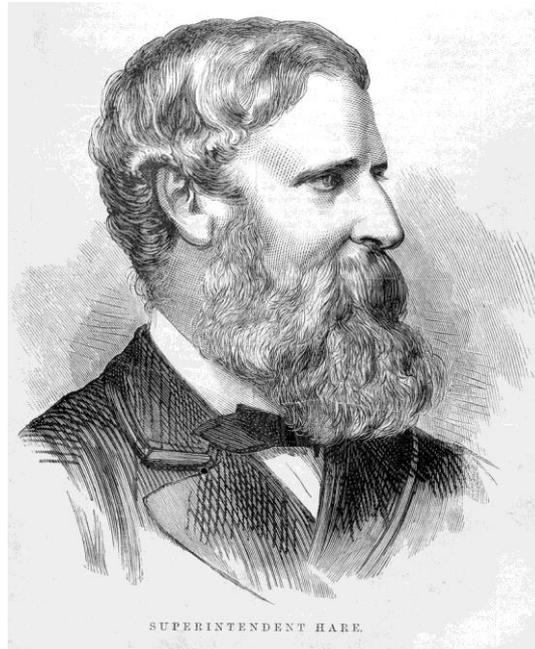


Superintendent Francis Augustus Hare



Francis Hare was born in Wynberg, 8 miles from Capetown, South Africa, on the 4th of October 1830. He was the youngest son of a family of 17 children. His father was a captain in the 21st Dragoons, and when his regiment was disbanded he settled in South Africa with his large family.

Francis farmed sheep with his brother for a time after leaving school but decided to make his way to greater prosperity in Australia. At the age of 22, Francis Hare made his way to Melbourne, Australia, arriving on 10th April 1852 and shortly after joined the gold rush to Bendigo. He found success in the goldfields and on one day it was claimed that he personally washed 10 ounces. (more than 300 grams) The day after washing the 10 ounces his group make their way to the Ovens gold rush and again they struck it rich. He was involved in several claims and one of those claims returned him some 800 pounds. While on the goldfields he became seriously ill and went to Sydney to recover. He did well on all the goldfields, but gold was a short term prospect so he looked for other more permanent employment.

On the 1st June 1854, he joined the Victoria Mounted Police and was appointed a lieutenant. His main duty was escorting gold from the Buckland to Beechworth. He later was moved to new diggings when they were found to deal with the bushrangers that followed on intending to rob the miners of their gold.

Hare had quite an exciting life as a police officer arresting quite a number of bushrangers who were plying their trade where he was stationed in the goldfields. Perhaps one of the most notorious was Harry Power, who was allegedly given away by Ned Kelly, who had a charge of highway robbery withdrawn because of the information Kelly gave to the police which led to Powers capture.

He also captured a bushranger called Meakin, who attempted to escape from Hare several times by running from him. Each time Hare recaptured him. Meakin eventually escaped from Beechworth lockup and was never heard from again.

On the 28th of July 1857, he married 37 year-old Janet Wright Harper, the eldest daughter of Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass. She had been previously married to George Mitchell Harper, who had died a year before. No children were forthcoming from this marriage. They lived in Hotham Street, St. Kilda.

Hare was promoted to Superintendent in November 1865, not long before the Kelly outbreak. He was in charge of much of the area in which the Kelly gang was operating. Despite numerous attempts to corner and capture the Kelly's, police were unsuccessful. There was considerable discourse within senior ranks within the police force. The Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police was Captain Frederick Standish, a former army officer, who was at logger heads with his deputy, Superintendent Nicolson, but on good terms with Hare. As a result, Nicolson and Hare did not get on and it showed to lower ranks, with a great deal of discourse that seriously affected the ability of the police to capture the Kelly gang because of the squabbling and discourse that followed.

Both Superintendents were present when Harry Power was captured at his hideout in the Wombat Ranges.

On the 2nd July 1879, The Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police appointed Superintendent Hare to lead the search for the Kelly gang after the horrific murders of the three police at Stringybark Creek.

Finally, the Kelly gang emerged in June 1880 and Superintendent Hare and a handful of men made their way from Benalla to Glenrowan to meet them. It is of great interest to read Hare's statement regarding this momentous event. Much of this information had to be gathered after the event as Supt. Hare left the scene relatively early in the fight as his left arm was bleeding profusely and he was taken by train to Benalla where his wound was treated.

Supt. Hares statement is included in **Articles** on this web site.

The Royal Commission into Victoria Police were scathing of the nepotism and dysfunction of the upper echelons of senior police, and although the Chief Commission of Victoria Police had resigned before the Royal Commission took place, several senior members were recommended to be pensioned off, including Supt. Hare. It should be noted that his share of the reward money of 8,000 pounds was 800 pounds, a handsome amount at that time.

The government, having considered the Royal Commission report, disagreed vehemently with many of the recommendations, including the recommendation that Supt Hare be pensioned off. Cabinet re-instated both Supt Hare and Supt Nicolson, and a few weeks later both were appointed Police Magistrates.

Mr. Hare SM did not remain as a police magistrate for long and left his position and went to work for Sir William Clarke, a wealthy landowner. He had contracted diabetes and died at Rupertswood, the Clarke country estate at Sunbury, near Melbourne on 10th July 1892. His remains were interred in the Melbourne General Cemetery.