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Desperately Seeking Samuel: a diary lost and found

A Diary Lost

When the State Library of Victoria (SLV) purchased a small, battered, mid-nineteenth century diary at auction in 2006, there was justifiable celebration.¹ It was, after all, a prize catch: the eye-witness account of a highly literate and observant English gold rush immigrant who happened to be in Ballarat at the time of the Eureka Stockade. What's more, this eagle-eyed gent wasn't a participant in either the moral or physical force elements of the diggers' campaign for justice. He was an impartial and an unusually articulate bystander. When the SLV secured the diary for its public collections, many wrote about the coup, including myself. In an opinion piece in the *Age* I wrote,

This important piece of cultural heritage is a glistening nugget in the library's already rich collection of original material relating to the goldfields era . . . Lazarus provides a human face to a historical event that has been intensely politicised – by both sides of the stockade – for the past 150 years.²

The State Library subsequently digitized and fully transcribed its precious gem to give it maximum public accessibility and the 'Lazarus Diary' is promoted as one of the SLV's 'treasures'.³

Nothing in my subsequent affection for and affiliation with the 'Lazarus Diary' has swayed my initial judgment. Indeed, as I discussed in an essay in *History Australia*, the document has become a vital primary source for my own research into the women of the Eureka Stockade.⁴ It was, after all, this diarist who revealed that one of the victims of the early morning massacre on 3 December 1854 was a woman. However, when recently I began using the diary again for a non-Eureka related project (in 2011 I was commissioned by Sovereign Hill Museums Association as an historical consultant on a new orientation centre), it began to dawn on me that I needed to reach for the inverted commas when citing the 'Lazarus Diary'.

The diary itself is anonymous in so much as it does not have the diarist's name inscribed on the end pages or cover. The SLV's website gives brief background notes on the presumed author: Samuel Lazarus, a nineteen-year old from Liverpool who later worked as a teacher. The rest of the biographical details are culled from the internal evidence of the diary itself: when the diary commences on 23 September 1853, the author is working as a confectioner in Melbourne. He then sells his business, tries a number of other menial jobs, and eventually buys an enormous tent and heads to the diggings on 9 November 1853. In Ballarat, the author opens the Criterion Auction Mart, starts a printing business, witnesses the Eureka Stockade in December 1854, sells a portion of the business in late 1854 and concludes the diary on 24 January 1855.

It was only when I started compiling a more complete biography of Samuel Lazarus – contextualizing him as a gold rush immigrant, not just a Eureka eye-witness – that I began to feel unsettled by the accepted wisdom about the precious volume’s provenance. So I began the laborious process of reading the diary line by line and squaring it with the other archival sources so much beloved by genealogists in the digital age: passenger lists, international census data, newspaper beta files, Victorian births, deaths and marriage registers. Certain evidence of family background in the diary gave me clues to hang my research hat on: the diarist had a brother called George; he refers to himself as a Wellingtonian; his mother is alive but not his father. There was one particularly discordant note in the diary that triggered a cascade of investigation, a symphony of questions that soon became an obsessive act of detective work as I began desperately seeking Samuel.

This was the alarm bell: whoever wrote the ‘Lazarus Diary’ tells us plainly that he came to Australia on the *Mobile*. Many of the people that he mentions by name in the diary, he also tells us, were his fellow passengers. I made a list of such names: Adams, Butcher, Gillespie, Hale, Hunter, Hurst, Martin, Paine, Walker, Wright. There is also the large Hall family, lead by Mrs Hall and her drunkard of a husband. Then there’s the Hayes family, headed by Timothy and Anastasia Hayes. On 29 November 1854, the diarist identifies Timothy Hayes as being the leader of the Bakery Hill Monster Meeting: ‘Mr Hayes, a shipmate of mine was in the Chair.’⁵ A quick check of the Public Record Office of Victoria’s online index to Unassisted Inward Passengers for the *Mobile*, which arrived in October 1852, revealed each and every one these names on the passenger log. But there was one notable omission: there was no Lazarus.

Could the *Mobile* have made another trip to Melbourne? Well, yes, the *Mobile* arrived again in November 1853. However the diary starts as the brothers are selling their business in Brunswick in September 1853, and none of the other people named in the diary as fellow travelers are on this *Mobile*. One thing was clear: whoever wrote the diary definitely arrived on the *Mobile* that docked in Melbourne in October 1852.

Other details from the diary began to throw up more conundrums. The diarist had travelled to Victoria on the *Mobile* with his brother, whom he refers to throughout the diary simply as ‘George’. If there was no Samuel Lazarus on the *Mobile*, neither was there a George Lazarus. The diarist lives, works, travels to Ballarat and sets up in business with this George, as well as another man who unexpectedly arrives in Melbourne. On 1 October 1853 the diarist records:

We were all sitting around the fire this afternoon talking over our future operations when a rap sounded at the door. George opened it and immediately uttered a wild exclamation of surprise – a few seconds more and as wild a cry of amazement issued from me – for who should show before me than our old friend George Morgan.

George Morgan became the brothers’ constant companion and business associate.

