



AUSTRALIAN RAILWAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MELBOURNE BRANCH

ARHS Melbourne Luncheon Outing Group, #12 Powelltown & Noojee by Charter Heritage Coach Saturday 13th April 2024

We will meet on the Concourse at the Flinders Street Station at 8:40 am to catch the 9:06 am Lilydale service to Blackburn, traveling in the second car from the front. Members traveling from the east of Blackburn can meet us outside the exit at the Blackburn Station on the North side at 9:47 am us.

All travel for the day from Blackburn and return, will be on a special Heritage Coach from a Member of the Bus and Coach Society of Victoria.

If you must contact John or Geoff on the day of travel only, John 0418 384 718, Geoff 0412 056 033.

Powelltown History

Powelltown is a town in Victoria, Australia, 70 km east of Melbourne's central business district, located within the Shire of Yarra Ranges local government area. Powelltown recorded a population of 214 at the 2021 census.

History

The first settlement was established in 1901 when H Blake founded the first timber mill known as Blake's Mill; later a larger mill was constructed and completed in 1913 by the Victorian Powell Wood Processing Company to harvest hardwood mountain ash in the Little Yarra Valley to fill its new government contracts. The logs were transported from the forests to the sawmills by tramway and from there to the railheads at Yarra Junction and Warburton. Renowned axemen like Shane Corr opened up the veins of timber with no more than an axe and a team of bullocks to fulfil his government contracts. The Post Office opened around 1904, as Blake's, and the settlement was renamed Powelltown in 1912.

The Powelltown Tramway provided a passenger and goods service to Yarra Junction between 1913 and 1945.

Today, many of the trails constructed to transport timber have been opened up as walking trails and driving routes for tourists, including the Powelltown Tramway Rail Trail.

Sport

The town has an Australian Rules football team competing in the Yarra Valley Mountain District Football League. Despite its small population, Powelltown has produced a number of AFL former players including, Melbourne Demons forward Sean Charles and Western Bulldogs and Fremantle forward Daniel Hargraves. A relative of Charles, former West Coast Eagles defender David Wirrpanda also played junior football with the Powelltown Demons.

The town also has a cricket club that plays in the Ringwood and District Cricket Association. It features 2 senior teams that compete in the D.J Strachan Shield and the Adrian Hammond Shield.

Noojee History

Noojee is a town in the Gippsland region of Victoria, Australia, north of Warragul and east of Melbourne, in the Baw Baw local government area. At the 2016 census, Noojee and the surrounding area had a population of 157.

The town benefits from tourists passing through to the Mount Baw Baw Alpine Resort, 48 kilometres away, as it is the last stop with tourism services. There are also a number of walks in the area, including the Noojee Trestle Bridge, a 100m wooden rail bridge.

"Noojee" is an Aboriginal word meaning "valley of or place of rest".

It was first settled after gold was found in the area in the 1860s. Noojee became a major timber town when the railway connected the town to Warragul in 1919. Noojee Post Office opened on 3 May 1920, though an earlier office had been open between 1902 and 1904.

The town was destroyed by bushfires in 1926 and again in the Black Friday fires of 1939. The only building left standing after both fires was the Noojee Hotel which served as community meeting point during the emergency. The hotel also served as the school after the one room school was destroyed.

Economy

Noojee is well known for its trout fishing. A trout farm is located on the outskirts of the town.

Source Wikipedia for Powelltown & Noojee History

Infrastructure

The broad gauge line was built to Victorian Railways "light lines" standard with 60 lb/yd (30 kg/m) rail. The ruling gradient was 1 in 40 between Warragul and Neerim South, and 1 in 30 between Neerim South and Noojee. As of 1923, it featured three turntables along its length: a 50feet table at Neerim South, and 53feet tables at Nayook and Noojee. Passenger trains were permitted to travel at speeds of up to 40 mi/h, while goods trains were restricted to 25 mi/h.

