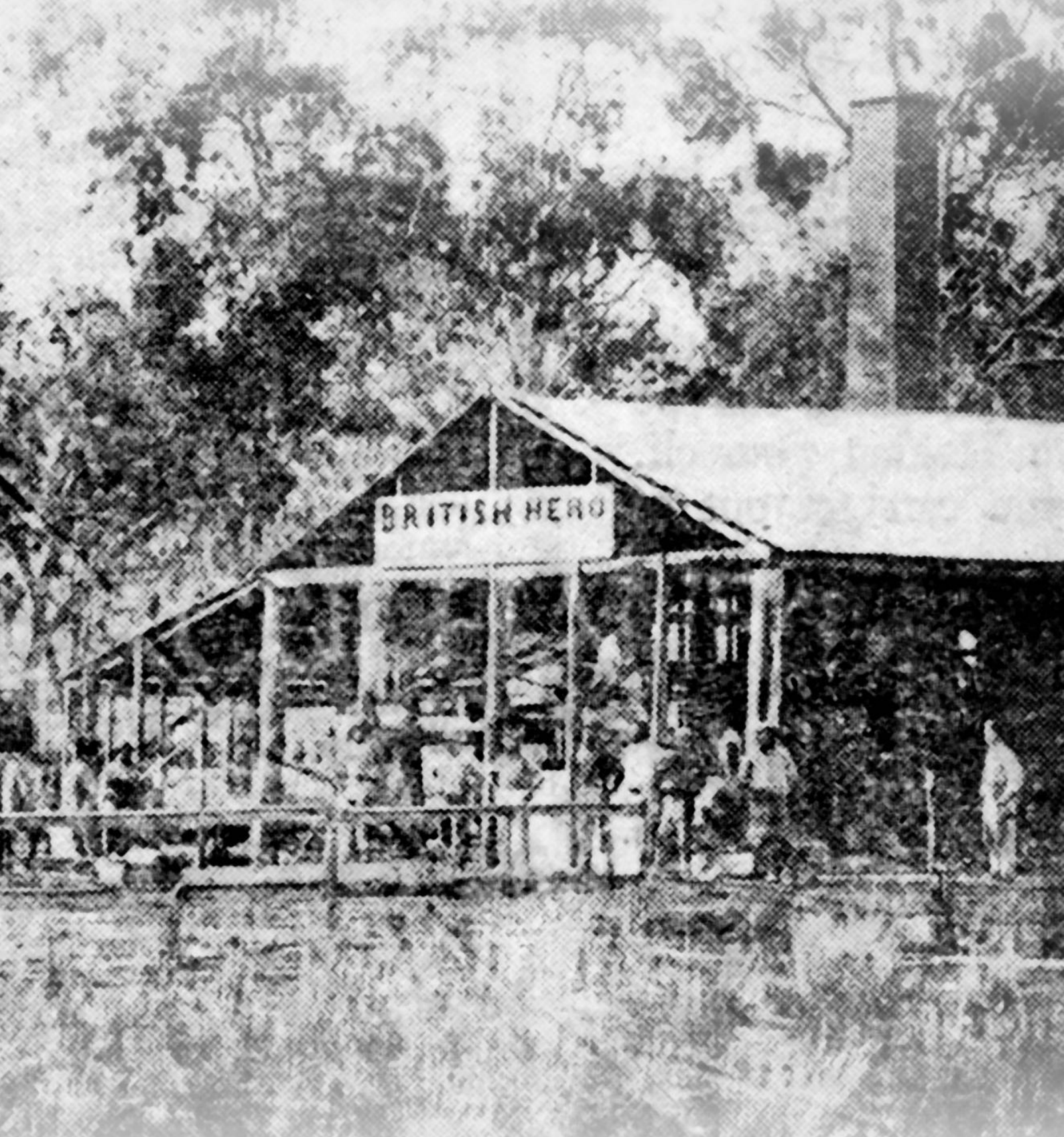


# SABELBERG



# BATTERY



**HERITAGE  
MINING  
SERIES**

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# **SABELBERG BATTERY CRUSHER**

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## **CONTRIBUTORS**

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National Library Australia

Lawrence Hood

Allan Layton

Leisa Lees

Kathie Maynes

Kelly Petersen

David & Debbie Hlbert

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# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## INTRODUCTION

**Name:** Sabelberg batter stamper  
and British Hero Stamper

**Built:** Early 1860s

**Industry:** Gold

**Closed:** 1870s

A 15 head batter stamper was built at Alexandra and operated by the Sabelberg family in the early 1860s. It was located near where the Alexandra bowling club stands today in Leckie Park.



