

ON THE SHEEP'S BACK



Jaye Charlton, Sophie Bashford,
Sophie Willis and Sam Hughes

Deniliquin North Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

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Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Jane Frazer for her wealth of knowledge about the Peppins, as well as her contribution of photos.

Our Community

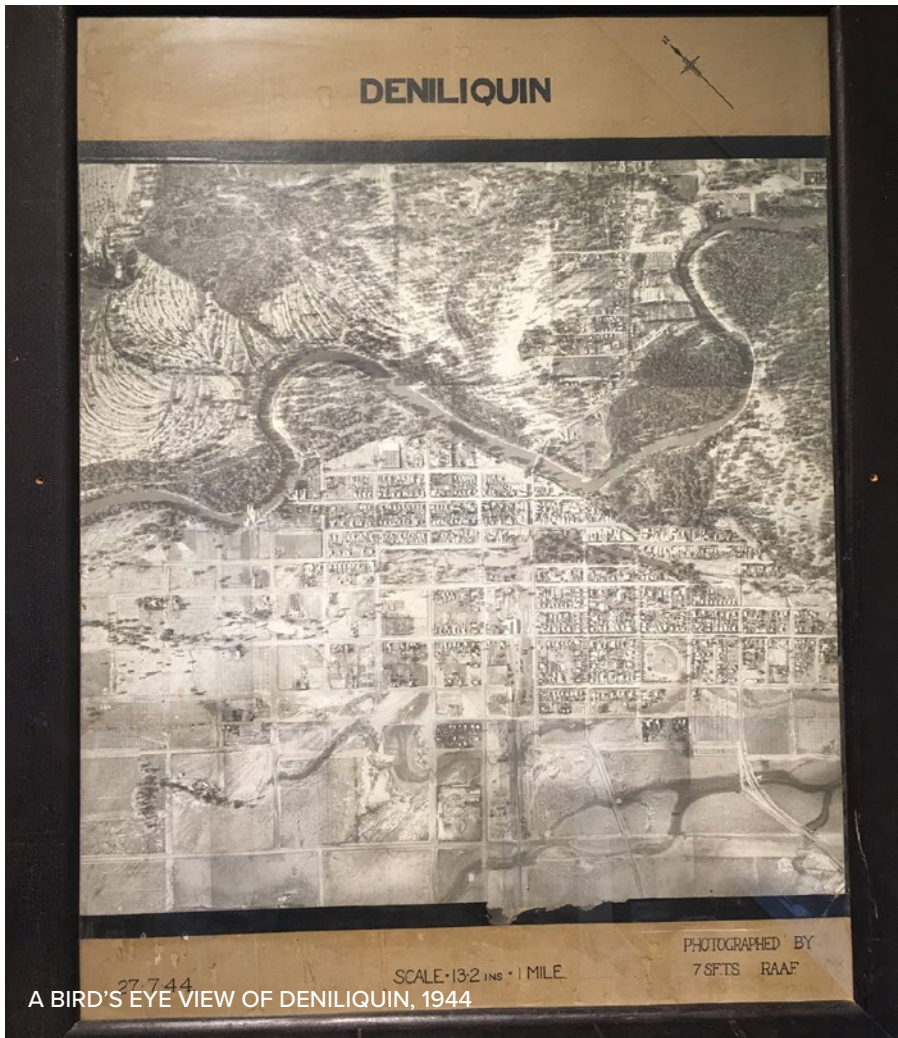
In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their local community and how local individuals, couples, businesses or industries have made a difference. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services and the Australian government's National Landcare Programme.

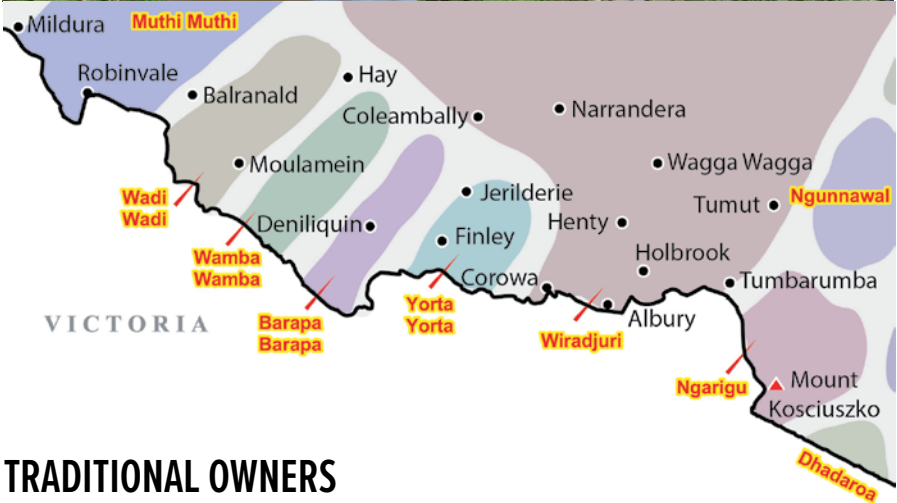
Creative Catchment Kids - Our Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.