Services

The line saw the use of Victorian Railways V class 2-8-0, K class 2-8-0 and N class 2-8-2 steam locomotives.

Passenger services were relatively slow, as was the case for many branch lines where a mixed goods and passenger train service was provided. Victorian Railways passenger timetable of 1928 shows a travel time from Melbourne to Noojee of approximately six hours for the approximately ninety miles journey from Flinders Street station, which included lengthy stops at Warragul and Neerim South.

Although by 1930 services into Noojee had only been running for just over ten years, Victorian Railways, faced with mounting losses that would result in a record £1 million deficit (almost \$85,000,000 in 2020), announced the closure of the daily passenger rail service from 30 June 1930. It was replaced by twice-daily road motor services, with a journey time reduced by two hours, and additional services were available for market days on Thursdays. Use of the railway line was reduced to the three goods trains per week needed to clear goods traffic.

Bushfire damage

With much of the line traversing dense eucalyptus forests, the line and the towns it served were at high risk of bushfire damage.

In February 1926, the town of Noojee (including the railway station) and much of the line from Nayook was destroyed in the Black Sunday bushfires. The line was closed for repairs until 17 May 1926, with a road motor service being provided in the interim.

The town was again razed by fire in the Black Friday bushfires of Friday 13 January 1939, along with three of the large trestle bridges on the railway line between Nayook and Noojee. Of the £20,000 damage caused to Victorian Railways by the 1939 fires, the Noojee trestle was the most serious loss, with repairs taking several months.

Closure

The lightly trafficked line was closed beyond Nayook on 27 March 1954. The section was last used when residents travelled by train to Warragul on 3 March 1954 to see Queen Elizabeth II during her first visit to Australia. The remaining section between Nayook and Warragul was closed in 1958.

Preservation

After closure, the tracks and station buildings along the line were dismantled and many sections of the right of way were sold off. The Buln Buln Shire Council purchased the No. 7 Noojee trestle bridge from Victorian Railways for the nominal sum of £1 (\$2). This historic eighteen-span structure, 102m (335 feet) long and 20m (70feet) high, was one of three rebuilt in 1939 after the original structures were razed by the Black Friday bushfires. Architecturally significant as the tallest surviving timber trestle bridge in Victoria and a unique and intact example of trestle bridge construction, it is now registered with the National Trust of Australia.

Approximately 3km (2 miles) of the rail formation around the Noojee Trestle Bridge has been converted into the Noojee Trestle Bridge Rail Trail. Further south towards Warragul, approximately 4km (02miles) of the formation has been converted into the Rokeby to Crossover Rail Trail.

In April 2012, the Noojee and District Historical Society were successful in a bid to relocate J class steam locomotive J550 from Warragul to Noojee for eventual restoration. The bid for the locomotive was part of a project to create an historical park in Noojee, featuring a restored rail line from Noojee railway station to the trestle bridge.

On 24 March 2013, J550 was moved by road to Noojee and placed on a section of track at the site of the former railway station.

https://everything.explained.today/Noojee_railway_line



Noojee Extension & Powelltown Tramway to Yarra Junction c 1940 Facebook.

The only line still in use on this map is the Gippsland Line, apart from Thompson to Walhalla on the 2' 6" Narrow Gauge. All the other lines have long ago been closed & removed.

(Victoria)

THE NOOJEE STEAM TIMBER TRAMWAY

The Goodwood Timber and Trading Coy.

By John L. Buckland

Whilst the majority of bush timber tramways in Victoria have been built to 3 feet gauge, and some even less, this line is notable as being one of the few to be built to the 3 feet 6 inches gauge, and its motive power presented an interesting collection.