In the early days of the gold mining in the Alexandra District, a large 15 head batter stamper (crusher) was built at Alexandra, near where the Alexandra bowling club now operates from. It was also near where the house of Mr J Waters then stood.

The crusher was built by the Theodore Sabelberg and was the first gold crusher to be erected in the Alexandra District, being erected in 1866/67. The above photograph was reproduced in the *Alexandra and Yea Standard* on Friday the 30 January 1931 and was reported as being the oldest photograph of Alexandra in existence, showing Theodore's British Hero crusher beside the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek).



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## INTRODUCTION

**British Hero  
CRUSHING MILL,  
ALEXANDRA.**

—o—

**S**CALE of CHARGES :—

	Per Ton.
For crushing under 10 tons ... ..	£1 0 0
"    over 10 tons and under 20	15 0
"    over 20 ... ..	12 6

Mr Sabelberg begs to inform the inhabitants of Alexandria that he has determined to crush quartz, brought to his mill, at the above rates, and trusts that by paying strict attention to maintaining the efficiency of his mill, he will always continue to merit their support.

He begs to thank them for their past kindness and has but little doubt that, notwithstanding the competition of other machinery in the district, he will always secure such an amount of patronage as will render his somewhat expensive speculation remunerative.

Alexandra, 11th June, 1868.  
**THEODORE SABELBERG.**  
Proprietor.

This crusher was used by numerous local mines, who would have their quartz and rock processed there instead of investing in their own stamper, which was costly to purchase, transport and erect for smaller mining operations. One mine who sent ore to the Sabelberg Battery was the successful Lucky Mine, on the south side of Alexandria. They also operated their own battery, though it is thought that they sent ore to the Sabelberg crusher as they had too much to process themselves, or their battery was not always operational.

The Sabelberg stamper was named the British Hero, and was reported to have worked 24 hours a day at one period.

As the gold rush intensified around the district, other battery stampers opened for business in Alexandria, in direct competition to the Sabelberg battery stamper. One was the William Wallace Crushing Machine, which was competitive in pricing to the Sabelberg crusher.

Sabelberg sold the business in mid 1868, and left the district with a Mr J Walsh. A large farewell being held in July of that year, for their departure from the district. It was said that every luxury that the district could produce, was supplied for the event, such was the impact of the Sabelberg's on the community.

In the *Alexandra & Yea Standard*, dated 26 June 1931, it references how long term local bricklayer William Parsons erected the chimneys for the stamper in 1867. The *Alexandra & Yea Standard* also reported that the chimney for the crushing plant was built by Mr. Parsons, father of W Parsons of Fawcett, and that an enlarged copy of the photograph (pictured above) was presented to WH Whiting.



# TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## TIMELINE

- 1867/68** The Sabelberg Battery Stamper was built and commenced operations. It was known as the British Hero battery and was a large 15 head stamper, crushing rock for local mines.
- 1867** The Sabelberg's British Hero battery was processing much ore and chimneys were erected by local bricklayer and early settler William Parsons.
- 15 August 1867** Theodore Sabelberg's crusher was mentioned in an official mining report published in the Melbourne Argus. It is said that it is currently the only crushing plant in Alexandra. It is said that the stamper is twelve head, driven by a ten horse-power engine. It is said that there are around 600 people in the township at this time.
- Early 1868** The Sabelberg family sold out their interests in the British Hero (Sabelberg) battery stamper.
- June 1868** The William Wallace crusher was also operational inside Alexandra, and advertised in competition to the British Hero crusher, and had matching pricing.
- 24 July 1868** A lavish departure dinner was held for T Sabelberg and J Walsh, who both left the district shortly afterwards.
- 6 January 1870** A storm described as a hurricane took off most of the roof of the British Hero crushing plant.
- 2 November 1878** A crusher likely to be the Sabelberg Crusher was sold and likely dismantled.



