

THE NORTHEASTERN AND NORTH CENTRAL REGION



NORTHEASTERN AND NORTH CENTRAL Victoria is a complex region geographically. It encompasses alpine peaks and high plains, major river valleys and the eastern edges of the vast inland plains that stretch from South Australia to Queensland. It also contains one of Victoria's first national parks at Mount Buffalo.

The quarrelsome men led by Hamilton Hume and William Hovell in 1824 were the first Europeans to cross the region. Their reports of the country were favourable, but European settlement was delayed until 1835 when a stockman, Wyse, established a squatting run at Bonegilla (see Wodonga). Others soon followed. The region's squatters were predominantly from **Sydney**, but came from diverse backgrounds. They counted among their number a clergyman, schoolteachers, a French émigré family and the native born. More significantly, many of the earliest squatters knew Hume and took up runs along the route he had followed in 1824, favouring the Kiewa, Mitta Mitta and middle Ovens valleys. The plains to the west were left until the 1840s. The occupation of the region was characteristically rapid, and a decade after Wyse had established Bonegilla all available land had been claimed.

Aboriginal resistance to the squatters was strong. For thousands of years, Aborigines had followed the valleys to the **Bogong High Plains** to feast on the Bogong moth during the summer. Squatters travelling south to **Melbourne** cut directly across their lands and there is little doubt that they violated sacred sites and territorial rights. A growing mutual antagonism climaxed in an attack on part of George Faithfull's overlanding party near the present site of **Benalla** in 1838. Men were killed and stock scattered. Aborigines also attacked several stations during the 1840s. A series of punitive expeditions led by many of the squatters had 'pacified' the region by the late 1840s.

The discovery of gold changed the region. Gold was first found in 1845 at **Yackandandah**, but dismissed as mica. Discoveries made near the present site of **Beechworth** in 1852 could not be so readily ignored. The Northeast proved to be a particularly auriferous region. Alluvial deposits were found in every river system. Gold-bearing quartz reefs were found in the ranges separating the river valleys. Deposits in deep leads were found in the Barnawartha district. Mining remained a major regional industry until the 1920s.

With gold came urbanisation: **Harrietville**, **Myrtleford**, **Yackandandah**, **Omeo** and **Rutherglen**, for example, were all towns established on goldfields. **Beechworth** remains one of the finest examples of goldfield urbanisation in Australia today. Some towns that were built have long since disappeared: **Cornishtown** and **Woolshed** (see **Beechworth**) are two. In areas suitable for agriculture, small towns grew up. **Greta**, **Benalla**, **Wangaratta**, **Euroa** and **Mansfield** are good examples. With the arrival of the riverboats, river towns such as **Echuca** and **Wodonga** (**Belvoir**) became ports and customs centres.

The goldfields of the Northeast differed in many ways from their contemporaries. They were more radical politically, demanding the abolition of licence fees and the right to vote in 1853, a year before **Eureka** (see **Ballarat**). Mechanisation of mining was introduced in the mid-1850s and the exploitation of gold-bearing reefs was also generally earlier. The Northeast's fields also saw the first of what became an ugly reality on Australia's goldfields: anti-Chinese sentiment flared into a major riot at **Buckland** in 1857.

The goldrushes were certainly dramatic interludes in the region's history, but the most profound changes came between 1860 and 1900 with the land acts promoting closer settlement.

Popularly known as the 'selection acts', they settled many people on the land, producing a pattern of population distribution and an urban hierarchy that persist today. Towns adjacent to the goldfields, in areas more suitable for agriculture, grew rapidly. **Wangaratta** and **Benalla** were the most notable examples. **Beechworth** began to decline in significance; the building of the main intercolonial railway further west ended its days as regional capital.

The railway reached **Benalla** in 1873 and, bypassing **Beechworth**, reached **Wodonga** late that year. Although finally linked with the main line via **Wangaratta**, the direct link from Wangaratta to Wodonga accelerated Beechworth's decline. The railway also sounded the death knell for the riverboat trade through Wodonga. But it did promote the rapid settlement of the plains to the west of Benalla and subsequently the growth of towns such as **Shepparton**. As elsewhere in Victoria, selection met with limited success.

These were also the years of the Kelly gang. The story of the Kellys is probably one of the best known in Australia; people debate the merits or otherwise of Ned with as much passion as they did when he was hanged in 1880. The region has many mementoes of the gang including the dock where the young Ned was tried in **Beechworth**, the boot shop where he was arrested in **Benalla** and the place where he was captured at Glenrowan. The sites of the Kelly house at Lurg, Aaron Sherritt's hut at Woolshed and the site of the shooting of the police at Stringybark Creek are still accessible. Many of the towns in the Northeast now openly advertise their connections with the Kellys: Glenrowan is the most extreme example.

Yet, often through trial and error and, as the century drew to a close, with active government participation, the selection decades laid the foundations for the mixed farming systems characteristic of the region today. The Germans, who settled in the region from the 1860s, made a particularly significant contribution. Some specialist crops appeared quite early. Hops and tobacco, often grown by the Chinese, were cultivated from the 1860s. Vineyards,



The tiny settlement of Wandiligong, high in the foothills of the Victorian Alps, was the scene of gold rushes in the 1850s and more recently a popular holiday place, especially for family groups. Photograph by Don Spearritt, 1958.

too, made an early appearance and the region boasted a vigorous wine industry until vineyards were devastated by phylloxera in the 1890s. The industry did not fully recover for fifty years.

The first half of the twentieth century was basically a period of consolidation. Dairying began to emerge in the 1890s, particularly after the introduction of the hand separator which helped with butter production. Co-operative factories were established early in the twentieth century, but the dairying industry in the region had a fitful history until the opening up of international markets and improvements in technology after World War II put it on a firmer economic footing. Soldier settlement schemes were established in the region after both world wars. Many of the farms were given over to dairying, although in the **Shepparton** district irrigation promoted the development of stone fruit orchards. With the establishment of a canning industry, an international market was opened.

In 1911, a plan was unveiled to exploit the hydro-electricity potential of the region's alpine areas by building a series of dams on the headwaters of the Kiewa River. It was shelved after the government opted for electricity generated by brown coal in Gippsland. Approval was finally given to the scheme in 1937, then World War II interrupted construction and in the postwar period preference was given to the **Snowy Mountains** Scheme. The Kiewa scheme was finally finished in 1961 with a power output one-third lower than originally planned. Less troubled in its history was the construction of the Hume Dam. Designed for both irrigation and hydro-electric uses, the dam was begun in 1919 and completed in 1936. Its storage capacity was increased by major work beginning in 1955.

