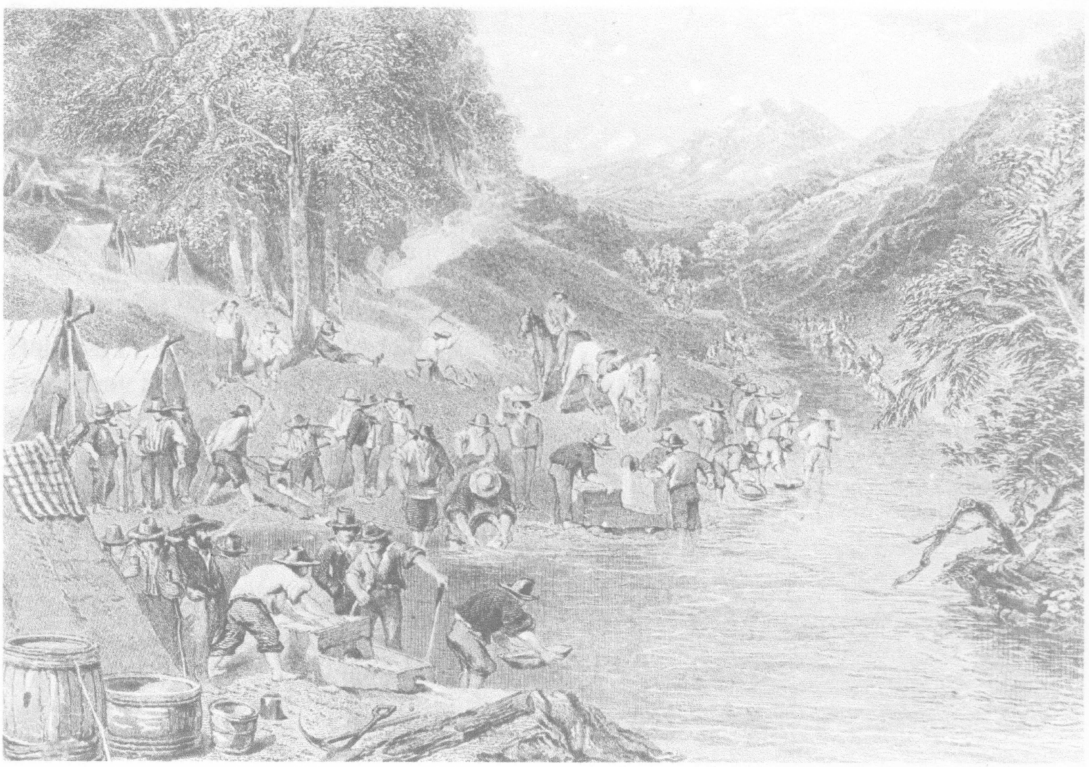
Brown Hill Our Golden District

Eureka Goldfields Town That Grew to a Suburb of Ballarat.

POST OFFICES



Sincere thanks to research carried out by J.Waghorn and the assistance of the Ballarat Public Records Office.

Margaret J. McKenna
March 2005

BROWN HILL POST OFFICE

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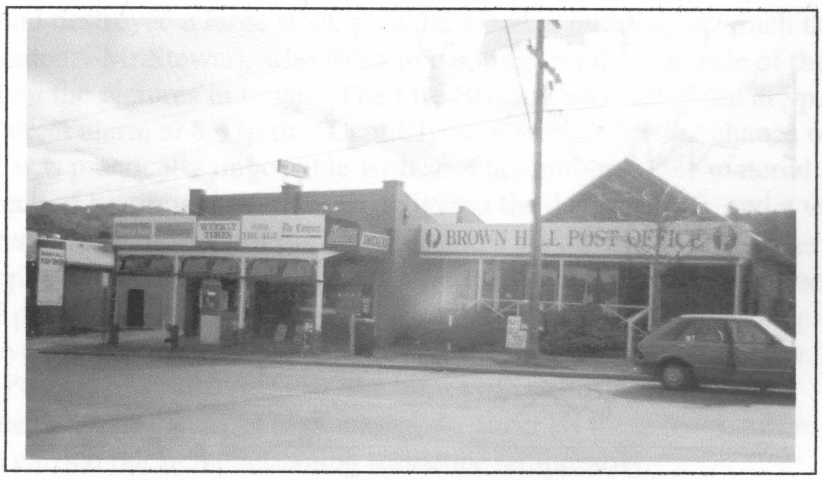
BROWN HILL POST OFFICE

