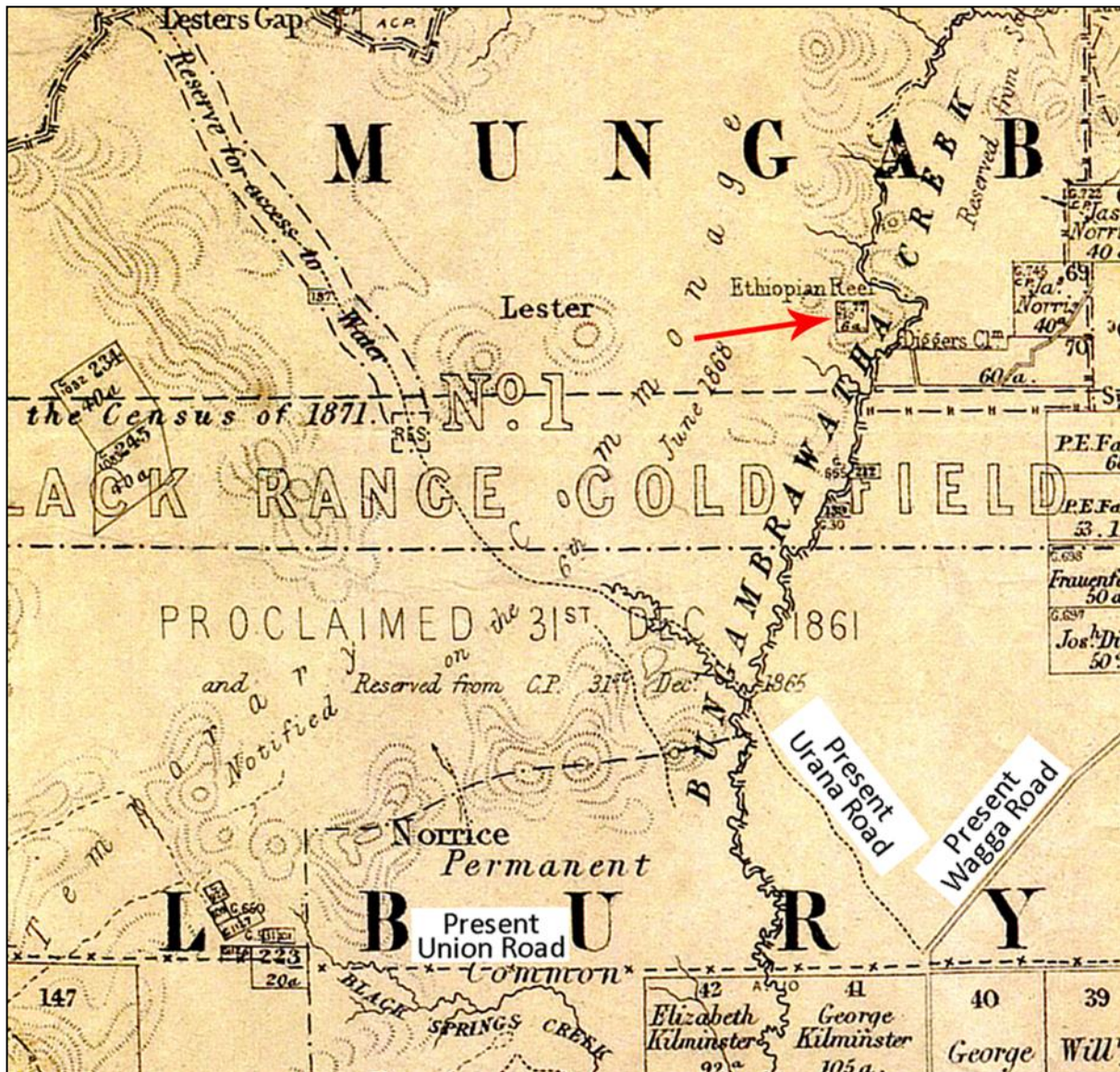


Gold at Ethiopian Reef

Ray Gear

Gold is said to have been discovered at the Ethiopian Reef, also known as Blackfellows' Reef, in 1864 by a party of Aboriginal reefers. According to the *Ovens & Murray Advertiser*, the reef was named them. Located to the north of today's Lyne Street, after being worked to a depth of fifty feet "the reef was lost, and the claim abandoned."

Soon after, other reefers began working the reef including, JC Middleton and party, R Bowden and party, and the Ethiopian Quartz Prospecting & Amalgamated Company. In November 1865 James Fallon, a Mr North, and James Layton each bought a one-eighth share in the reef. The claims value in late 1865 was put at £2800.



Part of Sheet 1 of 3 sheets of County of Goulburn map no 6387495.

The red arrow indicates Ethiopian Reef.

At the beginning of 1866 a crushing from the Ethiopian Reef averaged 1oz 2dwts (about 31 grams) to the ton. A month later 1.5 ounces (43g) to the ton was achieved. By the late 1860s work had nearly ceased.

In early 1872 a party consisting of Messrs Skinner, Webb, Day, McLennan and Hayes began re-working the reef. The work included the start on a new tunnel which by the end of November was in some ninety-five feet helped by using the "new explosive material, dynamite." Work included the laying of a tramway along the tunnel.

Ralph Walton and William Goldsworthy, in early 1876, were given possession of the claim which had been abandoned for a few years. Working the claim also was Collins in early 1881, returning in 1883 with one of the Wealand brothers. Five years later, following new finds in the vicinity of the reef, new claims were taken up. Parties working included Goldsworthy, Pye & Wealand while James Devene was sinking a shaft on his Blackfellows' claim.

George Lawson and party in 1887 made a fresh start on the reef, a crushing yielding 2.5 oz (71g) per ton. In the following year it was reported that Messrs FW Meredith, Daniel Day and Kenneth McLennan had found rich stone on the "supposed line of the old Blackfellows' claim."

In the early 1890s Tyrell and party were prospecting as was Clina Company, T Wealand and Miles who in March 1891 also leased George Lawson's claim. Soon after mining at the reef declined, and by the end of the nineteenth century had again lapsed.