

## ALBURY'S FIRST 30 YEARS

The first white men to discover the Albury region were the explorers Hume and Hovell. *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, February 10, 1825 reported:

We hasten to lay before our Readers an extract of the Journal that was kept by our Australian travellers (Messrs. Hovell and Hume), during their late adventures in the interior of this unknown and interesting country. We are satisfied no ordinary gratification will be excited on a perusal:—

.... we resumed our route to the South-West and proceed until the 16<sup>th</sup>, when we reached the banks of a river situate in latitude 36° 15' South. This river, which we named "Hume's River," takes its rise from the snow mountains, and is about 100 yards in breadth, and deep, the banks about 10 feet above the level of the water, but apparently overflowed in times of flood; the stream running about three or four miles, per hour, in a West to North-West direction. On the 20<sup>th</sup> we crossed to the South banks of the river by means of a boat made from a few sticks and a tarpaulin, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> we continued our journey through a country interspersed with swamps and lagoons ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/2183722>

### The First Station

In October 1835, William Wyse drove the first cattle from Yass, acting for Charles Ebdon, established a station at Mungabareena and built a hut near the present Waterworks. Soon afterwards he crossed the river to establish Bonegilla station for Ebdon. Charles and Paul Huon squatted on the Wodonga run in 1836 and John Dight took Bungowannah.

### The First Store

Aime Huon and his brother-in-law, Robert Brown, arrived soon after and Brown settled by the river and opened a store near the Hovell Tree, advertising his store in *The Australian* in March 1838 and calling the location "Port Phillip Crossing Place."

### Police

A police camp was established in 1838 on what is now Monument Hill – a sargeant and four men built a slab-hut police station. *The Australian* (Sydney) of Tuesday, January 8, 1839 reported:

Hume River, 26<sup>th</sup> December—The mounted police party, in charge of Sergeant Ross at the Hume River, are already proving themselves useful, having taken six runaways and a woman; but the nearest bench (Yass) being 200 miles from the Hume, they have to march the prisoners the whole of that distance, keeping them nearly a month from their district. This cannot be remedied until a few policemen are stationed at Gundagu (sic), to whom prisoners would be given in charge and escorted to Yass.

**THE** Undersigned most respectfully begs leave to inform Gentlemen and Travellers, that he has opened a Store and a House of Accommodation, on the Hume River, Port Phillip Crossing Place, where he has constantly on Sale an assortment of Wines and Spirits; also, bottled Ale and Porter, of the best quality, and on reasonable terms.

