

## **The Working Miners of Southern New South Wales: Adaptability, Class and Identity**

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**M**iners in the colonial and immediate post colonial period worked in one of three ways: on their own account, either independently or in co-operative groups, or as wage employees for companies or syndicates. They also worked as tributers.<sup>1</sup> The term 'working miner' was used by contemporary observers, and it will be used in this discussion to refer to all miners, including tributers, who were working on their own account or in co-operative groups. This paper examines the place of the working miners in the historiography and contemporary mining society, their identity and class, and the implications of this discussion for the wider historical discourse on the role of independent workers and labor organisations generally.

The discussion falls into two parts. In the first part it is argued that miners generally should be viewed as part of a wider, more adaptable work force, and a number of examples of this adaptability are provided.<sup>2</sup> It is concluded that the working miners, in particular, were considerably more prominent and persistent than most historians have realised. In the second part of the discussion the question of class and identity is discussed, in particular the argument that the working miners can be best described as subsistence miners. It is argued that such a definition is too limiting, and that it is more appropriate to apportion them to the middling class.

Examples of working miners are derived from a number of mining fields in southern New South Wales, referred to thereafter as the Southern Mining Region, although evidence from other mining regions in Australia is also used. Mining within the study area was highly diversified and included all forms of gold mining and base metals such as copper, silver and lead. This diversity would be similar to many other regions along the eastern seaboard and western slopes of Australia. There was, however, no coal mining in the region, and therefore no reference is made to the experience of coal miners. Neither are Chinese miners discussed. There were large numbers of them, particularly in the Braidwood area, but consideration of their role and identity is outside the scope of the paper.<sup>3</sup>

### **Versatility and adaptability**

Some historians have argued that the independent miner was a fleeting phenomenon, a product of the gold rush era, and that this mode of employment soon disappeared in favour of wage employment. For instance, Geoffrey Serle commented that by 1858 wage employment was the norm for Victoria, and that the opposition by the majority of miners, particularly the family men, to large scale mining was 'turning to resignation, not without bitterness and disillusion'.<sup>4</sup> John Ritchie, in a more colourful vein, also took up this theme, describing, perhaps over dramatically, the 'would be Croesuses' leaving the fields and slinking back to the capital cities to 'swell the caged ranks of the wage-slaves....'<sup>5</sup>

A number of historians have, however, noted that many miners and other workers were motivated by a strong desire for independence well after the end of the early gold rushes in their respective colonies. Geoffrey Blainey referred to those who 'alternated the seasons between mining and sheep-shearing and harvesting, and found a miner's wage the highest', and those who 'owned an acre or two and cows and poultry and gladly worked intermittently in the mines'. He commented that the two groups overlapped, with people often moving 'from wages to independence or back to wages'.<sup>6</sup> In addition, there were thousands of miners who 'retained the optimism of the old order', by speculating in mining shares, while gaining the 'regular wage of the new order'.<sup>7</sup> John Merritt commented that the nomadic bush workers and mine employees could turn their hands to many tasks.<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Bolton also noted that in North Queensland many mine employees would leave their jobs to go mining on their own account or undertake seasonal work.<sup>9</sup> Charles Fahey has also referred extensively to the versatility of the rural labour, although he admittedly makes no mention of their involvement in mining.<sup>10</sup>

Both June Philipp and Susan Lawrence have extended this general point further by referring in detail to specific examples. In her study of the gold and copper mining community at Bethanga in north east Victoria, June Philipp referred to the gold miners, almost all of whom were reef miners, as 'Swagmen seeking seasonal employment for wages ...', who 'might turn their hands to other tasks and from time to time work on their own account - for example as timber splitters and carters or as prospectors. Some were smallholders, owning or leasing plots of land often located in the vicinity of gold field towns and usually insufficient to provide a living even at subsistence level'.<sup>11</sup> In

commenting upon the Dolly's Creek goldfield, also in Victoria, Susan Lawrence referred to the 'persistence of what has been identified as informal mining', with the mining 'restricted to short periods separated by much longer periods, sometimes as long as several years, in which miners are employed in other forms of labour, primarily farming'.<sup>12</sup>

As suggested by these accounts the desire by many miners to work independently was very strong, and manifested itself in a high degree of adaptability and versatility. But, these characteristics never found their way into the official statistics. Miners and other workers were categorised then, as now, into distinct occupational groups. For instance, in the NSW 1871 *Census* it was stated that it was only possible to record one occupation for each individual. Thus if it was considered that persons were working primarily as miners or labourers they were classified as such by the Statistician and presumably by other officials, such as the wardens and registrars.

