

James Stephen Lynch

An Unsung Life

Part Four

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(The Third)

1895. This was the year James Stephen Lynch decided to leave the family and the Monaro district. At twenty one years of age, the same as his older brother Eugene, when he decided to leave the family property, James was set for foreign climes.

There was absolutely no knowledge of this part of James' life that passed on to later generations of the Eather or Lynch families. The return from WW1 photo taken outside the Eather family home at Belmore in 1919 was accepted as the highlight of James Stephen Lynch's life. James' even further unsung life was uncovered with the small note on his attestation papers that he had served in the "Shanghai Police".

The search began. First question was. What were the "Shanghai Police"?

The Shanghai Municipal Police were formed in 1854 to see to law and order in the British International Settlement Port of Shanghai. By 1899 the Settlement had grown to cover 5,721 acres of the city. As well as crime prevention and detection and traffic control the S.M.P. were also seen by the British Settlement as their first line of defence against Chinese Nationalist activity.

The first detachment was 31 Europeans, borrowed from the Hong Kong Police. Further men were recruited from the Royal Irish Constabulary, London's Metropolitan Police and from military presence in Shanghai itself. Agents were set up for the recruitment of Britons in the United Kingdom and they also recruited in the colonies.

It would appear that this is what enticed James Lynch and his brother Eugene, plus some dozen or more males from the Monaro region whose names I have come across who joined the S.M.P. in the mid 1890's.

The search for information struck gold with the discovery of Professor Robert Bickers, Department of History, Bristol University, U.K. He is the China history guru, of all gurus'.

He has a web site that covers China from dawn to dusk, history wise. It is amazing how he has managed to collect these miles of history from a country that has been very lax in letting information exit to outsiders. His collection on China itself beggars description. A photographic collection of China in all its very complex configurations. Basic life in China not all that many years ago was very cheap to put it rather mildly. These pictures show that in very gory detail.

The information on the Shanghai Municipal Police is stupendous.

What did it entail to join this force?

You applied and when accepted you were signed up for three years, your fare was paid and you started with the rank of Constable. If you resigned before that time you had to refund that fare and super was withheld.

Pay was not very generous but there was one month's leave every year which had to be taken outside of Shanghai. After five years service you were entitled to what was known as "long leave". This amounted to seven months leave. The organization was run much the same as the British Raj in India and other British colonies of that time. There were hill stations and house boats where you could retreat to when on leave, shooting parties and trips were popular.

Life was regimented. In fact recruits were not allowed to marry in their first term of service and permission to marry after that was limited to no more than a third of the Sergeants at any one time avoiding pressure on married quarters. Life for a Constable was walking the beat, through the alleys and byways of Shanghai where life was very cheap. Crime, Corruption and dead bodies were a daily occurrence. Public executions by the Chinese authorities were a regular happening. Chances of promotion were very limited unless you had some military background.

Part of Robert Bickers web site on reference to the Shanghai Municipal Police is a list of some 2,742 men who served in the force over the years with the little information that he has managed to glean about each.

The columns listed as follows:- 1. Surname. 2. Forename. 3. Joined. 4. Serving. 5. Left. 6. Previous Employment. 7. Date of birth. 8. Place of birth.

When I first scrolled through the pages of names and came to the following entries, I did at last realize that my Uncle Jim's "Unsung Life", after these many years, was showing its face to the family who had no knowledge of his varied charismatic past.

Lundquist	A.	1895	1896		Unknown		
Lynch	J.S.	0	0	1905	Unknown		
Lynch	Thomas (2)	1903		1912	Unknown	01 Jan, 1882	Australia, NSW
Lynch	Eugene Hugh	1895		1926	Army, NSW Artillery (1889), farmer	01 Jan, 1869	Australia, NSW
Lynch	Thomas		1863		Army	01 Jan, 1823	Ireland, Limerick

Line 2. Lynch J.S. Left the service 1905. All the rest unknown.

Line 4. Lynch Eugene Hugh was James' older brother with lots more information.

Line 3. Lynch Thomas(2). Was another younger brother.

