

Sovereign Hill Education

The Chinese

Research Notes for Primary Schools



In 1853, the Chinese population of Ballarat was 2,000 with the numbers increasing to 7,542 by 1857.

The majority of Chinese who came to Ballarat lived in an area of China called Sze Yap, which means four districts, located near the Province of Canton.

All the Chinese were young men sponsored by a businessman from their village. When gold was found, it was sent back to the sponsor.

When the Government of Victoria found so many Chinese coming to Victoria and having success at mining it was decided to levy £10 (\$20) for every Chinese that landed in Victoria. (It already cost Chinese £10 (\$20) to purchase their travel ticket.)

Consequently, the ships carrying the Chinese landed at Robe, in South Australia, and the Chinese walked to the Victorian goldfields.

There were three Chinese villages in Ballarat: Golden Point, Eureka, and Clayton's Hill which became a Chinese Lazarette (for lepers) during the 1860s.

The main street of most Chinese villages was called Canton Street and this is where the shops, businesses, eating houses and gambling houses were found.

The Chinese Dragon has the head of a camel, horns of a deer, eyes of a rabbit, ears of a cow, neck of a snake, belly of a frog, scales of a carp, claws of a hawk and the paws of a tiger.

All Chinese Temples were painted red as the colour red means good fortune.

In Old China the brides wear red. White and pale blue are the colours of mourning.

Reprinted with kind permission of Red Hill National School and St Peter's Denominational School at Sovereign Hill. 2002

