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Glossary words
When a word is printed in bold, click on it to find its meaning.
There were very few children living on the goldfields in the early days of the ‘rushes’ in Australia. Most were left behind when their fathers rushed off to seek their fortunes. Women and children began to arrive once diggers had settled in a particular area and shops, schools and hospitals had opened.

For children growing up on goldfields like Hill End in New South Wales, Mount Alexander in Victoria, Charters Towers in Queensland and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, the experience was very different to life in more established towns and cities.

Growing up on the goldfields

In this book you can:

- **LEARN** about the daily home life of children during the gold rushes
- **LOOK AT** what they wore
- **FIND OUT** what they learnt at school and how they did their lessons
- **READ** about what games they liked to play
- **SEE** what toys and pets were popular in those days.
Families arrive at the goldfields

In the early days of the gold rushes, diggers were usually single men who lived alone or shared their simple tent or hut with a few mates. When women and children finally arrived, they were greeted with great excitement.

Making homes comfortable

With families to care for, diggers worked hard to improve their living conditions. They added fireplaces to their tents and wooden floors to make their homes more comfortable. Some men built new houses out of bark or timber.

Many people thought that the presence of families would make the diggings more respectable. Tents were neater. There was less drinking and swearing.

Ellen Clacy, who visited the Victorian goldfields in the 1850s, wrote that she could always tell when a digger’s wife had joined him:

There are sheets as well as blankets on the beds, and perhaps a clean counterpane, with the addition of a dry sack or piece of carpet on the ground; whilst a pet cockatoo, chained to a perch, makes noise enough to keep the ‘missus’ from feeling lonely when the good man is at work.

(counterpane – bedspread)

Sadly, some women never heard from their husbands or fathers again. Some men were killed in accidents, while others lost what little money they had and were too ashamed to go home.

Babies and young children

As diggers were mostly young men with young families, the goldfields soon became places where there were lots of babies and small children. Everyday life could be very difficult for mothers. They had to cope with living in tents, cooking in the open and making do with what food was available. Far away from family and friends, they had no one to turn to for advice.

Golden stories

Arrival at Mount Alexander

In 1851, Mary and her mother were among the first women to arrive at the Mount Alexander diggings in Victoria. When diggers saw them they shouted, ‘A petticoat! A petticoat!’ and rushed towards them. After Mary and her mother had listened to their cheers and shaken as many hands as possible, the diggers built them a hut to live in.

Remembering a daughter

The parents of this little girl had her photograph taken so they could remember her after she died.

Despite the hardships, women like Emily Skinner in Golden Stories went on to have large families. It was quite common to have six or seven children. Sadly, not all lived. On the Victorian goldfields in the 1860s, three out of every 20 babies died.
Day-to-day living

Household chores and meals
The daily life of a digger’s family started early. Parents and children had a simple breakfast of damper and tea with perhaps a grilled chop or other meat left from the night before.

Once the family had eaten, there were lots of chores to be done. Boys chopped wood and stacked it by the fire. Girls helped their mothers with housework. On Mondays, all the family’s clothes and linen had to be washed. On other days there would be cleaning, cooking, shopping and sewing to be done. Even little children were expected to help.

Main meals
Many families had their main meal in the middle of the day. This might be a stew cooked in a pot over the fire or meat hung in front of the flames and roasted. If their father was working far from home, children took a meal to him. In the evening, there would be another meal of meat, damper and tea. Light came from candles or kerosene lamps. After supper there might be games or stories before it was time for bed. Few goldfields’ homes had more than one or two rooms. All the children slept in the one room and often in the same bed.

Bathing and dressing
Getting dressed was simple. Children slept in a nightshirt or their underwear. After a quick wash of faces and hands in a basin of cold water, they put on the clothes they had worn the day before. Most children only had two or three sets of clothes. They had some for everyday and another set of ‘best’ clothes for Sundays.

Golden stories
The Ennis sisters
On the Bendigo diggings in Victoria, the three Ennis sisters had to look after their father’s horses. Every evening, Jenny, aged eleven, Kitty, nine and Lizzy, six, rode out looking for grass for the horses to eat. Leaving them behind they walked home. In the morning, the girls went back to find the horses, gathering firewood on the way. They also searched for gold, earning about £1 a week each from finds of small nuggets and gold specks.

What is it worth now?
Altogether the Ennis sisters made about £3 a week, which would buy as much as $372 today.