Originally built by the Goodwood Timber and Trading Company, the Goodwood Line, as it became generally known, ran from a point on the Victorian Railways' Noojee Branch about a half-mile from its terminus at Noojee, known as Noojee Timber Siding, up the valley of the Latrobe River to a bush mill variously termed Goodwood and Millswyn, a distance of approximately 14 miles of main line. Beyond Millswyn, which was the site of a large mill and engine shed, bush spurs stretched out, including one rather long one up the Latrobe Valley another mile to the site of Knott's Mill, near the junction with Big River, also on the route of the Ada River line of the Victorian Hardwood Company's Powelltown Tramway which tunnels through the waterparting between the Rivers Latrobe and Little Yarra.

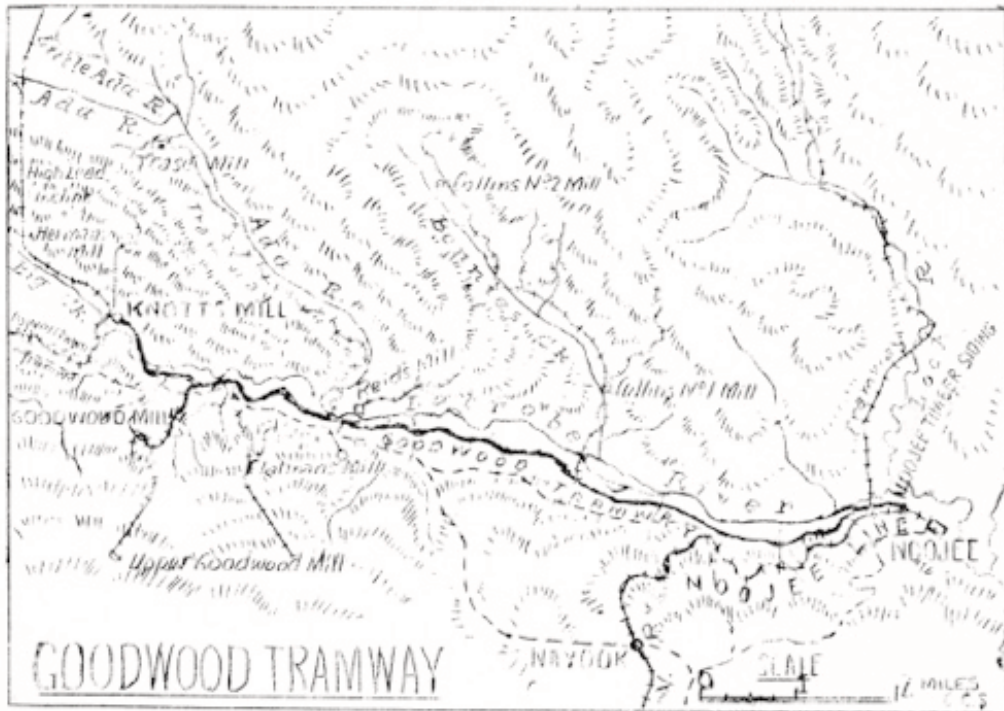
According to the records of the Victorian Forests Commission, the line was built in 1923, being laid with steel rails throughout, and ballasted with river gravel. This can be verified by the writer, who, on one memorable occasion (in 1936) walked over the line between Noojee and Millswyn, and four years later covered the Knott's Mill - Millswyn end by car where the main road between Powelltown and Noojee paralleled the original tramway right-of-way. It had long been an ambition to make a journey on this line, but unfortunately the nearest to achieving this object was the occasion when hiking up the line towards Millswyn, an old English bell-whistle was heard echoing down the valley, and in due course, heralded by a tremendous ground shaking roar, appeared a strange apparition on flanged wheels under a cloud of smoke. It literally tore past our party who had taken refuge behind a stout tree, just in case she decided to do a waltz through the undergrowth; a by no means uncommon occurrence! The engine was an old, and very dilapidated 2-6-0 tender type of unmistakable Beyer Peacock origin, typical of all the 3 feet 6 inch gauge lines from Tasmania to the West. Behind her home-made tender were half a dozen timber bogies with wide treads and deep flanges loaded high with sawn timber, and on top of them the passengers clung precariously to their belongings and the timber, all of which appeared imminently likely to come to a sticky end down at the bottom of the gully! In short, from most reliable witnesses who have made the terrifying trip, a most hazardous experience.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of the Goodwood line was the collection of four 'foreign' steam locomotives. The writer was only fortunate enough to see the last of these in active service, and the wreckage of the others in the remains of the engine shed at the mill, or scattered along the track. The line commenced operations with three of the former 'V' class little 0-4-4 Tank engines of the South Australian Railways. These were Nos. 11, 143 and 145, which are on record in South Australia as having been sold in 1924 to a Mr. Russell of Melbourne. This gentleman is believed to have been either a contractor or a dealer, as one, if not all, of these little engines is believed to have worked at Yallourn during the earlier construction period, before the Goodwood Company acquired them. Be that as it may, the remains of the frame and the bunker of No. 11 were last seen lying in the undergrowth beside the line, apparently where she 'had fallen by the wayside' whilst in action. Nos. 143 and 145 were last seen by the writer in November, 1936 lying partially dismantled in the semi-collapsed engine shed at Millswyn, together with the boiler of the fourth engine. This latter was a somewhat larger machine with a chequered past. As already mentioned she was a 2-6-0 of the Beyer Peacock type, and patently a refugee from Western Australia. She carried the former W.A.G.R. No. 5 and belonged originally to that system's 'A' class. Built in 1882, No. 5 carried Beyer Peacock's No. 2245 and was placed

