



# The Man From Snowy River TOURIST Association Inc.

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## The Time Line for Jack Riley “The Man from Snowy River”



*Jack Riley (centre) at his hut around 1890*

**1841-** John Henry Riley born to Daniel Riley labourer & Anne (nee Murray). Castle Bar Ireland. Other date suggested are 1827, 1834, 1835.

**1854 (March)** - John Riley arrives Sydney Harbour on the Rodney aged 13 years.

**1858** - John Pierce (The Elder) takes up Greg Greg Station

**1862** Jack is in Omeo. Witness to his sisters charge of assault against her husband Joseph Jones.

**1871** - John Barry transfers Tom Groggin Station to John Pierce (the elder) for use as a mountain cattle run.

**1876** - Jack was employed at Bendoc as Stockman-in-charge for Thomas Pendergast. After the death of Thomas Pendergast he entered the employ of James Thompson of Cobbin to look after cattle at Willis on the Snowy River.

**1884** - Riley left the Snowy River droving cattle and came to John Pierce's station at Greg Greg near Corryong.

**1884** - Jack takes cattle into Pierce's mountain station, Tom Groggin, and decides to stay. Soon after John Pierce puts Jack on in charge of Groggin.

**Late 1889 or Early 1890** - An old friend of John Pierce, Walter Mitchell of Bringenbrong

Station, takes A.B. (Banjo) Paterson on a camping trip into the mountains with the intention of attaining the highest peak. They spend the night at Riley's hut at Groggin where they are thoroughly entertained. The next day Jack guides them to the summit of Kosciuszko, returning to Groggin over the next few days via the Ram's Head, the Cascade country and the Pilot.

**26<sup>th</sup> of April 1890** -Paterson's poem "The Man from Snowy River" is published in the Sydney Bulletin.

**1890 to 1914** - Jack remains at Groggin looking after the run and occasionally acting as guide to adventurous tourists. During this time his fame grows but Jack shuns the limelight and only ventures into Khancoban and Corryong when it becomes a point of necessity.

**1895** – The poem was re-released, this time saying down by Kosciusko instead of down by Araluen.

**1912** – Jack became seriously ill and Father Hartigan was called to perform the Last Rights. Jack declares that "Paterson fellow got it wrong. Clancy was not there, there was....."

**Early July 1914** - While mustering cattle Will Findlay drops by to see Jack and discovers his old mate is seriously ill. Will Findlay insists Jack return with him to Corryong to receive medical help but Jack refuses to budge. Constable Moore of Corryong delegates Will Findlay, Jack and Alec McInnes, Fred Jarvis and Bob Butler to bring Jack in.

**July 14 1914** - Jack's last journey begins as the stockmen attempt to bring the old man into Corryong for urgent medical help.

**July 14, 1914** - Evening - Jack draws his last breath in George Carter's hut at the tin mine at the junction of Surveyors Creek and the Indi (Murray) River.

**16th July 1914** – Jack finds his last resting place in the Corryong Pioneer cemetery.

**Note** the only references that can be found that supports his trade as a tailor are from a jail entry 1863 and in the Cooma Monaro paper on the 27/7/1914 in an obituary notice for Jack, the writer gives the following "On his return he did some droving across to Gippsland, and at other times worked at his trade (a tailor) about the Snowy River". The story that he opened a Tailors shop in Omeo to support his sister, Mary Ann Jones, after the death of her husband, clashes with his time at Bendock 1876.

Produced for "The Man from Snowy River Tourist Association" by Richard Hubbard (0409 761570) from documents ranging from 1834 to 1950. All effort has been made to verify information provided, however there still may be errors.

### ***Why Jack Riley is the "Man from Snowy River"***

Jack Riley was the only one of about 13 contenders to have met Banjo Paterson prior to the writing of the poem in 1890.

There were two versions of the poem. The first was printed in the Bulletin in 1890. The second version was published in 1895.

Paterson consistently said the poem was not about one man, but in 1934, while meeting with the Australian Ski Team he confirmed to Tom Mitchell that Jack Riley was the inspiration for the poem.

Most people argue that Jack can't be the "Man" from the point of view that they believe the poem is a factual account of a brumby chase, but in reality it is full of poetic license which makes it difficult to discern what is fact and what is fiction. For example, the original poem had 'down by Araluen side", whereas the 1895 version has "Kosciusko side". If it was factual where did the chase occur?

