THE KYABRAM TOWN HALL PRESENTS

From the

RATHBONE COLLECTION

Living Heritage
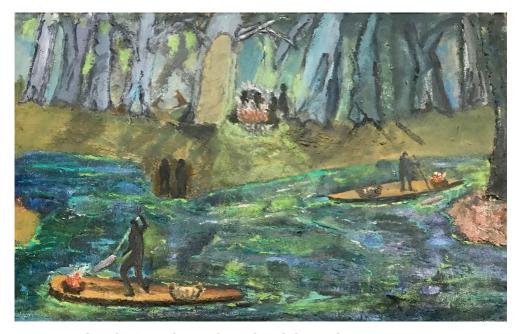
Campaspe
Shire Council

The Rathbone collection is owned by the Shire of Campaspe. Taken as a whole, it is a remarkable visual memoir. The artist, George Martinmay Rathbone, lived and worked for most of his life in the region around Echuca as did his parents, and his maternal and paternal grandparents (the latter settling at St Germains in 1874). The paintings include depictions of the earlier days of Echuca town and district, the river trade and pioneer life, which have helped shape the unique character of Echuca and its river port heritage so popular with tourists today.

Given that George Rathbone was a teacher for nearly half a century, it is not surprising that the Collection has a great value as an educational tool. The accessible, friendly style and local history subject matter make it an engaging and informative platform for teaching history to both younger and older learners alike.

The collection has artistic significance as a substantial body of works within the Australia naive genre. Artists who make so-called "naive" art are visual story tellers, communicating about subjects from everyday lives, rather than focussing on technical achievement or art world recognition. Nevertheless, within a very short period late in his life, George Rathbone achieved some status as a minor but established name withing the naive genre, through the development of a signature style, exhibitions at reputed venues, media references and publication of his work. His work is augmented by the Collection's clear, well-documented provenance and good physical condition and is still traded by dealers and auction houses today.
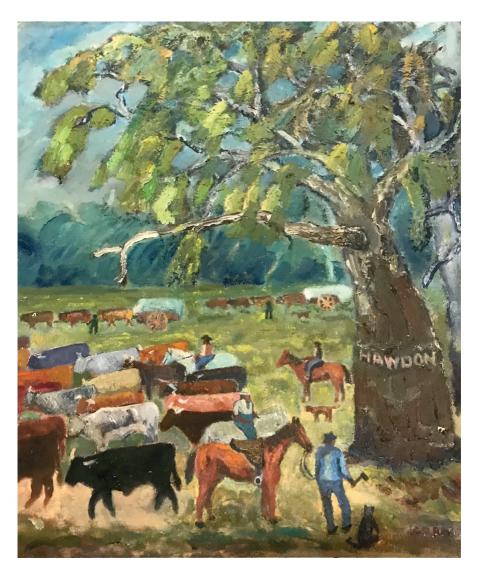
PAINTING NO. 1 - HOW ECHUCA GOT ITS NAME

This painting is to remind us of how Echuca got its name. In the "dream-time" the word, ET - CHU - CA was most aptly used by the aborigines, for it means in their language "the meeting of the waters." How right they were - because near this city are the junctions of the Campaspe, and the Goulburn rivers with the Murray river. In flood times there is a tremendous meeting of the waters. This painting is to remind us of the aboriginal name of the place.
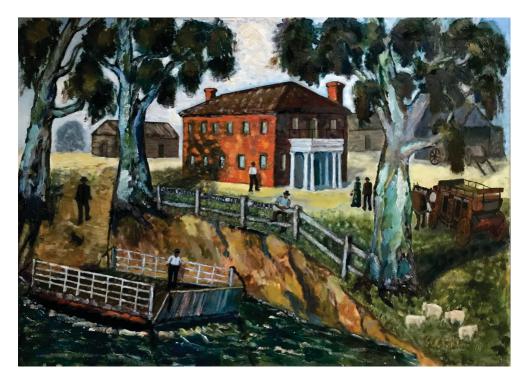