The post-World War II period was one of new growth and change in the Northeast. During the war, Bandiana and Bonegilla (see Wodonga) had been established as army camps. Bonegilla had also held some of the internees destined for the prisoner-of-war and internees' camp at **Myrtleford**. In 1947 the government retained the Bandiana complex for the army but turned Bonegilla over to the Department of Immigration for use as a reception centre for post-war immigrants. At its peak, the camp held 12 000 people. It was closed in 1971. Many of the migrants remained in the region, giving it a complex ethnic composition rarely found beyond the capital cities.

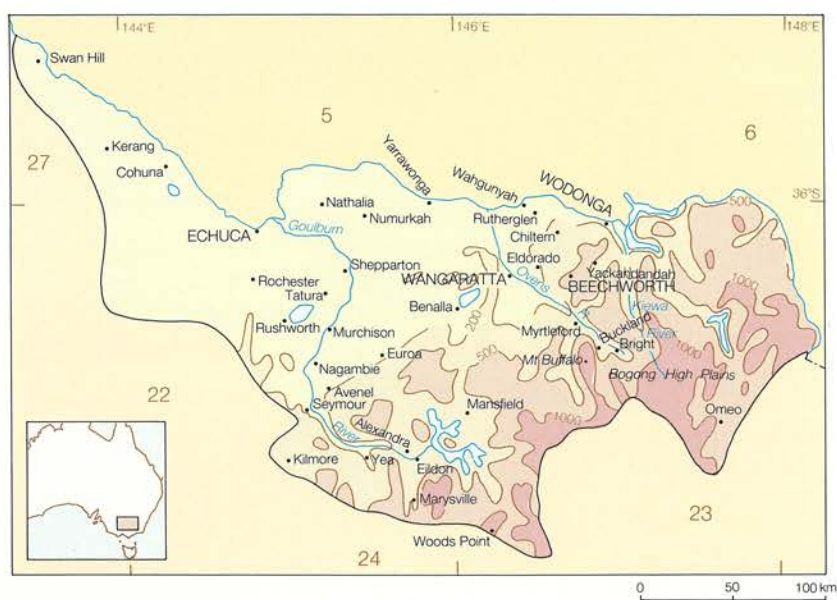
In 1883, Victoria had extended the railway to **Albury** to link up with the line built by New South Wales. Unfortunately, the gauges differed and goods and passengers had to be transhipped at Albury. The opening of the standard-gauge line in 1962 ended this folly.

Postwar reconstruction policies and the government's active promotion of decentralisation led to the establishment of light industries in the region's major towns. Initially, **Wangaratta** was the favoured site, but from the early 1970s preference switched to **Wodonga**, particularly after the nomination of Albury–Wodonga as a growth centre under a joint federal–Victoria–New South Wales agreement in 1973. The accelerated development associated with the creation of this growth centre has created one of the largest inland cities in Australia and growth continues, albeit at a slower rate than originally anticipated.

John McQuilton

SUGGESTED READING

- A.J. Dunlop, *Wodonga: over river and plain*, Melbourne 1976.
 A.J. Dunlop, *Wide horizons: the story of Yarrawonga, Tungamah and Cobram Shires*, Bentleigh 1978.
 D. Johnson and J. Brownlie, *Victoria's north-east corner*, Montrose 1976.
 S. Priestley, *Echuca: a centenary history*, Brisbane 1965.



ALEXANDRA

[37°11'S 145°44'E]

Popn: 1039 (1871), 708 (1891), 2014 (1966), 1756 (1981). Named after Princess of Wales. Earlier known as Red Gate. Gold found at Red Gate Diggings in 1866. Town surveyed in 1867, shire formed in 1869. Gold diggings extended over 90 sq km in the 1870s. Also important as crossing place on Goulburn River on route to goldfields at Woods Point and Jamieson. Gold claims deserted by 1884. Rlwy opened in 1909. Former Union Bank (RNE) built in 1888–89. Town threatened by serious bushfire in 1969.

AVENEL

[36°53'S 145°15'E]

Popn: 86 (1854), 623 (1911), 372 (1947), 453 (1954), 351 (1971), 420 (1981). H.K. Hughes named station in 1838 after village in Gloucestershire, England. First township blocks sold in 1847; grew as halt for coaches and other vehicles on road from Melbourne to Albury. Six-arch sandstone bridge (RNE) built in 1859, disused from 1971 but preserved. Former Royal Mail Hotel (RNE) built in the 1860s. Ned Kelly attended school here — his family moved when he was 11 yrs old (1866). Rlwy opened in 1872, became shipment station for wheat from Goulburn River valley. Former courthouse (RNE) built in 1876. Large grain store, steam flour mill, sawmill estab by 1880; large wood trade with Melbourne.

BEECHWORTH

[36°21'S 146°43'E]

Popn: 1275 (1854), 3040 (1857), 2317 (1861), 3409 (1911), 2852 (1933), 3554 (1966), 3154 (1981). Named in 1853 after English birthplace of govt surveyor. Earlier known as May Day Hills; first post office called Spring Creek.

Goldfields David Reid explored Eldorado Creek in May 1839 and named area May Day Hills. In 1840 he built woolshed there which later gave name to Woolshed goldfield. Little development until Reid's

former shepherd discov gold on Spring Creek in 1852. Further gold discov on Pennyweight Flat and Reid's Creek and district popn increased to about 8000 later in year. Rush to Stanley area in 1853. In 1853 storekeepers on May Day Hills goldfield requested govt to survey township site: this was done and new town named Beechworth. Further finds and rushes in 1854–55. Alluvial, lead and reef mining continued until the 1890s. As shafts became deeper and operations larger in scale, drainage and water supply became problems: major tailrace cut to divert water 1856–67; 800 m tunnel cut through solid rock under town in 1880. Dredging and sluicing became important from the 1890s and into the early 20th cent. Peak digger popn on fields in immediate district was about 22500 in 1857, still 5340 miners in area in 1901. More than 85000 kg of gold were mined in the first 14 yrs. Largest Chinese popn in Vic outside Melbourne until early 20th cent: burning towers, graves and joss house remain in cemetery. Town slowly declined in significance from 1873 to 1900 as mining declined and because of lack of agric in district.

Administrative centre Beechworth became important administrative centre: telegraph office, subtreasury and two gold wardens' offices built in 1857–60 (all RNE). Victory of first local member in Vic parliament celebrated in 1855 by supporters shoeing his horse with gold (or gilded?) horseshoes. Former Ovens Goldfield Hospital (facade RNE) built in 1854–56, at time only hospital between Melbourne and Goulburn, NSW. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1858; first wooden stockade gaol replaced by present building (RNE) in 1859. Burke Historical Museum estab in 1863 and named after explorer Robert O'Hara Burke, formerly police superintendent here. Coachhouse and stables (Nat T) built in 1859 by local rivals to Cobb & Co. Powder magazine (RNE) built outside town in 1859–60 for safe storage of gunpowder; restored by



Beechworth retains many buildings erected during the gold rush of the 1850s and 1860s. The main street still has most of its balconies and veranda posts and would look well with horses and buggies. Photograph by Adrian Young, 1985.

