

Early Lavington Churches

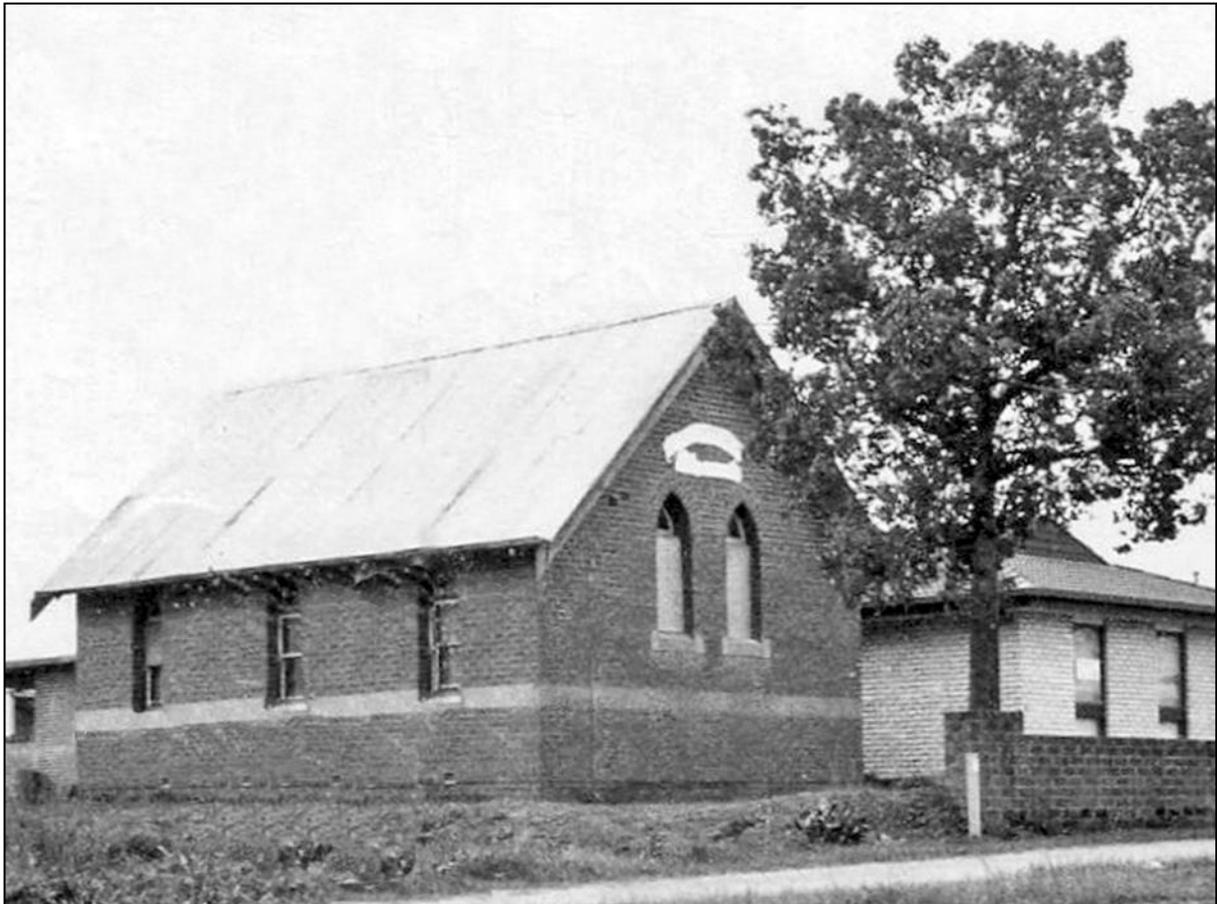
Ray Gear

To meet the religious needs of the emerging Lavington community before churches were built, clergymen from Albury visited the goldfield. Even when churches were built clergymen still visited, until permanent residential accommodation was built.

The first church at Lavington, previously known as Black Range, is said to have been a Presbyterian Church opened by the Reverend David Ballantyne on September 3, 1865.

In October 1873 the *Albury Banner* reported that a weatherboard building was being erected to serve as a church, to be shared by various denominations, and as a school. A week later the same newspaper reported that the Independent Church numbers at Black Range within the past six months had increased from six to upwards of forty.

Some ten years later in the early 1880s the Wesleyans (Methodists) are said to have also began services on the goldfield. In October 1900 they removed to the School of Arts.



Methodist Church, Urana Road Lavington.

By 1892 the Salvation Army was conducting services at Black Range. A service on February 7 attracting some sixty plus people. Twelve months later the Black Range 'Band of Hope' held a concert in the Salvation Barracks.

The first Catholic Church at Black Range was opened on June 19, 1904 in Carstens Street. Named St Mary's, Father Daniel Griffin performed the blessing and dedication of the Church.

Five months later in November 1904 the Anglican faithful decided to build their church on the corner of Urana Road and Schneider Street (previously known as the Post Office Lane). At the time the Anglican population was said to be “about forty families and growing.”

In 1905 Methodist worshippers purchased land on the north-eastern side of Urana Road opposite the store and post office run by James and Annie Colquhoun. Like the Anglican population, they held social functions to raise funds for their church which was to be erected on land adjoining the Anglican site.

The foundation stone for St James Anglican Church was laid on April 14, 1907 by Dr Cleaver Woods in the presence of over three hundred people. Some eight months later the federation style church was opened by the Venerable Archdeacon Simpson.

Next door, on December 8, 1923, the foundation stone for the Methodist Church was laid by Mrs Ellen Smith. This building, designed by A Lanyon Clark, was opened on February 17, 1924 by the Rev P O Davis.