LECTURES ON NORTH QUEENSLAND HISTORY

SECOND SERIES

James Cook University 1975
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreword</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Ethnohistory and Archaeology in the Herbert/Burdekin</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Brayshaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II Racial Violence in North Queensland</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Reynolds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III &quot;A State of Open Warfare&quot;: Frontier Violence in the Cooktown District</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I.L. Hughes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV A Conflict of Faiths: Aboriginal Reactions to Christian Missions in North Queensland</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.A. Loos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V The White Man and the Australian Tropics: A Review of Some Opinions and Prejudices of the Pre-War Years</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.P. Courtenay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI &quot;Shipwrecks and Pearl Shells&quot;: Somerset, Cape York, 1864-1877</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Farnfield</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Pioneer Squatting in the Kennedy District</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Allingham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Women in North Queensland</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline Cahir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX &quot;Whips and Rum Swizzles&quot;</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.R. Moore</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Chinese and Europeans in North Queensland: a Study in Racial Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cathie May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI</td>
<td>Ravenswood 1863-1917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>D.C. Roderick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII</td>
<td>Wowsers and Diggers: the Impact of Puritan Ideals upon Charters Towers, 1872-1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharon Hayston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>The Rise of the Amalgamated Workers' Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K.H. Kennedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>&quot;The Hottest Town in the North&quot;: Cloncurry in the Early Twentieth Century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M.J. Richards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notes on the Contributors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maps and Illustrations

1. The Herbert/Burdekin District   10
2. Griffith Taylor's 'Climatographs'   58
3. Generalized Habitability Map of Australia according to Griffith Taylor   58
4. Somerset, Cape York   68
5. Declared Districts of Settlement in Queensland, 1861   79
6. The Kennedy District, 1870   86
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Cairns and District</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The Ravenswood District</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Ravenswood in its Heyday: the main street</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>i  Ravenswood: a general view</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii Ravenswood: the Mabel Mill</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pioneer Plantation House on the Burdekin River</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>i  Early Agricultural Settler's House, Upper Burdekin in the late 1860s</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii Pacific Islanders in Queensland: a typical family home, early 1900s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>i  Boating, Planter-style</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii Boating, Islander-style</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>i  An Island Woman in Mackay</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii Two Generations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>i  The Second Cloncurry Flying Doctor Base</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii VH-UER - the First Plane Used Regularly by the R.A.M.S.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Amy Johnson</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The Cloncurry Post Office about 1930</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FOREWORD

In 1974 the History Department published a selection of lectures on North Queensland history which had been given as an integral part of the first-year course in Australian history. Although designed primarily for the use of history students in this University, the publication was bought in substantial numbers by members of the public whose comments have encouraged us to produce a similar volume in 1975.

The format is uniform with that of the 1974 volume; half the authors contributed to both series and drew, in most instances, upon the same research projects: readers of both series, therefore, will observe a marked "family likeness". The present volume is, however, an entirely new work which does not reproduce anything that appeared in the previous one.

Once again the publication does not purport to cover the whole of North Queensland history, the whole of any period, or even to touch upon all major themes in that history: it represents what was available in 1975 from research projects currently in progress. The research upon which lecturers drew is at varying stages of completion: some lectures necessarily present interim conclusions which may undergo some modification as the research advances towards completion. Similarly, the contributors range from honours students engaged in their first essay into original research to mature scholars with substantial publication to their credit. These differences are naturally reflected in the lectures, but all, we believe, have something of interest and value for readers; all we hope, will give pleasure as well as instruction.

We are again indebted to two contributors from outside the History Department: Associate Professor P.P. Courtenay of the Department of Geography, and D.C. Roderick, a Townsville architect with a unique knowledge of the goldfield towns which contributed so much to the growth of Townsville and North Queensland.

B.J. Dalton

Acknowledgements

The entire manuscript was typed for the printer by Helen Stokes; maps were drawn and the cover designed by Mr. J. Ngai, Department of Geography; and plates prepared by Mr. M. Lamont, University Photographer. Illustrations to Lecture No. XIV are from photographs in the possession of Mrs. A. Vickers, Brisbane.
The purpose of my research is to build up a picture of the traditional material life of the Aborigines, their distribution throughout the area, their exploitation of the environment and its possible effects, their material creations, in terms of dwellings, weapons, equipment, bodily adornment, their initiation and mortuary practices insofar as they are reflected in physical remains, their sacred and creative activities embodied in rock art. In this lecture I hope to give an idea of how the evidence can be used to illustrate these things, and to indicate how mindful one must be of the shortcomings of the evidence, and the problems this creates.

The area under study, the Herbert/Burdekin district, extends north about to the Tully River, inland towards the Dividing Range, and south of Bowen. North of the Herbert River there are extensive areas of rainforest and some traces of rainforest are to be found along the eastern escarpment south as far as Mount Elliott. Inland on the Burdekin and south in the Collinsville-Suttor River region the vegetation is predominantly dry sclerophyll.

The two principal sources of evidence being utilized in this study are the ethnographic literature, and the field; use has also been made of material held in museums and private local collections, and of information provided by a few Aboriginal people who still retain some knowledge of the traditional life. By 'ethnographic literature' I mean literature which concerns traditional Aboriginal life, such as diaries and journals of early mariners, explorers and settlers. Some of this material is available here in Townsville, much more is situated in places like Brisbane, Sydney and Canberra. While the second major source of evidence which I referred to, namely the field, is all within a 150 mile radius of Townsville, much of it is considerably less accessible, involving the constant use of four wheel drive vehicles, once a horse, once a small aeroplane, foreseeably a boat and always, regrettably, the feet. The kind of evidence one looks for in the field consists of campsites, middens or food refuse heaps, quarries, fish traps, ceremonial sites and art sites.

One area where the field reveals very little and the literary evidence has serious shortcomings is in relation to Aboriginal women. Unfortunately
all the early explorers were men, and the picture which emerges from their reports provides vastly more information about male Aborigines, their appearance, their behaviour and their weapons. An illustration of this is that in all the journals from expeditions within the Herbert/Burdekin there is only one reference to that implement of such economic importance traditionally used by women, namely the yamstick, while there are dozens of descriptions of spears, boomerangs, shields and clubs.

Of course as is so often the case, these male explorers did not realize how economically vital women were. The labour involved in procuring and preparing food was divided between the sexes, the men's part being generally restricted to hunting game, fishing with spear and line and cooking flesh foods (Roth 1901, 3:7). As a rule, however, especially in tropical areas, the greater part of the food was provided by the women (Hiatt:7), who gathered fruit, dug roots, chopped larvae out of tree stems, caught small game and where they were available also provided crustaceans and shellfish (Lawrence: 158). The painstaking preparation of vegetable foods was also performed by the women. Casual observers were not aware of these factors, and the clearest statement of women's relative importance comes from Carl Lumholtz, who lived for many months with the Aborigines of the Herbert River:

The husband's contribution to the household is chiefly honey, but occasionally he provides eggs, game, lizards and the like. He very often, however, keeps the animal food for himself, while the woman has to depend principally upon vegetables for herself and her children. The husband hunts more for sport than to support the family with necessities, a matter that does not really concern him.(160)

It would be unfair and inaccurate to overemphasize the fault of the explorers in their failure to provide as much information about the women. Very often there was good reason. There are numerous instances of the women and children deliberately staying in the background or out of sight altogether when white men were about. For example in 1819 when other members of P.P. King's party were talking to a group of Aboriginal men at their camp on Goold Island, Alan Cunningham went off on his own and found ovens and paperbark beds where he thought the women had been very recently, but he never actually saw them. On May 26, 1848, two days after Kennedy's party had disembarked in Rockingham Bay, and although numerous Aborigines had watched
every stage of the proceedings, Carron commented:

We had not as yet seen any of their women, as they were encamped some distance from us. (9)

Still in much the same area, but four weeks later, on June 19 he remarked that:

The women and children always kept further from us than the men. (20)

The only indication that the explorers might have felt the women to be less worthy of mention than the men, possibly because they could not be considered dangerous, comes from Jukes, exploring the mouth of the Burdekin River (which he called the Wickham) in May 1843, when he observed that:

Another small party of natives were on the opposite side of the river with two dogs, but they were probably women. (77-8)

The literature gives no indication of sites that are important to women. The significance of this should not be overstated as the number of specific sites it does refer to are relatively few and these have been discovered by chance, none of the European observers except Morrill having been in a position to be informed of sacred sites. Very little is known of women's sites anywhere in Australia. The fact that some have now been located, for example in South Australia, by women investigators, suggests that they may exist in other areas as well.

In some instances it has been possible to proceed directly from the literature to sites in the field with positive results. For example a note in the journal Man of 1915 (Hamlyn Harris: 167-8) to the effect that

a native axe factory evidently existed at Corner Creek, the greenstone axes being ground on sandstone rocks near the mouth of the Star River,

can be traced to the site of the old gold diggings. The quarry is quite extensive, covering about 800 metres.

William Chatfield of Natal Downs Station south-west of Charters Towers, wrote in 1886

In sandstone caves, which are numerous in their country the Pegulloburra make drawings of emu and kangaroo, and also imprints of their hands daubed with red. These latter are found on the almost inaccessible faces of the white sandstone cliffs. (in Curr: 476)

Some of these paintings also have been seen, although possibly not all. Other references to painting sites have proved less easy to trace. Referring to the years 1887-8, Hives records in Journal of a Jackaroo (92) that
Some of them were not without artistic ability, as my brother and I found out once when we were prospecting among the ranges of the watershed between the Murray and the Herbert Rivers. We came across a large cave, in which there were many indications that it had been used by aborigines in days gone by. On the walls were several very crude drawings, done in coloured clays, representing horses and cattle. One depicted a man astride of a horse, evidently intended to be a European, as the face and hands were painted white. Another was evidently intended to be a sailing ship.

Such a site would have been extremely valuable to find, for although art recording the period of contact with Europeans occurs in places such as Cape York and Arnhem Land none has so far been seen in the Herbert/Burdekin. Efforts to find the site proved as fruitless in this case as in that of a site recorded by the Marquis of Normanby, then governor of Queensland, in a despatch to the Secretary of State in October 1872 (No. 65, QSA Gov/26). He was shown the site by Dalrymple who had found it while looking for a route across the Seaview Range for the telegraph line to the Gulf.

This rock is about 1½ miles from Cardwell and has evidently been an old camping place of the natives. It is situated on a hillside over-hanging a creek of running water about 1/4 of a mile from the line taken by the new road. The circumstance however which renders this place so remarkable is that the whole of the overhanging portion of the rock is covered with Native drawings representing men, women, birds and animals. The whole of the surface is covered with a dark brown substance which has much the appearance of paint, but which the native Troopers say is composed of human blood and as there can be no doubt that the natives are cannibals, it is quite possible that this may be the case. The drawings are made upon this substance with a kind of clay of different colours, white, black and blue. They are exceedingly rude but considerable pains must have been bestowed upon them, and it is quite evident that they have been renewed at different times as traces of old drawings can be seen under those of more recent date....Having taken a photographer with me for the purpose of obtaining views of the different places I visited, I was fortunate enough to be able to have this rock photographed....The drawings are not of a very decent character, but I do not think that this will be so apparent in the photograph as in the original.

Unfortunately it has so far proved impossible to find either the photograph or the original. An expedition into the Cardwell area soon convinced us that the latter was 'somewhere in the rainforest' and therefore probably secure against discovery for many years yet. These two, alas, remain in the file labelled 'sites unseen'.

12
ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN

In spite of the difficulties Leichhardt seems to have had with his compass on the Port Essington expedition of 1844–45, it is possible to trace his movements quite closely in some areas, so detailed are his geological descriptions of the route. This is true for example of the Burdekin River in the region where it is joined by Fletcher Creek (the site of the town of Dalrymple). In April 1974, a party of us went to this area, at the same time of the year as Leichhardt had been there, hoping to find some evidence of the Aboriginal campsites to which he referred. As it was, the abnormal wet earlier in the year had ensured that there was too much grass to find anything on the ground; however, we did find one of the fig trees as Leichhardt described them.