**ROBERT BROWNE.**

Hume River, }  
February 23rd, 1838. }

*The Australian* (Sydney)  
Tuesday, March 6, 1838

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/36860999>

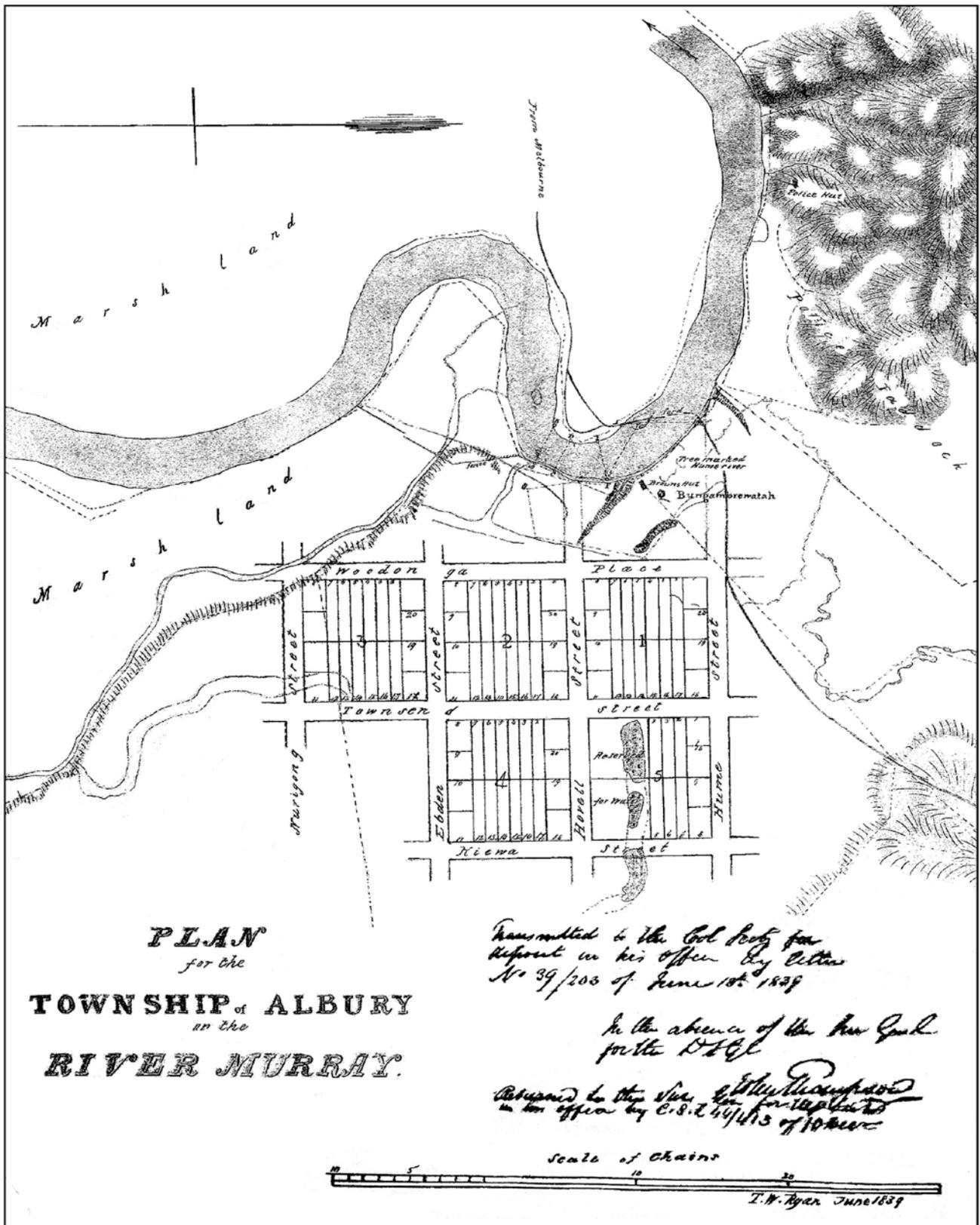
### The Township

Late in 1838, Assistant Government Surveyor, Thomas Townsend mapped out the first streets. The streets were named Hume, Hovell, Ebdon, Nurigong, Townsend streets and Woodonga Place, then about ten years later Smollett, Dean, Swift, Olive and David streets were added to the town map.

A new township has been laid out by Mr. Surveyor Townshend, (sic) on the north side of the present crossing-place on the Hume River .... the pasturage is for the present pretty good; sheep are healthy, and cattle in prime condition, &c. Few, if any bushrangers now roam about these remote parts. Our principal drawback is from the aggression of the Aborigines ....

*The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, Monday 14 January 1839

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/32162538>



The name Albury was officially chosen and gazetted on April 13, 1839 and the first 12 allotments offered for sale in October. However early growth of the new township was quite slow. An article in the *Sydney Herald* of Saturday, March 6, 1841 described the area:

.... The next township is "Albury" situated (140 miles beyond Gundagai) at the crossing place of the Hume River, a more eligible spot than this could not have been selected for a township. It is beautifully situated in the heart of an extensive and fertile district. It is on the bank of a splendid river. It is on the high road from Sydney to Melbourne. It is surrounded by hundreds of sheep and cattle stations, in supplying the wants of which, a number of mechanics and tradesmen of all sorts will find constant

employment, and there is no place within 45 miles of it, on which another town can be built. As yet there are only two or three houses here, a public house (kept by a very respectable man named Brown), besides a blacksmith's shop, there are also Police Barracks here, where a few policemen are always stationed ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12868120>

By the following year the town was growing – Albury had its first medical man, Dr Crichton, a regular postal service was established and more substantial buildings were appearing as described by a correspondent who signed off as “Timothy Bushman” in the *Sydney Herald* of Thursday, February 10, 1842:

.... Albury, the Government township at the crossing place of the Hume River, is steadily advancing. Mr. Robert Brown, the inn-keeper, has nearly finished a splendid house here, at a cost of two thousand pounds, and we expect Commissioner Bingham, with his family, will soon take up his residence among us. Several respectable families are now residing in the neighbourhood, and recently, a medical gentleman, a Dr. Crichton, has settled here, with the intention of practising his profession. You are aware that the mails from Sydney and Melbourne meet here every Saturday morning ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12873636>

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of Wednesday, September 7, 1842 reported:

.... A great want of female society up in this quarter; a few of the late importations would get good husbands in a short time if up here. In the township there is a store, a splendid new inn, nearly finished, to be called the Hume, a blacksmith's and wheelwright's shop, and also two new houses about to be erected; this will be one of the most flourishing parts of the colony, as with a hoe a man can chop up near an acre a day, and beautiful soil....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12423375>

Two year later the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Tuesday, January 30, 1844 reported the progress that had been made in Albury, commenting on the various trade people and people of “status” who had arrived as well as describing Robert Brown's new punt across the river:

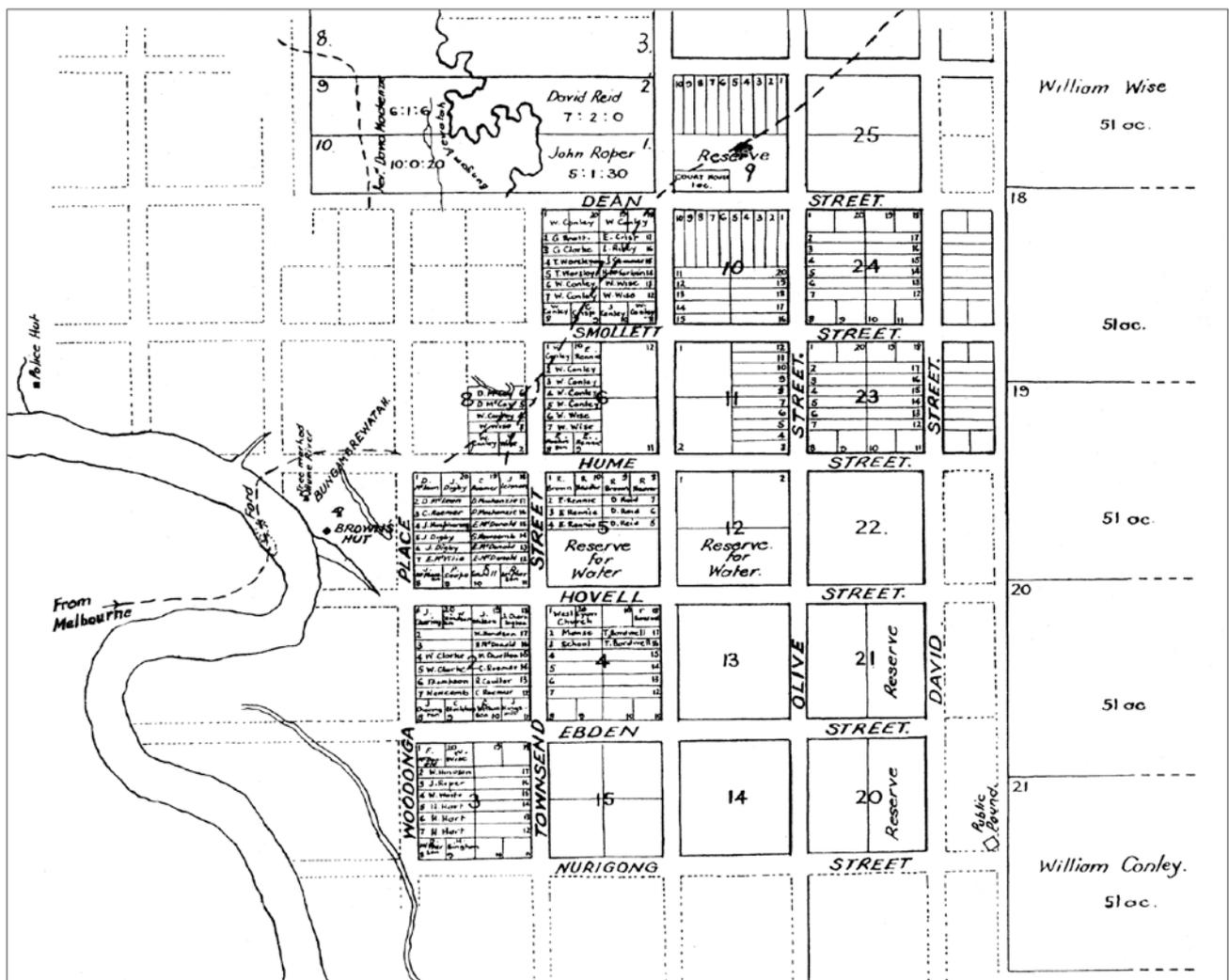
THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS The following are a few scraps from the journal of a settler recently arrived from the Hume River:— “.... The town of Albury, which has lately sprung up in the Hume district, is probably one of the most promising settlements that has been made in any part of the colony for years past, and is rapidly rising into importance, chiefly through its being made a post town, where the settlers and squatters can obtain their letters and light parcels from Sydney. A number of good substantial houses have been lately erected in this township, while among the residences of inhabitants are to be seen those of brick-makers, bricklayers, carpenters, joiners, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, shoemakers, storekeepers, carriers, publicans, &c, all at present well employed. There are also two medical men settled in the district, one of them an M.D. of the R.N. Among the gentry in the district of Albury, there is a brother of Sir John Jamison, a son of Sir George Clarke, M.P., of Pennycuik, Count Lockart, with several junior members of other highly respectable British families. Within the last two months, a splendid punt has been built in the vicinity of the crossing place on the Hume, at an outlay of between £300 and £400, by Mr. Robert