out to Lisle Road, taking people out to catch the train from Scottsdale to Launceston, which used to come through Lisle Road 7.30. The road was very rough. We had a spring dray and a $\frac{1}{4}$ brd mare, which was very slow, and the trip used to take about 2 hours. It meant early rising to feed the horse and have breakfast. The fare was 2/6, and sometimes we would have only one passenger, and sometimes 5. The seats were solid; a bit of horse hair covered with American

leather. One time, when Father was driving, the seat collapsed on to the bottom of the cart, and the three lady passengers landed on the floor. He said, "You will have to stop there. If we stop to fix it, we will miss the train."

40. Of course, as we got older, we all had to take our turn to drive the passengers out. When the road improved, we got a chaise cart and a faster horse. One wet morning, driving a mine manager named Dickinson, out, a log made heavy by the wet rolled in front of the horse, and he shied and jumped down a very steep bank. The passenger went out over the horse's head, down the bush. As luck would have it, the steps of the cart caught on the fender log of a culvert and held, so I was able to release the horse by unbuckling the hame strap, and a man named Brooks, going to work at the wawmill, helped me and I caught the train. We never used a light and used to take passengers from the last train at night, rain, hail or shine. We always ----- to the horse.

41. My father usually only smoked on Sundays; sometimes on a wet day when he was in his snob shed; but he would meet some of his mates on Sunday and he would smoke dark Havelock tobacco all day Sunday, and put the pipe on the mantelpiece until the next Sunday. Of course, he used to cart anything that came by train, using a farm dray and two horses sometimes.

42. After the last hotel closed, the miners had difficulty in getting their beer, and used to get it out from Launceston by the barrel, and although he was against drink, he was obliged to cart it in for them. I dont remember much about this, but I remember one Xmas they got seven 18 gallon casks. They used to have it down under the wattles in the grass. They would buy a couple of cheeses from Hudson's store and some biscuits. However, they ordered another barrel and he refused to cart it; reckoned they

had had enough. So they got a wheelbarrow to wheel it the 7 - 8 mile into Lisle; eight miles on a rough road and a barrow with an iron tyre; no rubber about those days; it was no mean feat. I don't know how many went to get it, but I do know they were very thirsty and the beer well stirred up, and when they tapped it it almost exploded; beer and froth went all over the bush; they lost about 2/3 of it.

43. My father was made the registered gold buyer in the district after the boom. He was allowed 1 Pwd(?) per ounce commission, and used to take gold from the fossickers that were in a small way, and send the gold to the bank for them. They would be paid half the value for it, and then they would have to wait for the mint returns to get the full value. The larger producers sent theirs to the bank themselves.

our house was built on high ground and the road only went within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of it for some time, and everything had to be carried that distance. When the half yearly grocery order came, it was quite a job. I didn't take part in the carrying, but my older brothers did. The flour used to come in 200 pound bags, and the oldest brother, who was very strong, could carry it with only one spell.

44. As I stated before, there were 14 in the family; two of them died early on; one was 14 (?) and the other 3 years. They died before I was born and they are buried in the cemetery in Lisle. You would have a job to find it now. I know where it is situated.

My sister, Elsie, was a nurse. She trained in the Royal Alfred Hospital in Melbourne. After nursing for a while in Melbourne, she went bush-nursing in Dargo in the Australian Alps. Where ever she went to visit patients, she had to ride horse back,

day or night. After a while she came back to Tasmania and was matron at the Zeehan Hospital for a while, then went bush-nursing in several places, including Adamsfield. She finally married a miner from that field. She could have written a book on her life.

BOOK 2

45. Three of my brothers enlisted for the First World War, Len and Clarence (Cal) and Roy. Cal was killed in action. Roy, at that time, had been in camp about 6 months, but when Cal was killed Father stopped Roy from going. He enlisted at 18 without parents consent.
46. Len came back and worked as bushman at sawmills; prospecting at the Golden Plateau Mine leases, and was looked on as being a good and reliable prospector. The Pacific Gold Company sent him to Fiji in 1935 in charge of a party, about the time the Emperor Gold Mine was discovered. I went in the party; we returned after about seven months, and they sent him to Borneo to report on a diamond mine E.G. Theodore was supposed to have there, and it proved it was trying to raise capital on a hoax. Len was complimented by the Pacific Gold Company on always making a true report on any prospect he was sent to inspect. He went back to Fiji in 1937 and was employed as underground foreman by the Emperor Mines. He lost his life there in tragic circumstances; he slipped and fell on a conveyor belt, which crushed him.
47. I remember some humorous incidents that happened in the family. I will just mention a few of them.

My father and eldest brother, Earn, were ploughing with two bullocks and a single furrow plow. Well, the old Dad got sick of ploughing all the time, and he said to the brother, "You will have to learn to plough". And Earn said, "Then you will have to learn to drive the bullocks." So they changed over. Dad took the whip in the wrong hand and gave the bullocks a slash the wrong way, and they bolted and smashed the plough into a stump and broke the wooden beam. The language was hot, I can tell you.

48. On another occasion, my brother Roy, was courting a girl over the hills, about 3 miles away, and Father was staying in Launceston with Tom, his brother, having treatment for his arm. He had the misfortune to dislocate his elbow falling off the shafts of the cart, and was having physio for it. We were batching at the time, and we had two Griffiths brothers visiting us. Anyway, on this particular day, we got a wild cow and calf in from the bush. The calf was about 3 months old and had never been handled before, so we roped him and after a struggle, got him into Roy's bedroom, and blocked the window so as to make the
49. room perfectly dark. We slept in the room behind his, and the room he slept in opened out onto the verandah. We had to keep awake until about 2a.m. until he came home, to hear the fun. Well, as soon as he opened the door and the calf saw light, he charged out hitting the brother about the knees, and he went over the calf's back, and in his mad rush he (the calf) hit a long stool on the verandah laden with buckets and dishes. I can tell you, it made a terrific noise.

50. As I stated before, snakes were very plentiful. I remember one Xmas day we had 17 (people) there for dinner. One of my sisters was working in Melbourne and she brought a lady friend home with her, and in the middle of dinner a large tiger snake slithered in the door, and my brother, Cal, got up, picked a large boiling kettle off the fire and held it on him while one of the brothers killed it. There wasn't any panic.

51. On another occasion my mother went to the toilet, which by the way, was 150 yards from the house, and she called to my brother, Len, to bring the gun and shoot this snake. A 5 foot tiger snake was coiled up on the seat. Most toilets was built over shafts that had been sunk for prospecting; some of them would be 30 feet deep.

There was an elderly Scotchman lived in a hut near us. He was very interesting to talk to, as he had travelled around the world quite a lot, and we, as boys, would go to his camp in the evenings and put in a lot of time. His name was Thomas Baily. He was a stonemason by trade, but gold prospecting got him in and he finished up badly crippled in the back. He told me once he and his mate were prospecting in New Zealand and became lost in the bush near the foot of Mt. Cook. They always carried oatmeal with them when prospecting away from their campsite. This time when they were lost they had to swim a river and they had their oatmeal in a water proof bag; one of them carried that and the other the panicans in another bag, and they lost the bag with the panicans in it, which meant they never had anything to mix their oatmeal in, so he said they mixed it in the heel of their boots.

53. Now there was another colourful character who came out from Ireland and came almost straight to the field. He asked one of the locals, "What runs this country. Is it a government or a presidency?" They said, "A government." "Well," he said, "I am agin him." His name was William Kerr, but about the time he came out, there was a big write up about a disputed will case; an Irishman by the name of Ditchburn; they were looking for him in Western Australia. It was called the Ditchburn will case. As this man resembled him, he had red hair and red moustache, he was nicknamed Ditchburn, which he resented very much. However, behind his back he was always referred to as Ditchburn, and he was a real wild Irishman. He selected 300 acres of bush, right in the top end of Lisle. He pegged a claim about 1 mile away, and as he always believed in going in a straight line wherever
54. he went, he cut a track from his hut to his claim; he cut ends off logs 4 feet in diameter so he would be going straight. Well, after he built the hut he put some fruit trees in. They didn't grow too well, so one of the locals told him he should put animal manure around them, so he bought a bull and he (the bull) went wild, so he would be seen roaming through the bush with a bag looking for manure. I don't think the trees got much manure.
55. Well, he got the idea that he should get married and built a house out of blackwood timber, cut and split on his property. I never saw the house but they told me it was quite a good job. He had no girl friend in sight, so he went looking for one, but they kept shy of him, so he went to George Fquikner and asked him for one of his daughters and offered him £1 and a bag of spuds for one. When he had no luck, he burnt the house down. I can remember the police and some of my brothers carrying him out of the bush on a stretcher. He died of paralysis later in

the General Hospital.

56. After the rush had died down quite a few batchelors remained on, as some made enough to live on out of the gold. All very respectable. Another I remember quite well was one called Pat Cashman. (Strangley, they were nearly all Irishmen.) Pat had the Irish wit. One day one of the Faulkners was sitting on a box in front of a store, playing an accordian. Pat, walking past, said, "What are you doing there, Jack?" Jack replied, "There is a big snake under the shop and they say if they hear music they will come out." And Pat kept on walking and remarked, "I wonder if they would be tempted to dance."