Among the patches of brush which are particularly found at the junction of the larger creeks with the river, we observed a large fig-tree, from fifty to sixty feet high, with a rich shady foliage; and covered with bunches of fruit....These trees were numerous, and their situation was readily detected by the paths of the natives leading to them: a proof that the fruit forms one of their favourite articles of food. (201)

We actually felt quite close to Leichhardt when we found as he did, that "the figs were of the size of a small apple, of an agreeable flavour when ripe, but full of small flies and ants."

A serious archaeological problem is highlighted by elements contained in Leichhardt's journal. As he proceeded up the Suttor River towards its junction with the Burdekin he referred constantly to Aboriginal campsites, seeing numbers of Aborigines practically every day. On the Burdekin itself he saw noticeably less evidence of the Aborigines until his party reached the vicinity of the Valley of Lagoons where they reappeared in numbers. Gilbert, ill-fated botanist of Leichhardt's party, remarked as they approached the Valley of Lagoons:

Hitherto, with but one exception, we have not met with natives on the Burdekin, and very few recent traces, perhaps it may be accounted for in some measure from the openness of the country, and the very small trees; not being favourable to them for hunting...

The sort of evidence of Aboriginal occupation which they had seen so often on the Suttor River, Leichhardt describes:

The inhabitants of this part of the country, doubtless, visit this spot frequently, judging from the numerous heaps of muscle-shells. (185)

and again,
Bones of large fish, turtle shells, and heaps of muscles, were strewed round the fireplaces. (187)

The problem is indicated by another observation, to the effect their camp was in the bed of the river amongst some small casuarinas. (162)

During the dry season it was the Aborigines' habit to camp in the sandy bed of the river, as this statement suggests. They also favoured areas immediately beside the river near waterholes. The regular flooding of the rivers each year would ensure that any debris would be effectively removed. Today, in the vicinity of the Suttor River, there is ample evidence that the Aborigines inhabited the area, in the form of small worked stone quarries, gidyea trees with holes chopped in them in the search for honey and possums, and some surface campsites where a few pieces of stone showing signs of utilization can be found, but the heaps of mussel shells and other remains observed by Leichhardt and which in other places endure for thousands of years, are nowhere to be seen. If it were not for the literature in this case we would be unaware that the environment had destroyed so much of the archaeological evidence, a process which is still going on. For example, a campsite by Rutherford Creek, a tributary of the Suttor, which I first observed in 1973 was considerably altered and reduced by mid 1974 as a result of the extraordinary wet season. Any statistical conclusions and predictions based on collections from sites subject to such variation would obviously be of dubious validity.

The literary record highlights other archaeological difficulties, difficulties which in this case may be a function of rainforest environments or at least of areas of high rainfall. There are numerous descriptions of campsites on the islands and along Rockingham Bay, for example that of Cunningham who was on Palm Island in June of 1819.

Native gunyahs or huts were standing on this shore, and the fresh remains of fires of these wanderers indicated those houses had been occupied at a very recent period, probably last night. Many beautiful shells strew'd around and procured only from the neighbouring reef, some of us regretted were so much spoiled by the action of fire in roasting for the fish (of which the Australians had had abundant repast).

In June 1848 Carron recorded this description of a campsite near the Murray River:

HELEN BRAYSHAW
We came to a native encampment, consisting of eighteen or twenty gunyahs, (huts) of an oval form, about seven feet long and four feet high; and at the southern end of the camp, was one large gunyah, eighteen feet long, seven feet wide, and fourteen feet high. In the centre of the camp were four large ovens, for cooking their food. These ovens were constructed by digging a hole in the ground, about three feet in diameter and two feet deep. The hole is then filled to within six inches of the top with smooth, hard loose stones, on which a fire is kindled, and kept burning till the stones are well heated. Their food, consisting principally of shell and other fish, is then placed on the stones and baked. (15)

That the area was well populated was confirmed by Dalrymple, who when just a few miles to the south in February 1864 commented:

The whole of the open ground of this portion of the floor of the valley was dotted with old and recent "bora" (or ceremonial) grounds of the blacks...over these "bora" grounds the soil was beaten down hard and bare over a space of a quarter of an acre, like an oriental threshing floor, and generally surrounded by clusters of small, round-topped huts, covered with melaleuca bark. (1865)

Under ideal circumstances the sort of archaeological evidence one could expect to find from this kind of occupation would include the flattened areas of the bora grounds, the huts, the ovens, and the remains of fish and shellfish. The high rainfall, however, would ensure such a rapid regeneration of thick vegetation that all evidence of ceremonial grounds, where they consisted merely of flattened earth, would disappear within a couple of seasons. Huts too would disappear very rapidly as wood and other vegetable matter soon decays in damp humid conditions. The ovens described by Carron, consisting of pits filled with stones, should endure; however their presence could also be obscured by lush growth. It is possible to detect the presence of fireplaces with a proton magnetometer, but it is at its most efficient in an open environment where it can be used to cover a large area in a short time; it is expected that the dense tropical growth could present considerable difficulties in this respect. Such a device has not been tried in the north for archaeological purposes yet, but it is hoped that this will not be the case for much longer. It is to be expected however that amongst congested tropical vegetation the proton magnetometer would be more effective in assessing the potential of known sites rather than locating unknown sites.
HELEN BRAYSHAW

The food refuse, consisting of fish bones and shellfish, referred to in the descriptions of campsites, may present an archaeological problem with much more serious implications. There are numerous references in the literature to the Aborigines eating shellfish but where is the evidence? None of the observers recorded large mounds of shell refuse heaps or middens, the impression one gets is that they were usually seeing the remains of only a few meals. Roth himself actually comments on the lack of such middens (3: 7). There is a possibility that small ones do exist on various parts of the coast but certainly there appears to be nothing to equate with the numerous and extensive ones such as those further south on the east coast of New South Wales (e.g. McBryde, Figs 62 (I), 62 (II)), and those near Weipa on Cape York Peninsula (Wright 133-6):

Some of the mounds reaching to a height of over 30 feet, and dotted over a distance of from quarter to half a mile in length (Roth 1901, 3: 7).

Middens of similar dimensions are also to be found in the region of the Blythe River, Arnhem Land, (the subject of a forthcoming thesis by Ms B. Meehan, S.G.S., A.N.U.). This relative dearth of middens seems to extend along the Queensland coast from the vicinity of Hervey Bay to north of Princess Charlotte Bay. Roth (ibid) postulated that it may be due to the continual shifting of the camp owing to a change of season, food supplies and sanitary reasons.

We may also ask did the Aborigines in this part of Queensland not eat as much shellfish as in other coastal areas, and if so is this because for some reason shellfish were not as readily accessible, or is it because their environment was relatively richer and offered greater food resources, thereby rendering a great dependence on shellfish unnecessary; is it in anyway connected with the reef, which seems to coincide with the area where the middens are missing, or is it connected with weather patterns, the wet seasons, or cyclones preventing the accumulation of large heaps of shells. These are just some of the questions which arise out of this apparent anomaly. The archaeological problem may be solved simply by more research in the field, though it is not unique to this tropical environment (Lathrap: 27) and its implications for archaeology as a means of research could be quite far-reaching. The problem may be simply stated: if the Aborigines themselves or the literature did not tell us, it would be very difficult to discover by purely archaeological means that this part of Queensland supported quite a large population (Davidson: 656).
ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN

The most obvious type of site in almost any environment is the rock shelter, which often includes cave paintings, and has frequently been occupied for long periods of time. Throughout the Herbert/Burdekin district there are many such examples of rock art, and occasionally there is in association evidence of what appears to be occupation debris. In the literature there is no reference to Aborigines actually living in rock shelters, which may just be because none of the European observers saw shelters where they were living, or it may be that the Aborigines in this area did not actually live in the shelters, or not for any length of time. There are indications in the literature that along Rockingham Bay huts were occupied in the wet months (Dalrymple: 1865) and also in June (Carron: 15), and according to Morrill the Mt. Elliott Aborigines put up small gunyahs to live in during the wet and cold seasons. Thus the literature suggests that rock shelters cannot be regarded as occupation sites used during a particular season; other possibilities are that they may have been used occasionally by hunting parties, or they may have been ritual or sacred sites.

This type of consideration becomes extremely important when one is interpreting the material uncovered in the course of archaeological excavations of which four have been conducted in the Herbert/Burdekin: at Mount Roundback near Bowen, to the South; at Herveys Range, Jourama, and Kennedy in the north. Faunal remains in all but the Herveys Range site were minimal; there were virtually no shell remains at Herveys Range, and only small amounts at the other three sites (cf. Lampert: 1966); minimal utilized stone material was unearthed at Kennedy and Mount Roundback, though more was found at both Jourama and Herveys Range. To add to this apparent confusion, Kennedy, Jourama and Herveys Range all had varying amounts of human bone material in the deposit, which considerably complicates the problem of determining the purpose for which these sites were used. Each of the four sites seems to be unique in important aspects which makes it very difficult to deduce a pattern of usage for rock shelters in the Herbert/Burdekin. At this stage of analysis it is not possible to say with confidence that any of the sites excavated was a typical occupation site, based on the archaeological evidence, and to this extent at least the archaeological evidence concurs with the literature.
One other area of concurrence between literature and archaeology is worthy of mention in this context, and that concerns knives and scrapers of stone and shell. According to the literature away from the coast some degree of workmanship was involved in manufacturing stone knives and scrapers which were hafted (Chatfield: 471; Leichhardt: 269). Closer to the coast and more particularly to the rainforest regions, the tendency seems to have been to use as a knife or scraper any sharp piece of stone ready to hand, rather than to expend a lot of labour on the manufacture of one. In addition, in these latter areas other materials were used, such as the spines on Lawyer cane (Roth 1901, 3: 7), or more frequently shell (Roth 1904, 7: 21; Lummoltz: 135, 193). From each of the three sites containing shell, a number of shell fragments showing signs of use wear were found, while the amount of utilized stone implements were comparatively few.

The use of independent sources, in this case ethnographic literature and archaeology, often confirms traditional suppositions, but more importantly it can stimulate new lines of enquiry in the instance of conflicting evidence. The literature relating to the Herbert/Burdekin district has shown the archaeological record to contain serious lacunae. This complicates research into the area under study, and it also questions the reliability of archaeology when employed as a sole means of finding out about the past.

REFERENCES

Carron, W., 1849 Narrative of an Expedition Undertaken Under the Direction of the Late Mr Assistant Surveyor E.B. Kennedy, for the Exploration of the Country Lying between Rockingham Bay and Cape York... Sydney. (Australiana Facsimile Editions No. 9, Adelaide, 1965).


Gilbert, J., 1844-45 Diary of expedition with Ludwig Leichhardt. MS. Mitchell Library.
ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE HERBERT/BURDEKIN


Lathrap, D.W., 1972 'The "hunting" Economics of the Tropical Forest Zone of South America: An Attempt at Historical Perspective'. In R.B. Lee and I. de Vore eds. Man the Hunter, Chicago.

Lawrence, R.J., 1968 Aboriginal Habitat and Economy. A.N.U. Canberra. (Department of Geography Occasional Papers No. 6).


Lumholtz, C., 1890 Among Cannibals. London.


RACIAL VIOLENCE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Mr. H. Reynolds


There never was and never will be a White Australia north of the Tropic of Capricorn. Contemporary North Queensland is a multi-racial society with significant minorities of Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders and descendants of indentured Pacific Island labourers. In the late 19th Century this multi-racial character of our region was even more marked. As well as the indigenous inhabitants there were large Pacific Island and Chinese communities and smaller groups of Javanese, Cingalese, Indians and Japanese.

Race relations then are an inescapable feature of North Queensland history. Clearly such race relations are complex and many faceted. This lecture is about racial violence, not because that was the only aspect of race relations although it was unquestionably an important one.

