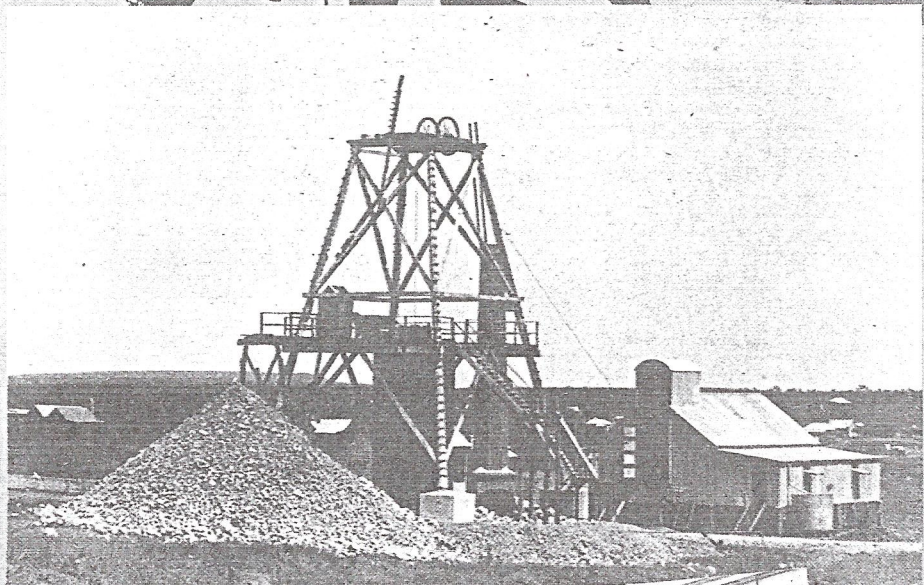
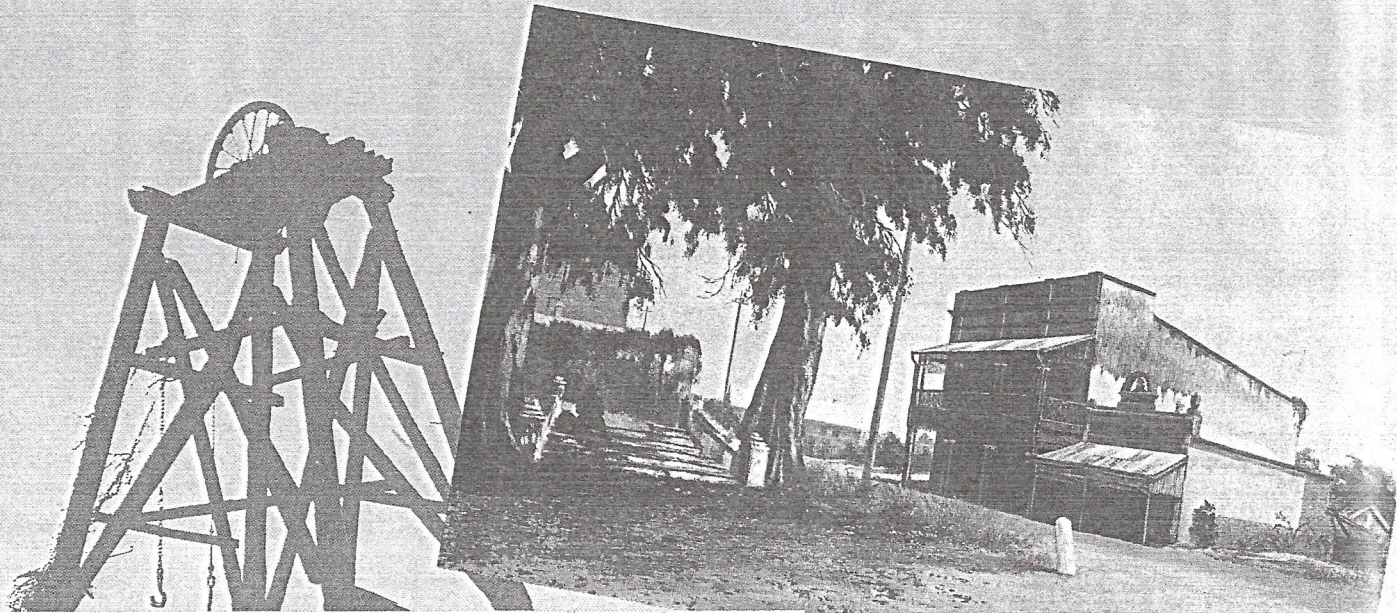


