

The Early Days

By the middle of the nineteenth century the area we know as West End was a thriving farming community growing fruit and vegetables for the people of Brisbane. It had been named 'Kurilpa' meaning "place for rats", by the local Turrbal people and consisted of blocks of rich alluvial soil along the river bank which were able to produce strawberries, grapes, oranges, melons, bananas and peaches. A creek ran down Montague Road to Jane Street where it met the river.

Building the New School

Around the 1870s the close proximity of West End to the city and the increasing commercial interests in South Brisbane led to a greater increase in residential development. By 1874 it was clear that a primary school was needed and tenders were called. Mr. Ebenezer Chapman was successful and with a budget of one thousand six hundred and fifty pounds built the first school which opened on August 16th 1875.



The First West End School

In fact it was three schools in one, for in those days boys, girls and infants were segregated. The T shaped building at the southern end of the block bounded by Vulture, Hardgrave, Horan and Jane Streets, housed 76 boys under the Headmaster Mr. Walter Scott, 54 girls under Headmistress Miss Jessie Robertson and 106 infants under Headmistress Miss Marianne Horan.

The First Inspection

The first inspections reveal a good report on the teaching at the new school, but concerns about the building: "The schoolroom devoted to the use of the infants is un-provided with verandahs, and, the windows not being frosted, is found to be very hot in the afternoon; it also stands in such a position that it is screened from the prevailing easterly breezes".

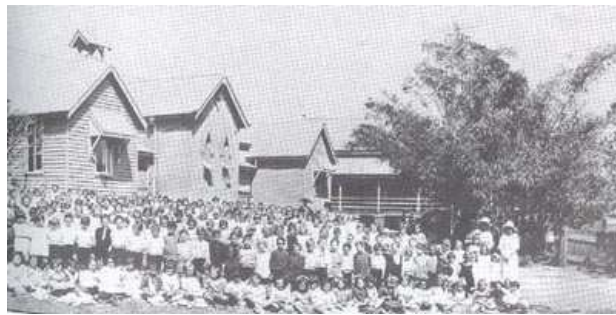
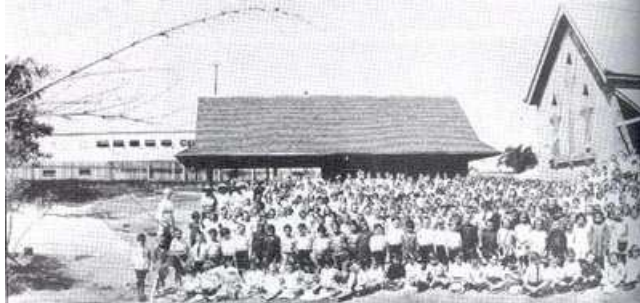
1890 – The First Arbor Day

The report in the Brisbane Courier records the day – "The day's work began by the scholars marching with their implements to the scene of their labours.....Mr. Atkinson, the gardener of the Queensland Club superintended the planting of the trees and he was ably assisted by the teachers and scholars of the boys' school.....Twelve trees were planted.....and two figs." One of those fig trees still stands in the centre of the school grounds today and is a familiar landmark – "Meet me under the fig tree".



Expanding enrolments

By 1884 overcrowding was intense and so a new Boys School was built on the site of the current Junior School and the girls and infants thankfully took over their room. A large fence was built down the centre of the playground thus keeping boys and girls separate. However further additions were necessary in the Girls' section by 1892 and again in 1924. This photo shows the original school in 1926 with the students assembled outside.



The girls in 1888



The Boys In 1897

The boy marked with a X is Walter Adey born in 1887, whose daughter Carol, later became a student and then a teacher at the school herself.



