
GERMANTOWN AND ASSOCIATED MINING INFRASTRUCTURE

Location

MURCHISON ROAD REEDY CREEK, MITCHELL SHIRE

Municipality

MITCHELL SHIRE

Level of significance

Heritage Inventory Site

Heritage Inventory (HI) Number

H7923-0038

Heritage Listing

Victorian Heritage Inventory

Interpretation
of Site

Current place: the place is zoned as Public Conservation and Resource zone and is now open to public firewood collection. Previous phases of development of site – Until further access to historical records is obtained it is difficult to provide the phases of development of the precinct or site however given: 1. historical newspaper accounts and <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au> Historic Gold Mining Plots – ‘Kilmore Goldfields Historical Notes 2014 2. Archaeological evidence present, the site exhibits strong evidence for a substantial building and occupation circa 1860s. 3. Combining this with the presence of stone foundations suggestive of a chimney and possible cellar with the large quantity of wine/champagne bottle fragments, nineteenth century ceramics, and domestic and commercial glass fragments, the site is interpreted as a hotel. Newspaper accounts record a number of hotels in the Reedy Creek area with only an Auction account specifically detailing the location of one hotel as being at Blackman’s Creek (Argus 26 September 1860:2; Argus 27 September 1860:3(7); Figure 9). This was known as the Golden Fleece Hotel and recorded as being operated by Andrew Christian Ollson, Publican (Mining Surveyors and Registrars 1870:564). The auction notices are the only accounts referencing a hotel at Blackman’s Creek, otherwise known as Germantown and the site of the Golden Fleece Hotel circa 1860 operated by Andrew Christian Ollson. Based on the location, map depicting location of Captain’s Reef, the type and quantity of artefacts and stone foundations present I would interpret this site as that of a hotel. The area was known historically and anecdotally as Germantown, a separate and socially distinct settlement from the township of Reedy Creek (see Place History). This precinct and hotel site is associated with nearby Captain’s Reef Quartz Burning Kilns (Figure 1, 1a, 1b); remnants of a man-made dam (referenced in <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au> and anecdotal references to an underground aqueduct water system (Brearly 1982). It is also accompanied by a terracing of river flat and adjacent areas for possible tent or other forms of accommodation (Refer <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au> Kilmore Goldfields Historical Notes providing chronological accounts of the Reedy Creek mining activities circa 1860s). In combination with the Heritage Inventory Captain’s Reef Quartz Roasting Kilns (HI7923-0038), man-made dam, potential aqueduct system, mine shafts, hotel site, terraces along with historical references I believe this is the settlement of Germantown, Blackman’s Creek and that of the Golden Fleece Hotel. Further archaeological investigation would be essential toward verifying this interpretation and in protecting the archaeological values of the site.

Hermes
Number

11655

Property
Number

History

Captain's Reef Quartz Roasting Kiln: Contextual History:History of Place: Heritage Inventory History of Site: September 1860: Satisfactory trial crushing from Wellington Reef. Langridge Reef Co. putting their crushing plant in thorough repair. Rich specimens raised from Captain's Reef (Nickinson & Co). Quartz has been crushed from the Albert and Magenta Reefs, but was not payable. Reference: Mining Surveyors' Report (Kilmore Division), September 1860 March 1864: Only three claims are presently taken up at Reedy Creek -Albert and Captain's return an average 4 oz/ton - they can raise little stone, because of water in their shafts - whim or pumping apparatus is required. Reference: Mining Surveyors' Report (Kilmore Division), March 1864 September 1864: Hayes and Co., Captains Reef, crush with a small basin with two balls, turned by hand - crush two tones per week - 7 tons gave 21 oz. Reference: Mining Surveyors' Report (Kilmore Division), September 1864 1866: At Reedy Creek, the principal companies were the Reedy Creek Co. (working by shaft), Magenta and Solferino (tunnelling), Captain's Reef GMC, Leviathan Co., Shepherd's Reef Co., and Sailor's Reef Co. December 1866: Captain's Reef GMC erecting machinery. Reference: Mining Surveyors' Report (Kilmore Division), December 1864 Germantown and associated mining infrastructure: GERMANTOWN – BLACKMAN'S CREEK - REEDY CREEK, VICTORIA PLACE HISTORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS Lynne Dore 2020 The area known as Germantown is located at Blackman’s Creek approximately 5 kms from the township of Reedy Creek with newspaper advertisements detailing an occupation by miners from 1860 to 1910. The township of Reedy Creek was

