John Augustus Hux (1826–1864): A colonial goldfields reporter¹

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Affairs are in such a state at the Flat that it is dangerous for any one to give their opinions with respect to the proceedings that have taken place: but I will state my opinions, without fear or favour, let the result be what it may.

So wrote John Augustus Hux in response to death threats he received as a consequence of his reporting of the anti-Chinese riots at Lambing Flat on 30 June 1861.² The statement provides an indication of the character of a man who came to Australia in the early 1850s and then spent most of the rest of his short life on the colonial goldfields in the 1850s and 1860s.

Gold, newspapers and reporters

The discovery of gold in the mid nineteenth century changed the face of colonial society in Australia dramatically and in countless ways, not least through the massive migration and population growth it spurred. Covering the goldrushes and the many changes that occurred were major tasks for contemporary newspapers, as the public's appetite for information about gold was insatiable. The main sources for this information were the newspapers and, for them, gold was 'gold', not least for the capital city dailies, such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Empire* (Sydney) and *The Argus* (Melbourne). Gold took up a significant proportion of their pages, with just about everything imaginable associated with the precious metal: editorials, specific reports, short reports in the 'Domestic Intelligence' columns, the 'Gold Circulars', reports from other colonies and overseas (for example, California, New Zealand), 'Original Correspondence' (letters to the editor), personal messages and countless advertisements for everything connected with gold and its mining, such as the necessary clothing and equipment, and even 'how-to' books. Much of the

1 Much appreciation is extended to Dr Alexis Antonia, Centre for Literary and Linguistic Computing, University of Newcastle, for textual analysis in helping to confirm the attribution of some of Hux's articles, and for confirming the presence of another so-far anonymous 'Special Commissioner' reporting for the *Sydney Morning Herald* from Lambing Flat. Her comments on an earlier version of this article are also appreciated. Thanks are also due to Malcolm Allbrook and Brendan Dalton for numerous discussions, to Clive Hilliker for his cartography and to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

2 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 July 1861, 4.

‘gold news’ was day-to-day factual reporting from ‘local correspondents’ and material taken from country newspapers, such as the *Braidwood Dispatch*, the *Temora Herald* and the *Bathurst Free Press*.³

However, as the number of gold finds grew and production increased, the city newspapers recognised the need and responsibility to do more for their readers, to provide not only accurate but also, as far as possible, unbiased information and informed commentary, especially when widely different and conflicting information was circulating among the colonial population. In July 1857, the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* set out how the paper would endeavour to improve the situation:

It has been our constant effort to furnish our readers with information respecting our Gold-fields; to create no unnatural stimulus to mining pursuits, and yet to give fair play to our mineral resources. It was in keeping with this policy that we despatched a special commissioner to collect, at the different gold-fields, the more important facts, to ascertain the feelings and wishes of the miners, and thus to assist the merchant and the legislator, as well as the labourer. A Commissioner—such was the distinction first claimed by the *Times* for its agents—has functions different from that of ordinary reporting. His duties are more remote, less liable to oversight, and therefore peculiarly confidential. He is bound to see with his own eyes, to collate and estimate the facts he may gather, and penetrate through the illusions of selfishness, slander, and timidity, in search of the substantial and permanent.⁴

A similar undertaking had been made by the editor of *The Argus* five years earlier.⁵ The results were extended series of articles in both papers. In both cases, the ‘Special Commissioner’ was Charles de Boos.⁶

While there is little doubt he was the most prolific, Charles de Boos was just one of a number of reporters who worked on the colonial goldfields of New South Wales and Victoria. As with most of the others, his name did not appear on the articles he wrote. It has taken much research to identify his work, and that of Frederick Dalton⁷ and R.J. Howard.⁸ In most cases, reporters were referred to as ‘A Correspondent’, ‘Our Local Correspondent’ or ‘Our Own Correspondent’; a small number were

3 For extracts from many of these reports, together with very brief comments, see the Gold Trails website: www.goldtrails.com.au/gold-heritage/.

4 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 July 1857, 4.

5 *The Argus*, [Melbourne], 16 March 1852, 2.

6 Peter Crabb, “‘His life history may be told in a few words’: Charles Edward Augustus de Boos, 1819–1900”, in *A New Tapestry: Australian Huguenot Families*, ed. Robert Nash (Sydney: The Huguenot Society of Australia, 2015), 109–20.

7 Brendan Dalton, ‘Frederick Dalton (1815–80): Uncovering a Life in Gold’, *Australian Journal of Biography and History* 1 (2018): 113–39, doi.org/10.22459/AJBH.2018.06; Brendan Dalton, Alexis Antonia, Peter Crabb and Hugh Craig, ‘Identifying Another Goldfields Reporter: Frederick Dalton (1815–1880)’, *History Australia* 13, No. 4 (2016): 557–74, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2016.1249272; Peter Crabb, Brendan Dalton, Hugh Craig and Alexis Antonia, ‘The Enigmatic Bartholomew Lloyd Alias Frederick Dalton: Identity and Mobility during the Gold Rush Era in New South Wales’, *History Australia* 16, No. 2 (2019): 358–74, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2019.1591926.

8 Research continues on Howard, who wrote extensively on the Mount Alexander diggings for *The Argus* in 1851–52.

given the title ‘Our Special Commissioner’. Some reporters were identified by name, including Daniel Bunce, Angus Mackay, Alfred Clarke and John Hux. Some had worked as gold ‘diggers’; all had significant knowledge of goldmining. Their reports provided reliable information for contemporary readers. Today, they are significant primary documents from a critical period in Australia’s history. Of as much interest as the stories they wrote are the personal stories of these goldfields reporters. Most have yet to be told. This is the story of one of them, John Augustus Hux.

John Hux: Family heritage

John Hux came from what appears to have been an established London family of craftsmen. The oldest known ancestor, his grandfather William Hux (1730–1780), was a ‘pewterer’. Pewter, a tin alloy, was long used to make plates, dishes and drinking vessels. One of the older livery companies in the City of London, the Worshipful Company of Pewterers, dates from 1348—its charter granted in 1474. The industry reached its peak in the late seventeenth century and then declined, largely as a consequence of the new materials and products of the Industrial Revolution. By the late eighteenth century, the company’s numbers were small.⁹ This may explain why at least one of William’s children turned to another craft; Thomas Hux (1760–1825) became a watchmaker. He married Elizabeth Hudson (1761–1843) in 1782 and they had 11 children, including John, who also became a watchmaker.

John Hux (1792–1876) was born at Finsbury, London, and baptised at St Luke’s, Old Street, on 5 February 1792. He married Jane Rodwell (1798–1835) on 17 November 1819 at Blandford Forum, Dorset.¹⁰ They had at least six children, including John Augustus. In 1828, John was recorded as being a watchmaker in Brunswick Place. Jane died about 1835, aged 37, and John married Mary Martha de Boos (1801–1885) at St James Clerkenwell on 26 May 1838.¹¹ Mary was the daughter of Abraham and Marthe de Boos and an aunt of Charles Edward de Boos, who, in 1839, moved to Australia, where he became a journalist and writer.¹² John was described on the marriage record as a ‘Watch Manufacturer’ and a ‘Widower’, living at 41 Percival Street. By 1843, he was listed as ‘John Hux & Sons Watch Manufacturers’; eight years later, he employed three men. He had moved to 10 Spencer Street, Goswell Road, where he remained for more than 10 years.¹³ The

⁹ The Worshipful Company of Pewterers website (London, 2018): www.pewterers.org.uk.

¹⁰ The marriage record stated that John Hux was of the Parish of Blandford Forum and Jane Rodwell was of the Parish of Hampreston.

