

Early Settlement in Albury District

From *The First Settlement in North-East Victoria*, an article by Dr Arthur Andrews published in *The Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vol 5, March 1916.

To describe correctly the beginning of settlement in the north-east of this great State is especially difficult, from the almost complete absence of authentic records. Most of the pioneers were too busy with the struggle for a livelihood to keep even a few notes of the events of their strenuous years. They had not even the meagre advantage of a fortnightly mail to encourage correspondence, nor was there any press reporter always on the watch for "copy" when they made their adventurous journeys into an unknown land.

The following notes have been compiled from letters and statements of old residents, after much endeavour to assure their correctness, by careful comparison and reference whenever possible to reliable historical publications.

I propose to confine my remarks as closely as possible to the first wave of settlement, which covered that portion of the State of Victoria lying to the east and north of the Ovens, or, as the natives called it, the "Burwang" River, comprised in the counties of Bogong and Benambra. This settlement took place during the years 1835 to 1840, at which time, as is well known, it still remained part of the parent colony of New South Wales, all grazing licences being issued at "Tumut," or "Doomut," to use the aboriginal pronunciation, by Mr Henry Bingham, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

It is well known that by 1833 settlement had extended down the Murrumbidgee as far as the site of the present town of Wagga Wagga, Oura and Eunonyhareenyha stations having been formed by the Tompson family in 1832 on the north of the river, and Wagga Wagga by Robert Holt Best, and Borambola by John Gordon, on the south bank. Guy had previously formed a station on the Tarcutta Creek, a little to the east, which later became the "stepping-off place" for those pushing south to the Murray, and many of the "overlanders."

There is no record of any attempt to occupy the Murray country, or the district we are concerned with, till fully two years after. We can, however, safely fix the date of the first settlement in this district near the end of the year 1835, for there is then clear record of its being approached almost simultaneously from two distinct quarters by quite independent parties, both hailing from the older-settled districts of the mother colony.

In the spring of 1835, William Wyse, employed by Mr (afterwards Sir) Charles Hotson Ebdon, gathered a mob of cattle near Sydney, and, with a party of drovers, set out to find suitable pasturage, where a new run could be safely and profitably taken up. He followed the usual track of the settlers on the Murrumbidgee till he reached the Tarcutta Creek, when he turned south-west, and, following almost the actual track of the explorers Hume and Hovell eleven years before, pressed on till he reached the Murray at the spot of its first discovery.

Here he at once formed the "Mungabareena Run," which included the site of the present town of Albury. The position of his camp is not recorded, though it is probable that it was on a small plain where now the Albury waterworks are situated. This was almost the only clear space above flood level on the banks of the river for some distance, and was chosen by Mr Thomas Mitchell for the first homestead when the run was

transferred to his mother, Mrs Elizabeth Mitchell, in the following year. It is also immediately adjacent to a good ford, giving direct access to the "Bonegilla" Flats, which Wyse so soon after occupied.

Within a few weeks, following some straying cattle, Wyse crossed the river, and discovered the splendid flats about the junction of the Mitta Mitta and Little Rivers with the Murray, and at once formed the "Bonegilla Run." The meaning of "Bonegilla" is somewhat doubtful, some claiming that it means "Big water-hole," and others "Big cattle camp," either of which would be fully applicable to the situation.

We cannot now fix the exact date of this settlement, but when we take into consideration the time that must necessarily have been consumed in the 400-mile journey from Sydney, added to even a few weeks of delay on the north bank of the river, it must have been very near the end of the year.

Bonwick also, in his *Port Phillip Settlement*, quotes from Willis's account of his journey, on which he crossed the Murray in May 1837, a statement that this station had been formed fifteen or eighteen months before, which would fix it as not earlier than November 1835.

The name of but one other member of Wyse's party has been recorded. It is James Gullifer. He was stationed on Bonegilla for two years, and while there he, from a red gum log, made the first canoe, or dugout, which was placed on the Murray. This he afterwards sold to Robert Brown, the first resident on the actual site of Albury, who used it for years till it was replaced by a punt.

Gullifer in his later years delighted to tell thrilling tales of life at Bonegilla at this time. However true these stories may be, there is no doubt that at that time it was quite unsafe for any white man to go anywhere unarmed or alone, even for the shortest distances. In 1844 Gullifer formed the "Lilliput Run," near Rutherglen, where he resided, greatly respected, till his death in 1899.

