

# *A History of Doodlakine*

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## INTRODUCTION

Surely there are few people who do not occasionally pause from the swift tempo of modern life, to wonder how their town, district, and their own farmlands came to be developed and settled - to wonder how the original settlers fared, what hardships they suffered in the pioneering days, and what life was really like in the days when townships were few and far between and there were no modern cars to bring the city within a few hours reach. In order to provide the answers to some of these questions. I have attempted to write a history of the Doodlakine District. Doodlakine is not a very big town, nor would it be very impressive to the traveller passing through, but nevertheless it has quite an interesting past, which is well worth recording. Situated on the Eastern Goldfields Railway, 142 miles from Perth, with the Great Eastern Highway and the Eastern Goldfields Water Scheme both running through it, the little township is the centre of quite a flourishing farming area.

Unfortunately in the earlier days of the State's history little need was seen for the keeping of records and information about the pioneering years is very difficult to obtain. As these years are becoming more remote and with the passing of the families of the pioneers, their memories passing with them, this information will become increasingly difficult to find. I therefore feel, that unless attempts are made at recording in the near future what is still available, such valuable and interesting history will become forever lost. The time allotted for this work has not been sufficient to enable me to explore all avenues as thoroughly as I would have wished, so I feel that further research would yield beneficial results.

I am very much indebted to Mr B W Leake who supplied me with practically the entire story of the early pastoral settlement, and who gave many particulars concerning the first township of Doodlakine and Agricultural settlement.

Mr D M Barr also assisted me considerably with information about the early period. The information concerning the growth of the present township I owe to Mr P Ripper and Mr J Johns.

Others to whom I am indebted for assistance in the collecting and compiling of material are:-

Mr D Mossenson	Teacher's College
Staff of the Archives Dept	Public Library
Mr & Mrs W T George	Doodlakine
Mr H V Cox	Northam
Mr E W Prowse	Darkan
Mr B Thornton	Chairman Kellerberrin Road Board
Mr Walsh	Co-Operative Bulk Handling
Mr Blackwell	Wesfarmers Co-operative Society
Mr N Hutchison	Perth Modelling Works
Officers of Lands Department	
Officers of Statistics Department	
Officers of Education Department	
Officers of W.A.G.R.	

EXPLORATION

After the colony was formed on the Swan River in 1829, many disappointments were to follow, due in part to the land policy and the shortage of labour. Little was known of the country other than the coastal strip from Shark Bay to Albany. The land was not nearly as good as had been expected, that near the sea being poor. Governor Stirling encouraged expeditions to explore the inland areas to search out better farm lands. It was not long before settlement began in the South West and Midlands Districts, but the Eastern Wheatbelt Area was not settled until much later. Between the years 1830 and 1870, however, several small expeditions travelled through and examined the country now comprising the Eastern Wheatbelt.

After his discovery of the Avon Valley in 1830, Ensign Dale explored the country to the east as far as Mt. Stirling (1). In 1854, with a view to discovering minerals and in order to open up further pastoral lands, Surveyor R. Austen was sent to examine the country North and East of the settled District. (2)

The lands lying immediately east of York and Northam began to attract a good deal of attention, and several exploring parties went out in the hope of securing good land. (3) The explorers, however were quite unimpressed with the "land that is now tardily recognised as comprising some of the best cereal producing country in the State". (4)

In 1861 renewed efforts were made to open up the country east and southeast of York . It was in this year that Messrs. E E Dempster, A Dempster, B Clarkson, C Harper and a native named Correll, taking with them ten horses, travelled over a large part of the district now forming the Yilgarn Goldfield. (5) Writing in his journal, Mr Clarkson records that on the night of Tuesday July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861, the party camped at Doodlakine "Where there was a spring and about 2,000 acres of tolerable grazing land". (6) The following day the party set out for a hill called Daraining (now that name of the property of Mr H Thompson in the district) some fifteen miles from the Doodlakine Spring. They "passed through open forests, tree thickets, and the dry bed of a saltlake, about ten miles in circumstances," (7) which they named Lake Hillman. This lake is undoubtedly the one which runs through the properties of Messrs Saunders and Colliver and from which gypsum is now mined.

(1) (2) (3) (4) J S Battye, Cyclopedia of W A .

(5) Inquirer and Commercial News 1861.

(6) Journal of Mr B D Clarkson.

(7) Journal of Mr B Clarkson

Shortly afterwards, the York Agricultural Society despatched Mr H N Lefroy on a journey eastward for the purpose of finding new country suitable for sheep grazing. (8) Mr Lefroy reported the existence of good agricultural country, but, as surface water was not obtainable, considered settlement out of the question until wells had been sunk.