DENILIQVIN

Deniliquin, locally known as 'Deni', is a small town situated in the Riverina district of NSW. With the Edward River meandering through the township, Deniliquin lies 711 kilometres from Sydney and 290 kilometres from Melbourne, on what some say is the flattest place in Australia - the 'Hay Plains'. The town mostly produces rice, wool and timber. At one time, Deniliquin had the largest rice mill in the southern hemisphere.





TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Wamba-Wamba and Barapa-Barapa tribes were the traditional owners of the land that is now, Deniliquin. The Barapa-Barapa people are closely connected to the Wamba-Wamba people. Deniliquin was named after Denilakoon, an Aboriginal chief and wrestler who was noted for his size and strength. Deniliquin was first occupied by white settlers in 1842.



SALTBUSH AND THE EARLY SETTLERS

Early settlers around Deniliquin found the area dull and inhospitable. Away from the creek and river fronts, the land was virtually arid. It was considered too harsh for sheep, so Deniliquin was originally cattle country. One native plant that thrived was, and still does, is saltbush. Saltbush is a valuable fodder plant that recovers well after grazing and is also fire and drought retardant.

THE PEPPINS

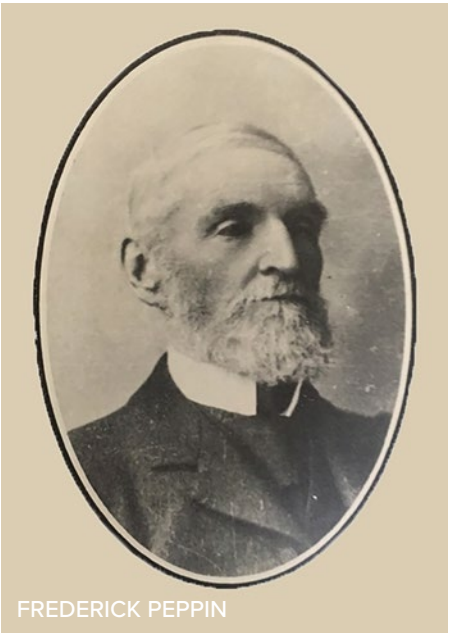
In 1850, English born George Hall Peppin, his wife Harriet and their sons, Frederick and George Jnr, sailed from England on the 'Anna Maria' to Melbourne. Before arriving in Deniliquin, they attempted to farm at Mimamaluke (near Mansfield). They had to deal with very heavy rainfall and diseases such as scabies and fluke. Soon, they sold up and bought South Wanganella station from W.A. Brodribb for £10,000. This deal included 8,000 sheep.