The first Brown Hill Post Office was in a Store owned by Thomas Ryan. The store was situated in Humffray Street North, prior to 1853, and by 1857 he had added the Brown Hill Hotel next door. The Postal Services at Brown Hill were to start in December 1857 but the Courier advised people to start addressing their mail to the Brown Hill Post Office in their article on November 17, 1857 to make sure their letters were not delayed. (This Store and Hotel are shown on the 1861 Map.)
The Post Office at Mount Pleasant was the next to be established and was planned to open on the 1st January 1858 at Mr.William Prest's Mount Pleasant Hotel.

So Thomas Ryan was the first Postmaster in December 1857 and was granted the pay of Twenty Pounds per annum. The next Postmaster was Francis Bradbury in 1866 with the pay rate being increased to Thirty Pounds per annum. Then the Post Office was in charge with G.Schmidt, Patrick O'Day, William O'Day, Honora O'Day and Honora McMahon. These people were all the publicans of the Brown Hill Hotel, so we can assume that the Brown Hill Post Office was still at the Brown Hill Hotel & Store in Humffray Street until 1903. After Mrs.McMahon the Postmistress was Mrs.Murray with the Post Office being situated at its present site.

Postmasters Brown Hill Post Office – Office No.186

1857 – 1866 – Thomas Ryan
1866 – 1877 – Francis Bradbury
1878 - 1887 – George Schmidt
1888 – 1894 – Patrick O'Day
1894 – 1900 – William O'Day
1990 – 1901 – Honora O'Day
1901 – 1903 – Honora McMahon
1903 – 1907 – Mrs. M.A.Murray
1907 – 1911 – Mrs.Turner
1911 – 1919 – Jessie Skinner
1919 – 1956 – George Stewart
1956 – 1973 – A. Hehir
1973-1982
1973 – 1975 – Eric Holman
1980 – 1983 – Susan Egan
1983 – 1984 – Nevin Saathoff
1984 – 1987 – Brian Green
1987 – 1988 – Douglas Mulholland
1988 - 1992 - Cheryl Haintz
1992 Frank Kennon



In the 1882 Directory the Post Office has is listed in the following order:

Brown Hill Hotel
Brown Hill Post Office
Picnic Grounds
Apollo Hall

In other references the Apollo Hall was apparently situated next to the Brown Hill Hotel and used as a Hall for the Hotel, so this would then mean the Post Office is still situated at Thomas Ryan's Brown Hill Store that the Post Office originally started in.

By the 1890 Ballarat Directory the Brown Hill Post Office was listed as:

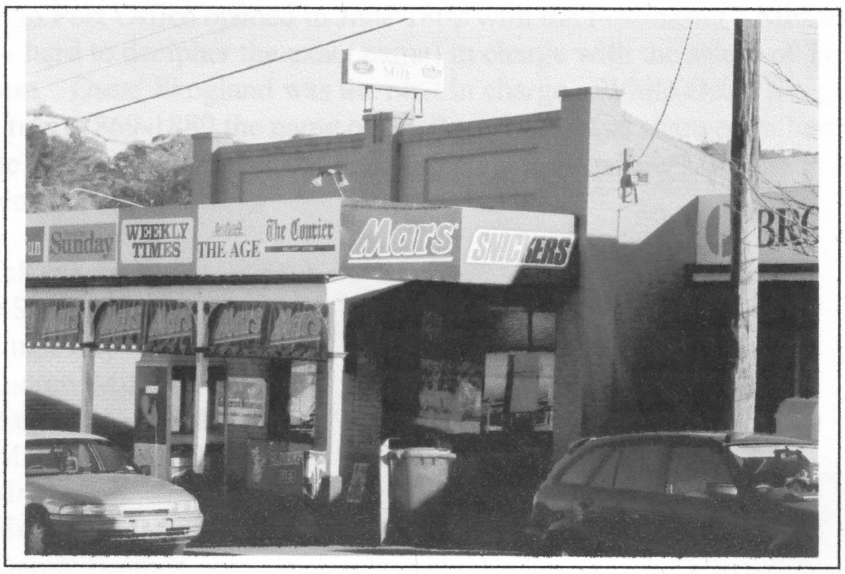
Humffray Street North:
385 Brown Hill Hotel
391 Daw, Joseph
395 Martin, James
397 McLennan
399 Hogg
405 Turner Bros, Butchers
407 Brown Hill Post Office
Murray, Miss. M.A. Postmistress & Storekeeper.