57. He was in partners with two other Irishmen, working a claim. The others were named Higgins and Cummins. Dick Cummins dropped dead in the tailrace and Pat walked up to Harry and said, "Dick's dead, Harry. "Harry, a real character, said, "What the hell did he want to go and die for now we was just getting on to a bit of good gold." Higgins done well on the field. They say he made £11,000 out of gold. He used to wear a flannel shirt and an oatmeal bag for a hat. On a Sunday he would put a big flower, a trumpet lily in preference, in the button hole of his shirt, and he was dressed up. He left Lisle to go to the Yukon gold rush in Alaska. The night before he left he got Brady, who I have mentioned before, to come and show him the route he would be taking, and when he showed him he said, "It's a long way, Brady. I will have to have a good breakfast before I leave."

58. Another character was a German named Whitty. He was married to a Irishwoman, and they used to row like hell. He was very suspicious and had a job to get a partner to work a claim with him,

as he reckoned they all robbed him. At one time there was one or two incidents of attempted gold stealing; a man with a bit of dark blood in him acting suspicious, and the miners run him off the field. When some of the miners were cleaning up and the tailrace run down in preparation to picking up the gold, they would watch the race at night when this character was around. Well, Whitty got the policeman to watch his race, and got behind a tree and watched the policeman. The police saw him sneaking away just at day break, but he said there was nothing he could do, but gave him a good talking to.

59. The school closed down about 1905, as there was not enough children to warrant keeping it open. One of the Miss Furlongs was the last teacher. A few children never had much schooling. One of my older sisters married Perc French at Whitemore, and I went to live with them. The Lisle school re-opened in 1913, and I returned for my last year at Lisle. It was termed as a Provincial school, so the teachers didn't have to be fully qualified. There used to be a change of teachers pretty often.

About that time a family of Collins came to settle on a farm owned by John McKenzie of Launceston, one of the firm of John McKenzie and Co. There was four girls in the family, and them along with the school teachers, added more life to the dances, which was very popular at that time. Some of the teachers used to board at our home. Of course, when a new teacher was coming some of the young fellows used to seek their company. One of my brothers married one, and later shifted to Rocky Cape.

60. The Collins girls all found husbands on Lisle. The school went on then until about 1937(?), and then it was shifted to Prospect as class room to the Summer Hill school, and is still being used.
61. There was quite a few cattle roaming about the field. After the dredges finished good feed used to grow on the dumps. Most of the families used to milk a cow or two, and young cattle ran free. No one really owned the land, because it was still reserved for mining, so they used to brand or ear mark them and let them go. There was prospect holes and shafts after mining finished all over the place, and they used to loose quite a few cattle down them. Of course, if they were found in time, they would try to rescue them. If the holes were deep it was a big job to get them out. You had to start quite a distance back and dig a sloping trench into them. On several occasions I worked all night helping to dig them out.
62. One incident worth mentioning: I had quite a lot to do with it. When I was about ten another boy, Bill Marshall, about the same age, caught a steer by the tail and he ran through the bush, and went down a shaft about 12 feet deep, and we nearly went with him. He fitted into the hole very neatly, and he had no hope of getting out. Of course, we were in a dilemma; what to do? The steer belonged to Brady, who I have mentioned before, so we decided to go and tell Brady a white lie, and told him we found him (the steer) down the hole. So he got picks and shovels a horse and rope, and we went back and helped him get him out; cut a trench down to him and rope on his horns, and he scramble out, and Brady gave us 5/- and a big bag of lollies for helping him. After I got older, and was not frightened of him, I told him the truth. "Well," he said, "I think I would have given you the money and lollies for being honest, if you had told me the truth then."

63. In 1919 some of the men of the field got together and decided to build a local dance hall, and call it the Lisle Memorial Hall in memory of those who were lost in the war.

Charlie Furlong, who had just returned from the war, was the main mover, but when it started there was a wonderful response from the residents, and it was all done by voluntary labour. The logs were cut in the bush. Hudson's bullock teams hauled them to the mill, which was owned by Mr G. Hudson; all timber and weather-boards were cut free; some of the men split shingles for the roof, and all helped grind (?) and oil the floor. Already dressed from the planing mills in Scottsdale, it was a first class dance floor. There used to be dances held regularly for some time, and they used to have chopping quite often near by. Then, when the people gradually drifted away, it was sold to someone at Nabowla for a barn.

64. About the time the hall was built, a new mining venture was started by a English army man by the name of Major Dunn. He was quite a colourful character; stood about 6ft 5"; wore long army socks. He lived in a hut he built up in the hills between Lisle and Lilydale. He was there quite a while and people used to wonder what he was doing there. It was during the 14-18 war, and he had maps of the war zones and the authorities took him to Lilydale to question. They thought he was a German spy. I said they took him: a policeman and J.P. went up to his camp and said, "We have come up to take you to Lilydale." "I will come. I will be taking you." he said. "Get going. I will follow."
65. So they started to walk through the narrow bush track. He carried a revolver with him and he discharged it, and cut the fronds off the man ferns on the side of the track. They realised then that he was taking them. However, he was not questioned any further.

66. What he was really doing there, he was studying the geology of the gold bearing area of Lisle, in view of raising money to sluice the whole field out again, so he went to England and got a syndicate interested and they promised £20,000, which was a considerable sum of money in those day. However, instead of starting to procure some gold for a start to keep them interested, he started expensive plans as to how he wanted it to be worked, wasted money, bought whisky by the two cases at a time, and the syndicate sent another man out, and he closed everything down, and then he stayed on for a while, and started to grow small fruits. He bought my father's property, but it finished up a failure. These mining speculations helped to keep the place alive as it meant jobs for some of the men.
57. The next venture was started by Mr Charlie Robinson. He took up mining leases, built dams. One of the biggest jobs was to cut a water race from the head of the Little Forester, a distance of about 8 miles into Lisle. He had to put in a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of syphon. The race was cut on contract, on the average of about £2 per chain. He worked about 5 separate claims with moderate success. I might mention here the company he represented bought my father's property and the property of Mr W. Watts, and strangely enough, he got to small rich patches on each property. On our property he started sluicing and he struck a rich patch where we had a big paddock. He got 100 ounces in a small area. Of course, it made it look better for him, as no one knew it was there before he bought it. The ground was only about 8 feet deep and so rich
68. that you could see the gold in the wash. And they found another patch on the Watts' property. This was deeper and lasted longer but they got more out of it. Mr Robinson had advised the company to buy these two properties, so getting these two patches of gold on each property made it look better for him, and it was

a stroke of luck for the Watts and my father, as they would never have sole them otherwise.

69. This was in 1922. We lived in the house for a while, and Father bought a farm at Nabowla and I went with him. The Mr and Mrs Watts had a house built at Golconda, and went to live near their daughter and son-in-law for the rest of their lives.

There was some deep ground worked on the western side of the field. Mr W. Langley worked a claim for a syndicate. It was 70 feet deep. I worked for him. One winter I remember we had one clean up for 72 ounces, but the gold bearing wash was narrow and we had to shift a lot of overburden, and the shortage of water finally closed it down. Ben Watts drove it and took some out, but it became dangerous and he closed down. There was several other small sluicing shows worked for a time, and there is still one or two working there.

70. I don't think I should finish without mentioning the sawmills and timber getting that helped to keep the district going for quite a few years. The stringy gum timber in the valley was equal to anything in Tasmania, and blackwood was plentiful, and the real blackwood. Mr George Hudson, when he finished with the hotel and store business, started sawmilling and worked for a good many years; put a wooden tram line to Greeta siding, a $4\frac{1}{2}$ mile away and railed (?) the timber out with horses. Before he built the tram the bullock teams used to cart it out. I remember when there were 4 or 5 bullock teams a day carting timber and blackwood logs out to Lisle Road station. There was a tremendous lot of blackwood in the valley.

One feature of the mill was the whistle. It was the fog horn off the "Alice", a ship that sunk in the Tamar. After the mill shifted to Camden the whistle could be heard, on a clear day, from Nabowla to Launceston.

75. The Hudson family came to Lisle from Lisle Road, where they had a store. A family named Kenworthy had the main shop in the township, and George Hudson bought them out, and he had the misfortune to get burnt out, and then he went into some big rooms in one of the old hotels, and carried on store keeping and baking for some time before he went into sawmilling.
76. He had six in his family - 5 daughters and 1 son, Walter, who joined the police force for some time, but he retired from that and came back to Lisle, and carried on sawmilling for some years. He managed the mill for Bills & Co. until it closed down, then he shifted to Victoria, and he and some of his sons carried on sawmilling there for some years.

One character I missed out was an Irishman named Jack Carr. He was a notorious liar, and used to lock himself in his hut and pray, One day two of the locals were listening to him, and apparently he must have ill-treated his wife at one time, and he said, "Oh, Lord, I know I was cruel to my wife, and want you to forgive me." Then there was silence for some time, and he said, "That's no answer mister. I want a plainer answer than that."

77. He shifted out to Nabowla and lived on a farm for a while, and then he went and lived in Launceston with some Irish friends, but he couldn't help telling lies. He made his will and left the people he was living with a horse and cart and 4 cows, and he didn't own anything at all.

Notes added by Mr. E. D. Weston
Lilydale.
and by J. Kelly, Taree

LISLE.

Nothing apart from the cold facts of official reports has been written of the brief bright life of the Lisle goldfield which was discovered in 1878.