The Statistician noted, however, that multiple occupations were common, and that many gold miners were also proprietors and occupiers of land. He stated that there were others

forming an important part of the working class in this country, who in the shearing season would be employed as station hands, and might at the time of the year when the Census was taken have been doing "job work" as miners, carriers, labourers on the roads & c.

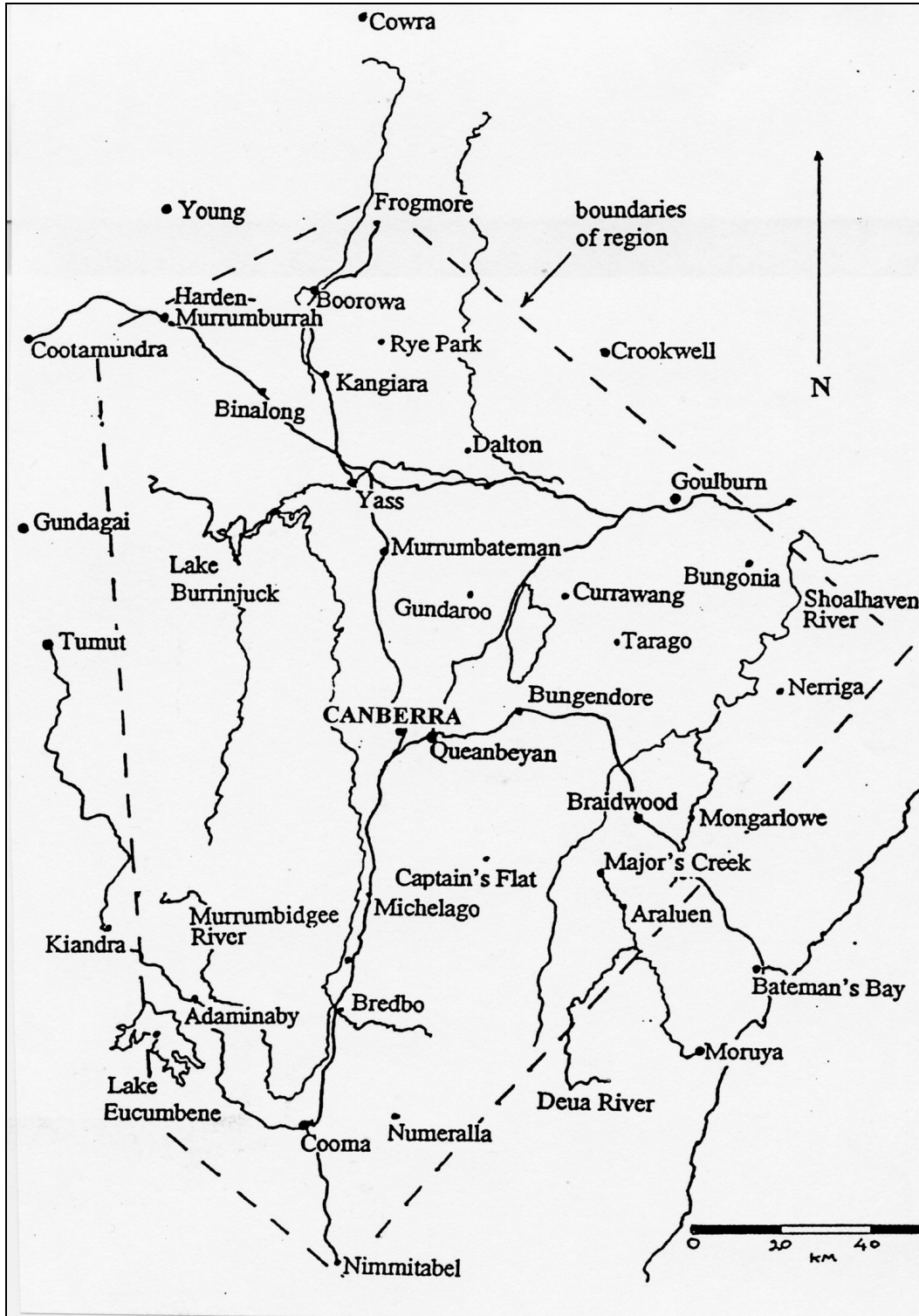
Only the principal occupation followed was recorded by the *Census*, that is 'the one from which each person was chiefly deriving his income at the time of the Census'.<sup>13</sup> Part-time or informal miners were, therefore, included in one or another employment category depending on their circumstances at the time.