Nat T, reopened in 1966. Town once boasted 4 breweries, 61 hotels and theatre at which international celebrities performed. Shire estab in 1861, town became a municipality in 1863, shire and borough united in 1871. Commercial Hotel (RNE) built in 1873, recently restored. Beechworth gaol held bushranger Harry Power and, at various times in 1870–78, Ned Kelly, his mother, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne. Ned Kelly also held in cell below town hall after an 1870 conviction, and his final trial began in courthouse here before being transferred to Melbourne in 1880. Branch rlwy opened in 1876, closed in 1977.

Twentieth century Town stagnated through much of this century. Major private employer, Zwar Bros tannery, opened in 1858, closed in 1961. Govt then upgraded mental hospital and training prison and encouraged employment in the Forestry and Lands commissions. Tourism very important since c1960 with much being done to preserve historic buildings — more than 80 have been classified by Nat T in what is perhaps Vic's best preserved gold town.

BENALLA [36°33'S 146°01'E]

Popn: 297 (1854), 2509 (1891), 4949 (1947), 8300 (1976), 8151 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'big waterholes', first officially used when town site surveyed in 1848. Previously known as Broken River. Thomas Mitchell crossed river here in 1836. Aborigs killed 11 shepherds on station of George Faithfull in 1838, known as the Faithfull massacre. Town site surveyed in 1848, but little growth until the late 1850s when became centre of grain-growing district. Proclaimed a town in 1861, became a borough in 1948, a city in 1965. Some local goldmining in the 1860s and spas-

modically until 1904. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1864, used until the 1960s: several trials involving the Kelly family held there, including one in 1877 when Ned Kelly was fined £2 for drunkenness. Rlwy opened in 1873. Moira House (RNE, now the Benalla Club) built in 1878. Selections taken up in district until 1883 when last run subdivided. Large public gardens estab in 1887, gas works in 1888. World War II air force camp. Aerodrome became headquarters for Vic gliding in 1948.

BOGONG HIGH PLAINS

[36°43'S 147°19'S]

Name: Aborig = 'the big one', i.e., Bogong moth (*Agrotis infusa*). The Ya-itmathang Aborigs gathered on the high plains each summer to gorge themselves on Bogong moths. John Mitchell of Kiewa River valley reached the high plains in 1843; explored by James Brown and John Wells in 1851 when told of route by Aborig. First run taken up in 1851. Tracks cut through area in the 1850s–60s, much exploration carried out and many features named by early cattlemen. Mother Morell's Hospice built in 1863, Boustead's Hospice and Hotel in 1880. Latter burned in 1939 bushfires, as was old Feathertop Hut built on mountain in 1912. Harrierville to Omeo road built in 1880. Vic State Electricity Commission built Kiewa hydro-electric scheme 1937–61: settlement of Bogong was original base camp for scheme 1939–46. Grazing limited from 1946 due to erosion, stopped altogether in some areas in 1960. Ski area on Mt Bogong designated in 1952. State Electricity Commission road to Langfords Gap extended as tourist road to Omeo Hwy in 1965–66. Bogong Nat Pk of 81 000 ha declared in 1980.

BRIGHT [36°42'S 146°59'E]

Popn: 551 (1871), 972 (1911), 595 (1933), 1545 (1981). Named after John Bright, English statesman, in 1862. Earlier known as Morses Creek goldfield after prospector. First alluvial goldmining along river above Porepunkah in 1853; Morses Creek field mined from 1856. Reef mining dominant from 1859. Village founded and surveyed in 1862. Powder magazine built in 1861, courthouse (RNE) in 1861–62. Rlwy from Wangaratta opened in 1890. Gold dredging from 1899; 38 dredges in area in 1913. Alpine Club founded here in 1891. Town in depressed condition c1939 when major Forestry Commission planting of pines as basis for timber industry began. Tourism increasingly important since World War II.

BUCKLAND [36°47'S 146°51'E]

Popn: 344 (1911), 21 (1933). Named after squatter Thomas Buckland who took up land in 1845. Gold discov and field rushed in 1853: popn of about 6000 in 1854. Disease a problem, typhoid killing 1000 in 1853. In 1857 over 3000 Chinese diggers joined the 500 Europeans on field leading to anti-Chinese riot with many Chinese fleeing and Robert O'Hara Burke being sent from Beechworth to restore order. Reef mining dominant from 1857, dredging from the 1890s. Village removed in the early 20th cent.

CHILTERN [36°08'S 146°38'E]

Popn: 1100 (1861), 2746 (1911), 785 (1933), 603 (1971), 867 (1981). Named after Chiltern Hills in southern England. Earlier named Black Dog Creek, then New Ballarat. Settlement grew up around hotel and changing station for horses for mail coaches in 1844–46. Alluvial gold discov in 1855 by refugees from Eureka incident (see Ballarat), but not publicised. Main rush after find in 1858. Gold mined until early 1900s when seepage and falling returns closed mines. Courthouse (RNE), police station, post office and *Federal Standard* newspaper office (Nat T, RNE) sprang up soon after discovery and popn rose rapidly — up to 20 000 diggers on field c1859 — fell when mines began to decline. First district winery estab in 1858, second in 1913. Childhood home of author Henry Handel Richardson was Lake View (Nat T, RNE). Historic sites around town protected by state park created in 1978.

COBRAM [35°55'S 145°40'E]

Popn: 282 (1891), 1695 (1954), 3817 (1981). Name: Aborig *cobbera* = 'head', i.e. head station of run estab in 1845 by Octavius Phillips. Shire estab in 1853. Town estab in 1887 for rlwy which opened in 1888. Centre of large post-World War II soldier settlement schemes and of Murray Valley Irrigation District. Murray Goulburn Co-operative Co estab here in 1949 by soldier settlers, now has one of state's largest milk factories.

COHUNA [35°48'S 144°15'E]

Popn: 24 (1891), 2178 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'native companion' or 'camping place'. District settled by squatters from north of Murray River in 1835–36. First irrigated blocks estab in 1913. Cohuna

Skull, possibly over 14 000 yrs old, found in 1925. Dairying important on irrigated pasture: butter, cheese and casein produced. Myxomatosis virus first successfully released among rabbit warrens near here in 1950. Important skeletal finds in Kow Swamp area to the southeast in 1967–73: some complete skeletons over 9000 yrs old.

ECHUCA [36°08'S 144°47'E]

Popn: 1649 (1871), 4789 (1881), 4137 (1933), 7943 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'river junction'.