In the previous June Mr George Mackillop set out with a party from Manaro with the object of opening up a road to Port Phillip. Melbourne was just being founded, and already some settlers had formed small homes with a few stock in the neighbourhood. Mackillop was successful in passing the ranges at the head of the Snowy River and reached the northern slope of the Divide. He here discovered the magnificent plains about Lake Omeo (*Omio* meaning "mountains") ...

Charles Hotson Ebdon was a well-known figure in Sydney in the early thirties. A son of Mr J B Ebdon, a nominee member of the Cape Legislature, he possessed some little fortune when he arrived in Australia. Driving tandem in George-street, or attending any social function in Sydney, he was always a man of mark, as he became in later life in Melbourne ... He was a man of great enterprise, and within eighteen months of the formation of the Bonegilla run had already pushed on across the Goulburn, forming the Sugar Loaf Creek run, which he held but a short time, when he travelled further and took up "Carlsruhe." He took an active part in opening up the road between the two capitals, was a purchaser at the first Melbourne land sale, and an active politician, holding several important offices. In 1846 we again find him pioneering, when, with a Mr Keene, he took up Kilcool station, on the Lower Murray. He died in Melbourne in 1867, leaving a large estate both in the colonies and the mother country.

William Wyse, whose name deserves to be carefully recorded as the first actual settler on any portion of the main Murray River, remained at Bonegilla for two years. Then he formed the Noorengong station, on the Mitta Mitta, for Captain McDonald. In 1840 he took up the Mitta Mitta blocks for himself. These he held till 1857, when he retired north of the Murray, where he died about 1900.

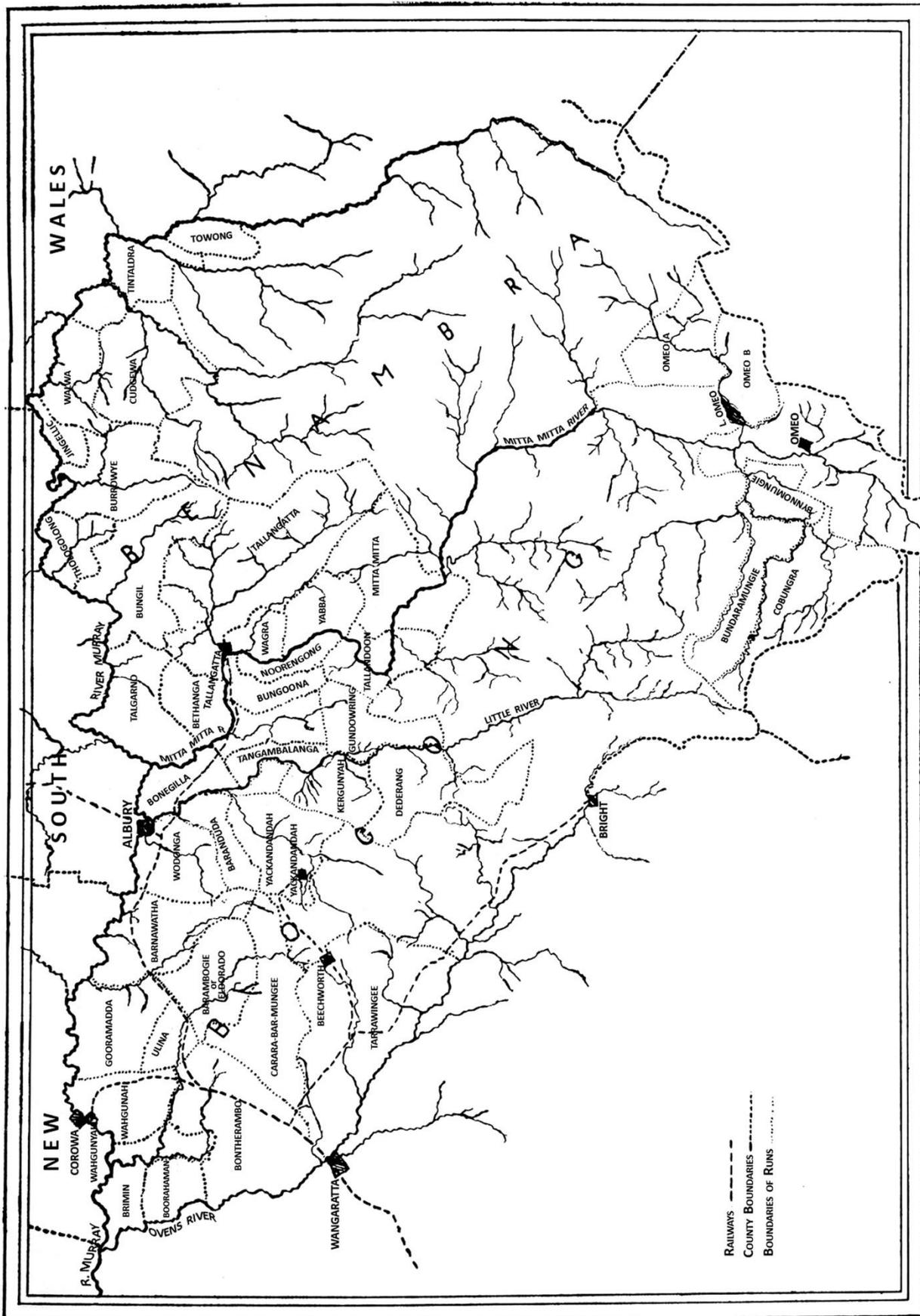
Though so long an interval elapsed between the settlement of the Murrumbidgee and the Murray, it was not long before Wyse had neighbours, as very early in 1836 Mr Charles Huon arrived, and formed the Wodonga run for his brother Paul. Mr Paul Huon was the son of a well-known French nobleman, who, leaving France on account of the Republican troubles, joined the English army and came to Sydney as a private soldier. His worth was soon recognized, and within a few years he took his proper place among the best of the colonists. He has many descendants in the Commonwealth, and his name is little likely to be forgotten when the worthy among the pioneers are being remembered.

