

## Early Gold Mining in Lavington

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Gold was found at Lavington previously known as Black Range in November 1851, Richard Heaver and James Dennison being the discoverers. Few diggers made their way there however, goldfields at Bathurst and Mount Alexander being more attractive.

In March 1852 it was reported that only a few parties worked at the Black Range, one being Sanders and party. In the mid to late 1850s local prospecting parties were being formed and a Prospecting Association established. All had a short life.

To advance the finding of gold, a gold reward fund was established in May 1857, for "the discovery of a gold field within a radius of fifteen miles from Albury capable of employing at least 500 diggers collectively, for three months." The reward was never claimed as with later reward funds set up in 1860 and 1862.

According to the *Border Post* in September 1860, some two hundred Chinamen were working at Black Range besides some fifty Europeans. Twelve months earlier only one or two parties were reported to have been working on the field.

By late 1860 there were disputes between the Chinese and Europeans. A clash in December occurred over a claim which the Europeans had sold to the Chinese for twenty pounds. Once the Chinese had paid, the Europeans demanded more.

The *Border Post* of October 19, 1861 reported there is "no longer any doubt about the payable character of the diggings." Over two months later the Black Range Gold Field No1 was proclaimed within the meaning of 'The Gold-fields Act of 1861.' The field was extended easterly in June 1863.

By early 1862 a four-stamper battery had been erected however lack of rain restricted its operation. It was not to have its first crushing until July when it crushed quartz from Acton's reef.

Quartz reefing up until this time was the main way of seeking gold. In mid-1862 diggers began to take up alluvial mining where pans, cradles, sluice boxes and tubs were used to retrieve gold.

By mid-1865 different fields, localities, reefs and claims were being identified or named. Major reefs included Acton's (1862), One Tree Hill (1863), Albury Quartz (1865) and the Ethiopian (1864) also known as Blackfellows.



Cradle displayed at Jindera Pioneer Museum used to separate gold from surrounding material.