Beginnings Charles Sturt drove cattle through district on way from Sydney to Adelaide in 1838. Settlers in area by 1841. Punt across Murray River from Moama estab in 1844. In 1851 innkeeper and punt owner H. Hopwood suggested to govt that river port be built in area. Epidemic of ophthalmia and bush-ranging activity in 1852. In 1854 govt surveyor approved Hopwood's site for township and named it Echuca. First land sales in 1855; pontoon bridge over Murray R, butchery, boiling down works built in 1855–57 period. Important frontier post: in 12 months June 1856–June 1857, at least 34 319 cattle, 110 885 sheep and 1710 horses crossed Murray R at Echuca.

River port Warehouse leased to Murray Navigation Co in 1855 as depot, but company failed in 1858. However, steamer operator Francis Cadell made Echuca his base in 1857–58. In 1858 proposal to build rlwy brought people to town; Thomas Mitchell built Echuca Hotel and Hopwood the present Bridge Hotel (RNE); leeches were exported to London doctors; importers and merchants set up in town; and telegraph to Bendigo opened. The 1862 Land Act led to 40 500 ha being opened up in district. Rlwy from Bendigo opened in 1864 and popn trebled by end of yr. Created a borough in 1864. In a second land release in 1865, only 20 000 ha of 60 000 ha released went to new owners, the rest being taken up by nominees of owners of older runs. Police station (RNE, now a museum) built in 1867. Echuca was base for 35 steamers and 70 barges in 1875, but by then feeling effect of some diversion of trade via Darling River to South Australia. Peak yr for exports was 1878, peak yr for imports, 1880. Town became Aust's largest river port with three-level wharf (RNE) and 79 hotels. Exports via river ceased by 1901. Present rlwy station built in 1879.

Later town and district development Hospital built in 1881. Town was presented in 1891 as possible federal capital. Pig farming grew in importance in the 1890s: bacon factory estab early in 20th cent. Butter factories opened in 1904–05 following closer settlement schemes in district. Much of Echuca wharf demolished because of wood shortage in 1944. Restoration of port area began in 1973 following Nat T declaration of a historic area. Large number of buildings from the 1850s–80s, many restored, are listed by Nat T and RNE.

EILDON [37°13'S 145°56'E]

Popn: 489 (1933), 206 (1947), 2913 (1954), 737 (1981). Station of 1838 named after Eildon Hills in Roxburghshire, Scotland. Gold discov in area in 1867, OK mine

employed 100 men at its peak. Sugarloaf Dam completed in 1922, reservoir filled by 1927, doubling capacity of Goulburn River irrigation system. Major enlargement work 1950–55 led to new townships of Eildon and Thornton and to Eildon Reservoir which, in the early 1970s, had the second largest capacity in Southern Hemisphere. Hydro-electric generating station also built. Fraser Nat Pk declared in part of catchment in 1957. Road around reservoir completed in 1959 and use of park and reservoir for leisure increased. Large state park created in 1980.

ELDORADO [36°19'S 146°32'E]

Popn: 1562 (1871), 243 (1891), 155 (1966). Name from Spanish 'the golden one': name given to station in 1836 because of pastoral potential. Gold discov in 1854–55, field rushed in 1856. Some sluicing began in 1855, although mining chiefly of leads to 100 m depth. Tin mined from the 1860s, first in Aust. Also first tin smelting in Aust. Township grew to about 4000 in the 1870s, but isolation and lack of capital hindered further growth. Many Cornish miners. In 1895, 6 men killed by mud flow into McEvoy mine and town declined as deep mining viewed as too risky. Open-cut sluicing began in 1900. Powerhouse built in 1914 to supply mines: closed with main mine 1929, mine reopened using State Electricity Commission power 1934–42. Dredge (RNE), largest in Southern Hemisphere when built in 1936, operated until 1954 winning 2.3m g of gold and 1475 tonnes of tin. Most houses removed in the 1950s.

EUROA [36°45'S 145°36'E]

Popn: 124 (1854), 3040 (1961), 2640 (1981). Name: Aborig *yera-o* = 'joyful' or 'meeting of the waters'. Explorers William Hovell and Hamilton Hume in district in 1824, first European settlers in 1838. Village founded c1850. Merino sheep breeding in Vic began at Seven Creeks station in district in 1851 when Mrs Eliza Forlonge brought Saxon merinos from Tas. In 1878 Kelly gang held up National Bank, netting over £2000. Important Aborig rock painting site in Garden Range to southeast.

KERANG [35°42'S 143°56'E]

Popn: 109 (1871), 1082 (1891), 4164 (1966), 4049 (1981). Name: Aborig name for edible root vegetable. Thomas Mitchell explored area in 1836. First European settlers in 1845. Woodford Patchell purchased land in 1856–57 and set up pump on Loddon R to irrigate crops, probably for first time in Vic. He also created nucleus of town which developed from about that time. Rlwy from Melbourne opened in 1884, tramway to Koon-drook in 1888. Borough created in 1966. Salination problems in irrigated areas in the 1980s.

KILMORE [37°17'S 144°58'E]

Popn: 1426 (1854), 1122 (1891), 1474 (1954), 1096 (1966), 1728 (1981). Speculator William Rutledge named estate after his birthplace in Ireland in 1841. Hamilton Hume and William Hovell passed through district and named Mt Disappointment in 1824. Squatters drawn to district in 1837 by rich volcanic

soils. One of oldest towns in Vic: post office estab in 1840, first town lots sold in 1842. In area of one of special surveys of 1841. Township surveyed in 1849–50. Some local gold discoveries in 1851 and 1890. Boom period in the 1850s. First Roman Catholic parish in Vic outside Melbourne estab here in 1849. Daily coach service to Melbourne began in 1854. Created a municipality in 1856. Whitburgh Cottage (now a museum) built in 1853–57, courthouse in 1864. Main road from Melbourne to Sydney built in 1858: town became first major staging post when travelling north from Melbourne. Rlwy opened in 1872. Mt William has most important Aborig stone quarry in Vic with tools made from it found in the Riverina of NSW and southeastern SA.

KYABRAM [36°18'S 145°05'E]

Popn: 391 (1891), 2137 (1947), 5414 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'thick forest'. First European settlers in district in the 1840s. Closer settlement scheme begun by State Rivers and Water Supply Commission in 1909 with subdivision into dairy farms averaging 40 ha. Irrigation area estab in 1913, largely for orcharding, using water from Goulburn River. Fruit cannery opened in 1922; fruit preserving and sauce factory in the 1930s. Created a borough in 1954, a town in 1973. Aust's only community owned, non-profit wildlife park opened in 1976.