The Wodonga run covered a large stretch of country west and south of the Bonegilla station, on the south bank of the Murray, opposite the site of Albury. Its boundaries were not really defined, as for some considerable time it had no other neighbours. Mr Huon built his homestead on the bank of the Wodonga Creek, just at the entrance to the present town of Wodonga when approached from Albury. Thirty years later it was converted into an hotel, another homestead being built somewhat east of it. It was not long thus occupied, and ultimately the remains were destroyed by fire about 1882.

At this time the settlers in the older districts near the Blue Mountains were experiencing the first years of a severe drought, of which there is little record, though it probably was one of the worst ever, experienced since the arrival of white men. It did not break up till well into 1841. It appears that the fact was not fully recognized, as none had resided in those districts long enough to look upon it as unusual. Graziers were then accustomed to allow stock to wander at large in the neighbourhood of natural water. No attempt at fencing or the conservation of the precious fluid had been made, and the opening up of such large and fertile areas gave the settler a chance of saving his rapidly increasing stock by moving them to fresh country. A run could be secured by the taking out of a licence at the cost of £10, and one licence could be made to do for the securing of several blocks. In fact, the issue of a licence became practically merely a certificate that the holder was considered a fit person to be allowed to live beyond police supervision, but supervision was not too vigilant, and many of the pioneers did very much as they liked.

At the same time a great rise in the value of stock had been brought about by various causes. Firstly, a large company (the A. A. Company) was formed in England with about £1,000,000 in capital, and secured very extensive areas in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. The arrival of this immense sum of money led the colonists to believe that their fortunes were to be rapidly made. A spirit of speculation took possession of the community, and sheep rose to be worth from £2.10 to £3 in open market, cattle in proportion, while any decent horse would bring £100.

Just at this juncture also, Major (afterwards Sir) Thomas Mitchell published the account of his journey of exploration of the Murrumbidgee and the country to Portland, and his return direct to Sydney. He was so convinced of the value of the district he traversed that he named it "Australia Felix." When this was issued in London it attracted great attention, and many emigrants started, with much capital, to take advantage of



MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THE NORTH-EAST OF VICTORIA.

this Eldorado. Again, the whole of the lands of Port Phillip were at this time gazetted open for selection under grazing licences, which induced many of the more enterprising among the younger settlers to push out in search of home and fortune in the “promised land.”

Several parties have been credited with forming settlements on the banks of the Upper Murray about this time, though no definite record has been found. A party, of which John Spalding was one, did certainly advance as far as the present position at Thologolong run (*Thologolong* meaning, a plain with a creek). They did not remain long, as two of the party were murdered by natives, and the rest removed their stock to the north bank of the river. Here they soon formed the Wagra run. We find Spalding back again a year or so later at Bungil, the next run to Thologolong, where he lived for a good many years. Several of his descendants are well-known residents in the Albury district at the present day. He was addicted to racing, and one of his sons possesses a silver cup which he won at Albury in 1844, competing against horses from Sydney and Tasmania.

