

*The following are edited talks presented at A&DHS General Meetings, December 1968 and September 1976, reprinted from A&DHS Bulletins No 81 and No 151*

## JAMES T FALLON – ONE OF ALBURY'S FOUNDERS

J T Fallon and his brother, P E Fallon, left Athlone (Ireland), about 1850. After spending several years in America they arrived in Albury in 1854.

The population of Albury was then about 400, but it was developing rapidly owing to the boom of the Victorian goldfields. They commenced business in Kiewa Street, just in time to celebrate two important events—the arrival of the first steamer on the Murray and the removal of Border duties, the last event being an occasion of a monster banquet, attended-by half the population. By 1856 there were a few brick houses, the business areas being in Kiewa Street and at the corner of Hume and Townsend Streets.

From the beginning J T Fallon took an active part in the development of the town. He was one subscriber to offer £500 reward for the discovery of gold within 15 miles of Albury, and joined a committee for the formation of a building society. In 1859 Albury elected its first aldermen and J T Fallon was elected Albury's first mayor, a position he held for several years. In 1861 he took over the Murray Valley Vineyard Co of 640 acres, and built up one of the most successful wine businesses of the district. In 1869 he built the wine cellars in Kiewa Street, and many notable events in the progress of Albury were celebrated at Fallon's cellars. At the request of Sir John Young, Governor



J T FALLON

of New South Wales, he sent a case of wine to the Queen. Sometime later he succeeded T H Mate as Member of Parliament for the district. In 1876, J T Fallon compiled a lengthy paper on the wines of Australia and on the 20<sup>th</sup> June of that year he read this paper before the Royal Colonial Institute in London. As a result he secured the admission of Australian wines into England at a lower duty. The Murray Valley Vineyards became one of the show places of the district, and Fallon's wines were known throughout Australia and overseas.

J T Fallon sold his store business and lived in Sydney for 15 years. His brother, P E Fallon, carried on the wine business, succeeded by his sons P W and J A Fallon. J T Fallon died in Sydney in 1886 and is buried in the Albury cemetery, where his monument faces directly down Fallon Street and towards the hill now known [1968] as Murray Heights, but which was once the Vine covered Murray Valley Vineyards.

*K M ORTIZ (granddaughter of P E Fallon)*

## J T FALLON AND THE WINE INDUSTRY

James Thomas Fallon settled in Albury in 1854, opening a store nearly opposite the then Rose Hotel, with his brother, Patrick Edward, and when the first Council of the Municipality of Albury was elected, he was chosen as Mayor and held that office for three successive years. He took an active part in all movements for the advancement of the town or district and after purchasing the "Murray Valley Vineyard" took a prominent part in the introduction of Australian wines into England. He visited London twice for this purpose.

The wine trade was reaching a better footing. Mr Fallon, at the request of Sir John Young, the Governor of New South Wales, sent a case of wine to the Queen, and this drew considerable attention to the industry.

He built the home on the top of the rise now known as "Quick's Hill," practically in the centre of the Murray Valley Vineyard area, and other buildings concerned with the industry were

established near the railway crossing in what is now termed Dallingers Road. During 1875, Mr Fallon carried on an important controversy with the Customs authorities in London regarding the strength of Albury wines. Dr Thudichum, the London analyst, contended they were all fortified with spirit and full duties were charged. Mr Fallon contradicted this and ultimately Mr Leslie Moody, Chief Inspector of Distilleries in Victoria, visited Albury, gathered the grapes and made the wines, proving that they naturally contained as much as 34% alcohol and securing their admission into England, as wine, at the lower duty.

Mr. Fallon had visited England and French and Spanish vineyards in 1872 to develop trade in Australian wines and had met in Paris, M Franzois Gaston Leonce Frere, who, with his family, Mr. Fallon brought to Australia for the purpose of making champagne. Mr Frere was born on March 3, 1837, the year Queen Victoria ascended the Throne of England. His native place was Barbezieux in the Department of Charente, France. He served his country in the Franco-Prussian war and after that struggle and the establishment of the commune he expatriated himself to Australia with the hope of re-building his shattered fortune. He left France with his wife and only son, arrived in Melbourne but came on to Albury the same day. The railway terminated at Wodonga and they came on by the coach that plied to Albury.



J T FALLON CELLARS, KIEWA ST ALBURY

He was established finally at “St Hilaire” (the district they came from in France) Cellars, house and vineyard built at the same time and in 1876, M Frere made the first champagne at these cellars from grapes grown on Murray Valley Vineyard.

M Frere had one son, Georges P Frere, who in his turn became Mayor of Albury in 1913. He married Miss Madeline Kelso and carried on as a vigneron until approximately 1943. He then sold it to a Mr Nelson (from Brittany) who died a few years later and the present owners [1976], Mr and Mrs Paton bought it in 1949.

Mr Fallon, in 1871 sold his store business which he carried on in the “Globe Buildings” to Mr Culley and went to live in Sydney. He represented the Hume Electorate for some years, he died in Sydney on May 26, 1886, aged 66 years and his funeral took place in the Albury cemetery on May 28.

