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The “Golden Greeks” from “Diggers” to Settlers: Greek Migration and Settlement during the Australian Gold Rush Era, 1850s–1890s*

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Between the 1850s and 1890s, the gentle ripples of Australia’s early Greek presence surrendered to the first real wave of Greek migration. Gold was the initial stimulus. Greek seaman — particularly those on British vessels — jumped ship and left for the diggings with other “new chums”. Greeks dug, panned and sweated for the precious metal amongst bustling hopefuls from across the globe — the road to a multicultural Australia had been unintentionally initiated. Greek migration to, and settlement in Australia, reached a point of change during the gold rush era: the first collective Greek settlements appeared, family groups increased, occupational diversity began to emerge — together with what was to become the Greek café phenomenon — chain migration was stimulated, and eventually formal Greek communities were established. Gold encouraged and shaped the Australian colonies’ progress towards nationhood, it also secured, as this paper evidences, the Greek diaspora’s presence as part of the nation’s future.

This paper builds on material from a number of earlier publications by the authors which deal, either in full or in part, with aspects of the Greek presence on the Australian goldfields during the second half of the nineteenth century (Janiszewski, 1986b; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1988; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1991; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1992; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1999; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2000; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1995; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998).

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Gold had stimulated such an expansion of Australia’s economic fabric that... possibly no other country in the world had been so quickly transformed by metals... Australia ceased to be a land of exile... For once Australia almost competed with North America in luring European migrants, predominately young men, in full vigour... The swift growth of population widened the market for Australian manufacturers and foodstuffs. It stimulated farms and factories and workshops and cities... The hope of gold was shared by every man, and Australian society became more optimistic, individualists, and fluid than it ever was in the era of jailers and pastoralists. (Blainey, 1981:61–62)

In 1849, Britain’s Secretary for War and the Colonies, Earl Grey, entertained the idea that Ionian islanders should migrate to Western Australia “and there found a colony, transplanting to a congenial soil the olive, the vine and the fig of their native islands, and instructing the settlers from a colder land [the British] in their cultivation”.1 At this time, increased Greek migration did arise to the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria, though not to Western Australia. Gold was the stimulus, not the desired utilisation of Greek agricultural expertise. Australia’s limited early Greek arrivals gave way to a firm increase in numbers — the commencement of a migratory ripple (the cumulative action of individuals rather than a conscious collective undertaking) which would be gradually augmented in strength and volume, through chain migration, as the decades passed (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:18).

Until the gold rushes, the “tyranny of distance” and the uncertainty of economic opportunities upon arrival had successfully excluded the Australian colonies from significant migratory contemplation by Greeks — Greek migration at the time was focussed upon countries bordering the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (Clogg, 1999:6–14; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:17–18). However, with the gold rushes, the opportunities on offer after arrival had dramatically changed. Moreover, gold’s momentum — increased population, economic development and wealth, coupled with the spread of political liberalism and nationalist sentiment — provided the impetus for the Australian colonies to seek nationhood: the Greek diaspora in the Antipodes was part of this momentum. During the gold era, the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria became a migratory vortex — “a hub of the world” (Janiszewski, 1986a:73–96). As A. Ingleson observed: “numbers of people of all nationalities were wending their way [to the diggings] (Cannon, 1982:185)”. Australia’s population rose from 405,000 in 1850, to 3,151,000 in 1890 (Jackson, 1988:6 Table 2). Nationally diverse throngs from across the globe bustled and toiled in the hope of instant wealth — unintentionally, the long road to a multicultural Australia had commenced. By 1901 (despite the formalisation of “White Australia” as one of the first Acts passed by the inaugural Australian parliament), gold had firmly secured an ongoing Greek presence as part of the new nation’s future.

1 Earl Grey’s statement is referred to by Damian N. Andronicus, London, in correspondence with the authors — 18 June 1987 and 14 August 1987. Andronicus indicates that Grey’s statement appears in James Ridgway’s The Ionian Islands under British Protection, 1852, as a dispatch from Grey to Sir H. Ward, dated 13 August 1849. See also Janiszewski and Alexakis 1995:18, 32 (endnote 19).
Gold fever affected both Greek sailors and fishermen serving mostly with British vessels, many unhesitatingly jumping ship and swiftly making their way to the interior goldfields of New South Wales and Victoria — the latter quickly proving the more attractive because of the superior wealth of its deposits. The New South Wales Government Gazette and the Victoria Police Gazette of the 1850s and 1860s listed a number of either confirmed or probable Greeks (most with Anglicised names — or at least attempted Anglicisation — or adopted aliases) who had deserted their vessels. For example, in April 1854, Nicholas Megne and George Leunle, both individually described as a “Native of Greece... [who] cannot speak English”, abandoned their ship the Persian in an undisclosed Victorian port, while in January the following year, John Duffy, “a native of Corfu... [with] dark complexion, dark hair, [and] dark grey eyes” deserted his vessel, Spray of the Ocean — a reward of £5 was offered for his apprehension. In Sydney, “a Greek... Able bodied seaman... [of] dark complexion” listed as Lafar Constantine deserted the ship Ann in November 1857, whilst in May 1858, an “Ordinary seaman... native of the Cephalonia Archipelago”, recorded as A. Wells, deserted from HMS Megaera. In October 1860, Nicolas Brown, “a Greek... of dark hair and complexion... [who] speaks broken English” deserted from the vessel Kestrel at Newcastle in New South Wales, while