Three questions settled in my mind. First, who was Samuel Lazarus and could he have possibly written this diary? If not, then who DID write the diary? (If the author was

on the *Mobile* that arrived in October 1852, that ‘narrowed’ the field to just the 262 adult males on board.) And finally, how did the diary become attributed to Samuel Lazarus in the first place? I also could not avoid the meta-question staring me in the face: Could the mystery of the diary’s true provenance be solved at all, or would the infamous tide of history have washed away the footprints to the author’s identity?

Show me the historical researcher who doesn’t love a quest? And what followed was a mighty archival odyssey to be sure. But to delineate all the rabbit holes, false leads, brick walls, wrong turns and, finally, the slipping into place of all the many pieces of this extraordinary puzzle would no doubt test the reader’s patience for armchair travel. What follows is an account of the answers to those three key propositions, with a taste of my research journey to egg the pudding.

Who was Samuel Lazarus?

Samuel Lazarus was born on 10 October 1837 in Liverpool, the son of Jewish immigrants Joshua George and Hannah Lazarus.⁶ Both Joshua and Hannah were natives of Riga where Russian Jews were in the minority (most of Riga’s Jewish population was German). In 1833, Joshua fled to London, where he was later joined by Hannah and the youngest of their five children, including a five year-old daughter who was blind, deaf, mute and unable to walk. After jobs as a commercial traveller - hawking was one of the few occupations open to Jews in London - the family moved to Liverpool, where Samuel and his sister Elizabeth were born. On 18 December 1836, Joshua and Hannah converted to Anglicanism along with their children in a mass baptism at St Bride’s Church, Liverpool.⁷

In 1841, Joshua published a book called *Ebenezer*, which combined autobiography, an analysis of the spiritual condition of Eastern European Jewry and a treatise calling on Christians to reject anti-Semitism and embrace Jews as friends, ‘making their sorrows and wrongs our own’.⁸ After a failed attempt to run a stationery business, Joshua Lazarus found employment as a Missionary to the Jews in Liverpool and later Manchester, where the Lazarus family were living with at the time of the UK census in 1851. The census lists Samuel, 14, as a scholar, a rare occupation at a time when post-primary education was atypical for non-gentry. Elizabeth Lazarus was four years younger than her brother and if she was also receiving an education, the Census taker did not note it. However, in *Ebenezer*, an older sister is recorded as having received ‘a tolerable education’ at the London Society School for the instruction of Jewish children.

Two years after the Census pinioned the Lazarus family in Manchester, 16-year old Samuel sailed to Victoria, alone. There is no indication of his motivation for this youthful exodus, beyond the general lure of adventure, independence and potential wealth. He arrived on the *Athlone* in March 1853. His sister Elizabeth, aged 18, arrived in November 1859 on the *Champion of the Seas*. Neither Joshua nor Hannah Lazarus appears to have made another transformative migration by following their children out to Australia.

It is unclear just what Samuel Lazarus did when he arrived in Melbourne at the

height of the gold rush, when jobs for tradesmen were plentiful but employment for soft-skinned scholars was thin on the ground. By January 1854, he had found himself a job in the fledgling township of Bulla, 29 kilometres north-west of Melbourne. William 'Tulip' Wright had 'settled' the area in 1844. Wright built the Deep Creek Inn, near the bridge, and then the Bridge Inn, 100 metres away.⁹ After the town was surveyed in 1847, a small community began to form. The first Church of England services were held in the barn of Lady Pomeroy Greene, the wife of a landowner, and soon after it was decided that a school was in order. The first school was built on Church of England land, just up from the Bridge Inn.¹⁰ The first teachers employed at the new denominational school were Samuel Lazarus and Mark Cassidy. The school opened on 23 January 1854.¹¹ Lazarus was 10 years younger than his fellow teacher. Together they had fourteen girls and twenty-one boys in their charge.

Mark Cassidy was twenty-six years old when he arrived on the *Emily* in October 1852. He had travelled with his sister Fanny, 25, his wife Lucy, 24 and their two year-old daughter, Henrietta. The Cassidy's were English blue-bloods, with solid berths in the British Peerage. Francis Duff Cassidy, their father, was Private Secretary to Lord Castlereagh and gained the rank of Captain in the 60th Rifle brigade.¹² Francis Duff's father had been the Chief Constable of Cashel in County Tipperary, Ireland. Colonialism was at the heart of the Cassidy's prestige, though Francis Duff's wife, Mary Ann, perhaps had a rebellious streak; she named her daughter Frances Burney Cassidy, after the popular novelist Frances (Fanny) Burney, a satirist of the gender politics of the day.

In Victoria, however, the fancy lineage ended on the banks of the Deep Creek. On Christmas Day 1858, Samuel Lazarus married Fanny Cassidy according to the rites of the Church of Scotland. Fanny was (at least) five years his senior.¹³ There is evidence to suggest that Fanny's unconventional behaviour may have begun prior to her journey to Victoria. For when Samuel and Fanny's first child, Frances Mary, was born on 10 November 1859, the birth certificate records that Fanny already had one living child. It appears that Mark Cassidy may have been accompanying his disgraced black sheep of a sister to the colonies, leaving behind the proof of her sin.

Mark's wife, Lucy, had died in February 1854. On 31 July 1860, Mark Edward Cassidy, schoolmaster, married Elizabeth Lazarus, schoolmistress, at St Mary's United Church of England and Ireland, Tullamarine. The Lazarus siblings and the Cassidy siblings were now united in marriage, profession and residence.

