

**THE BATMAN MEMORIAL.**

On Saturday afternoon the monument of the grave of John Batman, in the old Melbourne cemetery, was unveiled, in the presence of a large gathering of old colonists, and a numerous assemblage of other visitors. The stone, which is an obelisk of dressed bluestone, was erected at a cost of £120, subscribed by the public upon the suggestion of Sir W. H. F. Mitchell. At a dinner given to the hon. gentleman at Kyneton in 1880, he deplored the fact that the remains of the founder of the city of Melbourne lay without any indication of the spot where they were buried, and his utterances attracted the attention of a number of gentlemen who desired to perpetuate the memory of the deceased pioneer. They organised a committee and collected a sufficient sum to enable them to erect the stone over his grave, which was on Saturday unveiled. It is the most prominent object in the enclosure, and contrasts conspicuously with the decay and disorder which prevail around. On the side facing the town has been cut the inscription:—

**JOHN BATMAN,**  
Born at Parramatta, N.S.W., 1800,  
Died at Melbourne 6th May, 1839.  
He entered Port Phillip Heads  
29th May, 1835.  
As leader of an expedition which  
He organised in Launceston, V.D.L.,  
To form a settlement, and founded one  
On the site of Melbourne then unoccupied.  
This monument was  
Erected  
By public subscription in Victoria,  
1881.  
Circumspect!

At 3 o'clock, when the ceremony began, the monument was covered with the Victorian ensign, and a company of the naval forces (with the Cerberus band) under command of Captain Mandeville, was drawn up in a line in front of the grave.

The MAYOR of Melbourne, addressing the assembly, referred to the very interesting occasion which had brought them together that day. He felt that it was not creditable to the colony that the grave of one of its early founders should have remained without any monument above them for more than 40 years. That feeling was expressed by Sir William Mitchell at Kyneton two years ago, and the proposal to erect the present monument was made by Mr. J. J. Shillinglaw. The committee which that gentleman gathered together for the purpose of giving effect to the suggestion had been most successful, and the result of their exertions would soon be exposed to view. He (the mayor) held in his hand the original diary of John Batman—a document of considerable interest—from which he would read an extract. Under date the 8th June, 1835, after referring to his exploration of the neighbourhood of the junction of the Yarra and Salt-water rivers, he proceeds:—

"The boat went up the river I have spoken of, running from the east, and I am glad to state that about six miles up I found the river of good water, and very deep. This will be the position for the village."

(Laughter.) Forty-seven years ago those words were penned by Batman, after his boat had first disturbed the then pellucid and beautiful, but now not very beautiful, Yarra. (Hear, hear.) When they thought of what had been accomplished since that adventurous man first moored his boat to the banks of the river; when they knew that upon the spot had been raised a city and suburbs of 300,000 inhabitants, that now the iron roads reached from Hobson's Bay to the Murray, that the colony had developed boundless resources—mineral, agricultural, and pastoral—surely they could say that they had beheld one of the marvels of the present

pastoral—surely they could say that they had beheld one of the marvels of the present century. (Hear, hear.) All who had taken part in the movement which they were now completing must be satisfied with the result, and those who were present at the ceremony would look back to the event with pleasure.

Mr. SHILLINGLAW said that the monument had been paid for, and that three times the amount required could have been obtained, had the committee desired. But it was decided that the money should be raised by *la. subscriptions*, a contribution within the power of all, and that arrangement had been carried out in the main. After Sir William Mitchell's speech, a committee was formed in Melbourne, of which Dr. Embling, and Messrs. A. C. Macdonald, G. F. Belcher, R. W. E. M'Ivor, and J. A. Pantou were members, and the late mayor (Councillor Meares), and Mr. G. Coppin, treasurers. He was appointed secretary. Every town clerk, shire secretary, public officer, and public school teacher in the colony was written to for the purpose of obtaining subscriptions, and the name of each contributor and all the papers connected with the movement had been embodied in one record, which would be placed in the Public Library. It would be invidious to mention the names of those who had been so warm-hearted in assisting the committee. They included some of the oldest colonists; among others, Mr. Joseph Solomon, of Saltwater River, and Mr. G. A. Thomson, who was present that day—83 years of age, and an old friend of Batman's. The lists contained the names of Mr. M'Arthur, Mr. Rusden, Mr. Creswick, Mr. Howell, Mr. Russell, and the late Mr. Hoddle—the last signature of the latter gentlemen appearing in the record. Mr. George Coppin's list was a sight to be looked at, and other gentlemen who had assisted were Mr. M'Gowan, Mr. Blackburn, Captain Baxter, Mr. Cumming, and Mr. Raven.

