



Source A Extract from a speech given by Victorian politician Sir W.H.F. Mitchell at Kyneton in April 1880, as reported in *The Argus*, 16 April 1880, p 6

Batman who was the great discoverer and benefactor of this country, now slept in an unknown grave, and no proposal had ever been in made to erect a monument to his memory. The country owed a debt of gratitude to Batman for his services in opening up this colony (Cheers).

Source B Extracts from a letter to the editor, *The Argus*, 6 May 1880, p. 7

This day 41 years ago – the 6th May, 1839 – there died in Melbourne a man who was among the first pioneers of the noble colony of Victoria, who selected the site, and has very good claim to be called the founder of this city, and whose grave remains to this day unmarked by a stone to recall his merits and his services.

This neglect ... was prominently referred to in a speech by Sir W.H.F. Mitchell, the President of the Legislative Council, who, to his honour, has not stopped there. Sir William has accepted the position of chairman of a committee – already numbering some 70 gentlemen – who propose to raise, by a shilling subscription throughout Australia, a fund which shall suffice to erect a national memorial to John Batman.

J. J. SHILLINGLAW

Source C Extracts from an article in the *Australasian Sketcher* 17 June 1882, pp. 183 – 186

AN HISTORIC INCIDENT—UNVEILING OF THE BATMAN MEMORIAL

[1] On Saturday, June 3, the monument of the grave of John Batman, in the old Melbourne cemetery, was unveiled, in the presence of a large gathering of old colonists, and a numerous assemblage of other visitors. The stone, which is an obelisk of dressed bluestone, was erected at a cost of £120, subscribed by the public upon the suggestion of Sir W. H. F. Mitchell. At a dinner given to the hon. gentleman at Kyneton in 1880, he deplored the fact that the remains of the founder of the city of Melbourne lay without any indication of the spot where they were buried, and his utterances attracted the attention of a number of gentlemen who desired to perpetuate the memory of the deceased pioneer. They organised a committee and collected a sufficient sum to enable them to erect the stone over his grave which was now unveiled. It is the most prominent object in the enclosure, and contrasts conspicuously with the decay and disorder which prevail around. On the side facing the town has been cut the inscription: –

JOHN BATMAN,
Born at Parramatta, N.S.W, 1800,
Died at Melbourne 6th May, 1839.
He entered Port Phillip Heads
29th May, 1835,
As leader of an expedition which
He organised in Launceston, V.D.L.,
To form a settlement, and founded one
On the site of Melbourne then unoccupied.

This monument was
Erected
By public subscription in Victoria,
1881.
Circumspice!

[2] At 3 o'clock, when the ceremony began, the monument was covered with the Victorian ensign, and a company of the naval forces (with the *Cerberus* band) under command of Captain Mandeville, was drawn up in a line in front of the grave.

[3] The Mayor of Melbourne, addressing the assembly, referred to the very interesting occasion which had brought them together that day. He felt that it was not creditable to the colony that the grave of one of its early founders should have remained without any monument above them for more than 40 years. That feeling was expressed by Sir William Mitchell at Kyneton two years ago, and the proposal to erect the present memento was made by Mr. J. J. Shillinglaw. The committee which that gentleman gathered together for the purpose of giving effect to the suggestion had been most successful, and the result of their exertions would soon be exposed to view. He (the mayor) held in his hand the original diary of John Batman – a document of considerable interest – from which he would read an extract. Under date the 8th June, 1835, after referring to his exploration of the neighbourhood of the junction of the Yarra and Saltwater rivers, he proceeds: –

The boat went up the river I have spoken of, running from the east, and I am glad to state that about six miles up I found the river of good water, and very deep. This will be the position for the village.

[4] (Laughter) Forty-seven years ago those words were penned by Batman, after his boat had first disturbed the then pellucid and beautiful, but now not very beautiful, Yarra. (Hear, hear.) When they thought of what had been accomplished since that adventurous man first moored his boat to the banks of the river; when they knew that upon the spot had been raised a city and suburbs of 300,000 inhabitants, that now the iron roads reached from Hobson's Bay to the Murray, that the colony had developed boundless resources – mineral, agricultural, and pastoral – surely they could say that they had beheld one of the marvels of the present century. (Hear, hear.) All who had taken part in the movement which they

were now completing must be satisfied with the result, and those who were present at the ceremony would look back to the event with pleasure...

