

ALBURY IN 1876

The following is an article published in the "Australian Town and Country Journal" (Sydney) of September 16, 1876 (<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/70604201#pstart5669667>) giving a description of early development of Albury and District.

A Visit to Albury (by our Special Correspondent)

IN depicting the history and progress of one of the most important of Australian inland towns, I might say, after the manner of playwrights:—

Scene I. A wide river, the banks studded with gum-trees. On the southern bank a small tribe of blacks, and a party of white men encamped.

Scene II. A small station homestead, with blacksmith's shop and public-house; and on the river, a rough log canoe in charge of an aboriginal lad.

Scene III. (Thirty years have elapsed.) A town of 3000 inhabitants, well laid out streets, fine churches, hotels, banks, warehouses, mills, stores, and private residences, and a noble bridge spanning the river. Such has been the history of Albury.

The pictures shown in the accompanying engravings represent the explorer's tree, which is still standing, and a view of the Albury post office, with one of Cobb and Co's coaches drawn up before it, under the charge of the manager, Mr John Lloyd, who is one of the best whips on the road.



POST-OFFICE, ALBURY

On the 3rd October 3 1824,
Mr Hamilton Hume,

accompanied by Mr Hovell and a party of six men, met at Mr Hume's cottage, Appin, and started on their celebrated overland journey to endeavour to reach Port Phillip. The dangers and the hardships the party encountered, and their many escapes, have often been recounted. Early on the afternoon of the 16th November, 1824, Mr Hume discovered a noble stream which he called the Hume, in honour of his father, Mr Andrew Hamilton Hume, of the Imperial Commissariat Department, and who had arrived in Sydney about the year 1789. After crossing the river, now better known as the Murray, the journey was continued, and the party of explorers reached the shores of Hobson's Bay, at 4 o'clock on the 16th December following. In other words, the party took thirty days to accomplish a distance which now — fifty years afterwards — can be performed by rail and special train in five-and-a-half hours. On the return of the exploring party to Sydney, early in 1825, Mr Hume gave a full description of the country through which he had passed, but not withstanding his very favourable account, little advantage was taken of his discoveries for nearly ten years. About the year 1835, Mr C H Ebdon took up two stations on the banks of the Hume, Mungabareena, and Bonegilla, which included the site of the present town of Albury. In the following year Mr Ebdon stocked the country taken up, by sending a mob of cattle over to it from Yass, in charge of Mr William Wise. Mr Ebdon was followed by Messrs Huon and Mitchell, and Wodonga was shortly afterwards settled by Mr Paul Huon. In 1837 the Bungowannah run, which extends from Albury down the river for ten miles, was taken up by Mr John Dight, and to this day the homestead continues in the occupation of

the Dight family. During these years of gradual occupation the present site of Albury was known far and wide as "the Murray Crossing-Place," but why the name "Hume" was not retained, as in common justice it deserved to be, is not explained. On the 10th October, 1839, the first sale of allotments in this, the first established township on the Murray, took place, by auction, in the Market Buildings, Sydney, by order of E Deas Thomson, Colonial Secretary of the period, the reserve price being £2 per acre. Some of it is now worth £2000 per acre.

The first house worthy of the name in Albury was an inn erected in 1842 by Mr Robert Brown, and the second house was put up in 1843 by Mr James Wyse. The first child born in Albury was the daughter of Mr A Huon. In those early days many articles of food were scarce, and had to be procured from the new settlement of Port Phillip. Fights with the blacks were of ordinary occurrence, but in the end, as in most similar cases, the blacks always came off second best. In 1846 a census was taken, when the population was 65 — of these 48 were males, and 22 females. There are tales of a severe drought, and tales of an overwhelming flood between 1842 and 1850. In 1851 Albury received a considerable accession to its population. It was the year in which the gold-fields were discovered. The culture of the vine was commenced on the banks of the Murray in 1840, by the German pioneers Schubach, Frauenfelder, and Rau, and notwithstanding many difficulties, and in spite of strong prejudices, the wines of Albury have made a name for themselves in the markets of the world.