If this Directory were an accurate account of the shops, this would mean although the Post Office Records have the O'Day's as Postmaster during the late 1880's to 1901 the Post office has shifted to 407 Humffray Street North, and that Mrs.Murray is in charge.

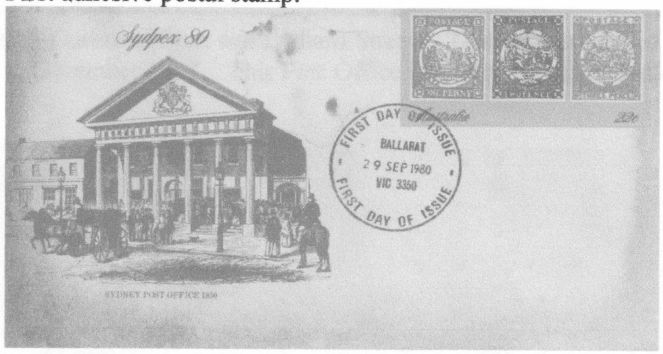
George Skinner followed Miss Murray's Store and Post Office, then Mr.Morris. In 1919 George Stewart was the proud owner and by 1921 the Post Office had withdrawn the telephone facilities. This store/grocery shop/post office was burnt down and rebuilt by George Stewart in 1928. Where the present Shell Service Station is was a building that George Stewart used for storing fodder, etc. Miss Jean Stewart than conducted the business with her Uncle Mr.A.Hehir.

The fire at the Brown Hill Post Office and Store was reported as occurring on a Saturday night and destroyed a large stock plus the wooden building in which the business was located. Mr.Stewart, who lived in a cottage on the east side of the shop, had been attending the pictures in town. The Fire Brigade was called out at 9p.m. and also by the street alarm at 8.47p.m. Capt Clymo attended, but the chance of saving anything was practically impossible with so much inflammable material stored in the shop, a truck of kerosene having been delivered the day previous, and a very low water pressure, made the task of the Fire Brigade a very difficult one. The kerosene tins kept exploding, which apparently lite the sky like fireworks, attracted a huge number of people to witness this blazing fire. Mr.Turner's Butcher Shop was continually sprayed with water, to prevent this establishment catching fire also. Over Two Thousand Pounds of stock were lost, the books of the business were all destroyed and the Insurance was not high enough to cover all these loses. The business will be carried out in the adjoining residence temporarily.

The present Brown Hill Post Office is still incorporated in the Brown Hill Store, but this has been extensively renovated inside and although it still maintains its original appearance outside, it is a modern shop inside. The shop has also been extended, so that the Post Office part of the business, (which was a bench and pigeon holes on the wall for the mail and the old scales at the back of the store), now have a frontage of their own in Humffray Street North. This part of the Store replaces a home of the previous owner of the Store, and is situated now on the block that was once number 409. The Residence is now behind this Post Office, and the building extensions and renovations carried out by Maryanne and Frank about nine years ago have made a big difference to this store.



First adhesive postal stamp.

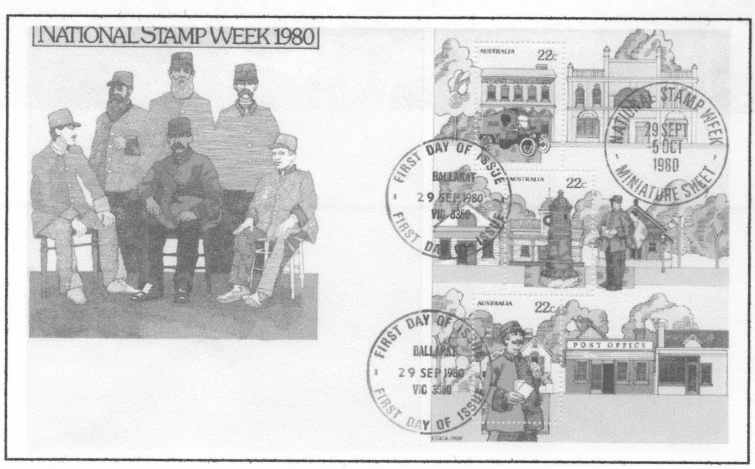


LITTLE BENDIGO – Office No.402.
(Name changed to Nerrina November 1, 1881.)

