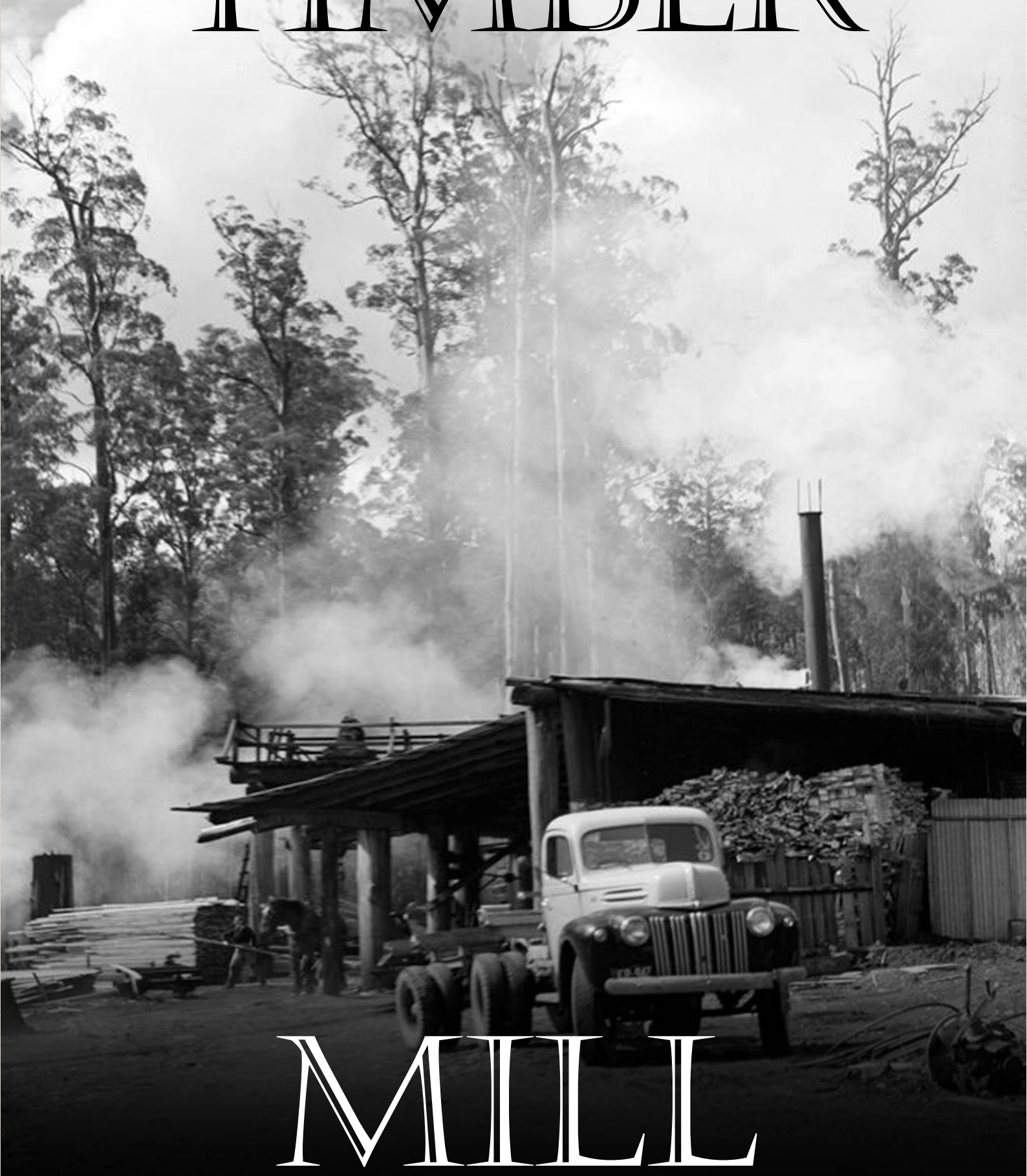


CAMBARVILLE TIMBER



MILL



HERITAGE
AREA
SERIES

CAMBARVILLE

1939 - 1971

CONTRIBUTORS

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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