Clearly this practice masked the degree to which farmers, labourers and other rural workers were also engaged in mining activities. It also masked the distinction between those miners working on their own account and those employed by mining companies or syndicates. Timothy Coghlan, the NSW Statistician, admitted of some movement between other occupations and mining, not so much as a norm, but rather as a response to the early gold rushes or to depressed economic activity and employment generally. The implication was that this was a temporary phenomenon and that in normal circumstances the persons would assume their rightful occupations in industries other than mining.<sup>14</sup> But, if large numbers of part-time miners fell into this multiple occupation category on a regular basis, then the official statistics have grossly

understated the number of persons dependent or partly dependent upon mining for their livelihood and the numbers of those who could be classified as working miners.

There were many examples of this part time or multiple occupation category in the Southern Mining Region (Map 1), all of them related to gold mining. On the Majors

**Map 1:** *Southern Mining Region and Environs*



Creek gold field at the height of the rush in late 1851 it was stated that many men had returned home to look after their crops rather than pay a licence fee for half a month.<sup>15</sup> At Araluen in early 1853 it was commented that those miners who had built huts, and who were obviously of a more settled disposition, had erected temporary stockyards, and that poultry and calves were kept. In addition, many of the miners resided at Reidsdale on the tableland. The diggings were regarded as a spare time activity and if the miners were unsuccessful they could return to their farms.<sup>16</sup> On the Nerriga field all the miners at Oallen in 1856 were local farmers.<sup>17</sup>

The same pattern emerged in subsequent periods. At the Spring Creek Jacqua field near Goulburn in 1869 all the miners were described as having gone harvesting while awaiting the arrival of a crushing machine, and in 1870 most miners were reported as tending their own selections while mining matters were at a standstill.<sup>18</sup> Some members of the Hockey family, for example, mined for alluvial gold on this field in the early to mid 1860s before making the transition to farming to supply other miners, or combining both activities.<sup>19</sup> On the Cowra Creek field it was commented in 1899 that many leases were worked until shearing time when they were left dormant. It was expected that the miners who remained would not interfere with them in the men's absence.<sup>20</sup>

A similar pattern can be seen in the Southern Tablelands. The principal miner on the Brindabella gold field was William Reid, who was also a local guest-house and hotel proprietor.<sup>21</sup> At Brook's Creek in 1862 many of the diggers travelled to Gundaroo to assist in reaping for a few weeks as many of the farmers were short of hands and their crops were very substantial.<sup>22</sup> By 1880 the men were fossicking in the winter and working as farm labourers or shearers in the other months.<sup>23</sup> At Mac's Reef the first initial gold find in 1865 was made by John MacEnally, a local free selector, who discovered gold while working for another landowner, Cartwright, the field coming to an end with the death of two miners, one of whom was a free selector.<sup>24</sup> The Cartwright family was also involved actively in gold mining at Bywong in the 1890s.<sup>25</sup> On the nearby Dairy Creek field the main miner was a local landowner, James Kershaw.<sup>26</sup>

On the Nanima field near Murrumbateman all the hands on nearby Nanima station left in August 1872 to take up claims, and a few months later delays in obtaining assay results allowed many of them to return to the station to help it through its busy time. Others had stopped work on their leases to work on their farms and they could not

afford to pay for labour to work the claims in their absence.<sup>27</sup> Among the miners were George Butt and George Crocker, both of whom were from local farming families and were prominent again in the 1890s. One of the main mines was on Butt's property.<sup>28</sup> A successful miner on the nearby Spring Range gold field in the early 1900s was Southwell, a local landowner.<sup>29</sup> All these men were 'hands-on' or working miners.

Much of this versatility was related to seasonal ebbs and flows in working patterns, a process commented on extensively by Jenny Lee and Charles Fahey. In the Southern Mining Region the miners supplemented their income by 'off-mine' work, which fortuitously in many cases coincided with the off season in mining, that is summer.<sup>30</sup> The position of these miners became considerably more precarious, however, with the onset of severe drought conditions in the late 1870s and early to mid 1880s. Drought not only affected alluvial mining, but was also an impediment to reef mining, for water was needed for the steam powered batteries. Often there was insufficient fodder or water for the horses or bullocks that were carting the ore, except at prohibitive prices.