Because my theme is racial violence the emphasis must fall on white-aboriginal contact. This is not to suggest that relations between the European community and the Kanakas or Chinese were characterized by sweetness and light. There were occasional serious outbreaks of rioting against the Chinese on the gold fields and against the Kanakas as in Mackay in 1883 and there was a constant undercurrent of personal violence and petty persecution. But such manifestations of interracial conflict were of minor significance compared to the violence which characterized the relations between settlers and aborigines practically everywhere in North Queensland. I will therefore consider the extent and nature of conflict, the resulting death toll and the legacies of racial violence.

All major frontiers - pastoral, mining, small farming and the sea - experienced periods of serious conflict. The only Aboriginal groups to escape this fate were those who lived in a few of the very remotest areas which had no economic appeal to Europeans. Violence was ubiquitous but the pattern of conflict showed considerable variety. In some places violence
began with settlement; elsewhere it occurred after months or even years of 
white occupation. An initial period of amicable contact was no guarantee 
against subsequent conflict. Once begun, fighting might last a few months 
or as long as ten years. The Europeans had enormous advantages of mobility 
and fire power but where the Aborigines could exploit the terrain their 
resistance was surprisingly prolonged. Obviously the rain forest provided 
sanctuary as did rugged mountain, coastal swamp or offshore islands. 
Fighting was scattered and sporadic. The punitive expedition or ambush 
rather than the pitched battle was the characteristic form of operation. 
The Native Mounted Police was of crucial importance in frontier conflict. 
It was officered by Europeans with Aborigines recruited from well back behind 
the frontier making up the rank and file. Small troops of half a dozen or 
so men patrolled a huge area of frontier punishing Aboriginal offences and 
dispersing large tribal gatherings. Far too small to properly police the 
frontier the force found it necessary to use terror to pacify the Aborigines. 

How many settlers did the Aborigines kill? To answer this question 
it was necessary to search newspapers, official reports and other archival 
material, diaries and autobiographies, and gradually compile a register of 
frontier deaths. There were few - what earlier historians termed massacres - in North Queensland. Settlers were killed singly or in twos and threes. 
The annual death rate fluctuated widely varying from as few as one or two in some years between 1861 and 1897 to an all time high of 46 in 1874 at the height of the North Queensland Gold Rushes. In total it was estimated that between 400 and 450 died as a result of Aboriginal attack.

What of the other side of the frontier? What of the Aboriginal death toll? Here we can be far less certain. Native police officers or settlers either didn't count their victims or kept their dark secrets to themselves. Private punitive expeditions were often cloaked in secrecy while the official records of the Native Police have apparently not survived the guilty conscience of later generations. In some districts a reconstruction of tribal genealogies may unearth the sorry statistics. So all we can do is guess. But it seems probable that the Aboriginal death rate was at least 10 times that of the Europeans and probably higher. We must start with a minimum of 5,000 and work up from there. For Queensland as a whole the figure must be doubled.
RACIAL VIOLENCE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Edward Curr's book the Australian Race, published in 1886 provided some unusually frank assessments by North Queensland settlers about the impact of frontier conflict. The book endeavoured to compute the original population of each tribe and the numbers remaining in the early 1880's. To this purpose Curr solicited comments from people in every part of Australia. Some of the North Queensland contributors provided important contemporary information. Inspector W.E. Armitt of the Native Police wrote of what Curr called tribe no. 92 of the Norman River.

In 1875 he said they had numbered some 250 but were "now reduced by the rifle and syphilis to 160 souls made up of 50 men, 170 women and 40 children. Women rarely being shot, it seems from these figures that 90 men of this tribe fell before the rifle."1 Similar comments were made about the Halifax Bay Aborigines by James Cassady who reported that:

In 1865, when the Halifax Bay country was first occupied by the whites the tribe is estimated to have amounted to about 500 persons. The numbers which existed in 1880 are set down to have been 40 men, 30 boys over ten, 100 women and girls over ten and 30 children, in all 200 souls. This decrease my informant attributes to the brutality of the Native Mounted Police and some of the settlers, who in the beginning, relentlessly hunted down as many of the males of the tribe as possible.2

Such violence was the most important fact in the history of white-aboriginal relations in Queensland. Yet it has rarely featured in our history books. Comparatively the mortality was very large, dwarfing that in such local disturbances as the Eureka Stockade or in Australia's lesser wars in South Africa at the turn of the century, Korea in the 1950s or Vietnam in the 1960s. For a country that has extolled death in combat we have been strangely silent about black Australians who died in armed conflict. They never appear in the ubiquitous rolls of honour; no monuments record their sacrifice; no processions testify to their sacrifice; neither sermons nor prayers are offered to their memory.

Just as violence has been forgotten, so too has the acute fear and insecurity of frontier life. Clearly both settlers and Aborigines were affected although we have almost no direct evidence from the Aboriginal side of the frontier. Occasionally we come across a revealing comment like that of Archibald Meston who met one tribe in Cape York in the 1890s "whose men and women were like hunted wild beasts, afraid to go to sleep in their own country."3
We can say much more of settler reactions. Acute anxiety about the blacks was a common experience although its duration and its necessity varied widely from place to place. Over-reaction was frequent. Yet the fear was real and must be taken seriously by historians. Many contemporary comments could be adduced. In the 1860s for instance the Northern Argus of Rockhampton reported that "hardly a week passed without some outrage or other or news of the blacks gathering in threatening numbers around the stations which were kept in a constant state of apprehension and alarm." Writing of his career in North Queensland, W.R.O. Hill asserted that "life was never safe and the only thing to do on seeing an aborigine was to shoot and shoot straight or he would certainly spear you." An Atherton Tableland selector wrote to the Herberton Advertiser in 1890 that he and his neighbours had to go to work armed "carrying our lives in our hands; and when engaged felling scrub, or doing any other work, we are liable to be speared or tomahawked at any moment." A small farmer from the Maryborough district described similar circumstances in 1865. "I am", he wrote, expecting a visit from them directly; the sun is setting - their favourite hour of attack. They are now concealed somewhere in a small patch of scrub between mine and Mr. O'Kelley's farm. There is nothing to be done but to take it easy, and to make up my mind that the same number do not go away alive as favour me with a visit. I write this with my revolver within reach, and my dogs, as sentinels chained to the door posts.

But isolated shepherds or selectors were not the only ones to feel the spur of fear. In the pioneer townships people worried about Aboriginal attack. In Gladstone in 1855, after a station in the district had been overwhelmed, the townspeople became "fearful that the blacks will ultimately assemble in overwhelming numbers and rush the township itself." Cardwell too had periods of acute communal anxiety. When the H.M.S. Basilisk called at the settlement in 1872 the Resident Police Magistrate asked Captain Moresby for assistance because he was afraid that the settlers outside the town "or even the town itself, may be attacked by the savages."

In 1874 Cooktown's citizens slept uneasily after Aboriginal attacks on travellers and stock near the settlement. The editor of the Cooktown Herald wrote that
RACIAL VIOLENCE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

It is in no drivelling tone that we say our houses and our wives and children are at the mercy of these black rascals, who if they in broad daylight will drive in white men and then coolly massacre their horses and bullocks, only five miles from Cooktown we may reasonably expect that in the absence of the native policy they will some fine night or day either slaughter us when we are quite unprepared, or burn us out of their territory.\textsuperscript{10}

There was much anxiety in Normanton too, in that year, for fear the blacks would burn the town\textsuperscript{11} while at Ravenswood spearsings on the outlying diggings convinced the \textit{Northern Miner} that the tribes were gathering to sack the town.\textsuperscript{12} Cloncurry had its moments of fear as news of the local tribe the Kalkadoons passed around the town\textsuperscript{13} while in 1880 the residents of Smithfield took a deputation to the local Police Magistrate seeking aid against the Aborigines. They spoke "of the probability of an onslaught being made" and said their lives and those of their families were "in imminent danger."\textsuperscript{14}

Gilberton was one of the ephemeral boom towns of the North Queensland Gold Rushes which was founded in 1869 and grew to a community of perhaps several thousand in 1871 and 1872. There had been minor skirmishes with the local Aborigines on the more outlying claims but the first serious attack took place late in 1872 when the Chinese camp was rushed and five miners killed. The \textit{Queenslander}'s correspondent wrote with prophetic doom:

there is an idea that the blacks have got an inkling of our small population, and, judging from the ease they had in putting the Chinese to flight ... no doubt ... they thought to have put the coup de grace on old Gilbert, and start a grand corroboree on the ruins of its empty habitations.\textsuperscript{15}

However the most serious blow came not from the blacks but from news of the Etheridge and Palmer fields which enticed away the bulk of the population. About one hundred remained, mainly Chinese diggers, but including a few Europeans like the storekeeper, the publican, the owner of the stamping machinery, and their families. The crisis came at the end of 1873. The police were withdrawn to the Palmer in November leaving the town without protection. The Aborigines began to move in once again towards the settlement. In a couple of concerted attacks the Chinese were driven from their camps into the town leaving behind their stores and large quantities of wash dirt which was being stockpiled in anticipation of the rains. With
that the Chinese left the town. Contemporary accounts invariably impute
their exodus to the fear of the Aborigines although we lack any evidence
from the Chinese themselves. A few remaining Europeans were in a perilous
position. The wet season was imminent with its certainty of flooded creeks
and impassable tracks. Teamsters refused to come to the town through fear
of attack and the greater profits to be made on the road to the Palmer. In
December the remaining residents burnt many of their belongings in the main
street and abandoned the town leaving behind stores, equipment, the 15 head
stamping machine and ripening crops in vegetable and fruit gardens. Though
the evidence is not conclusive it seems probable that Gilberton was
abandoned largely through fear of the blacks. This was certainly the
conclusion drawn elsewhere and Gilberton entered the folklore of the North.
The field was re-opened at the end of the seventies. The sentiments
expressed by the Queenslander in 1879 were no doubt echoed around a hundred
camp fires. A promising district then maintaining more than 600 men had
earlier been "deserted at the instance of a few howling savages."16

The amount of violence - and property loss - the insecurity and use
of guns all point to a situation in which many people on the frontier
considered that they were at war with the Aborigines although legally that
was impossible. We can find numerous references to 'a kind of warfare',
'a guerilla war', 'a secret war' being waged. Two examples will illustrate.
The first comes from a letter written by an Atherton Tableland selector:

there are thousands, that can be spent on Defence Forces, to
protect the inhabitants of this country from the invisible,
perhaps imaginary, but for certain distant enemies; but we
cannot afford to keep an efficient body of police to keep in
check the enemy we have at our door, the enemy of every day
the one that slowly but surely robs us and impoverishes us.17

The editor of the Rockhampton Bulletin wrote in 1870 that:

No way of treating them, except as beligerants when they
commit outrages has yet been found efficacious in the back
tracks. They may be tolerated and treated kindly so long
as they refrain from mischevious acts, but when they rob,
steal, or murder, they must be treated as enemies to the
state and shot down with as little compunction as soldiers
shoot each other in battles amongst civilized men. That
this is a deplorable necessity we admit. But is it more
deplorable than the practice in modern civilized warfare.18
The legacy of frontier violence lived on. For the blacks there was fear, suspicion, powerlessness and a belief that Europeans were monstrously hypocritical. For the whites there was no sudden end to insecurity. Above all the settlers felt the Aborigines could never be trusted, that given the slightest opportunity they would be revenged and that as a consequence they had to be held in constant fear of punishment or death. Such suspicions were epitomized by the squatter who remarked in 1861 that one could never depend on the blacks:

you can never win their affections to you, so as to trust them like any other individual...the only reason for their being in a state of subordination is to be found in their dread of the white man, it is not respect or love but fear.19

Similar views were expressed in 1897 by a cattleman who had managed a Cape York station for five years with the help of five Aboriginal stockmen. Despite long and intimate association the deep distrust remained. He explained that

so closely did I observe their hidden nature that a revolver, generally loaded, was, like my stockwhip, my constant companion.20

Such sentiments were common in frontier towns as well. Thus the Port Denison Times issued a warning to the people of Bowen just after the local clans had been let in to the town:

it would be absurd under any circumstances to expect any kindly feeling to exist towards us in the breasts of the black fellows... we shall do well to bear in mind that their feelings towards us are and must be those of resentment and hostility and that however the exhibition of those feelings may be restrained by motives of policy on their part they do exist and probably will continue to do while the race lasts, and that this smouldering fire will be ready to burst into flame when favourable conditions offer.21

Violence towards the Aborigines came to be accepted as a normal feature of colonial life. Some contemporaries were alarmed at this burgeoning tradition of brutality. In 1867 a writer in the Rockhampton Bulletin remarked that the community calmly accepted atrocities which in Britain would elicit "universal indignation". He sensed that the whole community was being brutalized:

Already the evil leaven has begun to work. I have frequently felt grieved and indignant at the levity with which many of the colonial youth speak of those outrages on the blacks.22
Examples of post-frontier violence are easy to find but a particularly graphic illustration can be found in Edward Curr's *The Australian Race*. Curr's informant, writing of the funeral rites of the Belyando blacks, instanced in passing the case of a girl of 15 years of age, who with several others were dispersed for unwittingly allowing the grass to take fire on the bank of a river on which they were fishing. This was on the territory of the tribe. She was brought here, and died the day after she received the shot.\(^{23}\) Violence, then, played an overwhelmingly important part in the first period of European-Aboriginal contact and continued to influence events long after the pioneering era. While recognizing its significance in the past we can hope that it will not once again come to influence the nature of race relations in North Queensland. But we would be very sanguine indeed if we did not accept that as one of the possibilities for the future.