What would Shanghai be without the help of the Lynch family?

Robert Bickers was most cooperative and receptive when I did manage to get in touch with him. On Uncle Jim, "Lynch. J.S." he knew no more than what he had in the list he had compiled. I managed to pass on the two Christian names of James Stephen and he pointed me in many directions to learn more about the S.M.P. He also introduced me to Eugene Hugh s' grand daughter, via e-mail, who had been in contact with him some years before. Her father had been born in Shanghai and she was very active in seeking information about her grandfather, etc. And with their input there was much more information about the Lynch boys in Shanghai and beyond.

"The North China Herald" was the dominant English newspaper in Shanghai for nearly 100 years. It is the main source of day to day activities during those late 1800's early 1900's.

It was shortly after our exchange of information that Robert Bickers passed on to me that he had been looking into the old newspapers records and had noted the following :-

"Mr. J.S.Lynch" arrived in Shanghai on the steamer "Chihti" from Hong Kong in the week ending 25 June 1895. (Source: "North China Herald" of that date..)

Extract from "North China Herald" Arrivals list 9th August 1895. E.H.Lynch aboard steamer "Guthrie". Shanghai temperature readings for that day 9 August 1895, "taken in the open air in a shaded situation in the Foreign Settlement, 94.0 F. blue sky and clouds.

This latter information about Eugene's arrival came from his granddaughter.

James Stephen Lynch arrived in Shanghai just over six weeks ahead of his older brother Eugene Hugh Lynch and both went into service with the Shanghai Municipal Police that year.

For the next ten years they both served together in Shanghai and in 1903 were joined by a third brother, Thomas Sylvester Lynch. James served in the S.M.P. till 1905 before leaving, Thomas served from 1903 until 1912 when he left and moved on to New Zealand. Eugene however remained in the service until 1926 when he retired after more than thirty years in Shanghai.

Research on James Stephen's activities during his ten year service in Shanghai with the S.M.P. are still being sought. It is recorded that James and his brother Eugene both played cricket with the S.M.P. team with some success during this time and also were active in the rifle club as well. It is known that Eugene won several trophies over the years in the latter.



Shanghai Municipal Police Cap Badge.

July 1898, saw the French, who were one of the four countries that were concession holders of the European settlement of Shanghai claim an extension of their settlement, taking over a local native burial ground which the latter were compelled to sell. Serious rioting occurred. A French cruiser landed a party and the rioters were fired on, a number of natives being killed and wounded. The French had also recently demanded from China the secession of valuable territory in the valley of the Yangtsekiang, which England regarded as her sphere of influence, as compensation and in settlement of the dispute with the Ningpo Guild. The Viceroy of Nanking refused to pay compensation and was reported to be preparing to resist French aggression.

The European Settlement of Shanghai was governed by a Municipal Council elected by the foreign residents and the Shanghai Municipal Police were the front line in any troubles and disturbances that arose. Great Britain, America and Germany the other three concession holders declined further negotiations relative to a further extension of the foreign settlement and requested the Viceroy to appoint a deputy to deal with this matter.

It would appear that the brothers Lynch, James and Eugene, would have had a very active time during these events which carried on into the following year. The trade of Shanghai was far greater than any of the other Chinese treaty ports and there was more than a little rivalry between the various countries that held these concession areas.

In 1899 during or just after this turmoil Eugene was promoted to Sergeant.

Below is a photo of a group of some S.M.P. off on a shooting party some years prior to the arrival of the Lynch brothers.