Later in the year John Waite, from Bong Bong, near Sydney, formed the Bungil run (*Bungil* means “grassy creek”), just to the east of Mount Granya, about 25 miles above Wodonga on the bank of the Murray. Waite acted for his son-in-law, the late John Hore, so many years the owner of Cumberoona and other well-known runs. In the following year, or in 1838, Mr Hore exchanged the Bungil run for Wagra on the opposite bank of the Murray. Waite, not a young man when he arrived in the district, died in September, 1863, at the age of 91, and left many descendants, who are to be met with in all parts of the district.

Land hunger appears to have been severe among the first settlers, who tried to secure more extensive areas than they were able to hold. All the first arrivals were not discreet when looking for new country. In at least two cases it is reported that areas were selected by them, and, owing to want of discretion while travelling to secure the necessary right, they allowed others to forestall them. In this way it is said that a large area high up the Murray was secured by one who had never seen it. He was vague about the boundaries, and even to this day is credited with having been concerned in the first formation of many runs he certainly could not have stocked even if he secured a title.

Of actual settlement in this year, we have John Jobbins taking Talgarno, which includes the country east of the junction of the Mitta Mitta (Mitta Mitta being said to be derived from *Mutta Mutta*, the aboriginal for thunder) on the south bank of the Murray. He had just previously secured the Cumberoona run, on the north of the river. Charles Huon formed “Baranduda” as an out-station of Wodonga. It lay to the south of that run, and embraced a large extent of country. Mr John Pendergast settled in this year on the bank of “The Morass Creek,” opposite to Mr MacFarlane, calling his run “The Three Brothers,” afterwards known as “Omeo A.” James Osbourne is also said to have taken possession of the Yackandandah country, but I am of opinion that this is placing him here fully a year too soon. He and his sons long resided in the district, and held properties also on the north of the Murray.

In October in this year, 1836, the first party for “overlanding” was led by John Hepburn, Joseph Hawdon, and John Gardiner, with the object of forming runs in Port Phillip. We must remember that at the time the Port Phillip district was confined to country about the port and north of the Dividing Range between the Ovens and Goulburn Rivers. They collected their stock at Howe’s station, on the Murrumbidgee, and

soon after starting for the southwest met a portion of Major Mitchell's party returning from Portland. The latter gave them advice about their route, and they took what was for many years after known as "The Major's Track," and reached the Murray at Howlong, or, as the natives called it, "Oolong," which meant "resort of native companions." They crossed safely, and, still following the same track, passed the Black Dog Creek, called by natives "Doma Mungi," at the present site of Chiltern. This creek gained its name that day by the fact of Hawdon shooting a black native dog there. They found no trace of settlement after leaving the Murrumbidgee, and pushed on to Melbourne, where they formed the "Gardiner's Creek Run," which Hepburn, writing soon after, claimed to have been the first "cattle run" formed in "Australia Felix."

Major Mitchell, in his account of his journey from Portland to Sydney, states that he found no sign of settlement after leaving Portland till he reached the Murrumbidgee. Hawdon's party met with none when travelling shortly after in the opposite direction, and these statements have been used to throw doubt on the date attributed to the settlement of Ebden and Huon. The discrepancy is, however, easily disposed of when we remember that neither of these parties was at any time within twenty miles of Ebden's station. The latter settled near the spot where Hume discovered the river, and the former crossed twenty miles lower down. For some reason, when the mail service was established in 1838, the Howlong crossing was adhered to, though the route thence to the Murrumbidgee was reported against by Sturt, the explorer, on the ground of its waterlessness in dry seasons. Quite at the end of this year, 1836, Rowland Shelley, from Tumut Plains, was exploring the Upper Murray with the view of forming homes for his mother and brothers. He is believed to have camped about the present position of Tintaldra, but there is no definite record till the following year, 1837.

With the commencement of 1837, we find many overlanders pushing through. Some settled in the district, others passed on over the Goulburn, forming runs in various places, even to the extreme west of the colony of Victoria. Both sheep and cattle became plentiful, mobs being met with every few miles on the route. A F Mollison, with 5,000 sheep, was one of the first, and wintered about Bontherambo, passing on in the spring to the Coliban; the McKinnons, Hector Norman Simson, the Darlots, Yaldwin, Ebden, Howey, Coghill, Hamilton, and many others following his example ...

