

# THE MURMUNGEE

It's many a year since the Murmungee Hotel, built in the 1860s, stood at the foot of the precarious Buckland Gap, between Beechworth and Myrtleford.

The late Mrs Dorothy Orton married her husband Clem, and as a bride arrived at the present pitsawn house on the farm that now includes land where the Murmungee pub once stood.

*Historic Orton House, Murmungee, close to where the Murmungee Hotel once stood.*

This gracious pioneer said it gave her 'a feeling of continuity' to live in this beautifully restored house with history. "Initially it was the house of James West, situated on the outskirts of Beechworth but in 1915 was



moved in two sections by draught horse and a skid," Mrs Orton said. It was a massive feat transporting the house down the precarious Buckland Gap to resite it on the Orton Farm.

"The hotel was on a 40 acre (16 ha) block but all remains are gone. At one stage part of the hotel was put down a mineshaft," Dorothy Orton said.

"My mother in-law told me when the Kellys were around everyone locked their doors. There's a story Ned sold a horse to someone at the Murmungee pub, then after he got the money came back and was seen riding the horse to Kneebone Gap. Initially when I came here no-one would admit to being related to Ned, then it became more fashionable," Mrs Orton said.

Like many of the other staunch pioneers who helped with this book, this wonderful woman, living in her comfortable farm house, died before it was finished.

A descendant of Margaret Ryan who worked at the Murmungee pub has passed on the story Ned stopped at the hotel while on the run, had a feed and a drink, then said, 'When I leave here you just didn't see me'.

The township of Murmungee has disappeared into the shadows of yesteryear. The sole structure left is the original Murmungee School, now a well-kept heritage listed community centre.

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