The year 1859 was a significant one for Samuel and Fanny Lazarus. Not only was their first child born in November, but on 1 October, Samuel had been appointed the first teacher of the new non-vested National School, officially known as 546 Seafeld School. This new purpose-built facility at Tullamarine had a schoolroom, classroom, two dwelling rooms and two living rooms.¹⁴ The Lazarus family settled down to some steady breeding and career-building. In 1861, Julius Samuel was born, followed by Elizabeth Hannah in 1862. Baby Elizabeth died when she was six months old and the

next child to come along, Elizabeth Henrietta, was born in 1866. Meanwhile, Mark and Elizabeth Cassidy welcomed Florence Mary in 1866 and Francis Henry in 1868.

But if the Cassidy clan thought their disreputable days were behind them, separated by the waste of waters, they were wrong. In 1870, a scandal rocked the Shire of Bulla, sending frissons of outrage down the telegraph wires and being reported as far as Western Australia and across the Tasman. Thomas Harris, the municipal engineer and secretary of the Shire Council was arrested in New Zealand, where he had fled with his lover and the £650 he'd swiped from the Bulla exchequer. Harris was the son of a clergyman, father of six and a pillar of the close-knit Bulla community. His paramour, with whom Harris was intending to escape to New York, was none other than Mrs Elizabeth Cassidy.¹⁵ In the ensuing fracas, it was reported that Mrs Cassidy had 'deserted her two infant children' while Harris had abandoned his dying wife and family.¹⁶ After the errant lovers were returned to Australia by authorities and Harris imprisoned for embezzlement, Mark Cassidy filed for divorce on the grounds of adultery. The subsequent saturation media coverage dragged out all the dirty washing. Elizabeth claimed that Mark, who was fifteen years her senior, had been cruel to her 'within a few months of marriage'. Mark told the court a pitiful story of hearing 'heavy breathing from the other bed' while he and his wife shared a weekend trip to town with the Harris's. He laid his hand out towards his wife's bed and felt the beard of a man. It transpired that Mr Harris and Elizabeth Cassidy had been having an affair for six years. Outside the court Mark 'went needlessly out of his way to call her a villainous name'. Elizabeth shouted back that he 'drove her to it', then called out to her former husband 'as he went off, to give her back the two children which were the result of their marriage'.¹⁷ (But not her step-daughter Henrietta, it would seem.)

Whether reeling from the scandal or ready to move on, it appears that sometime after 1870, Samuel Lazarus left his job at the Seafeld School in Tullamarine and took up a teaching position in Emerald Hill (now South Melbourne). Following that, he retired from teaching altogether, moved to Carlton and began a second career as a financier. In 1872, Samuel was the witness at his sister's wedding to Thomas Harris, with whom Elizabeth had been living in Little Lygon Street, Carlton since her light-fingered lover's release from prison. Samuel may have been present to celebrate the births of Elizabeth and Thomas Harris's two children, Arthur and Laura, in 1873 and 1876 respectively. The missionary's daughter and clergyman's son had certainly found a novel route to happiness in the colonies.

It was during this turbulent era that Samuel Lazarus had his closest brush with iconic Australian history, serving as the foreman on the jury of Ned Kelly's Melbourne murder trial in November 1880. Samuel's son, Julius, later wrote that Kate Kelly had come to their house to beg Samuel to sign a petition commuting the sentence to life imprisonment 'but Mrs Lazarus stood firm and Mrs [sic] Kelly had to be removed from the house in a very distressed state'.¹⁸ Kate Kelly had already made a similar plea to Victoria's governor, the Marquis of Normandy.

During the boom years of the 1880s, Samuel Lazarus proved to have a harder

head for business than his father, and in 1888 he built the grand Hatherlie House, two-storey polychrome brick terrace house, in McKean Street, North Fitzroy/Clifton Hill as a testament to his worldly success. After Fanny's death in 1903, Samuel sold the house and moved to Alma Road, Camberwell. This house was also named Hatherlie.¹⁹ Samuel lived at Hatherlie with his daughters, Frances and Elizabeth. Also attached to the household was Murial Mary, Elizabeth's daughter, born in 1893.²⁰ By 1923, Samuel Lazarus had amassed a property portfolio of at least 20 houses in inner Melbourne.²¹

It was not far from his Camberwell home that Samuel Lazarus was killed while alighting from a tram on Burke Rd on 6 September 1923. He was 87 years old. The driver of the fruit van that ran Lazarus down, as the frail old man hobbled from tram to curbside with his cane, was found guilty of manslaughter by the Coroner and committed for trial.²² On the first anniversary of her father's death, Elizabeth Lazarus presented a clock to the Camberwell Town Hall, which had been without a timepiece in its tower since its erection thirty years earlier. The clock, which cost £300, was intended as a memorial to her late father, who had been a civic-minded, church-going man all his long life.²³

Samuel Lazarus – teacher, financier, leading citizen – is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

If Not Lazarus, Then Who?

