

**THE HISTORY OF WOOD'S POINT.
GAFFNEY'S CREEK AND JERICHO
BY G. R. M.
DISCOVERY OF GAFFNEY'S CREEK
AND WOOD'S POINT**

Early in the year 1879 some of the most energetic and enterprising of the Victorian gold miners had prospected up the Goulburn river, from Jamieson to the foot of Flour Bag hill, about twelve miles up the river as you follow its windings. At this time the ranges were almost unknown, and were believed to be covered with snow for eight months of the year, and though the existence of alluvial gold in the creeks, and quartz gold in the mountains, was presumed whether it was payable was not even guessed at, as it was supposed to be an impossibility to prospect for gold in the lofty, snow covered, barren ranges, which are the water sheds of the Goulburn and Yarra Yarra rivers. Prospecting along the Goulburn river many rich patches of alluvial gold were found, and a party of four miners Tom T. Gaffney, Tom Gaffney, known as red and black Tom, respectively, from the color of their hair, Fred Gilgley, and Jim Garvey pushed their way up the river far into the mountains, till it was joined by a beautiful fern lined creek, the crystal waters of which ran bubbling along its pebbly bed as rapid as a mill stream. On each side the mountains were high and almost perpendicular, as is the nature of the country along the Goulburna river, from the Flour Bag hill up; but here the country was wilder than ever, and though the scenery was magnificent, its still, gloomy, shadowy nature tended, with the small means limited provisions, and the difficulty of getting anything from Jamieson, then a petty hamlet, to cast a gloom on every member of the hardy band. As it was evening the fire was lighted, and after a supper of damper and tea the four men

gathered around the blaze to consult on the course to be pursued on the morrow; provisions are running short, and could only be saved from the long haired rats which then swarmed in the ranges, by being swung by a rope from a horizontal bar; the wild dogs and opossums were howling and squealing around the camp, attracted by the fire, and the only other animals in the ranges, the bears and wombats were too lazy to leave their haunts for a sight of the strangers. The spirits of the party were depressed, and the council was short, the principal speaker being red Tom, who was for going up the creek, and as the others 'didn't care,' they went. After three days, travelling up the creek they came upon gold, prospect after prospect was washed with improving results, claims were marked out, and two of the party were sent to register and bring more stores; in nine days they returned, after having registered their claims at Kilmore, which was then the nearest mining registrar's office, with provisions, and several other parties of miners, and operations were commenced systematically. The prospectors now applied to the Government for the reward for finding a new goldfield, and Mr. Cobben, a superintendent of police was sent up to report after having inspected the creek, which was now called Gaffney's Creek, after the two leading prospectors—Cobben reported favorably on its auriferous nature, and recommended that the prospectors receive the reward. Directly the report was made known the place was rushed by miners from all parts of the colony, and in less than a fortnight there was between 800 and a 1000 miners on the creek, and the prospectors were forced to wash a paddock of dirt, which only yielded a few penny weights of gold, to the disgust and rage of the assembled, who raged against Cobben and the prospectors for bringing them into the ranges on a fool's errand. Nearly everyone on the creek prepared to leave, and it

one on the creek prepared to leave, and it was proposed to search for the prospectors who were hidden in the scrub and lynch them; wiser council however prevailed, and in less than three weeks; about 1000 miners had come to and gone from Gaffney's Creek all of whom pronounced Superintendent Cobben and the prospectors swindlers. The reward was withheld from the prospectors, and the superintendent fell into disgrace; he insisted nevertheless on the correctness of his report, "because," as he said, "a lot of miners could not find payable gold in a few days it didn't prove there was no payable gold to be found," which turned out to be the case, for in a few weeks the prospectors and the few men who had remained were getting splendid gold, and a steady flow of miners set in, who worked perseveringly with various success, some getting as much as 90ozs of gold to the paddock. In the end of 1860 a prosperous town was formed on Gaffney's Creek many of the difficulties of getting to Jamieson were overcome, and provisions, though fetching

tabulous prices, for instance flour £12 per bag had fallen fully 25 per cent. Townships sprung up on Raspberry creek and Snob's point each about a mile and a half from Gaffney's creek, and prospecting parties were sent out in every direction. Three of the prospectors Black Tom Gaffney, Fred Gilgley and Jim Garvey, had left the place and fourth, Tom T. Gaffney, now applied for the Government reward, and obtained £250. T. T. Gaffney as one of the party who found the creek and the only one who thoroughly believed in its being payable and stuck to it through thick and thin, may safely be said to be the discoverer and real prospector of Gaffney's Creek, which was the first township ever established in the ranges. In the end of 1860 several parties

of prospectors from Gaffney's Creek cut their way, for, as the scrub generally along the banks of the river was so thick that it was only literally by cutting their way with a tomahawk they could proceed up the Goulburn River, and found about sixteen miles below Wood's Point, as you follow the windings of the Goulburn, some good alluvial in the river. They made a small settlement which they called the burnt camp, and storekeepers following up the miners, as was their rule, took a short cut across the ranges to the burnt camp, amongst them Mr. T. Cherry, the leading partner in the firm of Cherry and Griffith's storekeepers, of Jamieson. Mr. Cherry started about October 1860, with seven pack horses loaded with stores and a driver from Jamieson, to the Burnt Camp by Gaffney's. At this time the only means of transport was on horseback, as it was impossible to bring even a bullock dray to Gaffney's. In due time Mr. Cherry reached Gaffney's Creek and then took a short cut across the ranges for the Burnt Camp, and seven days after leaving Jamieson camped on a spur about 120 yards below the Goulburn junction, which is the meeting of two small creeks called the left and right hand branch, and the commencement of the Goulburn river. The spur was afterwards called Wood's Point, from a Yankee storekeeper named Harry Woods who commenced business there some months after; so, though Wood's Point was not then named, it was found by Cherry. Next day Cherry sent back the man with the horses for goods, and for each of the six following days searched up and down the river for the burnt camp, which was afterwards found to be sixteen miles lower down the river. Cherry being unable to find the burnt camp, determined to find a more suitable place for his goods, believing the miners would work their way up to him. Next day he selected a spur, bounded on three sides by the Goulburn river, which is now known as Cherry's spur. After having camped on the spur and spent