Bathing in a tin tub
Children had a bath once a week on Saturday night. With a kettle over the fire heating the water, the whole family lined up to take turns washing away the week’s dirt in a tin tub. If they were lucky, the tub was set up in front of the fire where it was warm. They then put on clean underclothes. On Sunday morning they all put on their best clothes.
How children dressed

Girls’ clothes

Girls dressed in a similar style to their mothers with the only difference being in the length of their hair and their dresses. Young girls kept both quite short.

In the 1850s and 1860s, the fashion was for girls’ dresses to have tight waists and full skirts. They wore a chemise (similar to a singlet) underneath and white cotton petticoats and pantaloons. Pantaloons were similar to underpants, with long legs that reached down to the ankles, and they were often trimmed with lace. Under their pantaloons, girls wore brightly coloured striped stockings with hard-wearing leather boots on their feet.

When they went out, girls put on a short cape or jacket and a hat. Their hats were decorated with flowers and feathers and tied under the chin with pretty coloured ribbons.

Golden stories

Rachel Henning

In 1861, Rachel Henning visited her sister and her family in Bathurst. She wrote home to another sister in England with a detailed description of her young nieces’ somewhat old-fashioned clothes:

“They were sitting at tea when I came in and seemed quite delighted to see me … They are very neatly dressed in crimson French Merino dresses, made high with long sleeves for the winter, and white pinafores of the old shape; they wear little cloth jackets out of doors and brown felt hats – a broad shape not turned up.”

(French Merino – type of woolen material)

Dress from the 1850s

A young girl wore this blue and white silk check dress in the 1850s. She wore stiff petticoats underneath and pantaloons.

Boys’ clothes

As babies and young children, boys dressed in almost exactly the same clothes as girls. They also wore their hair long, so that it was often difficult to tell if a child was a boy or girl. Parents often referred to a young baby as ‘it’ rather than he or she. This was because in the 1800s, young children were not thought of as individual boys and girls with distinct personalities. As many died before they turned six or seven, this helped their parents cope with the loss. Girls and boys were not dressed differently until they reached this age.

Dressing like their fathers

When boys began to dress as boys they wore the same clothes as their fathers. On the goldfields, this meant they wore long pants held up by a belt, striped shirts, a short jacket and a hat or cap. Sturdy shoes kept their feet dry, although boys often went without socks.

Many boys wore their fathers’ or brothers’ hand-me-downs. One visitor to the goldfields wrote about how ridiculous boys looked in their badly-fitting clothes:

“They are dressed in a pair of moleskin or corduroy trousers … [that are] immensely wide, being their fathers’ cut shorter … a pair of strong shoes and no stockings, a coloured shirt … if the weather be cold or wet, a coarse, short wide coat, much too big and an old dirty wide-awake, which having belonged to their fathers, is also much too big, and apt to blow off.

(moleskin – cotton)
(wide-awake – hat)

This boy was probably apprenticed to the tailor standing next to him. He is wearing the typical clothes of a boy on the goldfields.
Going to school

By the time children were five or six, their parents wanted them to go to school. Where goldfields were well established, there were several different types of schools.

Sunday schools
These were often the first schools on the diggings. They combined religious education with teaching reading, writing and arithmetic.

Private schools
Anyone could start a school. All they needed was a place to hold lessons and students willing to come. Diggers’ wives and widows set up small schools in their homes to make money and help support their families.

Denominational schools
Religious groups established their own schools on the goldfields. Children were taught the basics and given lessons in religion.

National schools
Just before the first gold rushes of the 1850s, the governments of Victoria and New South Wales set up a system of National schools. They wanted every child to have an education.

Of course not all diggings had schools. If parents were keen for their children to learn they might teach them themselves or organise a teacher called a governess or tutor. Of course, it was often easier to let children amuse themselves or get them to help look for gold.

Sunday schools
Mrs Campbell lived on the Beechworth diggings in Victoria with her husband, who was a police magistrate, and their baby daughter. She was concerned that local children had no school and decided to provide lessons for girls in her own home on Sunday afternoons. Children were so keen to learn that they would line up outside her home long before classes began.

The first schools on the goldfields were in tents. They gave little protection from the weather. They were lined with coloured material to reduce the sun’s glare. Insects were a problem. It would not have been easy to concentrate on hot summers days with flies buzzing all around. Children sat on benches made from logs of wood. Some had tables to write on, but many had to balance books and slates on their knees.