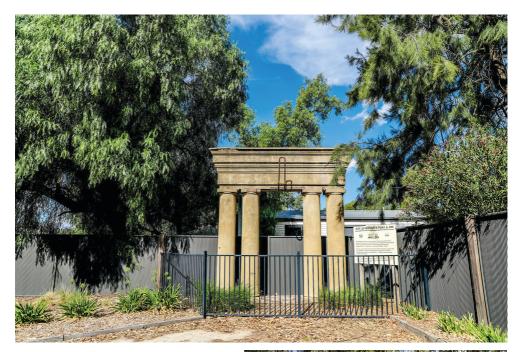The "meeting of the waters". Photo - Cindy Power

PAINTING NO. 2 - JOSEPH HAWDON AND PARTY - THE FIRST WHITE MEN TO PASS THROUGH THE AREA

This is the artist's impression of Joseph Hawdon cutting his name on a tree near the junction of the Murray and Goulburn rivers in 1838. He, with Charles Bonney and party were the first white men to come to this area, when they were taking cattle from the Old Crossing Place on the Goulburn near where Mitchellstown is today, to be sold in Adelaide. They have left their account of the journey in their diary.

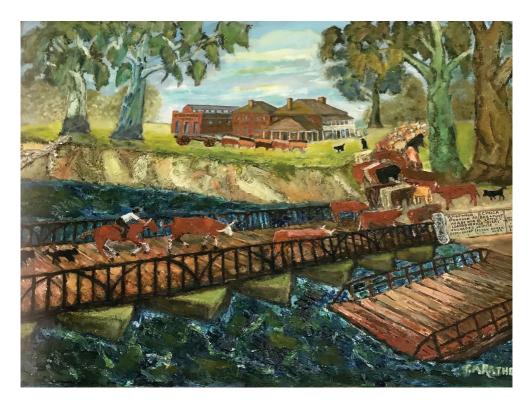## PAINTING NO. 14 - JAMES MAIDEN'S JUNCTION INN AND PUNT

James Maiden who was a pioneer stockman, taking cattle from New South Wales to Adelaide, established in 1843 a punt and very good "Inn" on the Murray River crossing place a few miles above its junction with the Campaspe. This "Inn" was a wooden slab structure. It was known as Maidens Inn, until in 1851 its name was changed to Moama when the first town blocks were sold there. In 1858 when the Bendigo goldfields were flourishing and there was a greater movement of stock from N.S.W. to feed the hungry multitude of miners James Maiden built the Inn as shown in this painting. Later when he sold his interest for £10,000, the new owner found he had to compete with Harry Hopwood's Pontoon Bridge further downstream, and this sadly decreased the use of this crossing place. This painting appeared in colour on the front page in lifts *Modern Housewives Magazine* in Queensland and on *Permanent Building Magazine* in Victoria.

All that remains of the inn today is the impressive columns and the lintel that was once part of the entrance to the building. Photo - Cindy Power

Maiden's Punt was located at the of a stock route that was part of a network of tracks later known as the long paddock. These tracks linked the cattle and sheep breeding areas in NSW and Queensland to the southern markets of Bendigo and Melbourne. Photo - Cindy Power

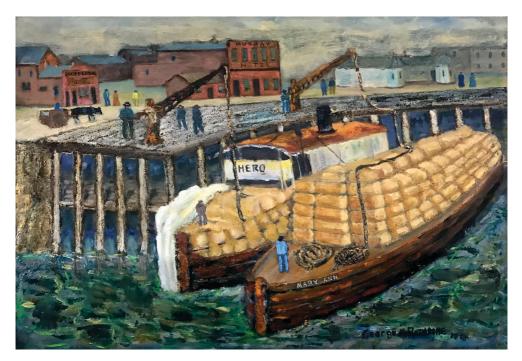PAINTING NO. 16 - HARRY HOPWOOD'S PONTOON BRIDGE AND BRIDGE HOTEL

Because of the discovery of gold, there was a rapid change in the movement of stock, hence new crossing places on the rivers. To cater for the movement of cattle and sheep from N.S.W. to feed the thousands of miners at the goldfields (mainly Bendigo), Harry Hopwood built his Pontoon Bridge and Bridge Hotel on the Murray at Echuca in 1858. This was the first bridge across the Murray River and it gave good service for twenty years, until the big Iron Bridge was built in 1878. His Bridge Hotel was built also in 1858 on the left bank, nearby his pontoon bridge. The government of N.S.W. gave Harry Hopwood the sole right to charge for the crossing on the Murray, likewise the Victorian government gave him the sole right to the crossing on the Campaspe River.