# GALLERY

RELATED IMAGERY



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## GALLERY



**British Hero Gold Crusher**



# NEWSPAPERS

RELATED NEWSPAPER ARTICLES





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### **Sabelberg's Mill in 1867**

"F.F." writes: — They were cleaning up a crushing from the celebrated "No. 2" at Sabelberg's mill on the day of my arrival in December, 1867, and I was present at the interesting process of retorting the amalgum, which was placed in a thick round-bottomed pot having a lid carrying a long pipe through which the mercury, in the form of vapor, passes, till condensed by cold, caused by a constant stream of water falling on the pipe when it comes spluttering out in little globules of quicksilver, to be received in an open vessel underneath. When this spluttering ceased the staples securing the top of the retort were knocked out and the lid removed. For several minutes after this had been done no one approached the retort for fear of being salivated by the fumes still rising from it, for one breath of it would cause the teeth to loosen and drop out, besides other undesirable effects. The first to advance and peep into the pot was a rough sailor-looking chap with one eye. He squirted a lot of tobacco juice on to the red hot cake of gold with the remark,—"a quarter of that is mine, anyhow." The cake when weighed at the bank proved to be over 400 ozs, which meant a Christmas box of about £500 for "Charlie" Jones!

(Jones was the discoverer of the Lucky.)



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### **Death of Mr. W. Parsons**

The death occurred on Sunday last of Mr. William Parsons, of Spring Creek. He suffered at times from heart trouble, and passed away at the age of 69 years. Mr. Parsons spent practically the whole of his lifetime in the Alexandra district. His father was one of the earliest tradesmen in the town, and he erected the chimneys for Sableberg's battery in 1867. For a number of years Mr. Parsons followed his father's occupation—that of a bricklayer, — and assisted in the building of the Shire Hall in 1881. Later on he devoted his attention mainly to grazing and farming pursuits. In his young days Mr. Parsons was a great athlete, and his speed in laying bricks matched his speed as a runner. Mr. Parsons took an active interest in social affairs in his younger days. Up to the year 1927 he had officiated as Master of the Ceremonies at the annual Hospital ball for 44 years. Mr. Parsons was held in high esteem by a wide circle of friends throughout the district, and sympathy has been expressed for the bereaved wife and members of the family (two sons and five daughters). The funeral took place on Tuesday, the remains being interred in the Alexandra cemetery. The Rev. L. Ball conducted the burial service, and Mr. Howell had charge of the funeral arrangements.

Alexandra & Yea Standard  
26th June 1931  
National Library Australia



## NEWSPAPERS

### *ALEXANDRA DIGGINGS.*

The following official report has been furnished to the Minister of Mines :—

Office of Mines, Melbourne, Aug. 14.

Sir,—I have the honour to inform you that, in accordance with your instructions, I proceeded last week to make an inspection and rough survey of the Alexandra Gold-field; and I beg to submit the accompanying plan, showing the positions of the principal workings, together with the following report :—

The township of Alexandra comprises a number of weatherboard and slab buildings, erected on or near the principal street. It contains three public-houses, several boarding-houses and stores, an agency of the Union Bank, and a small police-station, and the situation is generally good for drainage purposes. The British Hero quartz-crushing machine, the only one at present on the gold-field has also been erected here, it has twelve stamps driven by a ten-horse power engine, and by the kindness of Mr. Savelberg, the proprietor, I was enabled to obtain a copy of the results of the whole of the crushings that had been made up to the date of my visit. There is a population of about 600 persons in the township at present, but many of them are unsettled. About 200 are engaged in working on the Eglinton, Luckie, Welcome, and Mysterious reefs, and a small patch of alluvial ground in the vicinity, and a few others are prospecting on a line close to the township, supposed to contain a reef registered as the Homeward Bound.

The Argus

Thursday 15th August 1867

Courtesy National Library Australia



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### OLD ALEXANDRA.

Mr. Walter Vining, of No. 8 Forest street, Collingwood, for many years engaged in the timber industry in the Alexandra district, claims to be the only one now alive who lived at the Red Gate Shanty, Alexandra, when the licensing laws had very little effect in curbing the activities of enterprising colonial freetraders in those hectic days of gold mining.

In 1864 Mr. Vining, when only six months old, left Melbourne with his father (Richard Vining) and mother, and with a three horse dray loaded with provisions, headed for Thornton along rough country roads or tracks. They travelled through Yea as far as Molesworth, and, as the Goulburn river was not crossable in those days, they had to turn to the right along the three-chain road through what was known as Whanegarwen. Next the track below the Acheron cutting was taken along past Dobson's and over the hills and out by Gilmore's at Thornton. There Mr. Vining's father found employment on a grazing station, but before long started business on his own account, taking a contract from Mr. Donald McKenzie of Mount Pleasant for the building of a homestead.

