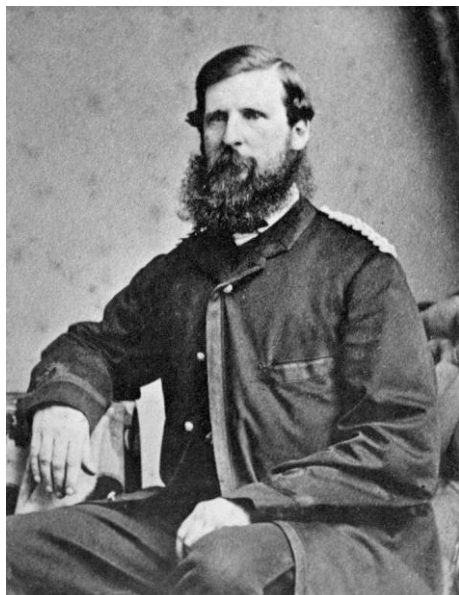


Francis Hare

Born 1830. Police Superintendent who led the capture of Ned Kelly.
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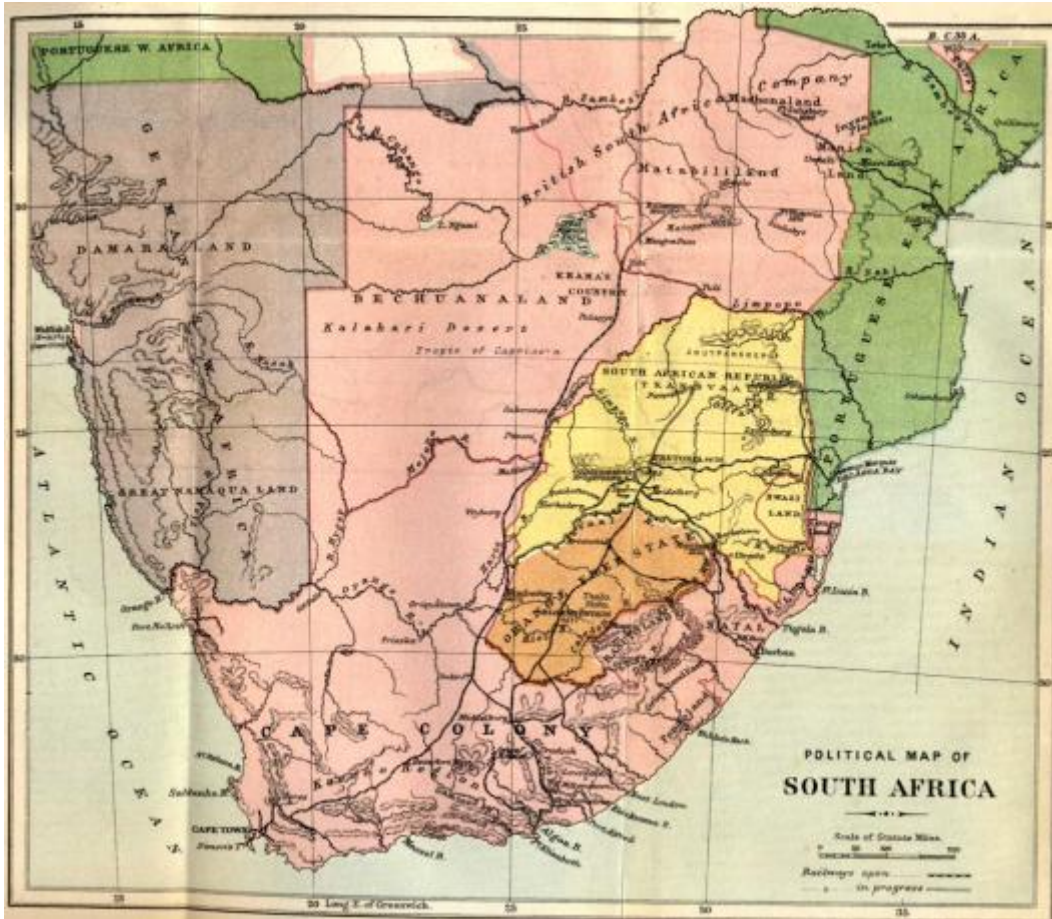
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SUPERINTENDENT HARE.

1. Early Life in South Africa

The following chapters 1 to 9 were archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Guide to Australian Bushranging website at www.aguidetoaustralianbushranging.com.



Map of South Africa c.1880s. Wynberg is located within Cape Town in the south west.

Forever remembered as the Kelly Hunter, Francis Augustus Hare was an intriguing man with a biography full of excitement and misadventure. From a privileged upbringing in South Africa to good fortune on the Victorian gold fields and a thrilling career as a frontier policeman, Hare is a man often maligned for his seeming ineptitude when hunting for some of the most remarkable bushrangers that Australia has produced.

Hare was born in Wynberg in the Cape of Good Hope on 4 October, 1830. One of seventeen children of Captain Joseph Hare of the 21st Light Dragoons and his second wife Sally, Francis received a good education due to his father's good social standing.

Joseph Hare passed away in 1856 after many years as a professional wine taster and warehouse-keeper at customs, as well as the owner of a farm named *Oude Wynberg* where Francis farmed sheep for a time with his brothers.

However, the life of a grazier was not one that held any kind of allure for Frank Hare and when news reached him of the remarkable quantities of gold that had been found in Australia, he knew where he wanted to be.



Street in Wynberg.