Fund-raising for schools
Once a particular goldfield area became more settled, parents wanted permanent school buildings. Church groups helped pay for Denominational schools and the governments met some of the costs of building National schools. Parents had to raise the rest of the money and some goldfields offered unique fund-raising opportunities.

In 1858, the ‘Welcome’ Nugget, one of the largest ever found, was put on show at the Ballarat diggings in Victoria. People were charged a shilling admission and all the funds raised went to Ballarat’s Red Hill National School.

Building schools
Once money was raised, local builders constructed new school houses using whatever materials were available. Some schools were built from slabs of wood. Others were built from wooden boards nailed to a frame, or from bricks.
**Teachers and pupils**

Teachers on the goldfields came from many different backgrounds. Some were trained in teaching, but most became teachers after they had tried other careers. Some were very good. Others had a hard time keeping their pupils under control.

Children of all ages went to school. Two- and three-year-olds were sent along with older brothers and sisters. Few children stayed at school once they turned 12 years of age.

**Class sizes**

In the one-teacher schools, classes could be enormous. Sometimes 40 or 50 children of all ages sat in one room. The teacher would take the whole school for some classes, then divide them up into smaller groups for special subjects. Older children were expected to teach younger children.

Families would often move from one goldfield to another so children would go to one school for a while and then have to move and start again at a new goldfield. It was hard for these children to learn even the basics of reading and writing.

Even when they were settled, children did not always go to school every day. If families needed money, children had to go out to work. A new baby or illness kept girls at home to care for other children and help with the housework.

Teachers often used the **cane** to discipline students. Mostly children were punished for naughtiness or not paying attention. Sometimes they were caned for spelling a word wrongly or doing a sum incorrectly.

**The school day**

In the 1850s and 1860s, the school day began at 9 o’clock. Children had two hours for lunch, from 12 o’clock until 2 o’clock, and most children walked home and ate lunch with their families. The day ended at 5 o’clock. Children did not wear uniforms.

**Cleanliness**

Cleanliness was very important and the school day started with an inspection of every child’s hands. Children who had not washed properly that morning were sent away to scrub their hands clean.

**School fees**

Parents had to pay for their children to attend school. Fees had to be paid at the beginning of the week. If their parents did not or could not pay, children were sent home. They could not return to school until their parents had the money. In National schools in the 1850s, the fees were one shilling a week for children under eight, one shilling and six pence for those aged eight to 12 years and two shillings a week for children over 12 years.

**What is it worth now?**

School fees were quite high. One shilling would be now equal to about $6.20. One shilling and sixpence would be about $9.30 and two shillings would be about $12.40. This meant that for a family with, for example, two children under eight and a 10 year old and a 13 year old, the school fees would be equal to $34.10 a week. Few families could afford to spend that much on their children’s education.
School rules

Schools were very strict. Children had to behave well at all times.

This guide lists rules for behaviour in school:

- Be humble towards your teachers and respectful to your schoolfellows.
- Do not run into the school, but walk quietly to the door.
- When you enter, take off your hat, bow or curtsey to the teacher and walk straight to your seat.
- Never talk during lessons.
- Observe nothing at school but your book and never neglect that.
- Never quarrel in school, it shows idleness and bad temper.
- When the teacher speaks to you, stand up and look at him with modesty and attention.
- When school is finished, go out as you came in, quietly, softly and decently.

Reading, writing and arithmetic

School lessons covered the range of useful subjects. Reading, writing and arithmetic were the most important. Children also learnt geography, natural science and music. Girls spent several hours every week learning to sew and embroider. These skills were thought important for when they married and had children. Boys had additional lessons in practical subjects, such as drawing, book-keeping and arithmetic, which would help them find jobs.

Learning to write

Learning to write was very important. Paper was expensive so children first learnt to form their letters using a stick in a sand tray. They carefully traced the letters that the teacher wrote on the board. When the teacher decided they were ready, she gave them slates and special pencils to write with.

When children could form their letters properly they were given paper and pens. The pens had metal nibs and the children dipped their pens in ink stored in special china bowls on their desks.
Golden stories

Saving the school tent

The headmaster of the first Red Hill National School was Andrew Sparke. One Sunday in September 1854 he woke up to find some men attempting to steal the school tent. He later wrote that they had wanted the canvas to:

puddle the drifts of their holes as I find a large quantity of canvas is used for this purpose and this costs 2/6 per yard and it is not the first tent used for this purpose and so obtained.

