

Hume and Hovell Murray River Crossing

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For Albury & District Historical Society

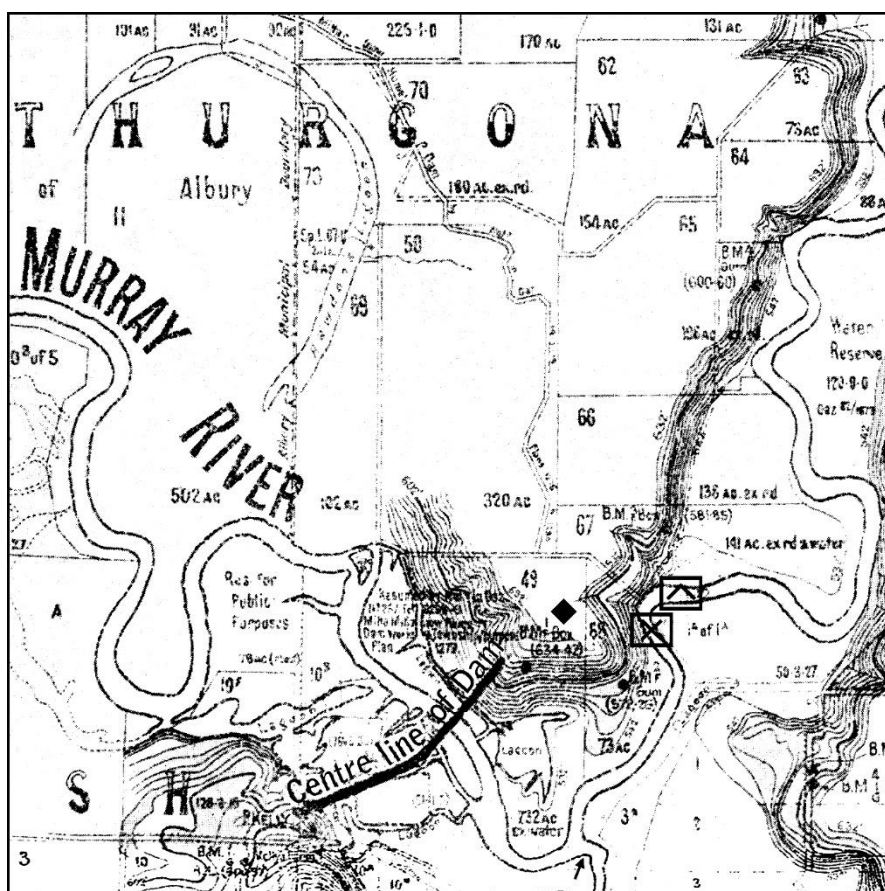
On November 16, 1824, the Hume and Hovell expedition arrived at what is now Albury. They encountered a wide, fast-flowing river which they were unable to cross, with all their party and belongings.





This was a critical point in their journey to discover an inland route from Sydney to Port Phillip. Naval Captain William Hovell, the team leader due to his rank and age 37, wanted to abandon their journey. This was strongly opposed by the younger, but much more experienced bushman, Hamilton Hume, aged 27.

Hume named the river Hume, after his father, but this was later changed to the Murray River by Captain Sturt in 1830. Hume, born in Sydney, had grown up exploring the bush with an Aboriginal friend. Hume's respect and friendliness towards the indigenous people was a critical factor in the expedition's success.

After both men carved their initials in trees at the site, Bungambrawatha, then started looking for a place to cross.

After exploring the river downstream for seven miles, failing to find a safe crossing place, they camped the night below Dights Hill. Next day, November 17, they continued downstream another 7½ miles before returning to their camp unsuccessful. They travelled



-  Crossing place as marked on the 1919 map of Dr Andrews
-  Crossing place as marked on the map in the 1924 Hume & Hovell Centenary booklet
-  Hume Weir Village
-  Point at which the Mitta River enters the Murray River

upstream over the next two days to just above the junction of the Mitta Mitta River with the Murray. Here was a crossing place, marked by a line of rocks, used by local aboriginal people as it was relatively shallow and less wide.

One of their crew, Tom Boyd, swam across, pulling a rope in his teeth. The rope was then attached to their belongings on a makeshift raft, built using wattle tree saplings covered by a tarpaulin. They had previously used their wooden carts to cross the flooded Murrumbidgee River but later had to abandon their carts because of the steep terrain of the Goodradibee River.

On November 20, 1824, they successfully crossed the Murray River and proceeded on a route to Port Phillip.

The site chosen to cross is now under the water at Lake Hume. Historian Dr Andrews, writing for the Victorian Historical Magazine in April 1919, described the crossing site. The site is just upstream of a bend in the river below what is now Hume Weir Village.

The monument near the Lake Hume café has an arrow inlaid at the back indicating by sight the Bellbridge monument opposite on the Victorian side. A similar line of sight exists between the Bellbridge to the Ebdon monument and indicates the crossing place of the Mitta River on November 22.