In 1863, Mr C C Hunt explored as far as the Hampton Plains with a party that set out from York. (9) The party crossed over the sites of Coolgardie, but lack of water forced them to return. The following year, July and August of 1864 Messrs B Clarkson, Harper and Lukin conducted an expedition to the north and east of Toodyay, again the purpose being that of discovering further pastoral lands. (10) The party made a final start from Doodlakine where Mr Clarkson had recently formed a station. However, as all the springs found after leaving Doodlakine were dry, the expedition soon returned.

Following in almost similar footsteps to his 1863 expedition, Mr C C Hunt in 1865 made a trip to the Hampton Plains, to which he was commissioned to cut a track and at the same time, sink wells along the way, (11) on February 10<sup>th</sup> the party of eighteen mostly convicts and prisoners, were engaged on sinking a well at the Doodlakine Spring. (12) The stone required for the well was easily obtainable from the nearby rocks. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary, Mr Hunt says:-

“The track I have made as far as Lake Lefroy, which is but a mere track, through cleared for the greatest part of the distance of sufficient width for the passage of my teams, along which a spring cart might be driven with safety, having had to cut through dense thickets and forests. I have not been able to carry out my instruction to the letter in roadmaking, which would take many years to do, but the greatest requisite, - water - I have been able to secure for 300 miles east - northerly of York, - in places of very good supply, in others more limited, though sufficient for most travelling purposes in ordinary seasons”. (13)

(8,9) J S Battye Cyclopedia of WA

(10) Journal of Mr B Clarkson published in the Inquirer and Commercial News 1864.

(11) J S Battye Cyclopedia of WA.

(12) Journal of Mr C Hunt published in the Inquirer and Commercial News 1865.

(13) Letter from Mr C Hunt to Colonial Secretary published in the Inquirer and Commercial News 1865.

No use was made of the track at that time, but thirty years later it remained in sufficiently good order to become the highway to the Goldfields. The Eastern Goldfield's Railway now follows almost the same path. The last exploring party which passed through the Doodlakine area was the one led by Mr Alexander Forrest who made the final start for his 1871 journey from Mr R B Leake's station. (14) "Mooranoppin" which had been first formed in 1865.

The impression gained of the country from these expeditions have been recorded by Mr B Leake in the following extract :-

"Few of the explorers were favourably impressed with the pastoral possibilities of the country they traversed. The patches of grassland, mostly jamwood country, were small, and were often surrounded by Whitegum land through which box poison was found in profusion. The vast areas of forest and scrub were practically useless for stock in their natural state, and the only surface waters were found in the chain of salt lakes. After heavy rains some of these contained water that, although brackish, was quite suitable for sheep, but many would not have water in them for several years at a stretch". (15)

It is interesting to note some of the earlier spellings of place names, which were doubtless attempts to interpret the native pronunciations. Dodolokim was first used for Doodlakine and Killaburing for Kellerberrin. Apart from the association of the last syllable with water, it is not known what the native word Doodlakine means.

The explorations of the eighteen fifties and sixties paved the way for settlement. The explorers reported on the country they had examined, they certainly did not over glamorise the situation, and those interested were able to find out what land was available, and something of its nature. Mr Hunt's 1865 expedition was of particular importance to Doodlakine, because it was around the well that he built there, that the first township of Doodlakine sprang up.

(14) Journal of Mr A Forrest.

(15) Article in Western Mail August 1950 by Mr B Leake.

EARLY SETTLEMENT – THE STATION PERIOD

As a general tendency in Australian Settlement the pastoral industry always preceded agriculture. Western Australia has been no exception. In the beginning it was easier and cheaper to buy wheat from the Eastern States than to grow it in WA. The new land was quite suitable for stock, and as wool was bringing good prices, sheep farming became the chief occupation. As the settlers became increasingly successful in raising sheep, horses and cattle were used.

After the introduction of convicts in 1850 to augment the labour force, Western Australia settled down to come quite a prosperous squatting colony. Gradually, as the colony grew, more land was needed and after the way had been paved by the explorers, settlement of the Eastern Wheatbelt began.

Settlement of the Doodlakine-Kellerberrin district first began in 1861 when Mr E R Parker, who in 1860 had taken up land at Dangin at Mt. Stirling (1), made an outstation at Mt. Caroline where he ran a flock of sheep and shortly afterwards sank a well.

In 1871, Mr Fred Sewell took over the station from Mr Parker. Mr Sewell's family joined him at Mt. Caroline, Mrs Sewell being the first white woman to live in the district. Further penetration into the area by white men occurred in 1864 when Messrs I & E Clarkson of Toodyay established a station at Doodlakine. These men were actually the first to occupy land in the area now called Doodlakine, their flocks grazing over both the original and the present townsites. The Clarkson's stay, however, was a short one as Mr Clarkson was killed by blacks who speared him through his tent just before dawn on August 21, 1865. The murder occurred at Dolbercuttin, a nearby locality which is part of Cardonia, the property now owned by Mr B Leake. The following record has been made of the incident by Mr B Leake:-

“It was necessary to have a hutkeeper to guard against thefts by the blacks, and Mr Clarkson had with him David Hackett, then a boy only eleven years of age. They were camped at Doodlakine with a flock of 800 sheep and one day, when the boy was alone in camp.