A street in Wynberg in about 1900.

2. Australia and the Goldfields



Melbourne in 1852.

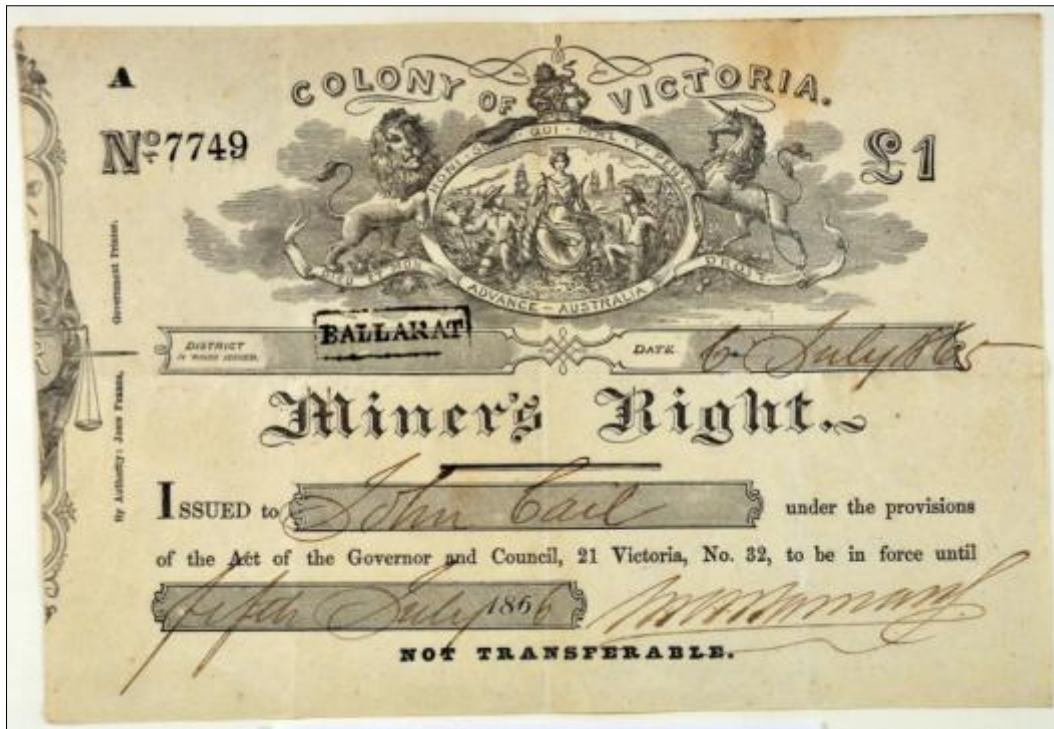
On 10 April 1852 Hare arrived in Melbourne. After a jaunt in Sydney with a mate who had escaped from Norfolk Island, the 22 year old South African headed straight to the Goldfields in Bendigo where he staked a claim and later, on his claim on Springs Creek, he managed to dig up £800 worth of gold in one day.

During his prospecting days he managed to avoid being nabbed for not having a mining licence, a serious offence in the days before the Eureka Stockade. Unfortunately, Hare's constitution failed him and he fell deathly ill. Such problems would regularly plague him, but this illness was such that he ended up giving up mining in an effort to get to Sydney for treatment.

At one point on his journey he found himself on a dray under a gum tree being watched by crows who he feared would peck out his eyes. Hare's fear of death and carrion birds gave him the resolve to survive and recuperate.

He soon got work with the gold escort, becoming a mounted lieutenant on 1 June 1854 and was assigned to escort the gold delivery from Beechworth to Buckland. The track upon which the escort travelled was notoriously difficult to traverse, the escort regularly having to swim across floodwaters and rivers and on one occasion a mule bearing 2000 ounces of gold broke away from the escort and bolted up a mountain pass and was shot to enable

the escort to retrieve the gold as it would have been too treacherous to retrieve the mule as well. It was during this time that Hare had his first encounter with bushrangers.



A miner's licence.

3. A Life and Death Struggle with Meakin

At Dr. Mackay's station on the Ovens River in 1855, the bushranger Meakin stuck up the station in search of £700 in cash Dr. Mackay had been paid the day before for horses. There were a number of people in the house that evening, the doctor's wife bedridden and in precarious health, two women including the doctor's niece and none other than Francis Augustus Hare, at that time a lieutenant stationed at Wangaratta.

At 2am Hare was roused from his makeshift bed on a sofa by the two visiting women rapping on the French windows. They informed him there was a strange man on the deck with a gun and a large knife. Hare told the women to return to bed but they refused to leave his quarters until they were convinced he knew the seriousness of their observation. Five minutes after sending the women to bed the dogs began barking and Hare saw Meakin bolting across the courtyard for the fence. Hare called on him to stop to no avail and pursued him on foot.

The chase was farcical, the hunter and the prey tripping up repeatedly as they headed for the garden fence, at one point Meakin becoming entangled in the vines in the garden. Hare took a shortcut to head Meakin off whereupon he tackled the bushranger into a mullock heap comprised mostly of rose bush cuttings. He grasped Meakin's colt revolver in his right hand and with his left repeatedly pounded Meakin between the eyes. Of the event Hare would later recall:

The struggle was for life, and notwithstanding it was on the top of a heap of rubbish, principally rose cuttings, men never fought harder.