Lisle is an upland valley on the slopes of Mt. Arthur which rises to the south west of N. E. Tasmania. It is horse-shoe, or perhaps more correctly pear-shaped, sloping from south to north and drained by the Lisle Creek and its many tributaries that form a stream which leaves the valley through a deep gorge at the narrow northern end. On the east a ridge 800 to 1000 ft high separates Lisle from the basin whence rises the Little Forester River, and a similar hill on the west overlooks the Lone Star Creek. The broad end of the pear-shape is hemmed in by a 1200 ft. divide which overlooks Lisle from south to the north, and looks to the north coast some 22 miles away.

The field was first discovered by Messrs Charles & T. Bessell and Mark Gibb who had already found gold at Cradle Creek in the adjacent valley. They brought samples of the almost pure alluvial gold to Launceston and soon the news spread. By January of 1879 there were five parties sluicing (Bessell, Handley, Rose, Brookes & Bessell) about 40 men, and others prospecting, making about 100 men in all on the field. From then on for about 12 or 18 months diggers poured steadily into the valley, so that by March the number had increased to 1000 and at the end of April it was estimated there were on the diggings 1500 people, comprising miners, tradesmen & a few hardy women-folk.

These people had literally to hack their way into the valley for after a rough journey of 17 miles by drag or cart from Launceston to Millwoods Hotel at Patersonia, they went by a barely passable track to Faulkners farm thence through the untamed forest and

LISLE.

down the 1200 ft. ledge into the valley. This track was unimaginably rough; huge fallen trees had to be climbed over; boulders blocked the path; giant myrtle and sassafras conspired with thick undergrowth, creepers, thorny bushes, dogwood, wattle & brambles to bar the way & hidden springs made bogs & slippery ruts to hinder the traveller's perilous descent. Yet down this path they came carrying their possessions on their backs. Mining implements, food, bedding & children were carried tortuously into the diggings in the eager rush to share in the search for gold at the Mt. Arthur field.

The place was known as Bessell's Creek till March 1879 when Governor Weld visited the diggings, and named the field "Lisle" after his wife's family name which was "de Lisle".

By April 1879 a township stretching some 2 miles along the valley had sprung up. It was a township of huts, shanties, tents & shelters of all descriptions & in various stages of completion. Since all transport was via the Patersonia track or an equally hazardous one from Lilydale via ~~Underwood~~^{the Arthur}, only the barest necessities were brought in; food & drink & the ¹²impediments for getting gold had first priority: the amenities of living, furniture, windows, got scant consideration. But there were some 1200 people to be fed & to cater for their needs 5 butchers' shops, 4 bakehouses & 8 stores had come into existence in 1879 and were doing well. Also four hotels were in process of building for ^{John}McKenzie, ^{John}Fitmus, ^{John}Faulkner & ^{John}Connelly. These houses did a roaring trade: they were the social centre of the diggings, reports handed down indicate that the miners of those rough early days put away stupendous quantities of beer and spirits.

As soon as possible the track was widened sufficiently for supplies to be brought in by bullock wagon: no other vehicle could withstand the terrific battering of the journey. Yet the field

LISLE

was pretty well supplied with food. Groceries came from Launceston; the meat & butter of excellent quality was supplied from the Pater-sonia & Myrtle Bank farms. The stores were brought in by pack horse^{or} by bullock wagons that came down the precipitous track often axle deep in mud. Sometimes the waggon got bogged, & resisted all attempts of straining bullocks & cursing driver. Then the only course was for the driver to unload, pull out the lightened waggon then load up again so one cannot wonder unduly that some-
side times the weary bullocky broached a case of bottled ale from the load to hearten him on his journey!

Vegetables were also fetched to Lisle from Lilydale by the track along the side of Mt. Arthur. This road was referred to as coming "under the mountain" and transport by it was so arduous that in order to make the most of the journey space was saved wherever possible. To quote one space-saving device: peas were shelled before leaving Lilydale & sold by the pint in Lisle along with other products to feed the population of Lisle which reached 2½ thousand in 1880.

George McRae used to take in provisions from Lilydale: JK.

*North Lilydale
 track(?)*

Meanwhile, on the goldfield itself, as soon as some kind of shelter had been thrown up with haste, prospecting went on with feverish intensity.

The first discoveries were in the Lisle Creek & claims were soon pegged all along the length of this waterway which flowed down the centre of the basin. Then the many tributary streams were prospected & sluicing was commenced up the eastern slopes where rich ground was found, close to the surface in places. However, many difficulties had to be overcome before the actual recovery of gold began. Water had to be brought on to the claims & this was done by diverting it from streams & springs by means of races. This was by no means easy & there were often long & heartbreaking delays.

on the northern slopes of Mt Arthur

LISLE.

When stripping & sluicing had finally begun there was gold a-plenty for some, & for others a poor return. The average claims returned £10 - £12 weekly while others "made tucker" only. Buyers travelled to Lisle & paid £3. 17. 6. per oz. for the gold which was particularly pure alluvial metal in the form of fine particles which can be best described as "pinhead gravel". The gold taken from the creekbeds was smooth while that recovered from the hill slopes was generally more angular.

The earliest sluice boxes were made from timber frames with a kind of baize bottom over which were stretched narrow slats or "ripples" to trap the heavy gold dust. Later the boxes were made wholly of timber which was also used for fluming, and, in fact, owing to its being so readily obtainable, was pressed into service wherever possible for the difficulties of transport into the valley made, as it were, a virtue of necessity. At first, ground sluicing was the only method employed but before long nozzles came into use, the first of these being made of canvas with a metal cylinder at the end.

Some very rich ground was worked & fortunes were made in those early days. No really large pieces of gold were found: even pennyweight nuggets were rare, though several of these were found on Donnelly's workings which seem to have been the richest on the field. Here the wash-dirt was one to four feet thick & in parts gave 5 dwts to the cubic yard. On Donnelly's Terrace, too, the work was comparatively easy for there was not a great deal of stone, and the gold bearing wash was near to the surface whereas on other claims it was anything from 6 to 50 feet down.

At the close of 1879 it was estimated that 400 ozs weekly were being taken from the Lisle field. There was no poverty among the community: those who were unable to find gold in payable ground, got out. The majority made a reasonably good living. Miners'

LISLE.

laborers were paid 8/4 a day.

The gold, though in almost pure state, had to be separated from the adhering clay & mineral impurities in which it was embedded. This was done by blowing on the gravelly particles after they had been cleaned as much as possible by washing. Blowing was done by the aid of a blowpan - a shallow dish with a funnel at one side. The gold was tilted away from the funnel while the blower dispersed the fine black sand & similar dust impurities through the opening. This job was usually done in the evening in front of the open fire as it was essential to keep the contents of the pan from being moistened by the blower's breath. After the blowing, a magnet was passed over the gold to remove iron ores, then the precious residue was stored in tins, bottles or jars. Sometimes the black sand was collected & cleaned with quicksilver. Small vaseline jars which held about 1 lb. of gold, or round Capstan tobacco tins, holding some 30 ozs, were popular containers at the time.

Some miners sold to local licensed buyers; others took it direct to Launceston & a great deal of Lisle gold was never sold in Tasmania, but taken by miners returning to the mainland.

As prospectors searched avidly for payable ground & claims were staked in ever-increasing numbers, it was inevitable that disputes arose about mining rights & the Tasmanian Mail of 7.8.80 reports several cases at the Court of Mines dealing with, inter alia, water rights, interference with a tail race & subsequent injury to a claim; turning aside water from Bessells Creek. The disputants on these occasions were:

Henley & others	v.	Brooks
O'Sullivan	v.	Coady
Barnett	v.	Airey & others
Gunner	v.	Webster

Today the names mean nothing to us, but doubtless the disputes involving these names were the subject of many a contentious evening in the isolated Lisle valley more than 70 years ago.

LISLE.

But what of the life of the women in these rough early years of the gold rush? The first woman to step on to the Lisle field was Mrs. W. Watts & it is said that when she came in sight the men gave a cheer. Soon after in January 1879, came Mrs. ~~Tom~~ Kelly & these two ladies made history in Lisle the same year by giving *children born* birth to the first two children born on the goldfield. Here I 1880 might mention that Mrs. Kelly, now a frail but cheerful lady of 95 *J. Kelly* years, is the only person living who was in Lisle at the time of the gold boom. Mrs. Kelly is blind now, but the eyes of memory look back with amazing clarity over 70 years while she tells with vividness & humour of life in the valley at that time.

The two babies married each other when they grew up - Tom Kelly & Jessie Watts. J. Kelly

Housekeeping was something of a nightmare owing to the absence of household utilities & the difficulties of getting regular & varied supplies. The huts & shanties were small & crudely constructed, & it has been said before, transport problems were such that the bare necessities were brought in & furniture was knocked up on the spot out of the timber in which the place abounded. The dwellings were built from gum slabs obtained by pit-sawing or splitting the felled trees. Often dogwood poles were used for stays & rafters. The little squat cosy chimneys also were constructed from green gum, which soon took on a flinty dense texture & was thereafter unlikely to catch fire. However, if this did happen the house holder threw a couple of buckets of water up the chimney & if the damage done was irreparable, there was plenty of timber to build another. Myrtle & sassafras were freely used for doors, tables, & rough seats. Sometimes doors were left till later & in the meanwhile the wind & weather were kept out by a length of hessian. As bringing window-panes into Lisle was a most hazardous undertaking, the window frames were as often as not filled in with a piece of calico; this was particularly true of the bachelor huts where the female urge for home-making was non-existent.

LISLE.