MANSFIELD [37°02'S 146°07'E]

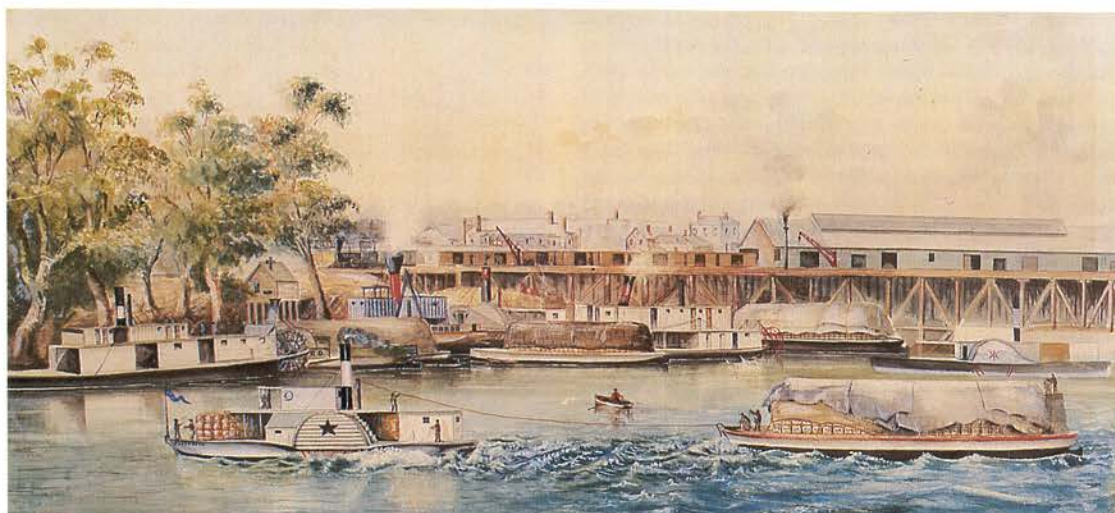
Popn: 385 (1871), 1110 (1911), 2019 (1966), 1920 (1981). Named after Edward Mansfield who settled here in 1841. Township surveyed and lots sold in 1851. Shire created in 1866. Rlwy opened in 1891. Graves of 3 police shot by Ned Kelly at Stringybark Creek are in local cemetery. Timber industry has long been important.

MARYSVILLE [37°30'S 145°46'E]

Popn: 85 (1871), 776 (1947), 598 (1981). Named after Mary Steavenson, wife of surveyor of town in 1863. In the early 1860s diggers on route to Cumberland Diggings camped at future town site while Dirty Dick sold them tea and damper. Steavenson in charge of road surveying and construction in 1863 with headquarters here, also surveyed town site. Guesthouses built in district after rlwy from Melbourne to Healesville opened in 1889. Goldmining in district had ceased by 1914 and cattle, timber, agric and tourism became economic bases. Acheron tourist road built between here and Healesville in 1929.

MURCHISON [36°36'S 145°14'E]

Popn: 235 (1871), 1123 (1911), 544 (1966), 596 (1981). Named after Roderick Murchison, pioneer traveller and geologist. Settlement grew up at river crossing on route to Waranga goldfield on land formerly occupied by Goulburn Aborig Protectorate which existed here 1840–50 after beginning at Mitchellstown in 1839. One of Vic's grandest homesteads, Noorilim (RNE), was built east of town in c1870. Over 5000 German and Italian prisoners interned in area during World War II: remains of 130 Italian POWs, Italian war



The paddle-steamer Elizabeth pulling a barge laden with woolbales at Echuca. The three-level wharf reflects the importance of Echuca as Australia's largest river port in the 1880s as well as the variation in water level in the unregulated Murray River. Watercolour by an unknown artist, c1880.

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memorial and chapel in local cemetery. Debris from rare form of meteorite fell in area in 1969, providing evidence of chemical evolution beyond Earth which could produce life.

MYRTLEFORD [36°33'S 146°45'E]
Popn: 338 (1871), 1085 (1933), 2815 (1981). Name derives from Myrtle Creek, which was named after myrtle trees in area. First squatters in 1837–38. Gold discov in 1853 and many reefs mined, mainly by companies 1856–1900. First alluvial mining rush in district at Happy Valley in 1856. Town surveyed and named in 1859. Rlwy opened in 1883. Growth due to success of tobacco industry. Industry at low ebb c1895, US expert brought in. Other declines in the 1930s and during World War II. After war new varieties and new techniques successfully introduced. Tobacco Growing Research Station estab in 1952. Soldier settlement in district after World War I. Important rodeo held annually since 1954. Became part of Shire of Bright in 1866, but dissatisfaction came to a head in the 1950s and separate shire formed in 1960. Large numbers of Italian, Yugoslav and Spanish immigrants have entered tobacco, hops and walnut industries since World War II.

NAGAMBIE [36°45'S 145°11'E]
Popn: 146 (1871), 908 (1911); 738 (1947), 1102 (1981). Name: Aborig *nogamby* = 'lagoon'. Teamsters earlier called it the Dip and Horseshoe Lagoon. Large estate taken up in 1845 by Hugh Glass and John Purcell. Chateau Tahbilk vineyard estab on part of it in 1860; most of vines wiped out by phylloxera in the late 1880s; vineyard declined until taken over by Purbrick family in 1925. Attempt to diversify into silk in 1887 unsuccessful. Cellars classified by Nat T in 1959 (also RNE). Glass had private town surveyed and first

blocks sold in 1870, but hotel, blacksmith and church already estab as overnight stop for teamsters. After northeastern rlwy opened in 1872, Avenel became their goal if carrying Goulburn valley produce. When mining town of Graytown 24 km to west crashed in 1870 after mines were flooded, businesses moved to Nagambie. Rlwy from Melbourne opened in 1880, but had detrimental effect as town lost coach and teamster trade. Goulburn Weir completed, largely by manual labour, in 1890 and Lake Nagambie created as storage for Goulburn River irrigation system.

NATHALIA [36°02'S 145°14'E]
Popn: 689 (1891), 1369 (1966), 1222 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'place with no stones'. Runs in district taken up from the early 1840s. Closer settlement in district in the 1870s. School and post office opened in 1878. Settlement surveyed and allotments sold in 1879. Gazetted as village in 1880. Coach factory estab in 1882, first newspaper in 1884. Proposals for rlwy led to further development; rlwy opened in 1888. Popn of 300–400 in the 1880s when poor amenities led to typhoid outbreak. Butter factory estab in 1895. Empire combine harvester patented by local man in 1900, but design sold to SA company. Bad drought led to no wheat at all being shipped from district in 1902. Levees built on Goulburn River in the early 1900s to restrict flood waters; reasonable flood prevention achieved with Loch Garry scheme in 1925; but further bad flooding in 1974–75.

NUMURKAH [36°05'S 145°28'E]
Popn: 1011 (1891), 2770 (1966), 2582 (1971), 2713 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'war shield'. Strathmerton, first run in area, granted in 1840. Coonanga homestead (RNE) built of red gum slabs in 1866, one of finest such homesteads in Vic. Selectors moved into

district in 1869. Township surveyed in 1876, land sales in 1878 as settlement grew to cater for increased rural popn. Rlwy from **Shepparton** opened in 1881. In 1881 shire president asked Chaffey brothers to report on suitability of area for irrigation, but they had misgivings about such development. Area resurveyed in 1930 and construction for irrigation scheme begun. Area of 24 300 ha in district declared suitable for soldier settlement after World War II, much of it developed by 1949–50 and eventually catering for 700 settlers. Courthouse (RNE) built in 1888–89.

