

---

## Community voices – transcript – D 3377 L

### Edward Austin

*Extract from his reminiscences recounting the shortage of males in South Australia due to the Victorian gold rush of the 1850's and the ability of the ladies to cope.*

---

Reminiscences of Long, Long Ago by Edward Austin

...

The gold discoveries in Victoria and New South Wales about this time (1851), or shortly after, worked a wonderful change in the value of stock, and indeed, of everything saleable. It upset existing conditions generally, all over the colonies.

All sorts and conditions of men became very scarce in South Australia, and women were left in many cases to see how they could “run the show” and manage without their lords and masters, and manage they did, somehow, and often wonderfully well, considering their inexperience. Indeed, they frequently proved themselves to be the “better half” with regard to management.

Nearly every man who could leave, went to the diggings, and by far the majority did very well, though often those who remained behind were those who divided the spoils and reaped most advantage, owned plenty of stock, did even better as prices rose by leaps and bounds when the diggers returned with their pockets full of gold...