Margarete Johnson (Ioannou)
(Studio portrait, 1889)
Margarete's father, Antony, arrived in Australia in 1855 and tried his luck on the goldfields. He is recorded as having been born in Athens. Antony married Bridget Hogan at Scone in New South Wales in 1862. They had eight children. Margarete was their third daughter. With few Greek women entering Australia during the gold rush era, many Greek men, like Antony, married women of British background. Various gold mining districts in both New South Wales and Victoria reveal a number of Australian-born offspring from mixed marriages entered into by Greek miners.

Photo courtesy Jarrett family, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
George Williams “a Greek... with dark complexion, black eyes, long black hair, bushy whiskers and moustache, long nose, piercing look, and scowling aspect”, took leave of his vessel, the *Istanboul* [sic], at Sandridge (Port Melbourne) in June 1864 — James F. Bogy, the ship’s Chief Officer, offered £3 on apprehension. Two months earlier, “a Greek... [of] stout build [and] dark complexion” named Constantine Liles abandoned — with twelve other seamen — the vessel *Excellent* at Williamstown, a port suburb of Melbourne. Robert Smyth, the ship’s master, offered £1.10s for the arrest of each sailor. The masters of vessels generally offered guaranteed rewards for the return of ship jumpers of between £1 and £5 (*Victoria Police Gazette*, 1854:232, 1855:14, 1863:247, 1864:167; *New South Wales Government Gazette*, 1857:2185, 1858:669, 1860:1898; See also Melton, 1986:44, 67, 94, 139, 147, 155, 160, 165; and Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:12).
Other early Greek gold rush arrivals included: Nicholas Emellen [Emale] (Victoria, 1851), Andreas Lekatsas (Victoria, c.1851), Andreas Kourouklis (Victoria, 1852), George Gouvas (Victoria, 1852), Anthony Major (Victoria, 1853), George Paxinos (Victoria, 1853), Andreas and Anthanasis Lagoyiannis (Victoria, 1854), Nicholas Lambert (New South Wales, 1854), Jeremiah Perry [Yerasimos Apozogy] (New South Wales, c.1855), Antonios Spero/Spiros (Victoria, 1855), Antony Johnson [Ioannou], (New South Wales, 1855); John Nicholas (New South Wales, 1857), Alexandros Dimitrios Voyatzis (Victoria, 1858), Nicholas Karkoe (New South Wales, c.1858), Ioakeim Zannis (Victoria, c.1858), Jeremiah Panos (Victoria, 1859), Spyridon Magnarisi (Victoria, 1859), Prokopios Konstantinidis (New South Wales, 1862), Spyridon Stempoyiannis (New South Wales, 1865), Konstantinos Koukousakis (New South Wales, 1868) and George Nicholas (Victoria, 1869). Amongst these Hellenic “new chums” were Greek Cypriots. These included Tony (Antonio Giovanni) Meringa/Miranda who disembarked in Victoria in the late 1850s and eventually settled at Daylesford, and George Kalenithidis (Calenides) who settled in Ballarat around the late 1860s (Gilchrist 1992:74–76, 94–95, 376–377, 379–380; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:12, 36).

In New South Wales, the concentration of Greeks in rural mining areas was clearly evidenced in districts surrounding Gulgong, Braidwood, Araluen, Captains Flat, Lambing Flat (Young), Parkes, and most predominantly, Tambaroora, just north of Hill End in the colony’s central-west. So conspicuous was the Greek presence on the northern outskirts of Tambaroora mining settlement (near the Ullamalla and Dirt Holes turn-off on the Hill End to Mudgee road), that the area was referred to by locals as “Greek Town”. In Victoria, Greek miners were particularly conspicuous in the districts of Tarnagulla, Ballarat, Bendigo and Maryborough. Their presence was also apparent, though to a lesser degree, in mining areas such as Castlemaine, St Arnaud, Dunolly, Great Western, Stawell, Ararat, and Back Creek (Talbot). At Maryborough, in an area known as Mosquito Flat, the Greek presence was such that another collective Hellenic settlement developed. Both “Greek Town”, Tambaroora, in New South Wales, and Mosquito Flat, Maryborough, in Victoria, appear to have been the first collective settlements of Greeks in Australia (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:12, 21, 33, 34–51; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:18–19; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files; Gilchrist, 1992:74–100).