Brown, the spirited proprietor of the “Hume River Inn,” and launched by him for the purpose of plying across the River, which cannot fail to be a great accommodation to the settlers sending produce to Sydney, as well as to those forwarding stores beyond the Hume, as before this punt began to ply, scarcely a flock or a herd could cross, or a dray load of stores pass the river without some of the former being drowned, or a portion of the stores damaged, but now, a dray with a team of eight or ten bullocks can be taken across from either side without even the draught cattle being unyoked. The charge for a loaded dray drawn by eight bullocks is about £1. Mr. Brown has also lately built one of the finest houses on the Sydney and Goulburn road, at a cost of upwards of £2000, independent of the labour of all the men in his employ, and furnishing nearly all the materials from his own property .... Since February last there has been but little bushranging going on along the banks of the Hume; but since then several horse-stealers have visited the settlements on both banks, one of these was the gang known as Macdonald's, which carried off about half-a-dozen of fine horses from a single station, and managed to sell them before leaving the district ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12417933>

In 1845, "Timothy Bushman" was writing again in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Wednesday, February 19, 1845 with some complaints:

I do not know whether I ought to call it the disgrace or merely the misfortune of the people here, that there is neither clergyman, missionary, nor place of public worship—neither schoolmaster nor schoolhouse—in all this district. There is not even a burial-ground and hence those who pay the debt of nature—and it is the only debt which some of them have ever paid—are buried generally in sight of the huts .... Owing to the total absence of all means of religious instruction, the people here can hardly be said to be Christians .... and it is truly surprising that one or other of your leading Christian denominations in Sydney should not have ere now appointed some active clergyman to itinerate among us here. The hospitality of the people is proverbial—and any traveller who has even the slightest appearance of being respectable, is received and gratuitously accommodated by the squatter with every mark of attention and kindness. They are sometimes imposed upon by lazy vagabonds, and what is here vulgarly called "broken down swells," yet still every traveller, whether known or unknown, is hospitably treated for the night. Everything is here done on horseback. Every man you meet here is on horseback. A boy will not travel from the hut to the stock-yard except on horseback—while he can get a horse, and he will walk two miles to catch a horse to carry him one....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12877519>