**REFERENCES**

2. Ibid., II, p.424.
4. As reported in the *Queenslander*, 23 June 1866.
6. Letter from 'Selector', 11 April, 1890.
10. 1 July 1874.
12. As reported in *Mackay Mercury*, 14 February 1874.
15. 14 December 1875.
RACIAL VIOLENCE IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

16. 12 April 1879.

17. Queenslander, 26 November 1887.

18. 8 November 1870.


20. Queenslander, 2 January 1897.

21. 12 June 1869.


"As regards its aboriginal inhabitants, the colony falls naturally into two divisions - districts where the blacks are "quiet" and those where they are "bad". In the first the blacks have given up all avowed hostility; their depredations, if they commit any, taking rather the nature of larceny. In the second, a state of open warfare between the two races exists...in places where they are bad, as in the Palmer district, every depredation committed by the blacks is avowedly an act of warfare. They mean war; they only know one way of waging it - killing everyone they can catch, and all that belongs to him and if their foe were to refrain from retaliating in the same manner, they would not feel grateful for his mercy - they would simply deride him as a fool."¹

"The history of the occupation of Australian territory by the whites is a continual tale of warfare with the blacks, of attack and reprisal. It is a story of two people separated by a gulf of thousands of years, generally unbridgeable except by a slow and minutely studied progress. That the result was disastrous for the inferior race can readily be understood and is in keeping with the history of the world's conquest and colonisation."²

These two quotations probably provide as good a place as any to begin a consideration of what happened when two civilizations - one which had exercised total hegemony over the area we are concerned with for at least 7,000 years³ and probably over a much greater period, and a second whose ethic of progress and self-confident belief in their own innate superiority led them to believe that there was nothing inherently wrong in dispossessing a weaker, less technologically advanced race - came into contact in the country between Cooktown and the Palmer River goldfield. While neither quotation tells us much that historians of frontier conflict are unaware of, and each shows the bias of earlier generations, they introduce four themes which underly my subject.

First, they refer to the fact of warfare. We shall see that Europeans generally, and the editors of the Cooktown newspapers in particular, believed that they were involved in a state of open warfare, the aim of which was to establish white hegemony over the pathways between a port and a goldfield. I am not concerned with the realism, or otherwise, of this belief. It could perhaps be shown that this belief
was not wholly accurate. It was, however, believed and is significant by virtue of its existence regardless of the degree of objective truth it represents.

Second, Hudson Fysh refers to the belief that this state of open warfare was to all intents and purposes inevitable, when these two civilizations came into contact without the kind of period of grace which might allow them time to adjust to each other. It is worth remembering that the Europeans on the whole had been sufficiently indoctrinated by their experiences in other areas, or by what they heard and read, to believe that there was no point in allowing the blacks a period of grace - that by virtue of Aboriginal treachery any such period merely postponed the day when the white man would have to prove that European culture was supreme, and that resistance was useless. The settlers expected resistance, believing it to be inevitable, and therefore acted first to gain and hold the initiative.

This leads us to a third point - the belief in the innate and insurmountable biologically-imposed inferiority of the Aborigines. Later we shall see this type of belief emerging in the newspapers of the day, often accompanied by a type of Social Darwinist belief that this fact of inferiority meant that the Aborigines were fated inevitably to disappear when faced with a superior culture. This belief provided some justification for the activities of the Native Police and others who were in practice waging a war of extermination against the blacks. However lamentable such a state of affairs was seen to be, it could at least be partly excused as a mere acceleration of an entirely natural process.

Finally, Fysh points out to us the belief that this extinction of the inferior race "in keeping with the history of the world's colonization and conquest" makes the eclipsing of native peoples an unfortunate consequence, a melancholy footnote, to the bringing of the light of civilization to the benighted corners of the earth. Such a belief would have had a soothing effect on what might otherwise have been disturbed colonial consciences.

Having introduced these themes, before turning to consider the actual events which form the meat of this lecture, it might be as well to establish some form of theoretical framework for our observations. I would suggest three basic hypotheses concerning the factors which influence
"A STATE OF OPEN WARFARE": FRONTIER CONFLICT IN THE COOKTOWN AREA

the nature of frontier conflict in a given area. While I would not claim that these are the only considerations, I would suggest that, all other things being equal, they are major considerations. My hypotheses are as follows:

1) Settlement of an area occurs either by diffusion, spreading from a neighbouring area, or by the relatively sudden arrival of settlers from somewhere outside the immediate vicinity.
2) The nature of Aboriginal-European relations in a given area is partly determined by which of these forms of settlement applies.
3) The nature of race relations on the frontier depends partly on the forms of economic activity carried out by Europeans.

I would suggest that the first hypothesis enables us to distinguish clearly between the classic type of pastoral expansion, of going one step further into the unknown, one step beyond the previous limits of civilization, to found a sheep or cattle station, and a second type of settlement which may be seen as corresponding to jumping off the deep end in order to learn how to swim. This second type of settlement may be the result of the discovery of gold somewhere far beyond the bounds of civilized, or even of semi-civilized, life. Or it may be the result of a decision to establish a port somewhere along the coast, perhaps to provide access to a goldfield, or to a pastoral area, or perhaps for strategic and commercial reasons. Or it may be the result of the discovery of good grazing country somewhere far beyond the horizon. Most of Queensland was settled by diffusion, but the initial settlement of Brisbane, the establishment of ports at Bowen, Cardwell, Townsville, Somerset and Cooktown, as well as the results of the discovery of gold on the Palmer River, are all examples of settlement by jumping into the deep end.

With regard to my second hypothesis, I would suggest that in areas of gradual settlement Europeans will be preceded by stories passed on from tribe to tribe, and it is possible that their presence in a neighbouring area may warn the Aborigines of the dangers inherent in resisting invasion. It may postpone or even prevent conflict by giving the blacks time to learn the types of behaviour that whites regarded as desirable, or to learn by hearsay how to effectively resist the invasion of their territory.
Again, it may contribute towards the type of deliberate migration away from tribal areas described by W.E.H. Stanner in his article "Durmugam: A Nanglomeri". Conversely it may be seen that in an area of sudden settlement there is little opportunity for Aborigines to learn particular types of behaviour or to choose their course of action. However we should remember that permanent settlement in such areas may well be preceded by itinerant Europeans: for example, explorers, or along the coast merchant ships, marine surveyors, or beche-de-mer fishers, and that some of these may give, by their treatment of Aborigines, an early unfavourable image of Europeans as a whole. Dalrymple and Hann both refer to the presence of beche-de-mer fishermen near Cooktown prior to settlement in 1873.

Thirdly, I would suggest that the actual nature of race relations on the frontier depends to a great extent on the forms of economic activity carried on by Europeans. This may seem obvious, but it is nevertheless worth remembering. Obviously farmers and graziers use the land in different ways. Obviously miners will be different again. Other types of frontier spring readily to mind. In the Cooktown area we can refer to an urban frontier, a maritime frontier, a missionary frontier, and the type of frontier I will be chiefly concerned with - a transport frontier. European attitudes, I believe, spring from their hopes and aspirations in a given area, and the subjugation, extermination, or whatever, of the Aborigines has to be seen in terms of the requirements of a given type of economic activity, and of the attitudes of Europeans to Aborigines as a racial group, which helps to determine the European perception of the requirements of that area.

The area I have defined as the Cooktown area for the purposes of my research is bounded by the Daintree River and the Great Dividing Range in the south, the Hann, Morehead, and North Kennedy Rivers in the west, and Princess Charlotte Bay to the north. This paper, however is concerned with one slice of this area - the part lying between Cooktown, the junction of the Normanby and Kennedy Rivers, and the Great Dividing Range. This is the area where most of the fighting took place, and falls broadly into one particular type of frontier situation which I will refer to as the transport frontier. Most of the country between Cooktown and the Palmer was not settled during the period we are concerned with and represents a frontier where movement was the major constant factor. Diggers, packers,
bullock drivers and other travellers passed along the various tracks to and from the Palmer as fast as their legs, horses, or bullocks permitted them to travel, stopping only to rest where fairly permanent water, good grass or alcohol had led to the development of established rest areas. Perhaps if settlement had been closer, the duration of Aboriginal resistance might have been shorter. In 1880, after seven years of frontier warfare, the "wild blacks" of the Hells Gate area were "still very dangerous", and the fighting, though it may have decreased with the decline of the Palmer as an alluvial field, and the losses suffered by the blacks, still continued.

Prior to the establishment of Cooktown in 1873, the area was visited by a number of Europeans, notably by Captain Cook who came into conflict with the Gugu-Yimidjir tribe over the quantities of fish and turtle which the crew of the "Endeavour" were catching. Other visitors included Philip Parker King, who ran into trouble with the Aborigines at Cape Flinders and Lizard Island in 1820 and 1821, and William Hann the discoverer of the Palmer River, if not of the payable gold in its bed, in 1872. Hann's discovery of a few grains of gold in the Palmer, and his claim that the gold was not payable, led Irish prospector James Venture Mulligan to investigate the prospects more closely. Mulligan's party found payable gold and despite his warnings about the nature of the country and the amount of gold, Mulligan found himself the father of the last real alluvial gold rush in Australia: enthusiastic rumours led miners to sell, if not their souls, at least their worldly goods in a blind rush to reach the new "river of gold".

