



THE HALL OF DEBATE

This section of The Eureka Centre is the venue for a focused discussion and inquiry activity concerning the events associated with the Eureka Rebellion. This activity provides a forum for the presentation of the actions and views of a number of individuals associated with the Eureka story.

The benches on the left are occupied by individuals representing or supporting the Government including Governor Hotham and others such as Commissioner Rede, James Bentley and Captain Thomas who were involved in events prior to, during and following the confrontation at the Eureka Stockade on 3 December, 1854. Father Smyth sought a peaceful resolution to the problems on the Ballarat Goldfields and implored the diggers not to become involved in a battle with the authorities.

The benches to the right are occupied by representatives of the diggers including Peter Lalor and his supporters including Raffaello Carboni, Phoebe Emonson and Timothy Hayes.

Additional students become involved in the session by representing the different viewpoints held by the residents of Ballarat. Some will be supportive of the diggers whilst others are pro government. Others may choose to remain neutral. The Hall of Debate activity is led by the Centre's Education Coordinator in the role of Judge whilst students, teachers and parents act as jurors. The jury listens to the information/evidence provided by each character and then is required to answer three key questions:

1. Who was responsible for the events leading to the conflict at the Eureka Stockade?
2. How might the conflict have been avoided?
3. What might be the social and political significance of Eureka in the future?

At the conclusion of the inquiry the Jury leave the Court Room and retire to consider their verdict. The Jury then return to the Court Room and through their appointed spokesperson(s) their decisions are delivered.

The Hall of Debate Activity is an interactive educational role play session designed to increase each student's understanding of the Eureka story and to assist in development of personal self confidence and public speaking skills.

Teachers or groups interested in participating in the Hall of Debate Activity should contact Reception Staff or the Education Coordinator for further information.

"The important process is to reflect, judge, consider and evaluate explanations about historical situations. Such a process will indeed make you aware that gold mining in the 1850's and 1860's had many consequences for Victoria and Australia."

(Issues in Australian History Wills, Prior, Close and Castle)

CHARACTER SUMMARY

Lt Governor Sir Charles Hotham

Lieutenant Governor of Victoria at the time of the Eureka Rebellion.

James Bentley

Owner of the Eureka Hotel.

Commissioner Robert Rede

Gold Commissioner at Ballarat.

Father Smyth

Catholic Priest at St Alipius Chapel, Ballarat.

Captain John Wellesley Thomas

A soldier who planned and commanded the attack on the Eureka Stockade.

Magistrate John D'Ewes

Police Magistrate in Ballarat. Removed from office in November 1854.

Private John Neill

Soldier of the 40th Regiment who was involved in the attack on the Eureka Stockade.

Colonial Secretary John Foster

Colonial Secretary to Governor Hotham.

Major General Sir Robert Nickle

Commander in Chief of the military forces in the Australian colonies.

Trooper Goodenough

A policeman who dressed as a digger and attended the diggers' meetings on Bakery Hill. Acted in the role of informant.

Sir Redmond Barry

One of the judges involved in the State Treason Trials held in Melbourne.

Doctor Alfred Carr

A doctor on the Ballarat Goldfields who pronounced James Scobie dead.

Thomas Kennedy

A miner and member of the Ballarat Reform League. A friend of James Scobie.

Alicia Dunne

A school teacher and fiancée of Peter Lalor.

Frederick Vern

A leader of the Eureka Movement.

George Scobie

Brother of James Scobie and participant in the Eureka Rebellion.

Doctor Timothy Doyle

A doctor on the Ballarat Goldfields who amputated Peter Lalor's arm.

Timothy Hayes

An Irishman. Chairman of the Ballarat Reform League.

Phoebe Emonson

Shopkeeper on the Eureka Lead who hid several of the rebels after the Eureka Battle.

Henry Seekamp

Editor of the Ballarat Times who wrote supporting the diggers.

Raffaello Carboni

An Italian digger who acted as translator. Published "The Eureka Stockade" in 1855.

Anastasia Hayes

A teacher at the Roman Catholic School. Assisted in the amputation of Peter Lalor's arm.

Peter Lalor

An Irishman and leader of the diggers.

John Humffray

Leader of the Eureka Movement. A Chartist from Wales.