FEDERATION

Until federation (the formation of a political unity – with a central government – by a number of separate states, each of which retains control of its own internal affairs), the colonies of Australia operated like separate countries with their own defence force, roads and railways.

The colonies had many concerns in common – national defence, railways, water, immigration and a desire for a 'White Australia', to name a few. However, each colony also wanted to protect its own interests. A major point of rivalry was the location of the national capital. All of these issues needed to be resolved before federation was possible. For over ten years, heated arguments raged both for and against federation.



Federation cartoon from Punch. 1900. showing Australia being 'trusted with its

A call for Britain to defer linking the South Sea Islands with New Zealand as the colonies were on the brink of federation. From the New Zealand Graphic.

Following the successful referendums of 1899, colonial governments requested that the British Imperial Parliament pass legislation to establish the Commonwealth of Australia. An Australian delegation arrived in London in March 1900 and, after a period of negotiation, the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act was passed by the British Parliament. On 9 July, Queen Victoria gave Royal Assent.

On New Year's Day, 1901, the Commonwealth of Australia came into being and the colonies became states. Local celebrations occurred everywhere.



Federation celebrations in 1901. Royal party leaving Exhibition Building.

the question of federation was submitted to the electors of Victoria on 27 July 1899, and that 152.653 votes in favour were received.

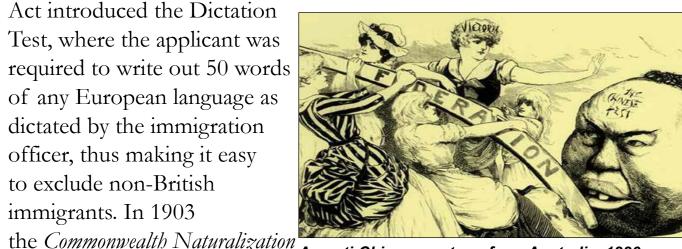
Federal parliament met in Melbourne until 1927, when it was transferred to Canberra.

IMMIGRATION AND THE GREAT **DEPRESSION**

In 1901, the Commonwealth passed the *Immigration Restriction Act*. This

Act introduced the Dictation Test, where the applicant was required to write out 50 words of any European language as dictated by the immigration officer, thus making it easy to exclude non-British immigrants. In 1903

Act excluded all non-



Europeans from the right to apply for naturalisation, or from bringing spouses or children into the country.

Immigration recovered by 1905 and state funds were allocated for advertising campaigns to attract British immigrants. Schemes such as the Closer Settlement also assisted British immigration, where three to five discharged soldiers could purchase privately owned land under agreement with the vendor. Immigrants were enticed by the offer of rural land; however, few made a successful living. In 1914, all immigration ceased with the outbreak of World War I.

Following the war, the Empire Settlement Act 1922 allowed the British Government to assist migrants to go to Australia to settle on the land An increase in non-British immigration had by then led the Australian Government to enforce strict quotas for each European country, accompanied by heavy landing taxes.

The Great Depression of 1929 brought a halt to immigration assistance schemes. Australian people moved around the country to find any available employment. Life was hard for many.

1913 Bushfires

Tith the thermometer at 99 degrees in Melbourne today, bushfires are ravaging the Plenty Ranges. The fire, which broke out there last Monday and spread over country several miles on both sides of the Dividing Ranges until checked by rain early on Tuesday morning – has been slowly burning in several places since, and on Sunday last three large outbreaks at different points occurred. Mr Nissan's block of 320 acres was completely burnt out, and a large party of firefighters had hard work to keep the fire spreading through Messrs O'Brien's and Clarke's properties, and from Messrs Robertson's and Mahady's on the East side ...

Another fire broke out in Mr J Cleve's land, and this is the most serious. Homesteads owned by Messrs McDougall, McLeod, Fleming and others are threatened with destruction.

The Advertiser (Adelaide), Tuesday 30 December 1913.

