

Financial hardship ends in flames

Barbers c.1863 - c.1867

This site is about midway on the route between Bald Hills and Donnelly's Creek and was once a well known restaurant and accommodation house. It was later a hotel kept by William and Alice Barber and their children.

Not long after the business was established it suffered financial strain. Soon son Phillip Barber was granted a publican license. Stepping in he offered patrons exclusive use of three bedrooms and two sitting rooms. By the end of 1867 the falling number of mining ventures meant a smaller population.

The Barbers eventually abandoned their house. Their well kept gardens were initially maintained by the few remaining housekeepers. However, the house suffered from numerous break-ins and was eventually destroyed by fire.

Flames were witnessed from afar but an inquest failed to identify any suspects of the alleged arson.

William Barber died aged 61 in 1875. Alice eventually remarried and settled in the ranges at Coopers Creek. She remained active up to the advanced age of 76. After a short demise caused by an attack of bronchitis, she died in 1891. All three daughters of William and Alice Barber married locally raising their families at Walhalla.

Source: Paoletti R. & J., 2013, 'McEvoy's Track - the Gateway to the Gippsland Goldfields'

A bark and slab hut with a bar and a bunk,
and a man propped before it disgustingly drunk,
and a nameless galoot in a hand-me-down suit,
straddling out on the grass, grim as death, and as mute,
trapping millions of rabbits that run from his boot,
when eleven lie round,
in all shapes on the mound,
and two navvies are fighting like fiends on the ground,
isn't needful to say,
it's a sweet Sabbath day,
and that trade at the Shanty's uncommonly gay.

Edward Dyson - Rhymes from the Mines.



Photo: Unknown - May be the site of Barber's accomodation.

Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.