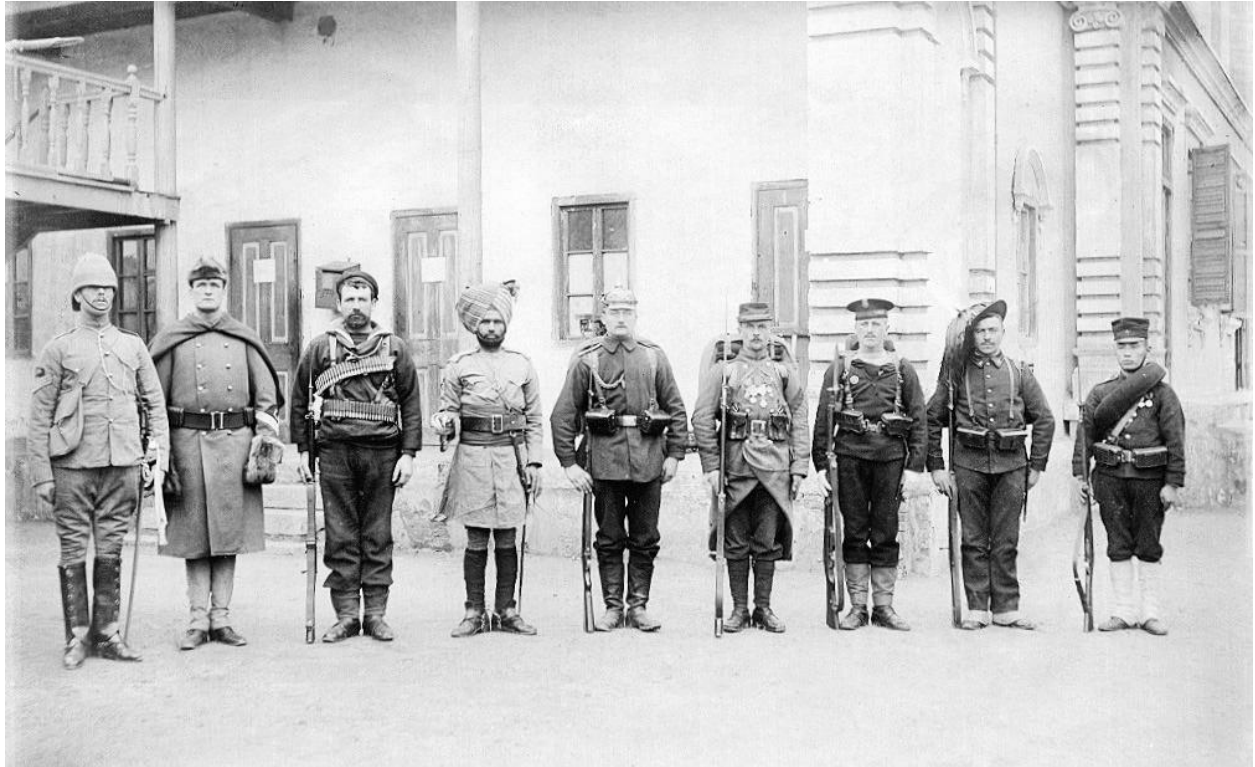


Life did have some softer moments.

Turmoil and China seem to be constant companions over the ages. 1900 proved to be the start of another great outburst of trouble centered mainly to the north of the country. This became known as the Boxer Rebellion. It did not move as far south as Shanghai however the International community became heavily involved.

The Boxer Rebellion was a violent anti foreign and anti Christian uprising. They were motivated by pro nationalist sentiments and opposition to imperialist expansion and associated Christian missionary activity. The International community formed an Eight Nation Alliance and invaded China to defeat the “Boxers” and then took savage retribution.

Wikipedia / Boxer Rebellion, has a very comprehensive report on the whole history of the uprising and the very bloody reprisals that ensued.



Above is a photo of troops of the Eight Nations that were involved in the suppression of the Boxers.

L.to R. 1. British Soldier. 2. United States Soldier. 3. Australian Colonial. (From British Empire.). 4. Indian Soldier. (From British Empire.). 5. German Soldier. 6. French Soldier. 7. Russian Marine. 8. Italian Soldier. 9. Japanese Soldier.

Sydney Morning Herald. July 1930. Obituary notice for Eugene Lynch stated in part ---- “When the Boxer rebellion broke out in China, Mr. Lynch’s training as a gunner in the New South Wales Artillery obtained for him a position with the Allied forces, and later he was awarded the Boxer medal.”