It was comparatively simple to rule out Samuel Lazarus as the author of the 'Lazarus Diary'. On 23 January 1854, Samuel Lazarus was turning up for his first day of work at the Deep Creek School in Bulla, some 60 kilometres from Ballarat, where the author of the diary was running an auction house and printing business. Samuel Lazarus came to Australia on the *Athlone* in March 1853; he had no connection with Wellington; and both of his parents were alive in 1853.

Positively identifying the actual diarist would prove a far more exacting task. I knew it had to be one of the passengers on the *Mobile* log, most likely one travelling with a George and sharing a surname. That narrowed down the field. But the most substantial clue lay in the diary itself. Whoever wrote the diary owned the Criterion Auction Mart on Commissioner's Flat, which soon extended to a stockyard, stables for fourteen horses and an equal share in a printing business with Thomas Fletcher. It was the fortunes of the Criterion Auction Mart that eventually lead me to Charles Evans.

Charles James Evans was born in the town of Ironbridge, county of Shropshire, in 1827. Ironbridge, nestled in a gorge in the West Midlands, takes its name from the famous thirty-metre cast iron structure that was built across the River Severn in 1779, a feat of engineering that partially accounts for the town's appellation as 'the Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution'. It was also in Ironbridge that the process of iron smelting was pioneered. Neighboring towns in this coal mining district include Telford, Madeley and the administrative centre of Wellington, on the Wrekin River.

The second eldest in his family, after his brother George Basnett Evans, Charles Evans was the son of Charles James and Jane Evans (nee Bennett). Charles and Jane had two other sons, John and Thomas. Charles Snr, a learned man who raised his family to value education and their Wesleyan faith, worked as an excise officer, post master and printer. The Evans boys may have been educated at the Reverend John Cowper's private school in Madeley. During the 1820s, the Evans's kept the historic Talbot Inn, which housed the excise office and post office. In 1829, Jane Evans was listed in a local directory as the proprietor.²⁴ The Evans would have had a high profile as members of the respectable professional and small business community in a township of less than 1500 people.

When Charles Evans Snr died, sometime prior to 1841 and possibly as early as 1829, the family's fortunes shifted. Jane Evans and her son John moved to the county heartland of Wellington, where the widow established herself as a milliner in the thriving commercial district of Church Street, amidst other fashionable drapers, haberdashers and mercers.²⁵ According to the Wellington Town Council's history, such 'small businesses helped the process of turning Wellington from a large village into a sizeable and notable town'.²⁶ The other Evans brothers dispersed. By the time of the 1841 Census, Charles, 14, was working as an agricultural labourer in a nearby parish; George, 16, was working in a coal mine; and Thomas, 5, appears to have been sent away to relatives, perhaps to live with Jane's family in her native London.

Ten years later, the family had regrouped. Jane was working as a milliner in New Street, Wellington, where she lived with George, 26, her assistant, and John, 22, now in business as a draper. Thomas, 15, lived in nearby Shrewsbury and had found work as a grocer's apprentice. Charles Evans, 24, was living in the home of a draper and his wife, George and Sarah Morgan, in Staffordshire. George Morgan, 26, was born in Shrewsbury. Charles Evans' occupation is listed in the 1851 Census as 'servant'. The early death of their father meant that the Evans boys had learned to adapt their skills in keeping with life's vicissitude; it was an experience that would bode well for their immigration to Victoria.

When Charles Evans first began his diary on 23 September 1853, eleven months after disembarking the *Mobile*, he and his brother George were in the process of selling the confectioner's business they'd established in Brunswick. They then worked as carters and timber merchants before offloading the trappings of those enterprises (Charles was most upset to sell his horse, Jessy: 'I have never felt more regret in parting with an animal') and starting out for the Ballarat diggings. Accompanying the Evans brothers were George Morgan and a fellow shipmate of his, John Basson Humffray.²⁷ The party left Melbourne on 9 November but took the wrong road. Realising their mistake, they doubled back and 'by a miracle took the right road', setting out on 11 November – a date that one year later would hold supreme significance for J. B. Humffray.

Arriving in Ballarat a week later, the Evans brothers and George Morgan erected their huge canvas tent on Commissioner's Flat. George Morgan obtained an auctioneer's

licence. They engaged a cook, 'a white headed old negro'. According to the diary, the Evans brothers went into business with Robert Harrington. On 2 September 1854, the *Ballarat Times* listed 'Harrington and Evans' in its directory of auctioneers. The association was financially disastrous for the Evans brothers, and on 18 November 1854, Charles wrote with satisfaction that they had broken all arrangements with Harrington, 'a man I utterly despise . . . contemptible in the extreme . . . a mixture of deceit, insolence and cowardice'. In September 1855, the *Ballarat Times* commercial directory now listed 'Wright and Evans' as auctioneers. Henry Wright, an engineer, had been a shipmate on the *Mobile*.