Golden **RAVENSWOOD**



Sunset No. 2 Mine — former glory



'The Steps On The Corner'—Denis Hardy

Railway Hotel today



Early goldfields transport

State Library Maps
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Mining Heritage Series
DEPARTMENT OF MINES, QUEENSLAND
DALRYMPLE SHIRE COUNCIL

Mining History

By the 1860s much of the Burdekin River country had been taken up by graziers, and near the junctions of Elphinstone and Connolly Creeks were two properties called Merri Merriwa and Ravenswood. Ravenswood Station was presumably named after Ravenswood in Scotland, made famous by Sir Walter Scott's 'Bride of Lammermoor'.

Prospectors and discoveries

A stockman named Thomas Aitken found the first gold, on Ravenswood. His find was unpayable, but he convinced others of the prospects of the district, and by 1868 payable gold had been found at Middle Camp, a little to the north of Brookville. Other prospectors soon followed, and by April 1869 there were 140 working in the area. Although this find was on Merri Merriwa, the prospectors knew the district as 'Ravenswood' and the name was there to stay.

From Middle Camp prospectors worked out in all directions, and success came to Jessop, Buchanan and Crane, who worked north to Top Camp, the present site of Ravenswood. Top Camp was extremely rich in alluvial gold and 'floaters' of 'specimen' material, and in October 1869 a rush took place.

Prosperity and disappointment

The prospectors following the 'floaters' soon discovered many of the lodes that occurred in the area, and for the first time in North Queensland lode mining began. The first problem was how to crush ore. In 1870 the field was visited by W.O. Hodgkinson — civil servant, explorer, journalist, subsequently prospector, Mining Warden, parliamentarian, and Minister for Mines. Hodgkinson agreed to provide crushing facilities, and in April 1870 his Lady Marion mill, at Burnt Point, commenced operations. The results of the first month's crushings were so rich that they caused a second rush to the area. Within twelve months the mines were supplying ore to five crushing plants, and the canvas village of Top Camp had become the iron-roofed and weatherboard town of Ravenswood.

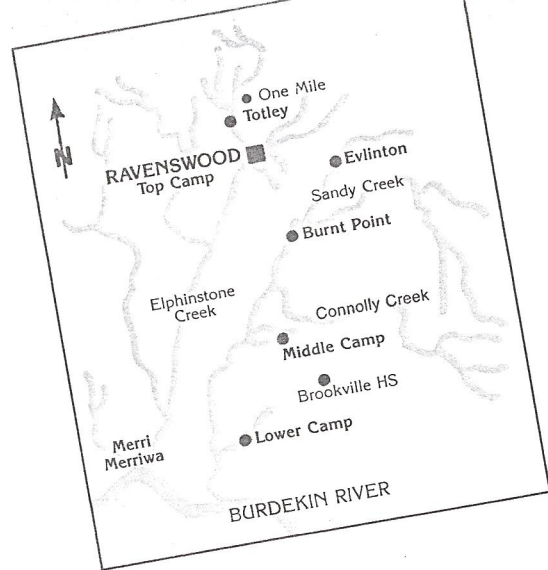
For two years the new field prospered, but then came a severe blow. The ore that had been worked near the surface was 'brownstone', oxidised by the air and rain, and ready to yield its gold easily. By 1872 the larger mines had reached water level, and the 'brownstone' gave way to a refractory sulphide mixture, which defied the best efforts of the millmen to extract its gold. Many of the miners left, most of them to the newly-discovered Charters Towers field, and for a time Ravenswood was almost stagnant.

Hope and perseverance

For the next twenty years the story of Ravenswood was one of process after process being tried and found wanting, as one inventor after another sought a universal remedy to the extraction problem. Yet it was not all bleak: though no universal remedy was ever found, men like H.H. Barton persisted with established methods, gradually improving them and adapting them to the different types of ore on the field. Some of the ores carried sufficient free gold to be amalgamated with mercury, others were chlorinated or smelted on the field, and concentrates were shipped to Maryborough, Footscray or England. Only the richest material could be worked, but a steady stream of about 10 000 oz (300 kg) of gold was produced each year, keeping the field alive and laying the foundation for its later prosperity. The lodes worked at this time, with more or less success, were mainly the Ravenswood 'main group' - the Sunset, General Grant, Black Jack, Mellaneur and Shelmalier. To the east of the township was the smaller settlement of Evlinton, or Sandy Creek. The lodes here, such as the John Bull, were not as rich as those in Ravenswood, but were much easier to treat, and they added their share to the output.