¹¹ She was baptised Marie Marthe de Boos.

¹² There was also a more direct family relationship with Charles de Boos. See Crabb, “His life history may be told in a few words”.

¹³ *Post Office Commercial Directory* (London, 1843, 1848, 1851 and 1856).

censuses of 1841 through to 1861 described him as a watchmaker; in 1871, he was listed as a 'Jeweller', living at 10 Milton Street. He died in 1876. In the 1881 census, Mary was described as a 'Boarding Housekeeper' and 'Widow', living with Louisa (1840–1920),¹⁴ her daughter by Hux, at 'the abode of a secretary accountant and his family'.¹⁵ Mary Martha died in October 1885, aged 83.

John Augustus was born on 7 August 1826, and was baptised at St James Clerkenwell on 4 August 1828, on the same occasion as two of his brothers.¹⁶ At the 1841 census, he was living with his parents and four siblings at Clerkenwell and was described as a watchmaker. But he was soon to leave the family business of watch and clockmaking to his brothers. Two of John Augustus's younger siblings have a small part in this story. They were twins Mary and Harry Rodwell, born in March 1830 at Hampreston, Dorset, a small village east of Wimborne Minster, where they were baptised on 13 April 1830.¹⁷ Jane and her husband travelled from their home at Clerkenwell for the baptisms; Jane may well have been at her family home in Hampreston for the births. Harry was living with his parents at Clerkenwell at the 1851 census and working as a watchmaker.

His early years in Australia

John Augustus Hux arrived in Melbourne on 21 January 1853, on the *Catherine Mitchell*, having sailed from Liverpool.¹⁸ In August the following year, advertisements appeared in *The Argus* in Melbourne indicating that his sister, Mary, wanted to contact him and their brother Harry:

HUX.—If this should meet the eye of John Augustus or Harry Hux, send a line to your sister Mrs. Connolly, No. 129 Toy Warehouse, Old South Head-road, Sydney.¹⁹

Just when Mary and Harry arrived in Australia and where they landed are not known, but the lack of a similar advertisement in any Sydney paper suggests Mary knew both her brothers were somewhere in Victoria. Mary was living in Sydney and married to Matthew Connolly, who had a retail business on South Head Road.²⁰

14 The previous year, they had another daughter, Florence (1839–1843), but she lived for only four years.

15 Ancestry.com Library Edition: trees.ancestrylibrary.com/tree/25190412/person/1659018516.

16 Some sources give his name as John Augustus Rodwell Hux. The brothers were Richard Rodwell (1824–1869) and Thomas Hudson (1828–1847).

17 'Baptisms in the Church of England, Parish of Hampreston, Dorset Parish Registers', Dorset History Centre, Dorchester, www.ancestry.com.

18 *Unassisted Passenger Arrivals* (Melbourne: Public Records Office Victoria, 2019), www.prov.vic.gov.au; *The Argus*, [Melbourne], 22 January 1853, 4.

19 *The Argus*, [Melbourne], 10 August 1854, 1; 11 August 1854, 2.

20 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April 1864, 1. He also ran a 'Circulation Library' (*The Empire*, [Sydney], 12 August 1852, 2). Apart from this inquiry, nothing further has been found about Harry in Australia, nor is anything further known about Mary following the death of John Augustus in 1864.

Just over three months after Mary Connolly's advertisements appeared, on 29 November 1855, a Mr Hux arrived in Sydney from Melbourne, having sailed on the *City of Sydney*.²¹ And in February 1858, an unusual notice appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald*:

I BEG to acknowledge the RECEIPT of Twenty-one pounds ten shillings and sixpence (£21 12s. 6d.) handed me by Mr. HUX and to return him and all parties subscribing to the same my sincere and grateful thanks for their kind assistance, after the fatal accident by which my husband was killed. EMMA LAWRENCE, February 1st, 1858.²²

In both cases, we might ask was the 'Mr Hux' John or Harry? And who was Emma Lawrence; what was her connection with 'Mr Hux'; and what caused him to undertake this charitable task? Emma's husband may have been the Joseph Lawrence whose accidental death while at work at the Western Islands wharf was the subject of a coroner's inquest about the same time as Emma's notice appeared.²³

Hux, the digger and writer

What little is known of Hux's time in Victoria comes from his later writings. In the winter of 1854, he 'was working on one of the principal [gold]fields in Victoria',²⁴ and in late 1858, he stated that he 'had four years' experience as a gold-digger on the Melbourne side'.²⁵ In early 1860, two letters Hux wrote from Back Creek in Victoria²⁶ to a friend in Sydney were reproduced in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. The first was titled 'The Victoria Gold-Fields' (it did not present a very positive picture); the second, 'The Gold Fields of New South Wales Compared with Those of Victoria'.²⁷ Also from Back Creek, he wrote a letter to *The Age* (in Melbourne), entitled 'The Decrease in the Yield of Gold'.²⁸ In a further letter written later in 1860, he stated that he had 'just returned from the Victoria gold-fields', suggesting he had more than one extended period there.²⁹

21 *The Empire*, [Sydney], 30 November 1855, 4.

22 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 February 1858, 1.

23 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1858, 5.

24 J.A.H., 'Reminiscences of a Gold-Digger', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1861, 2. Given comments he made some years later when writing about the Lachlan diggings, this Victorian goldfield could have been Ballarat: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 November 1861, 4.

25 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1858, 5.

26 Back Creek was near what is now the small town of Talbot, south of Maryborough, in Victoria. See 'Talbot, Victoria' (Wikipedia, 2019), [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talbot, Victoria](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talbot,_Victoria); www.talbottourism.org/home/history.htm [site discontinued].

27 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 February 1860, 9; 13 March 1860, 13.

28 *The Age*, [Melbourne], 26 April 1860, 4.

29 *The Sydney Mail*, 1 September 1860, 3.

In October 1858, two letters on the 'Fitzroy Diggings' by John A. Hux, written from the home of his sister in Sydney, were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.³⁰ Having been resident in the city for several months and fearing the prospect of 'becoming a respectable or settled man', he could not resist another dig.³¹ He wrote that, on his arrival in Rockhampton (in what is now Queensland), the initial reports were positive; upstream on the Fitzroy River, gold had been found at Canoona, and hardly anyone had returned from there to Rockhampton. However, once at Canoona, he quickly realised it was a very different story:

In the morning I commenced a survey of the diggings. The great rush had not yet taken place for we were only the second vessel that had arrived;—but I saw and heard quite sufficient to convince me that Canoona was no place for me.³²

Along with hundreds of others, Hux and his party found extremely little or no gold at all.

In the two letters and a long article on 'The Rockhampton Rush', he wrote in some detail about the Fitzroy and the failure of the Canoona rush, the dreadful conditions, food shortages and the impacts on the many men who had made the fruitless journey north (Figure 1).³³ He also wrote of the costs to the shipping companies, which were unable to land their cargoes.³⁴ His letters were reprinted, in whole or in part, in a number of other newspapers.³⁵

After his trip to the Fitzroy, Hux returned to Sydney, 'if not richer perhaps a wiser man', yet he had to acknowledge that '[t]he roving disposition once commenced, it is difficult to say when it will stop'. So, when the 'opportunity' arose, he was soon visiting the Maitland and Singleton district in the Hunter Valley, although he 'saw nothing there worthy of notice except the roads'.³⁶ He spent Christmas Day 1858 in Sydney, but on New Year's Day he was once again on the move, this time sailing to Melbourne.³⁷

30 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1858, 5; 13 October 1858, 5.

