

The Forgotten Rebels Of Eureka



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Synopsis

The story of how gold miners rebelled against British authority, beginning a process that would ultimately lead to democracy in Australia. The Eureka Stockade. It's one of Australia's foundation legends - yet the story has always been told as if half the participants weren't there. But what if the hot-tempered, free-spirited gold miners we learned about at school were actually husbands and fathers, brothers and sons? What if there were women and children right there beside them, inside the stockade, when the bullets started to fly? And how do the answers to these questions change what we thought we knew about the so-called 'birth of Australian democracy'? Who, in fact, were the midwives to that precious delivery? Ten years in the research and writing, irrepressibly bold, entertaining and often irreverent in style, Clare Wright's *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* is a fitting tribute to the unbiddable women of Ballarat - women who made Eureka a story for us all.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a thoroughly researched and extremely readable account of Eureka, one of Australia's most significant events. The attention to the lesser role that has been neglected until this publication is most welcome in our attempts to gain a full and accurate picture of the Eureka events. The women were certainly present and had a significant role as the events unfolded. Clare has restored women to history and demonstrated that history has not always been in the male hands at times the male was seen running from conflict whilst women stood and fought. The book is, however, more than an insistence on restoring women to a positive role in the Eureka history. It gives a detailed account of

the events in one of Australia's most significant stands against authoritarianism and privilege. Would that there were more of it today.

Some of it Wright makes up in a novelistic way. Perhaps it is passing for inclusion in the genre of narrative history. Wright adds more research into the Eureka story that tells something of what women were doing when on the gold fields. This adds little to an understanding of the historical event except a bit of context. The book struggles at times to be a bit of B rate historical novel. Given that this book won an important prize in Australia, it doesn't bode well for the quality of the work of other entrants to the prize. Though well written - in terms of the grasp of language - it is generally pretty boring.

This book gives a great insight to life on the goldfields around Ballarat during the Victorian Gold Rush period. We especially learn about what it was like for women at the gold fields. Because the book is based on extensive research, we read about people who were actually involved in the struggle for survival at the diggings, the Eureka Rebellion and events following. It follows the lives of many of these people who after the Rebellion went on to work, raise families and build communities. The actual events of the Eureka Stockade were clearly reported and I gained a fresh insight into the significance of the Eureka Rebellion in Australian history.

I really liked the Clare's description of early Ballarat as the newcomers arrived in 1853 with bustling diggings tent shops and flags fluttering....that part transported me to the time. Certainly this work is warranted as many missing pieces are filled in criss crossing in new directions which is not an easy task. Once I began reading I could not put it down. Clare's style and intelligence shows through. Well done.

Clare Wright has researched well. She sheds light on everyday life in the early days of Ballarat. This book is an excellent social history covering many aspects of the gold rush.

I thoroughly enjoyed the historical information about the women of this time. Very readable. It should be on the book list for senior students of Australian studies or for anyone interested in better understanding this part of our colonial history.

Perhaps because I have Irish ancestry and family who lived in the Ballarat and Bendigo areas, I

have been totally absorbed by this book. And I normally prefer to get my history in a more fictional piece. I can totally understand why this book has been shortlisted for awards.

At last an account of the behind the scenes role of women on the goldfields and an interesting insight into life compared to the usual patriarchal list of achievements. A very interesting read.

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