

# DISCOVERY AND EARLY HISTORY OF TUMUT VALLEY

*An address to Canberra & District Historical Society by REV'D. J.D. FRENCH  
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## The Explorers

In 1823 Commissioner Bigge in his report on Agriculture and Trade recommended that an expedition be sent inland from Port Phillip to pursue a north-easterly course to Lake George. The object - to ascertain the character of the country and the possibility of communication by land between Port Phillip and the small portion of N.S.W. that was already settled around Appin and Lake George

Influenced by this recommendation Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane had the idea of turning loose a party of convicts with food and horses, promising to grant them their freedom if they safely made the journey back to Sydney.

Governor Brisbane was dissuaded from this course, and was prevailed upon to call in Hamilton Hume (27 years) an experienced bushman who had previous experience in exploration. Mr. Hume was called in, but after deliberation, declined to adopt the proposed scheme.

Subsequently, at the request of Sir Thomas Brisbane, he suggested a route by which he would undertake to conduct such an expedition. The only conditions Hume laid down were that he was to be provided with six men, six pack horses and furnished with necessary provisions.

He was to start from Lake George. Although this proposal was at first agreed to by the Government, ultimately the proposal was abandoned on the grounds that the Government could not afford nor spare the requisite cattle. Hume had further interviews with the Government authorities, but found it impossible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. He then entered into an agreement with Captain William Hamilton Hovell.

Hume and Hovell realising the tremendous possibilities which could result from opening up new country undertook to personally provide the necessary men and cattle. This proposal was acceptable to the Government, who furnished the explorers with the following outfit: "six pack saddles and gear, one tent, two tarpaulins, a suit of slops each for the men, a few bush utensils, a small quantity of arms and ammunition, also two skeleton charts for tracing the route traversed".

Beyond the articles enumerated, Hume and Hovell were thrown entirely on their own resources, and in order to raise money sufficient to purchase supplies for the journey, Hume was forced to dispose of some of his valued personal effects.

The Government promised a cash payment for cattle, and grants of land to those taking part should the expedition prove successful. Results far surpassed expectations, but the promise was not honoured and no money was forthcoming on the return of the explorers. Grants of land were made to the two principals, but Hume was compelled to dispose of his owing to the expenses incurred and losses otherwise sustained by him.

The expedition set forth from the home of Hume, near Lake George on Saturday, 3rd October, 1824. Of the six men accompanying the explorers, each explorer provided three. Hume's men were: Claude Bossan, Henry Angel, and James Fitzpatrick; Hovell's men were: Thomas Boyd, William Ballard, and Thomas Smith. They had five bullocks, three horses, and a cart.

After an absence of 16 weeks they returned on 18th January, 1825. Rain fell on only six days during the expedition. Flour ran out three days before their final return. The whole distance from starting point was measured by perambulator wheel.

On the 21st October they reached the Murrumbidgee above Burrinjuck Dam. The river was in flood and great difficulty was experienced in crossing it. A bark canoe was made, but the bark cracked and proved useless. Then on October 22nd a serviceable punt was made by taking the wheels off and then covering the cart with a tarpaulin.

Boyd (a strong swimmer) swimming the river first. On crossing the river the cart had to be abandoned in the river gorge and the pack saddles were then used on the bullocks as the country was so rough. It was not until 28th October, i.e. 6 days later, that the party got out of the Murrumbidgee Gorge and on to the high ground to the South near Tumorrroma.

Progress there too was, at times, very slow and of a speed of 1½ miles per hour in country east of "Shaking Bog" Tumorrroma. This country was doubtless what is now known as Micalong Swamps. On to the Goobragandra River, well up the river near where Goobragandra Station stands today at Dinnertime Creek.

Hovell's journal mentions that they caught a lobster in the river and shot a kangaroo, and planted clover seed, and peach stones. On November 2nd they crossed the Goobragandra, and set out over the hills in a south-westerly direction, behind the "Camelot" and "Wormatong" of our day, and towards evening "we came in sight of some small plains to the westward of us and a large river" states Hovell's journal. The point where they emerged from the hills would be about where the new road comes into sight of the Tumut River near Bourke's at Blowering.

Hovell's journal continues, "Here we saw that it was only lately that the natives had passed up the river in the direction we were going, and by the marks which they made in trees they had iron, as well as stone, tomahawks in their possession". The exploration Party went 2 miles up stream and camped.

On Wednesday , November 3rd 1824, the party started at sunrise, and made towards the river, and after going three miles came "to the banks of a river which was running very strong, equal to any of the others we have passed, it was about 80 feet wide and three of four feet deep over the falls".

They tried to cross but found the river too deep, and returned 1¼ miles down stream "We found the place where the natives had crossed only a few days before". (This spot is now known as Janey's Reserve). "Here the river is at least 150 feet wide, the stream very strong, stony bottom, about 2½ feet deep, the falls being a little below us. We crossed with the loads on the beasts' backs a little after sundown, and encamped for the night on the west bank".

Hovell wrote "This is the fourth river we have crossed (exclusive of the one at Yass). I perceive that when this river is flooded it is at least 10 to 15 feet higher than at present, as the washings are still remaining on the banks and trees. Thermometer readings 52° at sunrise and 79° at noon. This river we afterward learned was called by the natives 'Doomut' "

Hovell also wrote in his diary of the superiority of bullocks to horses. Bullocks carried loads at a steady pace, and did not get excited like the horses, and were safer on a steep hill and sidings. Sandflies, blowflies, and mosquitoes tormented the men at Tumut River.

Here also the Kangaroo and Emus were in abundance. The site of the Tumut River Crossing was, as far as one can judge, about the vicinity of the Blowering Station Homestead, but Jack Bridle of Talbingo, contends that the crossing was higher up near Henry Pearce's.

On Thursday 4th November, the party followed the west side of the Tumut River south for 6½ miles until the hills closed in, then they made over the range westward towards Batlow, camping a furlong from the top of the range at a soakage. (This soakage is still there today and is well known to Mr. Red Higgins and others).

Thus they struggled through the mountains in a south and south-westerly direction until they emerged from the Tumut River Valley—went down through Tumberumba area - saw snow capped Kosciusko—reached the Hume or Murray River near Albury on the 16th November, and on December 16th 1824 arrived at Port Phillip. The site of the Tumut River crossing by Hume and Hovell will be submerged by the rising waters of the Blowering Dam.

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### **Early History of Tumut Valley**

Settlement followed the discovery of the Tumut Valley by Hume and Hovell very quickly.

As far as can be ascertained the first advance was made down the banks of the Murrumbidgee from Yass, and must have taken place in the late 1820's. It is of interest to note that one member of Hume and Hovell's party, Thomas Boyd, returned in the early thirties and selected land on the Gilmore Creek at "Rosebank" where he reared a large family. Boyd was born in Dublin in 1798 and died at Gilmore on 26th August, 1885. A large headstone in the old cemetery erected by Tumut and district citizens marks his burial place. The Tumut Shire Council at a recent meeting (this year) saw fit to further honour the name of Thomas Boyd by giving the name Boyd to that end of Tumut town which was formerly known as "Railway End".