This period also saw the discovery of silver at the One-mile, and from 1880 to 1891 this area, now known as Tolley, made an important contribution to the economy of the town.

It was during the heyday of the silver mines, in 1883, that the railway was extended to Ravenswood from Cunningham, which then became Ravenswood Junction (it is now Mingela).



The great days

1893 saw an important turn of events for Ravenswood. The John Bull mines and battery at Sandy Creek, idle since 1892, were placed under option to a local mine manager, A. Laurence Wilson. With the assistance of local subscriptions, Wilson travelled to London with the purpose of interesting British investors in the mines. He was successful, and by 1894 the mines were again in full swing. This marked the emergence of Wilson as one of the leading entrepreneurs of Ravenswood. During the next few years he showed that he was a highly competent business manager as well, and when in 1899 he successfully floated another British company - New Ravenswood Limited - to take over the 'main group' of mines, he had risen to be 'the uncrowned king of Ravenswood'.

1900 to 1912 was Ravenswood's great period of prosperity. New Ravenswood Ltd was highly profitable, and its success encouraged investment in many other of the old mines. This was also the main productive period of the Donnybrook (Brookville) mines, 10 km to the south. During these 13 years over 400 000 oz (12 500 kg) of gold was produced. The population of the field reached nearly 5000, of which probably about 4000 lived in Ravenswood itself. New domestic and commercial buildings arose (including at least two new hotels). Life was good, and the town looked to the future with confidence.

The decline

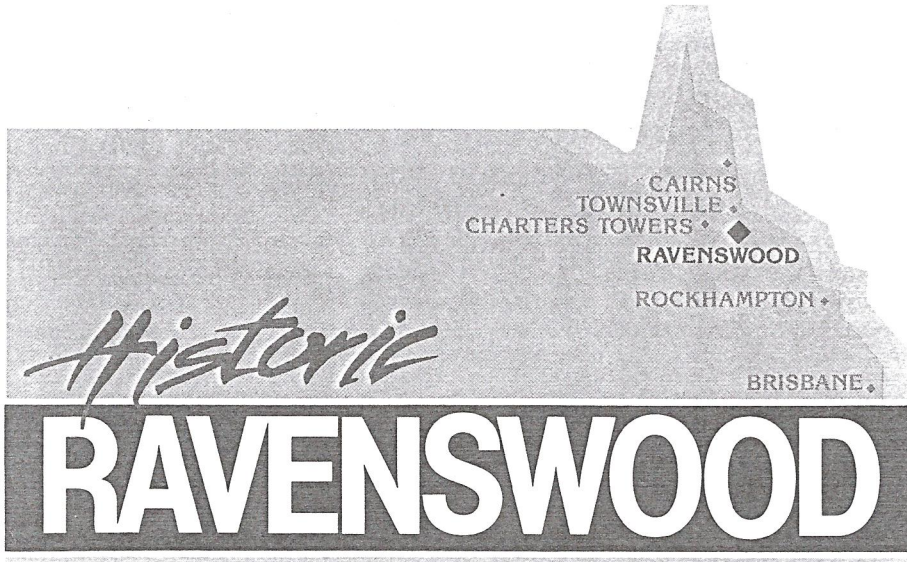
The great days were not to last. By 1912 New Ravenswood Ltd was fighting against rising costs on the one hand, and increasingly meagre ore-bodies on the other. Every possible measure of economy was taken, but gradually operations became more and more restricted, and by 1917 the company was forced to cease operations. The other companies that had been floated on the wave of confidence set up by New Ravenswood Ltd had either fallen by the wayside or were operating on a very small scale. The most ambitious scheme of the 'boom' period was the Ravenswood Deep Mines shaft, which was intended to cut the main lodes at depth and prove their continuation. It was sunk to 1536 ft (468 m) and some work was done on a number of veins intersected by it. However, little in the way of ore was found, and the veins that had been intersected could not confidently be correlated with known lodes. The project was abandoned in 1912.

Postscript

Since 1917 Ravenswood has been a ghost of its former self. Occasionally hope has been rekindled, as in 1934 when Gold Mines of Australia drilled the Buck Reef at Golden Hill, and in the early 1950s, when Mr P. Kean reopened the silver mine at Tolley, but nothing came of either of these ventures. Since 1982 there has been another burst of activity - many of the dumps have been treated for gold, and an open-cut has appeared to the south of the school. Is this another false dawn, or has Ravenswood's long sleep come to an end at last?