established in 1859 with gold being discovered in 1857 by John Jones. Within two years of discovery mining of quartz reefs and alluvial deposits had begun. By 1857 the mining population of the Reedy Creek area and encompassing Germantown was reported to be 3300; while in 1859 the Mining Surveyor F.M. Hill stated there were “150 Alluvial miners, 800 Quartz miners, some 300 engaged in crushing and in stores” totalling 1250 people for the Reedy Creek area (Geelong Advertiser 1859:3). Murray’s 1881 Goldfield map shows the extensive mining leases and operations that once existed in the Reedy Creek area (Figure 1). By 1870 it was reported that there were about “sixty Europeans and fifty Chinese alluvial miners still employed about the Reedy Creek making fair wages” (Mining Surveyors and Registrars 1870:29; <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au>). Despite mining continuing through to 1910, a downturn in yields in the 1880s soon saw the population decrease to 578. While Reedy Creek became the centre of commercial and goldmining activities in the area, a separate and detached group of miners settled along the banks of Blackman’s Creek and began working the adjacent quartz reefs. Said to be of German or European descent this small community established their quartz crushing operations at Blackman’s Creek. Reference to German presence can be found in <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au> – Historic Gold Mining Plots, Kilmore Goldfield Historical Notes: 2 “June 1860: Reedy Creek—some few of the old reefs are still working, but most claim holders seem dispirited and are disinclined to venture more capital in exploring the reefs. Triangle Reef, King Parrot Creek—Fortune & Co. sinking engine shaft—Hurley & Co., Ross & Co., and Marnell & Co. still raising good stone—Doyle sinking shaft farther north, immediately adjoining the Germans” <http://Pandora.nla.gov.au> – Historic Gold Mining Plots, Kilmore Goldfield Historical Notes: 2 Physical evidence of this settlement can be found with the extant remains of Captain’s Reef Quartz Roasting Kilns (Figure 4), a remnant dam across a small tributary (Figure 6), the terracing of Blackman’s Creek for a tented/hut community and the artefactual and structural remains of what is considered to be from an 1860s hotel site (Figures 2,3, 5). It is suggested this was the Golden Fleece Hotel operated by publican Andrew Christian Ollson (Ollosson), although there is very little documentation available to verify this assumption without accessing archives. While there were at least five recorded hotels at Reedy Creek between 1860-1890s, O’Connor’s Diggers Retreat, Fraley’s Commercial, Treziese’s Reedy Creek, Kelly’s Exchange and McMahon’s Reefer’s (Argus October 1890:10), in contrast there is only one reference to a hotel being located at Blackman’s Creek and stated to be the only one offering accommodation... (Age 26 September 1860:2, Figure 9). This reference is an advertisement to sell by ‘Public Competition’ the Insolvent Estate of Andrew C. Ollson, ‘a splendid New Hotel’ adjoining Messrs. Nickenson and Co’s large steam quartz-crushing establishment at Blackman’s Reedy Creek’. The advertisement details the hotel’s size as 50 ft x 32ft, shingled roof, wide verandah with corrugated iron roof; the bar and front parlour each measuring 21ft square with an entrance hall 6ft wide (Age 26 September 1860:2). The bar-parlour and three bedrooms each being 12 ft x 10 feet... is the only one in “that quarter offering accommodation and refreshment” (Age 26 September 1860:2). The advertisement also lists the furniture and bar equipment to be sold and states that the hotel is near Captain’s, Emu and Opossum Reefs. This would seem to verify the hotel’s location as being in close proximity to Captain’s Reef which is 900 metres east of the hotel site at Blackman’s Creek (Figure 1a). The sale of the hotel was a result of Ollson (Ollson?) being declared insolvent with a Special Meeting of Creditors at Melbourne’s Supreme Court House held in May 1861 at which a proof of debt of £380 9s 6d was made against the ‘Estate of Andrew C. Ollson of Reedy Creek’ (Age 1861:7 and Victorian Farmers Journal and Gardeners Chronicle 1861). The proposed auction of Ollson’s hotel coincided with a downturn in gold prospecting for the area in 1860s resulting in many insolvencies being declared within the Reedy Creek district. Despite this it was stated in a local history that ‘new discoveries of alluvial gold in 1861 led to a rush (in the area) by the Chinese’ (Brealey 1982:4). Anecdotal Evidence Stories from past Reedy Creek residents verify that the area was “popularly known as German Town in the early days” (Brealey 1982:5) with local reminiscences stating: “A visit to the upper reaches of the Blackman’s Creek may be worthwhile as there are still remains of a fairly large dam evidently built across the creek which held water for a colony of German people who settled there’. Parts of a system of hand built underground aqueducts apparently to feed this dam from surrounding hills still remain and it is hoped that steps to preserve these will be taken’ (Brealey 1982:5). After 1910 – Going with cousin George Balmer to see the signs where German Town had existed years before – I think it was between Doctor’s and Crystal Creeks’ (Brealey 1982: 50) The Blandford family settled in Kilmore on arrival from England in early 1850’s. John Blandford was a stonemason...he married Ellen Quane in 1857...later they moved to Germantown (situated near the present Blackman’s Dam) where John took up mining (Brealey 1982:77). The last reference to Blackman’s Creek was in 1910 when bush fires broke out in the district “The bush fire which was started last week was got under control, but considerable uneasiness has been felt by the residents of Germantown on account of several fresh outbreaks” (Argus February 1910:4). Site Visit Report – T. Vienet 2020 GERMANTOWN HISTORIC PRECINCT Germantown as the name suggests was a community of German miners working together 5 kilometres southeast of Reedy Creek. Throughout Australia there were many towns named Germantown. I know of one near Walhalla, one at Epping, one near Geelong and Holbrook in NSW was originally named Germantown until the Great War. There are few references in the newspapers and documents of the 1800s. The precinct is on the intersection of Blackmans Rd. and Beaconsfield Road on Blackmans Creek. What remains today is the hotel site with evidence of a chimney that was standing several years ago until a tree fell on it.

