

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

DROUGHT, FLOODS & FIRE

March 1857: Bushfires

Mr Palmer, of Dederang, Little River, has also lost a quantity of hay and wheat by bush fire. An extensive bush fire has also been burning for several days in the direction of Mr T. Mitchell's station, but we have not heard of any property being consumed by it.

Source: "DISTRICT OF ALBURY." *Empire* (Sydney, NSW: 1850 - 1875) 17 Mar 1857: 2. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article60277983>

October 1867: Floods

The Yackandandah road is all but impassable, and we may expect at any moment to hear of some of the culverts on that line being swept away, as they have been more than once before. In that division also we tremble for the new Kiewa bridge and its approaches, as the Little River and its lagoons are full. The bridge over the Middle Creek is not in a very safe condition; and we have heard it stated that the upper bridge on the old Middle Creek Road to Albury has been entirely carried away, and the creek of course impassable.

Source: "THE FLOODS." *Illustrated Australian News for Home Readers* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1867 - 1875) 19 Oct 1867: 10. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article60819741>

1889: Bushfires on the mountains burning the "coarse grass"

KERGUNYAH. Our sleepy valley is beginning to rouse itself at last, and to put on an air of importance. A railway is in contemplation along the valley from Huon's lane to Dederang; churches are in course of erection—a Church of England at Gundowring, and a Presbyterian at Kergunyah. Let us hope the new buildings will see more people congregate within than the State schools have done hitherto. At Kergunyah South the State school has to do duty as a place of worship. The Rev. E. Elliott preached here last Sunday for the second time, and, I am glad to be able to say, to a decidedly increased congregation. The bush fires are still raging, but as they are only burning the coarse grass on the mountains, the inhabitants do not trouble themselves much about them. The dense smoke that sometimes envelopes the valley somewhat resembles a London fog.

Source: KERGUNYAH. (1889, March 29). Wodonga and Towong Sentinel (Vic.: 1885 - 1954), p. 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70750305>

April 1889: Drought Breaks

KERGUNYAH The drought has fairly broken up at last. Heavy rains fell here last week, and again this week light showers have fallen, which have made a good spring in the grass, but it is feared that the frost will cut off any feed that is likely to spring before the winter, as already we have had several slight ones.

Source: KERGUNYAH. (1889, April 18). Wodonga and Towong Sentinel (Vic.: 1885 - 1954), p. 3. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article70750349>

August 1896: KERGUNYAH – long dry spell

The long spell of comparatively dry weather is making graziers and farmers uneasy. Since the beginning of May we have only had 6'54in. of rain, and a succession of 12 frosty nights at the end of July has dried up all the old grass and checked the spring effectually; unless August and September are really wet we may expect another droughty summer in this part of the world.

Source: "COUNTRY DISTRICTS." *The Australasian* (Melbourne, Vic.: 1864 - 1946) 15 Aug 1896: 9. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article139729461>

December 1898: Dust Storm

Summer has begun in earnest. The weather has been hot by fits and starts before this, but - the month of November, as a whole, was delightfully cool. Today the thermometer has reached 95 degrees in the shade, and we have had a dust storm only a shade better than the one which invaded this part of the country on the 28th November. The dust was so thick that day that in places a traveller could not see the way more than 30 yards ahead.

There were 11 points of rain on the night following the storm, and the dust got washed into hollows in the floor in thick cakes of mud. It settled on the grass and trees, and got into your mouth, making a nasty taste and a feeling of grit between your teeth. It dirtied your shirt collar and penetrated everywhere, through all the clothes you were obliged to wear for the sake of appearances, into the pores of the skin.

Today there has been a repetition of this on a smaller scale, but the wind has not been nearly as strong, and so the dust has not been so aggressive. It is to be hoped the rain will follow.

Source: KERGUNYAH. (1898, December 9). Albury Banner and Wodonga Express (NSW: 1896 - 1938), p. 17. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article99977401>

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July 1905: Floods

What might truthfully be termed phenomenal rainfall took place on Saturday night and Sunday. Starting at about 12 o'clock on Saturday night it continued without intermission, and after raining heavily for about eighteen hours, it came down at the rate of about an inch per hour between 2 and 3 o'clock on Sunday afternoon, In a remarkably quick time the whole country side was in flooded state, and a considerable amount of damage was the result. Following so closely on the late very heavy rains the effect on the roads was disastrous.