After wrestling for five or six minutes, Dr. Mackay finally arrived to discover the hullabaloo and Meakin surrendered. One can only imagine the sight of a 6'3" tall South African dressed in nothing but trousers and a ripped shirt pinning a bushranger on top of a pile of rose clippings. Meakin was taken to the kitchen but made a run for it when Hare left the room to get dressed. Once more Hare was bounding after the criminal and brought him again to the ground, this time threatening to dash his brains out with a rock if he tried anything.

Mackay bound Meakin with saddle straps and a constable was brought from Beechworth the next morning. Meakin was tried for burglary, having committed numerous similar offences. He was kept guarded by Hare at Wangaratta, the police station little more than a slab hut with earth floor. Despite having irons riveted to his legs, Meakin attempted again to escape custody. During the night he had fooled the sentry by getting right underneath his blankets and digging the earth floor of his cell and piling the dirt underneath the blanket to give the impression he was still asleep.

Unfortunately for him the process took longer than he had anticipated and he was caught in the act the next morning. After he was transferred to Benalla he escaped through the roof of his cell, still in his irons, and was never seen again. It was not a complete loss for Hare, however, as Dr. Mackay gifted him a handsome gold watch as a token of his esteem for Hare's astounding feat of daring. Hare would carry it with him until the day he died. Inscribed on the watch was:

Presented to Lieutenant Francis Hare for his gallant capture of an armed bushranger at Tarrawingee, the 23rd of June, 1855.

4. Hot Pursuit of Billy the Puntman



The Owens River, where Billy the Puntman had plied his trade, in the 1870s.

1855 also saw Hare attempt to bring justice to another bushranger known as “Billy the Puntman”. When the Owens river had no bridges, the only way to cross was by punt. Billy, whose real name was John Hyde, was the puntman on the Owens as well as a known stock thief. When a bridge was finally built, Billy was out of a job and turned to bushranging.

On one occasion he robbed a mailman just outside of Greta, then known as 15 Mile Creek, but not far behind was a coach bound for Melbourne carrying Lieutenant Hare. When they found the mailman distraught on the side of the road and learned of his plight, Hare took one of the coach horses and rode off bareback after Billy the Puntman. Alas he soon lost the tracks and had to be satisfied with providing the information to the police at Benalla.

5. Marriage, Murders and a Lynch Mob

On 28 July 1857, Hare married 37 year old Janet Wright Harper, the eldest daughter of Colonel Kenneth Snodgrass at Raymond Terrance in New South Wales. Harper had been married in 1844 to George Mitchell Harper who had died the previous year.

In the years that followed, Hare moved between stations in the roughest areas such as Back Creek, Chinaman's Flat, and White Hills, near Maryborough. This was almost like the Wild West where murder was scarily frequent (almost weekly) and the frontier lifestyle was one fraught with danger and excitement, Hare even having to attempt placate a lynch mob who tried to break a murderer out of his cell to summarily hang him resulting in a riot. In a strange sequence of events, that murderer – a man named Brooks – died that afternoon of wounds received from his victim.

The coroner severed the head as a memento and during the inquest, which was held in a theatre, the disembodied head rolled downstage and landed in front of the assemblage. The head, stripped of flesh stayed in that coroner's possession for many years until his widow gave it to Hare who kept it as a keepsake in his den.

Yet, as grisly as that place was, Hare's tenure there also had its share of absurd moments. Hare would recall fondly the cases he was privy to in those days such as that of the drunk coroner forgetting to put a heart back into a body after an autopsy and the organ being pinched by an enterprising feline, or the coroner who got the sack for misidentifying ham bones from a fire as human remains only for the real human victim to be located dead of suffocation from the fire in a tunnel underneath the burned shop a few days after the funeral.

Fortunately for Hare his time in the region was relatively safe apart from once when he had a narrow escape from being shot at Back Creek by one of his own troopers. At this time Hare was routinely referred to by some officers as 'kaffir', a racist term used by white South Africans in reference to black people.

Hare gradually climbed the ranks of the Victoria police, soon reaching the rank of superintendent. His conduct had brought him friends within the force, none so conspicuous as Captain Frederick Charles Standish, the chief commissioner of police. It was Standish who sent Hare to north east Victoria in 1870 to help lead the hunt for the notorious Harry Power, the infamous highwayman bushranger who had been committing his depredations unhindered.

6. Hunting for Harry Power

Hare was not used to operating in this region in such a capacity but his ego refused to allow him to fail. While he worked closely with Superintendent Nicolson on the chase, the two would often clash due to their dramatically different approaches.

Hare was a very hands-on policeman, whereas Nicolson, who had been a detective for decades, tended towards establishing a sophisticated net of spies and traitors to entrap his prey. Both superintendents were present at Power's capture, though Hare would later suggest his own role in the event was far greater than what had been reported.

Hare and Nicolson had worked closely with a magistrate named McBean to convince a man named Jack Lloyd, a sympathiser of Power's, to assist in his capture for the £500 reward – the largest yet offered in Victoria for a bushranger at that time. Lloyd led the police to a mountain near Whitfield and after making initial contact with Power to prove his presence, abandoned the police to avoid being suspected as the informant.

The journey through the bush was treacherous, torrential rain hampering the police in their quest. Nicolson and Hare were accompanied by Sergeant Montford and a tracker named Donald who was able to point out the location of Power's camp on an outcrop overlooking the King Valley.



A gunyah is an Aboriginal bush hut, typically made of sheets of bark and branches.