In these instances working off-mine was not a matter of choice so much as necessity and many miners worked temporarily on the roads and railways or at their previous occupations, pending good rains.<sup>31</sup> On the Mongarlowe gold field in 1880 one third of the Europeans followed other occupations during part of the year, and in 1882 most of those owning water races had abandoned their claims and sought employment elsewhere, particularly on the railway contracts.<sup>32</sup> In 1883 there was 'a regular stampede to the railway works Goulburn to Tarago'.<sup>33</sup> A similar pattern also occurred at the Major's Creek and Shoalhaven River fields.<sup>34</sup>

Regional factors at play in these examples are not strong enough to prejudice the general linkage suggested between farming, rural work and mining, particularly along Australia's eastern seaboard, tablelands and western slopes areas, although it is conceded that the linkages may be weaker in more arid climes, where there was less farming. It is noted in any event that the examples are varied, and span several generations and a wide and varied geographic area. Working off-mine was often viewed as a seasonal activity, which compensated for periods of dry weather in the non winter months, and which took advantage of the shearing and harvesting periods, particularly where miners had their own farms. Similar physical skills were needed for these tasks, and while the practice affected all types of gold mining, it was particularly prevalent

among self-employed gold miners, that is, the working miners. Further studies would be needed before establishing that such practices were an integral part of rural culture in the colonial and immediate post colonial periods throughout Australia. However, such linkages are strongly implied.

The blurring of distinctions between the working miners and other workers was further exacerbated by the large numbers of miners who were oscillating between work as independent working miners and as paid employees of mining syndicates or companies. Both forms of mining coexisted on most gold fields, particularly on the alluvial goldfields and those with both alluvial and reef mining. The working miners would have been aware of what the wage employees on neighbouring claims were earning, particularly when such details were publicised in the local press, or were otherwise common knowledge. While the latter may not have known what their more independently minded colleagues were earning, it is difficult to imagine that the reverse was the case. It could be expected, therefore, that the working miner would react to any marked discrepancy between current earnings and the opportunity cost of wages foregone, particularly if the costs and inconveniences arising from a change of occupation were minimal. It is unlikely, however that the predominantly wage based miner was as versatile, for while he may have possessed the skills, he may not have had the opportunity or capital to venture into these more uncertain enterprises.

Base metal miners in the region also oscillated between work as working miners and other occupations, although the context differed. In the very early stage of a base metal field most miners were engaged as independent working miners. However, this type of mining could not be advanced without a substantial investment in plant and equipment, such as smelters and reduction plants. Invariably, the mining leases were acquired by large companies or syndicates, and the vast majority of miners worked as wage employees. This was the case on all the base metal fields in the region, for instance at Currawang, Frogmore, Captain's Flat, Kyloe and Kangiara, to name the most significant. The only exceptions were, and then only for a time, the silver mining ventures at Kangiara and Wallah Wallah, but even here, large companies or syndicates prevailed eventually. Wage employment in the base metal mines would have been attractive to those working miners on nearby goldfields who were earning less than wages on their own claims.

## **Identity and class**

Clearly, the working miner has a place in the historiography, but how did they define themselves and can they be categorized in class terms? Geoffrey Bolton and Humphrey McQueen have discussed further the question of identity. Bolton remarked that in the 1870s it was the 'prospect of being ones own master which attracted many to the north Queensland fields'. By this time 'mining had become well imbued with those traditions of mateship, cooperative individualism and belief in the equality of all white men which Russel Ward has called the "Australian legend" '.<sup>35</sup> McQueen commented that 'Gold contributed to the consciousness of the labouring class in a number of ways all of which served to reinforce the belief that there was something to be gained under capitalism- perhaps that most prized of all possessions, independence'. Gold, silver, or some precious stone, combined with land, sustained the hope of aspiring labourers, to 'hold out to them a chance of escape from wage-slavery. It could never offer sufficient to retire but it could set up a business or a farm'. These ideological consequences were described 'as important in subordinating the labour movement as were the very real riches and widespread prosperity which gold engendered'.<sup>36</sup> He questioned whether 'every mine-employee was a wage-slave', for some miners earned very high returns as tributers or wage employees.<sup>37</sup>

Perhaps the most thorough analysis of identity has been by June Philipp. In her discussion of the reef miners of Bethanga in Victoria, a mining settlement similar in size to some of those in the Southern Mining Region, she argued that the miners fell neither into the category of small scale capitalist nor working class proletariat, but should rather be described as 'subsistence men'. Susan Lawrence also used this terminology in her history of the Dolly's Creek gold field in Victoria.<sup>38</sup> Philipp stated that:

from time to time they might be compelled to work for wages, their constant endeavour was directed at avoidance of wage labour. Neither the scale of their independent operations nor their expectations qualify them as entrepreneurs or small capitalists. They were subsistence men; they aimed to make a living to gain and independence on the basis their own hard manual labour. Above that, success was not expected, if it came it was a matter of luck and a cause for celebrations.<sup>39</sup>

