

The Eureka Rebellion 1854

The Eureka rebellion followed years of discontent on the Victorian goldfields and has come to be regarded as a "milestone in Australian democracy". The Eureka flag, also known as the Southern Cross, is closely associated with this struggle for democracy. It is generally thought that a Canadian digger from Ontario, Captain Ross, designed the flag and commissioned miners' wives to sew it. Along with other Canadians, Ross came to Ballarat seeking gold and adventure in the early 1850s. Although the uprising was put down quickly – the known death toll was five soldiers and 22 miners – important social changes and political improvements arose out of the events at Eureka that influenced the course of Australia's political history.

Another noteworthy Canadian was the 20-year-old artist from Quebec, Charles Doudiet, who helped carry the fatally injured Ross from the battlefield to a nearby hotel. His *Australian Sketchbook* contains watercolours and annotations that are among the most significant documents on Eureka. Doudiet was the only eyewitness observer on hand to record these historic events. Fifteen of his sketches, including *Swearing Allegiance to the Southern Cross*, are now on display with the flag in the Ballarat Fine Art Gallery.

This historic connection to Canada is reflected in the name given to the Ballarat suburb of *Canadian*.



Chaffey Brothers Pioneer First Irrigation Colony in Australia 1887

In 1887, two Canadian brothers, George and William Benjamin (W.B.) Chaffey who were born in Brockville, Ontario, signed an agreement with the Victorian Government that would establish the first great Australian irrigation colony in the Murray Valley. The *Chaffey Agreement* founded the irrigation settlement at Mildura and later was extended to include irrigation colonies at Renmark in South Australia.

The Chaffey brothers established their reputations as successful irrigation engineers in California in 1871 where they launched model colonizing schemes. Their efforts were recognized by Alfred Deakin, a Victorian state parliamentarian and later Prime Minister of Australia, who was impressed by their ability to irrigate once arid regions of the country and convinced them to come to Australia.

A prominent statue honouring W.B. Chaffey and his brother George was erected on Deakin Avenue, Mildura, with the inscription, "*He laboured for the common good*".