The TOWN CLERK (Mr. Fitzgibbon) remarked that had it not been for the information given him by Mr. William Weare, he would not have known the spot where Batman was buried, and before the monument was erected the place was known to but very few persons. As would be seen by the extract which he would read presently, Batman on arriving in this colony effected a large purchase of land from the natives. But it would seem as if from some reversal by Providence he did not enjoy any advantage from the transaction. He subsequently bought by auction a number of the most valuable blocks in Melbourne—so valuable, indeed, that had they remained as they should have done, with his descendants, they would now be worth little short of a million of money. They included Powell's corner, the Royal Arcade site, and many others. But by the misfortune of the time, there being no lawyers in the colony, Batman's will was slaughtered by that good-natured butcher, John M'Nall, who made such a "mess" of it that the two executors, William Lonsdale and James Simpson, declined to involve themselves in the mesh of complexities which it contained. The result was disastrous, inasmuch as Batman's only son had already died, and Mr. Weare, who married one of the daughters, spent his last penny in fighting for their inheritance, and was obliged to go to Melbourne Gaol because he was unable to pay the costs of the suits in which he had engaged. He was unsuccessful, and to the present day the grand-children of John Batman were obliged to work for their daily bread. The extract to which he referred was from the *History of Australia*, by the late Mr. Marcus Clarke, as follows:—

"Two residents of Tasmania, Mr. Gollibrand and the energetic John Batman, who had rendered good service in the Black War, had in 1827 sought, and been refused by Governor Bourke, a grant of land at Western Port. In 1835 an association was formed by them in Tasmania to ascertain the general character

Western Port. In 1835 an association was formed by them in Tasmania to ascertain the general character and capabilities of Port Phillip as a grazing and agricultural district. Batman accordingly sailed from George Town on 12th May, 1835, in the *Rebecca*, of 30 tons, with a master, a mate, four seamen, three assistants, and seven Sydney aboriginals. On the 29th he entered Port Phillip Heads, and subsequently ascended Station Peak Range, and traversed the country round about Geelong. He had several interviews with the natives, and having on the 2nd June anchored at the mouth of the river which falls into Hobson's Bay at Williamstown, on the following day ascended in a boat that and the Saltwater River some five miles. The party then landed, and followed its course for 20 miles. On the 6th he effected an extremely simple and happy arrangement with eight of the principal men of a tribe he fell in with, by which they agreed to grant 'to him and to his heirs for ever' some 800,000 acres of land, which would now include the cities of Melbourne, Geelong, and Collingwood, and also embrace the boroughs of Sandridge and St. Kilda. The consideration paid the aborigines by Batman for 810,000 acres was 20 sheets, 50 blankets, 20 pairs of shoes, 50 gowns, 30 necklaces, 50 lbs. of flour, and half a ton of pork. When this 'deed' was declared void by Governor Bourke compensation (£7,000) was allowed the association to the extent of the consideration paid to the vendors, 'thus in some degree recouping the services which the company had rendered by assistance in the colonisation of the new country.'

The MAYOR intimated that Mr. Henry Creswick had just handed him the first "Constitution" of Victoria, then called Port Phillip, it being the book of the minutes of a meeting held at Yarrow (as it was then called), Port Phillip, on the 1st June, 1836. Among the names appended thereto were those of Mr. Batman and Mr. Solomon. So far as he was aware Mr. Solomon was the only one who signed the document who was now alive. The number of residents in the settlement, all told, at that time was 77—34 adult males, 12 adult females, and 31 children. He might also add that it was intended to send the original diary of Batman—a document of very great value—to England to be sold to some museum or public institution there, because it had not been purchased in the colony. He negotiated for its purchase, and was fortunate enough to secure the document. He intended that it should be placed in the Melbourne Public Library. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. WILLIAM WEAKE, son-in-law of John Batman, thanked the committee on behalf of the family for the action taken for the purpose of erecting the monument. That day

should be one of the "red letter" days in the history of the colony, and although the act of remembrance had been tardily performed, it had been worthily performed. [Mr. Weake introduced his son and grandson (Mr. Batman's grandson and great-grandson) to the assemblage.]

Messrs. G. A. Thomson and Robt. Russell, the two gentlemen present who were the oldest colonists, then performed the ceremony of unveiling. As the flag fell to the ground, the band played the National Anthem, and the detachment presented arms.

Votes of thanks were unanimously tendered to Captain Mandeville, Mr. Shillinglaw, and the Mayor, for the services they had rendered.

A gentleman suggested that the committee should apply to the Government for a grant of land to the descendants of Batman as compensation for the loss they had sustained in being deprived of the property which he purchased.

The proceedings then terminated.