Mr. Vining, senior, at this time moved off to Mount Pleasant district, building a slab hut on the banks of a lagoon, and a sawpit a quarter of a mile from the foot of McKenzie's Hill. All the timber for the Mount Pleasant homestead was sawn at the pit. While this building was being constructed gold was discovered in the district, so before long the usual rush set in. Mr. Vining senior, with others, including "Tom," his mate, joining up with the fortune-hunting throng. These partners, on arrival at the goldfield, proceeded to peg out claims, Vining suggesting that they each select sites on either side of Lucky Hill. "Tom" objected to this suggestion as he thought they should have one claim only and share and share alike. The partners after agreeing to this compact, botched on a "duffer," but the claim sunk on the right side of Lucky Hill by others, returned a first dividend of £8,000 a man.

During these exciting times Mr. Vining's father built a bark shanty on the banks of the U.T. Creek, just about where the present road runs alongside the Shire hall to the butter factory. Diggers were then arriving from all parts, and so were large parties of friendly blacks, who selected a site for an extensive camp on part of land now occupied by the Alexandra Hospital.

The bark shanty was quite close to the red gates marking the boundary between McKenzie's and Johnson's stations. Vining's shanty was known far and wide as the Red Gate, and the beer used to arrive in three horse drays. The stocks, however, were never unloaded, the casks being tapped on the dray, and retailed to the ever-thirsty miner at one shilling per panukin, the customers drinking away until the supply ran out. In a very brief period £10000 was cleared at the Red Gate Shanty by Mr. Vining's father, who had built an hotel next to the building now the Commercial Hotel. Vining's hotel had a verandah in front of it with a small room at each end, one being used as a bank and the other the post office. Just about the time Vining's Alexandra Hotel, with large ballroom attached, was opened Grant street was formed, after which numerous hotels sprang up all over the township, and two breweries started operations on the banks of the Goulburn. Shortly after diggings broke out at Godfrey's Creek (now Gobur) and after a big rush set in, Mr. Vining's father started running a buggy from Alexandra to the Creek and back, as there was no mail service; he was paid sixpence each way for every letter he carried.

Business improved so rapidly that a four-horse coach was bought, but as Mr. Vining senior was so frequently molested by travelling bands of roughs he had to carry a loaded revolver. After that he was never molested by those undesirable who frequented country townships and roads. The price of horsefeed in those far-off days was high, oats being £1 a bushel and chaff a £1 a bag. Following this, there was a rush to Durham Gully (now Fawcett), where a very lively mining township sprang into existence, and Mr. Vining's father built another shanty. Saturdays were indeed lively days in the mushroom township. Station hands on horseback riding everywhere, sometimes through the front entrance of one of the numerous shanties and out of the back. It was at this time that mining—alluvial and reef—was in full swing at Alexandra and up the U.T. and Johnson's creeks. It was also about this time that one of the greatest mining disasters in Alexandra happened. Many men were employed in alluvial work, and while taking the ground out in paddocks for sluicing a fall of earth killed twelve of them. These diggers were buried in the Alexandra cemetery.

There was a large battery on the U.T. Creek close to the present bowling green, going day and night crushing quartz, but many of the local business men became financially embarrassed through injudicious investments. They had to start at the bottom of the business ladder once more, but when things showed signs of improvement they were able to benefit by their past experience and make good once more.

The most important mines that Mr. Vining, jun., can recollect are the No. 2 Lucky, No. 4, No. 5 (known as the jeweller's shop), Homeward Bound, Mysterious, Eldorado (up U.T. Creek), Morning Star, Monta Zooma, Pig and Whistle, Apsley, and many others, some puddlers obtaining one ounce to a load of three feet of wash. Owing to the number of reefs and other indications Mr. Vining is of the opinion that there is still a lot of gold to be unearthed in the Alexandra district.

While living in the district Mr. Vining can recall numerous fires, some of which removed many of the old landmarks of Alexandra.

After retiring from the hotel business Mr. Vining and his son bought the sawmills at Crystal Creek, and after his father's death, carried on until 25 years ago, when he sold out and has lived in Collingwood ever since.

In his early days Mr. Vining, jun., thought that kangaroo hunting was one of the best of week-end sports. Kangaroos abounded on the country round Alexandra and they used to be hunted by men on horseback, with packs of dogs.

Mr. Vining, jun., attended the old No. 912 School at Alexandra, but previous to that, and before free education was established, he had to pay a fee of one shilling every Monday morning to the school teacher.