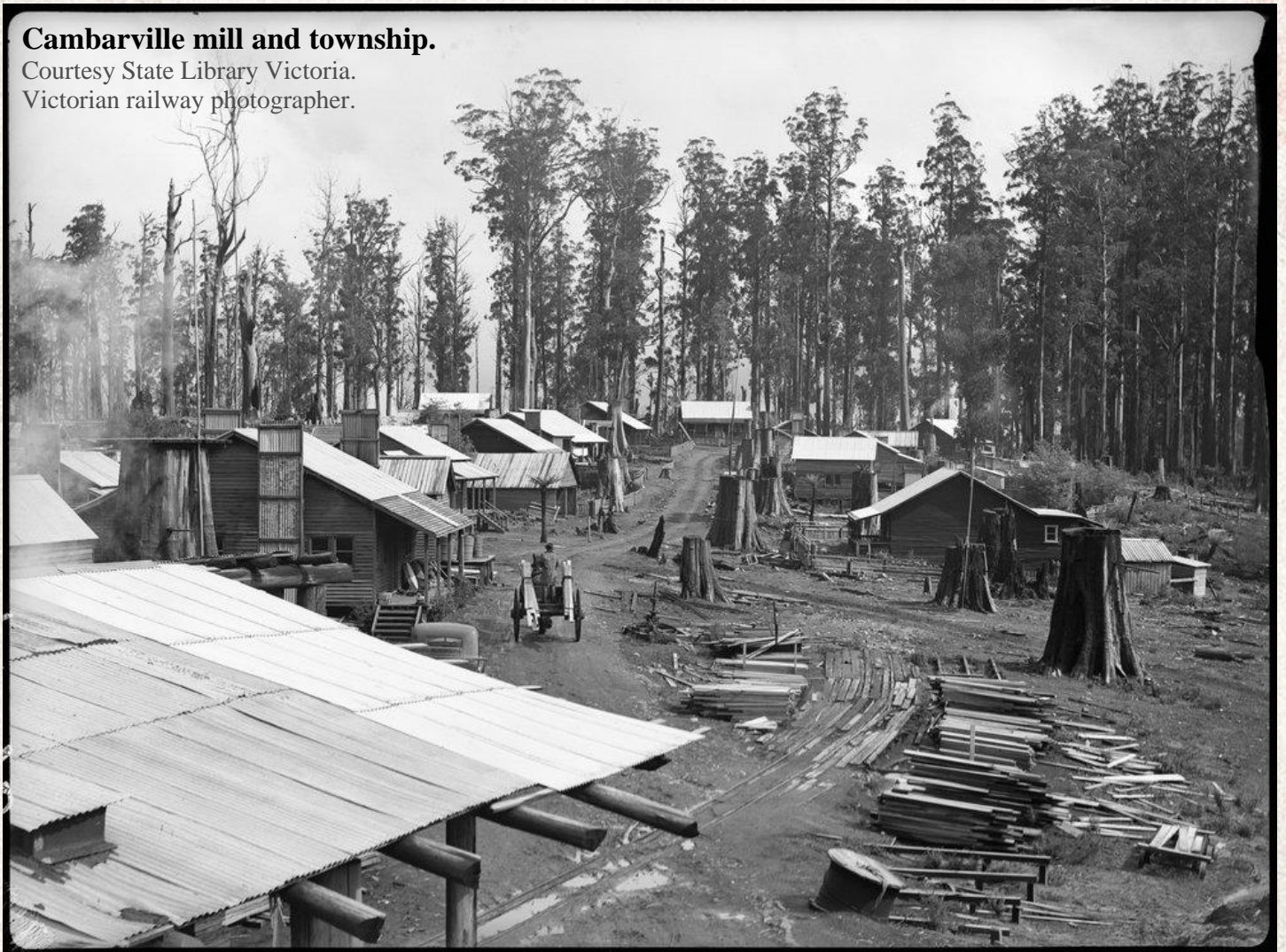
CAMBARVILLE HISTORIC AREA

Name: Cambarville
Established: 1939
Location: Yarra Ranges
Purpose: Mill and township

Cambarville was established after the 1939 bushfires, which decimated the area. A mill was established to process burnt wood after the fires went through the area.

