



JACK SUSAC FIRING HIS KILNS

SUSAC LIME KILNS



The Lime Kilns OF WANNEROO

Further information

You can borrow "Living History - Lime Kilns" on video or DVD, featuring the actual operation of a lime kiln in Wanneroo, from the Wanneroo Library. This includes an interview with Jack Susac of Susac Lime Supply who has been operating lime kilns for 50 years.

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FRONT COVER | MENCHETTI KILNS, LAKE ROAD, NEERABUP



LM 0605

heritageplaces



YANCHEP LIME CO. (YLC) TRUCK LOADED WITH WOOD c.1940

Lime kilns were located around Western Australia close to European settlement before commencing as an industry in the Wanneroo district in the early part of the twentieth century.

Small homebuilder kilns were used initially in Wanneroo, however, from the 1920s Wanneroo became the major lime producing area in WA. The high quality of the limestone saw the development of an industry that has continued into the twenty-first century.

At the industry's peak approximately 47 kilns were operational and over 200 people employed. During the mid twentieth century it was common for lime-burners and their families to live at the sites. Many were Southern European migrants. This domestic life is also part of heritage of the lime industry in Wanneroo.

Why lime burning?

The burning of limestone at very high temperatures removes the carbon dioxide and quicklime is produced. If water is added to the quicklime hydrated (or slaked) lime is produced. As well as supplying the building industry, Wanneroo lime was used in gold production and for agricultural fertiliser. The lime putty for the construction of new Parliament House in Canberra was supplied by a Wanneroo company, Susac Lime Supply.

High quality limestone can still be found along the limestone ridges in Wanneroo, while deposits around Lake Joondalup are of a lower grade and used for building stone and road base.

Where are the lime kilns?

Lime burning generally occurred along the limestone ridge adjacent to Wanneroo Road between Joondalup Drive in the south and Bernard Road in the north. The more southerly kilns are located to the west of Wanneroo Road as the ridge crosses the Wanneroo Road alignment to the south of Flynn Drive. The existence of Wanneroo Road in the area was an essential element in the development of lime kilns as it made them accessible for transport to markets.

In the City of Wanneroo there are now 25 kiln sites. Very few are currently accessible to the public. Two sites that can be visited are:

Coopers' Kilns Mindarie situated in Coopers Park, Fairport Vista, Mindarie

As the name suggests, these were operated by the Cooper family from 1932 to 1948 by brothers Harry, Athol and Daniel. The family company was known as the Quinns Rock Lime Stone Company. It is unusual in the Wanneroo district for limekilns to be located near the coast, where the kilns were able to take advantage of the sea breezes to fan their fire. The two tower kilns are also unusual due to their style. The roof over the loading bays is no longer in situ.

Lime burning was a highly significant industry for the first settlers in Quinns Rocks, who diversified to survive the hardships of the Depression. The kilns were sufficiently successful to be able to provide much needed work for new migrants and the unemployed.



Menchetti Kilns, Lake Road, Neerabup

These kilns can be seen from Wanneroo Road. The Neerabup Lime Company, run by Neil Menchetti, operated them between 1958 and 1968. The three arch double kilns are set into a limestone rock face with a quarry nearby. The bagging floor, where the lime was unloaded, is between the two kilns.

Kiln construction

The kilns in the Wanneroo district have changed in style over the years. Very early kilns were small, single units but later kilns are larger and taller, with more ports and heavier buttresses.

Most kilns have been placed with their back along a ridge. This permitted the limestone to be loaded from the top. Thick walls were built so that the heat was retained but prevented cracking. The exteriors were constructed of random rubble limestone, whereas the interior walls were lined with clay bricks.



TONY LUCCA BURNING LIME AT YLC KILN c.1950

Domestic life

Remnants of housing can be found at some sites. Generally the housing was of a temporary nature and timber-framed, hessian-walled huts were common. The hessian was treated with lime wash for weather protection and roofs were made of corrugated iron. Such dwellings were known as bag houses. Some of these simple structures had brick chimneys and fireplaces. Life was not easy for workers or their families.

Many of the limekilns were on leased land, so more permanent structures were not common. The temporary nature of the dwellings has contributed to the scarcity of domestic remnants on the sites.



FRANK AND PAULA ZNIDARSIC AT YLC SITE, CARABOODA