

THE DAY THE LAKE CAUGHT FIRE 1868

Mr R Kerr responded to the Mayor's invitation to provide reminiscences of the early days of Ballarat when he invited early residents to a reunion in 1920. He arrived in Ballarat in 1854 and would have been 7 years old.. He writes :-

“ I remember the first water supply was brought down a pipe from the Lake then called Yuille Swamp and was a rather primitive affair with (a) stand pipe which stood in Sturt St at (the) intersection of Armstrong St. from whence water was sold in load or half load.

The Lake was dry and a fire in 1868 after which our enterprising Councillor, Mr Dowell had a motion carried to have a serpentine Embankment constructed by Prison Labour with (the) object of keeping the South side full by syphoning the water from the North side for boating purposes which project dully carried out and on the West side of the Lake there was an island called McDowell's. I do not remember the Lake has ever been dry since.”

R.Kerr 1920