For many years Mr. Vining, jun., was attached to the Alexandra Brass Band, said to be the first mounted band in Australia. When the then Premier of the day would pay an official visit to Alexandra, the members of the band would ride out on horseback to Molesworth, the Shire boundary, and with tuneful music escort the distinguished guest of the day to the township.

Alexandra's first milk supply was from John Hall (known as Hall the milkman); he used to bring it into the township by pack horse from Hall's Flat (no roads made at that time).

Alexandra & Yea Standard  
Friday 22nd May 1931  
National Library Australia

**Battery on the U.T. Creek, near the site of the present Bowling Green, that was going day and night.**

Alexandra & Yea Standard  
Friday 22nd May 1931  
Courtesy National Library Australia





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### **British Hero CRUSHING MILL, ALEXANDRA.**

—o—  
**S**CALE of CHARGES :—

	Per Ton.
For crushing under 10 tons ... ..	£1 0 0
„ over 10 tons and under 20	15 0
„ over 20 ... ..	12 6

Mr Sabelberg begs to inform the inhabitants of Alexandria that he has determined to crush quartz, brought to his mill, at the above rates, and trusts that by paying strict attention to maintaining the efficiency of his mill, he will always continue to merit their support.

He begs to thank them for their past kindness and has but little doubt that, notwithstanding the competition of other machinery in the district, he will always secure such an amount of patronage as will render his somewhat expensive speculation remunerative.

Alexandra, 11th June, 1868.

**THEODORE SABELBERG.**

Proprietor.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### Local and General News.

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On Sunday last, about 2 p.m., a hurricane passed over the township of Alexandra. The front of Mr Jobson's large store was blown in, smashing the windows, tearing the doors off their hinges, and completely unroofing the verandah; and the rain, which was falling heavily at the same time, was driven into the store, destroying about £100 worth of goods. A building adjoining the Shamrock Hotel was blown down into the street. A man who was in occupation escaped just in time to save his life. A sheet of zinc, carried off Mr Peterkin's store, passed over Grant street, smashed the lamp at the Corner Hotel, and landed behind the Council Chambers. Leckie's butcher's shop was blown down, and the zinc roof of the British Hero crushing machine was nearly all carried off. A number of other buildings sustained various injuries. Branches of trees were flying about in all directions. Many of the largest trees were torn up by the roots, or stripped of their branches. We have not witnessed such a storm in these colonies during the past 30 years. Singular, that a mile to the north of Alexandra there was neither wind nor rain, and from information which has reached us, the storm does not appear to have been more than two miles in width.

Alexandra Times  
Friday 7 January 1870  
Courtesy National Library Australia

**A storm reeks havoc in Grant Street**  
Alexandra Times, Friday 7 January 1870.  
Courtesy National Library Australia.



# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### **The William Wallace Crushing Machine.**

ALEXANDRA.

#### **R**RATES FOR CRUSHING :—

10 Tons and under ... .. £1 0 0  
Over ten tons as per agreement:  
**HEALEY & JONES,**  
Proprietors.

Another crusher operated in Alexandra at the time of the British Hero.

23 June 1868  
Alexandra Times  
Courtesy National Library Australia

### **Connelly's Machine.**

ALEXANDRA.

#### **R**RATES FOR CRUSHING :—

10 Tons and under ... .. £1 0 0  
Over ten tons as per agreement:  
**HEALEY & JONES,**  
Proprietors.

Other crusher operated in Alexandra at the time of the British Hero

5 June 1868  
Alexandra Times  
Courtesy National Library Australia

### **Golconda Quartz Crush- ing Machine.**

UNITED KINGDOM.

#### **R**RATES for CRUSHING :—

Ten tons and under ... .. £1 0 0  
Over ten tons per agreement,  
**GERARD PENDLEBURY,**  
Proprietor.

### **PROVIDENCE CRUSHING MILL, YEA.**

**T**HE Trustees of the Providence Perfumed to afford every encouragement to Proprietors in the district, and will Crush Trial Cravings at  
GREATLY REDUCED RATES

NO DELAY AT THE MILL

Yea crushing mill advert

5 June 1868  
Alexandra Times  
Courtesy National Library Australia





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### COMPLIMENTARY BANQUET.