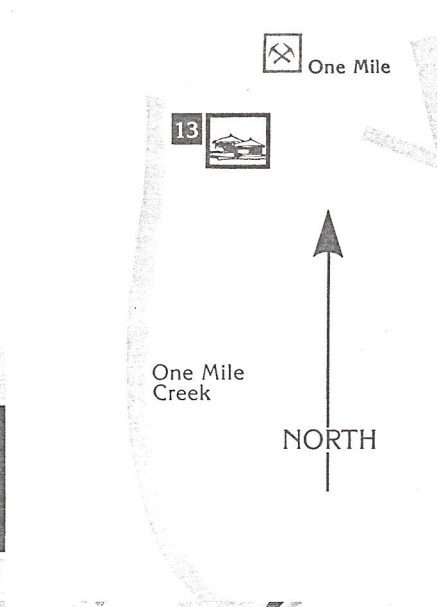
Ken Levingston
District Geologist.

The Department of Mines acknowledges the contribution of Mr Don Roderick, Brisbane, in the preparation of this publication. Front cover illustration 'The Steps On The Corner' is from 'A Town That Was - Ravenswood', courtesy of Booloorong Publications, Brisbane.



Historic

RAVENSWOOD



Ravenswood is situated one hours drive from Charters Towers, or 90 minutes from Townsville. The old gold mining town has rested unperturbed by modern developments since its former glory days. This brochure records the locations of major mines and town buildings, and provides a guide for the visitor to this unique example of Queensland's Mining Heritage.

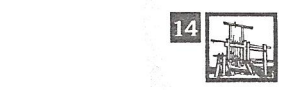
PLACES OF INTEREST




- 1 SUNSET MINE**
Ravenswood's largest producing mine — over 6.6 tonnes of gold. Part of the Brace remains.
- 2 GENERAL GRANT MINE**
Named after the U.S. President General Grant. Boiler stack, head frame and magazine remain. Ravenswood's second largest producing mine — over 1 tonne of gold.
- 3 GRANT AND SUNSET EXTENDED MINE**
Remains of head frame and boiler stack.
- 4 TOTLEY MINE**
Machinery, head frames and buildings of this major silver mine remain. The steel head frame and diesel motor were transported from the Louisa Mine, Maytown.
- 5 LONDON NORTH MINE**
Mullock heaps, head frame and remains of winding gear.
- 6 GRAND JUNCTION MINE**
Concrete foundations and boiler stack.
- 7 THE DEEP MINE**
Boiler stack remains. The deepest mine on the field, 468m.
- 8 GOLDEN HILL MINE**
Remains of head frame, shaft and open cut. Excavations surrounding this mine have been refilled with the overburden. Different coloured mounds show the changes in underground soil colours.
- 9 DUKE MINE**
Machinery foundations remain. This mine was named after the then Duke of Edinburgh.
- 10 EUREKA MINE**
Remains of head frame. The shaft of this mine extends underneath the Imperial Hotel.
- 11 MABEL MILL**
This major ore crushing plant once housed 30 stamper heads. Remains include the boiler house and assay house, chimney, stampers and machinery supports. This site is being developed to feature a collection of Ravenswood's old mining machinery.
- 12 CHIMNEY STACKS**
These chimney stacks mark the presence of the central power plant which served the area surrounding the Sunset mine. The southern stack served the steam winch at the Sunset Underlie mine.
- 13 OLD TOTLEY PLANT**
Remains of brick buggles and treatment plant, where silver ore from Tolley mine was concentrated. The conical tables are locally known as "The Mushrooms"
- 14 EMPIRE MILL**
Remains of the Empire Mill; a ball mill and cyanide plant.
- 15 RAILWAY HOTEL**
Built in 1902. The frontage has been recently restored. Accommodation and meals available.
- 16 IMPERIAL HOTEL**
Goldfield architecture in the exuberant Victorian style. Accommodation and meals available.
- 17 POST OFFICE**
Built in 1878. Still services the community. Now incorporates general store and petrol supplies.
- 18 AMBULANCE BUILDING**
Built in 1904 to provide an essential community service.
- 19 THORPS BUILDING**
Built by Sydney H. Thorp, a Charters Towers stockbroker who promoted many Ravenswood ventures.
- 20 ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH**
A church built in two discernable stages, reflecting the towns increasing prosperity.
- 21 SCHOOL OF ARTS**
The hall and adjacent Library provided both social and cultural venues.
- 22 SCHOOL and RESIDENCE**
Built in the mid 1870's, and still operates as an educational facility today.
- 23 STAIRWAY—BROWNE'S HOTEL**
All that remains of a once very grand hotel.
- 24 BROWNE'S BUILDING**
Built in matching style to the adjacent Imperial Hotel.
- 25 CHAPEL STREET BRIDGE**
Single arch red brick bridge.