Cambarville mill and township.

Courtesy State Library Victoria.
Victorian railway photographer.



The Yarra Ranges and Cumberland areas of the Yarra Ranges were surveyed and designated by the Government as having tourism appeal in the late 1920s. This was thanks to the tall Mountain Ash, a large number of waterfalls, rivers and streams, and scenic views. A reserve area was set aside by the Government for tourism.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE

After the 1939 bushfires devastated the Yarra Ranges, two enterprising locals from Marysville (Fred Barton and Alex Cameron) established the Cambarville mill, to harvest the burnt wood. The mill was operational by the end of 1940. The small community of Cambarville followed, with its own school, and it quickly became vital to the districts and Marysville's economy.

By the 1940's the area was attracting over 900 visitors each weekend, and the Government responded by tripling the size of the Cumberland Reserve to over 800 hectares. Attractions were now designated and roadways passable by tourism from Melbourne.

The mill at Cambarville finally closed in 1971, and slowly the area was lost to the bush again. Today there is little left of the bustling historic timber township that once stood on this site, though remnants are still visible for those with a watchful eye.

Cambarville has a picnic area with tables and chairs as well as toilet facilities and an information board. It is located alongside the circular walking track that takes you past Cumberland Falls, Cora Lynn Falls and the Big Tree. The Big Culvert is also close.

The Big Tree is the largest remaining Mountain Ash tree known to be alive in Victoria, and the walking path takes you through some of our best bushland.

Cora Lynn Falls is a beautiful and easy to access waterfall, that is very photographic. Cumberland falls is harder to access, and can only be viewed from a distance. The walk in to the falls takes you past the "Sovereign View" lookout, which offers the viewer a nice view down Armstrong Valley.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 1862** The Yarra Track was cut through thick bushland, creating access between Melbourne and Wood Point, where gold had been discovered.
- 1864** The Government of the day funded the upgrading of the Yarra Track, to a roadway.
- 1880** Timber was harvested from Cumberland and surrounding areas.
- 1939** The 1939 Black Friday Bushfires burnt much of the bushland around Cumberland and Marysville. Seventy-one lives were lost, and nearly 2 million hectares were burnt. Over 650 buildings were destroyed across the state.
- 1940** A mill at Cambarville was established by Fred Barton and Alex Cameron, to harvest the tall timbers of the Cumberland area.
- 1943** The Cambarville Primary School opened in the newly established township, which was now a hive of activity.
- 1956** The Cambarville Mill was severely damaged by fire and resulted in the mill closing for a year as it was re-built.
- 1968** Cambarville school closed permanently.
- 1970** A fire at the Cambarville Mill caused considerable damage.
- 1971** The Cambarville Mill closed permanently.
- 2009** The Black Saturday Bushfire, destroyed much of the Cumberland Reserve, and burnt much of what was left of the old Cambarville township. Firefighter David Balfour, aged 47 and from Gilmore in the ACT, was killed at Cambarville when a 50 metre burnt mountain ash tree, fell on him while he was preparing a hose for mop up work. He was the only emergency service fatality of the fires.