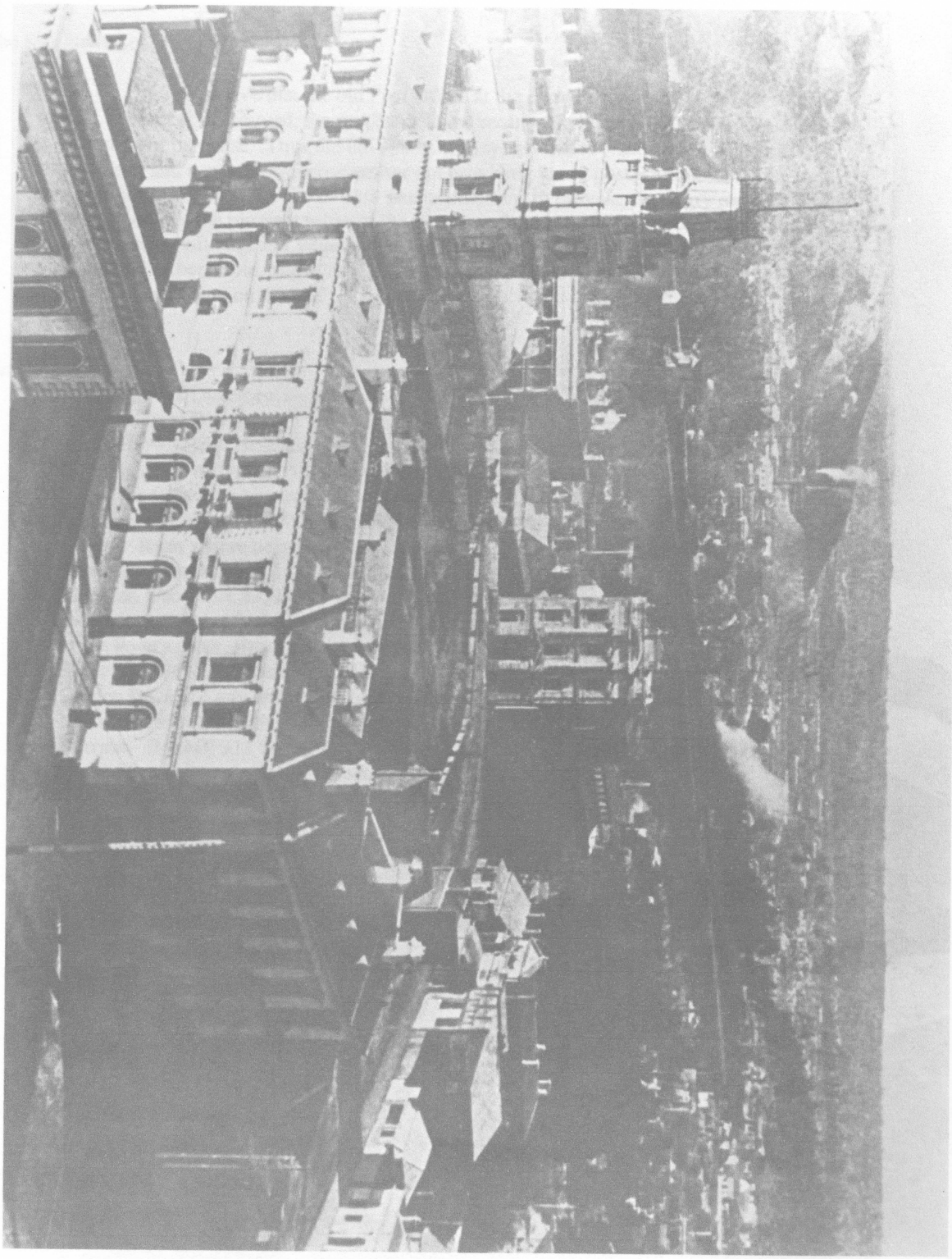
The Little Bendigo Post Office opened in June 1862 with the Postmaster J.McKenney (or J.McKenna – hard to decipher the exact name) in charge with the salary of Ten Pounds per annum. Oscar Skogland was the next in charge. While Oscar Skogland was Postmaster from 1869-1889 the name of the Post Office was changed to Nerrina Post Office. The next postmasters were Hugh Day in 1889, Andrew Milligan in 1892 and Margaret Leonard in 1900.