Settlement in this district was increasing steadily. The principal holdings which were formed during this, year are : — Barnawartha, or Barnawoodtha, meaning "Deaf and dumb," just west of the Wodonga run, by Joseph Slack; he, however, soon abandoned it, taking his stock across the Goulburn. Bethanga, on the right bank of the Mitta, south of Talgarno, was formed by William Roberts, Murra-murran-bong, also called Merri-merrim-bong, meaning "Beautiful" or "Grand Mountain," by Aimee, a brother of Charles Huon. This lies west of the Kiewa, or Ki-e-wah, River (*Ki-e-wah* meaning "sweet water"), and adjoining Baranduda on the south. William Wyse left Bonegilla, and with his brother James formed Noorengong, on the Mitta Mitta, for Captain McDonald. Noorengong is said by some to mean "a lightwood tree," by others "a magpie," and also is said to have been the name applied by the natives to the lower course of the Mitta. John Hore had joined Waite at Bungil, William Shelley had settled at Tintaldra, while Rowland Shelley had formed Wermatong adjoining. Wermatong is said to be a corruption of the native equivalent for "wooden arm," one of the first settlers there having, that appendage.

“Waddy mundowie” was the name for a wooden leg in the dialect of the Woradgery tribe ...

With the exception of the graziers and their employees, there is little record of settlement to this time. At the crossings of the rivers generally someone would be found to assist and supply the wants of travellers. At the Murray, Robert Brown, a brother-in-law of Chas Huon had settled in 1836, and kept an accommodation house and small store. His widow died but a few days ago, aged 89 [1916]. At the Ovens crossing one named “Ratray or Rafferty” kept a store for about a year, when he sold out to William Clarke. This was on the site of or near the present “Sydney Hotel” in Templeton-street, Wangaratta. Wangaratta has had several meanings attributed to it, but the most probable one is “Home of cormorants,” those birds having been most plentiful there in early days. Clarke soon added to the premises, and a year or two after built the first inn, “The Hope,” there. He placed the first punt at the crossing, and carried on business for many years, being always looked on as the father of Wangaratta.

1838.—With the commencement of this year, 1838, we may say that the district was becoming civilized. For the first time, on 1st January, regular mail communication was established between Sydney and Melbourne at fortnightly intervals. The first mail was carried by John Bourke, who was employed by Joseph Hawdon, the contractor. He related graphically in later years his adventures with the first postbag, which only, weighed fifteen pounds. He reached the Ovens River safely on horseback, but there his horse was speared by natives. He managed to get him as far as the Murray at Howlong, which was the official crossing of the river, and, obtaining a fresh mount, reached Yass at the due time. There were, however, no local post-offices, and the settlers along the route were dependent on the good offices of the mailman for their correspondence. It cost tenpence prepaid then for a letter.

We are now approaching the most active period in the settlement of this district, and soon find record of names which afterwards became household words throughout the North-East. Docker, Reid, Faithfull, Mackay, Chisholm, Lindsay Brown, and Barber are not likely to be forgotten for many years. Practically the whole of the flat country between the ranges and the Murray was speedily occupied, with much of the lower slopes of the mountains, and even of the higher regions reaching towards the Divide. Such was the rapidity with which runs were formed that a brief or chronological account can hardly be given. Much confusion of dates is also found in early records, so that even so well-known an event as the “Faithfull Massacre” has been attributed to three distinct dates in three different accounts, written while it was a matter of comparatively recent happening. I have found the 9th, 11th, and 15th April given as the correct date, while one account says that all the men were killed, another that eight out of eighteen were lost, while a third says that “most of the men were killed, only one escaping unhurt.”

The Letters of Victorian Pioneers, written to Governor Latrobe in 1853, contain many references to this district and its settlement, which show clearly the conditions under which these pioneers lived.

Mr Geo Faithfull relates that he decided in February 1838, to bring his stock from New South Wales. He travelled the usual road as far as the Ovens River, when he turned aside to inspect the Oxley Plains. He had been greatly attracted by the description given of these plains by Hume, and decided that, if possible, he would settle on them. He was so satisfied with them that he left his cattle there, sending on his sheep with those of his

brother, Mr W P Faithfull, in the charge of an overseer to the Broken River, to wait for him. This was the party attacked by the natives with such heavy loss. This occurrence decided them to remain at Oxley, close to the Ovens River, and within a few months he had for neighbours Messrs Bowman, Reid, Docker and Mackay.

Another account says that Wm Bowman preceded Faithfull by two months, and took up Tarrawingee. Dr Mackay writes that "He arrived on the Ovens on the evening of the day of the Faithfull massacre." There were two temporary encampments in that part prior to his arrival, those of Mr W Bowman and Colonel White. In a few days Mr Geo Faithfull selected Oxley Plains, and he himself Myrree, directly opposite. The latter within a few months became the property of J W Chisholm.