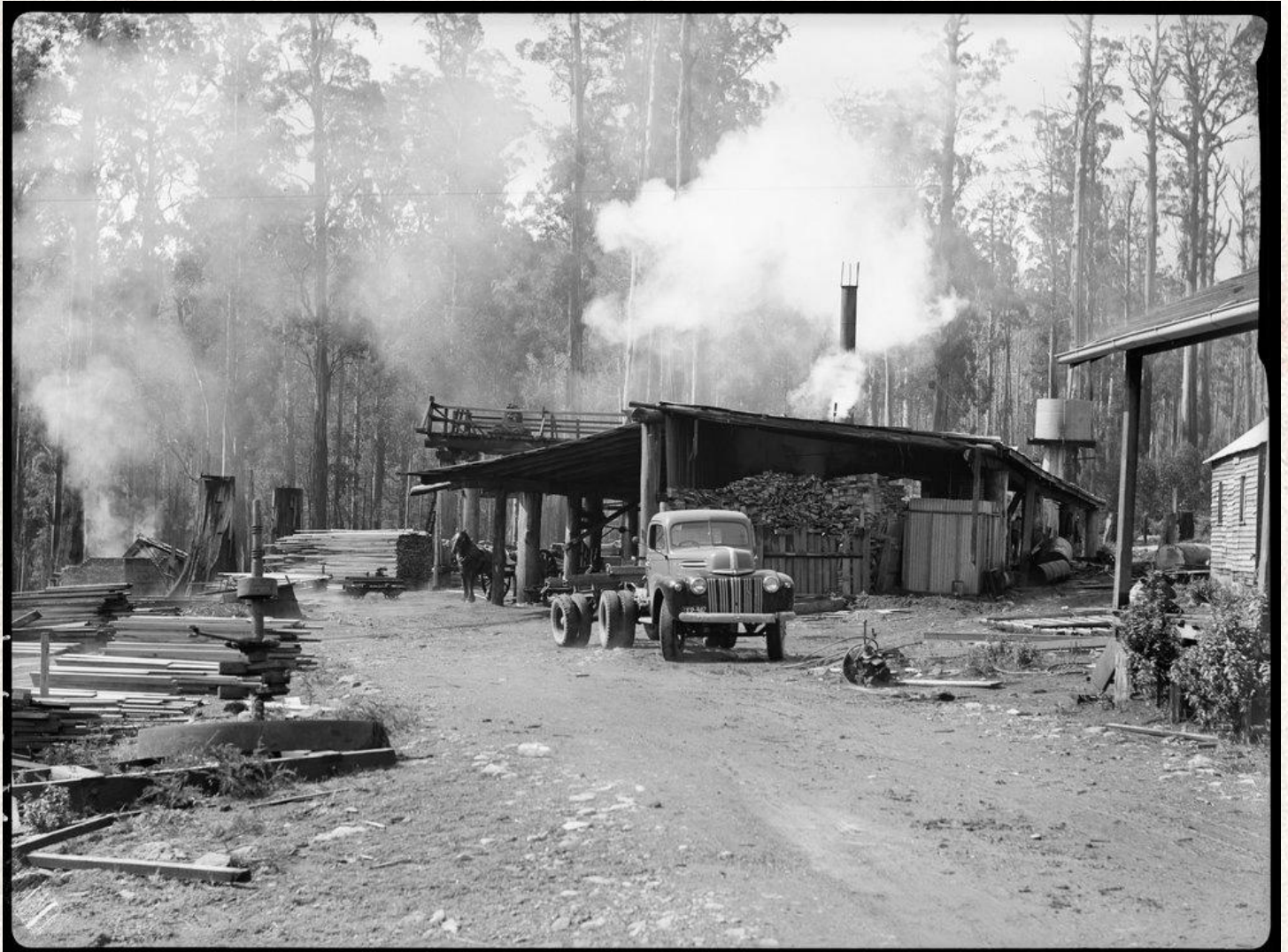
HISTORIC FACTSHEET

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 2010** Cambarville day visitor area reopened to the public.
- November 2011** Cambarville signage returned, with historic boards erected by Parks Victoria, highlighting the history of the area at different locations.
- 2012** A wooden under cover picnic area was added to the reserve.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE



Cambarville mill and township.