(in service

in service in February 1883 by the Western Australian Railways. Subsequently she was sold to the Kalgoorlie - Boulder Firewood Company in July 1902, and at some later stage, this company having become what is now the Goldfields Firewood Supply Company, and named No. 5 "Kurrawang", sold her at some undetermined date, and eventually she turned up on the Goodwood line about 1925, by this time having shed her tender, her Beyer Peacock builder's plates but strangely not her W.A.G.R. number plates. She had also acquired several spare parts, such as connecting rods on both sides bearing the legend "2123", obviously robbed from another similar engine which actually began life on South Australian Railways!

When the writer last saw No. 5 in action in March 1936, she was in a deplorable condition, and was equipped with a tender of primitive type, consisting of a four-wheel timber-framed truck with tramway contour wheels, carrying firewood fuel and two square 500 gallon iron water tanks. The regulator had become permanently stuck open and the driver - a Mr. Daniel, who was subsequently



killed in the inevitable accident - showed considerable skill in running the engine with reverse lever and hand brake operating very worn brake blocks on the engine driving wheels. The tender wheels were unbraked. Words cannot adequately describe the sensations of riding upon this ancient engine during shunting operations, which included use of a tail rope, since there was no reversing loop siding at the Noojee end of the Goodwood line. The usual procedure used to be for the tram to make a daily trip in from the mill about lunch-time, shunt the empties ready for the return journey, run tender first, as there was no turning facility at either end, later in the afternoon. As the return journey was never made without a visit to the nearby hostelry, many of the trips were made at night and without lights, and I can state from experience that the line was neither level nor straight!

Unfortunately, but a month later, in April, 1936, the inevitable happened, and No. 5 plunged to destruction off one of the timber trestle bridges spanning a deep gully with a load of timber which crushed the driver to death and severely injured the fireman. This was not the end of operations on the line, however, for some little time later the company purchased a 6-coupled diesel tractor built by Day and Sons, South Melbourne engineering firm, which has subsequently supplied numbers of similar units to bush mills in
(Victoria.