OMELO [37°05'S 147°37'E]

Popn: 166 (1854), 63 (1871), 989 (1911), 439 (1933), 272 (1981). Name of local Aborig group, first used for James Macfarlane's station in 1835. Aborigs gathered quartz crystals (*gibba*) from Omeo R and believed them to be magic. Omeo Hwy follows route of Aborig track used for intergroup contacts. George McKillop reached Omeo district from the Monaro (see Cooma) in 1835; Angus McMillan passed through on way to estab station at Ensay in Gippsland in 1839, using the Aborig track. Site of most isolated goldfield in Aust after gold discov in 1852: in early yrs gold warden from **Yackandandah** only visited field twice a yr. In 1863 popn was 600, including 400 Chinese. Police magistrate in the 1860s was T.A. Browne (Rolf Boldrewood), author of *Robbery under arms*. Cassilis mine used hydro-electric power in 1908 because of local shortage of firewood for boilers — innovative technology for the time. Mining ceased in 1914. Badly damaged by earthquakes in 1885 and 1892 and largely destroyed by 'Black Friday' bushfires of 1939, but some old buildings remain including courthouse of 1865 and log gaol of 1875 (RNE), the latter still in use in the early 1980s.

ROCHESTER [36°21'S 144°44'E]

Popn: 66 (1871), 1714 (1933), 1549 (1947), 2399 (1981). Earlier called Rowe's Camp; in 1854, Rowecheester; then in 1855 changed to Rochester after city in Kent, England. Dr John Rowe was first European settler in 1846. Town proclaimed in 1855. Rlwy from **Melbourne** opened in 1864. Random House built for W.T. Webb (MP) in 1868. Long-distance cyclist and politician Hubert Opperman born here in 1904. Area benefited from irrigation when Waranga Channel opened, leading to modernisation of existing dairy factories in the 1930s. Establishment of electricity supply in 1940 allowed butter factory to open cheese division: pasteurising plant followed in 1946, dried milk processing in 1952. Largest milk processing plant in Aust c1980. Local farmer contracted with H.J. Heinz & Co in 1947 to grow tomatoes, 120 ha in district by 1953 and of continuing importance since. Eppalock Dam on Campaspe R completed in 1964, increasing water supply for irrigation in district.

RUSHWORTH [36°34'S 145°02'E]

Popn: 399 (1871), 1483 (1933), 994 (1981). Supposedly named after shipboard companions of early gold warden. Known earlier as Dry Diggings and Nuggetty. Gold discov in 1853. Village founded and Imperial

Hotel (now a private home) estab in 1854. At peak 26 mines in area and about 40 000 diggers in Nuggetty–Whroo district: Whroo to north was thriving mining village for a few yrs after gold discov in 1853, now deserted. Mining declined in the 1870s, but renewed growth of town with land selection in district. Butter factory built in 1895. Waranga Reservoir completed in 1905 as part of Goulburn–Murray irrigation system. Many wooden miners' cottages moved out in the 1930s as town could no longer sustain miners or timbermen. Over 1000 prisoners of war and enemy aliens in camps in area during World War II.

RUTHERGLEN [36°02'S 146°29'E]

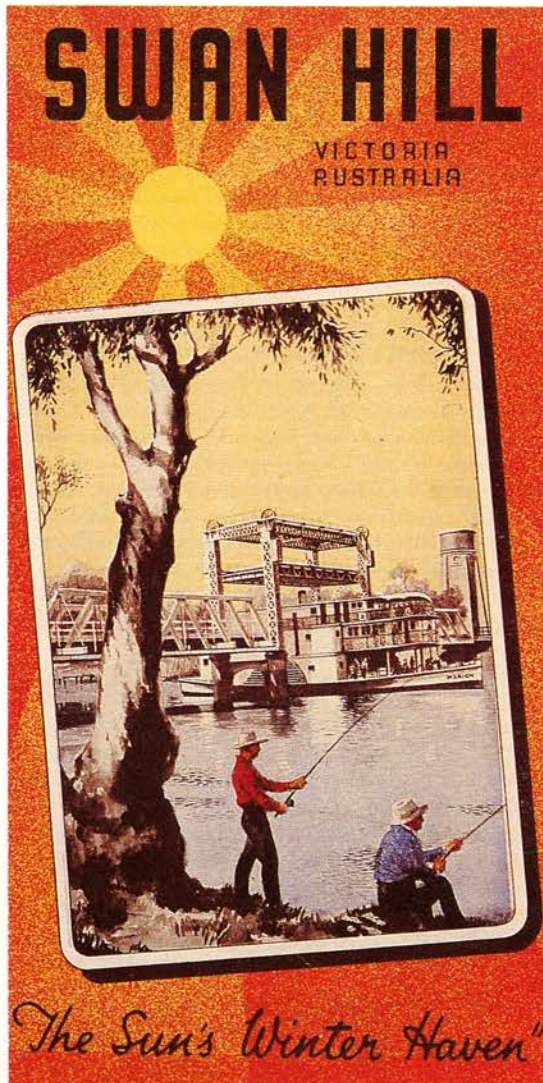
Popn: 616 (1871), 2437 (1911), 1177 (1971), 1454 (1981). Named after Scottish birthplace of John Wallace, hotel owner and member of legislative council. Pastoral occupation from the 1830s. Boom area during gold-rush period of the 1850s. First vines in district planted in 1851. Seppelts' Clydeside winery estab in 1851, Morris' Fairfield in 1859, Chambers' Rosewood in 1862. Campbell's Wines estab in 1874. Murray District Vinegrowers' Assoc formed here in 1883. Vic govt passed Planting Bonus Bill in 1889 leading to production of huge quantity of inferior wine followed by depressed industry in the 1890s. Viticultural college estab in 1896, but became research centre from outset after phylloxera destroyed vines in area, then used for general agric research (including 1911 work on superphosphate and pastures) until 1945 when finally became a viticultural college. Sprinkler irrigation used on vineyards from 1966. Renewed prosperity in industry since first Rutherglen Wine Festival in 1967. Gold discov in area in 1860–61, one mine operating until 1965. Gold and wine between them drew about 25 000 people to district at its peak, but town popn declined to about 500 by 1870. Borough estab in 1862, absorbed into shire in 1920.