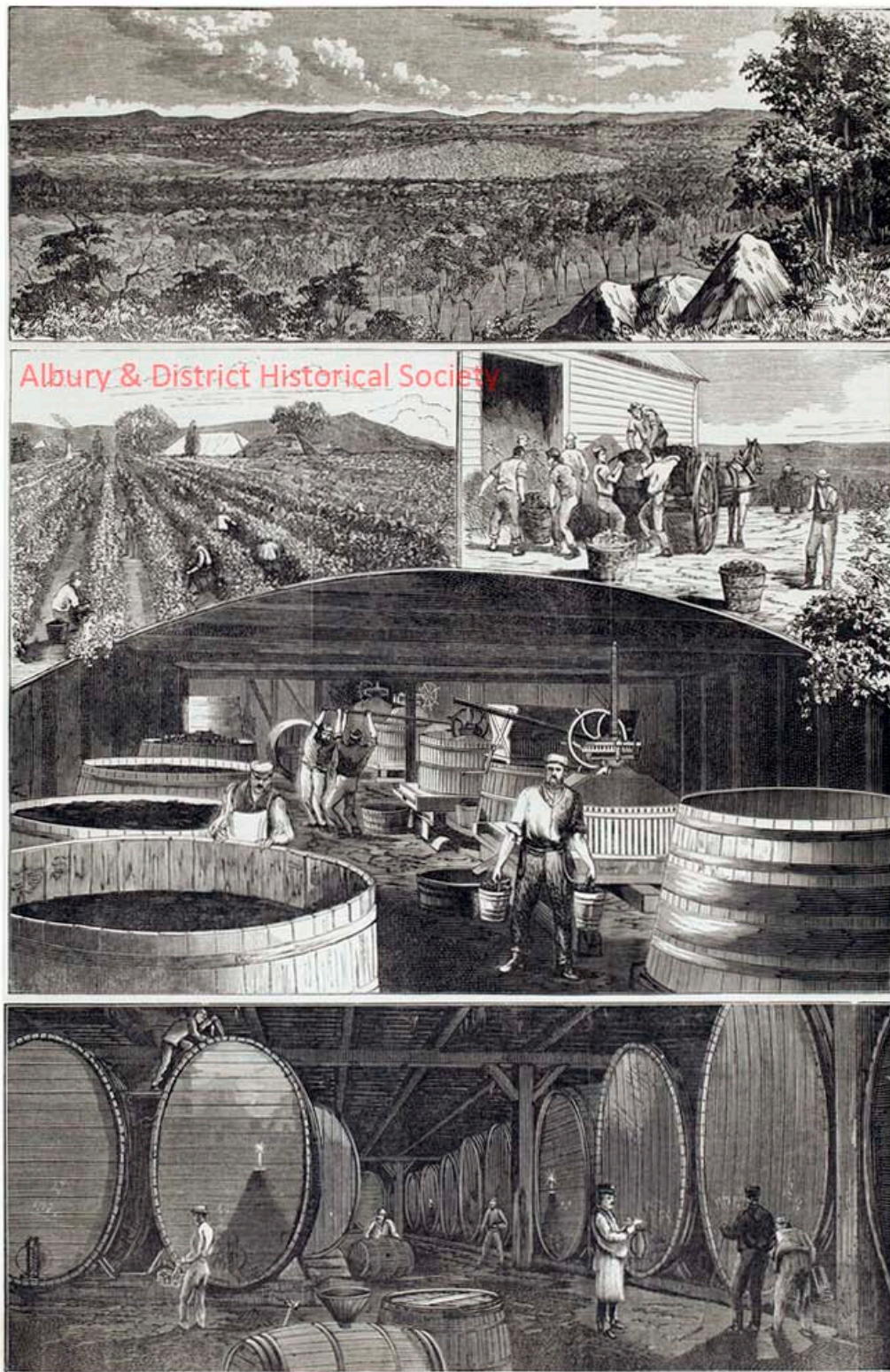
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Footnote: The following article and illustration appeared in the *Illustrated Sydney News and New South Wales Agriculturalist and Grazier* on Saturday 12 June 1880:

The Vintage of the Murray Valley. A thrill of poetic associations is always awakened by a description of the vineyards of the Rhine and of the South of France and other distant countries; but it would be difficult to rouse the enthusiasm of an average colonist here to any very great height by a reference to the splendid vineyards which are dotted over the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia .... The great vineyard of the Murray Valley—which we select for illustration as the chief representative of this important industry—is owned by Mr. J. T. Fallon, a gentleman well known for his ardent advocacy of the claims of the vine to a leading position among the industries of the colonies .... a visit to the vineyards and cellars at Albury—the subjects of our illustrations—will show that Mr. Fallon is under no necessity to send out wines too young to do him credit. The visitor to Albury will miss a great treat if he fails to inspect the cellars and the very perfect appliances here and at the vineyard in full operation. The present stock of wines in the main cellar, which is a

structure of enormous dimensions, is estimated at about 300,000 gallons, ranging from the last vintage to the age of eight years. This, of course, is all in bulk, and is contained in casks ranging in capacity from 500 to 2,400 gallons each ....

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/6497359>



1. GENERAL VIEW OF THE DISTRICT OF THE MURRAY VALLEY VINEYARD. 2. GATHERING THE GRAPES. 3. CARTING TO PRESS ROOM. 4. PRESS ROOM. 5. VIEW IN CELLARS.  
THE VINTAGE AT J. T. FALLON'S MURRAY VALLEY VINEYARD.

The caption reads:

The Vintage of J T Fallon's Murray Valley Vineyard: 1. General View of the Murray Valley Vineyard 2. Gathering the Grapes 3. Carting to Press Room 4. Press Room 5. View in Cellars