

WELSH SWAGMAN 1869- 1894 IN AUSTRALIA.

Joseph Jenkins came from Wales and landed in Melbourne 8th December 1869, he prided himself as a very skilled farmer and looking for jobs. He kept a day to day diary. I would say he was stubborn, but very honest. Apart from all his farming experiences he wrote very accurate description of the weather, dryness, drought and this is the most interesting part I will post.

He also gives reports on produce prices, yields of crops and milk production, gold found.

He left Melbourne heading to Taradale then Castlemaine and Newstead looking for and working. Unbearably hot 118°F degrees, a paddock of 22,000 starving sheep in a paddock, the stench was atrocious.

At Lake Learmonth up to 135°F in the shed and down to 35°F at night.

January 1870 has job following the threshing machines from farm to farm, Burrumbeet, Forest Creek, 120°F in the day and 40°F at night.

Coghills Crk.

March 1870 at Cogles Creek 102°F January 1871 back at Learmonth severe thunderstorms, 3 people killed by lightning, a hay stack caught on fire cattle killed. Late March ploughing a paddock with horses heavy frosts ground hard to plough. February 1875 at Geelong 113°F Many die in Melbourne from hot weather, fierce bushfires around Melbourne.

December 1878 long dry grass and grass fires very dry weather, need rain, 103°F in the shade and 117°F in the sun. February 1879 bushfire smoke everywhere, driest on record, all creeks and waterholes dry. Building a dairy and a lodging room in side of slope 4 foot (1200mm) underground and 6 foot (1800mm) above ground. Digging for ground water. May a thunderstorm gives some relief.

1884 severe flooding near Maldon. 2 people drowned crossing creek in a trap. (horse gig?)

December 1888. The drought continues. Local councils have big debts.

September 1889 Heavy rains and big floods along the Murray River, houses flooded, people rescued by boats.

January 1890 Spent the day cutting thistles along the channel banks 101°F in the shade 136°F in the sun.

Heavy rain in Queensland and NSW but none in Victoria still hot 108°F in the shade, water scarce, town taps not working.

February 1890 intense heat, bushfire smoke, locals are saying looking like could develop to another 6<sup>th</sup> February 1851 "Black Thursday".

January 1891 hot and drought fruit on tree are dropping off before ripened. March more bushfires 16 miles away, another one swept through Maldon here burning houses and shops.

Late March heavy rains and flooding in the Maldon district, the farmers didn't bother to make hay from the growth.

December 1891 heat waves 1891°F in the shade, bushfires in other states. 1892 8 dust storms for the year.

Driest and hottest year I have spent in the Colony and stock dying for want of hay.

June 1893 rain and crops are flooded. Still rain and floods in September, early December 90°F humid then 3 days later torrential rains. Sometime in 1894 he went back to Wales.

He saw Haleys Comet and another one and one major earthquake and one smaller one.