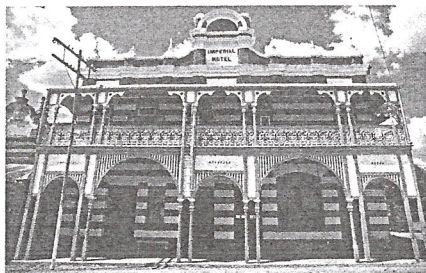
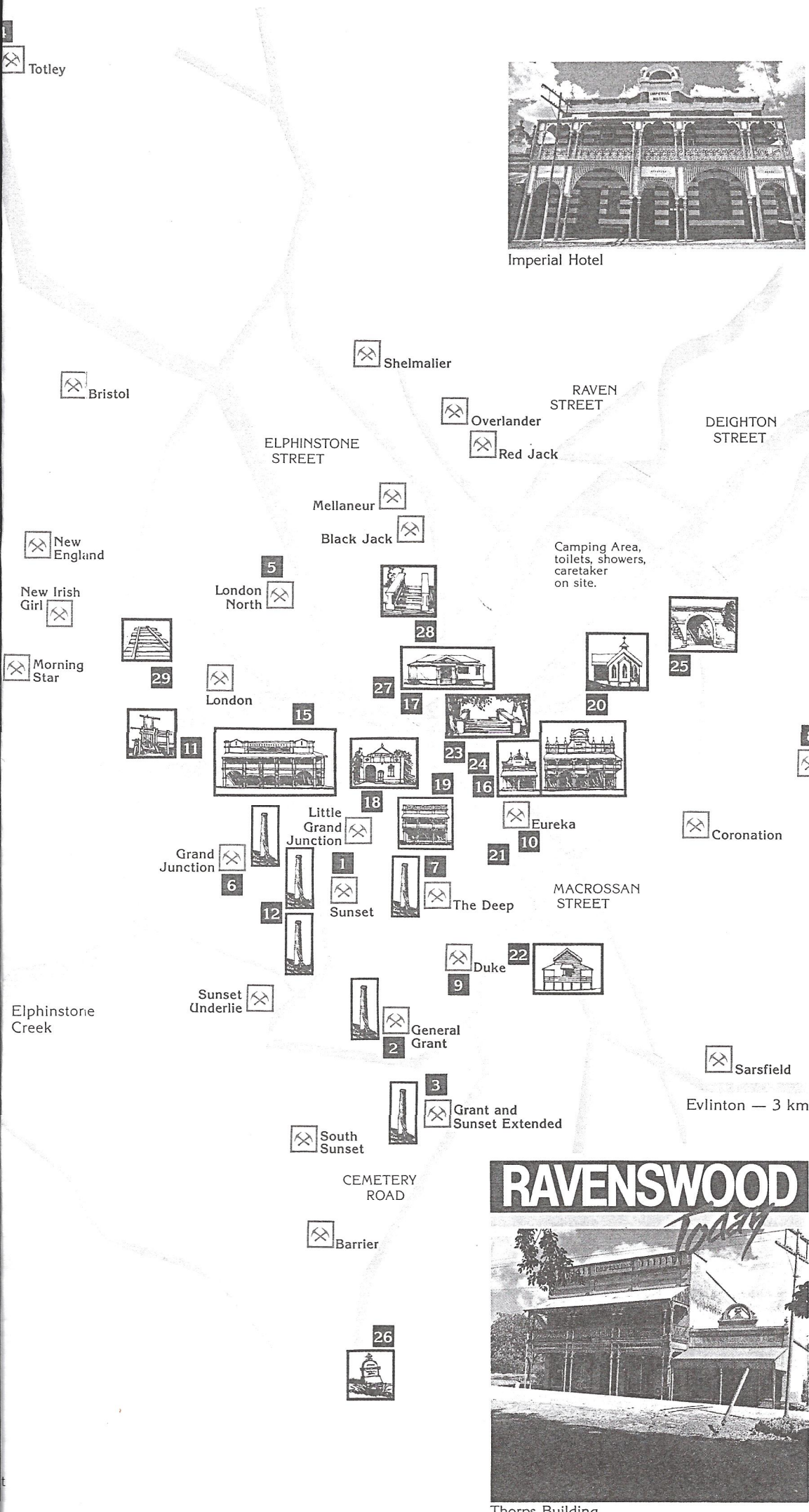
- 26 CEMETERY**
A commentary on the harsh condition which accompanied early mining.
- 27 COURT HOUSE**
Remains of the brick fence and steps mark the location.
- 28 A.L. WILSON'S RESIDENCE**
Only the steps and pathway remain of the home of the "uncrowned king of Ravenswood."
- 29 RAILWAY STATION**
Parts of the bitumen platform remain.