The growth of Albury has been sound and gradual. Land was taken up eagerly and put under cultivation, by men whose desire was to found homes for their families. Flour-mills were erected in 1850 by Messrs McLaurin, and the growth of cereals was extensively undertaken and continued to the present day. On June 4, 1859, Albury had risen to such importance, by reason of the wealth of the district of which it was the centre that the town was proclaimed a municipality, and in July following the election of aldermen took place: the first mayor was Mr J T Fallon, a name honoured in the district. The aldermen, in addition to the mayor elected for the first municipality, were Messrs L Jones, Jas McLaurin, A C Kidd, W Wyse, J Horsley, J McGall, J Roper, and P Davis. Auditors: Messrs H Moffitt and A Haydon. The representatives in Parliament in the early days were Messrs George Macleay and John Hay. Among remarkable local events, it may be noted that the first steamer arrived in Albury on 2nd October, 1855, and that the Victorian Railway was opened to the Murray, at Wodonga (opposite side of the river to Albury), on November 20th 1873. The first clergyman of any denomination located in Albury was the Rev Mr Ballantyne, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, who arrived about the year 1855. The first clergyman of the Church of England was the Rev Mr Elliott; of the Church of Rome, the Rev Father Maher; and of the Wesleyan denomination, the Rev Mr Neal; and of the Congregational Church, the Rev Mr Fry. The members of the Church of England have spent about £7000; the Roman Catholics, £20,000 and the Wesleyans about £3000, in building religious edifices in Albury, during the past twenty years. There is a court-house, erected at a cost of £4000; a hospital, at a cost of about £3000; a Mechanics' Institute, at a cost of £1200; Model Schools, at a cost of several thousand pounds. At the Post-office (shown in the accompanying engraving), a great amount of business is transacted. In round numbers 100,000 inland, and 70,000 foreign letters, besides 95,000 newspapers, pass through the office annually. An enormous amount of business is done at local Lands Office. Since Robertson's Land Act came into to operation, over three-quarters of a million acres were conditionally purchased in the Albury district. The amount of Customs duties levied in Albury during the first six months of 1875 was £12,250, or at the rate of £24,500 per annum.

Looking at Albury at the present day, we find that the actual value of the rateable property within the borough, with its 95 miles of streets and roads, is about £23,000 annually; that there are five churches, a convent, four or five schools, about thirteen hotels, the same number of

stores, two flour-mills, three banks, numerous charitable, benefit, and friendly societies, including the Oddfellows, who have a fine hall. The township is prettily situated in latitude 36 deg 5 min S, and 146 deg 55 min E. Its distance from Sydney is 351 miles, and from Melbourne 205 miles.

The wealth of the district may be judged from the following statistical returns for the present year: Extent of land under cultivation, 32,860 acres; total extent of holdings, 823,919 acres; quantity of land under wheat for grain, 21,817 acres; under wheat for hay, 1536 acres; under maize, 476 acres; oats for grain, 3805 acres; oats for hay, 1725 acres; tobacco, 24¼ acres. The produce was 268,673 bushels wheat, 8089 bushels maize, 8524 bushels barley, 13,952 bushels oats, and 1295 tons potatoes. About 1000 acres are under vines. The produce last year from 993½ acres was 237,987 gallons wine, and 754 gallons brandy.

Fifty years have passed away since Hamilton Hume and his companions made their memorable journey across that then *terra incognita*, the country from the Yass river to the shores of Port Phillip. On the southern bank of the Australian Mississippi, where Hume and his companions first sighted this great stream, a tree, a large eucalyptus, is still standing on which they engraved 'Hovell, 17 Novr, '24.' There were originally two trees, each bearing the name of one of the leaders of the expedition, but the tree on which Hume's name was engraved has long since been destroyed. As shown in the picture, the remaining tree is protected by a slight fence. And near the place where the explorers first camped a thriving town has sprung up the wastes that formed hunting-grounds for wandering tribes of aborigines have been converted into pastures for countless flocks and herds, hundreds of families have settled on the land, and their labours have caused the wilderness to "blossom as a rose;" homesteads, corn-fields, vineyards, and other signs of civilisation, industry, and prosperity meet the eye on every side where Hume and his companions — some of whom still survive — wandered through forests primeval."



THE EXPLORER'S TREE, ALBURY