The first authentic record we have of earlier settlement is from the diary of Captain Charles Sturt written during his exploration of the Murrumbidgee River. On the morning of the 27th November 1828 he called at the station of Mr. Warby at Darbalara on the Tumut River.

Whilst there Mr. Warby told him of the abundance of limestone and whinstone at James S. Rose's station at Been (Tumut Plains). Here we have a positive record of early settlement. Thomas McAlister and his wife worked on Darbalara and their daughter Elizabeth was born there on 10th May 1830 being (as far as is known) the first white child to claim the Tumut River as her birth place.

In N.S.W. there were two types of early settlement, that which was created and that which developed. Of the first, Port Macquarie is an example. "The Governor decided to create a settlement" and a party of soldiers and prisoners were sent to build all that was necessary for a civilised community. With free immigration, another class of settler appeared, young, adventurous, and independent, prepared to form the outposts, rather than be the nucleus of settlement. How differently situated were these last settlers compared with those of the "created settlements". Here all those institutions making up a township were lacking.

Exposed to the dangers of uncivilised blacks and outlawed whites the pioneers had little companionship save that of their brave pioneer wives who shared their labours, dangers and hardships, and no one to look to for guidance or protection but the good hand of God above them. Such were the conditions of the pioneers of the Tumut Valley.

At many a pioneer home in the bush a little grave has had to be dug in the garden and the father too read the prayers over a little home-made coffin, enshrouding the beloved body of a child, baptised, perchance, by its mother in the hour of extremity.

In common with all big rivers the blacks called the river running through the valley "Murrumbidgee" (Big Waters) but its name changed in different localities. At its junction with the river which retained the name "Murrumbidgee" exclusively, the stream was called "Bewuck" from the cod found in its waters. The angle of the river where the first township sprang up was called "Doomut" or "Camping Ground" and this name, spelled also "Toomut", "Tumat" and finally "Tumut" was retained by the present town and river.

We also have authentic records of very early settlement from Dr. George Bennett, Esq., F.L.S., F.R.C.S., London, who in 1832 visited Tumut in order to study the flora and fauna of the district. On the 8th December 1832 he visited Mr. Warby's station at Darbalara and in his book "Wanderings in N.S.W" states that butter and cheese were being sent to Sydney, thus showing that the home of the famous milking shorthorn breed was also the Pioneer dairy of the Tumut Valley. Mr. Keighern at "Brungul" and Mr. Shelley of "Bombowly" are also mentioned. Dr. Bennett stayed at Mr. Rose's cattle station "Been" (now Tumut Plains).

A sketch made by Dr. Bennett showing the "Blowrin" rocks, is reproduced as a frontispiece in his book. In 1829 James Hamilton Rose, of Yass, obtained the promise of a grant of 1280 acres of land in the angle of the Tumut and Goobragandra rivers. He built a house near the "Little River" for a manager - Captain Potter - and sent the first cattle on to the Tumut Plains.

It was 10 years before he was given the title to this land, as the area was outside the boundary of the then settled part of the state. There is some doubt as to whether Mr. Rose ever lived on the property himself.

It was at this home and property that Dr. Bennett stayed, and he states in his book in speaking of the aborigines that it was in this part of the colony, that by killing the cattle of the settlers the blacks found that they could procure a large supply of food with less trouble than by hunting, hence they had commenced spearing the cattle.

On December 13th, 1832, Dr. Bennett rode on to "Blowrin" Station. He does not give the name of the then owner, but sometime later, it was occupied by Dr. Clayton. The places he visited were the only five in the Tumut Valley at that time; namely Warby (with also McAlister) Darbalara; Keighern Brungul; Shelley Bombowlee; Rose Tumut Plains; Blowering Station.

Obtaining title to the land in 1839 Mr. Rose then sold to George and William Shelley, who had been at Bombowlee for 10 years. This seems to have been the first property sale. This 1280 acres is Block No. 1 on the County of Buccleugh land map; No. 2 being the block next to it taken up in the name of George Shelley's wife Amelia. Mr. George Shelley had married Miss Amelia M. Waddy at Parramatta on September 1st 1835 and brought his bride to Bombowlee, Tumut, where he had been the first land holder. Mrs. Thomas McAlister of Darbalara (mentioned earlier) had the house in readiness when the bride and groom arrived - these were the first two white women in Tumut.

George Shelley sold out his Bombowlee property to his eldest brother William Shelley. At the death of William Shelley in 1845 George Shelley became the sole owner of Tumut Plains. The first house the Shelleys occupied was near the Goobragandra River. This house was unusual for its time in that it was built partly of brick (said to have been ballast in a ship) and lathe and plaster. Fruit trees still mark the spot - quinces, plums and mulberrys.

In 1842 this original house (because of flooding own by the Little River) was moved up onto the hill and formed the nucleus of the old Tumut Plains House (“Camelot”) which stood with many additions and alterations until 1960. This home has sheltered at least five generations, a fact rather unique in a young country like Australia - 1) Mrs. Waddy, mother of Amelia who married George Shelley, 2) Mrs. George Shelley, 3) Mrs. H.L. Harris, daughter of Mrs. George Shelley, 4) Mrs. Stacy, daughter of Mrs. H.L. Harris, 5) Mrs. Stacy’s children.

It was while living at the cottage on the “Little River” in 1839 that bushrangers arrived. Mr. Shelley, hearing of the proximity of the bushrangers sent his carriage horses to Bombowlee. The gang arrived, rounded up all the residents of Tumut Plains (numbering about 18) and locked them in the rooms of the cottage. The drays had just arrived from Sydney with provisions and the bushrangers looted these. When Mrs. Shelley came to Tumut blacks were plentiful but friendly. They asked Mr. Shelley when he expected his “gin” and when his wife arrived they curiously gathered round and even felt the curls that she wore on either side of her face and said “budgery” (good).

In after years Mrs. Shelley used to recall that once the black King of Gundagai fought the King of “Doomat” just in front of “Camelot”, Tumut Plains, where the windmill on Shelley’s Creek now stands, and that one of the Chiefs lost his eye. The bridge at the junction of the Goobragandra and Tumut Rivers was named the Shelley Bridge, after Mrs. George Shelley. The opening ceremony was performed by Mrs. E.G. Brown, her daughter. In 1852 Mr. George Shelley died of typhoid fever contracted while travelling to Melbourne with stock. He was accompanied by Dr. Large and Peter Lenehan who brought back the money for the sale of the stock, travelling by night as the Ballarat gold diggings had been opened up and the country was unsafe. The name of George Shelley is preserved as a pioneer of the Tumut District. The glorious East Window in All Saint’s, Tumut, is dedicated by his widow to his memory.