Power was asleep in his gunyah when Nicolson pounced on him, grabbing his wrists. Hare and Montford dragged the indignant bushranger out by his feet. After Power was restrained, the police ate his rations as they hadn't eaten for two days. The exposure took its toll on Hare's health. Nonetheless, Hare was lauded as a hero and this led to him gaining a reputation as a force to be reckoned with.

It was business as usual after that. Hare was a keen sportsman, taking much joy in hunting for kangaroo and fowl, often going for trips hunting ducks along the Murray river.

7. Hunting for the Kelly Gang

Nine years after his famous encounter with Power, Francis Hare was appointed by Captain Standish as the head of the hunt for the Kelly Gang, which was to be the defining period of his life. Hare took over from Superintendent Nicolson on 2 June 1879 after public perception of Nicolson had soured after the failure to apprehend the Kelly Gang, the outlaws even managing to rob a bank in Euroa during Nicolson's watch. Hare was equipped with an indomitable spirit and was determined to bring the bushrangers to heel.

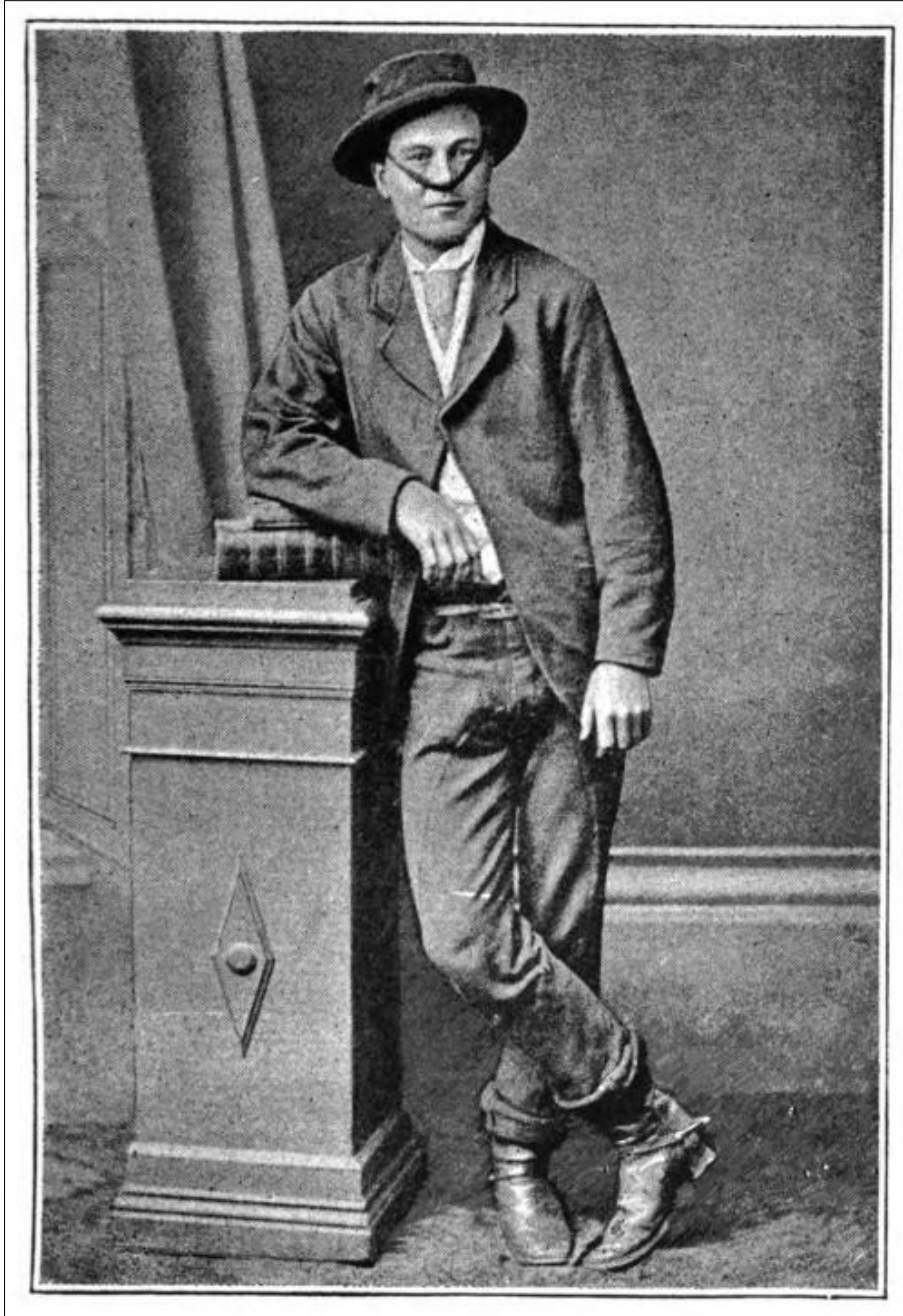
Hare's hands-on approach led to a dramatic change in the way the police conducted their hunt. Bush work was the main focus of the operation and Hare would take parties of men out with black trackers to search the forested haunts of the gang. Hare took to leading search parties through the Warby Ranges in pursuit of the gang, believing them to be hidden in that region rather than around the Woolshed Valley or Strathbogie Ranges.

Captain Standish had headed up from Melbourne to keep an eye on proceedings and such was his obsession for Hare that he would wait at the gate of the Benalla police station fretting like a hound awaiting its owner until Hare returned safely. Hare would later express great frustration in the fact that the gang's network of sympathisers constantly hampered his attempts to ensnare the outlaws.