To categorise this:

large and shifting body of men, in the post gold era, as small independent producers staunchly upholding the capitalist ethic of personal gain was to discount their origins and their experience in the colony and to provide them



with a niche in the social order which the great majority never attained and which many did not value as a goal to be pursued. To describe them contrawise as wage labourers and therefore as forming part of a working class is to ignore a way of life that was in constant flux and its appraisal by those whose way of life it was.<sup>40</sup>

Some support for the unlikely assignment of these men as either capitalist, entrepreneur or proletariat is emphasised by the tenor of debates within the NSW Parliament in 1893 and 1894 on the *Mining on Private Lands Bill*. Conservative and propertied members of the NSW Legislative Council certainly had no doubt in which class the miners lay, and gave full vent to their unease at the proposed legislation, which they saw as a class measure.<sup>41</sup> To them the miners were a peripatetic bunch of nomads ‘here today and gone tomorrow’.<sup>42</sup> Within the Legislative Assembly the debate was much more informed and a clear distinction was made between the working miners and the mining companies and syndicates, and by corollary, those that worked for them. Of principal concern was the nature of enterprise and capitalism on the fields and the concern that the granting of large leases would significantly diminish the opportunities for others.<sup>43</sup> George Reid was one of the most outspoken of the *Bill*’s supporters, asserting that it ‘must throw the lands open, not to the syndicates only, but to the miners’, who should ‘be the first to reap the advantage of this measure’.<sup>44</sup> Another proponent, Carruthers, expressed his disappointment that the Council’s amendments to the bill rendered it all but impossible ‘for a working miner earning a day’s pay on his own account ...’.<sup>45</sup> In the final days of debate on the *Bill*, Reid stated that it:

had been frittered away in every possible degree so as to make the owners of the land supreme over the minerals of the country, and so as to enable every possible legal difficulty to be put in the way of those unfortunate men, the ordinary mining population of the country ... One of the strongest feelings they had had with reference to this bill was to give the miner a show of working for himself instead of working for wages? ... if they are prepared to give their enterprise and risk the loss of wages on their own account, surely that is one of the best things for mining in this country.<sup>46</sup>

The Assembly debates provide a clear illustration of where the Parliamentary members saw the working miners in relationship to their wage-earning brethren. There was no suggestion of any tension between the working miners and the employees of the larger companies and syndicates. But, clearly the Parliamentary members perceived a difference between the aspirations of the working miners and their wage-based colleagues. They were neither capitalist, entrepreneur nor proletariat. The dilemma of

class and identity highlighted by Phillip's account of the Bethanga miners is very much in evidence in these debates.

Should the working miners, however, be classified as subsistence men? Clearly to establish this contention some idea of earnings is critical. Some guidance on these questions can be derived from contemporary reports on the level of earnings on the mining fields. There was, for example, a considerable diversity in earnings from one goldfield to another and within a particular field. This diversity was particularly evident amongst working miners on the alluvial gold fields. Miners were described as 'getting wages', 'getting good wages', 'just getting wages', 'making little more than a living', or 'just making tucker'. Most contemporary accounts support the contention that the miners had a very clear idea of the relative worth of their earnings, but it is only the latter two terms which can be considered synonymous with subsistence earnings. Thus the mining fields can be described as comprising good wages, wages, or subsistence, depending upon which category of miners was dominant.

While it is difficult to define exactly what the level of subsistence wages was, there are enough examples to suggest that in the Southern Mining Region in the 1890s and 1900s it was in the order of 12s 6d a week.<sup>47</sup> In addition, in the early months or years of a gold rush many miners earned more than wages and even good wages. On the gold fields of Bells Creek, Jembaicumbene and Majors Creek earnings well above the average wage level were obtained long after the initial boom period. Even in Phillip's Bethanga the earnings of the 'subsistence men' far exceeded anything that could be regarded as subsistence in the strict economic meaning of the word. The tributors of one claim earned about £6 a week and earnings on another claim were £12. 2s 6d, suggesting earnings that were well above the going rates at that time, at least in NSW.<sup>48</sup>

In reality there were very few fields of substance that could be described as predominantly subsistence, for such fields generally only supported a relatively small number of miners, and then often only in a situation of general economic depression as in the 1890s. While there would be a proportion of miners on the good wages and wages fields who were earning subsistence wages, their numbers were not as prevalent as some historians have suggested. A much larger proportion of miners were earning wages.<sup>49</sup>

