

# ORBOST & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

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## NEWSLETTER No. 124 February 2016

### SCHOOLS IN THE BENDOC AREA

**Bendoc (1873-1987), Hayden's Bog (1878-1941), Delegate River (1887-1956), Bendoc Lower (1896-1956), Delegate River Upper/Lower(1903-1947), and North Bendoc (1913-1941).**

- by Lois Crisp

#### BENDOC STATE SCHOOL 1166

According to *Bendoc S. S. Centenary Souvenir* publication, Bendoc had a fee-paying private school run by an Englishman, John Stockdale, from October 1868. In February 1870 Stockdale applied to the Education Department of Victoria for assistance with wages, as many parents were unable to pay the fees.

This was granted subject to an inspector's report. However the Inspector for Gippsland found it impossible to cross the Snowy River, so arrangements were made for the N. S. W. Inspector for Cooma District to visit. The subsidy was subsequently paid. Unfortunately, John Stockdale died in 1872 and the school closed.

In mid 1873, Frederick Jones from Prahran, Victoria, was directed to start a school in a rented "room" [log hut – no window!], with 35 pupils. By January 1874 "school was held in a much improved building" [formerly an old store].

Nearly 90 years later, in 1962, a new two-roomed school building was opened and in 1973 a Centenary Celebration was held. This school closed in 1987 and the building is now in the grounds of the SES quarters at Bendoc.

There are 25 names on the Bendoc S. S. WW1 Honour Board [now in the Bendoc Hall]. Two were those of teachers, D. Mahoney and P. Rahilly and the rest were past pupils. Family names are Akeroyd, Cross, Dudley, Duffell, Dupas, Farmer, Hayse, Helmers, Lewis, McLean, Matthews, Mustard, Oslington, Rankin, Shannon and Shaw.



**ABOVE: Bendoc State School and pupils c.1910**

William Windle was in Gr.7 when he wrote "*The Lyrebird*" for *The Gap magazine* 1922 issue, and for the 1923 issue, Doris Mustard (Gr. 4) wrote a story titled "*On Marching Orders*". Elsie Windle (Gr.5), May Windle, aged 8 years, and Joyce Mustard (Gr. 5), were represented in the 1924, 25, 26 issues respectively.

The 1918 school photo in "*Bendoc – A Centenary Souvenir - !873 to 1973*" shows 18 pupils from the Dent, Downey, Gouge, Gunnser, Helmers, Mustard, Nichol, Rodden, and Windle families, and in 1931 there were 11 pupils from the Jackson, Jamieson, Miles, Mustard, Nichol and Spring families.

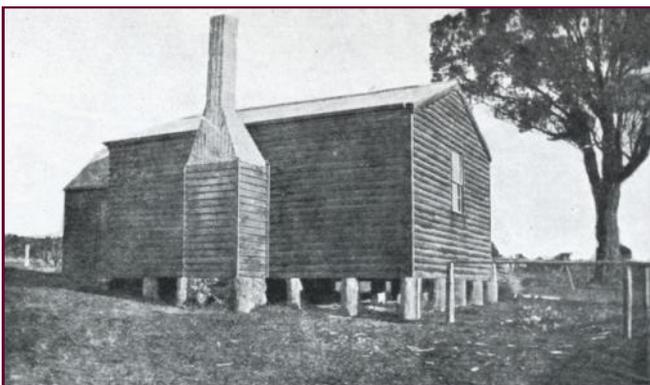
Anyone interested in reading more detailed notes, can access a copy of "***The Bendoc Centenary Souvenir***" in the Local Collection of the East Gippsland Shire Library, or Orbost Historical Society Collection, [Members only].

**If you or any of your ancestors attended Bendoc State School or any of the others in this Newsletter, we would welcome your input for the Orbost Historical Society State Schools file.**

### **HAYDEN'S BOG STATE SCHOOL 2537**

After Bendoc S. S., the next school to start in the area was at Hayden's Bog.

*Vision and Realization* the Education Department of Victoria history states: "On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1878 the people of Hayden's Bog which is a small community four miles from Bendoc on the Bendoc-Delegate Road witnessed the opening of their school. The first teacher was James de Visseux. For about 63 years this school functioned in the interests of a community devoted mainly to pastoral pursuits. However, through lack of numbers the last teacher, Alfred Chown was withdrawn and the school closed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April 1941".



**ABOVE: Hayden's Bog State School.**

Some years later, Elvon Jamieson, Bendoc Lower, dismantled the building and re-erected on his property as a shed. Old pine trees mark the original site on the corner of Legge Road and Bendoc-Delegate Road.

John James 'Jack' Hepburn, born 1899, was presented with a book in 1911 at Hayden's Bog School, and a school photo taken about the same time shows thirteen pupils with their teacher. [ref. Dorothy Hepburn's book *Memorial Wall*.]