The Evans name next appears in the colonial historical record in conjunction with the business the brothers established in partnership with Thomas Fletcher, one of the three men imprisoned for the burning down of the Eureka Hotel. On 17 October, a riotous crowd torched the Eureka Hotel, owned by James and Catherine Bentley, in ardent retaliation against the perceived injustice of a local magistrate's decision that the publicans were not guilty of a miner's violent death outside the pub ten days earlier. The Eureka Hotel riot is often considered the spark that lit the long wick of Eureka.²⁸

The venture between the Evans brothers and Fletcher, the Criterion Printing Office, was a successful one, an offshoot of the Criterion Auction Mart. In his diary, Charles notes that they had 'all the business' from the theatre that was located opposite them on Main Road. This was the Adelphi Theatre, run by the entrepreneurial Sarah Hanmer and her daughter Julia. Mrs Hanmer also played a significant role in the events leading up to the Eureka Stockade.²⁹ In early 1855, the Evans brothers' names were again inscribed in the canon of primary Eureka documents. Both Charles and George signed the Petition of Benden S. Hassell for compensation for a gunshot wound to the leg sustained during an altercation on 28 November 1854 when a detachment of the 12th Regiment was ambushed by miners as it entered Ballarat. Signing the petition, G. B. Evans listed his profession as a Stationer and Evans and Wright signed jointly as Auctioneers.³⁰

In July 1855, a new newspaper was launched in Ballarat, aiming to challenge the monopoly of the *Ballarat Times*, run by Henry Seekamp (and his wife Clara Duval Seekamp during her husband's imprisonment for sedition, the only conviction secured out of the Eureka trials.) This new enterprise, the *Ballarat Leader*, was 'printed and published by Thos Fletcher and Charles James Evans at Criterion Printing Office, Main Road, near bridge'. The newspaper's editor was J .B. Humffray. 'The crying evil of civilized Europe is too much law and not enough justice', thundered the editorial on 7 July. The American Declaration of Independence was printed in full. And its commercial directory listed 'Wright and Evans, auctioneers and commission agents, Criterion Auction Mart, Main Road, Ballarat Flat'.³¹

Meanwhile, by 1856, George had set himself up as the manager of the Ballarat Register and Labor Office. His business venture is listed on Main Road – the 'most central business part of the Main Road', according to Huxtables Directory³² – located beside

the Adelphi Theatre (later burnt), Fletcher and Evans, printers, F. Humffray, stationer and bookseller, Hemingway and Jones Criterion Drapery (also burnt) and Lazarus and Co., auctioneers.³³ An advertisement for the Ballarat Labor Market in the *Geelong and District Commercial Directory* lists the business's many services as 'books and stationery of every description, periodicals, the Colonial and Home papers, Agreements written, servants of every kind supplied on the shortest notice.' Clearly the Evans brothers had put their literacy skills to good use.

By the spring of 1856, the relationship between Evans and Fletcher had soured. (The *Leader* only ran for six issues.) According to a public notice in the *Ballarat Star*, on 3 October 1856, the Supreme Court of Victoria, in the case of Charles James Evans vs Thomas Fletcher, ordered the sale by public auction of the Criterion Printing Office and all its fixtures, fittings and equipment.³⁴ The only exception from the sale was the property belonging to William Dixon Denovan, a high-flying identity in Bendigo's political circles and another *Mobile* shipmate of Evans.³⁵

Whether the property was knocked down to Charles Evans, the plaintiff in the case, is not clear, but it is certain that the Evans brothers continued in their printing venture. It didn't just survive, it thrived, and by 1859, the Main Road property was sold. Now trading as Evans Brothers, the new printing, stationery and bookselling business symbolically moved off the East Ballarat flats and up to the higher ground of the township.³⁶ Evans Brothers was located on prestigious Lydiard Street, next to the offices of lawyer Adam Loftus Lynn. The business venture was so successful that both brothers were able to buy their own residences, rather than live on top of each other amidst the fumes and noise of the printing presses. George Evans had married Mary Ann O'Brien, an Irish lass from Limerick in a Catholic ceremony in 1857. By 1862, George and Mary Ann had set up house in Dana Street, where they ran Evans Brothers Coffee Works and raised their Mary Jane (b. 1858), Julia (b. 1860) and George Thomas (b. 1862). By the time John Charles (1864), Alfred O'Brien (1865) and Ernest came along, the family was living in Woods Point, a town near Mansfield that had boomed after the discovery of gold in 1861: within three years the town had thirty hotels.³⁷

Charles Evans had married a year after his older brother, in 1858, to Catherine McCallum, a 17 year-old Scottish girl from Geelong. Charles was 28. The couple moved to Brown's diggings where Charles was listed as a storekeeper when the second of their eleven children, Charles Clerk, was born in 1860. (The first child was stillborn and not registered.) The 1860s saw a spate of ventures for the Evans Brothers. Where their first enterprises in Melbourne had been in the labour-intensive pursuits of carting and catering, they now turned to the capital-intensive field of sharebroking. In 1861, Charles Evans was advertising to sell shares in his Ivanhoe and Albion Mining Company at the Lucky Woman Mine in Happy Valley, near Swan Hill.³⁸ By 1863, joined now by brother John after his emigration from Wellington, George had purchased Mooreep Station, in the Strathdownie Region, near Casterton in south west Victoria. Up to thirty mining claims had been established on Mooreep Station; the terms on which they were held



'Lydiard Street Ballarat' showing the Evans Bros Printers, Booksellers and Stationers business.
Photograph by Solomon & Bardwell, 1861

included a cash payment of £10 per claim on the first yield of gold and a royalty of 5 per cent on all gold obtained.³⁹ Despite the seemingly advantageous position, by February 1864, George and John had filed for insolvency and moved to St Kilda.