1919 Bushfires

here were four or five distinct lines of fire travelling down [the Plenty Valley] at the one time, and the residences of ▲ Messrs McKenzie and Dickens, and the latter's valuable orchard, was totally destroyed. Mr Robertson lost everything except his house; a big waterwheel, implement shed and implements and drays were all destroyed. The Upper Plenty School and the residence adjoining, which was owned by Miss Smith, the former teacher of the school, were all burnt to the ground, with all their contents. There was not even time to save the records of the school, or the books of the war saving's group. Miss Smith will be a heavy loser as an eighty-pound piano was amongst the furniture destroyed.

The residences of Messrs McDougall, Potter, Fleming, McMahon, Speirs, Duckworth, Pratt, Mahady Bros, Prenzel, Turner, Holt and Gardiner, were all saved after almost superhuman efforts. Every residence was attacked by the flames at approximately the same time, consequently each house had to be defended by only one or two firefighters, and nearly all arrowly escaped destruction.

The Upper Plenty Hall also had a narrow escape – the fire burning right up to its four walls. The hall had to take its chance as, owing to the serious aspect at the adjacent dwellings, no one could be spared to defend the hall against the seething inferno of flames.

Practically every blade of grass on the attached farms was destroyed ... The loss of the Upper Plenty School is deplored as it was an old landmark in the district, and most of the residents of Wallan East and Upper Plenty received their education there ... After the school was destroyed a 600-gallon tank of water began to boil and continued so for hours, and steam was blowing off at the overflow pipe like a safety valve ...

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 20 February 1919.

THE GLENVALE TOWNSHIP

lenvale (Co. Bourke) is a small postal hamlet in the Parish of Wallan Wallan, and electoral district of E Bourke. It is situated on the Yarra rivulet, about 1 mile from the Plenty River, and ½ mile from a small but never-failing stream of good water called Christies Creek. Mt Disappointment is distant about 4 miles NE and is celebrated for the excellence of its timber as adapted for building purposes, a large trade being carried on from this township with Melbourne and other places. There is a sawmill $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the hamlet, driven by water power.

The district is agricultural and pastoral, chiefly the latter, in consequence of a general failure of crops of late years. Quartz mining has been carried on for some time, and a crushing machine was erected a few months ago at the Glenvale diggings .. There is no regular mode of conveyance to these places; drays are, however, continually passing to and fro; and with Melbourne the communication is from Whittlesea by coach, the total distance being 28 miles.

The hotels are the Glenvale, Pattons and Carriers Arms. The district is under the control of the Whittlesea Road Board.

Victorian Gazetteer, 1865.

Glenvale was laid out as a township in 1862 but never gazetted. It was a droving route from northern Victoria and a popular stopping place due to the farmers' common, which could contain stock overnight. Restrictions on timber cutting in the Plenty Ranges in the 1870s, and the advent of the railways – which could transport stock – in the 1880s, caused the population to decline. Much of the remaining population departed during the years of World War I. However, a period of revitalisation took place during the 1920s and '30s.



interior of Australia, circa 1910. Small sawmill

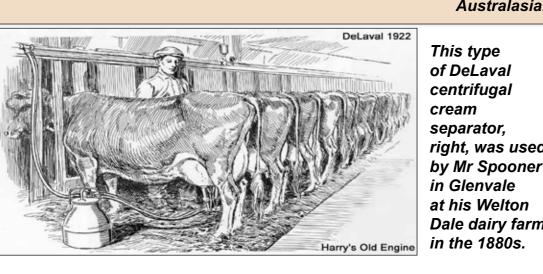
"Recent settlement has induced the residents to make a move for some improvements. The first step has been made by approaching the Postal Department for regular mail facilities between Glenvale and Whittlesea." (Advertiser (Hurstbridge), 6 June 1930.)

The Glenvale Primary School (No. 727) opened around 1865. It closed temporarily in 1934; however, numbers rebounded and it reopened in 1936. The school closed permanently in 1944. The Glenvale hall was only in use for 15 years before being demolished in 1936 due to lack of use. It was purchased and removed to a property just outside Whittlesea for use as a shed. Finally, Glenvale lost its postcode in the 1990s. Today it is just a sign on the Wallan-Whittlesea Road. (Thanks to Val Andrew for information on this period.)

