

Hamilton Hume

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Albury & District Historical Society

Born on 19 June 1797 at Parramatta, Hamilton Hume was the eldest son of Andrew Hume and Elizabeth Kennedy. As a young man, Hume explored the bush around their property, Hume Farm, at Appin about 10km south of Campbelltown. He and his younger brother John made many trips away, travelling as far as Berrima exploring the bush often in the company of aboriginal friends. He learned much from them including bush skills and some of their language.

From 1818 through to 1828, Hume accompanied Government surveyors on five explorations:

- With Meehan and Throsby to Lake Bathurst, then
- 1819 with Meehan and Oxley to Jervis Bay,
- 1822 with Alexander Berry, Shoalhaven River to Braidwood. It was Berry who recommended Hume to Governor Brisbane as a suitable leader for an expedition to find an overland route from Sydney to Western Port.
- 1827 with George Bowen to find more passes through the Blue Mountains.
- 1828 with Sturt to explore the Darling River to its junction with the Murray.

The 1824 expedition with Captain William Hovell, although sanctioned by Brisbane, was mostly self-funded. It took 15 weeks to complete the exploration to Port Phillip and travel back to Sydney. Both men were rewarded with a grant of 1200 acres of land for the successful expedition, crossing ten rivers and many plains suitable for farming, all previously unknown to Europeans.

Hume married Elizabeth Dight in November 1825. He and Elizabeth moved to Cooma Cottage near Yass in 1839. He farmed the selection gradually extending the house and acreage following further land grants in recognition of his other explorations. Hume was respected in the community, serving as a magistrate in Yass until his death in April 1873. The couple had no children.



Hume became well known for the 1824 expedition and his opinions about the southern lands were popular. He found an inland route to Port Phillip, where a settlement was later established by his school-boy friend, John Batman. Batman, then living in Tasmania, was encouraged by Hume in a letter describing the magnificent Duke of York Downs of Port Phillip. This settlement of 1834 became the future city of Melbourne. Hume's legacy is acknowledged by his name being attached to many community and government structures, such as the Hume Highway and Hume Dam. Nationally Hume and Hovell were also commemorated with photos on the 1953-66 one-pound banknote and on the 18-cent postage stamp of 1976.

The 1824 expedition is recognised in NSW by the 440km Hume and Hovell Walking Track. The 'Explorers Bike Ride 2024' is the Albury and District Historical Society's bicentenary activity to remember the Hume and Hovell expedition from Albury to Port Phillip Bay.