

GOLD MINING

P O S T   A N D   T E L E G R A P H   O F F I C E

This was a typical telegraph office - a larger and more imposing government building.

We are still searching for a real history of what Forbes Post Office was like. We are told that maybe the Post Office was originally in a building called Burchette's Store, but we have not really got to the answer of this. "Black Ridge" was Forbes' original name just as it is interesting to note that Hill End was originally called, Forbes, for some period of time.

The Post Office, or Telegraph Office is a typical Government structure further West. We therefore obtained a description of a log building, actually, with logs set in the ground vertically and a large thatched roof, possibly with reeds according to the regions and according to the nearness of water. The thatch was lashed down with ships yarn and it relates back to the sailing ship heritage of our country. Thatch laid in England is different to the thatch laid in Australia. This is not because we are doing it now, in fact local regional problems and uses modified the actual techniques. Here the sheaves are placed all together and they are not identified as a single sheaf. It is en masse type of placing of thatch. If you visit some of the farms where old stone age buildings still exist you will see that it is placed in well defined sheafs.

Often with the sheaves laid across the rafters underneath and then building up to be parallel to the rafters on top. Obviously when the thatch gets to the top it has to be lying along the slope of the roof, so that the water can run off.

They have reduced the amount of timber in the roof. In the case of this building because it is not a sheaf roof but tending to be just thatch en masse. There are rafters and battens. The battens typically, as with many of the joints in these timber buildings, were dowled down and then the sheaf was laid, and the yarn was used to lash that together. It is not unknown that even the roofs were actually lashed down also, ie that battens and rafters were lashed down. In this particular one they are dowled and this is quite a common way in this area.

On the verticle log walls, the cracks have been packed with clay mixed with straw. This is a common way of actually filling up the cracks and getting rid of the drafts. The people who worked in it permanently were always adding to it so that they were permanently damp. The technique adopted is to pug the whole area - not just between the slabs. It would be termed pugging of logs.

Typically the Post Offices in the gold mining areas were terribly small. They were cramped and over burdened with a lot of mail for great populations, that would suddenly burgeon up to thousands, in this case thirty to forty thousand.

They were tiny rooms but the only way to keep order with beligerent miners, was actually to work in the room and open the window. This was a typical way to deal