This combined with the police inexperience in such rugged and mountainous terrain proven to be an almost insurmountable obstacle. Hare also instituted a bold plan formulated by Superintendent Nicolson back in Melbourne to cut off support for the gang. Officers arrested anyone suspected of being a sympathiser and had them remanded indefinitely until a charge could be laid. The downside of the plan was that it required Hare to travel to Beechworth every week to apply for a further seven days remand because no evidence could be produced to formulate charges for the prisoners. The plan proved impractical with the key sympathisers, the sisters of the outlaws specifically, still supplying them with information and sustenance, and the prisoners were soon released but not before stoking sympathy among the masses.

This calculated move to try and eradicate support for the outlaws seemed to reinforce a resentment of the authorities instead. It was at this time also that the police would, through their agents, start to receive frequent reports that the outlaws or their sympathisers were intending on blowing up a police train. Additionally, pressure was put on the police to investigate every reported sighting regardless of how unlikely leading to Hare allocating officers to go in pursuit of dead ends or else be forced to deal with complaints that the reports were not being taken seriously. Hare, like

Nicolson before him, began to rely ever more heavily on spies and informants to get an upper hand. The most prominent of Hare's informants was Aaron Sherritt, a young man from the Woolshed Valley who was the childhood companion of gang member Joe Byrne and a bush telegraph for the gang.



Aaron Sherritt, dressed in the larrikin style of the Greta Mob.

Aaron would supply Hare and Detective Michael Ward with information in exchange for money, which would soon become his primary income. While Sherritt's motivations and sympathies have been debated ad nauseum, Hare believed that Sherritt was honest in his support for the police effort, aided by the fact that Sherritt's father had been a constable in Ireland (Sherritt's

brothers would later seek employment in the police force with their father writing a letter to Hare for his support in getting them jobs).

Sherritt's information often resulted in no successes for the police, though Hare continued to rely on him. It was Sherritt who informed Hare that the gang were planning a bank raid in New South Wales, stating he had been asked by the gang to accompany them to Goulburn. However the information proved incorrect and at the time the police were preparing to strike at Goulburn they stuck up the township of Jerilderie instead.

On Sherritt's guidance Hare established watch parties at the Byrne homestead to ensnare the outlaws on their return trip from Jerilderie. The stake-out proved a farce but Hare trusted Aaron enough that in the coming months he would establish a permanent watch party to observe the Byrne farm, fed all the while by information from Aaron that he had obtained from his fiancée, Kate Byrne, Joe's sister. During this time Aaron and Hare became very close, Aaron letting Hare in on the trade secrets from his time with the Greta Mob when he would help Ned and Joe steal and sell horses.

Hare had given him the nickname 'Tommy' to make his involvement with the police less conspicuous and had developed a keen admiration for Sherritt's hardiness. Hare's search parties were bolstered in March 1879 by the arrival of Sub-Inspector Stanhope O'Connor and his Queensland black trackers. Hare was so astounded by the abilities of one tracker in particular, named Moses, that he arranged for him to be transferred into the service of the Victoria Police, much to O'Connor's chagrin.

Aaron's insistence on keeping a police watch party (known as the 'cave party') watching the Byrne homestead would prove to be the larrikin's undoing. Aaron would visit Kate Byrne and while he was there her mother would express a concern that there were police about the place. Aaron's efforts to allay her fears were completely dashed when Mrs. Byrne found the police camp and Aaron along with the police stationed there after noticing a sardine tin glinting in the sun. Her recognition of Hare's star informant made Aaron go deathly pale and break out in a cold sweat. When Hare asked what the matter was, Sherritt's reply was nothing if not prophetic:

"Now I am a dead man."

Mrs. Byrne subsequently broke off his engagement to Kate Byrne and in retaliation he stole a horse he had gifted to his fiancée and gave it to Maggie Skillion, Ned Kelly's sister. At the time this arose Hare was greatly frustrated with the lack of progress and his health had begun to fail him, further exacerbated by badly injuring his back after jumping his horse over a fence, so he was removed from the hunt in July 1879 to recuperate, Nicolson being reinstated. Nicolson had pulled strings to get Aaron off the

charge of horse stealing but the damage was done and eyes were now firmly on Sherritt from all quarters.



Hare poses with his favourite tracker Moses.

Upon Hare's return to the campaign on 1 June 1880 he insisted that the trackers be sent back to Queensland, stating that their presence was too intimidating for the gang to be inclined to present themselves. Meanwhile, Hare had arranged for police to be stationed at key areas where they could keep an eye on the activity of the families of the outlaws.

In addition, measures were put into place to protect Sherritt. A party of police were to remain with him at all times in the hut on his new selection at the Devil's Elbow. Alas, word quickly shot through the bush telegraph and reached the gang that Aaron was working with the police and had constables living with him and his new wife Belle. Dan Kelly and Joe Byrne would begin a campaign of testing to see if Aaron was still loyal to the gang but in the end Sherritt's fate was sealed.

8. Closing in on the Kelly Gang

On 26 June, 1880, Aaron Sherritt was murdered by Joe Byrne in his home. News of the murder was delayed in reaching the police until the following day. Hare was notified of the event at the hotel he was staying in and proceeded to attempt communication with Captain Standish in Melbourne. After much back and forth a special train was organised to leave Spencer Street train station. The train would collect O'Connor and the black trackers from Essendon and then Hare and his police party from Benalla before going express to Beechworth for a rendezvous with Detective Ward to pick up the trail of the Kelly Gang before it was too late.

