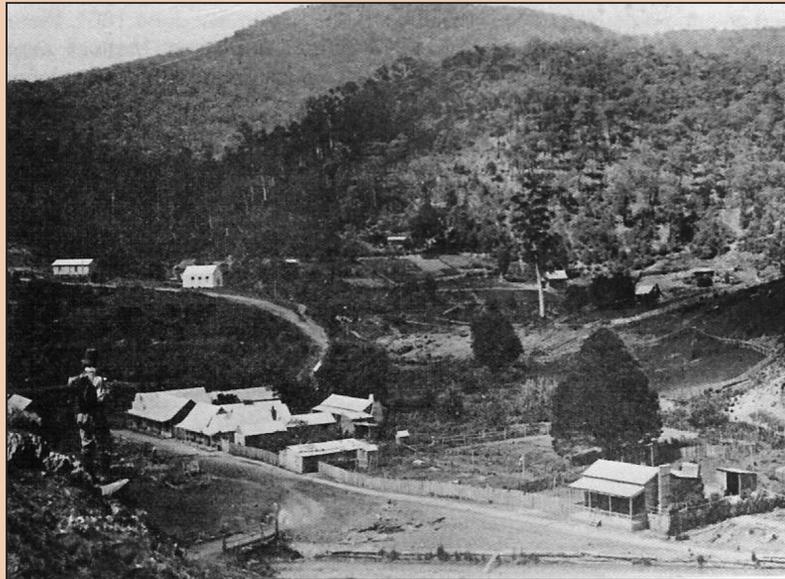


TOWNSHIP OF JERICHO

1862 to 1939

In November 1861 a party of miners who had been working the Big River crossed the divide and headed south into a large valley. In a week the party had won 280 ounces of gold, much of it in nuggetty form.



This photo was taken about 1906 of the township of Jericho on the Jordan River. The B.B. Creek is in front of the town. The Jordan River ran from the south west down to the north east. The school is by the tall tree.



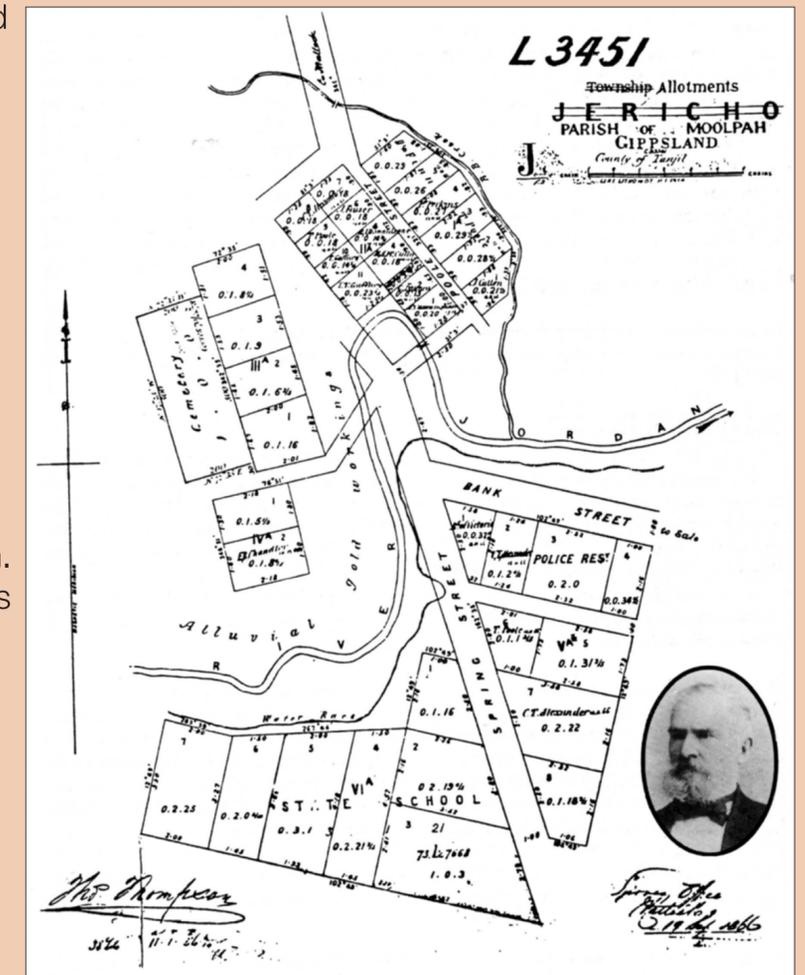
Jericho. c1930s

The first diggers saw fern trees and those in great number where gold was first found and having seen an illustration on a bible page showing Jericho with palm trees, they called it Jericho and thus Jordan also got its name. *"Gippsland Times 1862"*

"BB Creek" was named because of the dense prickly scrub where miners lost most of their pants, hence "bare buttocks" creek. Two other creeks were named after schooners, Red Jacket and Blue Jacket. Jericho was to become the capital of the field. Numerous tracks were opened up to the field from the south, the most heavily used was McEvoy's Track opened up by Tom McEvoy and Portugee Joe beginning at Heyfield and passing through Seaton. Jericho was described as **'...the most compact town I ever saw. It consists of a main street containing 40 or 50 places of business, with a line of habitations at the back.'**

Father Patrick Courtenay was one of the district's characters, travelling throughout the mountain goldfields on foot and horseback to preach. He travelled 350 miles each month. Courtenay was particularly interested in education and helped to establish church schools and chapels in many of the mining towns. At Jericho he established a chapel, which during the week operated as St Peters Common School. In 1878 it became the Jericho State School which operated until the turn of the century.

The Bank of Victoria conducted business here until 1867, a police station operated between 1862 and 1875 and local magistrate's court sat regularly in the police building. Hotels and stores did a good business. Although mining on the Jordan retained a strong alluvial component there were also numerous quartz mines with steam engines and crushing plants. The Harbinger, BB Quartz, New Chum, Blue Jacket and the Victor's Quartz all worked into the 1900s. By the turn of the century only a handful of families remained and many of the buildings in the valley stood dilapidated and deserted. The Bennett and Christie families used hydraulic sluicing in the valley in their search for gold between the thirties and fifties. In 1939 the valley was completely burnt out by the bushfires that ravaged the state and nearly all trace of the town disappeared.



Plan of the township of Jericho

Source: Rodgers, J.G., 1998, 'Jericho on the Jordan: a Gippsland Goldfields History'
Rudi Paoletti, "Gold for the Taking, A Pictorial History of the Heyday of the Walhalla-Wood's Point Gold Belt, 2007".

The Athol Christie Collection

West Gippsland Relic, Mining and Heritage Protection Inc. (www.westgippslandinc.com.au)