Generally speaking the architectural set-up was more utilitarian than aesthetic but it was definitely original, scarcely two places being built alike. Tents & one-room huts comprised the greatest number & for those with families a two room cottage was built & later maybe, a lean-to was added for the specially pampered housewife. Some huts were lined with scrim over which newspapers, pictures & bright almanacs were pasted in a determined attempt at brightening the home. Many places had for flooring nothing but the earth provided by nature & stamped hard by daily use; in others more fortunate housewives had roughly adzed timbers to walk on. Packing cases were used for cupboards, hastily smoothed boards were set up for tables & benches, & bed-framework; nails in the walls served as hooks & racks for hanging; rough dark blankets covered the shake-downs & the windows were without benefit of curtains yet the gallant women of that early Lisle goldrush managed to make real homes from the poor material at hand & took pride in turning to use everything practicable & many excellent improvisations resulted. The trunks of manferns (treeferns) were cut & fashioned into chairs & couches & dried fern-fronds were used for stuffing cushions. Perhaps the true hallmark of good housewifery was the whiteness of the fireplaces which were deep & roomy with high hobs made from stones set in clay that baked hard as rock. The whitest of pineclay was used as a wash for the fireplaces & housekeepers would search for the best & carefully remove any yellow pieces from their whitening buckets so that the final result would be most immaculately snowy. The fire was kept going early & late; it was rarely allowed to go out & was the centre of all life indoors, giving heat for comfort & cooking & the ever fascinating job of blowing gold.

Mention must be made of ^{some} ~~one~~ cottages which was made entirely of tree-trunks, log-cabin style, with the crevices sealed with local *Big Manfern* clay & the finished structure was very snug & neat.

LISLE.

Of course there were no gardens, fences or gates yet; one picked ones way along a grassy or muddy track leading through rough bushes & rushes & stepped into the door which was defenceless against wind & weather being unprotected by verandah or porch, for in the all-important search for gold the amenities of living were considered not at all.

In case of sickness homely remedies were used & homely skill applied & the rest was left to nature & the toughness of the patient's constitution. Doctors had to be brought from Launceston - a long & expensive business by the time someone had travelled to town & fetched back a medico at the cost of about £25.

Women gave birth to their children without nurse, doctor or any skilled attention - a kindly friend or neighbour gave a hand, & if all went well it was good, if there were complications, sometimes there followed the tragic loss of mother or child.

The absence of fresh milk was something of a nightmare to those with children till in 1881 an enterprising farmer from Myrtle Bank undertook to supply the mining community; & daily this truly gallant little man made the rough descent into the Lisle basin with milk in 2 cans each fitted with a little faucet, & fastened to a pack-horse by means of rings which slipped over hooks on the saddle. At this time milk cost 8d. a quart in Hobart but on the goldfield the people gladly paid 6d. a pint for it. Not long afterwards the first cow to be seen in Lisle slipped & staggered down the eastern track. It was driven by the late Mr. Harry Faulkner, then a lad of about 12, & was the first comer of the herd that later supplied the township.

All foodstuffs commanded a high price in Lisle. A bag of flour bought for 12/6 in Launceston cost over £2 on the diggings & vegetables too were eagerly bought at high cost. Lighting was

LISLE.

by candles often as not stuck in the neck of a bottle, & later kerosene lamps were used. When supplies of these ran out the women had to resort to the inadequate, smelly jam tin lights - tins partly filled with earth, topped with any fat available, in which a rag-wrapped stick was thrust & lighted. Sometimes, too, fresh meat was not available & the community had to subsist on salted beef or mutton-birds bought in the cask. A bootmakers business was early established & supplied the miners with the water-tight boots necessary for their work: these lasted for 2 years in & out of water all the time, a fact which speaks volumes for the excellent materials & the workmanship of Mr. Alfred Bessell who owned the business.

By the end of 1880, in response to urgent requests to check the petty thieving that went on, a police camp was built about half way down the east side of the valley and a resident policeman detailed to keep order in the diggings but the small lock-up was rarely used except for drunks who made nuisances of themselves, for the Lisle community, particularly when the first rush was over, became a singularly honest one so that by 1890 the need for a full-time officer was past & the abandoned police camp was pulled down & any useful fittings - door knobs, hinges & the like, were very quickly put into use on other buildings. The site was then thrown open to prospectors & so in a short time one of the earliest buildings of the Lisle diggings had vanished without trace.

By 1882 the "rush" was definitely over & many miners had abandoned the field. Some extremely rich ground had been worked & a great deal of wealth contributed to the colony. Some of the best yields came from the Clare Bros. claim, which gave 1000 ozs.; Lockwood's Terrace gave 500 ozs. in a year; in the creek near the Post Office 550 ozs. of gold were taken, & 200 ozs. from less than a 1/2 acre at the Red Cliff which was situated on the slope at the north end. Cashman's claim yielded £200 per man in 6 months.

LISLE.

There were scarcely any "duffer" claims along the Lisle Creek & that area made £4 - £12 per week per man. The largest nugget weighed some 15 dwts. & was found at the junction of the Lisle & Bessell Creeks.

Always there was the eager hope that the source of the gold might be found & many attempts were made, & many theories put forward but all without successful application. G. Thureau, Government Geologist, at the time reported to Parliament in 1882 that the main gold-bearing veins lay in the east foothills of Mt. Arthur, & later authorities agreed that the source of the gold was where the sandstone & granite strata meet.

Of those who left Lisle after the rush was over, some were very rich & other as poor as when they came. Many, discouraged by the long & difficult work preparatory to actual sluicing, abandoned their claims which others took on & often found rich ground, without having to do all the "dead work", that is the non-paying preliminary labour.

From the first a bi-weekly mail service came to Lisle by horseback through Patersonia. In the beginning the mail bags were emptied on to the floor in the house of Mr. Tom Faulkner & the people sorted out their own mail. However, before long a Money Order Office & Post Office were established & run in conjunction with a general store by Mr. C. Furlonge in the South west of the valley. The Tasmanian Mail, the Mercury & the Weekly Examiner kept the isolated Lisle community in touch with the world beyond the mountain and as well there were many mainland publications for the miners who had hurried to Lisle from the dying Victorian & N.S.W. fields.

From what can be learned there were few serious accidents on the Lisle field though one man was killed by a fall of earth & often there were gashes from palin knives & other timber-getting implements. An early tragedy was the death of a small girl, Rudden by name, through being struck by a tree which was being cut down by her father.

LISLE.

Miners carried the body half way to Launceston then it was taken the rest of the way by vehicle for burial. Shortly after this a piece of ground for a graveyard was cleared on a site about half a mile up the east hill from the township & in all some 25 people lie buried there. The coffins had to be taken on stretchers up the steep ascent from the valley to the cemetery.

After the rush was over many of the tradespeople left Lisle for better business elsewhere. Connelly left his hotel & opened a wine & spirits business in George St., Launceston. McKenzie's Hotel was closed soon after & Titmus' Hotel, the scene of many lively dances & convivial gatherings closed down later. Some stores closed down also the small chemist shop & with the depleted population the tempo of the early wild rough years was reduced considerably.

Yet there was still a sizeable community to be catered for and gold to be won by those willing to persevere. Tunnelling and panning was continued up the eastern hillside & more water races were built. Every likely gully & corner of the valley was prospected & sluicing by various companies & individuals went on steadily.

A great deal of ground had been "mullocked over" in such a way in the first mad scramble that it was hard to say what had been worked & what not. After the "Temora" gold rush had taken many diggers from Lisle to N.S.W. those who remained set about a systematic & thorough re-sluicing of much of the surface of the valley.

During the eighties the community became aware of the need for schooling for the growing children. Till this time educational facilities were nil; any teaching the children got was from their parents though one family had a tutor. A school house was built in the south east near Cox's Creek & the teacher's salary was paid by ^{the} ~~the~~ parents. Mr. Reece was the first schoolmaster in Lisle. Many ^{later} years the Government undertook to subsidise the salary & appoint a teacher.

W. Doyle
(Ranch)

LISLE.

Later a hall was built for concerts, dances & other entertainments & many lively evenings centred around & within this community building which had an ante-room fitted up with wooden bunks having protective boards at the side to prevent the youngsters who were bedded down there from falling out.

As the years went by the population became more settled better houses were built, verandahs & porches were gradually added to existing cottages & Lisle took on a less feverish, more mellowed appearance. Fences & gates & paths appeared where previously there had been untidy bush; attempts were made to clear spaces for gardens; tents had long since disappeared together with the other more temporary shelters; people found time to apply a little paint & altogether the township became more civilised.

In 1889 the railway to Scottsdale was opened & this made Lisle less isolated, & opened up the hinterland for farming & sawmilling. A rough track was made down to the nearest railway station, Lisle Road, later called Nabowla, & stores were brought by dray or wagon from here a distance of 6 miles to Lisle thus the community was no longer dependent on the hazardous descent over the track from Patersonia.

A Presbyterian Church service was now held monthly in Lisle, the minister being the Rev. ^{Robert} Campbell who came from Lilydale via Golconda or Lisle Road. Even earlier than this a band of intrepid Salvation Army people came at intervals from Lilydale over the very difficult track along the side of Mt. Arthur, to conduct services.

Life in the Lisle Basin was conspicuously lacking in cultural amenities owing to its isolation from other parts. However, the little community gradually developed ways of providing amusements & recreation. Concerts with a dance to follow & sporting fixtures featuring chopping, running & jumping, events were held occasionally,

LISLE.