In a letter to Dorothy Hepburn and printed in *The Local Rag* issue 23 February 1981, Richard Mawson wrote, "I commenced duty as Head Teacher at Hayden's Bog on November 26<sup>th</sup> 1912. In 1915 Hayden's Bog and Bendoc became part time. I taught two days a week at Hayden's Bog and three days at Bendoc. In 1915, I married Minnie Roberts and we occupied the residence at Bendoc. Later Bendoc was made full time and Hayden's Bog and Bendoc North became part time. In September

1921, I left Bendoc. I remember teaching Jack, Nellie, Laura and George Hepburn".

In 1923, Alex Hepburn, 10 yrs. (Gr. 5), Hayden's Bog, contributed to *The Gap* magazine with this piece titled "Hayden's Bog". "Hayden's Bog is a very small settlement in the east corner of Gippsland. It probably was named after one of the early settlers. During the last few years, many people have left Hayden's Bog and now there are only eight children attending school. The chief occupation of the people is farming."

Nevertheless, the school had enough pupils to continue for another eighteen years.

It should be noted that in the *Snowy River Mail* dated 14-6-1902 there is a report "The people of the upper Delegate River and Hayden's Bog are agitating for a half-time school". This would seem to indicate that the Hayden's Bog school was closed at that stage, and it appears that the schools in the remote areas did fluctuate between full, part time and closed for periods.

Hayden's Bog was named after Henry Hayden, who came to the area and first worked for George Simpson who had taken up 12,800 acres on the Delegate River. Later Henry Hayden took over the property and it became known as Hayden's Bog. [Information from Kaye Reed's Memoirs, "*Dizlight to Delegate*".]

### **DELEGATE RIVER STATE SCHOOL 2809**

Delegate River is situated very close to the Victorian/ N.S. W. border, and the school was situated off the Bonang Highway, about five kms. along the Delegate River Road from its southern junction with the Bonang Highway.

From *Vision and Realization*: "The history of the Delegate River School No. 2809 ran almost parallel with that of Bonang for both were opened on the same date, 16<sup>th</sup> of May 1887 and were at first conducted by the same teacher, W. Armstrong, who worked the schools on a half-time basis. As Armstrong finished teaching at Delegate River in 1893, we might assume these schools were granted full-time status in 1893. The residents of Delegate River erected their school, a wooden structure 16ft x 12ft. [one foot = approx. 30cm]. Delegate River remained operative until 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1956". ["Notes on Tubbut Primary School" states: "In 1952, Tubbut 4593 and Delegate River, also unstaffed, were re-established part-time".]

From the *Delegate Argus* we glean some mention of teachers in the early 1900's. The 4-5-1899 issue states: "Mr. S. H. Wood our popular state school teacher took his departure from amongst us. On the previous Monday evening a "send off" was accorded him at Mr. B. Allen's residence .....

In the 29-3-1902 *Delegate Argus*, we read of the annual State School picnic on the previous Wednesday, organised by Mr. Burgess, and then on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, the report of his farewell. The *Delegate Argus* 21-2-1903 reported: "A Mr. Dennehy has been appointed to the charge of the school here. In room of Mr. Burgess, removed, and has arrived and taken up his duties". Then in December 1904, it was "The popular teacher, Mr. Pye" who "put his heart and soul" into organizing a successful annual picnic.

On the 15-11-1907, there was mention that Mr. Spowart's State School picnic was to be on the 11<sup>th</sup> December. In July 1913 the Delegate River State School was again without a teacher, Mr. McKenzie having taken up duties with the N. S. W. Education Dept.

Soldiers enlisting in WW1 who gave their birthplace as Delegate River were Charles Commons, William Edward Commons and Arthur John Taylor. Did they also attend school at Delegate River? Certainly Taylors remained at Delegate River. Other families in the area from 1889 were Begley, Burgess, Forsyth, McDonald, Mustard, and Wallace, and may have attended Delegate River State School.

In 1922, Ernest Edwards Gr. 5, submitted a prose piece to *The Gap* magazine. In 1923, Annie Reid [sic] Gr. 6, contributed "Delegate River", which starts: "Delegate River is a small township situated on the Delegate River, near the border of New South Wales and Victoria, It consists of about twenty houses, a hall, and a nice little school at which twenty-six children attend." Noel Begley Gr. 6, had his story "Watching a Lyrebird" published in the 1924 issue, and in 1926, two pupils, Bertha Reed aged 14 years, and Roy Stuart aged 13 years, submitted pieces.

