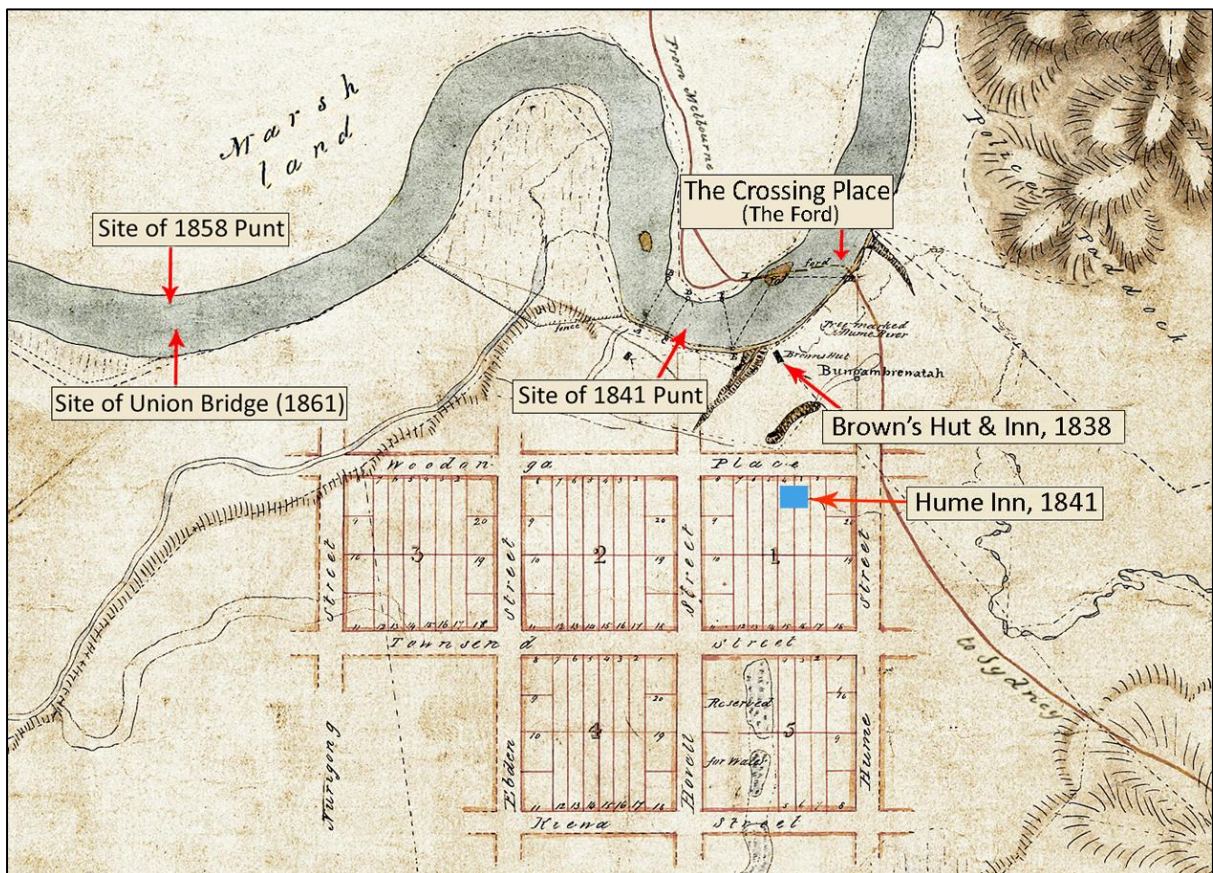# Albury's First Hotel

Greg Ryan

Robert Brown advertised in Sydney newspapers in February 1838 his 'Public House' where he "has on sale an assortment of wines and spirits, also bottled ale." He established on the river bank between the river ford, the 'Crossing Place' and where a couple of years later he established the first punt.

In May 1841, Brown pulled down his original Hume Inn, which was little more than a slab hut. He relocated to land on the other side of Wodonga Place, Section 1 Lots 3 and 4 of Albury's first town plan.

In spite of Albury only having a population of 43 males and 22 females in 1846, business was booming – the Hume Inn offered the "only accommodation for many miles." A new Hume Inn was erected costing about £2,500. The publican of the Hume Inn also operated the ferry, adding to the income stream.

The Hume Inn and the associated two-thirds share of the punt, was for sale in November 1848: "The principal front of this splendid inn comprises an extent of 150 feet [about 46 metres], more or less.—it has a very long verandah and hall, two first-rate parlours, bar, tap-room, and six superior bedrooms." The town of Albury was initially built on the floodplain and the Hume Inn was often impacted. It was still for sale in March 1849.

With extra labels added, this is a section of surveyor
Thomas Townsend's 1839 "Plan for the Township of Albury."

The property was purchased (or leased) by D Rhodes in March 1853. By April 1855 it was sold off as its then owner Francis Harmer Moss had become insolvent. The hotel was reopened by a new lessee, John McGall, in May 1855.

In the floods of September 1856 there were two feet of water in the hotel and a boat could, reputedly, row straight up to the bar. At that time it was possibly still the premier accommodation in town. The hotel was on the market several times in the late 1850s.

In October 1868, fire destroyed the hotel. The *Albury Banner* reported that "The hotel, with store, stables, etc have been completely gutted — the brick walls alone remaining." During a three day inquest, the jury heard that prior to the fire, the windlass and bucket had been removed from well and water tanks overturned. The jury also questioned why James Kelly, the landlord, had completed an inventory of the property before the fire. They concluded "whether by accident or design, there was not sufficient evidence to show." Three months later Kelly was declared bankrupt.

Caption: With extra labels added, this is a section of surveyor Thomas Townsend's 1839 "Plan for the Township of Albury."