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**BRO. HIERONYMUS (JEROME) SALVATOR LOPEZ
von PERIERA
ALIAS CHARLES RASP**

Jerome was born on 23 November 1847 in a castle in the Kingdom of Saxony. His Grandfather was a member of the Portuguese aristocracy and a high-ranking politician. His father worked for a German prince in Portugal.

Jerome's parents both died when he was young and at the age of 12 he went to live with relatives in Paris where he received a good education. He spoke five languages :- German, French, English and Russian and Portuguese.

In December 1870, as a 23 year old officer in the Royal Saxon Army, he took part in the Siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian War where he met English war correspondent, Archibald Forbes who had spent some time in Australia in the 1860's.

On 2 December 1870, Jerome's closest personal friend Dr. Emanuel Raspe was killed in action.

This, together with his anguish over the war between his two homelands and his deteriorating health during the bitter winter of 1870-71 were to cause Jerome to leave the battlefields, journey over the border into Holland and take a ship to Australia.

He also changed his name to Charles Rasp, the name of his best friend only without the e !

There is no record of Charles Rasp's arrival in Australia. It is believed he adopted the name, Van Hengel when he left the ship in Melbourne but it was Charles Rasp who, worked as a grape-picker at Lilydale before trying his luck on the Victorian goldfields.

He wandered along the Murray working as a station hand.

In 1872, he experienced the 'tin rush' at Jingellic, a New South Wales town on the Murray River some 50 km east of Albury.

The outcrop of tin oxide was black, heavy and hard, just like the outcrop at Jerome's native Erzebirge where tin had been mined for more than 1,000 years.

He then wandered along the Darling River working as a station-hand and shepherd and loading river boats at Wilcannia until drought stopped the river traffic.

He then went westward into the Barrier Ranges where he was employed by George McCulloch, the manager of Mt. Gipps Station.

The area, originally inhabited by the Wilyagalic people was first discovered in 1844 by Captain Charles Sturt, who discovered it as a 'broken hill' in some of the most desolate country he had seen.

It is 1180 km from Sydney, 502 km from Adelaide and 304 metres above sea level.

Rasp became one of McCulloch's most trusted men and several times arranged him to take mobs of sheep to Adelaide.

Rasp had noticed the outcrop of black rock and thought it looked like the tin oxide he had seen before. He had no knowledge of geology so he purchased a copy of the *Prospector's Guide*. Using this he became sure that the black hill was a mountain of tin oxide.

On 5 September 1883, Charles Rasp, after consulting his *Prospector's Guide*, decided to peg a claim on the blackest part of the hill!

George McCulloch and other station hands formed a syndicate of seven. They were :- Charles Rasp - boundary rider, George McCulloch - Manager Mt. Gipps Station, George Urquhart - Sheep overseer, George A. M. Lind - Storekeeper and bookkeeper, Philip Charley - Station hand, David James - Contractor and owner of bullock teams, and James Poole.

Further claims were pegged and by 21 September, Rasp and the syndicate had lodged claims for a total of nearly 3 km of the 'hill' !

Each member held two shares and agreed, if they decided to sell, to give the other members of the syndicate first option. Eventually Rasp and McCulloch were the major shareholders.

It was soon realised that it wasn't tin oxide but silver, lead and zinc that were the riches to be mined and, on 16 July 1885, the Broken Hill Propriety Company was formed. Charles Rasp, although he was one of the largest shareholders, was not one of the directors.

Charles, now a wealthy man, was able to move to Adelaide to begin the third phase of his remarkable life.

He began a comfortable social life among the large German community and, in 1886 became a Justice of the Peace and director of several companies.

On 22 July 1886, he married Agnes Maria Louise Klevesahl, a blacksmith's daughter from the Prussian village of Woldenberg. She was working as a waitress at Café Kindermenn in Rundle Street, Adelaide.

They moved into a mansion they called *Willyama* and led a life of luxury.

They travelled extensively including visits to their homeland.

On 27 May 1907, Charles Rasp died suddenly from a heart attack. Agnes, who later remarried, died childless in 1936.

Charles Rasp never revealed his true identity, not even to Agnes, and it was not until nearly 100 years after his arrival in Australia that research revealed the true story.

Bro. Charles Rasp was made a mason in Lodge Umberumberka, No. 2116 E.C. meeting at De Bain's hotel, Silvertown on 17 November 1885. The Lodge had been inaugurated under dispensation on 17 October 1885. Bro. Rasp was passed Fellowcraft on 22 December 1885 and raised a Master Mason on 20 January 1886. He called off in February 1895. His name is perpetuated in the Charles Rasp Memorial Library in Broken Hill.

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Bro. Charles Rasp.