ALBURY MAP - 1848

Another three years on and Thomas Townsend is still supervising the layout of Albury and surrounding districts. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday, October 14, 1848 describes the changes and complains of squatters laying claim to land:

.... since my last visit, now some months since, a great change for the better has taken place, which appears to me to be owing, if not wholly, in a great measure, to the suburban allotments recently laid out by Mr. Surveyor Townsend, and purchased from the Government in May last. Much of the land has

been cleared, root and branch; some has been sown with wheat, which is now waving in the wind. Fences are extending on all sides, and there is every indication of our soon having a thriving rural population, which is so much required. Surely these parties deserve to be protected against those who are unlawfully possessed of Crown lands: it certainly is unfair if others are allowed to squat where they choose, without permission of any sort, but founding their claims upon having been in possession so long a time. Mr. Surveyor Townsend paid a flying visit to Albury, and laid out several farms of 10, 20, and 60 acres in size ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/28647135>

Into the 1850s and Albury was gaining in importance with a school, parsonage, court house, various industries, hotels and shops. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of Wednesday, December 18, 1850:

MANY of our readers are already aware that this township is situated at the crossing-place of the River Murray, on the high road from Sydney to Melbourne. Two years ago the township could only boast of one inn and sundry slab huts, but within the last twelve-months it has been metamorphosed into a town of considerable importance, and it has now assumed the rank of the third township between Sydney and Melbourne. It contains a steam flour mill, a boiling-down establishment, a national school, a Royal Hotel, and four other inns, three stores, a few substantial brick cottages, and a goodly array of slab huts. A parsonage is about to be erected near the new court-house, and not a week passes without some new building being commenced. Since the separation of Victoria from her elder sister New South Wales, Albury has assumed a still more important position, viz., that of a frontier town.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12923414>

In April 1851, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported further progress:

REV. T. H. WILKINSON.—The arrival of a minister of the Church of England is an event which deserves to be chronicled with thankfulness.

CAPTAIN PLUNKETT.—The Inspector of Police has paid a visit to the town, and it is the general opinion that we may at last look forward to having an efficient police force. A re-organisation of our police was the only thing that could repress crime, more particularly horse-stealing, which is carried on to a great extent. The mere propinquity of the effectives has a moral influence over these marauders sufficient to keep them in awe, and the prevention of crime is of more consequence than the punishment. ....

CENSUS.—The township contains 79 houses, and about 500 inhabitants; the district is only computed at an excess of 200 souls, which is manifestly incorrect; but it was an utter impossibility to arrive at an exactitude on account of most of the settlers having migrated to water holes in untrackable places ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12926257>



Of great significance to the local economy in 1855 was the arrival of the paddlesteamer *Albury*, the first to make it all the way from South Australia to Albury. The joy of locals was evident in this article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of Thursday, October 11, 1855:

HURRAH ! hurrah ! ! for the steamer *Albury*. Free trade forever! The long-looked-for come at last ! ! Such were the congratulations that greeted the steamer and her adventurous crew, as they neared our township, and were safely moored at about 4 p.m., on the 2nd instant, to the banks of our noble and navigable Murray.

The news of her approach seemed to have spread quickly, for there were, at different bends and joints of the river, parties on the *qui vive* to catch the first sight and welcome her with the first cheer. The excitement at Albury was still greater. On the bank a large number of persons had collected, who were unanimous in their expressions of joy and congratulations at the complete success of this long-talked-of expedition.

A large steamer has come safely 1900 miles up the Murray, has opened up the resources of thousands of miles of country hitherto lying dormant. It gives the settler here the chance of a large market, and a better price for his produce .... From a Correspondent.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/12983147>

Then in 1856, Albury had its first newspaper, the *Border Post*. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of Saturday, October 11, 1856 featured extracts from its first edition:

FROM this remote locality we have just received the first number of the *Border Post*, a weekly newspaper, printed and published, as its title indicates, on the borders of New South Wales and Victoria—"farther in the interior of Australia than any other newspaper." The *Border Post* consists of two pages, similar in size to the *Herald*. It is neatly and carefully printed; its articles are well written, and, altogether, this new broad sheet does much credit to the taste and enterprise of the spirited projector, who has our cordial good wishes for his future success. We annex a few extracts: —

