

History of Heidelberg Primary School

PAGE: EARLY HISTORY – HEIDELBERG STATE SCHOOL (1872)

The establishment of the Common Schools Board clearly did not solve the problem of making adequate provision for the school buildings and staff that were so badly needed, and it also did not end the inter-denominational arguments over education. Eventually the Board was replaced in 1872 by the Education Department under a Minister responsible to Parliament, and so once more the Heidelberg school changed its name – this time to the Heidelberg State School. Education became free, secular, and compulsory.



An entrance to Heidelberg Park 1875-1938

HEIDELBERG NATIONAL SCHOOL (1849)

In 1849 the National Schools Board in Sydney dispatched a representative, Mr. G. W. Rusden, on a journey through the Port Phillip District, as Victoria was then called, with the object of visiting communities that had no schools and of letting them know how to go about establishing National Schools. One of the places he visited was Warringal (Heidelberg) and a local Committee, or “Board of Patrons”, with D. C. McArthur as chairman, set about raising the local contribution towards the cost of a building, the National Board agreeing to subsidize locally raised amounts at the rate of £2 to £1. But money came in slowly, and when Victoria was made a separate State in 1851 only £50 had been raised and sent to Sydney, where the subsidy of £100 had been set aside by the Board.

By December, 1852, a school site of one acre had been reserved by the Victorian Government, but the total amount available to build the school still remained at £150. However, on the 11th of May, 1853, application was made by Hugh Chambers, J. C. Aitken, and others, who had evidently take over from the original patrons, for a grant of £1,350 as a subsidy (which had now grown to £3 to £1) on £450 locally subscribed. Soon a beginning was made on the building, which was to be, in brick with a schoolroom for boys and another for girls, and with an attached residence for the headmaster. Good progress was made, and the school, or rather two schools- the Heidelberg Boys’ School and the Heidelberg Girls’ School – were opened, as has already been told, on the 8th of August, 1854, with John Hayhoe as “master of the boys’ school” and Sarah Hayhoe as “mistress of the girls’ school”.



Heidelberg 1845 – Scots Church, Jika St (opposite court)

THE SCHOOL BUILDING (1854)

The building was on the present site and, was first known as a National School, then as a Common school, and finally as a State School. At the time of opening, 32 boys and 36 girls were on the roll, and average attendance were 23 and 29 respectively – a much higher average than usual at that time, when attendance was voluntary. Towards the end of 1855 the Hayhoes were succeeded by Thomas Potter and Louisa Lake. Mr. Potter remained in charge until the end of 1862, which was all important year in the history of the school, for that was its last year as a National School.