The Bridge Hotel Echuca as it is today. Photo - Cindy Power

Hopwood's punt and pontoon bridge in the 1800s. Courtesy of State Library South Aust.

PAINTING NO. 27 - UNLOADING WOOL FROM THE HERO AND BARGE MARY ANN AT THE ECHUCA WHARF

The *Hero* was built at Echuca in 1874. It not only carried great volumes of wool to Echuca, but towed barges heavily loaded with bales of wool. On return journeys along the Murray and its tributaries it carried flour and other produ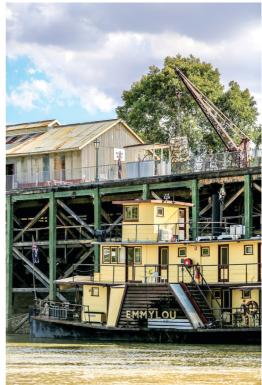ce to satisfy the needs of the squatters and their servants. In later years, it was used to gather up red-gum sleepers for the fast growing railways in Victoria and southern N.S.W. The barge *Mary Ann* was built at Echuca in 1877 and gave splendid service towed behind the *Hero*, laden with wool. The Artists Mother (maiden name Mary Ann Hart born 1872 - died 1962) said the young people often had a party and a dance on this barge as it moved down the Murray on a "day's outing".
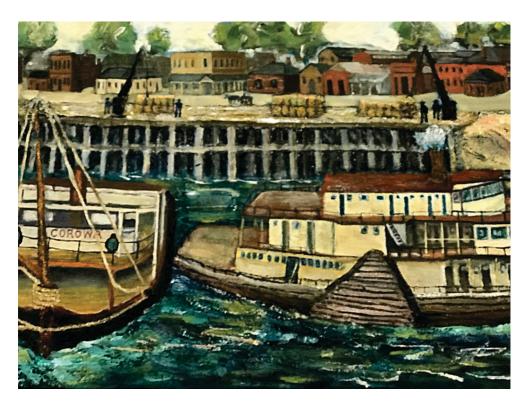

Port of Echuca - courtesy State Library of S.A.

Above - paddle steamer and barge. Logs are loaded across the hull. Photo - Cindy Power

A davit loading the Emmy Lou from the old Echuca wharf. Photo - Cindy Power.

PAINTING NO. 29 - PADDLE STEAMERS GEM AND COROWA
AT THE ECHUCA WHARF

This painting shows the *Gem* in her hey-day. When she was built at Moama in 1872, she was 90 feet long, but nearing the year 1900, she was cut in two, just forward of the paddle wheels and dragged apart by bullock teams. An additional forty feet section was built in, making her 135 feet long with three decks, of 285 tons weight and drawing only 4 foot of water. As one of the most stylish steamers she now had accommodation for 52 passengers (some of whom were placed in 24 tourist cabins), a crew of twelve and two stewardesses. In later life working as a passenger craft she made weekly trips from Mildura to Morgan. Lastly she was towed by the *P.S. Oscar W* from Mildura to Swan Hill where she has become part of the famous Swan Hill folk museum.
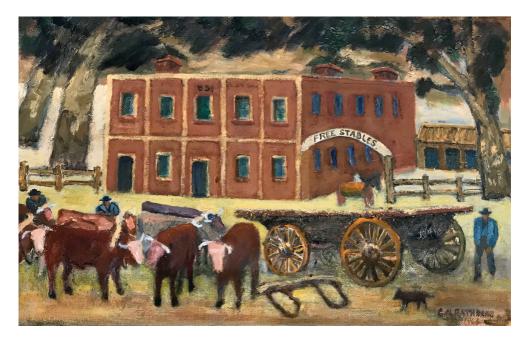
THE STERN WHEELER COROWA