Also football & cricket matches, & always the entire community turned out to these functions & others, as well, many ~~visitors~~ many visitors came by horse or buggy from Ferney Hill, Golconda & Lisle Road once the road was reasonably passable. Plenty of beer was drunk on the Lisle diggings & in the very early days there was a skittle alley.

Long before the nineties it was being said that Lisle was finished yet many stayed on & made a living. But the field was long past its best, even past that "steady best" that followed the rush of 1879-1882. Many people, both miners & tradespeople, continued to leave Lisle & the valley was dotted with derelict buildings that in time either collapsed or were pulled down or burnt in bushfires. The many deserted claims began to be covered little by little with bush growth.

The hopes that Lisle would eventually become an agricultural centre showed no sign of realisation though later an attempt was made by Cottrell Dormer to grow small fruits, ^{also} ¹⁹²⁰ however, this was abandoned.

The Bessell Report of 1894 stated there was still gold for those willing to persevere with methods other ^{than} the pick & shovel - the time for easily won gold was past. The Kelly Report at the turn of the century advised dredging machines as the only payable approach to getting further gold from the Lisle basin, & pointed out that the Lisle Creek was capable of 20-25 sluiceways of water in winter time.

In 1899 the Lisle Dredging Co. was formed but operated without spectacular success owing mainly to insufficient water & also to the presence of timbers hidden beneath the surface.

Little by little mining activities dwindled & died. The population shrank to a few hundreds early in the new century. The original hotel-keepers had long since left but one hotel was maintained by Mr. G. Hudson till about 1920. ^{at the}

LISLE.

The early years of the century saw many optimistic but fruitless attempts to re-start mining on a profitable basis. It is estimated that some 200,000 ozs of gold were taken from the field. Now only a few husks of houses stand here & there. Bush has reclaimed the area & the road is choked at its sides by clumps of wattle, dogwood & gum. The little streams are in many places entirely removed from sight & sound by masses of brambles & ferns.

Man, after taking all he could find, has been forced to hand back the valley to Nature and the silence of the centuries.

V. E. Edwards.

~~(now Mrs V M (Veda) Veale JK)~~

Oct. 7, 1952/

All Now owned by forestry commission

The author of this article was Mrs Veda Edwards, later Mrs Veale, and born Veda Watson. She grew up, I believe, at Nabowla (previously known as Lisle Road).

J. Kelly.

LISLE

THE LISLE GOLDRUSH. by H.B. Holmes.

Mining is full of the unexpected; of sudden wealth and rapid decline. All mining fields must eventually die, as many old miners know to their sorrow and regret from bitter experience. In North Eastern Tasmania, in less than one hundred years, we find that the once quite substantial village of Lisle, built on a small but very rich alluvial goldfield, has now completely disappeared from the face of the earth.

During the early years of mining at Lisle, it was hoped and believed that the existence of rich lodes would be proved, and that large scale mining would continue for many years. This was not to be and although much time, money and labour was involved, extensive and rich reefs were never found. The boom years of 1879 - 1881 saw the rapid growth of the Lisle township, but after the gold output tapered off, many miners left for greener pastures. The goldrush to Temora in New South Wales in 1883 took a large number of miners and their families to that place from Lisle, Golconda and Denison Goldfields.

It must be realised that most of the work done at Lisle was by men with a pick, shovel, dish and wheelbarrow. In later years sluicing of the ground was done by several mining companies but with not a great deal of success. On the hills surrounding Lisle, it is still possible to see some of the extensive earth works done by miners in their search for gold. A feature of interest are the remains of innumerable water channels, where the miners diverted most of the creeks to sluice their claims.

Lisle was built in the hollow of high hills to the north of Mount Arthur or Row Tor as it was once named. All the buildings in this town are now long gone. The valley that produced over two hundred and fifty thousand ounces of gold and at its most prosperous time boasted a population of two thousand five hundred people, is now covered with native forest regrowth or has been planted with Monterey Pines by the Forest Commission of Tasmania.

Except for a small mining operation near the centre of the valley, on the former site of the All Nations hotel, it is difficult to visualise this place as a busy mining field. Most goldmines are in poor country with stunted vegetation, but here at Lisle, the rich alluvial drift carried a magnificent temperate rain forest. After this was cleared away, the land proved to be very fertile farming country. The large eucalypts and blackwood trees supplied the timber for local buildings and kept several sawmills in work for many years.

In the 70's and 80's of the last century, more attention was paid to the search for gold than any other mineral in Tasmania. Many finds of gold were made but few were of commercial importance. To the north of Lisle both alluvial and reefmining had been carried on for several years at Golconda, Panama and Denison, all situated near the present Golconda Railway Station. Lisle was a later and more important discovery, and gold was still being found there, after the reef mines were closed.

LC
P
994
.68
HOL

Lisle Valley is shaped like a basin; three miles long and two miles wide. The Lisle or Main Creek rises in the southern foothills and flows through a deep gorge at the northern end of the valley. The area mined for gold was about two hundred yards wide and one mile in length on Lisle Creek. Another area about half the size was mined along Bessell Creek which flows into Lisle Creek. Of course much mining was done on adjoining areas, but the bulk of the gold came from a very small area along these creeks and their tributaries.

The field was discovered by Alfred, Charles, Edward and Thomas Bessell and a bushman named Mark Gibbs. The brothers were the sons of Mr. George Bessell of Newnham, Launceston, an Englishman who migrated to Tasmania in 1856. Mr. Bessell was a bootmaker and worked at this trade from the family home on the George Town road opposite the site of Pinkie Farm. Mr. Bessell also managed the Newnham Post Office. There were seventeen children in his family and all of the sons were trained as bootmakers.

From Newnham, the Bessell brothers would walk through the bush at weekends and prospect the creeks flowing through Underwood, Denison, Lone Star, Panama and Wyena. Camping at Tobacco Creek, they panned gold and found sufficient to pay for their tobacco, hence the name of the creek. It would seem that gold was found in Tobacco Creek, several years before the more important field at Lisle.

The evidence of the find at Lisle became known when the muddy water from Bessell's mining operations, drifted into the Little Forester River and was seen by Alfred Brewer of "Bowood", near Prioport. He followed the river southward and was heard breaking through the scrub by the Bessells, who also saw his face peering through the trees. Charles Bessell immediately walked to Myrtle Bank and then rode a horse to Launceston to register the brother's claim. He reached the Gold Commissioners Office only a few hours ahead of Alfred Brewer.

Mr. Samuel Richards, Manager of the Alacrity Mine at Denison, received £1000 reward from the Tasmanian Government for discovering a payable goldmine at Leifroy in 1870, but Bessell's reward for discovering Lisle, was to have their claim - the Reward Claim - registered free of charge, which was only a matter of a few shillings. The claim was registered in December 1878 and not a great deal of interest was shown in this discovery until January 1879, when fourteen ounces of gold on a plate was displayed in a shop window in Launceston. The interest shown in this display caused the rush to Lisle.

The next developments of this gold mining area, are best told by the following extracts, taken from the files of the Launceston newspaper, the "Examiner".

11th. January. 1879.

Messrs. Lockwood & Brookes returned to Launceston on Thursday evening from the new goldfield between Panama and Mount Arthur. They reported that the Bessell brothers have been making wages for the last eighteen months. Messrs. Lockwood & Brookes intend returning to the goldfield for a months trial of prospecting.

28th. January. 1879.

A report from Mr. Lacey that gold was not being found at the Mt. Arthur Diggings in payable quantities, but men could make "tucker". He was returning for a months trial.

29th. January. 1879.

Thomas Faulkner cut a track from his farm at Myrtle Bank. Packhorses were being used to take in stores. Two large buildings for hotels were being erected by Mr. William Titmus and Mr. McKenzie from Moorina. By the end of January there were about one hundred men at the field. In the next few months the population rose to two thousand.

1st. February. 1879.

An advertisement by Mr. Thomas Faulkner appeared in the "Examiner", stating that he would pack stores into the diggings where work was commencing.

18th. February. 1879.

There were two stores at the goldfield 150 men were making good wages. The stores were owned by Messrs. Millwood & Faulkner. A public house was to be opened shortly. Mr. Ward, formerly of the Nine Mile Springs, (Lefroy.) had applied for a hotel site. It was hoped that a Post Office would be opened shortly.

3rd. March. 1879.

There were 600 people on the goldfield. Twenty to thirty miners were arriving every day. James Millwood had cut a pack track from his Mount Arthur Inn at Patersonia, to the diggings, a distance of eight miles.

4th. March. 1879.

Mr. W. J. Brown, a surveyor, was sent in to mark out an area for a township. A road was required very badly. Many huts were being built. At Myrtle Bank, Thomas Faulkner conducted a Temperance Hotel. The Reverend William Blackett, a Wesleyan Bush Missionary visited the goldfield. He congratulated Mr. Faulkner that the hotel was temperance. Unfortunately Faulkner was caught selling sly grog and was forced to apply for an hotel licence. There were now between 800 and 1000 people at the diggings.

12th. March. 1879.

His Excellency, the Governor of Tasmania, Sir Frederick Weld visited the Mt. Arthur Goldfield. He was accompanied by his Aide-de-Camp, Lieutenant Colonel St. Hill; the Minister for Lands and Works, the Honourable H. C. O'Reilly and the Colonial Secretary, the Honourable Thomas Reiby. Governor Weld named the town Lisle in honour of his wife's family. Some days earlier he had named the towns of Weldborough and Beaconsfield where mining was also being carried on. W. B. Jorey advertised in the "Examiner" that he would run a coach from the Enfield Hotel in Launceston, as far as the Mount Arthur Inn.