Dairying at Glenvale

lenvale is an important section of the Whittlesea district —consisting of a rich alluvial valley at the foot of the Plenty Ranges ... being highly favourable for dairying and other branches of agricultural industry ... Glenvale butter is among the best known and most favourably regarded in the market.

Australasian, 20 March 1886.



When World War I broke out there was no shortage of volunteers to help the 'mother country', as Great Britain was often referred to; many

to the outbreak of the war.

both were defeated.

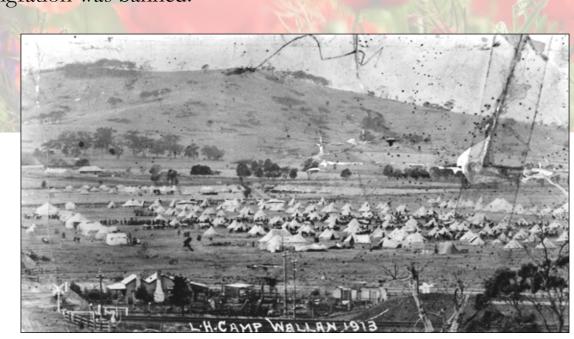
THE WAR YEARS, 1914–18

residents being only second- or third-generation migrants. Twenty-four men enlisted from in and around the Upper Plenty district, being either resident or associated with local families. Residents rallied behind these men, holding send-offs, fund-raising events and

welcome homes in the Upper Plenty hall, which had opened just prior

The issue of conscription deeply divided Australia, with large meetings held both for and against. Many people thought positively of conscription as a sign of loyalty to Britain and thought that it would also support those men who were already fighting. However, trade unions feared that their members might be replaced by cheaper foreign labour and, therefore, opposed conscription. Some groups argued that the whole war was immoral and it was unjust to force people to fight. Two referendums were held in 1916 and 1917; however,

The threat posed by the war caused the Australian Government to require all 'aliens' (non-British subjects/foreign nationals living in Australia) to register with local authorities. In 1914 the Commonwealth War Precautions Act caused several thousand Australian residents of German and Austrian descent to be interned as 'enemy aliens'. German immigration was banned.



Light Horse encampment, Wallan East 1913. In the background is Cleve Hill and in the foreground the railway crossing can be seen. Photograph courtesy: Bill McCarthy.

Recruiting Campaign

n Wednesday evening, 7th instant, a public meeting in connection with the recruiting campaign was held at the town hall, Kilmore.

The chairman said the meeting was called for the purpose of stimulating recruiting to send reinforcements for our sorely pressed troops in the dreadful war ... it was their duty to go forth and uphold the honour of the country.

Mr Jas Still said there were many young men in the district sitting on a rail with regard to this matter ... so long on the rail they had almost grown into it. They were sitting back like the Yankee making the almighty dollar while the other fellow fought for them ...

Kilmore Free Press, 15 July 1915.







Wallan East

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

concert and dance is to be held in the Upper Plenty hal on July 23rd, in aid of the Red Cross Sick and Wounded Australian Soldiers Fund.

Kilmore Free Press, 8 July 1915.

A Significant Incident

A GERMAN COUPLE'S LOSS, RECOUPED BY LOCAL RESIDENTS. Wallan Sunday.

ecently, two naturalised Germans, Mr and Mrs Prenzel, of Upper Plenty, narrowly escaped being killed by the Albury Express. They were driving over the crossing at Wallan when the train dashed through and carried away the horse and the shafts of the vehicle in which they were seated; the horse and the harness being cut to pieces.

The residents of the district have subscribed a sum of money to enable Mr Prenzel to buy a new horse and harness, and repair the damaged vehicle, and a cheque has also been handed to him to enable him to buy fodder for his horse. It is understood the Railway Department intends to recompense Mr Prenzel.