These early pioneer settlers were known as “squatters”. As their “Runs” were outside the settled areas of the State they merely claimed a right to the particular areas and paid no fee for it. A few years later the Occupation Licence fee was £10 for as much as 25 square miles of country.

About 1840 squatters were permitted to purchase areas around their homesteads, watering places and other specially selected spots for 5/0 per acre freehold. (Some of this same land was sold in 1964 for £210.12.0 per acre).

The valley was first used for grazing and breeding cattle and horses ( some of the latter escaping and becoming wild) about 1840 sheep were introduced. There were no fences, in fact fencing wire was not made at this time. Some paddocks around homesteads for holding riding horses and milking cows were fenced with what was known as brush fences or chook and log fences.

Selectors and farmers came in the late 1830’s and early forties. They were a grand type of people, mostly immigrants. They travelled from Sydney in parties, on foot, with their few worldly possessions on bullock drays. That was the only means of transport. The journey took about five weeks. Tumut in these early days was further from Sydney, so far as time in travelling is concerned, than London is from Sydney by boat at the present time.

These early pioneers worked untiringly. They suffered great sorrows and tribulations. There were no doctors and no amenities of any kind. These pioneers had to bring everything they might want along with them.

The early farmers grew wheat and maize and later tobacco. Wheat was reaped with the reaping hook and thrashing by the flail, also horses and bullocks were used to tread out the grain. Later, encouraged by the success of the wheat crops, a flour mill was erected in 1846 by Francis Foord and Mr. Moore on the

Gilmore Creek. In 1853 Fred Body erected a stream flour mill at Mill Angle. Mr. Body was storekeeper in Tumut. This mill was at one period operated by Ah. Chee a Chinese businessman, and later by Allsop and Co.

In 1863 "Rust" destroyed many of the wheat crops. In 1903 (when the fly came to Tumut) this mill was purchased by G.F. Grill, a storekeeper. He erected a modern mill near the railway at the intersection of the Gundagai and Adelong Roads. This "Old Mill" stood in later years unused, and a landmark until 1964 when it was demolished to make way for a modern Service Station.

The ploughs in these early days were composed almost entirely of wood with sheet iron nailed to the wooden mould board. The share and landside being all in one piece of iron. This was termed a "swing plough". These ploughs had no wheels to regulate depth or width of the furrows.

There was very little money and barter and exchange of stock and produce was the principal way of life.

In those very early times there were few entertainments where people could meet each other apart from the popular, but occasional race meeting at distant centres. These were followed by all night dances.

One favourite meeting place for young people was to visit a farm at night and assist in husking corn by the light of a fire of corn husks, whilst someone played an accordion. Many a romance commenced and blossomed in this way. Tumut literary Institute in later years became the centre of culture. Frederick Vernon directed this school in play readings etc. The School of Arts (still standing) was built in 1891.

Houses generally were made of slab walls, bark roofs and earth floors. Shingle roofs came next, but galvanised corrugate iron roofs did not appear until 1860. The inside lining of these early homes (if lined) was often of hessian, of calico, covered with newspapers or wallpaper. The ceilings (if any) were usually of calico. The kitchens had a big open fireplace with hanging camp ovens, boilers and kettles. Later some homes had a brick oven with an iron door for baking bread.

No word can ever adequately express or tell of the selfless courage - the utter down to earth day after day bravery of the pioneer wives and mothers, who leaving all the safety, amenities, and comforts of civilisation behind, came with their husbands to ring, and clear, and build, and make (as only a woman can) "Home sweet Homes" of these crude pioneering homes in the bush.

To face danger, privation, illness, loneliness, childbirth and death, often with no other kindly woman's hand to help. At many a sacred spot today on hill, and in valley, the good earth alone knows the moulded secret of an unmarked grave.

On a gently sloping hillside near Brungle is a fallen broken headstone - embedded in the good earth - it bears this inscription, "Sacred to the memory of Thomas French aged 3 years. Died 16th August, 1848, son of Daniel and Isabella French" and an inscription later "also sacred to the memory of Isabella French, aged 41 years. Died 1st July, 1853. Beloved wife of Daniel French". Along with all the great company of Pioneers "Their bodies are buried in Peace - but their name liveth evermore".

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## **The Aborigines**

In 1838 John Wilkinson (170), Thomas (15), and their young sister Elizabeth (14) arrived at "Rosebank", Gilmore. Disagreement with their stepmother had decided the young people to strike out for themselves. Hence they came to Gilmore with 80 head of cattle, in company with Thomas Boyd.

In 1840 they moved to Yellowin. Both boys built homes there. In 1847 John married Elizabeth McAlister, the first white child born in the district. In 1851 Thomas married Susannah Bridle whose father owned Talbingo station. The property of Yellowin is still in the hands of the Wilkinson family.

Yellowin was in these early days the principal meeting place of the Murray, Yass and local blacks. Often, as many as six or seven hundred gathered there and the Wilkinsons usually slaughtered some cattle to feed them.

It was Hamilton "the white man's friend" who used to advise the Wilkinsons well in advance of the coming of the blacks. Some signals were sent up from the hills for some days before the arrival of the tribes, hence the Wilkinsons were well aware of the coming of the tribes and the cattle were moved away lest they be speared by the blacks. Once the blacks arrived unannounced and the cattle stampeded and were finally rounded up where Jones' Bridge, Blowering, is today.

The principal food of the blacks seems to have been kangaroo and 'possum. The steps cut in trees while climbing for 'possum are still in evidence on some trees in the district. The 'possum or kangaroo was roasted on the fire and the aboriginal would sit down and pull a leg off, eat a mouthful and then throw the leg over his shoulder. The gins and piccaninnies seated behind him would catch and devour the fragments their lord and master threw. The blacks were also expert at spearing fish.

At Yellowin big corroborees were held and the men went deeper into the mountains for a week or two leaving the women and children behind. It is understood they went to the range that fronts Talbingo Hotel where there are "Bora" rings. These rings are still visible today and this year were visited by members of Tumut Historical Society. No one ever followed the men when they retired to the mountains for their ceremony (tribal initiation) as it was believed that certain death would be the lot of any watcher discovered.

On 12th December, 1832, Dr. Bennett (mentioned earlier) accompanied by a stockman and two aboriginal guides went to the top of Bogong Mountains to see the enormous quantities of Bogong moths which collected there in incredible numbers during November, December and January.

Tribes of naked aborigines journeyed to this place to gorge on moths. He wrote that the first time this diet is used by the natives violent vomiting and other weakening effects are produced. After a few days they become accustomed to its use and thrive and fatten exceedingly upon it.

The blacks who abounded in great numbers became great thieves, but we need to remember that we stole their valley. It was due no doubt to the humane character of the early pioneers that no record of bloodshed stains the history of this fair valley.