Late 1900 James Lynch took his long leave and returned to visit the family property “Bulgundra” The photograph below was taken during this time.



Bulgundra c1900

L-R: Julia Maud Primmer, Eliza Lynch ?, Catherine Lynch (nee McMahon), Myra Lynch, James Lynch, Elizabeth Ann Lynch

L. to R. Julia Maud Primmer. James's niece. Eliza Lynch, ?. His sister. Catherine Lynch, (nee McMahon), His Mother, Myra Lynch, Another niece, James Lynch, Elizabeth Ann Lynch, (sister in law).



Bridge at Buckley's Crossing, Snowy R.

This photo was taken in 1900 and shows the bridge across the Snowy River at Buckley's Crossing.

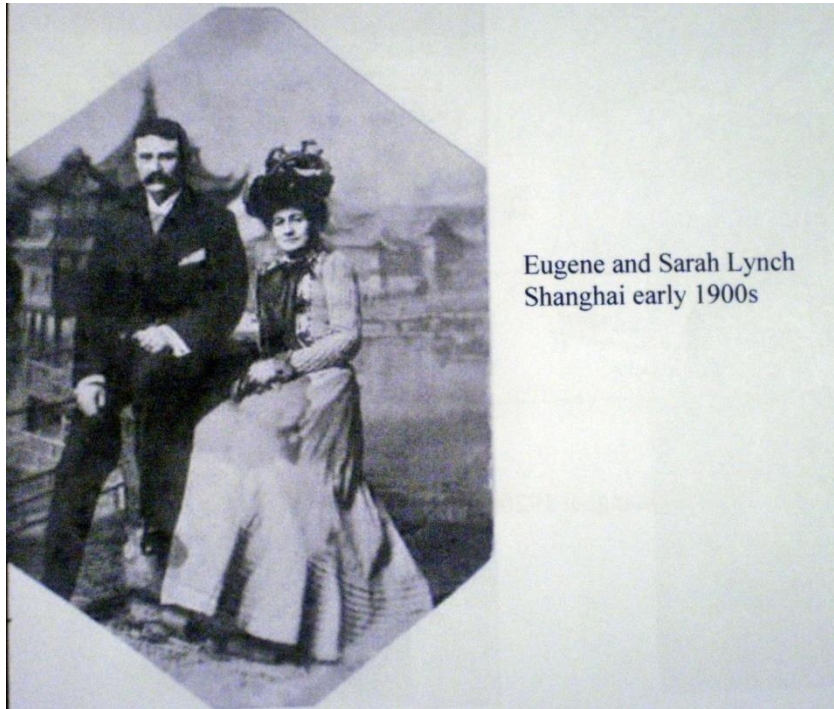
Buckley's Crossing was the original name for the village of Dalgety. The bridge carried on the old name.

Today Dalgety is the only remaining town situated on the Snowy River.

Possibly a little later than his brother James Lynch, Eugene Lynch took his long leave also and headed

back to Australia. He had of course been promoted to Sergeant and had been successful in gaining permission to marry.

Eugene Hugh Lynch married Sarah Rachael Conroy on the 3rd July 1901 at St, Mary's Cathedral Sydney. There were no family members of Eugene's recorded as witnesses on the marriage record. Eugene and his new wife returned to Shanghai shortly after.



Eugene and Sarah Lynch
Shanghai early 1900s

And it was on 12th June 1903 that Sarah gave birth to a daughter. Kathleen Bridget Lynch. Known as "Kae" to all the family. Born in Shanghai.

James and Eugene both returned to Shanghai after their long leave was over and renewed their respective roles in the S.M.P. James still as a constable and Eugene now a married Sergeant. While Eugene's life in Shanghai was well known to his family and descendants and has been actively researched the same does not apply to James. His Shanghai service was neither acknowledged or even known of to the following generations of the Lynch and Eather families.

Research on James Lynch in Shanghai from 1895 to 1905 when he left the S.M.P. is still the subject of this particular scribe. Hopefully records will emerge to enlighten us a little more of his activities.

(Further to follow.)