( puddle the drifts – to mix together clay, soil and water)

Marbles

Although children on the goldfields often worked hard, they still had time for games and toys. The goldfields offered plenty of opportunities and space for games. One of the most popular games for boys was marbles.

Children collected small glass balls called marbles. There were lots of different games and the winner kept those he won. One very popular game involved two players.

1. Mark out a circle at least three feet (90 centimetres) across.
2. Draw a short straight line in the centre.
3. Each player lines up an equal number of marbles along the line.
4. The players toss a coin to see who is to play first.
5. Using the firing marble (called a taw), the first player tries to knock his or her opponent’s marbles out of the circle.
6. Each marble knocked out belongs to that player.
7. If the player’s taw rolls out of the circle, his or her turn is finished and it is the other player’s turn.
8. The winner is the first one to knock all of his or her opponent’s marbles out of the circle.

How to play marbles

1. Mark out a circle at least three feet (90 centimetres) across.
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Imaginary games

In their tents, bark huts and houses, children played imaginative games. Little girls dressed up in their mothers’ clothes and held tea parties for their dolls. Little boys fought imaginary battles. Both went prospecting for gold and found pretend fortunes.

Making their own toys

Some children made their own toys. They made dolls out of small pieces of wood and dressed them in scraps of material. They drew board games on pieces of card and used buttons for markers. Lucky children had toys made for them.

Fancy dress

By the time of the Western Australian gold rushes, fancy dress costumes were very popular. Mothers could buy patterns for elaborate costumes they could make at home, everything from butterflies to Aladdin.

Jacks and skipping

Knucklebones

Jacks was a popular game played with knucklebones. Children asked the butcher for the small bone found in the joints of sheep and cows. Their mothers then boiled the knuckles until they were clean.

To play jacks, children tossed the knucklebones into the air, catching them in the palms or on the backs of their hands. At the same time they sang rhymes such as:

Charlie over the water
Charlie over the sea
Charlie come to my house
And have a cup of tea.

The one who could keep the most knucklebones on his or her hand was the winner.

Skipping games

Skipping was a very popular game too and there were many different ways to play. Two children would turn the rope while others took turns to skip. While they were skipping, they would sing rhymes. A popular one at the time was:

Who are you going to marry?
Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor,
Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief …

Other games included cricket, football, hopscotch, tug-of-war and tunnel ball. If children did not have a football, they could play with a ball made from newspapers tied tightly together with string.

Alphabet games

Alphabets were a popular toy. They were used to help young children recognise their letters. This alphabet was carved from sheep and cattle bones for a lucky child in the early 1800s.

Costumes for dressing up

These costumes belonged to a very lucky boy and girl. They wore them to birthday parties and other special events.

Mail order costumes

Mrs Leach’s Fancy Dress Costumes for Boys and Girls were available in all sorts of styles. Mothers ordered patterns and then tried to recreate the same results at home.
Playtime indoors

Store-bought toys and games
Children of successful diggers often had wonderful store-bought toys and games. There were all sorts to choose from and goldfield stores were full of beautiful dolls, books, games, musical instruments and rocking horses. Some children had so many toys it must have been difficult to decide what to play with.

Jigsaw puzzles
Jigsaw puzzles were popular and were designed to teach children useful information while they were piecing the bits together.

Games of chance
Board games were games of chance. In the 1800s, a dice was associated with the devil or evil. Instead of throwing dice, children would spin a six-sided piece of card with each side marked with a number from 1 to 6. They moved forward the number of places shown on the side the card fell. Miniature versions of sports were produced as table games. When it was too cold or dark to play outside, children could still challenge each other to their favourite sports.

Goldfield games
The excitement of the rush to the diggings led some toy manufacturers to sell special goldfield games.

In the Race to the gold diggings of Australia, players travelled from England to Australia, finding lots of hazards along the way. The winner was the first to reach the diggings. There the player found instant wealth and success. Nuggets lay on the ground just waiting to be picked up.

In the Gold Fields of Australia game, players arrived very quickly in Australia and then had to face many dangers and difficulties. Bushrangers lay in wait hoping to steal their gold. Players missed turns when they had to wait for the gold buyer to arrive or attend a protest meeting. When a player won they would read:

Tent Town is now a thriving settlement and your thoughts of England have faded away and you decide that Australia will be home.