Milestones – Qld's & West End's Educational Past

- 1824 The First settlement in Queensland is established
- 1842 The Moreton Bay Colony ceases to be a convict settlement, and opens to free settlers
- 1859 Qld becomes a separate colony
- 1874 Tenders called for West End State School to be built
- 1875 January – The memorandum of Agreement is signed to commence the building of West End State School
August 16 – West End State School opens
The Education Act transfers all primary education in Qld to the Department of Public Instruction and provides for free, secular and compulsory education in State Schools.
Mr. Scott, Miss Robertson and Miss Horan take up duties as Principals of the Boys', the Girls' and the Infants' Schools respectively
- 1876 The pupil teacher scheme under which the head teacher was responsible for the training of pupil-teachers is introduced.
- 1884 Increasing enrolments lead to a new Boys' School being built
- 1890 The first Arbor Day – The Fig Tree is planted
- 1892 Increasing enrolments lead to additions to the Girls' and Infants' schools
- 1893 Brisbane flooded – school used as a refuge for flood victims
- 1912 The first State High Schools established. School leaving age raised from 12 to 14.
- 1914 First World War
Secondary scholarships for 2 years at approved secondary schools offered to all students who gained 50% or more in the annual State Scholarship examinations.
- 1918 First World War ends
- 1924 Additions to Girls' School carried out
- 1930 Unveiling of Memorial Fountain to those who lost their lives in World War 1.
- 1936 Original building is demolished and new brick building is built. Girls' and Boys' Schools amalgamated.
- Materials from the original building are added to the old Boys' School
- 1938 Domestic Science and Manual Training introduced
Coronation of King George VI
- 1939 The Second World War
Slit trenches dug in main playing area in case of air raid
- 1941 Whole school participated in the Patriotic Fund Pageant in the Brisbane City Hall
- 1952 Preps dropped and change to Grades 1 to 7.
- 1962 The Scholarship Examination is abolished
- 1964 Grade 8 transfers to the secondary school.
- 1972 The Western wing is built on the brick building
- 1974 Brisbane Floods – Infants' School Inundated
The Infants' School is renovated and raised
- 1975 The School's 100th Anniversary
The preschool commences
- 1976 Out of School Hours Care commences
- 1984 The Eastern wing is built on the brick building
- 1990 The swimming pool is opened
- 1995 The Primary School and Infants' School are amalgamated.
The Resource Centre is built.
- 1996 The Queensland Department of Education becomes Education Queensland
- 2000 The Pool Stadium is built
The Kitchen and Tuckshop are amalgamated
The Hall Building Fund commences
February 23rd
The Launch of 125th Anniversary Celebrations
March 21st – 40s Reunion
April 4th – 30th Reunion
May 23rd – 50s Reunion
August 4th – Anniversary Dance
August 6th – Anniversary FIESTA
August 15th – Back to 1875 for the whole school
November – Time Capsule

The Fifties and Sixties

Sport including tennis was a regular feature at the school along with excellence in academic work leading to the Scholarship exam. With the post war era the baby boom continued and enrolments grew. A shortage of teachers following the war increased difficulties. The major change in education during the sixties was the cessation of the Scholarship Examination and the move to high school without the qualifying exam which opened up a secondary education for many students. Students moved to high school aged 13 at the end of grade 7. Sport has always been important in the history of West End State School - cricket, rugby league, softball, rugby union, tennis, swimming and the sixties were no exception with many well known sporting names having started at West End.

The Seventies

An additional block was built onto the western end of the main building facing Hardgrave Road. In 1974 the Preschool opened, and, exacerbated by flooding, the decision was made to raise and remodel the then Infant's School. This photo shows the old Infants' School on stumps prior to remodeling.



Another significant event was the beginning of Greek Dancing under the leadership of Mrs. Pat Xynias. Here the dancers pose at the front of the school in 1978. The Greek dancing has continued and grown with the dancers performing at many official functions.



The Out of School Hours Care program was also commenced in 1975 and continues to cater for a large group of children.

The Eighties

During the eighties two major building projects occurred - the Eastern wing was built onto the main building and the swimming pool was added through the combined efforts of parents, students and the community.



The Nineties

The nineties saw very rapid change for West End State School. The West End Infants' School was one of the last remaining Infants' Schools in Queensland and during the early nineties there were many amalgamations of Infants' Schools with

their nearby Primary Schools. In July 1993 the parents read in the Courier Mail of the proposed amalgamation of their Infants' School with the West End Primary School. There was a great deal of protest and opposition, but in 1995 the amalgamation took place and the fence between the two campuses was pulled down.

Between the two schools a large resource centre was constructed unifying the two areas, and beneath it, the ever resourceful parents, organised the building of change rooms for the nearby pool and raised funds. It was at this stage that the school motto was changed to incorporate the two schools, becoming "We all smile in the same language".

In 1996 the Kurilpa Trail, at the front of the school, was constructed to display indigenous plants. The School House names were changed to reflect the value the school places on our indigenous culture - these are:

- Kurilpa - The Water Rat,
- Baruga - The Kangaroo Rat,
- Chulawong - The Mountain Magpie,
- Dungar - The Pelican.

Through the 'Building Better Schools' some of the classrooms in the senior school were upgraded and in 1997 the administration area was totally refurbished. In

1999 the school won the inaugural Premier's Multicultural Award for " being a showpiece of consistent and holistic practice. West End is a brilliant example of a school that has embraced the diversity of its community and is vibrantly living the principles of multiculturalism". The Premier, Peter Beattie, presents the Principal, Mrs. Marion Shields with the award.



The Second World War

In 1938 the first Domestic Science and Manual Arts classes commenced and these were tailored to meet increasing restrictions as the war progressed. The oval was dug up by parents and volunteers for slit trenches in the event of bombing and students were issued with gas masks. School hours were reduced to a few hours each day with most of the male teachers enlisted in the armed forces. Students joined Junior Red Cross and various cadet groups, as well as joining in fundraising activities where possible. Life for most was governed by restrictions in food, clothing and petrol. The school fife and drum band practised diligently and marched in ANZAC parades through the city - seen here in 1941..

