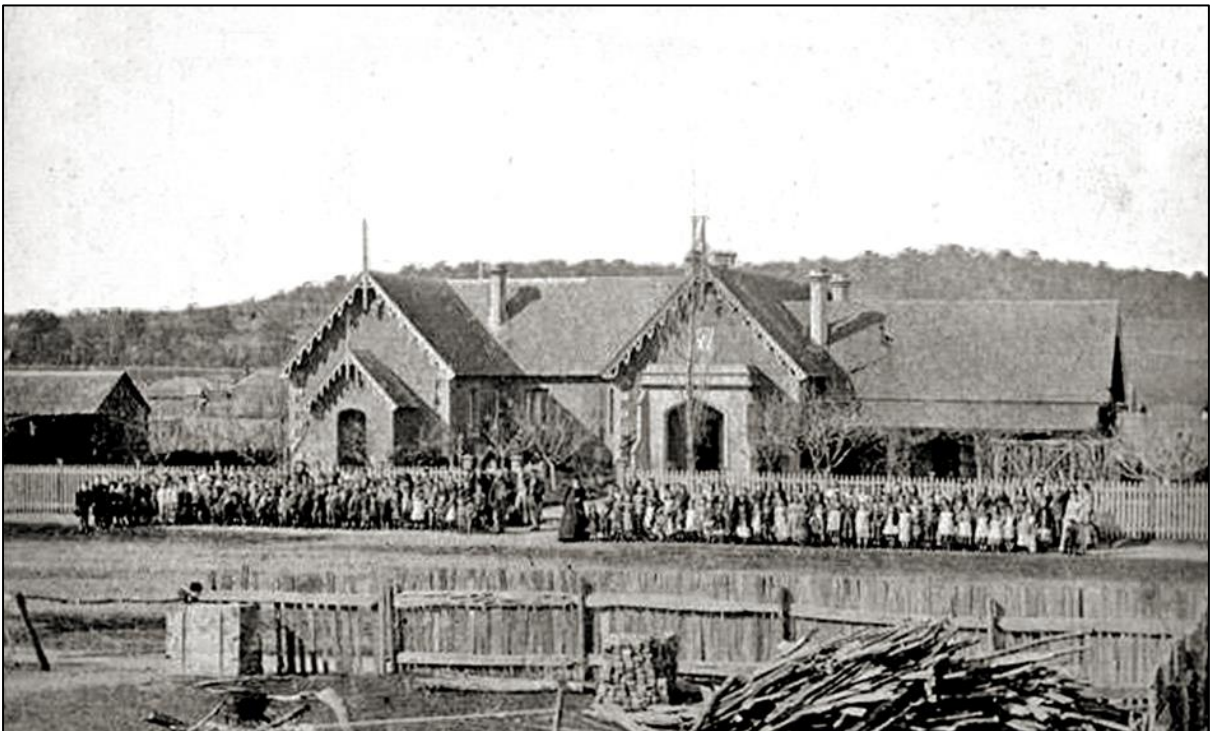# Early Public Schools in Albury

Greg Ryan

In 1848, a dual system of national schools and denominational, each under a separate board, was established in New South Wales.

Records show that in July 1848, there was a private school in Albury under schoolmaster Rowley, with 13 children, charging 1/6 a week each. There were said to be 30 or 40 other children in urgent need of education.

In June 1849, an application was made for a National School. The school began to function on July 22, 1850 on a government grant of one acre, with a frontage to Dean and Kiewa Street. The first teacher was Henry Rich on a salary of £40 a year. In the first year, 73 children were enrolled. The school moved in 1862 and T H Mate built his store on the site in 1899.

Pupils could be at school from about six years of age. However, school was not compulsory, and many parents required the help of their children to eke out a living. Absenteeism was fairly high and children often left school after less than two years. Most learnt only the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic and it was considered more important for boys to be educated than girls.

In 1862 a new school was built on land in Olive Street that forms part of the premises of the present Albury Public School. Built at a cost of £2145, the school became known as Albury Model School. By 1869, 229 students were enrolled, 126 boys and 103 girls. In 1867, an infants' building was erected.

A mid to late nineteenth century photo of Albury Model School.
Taken from the western side of Olive Street.

The Model School also took boarders. The *Border Post* in January 1872 advertised "Vacancies for two boarders. Apply for terms to Headmaster, C Hookins."

In 1912, with many post-primary students enrolled, the school was gazetted a District School with provision for courses up to the Intermediate Certificate examination. Later courses were extended to include Leaving Certificate examination subjects.

In 1919 the secondary school was removed to temporary quarters in the old hospital in Thurgoona Street. It was there that Albury High School began, under headmaster J G Monoghan. By 1923, 200 students were enrolled.

Formed in June 1923, the first aim of the Parents & Citizens Association was to secure a new High School. Foundation stones were laid in September, 1926 and the building, costing over £26,000, was completed by the end of 1927. The first headmaster was J W Mann. At the start of 1928, 256 students were enrolled.