Courtesy State Library Victoria.
Victorian railway photographer.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE



Cambarville mill and township.

Courtesy State Library Victoria.
Victorian railway photographer.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE

Image courtesy State Library Victoria
Victorian railway photographer



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE STREETS



Cambarville streets 1945.

Courtesy National Archives

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE STREETS



Cambarville streets 1945.

Courtesy National Archives

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE SCHOOL



Cambarville School 1945.
National Archives

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE SCHOOL



Cambarville School 1945.
National Archives

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE SCHOOL



Cambarville main street circa 1945.

Courtesy State Library Victoria.
Victorian railway photographer.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE



Logging industry at Cambarville in 1945.

Courtesy National Archives.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE FAIRY GARDEN



The last piece of the Cambarville fairy garden that is known to exist today.

Photograph © Copyright Kelly Petersen 2011

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

Cambarville – a thriving small community

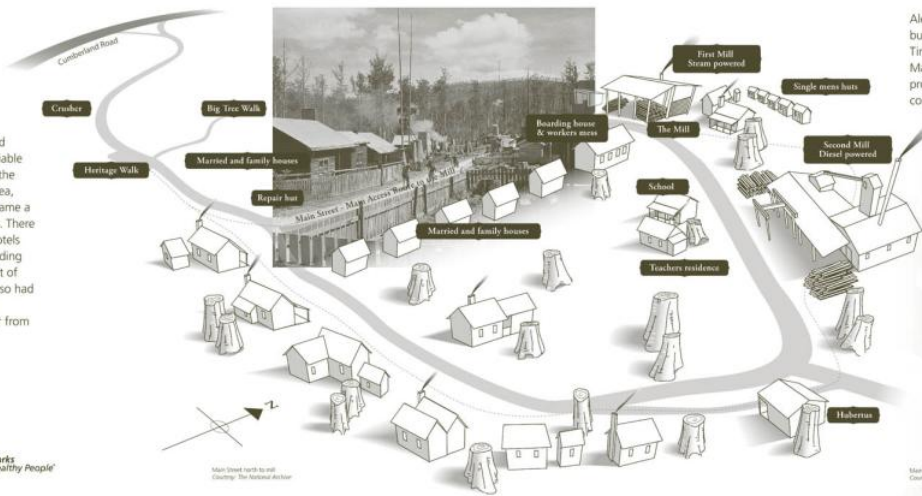
Take a walk through the remains of this once thriving timber settlement, isolated high above Marysville.

Freezing in winter and with the ever present threat of bushfire in summer, the workers and their families carved out a lifestyle that was both challenging and rewarding. Mill workers and their families were housed on site and isolation presented difficulties in communication and mobility. With limited access to transport, residents needed to be self-sufficient. The early mode of transport was horse and cart, due to the lack of infrastructure and poor access to roads, making a trip to town a 'day out'.

100 year history

- 1861 Gold discovered at Woods Point
- 1862 Yarra Track cut from Marysville to Woods Point
- 1864 Track upgraded to a road
- 1880 Logging began in Cumberland area
- 1920s Road upgraded through Cumberland Reserve (now Cambarville)
- 1939 Bushfire burnt much of Victorian high country
- 1940s Mill established
- 1943 Primary school established
- 1956 Mill burnt down
- 1957 Mill re-opened
- 1945 School closed temporarily
- 1946 School re-opened
- 1949 School used as polling booth
- 1968 School closed for final time
- 1970 Mill fire
- 1971 Mill closed for final time

With improvements to road maintenance and more reliable motorised vehicles during the 1920s, the Cumberland area, including Cambarville, became a popular tourist destination. There were many eateries and hotels along the Yarra Track including Bells Hotel, just to the west of here. The improvements also had an impact on logging as motorised trucks took over from horse drawn jinkers.