31 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

32 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

33 See also Peter Crabb, 'The Canoona Gold Rush Through the Eyes of Charles de Boos', *Margin: Life and Letters of Early Australia* 80 (2010): 33–42.

34 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

35 *Maitland Mercury*, 14 October 1858, 2; *Goulburn Herald*, 16 October 1858, 2; *Hobart Town Daily Mercury*, 21 October 1858, 3; *Darling Downs Gazette*, [Toowoomba], 28 October 1858, 3; and *Perth Gazette*, 5 November 1858, 3.

36 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

37 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

Mr. Campbell arrived at Canoona on Wednesday week last, and to a direct question put to him stated that he knew of no other gold-field, that that was the place he had found gold, and no other; but that if 30 or 300 diggers would form a party, and guarantee him his expenses, he would go and prospect with them, and he had no doubt but that they would find another field, but nothing was done—men began to get tired and determined to leave.

On that evening and the following day, upwards of 300 men left the diggings; I have seen many bad fields, but this beat all—you could not get anything for tents or tools—my party made up their minds to leave, and endeavoured to get something for our tents and tools, which cost some £10 in Sydney, and could not sell them; had we have staid a day longer it is possible we might have got a few shillings for them; but rather than do this, we gave them away, as did plenty of others. Men were to be seen in all directions begging a few shillings for tools that had cost pounds. Any person might have loaded a dray with Collins' new picks, shovels, tin dishes, and tools of all kinds, for 1s. each; and then the road down to Rockhampton was strewn with all kinds of tools; men that could not get anything for them, attempted to carry them down, and what with the heat of the sun and footsore as they were, gradually threw them away to lighten their "swags." The road is clearly marked all the way with picks, shovels, pots, tents, cradles, in fact, every thing you can think that men had carried up, together with all articles of clothing; and when we arrived in Rockhampton, it was a perfect canvas-town. There were four vessels lying there—the Swan, Cyclone, Jane, Staghound loading—I may say loaded, for the people got on board and would not go off—crowded to excess; men begging to pay a pound or two to be allowed to lay on the deck; in fact, I could continue this already too long letter with such an account of distress that would astonish the Sydney public.

I may conclude by stating that the Waratah had to put into Moreton Bay, and we learnt that they had got such accounts of the distress at Rockhampton, that they had already commenced a public subscription on their behalf, and that about £100 had been subscribed—Judge Millford heading the list with £10.

I shall be very glad to give any one any other information that I possibly can, and beg to subscribe myself,

JOHN A. HUX.

93, South Head Road, October 11th.

Figure 1 'Distress that would astonish the Sydney public'

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 October 1858, 5.

Later in 1860, when again back at his sister's Sydney residence, Hux wrote three more letters, mostly about the NSW goldfields. Two were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*—the first about the goldfields in Victoria, New South Wales and the Fitzroy River.³⁸ The second, a long letter headed 'The Gold-Fields of New South Wales', included comments on the lack of government support for goldmining and on the Reverend W.B. Clarke's 1851–52 reports to the colonial government on the southern goldfields.³⁹ The third letter was published in *The Sydney Mail*, headed 'Gold Digging at the Snowy River'.⁴⁰ Early in 1861, he wrote another letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, entitled 'The Chinese Question'. While concerned about 'the evils attending so large an increase in the Chinese population', he questioned many of the reasons for the opposition to the Chinese. And though too many may have been arriving, he stated that 'we are clearly bound to protect those already amongst us so long as they respect and conform to our laws'.⁴¹

38 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 August 1860, 3.

39 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 September 1860, 3; Rev. W.B. Clarke, *Researches in the Southern Gold-Fields of New South Wales* (Sydney: Reading & Wellbank, 1860). This was based on 18 official reports to the NSW Government made in 1851–52. Reviews appeared in *The Sydney Mail* (8 October 1860, 6–7) and the *Sydney Morning Herald* (20 October 1860, 4).

40 *The Sydney Mail*, 1 September 1860, 3.

41 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 March 1861, 8; *The Sydney Mail*, 9 March 1861, 3.

Identified as the author by the use of his initials, 'J.A.H.', Hux wrote a number of articles under the general title 'Reminiscences of a Gold-Digger'. They were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sydney Mail* from April 1860 to June 1861. Some were fictional, though he was at pains to point out all were based on fact.⁴² One was very definitely factual: 'The Rockhampton Rush' described some of his experiences on his trip to the Canoona goldfield.⁴³ Some were republished in other newspapers;⁴⁴ in the case of the Melbourne *Weekly Age*, there was no acknowledgement of the source, much to the disgust of a correspondent only known as 'M.C.', who called it 'piracy'.⁴⁵ In early 1861, two issues of *The Sydney Mail* contained a column entitled 'Extracts from My Note-Book' by 'J.A.H.'.⁴⁶ Late in 1860, a serialised story by 'J.A.H.' appeared in *The Sydney Mail*, entitled 'Emma Westan: A Tale of Australia, Founded on Fact'.⁴⁷ Two sisters with a very unhappy childhood in England are separated and independently move to Victoria, not knowing what has become of the other. The older sister, Emma, has a difficult life, leading to the death of her husband and destitution; the younger, Lucy, has wealth beyond her needs. By chance, they meet in Melbourne, are reunited and, with much happiness, Lucy restores Emma's wellbeing.

A reporter for the *Sydney Morning Herald*

Hux's letters and the knowledge of goldmining he had demonstrated may have contributed to him being employed by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and given the title 'Our Special Commissioner'. It may also have had something to do with the family connection with his stepmother's nephew, the journalist Charles de Boos, who was at that time also employed by the *Herald*; they could have met in Melbourne, Sydney and/or the Fitzroy diggings, as they were both in these places about the same time.

42 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 April 1860, 2.

43 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 June 1860, 2.

44 *Mount Alexander Mail*, [Castlemaine, Vic.]; *Clarence & Richmond Examiner*, [Grafton, NSW]; *The Age*, [Melbourne].

45 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1860, 5.

46 *The Sydney Mail*, 9 March 1861, 2 (Parts I and II); 16 March 1861, 2 (Parts III, IV and V). All five parts were published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 1861, 2.

47 *The Sydney Mail*, 27 October 1860, 3 (Chapters 1–3); 3 November 1860, 3 (Chapter 4); 10 November 1860, 2 (Chapters 5–7).

Figure 2 The site of part of the old town of Kiandra

Source: Peter Crabb, 9 October 2014.

Hux's first destination as the *Herald's* 'Special Commissioner' was Kiandra, in the NSW Snowy Mountains at an elevation of some 1,400 metres.⁴⁸ The cold-climate periglacial landscapes are isolated, exposed, stark and almost treeless (Figure 2). Even in summer, it can be very cold. After European settlement, farmers used the country for summer sheep and cattle grazing. Two graziers, David and James Pollock, discovered gold in payable quantities in November 1859 at Pollock's Gully.

People came from all over Australia and what had once been isolated grazing country suddenly became a boom town. By March 1860 there were more than 10,000 people on the goldfields.⁴⁹

48 The journey was by coastal steamer from Sydney to Eden and then overland, but Hux does not say how he travelled or exactly how long it took him to get from Eden to Kiandra. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 September 1860, 5; 11 October 1860, 10.

49 'Kiandra', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 February 2004. Accessed from: www.smh.com.au/news/New-South-Wales/Kiandra [site discontinued].

