

Petition for the continuance of stonebreaking

Prayer

Sandhurst January 26th, 1882

To the Mayor & Councillors of the City of Sandhurst

Gentlemen

We the undersigned Stonebreakers beg to petition that you would order the continuance of the stone-breaking for street metaling. We have been discharged by order of Mr. Steane, and respectfully request that you will order our reappointment as we are all old, and not capable of performing any other kind of work and if deprived of this, we have no other resource than seek aid from the charities.

Your humble servants

Notes

26 January 1882- Stonebreakers

Seven local Stonebreakers objected to being "discharged" by Steane, Sandhurst Council's Town Surveyor for over a decade at the time this petition was received. The stonebreakers asked that their work, which was breaking up stones that were then used in the construction or "metaling" of roads, be continued because **"we are all old, and not capable of performing any other kind of work"**. They concluded that if they were not reinstated, they would be forced to "seek aid from the Charities."

Judging from the handwriting, most of these Petitioners could not read and write so they sought help from the first signator, P. White, to compose and write the petition's prayer, and write each of their names next to their x marks. This is the only petition in the collection where the majority of petitioners were obviously illiterate.

Over a decade later, the Council's Surveyor reported that he was then employing 29 stone breakers, and commented "I have not refused any man a job at this need of work.", but concluded "it will be impossible to keep them fully employed for the whole year."

(City Surveyor to Bendigo Council, 22/12/1893, Box 38, Sandhurst-Bendigo Inwards Correspondence, BRAC.) This is again an example of local reference being made to the Depression which affected the colony of Victoria in the early 1890s.

Page	Column	Surname	First name /Initial	Occupation	Comment
1	1	White	P.	Stonebreaker	
1	1	Brodie	Pat or Robt	Stonebreaker	
1	1	Mc Caig	Hugh	Stonebreaker	signed with his mark
1	1	Gorman	Jas.	Stonebreaker	signed with his mark
1	2	Smith	Jas.	Stonebreaker	signed with his mark
1	2	O'Grady	P.	Stonebreaker	signed with his mark
1	2	White	Jas.	Stonebreaker	signed with his mark

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White

P. J. Brodie

Hugh McCarry

Jas. Gorman

Jas. Smith

P. J. O'Grady

Jas. White

26. 1. 82
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of Stockbreeding