We now move to the Endeavour River. The time: 4.30 p.m.; the date: Friday, October 24th, 1873, as the Queensland Government North East Coast Expedition under George Elphinstone Dalrymple came sailing into the Endeavour aboard the chartered cutters Flying Fish and Coquette, having reached the northern end of its journey aimed at exploring and assessing the agricultural potential of the coast north of Cardwell. Dalrymple pitched his camp near where Cook had beached the Endeavour and settled down to await the arrival of a party led by Philip Sellheim who was to have left the Palmer to blaze a trail to the coast. Sellheim however, never arrived. At 11.30 the next morning
the camp being busily engaged drying stores, pitching more
tents, cleaning firearms &c, &c, we were all startled by the
sudden appearance of the tall masts and yards of a large
steamer over the mangrove belt towards the point.8

The steamer was the Leichhardt, chartered by the Colonial Government
to bring officials, police, and some 70 miners to the Endeavour en route
for the Palmer. Alarmed by the developments, the Government had recalled
Sellheim, and decided instead to send a full administrative staff to the
Endeavour by fast steamer. The official party, comprising Howard St.
George, the warden of the new goldfield, Macmillan, the northern road
engineer, Native Police troopers, sundry administrative staff and the
miners left the new port on October 28th, guided by Jerry, an Aboriginal
member of Hann's party. Dalrymple, after thoroughly exploring the lower
reaches of the river, sailed away on the 31st, as did the Leichhardt.
Thus we can see that Cooktown was, in the terms of my first hypothesis,
settled off the deep end. Without warning, the first of a flood of miners-
50,000 in the first three years - had arrived and, literally overnight,
an almost deserted inlet became a major port. Given the experiences of
Europeans elsewhere in the colony, it is unlikely that they did not expect
some form of resistance. It came within a week of the departure of the
official party. A letter to the Brisbane Telegraph described it this way:

November 3rd - Started over the spur of the range running to E;
came to Normanby River (15 miles); started a mob of blacks;
shot four and hunted them; fine river; November 4th - Started,
15 miles, Surprise Lagoons; camped 5th for spell; November 6th -
Blacks surprised us at daybreak, about 150, all were armed;
got close to camp before anyone heard them; great consternation;
shot several; they ran into the water holes for shelter, where
they were shot; travelled then unmolested for 2 or 3 days to
Kennedy River...good country about Kennedy; came over ridges
next day to Palmer, 12 miles below diggings; plenty of game
and fish; camped one day; fishing; came to diggings on Friday.9

Sixteen members of the party subsequently denied two of the three
allegations in the report but confirmed the attack on the party, claiming:
The blacks were rounding up our horses to take them away and
we heard there was one black shot in the dispersion but did
not see any one shot. The Native Police did not follow the
blacks but saddled up immediately and went on to the Palmer.
And we believe that there was not a single black followed or
shot by any one.10

This account is unsatisfactory in a number of ways. It would be
surprising, to say the least, to find that a Native Police detachment
would have the restraint to refrain from reacting in the manner which they usually employed to punish depredations when the particular incident involved an attack on their persons. The use of the word "dispersion" in bloodless circumstances also represents a departure from the norm, and doubts on the matter can only be increased by the comment of the Cooktown Police Magistrate that:

To imagine for a moment that an expedition of the kind could pass thro' such a country amongst tribes of hostile blacks in close proximity to where at least two white men have been killed and eaten would be quite impossible, for it not infrequently happens that diggers travel with their rifles loaded and even cocked for fear of sudden attack.11

The stage was set. In 1875 the Cooktown Herald wrote:

at that spot, the natives, wholly ignorant of the terrible power of fire arms and confiding in their numbers, showed a ferocity and daring wholly unexpected and unsurpassed. Grasping the very muzzles of the rifles they attempted to wrest them from the hands of the whites, standing to be shot down rather than yield an inch. This was the beginning of a series of attacks that at first were daringly open; but as the knowledge dawned on their minds that the white race had a fatal superiority of weapons, these attacks became stealthy, cautious, and only made at great advantages of numbers and situation.12

Elsewhere it was reported that 13 Aborigines died at Battle Camp,13 and the locality retained a bad reputation with an attack on the Palmer gold escort14 and the murder of the Macdermott brothers15 in 1874 and an attack on the district mail carrier, John Hogsflesh16 in 1876.

Significantly, Hann's party had been attacked in the same area in 1872, though Hann had acted provocatively by detaining an Aboriginal boy in his camp. The attack on Hann and the events may be linked, but it is more likely that some provocative action prompted the attack on Macmillan's party. In 1878 it was claimed that members of the party thievishly took and wantonly destroyed the fish that had been secured by labour and preserved with diligence by the unoffending blacks at that time, and when they showed signs of displeasure, shots were fired to intimidate them, which were responded to with spears, their only means of revenge.17

It is possible that this episode corresponds with the events of November, as described in the Brisbane Telegraph. As well, it may be significant that it was the end of the dry season, the time of year when...
IAN HUGHES

the Aborigines gathered around permanent waterholes. The fact that the party was camped by a lagoon may thus have been amply provocative.

In any case the fighting had started, and over the next six years an absolute minimum of 17 Europeans and Chinese were killed, at least 10 more were wounded, and a further five rumoured or reported dead. As well, an absolute minimum of 133 horses and 67 bullocks were speared over the same period. These figures, as I said, represent an absolute minimum. No one can be sure exactly how many whites died and my primary research is by no means complete. The livestock figures represent only the total obtained from numbers given in press reports - they do not include one "wholesale slaughter," eight cases where "some" livestock were speared, two where "a number" were speared, five where "several" went and two when "many" were speared. These nineteen cases would, I think, push the total livestock tally well over 300.

While this concern with livestock may seem slightly ridiculous, the whites in the area, particularly the packers and bullock drivers were not happy about their losses and frequent comments about the regularity and expense of such losses found their way into the local press. Considering the importance of horses and bullocks on the transport frontier, this is hardly surprising. The regularity of such depredations gave rise to constant calls for increased police protection along the lines of communication. After all, as the Cooktown Courier rather succinctly pointed out:

When...a hardworking man loses at one fell swoop 10 or 11 horses of the average value of 40 or 50 pounds he cannot be so very much to blame if he commits an indiscriminate act of slaughter amongst the blacks should he fall in with them.

Nor is it surprising that the packers and bullockies should call for an increase in the Native Police in order to let us at once exterminate these useless and obnoxious wretches. It seems that nothing short of extermination will check their animosity to the whites and all that is theirs.

After all, the livelihood of those involved in transporting goods to the Palmer was at stake, and at times it seemed as if

The black has an inordinate appetite for horse flesh and a craving for the chase: the white man also is fond ad extremum of horse flesh (i.e. neither cooked nor dead) but at the same time he is painfully fond of money and it gives him many a cruel pang to see valuable property no longer valuable by

38
reason of a spear sticking through its ribs. Horses in the Palmer district are a vital necessity to its existence and from the nature of the country and the climate must for a long time be a most expensive adjunct to the field. There is, therefore, the more reason why we should dread the incursions of savages, whose only object is a raid for chops, that cost the unfortunate wight, whose animals furnish the repast from 20 to 30 pounds each.25

Certain areas developed a reputation as bad areas for stock spearing. Of my absolute figure of 200, two areas, the immediate environs of Cooktown - the land around the lower reaches of the Endeavour and Annan Rivers, and what may be termed the Normanby corridor - encompassing the land on either side of the Normanby River between Battle Camp and the Great Dividing Range, accounted for 173, and another 11 were speared in the Hells Gate area. Despite this apparent concentration of depredations, protection by the Native Police was constantly regarded as insufficient and the local press contained many complaints about the lack of protection and the inefficiency of the detachments in the area. In 1877 the Cooktown Herald complained that, with regard to cattle spearing at King's Plains:

If a man steals a pair of trousers from a store in the town he is tracked until he be secured, carried off to the watch house, tried, sentenced, and punished, but here a man is allowed to suffer the loss of 8 valuable horses through these marauders without so much as a sympathising word or a hand stretched out to help him....When horses and cattle can be speared with impunity so close to the town we may reasonably expect the blacks paying a visit to Charlotte street and carrying off anything they may fancy or desire, without any danger of their being molested. Such indifference is not only unjustifiable but it amounts to absolute criminality on the part of those whose duty it is to inflict upon the miscreants the just penalties they deserve.26

Though the spectre of an assault on the main street of one of the colony's major centres exaggerates the actual danger, there was some justification for such complaints. Absolute security along the lines of communication was, admittedly, virtually impossible due to the presence nearby of almost inaccessible ranges which provided a reasonable retreat for the Aborigines and the lack of permanent settlement along the tracks. The Government, however, having created a force to police the frontier, certainly failed to employ it in the most effective manner and there were never enough Native Police troopers to satisfy the demands of the settlers. Fever and desertion acted to further impair the efficiency of the Native Police.
IAN HUGHES

Stock spearing was bad enough, but the most indignant cries of rage came, as we might expect, when murders were reported. The Europeans had, however, a sense of priorities in this regard. A local politician, W.P. Morgan stated in an election speech that some Chinese had been speared by the savages, and a few of them had died, but this was not near so bad as Borghero losing several horses by the same agency.27

One event in particular, the murder of a German named Strau, found its way into the folklore of the day as an indication of the utter vileness of the Aborigines. The Cooktown Herald of 21 October 1871 described how a Mr. Alfred Court, travelling between the Palmer and Cooktown...heard the noise of blacks, and cantered on to have a sight at them, which he obtained and found that there was a mob of about 50 evidently engaged in something beyond honest pursuits. (Of course, any large group of Aborigines were, in the eyes of the settlers, bound to be engaged in something beyond honest pursuits, and therefore warranted "dispersing"). Mr. Court did not wait, but hunted them to the river into which they plunged after one or two of them giving signs of distress by jumping into the air. On returning to his mate on the road Mr. Court saw at once what the black devilskins had been up to, for there were all kinds of rations strewn about the road, and close by was a horse dray and a short distance off were three bodies - one of a woman stark naked on her back, and alongside of her the body of a girl 5 or 6 years of age also on her back naked; further on the body of a man with his trousers on lying on his face. The woman had evidently been ravished by the murderous wretches, and then tomahawked in the head, her face being covered with blood; the girl and the man having the appearance of a similar fate.28

Reprisals of course followed but are not described in the same graphic detail. Punitive expeditions were seldom described at all, most references to them speaking of dispersal "in the usual manner". The Strau murders were recalled in 1877 when news arrived of the deaths of two brothers named Macquarie near Hells Gate. The Cooktown Herald described those responsible as "these treacherous black cowards...possessing all the subtlety, dissimulation and treachery of the American Indian with none of his generosity."29

What made it worse was the widely held belief that the Aborigines of the area were cannibals. Murder was bad enough, sexual assault worse, and less widespread, but cannibalism was worst of all. Actual evidence
of cannibalistic feasts was rare - obviously the only concrete evidence could be half cooked remains - but the widely accepted belief that the Aborigines carried off the corpses of their victims gave some credence to reports of cannibalism. In 1875 it was alleged that "the increasing appetite of the Aborigines for roasted Asiatic is one of their marked peculiarities."30

This state of warfare, and the atrocities committed on both sides - the murders and stock spearings by the blacks and the ensuing reprisals by the whites were fairly typical. In one case 24 Aboriginal men were trapped in a ravine near Cape Bedford and shot, another four being presumed drowned, in retaliation for the non-fatal spearing of two whites.31 Debate resulted in the local press and, it may be reasonably assumed, in the community at large over the method of dealing with the Aborigines. Such controversies arose in most areas of the colony and led to the rise of two camps of opinion with a considerable amount of polemic flying between them.