There was no inkling that the police were playing right into a trap set up by the Kelly Gang at Glenrowan who were finally making good on the threats to destroy a police train. When the train arrived at Benalla it had been badly damaged by a closed railway gate. Fortunately a second engine was ready to go as a contingency if the train from Spencer Street hadn't arrived so the locomotives were swapped over and the damaged engine was to go ahead as a pilot.

Hare proposed that the civilian volunteer Rawlins be tied to the front of the pilot engine with ropes and equipped with a lantern and rifle so he could spot danger. It was promptly pointed out that Rawlins would be killed by such action and the idea was dropped. The train, carrying Hare, 5 police officers, Rawlins, O'Connor and his black trackers, O'Connor's wife and sister-in-law, a team of journalists, the police armoury and horses, headed out from Benalla not long after midnight on 28 June.

Just outside of Glenrowan the train was stopped by Thomas Curnow, the local school teacher, who explained that the Kelly Gang had damaged the tracks. Hare climbed out of the window of his carriage to see what was up and instructed the pilot engine to guide them into the station. When they arrived in Glenrowan, Hare, accompanied by Rawlins and Senior Constable Kelly visited the Stanistreet house where a distressed Mrs. Stanistreet explained that the gang had taken her husband.

By the time they returned to the station Constable Bracken had escaped from Ann Jones' inn and informed Hare that the gang was there. Hare led a charge to Jones' inn and in the opening exchange of fire between the police and the Kelly Gang Hare was shot in the left wrist, shattering the bones and severing an artery. He managed to fire another shot while perched on a tree stump before retreating to the train station where Thomas Carrington, a press artist, dressed the wound with a handkerchief from the ladies that had accompanied them.

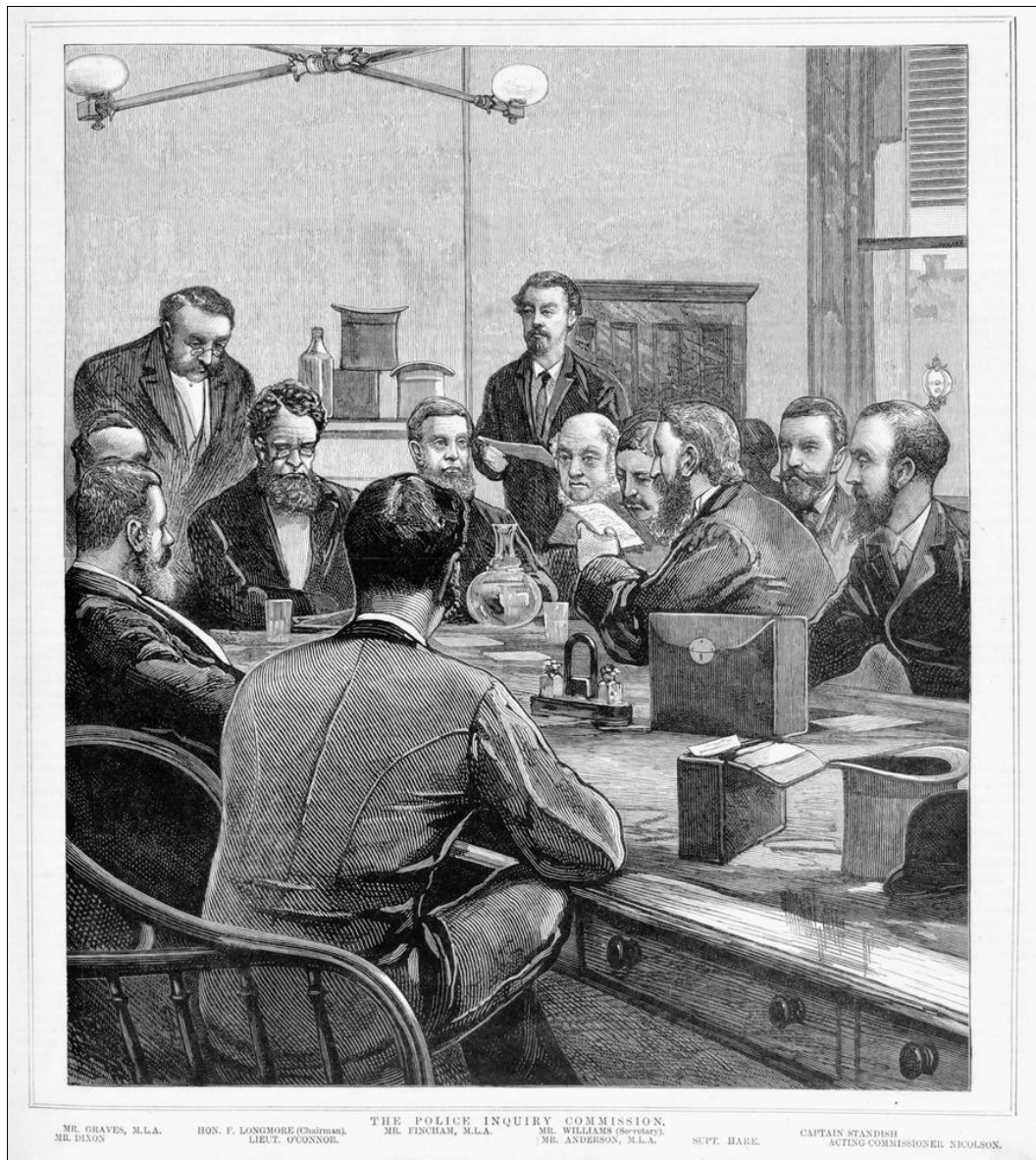
After a failed return to the battlefield Hare retired from the siege. No doubt Hare was disappointed in not being able to capture the Kellys himself, but he was more concerned with recovering from his injury.