Significantly, both collective Greek settlements included family groups. However, as early Greek migration to Australia was overwhelmingly male — and would remain so until attempts to redress the imbalance were officially undertaken during the late 1950s and early 1960s with the arrival of “bride ships” — the brides of Greek gold rush settlers who married in the Australian colonies were primarily of British background. Adele Ayres, who was born in Tambaroora and attended school there during the very early part of the twentieth century, recalls two of the township’s Greek families:
I knew the families who were still living in Greek Town. There was Mrs Manolato (a widow), Jimmy, Ethel, Emma, Alice, Susan and Alec (her children). Mrs Manolato’s sister Helen (or Ellen) Macryannis, lived with her brother Jack Macryannis in the house which was their parent’s home. In the next house was Peter Macryannis who was married and had several children who attended the same school. There was another sister, Mrs Ann Bluett who lived in the town, also there were three other brothers, one was Mick. (Ayres correspondence, 1986)

Ayres also provides an insight into the harsh realities of mining at the time. Serious health risks, particularly when underground reef mining superseded alluvial (surface sediment) mining during the 1860s, were not limited to gas seepages, cave-ins, flooding or accidental explosions:

The sad thing, these families were victims of ‘consumption,’ known as TB [tuberculosis — an airborne infectious disease which particularly affected miners due to their working conditions]. At various stages in their lives TB set in, and nothing in those days could be done to save them. In the Catholic Cemetery in Tambaroora there were fourteen or fifteen graves of these families. Greek Town and Tambaroora have now gone. (Ayres correspondence, 1986)

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**Macryannis family tombstone** (Old Catholic Cemetery, Hill End–Tambaroora, NSW, 1986)

Vacillus Macryannis arrived in New South Wales around 1851, apparently “jumping ship” in order to join the gold rush. Working as a gold miner, initially on the lower Turon River and later around the twin towns of Hill End and Tambaroora, in 1858 he married Matilda Collins. Vacillus and Matilda had nine children whilst living at Hill End–Tambaroora. The birth of their daughter, Ann Bluett, appears to have occurred before settling there.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
Whilst John Manolato (Ioannis Manolatos) fathered seven children between 1880 and 1892, Vacillius Macryannis had a total of nine children between 1866 and 1875. Fortunately, descendants of both families survived, and siblings, Mark and Betty Price, whose maternal great-grandfather was Vacillius Macryannis, were still living in the central-western district of New South Wales during the late 1980s — on Warraweena Sheep Station near Pyramul, less than 40km north-east of Tambaroora and Hill End (Hodge, 1980:158–161, 170–174; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1988:48–49; Gilchrist: 1992:82–83, 86; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:34–35; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

Other Greek gold rush “diggers” with families at Tambaroora included: John Demas (Ioannis Dimosthenis Nanis), Christie Totolos, Peter Moustaka (Themetre

Mack Price with his sister Betty on their sheep property (Warraweena, Pyramul, NSW, 1989)

Betty and Mack’s maternal great-grandfather was Vacillius Macryannis.

Betty: “Found out [about my Greek forebear] about five years ago... better than the Irish coming out of me.”

Mack: “I said I knew where the nose came from! I haven’t even thought about it [my Greek background]. It was something interesting I wanted to follow up... I don’t know what it was that wiped out the Greek interest”.

Photo by Effy Alexakis, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
Moustakas), George Doicos (Doikos), Nicolas Lambert, Spyro Lambert, Jeremiah Williams (Gerasimos Vasilakis), John Johnson, Theophilus Demond (Dimond), Konstantinos Lalekhos, and Charles Brown (Dimitrios Katremandos). During the gold rush era, over 70 children were born to Greek fathers in the settlement (Gilchrist, 1992:80–86; Hodge, 1980:157–174; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:34–35, 46–47, 48, 51; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). Like Mark and Betty Price, descendants of Vacillius Macryannis, not all of the succeeding generations of these Greek gold mining families left the central-western district. In the late 1990s, Laurence George Williams, a grandson of Jeremiah Williams (Gerasimos Vasilakis), was residing on Hillside Station, near Dunedoo, just over 140km north of Tambaroora and Hill End (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:46–47).

Interestingly, Jeremiah Williams, together with another Greek, John Demas (Ioannis Dimosthenis Nanis), were part of the reef mining gang which carefully extracted the famous Holtermann “nugget” — the largest reef gold specimen (gold mixed with impurities) ever uncovered — from the Holtermann and Beyers mine at Hill End in October 1872. In the official photograph commissioned to record the “nugget’s” discovery, both Greeks are seen standing amongst their fellow mining gang members around the specimen; Bernhard Otto Holtermann, one of the mine’s owners

![Jeremiah Williams (Gerasimos Vasilakis) and fellow miners at a mine-head](Hill End–Tambaroora, NSW, 1872)

Jeremiah (standing, holding a pick) was born in the Ionian Islands in 1838. He arrived in New South Wales in 1863 aboard the Boomerang, possibly a coastal vessel (and if so, he must have arrived earlier in Australia on board another vessel). Marrying Elizabeth Carty in 1865, he was naturalised eleven years later, and was recorded at the time as a labourer in Tambaroora. The couple are said to have had twelve children. Jeremiah died in 1901.

