

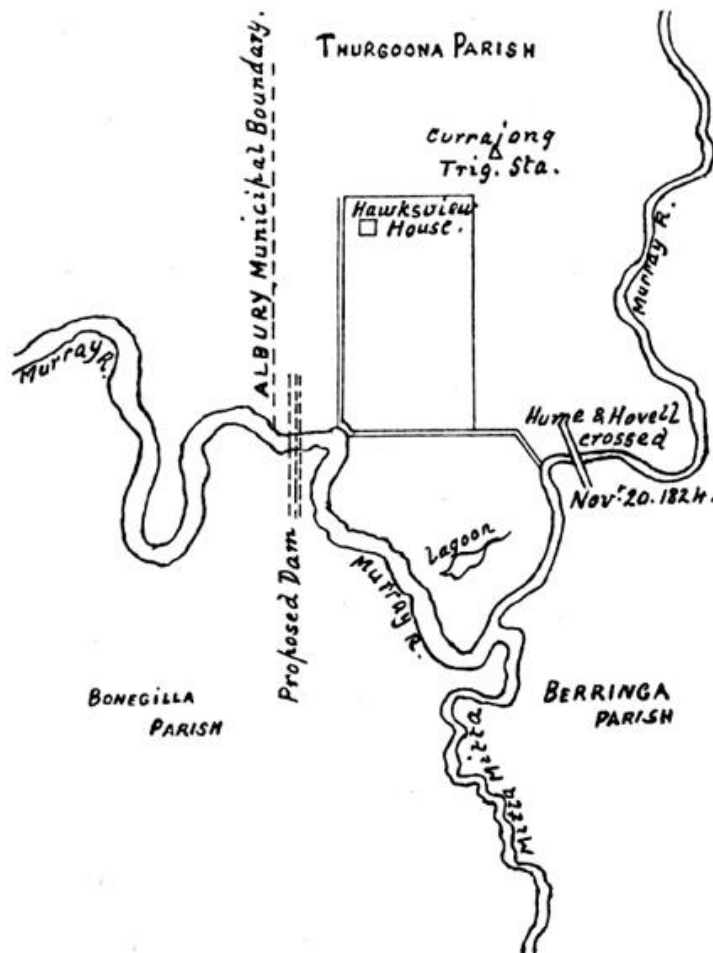
Where Hume and Hovell first crossed the Hume or Murray River in 1824

An article by Albury historian of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Dr Arthur Andrews, first published in the Victorian Historical Magazine, Volume VII, No 8, April 1919.

The proposed dam on the Murray, just below the mouth of the Mitta Mitta River, will submerge to a depth of many feet a site that should be of historical interest to all. This is the actual crossing place where the explorers first passed the river when on their outward journey to Port Phillip in November, 1824.

Shortly before the outbreak of the great war some of the residents thought that it would be well to place some enduring mark at this place for the information of future generations. The scholars of the Bethanga State school took great interest in the matter and devoted a day to attempting to fix the site.

With the view of finding the exact spot, reference was made to the explorer's journal. There we found the discovery of the river by Hume near the "Hovell Tree" at Albury on 16th November. This tree is accepted by many, even local residents, as marking not only the discovery point, but also the first "Crossing Place," but reference to the journal will soon show the error.



This shows that when they reached the river it was fairly high, being "not less than 80 yards in width, and with a current fully 3 miles an hour." Seeking a crossing they proceeded downstream a few miles. On the 17th Hume and Hovell, with two men, travelled a further 7 miles down, but finding the stream more regular and apparently deeper, they retraced their steps. On the 18th they again reached the place of discovery and passing on about 3 miles camped. On the 19th they still travelled easterly about 6 miles where they found the rocky islet known to the natives as "Thurgoona" (afterwards the site of the first homestead of the Mungabareena run). Again 4

miles further east they found the river had narrowed to 40 yards, which they took as an indication that they had passed the confluence of some large tributary coming in from the south. On the 20th they crossed with little difficulty.

This did not give sufficient information to enable one to fix the spot, and also implied that it was about 13 miles from where the river was first seen. Actually it is not more than 6 miles due east, and the long distance travelled must have been due to the winding course they had to follow, passing the many lagoons in the neighbourhood of the stream. Had they strictly followed the river itself the journey would have been fully doubled owing to its winding course.

Application was then made to Mr J F H Mitchell, of Ravenswood, who owned and lived at Hawksview for many years. With his usual courtesy he made a sketch of the position, and gave the actual words used by Hume himself when visiting. Hume said, "You, living near the spot, should know where the rocks run brokenly across the river a short distance above the mouth of the Mitta Mitta, where the hills tail off to the river flats, that is where I first crossed the river which I named the Hume."

By this the site was found with little difficulty, and I annex a sketch taken from the parish maps showing the position and that of the proposed dam. Also two photographs taken by Mr S Collier at the place early in 1914, when the river was more than usually low.

As there is no chance of any permanent mark being placed near the site, I have prepared the above note that some record should be preserved in the annals of the Society.

I would further note that when returning from Port Phillip in January, 1825, the explorers followed their own tracks from the Ovens River to this place, but passed about a mile further up stream before recrossing. This site also will be deeply submerged when the proposed dam is full.