

SOVEREIGN HILL LEARNING

MONDAY 12PM - 5PM

1. Married Couple's Hut
2. Linton Cottage Garden
3. Davidson's Cottage
4. Chambers' Cottage
5. Wain's Cottage
6. Poppet Head

ATTRACTIONS

- 6A. Red Hill Mine
8. Diggings
13. Ballarat Times Office
14. Spencers Lolly Shop
15. Grocers
16. Post Office
18. Playground
27. Confectioner
28. Goldpour
31. Criterion
37. Candles
40. Bowling

LEARNING SPACES

- 4A. One- Eyed Gully
10. Carver & Dalton
29. Education Centre
30. St Alipius School
39. Ragged School 'Steinfelds'
43. Red Hill National School
45. St Peters School
50. Wesleyan Day School

FOOD

11. Hope Bakery 12.30-4pm
18. Cafe
20. New York Bakery (coffee & ice cream 1-3pm)
23. UTO (afternoon tea collection)



LIVING IN THE PAST

SELF-GUIDED TOUR

INQUIRY QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

- Does the past make us who we are today?
- Where is the past in the present?
- Was life better in the past?
- Were we more sustainable in the past?
- How do we see people adapt to the future through the past?
- Why do people seek homes in new places?

1. MARRIED COUPLES HUT

While not many women migrated to Victoria's goldfields in the early years, families enjoyed more comfortable living conditions than single men. Huts took longer than tents to construct, but made Ballarat's hot summers and freezing winters much more tolerable. This hut features insulating clay walls and a bark roof, along with a wide fireplace perfect for cooking. If there is a costumed character in this hut when you visit, ask them questions about life on the diggings and the artefacts on display. The beds are firm but it is better to be sleeping on them than on the cold (and often wet) floor with the creepy crawlies!

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

How many people do you think could live in this hut and what evidence supports your guess?

A family of six could have lived in a space like this! Children slept head-to-toe for warmth, toddlers slept with their parents, and babies often slept in drawers or baskets.

Why do you think people would take the time to build a chimney for their indoor fire?

Too funnel smoke out of the house – the alternative was cooking outside in the weather.

What building materials have been used to construct this hut?

This building has earth walls, wooden posts, and a stringy bark roof - none of which would be transported from Victorian ports. Instead all of these are locally acquired materials and bushcraft techniques (eg. no nails).

4. CHAMBERS' COTTAGE

Chambers' cottage is a single gable cottage that would have been found in Ballarat in the late 1850's. This house has two rooms. Like most cottages in that time period, this house has an outhouse (outside toilet), however the family used the chamber pot (toilet pot located under the bed) when it was too cold to go outside. There was no indoor plumbing, no taps, sinks or drains. The contents of the chamber pot would be thrown out into the garden or into the outhouse. Even though the flushable toilet was invented in 1596, it was not until 1851 when they became popular in England (and much later in Ballarat).

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

Ask the students to locate the bathing and toilet facilities in this house. Why might this house have both an inside and an outside toilet?

The outdoor toilet is outside and a chamber pot is kept inside under the bed. The chamber pot would have been used instead of the outdoor toilet at night-time and when it was too cold to go outside.

Let the children investigate if this house has any plumbing (e.g. sinks, taps or drains), compared to their homes.

How many bedrooms does this cottage have?

How many people do you think lived in this house? Many children had to sleep in their parents rooms in smaller cottages. Ask the students how many bedrooms their house has in comparison.

2. LINTON COTTAGE

Just behind Linton Cottage is a gold rush garden. Growing fruit and vegetables of your own was sometimes the only way of having them in your diet if you were poor. Gardens were mostly devoted to potatoes; the rest to cabbages, parsnips and beans, with apples, pears and soft fruit trained against the house.

People would grow vegetables and herbs (e.g. parsley, sage and thyme) to use in their cooking and for medicinal purposes. Peppermint was grown in cottage gardens for cooking and was used for cleaning your teeth after dinner! This is where the term 'after dinner mint' is derived from.

All hoeing, weeding and gathering would be the task of the women and children.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

What can people place in the garden to scare away the birds from eating the plants?

A scarecrow, what does the names suggest? Do we have a scarecrow in the garden today?

Ask students to look at what is growing in the garden, can they identify any of the plants?

5. WAIN'S COTTAGE

Wain's cottage is a small timber dwelling from the late 1850's. In the house there is no plumbing or taps, and both the kitchen and laundry are located at the back of the house.

Women would cook with an open fire. While this was quite warm in summer, it would have kept the house cosy in winter. There was no electricity and no refrigeration; instead, a meat safe was used. Women in the 1850's would make their own butter using a butter churn and butter paddle (a technology that saved time). A small garden outside would have provided herbs and vegetables to cook with. Women would also make preserves and pickle food to last between the seasons, and due to the lack of refrigeration.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

Where do people get water from in this house?

How will they heat the water?

People would cart water from the creek in a bucket and heat it over the fireplace.

What does preserving mean, and what food can you see that is preserved in this kitchen?

On the kitchen shelves, you can see preserved lemons, pickled onions, and jams.

Can you see where people used to store their food? How do you keep your food cool at home?

Look up for the meat safe. The meat safe would be placed somewhere shaded with a breeze within the kitchen.

3. DAVIDSON'S COTTAGE

This cottage has an added gable, for extra space for a growing family and would be a cottage of a mining engineer during the goldrushes. This cottage would be a home of a wealthier family and this can be seen the family having an external laundry and an extensive kitchen. Some of the wealthier families on the goldfields had laundry rooms with copper tubs, in which they would do their washing of clothes; this would be done by boiling up water in the copper metal pot. Large tongs were used for lifting items out of the water when it was very hot, often scalding hot. Women from poorer families mainly did their laundry by hand in a washtub. Washing was usually done outside and water was fetched from the creek. Women usually washed in cold water as heating up water was time consuming and difficult.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

What do you see in the cottage that people would clean their house with?

Ask the children how they think people in the old days would clean their rugs.

Look in this house for rug beaters, feather dusters, buckets, brushes and brooms.

Look inside the kitchen of this house. Ask children what they can see that is similar to their kitchen at home and what may be different.

6. POPPET HEAD

Use the stairs on the right-hand side of this structure to climb to the mullock heap (mining waste) platform. This exhibit demonstrates what a steam-powered company gold mine looked like by the late 19th century; it is the "head" of the mine, by which gold-bearing quartz is brought to the surface by an elevator (from up to 700m below) for processing. The extracted quartz was crushed into a powder in a nearby Battery House so the tiny particles of gold could be extracted (typically using mercury or cyanide – both highly toxic chemicals). In the gold rush, all of the steam required to power these machines was produced by burning wood from local forests. By 1900, Ballarat was covered in noisy and dirty mining machinery like this, although the view from here today shows how the city has changed again.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE:

Which aspects of the local environment appear to have recovered from the gold mining era?

The trees have regrown since gold mining which largely ended when World War 1 began. Ballarat's 21st century economy is based around education, healthcare and tourism. A small amount of mining and manufacturing continue.

What damage do you think continues?

The loss of nutrient-rich topsoil, old-growth forests and natural waterways led to the extinction of many plants and animals. Mercury and cyanide continue to contaminate soil and water, and the climate-change-causing carbon emissions mining activity pumped into the atmosphere will impact us long into the future.