Photo courtesy Holtermann Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.
who closely associated himself with the find — hence its name — is also present (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:48; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). By undertaking paid reef mining for the Holtermann and Beyer’s Star of Hope Gold Mining Company — once the alluvial diggings had become unprofitable for individual miners — to support their growing families, both Williams and Demas, were demonstrably expressing a growing desire to settle permanently in Australia, rather than return to Greece. A desire, in the post-alluvial mining period, which was also embraced by many of their fellow Hellenes, especially after marrying and having children. The acquiring of British citizenship (naturalisations) by Greek gold rush miners — at Tambaroora, Hill End and other diggings in New South Wales and Victoria — both confirmed and reinforced this desire. Over 150 Greek arrivals to New South Wales and Victoria between the 1850s and 1890s are currently known to have successfully obtained naturalisation (Gilchrist, 1992:376–382; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). Furthermore, despite living collectively in “Greek Town”, Greek miners did attempt to “fit into” the broader community, developing strong friendships beyond their immediate compatriots. John Demas was known as “Honest John” and was so popular in Tambaroora and Hill End that it has been claimed that the twin settlements would celebrate the birth of each of his children with a public holiday. In 1872, an “act of courage” by Peter Moustaka (Themetre Moustakas) to retrieve the body of a fellow miner named Everett who drowned in a waterlogged mine, was applauded throughout the community (Gilchrist, 1992:85; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). In November 1859, the Bathurst Free Press newspaper reported

**Dionysius Campanus**
(Maryborough, Vic, 1880s)

Arriving in Australia during the early 1850s, Campanus was part of the collective settlement of Greek gold miners at Mosquito Flat in Maryborough, Victoria. As early as 1853 a Greek gold miner named John Collins (Ioannis Kolalos) discovered the Cleopatra Reef near Maryborough in an area that became known as Grecian Gully. With the arrival of more Greeks, a settlement developed. Between the 1850s and 1880s over 40 Greeks are currently considered to have lived and worked at Mosquito Flat. Photo courtesy H. Williams and E. Dick, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
that a Mr Neil McGlashen and an unidentified Greek friend had left a local inn after an evening's drinking intent on racing each other on horseback to their respective abodes. Both were presumably well fortified. Unfortunately, McGlashen was killed when he struck a tree branch and was felled from his horse. The Greek, shocked by the tragic outcome of their actions, bewailed the loss of a friend (*Bathurst Free Press*, 23 November 1859: no pagination; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1988:48).

At Mosquito Flat in Maryborough, just north of Ballarat in central Victoria, over 40 Greek miners have been identified to date. These include, for example, John Collins

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**Holtermann gold “nugget” photograph** (Hill End, NSW, 1872)

This official photograph taken soon after the famous Holtermann gold “nugget” was unearthed. All the men pictured were apparently connected with the Holtermann and Beyers mine in which the “nugget” was found. Two among the group were Greeks. Standing fourth from the right is John Demas (Ioannis Dimosthenis Nanis) and standing eighth from the right is Jeremiah Williams (Gerasimos Vasilakis). Bernhard Otto Holtermann, one of the mine owners (who later closely associated himself with the “nugget”), is seated in front of Jeremiah Williams. Photo courtesy New South Wales Geological and Mining Museum, Department of Mineral Resources.

Involvement in sporting activities may have been another means through which Greek miners sought to gain acceptance within Australia society. It is known for example that a Victorian Greek miner named Demetrius Torriano (Torianos) played cricket during the early 1860s for the Dunolly and Talbot cricket teams, and represented Maryborough against the second English team to tour the Australian colonies; in that match he top scored for Maryborough. Psarakis, 2000:21–22.
THE “GOLDEN GREEKS” FROM “DIGGERS” TO SETTLERS

(Ioannis Kolalos), who discovered the Cleopatra Reef; Antonios Spero/Spurios who operated the Cleopatra mine; Ioannis Dimitrios Voyatzis and his brother Alexandros Dimitrios who, together with Dimitrios Moskhopoulos, were all originally from Thessaly; John Nichols, who was listed as a “native of Corfu”; Christoforos Moros, who soon had changed his name to Christopher Morris; Nicholas Emellen/Emale, originally from Athens; Dionysius Campanus, from the Saronic Gulf island of Aegina; Nicholas Koutsovelis/Kutzouveli, who was mining in the Maryborough area during the early 1860s; and Athanasios and Agesilaos Tornaros who had arrived in Melbourne during the 1850s, as did fellow Mosquito Flat Greek miners Peter Nicol, John Ennis, Nicolas Carpentiner, Andrew Lucas, Spiro Parrott, and Andrew Demetrie/Demetry (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:12, 40–41; Gilchrist, 1992:94–97; Maryborough Hospital Records, 1855–1907; Bilton correspondence, 1993; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). According to Victorian gold rush historian, Jan Burnett, the Greek miners “kept together in that area [Mosquito Flat]...” (Burnett correspondence, 1993). Like Tambaroora in New South Wales, a “collective” Greek settlement had formed, with family groups clearly evident. Also as occurred in Tambaroora and elsewhere in the gold colonies, the Greek miners overwhelmingly married women of British-Australian background. Those Greek miners with families who settled in Mosquito Flat included: Christie Constantine, Nicholas Covedul [sic], Nicholas Limberio, Antonio Saraka, Theodoros and George Vlasopoulos (Vassopoulis) and Nicholas Capitaneas (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:12, 40–41; Maryborough Hospital Records, 1855–1907; Bilton correspondence, 1993; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files). More are awaiting firmly documented confirmation.

