



Army Museum of Tasmania

Anglesea Barracks
HOBART

Information Sheet No 5

Thomas Yardley Lowes 1798 - 1870

Lowes a distiller, merchant and auctioneer arrived at Hobart Town from England in the *Thalia* on 27 April 1823, as a free settler, with his wife Anna Maria Theresa and infant daughter Mary Ann.

Lowes received a land grant at Manor Owen, in the Lennox district, which he left unimproved and unoccupied for years. He was promised another 800 acres (324 ha) when he erected a distillery and malt house on another grant at Cascade Grove, Hobart, and began distilling in 1824. Because of the reduction of duty on foreign spirits in 1825 and the scarcity of grain he had to close his distillery, which was bought for £2000 in 1827 by the government for a factory and place of detention for female prisoners.

In 1825 Lowes, was advertising as a general commission agent and three years later he was appointed cashier of the Bank of Van Diemen's Land. In 1832 he was actuary to the Van Diemen's Land Assurance Association, and became a licensed auctioneer in partnership with W. T. Macmichael; he also opened a wool mart in 1834. Later he acquired property at Lowes Park, Antill Ponds, and at Dairy Lands, Glenorchy, where he built Lowestoft.

His political activities began in 1824 when he was one of the signatories to a memorial to the King, soliciting separation of Van Diemen's Land from New South Wales and its independence as a colony. In 1847, he took part in a public meeting on transportation, and spoke in favour of the continuation of transportation in a modified form.

He was a member of the Legislative Council of Tasmania from 1856 until his death, a Justice of the Peace from 1862, one of the two members of the Bridgewater Commission, and a promoter of the Mersey and Deloraine Tramway Co. He was treasurer of the New Town Race Course in 1831-32, and an early member of the Royal Society of Tasmania.

He was an original member and captain in 1860-62, of the Buckingham Volunteer Rifle Corps. He was also a director of the Tasmanian Fire and Life Insurance Co. and a vice-president of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Oddfellows.

He made his property at Lowestoft available to his Volunteer associates many of whom were freemasons and children of emancipists. Rifle shooting competitions followed by well provided social events endeared him to his associates and in recognition of his support, encouragement and fellowship, a presentation sword was subscribed to and presented to him.

The function took place on Monday 27 November 1862¹ and in the absence of the ordered sword the hand written testimonial was presented to him at the Union Hotel which reads,

To the Honorable Thomas Yardley Lowes Esquire

Dear Sir

It has for some time past been the desire of a considerable number of the Volunteers, Southern Division, Tasmania to present you with an Address and Testimonial in acknowledgement of your zealous and liberal support to the Volunteer Institution from its first establishment in the colony.

Individually and as a body we cannot but highly appreciate your efforts to promote the success of such a manly and patriotic movement not only by your personal participation therein but by your affording to your Brother Volunteers every possible facility for improving themselves in rifle practice, by the free use at all times of your grounds and of the Butts erected thereon for their benefit and by the award of valuable prizes last year in Rifle Matches open for competition to every qualified Volunteer in the Australian Colonies.

The good old English hospitality invariably extended by you to your numerous visitors is too well known to require comment, nor can it be easily forgotten. It becomes therefore our pleasing duty in accordance with the desire as above expressed to request your acceptance of this address in testimony of your unwearied Zeal and disinterested liberality and at the same time we beg to state that having been unable to procure in this or the adjacent Colonies a sword worthy of your acceptance we have taken steps per last mail for procuring one from England and hope at no distant period to have the pleasure of presenting it to you as a trifling but sincere tribute and earnestly trust that it may serve to remind you of your association with us as a Volunteer an association we need scarcely add attended with many pleasing reminiscences.

In conclusion we wish you the enjoyment of many years of uninterrupted health and happiness.

Signed by all Committee representing all volunteer units

On behalf of 163 subscribers to the Address and Testimonial

Hobart Town

27 November 1862

¹ The Mercury 28 November 1862

The sword was not presented to him until 22 June 1863 at a function at the Club hotel in Murray Street. The blade of the sword is inscribed,

Presented to the hon. T. Y. Lowes Esq, late Captain Commanding the Buckingham Volunteer Rifle Company by the members of the Volunteer Force, Southern Division Tasmania, as a sincere though inadequate testimony in acknowledgement of his zealous and liberal support to the Volunteer movement. November 1861

His wife died in 1861. Their only child was married to Francis Oscar Tondeur on 21 October 1848. Lowes died at Lowestoft on 5 October 1870. He was buried in St Paul's Church of England cemetery, Glenorchy.

His obituary referred to him as a friend of the poor, somewhat eccentric, and a politician whose views were not of the most advanced order. A contemporary described him as 'a fine old English gentleman', generous, courteous, with a kindly wit, a success in business which he conducted with the highest integrity, and with a wide social circle.

In 2009 Mr. John Presser a member of the Military Heritage Foundation of Tasmania alerted the Board of the Foundation to this sword being offered on EBay by an American dealer. With funds provided by the Board Mr Presser successfully bid for the sword and it was brought back to Tasmania and added to the Military Museum of Tasmania Collection.

