

George Theodore Rieck

(1833-1884)

Rieck is important to Marysville as he completed an early, 1862, bridle track started by Murphy from New Chum Creek to Wood's Point. He became involved with gold mining at Matlock, Walhalla and further afield.

George was born in 1833 on the island of Fehmarn, Germany and arrived in Victoria in 1854.

By 1862 George found work in the Department of Lands & Survey and went with the surveyor Mr James Murphy to New Chum Creek to discover a track to the Jordan Goldfields.

The Age 29 August, 1862

A deputation to the Commissioner of Lands & Survey from a meeting at Eltham.

.....short time ago the Government despatched a surveyor, Mr Murphy, to open a track to the Jordan from Melbourne, but that officer had not proceeded far when he was recalled. A Mr Rieck, however, who was one of the surveying party, believing that the direct road had been struck, resolved to follow it up. Accordingly he set out with a companion, and after undergoing great hardships they made their way to the Jordan diggings, where they remained ten days to recover their strength. Upon their return a numerously attended meeting was held at Eltham to receive them, and so satisfied were the residents of the district that a track had been discovered, that they subscribed a sum of money to cut a bridle road along it.

Rieck's name became famous for this track with deviations that Rieck later added. His crossing of the Acheron River moved to where it is today, in 2020, near Granton.

He was still on the Track in 1864 then the message - G T Rieck, Jordan Road, call on the Inspector General of Roads, William Street. *Missing persons, The Argus Aug 1864*. Communication methods then were so different from the 21st century!

Back in Melbourne he married Mary McDonald in 1864 and they had a son, Charles Ernest Rieck born in Prahran in 1866 and died Carlton 1919. All was not well because in 1868 George put a notice in the Herald stating "I will not be responsible for any debts contracted by my wife".

George became involved in gold mining companies¹. The first found was the Aurora Quartz Mining Company, Matlock, Woods Point in 1864. By 1866 George is in Walhalla setting up the Hercules Gold Mining Company at Stringers Creek as manager and South Black Diamond Mine as legal manager. *Advertisements in The Argus, Apr & Sep 1866*.

Several letters in the *Ovens & Murray Valley Advertiser* from G T Rieck appear in 1869 re the Buffalo River goldfield which he appears to know well.

Queenslander, 19 Dec 1874

George T Rieck last heard of at the Palmer² - Please communicate with Henry Kirchner, Farmer's Arms Hotel, South Brisbane.

Brisbane Courier, 10 May 1876

G. T. Rieck, who has lately returned to Brisbane from Byerstown³, informs us that he is so well satisfied with the general aspect of affairs and the value of the reefs on the Hodgkinson River⁴, that he has resolved to proceed to Melbourne for the purpose of obtaining the necessary quartz-crushing machinery, in order to have the value of the district duly tested. He informs us there can be no possible doubt as to the correctness of Mr. Mulligan's report. The Hodgkinson is of no value as an alluvial ground, but for those who can afford to wait there is a prosperous future in reserve.

Ovens & Murray Advertiser (Beechworth), 26 Jan 1882

Information Required. — Mr George T. Rieck, a prospector, of Mt. Werong⁵, New South Wales, writes to ask: "In 1869 a party prospected the heads of the Buffalo River (branch of the Ovens) and obtained a little

gold ; has since that time any of the branches of the Buffalo been worked by miners, or been since prospected? And does a Mr McLean keep a station at the head of the Buffalo yet? He did in 1869." With respect to the former query, we would request information on the subject from persons residing near and acquainted with the locality referred to. We may state that Mr McLean is still a resident of the Bright district.

The death of a George Rieck was reported in 1884 at Warialda⁶, NSW and searching the Warialda Pioneer Cemetery burial list, George T Rieck was there, died on 30 August 1884, aged 50.

¹ There were several more Mining companies with G T Rieck's name attached to them.

² Following the discovery of payable alluvial gold on the Palmer River in 1873, would-be diggers flocked to the field in search of their fortunes. Within two years, an estimated 9000 people had arrived on the Palmer. The Palmer is located northwest of Cooktown, Queensland.

³ Byerstown was on the Palmer River.

⁴ Hodgkinson was in the Palmer area.

⁵ In the southern Blue Mountains.

⁶ Warialda is between Moree and Glen Innis, NSW. In 2020 it is a gemstone and gold fossicker's area.