During the early 1860s, Tarnagulla, less that 40km north of Maryborough, had just as many Greek miners as Maryborough. Five major gold reefs had been discovered by Greeks — the Corfu, the Athens, the Hellas, the New Hellas and the Greek’s Hill — and all were contained within an area of two square kilometres. However, it is currently unclear as to whether or not a “collective” Greek settlement was established — though arguably, it is highly likely, given the examples of Maryborough and Tambaroora. Tarnagulla’s Greek miners who can presently be personally identified include: Andrew Lucas; Anthony Major; Dennis Keys (Dionisios Korkuchakeys); George Spyro; Andrew Demetrius; Periklis Adamantidis; Nicholas Koutsovelis/Kutzouveli, who also worked at Maryborough; Spyro Corfu, who struck gold at the Corfu reef; which was also worked by George Kyriatzis, Stathis Karmoutzis/Scarmoutzis, Nicholas Brown (Nicholas Brousianos), Constantinos Caraveas and Dimitrios Heratis. Both Karmoutzis/Scarmoutzis and Keys (Korkuchakeys) married women of British–Australian background whilst in Tarnagulla. (Carless correspondence, 1993; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files; Gilchrist, 1992:95–97).

The number of Greek women present in the Australian colonies during the gold rush era was indeed sparse. For example, in the 1857 census of the leading gold colony of Victoria, only three women of the “Greek Church” are listed. In 1861 this figure had risen to thirteen, and in 1871, the total was still relatively small at 27 — nineteen of
whom were born in Greece. Of those registered in 1871, 25 were noted as living on the goldfields. The names of two of these 25 have been uncovered: Augusta Ammuretti and Maria Vlasopoulou. Born in 1820, Augusta Ammuretti arrived in Australia in 1871 and although her name implies an Italian connection, when she registered herself at Mosquito Flat, Maryborough in 1875, her religion was recorded as being that of the

Lady Bowen (Countess Diamantina Roma)
(Pastel drawing, nineteenth century, artist and precise date unknown.)

Diamantina arrived in Australia as the wife of Sir George Bowen, the first Governor of Queensland, in 1859. She had been born on Zakynthos and was of Venetian-Greek descent. She had married Bowen on Corfu in 1856. Although she only spent thirteen years in Australia between her initial arrival and final departure (after his term in Queensland, Bowen was appointed Governor General of New Zealand and later, Governor of Victoria), her philanthropic work was greatly applauded and her name is widely commemorated in place names.

Photo courtesy All Hallows’ School, Brisbane, and the State Library of Queensland, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
“Greek Church”. Maria Vlasopolou (née Lamberis) married Theodoros Vlasopoulos (Vassopoulos) in Greece and migrated to Western Australia in 1870. The Vlasopoulos’ moved to Victoria in 1871 and were soon at the Maryborough diggings. Maria died in Melbourne in 1911 (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2006:157–158; Bilton correspondence, 1993; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

Another Greek female who arrived during the Australian gold rush era has also been personally identified. Having married in Greece in 1879, Maria Argyrou (née Morou), appears to have either accompanied or immediately followed her husband, Dimitrios Argyros, to Sydney in 1886. “Athina Florence” may be the name of even yet another “golden Greek” female arrival. In 1880 she married Efstathios Androulakis in Melbourne and later moved with her husband to Newcastle in New South Wales. Athina’s suggested Greek ethnicity is still to be positively verified. Maria Vlasopoulou, Maria Argyrou and Augusta Ammuretti evidence the pattern that most Greek women arriving in Australia during this period were doing so as “dependants” (such as wives, daughters, sisters and mothers) rather than as socially and economically independent individuals — this pattern persisted even during the twentieth century (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2006:158; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

Prominent amongst the limited number of Greek female arrivals during the gold rush period was the Countess Diamantina Roma — the wife of Sir George Bowen, Queensland’s first Governor and later Governor of Victoria. Diamantina was born on Zakynthos in 1833 into a distinguished Venetian-Greek family. She arrived in Australia in 1859. So highly regarded was Diamantina during her years in both Queensland and Victoria that the poet Marcus Clarke penned a farewell poem for her when she and her family finally left Australia for Mauritius in 1879. Her name is still celebrated through place names: Roma Street, Lady Bowen Park and Roma Street Station in Brisbane; Diamantina River and the town of Roma in Queensland; and Diamantina Falls in Victoria (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2006:156; Gilchrist, 1992:59–70).