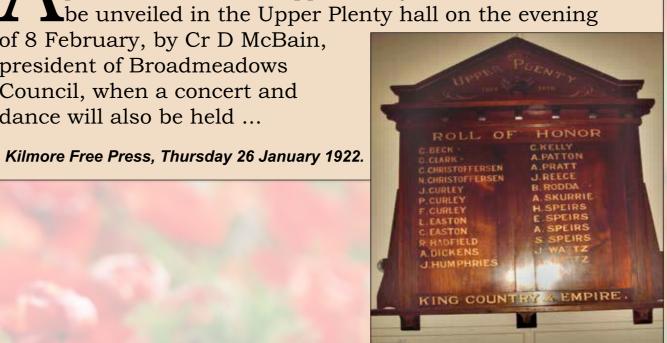
This treatment by local people to Mr and Mrs Prenzel is in marked contrast to the reported treatment of Britishers in

Warrnambool Standard, Tuesday 18 May 1915.

n honour board, containing 24 names of past and present residents of Upper Plenty who enlisted, is to

of 8 February, by Cr D McBain, president of Broadmeadows Council, when a concert and dance will also be held ...

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 26 January 1922.



Wallan East

▲ public welcome home is to be tendered Sergeant AH Pratt, Corporal C Christoffersen, MM, and Private A Lickens, in the Upper Plenty hall on Friday evening. Corporal Christoffersen was the first volunteer from the Wallan district and has been on active service ever since, and has been lately awarded the Military medal for bravery in the field in France. Sergeant Pratt (well known as captain of the old Wallan Football Club) also tried to enlist when the first call to arms was made; however, he was rejected at the time and had to make one or two subsequent attempts before he was accepted, but has been on active service ever since. Private Dickens is an original Anzac, and was one of the Australians that made the furthest advance at Gallipoli at the time of the Suvla Bay exploit, and was one out of only six survivors of his company that came out of the attack uninjured.

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 16 January 1919.





The three medals pictured were generally awarded to Australian soldiers who fought in WW1. Left to right: British War Medal; 1914/15 Star; British Victory Medal.

Wallan East

incere expressions of regret and sympathy is heard on all sides at the untimely death of the young man, Norman Christoffersen, aged 25 years, who was found in Messrs Mahady Bros' paddock late on Friday afternoon with a bullet wound in the right temple. He was the second son of the late Mr C and Mrs Christoffersen, of Port Melbourne, both former residents of Upper Plenty, where they resided for a number of years, and Norman was practically a native of the district. He was a bright and lively young fellow, and in 1915 he enlisted and served in France with the Anzac Mounted Division right through the war, returning about 12 months ago ...

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 30 September 1920.

Captured German Machine Gun

▲ captured German machine gun has been allotted to the Upper Plenty district by the State War Trophy **L**Committee, and is to be placed in the Upper Plenty hall. Messrs McDougall, Grills and Dickens have been appointed trustees for the gun.

Kilmore Free Press, 26 January 1922.

Footnote: No one seems to have any idea what happened to the gun, thought to have been removed in the 1950s.

Upper Plenty tragedy – Fred Curley

On 15 February 1922, Frederick James Curley shot and killed his stepmother, Annie Margaret Catherine Curley. Frederick was a returned serviceman who had enlisted at the age of 17.

During battle in France he was injured and laid out on 'No Man's Land' for a number of days before being found by a stretcher party. After seven months in a French hospital he was invalided home with severe intractable trench foot, the effects of German gas attack and shell shock. A week prior to killing his stepmother, the World War I Honour Board with his name on it was unveiled in the Upper Plenty hall. On the same occasion a German machine gun was also unveiled. Frederick declined to attend the ceremony.

Fred Curley was committed to the Hospital for the Insane at Sunbury and remained under care for the remainder of his life.

artin Curley, sawyer, said he was the father of Frederick James Curley. Frederick was a returned LVL soldier. He had been peculiar ever since his return from the war, but his stepmother could always manage him. Frederick was always talking about a wife and baby.

