

a day of infamy:

# Sunday 30 June 1861

Sundays were the time when trouble tended to happen at the Lambing Flat diggings.

On the miners' day of rest, ringleaders could rely on a good turnout for their rallies and occasional sorties against the Chinese on the field.

This mid-winter Sunday was not the first time Chinese miners had been driven off their claims here in **BLACKGUARD GULLY**. It was however the most brutal of the affrays.

The conflict that day later led to a civil uprising by the European miners against the authorities only rivalled in our country before or since by the Eureka Stockade rebellion. It also ushered in political reforms that took a major step towards the White Australia Policy.



**SYDNEY MORNING HERALD**  
**LAMBING FLAT. [From our special commissioner.] Sunday, 11 p.m.**

It was pretty generally known that a roll up would take place to-day against the Chinese. Between 10 and 11 o'clock, at Tipperary Gully, the muster took place. Upwards of 1000 men, most of them armed with bludgeons or pick handles, headed by a band, and carrying several large flags, one inscribed with the words, "Roll up on Chinese!" formed into procession, and marched into Lambing Flat.

On reaching the town several unfortunate Chinese were observed, and a general rush at them took place. The Chinese took to their heels, but to no purpose, for they were caught, and several of them had their pig-tails cut off, and were otherwise maltreated.

The mob, now between 2000 and 3000, and made for the camp of the Chinese, who were working inside the boundary set apart for them. The Chinese having taken flight, upwards of forty tents were burned down, and all property of every kind destroyed. They then proceeded to the ground where the Chinese were working, and destroyed all the windlasses and tools they could find, throwing them down the shafts.

After proceeding about a quarter of a mile, they again halted. Several shots were fired, it was then proposed they should proceed to Back Creek, a distance of six miles, where several hundred Chinese were working, which was reached in about two hours.

The Chinese had obtained information of their approach, and having packed up everything they possibly could to carry away, made a hasty retreat. Tents by scores were set on fire, rice and stores of all kinds destroyed, butchers' shops filled with meat, set on fire.

For a distance of half a mile, the burning tents showed the work of destruction. Not content with this, some men on horseback proceeded forward and overtook the Chinese some 1200. They rounded them up the same as they would a mob of cattle, struck them with their bludgeons and whips, and made them leave all their swags.

And now ensued a scene that defies description. Six or seven immense fires were made with clothing of all descriptions, stores, rice, blankets, boots, a large quantity of them quite new, being heaped together and set on fire; men with picks and axes destroyed everything that would not burn.

Having destroyed and burnt all they possibly could, they again formed into procession and returned to Lambing Flat, which was reached about half past 5 p.m. A report being spread that three men had been arrested for abusing the Chinese, the mob determined to proceed to the camp to release them.

And what did the authorities do?—nothing; because there was no force at all adequate to cope with such an excited mass of men. When the military were ordered to leave here, I forwarded you a telegram that I thought the Government could not possibly have been in the possession of the general state of this place, for I felt certain that until the Chinese question was settled their presence was absolutely necessary.

Many laughed at my assertions, and wished to make it appear they were unfounded. These proceedings confirm my statement, and more, I may add that another and greater roll up, I expect, will take place ere long.

As a result of the authorities' inability to effectively police the diggings, allied with strong political support for anti-Chinese sentiment from key politicians, Chinese miners at Lambing Flat had by April 1861 had been removed from their original claims.

A restricted zone here in **BLACKGUARD GULLY** was sectioned off, a place where the Chinese were allowed to mine on the field. Even this was too much for the European miners who wanted them expelled altogether.

The political response to the riots was swift and effective. In the wake of 1000 miners attacking a police lockup and releasing three men arrested over the attack, martial law was declared and the troops sent in to restore order.

Popular opinion in both Sydney and regional NSW saw fit to blame the Chinese for the whole affair on the basis that their presence had inflamed a peaceful community to riotous acts. Legislation to restrict Chinese to goldfields no one else wanted was passed as was a bill to effectively end Chinese immigration through the levy of a severe entry tax.



## A safe haven

Many miners, pastoralists and general community members alike were appalled by the racial violence directed towards the Chinese. On the wet winter's night after they were expelled from their campsites at Blackguard Gully and Back Creek, hundreds of Chinese travelled the 20 km to gain refuge at James Roberts' **CURRAWONG STATION** to the south, near Murrumburrah.

Describing this event the Sydney Morning Herald correspondent noted several days later that "they made for Roberts' Station, distant about twelve miles from this place, perfectly destitute. Mr. Roberts supplied them with flour, beef, and what clothing he possibly could. Many were seriously injured; two lay there in a very dangerous state, and are not expected to recover. Some three or four are missing.

"Up to the present time no measures appear to have been taken by the authorities for the arresting of the leaders of this diabolical outrage. It is openly stated by many on this goldfield that another roll up is to take place against the Chinese at Wombat, and the storekeepers who have supplied the Chinese with stores. I have been over a great part of these fields since Sunday, and so far as I can learn the general feeling is sympathy for the unfortunate Chinese."

In the NSW Parliament several months later, Mr. J Wilson expressed his outrage over the actions of the rioters noting that Lambing Flat was "situated in one of the most inclement parts of New South Wales, and that in the middle of winter hundreds of those unfortunate individuals, without covering, food, or shelter, were driven off into the wilds to live or die as they might. The action could not be that of an Englishman".



星期天往往是兰明低地矿区 (Lambing Flat) 最麻烦的时刻。趁着矿工的休息日, 滋事分子可以聚集更多的人到矿区进行他们的反华活动。这个隆冬的星期天并不是华人矿工第一次被赶离他们在巴力克内 (Blackguard Gully) 获准开采的矿场, 却是众多暴乱中最惨重的一次。这次冲突所引发的欧洲矿工反政府的民间暴动足可与多年前的尤里卡叛乱事件比拟。这也导致日后的政改更进一步迈向白澳政策。

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