



## **MOONTA SCHOOL OF MINES**

**Now the home of the Family History &  
Resource Centre At Ellen Street, Moonta**

### ***A Short History of its Establishment & Changing Role in Education***

The need for further education beyond that available by the Education Department at Primary School level and the Government supported the establishment in Adelaide in 1889 what became known as the School of Mines.

Soon after this the need for further education in subjects related to mining was acknowledged and a grant was received to establish a school at Moonta where practical knowledge could be obtained in the nearby mines at Moonta Mines and the smelters at Wallaroo. The Moonta School of Mines was opened in 1891 in what was formerly the Baptist Church in Ellen Street. The affairs were managed by a school council of local residents appointed by the Government. In 1893 the Members of the Council were T. James, Esq., M.R.C.S.; L.S.A., Lond. J.P., (President) H.R. Hancock, Esq., J.P.; S. Lathern, Esq.; R. Cowling, Esq.; J. Symons, Esq., J.P. Barkla, Esq.; G.W.F. Marshall, Esq, J.P.; J.W. Hughes, Esq. The School originally began teaching of three subjects:- Mine levelling and Surveying; Mechanical Drawing; and Mathematics and the number of students 33. A report states "The School is intended for students who desire to increase their knowledge in those arts and sciences which are especially important to miners and others similarly engaged."

The School continued to grow and in 1896 the council resolved to add a new room with furnaces and appliances for teaching metallurgy and assaying. By 1898 the number of students had increased to 275. In 1899 steam and Steam Engines were added to the curriculum and a class of Sheet Metal and plumbing was added in 1901. 1903 saw classes in Electricity and Magnetism opened and subsidiary classes in Steam, Geometry, Mechanical Drawing and Mathematics were opened at Wallaroo Mines and were well attended. The average number of students in all classes in 1903 was 269. To accommodate increased enrolments a separate Sheet Metal and Plumbing workshop was built and another room was added at the front of the building joining onto the former Baptist Church section. Included in the subjects taught at the School were the following: -

**Mine Surveying and Levelling  
Mining Engineering  
Assaying  
Magnetism & Electricity  
Geometry and Projection  
Machine Drawing and Design  
Plumbing and Sheet Metal Work**

**Steam and Steam Engines  
Chemistry (Theoretical & Practical)  
Metallurgy  
Mathematics (Algebra, Euclid,  
Mensuration and Trigonometry)  
Model Drawing  
Perspective & Freehand Drawing**

By 1906 further subjects namely Mineralogy, Geology, Book-Keeping, Shorthand, Carpentry, Wool classing, Bookbinding and Arithmetic were being taught, classes being conducted at Moonta and some subjects were taught in the Wallaroo Institute and at Wallaroo Mines.

Arrangements were made with the railway authorities whereby students (under 25 years) attending classes might travel and return from either Wallaroo or Wallaroo Mines to Moonta at special students fares, and special horse drawn coaches were also used for students attending some classes. In 1913 Dressmaking classes were introduced.

In 1915 the name was changed to the School of Mines and Industries and by 1917 commercial and hobby classes were assuming a more dominant role in the School and the syllabus had changed to accommodate these. The number of persons employed at the nearby copper mines was on the decline and closure was predicted to occur in a few years (the mining company went into liquidation in 1923).

Following the passing of the Education Act of 1915 the control and management of the Moonta School of Mines passed from the School Council to the Minister of Education and it became known as the Moonta Technical School. In 1922 the Moonta School was divided into three separate Country Technical Schools viz. Moonta, Kadina and Wallaroo.

The exodus from the Copper Triangle had been in progress before the closing of the Mines as can be seen by the total enrolment.

1917.....	567	1920.....	396
1918.....	489	1921.....	331
1919.....	407	1922.....	225

### **Moonta Technical School (1917 – 1951)**

The newly constituted school ran into difficulty immediately. The regulations required the payment of fees annually instead of terminally and this had its effect on all classes for example carpentry at Wallaroo Mines dropped from an enrolment of 50 in 1917 to 8 in 1918. The loss in numbers was partially off set by the introduction of classes for women and 1921 shows 83 women enrolled out of a total of 304 students. The increase in yearly fees from 10/- to 45/- was the main cause of non-attendance particularly in regard to the womens classes, such as Art Needlework as many who had attended for years were apt to regard the session as an outing rather than as an attendance for instruction. The School as a separate identity finished in 1951 when the control passed to the Kadina Technical School.

Wallaroo Technical School (1922 – 1951) Its history is similar to that of the Moonta School.

The Kadina Technical School history is somewhat different. They were successful in opening classes in Dressmaking at Paskeville in 1923 and soon after a millinery class at Bute. The commercial centre of Northern Yorke Peninsula has long been regarded as being at Kadina and the establishment of these classes in nearby towns led to Kadina becoming the centre of the combined schools in 1952. The Kadina School in 1938-39 period bypassed Moonta and opened branch classes at Stansbury, Maitland and Minlaton. The structure of enrolment into classes has changed from the early days of mining subjects to become almost wholly craft subjects. In 1952 enrolments were 3 per cent commercial and 97 per cent craft.

Following the reorganisation of country Technical Schools into Adult Education Centres in 1956 the school became the Kadina Centre. Since then there have been a number of changes and in 1986 the Kadina Centre, which had administered the Copper Triangle area and Southern Yorke Peninsula was again changed and comes under a larger district administration with headquarters at Port Pirie and the school is now known as a Technical and Further Education (T.A.F.E.) establishment.

### **Names of some of the students who attended the school in its early years**

T.J. Curnow, W.N. Elford, Jas. Proyer, H Pomroy, N.Drummond, Les Bennett, H. Thorner, S.R. Whitford, J.R. Rankine, W.J. Barbary, O.E. Goldsworthy, L.G. Hancock, A.L. Brown, Oswald Pryor, A.Penberthy, W.E. Slee, Wm. Trewarthe, W.H. Hand, Frank Richards, T.Elford, E.J. Trenerry, Thos H. Tamblin, H.J.F.Hollands, W.V. Cowling, Albert E. Noble, C.F., Skinner, J.L. Pearson, J.R. Tregonning, T.Webster and Hilda Barbary.