

Life in the Cities



Sydney

Sydney was already a well-developed city and a focal point for world trade by the time gold was discovered. In the 1850s a horse tramway was built from Circular Quay along Pitt Street, another was built from the city to Randwick Race Course and another to Bondi.

A railway line for trains driven by steam engines was built from Redfern to Granville in 1850. Fine buildings such as the University of Sydney were built out of the famous Sydney sandstone. Money from gold helped many more fine buildings to be erected.

Middle-class ladies wore crinolines, used parasols and wore wide-brimmed hats. Gentlemen wore tight fitting trousers, tall hats and frock coats. The working class men wore coloured shirts, serge trousers, hats of straw or felt and an untrimmed beard.

Until 1855 water pumps collected water from a pump in Hyde Park and it was sold water in the streets. The streets were not paved. People walked on dirt or mud. The low standard timber terraces were built with dirt floors and no drainage. Later the terraces were built of brick. Some shops and a few private houses were lit by gas. A few of the wealthy people had mansions on large estates.

The storage of food caused problems. The wealthy had ice chests and used

imported ice. Salting was a common way of preserving foods. Vegetables were supplied from market gardens, potatoes were a luxury and bread was home-made.

Melbourne

Melbourne was a mere town at the time of the discovery of gold. The great influx of gold prospectors made Melbourne Australia's largest city for a time. Victoria had nearly half of Australia's population, although one in two were still in tents. Government departments grew to cope with the demands of the larger population. Houses and roads were needed. Industry grew as Australian firms began to manufacture the materials needed to make coaches, bridges, carriages, railway lines and telegraph lines.

Other Cities

Prosperity from gold spread through other colonial cities. For a few years, Hobart boomed. New little companies were started by returning diggers.

Adelaide was only 14 years old when the gold rushes began. Banks, businesses and handsome shops sprang up.