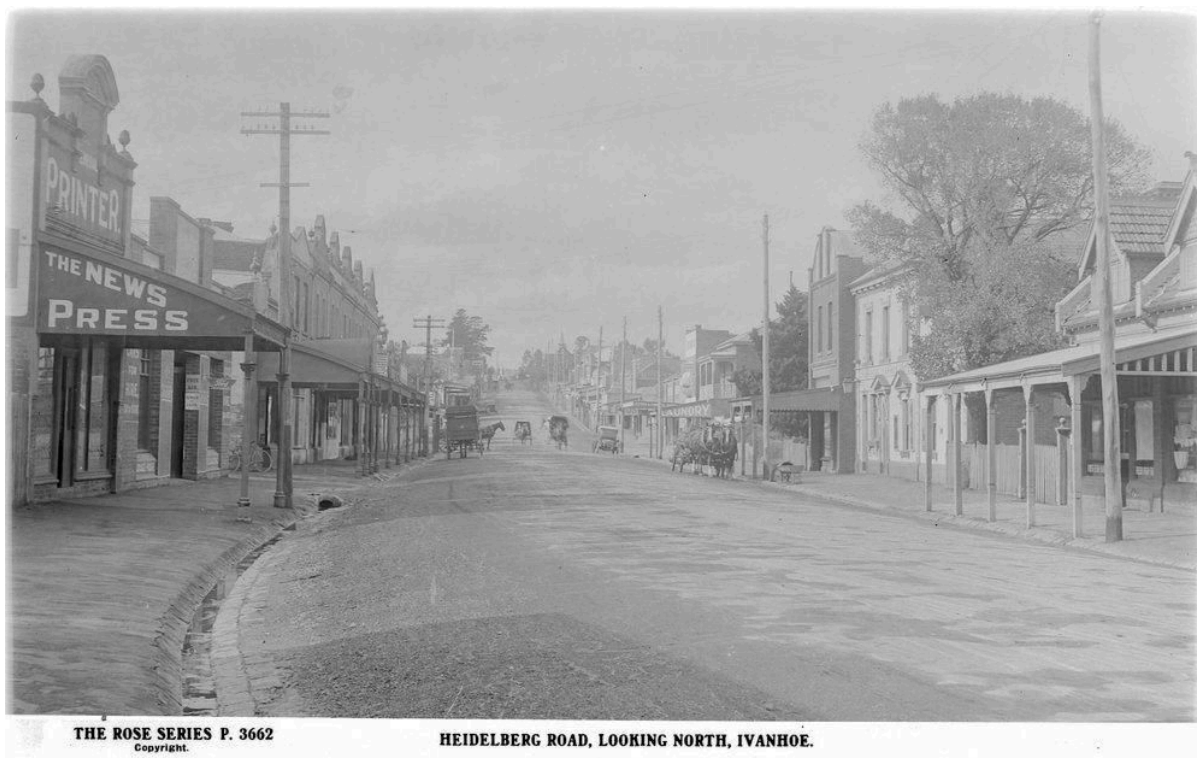


A sketch of the main school building in 1854

THE HEIDELBERG COMMON SCHOOL (1862)

In 1862, Parliament had decided to replace the two boards – the National and Denominational – with one combined board, the Common Schools Board, which was to supervise all schools receiving government grants. So when the new headmaster, Charles Mattingley, took charge at the beginning of 1863, the school's name had been changed to the Heidelberg Common School. Mr. Mattingley's assistant was his wife, Jane Mattingley, and for over fourteen years these two teachers carried on the school. Mattingley belonged to a well known teaching family; his nephew in 1938 – when reminiscences of early pupils were gathered – described him as a “tall, strong gentleman with a flowing beard, and a typical pioneer type”. They were both musical; Mrs. Mattingley took private pupils and Mr. Mattingley was choirmaster of the Church of England.

Pupils of Mrs. Mattingley in their reminiscences spoke of the fine standard of needlework and artistic handwork they had done under her instruction. She was also known as an enthusiastic gardener, and local people were proud of the school gardens, which were later all destroyed when the “new” school – the nucleus of the present building – was built. It was early in the Common School period that the school became known as No. 294. The Common Schools Board arranged in rough alphabetical order the seven hundred schools it took over from the previous two boards, and then allotted them numbers in accordance with that order. Attendances in 1863 had grown to 104, with an average of 77. A third member of staff during the Common School period was Miss Skeat, probably a pupil teacher. During the National and Common School periods, pupils paid fees, one shilling a week, which went towards teachers' salaries.



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HEIDELBERG ROAD, LOOKING NORTH, IVANHOE.

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An entrance to Heidelberg Park 1875-1938

THE 'NEW' SCHOOL BUILDING (1878)

The Mattingleys, both qualified teachers, were able to retain their positions, and they continued at the school until Mr. Mattingley's death in 1878. It was at this time (1877-78) that the school building and residence, then only twenty four years old, was wholly or partly demolished and a new school was erected on its site. An examination of the sketches of this building and of the present school will show that the northern or Darebin Street portion of our school consists of these rooms erected over 100 years ago. The "new" school (which had accommodation for 166 pupils) and a five roomed residence for the headmaster (now the caretaker's- cottage) were erected at a total cost of about £1,500. In 1877 there were 112 pupils on the roll.



Heidelberg Primary School building of 1878



The Austin Hospital 1876

SCHOOL REPAIR & RENOVATIONS (1897 ONWARDS)

By 1921, the “New” school was badly in need of repair and renovation. The enrolment had grown to more than 270, and some classes were being held in the Methodist Church. Lobbying by the school community resulted in the construction of seven new classrooms and the complete refurbishment of the existing buildings. This construction, completed in 1923, forms what we now call the “old school”.



Burgundy Street 1890's



Heidelberg 1897



Cnr Burgundy & Cape Streets 1903



The main building of HPS 1923