Evans Brothers now expanded their printing operations across two fronts: Melbourne and Ballarat, with Charles managing the Ballarat operations (and his burgeoning family) and George and John running an office at 44 Collins Street. During the 1870s, the Melbourne office was awarded many government contracts while also publishing municipal directories and working in close association with Benjamin Suggitt Nayler, an important if idiosyncratic figure in Melbourne's early intellectual and religious life.⁴⁰ In 1874, Evans Brothers' Melbourne wing merged with the firm of Arnall and Jackson. A tragedy in the family may have precipitated the decision to scale back commercial responsibilities, for on 7 October 1874, George's wife, Mary Ann, died of chronic hepatitis and kidney disease, aged 35. She left five children, the youngest only six years old. A fire destroyed much of Evans Brothers' Collins Street premises in 1876.⁴¹ Though the printing business was re-established by Arnall and Jackson, George Basnett

Evans didn't survive his multiple losses. He died of 'excessive drinking' in Kilmore in 1879, aged 54.⁴²

Charles Evans, two years his brother's junior, would also die in his 54th year. In 1881, Charles and Catherine took up residence at 245 Moray Street, Emerald Hill. It is not clear whether the couple had permanently left Ballarat or was stopping at the house of one of their older children. Charles Clerk was by now twenty years old. Catherine was due to have her eleventh baby and perhaps required some extra assistance with the little ones. Robert Gibbs Evans was born on 12 February 1881 at the house in Moray Street. Less than two months later, his father was dead. Charles James Evans died on 3 April in the same house on the hill.

The wide-ranging commercial and cultural activities of the Evans Brothers had come to an end, but not before making a lasting mark on the early establishment of Melbourne and Ballarat, not least in the form of a frayed little diary of a wide-eyed newcomer to a colony where anything seemed possible.

And Found

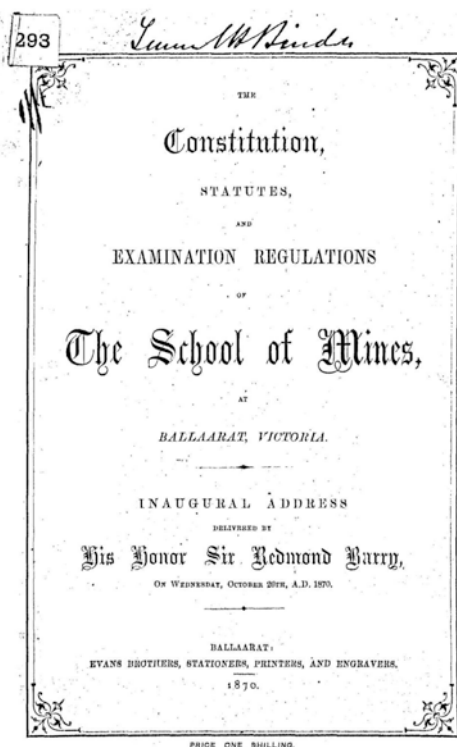
I subtitled this article 'A Diary Lost and Found'. Why? Well, if the 'Lazarus Diary' has had its institutional name hijacked by the empirical truth, the State Library of Victoria's catalogue has thrown up a counter-claim to its virtue. As it turns out, the SLV has not one, but two goldfields' treasures in its collection.

On a whim, after a long and winding session in the Heritage Reading Room, I keyed George Evans into the SLV's manuscripts catalogue. And – lo! – I was presented with the diary of G. B. Evans. I ordered up the item without much cause for enthusiasm, and was duly provided with a small brown volume, purchased at a stationers in Wolverhampton, an English midlands town on the border of Shropshire. As I cautiously thumbed the pages, my heart skipped a beat. For sitting on its white beanbag cloud before me lay a mirror image of the 'Lazarus Diary'. The same things happening on the same dates. Attending to a knock at the door: 'oh ye gods, little did I expect to see George Morgan'. Selling the confectioners business in Brunswick. Parting with Jessy the wonder horse. Purchasing 'an immense tent capable of holding 500 persons'. Leaving for the diggings on the wrong road. Arriving in Ballarat. Engaging a 'black cook'. The same names appear: Hall, Humphrey, Gillespie. The *Mobile*. And references throughout to Charles/Charlie.

Then this:

28 April [1853]

My birthday. A dreamy reverie takes hold of me and I am at Ironbridge where I first learned to prattle and the 28th of April brings its sixpence and Everton toffee. Then at Wolverhampton I find myself snug in Mr Fares wagon ... Then the scene shifts to Wellington where either on the far famed Wrekin or snug in a happy home ... smiling joyous beings are doing ample justice to the good things of a well spread board. [Now] a canvas tent ... I am in Australia and here to work.



Sir Redmond Barry, *The Constitution, Statutes and Examination Regulations of the School of Mines, Ballarat . . .*, 1870.