In 1868 at Moama the *Corowa* was built. She was rebuilt from the hull of

the burnt-out *Lady Darling*. The *Corowa* had a working man's look with her yard arms, pulleys and ropes. She travelled the Murray and its tributaries loading produce from and delivering goods etc to pastoral stations and other pioneer workers. Also for as long as the Echuca railway line remained the only one from Melbourne to the Murray, the *Corowa* was busy on the river between Albury and Echuca, for during the high water season, all trade between Melbourne and Albury passed through Echuca. The *Corowa* was under the command of the "Boastful Yankee", Captain Gus Peirce, who because of his long service was well known at Echuca and other river ports.
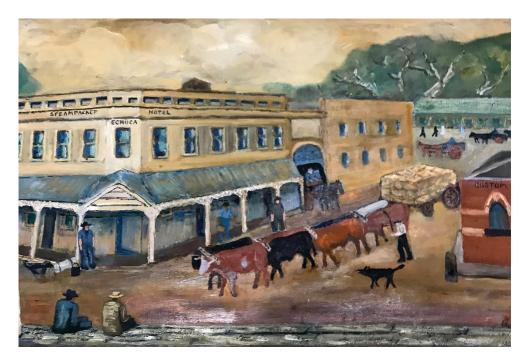

Today as in pioneer days, paddle steamers still in a line against the old Echuca wharf. Photo - Cindy Power,

PAINTING NO. 38 - THE ECHUCA HOTEL

In 1858, Thomas Mitchell's butcher's shop was hurriedly converted into the ECHUCA HOTEL. There was hot competition between Thomas Mitchell and Harry Hopwood who also owned a butchers shop nearby. After a heated argument Mitchell quickly altered, the existing shop and adding adjoining rooms of wood and iron, he obtained a licence in 1858, and he immediately declared open house for the whole day. The year 1858, was a boom year for brick making in Echuca and Mitchell in order to keep up with his arch-rival Harry Hopwood, who had constructed the brick double story BRIDGE HOTEL, soon built his ECHUCA HOTEL into the double story that we see in this painting.
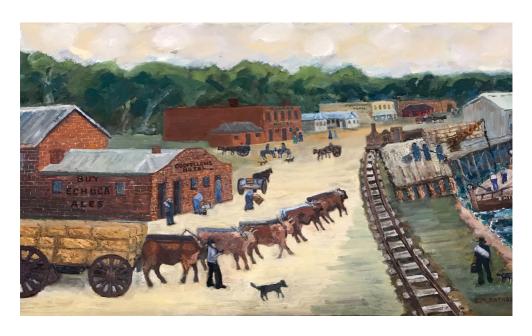
PAINTING NO. 39 - AT ECHUCA WHARF The STEAM PACKET HOTEL and CUSTOMS HOUSE at the corner of the Esplanade and Leslie Streets.

The Steam Packet Hotel was built on the corner of Hare Street and Leslie Street. the latter separating it from the Customs House. The Echuca. the Bridge. the Commercial and the Criterion were all built before it. I would say that this hotel was built in the early sixties and was in existence before the government wharf was built in 1065. This hotel was listed in the Butler and Servants Castlemaine and Echuca Directory in 1865 and at that time it was run by Anthony H Forrest. Illustrations in the papers shove that the building has been altered from time to time, and this painting shows its present form in 1960 having existed this way from about 1910. It probably started an a wooden structure with a bark roof.

Beer was 3 pence a pint pot. There was no early closing and Echuca hotels had a night life. Melbourne entertainers and theatrical artiste - also some from the gold fields at Bendigo would be billed at the Steam Packet. Great rivalry existed between the managers of the big hotels regarding their floor shows.

PAINTING NO. 4O - THE ESPLANADE AT THE ECHUCA WHARF - SHOWING THE ODDFELLOWS,THE MURRAY, THE CRITERION AND THE STEAM PACKET HOTELS, THE CUSTOM HOUSE AND McCULLOCK'S BOND STORE

The date for the establishment of the Oddfellows and the Murray Hotel is uncertain. For certain they were built when the wharf trade started to flourish - ie: in the early 1860's. They, during their active periods as hotels, flourished with ales from Echuca's own BREWERY. Later they were both de licenced and used as private dwellings. The Oddfellows was demolished about 1975, to make way for the Nirebow Motel. The brick Criterion Hotel was built on the site of Harry Hopwood's second New Road Inn.

McCullock's Bond Store was built to house large amounts of goods coming from Adelaide to be distributed in Victoria and N.S.W. Open air storage at Echuca before distribution to places like Bendigo and Ballarat, was unsatisfactory, so in 1828 Morgan and McIntosh engaged WW Moore to build a high brick building which was one hundred feet long and thirty feet high to the apex of the roof. It was later used by McCulloch and Co. as a bond warehouse for shipping agents so that customs duties could be collected.