Alex Cameron and Fred Barton, businessmen from Marysville, built the mill to harvest Alpine Ash following the 1939 bushfires. Timber from Cambarville was vital to the economy of nearby Marysville. A fire at the mill in 1956 temporarily stopped production, however it re-opened the following year and continued until its final closure in 1971.

Parks Victoria Healthy Parks Healthy People!

This heritage signage was erected in November of 2011 by Parks Victoria.

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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

Main Street

- from Shanty town to community



As you look up Main Street towards the mill, imagine a road lined with houses and millers huts set out in neat rows. The unsealed road leading to the mill was used constantly by timber trucks, wagons and pedestrians - a dust bowl in summer and muddy slush in winter.

Logging and gold mining were prevalent in the hills above Marysville prior to the devastating 1939 bushfires that burnt high country forest and towns, covering an area one third the size of Tasmania. Cambarville Mill, on the Yarra Track, opened in the early 1940s to harvest Alpine Ash still standing after the fires.

There is still evidence here of the springboard trees that were cut to build the settlement. There are many of these in and around the clearing. Tree felling was a backbreaking occupation, using an axe to cut a wedge in the trunk followed by a two man cross-cut saw.



Main Street south to north
Courtesy: Marysville Historic Society



Springboard tree
Courtesy: The National Archive



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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

Hubertus

- a sense of place



Imagine life here between 1940 and 1971. It would have been an oasis filled with garden beds, brick paths and colourful trees, chickens and a vegetable patch. Residents beautified the houses with ornamental gardens, conifers and deciduous trees in their leisure time.

Dwellings were supplied and built by the mill and allocated to workers based on need. Typical of the hardwood houses built in the area during the 1940s and 50s Hubertus was home to Herbert Urbas who personalised the dwelling and outbuildings in the Bavarian style. Even his chickens had a Chalet style coop!

This house was razed in the 2009 bushfires, with little remaining but some artefacts and hardware items from the building and evidence of Herb's eclectic collection of garden ornaments. Previously a house and a home, now it is a place for reflection and memories.



Bert's fantasy
Courtesy: Mrs Lillian Urbas



Hubertus
Courtesy: Mrs Lillian Urbas



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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

The School - *No 4600 Cambarville*



Imagine 30 children playing and squealing as they run helter skelter around the dusty schoolyard, their happy voices ringing throughout the forest – the ever present engine thump and screaming wood saws in the background.

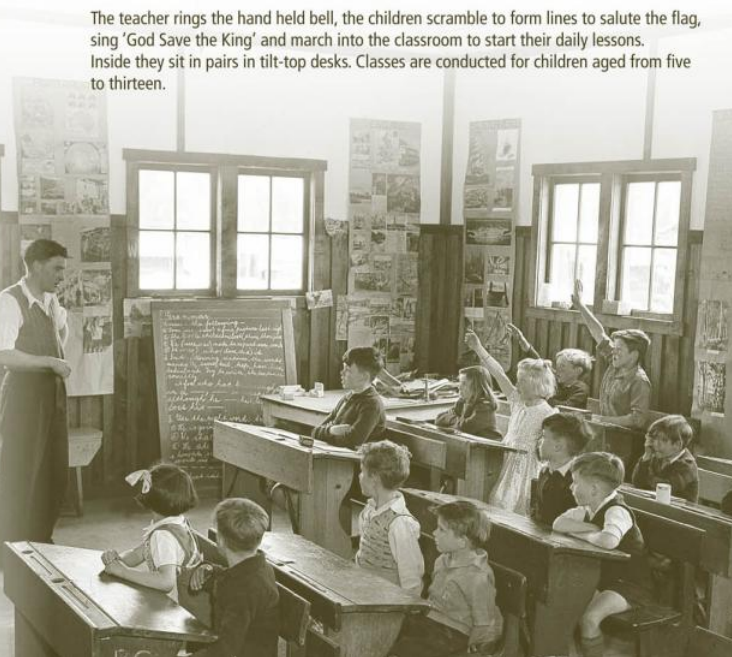
The teacher rings the hand held bell, the children scramble to form lines to salute the flag, sing 'God Save the King' and march into the classroom to start their daily lessons. Inside they sit in pairs in tilt-top desks. Classes are conducted for children aged from five to thirteen.

