

NOMAN'S LAKE – Western Australia

ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF NOMAN'S LAKE

Extracted from "Noman's Lake – A Collection of Memories" By Heidi Astbury and Lyn Chadwick 31-10-1987

SETTLEMENT: As a consequence of the Goldrush migration, the population of Western Australia increased from 48,502 in 1891 to 193,601 in 1901. Many men turned their attention to farming after the initial interest in searching for gold waned. Most of the settlers came from the Eastern States and disembarked at Fremantle or Albany. This increase in population created the need to open vast areas of land for farm development. Teams of surveyors were appointed by the Land and Surveys Department to survey farm blocks for selection. (Many places were "selected" before they were surveyed).

In 1898 the Homestead Act was passed which allowed the pastoral lease holders the option of claiming the farm land around the homestead. (A homestead site of 160 acres was allowed, this could then be extended at a later date to complete the farm). The region in the vicinity of Noman's Lake was surveyed for land settlement and farming in the period 1904 – 1907 (S13 P.W.D. Plan 12064 1905 – 1907).

On 24th September 1915 the Under Secretary for Lands states in the Government Gazette that –

"His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council has been pleased to approve of the area described hereunder being classified as "Town and Suburban," and set apart to form a Townsite on the Yilliminning – Kondinin Railway, hereafter to be known and distinguished as "Noman's Lake".

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA: Noman's Lake itself is one of a chain of lakes which form part of the headwaters of the Arthur River. (Toolibin Lake, Walbyring Lake – known as Mud Hut Lake, Taarblin Lake, Ibis Lake, Billy Lake, Bokan Lake, Noman's Lake, Lukin Lake, White Lake and Little White Lake). The lakes were originally fresh but due to the general increase in salinity in rural Western Australia, they are now all quite salty.

After settlement the lakes became a popular gathering point for social activities with families enjoying swimming, boating picnics and even fishing!!



Taarblin Lake 2013



Noman's Lake 2013

The earliest written evidence of exploration in this area was in 1871 when John Forrest was instructed to examine the Yilliminning Pools (which shows they were known before this time). Surveyor Oxley traversed the area in 1890s, although prior to this was evidence of sandalwood cutters and shepherding in the general vicinity.

RAILWAYS:

The railway from Perth to Midland was constructed in 1881, from Midland to Chidlow in 1884, from Chidlow to Beverley in 1886, then from Beverley through Narrogin to Albany, 243 miles in 1889.

The development of the railways created service centres for the construction activities and camp sites then later created the basis of a town.

The railway from Narrogin to Wickepin was opened on 16th February 1909. The railway line from Yilliminning to Kondinin was started in 1913. The Kondinin Loop Line was opened from Yilliminning to Kondinin on 15th March 1915.



Noman's Lake Siding and CBH Bin 2013

NOMAN'S LAKE HALL:

On the 6th June 1909 Alex McCrae, Hon. Sec. of the "Lakes Progress Association" wrote to the Premier telling of a meeting in which it was decided to ask for a grant of £100 for materials, tanks etc. necessary for the construction of a hall on townsite 10630 plan 385/40 East Narrogin, the said hall to be also used as a school building. The settlers guaranteed to cart materials and to work under a skilled workman.

The Hall opened by Mr E.B. Johnston M.L.A. on the 11th December 1912. The Hall was built by Bonney & Sons of Narrogin using local labour at a cost of £350. £150 was raised locally plus a subsidy from the government of £ for £ and carried a debt of £50. When the Hall was opened, Mr Johnson was sure the Government would raise £25 if the local residents could raise the other £25. and have it debt free.

Following its completion the Hall became the focal point for early settlers of the district, functioning as a venue for numerous activities. With the Noman's Lake School situated nearby, the Hall was used often by the children. Music lessons, gymnastic classes, Church services and at election time the Hall was used as a polling place.

Possibly one of the most important functions of the Hall was that of a meeting place. The Hall Committee, Noman's Lake Progress Association, CWA and the Farmers and Settlers Association all held their meetings in the Hall

The Hall has also been the venue for numerous twenty-first birthday celebrations and wedding receptions, plus district dances. Admission to the dances was 2/- for each man and 1/6 per girl, but girls were admitted free of charge if they brought supper. Water for the supper was boiled outside on an oven fire in kerosene tins in both summer and winter.

There was great excitement in the early 1920s when a Wizard light was installed in the Hall. It was fuelled with Shellite and had to be pumped up in order for the pressure to create the light.

In recent years the Hall has been the venue for square dance and family dances. For several years a children's playgroup, organized by a few local mothers, was held at the Hall.

September 2014 the Hall is still used for the annual Xmas Tree evenings, CWA meetings, Agricultural group meetings and the occasional Shire Works dinner.



NOMAN'S LAKE STORE: (By Joyce Lock)

The railway line from Yilliminning to Kondinin was started in 1913. The store with Post Office was built at that time by Mr & Mrs Charlie Barnes, who owned a small farm a mile east of the siding. Railway gangers and their families came and lived in the houses built of sleepers with iron roofs situated along the railway in a fenced off area. Mr Barnes sold the store to Mr & Mrs Archie Hill in 1924. Mr Hill set up a tennis court behind the store. Mr McInnes and family bought the store around 1932 and it was during his time the store was burnt down. Mr McInnes kept a store of hay for sale and it was stacked in a large shed adjoining the house, this caught fire and destroyed the whole establishment. The store was never rebuilt and the Post Office agency was run by the Shannons for a number of years.

NOMAN'S LAKE SCHOOL:

Mr E. Cardwell wrote to the Education Department on the 2nd June 1907 with an impassioned plea for a school service in the region. Nothing came of this request.

On 17th March 1908 Mr C. Cardwell forwarded an application on behalf of the East Narrogin Progress Association to the Education Department for a School. On 28th June 1908, the Inspector General of Schools requested the undersecretary of Lands, to set aside a school site on the western section of the townsite reserve No 10630. Delays occurred and on the 2nd August 1909, the school had still not been realized.

The matter of a school for the area was taken out of the hands of the Progress Association and on the 11th November 1909 an application for a Provisional school was made. On the 24th January 1910, in response to the application, it was proposed that the Education Department erect a tent school, but the problem existed of accommodation for a teacher. On 12th April 1910 it was advised that a transportable tent school with quarters would be erected on the school site.

The estimated cost of the school and the quarters was £100 for the quarters and £90 for the school. Mr H. Marsh, the contract builder, was the successful tenderer with a price of £187/17/7 with a completion date of 29th August 1910. Wet weather and impassable roads delayed the completion date, the school eventually is officially recorded as having opened on the 1st November 1910. The school served the community for almost 28 years, ceasing to exist on the 14th March 1938, because of a diminished enrolment of pupils.

TELEPHONE:

The telephone line was put through to Noman's Lake in 1948. A party line was erected by local voluntary labour with farmers supplying the posts for the line as well. The exchange was operated for many years by the Kilpatrick family.

SPORTING:

The 1920s seem to be the decade during which sporting clubs and organisations commenced on a formal basis.

A cricket team was formed during this time. The team played in the Wickepin Association until numbers fell away at Noman's Lake and the keen cricketers transferred to Toolibin.

About the same time attempts were made to organise a Tennis Club at a site south of the cricket ground, but the project did not proceed. A little later courts were established at the Store site near the siding and the : "Renown Tennis Club" was formed.

The "Lakes Football Team" was formed in about 1928 and played in the Harrismith Football Association and also in the Wickepin Association. "The Lakes" team's colours were blue and a white V. The team survived until numbers dwindled and players transferred to Toolibin.



NOMAN'S LAKE 2013