The Esplanade, Echuca wharf as it is today. Photo Cindy Power.

The historic wharf with its shed and steam locomotives. Photo - Noel Thompson

PAINTING NO. 41 - McCULLOCH'S BOND STORE (SOMETIMES CALLED SHACKELL'S) AT THE
ECHUCA WHARF.

In the late 1850's, the merchants in Adelaide used the paddle steamers and the Murray River as outlets for their goods to Victoria and N.S.W. Trading from small wooden huts was unsatisfactory because of lack of storage. In May 1858 fifty tons of tobacco and a variety of wines and spirits landed at Echuca, and until sold to squatters and various firms in Bendigo and Ballarat, they remained in the open under guard. So, in 1858 Mr Hughes, on behalf of business firm of Morgan and McIntosh, engaged W W Moore to build a huge brick store near the wharf, one hundred feet long and thirty feet to the apex of the roof. It became known as the bond store because William McCulloch stored goods there until the Customs Duties were paid. It was later used as a depot by the Echuca firm of Shackell and White. Mr Shackell bought the building. On the High Street frontage, in its early days it had the Masonic symbol in a circle and the Star of David in another circle below. In today's renovations these have disappeared.
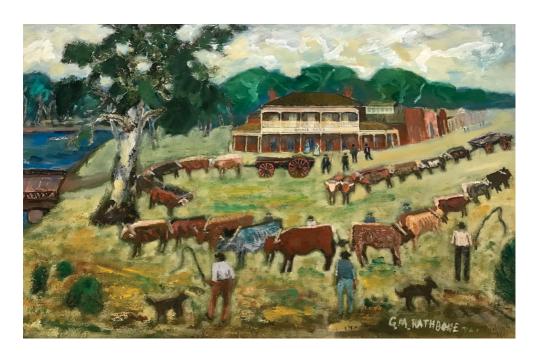
PAINTING NO. 42 - THE OLD COMMERCIAL HOTEL AND THE OLD CHEMIST SHOP

After working for squatters for ten years, George Redman bought a block of land in High Street at the first sale of town blocks at Echuca in 1855. In 1862, on this site, he built a double story brick hotel, known as Redman's Commercial Hotel. It was the fourth hotel built in Echuca. It is said that Redman's Commercial Hotel, along with Hopwood's Bridge Hotel, rivalled similar buildings in Melbourne, not only in external appearance but in internal comfort.

George Redman sold his interest in the Commercial Hotel in 1874 and became an auctioneer, a member of the Echuca Road Board and an Echuca Town Councillor. Sometime in the seventies this building was extended in brick to take in the little house next door and to look like it is today. It served as a Hotel for one hundred and nine years from 1862 to 1971. This building was subject to severe flooding during big floods on the Campaspe and Murray Rivers. All external doorways had slats nailed to the door jambs. Slabs were slipped into these to help prevent flooding. The brick building known as the Medical Hall, has been there over one hundred years. In its early days it was occupied by a chemist but later the two small shops became one and was occupied by a butcher.

PAINTING NO. 43 - PREPARING FOR THE BULLOCK-TEAMS TUG OF WAR AT HOPWOOD'S CROSSING AT ECHUCA
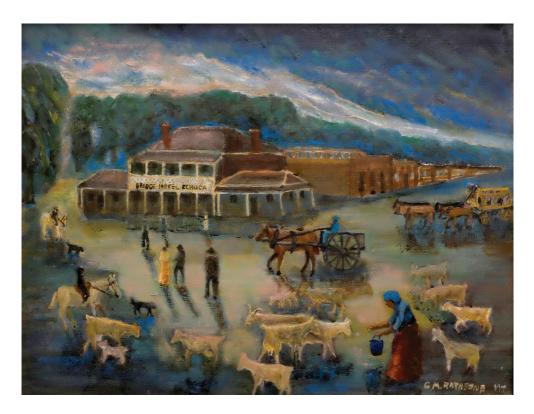
The Bridge Hotel was built at the Murray River crossing at Echuca in 1885, where Harry Hopwood had his pontoon bridge and punt. The bullock-teams and wagons had to wait their turn to cross the Murray River on the pontoon bridge. The bullock-drivers whilst waiting would drink and talk at the hotel bar. Arguments would start about the best bullock-team. This would result in a bullock-teams tug of war in front of the hotel. Sometimes the arguments became so fierce, that the prize was the bullock-team itself and as the driver was so attached to his team, he found himself employed by a new boss.

