The Eureka Stockade

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The Eureka Stockade, the birth of Australia's democracy, happened during the Australian Gold Rush, in the 1850s and was all due to the gold licences and miners rights. In the 1850s, gold brought wealth to Australia. This influenced many people to the newly founded country of Australia, and it's one of the main reasons Australia is such a multicultural place. The reward for gold was a massive 200 euro! That's about $7,798.13 today. On October 7th 1854, a tragedy occurred. A Scottish miner was murdered in a hotel in Ballarat, Victoria. The owner, James Bently, was accused of the crime. However, it was soon released due to some law enforcement accepting bribes. It was clear the authorities could not be trusted. Just ten days later, October 17th, there was hatred in the atmosphere. To make things worse, a group of miners set the hotel on fire. They were soon arrested by authorities. Many miners begged for their release, but it was no surprise that the authorities did the opposite. One hundred and fifty troops were sent to threaten miners into good behavior. Miners, also known as diggers, found this unfair so they all decided to meet at the Eureka diggings. A new Eureka flag was unveiled, a blue flag with the 5 stars of the southern cross representing unity and protest. Over the next few days, miners built a wooden stockade. Miners even practised military drills and appointed Peter Layor as their leader. On December 3rd 1854, three hundred troops were sent on foot and horseback. However, the miners were ready. In a battle that lasted barely twenty minutes, 22 miners and 6 soldiers died. Overall, the Eureka Stockade was a wild turn of events and has had a long lasting impact on Australia and modern day democracy.