20th. March. 1879.

One hotel for Mr. McKenzie, the Lisle Hotel was completed and others for William Titmus, the All Nations Hotel and Thomas Faulkner's - Post Hotel were in an advanced state. Five general stores owned by Messrs. Brookes. Faulkner, Ogilvie, Mitchell and Rose were trading. Three butchers shops were supplying meat and three bakers had commenced. Bark huts, manfern huts and some comfortable tents and paling skillions were scattered along the creeks and hills. One thousand miners were reported to be working at Lisle and the valley was said to look like a huge rabbit warren.

21st.March.1879.

An advertisement in the "Examiner" stated that Mr.Jones would cart passengers in his coach,three miles beyond the Mt.Arthur Inn at Patersonia.Fifty Victorians arrived.Many sawpits were cutting timber for buildings and thousands of palings were being split.

11th.April.1879.

Reported that 1200 miners were at the diggings.John Faulkner was appointed Post Master and 60 men were employed under Surveyor Richard Hall in making a road.It was now possible to take a cart down the steep track from Faulkner's at Myrtle Bank to Lisle.

22nd.April.1879.

1300 miners on the field.The township extended nearly two miles in length.Another hotel, the Governor Weld was being built for Mr.Connolly.Eight stores, five butchers shops,four bakers shops and a skittle alley were all well patronised.Miners arrived from New Zealand and on the 26th.April,men from Sydney and a second party of New Zealanders arrived.

1st.May.1879.

Ernest Ward held the licence for the All Nations Hotel and Daniel Connolly,the Governor Weld Hotel.

17th.May.1879.

From the "Tasmanian"; Buildings are still going up and town sections are in demand;some holders asking quite fancy prices for their allotments.In addition to our four hotels,we have two pie and coffee rooms,an assembly or dancing room,a shooting gallery rapidly approaching completion and last but not least,Mr.Furlong's reading rooms and restaurant,which building,when completed, will be the best one in the place.

1st.June.1879.

A Court of Mines was held at Lisle by the Commissioner of Goldfields,Mr.Bernard Shaw.Most of the complaints dealt with concerned claim jumping.

16th.June.1879.

Thomas Faulkner's Post Office Hotel was licenced and Robert Mckenzie was licenced for the Lisle Hotel.Charles Furlong was appointed Mining Registrar. By now 2500 people were on the field.

2nd.July 1879.

By this time all good mining areas had been taken up and through shortage of ground,many miners were leaving Lisle.There was a good deal of robbing and thieving from many of the shantys.Constables Murnane and Plane had to come from Patersonia to keep order.The Reverend Michael Beechinor came to Lisle and celebrated Mass at Connolly's Governor Weld Hotel.At a concert held the first lady to sing at Lisle was Mrs.Hennessy.More claim jumping and shifting of miner's claim pegs was reported.

4th.July.1879.

Mr.B.Shaw was appointed Commissioner of the Court of Requests to be held at Lisle.Mr.Furlong was appointed Court Registrar and Constable Murnane as Bailiff.More miners were said to be leaving through lack of mining areas.

15th. July. 1879.

The Reverend G. Daniel opened a neat little Chapel for those miners of the Wesleyan faith and Mr. Bridges conducted a Sunday School. 1289 Miners Rights had now been issued. There were rushes to Lone Star and Tobacco Creek goldfields. 500 acres were being mined.

15th. August. 1879.

Mr. Charles Cox opened the Mount Arthur General Store. A report of a good gold find at Boobyalla caused a number of miners to leave Lisle for that place. Unfortunately the report was false and the men returned to Lisle, vowing vengeance against the people who had spread the false rumours. Mr. Charles Furlong was appointed Post Master and a money order office was opened.

23rd. September. 1879.

There were 25 sly grog sellers in Lisle, but only two were prosecuted. Allegations of favouritism were rife. The Reverend A. Shaw in a letter in the "Examiner", complained that too much drinking was going on in the shantys. There was music and singing at all hours on Sundays. The favourite song was said to be "Marching through Georgia", and the letter bitterly complained that the men singing were badly out of tune.

30th. September. 1879.

The Reverend J. G. Greer conducted a service in Lisle. By this time the Main Street or Esplanade had been completely slabbed with timber. The residents of the town were seeking a school teacher. The illicit sale of sly grog was still causing a great deal of trouble.

14th. October. 1879.

The "Examiner" reported that a horse and gray had passed over the Sidling Road to Scottsdale for the first time. The road from Myrtle Bank to Scottsdale was in course of construction. From now on reports on Lisle became scarcer as it ceased to be news. By the end of 1879 mining was proceeding at a steady level. The yield of gold was 400 ounces per week, but this production was not maintained for long.

2nd. February. 1880.

Mr. Harry Sellars, ex boxing champion of Australia and his troupe were giving entertainment at Lisle to bumper houses. Proceeds of this entertainment were given by Harry Sellars to Mr. Connolly of the Governor Weld Hotel, who was the treasurer of the Irish Famine Relief Fund. Mr. Sellars was enthusiastically thanked and he donated a set of boxing gloves for use by the locals.

19th. November. 1880.

A letter to the "Examiner" stated that Lisle required a resident Justice of the Peace, and also a good road. Another request was that a Police Constable be stationed permanently at Lisle. A report stated that business was very slack and many miners were leaving.

30th. November. 1880.

A letter re bringing in water from the Little Forester River for sluicing purposes. It was stated that Christmas Sports would be held and that Commissioner Bernard Shaw would visit Lisle every two months.

24th. December. 1880.

The town livened up a great deal when Mr. Bevan gave a ball at the Lisle Hotel.

4th. January. 1881.

A report states : "Our Christmas vacation proved to be far more enjoyable than was at first anticipated and thanks to the open hospitality of hosts, Bevan, Titmus, Faulkner and O'Brien, our worthy publicans but not sinners, good cheer and plenty of it was had by all. Thanks to the good tact of Constable Murnane in breaking up fist fights, brawls, etc; no arrests were made and it is a matter of congratulation that it was not necessary to take any offenders twenty five miles to have justice meted out.

12th. July 1881.

The Commissioner of Goldfields, Mr. Bernard Shaw reported : "The yield of alluvial gold has greatly fallen off, and does not exceed an average of eighty ounces a week. Most of the shallow deposits in the creeks have been worked out and the principal mining is on the high ground. The population at the time the census was taken was 350 people of whom 185 were men. The number has since decreased."

5th. October. 1881.

"After the frightful dullness of many months past, the township was considerably enlivened by the visit of Beda, the one legged wonder. Beda opened opposite Titmus's All Nations Hotel and was well supported, nearly every man, woman and child flocking to see the performances which gave the utmost satisfaction." Note - It is not clear from the report exactly what Beda's performance was. A tea meeting and service was held in the Wesleyan Church. The proceeds of £10 are to be used to pay off the debt on the church. Seventy people attended and sat down to a meal supplied by Mr. Blay. The choir rendered the "Pilgrims Progress" and the choir leader was commended on a very fine effort.

Very little news of Lisle can be found in the "Examiner" from 1882 onwards. It would seem that most people had left the field when the boom was over. It is very difficult to find the names of many miners as only property owners are listed in the Government Gazettes of that time.

The following list is of property owners in Lisle in 1883. Many are well known names and have descendants in many parts of Northern Tasmania.

Frederick Benn - house & store.
 William Brooks - house.
 Charles Bessell - "
 Michael Bevan - Lisle Hotel.
 James Bond - boarding house.
 Bartholomew Bruen - house.
 John Cartledge - Store & Carpenters Shop.
 David Cunningham - house.
 Henry Davis - house.
 Peter & Robert Dudgeon - Bakers Shop & houses.
 Thomas Evans - house.
 Bartholomew Castalannelli - house.
 C.G.H. Furlonge - Post Office, Restaurant & Library.
 Edward Gunner. - house.
 John Fahey - house at Lisle & store at Golconda Goldfield.

John O'Brien - Governor Weld Hotel.
 William Titmus - All Nations Hotel.
 William Kidd - house.
 Edward Moore - Blacksmiths Shop.
 Thomas Moore - house, shop & licenced house.
 Thomas Faulkner - Post Office Hotel.
 Maxwell M'Cready - house.
 Henry Purcell - house.
 Thomas Proctor - bakers shop.
 Herbert Standage - store & house.
 Henry James Turner - house at Lisle but he was also the
 Mine Manager of the Lady Denison Gold Mining Company &
 also of the Sir William Denison Mine at Denison River.
 John Webster - house.
 Frederick Witt - house.
 Thomas Marshall - store & house.
 Charles Connolly - house. Former owner of the Governor
 Weld Hotel.
 Thomas Faulkner - Post Office Hotel.
 John Helbourne. - house
 Julius Dutton. - house.
 Thomas Kelly. - house.
 John Kelly. - house.
 John Langton. - house.
 Thomas Lockwood. - house.
 Thomas Maker. - house.
 Thomas Markham. - house.
 F.H. Mahnken. - house.
 George Urch. - house.
 William Wainwright. - house.
 Alfred Watts. - house.
 William Watts. - house.
 George Kemp. - house.

