

**EUREKA  
EDUCATION**

**ARTISTS  
ON  
THE  
GOLDFIELDS**

**EUREKA  
CENTRE  
BALLARAT**

**ART GALLERY  
OF BALLARAT**



# ARTISTS ON THE GOLDFIELDS

image p. 49:  
**Eugene von Guérard**  
*That's the Styl Mary* 1854 (detail)  
oil on canvas  
24.2 x 19.4 cm  
Purchased with funds from Cecil and  
Kathleen Toy and the Ferry Foundation,  
1989  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat

Many of the people who arrived on the diggings decided to keep a record of what life was like. Many wrote letters and diaries, but some also sketched or even painted. Some of these were professional artists like Eugene von Guérard who had come to seek their fortune digging for gold, but there were also many amateur artists like Canadian Charles-Alphonse Doudiet. These artists became an important part of telling the story of the Ballarat goldfields and the early days of the Australian colonies.

## CAPTURING LIFE ON THE GOLDFIELDS

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Drawing was very important because at the time of the gold rush photography was still quite new – it was not able to capture much detail and the images were in black and white. In the earliest period of the gold rush, only a few photographers had arrived on the diggings with their cumbersome equipment, so the task of recording what was happening on the goldfields became the role of artists who could paint and draw

Artists captured the daily happenings on the goldfields – the challenges and makeshift nature of the diggers' lives, as well as the physical and emotional challenges of digging for gold. They also captured the environmental impact mining had on the landscape.

However, these depictions showed the perspective of European men, so key parts of the story, especially that of the Wadawurrung people and the stories of woman and children, were overlooked or, at times represented with prejudice and judgement.

The Art Gallery of Ballarat collection holds a number of artworks by significant goldfields artists including Eugene von Guérard, ST Gill, Charles-Alphonse Doudiet and others.

## EUGENE VON GUÉRARD



**Eugene von Guérard**  
***Golden Point Ballarat, and flat, with part of Black Hill as in July 1853*** 1874  
oil on canvas  
36.0 x 61.4 cm  
Gift of James Oddie, 1891  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat

Austrian-born artist Eugene von Guérard arrived on the Ballarat goldfields in late 1852. He was a trained landscape painter with a meticulous eye for detail. He came with a thirst for adventure, expecting to find gold, but was also drawn to capturing the happenings and landscape of the new world in which he found himself.

In his extensive journals and sketchbooks von Guérard captured the harsh realities of the digger's life. His diary entries and sketches also reveal the everyday realities of life on the goldfields, such as the clothes people wore, the meals they ate and the entertainment they enjoyed – as well as the illicit sale of alcohol.

His drawings and paintings give a detailed artist's impression of both life on the goldfields and the impact mining had on the landscape.

## SAMUEL THOMAS GILL

### ST Gill

**Subscription Ball Ballarat 1854** 1854  
watercolour & gum arabic on paper  
25.1 x 35.3 cm  
Purchased, 1961  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat

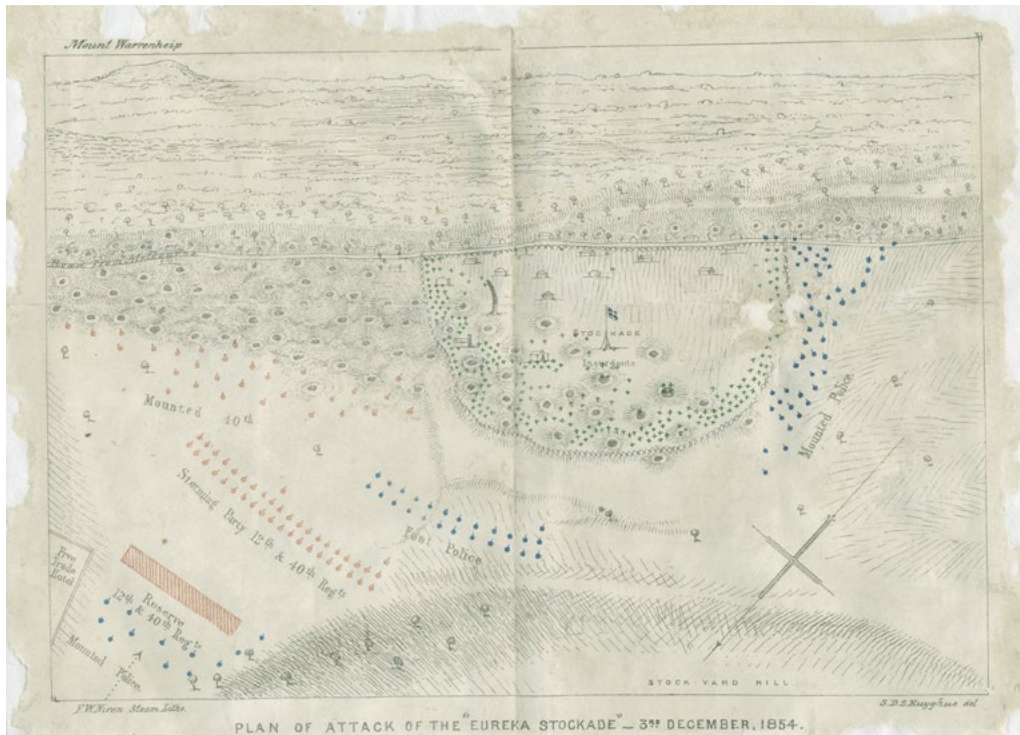


Born in England, ST (Samuel Thomas) Gill arrived in Australia 1839, aged 21. He lived first in the colony of South Australia, where he made a living painting street scenes and portraits. He also accompanied explorers on expeditions to record the country they travelled through. The last expedition he joined ended in disaster when its leader accidentally shot himself in the face.