Charters Towers — 84 km

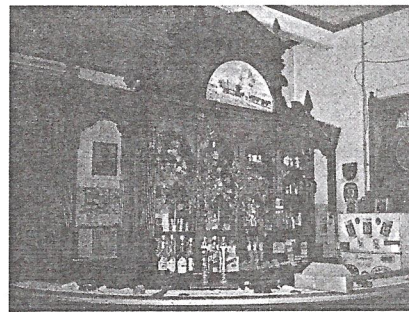


SAFETY
Take care when in the vicinity of old shafts and mining machinery.

 indicates the location of a mine. In some instances, little evidence of mining operations remain.

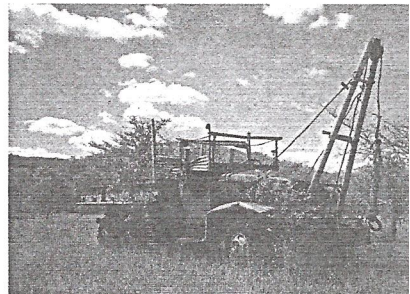


Imperial Hotel



Bar—Imperial Hotel

The White Blow
— 2km



Near Tolley Mine

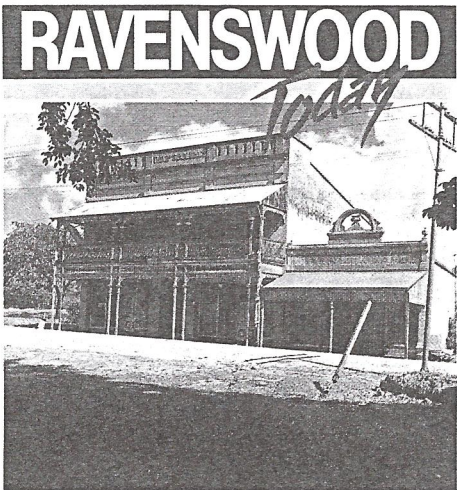
8
Golden Hill

A visit to Ravenswood will be rewarded with a display of building types from a previous era. Many of the surviving buildings are in their original condition, and were built around the turn of the century.

A stroll around the town can locate a church, a hall, hotels and shops, some houses, a school and a post office, all of which are virtually unchanged since their date of construction.

These structures offer much to those who treasure old buildings. They speak of the fashions, the building technology, the craftsmanship, and the lifestyles of a previous generation. They also reveal the confidence of a community whose pulse was the prosperity of its gold mining industry.

Although most of the buildings that once served Ravenswood have long since been removed, those surviving are linked by a system of roads and stone kerbs which indicate the extent of previous development.



Thorps Building

Sarsfield
Evlinton — 3 km

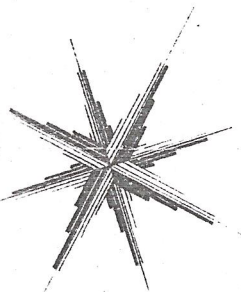
- Tolley
- Bristol
- New England
- New Irish Girl
- Morning Star
- London North
- London
- Grand Junction
- Sunset Underlie
- South Sunset
- Barrier
- Shelmalier
- Overlander
- Red Jack
- Mellaneur
- Black Jack
- London North
- Little Grand Junction
- Sunset
- General Grant
- Grant and Sunset Extended
- RAVEN STREET
- DEIGHTON STREET
- Camping Area, toilets, showers, caretaker on site.
- Eureka
- Coronation
- MACROSSAN STREET
- Duke
- General Grant
- Grant and Sunset Extended
- Sarsfield
- Evlinton — 3 km