On 15 February witness went home from work and found his wife lying dead on the floor. Frederick and his stepmother were on the most affectionate terms ... Frederick said, "I did it. I went mad this morning. I loved the old girl". He then began to cry and sob ... "he appeared to be demented". The following day [Constable Gilbert Young] returned to the house, and Mr Curley, senior, handed him the following document, which he had found on the floor:

"Feb. 15,1922. I Frederick James Curley, this day make my will to Isabella Curley, a block of land 46 acres, late of Daniel O'Brien, parish of Wallan, value of land eighty pounds. The kind man who takes Isabella and babies I know will be kind to them, and it is hoped she will make a good wife and the man make a kind loving husband and a good father. This day, Frederick James Curley's statement, which is correct. God have mercy on her. Amen."

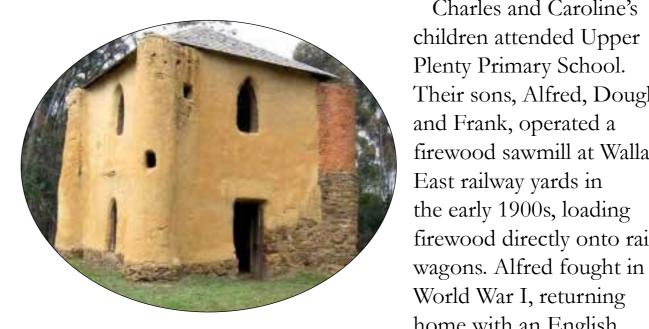
Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 9 March 1922. Report of Coroner's Inquest.

FAMILIES

The Patton family

William Patton was born in the Orkney Isles, Scotland, in 1808. According to family lore he was kidnapped and put to work on a sailing ship at the age of 14. He made his way to Victoria and married Charlotte Paleothorpe in 1853 at what is now known as Bears Castle, pictured below, at Yan Yean. They lived in Glenvale until 1870 and then moved to Dry Creek, where William worked on railway construction. Their son, Charles, married Caroline Scott, and the

couple purchased land on the corner of the Wandong and Wallan-Whittlesea Roads in the 1880s. They raised a large family; the most well-known being Marion, who wrote poetry and composed hymns and romantic songs. Charles and Caroline planted an oak tree, which features in one of Marion's poems, and which still stands today on the property, now occupied by Paul and Margaret Brinsden.



World War I, returning home with an English bride and baby. Photograph: Patton family.

LEFT: Caroline Patton, circa 1920. BELOW: Patton family picnic, circa 1932. Harry Patton and siblings in the back of the family furniture van.

Charles and Caroline's

Their sons, Alfred, Douglas

firewood sawmill at Wallan

and Frank, operated a

East railway yards in

the early 1900s, loading

firewood directly onto rail

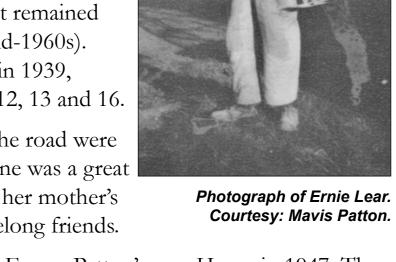
wagons. Alfred fought in



The Lear family

Ernie and Henrietta Lear purchased land in Upper Plenty, formerly the Curley property, in 1929. Ernie was a builder by trade who became very well-regarded in the district. When the Upper Plenty hall developed a lean to one side, he applied the props that stabilised it (it remained that way until at least the mid-1960s). Henrietta died prematurely in 1939, leaving three children aged 12, 13 and 16.

Their neighbours across the road were Mick and Rene Johnson. Rene was a grea support to Mavis Lear after her mother's death and they remained lifelong friends.



Mavis married Alfred and Emma Patton's son, Harry, in 1947. They returned to the Lear property in the early 1950s, raising their nine children there. Mick and Rene Johnson remained their neighbours until the 1980s.

The Osmond family

The Osmonds came from Tasmania and arrived in Upper Plenty in 1929 in a horse-drawn cart, after a time in Reservoir. They built a mudbrick house in Mahadys Road. The old mudbrick outhouse is still standing.