Trouble with the natives was evidently acute after the massacre, and most of the white servants abandoned their employers from fear. Messrs Bowman, Faithfull and White were compelled to leave their cattle to their fate, and all were soon dispersed. Mackay himself, after great privations, managed to drive his cattle back till he reached safe quarters on what he calls "The Hume" (Noorengong). It is difficult to identify the position, for the station of that name was nearly 20 miles from the Hume or Murray, but the fact of his bracketing the name with the latter river tends support to the statement that Noorengong was the native name for the Lower Mitta. After about six months he returned with his stock to the Ovens, and found that Chisholm had taken possession of his abandoned run at Myrree; Faithfull had returned to Oxley Plains; Bowman had formed Tarrawingee, which included the country afterwards known as Everton and Bowman's Forest; Joseph Docker was already at Bontherambo, and within a few days David Reid settled on Carrara-gar-mungee, leaving Mackay himself to form Whorouley station.

The well-known Rev Joseph Docker settled at Bontherambo on 8th September, taking up practically all the country from Chiltern to the Ovens, and north to the Murray, out of which several distinct holdings were formed in later years. He was for many years one of the most prominent figures among the settlers, being possessed of a strong personality. He died in April, 1865. His name is still perpetuated in the district by many of his descendants, and some portion of the original holding is yet held by them.

David Reid, another prominent identity, claimed to have arrived in the district on the same day that Docker took up Bontherambo. He selected Carrara-gar-mungee, a few miles north of the Ovens, which he held some years. He later held the Mill station at Yackandandah till the gold rush, when he purchased Barnawartha. He there built The Hermitage, and after a few years sold out and crossed the Murray to Moorwatha, where he died a few years ago over 80 years of age. He was prominent during the fifties in public matters, and represented the district in Parliament for some years. In his younger days he explored much of the Great Dividing Range, and is believed to have been the first white man to ride over the site of the "City of the Hills," Beechworth.

Mrs Docker and a niece are believed to have been the first white ladies to cross the Murray, which they did in August with Mr Docker and party. It has, however, been claimed that in the previous June Mr George Kinchington had taken his wife and family across. His son, also a George Kinchington, now living at Yackandandah, states that he well remembers crossing in that month with his father and mother, and that they were told at the time that a Mrs Judith Brodribb had crossed the day before, on her way to Mr

Chisholm's.^A Mr Kinchington was an employee of the late Mr John Dight for some years, and assisted at the building of the well-known mills at Dight's Falls in the -early forties. Later he formed "Thirlinganga," near Yackandandah, which the son still holds.

At this time there were many natives throughout the Ovens district, especially about the river and at the lake near Rutherglen. Many outrages were attributed to them, and various settlers give most conflicting reports of them. We know of the Faithfull massacre, and early records give many instances of loss of stock, besides murder of hut-keepers and others; and yet, on the other hand, we have the testimony of the Rev Docker that he never had any trouble with them at any time, allowing them about the homestead at all hours without having reason to regret it. One of Dr Mackay's stockmen, named William Thomas, who had been previously engaged with Sir T Mitchell's exploring party, appears to have been able to instil into their minds a wholesome respect for white men, but whether this was by kindness or otherwise is not recorded; he is reported to have been able to track natives or sheep anywhere. Certainly in many places it was necessary to keep a constant watch over their movements.

While thus settlement was taking place near the Ovens River it was also proceeding rapidly in other parts of the district. James Osbourne was firmly established at Upper Yackandandah; three shipmates and fellow-teachers at a grammar school in Sydney—Messrs Morrice, Mackenzie, and Wylde—secured Kergunnia (a native word for "camping ground"), on the upper reaches of the Kiewa River; Pinsen and Roberts, said to hail from Manaro, took Dederang, further south; while lower down the same stream, A W Smith, from Kiamba, on the Murrumbidgee, formed Tangambalanga, opposite the present township of Kiewa, for Thomas Walker and Co (*tangambalanga* is Woradgery for "white-clawed lobster"); and Charles H Barber formed Gundowring (*gundowringha* also meaning a camp), on the right bank of the Kiewa, adjoining on the south. Bethanga, on the Mitta, had also changed hands, being purchased by Colonel David Johnston from William Roberts. James Roberts, passing higher up the Mitta, formed Bungoona, or Bungonia, meaning a "sandy creek," on the left bank. Tallangatta, again higher up, was secured by Thomas Walker, and then included the country afterwards forming Annandale, Razorback, and Kangaroo Ground holdings. James Redhall had taken Thologolong for Redhall Bros, on the south bank of the Murray, next above Bungil. Rowland Shelley, again, had secured Cudgewa, on the creek of that name, for his mother, and Gravel's Plains, now Corryong, for his brother George. Towong, adjoining the latter on the Upper Murray, was occupied by Richard Guy.