We can thus take Phillip's analogy a step further. These men were neither capitalists, small-scale entrepreneurs, nor members of a proletariat. But neither were

they subsistence men. Many men may have been prepared to work for a time as subsistence miners for very poor returns, or perhaps no returns at all. What led them to mine on their own account, however, was the expectation of a return better than they could get by working for someone else as an employee. While for many, mining was a way of life, they were all motivated ultimately by the same goal - to establish an independence, though not necessarily in mining, but in another trade or enterprise. Without occasional and sometimes considerable recourse to wages labour, then the ultimate dream of the working miner, that of independence, could rarely be achieved.

### **The middling class**

Clearly the working miners do not fit easily into the traditional three-tiered class system. Fortunately, the distinctions made by R.S. Neale and subsequently adopted and adapted by other Australian historians, notably Chris Connolly and John Ferry, offer some guidance.<sup>50</sup> Neale's class structure is centred on the acceptance of a category which he called the middling class, which included the

petit bourgeois, aspiring professional men, other literates and artisans. Individuated or privatized like the middle class, but collectively less deferential and more concerned to remove the privileges and authority of the upper class in which, without radical changes, they cannot realistically hope to share.

This class was to be distinguished from an aristocratic, landholding and authoritarian and exclusive upper class, and a middle class comprising industrial and commercial property owners and senior military and professional men. The working class was divided into two categories, an A and B, the former including an industrial proletariat in factory areas and domestic industries, and the latter including agricultural labourers and other low-paid non-factory urban labourers.

John Ferry's categorisation differs. His top stratum was a ruling elite comprised of those who could influence major political and economic decisions impinging on the lives of all colonists. He also divided the workers into a working class and an underclass, the latter being basically unskilled and undervalued. This latter distinction is more useful in the colonial context than Neale's, for it allows recognition of the versatility of labourers between industries such as mining, agriculture and pastoralism. The use of a ruling elite appears to less useful, however, and Neale's reference to an exclusive upper class is preferred. Although in the Southern Mining Region the members of this class could not be described as aristocratic, they were authoritarian and

exclusive and would have included such people as the landed gentry and local magistrates.

Neale, Ferry and Connolly are at one, however, on the existence and importance of the middling class.<sup>51</sup> Ferry uses this category to describe the small business owners and lesser professionals of colonial Armidale. He asserts that the class was not transitory, 'but a class in its own right, comprising people who were situated in that stratum for virtually all their adult lives'. He saw the middling class as

the cutting edge of capitalism exemplifying the dream of independence and individualism and always harbouring a belief in just rewards for hard work. It stood juxtaposed to a dependent working class and a despised or pitied underclass.

It was also a 'susceptible class', subject to the vagaries of climate and economy, for instance, debt and the expansion of big business. They 'cherished their independence, believed in the small triumph of becoming a masterless man, and saw in their mirrors the image of the noble pioneer'.<sup>52</sup>

The majority of the working miners fit these descriptions and on that basis they are part of the middling class. They worked singly or collectively on their own account, and cherished a dream of independence. Like their urban counterparts they could at times be described as radical, and were wary of the large companies and syndicates, who could lock-up payable mining land under lease or shepherding arrangements. For the landowning classes they reserved a special antipathy, for they could be precluded from mining on private lands or at best charged an exorbitant fee for so doing. The Council members were correct in describing the intended legislation of the 1890s as a class measure, but the battle was not with the working class so much as the middling class.

They were, like their counterparts in Armidale, also a nervous class, for they were susceptible to the vagaries of climate and other factors such as the yield of gold or the price of metals. Most were only too well aware that failure on their part meant joining the ranks of the working class or an underclass; their recourse to wage labour was at the best opportunist and hopefully, temporary. Some of them, such as the battery owners, trenched close to being in the ranks of the middle class, but most were in the middling class for most of their adult lives.

## **Conclusions**

The importance of the working miners lies in the impact they had upon colonial society, especially on the goldfields, and their designation as middling class helps explain more clearly how their communities functioned. For instance, one of the striking features of goldfield communities with a large middling class was the almost total absence of labour organisations, for these structures served little purpose to those who were aspiring to be independent, and perhaps even become employers of labour themselves. The working miners eschewed any long term involvement in the formal labour market, and exercised their agency outside union structures, not because they were ignorant of such concepts, but because it did not suit their purposes to embrace them.