The numbers included many Chinese.⁵⁰ It was a real ‘rush’ and, at its peak, the town of Kiandra ‘comprised a bank, post office, 25 stores, 13 bakers, 16 butchers, 14 hotels, 4 blacksmiths, a courthouse, gaol, school and local newspaper [*The Alpine Pioneer and Kiandra Advertiser*].’⁵¹

The Kiandra goldrush that began in March–April 1860 was the subject of a number of reports, editorials and letters in the *Sydney Morning Herald* during the first half of that year, with frequent reports by ‘Our Correspondent’, both before and after Hux arrived there.⁵² Hux, however, provided commentary as well as factual reporting. His reports appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* from 28 September 1860 to 14 January 1861. There were also two separate reports by ‘J.A.H.’. Over the same period in which Hux’s reports were published, other articles appeared under the general heading ‘Alpine Sketches’ by an unknown writer (two attributed to ‘Our Correspondent’) in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sydney Mail*; these complemented Hux’s writings.⁵³

Hux wrote about the difficulties of getting to Kiandra; the township, which by mid October was already beginning ‘to assume a very respectable appearance’; and the harsh living conditions, especially for those living in tents.⁵⁴ He also described the mining methods—essentially sluicing the alluvial deposits—and the various locations at which mining was taking place, such as Rocky Plains, Pollock’s Gully, Nine Mile, Four Mile, Surface Hill, New Chum Hill, Tantangara and the Tumut River (Figure 3).⁵⁵ He wrote at some length about various management issues and the problems the gold commissioners had as a consequence of them, as well as those

50 Lindsay M. Smith, ‘Kiandra (New South Wales) (1860–1925)’, *Chinese–Australian Historical Images in Australia* (Melbourne: Chinese Museum and La Trobe University, 2005), www.chia.chinesemuseum.com.au/biogs/CH00823b.htm; Lindsay M. Smith, ‘Identifying Chinese Ethnicity through Material Culture: Archaeological Excavations at Kiandra, NSW’, *Australasian Historical Archaeology* 21 (2003): 18–29.

51 *The Historic Kiandra Goldfields* (Tumut, NSW: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, n.d.). See also D.G. Moye ed., *Historic Kiandra: A Guide to the History of the District* (Cooma, NSW: Cooma-Monaro Historical Society, 1959, rev. edn 2005); George O. Preshaw, *Banking under Difficulties or, Life on the Goldfields of Victoria, New South Wales & New Zealand* (Melbourne: Edwards, Dunlop & Co., 1888): 53–65; Klaus Hueneke, *Kiandra to Kosciusko* (Canberra: Tabletop Press, 1987): 16–22. A few historic sites remain: the cemetery, the chimney of Yan’s store, remnants of Matthews Cottage and the restored Court House.

52 For example, an editorial on the alpine diggings in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 March 1860, 4; Letter by ‘Stockman’, ‘Winter at the Snowy River’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 March 1860, 2; Editorial, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 March 1860, 4; ‘The Kiandra Diggings’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 June 1860, 5. For a short period, from August 1860 to some time in 1861, a local newspaper was published twice a week, *The Alpine Pioneer and Kiandra Advertiser*. Only a few issues from between 24 August 1860 and 28 December 1860 have survived.

53 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 September 1860, 2; 18 October 1860, 8; 5 November 1860, 5; 30 November 1860, 8; 7 December 1860, 3. *The Sydney Mail*, 27 October 1860, 2; 10 November 1860, 2; December 1, 1860, 4; 15 December 1860, 3. *Illawarra Mercury*, [Wollongong, NSW], 6 November 1860, 3. See also ‘Kiandra Gold-Fields. Report from P.L. Clorte, Commissioner in Charge of Southern Gold-Fields to the Secretary for Lands’, *The Sydney Mail*, 13 October 1860, 3; and ‘The Kiandra Gold-Fields. Report by J.H.L. Scott, Sub-Commissioner at Kiandra during Part of 1860’, *The Empire*, [Sydney], 30 January 1861, 2.

54 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1860, 10.

55 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 October 1860, 4; 27 October 1860, 8; 7 November 1860, 8.

he thought they created for themselves;⁵⁶ the fact that the nearest sittings of the District Court were about 90 kilometres away in Cooma; and issues of ‘sly grog’ among the Europeans and opium among the Chinese miners.⁵⁷

The two articles under Hux’s initials presented a somewhat different view of Kiandra. A visit to the cemetery with its unmarked graves was a time for reflection on who might be buried there, as well as recounting the story of one of those buried that was told to him by another visitor to the cemetery.⁵⁸ A somewhat tongue-in-cheek account of Kiandra, where Hux was still trudging through snow, slush and mud at the end of November, gave a picture of many buildings in a very poor state, unable to keep out the rain and snow. He concluded the account of his ‘ramble’ with the comment: ‘I think you will agree with a friend of mine, who said that one thing alone was wanted to make Kiandra perfect, and that was an *earthquake*.’⁵⁹

Figure 3 Kiandra and district

Source: Based on maps in *The Historic Kiandra Goldfields* (Tumut: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, n.d.) and D.G. Moye, ed. *Historic Kiandra: a guide to the history of the district* (Cooma: Cooma-Monaro Historical Society, 1959, revised edition, 2005).

56 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 October 1860, 4.

57 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 1860, 5; 22 October 1860, 4; 27 October 1860, 8.

58 ‘Graves at Kiandra’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 November 1860, 2; *The Sydney Mail*, 17 November 1860, 6; *Launceston Examiner*, 10 November 1860, 2; *Cornwall Chronicle*, [Launceston, Tas.], 15 December 1860, 2.

59 ‘A Summer-Day’s Ramble through Kiandra’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 December 1860, 2; *The Sydney Mail*, 8 December 1860, 2.

Figure 4 On this exposed site, even the daffodils—descendants of those planted by the miners around 1860—are small

Source: Peter Crabb, 9 October 2014.

There was one topic that appeared in almost all of Hux's reports: the weather. Many people had endured the cold and heavy snowfalls of the 1860 winter, many of them ill-prepared and living in canvas tents. It was a harsh environment in which to live and work; even the daffodils planted by some of the original miners found it difficult (Figure 4). Perhaps the hardest aspect of the weather to cope with was its variability from one day to the next, regardless of the season:

It would seem that this place is never to be favoured with a continuation of fine weather ... Last Saturday was quite a summer's day, and the next morning, to the astonishment of all, the ground was covered with snow ... This continued until noon on Monday, when it cleared up, and we were favoured with summer weather again.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 November 1860, 5; 27 November 1860, 3. Lightning strikes on the telegraph wires often caused cuts to the telegraph services.

While it lasted, Kiandra was a very productive goldfield; many miners did well, including the Chinese. For example, in one 10-day period, a group of miners found a single 12-pound (5.4 kg) nugget plus 70 ounces (almost 2 kg) of gold.⁶¹ The largely alluvial workings produced over 67,600 ounces (1,900 kg) in 1860 and 16,500 ounces (468 kg) in 1861.⁶² This field's decline seems to have been rapid, as significant quantities of gold were being sent to Sydney through to late November and a 24–25-pound (about 11 kg) nugget was found in early December.⁶³ By November, however, Hux wrote that people were leaving for Crackenback (initially called 'Crack-em-back'),⁶⁴ the location of short-lived mining activity, and more particularly, many were heading for Lambing Flat. In mid December, he reported that Kiandra was 'getting quite deserted'.⁶⁵ It had been one of the biggest and shortest goldrushes in Australia. Nonetheless, there were plenty of celebrations for Christmas and New Year, the latter including horseracing (Figure 5).⁶⁶

ALPINE PIONEER, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1860.

NEW YEARS' DAY SPORTS!!!