One side, believing that the treatment of the Aborigines was inhumane, was centred on the Aborigines Protection Society and its partisans were frequent correspondents of the southern press. Expressions of such opinions were less frequent in the northern newspapers - probably because of a combination the fact of the close proximity of the frontier, and of editorial policy which would have consigned such correspondence to the "mysterious depths of the journalistic waste basket" unless the editor desired to have a little fun at the humanitarians' expense. While the humanitarians admitted the need for security on the frontier, they were generally of the opinion that

even a blackfellow has some rights. He has a right to existence and a claim to be saved from mere purposeless slaughter; he has a right to have his property - the canoe he has laboriously hollowed out of a log or framed with bark, the weapons, nets, or implements he has fashioned - protected from the thievish curiosity of any party of idle travellers that may visit his camp; and he has surely a right to prevent his gin - his wife or daughter - being run in by any white man or his aboriginal servant who may take a fancy to her. And it is creditable to the colony that the aborigines of Queensland have been, and are, subjected to each and all of these outrages at the hands of the whites, without the chance of any reparation except such as they may themselves exact with spear or nullah, the "wild justice of revenge."32
The second side, which seems to have had the support of most settlers on the frontier, believed that suppression was the only answer. They claimed that

It is well known in the North that the first hostilities have in all cases been on the part of the blacks: in every instance where the races have come into collision the aboriginals have been the aggressors. They have ever been treated with leniency and consideration until bitter experience showed that no faith could be safely placed in them, and that the benefactor of the day might be the victim of the morrow.33

The suppressionists believed that there were three options open to the settlers. They could abandon the territory they had settled, or they could continue "as at present, letting everyone shift for himself, and content to let some unfortunate European or Asiatic furnish an occasional banquet for these degraded wretches,"34 or they could "at once organize a system of repression and protection, that would of necessary become extermination if the "poor blacks" will not recognize the paramount influence of the law."35 Needless to say, it was the latter course that was favoured by the settlers. Expressions of Social Darwinism can be found in references to the "inevitable extinction" of the Aborigines, and it was remarked that

Desperate diseases call for strong remedies and while we would regret a war of extermination, we cannot but admit that there exists a stern, though mayhap cruel necessity for it.36

The alleged inefficiency of Native Police protection, and the need for an increase in the number of detachments in the area, led to calls for the establishment of a Volunteer force37 and proposals in the southern press for the establishment of a force of Chinese police who would protect their countrymen. This suggestion brought a reply from a Mr. G.E. Buckmaster, who described himself as

U.S. Army, Texas Mounted Rifle Rangers and Victorian Mounted Police, teaches the British Cavalry and Infantry Sword, Lance and Bayonet exercises. Infantry Drill, Military Equitation &c. Drill-books forwarded to school teachers at 2s 6d (stamps) each.38

The frequency of depredations led to frequent derogatory comments regarding those who wished to protect or proselytize the Aborigines. The following quotations show quite clearly the scorn of the frontier editor for the humanitarian.
This black nuisance is becoming quite a bore to those who have occasion to travel the roads, and we think that the Government should at once despatch Mr. Alfred Davidson, the Brisbane agent of the "Aboriginal Destruction Society" in England to the scene, as we feel confident that with the administration of a few doses of his "Adelphi brimstone and treacle", the "poor blacks" may be dissuaded from that piece de resistance of a camp banquet - "Whitefellow a la Australienne."39

...the "Fools are not dead yet". Our contemporary [i.e. the Cooktown Courier ] in its issue of January 10th, publishes an article which may have the effect of luring one unsuspecting and unsophisticated enthusiast, to his destruction. The article aforesaid after charging the Native Police with murder, supplemented by nearly every fiendish crime in the calendar, which can disgrace our civilization, calls for "one single man" who for the love of his God should penetrate the untrodden wilds, and try to make friends with the first wild blacks he meets, live with them, learn their customs, learn their language, teach them Christianity &c, &c". This noble language has called forth a reply from an enthusiastic gentleman signing himself "W.E. Hillier", who responds thus: "If you will be the New York Herald, I will be your Stanley. I am a student of the Presbyterian College and will give up my snug home, the study of Greek and Latin, and will take my life in my hands, carry out your suggestion &c, &c". The Courier does not respond to this in enthusiastic terms, but says that through white influence the blacks in the immediate vicinity are dangerous, yet offers to convey Mr. Hillier 50 miles up the coast and then send him adrift with a few tomahawks and gaudy beads to teach the benighted savage how to find the great thoroughfare to Christianity and Heaven. We say, come along, Mr. Hillier, we will help you in the Christian work of planting you 50 miles in the interior, or underground, if you are bound to sacrifice yourself, We believe in giving a show to every man of energy and not to be outdone by the Courier, will supplement a weeks rations for your contemplated journey, believing you will not require half that amount in the prosecution of your labour of love and that the balance, together with your manly form, before that time will be undergoing the process of digestion in the clamorous bowels of those "black brudders", for whose salvation you and your friend of the Courier are so fondly yearning.40

Such sentiments were not, by any means, exceptional. We have seen, in the course of this lecture, that a state of warfare existed at least in the minds of European settlers. It was a war aimed at establishing European control of the lines of communication between Cooktown and the Palmer. The legacy of the war in the Cooktown area, as in Queensland as
IAN HUGHES

a whole, is still with us today. Perhaps it seems that the rediscovery of racial violence is adding to, rather than solving, the problems associated with race in Australia today. We must, however, remember that it is impossible to realize the extent and the true nature of violence in our past without looking at some of the uglier aspects of our heritage. Only by re-assessing our past can we see what we are today, and without a close look at relations between Aborigines and settlers we can never accurately understand what we have been, or what we are today. However galling the idea may be, we must remember that the settlement of the north, in the words of the Queenslander of 1 May 1880, amounted to:

a fitful war of extermination waged upon the blacks, something after the fashion in which other settlers wage war upon noxious wild beasts, the process differing only so far as the victims, being human, are capable of a wider variety of suffering than brutes. The savages, hunted from the places where they had been accustomed to find food, driven into barren ranges, shot like wild dogs at sight, retaliate when and how they can. They spear the white man's cattle and horses and if by chance they succeed in overpowering an unhappy European they exhaust their savage ingenuity in wreaking their vengeance upon him, even mutilating the senseless body out of which they have pounded the last breath of life. Murder and counter murder, outrage repaid by violence, theft by robbery, so the dreary tale continues, till at last the blacks, starved, cowed, and broken hearted, their numbers thinned, their courage overcome, submit to their fate, and disease and liquor finish the work which we pay our native police to begin.41

REFERENCES


2. Fysh, H., Taming the North, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1950, p.25.


10. Q.S.A. COL/AL94 701 of 1874, Police Magistrate, Cooktown to Colonial Secretary (enclosure).


12. Cooktown Herald 8/12/1875.


15. reported as rumour Cooktown Herald 28/10/1874; seemingly confirmed Cooktown Herald 29/5/1875.


19. Cooktown Courier 15/6/1878; 25/1/1879; Cooktown Herald 8/5/1875; 30/10/1875; 12/2/1876; 31/7/1877.


22. Cooktown Herald 16/1/1875; Cooktown Courier 31/7/1878.


24. Cooktown Herald 30/10/1875.


27. Cooktown Courier 30/11/1878.

28. Cooktown Herald 21/10/1874.


IAN HUGHES


32. Cooktown Courier 1/1/1878.

33. Cooktown Herald 8/12/1875.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid, 27/10/1875.

37. Ibid, 5/5/1875; 8/5/1875; 30/6/1875.

38. Ibid, 12/1/1876.

39. Ibid, 21/10/1875.

40. Ibid, 3/2/1877.

41. Queenslander 1/5/1880.
This paper is concerned with the following missions from their foundation, indicated below, to 1897:

Mari Yamba 1886 - on the Proserpine River - Lutheran
Hope Valley 1886 - at Cape Bedford - Lutheran
Bloomfield 1887 - South of Cooktown - Lutheran
Mapoon 1891 - on the Batavia River - Presbyterian
Yarrabah 1891 - near Cairns - Church of England

It should first be noted that missions to the Aborigines were seen in terms of a charity rather than as an inescapable Christian responsibility demanding an unavoidable call on the individual's or the church's resources. Very few Christians indeed would have considered their Christianity tested or salvation threatened by their response to the material or spiritual needs of the Aborigines. They were an optional extra.

It was the aim of all invading Europeans to control the Aborigines they came into contact with. The missions aimed at probably the most total control for the belief that Christianity was the only true faith produced the imperative to convert; that is, to change how Aborigines thought, felt and acted. By 1885, the necessity of establishing a village composed of missionaries and those who could be induced to abandon their nomadic life was accepted by all churches interested in converting the Aborigines. There was thus the need to develop an economic base to make the village self-supporting, or partly so, to ease the financial drain on the associated missionary organization, for the missions were always starved for funds. The attempt to create a Christian village resulted in a conflict of values with the traditions, life patterns, and values of Aboriginal society. E.R. Gribble of Yarrabah noted: "To instil the idea of a fixed home is the first task of the missionary". This produced a channelling of energies and resources away from purely

* This subject is dealt with in more detail in the writer's doctoral thesis, Aboriginal-European Relations in North Queensland 1861-1897.
religious teaching. Indeed, the Aborigines had the reputation of being the most difficult people to convert to Christianity. Missionary John Flierl, the founder of Hope Valley and later the Lutheran mission to New Guinea, claimed his church could support two missions in New Guinea for the cost of Hope Valley.

The economy and work patterns of Europe were deeply ingrained in the missionaries' concept of civilization and Christianity. The need to induce Aborigines to accept regular, agricultural employment was seen as essential to conversion. Missionary Poland of Hope Valley described the Aborigines as "Wild and vulgar; very workshy and used to absolute, unrestricted freedom. The men have neither strength nor energy. They loaf all day long. Their two or three wives have to feed them". A Moravian missionary at Mapoon, probably Mrs. Hey, wrote: "Thanks to the missionaries they have learned to use such instruments as hoes and are beginning to have some idea of earning their own livelihood. The small mission farm is a valuable teacher of thrift, diligence, kindliness and many matters belonging to the settled life. It has daily lessons for a people who never used to do any work". And E.R. Gribble enunciated the aims of Yarrabah as: "The elevation and the evangelization of the Aboriginals by preaching the Gospel, and by teaching them habits of industry".

These and other attitudes of missionaries, indicate both concern and contempt for the Aborigines. The missionaries also believed that Aboriginal life was suffused with satanism. They believed literally that they were confronted by the devil. Nicholas Hey of Mapoon wrote: "We started work with very poor material ... There was the stifling heathen atmosphere pressing heavily upon us. Besides we could not help feeling the Satanic power arrayed against us, and we realized as never before how completely he was holding sway in the heathen world". Such a view was echoed again and again on all missions: "Mission work is a battle against the realms of darkness; that is our experience here". Countless manifestations of Satan were seen in the behaviour of the Aborigines, especially in Aboriginal polygamy and the role of women in Aboriginal society, but also in Aboriginal child rearing practices, women fighting, nakedness, Aboriginal standards of cleanliness, and most particularly in
A CONFLICT OF FAITHS: ABORIGINAL REACTION TO THE FIRST MISSIONARIES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Aboriginal mortuary practices. Moreover, the missionaries saw unreclaimed Aborigines as animals, or nearly so. A photograph, in a missionary journal, of Nicholas Hey and four Aborigines was referred to as: "A lion-tamer amid four of his half-tamed young lions", "An animal expression", and "Bloodthirsty, treacherous lions". Gribble wrote of the Yarrabah Aborigines affectionately as "Children of Nature", implying they were not fully human.

All missionaries believed civilization was only possible through Christianity. They wanted Aboriginal conformity with European expectations. Yet they had limited expectations of the degree of civilization Aboriginals could achieve. Thus Gribble praised an Aboriginal convert for seeking spiritual strength to overcome his quick and violent temper and mused with wonder at the power of God to effect such a change as they were "only Australian Aboriginals". Yet the missionaries did develop surprising degrees of tolerance which often grew with the passing of time. Thus Nicholas Hey was horrified by the first corroboree he witnessed at Mapoon, but derived satisfaction from the corroboree of welcome he received at Aurukun some years later. At Yarrabah, a church service was often followed by a corroboree. All missionaries accepted the doomed race theory. Thus Poland of Hope Valley noted: "All the mission can really achieve for them is a kind of Christian burial service, a kind of promising sunset glow, which cannot be followed by any bright dawn in this life here on earth". This accounts to some extent for the early limited ambitions.

The "dying race" was only too happy to have its pillow soothed but often found the moral and spiritual medicine objectionable. This conflict was crystallized in the concept of sin. Nicholas Hey believed that the Aborigines' absence of a sense of sin was one of his greatest problems and observed, with some degree of exasperation, they "Could not see there was any wrong in themselves". Indeed, the Aboriginal converts often kept on "sinning" in Christian eyes. They often participated in mortuary ceremonies, initiation ceremonies and retained or reverted to their own code of sexual morals.