The attribution of the working miner to the middling class also helps put into focus many of the agitations arising on the goldfields. These were rarely directed at working conditions or wage levels. But it was a different matter when the laws or landowners acted to frustrate the miners' aspirations to gain a competence, particularly through denial or restriction of access to mining lands. More importantly, it is probable that there were many others in the colonial and immediate post colonial work force who were motivated in a similar fashion to the working miners. They may well have been in the majority in town and country Australia in the nineteenth century and beyond. These considerations suggest that the labour markets during these periods were very flexible, and helps explain why labour organisations often did not operate or hold sway to the extent intended by their founders or their more militant leaders.

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## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Bertola. 'Tributers and gold mining in Boulder, 1918-1934', *Labour History*, no 65, November 1993, pp. 54-74. Bertola defines tributers as those 'who contracted with a company for the sub-lease of a portion of mine; from this tributers or their employees could extract ore for sale to and treatment by a company, paying the company or leaseholder a royalty on the gold won and an agreed sum based on a scale of charges for service and stores the company provided'.

<sup>2</sup> I have defined the boundaries of this region as Goulburn in the north, Harden in the west, Braidwood in the east and Cooma in the south.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion of the Chinese miners is included in my thesis, 'Dust and Dreams. A regional history of mining and community in south east New South Wales, 1850-1914', PhD, ANU, Canberra, 2001, pp. 98-101.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Serle, *The Golden Age*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1977, pp. 220-224.

<sup>5</sup> John Ritchie, *Australia As Once We Were*, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1975, p. 97.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *A Land Half Won*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1980, p. 243.

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Blainey, *The Rush That Never Ended*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. 1978, pp. 294-295.

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- <sup>8</sup> John Merritt, *The Making of the AWU*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1986, p. 43.
- <sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away, a History of North Queensland to 1920*, the Jacaranda Press, in association with the Australian National University, 1963, p. 290.
- <sup>10</sup> Charles Fahey, 'Abusing the horses and exploiting the labourer': The Victorian Agricultural And Pastoral Labourer, 1871-1911', *Labour History*, no. 65, November 1993, pp. 54-74.
- <sup>11</sup> June Philipp, *A Poor Man's Diggings: Mining and Community at Bethanga, Victoria, 1875-1912*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1987, p. xii.
- <sup>12</sup> Susan Lawrence, 'Poor man's diggings: subsistence mining in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Australasian Historical Archaeology*, vol. 13, 1995, p. 59. Susan Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2000, pp.181-182. David Day also commented that, 'Contrary to popular myth, the common experience on the gold fields was probably one of independent digging interspersed with varying intervals of wage labour'. David Day, *Claiming of a Continent*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1996, p. 140.
- <sup>13</sup> Registrar General, *New South Wales Census of 1871*, Sydney, para xxv, p. 89.
- <sup>14</sup> Timothy Coghlan, *Labour and Industry in Australia; From the First Settlement to the Establishment of the Commonwealth in 1901*, Oxford UP, London, 1918, vol. 11, p. 1439. He stated that a good many miners (that is coal miners) employed themselves searching for gold in 1879 and 1880, particularly in alluvial mining, the gold discoveries at Temora in 1880 being attended not only by coal miners but unemployed mechanics. *Ibid.*, p. 1464, he also refers to the success of the fossicker's scheme in 1893 and 1894, stating that the 'relief to the labour market obtained in this way was very great'.
- <sup>15</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 8 November 1851.
- <sup>16</sup> *Sydney Empire*, 25 March 1853.
- <sup>17</sup> *Goulburn Herald*, 6 December 1856.
- <sup>18</sup> *Goulburn Herald and Chronicle*, 4 December 1869; *Ibid.*, December 1870.
- <sup>19</sup> Max Laidley, History of John Hockey 1803-1878, unpublished private paper, 1993, pp. 13-31.
- <sup>20</sup> *Manaro Mercury*, 13 March 1899.
- <sup>21</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 2 May, 30 June 1888.
- <sup>22</sup> *Golden Age*, 23 January 1862.
- <sup>23</sup> *Yass Courier*, 16 January 1880.
- <sup>24</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 11 November 1865.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, 10 March and 17 March 1888.
- <sup>26</sup> Errol Lea-Scarlett, *Gundaroo*. Roebuck Society Publication no.10, Canberra, 1972, pp. 90, 123. The Kershaws continue to reside as landowners at Dairy Creek.
- <sup>27</sup> *Yass Courier*, 30 July 1872; *Ibid.*, 12 November and 26 November 1872.
- <sup>28</sup> Jennifer Butt, *Our family tree from Dorset to Yass*, privately published and undated, pp. 32-33.
- <sup>29</sup> *Queanbeyan Age*, 28 July 1900. The Southwells continue to reside as landowners in the Spring Range area.
- <sup>30</sup> Jenny Lee and Charles Fahey, 'A boom for whom? Some developments in the Australian labour market, 1870-1891', *Labour History*, no. 50, May 1986, pp. 1-27.
- <sup>31</sup> NSW Department of Mines. *Annual Report*, Government Printer, Sydney, 1878, p.79 and *Ibid.*, 1881, p. 60.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 1880, p. 129; *Ibid*, 1882, p. 65.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, 1883, p. 78.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, 1878, p.79; *Ibid.*, 1881, p.60; *Ibid.*, 1883, pp. 77-78.
- <sup>35</sup> Bolton, *A Thousand Miles*, p.63.
- <sup>36</sup> Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia*, Penguin Books, Ringwood, 1976, p. 146.
- <sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, p. 145.
- <sup>38</sup> Philipp, 'Poor Man's Diggings', p. 53; Lawrence, *Dolly's Creek*, pp. 9-12.
- <sup>39</sup> Philipp, 'Poor Man's Diggings', p. 53.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xii.
- <sup>41</sup> Barry McGowan, 'Mining on Private Lands Act 1894: Miners Versus Capital', in Patrick Bertola and Karen Miller (eds), *Proceedings of the Australian Mining History Association Conferences 1997-2000*, pp. 8-15.
- <sup>42</sup> Hon, C.E. Pilcher, *Mining on Private Lands Bill*, NSWLC, *Parliamentary Debates*, 29 March 1894, pp. 1775-76.
- <sup>43</sup> Gold Fields Royal Commission of Inquiry, 'Report of the Royal Commission', p.11; Woods, 'Report on the working of the Mining Branches of the Lands Department, 2nd Progress Report', p.2; Philipp, 'Poor Man's Diggings', p. 33.

