

'REEFING' FOR GOLD AT NAILCAN GULLY

Ray Gear

'Reefing' spread to north-west of Albury in early October 1863 following a report that James Kelly Jnr had found gold near the farm of Joseph Mann. The area was given the name 'Nailcan Gully.'

Within a week some twenty-eight claims were registered. In late October, it was reported that a person using a tub and cradle at the top of the gully could make up to 25 shillings a day.

Crushing was carried out at Chiltern until 1865 when the 'Lavington Crushing Mill' was established to crush the quartz from the Nailcan and the Black Range goldfield to the north-east.

In December 1865 The *Tumut & Adelong Times* commented on the opening of the crushing mill "performed in a very graceful manner by Mrs Blackmore, the mayoress, assisted by Mrs Ballantyne, breaking a bottle of champagne against the fly-wheel, and naming it the 'Lavington' amidst enthusiastic cheering."



Not on Nailcan Hill, Darkies Hill quarry at Black Range (Lavington) in the 1890s

Disappointing yields and drought saw the removal of the mill in 1867.

In the late 1860s and early 1870s reefing on the Nailcan lapsed, but in 1879 interest revived and in December, Joseph Reeve of Yackandandah opened a crushing mill at Sergeant's Lagoon on the Howlong Road. Its opening gave "the Nailcan Reefs a new impetus."

In 1880 several parties of reefers were working on the Nailcan and companies were formed, one being 'The Albury Gold Mining Company (Limited), Old Nailcan Reef.' Nominal capital was £12,000 made up of 24,000 shares of ten shillings each. The 'paid up' shares amounted to £9,850.

P R O S P E C T U S
OF THE
ALBURY GOLD MINING COMPANY
(LIMITED),
Old Nailcan Reef, Albury.

(To be registered under the Limited Liability
Partnership Act.)

Capital. £12,000.

In 24,000 shares of 10s each, of which 2500
are fully paid up. Deposit money, 3s
per share; calls afterwards not to exceed
6d per share per month.

PROVISIONAL DIRECTORS.

Mr D. J. Abercrombie	Mr G. H. Billson
Mr A. Aeschmann	Mr W. Lee Ferrier, J.P.
Mr C. Ten Brink.	

Ovens & Murray Advertiser
June 15, 1880

Gold production for the company in 1881 averaged eleven pennyweights (about 17 grams) to the ton. In the previous year, their average yield was eighteen pennyweights to the ton.

In 1881 the company purchased the crushing plant of James Reeve but sold it the following year. In February 1882, tenders were called to work the company's claim on tribute. Later that year the company was reported to have been wound up. Two years later the Nailcan reefs were deserted.

Discovery of a new quartz lead in 1887 saw a new rush of claims including 'The Jubilee,' 'The Oddfellows,' 'The Foresters,' 'Four Men's ground' and the 'Advance Australia.' In mid-1888 the main shaft on the 'Advance Australia' reef was sixty feet deep, and the lode about nine inches wide.

By the late 1890s, serious reefing had ceased at the Nailcan reefs.