The total number of Greeks in Victoria during the gold rush period (1850s–1890s) has previously been estimated to have been around 350. The total Greek population of New South Wales for the same period was put at just under three hundred. However, recent research, together with the inclusion of Australian-born offspring and those of Greek ethnicity who were recorded as non-Greek foreign nationals, would arguably elevate the collective figure to conservatively well over one thousand. In 1863, Thomas Politis, a Greek Orthodox monk who had visited Australia during the preceding year, noted that many Greeks were gold miners or shop owners and estimated that those of the Orthodox faith and of Greek nationality, totalled 1,500 (Gilchrist, 1992:94, 93, 267).

Not all gold rush Greek male arrivals became miners, a number, quickly realising that individual-based gold digging was essentially a lottery and that luck played a major hand, entered other occupational fields to service miners’ needs. Some, such as Spiro Bennett, Mark Gless, Andreas Kourouklis, Spyridon Magnarisi and James (Ioakeim) Zannis opened up stores, taverns or small hotels, or like Jeremiah Metaxa,

Whilst permanent settlement was not initially contemplated by most Greek arrivals who headed off inland towards the new El Dorados, many — as has been indicated — remained in the Australian colonies, married and had families. Moreover, some who returned to Greece set in motion the process of chain migration to Australia. Relatives and friends would be informed of the southern land’s wondrous potential for personal material improvement, which contrasted starkly to the limited opportunities for betterment in Greece’s poor agricultural and sea-orientated economy. Letters to Greece from those who had decided to settle compounded the effect. Curiosity and interest in Australia’s settlement potential are also suggested within letters from Greece to family members and friends in Australia.

In an 1877 letter to Dionysius Campanus — who was part of the collective settlement of Greeks at Mosquito Flat, Maryborough — the gold miner was asked to
describe his situation and environment (the letter is written in both Greek and English by a British friend of Campanus’ sister-in-law, Caterina):

[T]ell me of how you live, what you are doing, what the country is like, whether there is good water (you know what Aeginetans think of that), whether it rains in summer [?]... What sort of fruits you have [?] Are they the same as Aegina — pumpkins, etc [?] Have you very big snakes at Mosquito Flat [?] What are the houses like? Have they a downstairs and upstairs floor? We fear you have no priest and cannot go to the mass, [that] the places of worship have no icons and how do you manage the school[ing]... [?] (Tuckey, private papers; see also Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:40–41)

Some of those “golden Greeks” who returned to Greece had an effect, on account of their British citizenship acquired while in Australia, on domestic political problems in Greece. A group of ex-Ballarat Greek gold miners who had returned to Kythera, assisted, through their presence, in having the island declared a republic in 1917 under British protection — the National Schism, a series of disagreements regarding Greece’s foreign policy between King Constanine I and Prime Minister Eleftherios Venizelos, divided Greek society, particularly following Venizelos’ dismissal by the King. Kythera’s re-unification with Greece occurred when Venizelos was returned to power in June of that year following King Constantine’s politically forced exile (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1995:8).

Within Australia, gold’s stimulus to the growth and broadening of political liberalism and nationalist sentiment, did entice a few Greeks to seek political office — an opportunity that may not have even been considered possible by them back in Greece. Although

![John Demas (Ioannis Dimosthenis Nanis)](Photo courtesy Holtermann Collection, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.)

Demas owned or managed several mines at Hill End–Tambaroora, including one in partnership with Vacillus Macryannis. In 1870 he married Margaret Evelyn Mahoney, a local school teacher. The union appears to have produced three sons – George Alexander, Leonidas and John Frederick. Together with Jeremiah Williams (Gerasimos Vasilakis), Demas was part of the mining gang that extracted the famous Holtermann “nugget” from the Star of Hope Mine in 1872.
it has often been claimed that Greek gold miner Andreas Lekatsas — who jumped ship in Victoria around 1851 — was present at the Eureka Stockade uprising on the Ballarat goldfields in 1854, the claim has failed to be authenticated (Gilchrist, 1992:76).

While gold may have been the initial lure, in the long term many Greeks miners who had decided to settle would turn to other forms of generating income, with preference increasingly being given to occupational pursuits which provided a reasonably stable means of economic sustenance. Some Greek miners settled in gold towns that had secured ongoing permanent development after the rushes. Many travelled back to their initial ports of entry to find work, principally Melbourne or Sydney. John Wolforth’s findings that Greeks (as with other non-British migrants) were not highly concentrated in Sydney in 1861, is not surprising (Wolforth, 1974:208–209;
Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:18–19). By 1901 however, New South Wales Greeks were concentrated in Sydney, and were more numerous than other main groups — the Chinese and the Germans (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:19). A small number decided to seek their future in other Australian colonies. Upon leaving the goldfields, Greek miners took up work as: general labourers, wharf and maritime workers, hawkers, fisherman, farmers, graziers, tailors, bankers, police constables, cooks, waiters, suburban market gardeners, domestic servants, tobacconists, bootmakers, hairdressers, confectioners, greengrocers, fish merchants, druggists, store and oyster saloon proprietors and boarding house or hotel operators. Some entered professional fields or stepped onto the local political stage (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:13, 33, 38–39, 43–45, 48–51; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 1995:20; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2013:401, 405, 414; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2015:81, 84, 89; Gilchrist, 1992:376–382; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

