

Inquiry Questions

- **How and why do people seek homes in other places?**
- **What creates a sense of belonging?**
- **How has our culture changed over time?**

Chinese Camp (MAP 8): By 1855 it was estimated that 17,000 Chinese men had made their way to the Victorian goldfields, barely any Chinese women came at this time. They came for gold and planned to return home once they had found their fortune. The Chinese people were the only cultural group forced to live in allocated camps in Ballarat. There were six Chinese camps across the Ballarat region. To further discourage the arrival of prospective Chinese miners to the goldfields, the government imposed a tax on any Chinese person arriving in Victoria. The tax imposed was 10 pounds per person, approximately \$10,000 in today's money. To evade this tax, many Chinese people arrived at the South Australian port of Robe and walked 400kms to the Ballarat goldfields.

Q. Why do you think the Chinese village is separate from the rest of the diggings? A. The government didn't want Chinese people to find gold they would possibly take back to China. One way to discourage them was to have them live in separate camps on the goldfields.

Q. Even though Chinese people had to walk 400km to the Ballarat goldfields, they still came, what could this tell us about them? A. In China, the social class you were born into mainly dictated what your life was to be like. Many Chinese people were quite poor and they came from poverty, famine, and political upheaval in China, to the goldfields. They were resilient and determined to find make their families' lives better.

Cobb & Co (Map 24): While many gold rush immigrants made money from gold, fortunes could also be made by shopkeepers, bakers, entertainers, restaurateurs, and entrepreneurs who sold goods and services to the miners. American Freeman Cobb and his three associates realised that they could make money by offering Victorians a means of more sturdy and reliable transport between Melbourne and the goldfields. The first coach ran in 1854 from Melbourne to the Castlemaine diggings took half the time as other coaches. The coach ride was slow, uncomfortable, and quite expensive, but was considered a luxurious method of travel. This meant that transport became accessible to more people, as owning a horse was expensive at this time. The coach delivered mail and people purchased their tickets for the coach ride at ticket booking offices (John Alloo's Restaurant was one of these). Not everyone that came to the goldfields stayed here. Freeman Cobb sold his business, which continued to be a success, and returned to America.

Q. Where did people put their luggage on the coaches? A. In various places including, under the box seat is a large storage compartment known as the boot. Mail and parcels were put in large wicker baskets and tied onto the roof, while luggage would be strapped onto the special luggage compartment at the back of the coach.

Corroboree Poster (BEHIND MAP 30): The Wadawurrung people are the traditional custodians of the land in the Ballarat region. Wadawurrung people relied on the land to produce food such as murnong (yam daisies), and grain for making flour. From 1851 Ballarat was turned inside out in the search for gold, with little thought to the long-term environmental consequence. Wadawurrung people still attempted to maintain their traditional customs, however, their main food sources may have been destroyed, and they had to find ways of participating in the new colonial economy. Corroborees are traditional ceremonies performed by Aboriginal people. Many Europeans were interested in Aboriginal cultural practices and Wadawurrung people soon realised Europeans would pay to be entertained by performances of traditional Corroborees. Any Corroborees for non-Aboriginal audiences were altered to protect traditional cultural practices and tickets were sold for money.

Q. Why do you think this Corroboree was performed by a full moon? A. Electricity hadn't yet been invented, so the full moon provided enough light for people to see the performance.

St Alipius Diggings School (MAP 15): People came from all over the world to make their fortunes on the goldfields of Ballarat with Irish people coming in large numbers. Some were skilled workers seeking new opportunities; many came because they were escaping starvation and conflict in their own country. As most Irish immigrants were Catholic, they built churches for their community soon after their arrival. When these buildings were not being used for worship, they became classrooms for Irish children. You can also find an Anglican school at Sovereign Hill for English children and a Wesleyan school for Scottish children.

Q. What can you see that tells us this is a Catholic building? A. There is a picture of Pope Pius IX, as well as equipment for Mass.

Q. Why do you think that people constructed these buildings not long after their arrival? A. To continue their way of life and to create a sense of community and belonging.

SOVEREIGN HILL LEARNING



VISIT THE PRECINCTS

THE DIGGINGS

1851 - 1854: Daily life in a tent city, including housing, mining, business, law and order as gold seekers searched for a better life. **Why was gold so valuable, and how did it change peoples lives?**

SPEEDWELL STREET

1856 - 1861: Aligned to Main Street, highlighting the change in living conditions, business and technology that improved daily life. **How do we measure change? Were we more sustainable in the past?**

MAIN STREET

1855 - 1861: Ballarat as a town with the building of permanent structures and amenities to service the needs and wants of the community, economically and socially. **How did the gold rush shape modern Australia?**

STEAM, MINING INDUSTRY

1861 - 1914: Showcasing technology and innovation that contributed to the rapid development of Ballarat and the broader region. **How does technology shape and change lives?**

CHINESE VILLAGE

1857 - 1860: The cultural and social living conditions of Chinese immigrants within the larger narrative of the gold rush, exploring their struggles and successes. **Why do people risk everything in search for a better life?**

WADAWURRUNG CULTURAL

First Nations artists share their reflections of culture, history, and heritage. **What creates a sense of belonging and connection to the place you call home?**

VISITOR SERVICES

- Information
- Food & Drink
- Toilets
- All Gender Toilets
- First Aid Kit
- Beware of Horses
- Suggested Stroller & Wheelchair Route
- Emergency Evacuation Point
- Accessible Toilet
- Parenting Room
- Water Tap
- Post Office
- Gift Shop
- Ramps

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR OUR INTERACTIVE MAP



We acknowledge the First Nations of the land upon which Sovereign Hill and Narmbool sit, the Wadawurrung, and their ongoing connection to this land and pay respect to their culture and their Elders past, present and future.