A sketch map of Lisle Diggin in its early days
 has been drawn and left by Mr. Charles Bessell, one of
 the discoverers of the goldfield. Several names not on
 the above list are on the land chart of the area. From
 the southeastern corner of the field there are Dawson,
 Elbourne or Helbourne, then Furlong's store and Post office.
 The Governor Weld **Hotel** and Shield's Drapery Store were
 by the pack track to Lilydale. On the right of the Main
 Street or Esplanade, were W. Gunner in the Police Residence;
 the dance hall; butcher and baker shops burnt down in 1888;
 then the Post Office Hotel of William Faulkner; All Nations
 Hotel of William Titmus and Michael Bevan's Lisle Hotel.
 By the Post Office Hotel the road turned to Myrtle Bank,
 passing the Church of England and other Chapels. On the
 right of the road is the Lisle Cemetery.

Further down the Esplanade were butcher, baker and
 and General Store. The road continued north past a market
 garden; a skittle alley and the Police Camp. Due west across
 the Lisle Creek was the sports ground and cricket pitch.
 The road continued north, one branch to Golconda Goldfield
 and the other to Lisle Road later Nabowla.

The land chart shows agricultural blocks in the
 names of William and Alfred Watts; Patrick Cashman; William
 Faulkner; William Vincent; C.G.H. Furlong and several members
 of the Bessell brothers. The streets of Lisle running west
 to the Esplanade were Phillips; Lord; Faulkner and Furlong.
 Several streets appear to have been un-named. There was
 a road leading to Myrtle Bank; a pack track to Lilydale
 and a track leading to the Lone Star Goldfield.

The following report on Lisle appeared in the Hobart "Mercury" on 26th. September 1883, written by their "Own correspondent."

I have little to report about this locality. The alluvial is being gradually but surely worked out and only those who have the command of water are doing any good. These may continue to get fair returns for years to come, but sooner or later a spirited company will secure all the water rights and go in for sluicing the whole Lisle Valley, from the gorge southwards and I believe in that way more gold will be got out of it than it has yet yielded. This is a matter well worth consideration of the capitalists.

The fact is a great part of the ground has been mullocked over by parties unaccustomed to the work and this was especially the case when the field was first discovered. Of course it is now impossible to say where the ground has been properly worked or where not, but nothing would escape a strong party having command of all the water in the creek and systematically ground sluicing the whole area. The operation should be carried on during the wet season.

But though Lisle is not in a flourishing condition as regards its gold returns, it has I believe a grand future before it as the centre of a large agricultural district. For miles around there is good, well watered land to be had, but the scrub is dense and roads wanting. No doubt as soon as the Scottsdale Railroad is completed, or even determined upon, the track from here to Golconda, and thence to Denison, will be converted into a road, and it may be done at comparatively trifling expense. The prospect of a road through the district would at once lead to all available land being taken up, and our township would soon resume its former importance.

The Government doubtless recognises the importance of inducing immigrants to settle on the land rather than congregate about the towns, and in order to effect this, I would again urge that a preliminary survey of the land into small blocks should at once be ordered. It seems absurd to expect that newcomers will look for land in dense bush without roads or information of any sort. The object should be to get small blocks taken up by bonafide settlers. A fifty acre block is as much as a working man with a little capital should in prudence take up and fifty acres well cleared will give better returns than thrice the quantity cleared in a slovenly.

6th. December. 1883.

From the "Examiner" files. Post Office Hotel at Lisle. At the Licensing Court in Launceston it was stated that this Hotel was not always well conducted in the absence of the landlord, who was often away. The landlord was warned to conduct the hotel better in the future.

As previously stated, after the boom years the gold output tapered off and many miners and trades people left the field. All the hotels were closed by the middle 1880's, except the Post Office Hotel of William Faulkner. This hotel finally closed its doors in 1906. Always there was the hope that the existence of a rich lode would be proved and much time and money was spent in vain trying to locate the source of the alluvial gold.

By September 1894, Mr. Montgomery, the Government Geologist reported that the population was only about thirty miners with all activity centered on alluvial mining. In 1899 a Launceston company, the Lisle Dredging company was formed to work the Main Creek deposits on the eastern flank of the valley. A total of 1605 ounces of gold was recovered from this operation over the period between 1901 and 1904.

In 1909, Mr. Twelvetrees, a Geologist reported:---
 "The present output as reported to the Department of Mines is from 30 to 40 ounces per month, but there is reason to believe that it is slightly in excess of this." At this time thirteen claims or leases were being actively worked giving employment to 23 men.

Later efforts by Hobart companies to work the Main Creek deposits by the New Bonanza Gold Mining Company and the deposits along Bessell's and Thomas Creeks by the Lisle Hydraulic Gold Mines were largely unsuccessful. The recorded production from the latter company was 1349 fine ounces, found between 1914 and 1918.

Over recent years activity on the Lisle Goldfield has been restricted to individuals or small parties prospecting or working small claims on a part time basis. Gold is still being obtained in small amounts in the northern portion of the valley but it is unlikely that any large unworked pockets remain.

In recent years I was fortunate to meet and become friends with Mr. George Bessell of Malabar Street, Launceston. George, the son of Alfred Bessell, one of the discoverers of Lisle had a great knowledge of the history of the place and much of the information I have gathered was supplied by him. Sadly George died on Xmas Eve 1983 aged 83 years.

The following notes of interest are taken from a taped interview with Mr. George Bessell in September 1975.

"My memory of Lisle is that there were about 100 people living there. This would be about 1910. There was a general grocery store owned by a man named Hudson, who afterwards operated a sawmill in Lisle for some years. My father Alfred Bessell was the only butcher in the township. Later on G.E. Smith & Sons of Lisle Road (Nabowla) used to deliver stores twice a week to the local people."

"In the very early days travelling from Launceston to Lisle, people went through Patersonia or Myrtle Bank. There was pack track down over the hills to Lisle which was about nine miles and after that went through Golconda on the Golconda track and later through Lisle Road. The road down Myrtle Bank was terrible - it was said to have been formed by rolling a keg of beer down the hill."

"There is a burial ground at Lisle, but the last time I was there it was covered by trees and scrub. There were some iron fences around a few graves. The cemetery is on the old town road to Myrtle Bank. Quite a few of the early residents were buried there including two of my young brothers who died before I was born. There were fourteen in my father's family. One of my older brothers was killed in action in World War One."

"Some of the pioneers built big houses and cut all the timber with a pit saw.-- My father built a nine roomed house for his family---."

" I went to school at Glenore; one of my sisters married a French and I lived with her because the school closed at Lisle. Afterwards when I was about twelve years old, it opened again and I went back to my parents. The Lisle School building was later brought to Prospect as a classroom and is still there. I think that it is called Summerdale now."

" There was a family of Watts lived in Lisle -there were eight sons and they were all very big men. Mrs. Watts was the first woman to arrive on the Lisle Goldfield from Victoria. Her little boy and girl were the first children there. The little girl died and was the first burial in the local cemetery."

"As in most pioneering communities several tragedies occurred. Those that come to mind are the deaths of William Gunner, killed by a fall of earth and William Hayes, killed at Cradle Creek. Richard Cummins was also killed by a fall of earth and Henry Lette, killed falling a tree."

George Bessell also said that much of the money gained from the alluvial gold was spent in searching for the source. He said some of the miners made a lot of money but many more nearly starved. George was a miner for some years in both Tasmania and Victoria but later moved to Launceston for employment.

Mr. Roy Partridge of Scottsdale has many recollections of Lisle in the 1920's and thirties. He recalls attending dances there when he lived at Nabowla. Some of his most pleasant memories are of cricket matches in which he played with visiting teams against Lisle. He also tells some interesting stories of the people he knew there.

A few people remained living in Lisle and the last residents departed in 1960. The whole area has been given over to an extensive reforestation programme by the Tasmanian Government. No houses now stand in Lisle and the valley is deserted except by timber workers, a few prospectors and those people who seek out and enjoy the peace and beauty of the place.

The former town is now easily accessible from Patersonia, Nabowla and Golconda. It is said that the right time to visit Lisle is when the Xmas bush is blooming. A drive down the old road from Myrtle Bank is most interesting going past the now neglected and lonely cemetery. On arrival in Lisle, boil the billy for a cup of tea, burn the grease off a miners dish in the hot ashes of the fire, then step into the blackberry lined creek and fill the dish with gravel wash.

Swirl the dish gently and empty out the gravel. Then look carefully into the dish for those bright specks of gold dust that the old miners failed to gather during their labours more than one hundred years ago.

From Mining Reports 1910 until 1943.