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<sup>44</sup>Reid (Sydney), *Mining on Private Lands Bill*, NSWLA, *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 February 1893, p. 4072.

<sup>45</sup>Carruthers (Canterbury), *Mining on Private Lands Bill*, NSWLA, *Parliamentary Debates*, 9 March 1893, p. 5052.

<sup>46</sup>Reid (Sydney), *Mining on Private Lands Bill*, NSWLA, *Parliamentary Debates*, 6 June 1894, p. 3069.

<sup>47</sup>In one of the more insightful comments on this subject in 1913 it was stated that on the Araluen gold field in the 1850s and 1860s, £4 a week was sometimes paid to each man, but generally £3 10s and £3 were regarded as the standard wage. As the very rich claims began to peter out some decrease in the weekly allowance occurred. For those in co-operative companies the wages were regulated by the amount of gold found each week. If they struck it rich and were fortunate enough to escape the floods, they could be much better paid than those employed. Towards the end of the century the miners were working for a much smaller reward of £1 10s or less. This would still, however, have exceeded subsistence wages. *Braidwood Dispatch*, 1 March 1913. On one of the last claims worked on the fields the men were accepting a sovereign and a half a day and sometimes nothing at all. The dredge workers were skilled workers and were highly valued, and obtained very comfortable salaries for many years, at least equal to those of the palmy days on the diggings.

<sup>48</sup>Philipp, 'Poor Man's Diggings', p. 36; Registrar General, *Statistical Register of New South Wales*, Sydney, various years.

<sup>49</sup>I equated good wages and wages with the upper and lower end of wages for tradesmen, which in turn corresponded closely to the amounts cited in contemporary accounts. See, Barry McGowan, 'A measure of production: a suggested method of assessing gold production on historic mining fields', in Patrick Bertola and Karen Miller (eds), *Proceedings of the Australian Mining History Association Conference 1997-2000*, Australian Mining History Association, 2001, Nedlands, pp. 30-36. These propositions were developed further in my thesis, 'Dust and Dreams', pp. 102-117.

<sup>50</sup>R.S. Neale, *Class and Ideology in the Nineteenth Century*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972, p. 30; John Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, Queensland University Press, St.Lucia, 2000, pp.96-104; Chris Connolly, 'The Middling-Class Victory in New South Wales, 1853-1862; A critique of the Bourgeois-Pastoralist Dichotomy', *Historical Studies*, vol. 19, no. 76, April 1981, pp. 369-373.

<sup>51</sup>Neale, *Class and Ideology*, p. 30; Ferry, *Colonial Armidale*, pp. 96-99.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.