

# A crook by name and nature

Mt Pleasant Hotel c.1864 - c.1869

**In 1864 the Crook family moved to McEvoy's track to set up the Mt Pleasant Hotel as respectable citizens.**

**But as a former Jericho resident, Mr Alexander Crook had not always been looked upon favourably within society.**

**In 1861 Mr Crook stole:**

**a case of surgical instruments,  
two dresses,  
two cloaks and  
several articles of female underclothing**

**from a house at Columbian Reef, Inglewood.**

Mr Crook then ran away to Omeo under a false name. He then absconded with another man's wife, Mrs Jane Nellis. Mrs Nellis abandoned her lawful husband and three infant children.

The couple set up a shanty home and posed as a well-to-do family. Mrs Nellis' two elder daughters Jane and Alice were with them. Between 1862 and 1863 Mrs Nellis gave birth to a son.

The Mt. Pleasant Hotel and Accommodation House run by the esteemed Mr and Mrs Alexander Hugh Crooks boasted the best facilities in the ranges. It included stables capable of housing up to 80 horses.

Alexander Crooks died at Walhalla in 1877 aged 48 from the effects of heavy drinking.

Source: Paoletti R. & J. 2013, 'McEvoy's Track - the Gateway to the Gippsland Goldfields'

**Take nothing but photographs, leave nothing but footprints.**

Photo: Alexander Hugh Crooks as seen in Fiona Pettite's collection from Rodgers J.G., 1998, 'Jericho on the Jordan: a Gippsland Goldfields History'