Much of the country between the head waters of the Mitta and Murray towards Omeo was occupied, but there is not sufficient record to fix the holdings accurately. James MacFarlane certainly held Omeo station itself, with Pendergast alongside, while Hyland or Ireland was settled on the west of the lake. Parslow is said to have already formed Cobungra, on the Victoria River, one of the upper branches of the Ovens, while between these holdings Bundarmungie, Bynnomungie, and Tongiomungie are believed to have been taken up, but I can find no record of the persons responsible. The affix mungie, so

^A Since the paper was read, my attention has been drawn to Joseph Hawdon's account of his second trip with stock overland, in *Letters from Victorian Pioneers*, where he shows that his party, which included Mrs. Hawdon, after crossing the Murray at Albury, reached the Goulburn, and crossed it on 1st March, 1838, so we must undoubtedly give Mrs. Hawdon the honour of being the first white lady to cross the Murray.

often found applied to names in this district, is believed to have reference to the presence of codfish in the streams.

In this year we have the first record of any attempt at agricultural operations in the district, but merely to supply in some measure domestic wants. Mr Huon cultivated the bed of the Wodonga Lagoon both in this year and the next, it having been left entirely dry by the prevailing drought. After the breaking of the drought it was never possible to repeat the experiment, though the fence was still visible in the late seventies. A further proof of the severity of this drought is afforded by a record of the training of racehorses being carried out in the bed of the large lagoon on Bonegilla station, a place that has never since been known to be dry. Wheat is also said to have been grown close to the site of Wangaratta in this year with success.

In 1840, Cropper, bringing sheep from Maneroo to Laceby, was much delayed by want of feed, and was compelled to leave the lower lands and take them through the hills. Owing to delay in reaching his destination he built a rough bough shed on what is now known as the "Woolshed Creek" for shearing, and hence its name. Demarr also, in his *Adventures in Australia*, shows that after passing the Murray at Albury he travelled direct by Beechworth to the King River for the same reason. Charles Hutton relates that he was compelled to travel as far as the Campaspe, there being no feed further east for his stock. Thomas Chirnside found much of the country abandoned from the same cause. C B Hall and Alfred D Thomson also make mention of the bad state of the lower country.

1839.—By the commencement of the year 1839 we find not only that the whole district was occupied, but that some subdivision of the first-formed runs was taking place. The early comers took up country with little regard to area, generally claiming all that they could persuade later arrivals to believe they owned. Now titles began to be inquired into, and new runs formed from any spare country. In the angle of the Ovens and Murray we find no less than three separate runs formed from the area at first included in the Bontherambo holding—viz., Boorahaman, which was taken up by Joseph Boulds and his three sons; Bremin, or The Junction, near the meeting of the rivers probably, by Michael O'Dea, who held it in 1844; and Ulina, nearer to Chiltern, by Jason Withers. Wahgunyah, which means probably "Beware of the *gunyah*, or camp," was soon after formed by John Foord, a most enterprising man, who placed a punt on the Murray, and later established a successful private township, in opposition to the Government township of Carlisle a mile higher up the river. The native name of the latter spot was *Boolgawhin*, but when the survey was made for township purposes the surveyor suggested the change of name.

Gooramadda, or "Grassy place," was formed a little higher up the Murray by Lindsay Brown and Thomas Clarke, both prominent members of the community for many years. William Cropper formed Laceby, and at the same time held country on the north of the Murray, where his name is still preserved in "Cropper's Lagoon" at South Corowa. Geo H Barber secured Barnawartha, which Slack had abandoned in 1837. Captain William Fury Baker also took the country south of the present Chiltern, as the Barambogie run. This was afterwards divided and renamed as Eldorado and Eldorado West stations.

Higher up the Murray we find Donald McLeod taking up Burrowye, appropriately named, the meaning of the word being "Toward the east," and the position of the run being just to the east of the previously formed Thologolong. Jingellic, next higher up the river, was taken by Hervey Bros, and Walwa, or "The place of waters," next above, by

William Guy. The back country of this run is still known as Guy's Forest. Tallandoon, on the Mitta above Tallangatta, was formed by Lockhart and Clarke, the former afterwards well known as a Commissioner of Crown Lands, and ultimately Stock Inspector, north of the Murray. John Redfern also formed Yabba, or "Plenty talk," on the higher Mitta about this time. In this year also there is a record of the formation of the Lower Yackandandah station by Mrs Eliz Mitchell, the sister of Paul Huon and the mother of the well-known owner of Tabletop and Mr J H F Mitchell, of Ravenshoe. This station was formed for sheep only, and is, as far as I have been able to discover, the first purely sheep holding formed in the district.