Victoria. This unit whilst slower and less powerful, was undoubtedly safer and continued to operate the line until it was finally closed and later dismantled during 1939. The disastrous bushfires which destroyed the town of Noojee in 1926 and again in 1939 sealed the doom of the Goodwood line, which in later years of operation had become the property of the Limberlost Lumber Company, in which the Melbourne timber merchants W. D. Flatman & Sons were principals. For a short period after the 1939 fires, which left thousands of acres of standing firekilled timber, the line was used to salvage what could be saved of the millions of feet of the finest mountain ash timber in Victoria, but the State Government assisted the Forests Commission to construct roads for the same purpose, and this resulted in road haulage of timber, and very soon the closure of this most interesting line.

After the accident that ended the career of No. 5, the wreckage was salvaged, and in November, 1936, the boiler was in process of cutting up for scrap, together with the two then surviving ex South Australian "V" class Nos. 143 and 145, which had all been sold for scrap by mid 1937.

Little, if anything, is known at present of the operations of the Goodwood line beyond Millswyn to Knott's Mill, but the extension probably fell into disuse after Knott's Mill was burnt out in the 1926 fires. It was not dismantled at least before May, 1940. Transshipment of timber to the Victorian Railways' line at Noojee Timber Siding was done by means of an overhead electric gantry crane.

A list of the motive power of the Goodwood Tramway is appended:-

No.	Type	Cylinders	Builder	Bldr.No.	Date	Remarks
11	0-4-4WT	9½" x 15" outside	Beyer Peacock	1599	1877	originally S.A.R.V class scrapped.
143	0-4-4WT	9½" x 15" outside	Jas. Martin	67	1893	originally S.A.R.V class scrapped.
145	0-4-4WT	9½" x 15" outside	Jas. Martin	69	1893	originally S.A.R.V class scrapped.
5	2-6-0	12" x 12" outside	Beyer Peacock	2245	1882	ex W.A.G.R., to Goldfields Firewood Supply Co. 7/02, thence Goodwood circa 1924-5, scrapped.
.	0-6-0	diesel tractor	W. Day & Son	-	1936	sold

The rolling stock, other than locomotives, consisted entirely of the usual Australian bush lines' timber bogies with wide treads and deep flanges, drawn by either wooden or iron coupling bars. The centre combined buffer-chopper couplings originally fitted to the locomotives were replaced by link and pin type brackets fore and aft.

One item of rolling stock worthy of special mention was what might be regarded as the "Presidents Special" - an old and very dilapidated Mors four-cylinder car chassis, shortened and mounted on tramway-type wheels with a chain drive. It had an attachment at the rear enabling it to haul a small load of timber, although the writer was never fortunate enough to see it in action.

ARHS Melb LOG #12 Tour Notes

Date	What was Done	WN or WON Date
Mon, 28 Apr 1919	Opened	
Mon, 27 Jan 1919	By this date, open during construction.	(WN04/1919)
Mon, 28 Apr 1919	Open for traffic, established as train staff and ticket station, section Neerim South - Noojee.	(WN17/1919)
	No-one in charge.	(WN20/1919)
	Provide down home signal and plunger lock at up end, provide temporary 53ft turntable.	(WN20/1919)
Tue, 1 Feb 1921	By this date, caretaker in charge, provide travelling stationmaster Noojee line.	(WN05/1921)
Tue, 27 Jun 1922	By this date, provide stationmaster.	(WN26/1922)
Sun, 14 Feb 1926	Destroyed by fire.	(WN08/1926)
Tue, 16 Feb 1926	By this date, line from Nayook temporarily closed account bushfires.	(WN07/1926)
Mon, 17 May 1926	Line reopened.	(WN19/1926)
Mon, 30 Jun 1930	Passenger service withdrawn.	(WN26/1930)
Sun, 3 Aug 1930	Caretaker in charge in lieu of stationmaster.	(WN30/1930)
Thu, 13 Mar 1941	Person in charge in lieu of caretaker.	(WN32/1941)
Wed, 28 Oct 1942	Turntable disc abolished.	(WN44/1942)
Tue, 2 Mar 1943	By this date, provide siding account Kauri Timber Company, leads off down end of No.3 road.	(WN09/1943)
Fri, 29 Jun 1945	Provide stationmaster.	(WN25/1945)
Tue, 6 Mar 1951	By this date, no-one in charge.	(WN10/1951)
Thu, 13 Dec 1951	Caretaker in charge.	(WN09/1952)
Tue, 18 Jan 1955	By this date, closed to all traffic.	(WN03/1955)
Tue, 22 Mar 1955	By this date, Smith Bros (South Yarra) Pty Ltd siding abolished, was at down end.	(WN12/1955)
1958	The remaining section between Nayook and Warragul was closed.	