appears that the residence had a cellar. Nearby (200 metres from the hotel site) Blackmans Creek had a dam built on it. There is evidence of the dam wall remaining. There is evidence of level terraces in several locations where huts or tents were likely to be located. Near Blackmans Creek in the scrub is two iron riveted tanks that likely held either water or cyanide. There is a flat cleared area on Blackmans Creek that was likely to be a part of the village. This area was a popular camping spot in the 1960s. The area is yet to have an archaeological survey, this is essential to gain more knowledge. Like many historic sites, the area has had bottle diggers do their uncovering in the 1970s when that was a popular pastime. Broken bottles remain as evidence of a past civilization. I have in my possession (for safekeeping) a brick that was found in Blackmans Creek at the site. It was manufactured in England may have come to Australia as a kiln brick that was used for ballast. The current firewood collection area that is in place in the area is a threat to preserving what history remains. A short-term gain to a few is a long-term loss to many. To put it into context, European settlement has been here for 250 years and our evidence of early settlement is limited and requires preservation. The fact that DELWP is unaware of this historic site is evidence of the need to preserve what evidence is there. The 50,000 years of indigenous ownership of the land overlaps this and forms a major part of history related to land utilization in Australia. The site check on 5 September showed that the firewood collection has already had an impact on the site. The hotel site has wood cutting evidence that has taken place since the firewood collection started on 1/9/20 and this will continue until 30/11/20. It is surprising that firewood collection has been permitted in this area considering the number of deep shafts each side of Blackmans Road. Evidence remaining is-

- Hotel site with cellar and chimney
- Dam site on Blackmans Creek
- Level areas created for huts, tents or buildings
- Iron Cyanide or water tanks
- Broken bottles from the 1800s
- Cleared area on creek
- Mining excavation and shafts 700 metres from Germantown is the Gold roasting kilns on Beaconsfield Road in the direction of Murchison Spur Road. The past road making improvements throughout the Germantown precinct has no doubt removed important evidence of the town's history; however, significant evidence remains and requires professional work to divulge mining settlement history that has not been previously investigated.

This place/object may be included in the Victorian Heritage Register pursuant to the Heritage Act 2017. Check the Victorian Heritage Database, selecting 'Heritage Victoria' as the place source.

For further details about Heritage Overlay places, contact the relevant local council or go to Planning Schemes Online <http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/>