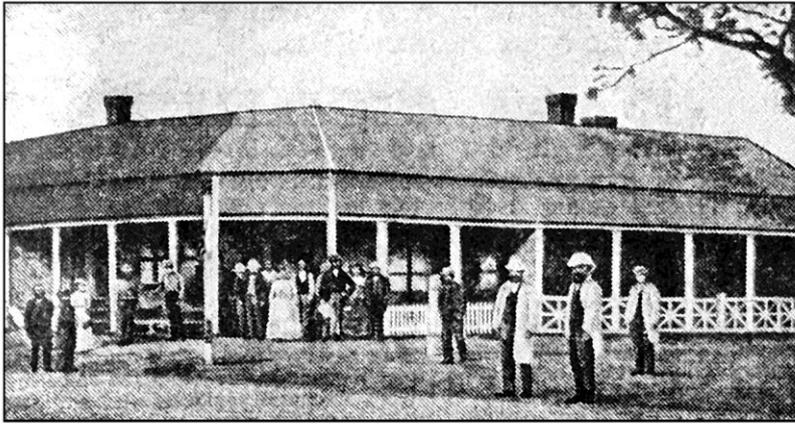


## Thomas Mate's Retail Business

*Greg Ryan*

In 1850, Thomas Hodges Mate came to Albury, a small border town with a population of just a couple of hundred. His first store was on the south-west corner of Hume and Townsend streets, then the business centre of the developing township.



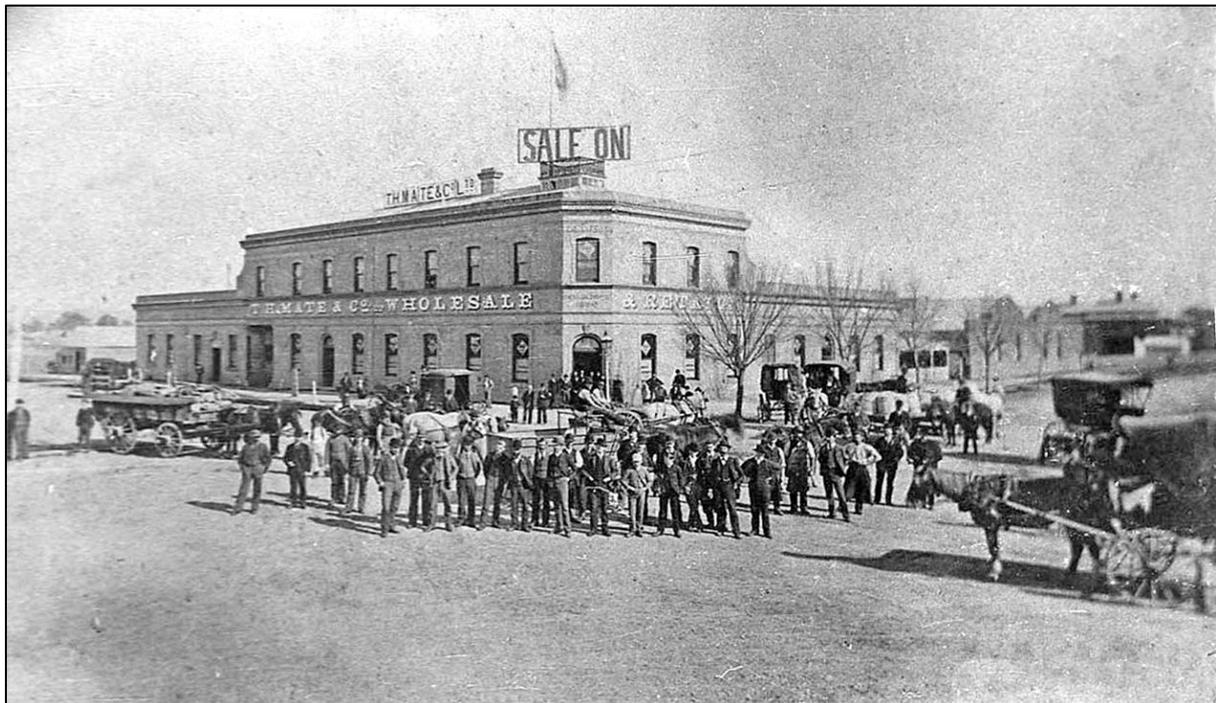
T. H. MATE & Co., 1850.  
Corner HUME and TOWNSEND STREETS.

In that same year, Albury's Anglican parish was established, a steam powered flour mill was opened by Richard Heaver in Hume Street and the National School opened on the south-east corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets.

A full-page promotion in the *Border Morning Mail Jubilee Issue* on October 24, 1953, told readers that in 1850

Mate "opened a small wholesale business in a single-storey building on the corner of Hume and Townsend Streets, using the original Court House, built of slabs, as a lime shed. The Post Office was under the same roof as Mate's.

"When the first steamboats to navigate the Murray reached Albury in 1855, the town entered a new era. Freight costs were low and Mate's continued to grow. In 1856 the first bank and newspaper office were opened. The population of the town had risen to 600.



Mate's 1884 store on the corner of Hume and Townsend Streets in the late 1800s, not very different from how it looks in 2022.

“In 1884 Mr Mate found it necessary to enlarge the premises to handle the increasing business, and the old premises gave way to a substantial two-storey building.” In 2022, this building survives on the Townsend and Hume Streets corner.

In 1861 Mr Mate, with an eye to the future requirements of his progressive business, purchased for £700, the allotment at the corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets.

Mate’s business empire continued to expand, and on October 7, 1899 their main retail store opened with great fanfare on the south-east corner of Dean and Kiewa Streets. It was not long before the corner became known as ‘Mate’s Corner.’

The Dean Street store was destroyed by fire in December 1915 to be replaced by a new building, much of which remains intact on that same corner.

The 1953 newspaper also reported that “in 1899 Mr Mate purchased the house and property of the late Mr Phibbs, in Townsend St and converted the homestead into timber yard offices. On the opposite corner, where the hardwood section is now situated, the ‘Horse and Jockey’ Hotel once stood.”

In October 1952, a new furniture store opened in Kiewa Street, opposite what is in 2022 the Target store. The 1953 article describes it as “another stepping stone in the onward march of Mate’s.”