Amidst the increasing occupational diversity of Australia’s gold rush Greeks, a number of significant individuals emerged. Born in Mytilini (Lesbos), Michael Manusu (Manousou) arrived in Sydney in 1853 after a brief period in the United States. He immediately joined the rush to Braidwood and Araluen. In 1854, he married seventeen-year-old Sarah Ann Baldwin at Braidwood’s Church of England church. The couple had twelve children. In the early 1860s Manusu commenced acquiring farming and grazing properties, he later also obtained a hotel and inn. Eventually he succeeded in establishing himself as a prominent grazier on several thousand acres of grassland near Mendooran, north-west of Mudgee. The property was called Biambil Park. One descendant, Syd Manusu, a grandson, was still living in the area during the late 1980s on a sheep station called Wallumburrawang, just west of Mendooran (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:33; Gilchrist, 1992:88–89; Marshall, private papers; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

Arriving in Melbourne in 1852, Natale D’Angri (Natale Spiridion Giorgio Angri), headed for the Ballarat goldfields and soon struck it rich digging a claim with a group of Italians and Greeks called Italiana Hole. Although his father was from Naples, D’Angri had been born to a Greek mother on the Ionian island of Corfu and his obituary clearly states that he “was not an Italian, but a Greek”. With his small fortune, D’Angri returned to Corfu and toured Europe extensively before returning to Ballarat. In 1856, he married Eliza Watts in Melbourne. Naturalised in 1861, in 1869 he and Peter Lalor (of Eureka Stockade fame) became partners in two mines at Creswick, just north of Ballarat. During the same year, D’Angri formed (for the benefit of himself and Ballarat’s other Greeks — possibly 20 in total at the time) the Lebentia Rowing Club — the first Greek sporting club in Australia. Later in life, he became a nurseryman as well as a pioneer member of the Ballarat Horticultural Society, and even had a pumpkin weighing 136 lbs (pounds) selected for display at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in London. D’Angri died at Ballarat in 1897, aged 70, though his name lives on in the rural Victorian city through his great-grandson Bill D’Angri (Harvey, 1990:1–7; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:43;
Gilchrist, 1992:95; Georgakis, 2000:76–78; D’Angri, private papers; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files).

James Nicklos, a Greek sailor attached to the British vessel *Othello*, who jumped ship in Melbourne in 1852, tried his luck on the Victorian goldfields, but made his fortune between the 1860s and 1880s as one of the Victorian capital’s major hay and corn retailers. Prokopios Konstantinidis, who arrived from Mytilini (Lesbos) during the early 1860s, became a well-respected practicing druggist in New South Wales. Christie Totolos served as an alderman on the Hill End Borough Council in the late 1870s, while Con Fisher (Agyropoulos) junior and Angelos Pholeros served on the Parkes Municipal Council, in central-western New South Wales; in 1891 Pholeros was appointed as Greece’s first Honorary Vice Consul in New South Wales. Jeremiah Perry (Yerasimos Apozogy), who was working as a gold miner on Victoria’s Ballarat and Bendigo goldfields following his arrival in Australia during the mid-1850s, eventually became a partner and manager of a flour and timber mill at Parkes in central-western New South Wales. Christopher Morris (Christoforos Moros), who landed in Melbourne in the 1860s and searched for gold at Mosquito Flat, Maryborough, later established a highly successful boat hiring business on Melbourne’s Yarra River — he

Natale D’Angri (Natale Spiridion Giorgio Angri) and his wife Eliza (née Watts)
(Probably Melbourne, late 1850s)
Natale arrived in Victoria in 1852 and soon struck it rich on the Ballarat diggings. He married Eliza in 1856, and by 1869 he was in partnership with Peter Lalor (of Eureka Stockade fame) in two mines at Creswick, just north of Ballarat. D’Angri was involved with the Ballarat Horticultural Society, formed the Lebentia Rowing Club, and was an early member of the Ballarat Colonist’s Club and the Masonic Lodge. He and Eliza had two sons — William Natalie and Thomas Ernest.