B. BENJAMIN,

IN RETURNING THANKS for the Liberal Patronage bestowed upon him on Boxing Day, begs to announce that he intends to award the following PRIZES to his Customers!!!

ON NEW YEARS' DAY!!!

Jumping in Sacks.

Prize—£2.

Foot Race.

100 yards; boots; for ALL COMERS. Prize—£5.

Climbing a Greasy Pole.

Prize—New Cabbage Tree Hat and £1.

Amateur Foot Race.

100 yards. Prize—£2.

Jumping Match.

For best Standing Jump. Prize—£2.

Tinkling the Bell.

Prize—£2.

Blind Wheelbarrow Race.

100 yards. Prize—£2.

Hack Race.

Prize—New Colonial-Brand Saddle, Value, £5. post returned.

Wrestling Match.

Quoits, Skittles, and Boxing Gloves.

Cricket Bats, &c.

Provided for all the lovers of the game.

Luncheon will be Provided Free.

THE MONSTER HAND will be in attendance all day.

HURRAH FOR THE RACES!!

NEW YEARS' DAY!!! NEW YEARS' DAY!!!

On the Race Course, near the Tunnel Bridge.

KIANDRA RACES, ON THE 1ST OF JANUARY, 1861!!!

REILLY and CARMICHAEL.

JUDGE.

P. L. Clarke, Esq., C.C.S.G.F.

STEWARDS.

Mr. Huron Tides Conway Greville C. Cooper, Junr., M.P.	Mr. Garrett, M.P. Budge Eubank Darcy.
--	--

CLERK OF THE COURSE.—G. Phelan, Esq. STARTER.—Commissioner Clarke.

Saddle and Bridle.

For all for whom that have never won an advertised prize. Value—£10. Mile heats; post entrance.

Race for £20, for all horses; Mile heats.

Heavy Heavy for Houghsides and all siders. Distance 1½; Mile heats.

WRESTLING.—Down and Irish style, collared and chow. £2.

FOOT RACE.—For amateurs only. 100 yards. £2.

HURDLE RACE.—50 yards; 8 leaps, 3 ft. 6 in. high. £2.

HURDLE RACE.—40 yards; 12. RULES.

New South Wales Jockey Club quietly acknowledge the assistance of the stewards to be done. All quizes to be made off the ground.

Figure 5 'New Year's Day Sports and Races', Kiandra, 1861

Source: *Alpine Pioneer and Kiandra Advertiser*, 28 December 1860, 6.

61 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 October 1860, 7.

62 Moye, *Historic Kiandra*. There was at least one find of 'auriferous gold': *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1860, 7.

63 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1860, 7; 5 December 1860, 4; 15 December 1860, 6; 18 December 1860, 9.

64 *The Sydney Mail*, 8 September 1860, 6; *The Golden Age*, [Queanbeyan, NSW], 1 December 1860, 2–3.

65 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 December 1860, 6; 16 December 1860, 5.

66 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 January 1861, 5; 8 January 1861, 5.

Hux did not experience the massive snowstorm of late July 1860,⁶⁷ which no doubt provided the impetus for an activity that gave Kiandra a world-first. In that winter, skiing, or snowshoeing, was introduced by three Norwegian miners, Elias Gottraas, Soren Tor and Carl Bjerknes. Skis, or snowshoes, were essential to move about. Soon, however, they provided a source of pleasure and, in 1861, Kiandra became the first place in the world to have an alpine ski club and to hold ski races.⁶⁸

On 8 January 1861, Hux joined those leaving Kiandra. Before doing so, he expressed his appreciation to those with whom he had worked, both government officials and miners,⁶⁹ and was the recipient of an unusual expression of appreciation, some nuggets of gold.⁷⁰ By the time he left, the Kiandra rush was over and, by early March, there were 'not more than 200 diggers left'.⁷¹ Hux's destination was the same as most of the diggers leaving Kiandra—namely, Lambing Flat (now known as Young).⁷²

Lambing Flat

Gold was discovered at Lambing Flat in March 1860 and, over the next few months, numerous other finds were made in the district, extending up to 32 kilometres from the centre of the Lambing Flat field (Figure 6). Large numbers of diggers—European and Chinese—were attracted to the district; by late November, the population was at least 3,000.⁷³ From very early in the goldfield's history, it seems to have been a lawless place, with antisocial behaviour and robberies (not least of horses) common. In November 1860, the first anti-Chinese actions occurred, with some 500 Chinese driven off their diggings:

John Chinaman was obliged to make himself scarce, and as soon as he was driven off the ground, all the tents were demolished in an instant. We believe that no violence to the person was committed in getting rid of the pests.⁷⁴

67 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 August 1860, 5.

68 Norman W. Clarke, *Kiandra: From Gold Fields to Ski Fields* (Sydney: Norman Clarke, 2006, with 2006–2011 Supplement); Norman W. Clarke, *World's First Alpine Ski Club* (Sydney: Norman W. Clarke, 2011). See also *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 August 1861, 2, copied from the *Braidwood Observer*; Judith Hickson, 'Chinese Skiers of Kiandra: Objects and Narrative', *reCollections* 8, No. 2.

69 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 January 1861, 5.

70 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 January 1861, 4; *The Sydney Mail*, 26 January 1861, 1.

71 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 1861, 5.

72 'A Trip from the Snowy to the Lambing Flat, from Our Correspondent', *The Empire*, [Sydney], 7 February 1861, 2.

73 Ross Maroney, *A Short History of the Lambing Flat Gold Rush 1860–1861: Based on Newspaper Reports and Letters of the Time* (Young, NSW: Young Historical Society Inc., Lambing Flat Museum, n.d.).

74 *The Empire*, [Sydney], 22 November 1860, 8.

Figure 6 Lambing Flat

Source: Based on maps in Ross Maroney, *A Short History of the Lambing Flat Gold Rush 1860–1861: Based on Newspaper Reports and Letters of the Time* (Young: Young Historical Society Inc., Lambing Flat Museum, n.d.).

Anti-Chinese sentiment and actions continued into 1861, and there were a number of large public meetings. In late January 1861, some 1,500 Chinese were driven off the land they were working, in defiance of the gold commissioner and the police; there were so few police they were unable to do anything.⁷⁵ A petition against the ‘invasion of the Chinese’ and calling for their removal attracted 3,394 signatures.⁷⁶ The Miners’ Protective League made its anti-Chinese position very clear (Figure 7). The *Sydney Morning Herald* also made its position clear—in demanding the fair and lawful treatment of all miners, regardless of race. Even before the worst riots, the paper’s editor, Reverend John West,⁷⁷ a Congregational minister, unreservedly condemned the persecution of the Chinese and the inaction of the government:⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 January 1861, 5; 2 February 1861, 4.

⁷⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 February 1861, 6.

⁷⁷ West was editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* from 1855 to 1873. See John Reynolds, ‘West, John (1809–1873)’, *Australian Dictionary of Biography. Volume 2* (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, The Australian National University, 1967), adb.anu.edu.au/biography/west-john-2784/text3965. West was followed as editor by Andrew Garran and William Curnow—both non-conformist ministers. See Gavin Souter, *Company of Heralds: A Century and a Half of Australian Publishing by John Fairfax Limited and its Predecessors* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1981), 591–94.

⁷⁸ Souter, *Company of Heralds*, 54–62; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1861, 5.