That the blacks were capable of civilisation was proved by the history of "Johnnie Taylor", who never lived with his tribe, who was a drover and an excellent cricketer, and became a member of Tumut Cricket Club.

Once, at a banquet after a cricket match, some objected to the presence of an aboriginal at the table. H.L. Harris then took the seat next to the black man and when the toast "Johnnie Taylor" was proposed helped the black man to respond. On another occasion two white boys were drowned whilst a cricket match was in progress. It was H.L. Harris and "Johnnie Taylor" who dived in and attempted a rescue. Johnnie was a baptized member of the C. of E. and is buried in Pioneer's Cemetery, Tumut.

No reference to the blacks would be complete without mention of Hamilton - "The white man's friend". There was never any trouble when this aboriginal was about. He seemed to have a powerful influence over the others.

Thomas Wilkinson relates a story of Hamilton: "Coming from Sydney with other teams that had banded together for mutual protection, we were near Yass, a district we were always glad to get through as blacks in this part were wild and untrustworthy. We were anxious - from signs we had observed we knew we were being watched and followed. Suddenly I felt two black arms encircle me, and at the same time heard a blood-curdling yell. My relief was great when I found it was Hamilton, and our troubles were over".

Hamilton was buried at the 2-mile peg on the Blowering Road. An elm tree, planted by Mr. Vyner, marks his grave.

Probably the last of the black chiefs was "Wellington", with "Sally", his wife. They were kindly, helpful, and greatly respected. "Sally" died first and was buried in Arentz's paddock, near the Tumut Showground.

Wellington died in 1875, beside the fireside of Mrs. McCallum. He was buried beside his wife by Messrs. Fred Vyner, Fred Archer and the McCallum brothers. Fred Archer cut the names of the chief and his wife on a tree close by. This tree has fallen but it is not too late to plant another in memory of the original owners of this beautiful valley.

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## Early Settlers

In 1836 John Archer Broughton arrived in Tumut. He was the son of William Broughton who arrived in the colony in the First Fleet in 1788, under Governor Phillip. Mr. Broughton settled at Mundongo and later took up land at Gocup. In 1837 he was joined by his brother Robert Kennedy Broughton who afterwards took up land at Gadara. This land is still occupied by members of the Broughton family.

In 1837 James Garland took up land at Darbalara. Part of a letter written to Miss Fanny Brown of Tumut is worth recording.

"When I left the 28th Regiment to settle in partnership with my brother officer, Mr. Cadhill, it was Darbalara that became our choice. I will tell you a story of these early times of which you may have heard something already.

Four desperate scoundrels, armed to the teeth, under the leadership of Hall and Maine, held up Dr. Clayton at Blowering Station. They remained a day revelling in the luxuries of his store, especially the grog. Taking everything they wished they proceeded to George Shelley's property at Tumut Plains. Fortunately some border police from Yass pounced on them unexpectedly. The two subordinates were arrested 'somewhat under the influence'. Hall and Maine escaped but afterwards were guilty of murder and both were hanged".

Reading on through Garland's letter we learn that before the arrival of the bushrangers at Tumut Plains Mrs. and Miss Broughton, Mrs. Clayton and Mrs. George Shelley had been sent to Garland's at Darbalara under the care of Dr. Clayton and Roland Shelley. The letter continues:

"Hearing the plight they were in we cheerfully undertook their protection. We had, besides our two selves, a soldier servant and also a young naval officer who was keen for a fray. We had six old muskets

with flint locks and a brace of pistols. Thus we remained in a state of siege for some days until the two captive robbers were brought down by the police”.

The story has a happy ending. Miss Broughton was “attractive and nice”. During the “siege” romance blossomed between Miss Broughton and James Garland which resulted in their marriage. Garland’s letter concludes “I never cease to bless the bushrangers for sending me such a treasure”.

Miss Broughton became Mrs. Garland in 1839 and was the sister of John Archer and Robert K. Broughton mentioned earlier. James Garland became he member of Lachlan on the introduction of responsible government.

In 1837 James B. Sharp took up “Green Hills” near Adelong. His son married a daughter of Robert K. Broughton. “Green Hills” is still owned by the family.

Another arrival in Tumut in 1838 was Robert Cooke. Cooke’s father fought in the Battle of Waterloo under Wellington. When his son Robert decided to go to Australia his father obtained a letter for him from the “Iron Duke” to the State Secretary of N.S.W. Cooke had a store in the original township near the “Mill Angle”. Petfield (purchased later) is still in the hands of the Cooke family.

Francis Anderson also arrived in Tumut in 1838 and started a blacksmithing business in Bombowlee. In 1847 Mr. Anderson and Mr. Foord built the first bridge over the river at Mill Angle.

In 1839 Tumut boasted two policemen, Murphy and Paton. Their descendants are respected citizens of Tumut today Others who were in Tumut in 1839 were Timothy O’Mara who kept the hotel near the Mill Angle, Fred Body who kept a store and Thomas Eggleton, a blacksmith.

Frederick W. Vyner, who was born in Warwickshire in 1818 arrived in Tumut in 1839 and at first went in for sheep raising. One of Vyner’s shepherds, an old man named McFarlane, lived in a hut on the banks of a creek which now perpetuates his name. In 1843 Mr. Vyner married Miss Robinson. He was made a J.P.

In 1863 he succeeded Captain Sinclair as Police Magistrate in Tumut. He became the first Returning Officer of the Murrumbidgee Electorate.

Henry Bingham was born in Gloucestershire in 1789 and came to Australia in 1837. He was appointed Commissioner of Crown Lands and took up residence on the Tumut River in 1840. Mr. Bingham was also the Gold Commissioner.

The convicts under his control were housed in barracks on the River’s bank. The bell, which was rung to indicate orders to the men, was for many years in the old house. The Police Headquarters was on the opposite side of the River, lower down at Cockatoo. Bingham always moved around with an imposing cavalcade, he always rode a beautiful horse.

An amusing story is told about Mr. Bingham. Two domestic servants arrived - one for Mrs. Bingham, and one for Mrs. Large, wife of Dr. Large. The maid for Mrs. Large, Polly, was very good looking. The maid for Mrs. Bingham was not so good looking. Mr. Bingham, to whom they had to report, changed maids, Mrs. Large’s good looking maid going to Mrs. Bingham. Next day Mrs. Large addressing her maid as “Polly” received no reply and asking the girl if she was deaf discovered that the girl’s name was not Polly. So Commissioner Bingham’s swap came to light.

In 1839 Robert George Ibbotson came to Tumut with his father and mother at the age of 5 years. His mother died soon after from typhoid fever. Ibbotson made many trips to Sydney and back by bullock team and wagon. His fastest time was 10 weeks. This was considered express time in those days. he

record was held by Tom Hayes (who worked for Fred Vyner) who made the trip to Sydney and back in 9 weeks.