Printed by Evans Brothers, Printers and Engravers

‘rather tired of this solitary life’ and eagerly awaited Charles’ return so that together they could try something ‘more bustling and lucrative’. After four months of unsuccessful digging, Charles returned like ‘the Prodigal son . . . thin, dirty, unrecognizable’ with a ‘shaggy beard and moustache’. They rented a plot of land at Brunswick, purchased two tents, made their own benches and tables out of scrap wood and began to sell fruit, books and, after the purchase of a stove, baked fifty mutton and apple pies a day. We learn that they were putting aside £2 a week for ‘Jack [John] to come out and £1 a week ‘to make mother independent of others assistance’. We learn that George has the same sensitive and analytical heart as his brother. Of the diggers, he observed that the ‘poor fellows who went up with bright hopes and golden dreams are coming down with empty pockets and desponding hearts’. And we discover that George is of flesh and blood too; on Jack’s birthday, George drank ‘rather too much Mountain Dew’. The unearthing of this companion diary serves to reinforce the essential body-and-soul humanity of the gold rush immigrants.

And what work do George and his brother Charles perform?

August 15 [1853]

Verily we have now got all the irons, poker, tongs and all: let me see, what are we? Confectioners, cooks, booksellers, dealers in cordials, fruiterers, lodging housekeepers, hay horners, storekeepers, carters, dealers in timber, et et et et.

In October, George is happy to learn that Mrs Hall has separated from her ‘brute of a husband’. Twin diaries: verifying the authenticity of one and revealing the newfound observations of another.

But the diaries are not identical twins. George began his diary prior to Charles, on the 25 December 1852, just two months after disembarking the *Mobile*. Charles’ diary commences on 24 September 1853, just days before the brothers sell their confectioner’s business. Thus we now have nine more months of these men’s lives in our sights. From George we learn that he set up a coffee and lemonade tent ‘in the bush’ on the road to the Ovens Diggings, while Charles went to the Ovens to try his luck. By February, George was

Provenance

The third leg of this research journey involved ascertaining how Charles Evans' diary was attributed to Samuel Lazarus in the first instance. Here, the value of talking to living people won out over the marvels of the internet. The SLV's website states that the diary was first discovered in Cann River in 1984. An article published in the *Age* newspaper at the time the SLV purchased the diary in 2006 further reveals that a Gippsland librarian named Keith Ridout had persuaded the diary's current owner that the diary in his possession was of public value. I called Keith Ridout who told me that the Cann River man had been the town's postmaster. The postmaster had a number of archival items kept in an old WW1 Light Horse harness trunk, many of which he'd sold through Christie's auction house in the mid-1990s. The diary was one of those items. As far as Ridout remembered, the diary had never been referred to at the time as 'the Lazarus diary'. Ridout couldn't remember the postmaster's name but believed he had moved to the South Gippsland area, around Foster.

I sent a barrage of emails to Christie's London office. (The Melbourne arm of the organization had closed since the sale of the diary.) A helpful archivist sent me a PDF of the relevant pages of the catalogue in which the diary of Samuel Lazarus had been item 123.⁴³

LAZARUS (SAMUEL) – EUREKA STOCKADE: HIGHLY IMPORTANT
PRIMARY DOCUMENT ON THE HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT EVENTS AT
THE EUREKA STOCKADE IN NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1854.

Following the blazing title was a short bio of Samuel Lazarus as being born in Liverpool in 1835; his father Joshua George Lazarus as author of *Ebenezer*; Joshua's conversion and subsequent work as a Missionary to the Jews. And then a description of the internal narrative of the diary, particularly as it pertained to the events at Eureka. This then, was the first time the diary was attributed to Lazarus. And Item 124 in the Christies' catalogue suggests the reason: LAZARUS (JULIUS SAMUEL) – GALLIPOLI. FIELD NOTEBOOK AND 6 ORIGINAL PENCIL AND INK SKETCHES OF VIEWS AT GALLIPOLI. The wartime memorabilia of Samuel Lazarus's only son was also for sale. Could it be that the same seller owned the two items, and that the joint ownership had bestowed a notional authorship on the diary? Could the Christies' curators have simply *assumed* that Julius Lazarus's father wrote the otherwise anonymous diary?

Fortunately, I happen to holiday in the Foster region, and on a rainy day in Easter 2012, I paid a visit to the Foster Library, for internet access and to entertain the housebound kids. With the Lazarus conundrum never far from my mind, I approached the elderly librarian and asked whether, by chance, he knew if a postmaster from Cann River had ever lived in the area. He did know, and more than that, he gave me the name of the now-deceased man's widow. They played cards together.

Again, my heart was beating furiously when I dialled the postmaster's wife's number. I told her the tale of my research. She listened attentively then whispered, 'Well, you certainly have given me something to think about'. And then she told me her story.

Her husband had been close to Samuel Lazarus's grandson, Hugh Frankland (formerly Herbert Samuel Lazarus), who worked as a photographer in the 1950s and 60s.⁴⁴ When Frankland died, he left his family's cache of historical documents to his favourite 'Sunday son'. The postmaster and his wife had kept the precious items in the old trunk. Keith Ridout had persuaded them that some of the items, particularly the diary, might be of value to a wider audience. It was Christie's that first attributed the diary to Samuel Lazarus, though they didn't have any reason to believe otherwise.

So if the diary belonged to Charles Evans, how did it get into the hands of the Lazarus family?

Several weeks after completing a draft of this article, I was able to meet the current custodian of the remaining contents of that WW1 Light Horse harness trunk that housed the family documents of Julius Samuel Lazarus. The trunk had been replaced by plastic file boxes, but after several hours and generous cups of tea, I was able to find what I was looking for: a link between the Lazarus family and the Evans family.