WANTS OF ALBURY.—There are several first-rate openings in this town for parties possessed of capital and enterprise, and when it is remembered that the population of Albury and Wodonga falls little short of 2500, it is surprising that we have been so much over-looked. We have eight public-houses but no brewery, and all our malt liquor has to be brought from Beechworth, a distance of thirty miles. For some time drays have been unable to cross the river, and in consequence of the stoppage of the supplies caused by this circumstance, it is now almost impossible to procure a glass of ale in Albury. There is a very heavy demand for bricks, but no brick-makers are to be engaged in this neighbourhood, and the proprietor of our single brickfield, with his two workmen, are quite unable to meet the calls upon their industry. At present there are only three storekeepers, but we hear that we shall shortly have a fourth, and from the very unostentatious way in which business is conducted, we imagine there is room for one or two go-a-head pushing proprietors of establishments of this nature. The cultivation of the vine is a branch of labour which offers large profits, and farming is by no means overdone.

FLOUR AND SAW MILL.—Mr. Moon, of Albury, is now engaged in erecting steam machinery at Wodonga, and in addition to grinding wheat he intends to apply the engine to working a saw-mill. The want of sawing machinery has hitherto been severely felt in this neighbourhood.

THE MAILS.—According to accurate computation the Sydney mail travels at the rate of rather less than 8½ miles per hour—a degree of speed which may be considerably excelled by a pedestrian. The Melbourne mail proceeds rather faster, and the journey is accomplished at the speed of about four miles per hour. There is much room for improvement in this department of the public service, and a great deal of unnecessary delay might be saved if less time were consumed in stoppages. The Sydney mail is frequently left behind, until the arrival of the next post affords an opportunity of transmitting both mails together, and we are often left for a week without any intelligence from the metropolis....

NEW DIGGINGS.—We have been shown a sample of gold obtained at Gingelly Creek, about sixty miles from Albury, in the neighbourhood of the Sydney road, and we learn that a party of miners has been working there for some time with tolerable success. We believe gold has long been known to exist in the locality indicated, but this is the first time we have heard of the creek being regularly worked....

HOWLONG. —The sale of the forty town allotment at Howlong took place on the 3rd instant, and there was a fair attendance of buyers. For a new township, the land may be considered as having fetched good prices, the half-acre lots realising in some cases £12 each ....

A CONTRAST.—The Postmaster at Beechworth receives £150 per annum, with a house to live in, and an assistant to help him. The Albury Postmaster is allowed £60 a year, and so far from being provided with quarters, he is expected to find an office situated on a central allotment of land for the use of the public. The annual rental of the building used for the Albury post-office would amount to more than the salary attached to the office.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/28635914>

**BY 1860:**

- 1847 (January) John Roper appointed as Albury's first Clerk of Petty Sessions.
- 1850 Thomas Hodges Mate established his store on the corner of Hume & Townsend streets.
- From 1851 to 1861 Albury's population went from 442 to 1587.
- 1851 creation of Victoria, the Murray as border and customs officers appointed.
- 1853 (February) Heyward Atkins appointed as Albury's first Police Magistrate.
- 1854 Wodonga township began.
- Albury's newspapers: *Border Post* in 1856, *Albury Telegraph* in 1858, *Albury Banner* in 1860.
- 1857 Albury's first bank, the Bank of New South Wales (now Kia Ora in Townsend St).
- National School (1848), Catholic school (1855), Grammar School (1856).
- 1857 Agricultural Society inaugurated.
- 1858 Electric Telegraph to Sydney and Melbourne.
- 1859 Albury declared a municipality with James Fallon the first Mayor.
- By 1859 St Matthew's Church of England, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and Catholic Churches.
- 1859 the District Court first sat in Albury.
- 1860 the Mayor James Fallon drove the first pile of the Union Bridge over the Murray River.
- 1860 the Court House opened.
- 1860 work started on Albury gaol and Albury's first hospital, both in Thurgoona St.
- Gold discoveries in the region brought thousands of prospectors to the district.