Sir T.A. Murray and a surveyor named Mote are said to have discovered the Yarrangobilly Caves in 1839 whilst exploring, but the Caves were known to local residents before this. Mr. John Bowman, of Currango, and later of Talbingo, discovered the Glory Cave in 1834. Whilst searching for lost cattle a thunderstorm forced him to take shelter and this resulted in his discovering the huge Glory Cave arch. He found some of his cattle, too, sheltering inside.

Mr. Leo Hoad who has devoted 50 years of his 83 years to work associated with these beautiful Caves recently gave interesting details of their history in an address to the Tumut Historical Society.

The years 1840 and 1841 saw the arrival of quite a batch of settlers whose descendants still reside in the district.

In 1843 Francis Foord arrived in Tumut. With Francis Anderson he constructed the first bridge over the Tumut River at Mill Angle, in 1847. They charged a toll fee of £1 for drays and wagons, and 1/- each for pedestrians and horses. In 1847 he married a daughter of Mr. Anderson and took over a farm at Bombowlee. Later, when the town moved to the present site he carried on a business as wheelwright and undertaker until 1890. A wheel tax was also charged by Anderson and Foord for the use of the bridge. A chap by the name of Ryan came with a wheelbarrow and finding a charge for the barrow, carried it over on his shoulder. Prior to this John Rix used to ply a boat for hire, charging 1/- per head to cross the river.

In 1846 Mr. E. G. Brown appears on the Tumut scene. He was a native of Denmark and was 17 years of age when he arrived in Tumut and went to live with his brother J. C. Whitty at Blowering. He built up a reputation as an expert horseman and made a famous overland trip to South Australia with cattle. In 1854 he married the eldest daughter of George Shelley of Tumut Plains.

Mr. Brown purchased Blowering Station shortly after his marriage. He later sold Blowering and then purchased Tumut Plains estate and Mr. W.L. Harris became his partner. In August 1866, he was elected to Parliament, defeating Mr. George Thornton, one time mayor of Sydney. For six years Brown represented his constituency in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Brown commenced business in Tumut as a stock and station agent, living firstly at Bombowlee and then in Wynyard Street (in the old house behind the school tuckshop).

In 1890 Mr. Brown successfully contested a seat in Parliament for this electorate. On 2nd July, 1887, he was unanimously elected the first Mayor of the Tumut Municipality. He was a magistrate, a keen churchman, and warden of the C. of E., and at various times he was president of the Tumut Turf Club, the A. & P. Association and the School of Arts. Mr. Brown died in September, 1895, and as a mark of esteem friends and citizens of Tumut built a cottage as a practical memorial to him. This cottage still stands and is located behind the new Tumut River County Council building.

I mention now some of the more colourful deeds of the colourful characters of this period, and William Bridle and his journey down Talbingo Mountain comes to mind. Bridle, in 1848, negotiated the Mountain in a bullock dray - the first vehicle to come this way. Bridle carried with him a spare nave (i.e. a wheel centre) and on steep sidings he took the uppermost wheel off and substituted the nave. He remained at Talbingo and took up land there, the first homestead being in the centre of what is now the S.M.A. Village of Talbingo.

Bridle later came to Bombowlee where he experimented with many crops, notably tobacco, and manufactured the famous "Bridle's Twist". One of the first shows was held in his wheat shed in 1861 and Bridle was a founder of the A. & P. Society.

The year 1852 is spoken of as "the year of the Gundagai flood", when the whole town of Gundagai was swept away with great loss of life and property. (The Rev'd C.F. Brigstocke of the C. of E. was called from Yass to bury over 50 victims). At the same time the Tumut River was also in flood.

As the first township of Tumut was on a river flat just above the present racecourse, flood waters rose to such a height that residents realised that the site was no place for a town, hence the town gradually moved to its present position which was called by the aborigines "Bockerledgerie" - meaning "where the cherry trees are".

The first building on the new site was a slab hut (where the C.of E. now stands) - a post office kept by a Mr. Gabbat and letters were posted through a crack between the slabs. There was a blacksmith's shop on the site of Beale's brewery (Beale Street), a store where Ron Graham's house now stands, and a court house and lock-up made of slabs on the site of the present court house.

As time proceeded a total of 18 hotels sprang up in and around Tumut. The "Shamrock" was kept by Barney Kelly on the riverside near where the now famous poplars grow. The poplars were planted in 1861 by James Carr for Barney Kelly. Of the hotels which now exist the "Globe" was kept by Michael Quilty who afterwards built the "Commercial".

On 12th August, 1871, a person unknown shot Quilty in the head from the street whilst he was serving in the bar. At an "Indignation Meeting" held that night a sum of £200 was subscribed for the apprehension of the would-be murderer. Quilty recovered.

The "Royal Hotel", then the "Rising Moon" was built in 1854 and was kept by Henry Moon. Dr. Inglis was in practice in Tumut in 1854 and lived in this hotel. Henry Moon and sons, prior to entering the hotel business, had a flour mill which produced a brand of flour named the "Star". Regarding this, Henry liked to joke about "Son, Moon and Star".

The year 1852 saw a further influx of population into both town and district. Dr. Large arrived and lived at Cockatoo. Alexander Myers, shoemaker, commenced business near the site of the present Oddfellow's Hall and W. Hayden, wheelwright, just below this. James Robertson, the first solicitor, commenced practice in 1852 and later built "Comely Bank", where Mr. Archer Broughton lives today.

In 1854 the Rankin Bros, a Scotch family and early pioneers in Australia, came to Tumut. They bought Bombowlee Estate. They also had property elsewhere. Rankin Springs was called after them. At a ball soon after their arrival the brothers attended in their handsome Highland costumes. One local lady who had never seen a kilt before was shocked that they should come "with bare knees".

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## **The Churches, Education and the Press**

The pioneers were largely people of profound faith and trust in God. Family prayers and Bible readings were the order of the day. The leading citizens were leading churchmen.

On Thursday, 10th October 1850, the Rev'd. Gottfried Wagner became the first Presbyterian Minister at Tumut and the first minister of any religion to reside at Tumut. Mr. Wagner was no stranger to Tumut having earlier followed his craft of shoemaker in Tumut, There was no church and an average

congregation of 50 worshipped in the Police Court House. Mr. Wagner was followed in 1853 by the Rev'd Patrick Fitzgerald. The first Presbyterian Church was built on the corner of Herbert and Russell Streets and was opened on 6th April, 1856.

The first Roman Catholic Church in Tumut was built by Dr. McAlroy of Yass, in 1859. It was opened by Archbishop Polding. This building was of brick and is still standing, being used today for school classes. Tumut was part of the Parish of Yass prior to 1863. The Rev'd. Father Thomas O'Neill was the first resident priest in Tumut. The present beautiful blue granite Catholic Church was opened in 1878 by Rt. Rev'd. Dr. Farigan, Bishop of Goulburn.