Goodwoods

Siding History

Wed, 27 Oct 1920	Opened as Noojee Timber Coy Siding
April 1927	Renamed Goodwoods Siding

Noojee Line

History

Mon, 28 Apr 1919	Line Opened	Nayook - Noojee
Sat, 27 Mar 1954	Line Closed	Nayook - Noojee
1958	Line Closed	Nayook - Warragul

Photos from Noojee Heritage Centre, information from <vicsig.net> Chris Gordon, images from the web, photographer unknown in most cases, Signal Diagram victorianrailways.net & Information from Wikipedia.

Notes compiled by Geoff Wallace

E&OE



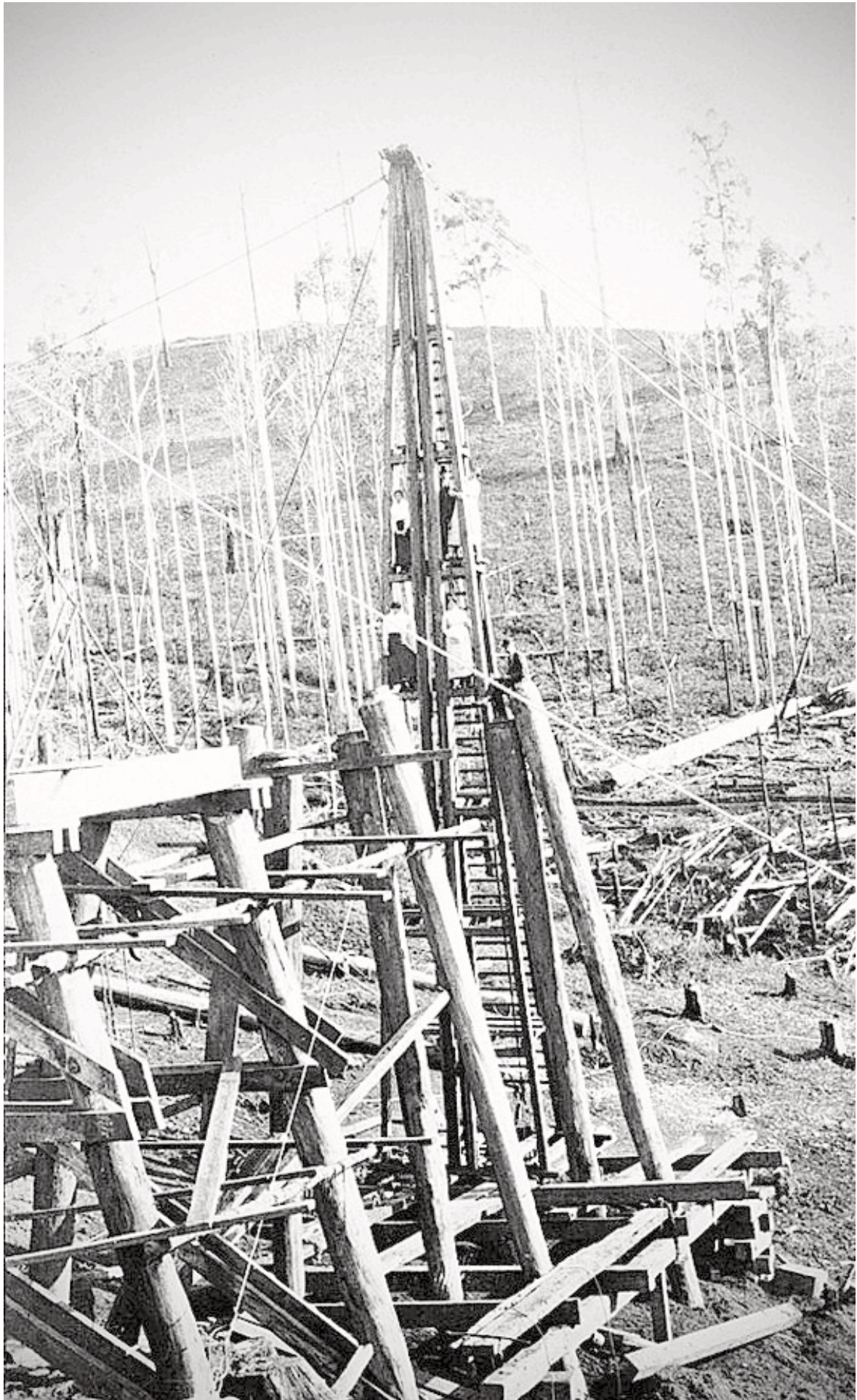
Noojee Line destroyed Trestle Bridge 1939 01 13