- 5th. January. 1910. Golconda's New Panama last fortnight extended No. 3 level 10 feet. Total tunnel length 562 feet. Repaired tram road tunnel where it crosses soft granite.
- 8th. January. 1910. Tunnel 596 feet. Hoping to cut No. 1 Reef. Leaders every 3 or 4 feet carrying gold and pyrites.
- 3rd. February. 1910. Golden Pyramid Mine at Golconda being reopened. (Probably means the Golden Crest Mine.)
- 12th. March. 1910. Prospecting at Denison Field on Hill's section, most encouraging. (Alacrity Mine.)
- 16th. March. 1910. Shaft being sunk on Wyena Field. Also called Lebrina Mine and Sequel Mine.
- 16th. April. 1910. Contract being let for the removal of the winding at the New Wiangatta Mine. (Denison.)
- 16th. April. 1910. From Weekly Review. Goldfields of the State are flat as pancakes. For several weeks there was a stir at Wyena (Lebrina Mine.), but last week operations were suspended.
- 19th. April. 1910. Denison. New Wiangatta Gold Mining Coy., has taken over West Wiangatta Mine, now called the Globe Section. Prospect shaft about 70 feet.
- 1st. June. 1910. Production at Lisle and Golconda 20 ounces.
- 7th. September. 1910. Re-erecting machinery from the West Wiangatta Mine at the Globe Section.
- 17th. September. 1910. Lisle Field Alluvial. Prospectors have proved 40 to 50 acres, but capital is required to remove sandstone bar. Already a million pounds of gold has been taken. Remove the bar and get the same again. Reported that the air in the Panama Mine is very bad. CO₂. Particularly bad when the north east winds blow.
- 25th. October. 1910. Prospecting between Tobacco and Cradle Creeks. Very good prospects reported.
- 5th. January. 1911. Work at Waterhouse. Main shaft at the Alliance unwatered and drives in good order. Reef carrying one ounce to the ton, confirming reports of twenty years ago. Railway shaft cleaned and drives put in order.
- 6th. February. 1911. Golden Pyramid (Crest) at Golconda still struggling but only getting 4 dwt to the ton. Drive has run into old workings. Lisle being prospected by Wills & Cash. North outlet bar to be removed.
- 7th. June. 1911. Lebrina mined being prospected at the Splitters Lode.

11th.November.1911.

Work on the New Alliance at Waterhouse. Also reports on Beaconsfield, Lefroy, Back Creek and prospecting between Pipers Brook and Pipers River.

1913.

All through this year optimistic reports on the Golden Pyramid, Golconda and Lebrina Mines. Lisle Field completely out of the news in 1913, 1914 & 1915.

3rd.May.1916.

The source of the alluvial gold believed to have been located. Major Dunn, a well known prospector having lived at Lisle for a couple of years, devoted his time to the search and reckons to have traced it to the foothills of Mt. Arthur. 960 acres in the Lisle Valley have been taken up.

15th.May.1916.

A lot of claims being pegged. 26 sections to date. One group on the north fall of Mt. Arthur near the head of the Lone Star Creek. Mr. Dunn forming a syndicate. Rumoured that it may be capitalised at £50,000.

26th.July.1916.

Golden Crest at Golconda still working. The tunnel is now 394 feet long.

16th.March.1917.

Mr. Pearson of Pearsons Golconda Gold Mine has now acquired the Lebrina Mine. The battery is completed except for the electrical plant which is being installed.

21st.March.1917.

Golconda Golden Crest having some very high payable assays.

1st.May.1917.

Lisle prospecting on the west boundary of the valley on 120 acres most promising.

14th.July.1917.

Mr. Crombie the new manager of the Golden Crest Mine at Golconda.

23rd.October.1917.

The Golden Crest is half an hours walk from the Golconda Railway Station. The chief entrance to the mine is by a main drive. The battery belongs to Pearsons of the Enterprise Mine and includes 10 by 950 pounds stampers capable of crushing 40 tones of stone every 24 hours. Driven by a 40 horsepower Gardner engine which also lights the mine and battery. A tramway runs from the mine to the battery. Mr. Dutton is manager of the battery.

22nd.January.1918.

An extra ten stamper battery is being erected at the Golden Crest and it is intended to work three shifts.

28th.July.1918.

Lisle is being resurrected. A report says that Messrs. Gibbs and Bessell found it, although T. Lamont got gold there many years before, but he was killed prospecting. A million pounds worth of gold came from Lisle and one third of the money was spent on good working men with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow, as wages.

17th.September.1920.

Mt. Brown at Panama in the news. Dr. Grey-Thompson advised of good prospects there. Prospectors have been seeking a reef there for forty years. The mine is in the

basin at the base of Mt. Brown, two miles south west of the Golconda Railway Station.

16th. May. 1921.

Gold found near Myrtle Bank.

16th. July. 1921.

An interesting letter in the "Examiner" by "Gumsucker" who has been chasing gold for fifty seven years. He argued in support of the Mines Department Geologist Thureau's belief that Lisle gold came, not from the surrounding hills but was due to an invasion of the sea.

26th. September. 1921.

The Panama Mine showed good prospects in an area previously explored by Parson's Tunnel.

21st. October. 1921.

Gold found at Linton's property on the Forester River at South Springfield.

1926. The mines at Denison, Golconda and Panama all closed. The next reports are of a great deal of prospecting in 1931 at Lisle, Golconda and Panama. These Reports continued for several years.

11th. October. 1935.

Attempts were being made to re-open the Alacrity Mine at Denison. 400 tons of ore mentioned.

1936. Mining at Cradle Creek and Lisle.

1937. Reports on the Denison Field by Wallis, Floyd and Lee, who were working there. Water causing a great deal of trouble in the Alacrity Mine.

1938. Mining at Cradle Creek.

1940. Another attempt to open the Alacrity Mine on the Denison River. Alluvial gold found at Waterhouse and Alberton.

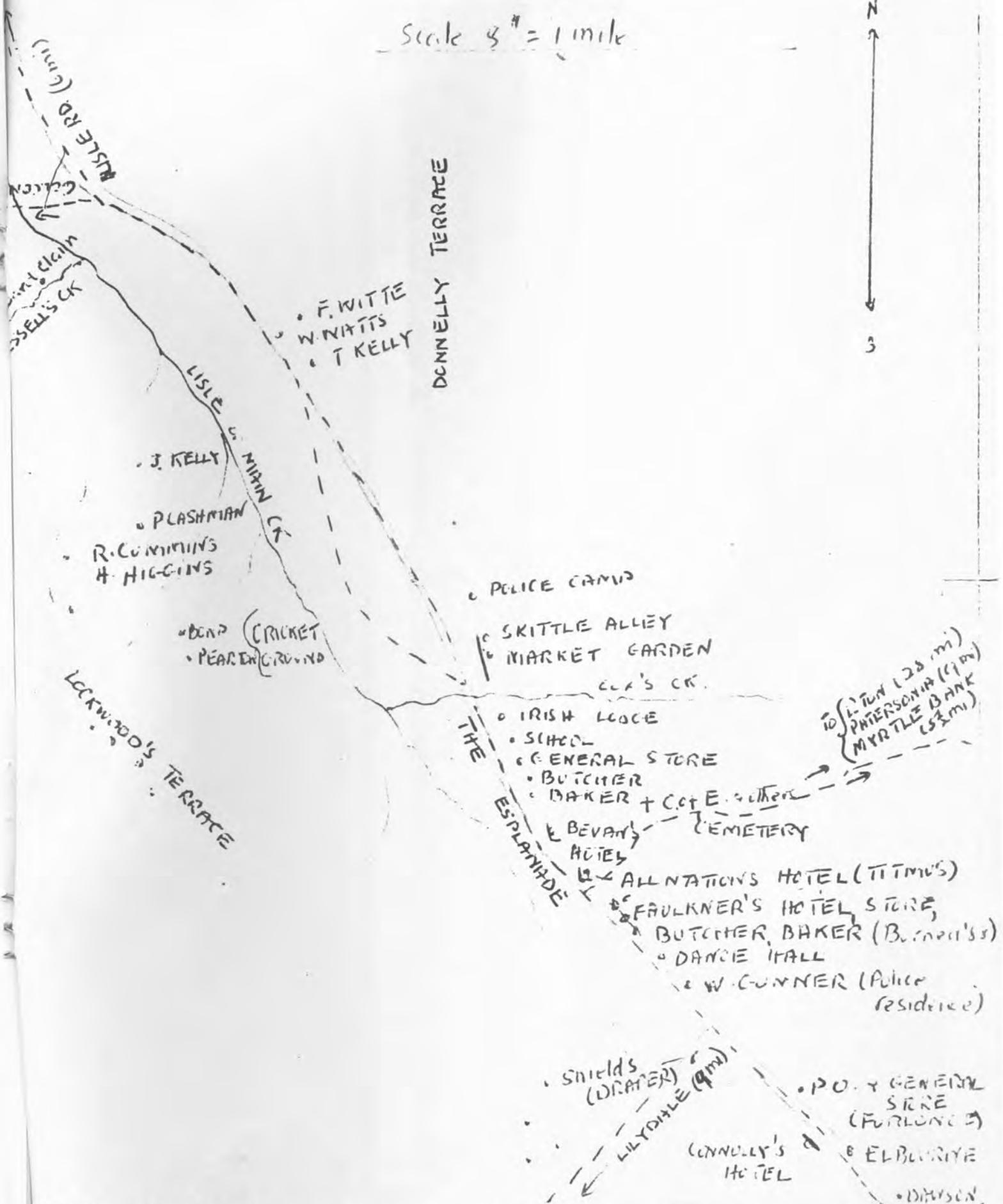
1941. Mt. Stronach - Molydenite. New River Gold and much prospecting at Waterhouse.

1943. Prospecting continues at Lisle, Denison & Golconda. The Lisle basin still proving profitable.

From here on reports on Lisle, Denison, Panama and Golconda appear to cease. Most of the reports are on Mathinna, Mt. Lyell and Lefroy.

It would also appear that in the late 1940's few miners or prospectors were available for work in these goldfields. Other work becoming available both occupations cease to be news and no reports appear. It would also seem from the reports that several very good crushing batteries and other mining machinery from the Golconda Goldfields were sold cheaply to scrap metal merchants in Launceston.

Scale 8" = 1 mile



KETCH OF EARLY LISLE DIGGINGS (as recalled by Mr. Chas. Bessell)