The traffic between Kergunyah and Kiewa was completely blocked on the western side of the river, owing to the loss of a culvert in an otherwise impassable creek, In several other cases culverts have been washed out completely and many more have been damaged beyond repair.

The damage to the roads and bridges, etc., in the Yackandandah shire is very great, and may be safely estimated to run into hundreds of pounds. Nor did private individuals fair much better, as the damage to fences and cultivation paddocks is painfully evident on all sides. The floods were the highest seen in the locality for years. In fact in the recollection of the older residents of the Kiewa Valley, only once before was the water in the creeks known to rise, so high. The present would be an opportune time for intending applicants to inspect the Springvale Estate, as they would have an idea what they may expect at any time during the winter months.

Source: AT KERGUNYAH. (1905, July 14). *The Border Morning Mail and Riverina Times* (Albury, NSW : 1903 - 1920), p. 2.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article108965405>

February 1926: Bushfires

A bushfire is raging in the hills around Dederang and Running Creek this week. Many of the land owners have lost grass and fencing, but up to the present they are holding it off the lower land. Gangs of men are working at it night and day, and if rain does not soon fall, things will be in a bad way. Another fire on the Gundowring hills is also causing great alarm to settlers, especially in the top end of Sandy Creek.

Source: Wodonga and Towong Sentinel (Vic.: 1885 - 1954), Friday 19 February 1926, page 2

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/69649210?search>

March 1900: Bushfire

News from the seat of war in South Africa, even when the 'Victorian Contingent under fire' in it, has had to take second place here for the last week or so. An enemy even worse than the Boers, as far as we are concerned, has been threatening our shores and our living for some time back: He has been steadily advancing, sometimes by forced marches, miles in a day, sometimes more slowly.

We have made many attempts to stop him, but he is a sturdy opponent, and takes any amount of beating ; in fact, it is almost impossible to make him beat a retreat. The Kiewa Valley has been invaded in force. On the east the enemy approached in great strength from the Sandy Creek Valley, the line of fire extending for at least half a mile: On the west the height called Big Ben had been seized, the enemy advancing rapidly up its western slopes, of which he took possession. A great deal of the country on the east side of the creek, running near Palmer's Gap to Mr Ivor's property at Dederang, has been devastated. A large number of men gathered to oppose the progress of the destructive force, and by hard fighting it was checked at the Swamp Creek on the west, and on the south at a line running from Mr Ivor's property to Coldwater Creek, thence up that creek to the top of the hill and down into Cherry Tree Creek on the Kergunyah side.

It was only by meeting fire with fire, and by very hard fighting, and occasional desperate attacks, after frequent rebuffs, that the enemy was repulsed. The work of opposing him continued day and night. The men were relieved occasionally by volunteers willing to take their places, while some who could not fight did as well by carrying food and water to the belligerents. At Tawonga a sudden invasion was made up Running Creek at Mr W Barton's. From that place it is said an advance of seven miles up the river was made in one afternoon. The homesteads of Messrs Black, Ellis, Taylor, and Hobbs were attacked nearly at the same time, and of course the volunteers who hurried up to assist in their protection could not concentrate at any one place. At Mr Ellis's it is said that the roof of one of the buildings was actually set on fire, but fortunately the fire was observed and put out before it got a good hold. Until the night of the 26th bush fires occupied the attention and all the strength of a number of active young fellows in the Kiewa Valley in the places mentioned above,

On that night a stormy blustering evening, so bad for fighting the enemy by any previous time, was succeeded by a fall of J7.5 points of rain, which damped the grass sufficiently to remove all danger the following day. The work still remaining is to cut off all burning logs projecting into the unburnt grass, and turn them back on to the burnt and blackened ground A careful watch will be necessary till the fire in these die out, for at any moment a sudden gust might carry sparks from them which might set fire to the grass after it has dried again,. There have been heavy losses of grass and fencing at Tawonga and Dederang, but fortunately no homesteads have been burned. It is reported that up at Tawonga the fire made a leap across the River Kiewa, which is of considerable width and lighted the grass in Mr Keat's paddock.

KERGUNYAH. (1900, March 2). *Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* (NSW: 1896 - 1938), p. 24.

<http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article99850976>