I remember...

... in the 1920s ..

"I still remember Nancy's [Osmond] parents arriving in a covered wagon. I could see the road from our house. They had a dog and a cockatoo on the wagon! The parents were there too, and Nancy. They stopped at the gate and her mother came up to the house to ask for a drop of milk. I remember mummy running around getting scones and all sorts of things – people did that

> Minna Kendrick on the arrival of the Osmond family in 1929.

In the photograph below, Mrs Osmond is standing to the left, George Osmond, in the white shirt, is sitting in the foreground. The girl on the left of the group of three girls is possibly Nancy. The young girl in the centre of the group is Glad, Nancy's older sister. The others are relatives from Tasmania.



The Osmond family, circa 1932, at the house in Mahadys Road, built by George Osmond, Nancy Lawrence's father.

Wallan Wallan part Parish Plan, 1900–1949. Courtesy: State Library Victoria See also enlargement.

I remember ...

We used to take people from the guesthouse to a creek we called 'Paradise'. Mummy would pack the picnic baskets and daddy would lead the way. We used to be able to pick watercress on the banks of the creek. I don't think there would be any now. It was so beautiful there.

Minna Kendrick (née Mair), 2004

Mahadys Road, then a widely known and popular picnic spot.

Killed by a Waterwheel

Note: The area being referred to is probably George Robertson's fern gully at the end of

There was a little picnic table and chairs to sit on ... "

n Christmas morning a young man named William Robertson, 28 years of age, son of Mr George Robertson, of the Upper Plenty, whilst showing a visitor from Melbourne the workings of a waterwheel, which is used on the farm for the purpose of cutting firewood and chaff, was thrown under the wheel and seriously injured. He was taken to his parent's residence, and medical assistance obtained from Whittlesea, but as no improvement was shown on the following day the sufferer was taken to Kilmore Hospital.

He lingered until today, when he died, the cause of death being rupture of the bladder and internal injuries.

The Argus, 31 December 1903.



The Troubadours – Wallan East Hall (Nurses' hall), circa late-1920s. 'Blackface', now regarded as politically insensitive, had been a theatrical convention since the mid-19th century, repopularised by entertainers such as Al Jolson, the star of the first talking picture, The Jazz Singer (1927). Back row: Jack Mahady, John Laffan, Annie Patullo, Perce Wedding, Jem McColl. Front row: Tom Heath, Pat Kenny, Aileen Mahady, Jessie Patullo, John Laffan, Mary Stoman, Mary Mahady, Ted Little, Neil

Wallan East

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

McIntyre. Photograph courtesy: Bill McCarthy.

A nother pathetic funeral procession wended its way from the Upper Plenty Hills to the Wallan Cemetery on Wednesday afternoon. This was the second sad event within two months, and both coffins contained the bodies of bright little boys.

The first funeral followed the remains of little Frank McDougall, aged nine years, whilst Wednesday's followed the body of little Charlie Cleve, aged 4 years and 8 months, who died after a week's illness from diphtheria, despite the attention of Dr Day of Whittlesea. Little Charlie was a bright, lively little chap, and his early passing came as a great shock to all who knew him, and great sympathy is felt for Mr and Mrs Cleve in their great loss ...

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 9 September 1920.

Wallan East

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Tr Ernie Speirs, the second son of Mr Alfred Speirs of the Wallan railway staff and formerly of Trawool ...
Ernie was a very popular young man and resided in Upper Plenty for four years. A year or two back he married Elizabeth, daughter of Mr William Fleming, of Upper Plenty, and since then had been living at North Carlton. He saw active service in Egypt, and there sustained an injury to one of his eyes; this developed into an incurable growth and last Wednesday – although then apparently in good health – he suddenly took a fit or too [sic] and died very suddenly.

His death cast quite a gloom over the district, as he was esteemed by everybody for his jolly and sunny disposition, and his passing away at the early age of 26 is deeply regretted. Much sympathy is extended to his wife and his young family.

Kilmore Free Press, Thursday 15 June 1922.