

# TOOMBON

c.1870 - 1912

**In the period 1870 – 1871, gold bearing reefs were opened up along the Aberfeldy River. Richard Fleming discovered gold in the Toombon gully at the same time.**

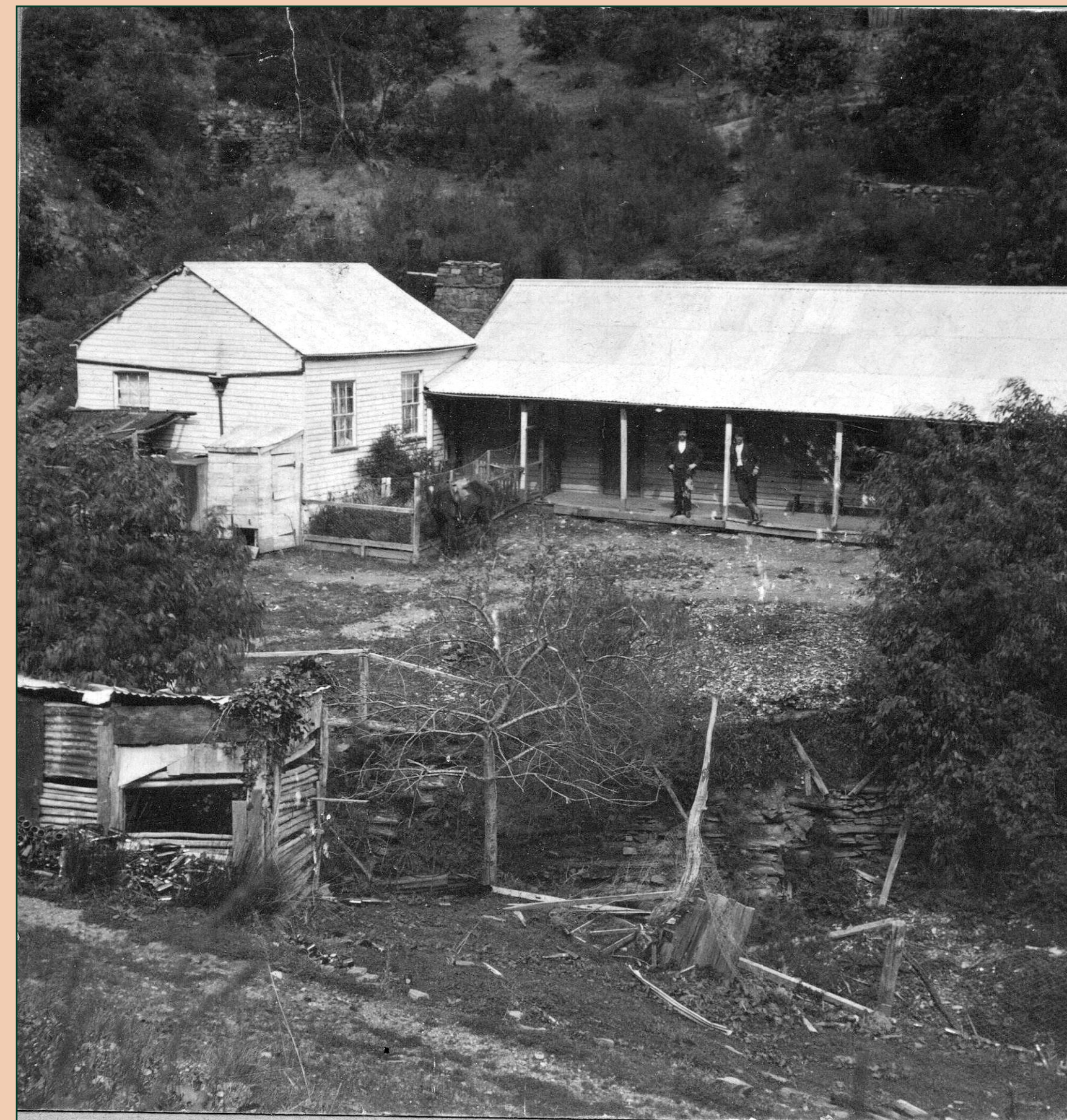
Six years earlier, a prospector named Jessop had opened up the ground and worked the reef under great privations. Although his work was encouraging, he died before making a major discovery. The reef he found was to be worked as 'The Aberfeldy', then "Lily of the Valley' and 'Toombon' in later years."

The Toombon Reef was originally discovered by Jessop in 1864 and developed by Richard Fleming and then the Aberfeldy Company from 1871 - 1876. James Rice was the key person in the Aberfeldy Company and Toombon became the best equipped mine in Gippsland but it was sold up under writ. The Sheriff who carried out the writ was Tom Boon and the Toombon Mining Company commenced with Peter Staff as its manager in 1881. The mine was a great success, having reached a depth of over 300m and yielding 50,844oz of gold from 61,888 tons. By 1884 all liabilities were paid off and handsome dividends recorded from 1871 through until 1896. The mine closed down just before WWI and re-opened briefly in the 1930's.

The town of Toombon had progressed rapidly from 1881 and was a thriving township with a butchery and a number of stores, a bank and the Toombon Hotel (known as The Wayside Inn) which opened in 1884. State School No. 2654 at Toombon was opened in 1885 when the department of education decided that the settlement would be permanent. The school functioned until 1907. In 1904, telephone and telegraph were connected to Donnelly's Creek and Toombon.

The Cemetery was established in 1886. In 1889, J. C. Markapolo erected the Apollo Hall for local cultural activities and church services for those whose faiths lacked their own premises. It is said that the average church attendance was near 400.

By 1886 there were over 200 houses in the township and there was a branch of the Amalgamated Miner's Association, a rifle club and cricket and football teams. By 1910 decline had commenced and by 1913 the hotel, post office and store were all closed. In 1926 the town was destroyed by fire. The last licensee of the hotel was Dick Merington.



*The Wayside Inn, Toombon towards the end of its life in 1913.*

Photo courtesy of Grahame Code, local historian.