

# Albury Pioneer Cemetery

*Greg Ryan*

There was an Aboriginal burial ground in South Albury, named on some maps as Yarra-wuddah. As the first European settlers died, they too were interred in the same place. The area was later known as 'The Sandhill,' now the site of Waite's Park.

During the 1850s Albury was expanding quickly and sand was removed from the burial ground for building works. The *Border Post* reported in January 1860 that "sand, in which repose the remains of the fathers of our township, is being carted away, graves and all and strewed about the streets and yards of the town. Broken coffins are seen protruding and little children amuse themselves by playing with skulls." A thigh bone was being shown at a local hotel and this was reported as a disgrace to "a civilized community."

A site for a new burial ground was chosen to the north of the town. In February 1860 burials began to take place in the new cemetery known as Kolb's Paddock. Valentine Kolb had land on Gerogery Road, the original name for Fallon Street. The remains of those buried in 'The Sandhill' were re-interred in the new cemetery.



Albury Pioneer Cemetery, April 2021

Complaints began almost immediately, and in September 1860 the *Albury Banner* bemoaned "neglect and desolation" at the new cemetery. Newspapers reported "ongoing public concern." Rabbits dug burrows which undermined grave plinths and slabs, and the holes were also a hazard to visitors. Cows and pigs were seen among the graves.

Alderman Roper was asked to lay out walkways in the new cemetery and to see that all graves were dug in a systematic order.

Roper commented that Cemetery Road was in “a sad condition” and called for general improvements. The road roughly followed the south-north alignment of David Street which stopped at Guinea Street. As the town expanded, the name David Street was extended to North Street. Around 1929, the name Cemetery Road was abandoned in favour of David Street.

In March 1861 the Council noted that some improvements had been made to the cemetery and suggested trustees should be appointed. A sexton (caretaker) was to be employed for £50 per annum.

At the turn of the twentieth century, dissatisfaction was expressed about the way the trustees managed the cemetery, and council were urged to take over the task. But it wasn't until 1950 that Albury City Council decided to manage the cemetery.