A complimentary banquet was given last night, at the Corner Hotel, to Messrs T. Sabelberg and Mr J. Walsh, on the occasion of their departure from the district. Messrs Sabelberg and Walsh are amongst some of the oldest residents in Alexandra, and were the first to erect a machine in the district. They lately sold all their mining interests in Alexandra, and their leaving the place was considered a suitable occasion for their friends to express the high esteem and respect in which they have been held by those who have had the pleasure of their acquaintance. About 35 gentlemen sat down to a splendid dinner provided by Messrs Hamea and Ashbee. Every luxury that the district could produce was set on the table. Gerard Pendlebury, Esq., J.P., chairman, and J. Peterkin, Esq., J.P., vice-chairman. After ample justice had been done to the good things provided, the chairman gave the usual loyal toasts which were drunk with strong demonstrations of loyalty, and then "The Guests of the evening," which was received with the utmost enthusiasm and musical honors.

Mr Sabelberg rose amidst much cheering, and said, I thank you sincerely for the great honor you have done me this evening, and I assure you that I shall at all times look upon this moment as the proudest of my life (Cheers.) Alexandra and its associations will never be forgotten by me, and I trust that on many future occasions, although I am about to leave your immediate circle, I shall have the opportunity of mixing amongst you. I can hardly find words to express my feelings, as I am, not much given to talking being more in the habit of acting, but trust that what I have left unsaid will be considered as spoken. I again tender you my most heartfelt thanks. (Immense cheering.)

Mr Walsh briefly and appropriately thanked the company for the honor they conferred on him.

Mr Vickery gave "The Mining Interests," accompanied with some most practical and judicious observations on mining matters in this locality.

Mr Fletcher said, that the honor of replying on behalf of the mining interests had been conferred on him. He had been connected with the mining interest since 1854. He had erected machinery on most of the important gold-fields in the colony, but it was not until his coming to Alexandra that he found the place where labor and capital could be invested with a certainty of success. (Cheers.) One great advantage they had over most other gold-fields was that the working man could take a pick and shovel, and after finding a reef, had only to call the nearest carter, send his quartz to the mill,

and get the result. (Cheers.) There was no occasion to go to the banker or money lender to raise capital for tramways and machinery. Judging from the result of the yields of our reefs, there was no reefing district in Victoria equal to Alexandra. (Cheers.)

"The Squatting and Agricultural Interests," was given by Mr Downing, and responded to by Mr Cooper, who regretted that some one more immediately identified than himself with the toast had not been called upon to respond.

"The Commercial and Banking Interests," was given by Mr Coster in a most amusing speech, which elicited much applause, and was responded to by Messrs Green, Peterkin, Browne, and Bainbridge.

Mr Raphael proposed "The Candidates for the New Road Board," and Mr Henry Perkins said that as one of the candidates for a seat in that Board, he could only promise that if returned he would do his utmost to promote the welfare of the entire district.

"Our Native Land," and "The Land we Live in," were given by Messrs Branch and Green respectively, with suitable remarks.

"Our Chairman," was given by Mr Sabelberg, and drunk with enthusiasm.

"Our Vice-Chairman," was given by Mr Walsh, and was received with prolonged cheers.

"The Press," was given by Mr Robinson, and responded to by Mr Downing, Mr Burgess, and Mr Whitelaw.

Mr Whitelaw proposed "The Ladies," in a most amusing speech, which called forth the warmest plaudits. The response was made by Mr Kidgell in a highly poetical manner.

Mr Gill then gave "The Hosts" of the house, Messrs Hamea and Ashbee, and commented on the well known and favorite character of these gentlemen, and wished them every success in the Corner Hotel.

Messrs Hamea and Ashbee replied, and were warmly received by the assembled guests.

This brought the proceedings of one of the most agreeable nights spent in Alexandra to a close. A few bright spirits, however, gathered round the social board, and kept up song and sentiment until daylight.

T. Sabelberg & J. Walsh  
departure dinner.

24 July 1868  
Alexandra Times  
National Library Australia

Alexandra Times  
Friday 24th July, 1868  
National Library Australia





# HISTORIC FACTSHEET

## NEWSPAPERS

### **Alexandra & Yea Standard**

**PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY**

**"EXCELSIOR."**

**SATURDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER.**

**The machine situated on the U.T. Creek has been sold at a good price to go to Kilmore, and we understand the plant will be at once removed ; and we must say this speaks very little for the public spirit of the residents of Alexandra, this being the only machine available for public trial crushings.**

Alexandra & Yea Standard  
Saturday 2nd November 1878  
Courtesy National Library Australia

**T Sabelberg and J Walsh departure dinner**

Saturday 2nd November 1878  
Alexandra & Yea Standard  
National Library Australia





BRITISH HERO

Artworkz

Serving the Community