Above - Bullock team carting a large log resting in front of a hotel in the 1800s Courtesy commons.wikimedia.org

Log buggy at Echuca Wharf. Ballock teams were used to haul the heavy red gum logs to the saw mills. Photograph - Cindy Power.
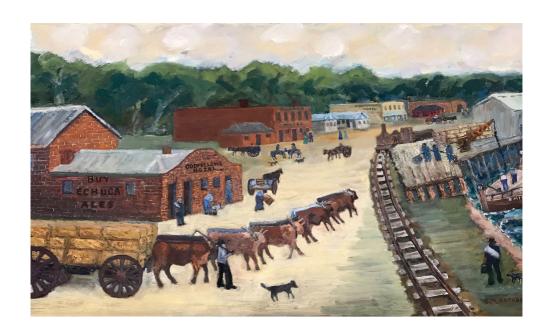
PAINTING NO. 46

This painting depicts the first milk supply in Echuca. Sarah Cochrane for many years drove her goats around the town, milked one or two at her customers' front gate and supplied them with milk. This painting depicts Sarah Cochrane in the early morning milking her goats in front of the Bridge Hotel.

Photograph of a pioneer woman milking her goats by hand. Courtesy of the State Library of South Australia.
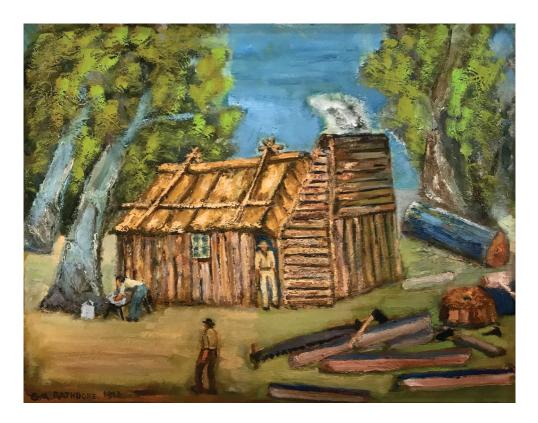

The Bridge Hotel. Recent photograph by Cindy Power.

PAINTING NO. 47 - THE OLD ODDFELLOWS HOTEL

The precise date of the commencement of the ODDFELLOWS HOTEL is not known. It was built when the WHARF TRADE was flourishing in the 1860s. They flourished with aloe from Debate's own brewery. When it was delicensed about 1914, it was as a private dwelling. On the top floor there was a large floor space where in the early days, artists from Melbourne, Bendigo and Ballarat gave floor shows. The ODDFELLOWS was demolished about 1975 by Mr O Berin who built the NIREBOW MOTEL on the site.

PAINTING NO. 52

Painting number 52 was one example of a wood cutters' but from the Barmah Forest which consisted of thousands of acres. The walls of this hut was built from roughly hewn red gum slabs whilst bark was fastened over a sapling construction for the roof. Sapling poles were fastened together to hold the roof in place. The chimney was also made of roughly hewn red-gum slabs. These chimneys were huge so that they could be lined with a clay wall, six to eight inches thick and five to six feet high. This enabled them to have a good log fire on the cold winters nights. The floor consisted of hard pressed clay.

PAINTING NO. 63 - PIONEER WOMEN'S ARTEFACTS

These artefacts were used by pioneer women around their log cabins and slab homes. In the big open fire places all sorts of foods were cooked in camp ovens which not only had hot coals under them, but hot coals were piled over the lid also. The camp oven was used for cooking "damper", meat and vegetables. "Damper" was a mixture made from flour and water. Fat and wax was placed in the candle mould. Candles were not only used in the house, but in buggy lamps on each side of the front seat. The scrubbing board and tub were most important on washing day and were taken in the dray when the washing was done at the lagoon. The tub was also used for bathing the children, in front of the kitchen fire. Bathrooms and running water were unknown in our pioneer homes. The long handle on the frying pan was very useful over the big log open fire. The iron had hot coals from the fire placed in its box. This heat helped to dry out the starched collars and dresses worn by the pioneers.