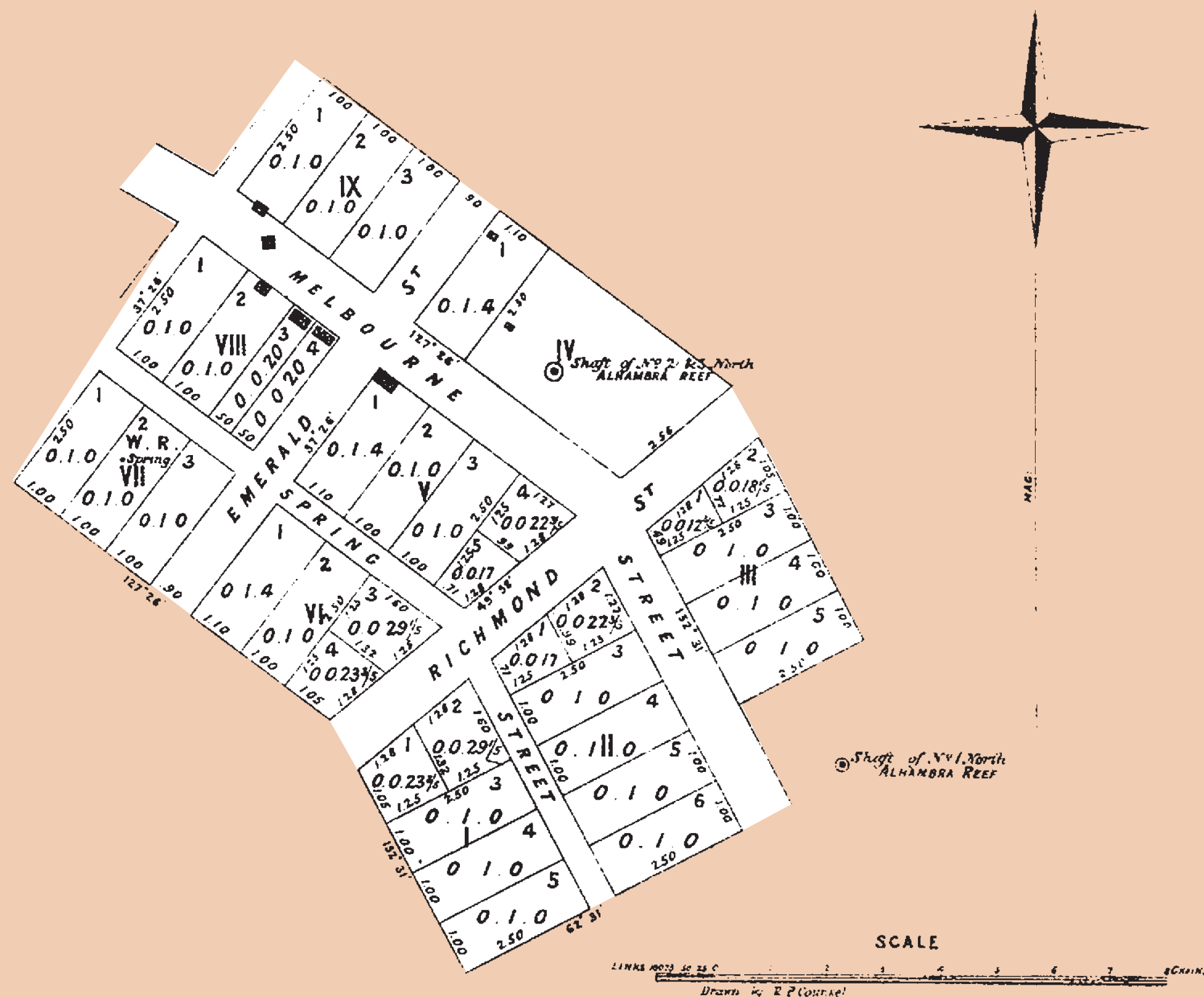


ALHAMBRA

A little sister of mighty Matlock

Alhambra (also known as Spring Hill), could have been considered a suburb of Matlock during its boom days, being less than 2 miles from Matlock. The Alhambra Reef was mined from 1864 to 1867. Nearby were also the reefs of Hibernia, Alabama, Magenta and Columbia, which all displayed gold in the surface quartz.

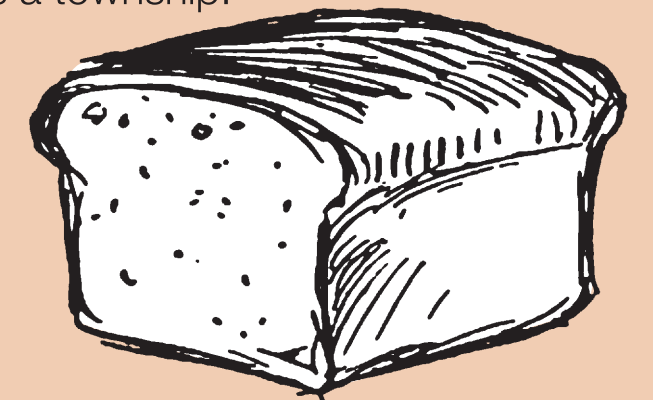


Above is the township plan of Alhambra, dated 1864.

The township was surveyed and divided into allotments and by 1865 consisted of about twenty weatherboard and shingle buildings. Three stores were also built including David Newell's wholesale and retail general store, and Mr O'Brien's 'Spring Hill Bakery'.

However this surface gold did not continue far below ground level. As the surface gold became depleted the miners tried to capitalise on the considerable money invested in the area and drove tunnels and sunk shafts in an endeavour to trace the course of the reefs, particularly in the case of Alhambra and Columbia Reefs. Unfortunately this effort did not produce adequate returns and by 1867 the mines had stopped working. Alhambra had no reason to continue as a township.

The 'Spring Hill Bakery' made and delivered bread to the local area, particularly to Matlock at 1/6d (one shilling, 6 pence) per loaf. They proudly advertised that their bread was better and cheaper than that available from Woods Point, but finally the intense competition and the downturn in bread sales, as the local population decreased, saw the bakery for sale. (No records are available to say whether a buyer was ever found).



In 1876, a traveller passing through the area wrote...

"In addition to seven goats, two dogs and a pig or two, I saw but one woman and four children... The township now consists of three or four rickety houses and one or two huts are all that marks the spot where once stood the hamlet of Spring Hill."

Source and Images:

Pam Craig (Stewart) & Peter Luke, Gaffneys Creek Progress Association
 Peter Horan & David Lean, Jamieson Museum
 Barbara and Des Miller & John Wood, Woods Point Museum
 Luke Steenhuis, 'Ghost Towns of the Mountain Goldfields, 1999'
 A Windy Morn at Matlock- Anne & Robin Bailey, 1998.

Rudi Paoletti, Historian & Author 'Gold for the Taking, A Pictorial History of the Heyday of the Walhalla-Wood's Point Gold Belt, 2007'
 West Gippsland Relic, Mining and Heritage Protection Inc.(www.westgippslandinc.com.au)