This is it: Samuel Lazarus's son, Julius S. Lazarus, married Eva Maud Bansgrove in 1898. The Bansgrove family was from Ballarat. Eva had a remarkable sister, Winifred. Forsaking marriage, the Conservatorium-trained Win worked as a music teacher, commercial artist and wallpaper designer and, in the 1930s, a psychologist who lectured around Australia. Among the glamorous studio photographs of Winifred Bansgrove, who studied art in Paris from 1907 to 1909, I found a slight envelope. Inside is a letter from a London physician, written on the eve of Winifred's Chanel-crossing to France. On the outside of the letter are the words 'Miss Bansgrove – Paid 1/- to Miss Evans'. The most slender fillip of evidence, tying together the loose ends of a story spanning more than 70 years and reaching from Russia to Liverpool, Ironbridge, New Zealand, Ballarat and Paris. The Misses Bansgrove and Evans were evidently friends, close enough for the prized goldfields' heirloom of one family to be passed to another.

The tide of history had been gentle.

But there is one other final unsolved mystery in this remarkable story. There is no doubt that the authors of these two diaries came to Victoria on the *Mobile* in October 1852. Every piece of evidence points to this ineluctable fact. Yet the inconvenient truth is that there is no Charles and George Evans listed on the passenger log for the *Mobile*. Their names are as conspicuously absent as that of Samuel Lazarus, the omission that gave me my first wake-up call. There IS a Robert and Thomas Evans on the *Mobile*. But the hard copy passenger log, which lists information that the online index does not, shows that these two men were Irish, one a mariner and one a farmer, not middle-class Englishman. Perhaps our Evans boys deliberately obscured their identities, giving false names to the immigration agent. This was a common strategy for making a new life in the colonies. If this is the case, there is an interesting possibility. George Branston Bridges and Thomas Bridges might be George Basnett and Charles Evans, both born at Ironbridge, with Thomas being the only Evans brother not to immigrate to Australia. (He may have already been dead before Charles and George departed.)



An image recently found in the old family bible of Mary Anne Evans, wife of George Evans. The image has since been donated to the State Library. It is not sure who the 'the two reprobates' are but they are likely to be the sons of either George or Charles Evans

Guesswork only. But one thing is for certain. Even if the 'Lazarus Diary' was in fact written by Charles James Evans, its fallacious title in no way erodes the document's stature as a leading manuscript in the State Library of Victoria's collection. The little diary is still just as valuable as it has ever been. If this has been a tale of two diaries, it is not a morality tale - though possibly a cautionary tale. There is no judgment to be made, neither of the diary's custodians nor of the intrinsic worth of the item itself. In fact, it is now all the more interesting an historical artefact given that Charles Evans had a demonstrable connection with the Eureka leaders and played such an important and ongoing role in Ballarat's commercial and cultural history. What's more, the discovery of a companion diary is like a glistening pot at the end of the rainbow.

Other seemingly random dots can now be joined too. An 1861 photograph in the SLV Pictures Collection showing the Lydiard St premises of Evans Brothers, stationers and booksellers. And numerous pamphlets printed by Evans Bros or Charles J Evans. And subsequent to the drafting of this article, the purchase of a copy of Ebenezer by the State Library of Victoria. The archival dots merge to become the crisp outline of an extraordinary story. If there is anything lost in the translation from the diaries erroneous to authentic provenance, it is the romantic but spurious link between the events at Eureka and the Kelly trial 30 years later.

There is one final ironic twist, making my research journey not linear but oddly full circle. Reading through the diary while checking references for this article, I came across a passage that had eluded me in earlier readings. It is the passage where the diary's author reveals himself to us, names himself, making fools of future historians and collectors even as he takes a casual pot-shot at himself:

23 October [1853]

Last evening George and George Morgan were seized simultaneously with a severe writing fit, which malady unfortunately did not extend itself to me.

I sat for some time like patience on a monument . . . I could neither hear a word nor utter a word even to that beloved friend Charles Evans, and I presently began to feel the gloom creeping insidiously upon me. I have a most potent hatred of the glooms so I quietly retreated from their approach and strode down to Cartons.

Charles Evans might have been too depressed to write a letter home or even write an entry in his diary, but he sure made me laugh out loud.

Postscript

Days before going to press, a Manuscripts Librarian at the State Library of Victoria furnished me with some remarkable documents from the non-public provenance files. Apparently not all of the pieces of the puzzle had yet slipped into place! Correspondence dating from the 1980s, when the SLV was negotiating with the original owner of the Charles Evans diary – via Gippsland mobile librarian Keith Ridout - to make a photocopy for its collection, reveals that both Ridout and the owner referred to the work as the 'Lazarus Diary'. Ridout states that a birth certificate for Julius Samuel Lazarus was found enclosed within the diary. Thus it was either the owner or Ridout who not unreasonably presumed that Julius Samuel's father had written the unsigned diary. Christies' merely followed suit when the item came up for auction, seemingly not undertaking any independent research to verify the authorship. This last – but probably not final! – leg of my research journey has provided a timely reminder that new material is always surfacing, requiring us to re-examine our assumptions and hunches in the cold light of hard evidence.