After having camped on the spur and spent thirteen days alone in these, then desolate mountains, he was passed by two packers, whom he directed down the river, and who found the Burnt Camp that night; twenty-four hours after the packers reached the Burnt Camp, all Cherry's goods were sold to the miners coming up the river, and Cherry then walked back to Jamieson, which was about 40 miles by the mountain track, to see why more goods had not been sent, and in fourteen days returned with more loaded pack horses. Three days after he had been camped, Joseph Corry, Dittimer Brehens, and Petter Curran passed in the morning up the river with a pack horse, and camped about 150 yards up the left hand branch of the Goulburn river. While they were putting up the tent the horse strayed away, and Joseph Corry, who was commonly known as Reedy Creek Joe, was sent to look for him. Corry followed the horse tracks up the hill, to the right of the camp, which is known as the Morning Star Hill, and while returning with the horses found some very rich specimens, from which he selected one about the size of an ordinary brick which contained several ounces of gold. He then turned back, but as it was getting so dark he could hardly get along he hid the specimen behind a log, and getting back to camp told his mates of the find. Next morning they all started in search of the place where the specimen was found, and though the specimen selected by Corry was not found for several months afterwards, numbers of others, some of which were very rich, were easily found on the surface. They now set to work, and marked out a three men's prospecting quartz claim, packed up their traps and hastened to Kilmore to register; on their way they passed Cherry, whom they told of their find, and who immediately marked out two claims north and adjoining the prospectors' claims which are known as Cherry's. In a few weeks Corry and party returned to open up their find, accompanied by Colin M'Dougall, who was

accompanied by Colin M'Dougall, who was taken by them as a mate; shortly after Cherry returned with a party and a general rush set in, principally, however, in the direction of the creeks, which proved to be very rich in alluvial, and Wood's Point, though only known as the Upper Goulburn township, became a busy settlement; Corry and party, which now included Colin Mac-Dougall, commenced to open up their reef, and after thoroughly testing the quartz decided to erect machinery. A machine was therefore ordered, no part of which was to weigh more than 150lbs, the whole to weigh about 6½ tons, and Colin M'Dougall went to Jamieson to get it packed up, but though he offered more than the ordinary rate of carriage, which was £35 a ton from Jamieson, he was unable to get any packers to undertake the task, so difficult was it deemed to be. Things now seemed to be in a fix, the packers who knew the ranges refused to bring up the machinery, asserting that it was impossible, so M'Dougall had only one course left, namely to bring it himself, which he did. Up to this time the party were crushing the quartz by manual labor, and as it was immensely rich they made enough to pay all current expenses, which were heavy. In the winter of 1862, while the snow covered everything, the first machinery ever brought to or erected in the ranges, commenced to crush, and from the first crushing of 150 tons of stone yielded 1,500 odd ounces of gold, or a little more than 10 ounces to the ton; subsequently crushings were equally good. By this time rich quartz had been opened up on Cherry's claim, and a trial crushing was made at the Prospectors, which yielded 10 ounces to the ton, on the strength of which Cherry put up machinery, and obtained splendid crushings, and in the beginning of 1863 more machinery was erected by other claims on the Morning Star Hill, which

rising township, slowly but surely developing its resources by the energy of the mining population, altogether without any aid from outside.

began to yield well, and as the alluvial claims had been giving splendid yields since early in 1861, Wood's Point, as the district now known, began to be thought as one of the most rising and prosperous of the mining townships in Victoria. In quick succession very rich alluvials and reefs were found, first the Loch Fyne reef, then B. B. Creek, the richest creek for its size in the colony, next the Jordan, on which Jerico was established, then the All Nations, the Royal Standard, the Leviathan, and other celebrated lines of reef. Claims, quartz and alluvial, were marked out on every side, and fetched fabulous prices; shares in the duffer claims, in many cases, fetching as much as shares in the richest. People seemed to think that the ranges teemed with gold, which was not after all so improbable, as it was only natural to suppose that all the gold bearing reefs and creeks could not be found in four years, which seemed the case, as, since 1865 no auriferous reefs or creeks of importance have been found. In 1865 Wood's Point was in the height of its glory, and the centre of a prosperous mining community, Jerico, and numerous other small settlements on one side; the Gaffney district on the other; the Standard and Leviathan on the third; roads were opened up; four churches were built; law courts and police station were put up; a commodious hospital was erected; a borough formed; two newspapers established; and last, not least, seventeen publichouses, besides numerous shanties, were in full swing. Had people only invested their money with justice and caution, Wood's Point would be equally as thriving to-day; but those who made money in the district as a rule spent it out of the district, and those who lost money in the district gave it a bad name; so the Wood's Point of to-day is a struggling, but again, a rising township, slowly but surely develop-