When Ron and Max Reed went to school there in the late 30's and early 40's, it was known locally as the Upper Delegate River, and their teacher was Mary Taylor who taught there for many years, formerly as Mary Harvey. Harry Grosvenor also taught at Delegate River, boarding with the Reed family. Bertha Reed's daughter Carol attended S.S. No.2089, and in more recent times Carol's sons David and Dean Cameron attended school at Dellicknora in the same building which had been moved from Delegate River.

### **BENDOC LOWER STATE SCHOOL 3267**

*Vision and Realization* states: "Bendoc Lower S. S. No.3267 opened on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1896, the first Head Teacher being John M. Cass. In 1953-4 the school went to part-time with Goongerah but then regained full-time status in 1955. However, in 1956 it again went part-time, this time with Tubbut, and finally closed in December 1956. The last teacher was R. R. King".

Barry Jamieson, still living at Lower Bendoc [2015], and his sisters Dorothy and Brenda, were three of the last pupils. They were the children of Elvon Jamieson who himself was a pupil there in the 1920's.

*From Humble Beginnings to Final Closure*, a history of Bendoc Lower State School by Dorothy Hepburn, [nee Jamieson], indicates that the first school was built by William Velt, using slabs and palings, on two acres of his land, for which he was allowed £4 per year. He also provided board for the teacher until a log cabin was built for a teacher residence. [Velt children of school age in 1896 were possibly Charles b.1881 and William b.1892 and certainly Bertrand b.1885, Violet 1886, Ethel 1888, Hilda 1889, and later, Harold b.1893].

A school photo taken about 1898 shows teacher Mr. Cass, in front of a very neat paling and slab building, with pupils named as Ethel, Violet, Willie and Bertie Velt,



**ABOVE: Bendoc Lower State School, now used by the local fishing club.**

Andy, Herbert and Joe Farmer, Albert, Bella and Florrie Jamieson, Bridget, Esther, May and Pat Lowry, Jimmy Lock, Bertie, Eric, Jack and Jean Richardson, ..... Bell, Edward and Pearl Rozynski, and Ethel Rodwell.

The building, now the home of the Bendoc Angling Club, was erected in the early 1900's a short way down the road from the original school. It is situated on the Bendoc Lower Road about 10 kms. east of Bendoc.

The Bendoc Lower S. S. WW1 Honour Board lists the following names of those who would have attended in the early days. Armstrong A., Armstrong A.E., Armstrong C., Denehy C. [Charles, schoolteacher], Farmer H., Feltis A., Feltis E., Frusher G. [George, schoolteacher], Hanscombe N., Kelly E., Kelly F., Kelly D., McNicol W. [Walter McNicoll, schoolteacher - prior to 1900], Richardson E., Richardson J., Richardson L., Stagg B., Stevens P.

Jumping to the 1920s, Stella Jamieson was a Gr. 4 pupil when she submitted her piece titled "Lower Bendoc" to the 1924 issue of *The Gap* magazine. And David Johnson had his "Story of a Black Rabbit" printed in the 1925 issue.

**An interesting artifact in private hands is a desktop signed by teachers, from 1878, the early ones refer to Hayden's Bog, and from 1896 refer to Lower Bendoc or both. For names of 43 teachers refer to Orbst. Historical Society's State Schools file.**

### **DELEGATE RIVER UPPER/LOWER STATE SCHOOL 3452**

The *Snowy River Mail* reported in June 1902, that the people of the upper portion of the Delegate River and Hayden's Bog area were agitating for a half-time school. [This seems to indicate that the Hayden's Bog school was not operating at that time].

The *Delegate Argus* 21-2-1903 reported: "Mr. Burgess late residence has been removed to the upper part of the river and is to be utilized as half-time school for the convenience of the residents in that locality and Hayden's Bog. The building was shifted bodily, on wheels, on which it was set, by Mr. W. A. Morrison, the hauling being done

by Mr. S. Mead”.

According to **Vision and Realization**, School No. 3452 was known variously as Delegate River Upper and Delegate River Lower. It opened on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 1903 with Thomas Loutit appointed the first HT. It reads: “Little is known the school between 1903 and 1926. In 1926, E. Argall, a temporary Head Teacher was appointed in charge of ten pupils. He was provided with a leased hall as a school and in this he taught members of the Mead, Allan [sic] and Foley families. S. S. Delegate River Lower continued to operate in a leased building until it finally closed in 1947”.

From the **Delegate Argus** we know that Upper Delegate River held it’s first school picnic on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 1906 “on a nice green flat about 150 yards from the school”. The teacher then was Mr. Bowey. And on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1908 a dance was held at Mr. H. T. Mead’s, promoted by Mr. Kelly in aid of the school library and science apparatus. And on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1908 it was reported that, “Mr. Buckland who has been appointed to the local State School has the youngsters going again after their 5 months rest. He is at present working under difficulties, having little or no teaching apparatus, everything being burnt in the old building”.

