

Early education in North Albury

Jan Hunter

In the early 1920s Joe Garnsey, member of Albury Chamber of Commerce, purchased land on the corner of North and Frauenfelder Streets. His business friends said "You're mad to buy a block that far out Joe."

But within a few years Joe looked across the paddocks filling up with houses and realised the area would need an infants' school. In 1923 he circulated a petition to get the Department moving and showed the local Inspector of Schools around the area urging the purchase of land before the price was too high.

Despite regular and persistent requests to the Education Department by the newly formed North Albury Parents & Citizens, by local parliamentarians and by the Chamber of Commerce, it wasn't until 1927 that builder, Mr E W Parnell of Lavington began construction of a two roomed school on the south-east corner of Mate and Fallon Streets.



Photo from the 'Official History & Pictorial Record of Albury & Border District to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of Australia. 1938.'

The promised figure of 200 children was way too optimistic and when the school opened in November 1927 only 26 pupils enrolled. The reason for the low numbers was attributed to parents not wanting to shift their children from the Albury and Lavington schools so late in the year.

Miss K Mitchell from the Rural School in Albury was appointed as teacher and, with borrowed equipment, began. Classes were divided into 1st and 2nd Upper and Lower. Miss Mitchell ordered supplies for the new year on the understanding that when the enrolment reached 40 another teacher would be appointed.

Miss Mitchell was loud in her praise for the local Parents and Citizens Association saying she had "never seen a keener P&C Association and they had already donated a piano to the school."

The school rooms were big and airy and the building was “a veritable palace compared to some little bush schools.” The school also gave much easier access to education for children from the Albury Common (Glenroy).

At the beginning of 1930, 74 pupils enrolled and Miss Hattersley joined the staff. As North Albury expanded beyond Fallon Street, enrolments of five to eight year-olds swelled and littlies could walk safely to school instead of trekking to central Albury.



Albury North Infants School, 1936

Back row: Gordon (Mick) Ried, Billy Warr/Waugh, James (Jim) Davenport, John Barton, P Mills, ?, Eric McGee, Rob Heriot, _
Middle row: Claire Hempel, ? Heriot or Mena Grant, ?, Doreen Henderson (later Gulson), Helen Stewart, June Buckhorn, Alice O'Reilly
Front row: ? Kirk, Yvonne Stow (later Cann, Finemore), Sue Zerbst, Nancy Ried.

Some decades later children were everywhere and in the early fifties there were 52 children in Buckingham Street alone. In 1954 Mr Roger Christie was appointed Headmaster and the school became Albury North Public with separate Infants' and Primary Departments. Enrolment in 2020 is 242.