Note:- Unless otherwise mentioned, all information contained in this chapter was supplied by Mr B Leake.

(1) J S Battye Cyclopedia of WA.

He was threatened by three aborigines, one of whom demanded the revolver which the boy held. On his refusal to part with the weapon, the blackfellow broke

his arm with a dowak (a short waddy about 2 feet six inches long and slightly pointed at one end). After this, the blacks helped themselves to stores and went away. When Mr Clarkson returned with the sheep, he carried out some bush surgery on David's arm, binding it with strips of bark so effectively that in three weeks it was practically right again. Soon after this, the three natives attacked at dawn and speared Mr Clarkson, driving the weapon through the tent. He lived for three days and after he died young Hackett, accompanied by the sheep dog, walked all the way to Northam following a rough cart-track., taking over three days to cover the distance. The police eventually caught the three culprits, one being shot while trying to escape, while the other two were tried in Perth and sentenced to be hanged on the spot where the murder was committed. A strong body of police accompanied by other officials, took the condemned men back to Dolbercuttin, and hanged then in the presence of two hundred natives as many as could be gathered from the surrounding districts, the idea to warn the natives against further trouble. The condemned men were placed on a dray under trees, and when the nooses had been adjusted, the dray was pulled away. Since then no full-blooded native would ever camp within fifteen chains of the graves which may still be seen as the police marked them by placing slabs of stone on top of them". (2)

Also in 1864, a station was formed at Milligan, seven miles north of Kellerberrin, by Mr Caleb Massingham of York, who, thirteen years later, sold his York property and took his family to live at Milligan. Mr Massingham's flocks grazed around the Kellerberrin Hill, and, during the winter months, at Mindabooka, the name given to South Doodlakine. The Mindabooka run included Daraining mentioned previously in connection with Mr Clarkson's explorations. Shortly after, in 1865, Messrs J H Monger of York and R Hardey of Mt. Hardy established a station at Cuttening. Until 1902, Cuttening had a succession of different owners, each remaining only a short time. Mr R Helms took over from Hardey and Monger in 1867, but in 1869 he sold out to Messrs C & H Foss. The Foss Brothers were energetic young Englishmen, who extended the run considerably to include what is now the Bruce Rock townsite.

(2) Quotation from a Western Mail article 1950 by Mr B Leake.

In addition they sank the well at Noonegin on the spot where the reservoir now is that supplied Bruce Rock with water. Mr S Hogan became the owner of Cuttening

in 1879, and in 1883 he sold the lease to Mr Shaw who in 1885 passed it on to Messrs R & D Luke who came from the Victorian Grazing districts. The Lukes put up ninety miles of fencing and carried out many improvements at Cuttening which included considerable ring-barking and clearing. Bad seasons and low wood prices, however, forced them to leave the property Mr J H Monger, who went to Cuttening about 1896, sold to Mr D Hammond whose property, part of the original Cuttening, still bears that name.

When Messrs Hardy and Monger formed their station at Cuttening in 1865, they also had stations at Mooranoppin and Nanyanine. In 1868, the last two mentioned stations were bought by Mr R B Leake, whose family still owns part of the original run. In addition, Mr Leake took over Nalyerin and the country previously held by Clarksons and which had been abandoned after Mr E Clarkson's murder. Mooranoppin, in those days, extended to about three miles south of the present Eastern Goldfields Railway, included Baandee, and thus covered most of the area now known as Doodlakine. Until 1894, there were only four families in the district with their headquarters at the four stations, namely Mt. Caroline, Cuttening, Milligan and Mooranoppin. Pastoral settlement had been effected during the eighteen sixties. While some of the lessees extended their runs, no further development took place for several years. The district remained much in this condition until the discovery of gold on the Yilgarn altered the tempo of life throughout the state.

LIFE AND CONDITIONS DURING THE PERIOD OF EARLY SETTLEMENT

With no township within easy reach, life in the district between 1860 and 1890 was very quiet, and certainly vastly different from what it is today. The pioneers would surely have considered that sheep raising was indeed an easy matter, if they had the improved techniques and machines that are now available.

The stations were about 200,000 acres in area and carried about 40,000 sheep, 600 horses and 300 cattle. In the beginning, the settlers paid 5 pounds for the right to graze their flocks over a certain area. Later this was altered and the lessee was required to take up a minimum of 20,000 acres for which he paid 2/6d per thousand acres for the first five years and 5/-d. per thousand acres thereafter. The lessee had no control, other than grazing rights, over the land, so he usually bought one hundred acres of freehold land around his homestead, the price being about 1C/-d per acre. When the crown wished to terminate a lease in order to allow closer settlement, the lessee was given twelve months notice.