The long silence of the Government respecting the proceedings at Lambing Flat will be there interpreted one way—assent. The spirit which shrinks from any unpopular duty is one of the characteristic results of democratic ascendancy. It is in vain to appeal to the principles of justice—to the rights of humanity—the claims of law—the sanctity of public faith. These are powerless before that cowardly spirit which cringes to the lowest of the people. Could any civilised Government be found that would not vindicate itself by declaring at the outset, and in decided terms, its determination to protect to the utmost of its means defenceless strangers, who have on their side right, humanity, and law.

The history of the Lambing Flat is an illustration of the brutal temper which prevails among the migratory bands of diggers. We gladly distinguish them from a very respectable class, who have given to gold mining the aspect of a settled industry, and whose conduct has been honest and fair. The Lambing Flat was discovered as a gold-field by the Chinese themselves. They were entitled by law to settle there; they obtained and paid for the miner's right; they were put in possession by the Government. No one pretends they have forfeited that protection which any man who lives under the English flag has the right to expect. The intruders, if any deserve the name where all have a defined and equal right, are the white men, for we will not disgrace our country by calling them Englishmen. The Chinese have been ejected, and robbed of their legal rights—driven off the ground, and exposed to want and starvation. And all this has been done in an 'orderly manner' forsooth! We are told there is no violence—no one has been attacked—they have only been driven off!⁷⁹

These errors cause much annoyance.

The Miners' Protective League have issued their prospectus. The objects to be dealt with are, first and principal question—Expulsion of the Chinese. The League call upon men of every nation except Chinese to join their society. Repeal of the Gold Duty. Police protection, which they say is merely nominal at present. Unlocking the public lands. Promulgation of the word of God throughout the mining districts of the colony. Protection to native industry. Representation of mining interests, based on population.

The men charged with the murderous assault have been identified by one of the unfortunate men as—

A visit by NSW premier Charles Cowper to Lambing Flat in early 1861 did not help. He made statements supporting the miners and the Chinese, including in an address to a large public meeting, but when he returned to Sydney, his statements in the legislative assembly were totally different. Not surprisingly, 'Slippery Charlie' was attacked by locals and by Hux for his 'misrepresentation'.⁸⁰

Figure 7 Excerpt from the Miners' Protective League prospectus. The full prospectus was published in *The Miner and General Advertiser*, [Lambing Flat, NSW], 6 March 1861, 1
Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March 1861, 4.

79 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 February 1861, 4; 'Notes of the Week', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 February 1861, 7.

80 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 March 1861, 5; 2 April 1861, 6; 9 April 1861, 3.

Petitions by the Chinese for compensation for losses from the riots provided them with little satisfaction.⁸¹ James McCulloch Henley, a Chinese-language interpreter,⁸² arrived at Lambing Flat from Victoria in late March 1861 at the request of the Chinese miners, who sought his help in their negotiations with the government and its officials.⁸³ A government inquiry conducted by William Campbell (from nearby Burrowa; now Boorowa) into the claims could be described as a whitewash; he found that

the destruction of property on the occasion of the removal of the Chinese from Lambing Flat on 27th January and 17th February 1861, was very trifling, and that the claims hereinbefore referred to are altogether fraudulent.

Further, Henley's support of one claim was dismissed, with Campbell stating that Henley 'must have been labouring under an excited imagination'.⁸⁴

Due to 'circumstances' he did not explain, two months elapsed between Hux leaving Kiandra and arriving at Lambing Flat.⁸⁵ Over that period, from the beginning of February to the beginning of April 1861, another 'Special Commissioner' reported from Lambing Flat for the *Sydney Morning Herald*.⁸⁶ With the exception of reports in late February⁸⁷ and again in late March and the beginning of April,⁸⁸ they were short, factual and provided little comment, but they offered an eyewitness account of the events that took place during the conflicts between the European and Chinese miners, in contrast to much misreporting, even from government officials.⁸⁹ Thus far, the identity of the reporter has not been determined.⁹⁰

81 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 1861, 8. The Chinese petition with respect to the riots on 19 February 1861 was rejected by the NSW Legislative Assembly 'because its prayer was for pecuniary compensation'.

82 Carol Holsworth, *James McCulloch Henley: Anglo Chinese Linguist and Advocate in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland* (Bendigo, Vic.: Carol Holsworth, 2012).

83 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1861, 4.

84 'Aggressions on Chinese (Compensation Claimed for Losses Sustained during Riots at Burrangong Gold Fields)', *NSW Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1862*, Vol. IV (Sydney: Government Printer), 9–27; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1862, 2; 12 October 1861, 7.

85 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 April 1861, 3.

86 Textual analysis confirms that the reports were not the work of Hux. See Peter Crabb, Alexis Antonia and Hugh Craig, 'Who Wrote "A Visit to the Western Goldfields"? Using Computers to Analyse Language in Historical Research', *History Australia* 11, No. 3 (2014): 177–93, doi.org/10.1080/14490854.2014.11668539.

87 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 1861, 8; 26 February 1861, 4.

88 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 March 1861, 4; 23 March 1861, 7; 2 April 1861, 4.

89 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 1861, 8; *Goulburn Herald*, 9 January 1861, 2.

90 It was not James McCulloch Henley, as stated by Souter (*Company of Herald*s, 58). Further, the passage quoted by Souter was not from a letter written by Henley, but from the report by Hux in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (9 July 1861, 5), which did include a long letter from Henley to the governor on behalf of the Chinese.

From 9 April 1861 through to March 1862, Hux wrote more than 75 reports from Lambing Flat as the *Sydney Morning Herald's* 'Special Commissioner'. Following on from his predecessor, he reported on the goldmining activities and the protest meetings, riots and acts of violence against the Chinese—some large, some small. In one report, he wrote:

I noticed in town yesterday more Chinese than I had seen for a long time. I also noticed one crowd of *intelligent* men amusing themselves by throwing rubbish at them.⁹¹

In another report, he wrote:

One day last week a few Chinese made their appearance at this place, and were shamefully ill-treated—not by diggers, but by a mob of stockmen and shepherds who, to amuse themselves, gave poor John an unmerciful thrashing, one poor fellow having his face cut to all pieces.⁹²

Far more serious trouble erupted on Sunday, 30 June 1861, involving thousands of people; among other events, the Court House and commissioner's camp were burned down.⁹³ These riots were particularly bad for the Chinese, and no doubt would have been worse but for the interventions of James Henley. One example of the brutality reported by Hux was

of a woman, the wife of a Chinaman, she had a poor little baby in a cradle; they burnt the tent and even set fire to the cradle in which the poor little thing was asleep, and if it had not been for the Chinese interpreter (a Mr. Henley), they would have even committed the same atrocities on her.⁹⁴

The petition to the government signed by 51 Chinese residents seeking an inquiry into the riot and a request for compensation for their losses almost certainly had the assistance of Henley (Figure 8).⁹⁵

91 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 May 1861, 5.

92 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 June 1861, 3.

93 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1861, 4; 18 July 1861, 4.

94 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1861, 5.

95 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 July 1861, 5. Holsworth, *James McCulloch Henley*, 48.

Legislative Assembly.
NEW SOUTH WALES.

ALLEGED AGGRESSION ON CHINESE AT BACK CREEK
AND LAMBING FLAT.
(CHINESE GOLD DIGGERS, &c.)

Ordered by the Legislative Assembly to be Printed, 26 November, 1861.

To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Chinese Gold Diggers, Miners, Storekeepers, and other Chinese Residents, at and in the neighbourhood of Back Creek and Lambing Flat, in the Colony of New South Wales,—

RESPECTFULLY SHeweth:—

That your Petitioners, before and up to Sunday, the thirtieth day of June last, were peacefully engaged (within the limits assigned to them) in the occupations of gold mining, storekeeping, and other lawful employments, at and in the neighbourhood of Back Creek and Lambing Flat aforesaid.