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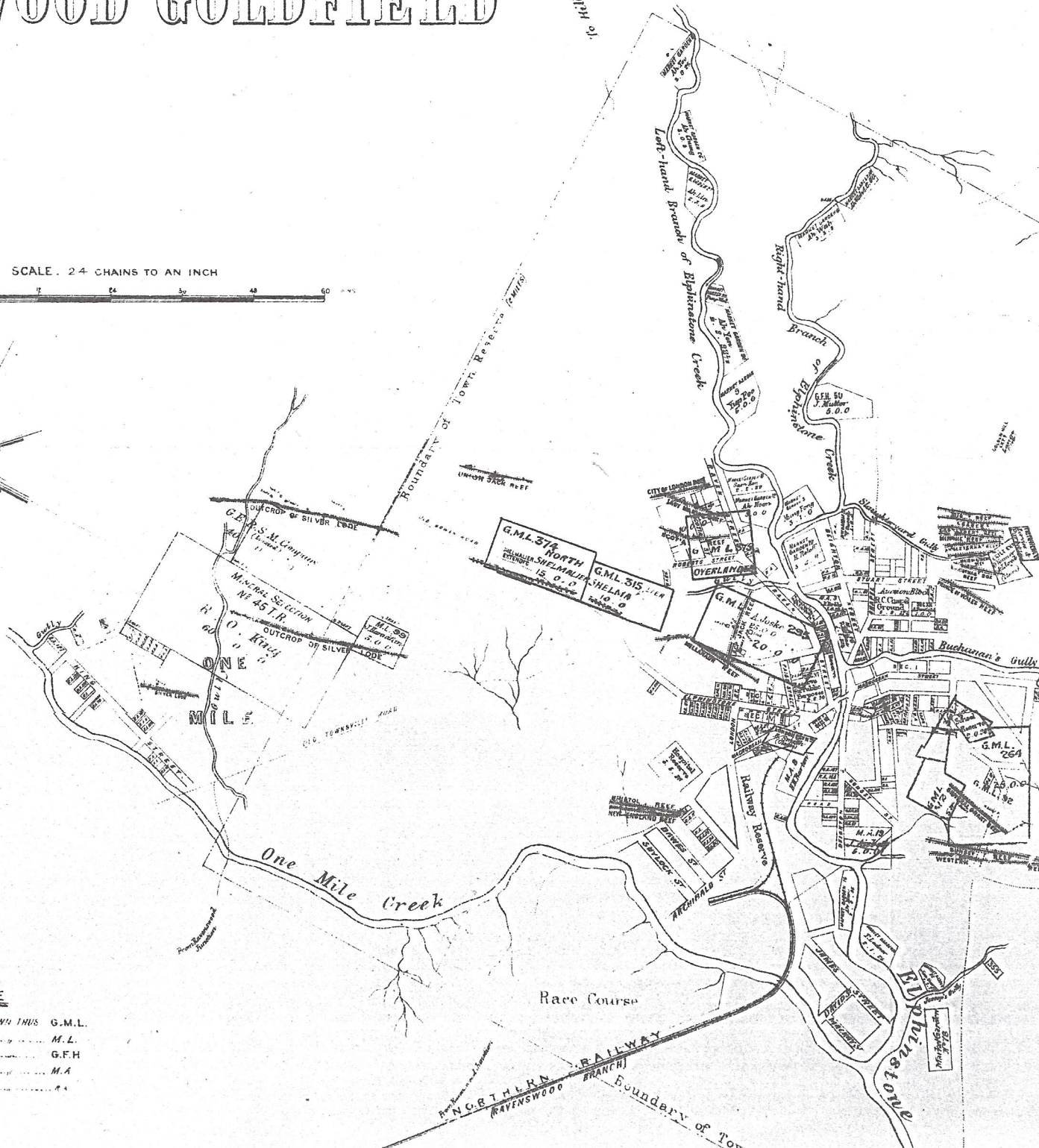
State library "Maps" level 3.
 Call NO. 844.3 1898 000191