In 1851, after gold was discovered in the neighbouring colony of Victoria, ST Gill made his way to the goldfields, including Ballarat. By August 1852 he had produced many sketches of goldfields life, including a set of 24 sketches which were reproduced and published as *Gold diggers and Diggings of Victoria*. The prints of his sketches were very popular in the colonies but also back in England, showing people what life was like on the Victorian goldfields.

In his drawings, ST Gill documented the comings and goings of life on the diggings – the stores and restaurants, the theatres and concert halls, sly-grog shops and Christian religious services, even the arrival of the mail coaches. He captured much of the excitement but also the disappointment and misery that were the reality of a digger's life.

## HENRY WINKLES



**Henry Winkles**  
**Canadian Gully** 1853  
pencil on paper  
8.0 x 12.4 cm (irreg.)  
Purchased with funds from the  
Colin Hicks Caldwell Bequest, 2004  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat

Henry Winkles was a well established artist in England and already a middle aged man when he came to Australia in 1852. He was travelling with his son who wanted to try his luck on the diggings. He spent a lot of his time recording the details of the living conditions on the goldfields. His sketches, which are even more detailed and meticulous than those of von Guerard, were bought by the Art Gallery of Ballarat in 2004.

## SAMUEL DOUGLAS HUYGHUE

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Samuel Douglas Huyghue  
FW Niven and Co (printer)  
*Plan of attack of the "Eureka Stockade" 3rd  
December 1854* 1854  
lithograph on paper  
15.1 x 21.9 cm  
Purchased, 1974  
Collection of the Art Gallery of Ballarat



After the Canadian writer and artist Samuel Douglas Huyghue arrived in Melbourne in 1852, he joined the Government service as a clerk. He was working in the Office of Mines at Ballarat during the Eureka Rebellion and wrote one of the first accounts of it, using a pseudonym. He made sketches of the landscape and vegetation around Ballarat and also drew sketches and maps of the Eureka battle. His drawings are valuable records of the early diggings and the Stockade itself.

## CHARLES-ALPHONSE DOUDIET

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The son of a clergyman, Charles-Alphonse Doudiet was born in Switzerland but grew up in Canada. He arrived on the Ballarat goldfields in 1854, in time to see the events of the Eureka Rebellion. In a sketchbook, he recorded some of the key events in the story of the Eureka Stockade including the burning of Bentley's hotel, the raising of the Eureka Flag and swearing of the diggers' oath and the final attack on the Stockade.

After Doudiet returned to Canada and became a clergyman, his sketchbook was packed away and not discovered until 1992, when it was bought by the Art Gallery of Ballarat.

(see page 31 for an example of Doudiet's work)

### Activity 1

#### History 3–9:

##### Historical sources as evidence

Imagine you have just arrived on the Ballarat goldfields, after travelling from a distant country. Using the image of von Guérard's *Old Ballarat as it was in the summer of 1853–54* 1884 and ST Gill's sketches of the goldfields, write a series of diary entries detailing your arrival.

Include the sights, sounds and smells, the landscape and other environmental factors, including weather conditions.

### Activity 2

#### History 3–9:

##### Historical sources as evidence

Imagine you are a reporter for *The Ballarat Times* newspaper and a large gold nugget has been discovered.

You are asked to interview the miners who have made the discovery. What information do you need? Write a list of questions that you would need to ask about the find. Then write a detailed account of the discovery for the newspaper. You could include the lead-up to the discovery, why they decided to mine in that spot, the preparation of the mine shaft, any challenges they may have faced, the excitement of the find and what their future plans might be.

### Activity 3

#### Visual Arts 5–9, Explore and Express, Visual Arts Practices

Look at the art of ST Gill. Look at the way he has portrayed the people going about everyday life. Research other artists who showed life on the goldfields. Design a poster to advertise life on the goldfields that could be used to encourage families to travel to Ballarat and set up a new home.

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

- What was the role of the artist on the goldfields and why do we consider them important today?
- If you were an artist working on the goldfields what aspects of life on the goldfields would you consider most important to capture?

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Visit the Art Gallery of Ballarat to view the Eugene von Guérard and ST Gill works held in the collection as well as looking at other art relating to the goldfields.

Visit the Art Gallery of Ballarat and participate in the Eureka program, with workshop.

## ACTIVITIES

### ARTISTS ON THE GOLDFIELDS

#### Pre-visit

Complete Activity 1

#### Post-visit

Complete  
Activity 2 or 3

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