Recuperating in Rupertswood Mansion in Sunbury, an initial assessment was that he was to lose his hand. Fortunately for Hare he was able to recover without amputation. He later gifted the Clarkes, who had helped him recuperate in Rupertswood, Joe Byrne's armour and Ned Kelly's colt revolving carbine.



Rupertswood Mansion, where Francis Hare recuperated after being wounded during the capture of Ned Kelly. Rupertswood was the home of Lady Janet Clarke, wife of one of the richest men in Australia. In 1857 her widowed aunt (also Janet) had married Francis Hare, and it was because of that family connection that Janet Clarke invited Hare to Rupertswood for his recuperation.

9. Retirement and Death



Hare gives evidence at the 1881 Royal Commission.

After the execution of Ned Kelly there was still work to be done. A Kelly Reward Board was formed in late 1880 to assess claims for the £8000 reward for the gang. Of this Hare received £800.

The following year a Royal Commission was held to investigate the conduct of police during the Kelly outbreak. The findings of the commission did not reflect favourably on many of the senior officers with a great many being demoted or recommended to be removed from active duty. One of those recommended to be removed from active duty immediately was Superintendent Hare, who was still suffering from the effects of his injury at Glenrowan.

In his later years Hare worked as a police magistrate while living at Janet Terrace in Hotham street, St Kilda. In 1892 Hare's health rapidly deteriorated. Diabetes saw him bedridden once more and he underwent surgery at T.N. Fitzgerald's private hospital before being transferred to Rupertswood Mansion where he collapsed, slipped into a coma and died the following day, 10 July. He was survived by his wife Janet, but left no heirs of his own. Janet would pass away herself in 1896, collapsing after a shopping trip in East Melbourne. Hare's body was interred at the Melbourne General Cemetery.



SUPERINTENDENT HARE.

WOUNDED IN THE CAPTURE OF THE KELLY GANG.

10. Obituary

The following chapter was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the website of the Australian National University at www.oa.anu.edu.au. The article was published in the Melbourne Argus newspaper in 1892.



Hare, Francis Augustus (Frank) (1830–1892)

A very wide circle will learn with deep regret of the death of Mr. Francis Augustus Hare, P.M., which occurred at Rupertswood, Sunbury, the country residence of Sir William Clarke, yesterday afternoon. Some three months ago Mr. Hare was seized with an attack of diabetes and until recently he was under special treatment at Mr. T. N. Fitzgerald's private hospital, where he went through a successful operation, and recovered sufficiently to seek a change at Rupertswood. There he made good progress until Friday last when he collapsed, passed rapidly into a comatose condition, and died on the following day.

Mr. Hare, who leaves no family, married a sister of the late Mr. Peter Snodgrass, father of Lady Clarke. Mr. Hare's remains will be interred in the Melbourne General Cemetery on Tuesday, and the funeral will leave his late residence, Janet-terrace, Hotham-street, St. Kilda, at 2 p.m.

Francis Augustus Hare was born at the Cape of Good Hope, in a little village called Wynberg, eight miles from Capetown, on October 4, 1830, and was the youngest son of a family of seventeen. His father, who was a captain in the 21st Dragoons, settled in the Cape when the regiment was disbanded there. After leaving school he was for a time sheep farming with his brother, but the life was not congenial and he decided to go to Australia.

He arrived in Melbourne on the 10th April, 1852, a few months after the gold discoveries. He paid a brief visit to Sydney, having a runaway convict from Norfolk Island as a mate, but returned at once to Melbourne, where life was then a wild carouse, and nothing was thought or talked of but gold and the diggings.

Mr. Hare joined a party of visitors, and an eight days' tramp brought them to Bendigo, passing en route through the Black Forest, then a noted haunt of bushrangers. They pitched their tents at Golden Gully, and had a fair amount of luck as gold seekers. Alluring news came across from the Ovens and Mr. Hare and his party decided to go there, although on the day before he left Mr. Hare had himself washed out 10 ounces of gold in a little gully not far from their tents. It shows how large were the expectations in those days when such a prospect was not sufficient.

By Christmas Day, 1852, Mr. Hare was on celebrated Read's Creek "paddocking" for gold, and afterwards on Spring Creek, where his share of the proceeds of one claim was £800. He led a stirring life here for a time digging, or evading the digger's license, which afterwards on this same gold-field it was his duty as a police officer to enforce.

But a serious illness sent him to Sydney, with very little prospect of ever reaching it, and in his book, *The Last of the Bushrangers*, which contains the record of his life and adventures in Australia, Mr. Hare tells a gruesome story of his lying on top of a loaded dray beneath a gum-tree, with a crow perched just above him waiting for the end. The fear that his eyes would be torn out while he was yet alive seemed to give a stimulus, and from that point his illness turned and he recovered.

He afterwards went to the Waranga diggings with Mr. G. D. McCormick who, strangely enough, was born on the same day and year as Mr. Hare, and many years afterwards both were made police magistrates in the same year. Mr. Hare was desirous of joining the Victorian Mounted Police, and on the 1st of June, 1854, he was appointed a lieutenant in the force by Mr. (afterwards Sir) W. F. H. Mitchell.

