

## GRAPEVINE CUTTINGS (December 1999)

By Rob Upson

### JOHN HANLON KNIPE

You may recall from a previous article, that John Hanlon Knipe, in 1861, built an imposing dwelling fronting on Valentine St. This became known as Knipe's Castle, a home in which he never lived. What do we know about this fellow Knipe? Mrs Edith Lunn, of Bendigo, has done some research into his background and a couple of articles appeared in the Bendigo Advertiser, one in 1972 and another in 1995. The following are some extracts from these articles.

John Hanlon Knipe was born in London in 1825 the son of George Edward Knipe and his wife Mary Ann Hanlon. He followed his father's profession as a silversmith and served his apprenticeship in London. At 19 he married Ellen Crouch and they had three children. In 1853 he migrated to Australia on board a ship called the *Magdalena* of which he was the purser. It is thought that his wife had died soon after the birth of their third child as the children were left behind in the care of his mother and brother George.

He arrived in Adelaide and became involved in the auctioneering business with the firm of Sampson and Wickstead. The excitement on the Victorian goldfields induced him to leave Adelaide and by January 1854 he was in Bendigo. When his gold digging efforts didn't produce much he opened a general store in Old Camp St. near what is now known as Pall Mall.

When a new rush began at Simpson's Ranges, now known as Maryborough, Knipe joined the many Bendigo diggers to head that way. He there commenced business as an auctioneer with a Henry Joseph Smith, for many years connected with the Melbourne press. Knipe took an active part in advocating the abolition of the gold licence fees and was appointed a delegate to a conference in Ballarat where he was present at the Eureka riots. While in Ballarat, he married Jane Munro in 1855 and from this marriage there were ten children.

Because of bad business ventures, including land speculation, he became bankrupt and returned to Bendigo in 1857 and set up as an auctioneer and general merchant. At that time, Knipe and his second family were living in Barkly Place opposite the home of Lachlan McLachlan, the police magistrate on the goldfields. It was then that he built his celebrated landmark in Valentine St. Defaulting on his creditors, he joined the gold rush to New Zealand but was soon back in Australia, this time settling in Melbourne.

It was here that his business ventures were more successful. He again commenced as an

auctioneer and land agent and remained prominent in this field for 30 years becoming an acknowledged real estate authority and valuer of freehold properties. He became a councillor for Prahran and Hawthorn and stood unsuccessfully for Parliament. He was the originator of the Victorian Humane Society. Being a thoroughly self taught man in all respects his lifestyle varied from one of affluence to bankruptcy several times. He died in St. Kilda in 1895 after an operation for cancer and is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. Unfortunately, Knipe's Castle on the Ironbark Ranges overlooking Bendigo, no longer exists.