In the beginning white shepherds were employed, but, as these almost invariably engaged natives to do the work for them, the station-holders found it best to employ the natives themselves in the first place. The blacks made rather careless shepherds, the poison plant causing many losses. Dingoes were also a menace to untended flocks, and after 1889, when the runs were gradually fenced and shepherds were no longer employed, they became more troublesome. In a letter to the Eastern Districts Chronicles of June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1879. Mr Massingham complained of the ravages of the wild dog, saying:-

“ Since this time last year many thousands of sheep have been killed by the native dogs, and every sheep farmer has been a loser more or less. There are only two serious drawbacks to the sheep farmer in this colony; the poison plant and the native dog”. (1)

The letter goes on to suggest that the government offer a reward for the destruction of dingoes. After the runs were fenced, it was found that shepherded sheep cut-up grass very much more quickly than those grazed in paddocks. As there was no hand feeding the dry summer months took heavy toll of the flocks. During the lambing season the ewes would be yarded each night, and in the morning the lambs born during the night would be drafted off with their mothers.

Note: Unless otherwise mentioned, all information in this chapter was supplied by Mr B Leake.

(1) Quotation from Mr Massingham's letter to the Eastern Districts Chronicle 1879.

Some of the activities associated with shearing time have been described by Mr Leake.

“in the very early days it was customary to wash the sheep before they were shorn, and when winter rains were light the flocks had to be taken from the District to the Avon and Malkie rivers near York for washing, and were then brought back and shorn at the homesteads at the rate of 25/-d per hundred. Wool was carted to Fremantle by four horse wagon teams or on drays and such a trip would take about ten days from Kellerberrin”.

In 1868 fleece wool brought 7d a lb.  
1860-70 average price was 1/-d a lb.  
1871-73 average price was 20.5d a lb.  
1873-83 average price was 13.5d a lb.  
1883-93 average price was 11d 1b (2)

Fresh water was very scarce and determined where the homesteads were to be built – usually at the base of the granite hills, thus putting the homesteads on some of the poorest parts of the stations. The first houses were built “either of sundried bricks, pug, stone or gimlet and dab, the roofs in all cases being thatched with rushes”. (3) Most of the stations grew about fifteen acres of Wheat and Cape Barley near the house, the seed being obtained from the Avon Valley. This was just sufficient to supply the working horses with hay, enough wheat was threshed out with a floyle to sow the following year, the cutting in the first place being done with a scythe”. (4)

There were no railways before 1894, so that all stores and station requirements had to be hauled first from Perth, and after the railway from Perth reached York in 1884, from York. Sandalwood was another commodity which was carted to Fremantle, from whence it was exported to China for the burning of incense. Most of the settlers cut some sandalwood which, after adzing, brought from 3 pounds to 8 pounds per ton. Until quite recent times sandalwood was still being cut in the district.

As stated previously, the first white woman to live in the district was Mrs Sewell who, in 1871, accompanied her husband to Mt Caroline. Soon after, in 1873, Mrs Leake went to live at Mooranoppin, while in 1877, the Massingham family, after selling their York property, Grassdale, settled permanently at Milligan.

- (2) (3) Quotations from Western Mail 1950 Article by Mr Leake.  
(3) Quotation from articles by Mr B Leake.

The district was rich in bird life, while animal life, especially rock wallabies and opossums, were abundant.

When the area was first settled, the blacks were quite uncivilised and more began to drift in from the unsettled areas further east. After the events of Mr Clarkson's murder, no more troubles were experienced from the natives. There were few cases of stealing and blacks gradually settled down as shepherds and station hands, though constant supervision was necessary.

This then is the picture of life some sixty and seventy years ago. Sheep farming was the dominant occupation while sandalwood was out as a sideline. Sandalwood was taken in wagon loads to Fremantle, and the carting of the wool clip to that part was an annual event. The stations, having their own meat and dairy produce and also producing hay for their own stock; were in some measure self-supporting, but regular trips were made to Perth and York for stores and other requisites.

The era of quiet industry, however, was drawing to a close, for the following decade, which closed the nineteenth century, was to completely change life in the district.

GOLD AND THE RAILWAY

While Eastern Australia was flourishing from the New South Wales and Victorian gold rushes, and their resultant population increase, little development was taking place in the West. Progress was so slow that WA was known as the Cinderella of the Australian Colonies. The West, however, was yet to know the excitements of gold rushes. In 1882, Mr M Durack found gold near Hall's Creek, and in 1866, when the Kimberley goldfields was declared, WA had her first gold rush. (1) This find gave encouragement to prospecting elsewhere in the State, with the result that gold was found at Southern Cross which was declared a goldfield in October, 1888. (2) The days of Stagnation in Western Australia were over.