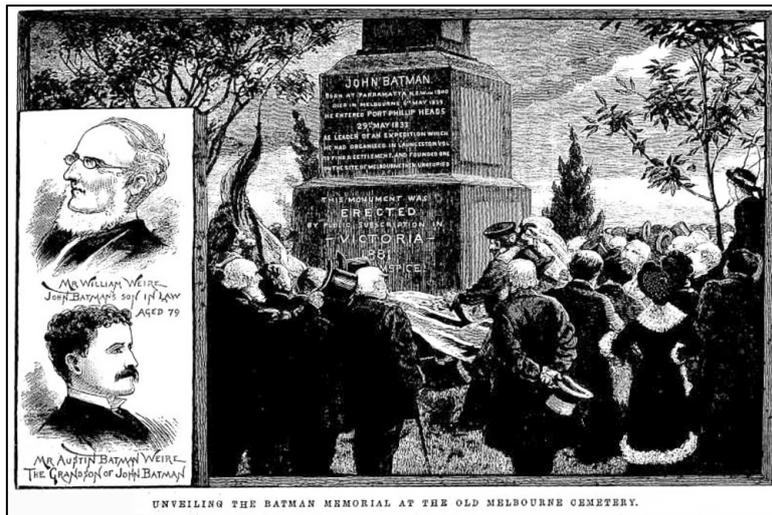
[5] The Town Clerk (Mr. Fitzgibbon) ... [read] an extract ... from the *History of Australia*, by the late Mr. Marcus Clarke, as follows:

Two residents of Tasmania, Mr. Gellibrand and the energetic John Batman, who had rendered good service in the Black War, had in 1827 sought, and been refused by Governor Bourke, a grant of land at Western Port. In 1835 an association was formed by them in Tasmania to ascertain the general character and capabilities of Port Phillip as a grazing and agricultural district. Batman accordingly sailed from George Town on 12th May, 1835, in the *Rebecca*, of 30 tons, with a master, a mate, four seamen, three assistants, and seven Sydney aboriginals. On the 29th he entered Port Phillip Heads, and subsequently ascended Station Peak Range, and traversed the country round about Geelong. He had several interviews with the natives, and having on the 2nd June anchored at the mouth of the river which falls into Hobson's Bay at Williamstown, on the following day ascended in a boat that and the Saltwater River some five miles. The party then landed, and followed its course for 28 miles. On the 6th he effected an extremely simple and happy arrangement with eight of the principal men of a tribe he fell in with, by which they agreed to grant 'to him and to his heirs for ever' some 800,000 acres of land, which would now include the cities of Melbourne, Geelong, and Collingwood, and also embrace the boroughs of Sandridge and St. Kilda. The 'consideration' paid the aborigines by Batman for 819,000 acres was 20 sheets, 60 blankets, 20 pairs of shoes, 50 gowns, 30 necklaces, 5 cwt. of flour and half a ton of pork. When this 'deed' was declared void by Governor Bourke compensation (£7,000) was allowed the association to the extent of the consideration paid to the vendors, 'thus in some degree recouping the services which the company had rendered by assistance in the colonisation of the new country'.

[6] Mr. William Weare, son-in-law of John Batman, thanked the committee on behalf of the family for the action taken for the purpose of erecting the monument. That day should be one of the "red letter" days in the history of the colony, and although the act of remembrance had been tardily performed, it had been worthily performed. [Mr. Weare introduced his son and grandson (Mr. Batman's grandson and great-grandson) to the assemblage.]

[7] ... Messrs. Gordon Augustus Thomson (who came to the colony 46 years ago, viz., one year after Batman) and Robert Russell, the two gentlemen present who were the oldest colonists, then performed the ceremony of unveiling. As the flag fell to the ground, the band played the National Anthem, and the detachment presented arms. Votes of thanks were unanimously tendered to Capt. Mandeville, Mr. Shillinglaw, and the mayor, for the services they had rendered. A gentleman suggested that the committee should apply to the Government for a grant of land to the descendants of Batman as compensation for the loss they had sustained in being deprived of the property which he purchased. The proceedings then terminated.

Source D Unveiling the Batman Memorial, *Illustrated Australian News*, 10 June 1892, p. 89



Source E A group of 'Old Colonists' at the unveiling of the memorial to John Batman in the Old Melbourne Cemetery, 1882. (J. W. Lindt photographer, State Library of Victoria's collection)



Source F Extract from Shane Carmody's 'John Batman's Place in the Village', *The La Trobe Journal*, No 80 Spring 2007, pp. 85 – 101

Settler communities demand a founder, for the foundation stories help define the moment at which history begins. For much of Australia these stories start with decisions made in a distant country and are muddied by the convict stain. Melbourne is different ... mythologised Batman is the inspirational founder.