That on the last-mentioned day, certain of the gold diggers and other evil disposed persons resident at and near Lambing Flat aforesaid riotously assembled in large numbers, on foot and on horseback, and being armed with firearms and other weapons, attacked your Petitioners, and, after having beaten and otherwise cruelly ill-treated your Petitioners, drove them from the said diggings.

That your Petitioners were, at the time aforesaid, possessed of personal property and effects of great value, but to save their lives your Petitioners were compelled to give up and abandon their said property and effects, which were immediately appropriated by their assailants, or wantonly or maliciously destroyed by fire.

That your Petitioners were at all times prior to the said attack quiet and orderly in their conduct, and had in all respects complied with the Government regulations.

That your Petitioners, by the means aforesaid, have been reduced to a state of complete destitution, and have no means of pursuing or bringing to justice the persons engaged in the outrages aforesaid.

Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that due inquiry may be made into the matters aforesaid, and that your Honorable House will take such steps to redress the grievances above complained of as to you shall seem meet.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

Dated this seventeenth day of September, A.D. 1861.

[Here follow 51 Signatures.]

Figure 8 Petition to the colonial government regarding 'Alleged Aggression on the Chinese at Back Creek and Lambing Flat' on 30 June 1861

Note: On pages 1–7, there were four other petitions regarding 'Alleged Aggression upon Chinese at Lambing Flat' from individual Chinese residents of Lambing Flat.

Source: *NSW Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, 1861–1862*, Vol. 2 (Sydney: Government Printer), 9.

The Government have been very liberal in their arrangement in suspending two commissioners for not stopping the riot that occurred on the 30th ultimo. It is to be hoped by this time they better understand these fields, and see that the commissioners acted with great discretion. If the Government will be advised at all, let them send commissioners enough to attend to the disputes that they will certainly be called upon to settle on the arrival of the forces. I must send my opinion even at the risk of great displeasure of many on Lambing Flat. The Chinese must be reinstated at all costs, and the law upheld, and then any Legislative enactment can be enforced. At present they are entitled, holding [their miner's right as they do, to the same protection as others. If the Government do not take these steps the Chinese question will be a source of trouble and expense to the country for many months to come. I have sent repeated warnings with respect to these fields, and it will yet be found without these steps are adopted the country will suffer from the vacillation of our present Government.

Figure 9 'Let them send commissioners enough to attend to these disputes'

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1861, 4.

Hux was forced to move to Yass for a short time because of death threats from people who, not for the first time, did not like what he wrote, but, as noted in the epigraph, he was fearless in his reporting and in his desire to do so accurately.⁹⁶ With far too few police and government officials to maintain law and order, many disturbances could not be dealt with.⁹⁷ The same observation applied to problems of management, though these were often the fault of the government and its regulations, rather than the local officials (Figure 9).⁹⁸

96 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1861, 8; 22 July 1861, 4; 6 March 1862, 5.

97 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 July 1861, 4; 15 July 1861, 4; 22 July 1861, 4. The government gave serious consideration to the imposition of martial law. 'Martial Law (Late Riots at Burrangong)', *NSW Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly*, 1862, Vol. II (Sydney: Government Printer), 231–34.

98 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 December 1861, 8.

The riots on 30 June were the last major disturbances in Lambing Flat. Although tensions continued,⁹⁹ over the following months, the situation gradually improved, due in no small measure to some diligent officials who worked in the district, such as the highly regarded Captain J.L. Wilkie of the 12th Regiment. When he died suddenly, the town closed for his funeral, during which more than 3,000 diggers marched and large numbers lined the streets.¹⁰⁰ The improving situation in Lambing Flat may also have been helped by some miners moving to the newly opened Lachlan diggings (some 145 kilometres away) and to New Zealand, along with a greater number of miners from Victoria, 'who, as a rule, look upon Commissioners' decisions as final'.¹⁰¹ And, it must be remembered, not all of the residents of Lambing Flat shared the views of what may or may not have been the anti-Chinese majority.¹⁰²

Among Hux's accounts of continuing troubles, there was information on the goldmining areas and gold production, but European–Chinese relations and the persecution of the Chinese dominated his reports from Lambing Flat. He deplored the lawless treatment of the Chinese, and in this he was supported by the editorial position of the *Sydney Morning Herald*.¹⁰³ It was not that the anti-Chinese activities were unique to the Lambing Flat goldfields, but, culminating in the 30 June riots, they were perhaps the worst experienced in Australia.

The reports of Hux and the other 'Special Commissioner' provide valuable eyewitness accounts of one of the darkest chapters in Australia's history—a chapter that has had a lasting impact.¹⁰⁴ But their views were not shared by other eyewitnesses—namely, the editor of and others who worked for *The Miner and General Advertiser*, which was published in Lambing Flat from 2 February to 13 November 1861, and then in Forbes from 4 December 1861.¹⁰⁵ In his book *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provincial Press, 1841–1995*, Kirkpatrick provides a summary of the events, headed 'The Black Mark of Disgrace: The Press and the Lambing

99 For example: 'Sticking Up Appears to be Still Carried On with Impunity, on the Various Roads Leading to this Place', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 September 1861, 5.

100 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 1862, 5.

101 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 February 1862, 3.

102 'Letter by "Critique" of Lambing Flat', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 July 1861, 2.

103 For example: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 July 1861, 4.

104 C.N. Connolly, 'Miners' Rights', in *Who Are Our Enemies? Racism and the Australian Working Class*, eds Ann Curthoys and Andrew Markus (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1978): 35–47; R.B. Walker, 'Another Look at the Lambing Flat Riots, 1860–1861', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* 56 (1970): 193–205; P. Selth, 'The Burrangong (Lambing Flat) Riots, 1860–61: A Closer Look', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal* 60 (1974): 48–69. For recent comment, see Karen Schamberger, 'An Inconvenient Myth: The Lambing Flat Riots and the Birth of White Australia', presented to Foundational Histories, Australian Historical Association Conference, University of Sydney, Sydney (July 2015); Karen Schamberger, 'Difficult History in a Local Museum: The Lambing Flat Riots at Young, New South Wales', *Australian Historical Studies* 48 (2017): 436–41, doi.org/10.1080/1031461X.2017.1331693.

105 There is an incomplete run of issues from 2 February 1861 to 25 December 1861.

Flat Riots'.¹⁰⁶ Yet in this account, 'the press' is almost entirely limited to *The Miner*. Apart from denials by *The Miner* of statements in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, there are no references to any of Hux's reports. The summary by Kirkpatrick and the reports in *The Miner* present a different 'eyewitness' picture from the one provided by Hux. *The Miner* and its editor openly supported the European miners and the Miners' Protective League and were anti-Chinese and even more strongly opposed to continuing Chinese migration. They were extremely critical of the colonial government, the Fairfax company and the *Herald's* 'Special Commissioner'. The *Herald* was accused of inaccurate and misleading reporting.¹⁰⁷ *The Miner's* reports of the 'monster meetings' that took place are certainly different to those published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*.¹⁰⁸ For a fuller story of Lambing Flat in 1860–61, the accounts in both papers should perhaps be read. But which are the more reliable?