By the end of the year we have record of 20 mounted police having been stationed on the road between Melbourne and the Murray, Major Nunn and Captain Christie being in command. There were five stations, and one is said to have been near the Ovens crossing, but I have been unable to gather any particulars of it. With such a small force we can well understand that they were almost compelled to confine their patrols to the main road, and the settlers at any distance therefrom obtained little advantage from the force. Bushrangers were numerous, being chiefly convicts who had served their sentences or escaped from custody. It therefore devolved on the residents to protect themselves by constant vigilance. Native raids were frequent, and any accidents happening to the blacks were the subject of searching inquiry, the policy apparently being to always consider the white settler in fault till proved otherwise. Dr Mackay relates that on one occasion he had his buildings burnt, a servant killed, and considerable injury to his stock, which were either killed or scattered, and when he applied for compensation he was informed officially that, "as he had voluntarily placed himself beyond the boundaries of the police, he must take the consequences." This he felt to be especially hard, as he at the same time was compelled to pay a stock tax annually to provide "police protection beyond the boundaries."

Having no regular mails, the services of travellers were gladly taken advantage of for the delivery of letters and transmission of news. No newspaper circulated in the district. There were practically no roads, but merely tracks, generally traversing the lower portions of the country, and therefore, more liable to flood and interruption in winter. Almost all travel was on horseback, as wheeled vehicles were often detained for weeks and months at creeks and rivers by the complete absence of bridges. Only at the Ovens and Murray crossings were even canoes or dugouts placed to assist the traveller.

In spite of the risk and difficulties of travelling, we find that at this early day there were some who were on the road more for amusement than profit. One party of young men, on amusement intent, were camped on one of these streams when they received the news of the accession of Queen Victoria, about ten months after the event. They celebrated the occasion in champagne, showing that, however scarce the necessaries of life may have been, luxuries could still be obtained.

In this year also it is recorded that Lady Franklin, the wife of the Governor of Tasmania, Sir John Franklin, so well-known later in connection with that band of heroes that laid down their lives in the cause of Arctic exploration, made an overland trip from Melbourne to Sydney. She spent some little time in the Ovens district, and ascended the range just south of the present Barnawartha railway station to obtain a last view of the Murray Valley and the great plains stretching as far as the eye can see to the north and west. This range now bears the name of Lady Franklin Mount therefrom.

1840.—Practically with the year 1840 we reach the-termination of the first period in the settlement of this great district, and there is but one fresh holding which I can ascribe to it. This is the formation of the Mitta Mitta run by William Wyse, south of the Yabba holding. This was a large and valuable property which was early divided into three blocks under the titles of Mitta Mitta No 1, Mitta Mitta No 2, and Mitta Mitta West.

Thus appropriately enough we finish the record of this early settlement by putting forward the name of William Wyse, the first to be mentioned in this history. Then, as previously mentioned, we found him employed by Ebden. Two years later, with his brother James, he was in the employ of Captain McDonald at Noorengong, and now we find him striking out in the endeavour to obtain some of the fortune for himself which in those days grazing these large areas promised. His success was not as great as one could wish, and he sold out in 1857 and went to live in retirement in New South Wales.

Having thus hurriedly sketched the formation of these runs, it is necessary to say that during the following twenty years many others were formed in these two counties by subdivision and the more correct definition of boundaries. Here I have only mentioned a few over forty, while the Gazette lists of 1860 contain the names of over one hundred distinct holdings.

Again, with the march of time and the spread of closer settlement many of those mentioned here have now become but names, known only to the older settlers. A constant succession of prosperous farms has taken the place of many, especially on the lower country bordering the Murray and Ovens Rivers and extending to the foot of the ranges. A new race and generation has taken possession, which knows nothing of the pioneers that paved the way for them, making it the more desirable that the early struggles and trials of these grand men should be carefully recorded.

Where only eighty years ago there stretched an unbroken forest traversed by a few aboriginals, we now have endless clearings, well cultivated and producing wheat, wine, and wool in abundance. With these are roads, bridges, railways, churches, schools, towns, and all the numberless proofs of civilized occupation, justifying one in looking forward with full faith to greater development in the future.