Just as the discovery of gold at Southern Cross had tremendous consequences all over the State, so it vastly altered life on the stations in Doodlakine and Kellerberrin area. The diggers made their way to the fields past the different station homesteads. The track cut by Mr Hunt in 1865 was cleared by the government in 1890, and thereafter became the main highway. (3) known as the York Road. In 1891 a telegraph line was erected between York and Southern Cross. (4)

The stations were called upon to supply meat and stores to the travellers, and chaff for the horse and camel teams. For this purpose the settlers cleared more land and grew extra crop.

Cobb & Co's coaches ran twice weekly between York and Southern Cross. (5) It became customary for the coaches to change horses at the Doodlakine Well, and as this seemed to provide a natural stopping place, a small township sprang up near the well. (6) A township was surveyed, and on the 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1891, Doodlakine was declared a townsite. (7) Town lots were available for purchase at 10 pounds per lot (8) The buildings that were erected at the town were only temporary but were nevertheless quite solid.

(1) (2) Sir Hal Colebatch – A Story of a Hundred Years – Western Australia  
1829 - 1929.

(4) (4) J S Battye Cyclopedia of Western Australia.

(5) The Golden West 1824-25 and Mr B Leake.

(6) Information from Mr B Leake.

(7) (8) W.A. Year Book 1900-1901.

Mr Wilkins began a post-office and hotel in 1891. (9) The police escorts, who rode two in front and two behind the gold coaches, used to spend the night there. (10) Mr Jack Fingland ran a store, and in addition there were stables, blacksmiths, saddlers and a baker. (11)

This township at the well also catered for the men who were putting down the railway to the goldfields. The line ran some three miles south of the well, however, and when it was opened for traffic, the little township became deserted. The post office, which in 1894 was run by Mr MacPhee, was dismantled and re-erected at Kellerberrin. (12) Mr MacPhee also went to Kellerberrin and ran the post there. (13)

The building of the line has been described by Mr Leake as follows:-

“In 1892 Surveyor Tibbets was entrusted with the work of surveying a route for the railway between York and Southern Cross, his instructions being to go the shortest way., and his line ran some eleven miles north of Kellerberrin. The settlers in the district were not satisfied as they wanted the railway further south to be more central and it would pass through better land. A petition was sent down with the result that Surveyor W Ripper was sent up and, leaving Tibbet’s line near Wyala, surveyed the line where the railway now runs. This was being built in 1893, and for some time the terminus was at Doodlakine”. (14) three miles south of the well.

Mr McDowell, who built all the stations between Northam and Burracoppin, built the Doodlakine station and also had the contract to cart water from the well to the engines at Doodlakine. (15) Doodlakine was opened as a station in 1894. (16)

When the track was cleared for the railway line, the grass grew abundantly along it and attracted cattle and horses from the stations. (17) The night officer found it necessary to walk along the line chasing stock off before letting the trains through. (18)

- (9) (10) (11) Information from Mr B Leake.
- (12) (13) Information from Mr P Ripper.
- (14) From an article in Eastern Recorder 1829 by Mr B Leake.
- (15) Information from Mr P Ripper.
- (16) W.A.G.R. Records.
- (17) Information from D Barr.
- (18) Information from Mr D Barr.

Some early fettlers were Oldfield, Harms, the Matheson Brothers and Churnside who was the ganger. (19). There being no entertainment of any kind, the fettlers found some difficulty in passing the long evenings. They had to provide their own amusements and some took to writing poetry. (20)

Verses written by Jimmy Okane, the night officer, have been preserved, through unfortunately not in their entirety.

The Poem is called:-

**Okane's Farewell to Doodlakine** – 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1897.

Dedicated with all due respects to the resident.!

Adieu my friends of Doodlakine,  
I cannot linger here  
Though I regret to leave you  
My duty call is clear.  
Away to Seabrook I must go  
And there my duty do,  
Though in some happy future  
I may return to you.

God's blessing by upon your heads  
And in your hearts and homes  
More genial hearts there never beat  
To ease all human throes.  
The destinies of Doodlakine  
For them I have no fears.  
They're in the hand of noble men  
Of gallant grit and cheer.

There's Andrew Barr, the farmer's star,  
Has now begun to plough  
His pastures new he furrows through  
For good season now I trough,  
Jansen old of sailor bold  
In trouble has no fears,  
And Matheson and Manns  
Are sandalwooding close around.

"Doodlakine" the porter cries  
To passengers in every train.  
The ladies raising with good grace  
All murmur in the porter's face  
"What a funny name".