MAP OF RAVENSWOOD GOLDFIELD

SCALE. 24 CHAINS TO AN INCH



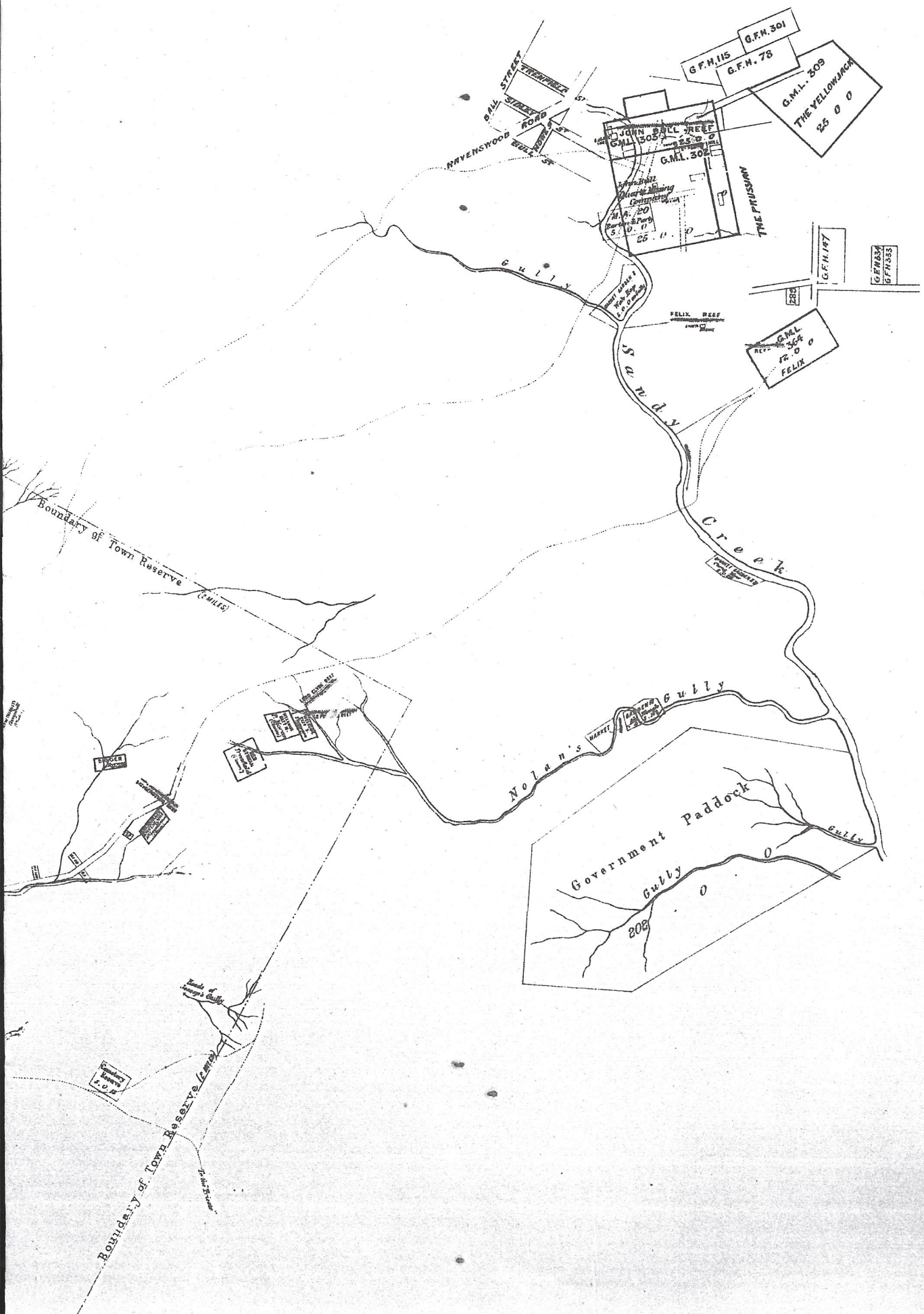
To Hillshoro. Eight mile Creek. Premier &



REFERENCE

MINING LEASES.....	SHOWN THUS	G.M.L.
MINERAL LEASES.....		M.L.
FIELD'S HOMESTEADS.....		G.F.H.
MINING AREAS.....		M.A.
RESERVE AREAS.....		R.A.

The Silver
The Yellowjacks



Boundary of Town Reserve
(MILES)

RIVERSWOOD ROAD
SANDY CREEK ROAD
THE PRUSSIAN

G.F.N. 115
G.F.N. 78
G.M.L. 309
THE YELLOWJACKS
25 0 0

JOHN BALL REEF
G.M.L. 305
25 0 0
G.M.L. 302
25 0 0

G.F.N. 78
G.F.N. 333

G.M.L. 304
12 0 0
FELIX

FELIX REEF

Nolan's Gully

Government Paddock
Gully
200

Boundary of Town Reserve (miles)