This jigsaw puzzle taught children the names of exotic animals.

Ball game
In this game, children rolled balls towards the village. If they hit a peg in front of a house, the face of the person who lived there would pop up behind.

History of England game
Players started on the outside of this game and raced each other to the centre. Their parents hoped they learnt English history at the same time.

The Race to the gold diggings of Australia game. Each player had a little ship to sail to the diggings.

Gold Fields of Australia game
Boys
There were some toys designed specially for girls, and others for boys. Parents thought that the toys for boys should encourage an interest in the outside world. They thought that boys who played with building blocks, toy soldiers and model coaches would go on to work as architects, builders, soldiers and drivers.

Toy theatres
The theatre was thought more suitable for boys than girls. Some lucky boys were given toy theatres with everything they needed to stage a play. Actors, costumes, scenery and the stage were printed on sheets of paper backed with card. Boys could recreate all the drama and action of the theatre. They even had special powders that when lit, gave off coloured smoke or made loud bangs.

Toy horses
Horses were an important part of daily life on the goldfields. Little boys were given rocking horses to ride on and pull-along horses and carts to carry things. Some toy horses were covered in real horse hair. They also had horse-drawn omnibuses and trams.

Girls
Girls were given toys that would encourage them to think of themselves as future wives and mothers. They had dolls to care for, stoves to cook on, even tiny teapots, cups and saucers on which to serve afternoon tea.

Dolls
All sorts of dolls could be found in stores on the goldfields. Some had pretty faces made of wax and real hair, while others were made of china or wood. Dolls could be bought wearing the latest fashions. They could also be bought ‘undressed’ so their new owners could make clothes for them.

Playing mothers
Domestic toys encouraged little girls to take an interest in their mothers’ work. Girls pretended to prepare meals on miniature toy cooking stoves and served imaginary meals on tiny plates. They sewed dolls’ clothes on toy sewing machines and pressed them with toy mangles. Daughters of very successful diggers had their own fully furnished dolls’ houses with everything from sofas and a piano in the parlour, to tiny bars of soap in the bathrooms.

This is a wax doll. Her owner had great fun dressing and undressing her in her fashionable dress and hat and fine underwear. She could also open and close the doll’s eyes by turning a wire at the doll’s waist.

Dolls came with elaborate sets of clothes
A toy sewing machine for making dolly’s clothes
A pull-along horse and cart
A mail coach
Toy theatre pieces
These are some of the scenes from a French toy theatre. The play is about the adventures of explorers in the Pacific Ocean. Each piece has a special tab that fits into the stage and allows it to be moved as the play progresses.

Paper dolls came with elaborate sets of clothes
This tiny dresser had everything necessary for serving meals to dolly and her friends
This is a wax doll. Her owner had great fun dressing and undressing her in her fashionable dress and hat and fine underwear. She could also open and close the doll’s eyes by turning a wire at the doll’s waist.


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Golden stories

Painting books
Some children had to go out to work to help support their families. Painting pages of books was one job thought suitable for children aged under 10. They sat at a large table with hundreds of separate pages. Each page continued around the table until it was finished. With so many pages to paint, children worked for very long hours for very little money.

Books

There were lots of books for children to read and most told stories that encouraged children to be good. At the time gold was first discovered, children’s books were becoming much more beautifully illustrated. New technologies made it possible to print in colour, where previously each page had been coloured by hand.

Needlework and handicrafts

As part of their training to be wives and mothers, parents encouraged girls to make useful and decorative things for the home.

Both at school and home, girls were taught sewing and needlework. These were important skills because girls would have to make many of their family’s clothes and most of the household linen. Girls sewed tiny examples of everyday clothes such as shirts, pantaloons and petticoats. They crocheted doilies and runners to put on tables. They embroidered pictures and samplers to hang on the wall.

Keeping busy

Girls also made decorative things for the home. They knotted string to make potholders. They made figures out of wax and clay. They made elaborate flower arrangements from wool. Girls were supposed to be always busy!

Settler’s home

Charlotte Rushby made this model of an Australian settler’s home in the 1850s. She made the hut from scraps of wood and bark. The figures were modelled from clay and carefully painted.

Model cow

This model cow was one of a number made by Wilhelmina Jurd in the 1870s. Wilhelmina made a shape out of wire, covered it with wax and then pushed in the tiny cow’s hairs one at a time to make a smooth coat.

