



Martha Clendinning

Shopkeeper, doctor's wife and
community supporter



Born Ireland 22nd February 1822


Married Dr George Clendinning 12th August
1845

Daughter Margaret born in June 1847, County
Mayo, Ireland

Arrived in Australia 1st January 1853

Died Melbourne January 20th 1908



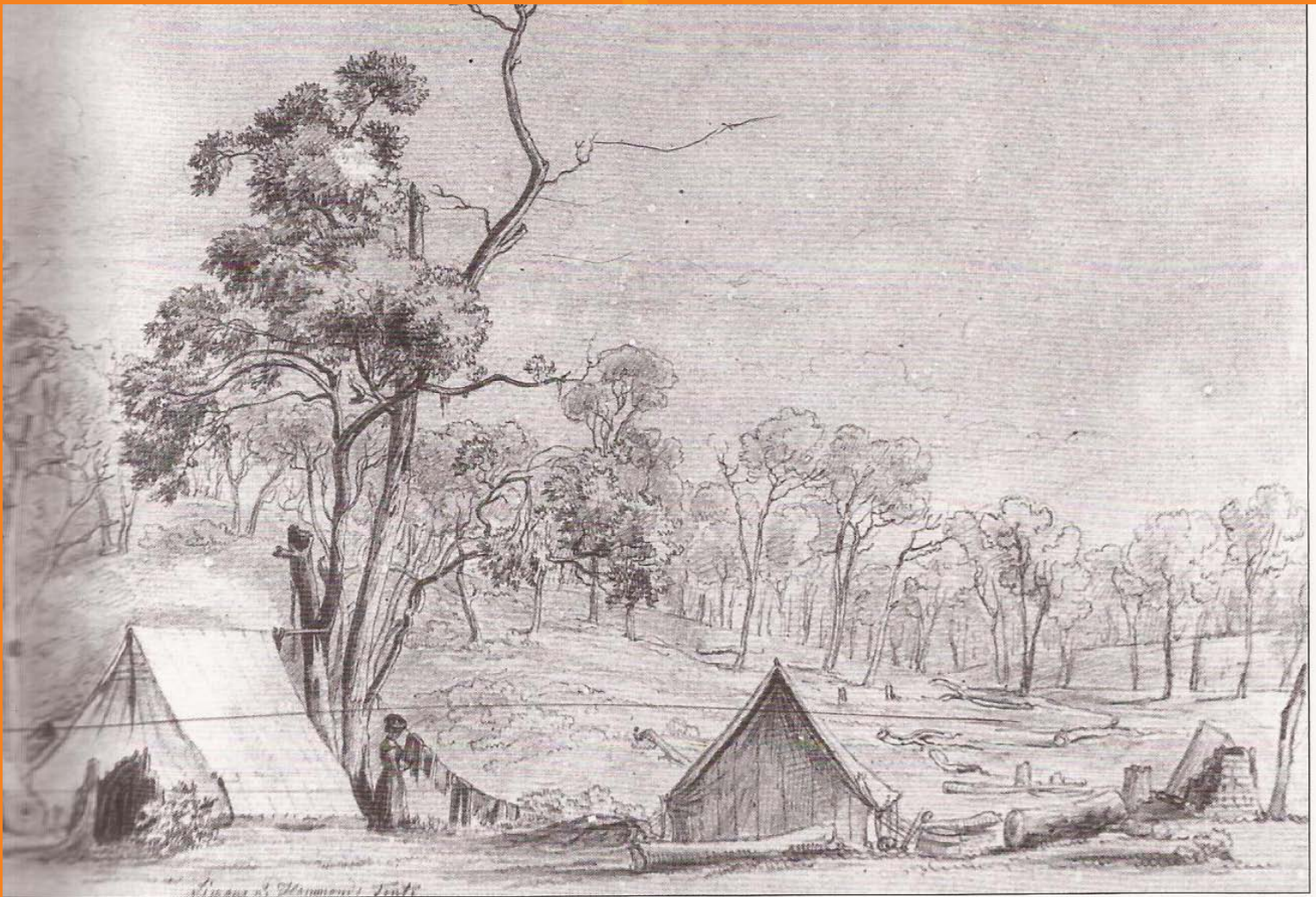


The lady that walked to the diggings... 1853

“Besides finding something to occupy our time, we felt we should much like some way of making a little money to help our husbands in their hard work.”

‘I would sooner walk all the way than endure the jostling and jolting on top of the cart.’





Eugene von Guerard. *Ballarat from my Tent, Simmonds and Hammonds Tent, c27 July 1853*
Courtesy Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria





Shopkeeper 1853-1855



Woman of Eureka

Martha witnessed the Eureka Stockade, *The Battle of Ballarat*, and the preceding events.

Asked to provide guns (which she did not).

Watched the police attack the stockade on 3/12/1854.

Her husband was running a 'tent hospital' in their home, treating a number of casualties.

(Johnson 1995)



Eureka Stockade Riot- JB Henderson, 1854



Changing times...

‘I began to fear my husband might be blamed for allowing me to continue at it [shop keeping]...The doctor had been most anxious for some time past that I should ‘retire’ and was greatly pleased when I announced my intention of doing so.’

Dr Clendinning erected a wooden house which ‘allowed us to make our home fit for a lady and her doctor husband to occupy, and, in a little time, to add a small garden to their comforts.’ (from Asher, 1985)





Community affairs and charity work 1855 ->



Ballarat Women's Refuge

July 1867- Martha Clendinning wrote to the government asking for a grant to establish a female refuge in Ballarat

Aim of the refuge:

'to save fallen women' from their degradation by allowing them to stay in the asylum where, "By moral and religious training, they might be fitted to become useful members of society.'



ORGANISATION

Ballarat Female Refuge (1867 - 1921)

From	1867
To	1921
Categories	Care Provider, Female Rescue Home, Maternity Home and Non-denominational
Alternative Names	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ballarat Female Home (c. 1900 -)● Ballarat Town and City Mission Rescue Home (1921 -)

Summary

The Ballarat Female Refuge was established in 1867 by a group of protestant women, with the objective of reforming 'prostitutes'. It became a shelter for single mothers. It was the first such institution on Australia's goldfields. In 1921, the Refuge became part of the Ballarat Town and City Mission Rescue and Children's Home.



Female Refuge Complex, 183 Scott Parade, Ballarat East [former site]

[▶ DETAILS](#)



There was room for ten women at any one time in the house, which had a high wall around it, on an acre of land..’

In less than two years 47 women were given a home. The length of stay varied from one day to eight months. Records show that three married, six were established in domestic service, three went mad and one died. Others returned to situations they had escaped.

Clendinning House opened in August 1988 and still helps homeless women in need of assistance.



Clendinning House, Ballarat, 2011



A need and a contribution...

‘Through their endeavours they helped to establish many of the charities still in existence today.’ (Wickham, 2003)



Questions...



Reflection...

How did the Gold Rush encourage people to move outside their social background or comfort zone?

Did a belief in moral superiority underlie philanthropic work at this time? Does this matter?

Are personal qualities or social circumstances (access to resources, skills etc) more important when taking action?



References

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