

Three Wise Men and a Mountain

The lives of three wise men Tadeusz Kościuszko, Count Paul Edmund Strzelecki and Edmond Buckley are forever linked through their association with the highest peak of the Snowy Mountains of Australia, the beautiful Mount Kosciuszko. Edmond Buckley lived the ideals put forward by these two futuristic compassionate Polish men, the noble ideals of freedom, equality and a life of adventure.

Both Tadeusz Kosciuszko and Paul Edmund Strzelecki were Polish men who ventured away from Europe to explore the new countries, Kosciuszko in America and Strzelecki in Australia.

Meanwhile Edmond Buckley, for some years, had made his home within the Snowy Mountain Ranges of Australia. He was a man who loved the freedom of the country life, his livestock and the unexplored Australian bush landscape. By 1840 he had been established on his southern Snowy Mountains Station for some years prior to the arrival of Count Strzelecki, who arrived on his isolated doorstep during his geological survey of south eastern Australia.

Edmond Buckley, an Irishman, had arrived in Australia in 1812 from England and immediately began his agricultural life in the district of Prospect, NSW just south of Sydney. In 1818 he married an Irish convict lady, Elinor Coady who had a two year old son named Patrick. Edmond Buckley very honourably took on the role of stepfather to this young child, who would become known as Patrick Coady Buckley. The family of three prospered in the agricultural contribution to the new Colony, with Edmond Buckley supplying milk and dairy products as well as wheat to meet the Government tenders for supply of produce for the hospitals and early Colony communities. Edmond Buckley was a marvellous role model to his stepson, with the pursuit of excellence in the quality of everything he produced from the land. Edmond Buckley was perhaps Australia's first nature conservationist, being given the responsibility of ensuring the protection of the trees and timber in the 100 acre Prospect Common in 1829.

During the 1830's, Edmond Buckley and stepson Patrick, and with a number of Stockmen in their employ, moved livestock south to the Monaro district, establishing a Station and a Store at Wulwye. Edmond and Patrick, over the next few years also developed a Station to the south-east at Benambra and would no doubt have gazed at the beauty of the snow covered mountains in the vicinity, including the as yet unnamed highest peak now known as Mount Kosciuszko. Both men made various annual trips back to Sydney, and in 1837, with the loss of Mrs Ellen Buckley, her husband Edmond, and her son Patrick had a marble tablet placed in her honour in St Mary's Catholic Cathedral in Sydney.

Returning to the Snowy Mountains, Edmond Buckley and his stepson Patrick moved further south to the present district of Omeo, beside the Tambo River, establishing the Bindi Station where Edmond Buckley played host to Count Strzelecki and his associates in 1840. Count Strzelecki marked Edmond and Patrick's stations in two locations on his Map as 'Bucklers Stn' [sic] marked as 'Encampments of the Explorers' on "Route from Yass Plains by the Australian Alps and Gipps Land, to Port Phillip / by E.P. Strelski, 1840" produced in London in 1841 by John Arrowsmith, Lithographer. Count Strzelecki named Edmond Buckley as one of the two first European pioneers into Gippsland in his report to the

House of Commons in 1841. It was on this trip that Count Strzelecki climbed and named Australia's highest mountain Mount Kosciuszko, in honour of his fellow countryman Thaddeus Kosciuszko.

Both Tadeusz Kościuszko and Count Paul Edmund Strzelecki moved back to Europe after their adventures in the new lands abroad and both became well-known and awarded for their feats. Edmond Buckley remained in Australia, went on to marry again and raised a family of eight children, the youngest James being my Great Grandfather. Edmond Buckley is virtually unknown for his role in the early exploration and settlement of Australia, however he holds pride of place in my heart. He was a man who always treated his employers as equal to himself, was respectful to the Indigenous people of Australia, and was a caring, strong family man with many descendants who are very proud of Edmond Buckley, our early Australian ancestor.

The three wise men, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Count Paul Edmund Strzelecki and Edmond Buckley were all adventurous explorers who had the qualities of fairness, equality and the Australian characteristic of a "Fair Go". Their lives are forever linked through the mighty Mount Kosciuszko.

Bibliography

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3. http://www.kosciuszkoheritage.com/200/en_competition.html - Information regarding Tadeusz Kościuszko.