

## A brief history of Trout in Australia.

In April 1864, a fellow by the name of James Youl, at considerable expense to himself, eventually managed to ship live brown trout ova to Australia. After several previous unsuccessful attempts to ship Atlantic salmon to the Antipodes, the *Norfolk* docked at Railway Pier in Melbourne with 90,000 salmon ova and 2700 brown trout ova aboard, packed between layers of moss inside 164 wooden boxes and stored in the ice house of the ship. The journey had taken 84 days.

The 'trout' ova had been provided by Frank Buckland (1200) & Francis Francis (1500) and were donated (independently and of their own volition) unaware of Youl's view on trout. James Youl was of the belief that trout would predate on salmon as they would develop quicker and as the intention was to introduce salmon, had decided against shipping trout. A little over 2 weeks after arriving in Melbourne, all but 11 boxes of the salmon ova were taken to Tasmania where a hatchery was being set up on a tributary of the Derwent River at Plenty and the first 'Australian' trout hatched on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 1864. Both trout and salmon were successfully liberated in the following years with some being kept as brood stock. The remaining 11 boxes of salmon ova were kept in Melbourne at the Victorian Ice Company and the first salmon to become a 'living fish' hatched in Victoria on the 5<sup>th</sup> May 1864.

These first hatchlings of salmon were released into Badgers Creek near Healesville, but unfortunately, no sign of them was ever to be seen again.

In 1866 a further shipment of 500 brown trout, 93,000 salmon and 15,000 'sea trout' ova from England was to follow aboard the clipper "*Lincolnshire*" but the brown trout which were left in Melbourne, all perished.

A hatchery that was built at the Victorian Acclimatisation Society's site (now the Royal Melbourne Zoo) had problems maintaining water temperature and in 1872 was moved to William Robertson's property "Wooling" on the Riddell's Creek near Gisborne. In the following years, other Acclimatisation Society's were set up at Ballarat (1870) & near Geelong (1874). These were supplied with brown trout and sea trout ova from the Plenty Ponds in Tasmania.

The 'Loch Leven' strain of brown trout were introduced to Victoria, Tasmania and NSW in the 1890's via New Zealand and were distributed from the Ballarat and Geelong Society's.

Rainbows were originally stocked into NSW in 1894 from New Zealand stock which had been shipped from California in 1877 and 1883. These were all from 'steelhead' (sea run) stock.

In Victoria, rainbows were supplied to the Ballarat and Geelong Society's at about the same time.

All of the trout in Australia are the progeny of these shipments. Without the vision and determination of James Youl and the provision of trout ova (when the contract stated 'salmon') by Buckland & Francis, brown trout may have never existed in this country.

*Information from VFFA book "Geehi to Great Lake" - "The introduction of Trout to Victoria" by Jack Ritchie (1985)*