SEYMOUR [37°01'S 145°09'E]

Popn: 138 (1854), 1740 (1891), 3016 (1947), 6494 (1981). Named by Thomas Mitchell in 1841 after Lord Seymour, son of Duke of Somerset. Earlier called New Crossing. Area first settled by Europeans in 1837. In 1838 Hawdon and Bonney mustered cattle in district for famous drive to **Adelaide**: they discov junction of Goulburn River and Murray River on their way. Inn built at punt crossing in 1839. Town surveyed in 1841. Royal Hotel estab in 1848. Serious bushfires in 1851. Log lock-up (RNE) built in 1855, since relocated. Town proclaimed and bridge built over Goulburn R in 1863. Rlwy from **Melbourne** opened in 1872. First steamers navigated as far as Seymour in 1878. Gasworks estab in 1892. Recommended as site for military base by Lord Kitchener during his 1909 visit: large military camps in both world wars, large permanent base at nearby Puckapunyal since World War II. Severe flooding in 1873. Habbies Howe station in district estab in 1842 and house (RNE) built c1852.

SHEPPARTON [36°21'S 145°26'E]

Popn: 33 (1871), 1679 (1891), 4049 (1911), 10848 (1954), 17 506 (1966), 28 373 (1981, including Mooroopna).



Tourist brochure advertising Swan Hill's attractions, 1941. Today, Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement recalls the time when the town was a busy river port. Victorian Railways and Swan Hill Tourist Association brochure.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

Named after Sherburne Sheppard who had run (1843–57) on which town built. Earlier known as McGuire's Punt, then Sheppardtown in 1853 and present form from 1855. In 1838 overlanders Hawdon and Bonney drove cattle through area on trek from near Seymour to SA. Sheppard took up Tallygaroopna run in 1843. Emu Bush Inn and punt estab in the 1850s. Town of Shepparton surveyed in 1855. Govt considered land so fertile that passed bill in 1862 forcing subdivision of large sheep runs in district. In 1874 John Furphy estab foundry which later supplied all metal-bodied water carts used in Vic World War I army camps: a camp or latrine rumour became known as a 'furphy'. Foundry turned to equipment for food processing industry in the 1960s. Town grew with land

selection but more intensive farming with irrigation from c1900 increased prosperity: popn doubled 1903–13. First orchards planted in the 1880s. Oldest irrigation district in Vic estab at Ardmona in 1886 by private syndicate. Rlwy opened in 1880. Gasworks estab in 1892. Musician Bernard Heinze born here in 1894. Agric high school estab in the period 1910–20. Fruit cannery opened in 1917, another at Ardmona in the 1920s. Town experienced another period of rapid growth 1921–47. Cleckheaton spinning mill estab in 1949. Shepparton became a borough in 1927, a city in 1949. Private township of Mooroopna estab in 1874, now virtually part of Shepparton. Fruit-dehydration plant estab in 1922, began canning in 1925.

SWAN HILL [35°18'S 143°34'E]

Popn: 44 (1854), 1769 (1911), 4305 (1947), 8398 (1981). Named by Thomas Mitchell in 1836 as swans kept him awake at night. Once officially known as Castle Donnington, but locals persisted with old name. Squatters in district in 1836. Tyntynder station occupied in 1846 by Beveridge family: homestead (RNE, Nat T) built as log structure in 1846, faced with brick in 1850 (possibly first brick veneer in Aust), extended extensively c1854. Lower Murray Inn and first general store estab in 1848. First pack-horse mail in 1849 relieved isolation. Frances Cadell left here to survey Murray River for steamer traffic in 1851. First paddle-steamers from SA reached here in 1853. Town grew up around punt crossing (operated until 1896), became busy river port. First sale of town lots in 1864. Robert O'Hara Burke and William Wills crossed Murray here in 1860 on way north. Became railhead in 1890. Growth followed rlwy and opening of district to closer settlement. Swan Hill Irrigation and Water Supply Trust set up in 1890, taken over by govt in 1906. Flour mill built in 1890, second in 1895. In 1894 scene of confrontation between union shearers and 'scabs' brought on the *Rodney* — boat set on fire as result. Customs house built and butter factory estab in 1896. Telephone exchange estab in 1907; electricity supply from 1911. Declared a borough in 1939, a city in 1965. Shakespeare Festival held annually since 1947. Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement estab in 1961 to recreate the river port of the 1860s–90s. In 1973 the *Murray River Queen*, largest ever Murray R paddle-steamer, launched for tourist operation between here and Goolwa.

TATURA [36°26'S 145°15'E]

Popn: 492 (1891), 2697 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'small lagoon with rushes'. Earlier called the Whim after the main watering place for area. Pastoralists in district from at least the 1850s. Village grew up around the Whim; proclaimed in 1874. Tatura East (formerly Toolamba) gazetted in 1870. Tatura Wheat Export Movement formed in 1896 to export to UK. Butter factory estab in 1907, also produced electricity for town from 1911. Large influx of Gippsland dairymen after World War I led to larger factory. Cannery built in 1919, but moved to Mooroopna in 1922 (see Shepparton) after complaints of smell. Not replaced until Rosella cannery built here in 1949. Italian settlers

in the early 1930s, many more after World War II. Wartime prison camps in area: 250 prisoners of war and internees from both wars buried in German war cemetery maintained by War Graves Commission. Some Italians and Japanese also held here in World War II. Horticultural and irrigation research farm estab in 1937. In 1981 a \$1.2m tomato concentrate plant opened.

WAHGUNYAH [36°01'S 146°23'E]

Popn: 314 (1871), 809 (1891), 373 (1966). Name: Aborig = 'watch out for camp'. Station taken up in 1839 by John Ford and John Crisp. Ford estab punt across Murray River in the 1850s and had town site surveyed in 1856. He built wharves, school and private township and promoted wheat growing. Town acted as Murray R port for diggers headed for **Beechworth** and other district goldfields. Former customs house dates from 1886. Served by small steamers from **Echuca** until rlwy opened in the 1880s. Gold discov in area in 1860. First vineyard estab in 1860; All Saints winery estab in 1869, present winery (RNE) built c1880.

WANGARATTA [36°21'S 146°21'E]

Popn: 503 (1854), 1469 (1871), 1331 (1881), 4136 (1911), 10 715 (1954), 16 202 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'home of cormorants' or 'meeting of the rivers'. Known as Ovens Crossing Place 1838–59. Hamilton Hume and William Hovell in district in 1824. Thomas Mitchell crossed Ovens River here in 1836 and reported enthusiastically on district. Settler George Faithfull built hut at **Bontharambo** in 1838 and estab Wangaratta station at junction of King and Ovens rivers. Faithfull sold **Bontharambo** to Rev Joseph Docker in 1838; homestead (RNE, Nat T) built in 1858 to replace

earlier one built in 1843. William Clark took up Ovens Crossing station in 1838 also and built homestead. General store at river crossing from 1838, became regular crossing place and settlement grew around it. First post office estab on northern side of river in 1843. Township laid out in 1849. Largely deserted in 1851–52 because of district gold rushes, but later prospered as starting point for route to diggings. Further survey and allotment sale in 1855, Docker a major buyer. First bridge over Ovens R in 1855 replaced punt. Courthouse built in 1859. Created a borough in 1863, a city in 1959. First stage of St Patrick's Roman Catholic church (RNE) begun in 1865. Bush-ranger Dan Morgan's body buried in local cemetery but away from other graves after he was killed at **Peechelba** station in 1865: his head was sent to **Melbourne** for analysis 'as he was thought to have the mind of a gorilla'. Rlwy opened in 1873. By 1884 Wangaratta had four churches, a tobacco factory, three flour mills, a tannery, two breweries, several foundries, a hospital and a town hall. Woollen and rayon mills important employers in the 1960s with workforce of about 1400: Bruck Mills estab in 1947. IBM estab one of their very few computer manufacturing plants outside USA here in 1984.