In 1839 Tumut became part of the Church of England Parochial District of Yass and the first visit of the Rev'd C. F. Brigstocke of Yass was made in January, 1840. For fifteen years services were held in homes, in an unoccupied store (vacated by Mr. Body) and later at the slab court house.

Mr. J. O. Atkinson supplied the music on a bass-viol and sometimes on a haut-boy. On 17th June, 1855, the Rev'd Samuel Fox, the first resident minister arrived. Before a year had passed, Mr. Fox had married Miss Elizabeth Shelley, daughter of Mr. And Mrs. George Shelley of Tumut Plains. Mr. And Mrs. Fox lived at "Rosevale", Bombowlee, in Mr. Bridle's residence.

The township was on the other side of the river and on Sundays Mr. Bridle would pull Mr. Fox and the Bombowlee section of the congregation across the river, hand over hand on a rope suspended above the river, in a hollowed-out log boat.

The first church was opened on Sunday, 20th September, 1857, and the foundation stone of the present church was laid on 28th December, 1875.

The earliest school of which we have record was conducted by Mr. Henry Hilton in a room situated in the present C. of E. Rectory grounds. The year in which the first school commenced is not clear but it was functioning prior to 1857. It was purely private, no assistance being given by the Council of Education of that day. In addition to his duties as teacher, Mr. Hilton was also Postmaster and general confidential adviser to the unlettered of the time.

On relinquishing his duty as schoolmaster, Mr Hilton's place was filled by Mr. James McCutcheon (25 years). His school was conducted in rented premises and was described by an Inspector as "a good slab building but it requires flooring".

A Mr. Hourigan, who was the first R. C. teacher established a school in the fifties, opposite the present Globe Hotel. It was later taken over by a Mr. Bush. In 1860 Mr. D. Finnegan was teaching a R.C. school at Comely Bank on McFarlane's Creek.

At this time Mrs Large, wife of Dr. Large, who arrived in 1839, was conducting a boarding school at which resident students paid £40 per annum. Samuel Gordon of Gocup was attending this school in 1860 at the age of 10 years. In 1883 Rev'd. mother M. Bernard and three nuns came from Yass to Tumut to open a R. C. school.

By the middle of 1868, through the zeal of a local committee, the public school, now the residence of Mr. Dudley Sampson, was in process of construction. This new school, erected by Mr. W. Schnokel, at a contract price of £638, of which the citizens subscribed £150 and the government the balance, was opened on 3rd August, 1869, by the new schoolteacher, Mr. Bonynge. Later, Mrs. Bonynge, a trained teacher, assisted and they taught at this school until 1877. In March 1872 there were 121 children on the roll.

The first newspaper published at Tumut was "The Wynyard Times and Tumut & Adelong and Murrumbidgee Advertiser". Vol. 1, No 1 was published on 20th November, 1860. The paper was printed and published for the proprietors by James Baker Elworthy until 1867 when he moved to Gundagai. Publication was suspended for a time but was renewed in 1871 by Mr. Windeyer.

In 1871 Mr. Spencer Groves took over the newspaper making it a bi-weekly, alternating with the "Adelong Argus". Spencer Groves relinquished active management in 1922. He died the following year. The paper was carried on by the Groves Estate until 1925.

In 1900 Mr. A. Wilkie Watson was publishing bi-weekly in Adelong the "Adelong and Tumut Express". Mr. Watson moved to Tumut in 1903 and continued publication from there, also establishing the "Tumut Advocate".

In 1925 A. Wilkie Watson and Sons bought out the Groves Estate and the amalgamation of the two papers took place. Publication has been continuous since 1871.

Items of news from the "Wynyard Times" may be of interest. 23rd September, 1862: "Inspector of Police for Tumut District, Captain Hare, arrived today. At present he has taken up his quarters at the Woolpack Hotel." July 2nd, 1862: "The first pile of a bridge at the foot of Wynyard Street was driven." Prior to this the only means of crossing was by Anderson's Bridge or by fording the river or by boat. This bridge was used for over forty years, the present bridge replacing it in 1904.

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## **The Kiandra Gold Rush**

Gold was discovered at Kiandra in 1859 and the "rush" commenced, with a consequent affect on the history of Tumut.

In an article published in the S.M. Herald, 4th February 1860, a Tumut storekeeper stated: "I am starting for the Kiandra diggings tomorrow. About 50 of us are going. A complete exodus is taking place. Tumut will be deserted next week. The roads are alive with diggers".

The Goulburn Chronicle, of 8th February, 1860, quotes a letter from a Tumut storekeeper dated 31st January, 1860 which reads: "1200 men passed through Tumut in the last 4 days and they are still going - dozens are looking for dray roads through. have found a dray road and am paying £50 to cut down a belt of timber. The men forfeit £50 if they do not get the drays through in 10 days. Each dray has 10 bullocks and 16 cwt. in loading. I am nearly sold out in Tumut. There is not a man left in Tumut excepting old codgers'. Even our Dr. has bought a pick and shovel".

The Tumut Annual Race Meeting had to be postponed on 18th February, 1860, because of the gold rush. However, when things settled down somewhat the Kiandra goldfields provided a ready market close at hand for Tumut primary produce.

But the road to Kiandra was evidently bad, even in those days, hence the following notice, dated 27th July, 1860: "A public meeting of all inhabitants of Tumut and District will be held at 2pm, Sat. 28th July, at Mr. Quilty's Hotel, for the purpose of appointing a committee to superintend and carry out improvements to the Tumut-Kiandra Road."

The S.M.H., 11th October, 1860, said: "yesterday Messrs. W.F. Vyner, E. G. Brown, N. Emanuel, and N. Mandelson of Tumut arrived at Kiandra by tandem. They were acting as trustees in the expenditure of

£600 contributed by the people of Tumut and £1200 contributed by the government to improve the road from Tumut to Kiandra”.

The Goulburn Chronicle records (April 21st, 1860): “The gold escort from Kiandra arrived at Gundagai yesterday, 19th. It left Kiandra on Thursday, 16th April in charge of Sgt. Maginty with five troopers bringing direct from Kiandra to Gundagai 6,833 ounces of gold”. The price at that time was £3.15.0 per ounce.

One of the many stories of those far off gold rush days concerns an intelligent (or less intelligent) donkey owned by someone at the foot of Talbingo Mountain. The donkey, named Jackie, when loaded with a bag of flour and given a smack on the rump would carry his load to the top of Talbingo Mountain, and being relieved of his burden would descend for another bag. This he did day by day, without any guide.

Hundreds of Chinese flocked to the diggings during this period. When the gold finally petered out, many of them finally settled in and around Tumut. A few went into business, a few into market-gardening, but the majority commenced tobacco-growing. On the whole, they were good and highly respected citizens and enhanced the life of both town and district. Their descendants are held in the highest esteem as fine citizens of Tumut today.