The other main source of error that has distorted Jack Riley's history was works



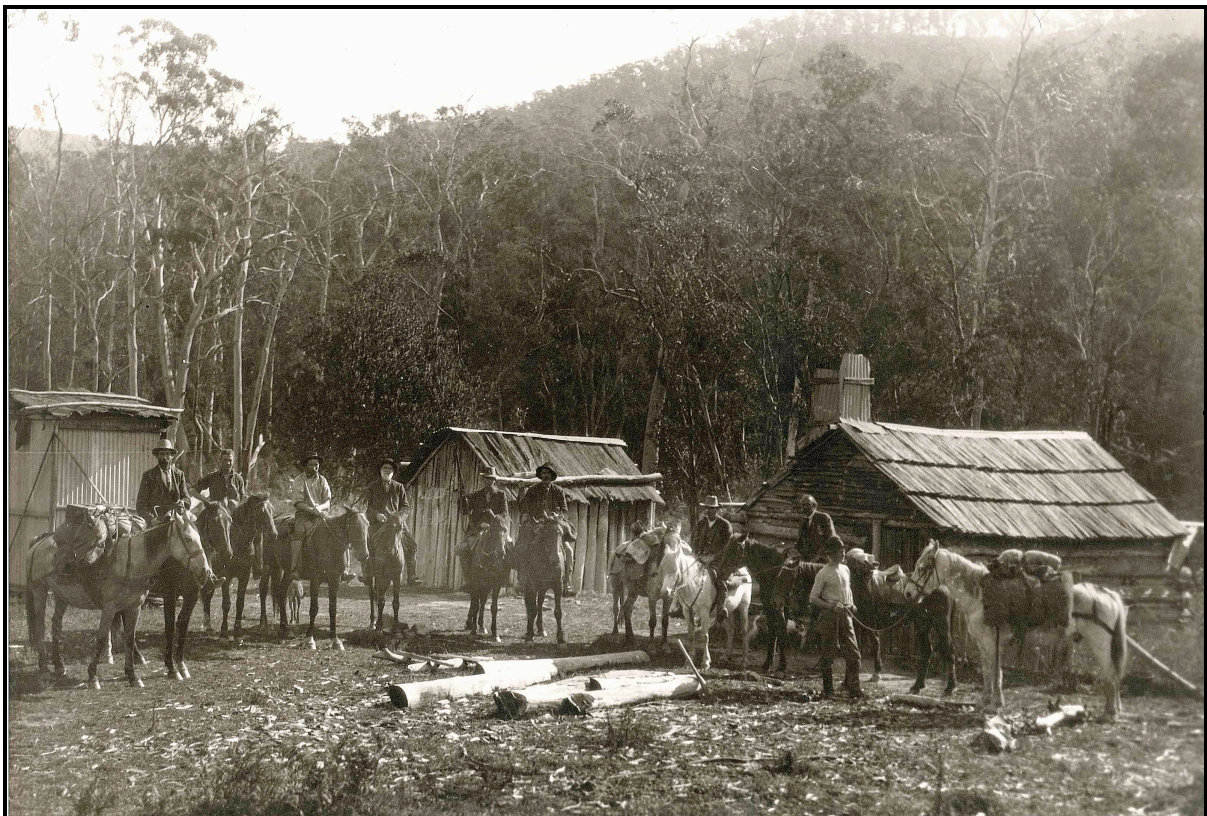
published by a Corryong Primary School Principal in the 1960s. Unfortunately this man's story was based on little fact and a lot of imagination. As a result historians like Jean Carmody and Lez Blake have included material that they have sourced from his works and therefore their work are not as accurate as it should have been.

Monaro Mercury. Cooma, Monday 27 July 1914 written by an old hand on the Monaro. In this article the writer summarises Jack's life giving dates that can be verified from other sources, which makes it a very important part of the evidence that Jack was the Man. The writer is one that believes the poem is a factual account of the chase and as such said that Jack could not have been the Man, however he then goes on to say *"but Riley was a better rider at 50 years than at 25, strange as this may seem"...."and during his last 20 years it would have been safe to say that there was not a man his age in either State who could have paced him in rough country."* The writer also notes *"It may be interesting to know how Jack came to think he was the inspirer of those lines of Paterson's."*

Clearly Jack believed that Paterson had written the poem about him. He was also aware that Paterson had not written an accurate account, which in 1912 while talking to Farther PJ Hartigan as written up in the Catholic Weekly Times

Before leaving in the morning, Hartigan had *"a yarn" with the Man from Snowy River, and was astonished to find that he was by no means pleased with Banjo's version of the story.*

*"We often had to do that sort of thing, and had tougher "goes" than that," he said, deprecatingly. "I was taking a party up to Kossy, and was telling them about it, and one of them put it in a book; but he brings in the names of a lot of men who weren't there at all. There was nobody named Clancy; there was me and so-and-so, and so-and-so."*



Riders gather at the mustering camp. Jack is the 4<sup>th</sup> from the left