Photo courtesy B. D’Angri, from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
became a relatively wealthy individual. Athanasios and Agesilaos Tornaros, who like Morris, also mined at Mosquito Flat, became successful maritime traders in the South Pacific, though regrettably “blackbirding” (the “recruiting” of natives from islands of the south-west Pacific as cheap labour primarily for the Australian cotton and sugar industries) was their most profitable pursuit. The brothers Athanasios and John D. Comino (Kominos) pioneered oyster farming in New South Wales and through their Sydney oyster saloons, gave rise to what was to become the Greek café phenomenon. So successful were the Comino’s city oyster saloons and their oyster leases on the Hawkesbury River and along the state’s coast, that both brothers were honoured with the title “Oyster King” (Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2013:411; Janiszewski & Alexakis, 2015:84, 89; Gilchrist, 1992:83, 91–92, 99–100, 110–114, 194–197, 302–305, 376; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:36–37, 51; Murray, private papers; “In Their Own Image” — Gold Rush Files; Alexakis & Janiszewski, 2016:34, 92, 94).

However, perhaps the most successful Greek gold rush arrival was Antony John Jereos Lucas (Antonios Ioannis Gerasimos Lekatsas) — commonly referred to as A. J. J. Lucas. Born in 1862 in the village of Exoghi on Ithaca, at 24 years of age, with limited finances and without any knowledge of English, Antony ventured to Australia convinced by glowing accounts of the new El Dorado by an uncle who had been to the goldfields (the uncle was Andreas Lekatsas who allegedly was present at Eureka Stockade). Arriving in Melbourne in January 1886, he laboured in various workplaces and finally was able to acquire a retail premises in 1894 opposite Melbourne’s Town...
Hall, where he opened the Town Hall Café. During the preceding year Lucas had married Margaret Wilson, whose experience in business proved to be an invaluable influence. The couple later purchased a second shop next door, converted it into a fruit and confectionery store, and then extended the café to the second floor of the original building. Able to accommodate 650 diners and employing some 70 (mostly Greek) staff, the café has been described as an “eating supermarket” and set a new benchmark in popular eating in Melbourne. Two other cafés followed, the Paris and the Vienna, both on Collins Street — the latter Lucas had redesigned by American architect Walter Burley Griffin, and was renamed Café Australia. It was considered at the time to be “the most beautiful café in the southern hemisphere”. In 1921, with cinemas and cafés developing a close working relationship, Lucas commissioned Griffin to design a grand theatre on Swanston Street — the Capitol Theatre. Stylistically described as “Chicagoesque” and “a classic Art Deco theatre”, it has been acclaimed as “the best cinema that was ever built or is ever likely to be built”. Able to seat over two thousand, it was Australia’s first genuine “Picture Palace” (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 2016:112–113; Gilchrist, 1992:226–227; Lucas, 1986).

A transformation had taken place — Greek gold rush migrants were linking their personal futures and those of their families, not to Greece, but to the future of the Australian colonies: they were discarding their migrant status for the potential benefits of being permanent settlers.

Permanent and increasing Greek settlement led to the formal establishment of Greek Orthodox communities in both Melbourne and Sydney before the end
of the nineteenth century. Furthermore, although the gold colonies of New South Wales and Victoria had attracted most gold rush Greeks, from the 1860s onward, Queensland and South Australia received a growing number of Greek settlers. During the 1870s, a handful arrived in Western Australia and more soon followed. Tasmania officially recorded a Greek presence from 1870. However, although the earliest documented Greek arrival in Darwin occurred fleetingly in 1869, recognisable Greek settlement in the Northern Territory did not commence until the early 1910s. In 1901, the year of Federation, 878 individuals of Greek birth were officially declared as residents in the newly created Commonwealth of Australia (Alexakis & Janiszewski, 1998:13–14). However, as indicated earlier, the actual number of Greeks at the time, including Australian-born Greeks, would have conservatively been well over one thousand.

In 1903, artist Tom Roberts completed his monumental oil painting *The Opening of the First Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia by H.R.H. The Duke of Cornwall and York (later H.M. King George V), May 9, 1901*. The work is often referred to as the “Big Picture” and is on permanent display in Parliament House, Capital Hill, Canberra. At the bottom left-hand corner with his torso and head (adorned with a clerical kalimavkion) turned towards the viewer, is Melbourne’s first resident Greek Orthodox priest, the Reverend Athanasios Kantopoulos, who had arrived in the Victorian capital in 1898. Gold’s developments had transformed the Australian colonies, culminating in their unification as the Australian Commonwealth. Greek settlers were now clearly part of the new nation’s hopes and ambitions.

**Sydney Greek community gathering**

(Probably Centennial Park or Putney, Sydney, c.1927)

Collective Greek settlements had been established during the gold rushes at Tambaroora in New South Wales and Mosquito Flat, Maryborough, in Victoria. In the late 1890s, formally constituted Greek Orthodox communities were founded in Melbourne (1897) and Sydney (1898) and by the early 1910s, all states and the Northern Territory evidenced permanent Greek settlement. Gold had encouraged and secured an ongoing Greek presence within Australia — Greeks had become part of the nation’s future.

Photo courtesy Capsanis family and J. Kolantgis (also known as Lianos), from the “In Their Own Image: Greek-Australians” National Project Archives, Macquarie University.
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