

Albury Gas Company

Greg Ryan

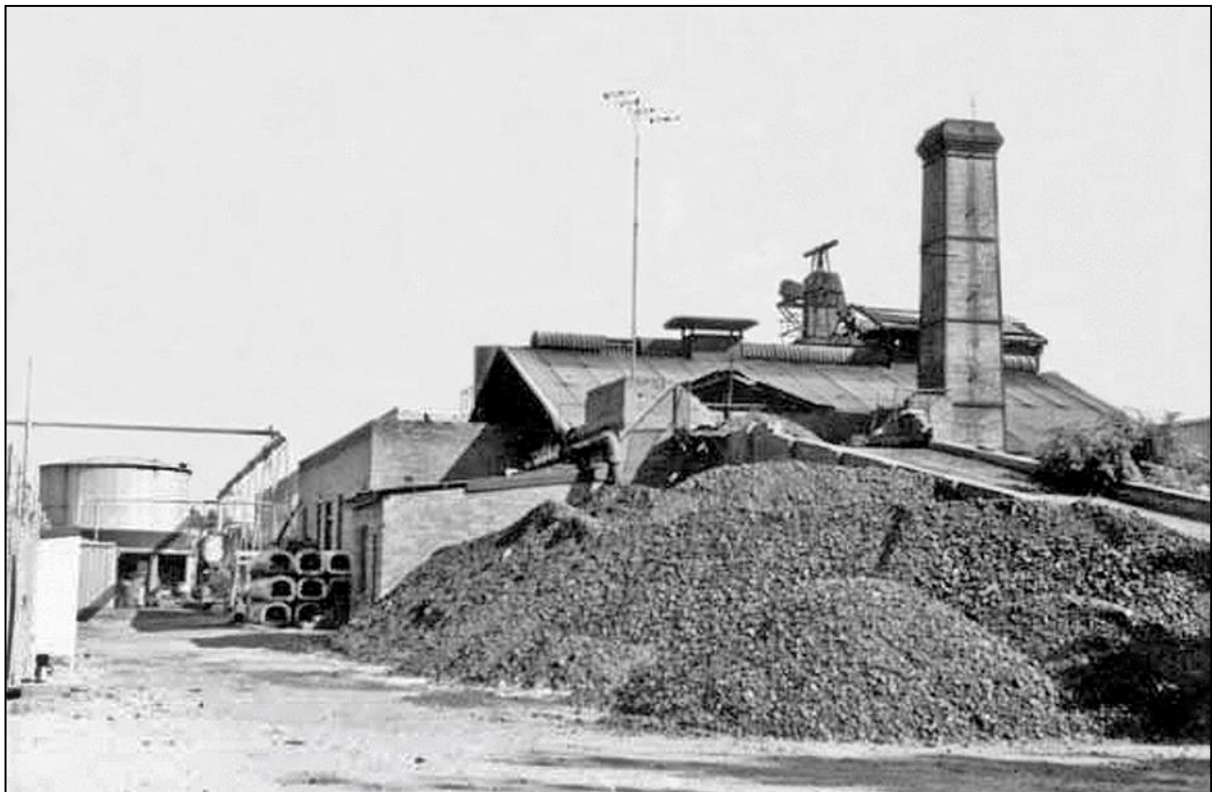
There were two failed efforts in the 1870s to raise the necessary capital for an Albury gas works. In June 1882 a meeting was called which resulted in the formation of the Albury Gas Company.

By August, shareholders had purchased all 6000 shares, tenders for plant construction were called for in September and in December Messrs Hayes, Scanlon, Edmondson, Abercrombie, Griffith and Allan were confirmed as a board of directors.

The company purchased land in Kiewa Street between Hume and Smollett Streets. Contractors Stevens and Kyle had the plant well under way early in 1883, building a gas tank 18 feet deep and 38 feet in diameter, walled with bricks 18 inches thick. Gas would be produced day and night, burning up to 300 pounds (136 kg) of coal daily.

Initially, the mains were along Kiewa Street to Swift, Dean from Townsend to Olive, Townsend from Dean to Hovell, Olive from Smollett to Wilson and Smollett from Townsend to the railway.

Albury Gas Company.
A MEETING of persons desirous of forming a Local Company will be held at the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, on WEDNESDAY EVENING next, 5th JULY, at Eight o'clock sharp.
J. H. PAINE,
Secretary pro tem.



Albury Gas Works, Kiewa Street, in the 1960s with stockpiles of coal used to generate coal gas.

Albury was lit with gas for the first time on Saturday June 2, 1883. The *Albury Banner* noted that “townspeople and principal shareholders met and the works formally set going.” The occasion was celebrated with toasts of champagne.

Tenders were accepted for lighting the street lights, the company charging £10 per annum to light each gas lamp (initially there were 16) and Mr J Brougham charging 9s 11d per lamp per month for the remaining kerosene lamps outside the gas company's range.

The gas company, being responsible to shareholders, were not always enthusiastic about extending their network. As a result, on several occasions over the next thirty years, there were proposals from Albury Municipal Council to purchase the company and all its assets. In October 1890, Council offered £8000. In reply, Mr J H Paine, secretary of the gas company, wrote that the "offer is much below the market value of the shares" and the directors asked £14000 for the works.

The gas company responded, expanding their works, installing a new gas tank, 21 feet deep and 80 feet in diameter, completed in 1892.

The Albury Gas Company contract to light Albury's streets was terminated after electricity was switched on to provide street lighting on July 28, 1916. The *Border Morning Mail* reported on August 26 that "the street gas lamps, which have done service for in many instances the past 35 years, were yesterday removed from their central positions at the intersections of the principal streets."