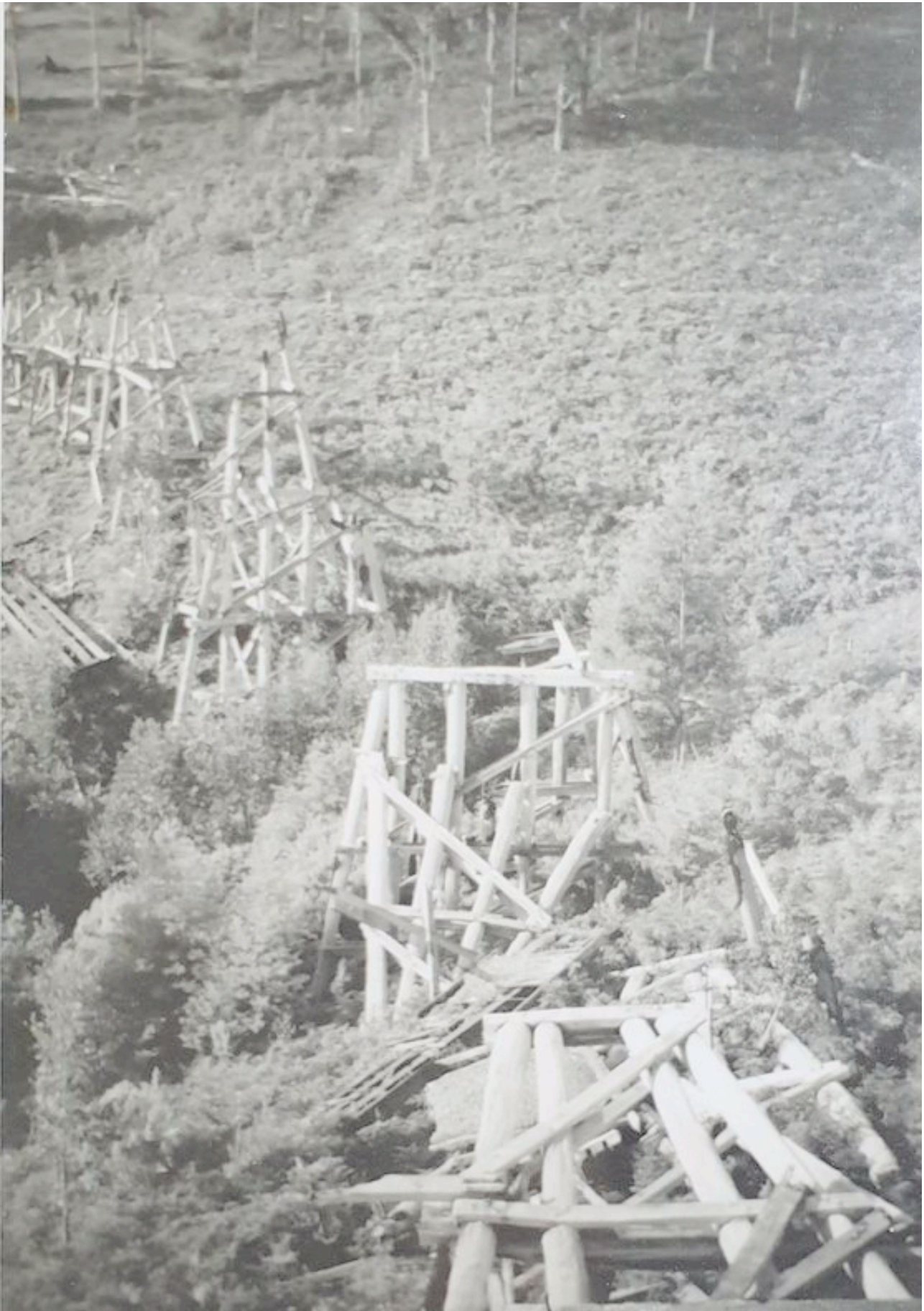
Noojee railway line closed 1954, 1962 photo of burnt trestle bridge Noojee