The missionaries adopted a variety of strategies in their attempts to establish a Christian village. They tried to make the Aborigines dependent on the mission by food and tobacco hand-outs for a few hours work.
Thus Missionary Pfa1zer of Hope Valley recorded: "The simplest way to reduce them to compliance is not to give out food for a day. In no time at all they are willing to co-operate again". This was only a negative control on Aboriginal adults who consequently exploited missionaries intelligently as an additional source of food. Aborigines flocked to Hope Valley when there was no work to be done but avoided it when there was. In difficult times they brought the old, the sick, or the very young to the mission. The missionaries tended the sick with great dedication and enough success for some Aborigines to seek their aid. All tried to convert the adults but soon diverted most effort to the young. Missionary Hoerlein of Bloomfield had devoted a good deal of his efforts to the adults when he first arrived but some years later wrote: "Our hope is centred on the young people. The older people are too set in their nomadic ways". Thus the chief aim of all the missions was to induce Aborigines to leave their children or orphans at the mission. The children were then housed in separate dormitories, and had highly organized or supervised daily programmes. The adult Aborigines left their children at the missions for a variety of reasons: convenience; an initial lack of understanding of Christian indoctrination and its effects; and the difficult conditions in the bush because of their disturbed environment. The children were kept in dormitories to remove them from traditional influences. They were intended to grow up and marry and never to leave the mission. The aim was thus to produce not only a Christian village but a closed one.

In a surprisingly short time, Aboriginal leaders emerged to assist the missionaries. With few exceptions they were young Aborigines with little or no experience of traditional Aboriginal values and religion. The young Aborigines soon lost the ability or desire to fend for themselves in the bush as their eating habits changed. It should be noted that, before 1897, adults could not be compelled to stay on a mission. Yet many did.

The reaction of the first generation of adult Aborigines to have contact with the Missions is interesting. Initially there was a rejection of Christian ideology and morality. It was thought to be irrelevant to Aborigines. Indeed, the white man's religion often produced scorn and
hostility. Thus, at Bloomfield, the Aborigines were astonished that the Ten Commandments were meant for all human beings. However, access to the missionaries' material wealth necessitated a good deal of conformity with their expectations. This resulted in two patterns of behaviour: one for the mission and another for real life.

There was also a conflict of religious concepts or the illustration of common concepts. Thus, Pingilina, the Eleri evangelist who was associated with Hope Valley and Bloomfield, tried to instruct a group of Aborigines on the Biblical account of the creation. He reported:

"I was telling the blacks about creation: how everything was made and by whom".

But they said:

"Nonsense, the old men [their totemic ancestors] made everything".

But I replied:

"You are ignorant. There is one up there in Heaven, who is the Father of all, and He has created us and later on He saved us through His own Son, Jesus. In Heaven His children dwell forever and will be blessed".

But they only laughed and asked:

"However would people get up there? It's so high".

To a fundamentalist explanation of "Heaven" and "Hell", the Aborigines laughed that "It was not like that at all". Indeed Heaven was sometimes associated with the missionaries as a place where dull menial work was paid for with inadequate hand-outs of food or tobacco. The missionaries often knowingly or unknowingly attacked Aboriginal beliefs. Thus Schwarz of Hope Valley deliberately cooked a meal at a sacred fire and incensed the Aborigines. On another occasion, Poland had lectured Aborigines on God, the Creation, Adam and Jesus. The Aborigines decided to teach him their understanding of the Divine. Poland responded by declaring such beliefs "Silly ideas some of them obscene". There was no appreciation of the common quest: to understand the nature and destiny of man.

Indeed, the Aborigines' tolerant scorn of the Christian religion was brought out in one of Poland's accounts. He had been preaching to the adults:

"What's the matter with old Barbi? Is he ... sick?"
"Not sick but very tired. We were out on the coral islands to catch the pigeons, and he had to tie up the wind to enable us to get back ... Even you must have noticed the wind is no longer blowing as hard as before."
"But Barbi is no more responsible for that than you or I."
"Isn't he? Then we should like to know who is!"
"... God did, of course; God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, who created land and sea and man, who lets the sun and moon shine upon us, who ..."
"Ngamungakuburla can also bring the rain."
"Oh, don't talk rubbish. I am telling you the truth: only God can let the rain come."
"Of course he is right," says the rainmaker and looks mockingly at his friends.
"Be quiet and don't mock him!" says another a little anxiously.
"Don't get angry!" They try to keep the missionary calm.
"Don't make him angry," another one repeats. "He may not give us any tobacco otherwise."
"Now let him talk!" exclaims one man. "Haven't I been telling you all along? He talks well and we ought to stay with him."
The bored look on his face leaves [the missionary] in no doubt about his insincerity.

Scorn and hostility was directed with much less restraint at Aboriginal converts. At Yarrabah there were even fights between the camp Aborigines and mission Aborigines; and girls who wouldn't rejoin the tribe were scorned. Indeed, the Aborigines soon came to understand the threat posed to their traditional life. Thus they shouted abuse at Poland and Schwarz on one of their visits to Cooktown. The adult men encouraged boys to become initiated and to leave the missions and repeatedly urged the mission girls to go to their promised husbands. In fact, this was probably the cause of the most intense opposition. The missionaries' opposition to polygamy was deeply resented and even the mothers told Poland there was no sense in the older girls being at the mission. Poland wrote: "The point is that these backward people cannot grasp the purpose of a school, especially for girls. They regard it as disgraceful to try to copy the white man". The young, especially the girls, used the missions to evade Aboriginal authority, especially marriage obligations. Hostility to the
missionaries was encompassed in the general hostility of Aborigines to the white colonists. Indeed, the word for "white man" near Cooktown was Aboriginal for "evil spirits" which as the missionary noted was "not very flattering".

Action and reaction occurred in a very complex setting. All mission sites were subject to settler influence and interference. This was especially true of Mapoon which was popular with the pearl-shell and beche-de-mer fishermen for recruiting labour. The settlers thus offered an alternative means of subsistence to the missions and were often preferred by adult Aborigines, as indicated by the comment of one of the Bloomfield Aborigines: "Does the one in Heaven tell you to give us so little? And ... they start to sing the praises of the folk in Cooktown who are far more liberal than we are". As well, traditional Aboriginal life was continued in a modified form. Thus each mission became one of the resources of its region and its great virtue was surety. Missions attracted Aborigines from far afield, which sometimes produced conflict as occurred when the Weipa Aborigines visited Mapoon. However, they were used to look after the old, sick and the very young. Increasingly, as European settlement spread and the menial labour that Aborigines provided became less useful to the settlers and disease wreaked more havoc, the missions would become more important to the Aborigines.

Finally, missions created their own communities. Mission Aborigines married mission Aborigines and produced mission children to grow up, work, live and die on the mission.

By 1903, the government's acceptance of the missions to control Aborigines was complete. Apart from the missionaries' caring for the sick, providing a sure source of sustenance for the healthy, protecting all their Aborigines as much as possible from opium and alcohol, and the women from prostitution, the representatives of government seemed most impressed by the way the missionaries were producing village communities moulded on European-Christian values. The first Northern Protector of Aborigines, W.E. Roth reported with enthusiasm on the Aborigines' carpentry, agricultural, basket-making, and home-craft skills. He praised the choir and the playing of the piccolo, cornets, accordion, and the
organ. He was impressed with the mothers' meetings, prayer meetings, confirmation classes, and the church service. He thought the "promotion" system by which girls and boys received in-service training in domestic service and farm work "excellent". He thoroughly approved of the way the missionary arranged the marriages so that a stable mission community could be set up. He noted the improved health of the mission communities and that at Yarrabah there had only been six deaths in six years and fewer at Hope Valley. Of Yarrabah, he concluded: "To attempt to describe the noble self-denying work of these missionaries in sufficiently eulogistic terms would be futile: the organisation, management and discipline leaves nothing to be desired: the aims and objects of the mission are practically Christian". And certainly no pun was intended.

Yet it seems that the factor that most impressed the authorities was expressed by the one word: control. Thus Roth reported that the Aborigines came and went as they pleased at Bloomfield: "... the mission people have no control over them, and herein lies the secret of what I would call their non-success". Ultimately, control involved stabilizing a mission population and moulding it until it was acceptable to the European mind. In fact Roth and the Home Secretary, Foxton, were convinced that in North Queensland the Aborigines could be raised to "a higher scale of social order" only "by the influence and precepts of the missionaries". By 1902, Foxton stated publicly that he intended to divide Cape York Peninsula into Aboriginal reserved apportioning the interested Presbyterian and Anglican denominations certain geographical spheres of influence, the area expanding as far "as the enthusiasm of the Church members would carry it". Foxton made it clear that any denomination could have an Aboriginal reserve. He believed (erroneously) that there were then 25,000 Aborigines in Cape York Peninsula and he was willing to deliver this number into the hands of the missionaries. As the new century opened, it seemed that a new age of a new faith was about to come to Aboriginal Queensland. After the early frustrating years, the efforts of such pioneers as Flierl, Schwarz, Hey, and Gribble showed promise of rewards that none could have imagined. Yet, the promise for the first generation of mission Aborigines was limited. They were being offered the religion of their white conquerors which few of the settlers
they encountered paid more than lip service to. They were being offered an eighteenth century, paternalistic arcady in an industrial-scientific age. They were being admitted to one aspect of European intellectual life but their mission education denied them access to the intellectual, social, and scientific developments that placed European-Christianity in perspective. These were not valid considerations for the first wave of missionaries to come to North Queensland. They brought with their spiritual message the hope of physical survival in black enclaves protected from the diseases and some of the demoralization of culture clash. They were creating new, if institutionalized, societies for the future on land that could be claimed to be Aboriginal. They were providing future Aboriginal generations with the possibility of rejecting Christianity as the religion of the invaders. Some few might reassess its relevance to Aboriginal Australians.

**SOURCES AND ADDITIONAL READING**

**Primary Sources**

In the preparation of this paper extensive use was made of the records of the Australian Board of Missions, the Presbyterian Board of Missions, and the Lutheran Church of Australia, together with records in the Queensland State Archives, and reports published in Queensland Votes and Proceedings after 1896.

**Secondary Sources**

E.R. Gribble, *Forty Years with the Aborigines* (Sydney, 1930).

N. Hey, *A Brief History of the Presbyterian Church's Mission Enterprise Among the Australian Aborigines* (Sydney, 1931).

F.O. Thiele, *One Hundred Years of the Lutheran Church in Queensland* (Brisbane, 1938).


When the first parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia was established in 1901, it was dominated by spokesmen for 'White Australia' who, in the words of Alfred Deakin, desired "to be one people and remain one people, without the admixture of other races." This attitude had considerable significance to the development of the tropical northern half of Australia that is of particular interest and concern to an understanding of the economic development of the region, since it initiated some forty years of debate concerning both the desirability and possibility of furthering the settlement and exploitation of the north on the basis of European labour alone. This debate, essentially between the proponents of the White Australia policy, whose interests were most likely to be served by evidence that settlers of European origin were physically capable of surviving the tropical Australian climate, and its opponents, many of whose attitudes were motivated by a desire to obtain low cost labour rather than by any feelings of international brotherhood, obscured many of the real problems of the north. It was, in many ways, tragic that problems associated with remoteness, unsuitable housing and a lack of basic facilities and foodstuffs were largely ignored, whilst politicians, scientists and journalists argued the ability of the northern population to survive on the supposedly scientific basis of its pigmentation.

An examination of some of the more significant contributions to the debate, selected from supposedly more respectable scientific and government publications, may usefully be preceded by a suggested basic cause for the existence of the debate at all. The attitude commonly held towards the tropical north is probably the consequence of the fact that the Australian continent as a whole was settled by people of north-west European, essentially British, origin. Typical British acquaintance with the tropics, whether first- or second-hand, has long been with the West Indies, India, South-east Asia or Africa in the role of trader, administrator or missionary. A clear distinction has emerged, both popularly and certainly in the English language literature, between what variously have been called 'farm colonies' and 'plantation colonies' or
'hinterlands of settlement' and 'hinterlands of exploitation'. Farm colonies or hinterlands of settlement were those overseas territories, essentially 'temperate', whither the European migrated, and where he settled, farmed, or otherwise earned his living in a way familiar in Europe, and raised his family. Plantation colonies or hinterlands of exploitation, by contrast, were overseas territories, essentially tropical, where the European was solely a temporary resident and undertook supervisory work leaving more energetic employment to 'coloured' peoples, either indigenous or recruited elsewhere for the purpose. Most British overseas dependencies fell neatly into one category or the other, the major exception being Australia, the southern half of which was perceived as temperate, and therefore suitable for permanent settlement, and the northern as tropical, and therefore not. This perception was apparently incorporated on some old maps of Australia on which the north is marked Australindia, as showing its suitability for Asiatic settlement, while the south-west is called Anglicania. Neither name ever came into common use (Tilby, 1912). The establishment in nineteenth century Queensland of a tropical plantation system, the acknowledged means of commercial exploitation of a tropical dependency, is well known, though perhaps less familiar are the efforts that were made to develop sugar, cotton, coffee and cinchona plantations in the Northern Territory.