WODONGA [36°06'S 146°55'E]

Popn: 34 (1854), 1510 (1911), 7498 (1961), 10 528 (1971), 18 142 (1981). Name: Aborig = 'native bulrushes'. Known as **Belvoir** from 1852 to 1869. William Hovell and Hamilton Hume crossed Murray River near town site in 1824. Immediate area of town first settled by Europeans in 1836 when squatters Charles and Paul Huon took up Wodunga run (officially leased from 1839), although an earlier run at **Bonegilla** to the east had been taken up in 1835. Mail service from



A versatile store at Yackandandah, the site of a gold rush in 1853–54. The entire town is now classified by the National Trust. Photograph by Adrian Young, 1980.

Melbourne to Sydney ran through here from 1838 after Mitchell's surveyors marked out road. Small village grew up in the 1840s. Township surveyed and gazetted as Belvoir in 1852. River trade important to district from the 1850s until rlwy built; port area proclaimed in 1854. First police station opened in 1854. Some small farms made available in district in 1856. Telegraph opened in 1858. Courthouse and customs house built in 1859, bridge between here and **Albury** in 1860–61. Part of Shire of **Yackandandah** from 1864 until Shire of **Wodonga** proclaimed in 1876. Rlwy from Melbourne opened in 1873, linked to NSW system at Albury in 1883. New customs house built in 1881, finally closed in 1915. Became important cattle sales centre after rlwy opened, but state import duties of the 1890s made droving from NSW less profitable. Horse sales became very important from c1890. Murray Grey beef cattle breed developed in district in 1900. Concrete pipe factory opened in 1949, large pet food plant in 1967, other industries since World War II. Bonegilla army camp to east estab in 1940, Bandiana camp in 1942. Latter became largest army storage depot in Southern Hemisphere during the 1940s. New army administrative HQ built at Bonegilla in the 1970s. In 1947 Bonegilla camp became one of Aust's largest migrant camps with popn of about 3500 in the mid-1950s to mid-1960s; closed in 1971. Over 315 000 migrants passed through the camps, many later settling locally. Wodonga proclaimed a rural city and became part of the Albury–Wodonga Growth Centre in 1973; site for offices of Albury–Wodonga Development Corp estab in 1974. Considerable suburban development since then.

WOODS POINT [37°33'S 146°16'E]

Popn: 1059 (1871), 147 (1911), 359 (1954), 229 (1961). Named after first storekeeper on diggings, Henry Woods. Gold discov in 1860. Main mine taken over by company and run until 1903. Peak popn of 2000 miners served by 30 hotels. Other goldfields in district were the Jordan (1861) and those in Matlock Hill area (1862–63). Jericho became main township of Jordan field. Postmaster at Matlock Hill in 1863: Emerald Hill township surveyed there in 1864 when 1000 miners in area, but named Matlock to avoid confusion with other places. Decline of Matlock began in 1867, remains devastated by bushfire in 1873. Brief mining boom in the 1890s. Athol and Gaffney's Creek (Lauraville) were other mining towns in district: whole of latter is a conservation area (RNE) which had 820 miners in town area in 1865 and which survives as small settlement because a nearby goldmine has operated continuously since 1864.

YACKANDANDAH [36°18'S 146°52'E]

Popn: 552 (1871), 701 (1911), 461 (1981). Name:

Aborig *yag-gun-doona* = 'country of hills'. First settled by Europeans in 1837. David Reid took over Yackandandah squatting run in the 1840s and gold said to have been discov and ignored when watermill being built in 1845–46. Gold finds in 1852 and main rush in 1853–54: considered easier field to mine than **Beechworth**. Popn of about 150 in 1853 rose to about 3000 by 1862. Dredging of creek beds followed earlier alluvial mining. Town surveyed in 1856: solid buildings and sale of town lots from 1857. Bank of Vic (RNE, now museum) built in 1860, courthouse (RNE) in 1866. Shire proclaimed in 1864. Many miners in the 1860s came from the Klondike and Californian fields. Rlwy opened in 1892, closed in 1955. First Aust-born gov-gen, Isaac Isaacs (born 1855, in office 1931–36) spent childhood here. Entire town classified by Nat T and large portion is a conservation area (RNE).

YARRAWONGA [36°00'S 146°01'E]

Popn: 1278 (1891), 3442 (1981). Name from Aborig *yarra* = 'waterfalls' and *wonga* = 'pigeon'. Burramine station estab in 1842, homestead built in the 1840s by John Hume: house hexagonal, facing all directions against surprise attack. Village founded in 1868. Courthouse built in 1874. Rlwy from **Melbourne** opened in 1886. Yarrowonga Weir built and Lake Mulwala created on Murray River in 1939. Scene of 1944 meeting to estab Murray Valley Development League. Soldier settlement in district after World War II. Pine plantation estab in 1958 to supply match factory in town. Important river resort since c1960.

YEA [37°12'S 145°27'E]

Popn: 230 (1871), 1126 (1911), 954 (1947), 1131 (1954), 996 (1981). Named after Colonel Lacey Yea, Crimean War hero. Called Muddy Creek Settlement until township laid out in 1855. In 1878 name of stream changed from Muddy Creek to Yea River. William Hovell and Hamilton Hume crossed Muddy Creek in 1824, carried back good reports of grazing land in area. First European settlers in 1837–38, most of good land along Goulburn River taken up by 1839. Murrindindi homestead (RNE) in district built in 1844–45 of locally made bricks. Gold discov in 1851. Town laid out in 1855, sale of town lots held in **Kilmore** in 1856. Grew largely as service centre for mines in area: small mining settlements in district in 1869 included Providence, Higginbotham, Enskillen and Molesworth. Anglican church built in 1868. Rlwy from Tallarook opened in 1883. Promotion as tourist centre in the 1890s and trout released in King Parrot Creek. Butter factory estab in 1891. Town threatened with inundation by Trawool Water Scheme proposed in 1908 but never built. Serious flooding in 1934 and 1973, devastating fires in district in 1969 threatened town.