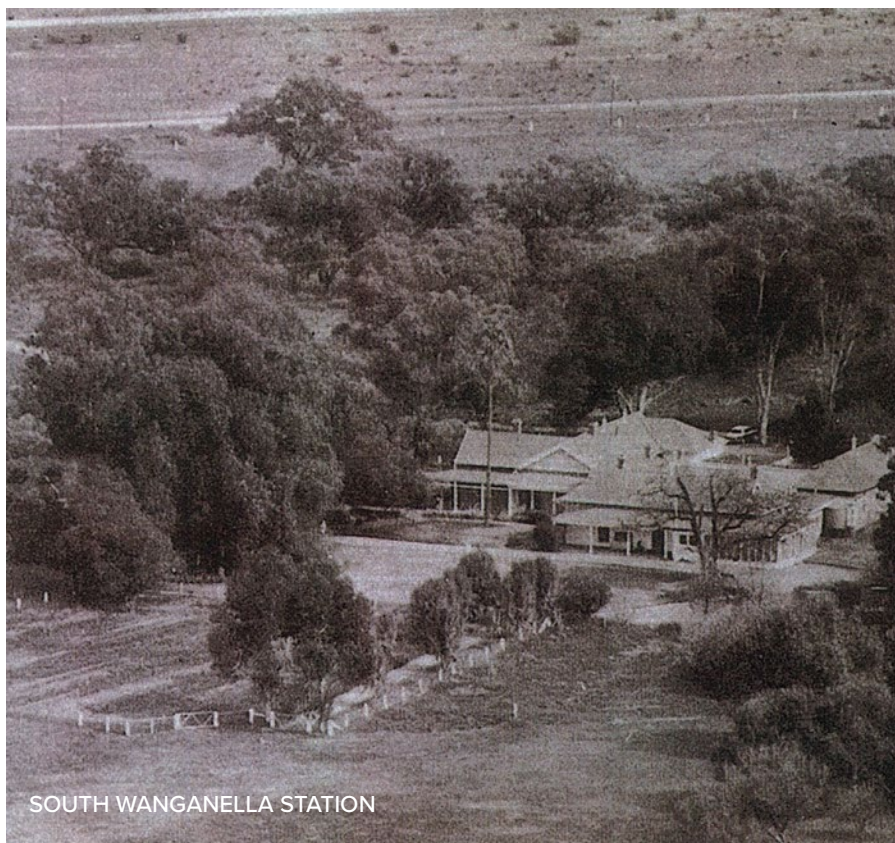
GEORGE HALL PEPPIN



GEORGE PEPPIN JNR



FREDERICK PEPPIN



MEAT TO WOOL

The Peppins' financial struggles didn't end with their arrival at South Wanganella. The fattening of sheep for the Melbourne market didn't pay off. By 1861, South Wanganella was on the market. To ensure a quick sale, the Peppins included 20,000 sheep in their offer. When no buyers presented, they had no choice but to re-examine their farming strategies. At the time, there was a demand for the supply of medium wool to the French and English markets, so the Peppins' took advantage of this.



WANGANELLA STUD RAM, 1874

THOMAS SHAW

As the Peppin's flock increased, they needed a quality breeder to maximise their chances of producing high quality wool. They employed a 'Pommy' sheep breeder and wool classer named Thomas Shaw. Shaw saw the potential in the Merino; a breed of sheep originally introduced to Australia from the dry, arid climate of Spain - a climate similar to that of Wanganella's.



THE PEPPIN Merino – AN AMAZING BREED

Thomas Shaw (pictured) began his breeding program by choosing 200 of the best ewes as well as 100 stud Rambouillet (French Merino) sired ewes, and mating them with Rambouillet and Negretti (German) rams. Later, two rams (sired by a famous ram called 'Old Grimes') from Vermont in America, were purchased and added to the breeding program. 80% of the sheep in Australia today are derived from the Peppin Merino. The Peppins soon acquired the neighbouring properties of Morago and Boonoke.

WOOL

Wool is a strong fibre which grows on sheep. Wool has many purposes, for example it can be used for clothing and carpet. Farmers employ shearers to shear off the wool. This wool is then classed by a wool-classer, put into bales, and trucked off to wool factories where it is sold to manufacturers.



THE MERINO POSSESSES MEDIUM WOOL

WORKING WITH WOOL

Wool is measured in microns. A good fleece is about 21-22 microns. The less microns, the finer the wool. The finest wool ever to be produced was 11.9 microns which sold for \$1.4 million.

Initially, the Merino had a lot of wrinkles on its body. However, the wool was too greasy and didn't contain the heavier fleece as first thought. Eventually these wrinkles were bred out of the Merino.



THE MERINO ORIGINALLY HAD MANY WRINKLES



A RANGE OF WOOL (FINE TO THICKER WOOL)

Australian Wool Market

In Australia's history, there have been three major wool industry peaks. The Peppins thrived back in 1860. The next two peaks were in the 1980's and in 2006/2007. In the 1990's, there were too many sheep in Australia, so farmers were paid \$5.00 per head by the government to shoot their sheep. This was a better deal than selling the wool, even with the bullet price of 20 cents.

"We were satisfied with the type of wool the country would grow instead of trying to produce what the climate and soil would continually fight against. Thus we developed all its good natural tendencies. After the flock had a character of its own, we tried experimenting on a small scale only, and in such a way that they could do not permanent injury, and abandoned them when they were found not the answer to the desired object."

Fred Peppin

As told to 'Bruni' (Journalist for the 'Australasian' Directory)

1874

LEAVING A LEGACY

In their brief 20 years of breeding, selling and developing sheep, the Peppins created history. In 1878, they sold Wanganella Station, South Boonoke and Long Plains to Millear and Austin, and North Boonoke to F.S Falkiner and J.R Ross- both parties inheriting all the sheep on the properties.

The Peppins' successors continued with their popular breeding system. George Hall, George Junior and Frederick Peppin will always be remembered for their important part in Deniliquin's history.





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2016 Year 6, Deniliquin North Public School

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.



Local Land
Services
Murray



Australian Government