(21)

(19) (20) Information from Mr D Barr

(21) From the diary of 1897 of the late Andrew Barr.

The discovery of gold had bought a road, railway, telegraph line and a township to the Doodlakine district. As Doodlakine well served as a watering place on the way to the Goldfields, a township grew up there to supply the needs of the

travellers. After the railway was built, however, most of the traffic went by rail, so that there was no longer any need for the town on the road near the well.

This township was dismantled and in the following years the present township gradually grew up and around the railway station.

## CHAPTER 5

### AGICULTURAL SETTLEMENT

Up till about 1905 Western Australia continued to buy flour from the Eastern States. (1) For some years all stores and mine equipment for the Goldfields had to be carted by horse and camel teams. The demand for chaff and hay meant good prices could be obtained, and this proved an incentive to further cereal growing by old and new settlers. As the surface gold was gradually worked out, depression and unemployment followed, and many people turned their eyes to the wheat industry as a possible source of employment. In 1905, the late Sir James Mitchell, who quickly saw the possibilities of wheat, was elected to parliament where he did all he could to encourage land settlement and make the development of the wheat industry possible. (2) After 1902, water from the Goldfields Water Scheme was available along the railway, so that land along the line was then soon taken up.

The earliest efforts at cereal growing near Kellerberrin and Doodlakine have been described by Mr Leake as follows:-

“Wheat crops were grown in jam and York Gum land, the first being about 1864 either at Cuttening or Milligan or perhaps at both places. During 1891 and 1892 about 100 bags of wheat grown at Milligan were carted to York and sold there. In 1892 the crops were excellent. At Cuttening R Luke grew a crop on gimlet and salmon land, and this yielded thirty cwt. per acre. At Mooranoppin ninety tons of chaff were disposed of during the season, and Milligan and Mt. Caroline also had good yields. Fifteen acres of wheat grown at Mooranoppin the same year on a white sandy soil stripped twenty-two bushels per acre, and in the writer’s opinion, it is very doubtful if this could be exceeded today on similar soil”. (3)

The first land to be selected near Doodlakine for purely agricultural purposes, was the 1000 acres near Woolundra Siding selected in 1894 by Mr W Ripper who had surveyed the railway. (4) Mr Ripper was impressed with the possibilities of the forest country near Woolundra because he saw in it a resemblance to the Victoria Gippsland District from whence he had come. (5) He cleared thirty acres of land for his first wheat crop which was the first in the district to be grown on forest country. (6) and was quite successful.

- (1) (2) A story of a Hundred Years, Western Australia 1829-1929. Sir Hal Colebatch.
- (3) Quotation from articles by Mr B Leake.
- (4) (5) (6) Information from Mr P Ripper.

In 1895 the present townsite of Doodlakine was surveyed and an Agricultural area surrounding it was declared. This district, which went seven miles north of the railway and westward as far as Woolundra, was thrown open for settlement. One of

the earliest selectors was Mr Andrew Barr, who took up land just north of the new townsite. (9) About sixty acres of land were cleared and sown with wheat, but, as there was no superphosphate, the crop was a failure. (10) The Barr Family then left the district and took over Noonegin Station, but in 1901 they returned and settled at Mindabooka where some of the family have lived ever since. (11) Some of the land cleared by Mr Barr at Mindabooka was the first land cleared in what was later to become the Merredin Road Board. (12) At Mindabooka the Barrs cut a good deal of sandalwood which they carted in wagons loads to Kellerberrin to be railed to Fremantle. A road had been made from Doodlakine to Mindabooka and in 1898 this was continued to Bruce Rock and today is an important link between that town and the Great Eastern Highway. (13) Until the new road was broken in, the Barrs would take the full loads of sandalwood through Cutting Station to Kellerberrin, and take the empty wagons home through Doodlakine. (14) As well as taking up land for himself in 1897 Mr Andrew Barr also selected a block just north for Mr T H Harrison who at that time lived on the Goldfields. (15) In 1899 Mr Harrison came himself to live at Doodlakine (16) where today his land is held by his estate. Mr Harrison was a prominent figure in the district which he represented in parliament from 1912 to 1924.

Until 1906 land could be selected before survey, and for this purpose Land Guides were appointed in the various districts. (17) The Guide, who was provided with a horse and trap, would meet the selector and drive him wherever he intended to select and otherwise give all the assistance possible. (18) The land chosen would then be surveyed. After 1906, however, all land was surveyed before selection. (19)

Mr Manns took up land south of the old township and, for a time, camped in the remains of the old hotel near the well. (20)

- (7) (8) Land's Department Records.
- (9) Information from Mr D Barr.
- (10) (11) (13) Information from Mr D Barr.
- (11) Letter from Mr C Massingham to Mr D Barr.
- (14) (15) (16) Information from Mr D Barr.
- (17) (1) (19) Information from Mr H V Cox.
- (20) Information from Mr D Barr.