1868 -1869 - McKenney, J
1869 -1889 – O.Skogland
1889 – 1892 - Hugh Day
1892 –1900 - Andrew Milligan
1901- 1902 – Margaret Leonard
1902 – 1902 – Mrs.Alice Hunter
1902 – 1902 - Mr. T. Day
1902 – 1935 – Hugh Duncan
1935 – 1945 – Daniel Holmes
1945 – 1971 – Florence Skelton
Postal facility Closed October 20, 1971.

Some records were missing, but apparently in 1902 the post office changed its residence from Hunter to Day and then to the site of Mrs.Duncan's house on the opposite side of street from the present site of post office, and then the location of the Post Office was apparently changed again in December 1912 while Mr.Duncan was Postmaster.



Ballarat Post Office – Corner of Sturt and Lydiard Streets. Tenders were called for the erection of a Post Office at Ballarat in December 1857. This Post Office was under construction during April 1864.



The Star November 5, 1859

"We perceive that the old Post Office at the corner of Mair and Lydiard streets, is now in process of removal, the purchaser at the recent sale being busy in carrying out so far the terms of purchase. Thus the old chums who were wont to stand by the hour in all weathers, and curse the Government for not providing better postal accommodation will henceforth only have the site of their past tribulations to provoke the angry memory of the past, or call up the pleasant sense of the pleasanter present. The Golden Fleece Hotel too, one of the oldest buildings in Lydiard street, and associated with not a few public gatherings in Ballarat, has been sold, and is now being removed piecemeal to make room for the new bank about to be created on the site".

References:

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Establishment of Brown Hill Post Office - The Star, Tuesday, November 17, 1857
Surveyor General's Map of 1861 – showing Brown Hill Hotel & Store/Post Office.
The Star December 2,1857 – Brown Hill Post Office open for business – Ryan's store next to Brown Hill Hotel.
The Star – December 8, 1857 – Brown Hill Post Office.
The Star, December 23, 1857 – Mount Pleasant Post Office
Extension of Postal Services - an office for the receipt and delivery of letters, At Ryan's Store, Brown Hill - The Star, November 17, 1857
Surveyor's General Office - Map 1861 - Ballarat Public Records Office.
Golden Days of Early Brown Hill – The Courier, March 9, 1967
Nerrina – Ref MP311 Series 11 Volumes 47-60 for 1901-1908
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Post Office Salaries – Post Office Reports in Victoria
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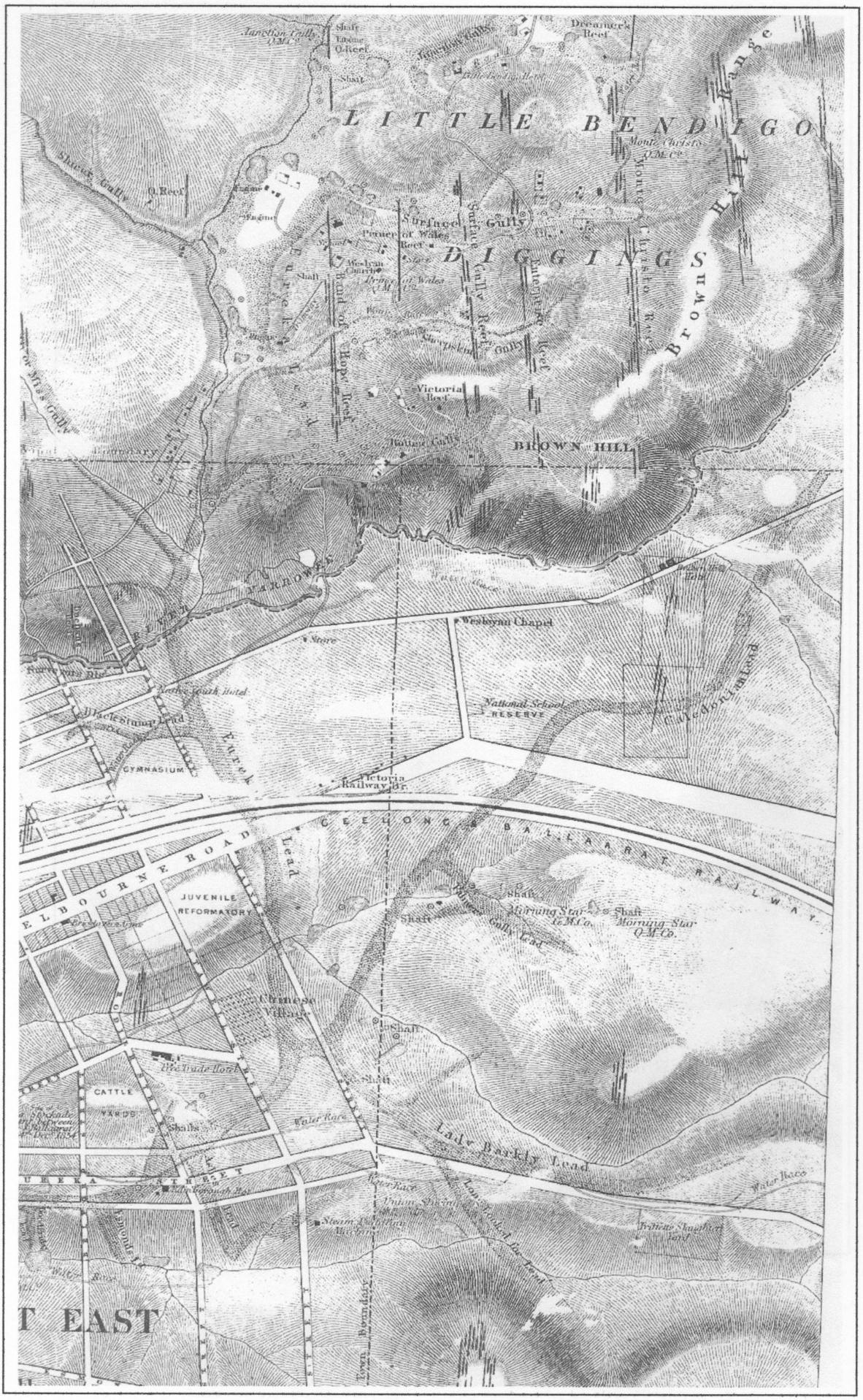
Ballarat Post Office – Cnr.Sturt & Lydiard Streets – Photo.
Ballarat Post Office – The Star April 30, 1864 –under construction
Ballarat Post Office – Tenders called – Star December 1857
Ballarat Post Office corner of Mair & Lydiard Streets – The Star November 5, 1859


LITTLE BENDIGO
DIGGINGS
BROWN HILL
Dreamer's Reef
Surface Gully
Prince of Wales Reef
Victoria Reef
Band of Hope Reef
Enterprise Reef
Brown Hill Range
Sluicer Gully
Q. Reef
Wesleyan Church
Wesleyan Chapel
Store
National School
RESERVE
Caledonian Lead
Victoria Railway Br.
GEELONG & BALLAARAT RAILWAY
MELBOURNE ROAD
JUVENILE REFORMATORY
Chinese Village
Free Trade Hotel
CATTLE YARDS
Shafts
Water Race
Lady Barkly Lead
Morning Star Q.M.Co.
Shaft
Town Boundary
T EAST

AUSTRALIA 20c
Australia Day 1979
AUSTRALIA $1.00
AUSTRALIA
27c
20c
AUSTRALIA
Australia
50c
22c AUSTRALIA
22c AUSTRALIA
22c AUSTRALIA
POSTAGE PAID AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA 30c
AUSTRALIA 30c
AUSTRALIA 20c
AUSTRALIA
18c
AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC TERRITORY
2c
Australia 22c
COLONIAL MILITARY UNIFORMS
JOIN US
Australia
43c
AUSTRALIA $1
AUSTRALIA 50c
AUSTRALIA 60c
24c AUSTRALIA
VICTORIA STAMP DUTY
2 POUNDS 2
45c
AUSTRALIA
33c AUSTRALIA
AUSTRALIA 22c
The Magic Pudding
Australia 33c
THE SENTIMENTAL BLOKE
Australia 27c
POSTAGE
5c
AUSTRALIA
1ST
THE CRIMEAN WAR 1854-1856
AUSTRALIA 33c