Noojee railway line closed 1954, 1962 photo Nayook small bridge at start of descent towards Noojee



Timber Trestle Bridge under construction on Sunday with Ladies on the pile driver c 1910



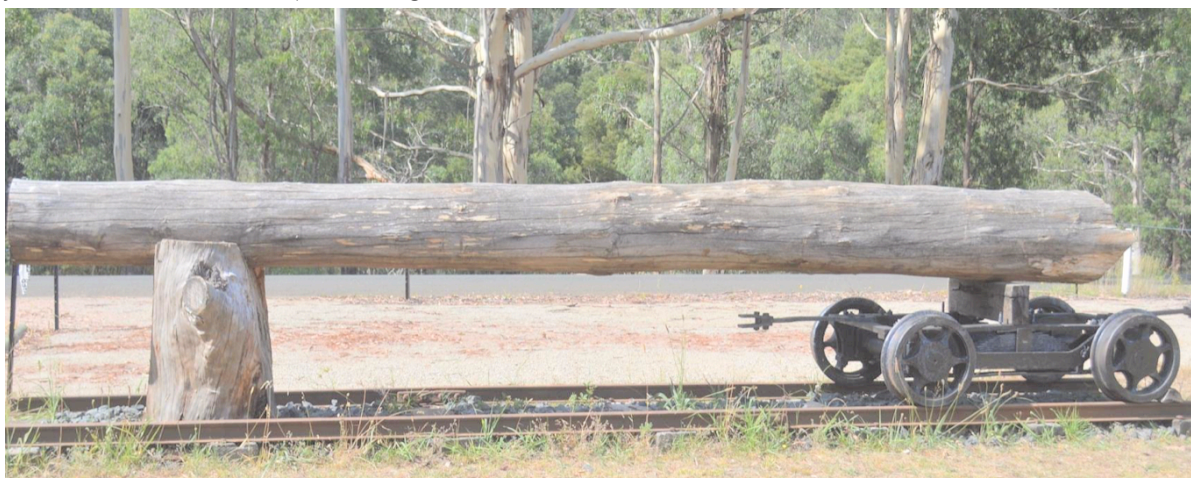
Noojee railway line closed 1954, 1962 photo of burnt trestle bridge Noojee Victoria



Noojee Trestle Bridge Rail Trail_001 VicScreen



J 550 side shot from Noojee Heritage Centre www



Noojee railway line closed 1954, 1962 photo of burnt trestle bridge Noojee