Mr R Hinckley was another early selector who took up a block four miles west of the present town on the south side of the line. (21) In 1899 Mrs Ban Bibra selected north of and adjoining Woolundra Siding. (22) J Fingland, with his two brothers and E Mitchell also had land north of Woolundra. (23) Immediately north of the well C Bitmead had his block. (24) J Levitt selected one mile east of the new townsite, north of the line, while the block immediately east of his went to Jansen. (25) J Scott took the block south of the line just one mile east of the town, while the block just east of this was selected by W Rees. (27) In 1906 Mr H V Cox came to the district and farmed two and a half miles south of the town. (28) A property owned by Mr Luke Reddin was purchased in 1911 by Mr A Prowse and his brother. (29) In addition Mr Prowse took up a lot of crown land and at one time owned about 10,000 acres. (30) Mr Prowse became associated with practically everything worthwhile in the district, and was many years a member of the Kellerberrin Road Board, of which he was Chairman for three years.

The following is a description of the first machinery used in the district given by Mr Leake:-

“The stripper brought up here from York by Mr C Massingham in 1883 was the first one used and for some time was the only stripper in WA. The machine was made in York by R Wheeler for his father, about 1875. A pair of shafts was fixed and two more horses worked in from of the shafter. One man attended to the machine and a boy either worked alongside or rode one and drove the other horses. Mr Massingham would strip his own wheat at Grassdale, and then do other farmers crops by contract. The binder appeared in 1895, a cultivator with a seed box attached (the sowing of wheat and guano had previously been done by hand) in 1896, a steam chaff cutter during 1898, and the ordinary drill in 1901. The first harvester – a Nicholson and morrow – ever used in WA. was imported by T H Harrison from Victoria, and harvested his wheat crop at Doodlakine in 1899”. (31)

Many bitter failures were experienced in the early years of agricultural settlement, mostly due to the lack of superphosphate.

- (21 to 27) Information from Mr B Leake and Mr P Ripper and Land's Dept Maps.
- (28) Information from Mr E W Prowse.
- (31) Article in Eastern Recorder 1929 by Mr B Leake.

THE GROWTH OF THE TOWNSHIP

When settlement first began and there were only four stations in the district, a town was not warranted. After the gold discoveries at Southern Cross, a small town grew up around Doodlakine Well to serve the needs of travellers to the goldfields, but when the railway was opened this was dismantled. The station master and the railway fettlers lived near the station, and as the land around was gradually taken up, a new township grew up around the railway station.

When the station was first opened, the station-master also conducted a post office agency. (1) J Barnes later built a shop, adjoining his store, which was used as a post office until 1914, when the present building was erected. (2) Miss Dorothy Giles was the first postmistress and she was followed by Frank Wise, while Miss Hall was the first postmistress in the present building. (3) In 1897 Howe was the stationmaster and he was followed by Veitch. (4) Veitch later left the railways and made his home at Doodlakine where he kept a livery stables. (5) When the Bruce Rock area was being opened up, he secured the mail contract, used to run a twice weekly service from Doodlakine to Bruce Rock in a four in hand coach driven by Harold Dennis. (6)

In about 1897, Mr Ernest Wilson conducted the first store in a makeshift building in Spring Street. (7) Mr Leidle took over the store from Wilson and built a new shop opposite. (8) Leidle's store was actually the first shop in Doodlakine. Meat was at first supplied by the nearby settlers then two butchers shops were opened, one by Scott and Lessnor and the other Sanguinetti. (9) The hotel was built by Mr P A Connolly and run by his brother-in-law, Mr Heggarty. (10) South of the line Mrs Ripper built two or three shops and a hall which became known as the Skating Rink. (11) One of these shops was run as a shop and boarding house combined, and was at first conducted by Mr Costa and then by Mrs Bailey, after which it was closed. (12) Roller skating, films and other entertainments were held in Mrs Ripper's Hall, where also Methodist and Church of England Services were held. (13) In 1910 however, a Church of England Church was built with money donated for the purpose by Mrs Cummings. (14) Largely due to the efforts of Mr A Prowse, who assisted considerably with finance, a Methodist Church was built about the same time as a Roman Catholic Church was erected.

- (1) Information from Mrs George.
- (2) Post Office Records.
- (3) Information from Mr J Johns
- (4) (7) Information from Mr D Barr
- (5) (6) Information from Mr J Johns and Mrs George.
- (8) (9) Information from Mr P Ripper.
- (9) (11) (12) (13) (14) Information from Mr P Ripper.