A sampler

Mary Ann Gorringe embroidered this sampler in 1851 when she was 12 years old. The picture shows her town’s courthouse.

Needlework

Young girls made tiny copies of shirts to show their skills at needlework.

Warne’s Picture Puzzle Book

This story came with characters and animals to glue on each page.

The Grasshopper’s Ball

This was a particularly popular story about a dance held by the creatures of the forest.

Uncle Buncles

New Stories about Animals

This story taught children about the creatures that gave them milk and meat, carried them from place to place, or lived with them as pets.
Sundays

On Sundays, children had to be very quiet and well behaved. Some spent most of the day at church with their parents. In the morning they went to a church service and in the afternoon they went to Sunday school. On some goldfields, these were the only schools.

No playing

In religious households, children were not allowed to play on Sundays. They could not run, skip, sing songs or dance. They had to sit quietly, reading stories from the Bible instead.

Noah’s Ark

The one toy parents thought suitable for Sunday play was Noah’s Ark. In this Bible story, God warns Noah that a terrible flood will cover the earth. To survive, Noah has to build a special boat called an ark. He invites a pair of all the animals in the world to join him. Children loved playing this game and marching the animals on board ‘two by two’.

Parents encouraged children to have pets. They thought it taught children to be responsible as they had to remember to feed their animals and care for them.

Birds

The most popular pets on the goldfields were caged birds. Almost every home had a birdcage by the front door with budgerigars, parrots or cockatoos.

Guard dogs

Most families had a dog. These were not always pets that children could cuddle. Many were vicious guard dogs bought to protect the family’s home from robbers.
**Children at work**

**Gold digging and other work**

Many children on the goldfields went to work. Some were caught up in gold fever. Boys as young as 10 had their own claims. They dug, washed and rocked the cradles alongside older family members. Others helped their parents with the search for gold. Children were encouraged to keep a sharp eye out for gold specks and nuggets.

Children took on casual jobs to make extra money for the family. Although they were not paid much, every bit helped. Boys and girls took messages for people, helped out in shops and looked after diggers’ horses. Boys found work milking cows or working bellows for the blacksmith. Some children had to work as their parents could not support them.

Like all children, those on the goldfields grew up, found jobs and had children of their own. Some stayed in goldfields’ towns while others moved away. Although all had their own adventures, life was probably never as exciting again as when they joined their parents in the rush to the diggings.
Glossary

apprenticed  learning a trade by working with a particular tradesperson for a fixed period
bellows  a device that produces a blast of air helping the blacksmith’s fire to remain hot
blacksmith  a person who works with iron to make horseshoes, tools and other objects
book-keeping  learning to keep records of money in banks or businesses
bustle  a pad or wire frame worn underneath a dress
cane  a long, hollow wooden stem used as a rod for punishment
colonies  the six British settlements of New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia (including the Northern Territory) and Western Australia
cradles  wooden boxes specially designed to separate gold from mud and rocks
damper  bread made from flour, water and sometimes baking powder. It is baked in the coals of a fire or in a camp oven
doilies  small mats, often embroidered and with lace edging
domestic  relating to the home
hand-me-downs  clothes that have been owned and worn before they are given to others
hymns  songs praising God
ink  a coloured liquid used for writing. In the 1800s, ink was made from a special powder mixed with water
mangles  wooden rollers turned by a handle. These squeezed out the water and pressed the clothes flat
omnibus  a horse-drawn bus
ounce  a unit of weight equal to about 30 grams
parlour  the best room in a house, a sitting room
£ (pounds)  currency introduced to Australia from Britain and used until 1966 when pounds, shillings and pence were replaced with dollars and cents
prospecting  searching for gold or other minerals
runners  long mats laid down the centre of tables and sideboards, often decorated with embroidery and lace
sampler  a piece of cloth with examples of needlework and sewing
slates  made from thin pieces of a special rock that was easy to draw on and wipe clean
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The author would like to acknowledge the following sources of information:
Annear, Robyn, 1999, Nothing but gold: The diggers of 1852, Text Publishing, Melbourne
Bate, Weston, 1978, Lucky city: The first generation at Ballarat, 1851–1901, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne
The calculation used in this book to convert 1850s pounds to today’s dollars is only approximate as prices fluctuated wildly during the gold rushes.

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