The **Delegate Argus** of October 20<sup>th</sup> 1911 reported that Mr. Moss, teacher at Upper Delegate River, had started an experimental plot in connexion with his school. Mr Marriott had given the land. And on September 20<sup>th</sup> 1912 reported that Mr. Buckland school teacher at Upper Delegate River had been moved to Bendoc, and Mr. Scanlon of Bendoc had succeeded him.

In 1936, the school was moved up to the main road [now the site of the Delegate River CFA] and by then had become known as Lower Delegate River, still 3452. In fact it is actually “downstream” from Delegate River 2809.

In the 22-10-1936 issue is the following report. “A party of teachers from the schools, Lower Delegate River, Bendoc, Bonang and Bendoc North journeyed to Orbost where a Teacher’s Conference was held on Fri. the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. They took with them a very effective project on the Bendoc District comprising sections on local cattle, sheep, mining, weeds, timber and transport. As this district project was unique, the District Inspector Mr. J. D. Haddow requested that a short explanatory talk should accompany it. Consequently two lads from Lower Delegate River, Clive Begley and Cliff Allen were taken along. Although these lads were obliged to face an audience of about 150 teachers, they did so with composure that brought each speech a round of applause”.

Mr. Jim Malin who had been the Head Teacher since January 1935 resigned from the Victorian Education Department in August 1938.

### **NORTH BENDOC STATE SCHOOL 3801**

North Bendoc is situated approximately 12 kms. north east of Bendoc on the Delegate - Lower Bendoc Road, very close to the border with N. S. W.

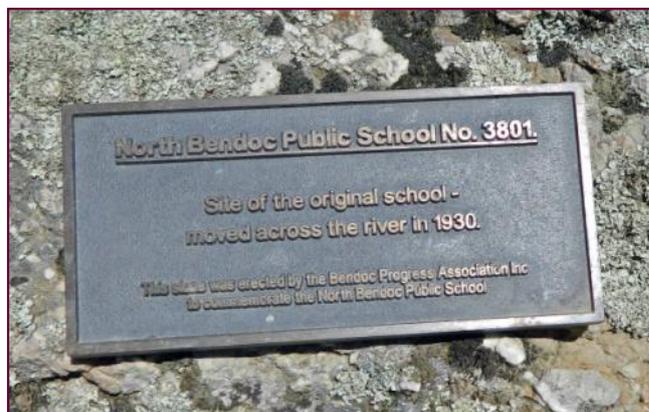
**Vision and Realization** states: “Just prior to the first World War, a school opened at Bendoc North. Evidently Mrs. H. Cameron agreed to provide a building

for use as a school, which was to be completed by 20<sup>th</sup> March 1913. The Hon. J. Cameron, MLA, on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 1913, enquired regarding the opening date of the school and Mrs. Cameron agreed to lease the building as from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1913. However, the actual opening date was 15<sup>th</sup> August 1913 and the HT was Albert E. Church. The school finally closed 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1941.”

The **Delegate Argus** 22-11-1917 reports, “As a consequence of a shortage of male teachers a lady teacher will succeed Mr. Segrave at North Bendoc School after the Xmas vacation. Mr Segrave has been promoted.” Then in The **Every Week** 4-7-1918 it was reported that Miss Chauncy and Miss Barrett who were formerly state school teachers in Bairnsdale were now located at North Bendoc and Lower Bendoc respectively. The **Delegate Argus** reported in the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1919 issue, that Miss Chauncy would be returning to North Bendoc and teaching at that school half-time with Hayden’s Bog when schools re-open. On the 24-9-1925, it reported that Mr. Kent the Head teacher at Bendoc North and Hayden’s Bog had left to take up duties at Wairewa.

At the close of the report of the Teacher’s Conference held in Orbost in October 1936, it states: “Mr. Enright of State School Bendoc North is to be congratulated on the keenness and enthusiasm with which he is undertaking his duties at this school”.

The later school site is in a paddock now owned by Doug Cameron and is marked with a plaque. Another plaque which indicates directions to this old school site has been placed beside Cameron’s Road approximately 1km. from the Lower Bendoc–Delegate Road. The original site was on the north side of the river with only a low footbridge for access.



**ABOVE: North Bendoc State School site marker.**

**SOURCES:** TROVE Newspapers on-line; John Phillips digitised collection; Indexes of births, deaths & marriages Victoria & N S W; interviews with Natalie Armstrong, Bendoc Neighbourhood House, Doug Cameron, Dulcie Clay, Dorothy Hepburn, Barrie & Helen Jamieson, Alan Reed, Max Reed, Ed Sellers, Claire Strickland, Carol Watson.