My mother, Frances Clout, and also Mrs. Florence Stacy, were two of those who conducted a Chinese Sunday School and helped to teach the Chinese to speak English.

However, there were those Chinese who were found to be conducting a “sly grog” trade, and for this offence came before the Tumut Court on 20th April, 1888. One hundred and five Chinese packed the Court House that day and the magistrate had to have the Court cleared.

Because of the “sly grog” trade and because of allegations of immorality against the Chinese, an Anti-Chinese League was mooted, but as far as I know, it was not formed. It is interesting to note that an old derelict brick building known as the “Chinese Camp” still stands in Fitzroy Street, back a little from the roadway, and just beyond Doon’s skin store.

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## **Some Later Settlers and Developments of Interest**

Mr. George Clout settled in Tumut in 1863. He was born at Goulburn in 1845. He took a prominent part in all public matters and had the honour of being elected first President of Gadara Shire. His frequent contributions to the press had a great influence on public opinion. In compiling these notes I have had the privilege of drawing on “Echoes of the Past” and “Reminiscences of Brungle”, written by George Clout and supplied by his 83 year old daughter, Miss Jane Clout, who is an active member of Tumut Historical Society.

It is from George Clout’s writings that we learn that in the 1830’s sheep became practically unsaleable, being sold for as low as 6d. per head in Sydney, which, of course, spelt ruin to the owner.

Works known as “Boiling Downs” were started on a huge scale by Mr. Henry O’Brien. By this process fat from the sheep was extracted and realised 5/- to 6/- per head. The method adopted was as follows. The paunches were cleaned and the fat run into these, much the same way as lard was later run into bladders. The paunches of tallow when cold, had much the appearance of large cheeses. A “Boiling Downs” works was in operation at Brungle Creek in the early days.

The population of Tumut in 1867 was 432 and about this time, (1869) John Beale arrived in Tumut and engaged in mining, dealing, and carrying. In 1878 he established a brewery and turned out a first class beer called "Johnie Beale", a favourite beverage in Tumut and district.

James Kell, who had arrived in Tumut in 1856 and had taken up land at Lacmalac, and also, along with John Beale and others, a carrier, plying between Circular Quay and Tumut.

"The bullocky has passed into legend and folk story as one of the most colourful of our early pioneers. He was a hard doer for a hard job. He lived on the roads under the wagon or dray, in flood or drought, alone, hardy and rough. His language was of such potency that legend has it that an artist of the species once swore and flayed the rails of a fence into a living team of bullocks". (From "*Childhood at Brindabella*" - by Miles Franklin).

One night in April, 1868, John Beale and Jim Kell camped with their teams at Conroy's Station, on the flat, on this side of Conroy's Gap between Yass and Gundagai. They were completely unaware that a short distance away during the night five people had been brutally murdered with an axe and a pair of shears by a man named Monday or Collins.

Those murdered were a shepherd (name not given), a Mr. Smith, Conroy and his wife, and another shepherd, named White. The reason Monday gave for this massacre was that he had been working for Conroy for some time and had not been paid. Monday was hanged at Goulburn on June 3rd 1868. From then onwards the camping ground was avoided as far as possible by passing teamsters.

In 1869 H. L. Harris arrived in Tumut Harris was intended for the army but one day in England he met Mrs. Brown, the mother of E.G. Brown of Tumut. Mrs. Brown advised him to go to Australia, promising him a letter to her son, and within a fortnight Harris had sailed for Australia. The first person he met on arrival at Tumut was John Weeden from whom he sought directions. Harris finally became a partner of E.G. Brown and married a daughter of George Shelley.

They had a large family and played a prominent part in the civic, social and church life of Tumut. Florence Stacy, who wrote the "History of the Anglican Church in Tumut" (from which I have drawn extensively in writing these notes) was a daughter.

Another arrival in 1869 was James Blakeney who started as a saddle and harness maker and worked up a fine business. He took an active part in public affairs and became Mayor of Tumut in 1901 and 1902. His grandson is Monseigneur Blakeney, the Parish Priest of Tumut.

Mr. W.D.P. O'Brien, whose name is still well known in Tumut, arrived in the district in 1870, coming from Ireland where he was born (at Killaloo) in 1847. He was very interested in mining and with some Sydney capital to help him developed the Gibraltar Gold Mine at Adelong.

The Gibraltar Mine was later sold to an English Company for £300,000, of which Mr. O'Brien received a considerable portion. He bought "Rosebank", Gilmore, and played a major role in establishing the dairying industry in the Tumut district. In 1900 he built O'Brien's Hall (now Wynyard Centre). He also established a freezing works and his name is associated with the general development of Tumut.

The early building trade in Tumut owes a good deal to Mr. Alfred Emery, who came to the town in 1873 from Essex, England, where he learned the trade of brick-making. His ventures gave employment to quite a number of men.

Another well known identity of this period was Frederick Kinred. He was a builder, engineer and contractor - a man of great vision and foresight. He envisaged and planned in amazing detail a vast hydro-electric scheme for the headwaters of the Tumut River, culminating in the Blowering Dam.

In the early 1880's Kinred endeavoured to induce the government of the day to have the plan adopted and carried out. Approaches were made to the various governments throughout the years. Frederick Kinred's scheme is incorporated in the present gigantic Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme.

There were also infamous names associated with this period of development and two are Lawler and Gatley, bushrangers, who, in 1865, held up Mr. Oltman Lampe's Talbingo homestead.

Mr. Lampe had only just sold his run, "Wambrook" on the Monaro, and had moved to Talbingo. This homestead, right on the side of the road, had been used as an hotel by Mr. Bromley.

Situated at the foot of the dreaded Talbingo Mountain which took at least two days for teamsters to negotiate, Bromley had done a roaring trade during the Kiandra gold rushes. This old homestead became, incidentally, the birthplace of the author, Miles Franklin, and she spent most of her early childhood there. She refers to it in her book, "Childhood at Brindabella", published after her death in 1964. Miles Franklin's ashes (as decreed by her) were scattered by her first cousin, Mrs. Bruce Cotterill (nee Pearl Lampe), along the lovely Jounama Creek which still runs (as of yore) in front of where the old homestead stood.

In 1865, then, Lawler and Gatley held up this homestead. At pistol point Gatley held the family in the dining room whilst Lawler ransacked the home searching no doubt for the proceeds of the recent Monaro sale. They got away with about £15 and all the jewellery that they could find. At pistol point they forced the girls to prepare them a meal and then decamped threatening any who left the house in less than an hour.

In all former hold-ups the two bushrangers had always been masked but knowing the Lampes were strangers, for once they did not disguise themselves. Thus, by the description given, the Tumut police located and arrested the bushrangers at Adelong. Much of the stolen jewellery was recovered. Lawler, an old "ticket-of-leave" man was sentenced to 15 years gaol and Gatley, a younger man and apparently led astray by Lawler, received 7 years gaol.