His first duty was in connection with gold escorts from Beechworth to the Buckland, the country traversed being often so rough that on one occasion when a pack-mule laden with 2,000oz. of gold broke away they were obliged to shoot it in order to recover the gold.

One of Mr. Hare's earliest achievements was the capture single-handed after a double personal encounter of the bushranger Meakin at Dr. Mackay's station on the Ovens River in 1854. Meakin had come to stick up the station, and in search of a sum of £700 in cash paid to Dr. Mackay the day before for horses, and was unaware that Mr. Hare was sleeping on the station that night. Meakin was taken to Beechworth, tied with the same saddle straps he had brought to bind Dr. Mackay. Meakin made several attempts to regain his liberty, and escaping soon afterwards from the gaol at Kilmore was never again heard of.

Mr. Hare also made an attempt to capture single-handed a bushranger known as "Billy the Puntman," who was afterwards taken near Albury, but on the way to Melbourne hanged himself with a shred of his blanket at Donnybrook, the last stage of the journey.

For several years Mr. Hare was on duty at the new rushes, such as Back Creek, Chinaman's Flat, and the notorious White Hill, near Maryborough, where murder was an almost daily occurrence, and he enjoyed a remarkable immunity from attack or injury, though he once had a narrow escape from being shot at Back Creek by one of his own troopers.

In his later years in the police force the more stirring episodes in Mr. Hare's experiences were the capture of Power, the bushranger, who, after surviving many vicissitudes and a long term of imprisonment, is supposed to have been accidentally drowned in the Lower Murray not long ago.

Power was a daring bushranger and owed his immunity from arrest chiefly to the help of his confederates in a lawless country and his plan of at once putting many miles between himself and the scene of his last exploit. Mr. Hare was one of the party led by Mr. Charles Nicolson, now a police magistrate, which captured Power, the other members of the party being Inspector Montford and Donald, a black tracker. With a promise of a reward of £500 they were able to secure the help of an associate of Power's, who led them to what was thought to be the safest of Power's retreats in the ranges.

The only road to it was past the house of the Quinns, a notorious family and active friends of Power's. As the bushranger afterwards stated, one of his best sentinels was a peacock at Quinn's house, but on the night of the capture the police party got past without the peacock giving the alarm. At daybreak they came on Power's hut, which was at once rushed, the bushranger being asleep inside, and Mr. Nicolson had hold of him before he could lay hands on his firearms.

Still more stirring were the incidents in connection with the notorious Kelly gang of bushrangers, Mr. Hare having command of the district police at the time the gang were finally exterminated. They had been criminals, chiefly

horse and cattle stealers, from childhood, but their outlawry commenced with the shooting of three mounted troopers on the Wombat Ranges in October, 1878. From that time the pick of the Victorian police, aided by six Queensland trackers, were in pursuit of them; but aided by a wonderful system of bush telegraphing, the help of friends and relations almost as criminal as themselves and a thorough knowledge—gained in horse-stealing—of some of the wildest mountain country in Victoria, they managed not only to evade capture for two years, but to provide themselves with funds by two well-planned and daring bank robberies.

Mr. Hare was given the command in the Kelly country after the successful raid upon the Euroa Bank. One of his first acts was to seek an interview with Aaron Sherritt, who, like Ned Kelly and Joe Byrne, was physically a splendid type of a bushman, but a known sympathiser with the outlaws and a participator in some of their earlier and less serious horse-stealing raids.

By a promise of the whole reward of £8,000 offered for the gang dead or alive, Sherritt's co-operation was secured, and Mr. Hare had always a belief in the genuineness of his assistance though other officers doubted him. Mr. Hare in his book tells how Mrs. Byrne, the mother of one of the bushrangers found her way one day into a police camp and recognised Aaron Sherritt as he lay asleep. Sherritt learning this when he awoke turned deadly pale and said "Now, I am a dead man," and the prophecy proved to be a correct one. Sherritt's connection with Mr. Hare was so little known that he was once fired on by the police, and on another occasion arrested for horse stealing.

On the 26th of June, some considerable time afterwards, and just after Mr. Hare had a second time been given the command of the police in the Kelly country, Aaron Sherritt was called out of his hut one night by a German neighbour, who was then in the hands of the bushrangers, and the moment he crossed the threshold was shot dead by his former schoolfellow, Joe Byrne.

Knowing that upon news of this further murder a special train would be sent to Beechworth with police and trackers, Ned Kelly and Hart had ridden to Glenrowan and, taking possession of the town, tore up the line in order to wreck the special. The story of the stopping of the special and the final struggle with the outlaws at Glenrowan is a familiar one, Mr. Hare led the rush of police on Jones's Hotel at Glenrowan, but was shot through the wrist and disabled on the first volley.

He directed the attack for some time, but being finally faint from loss of blood, had to leave for Benalla. He received afterwards the congratulations both of His Excellency the Governor and the Chief Secretary. A great deal of dissension amongst the police force followed, and Mr. Hare retiring from office, was made a police magistrate in 1882, which position he had

since held. While his discretion in connection with the pursuit of the Kelly gang was matter for comment, his personal courage was never once doubted.



Contemporary portrayal of Ned Kelly's last stand. He is wearing armour (including a helmet) fashioned by a blacksmith from the blades of a plough.