In 1904, a school was for the second time built at Doodlakine and this was opened on October 17<sup>th</sup> of the same year. Three boys and thirteen girls being on the roll. (15) By 1911 the school population was upwards of forty so a new building was required. In 1912 the two schoolrooms at present in operation were erected. (16) The building, which had previously been used, was shifted five miles south of the town and reopened on five acres of land given for the purpose by Mr V Wendt. (17) This South Doodlakine School was opened for instruction on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1912, and was closed five years later, on December 21<sup>st</sup> 1917. (18) It was, however, opened again in 1919 between February 3<sup>rd</sup> and October 24<sup>th</sup> of that year. (19)

In the year after their arrival in Doodlakine, Prowse Brothers erected a large building which became known as Ellis' Coffee Palace. (20) Part of this became a bakehouse, some rooms were used as a bank and the rest was run as boarding house for the many people passing through Doodlakine on the way to Bruce Rock and Norseman. (21) Mr A Prowse also built a home in the town where for many years his wife and family lived. (22) This home was later bought by Mr A Tiller who erected his butcher's shop alongside it.

In 1911, Mr Levitt had several shops built and these are now called Scotts Buildings. (23) Mr Levitt also had a saleyard where the first sale was held, Mr Andrew Barr's cattle being sold. (24) Elder Smiths later had saleyards and holding paddocks south of the line. In addition to the shops and saleyards, Mr Levitt built a blacksmiths shop which he leased to Messrs Baker and Brown. (25) Another smithy was conducted just behind the hotel by Mick Foley, while south of the line Mr Boltcher for a time kept a smithy. (26) Mr Ward later built a blacksmiths shop which he ran until the almost universal use of the tractor, made the keeping of a smithy unprofitable. A branch of the national Bank was opened in Doodlakine about 1900, business being transacted in a small galvanised iron building. (27) After Prowse built the Coffee Palace, however, The Bank shifted into rooms there. (28) Mr Frank Twist was the Bank Manager and he was followed by Mr Humble who remained until the bank became no longer permanent. (29)

(15) (18) (19) Parliamentary Papers.

(16) (17) Information from Mr J Johns.

(20) (21) (22) Information from Mr E W Prowse.

(23) (24) (25) (26) Information from Mr J Johns.

(27) (28) (29) Information from Mr J Johns and Mrs George.

Guano, from the Abrolhos Islands, could be obtained even before the 1890's, but of course it had to be carted from York. Thomas phosphate was used in 1899 and superphosphate in 1902. (32) Gradually, as the greater prosperity of the goldfields began to decline, more people took up land for farming. Among those to settle at Doodlakine after spending some time on the goldfields were Messrs W T George, E F Taylor, J Tolley, Connelly, Campbell, Barnes and Johns. As wheat farming drew more people to the district, problems of schooling and local government arose.

Until 1904 the education of the few children around Doodlakine presented quite a problem. The Ripper Boys, who came to the district in 1894 would ride to Mooranoppin each day where they were taught, together with the younger members of the Leake family, by Miss Leake. (33) Later the Rippers went each day by train to Tammin to school there. (34) The Growden Boys, of Nangeenan, also went to school at Tammin, but they would camp in a tent during the week, doing their own cooking and go home by train for weekends. (35) In 1897, the people of Doodlakine applied for a school and this was opened on August, 16 1898 with seven boys and one girl on the roll. (36) Due to the shifting nature of the population at that time, this school, which was only a small temporary building, was closed on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1898, dismantled, and shifted to another township. (37) It was not until 1904 that Doodlakine again had a school.

Before 1908, when Kellerberrin Road Board was formed, the district was part of the Meckering Road Board. (38) The settlers, however, refused to pay rates to the Meckering Road Board because no money was spent in their area. (39) The Board could quite understand the settlers viewpoint and so did not enforce payment. (40) Everything between Tammin and Southern Cross, and an unspecified distance north and south, was the east ward of the Meckering Road Board. (41) Messrs E Massingham, who later spent twelve years as a member of the Kellerberrin Board, F Growden and W J Jacka were the east ward members. (42)

After 1902, the wheat industry became quite successful, not only at Doodlakine but throughout the wheat areas of the State. The farms, of course, were essentially much smaller than they are today. The success of the wheat industry can be attributed to several factors, first and foremost among them being the use of superphosphate. The land and the climate are both naturally fairly suitable for wheat growing. The Agricultural Bank made it relatively easy for those with little capital to take up farming by spreading land payments over long period. (43) By 1912, the wheat industry was firmly established at Doodlakine.

- (32) Information from Mr B Leake.
- (33) (34) Information from Pr P Ripper.
- (35) Information from Mr D Barr and Mr B Leake.
- (36) (37) Parliamentary Papers.
- (38) Road Board records.
- (39) (40) Information from Mr B Leake.
- (41) (42) Letter from Mr C Massingham to Mr D Barr.
- (43) A Story of a Hundred Years Western Australia 1829-1929  
Sir Hal Colebatch.