Other incidents and development in the latter half of the 19th Century are interesting in the history of the Tumut Valley.

The Sons of Temperance Registered Friendly Society was started in Tumut on 8th April, 1870. A Temperance Hall was built in Wynyard Street and comprises part of Bourne's Hardware Store.

The M.U.I.O.O.F. Loyal Tumut Lodge was established in April, 1871. On 2nd August 1878, Bro. John Weeden laid the foundation stone of the present Oddfellows Hall, which was officially opened on Easter Monday, 1879.

It appears that the Tumut Turf Club held its first meeting in the early 1850's. The judge's box in those early days was a whisky case. The only grandstand was a rough shed on the opposite side of the course from the present grandstand. The local paper of 1860 gives an account of the Christmas Meeting for that year. In 1872 the course was finally granted for the purpose of horse racing. The trees within the grounds were planted in 1874.

The Tumut A. & P. Association was officially founded in Tumut in 1875. The first show was held in 1876. In 1862 a show organised by Mr. Henry Hoad was held on "Rose Farm", Bombowlee. About this

time ploughing matches were held annually on "Rose Farm" and were held long after the A. & P. Association was formed.

Typhoid Fever plagued Tumut for years in the last quarter of the century. In 1876 there was a serious outbreak resulting in a number of deaths, amongst them being Mr. R.K. Broughton, mentioned earlier. In 1881 there was a fatal epidemic amongst the Chinese resulting in five deaths in a few days. At this time, Mr. E. O'Mara, J.P., a prominent citizen died of typhoid. The S.M.H., April, 6th 1896, reporting on typhoid in Tumut said that there were 2 more deaths and that there were nearly 70 people still under treatment. Fresh cases were appearing daily. In one section of the town there was scarcely one house without a typhoid victim.

In April, 1896, the headmaster of the Superior Public School, Mr. James Fergusson asked for, and was refused permission, by the Department to close the school because of typhoid. The Department did not recognise typhoid as a communicable disease.

In June of the same year Mr. Fergusson again wrote to the Department stating that during the last quarter there were 84 children away ill, 55 were kept away and 30 were not enrolled because of typhoid. He himself was away for three weeks because of typhoid in the family.

On 18th July, 1896, Dr. A. Thompson, President of the Board of Health, arrived in Tumut with a view to discovering the cause of the outbreak of typhoid fever in Tumut.

A Bill, authorising the construction of the railway line through to Tumut, was passed by Parliament on 23rd October, 1884. There was great jubilation in the town. Land values immediately soared. Land on the Blowering-Kiandra Road jumped from £11 to £62 per ½ acre block. A block of land near where the Railway Station now stands jumped from £15 to £500. This was in 1884 but the railway line did not come to Tumut until 1903.

In 1885, contractor McSharey & Co. advertised for 200 men and commenced work on the first section of the Gundagai-Tumut line. After cutting through the rock near Gundagai Railway Station (before the bridge) the money ran out. The line was finally opened at Tumut on 3rd December, 1903. In 1876 the nearest rail point to Tumut was Bowning; Cootamundra in 1877 and Gundagai in 1885.

Tumut Cottage Hospital was built in 1900 at a cost of between £1300 and £1400. The government contributed £226 and the balance came from public subscription. The first medical officer was Dr. Fitzpatrick and the first Matron, Miss Massie. The most recent additions to the Tumut District Hospital, completed in 1962, cost in excess of a quarter of a million pounds.

Two unrelated items of interest came from "Town and Country Journal". From an 1888 edition we read that "the government has called tenders for the erection of a bridge over the Tumut River at the old punt crossing, 6 miles from Tumut, on the Kiandra Road". This bridge was for many years called the "punt bridge", but is now known as Jones' Bridge. The same Journal, dated October 27th, 1890, reports that:- "The Tumut Council discussed the larrikin practice of throwing eggs at nightly meetings of the Salvation Army. The police seem powerless to stop the matter".

Finally, I mention two widely diversified industries - the dairying industry and the rabbit industry.

Mr. Samuel Gordon, born in 1850 and mentioned earlier as a pupil at the age of 10 attended Mrs. Large's Boarding School, became inter-alia, one of the pioneers of the dairying industry and at Gocup had one of the first three Alfa-Laval separators imported in 1880 by Waugh and Josephson.

The first butter factory was built on the Gilmore Creek by W.D.P. O'Brien and was opened on 16th May, 1900. In 1901 steps were taken to float a co-operative company to be called Tumut Butter Factory Ltd., to take over O'Brien's factory. This commenced operations on 1st January, 1902. Steps were then taken to register a brand for the butter and "Gadara" (after the proposed Federal Capital site) was the name selected.

Rabbits were in millions in the Tumut district before the advent of Myxomatosis. They cost the landowner many thousands of pounds annually. On the other hand hundreds of families depended on trapping for a living.

In 1917 the Tumut Freezing Works was treating 12 - 15,000 pairs weekly (to say nothing of the trade done in skins by skin buyers, from poisoned rabbits). Four horse-drawn vans made daily runs along most country roads picking up trappers' rabbits from hessian-covered stands. Many trappers used their own conveyances. This was the position in 1917, but let us turn back the pages of history a little further.

In the catalogues of the 3rd Annual A. & P. Society Show, 1879, we read the following: "Prize of 5/- for the best collection of rabbits won by E.H. Vyner with two whites and two browns". And in the Sydney Mail, November 22nd, 1890, "The dreaded wild rabbit has made its appearance. Wild rabbits have been caught in Adelong, Gilmore and Brungle". The "Town and Country Journal", September 20th, 1890 has this to say: "A basket containing 7 wild rabbits was exhibited by Mr. E.G. Brown, Stock and Station Agent of Tumut, and were inspected with great interest. One gentleman was prepared to bet £20 to £1 that they were hares and not rabbits".

I conclude these notes with the concluding words of "Reminiscences of Brungle", by George Clout.

"Looking back through the vista of years to those vanished days, whose rude joys or imaginary wrongs were the events of our youth. I feel that I have given a very imperfect review of the working day life of our old time pioneers - a totally inadequate appreciation of those who, through half a century's experience, have done so much towards building up the district in which their lot was cast.

One is loath to leave the subject for friends and visions linger in the mind and homes sacred altar fires gleam amid the scenes. Pondering in the twilight of years over the retrospect of faded joys and hopes and sorrows one is brought to realise that "Memory treasures the bright days of yore". Few indeed of our old pioneers remain, but the work that they have done, both in example and precept, lives after them".

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#### **Acknowledgements and Sources.**

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Papers given to Tumut Historical Society by Mrs. A.L. Stacy, Mrs. B. Brennan, Mr. H.

Weeden and Mr. L. Hoad.

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