The school was established on 2 February 1943 under the care of teacher AH Cairns. A house was provided for the teacher adjacent to the school. Attracting a permanent teacher to the remote location was difficult.

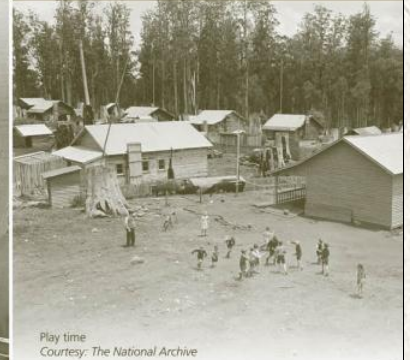
The classroom was also used as a community hub for dances, socials and concerts.

Student numbers fluctuated depending on the makeup of the community. Sometimes there were more itinerants and single men than families in the settlement.

The school closed in 1945 for lack of pupils. It re-opened the following year and closed for the last time in 1968.



Cambarville school
Courtesy: The National Archive



Play time
Courtesy: The National Archive



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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

The Mill



European immigrants, itinerant labourers and family men worked in harsh conditions with little consideration for safety – feeding log after log into the circular saw and loading timber planks onto trucks. The work was manual, dirty, noisy and dangerous.

The mill opened in the early 1940s to harvest Alpine Ash still standing after the devastating 1939 bushfires. The timber was highly valued as quality hardwood, but other timbers including Myrtle were also milled here.

This is the site of the second mill, built in 1957 after the original steam powered mill (100 metres to the left) caught fire in 1956. The new mill was powered by a diesel generator that also provided limited domestic power for the settlement.

Even in the harshest conditions the company produced record amounts of timber for the building and furniture markets in Melbourne until it closed in 1971 after a second fire.



Original mill 1940s
Courtesy: State Library of Victoria



Mill saw
Courtesy: The National Archive



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HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE 2011 SIGNAGE

Main Street

- *Life was tough in Cambarville*

Women and children found the conditions almost unbearable, with no access to luxuries like refrigeration and other appliances. Washing was done once a week in a wood-fired copper.



For entertainment, the residents held card nights, socials, plays, family race days and played football and cricket.

Single men were housed in huts provided by the logging company in a row behind the mill site. All meals were available from a boarding house on the corner of Main Street.

Main Street south from mill
Courtesy: State Library of Victoria



Durst residence
Courtesy: The National Archive



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Cambarville Historic Township Area

Cambarville was established after the 1939 bushfires, which decimated the area. A mill was established to process burnt wood after the fires went through the area. Today little is left, though there is beautiful Day Visitor Area Heritage Signage, and walks to attractions such as The Big Tree, Cumberland Falls, the Sovereign View Lookout, Cora Lynn Falls and the Big Culvert.



A new undercover picnic area was added in late 2012.





HEIGHT 301'6"
Girth at 10' 16'5"

*This specimen is the
highest known living
tree in Australia and
the tallest hardwood
tree in the world.*

HEIGHT 301'6"

Girth at 10' 16'5"

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**TALLEST KNOWN HARDWOOD TREE,
IN THE WORLD. HEIGHT 301 FEET
AT MARYSVILLE VIC.**

