

## NOTICES

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic: 1848 - 1956)

Tuesday 8 May 1900 p 1 Family Notices ... gathered at home. LEECH - On the 4th May, at "Leechfield " Woosang, Thomas, the dearly beloved husband of Betty Leech, aged 78 years

The Barrier Miner, Fri May 11, 1900

The death is reported from Victoria of an old colonist, Mr. Thomas Leech, of Leechfield, aged 78.

He landed in the colony in 1851 and made his way in succession to the Avoca, Adolatdo Lead, and Fiery Creek fields, and then to Dunolly, finding some rich claims. He was one of the first to take up tobacco growing as an industry.

HISTORY - (Granddaughter of Wm Henry Leech, Elizabeth M (Betty) Andrews)

Thomas came to Australia around 1851 and settled on the goldfields in Dunnolly.

The family later settled in Tarnagulla, (formerly Sandy Flat) around 1857.

Sons George Frederick and William Henry settled in Woosang in 1877, now a ghost settlement, between Wedderburn and Charlton. Following the death of William Henry and George Frederick, the farm was sold and now the beautiful mud brick building they built has been washed away and included in a larger property.

Thomas moved to Woosang in about 1885 when his 60 acre property at Grassy Flat went up for sale. He may have built his house over the road from his sons' place but nothing remains of it now.

I have no photos of Thomas, but do have for photos of one son and one daughter and their spouses.

They later became farmers and they and my grandfather William settled in Woosang in about 1877, a small settlement, now a ghost settlement, between Wedderburn and Charlton in Victoria's North West.

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~tarnagul/dgindex/index.html>

The following abbreviations are used within these documents;

TC - Tarnagulla Courier

IA - Inglewood Advertiser

MDA - Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser

DBCE - Dunolly and Burnt Creek Express

DTSE - Dunolly, Tarnagulla and St Arnaud Express

## LEECH T.

MDA 8.11.1861 Refreshment Licence

DTSE 22. 9.1864

TC 22. 8.1874 Mr Leach gives a Lancashire dialogue. He is very very good at acting and reading.

TC 20.11.1875 A son of Mr Leech of the Hard Hills, Dunolly\*, dies of scarlet fever.

TC 8. 7.1876 Elected to Shire School board of advice.

TC 19. 1.1878 J P.

TC 1. 6.1878 President of the Bet Bet Shire\*, travels to the Governor's Levee.

TC 3. 1.1880 Originator of the Harvest Queen ceremony in connection with the Tarnagulla Fete.

TC 26. 2.1881 Cr. Leech of Waanyarra.\*

TC 14.11.1885 His 60 acres property at Grassy Flat for sale.

TC 27.11.1886 Of Woosang.

TC 30.10.1897 Golden Wedding, at "Leechfield", Woosang.

TC 5. 5.1900 Dies, very good obituary.

TC 20.10.1900 Sale of his Paddock at Grassy Flat.

TC 3.11.1900 Sports held in his paddock, then paddock sold.

TC 25.11.1905 Mrs dies.

Tc 14.11.1908 Albert

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\*Hard Hills Mine, Dunolly (1856-59) area, near Linton VIC. Hard Hill Rush of Jan 1854; Dunolly Rush 1856

\*Waanyarra & Bet Bet Shire\* - Dunolly District

Waanyarra - NE of Dunolly

<http://www.waanyarra.com>

1864-65 Tobacco was first grown at Waanyarra in the summer of these years. Mr Thomas Leech planted a 1/2 acre crop at Grassy Flat, the fertile creek flats North of Morton's Welcome Inn. The venture was successful, so that the following season he planted a larger area. After dismissing the belief that the locally grown product was inferior, he sold the crop for 3/- a pound.

Mr Leech then constructed a press which was used to press the produce into a more saleable item at 4/- a pound.

In the years 1866-67 Mr. Leech planted an acre of tobacco which yielded around ½ a ton. The crop, when cured and pressed, was sold for 4/6d. a pound.

Mr. Leech's venture gained much notoriety in the Waanyarra neighbourhood, and in the following season the crop was again a success, with more acres being planted.

In the 1868 Waanyarra Postal Directory a Mrs. Mueller of Mosquito was listed as a Tobacco grower, so there was no doubt that Mr. Leech's tobacco venture caused interest.

From Janet Rowson of Grassy Flat Waanyarra Feb 2016

[1864-65] Tobacco was first grown at Waanyarra in the summer of 1864-65. Mr Thomas Leech planted a 1/2-acre crop at Grassy Flat. The venture was successful, so that the following season he planted a larger area. 168 [1860s] Gold deposits were depleted by the early 1860's, although diggers still worked the Waanyarra area with some success. Miners who stayed in the district with their families were reluctant to leave the settled life they had come to enjoy.

The 1869 Land Act allowed for ordinary, less wealthy people to select and buy land ...

Commons were established to allow controlled grazing of Crown Land for a fee.

Jones Creek Goldfields Common was about 410 acres and took in part of Grassy Flat, where a dam was built for stock water.

The saw mill was the first steam powered mill in Australia and was on this paddock.

[1861] Waanyarra] Many men were kept employed cutting timber when gold became scarce. Timber was used for fencing, building, and fuel and for railway sleepers.

In 1861 there was a sawmill at Grassy Flat. Bullock drays were used to haul the huge logs to the sawmill. Mr. R.W Hammond and Co. were proprietors of the mill.

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<http://www.waanyarra.com>

Jones' Creek School No.339

The average attendance at Jones' Creek School was 16 when Mr. and Mrs. Birrell took charge in January, 1871. The 1871 School picnic was held at Thomas Leech's paddock at Grassy Flat on the 17th March, with Mr. Birrell supervising the games.

The children who attended the picnic were given grapes by Mr. Leech.

The cricket ground was chosen as the venue for the 1872 picnic. Mr. Birrell marched his pupils to the picnic spot where, on their arrival, they were given fruit supplied by their parents.

Cricket and football were played and there were races. Lunch was served at the booth. In the afternoon adults danced to violin music and the children received fruit and lollies. Jones' Creek School correspondent, Mr. Leech congratulated the company on the spirit of cordiality and good feeling which had made the occasion enjoyable. The National Anthem concluded the proceedings.

Mr. Thomas Leech was elected to the School Board for the Tarnagulla Riding of the Bet-Bet Shire in June of 1872.

JONES' CREEK;

Loddon District; Postal Village; Dist from Melb 113 miles

Ballier's 1868 Victorian Directory for Jones' Creek

Leech Thomas, dairyman, Grassy Flat

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[trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/5933558](http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/5933558)

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1956).Bet Bet (Shire) - Mr Thomas Leech was on Tuesday elected president of the Bet Bet. Shire. Dandenong (web page unavailable for full details)