The Lachlan diggings

From November 1861 to May 1862, before his work in Lambing Flat had finished, Hux was also reporting on the new goldmining locations in the Lachlan Valley—usually referred to as the 'Lachlan diggings' or 'the Lachlan'. He wrote 21 articles about them. The first gold find was in June 1861, but the rush was over just two years later. The diggings were centred on Forbes, almost 130 kilometres from Lambing Flat. The distance and journey by way of Cowra did not give rise to any comment from Hux. On his first visit, he reported the population as 'quiet and orderly'—a marked contrast with Lambing Flat.¹⁰⁹ Hux was nonetheless concerned about the limited number of police in Forbes and the Lachlan diggings—which had a population of some 10,000—as he was sure management problems were going to cause 'great trouble', especially the frontage system of claims, which was quickly abandoned.¹¹⁰ There were 'almost universal complaints' over the mismanagement of the fields, as the regulations in the *Gold Fields Act* were not being applied. When one miner mentioned a regulation in that Act, the worthy official to whom he appealed laughed at the idea, and replied in a most grandiloquent way, tapping himself on the breast at the same time: 'I am the law.'¹¹¹

106 Rod Kirkpatrick, *Country Conscience: A History of the New South Wales Provincial Press, 1841–1995* (Canberra: Infinite Harvest Publishing, 2000): 39–45.

107 'The Unblushing "Herald"', *The Miner and General Advertiser*, [Lambing Flat, NSW], 9 February 1861, 3.

108 For example, *The Miner and General Advertiser*, [Lambing Flat, NSW], 3 March 1861, 3; 3 April 1861, 3; 6 July 1861, 3.

109 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 November 1861, 2.

110 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 November 1861, 6; 6 December 1861, 8; 14 December 1861, 6.

111 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 April 1862, 5.

But in the absence of the kind of problems that had affected Lambing Flat (there are no references to Chinese miners in his reports), Hux was able to concentrate on the goldmining and production. From late 1861 until early 1862, the Lachlan was ‘an established and permanent gold-field’, but just how productive it proved was open to question.¹¹² Hux reported that there were robberies, and the highway robbers Frank Gardner and Ben Hall were active in the area. A brief visit from NSW premier Charles Cowper left Hux and most local people wondering why he had come.¹¹³ Still, there was much mining activity, some large gold finds had been made and the town of Forbes was booming.¹¹⁴ And, being the reporter he was, it is not surprising that ‘Mr. Hux of the *Herald*’ received a very complimentary mention in a letter by ‘Cosmopolite’ to *The Empire* on the Lachlan diggings.¹¹⁵

A resident of Lambing Flat

Hux’s reporting for the *Sydney Morning Herald* came to an end in May 1862. A column in the *Herald* in late June referred to:

Mr. John A. Hux, for many months our Special Commissioner on the Gold Fields, a gentleman who has been residing on the Lachlan or Lambing Flat Gold Fields as Correspondent for this journal ever since the latter was opened.¹¹⁶

After this, Hux wrote two ‘Letters to the editor’ of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which, though on specific topics, also provide some details of his work as a reporter. Both were written from Lambing Flat, indicating he had returned to the town.¹¹⁷

In late 1862, he had a change of career, taking over ‘The Albion Commercial and Family Hotel’ in Lambing Flat. More than 30 advertisements for his business appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Sydney Mail* between October 1862 and May 1863 (Figure 10).¹¹⁸ An advertisement for the 1863 ‘Burrangong Annual Races’ included ‘Mr. J.A. Hux’ in the list of stewards.¹¹⁹ How long he stayed at Lambing Flat is not clear, but a letter by Hux headed ‘Sir Frederick Pottinger’ appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in July 1863.¹²⁰

¹¹² *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 February 1862, 5.

¹¹³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 May 1862, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 April 1862, 5.

¹¹⁵ *The Empire*, [Sydney], 4 December 1861, 8.

¹¹⁶ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 June 1862, 7.

¹¹⁷ ‘The Escort Robbery’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 June 1862, 2; ‘Bridges and Post-Office, Lambing Flat’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 1862, 8.

¹¹⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1862, 3; *The Sydney Mail*, 16 May 1863, 1.

¹¹⁹ *Bell’s Life in Sydney and Sporting Chronicle*, [Sydney], 25 April 1863, 3.

¹²⁰ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 July 1863, 7; *The Sydney Mail*, 1 August 1863, 10; *Armidale Express*, 1 August 1863, 4. Hux wrote in support of Pottinger, a senior police officer, who had been the subject of statements in the legislative council that were incorrect and without foundation; they related to events that had taken place in the Lachlan district, of which Hux had personal knowledge and experience.

Prior to settling at Lambing Flat, Hux—like so many of his time and especially those associated with goldmining—was almost constantly on the move, travelling widely in eastern Australia, from Melbourne in the south to the Fitzroy River in the north. Yet even his ‘settled’ time at Lambing Flat was not long, as at some time in the later part of 1863, he moved to Surry Hills in Sydney. What he did on moving to Sydney is not known, but it is unlikely to have been a move he would have wanted, and as it happened, it was his last move. After a ‘long and severe illness’ that lasted about 12 months, he died of heart disease on 21 April 1864, aged 38, at the home of his sister Mary on South Head Road.¹²¹ He was buried on 23 April in the Randwick Cemetery. His death certificate stated his occupation was ‘Publican’.

THE ALBION COMMERCIAL AND FAMILY HOTEL, LAMBING FLAT.—JOHN A. HUX begs to inform his friends and the public generally that, having completed the alterations in the above hotel, it is now opened for the reception of families and gentlemen visiting this district.
JOHN A. HUX flatters himself, from his knowledge of the requirements of an hotel on the diggings, that the Albion will be found by those favouring it with their patronage, a first-class house, and the hotel of the district.
 The best liquors procurable in Sydney will be found only at the Albion.
 Private rooms for families and gentlemen.
 A Table d'Hôte daily, with every delicacy in season.
 The billiard-room is furnished with one of Thurston's best tables.
 The metropolitan and most of the provincial papers regularly taken.
 First-class stabling.
 The Albion Hotel is in the most central part of the township, near the Banks, and corner of Main and Burrows streets, Lambing Flat.

Figure 10 Opening of Hux's Albion Hotel

Source: *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1862, 3.

Conclusion

This account of the life and work of John Augustus Hux came about as a consequence of research for a biography of Charles Edward de Boos, and was triggered by the family connections between de Boos and Hux. Until the research was undertaken, the contribution of John Augustus Hux to writings on the Australian goldfields of the mid nineteenth century were unknown. Despite their wealth of information, little or no use has been made of Hux's writings as a primary source of historical material. This is true even for local studies of Kiandra and Young (Lambing Flat).

Like Charles de Boos, Frederick Dalton and other reporters mentioned in the introduction, Hux travelled widely within Australia. Some, like Hux and Dalton, had worked as ‘diggers’. All had significant knowledge of goldmining. As the prime contemporary source of information, the newspapers could not claim to be always

¹²¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 April 1864, 1; 21 May 1864, 7; Death Certificate, Registration No. 1864/000508. See also records of ‘Burials in the Parish of Randwick in the County of Cumberland, New South Wales, in the Year 1864’, for the Church of St Jude, Randwick.

accurate, but the reports of this group of reporters were recognised by their editors and contemporary readers as providing reliable information and comment. And the extended nature of their work provided a consistency not present in one-off reports.

Today, these writings are significant primary documents from a critical period in Australia's history. While not as prolific a contributor as de Boos or even Dalton, Hux's writings are of equal value. Like them, he was a keen observer and an accurate and fearless reporter. From Kiandra, he provided firsthand accounts of living and mining in such an isolated location, with its frequent hazardous weather. His reports from Lambing Flat (along with those of the unknown 'Special Commissioner' who preceded him) are of particular value as a firsthand record of the disturbances and anti-Chinese riots that made such a mark on race relations in colonial Australia and the country's subsequent history.

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