- THE BIG TREE -

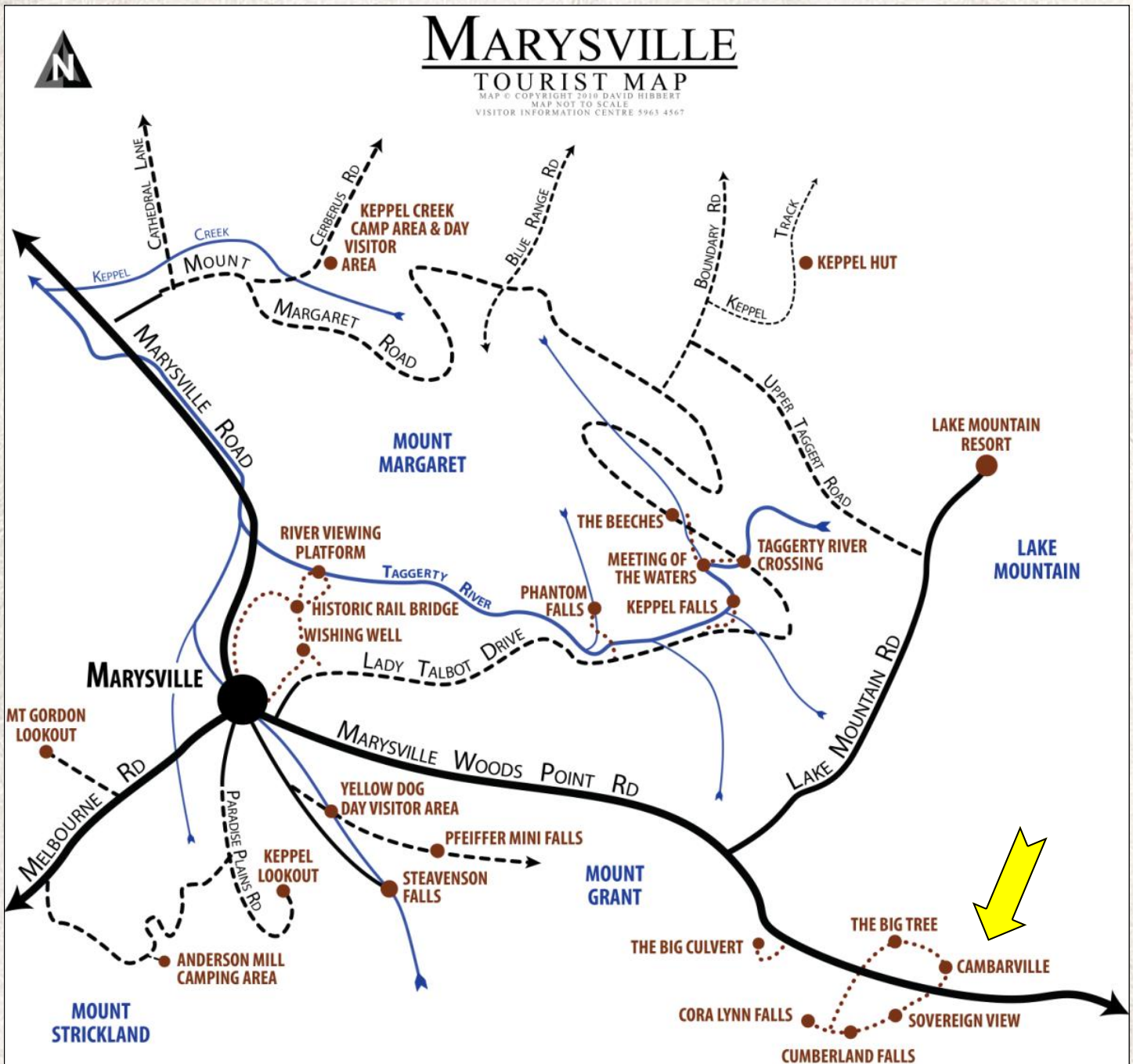
CAMBARVILLE

*Courtesy Kelly Petersen & David Hibbert.
Purchased on eBay in July 2013 and freely
returned to the community within the month.*



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

CAMBARVILLE AREA MAP





Artworkz

Serving the community

