

## ROYAL HOTEL.

Practically no information exists about the old Royal Hotel, which was situated on that corner of Devon Street and Liardet Streets, later occupied by The Melbourne—and now (1941) Scanlan's Melbourne Corner.

What little information I have, is as follows: Concerning the total destruction of the building by fire from the "Taranaki Herald" of May 23, 1868: "At about 5 o'clock on Thursday morning last the inhabitants were roused from their beds by the ominous cry of 'fire' . . . Royal Hotel . . . the building was enveloped in a full body of flame." (I wonder what sort of flame it would be if it were not full bodied, whatever that is!). "The reporters reached the spot a few minutes after the alarm was given, and the flames then seemed to have such a hold on the premises that any attempt to save the building seemed useless—the fire at this period being utterly beyond control. The first to discover the fire was the barman named Nightingale, who was sleeping in an upstairs room. He awoke from experiencing a suffocating sensation, and on rousing himself found the room filled with smoke. He then gave the alarm to the other persons sleeping in the house—Mr. and Mrs. Cottier (mine host), Mr. Breutnall, a youth named Peter Hillan, and the servant maid. Had to escape by windows, etc. Outside the barman finding that Peter Hillan, who had been sleeping in the same room as himself, was not present, hastened to the front door, he entered and then attempted to get assistance but was persuaded not to go in again. The floor of the room where the boy lay fell in. The fire brigade (Captain Holford, superintendent), then arrived, and considered it hopeless, they turned their attention to and saved the resident of Mr. Cudlipp adjoining. Half an hour after the first alarm the building crashed into the cellar, where it remained a burning debris." In the morning the remains of Peter Hillan were found. The fire originated in the landlord's private room, and it was caused by the chimney being badly constructed.

Mr. Cottier took the hotel in 1865, and there is a view of the building in a picture dated 1855, but I know not when it was built, by whom, and nothing more of its earlier hosts.

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**References:**

"Taranaki Herald Files of Period.  
Information of Alexander Black.  
Follett Carrington.