The 'White Australia' policy was clearly a major challenge to such well established concepts, which apparently were scientifically backed by geographers and others who purported to recognize areas of optimum habitability for the various races of mankind. The best known geographical proponent of this notion was Griffith Taylor who devised a system of 'climographs' based on monthly averages of wet bulb temperatures and relative humidities. His 'white race' climograph was based on twelve 'typical' centres of white settlement from both hemispheres, and suggested that the white man was most comfortable between about 40°F and 60°F with relative humidities between about 70% and 80% (Taylor, 1918). As illustrated by figure 1, the climographs for north Australian centres fell well outside the area designated 'ideal' for the European - though the only grounds on which this area was determined was that it possessed climatic conditions under which Europeans happened to be living in substantial numbers at his time of writing. Griffith Taylor's deeply
Figure 1. GRIFFITH TAYLOR'S 'CLIMOGRAphS'
(Source: Taylor, 1918)
Figure 2. GENERALIZED HABITABILITY MAP OF AUSTRALIA ACCORDING TO GRIFFITH TAYLOR (Taylor, 1926)
Approximate values of land in descending order 1-8
Ingrained attitude to the 'unsuitability' of the tropics is well illustrated by his 1926 map of the 'habitability' of Australia (figure 2) which suggests that the value of the land of eastern Australia for habitation and development drops from category 1 to category 3 (on an 8 point scale) precisely along latitude $23^\circ S$ (Taylor, 1926).

In a paper, remarkable in retrospect for its naivete, given before the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science at Adelaide in 1907 (Macfie, 1907), practically every pre-conception and non sequitur concerning the effect of tropical conditions on the European was asserted. Arguing the necessity of coloured labour to develop northern Australia, Macfie demanded:

How can the tropical and sub-tropical area which constitutes so vast a proportion of Australia be most effectively developed? I venture to maintain that the territory included in the heat-belt cannot be effectively developed without the introduction of labor from largely populated countries situated somewhere within that zone, and adapted, by nature, for doing open air work under a vertical sun. In choosing colored workmen I should be disposed to give the preference to our Indian fellow-subjects, although in some respects it is believed by many that Chinese and Japanese are more efficient in field labor. This may appear a bold assertion to those who are more familiar with the cry of a "White Australia" than with the teachings of science on the subject.

Macfie quoted a variety of supposed authorities to support his contentions:

In proof of the marked sensitiveness of the white man's constitution when transferred from the temperate zone to even the fringe of the sub-tropics, Dr. Woodruff shows that the Scandinavians who have emigrated to the southern States of America become liable to alarming disorders and nervous irritability, and die out in the third generation. The main line of his argument - which seems impregnable - is that the world is divided into color-zones, and that each climate is exactly suited by natural law to the particular human racial type evolved under its influence, but cannot be adjusted to any other. He denies that in a permanent change of residence from a temperate to a tropical or sub-tropical zone, acclimatisation is possible, except after a long period, and then only by the very rare "survival of the fittest." Nor, in this case, is the "fittest" the healthiest or the most adventurous, but the darkest man.

Further superficially scientific evidence, which inter alia ignored the fact that Asia stretches practically from pole to equator, was offered:
In his forcible work entitled "Europe and Asia" Mr. Meredith Townsend remarks - "Those who say ... that whites can thrive and develop in the tropics, only dream. History is opposed to them .... That must have been a most operative law which originally divided mankind so that the white race was confined to Europe, that the black race populated Africa, and that the huge bulk of Asia, the most fertile and tempting of all the continents, was filled with yellow and brown men .... The white people flourish best within strictly temperate regions. Hot lands do not, with all their natural advantages, ever tend to produce energy .... The first generation of white settlers in such countries suffers terribly from unaccustomed diseases; from the depressing effect of a change of climate, and from the shock involved in a violent change of daily habitudes as to diet, hours of labors, and general social life.

Clear ignorance of medical facts was apparent in Macfie's use as evidence the statement that:

Dr. T.E. Scholes, in his learned and unanswerable work, "The British Empire and Alliances," published in 1899, holds the view that 'nearly all the malaria which attacks white men in tropical Africa is due to the action of the sun, and that the pigment on the colored man's skin is the only true antidote .... While whites within the heat-belt become the victims of jaundice, disordered vision, shattered nerves, and sometimes subverted reason, and are compelled to be birds of passage, the black man can live under the severe climatic conditions mentioned with absolute immunity from the risk of such distressing ailments'.

The impossibility of a sugar industry without coloured labour was strongly asserted:

Mr. A.L. Anderson, a sugar-planter from the Herbert River, north Queensland, interviewed at Brisbane, said he had tried white labor in the canefields, and had come to the conclusion that the sugar industry without black labor was impossible. North of Mackay the white labor in the north was not only scarce but utterly unreliable, and as a result of that and uncertainty as to the future of the industry, the farmers were not increasing their acreages.

The whole attitude to the question of the white man's role in the tropics was clearly expounded by reference to a 'trustworthy citizen' who wrote to the Melbourne Argus in the following terms:

I have lived 40 years in the tropics and know that the white man cannot personally work the land. He can guide, direct, supervise, and profit by it when worked by coloured labour. A third generation of pure whites in the tropics is a feeble rarity, and a fourth is unknown. How, then, is the white man going to colonize tropical Australia? If necessary, a colour line could be drawn, south of which these immigrants are not to come.
The first truly scientific efforts to approach the whole question of European tropical settlement were undertaken by the Australian Medical Congress whose conclusions, presented to their Brisbane meeting in 1920, were largely based on comprehensive investigations made by Breinl and Young (Breinl and Young, 1920) of the Australian Institute of Tropical Medicine, Townsville. A further detailed report, including sociological as well as medical material, was published by Cilento, director of the Townsville Institute a few years later (Cilento, 1925). The Medical Congress generally concluded that, with certain adjustments to tropical conditions of their mode of living, Europeans could live, work and thrive in the tropics as elsewhere. The adjustments suggested included the regulation or prohibition of the sale of alcohol, better conditions of housing and clothing, better diet, and education in hygiene.

Breinl and Young's well-researched report cut convincingly through many of the ignorant pronouncements about the north with its acute insight born of local experience. Considerations of the effects of sunlight, heat and humidity on the human body were examined in the report, drawing upon data and experiments from the Philippines, the (then) Netherlands Indies, Africa and India as well as from northern Australia, and the conclusions reached were said to be 'disappointing' in that they were not conclusive. 'In short, all the efforts to detect physiological changes due to living in a tropical climate have not yielded definite results' (Breinl and Young, 1920). Their examination of vital statistics for Queensland - on the presumption that any unhealthiness of tropical Australia would have left its impress on those statistics - similarly revealed no evidence of high mortality rates. Indeed the record of the state disclosed general and infant mortality rates much more favourable than those of the Commonwealth as a whole. This latter point was severely challenged in the pages of the Geographical Review, by Ellsworth Huntington (Huntington, 1920, 1921) in the form of a criticism of the validity of the statistics in an effort to suggest that the real death rate was probably at least double that given by Breinl and Young. In a less simplistic, and perhaps wiser, era the difficulty of proving or disproving anything from raw vital statistics would more likely have been appreciated.
In many ways, the most valuable part of Breinl and Young's report arose from its comments on the general conditions of life in tropical Australia and their relationship to the broadly pioneering character of the region. In their general resume, they drew attention to the fact that during the first twenty years of the century, population growth in north Queensland and the Northern Territory had been less rapid than in the country as a whole, and that northern Australia was clearly less favoured for settlement than were the southern parts of the Commonwealth. The explanation of this fact, they suggested, was the preference of immigrants for settlement in the less unfamiliar environment of the south until such time as the opportunities were reduced. Settlement in the north - reflecting its frontier-type economy - was frequently of a migratory nature, producing amongst the inhabitants a general desire that their stay in the north should be as short as possible. Much of the man-made environment reflected this attitude. Houses were only rarely built for comfort, town improvements were often only of an ephemeral character and short-sighted policies were frequently the rule. Even the dress of the northern population, reflecting temperate custom, revealed an unwillingness to recognize the need to modify the norms of elsewhere. Breinl and Young write of newcomers 'dressed in their southern clothing (walking) about perspiring'. Experiments with various types of dress led Gibbs (1912) to the conclusion that 'clothing which in the sun will cast a shade upon the body without hindering the air circulation and heat radiation (would) be the most desirable, and if a colour is used which will give a minimum of heat absorption the efficiency is increased. This ideal condition is fulfilled by the umbrella, and it is evident that a large white umbrella lined with a material of a colour agreeable to the eyes, for example a shade of green, will be most efficient.' He adds that 'since custom prescribes that man shall cover his body, this mode of 'clothing' is in fact impracticable'. It would seem that, by the 1970s, many north Queenslanders have moved far towards this ideal dress, though usually - and unwisely - omitting the umbrella!

Cilento's substantial report on 'The White Man in the Tropics', published five years later, expanded on Breinl and Young's work. This report is particularly interesting in that, in addition to reinforcing
the earlier conclusions that climate alone presented no insuperable
block to colonization and that Queenslanders were as healthy as the
inhabitants of any other part of Australia, it included the results of
what was probably the first sociological investigation carried out in
northern Australia. This investigation, unsophisticated in many ways,
did however examine a random sample of north Queensland households,
stratified to include inhabitants of the hot moist coastal, and coastal
plateau and the hot dry inland climates. The picture of daily living
conditions in the north in the 1920s revealed by the report was appalling.
For example, 50 per cent of the 300 households surveyed in Townsville had
kitchens situated on the hot side of the house, 30 per cent had no ice-
chests, nearly 40 per cent were without meat-safes and 33 per cent had no
water laid on to the kitchen. In general in north Queensland towns,
Cilento reported that it was not uncommon to find the water supply,
polluted, inadequate and failing to reach 'any recognized standard of
desirability', the milk supply inferior, and the amount obtainable
 trifling and variable, greens almost unprociable and fruit, forwarded
from the south, highly priced and poor quality. Houses were largely iron
and wooden structures, built on primitive plans generally totally
unsuited to the tropics. Practically nothing had been done to deal
effectively with general sanitary problems. The climate was then blamed
for the disease, discomfort and premature ageing, especially of the
north's womenfolk!

Other writers had also recognized that much of the acknowledged
discomfort of life in northern Australia was as much due to the inadequate
man-made environment as to the climate, and that this circumstance was
largely the consequence of the nature of the regional economy. In 1912
Tilby (Tilby, 1912) had noted that in respect to the unhealthy
reputation of northern Australia
the ignorance or carelessness of the settlers has usually
been more to blame than any radical defect in the climate
or the country itself. The colonist's houses are generally
badly built, often of corrugated iron, without verandas,
which makes them resemble an oven more than a human
habitation; and the sites are often badly chose. If a
man makes his abode on a swamp he usually pays the penalty
in the shape of rheumatism in a cold country, malaria in
a hot one.
Some years later, Barrett repeated the criticism of housing conditions (Barrett, 1925) and came to the conclusion that the settlement of tropical Australia was, 'not a climatic one, but an economic and political problem'. The "tropical neurasthenia" (nervous disability) which was long held up as the bete noir of all white women in the tropics was diagnosed by some as "kitchen neurasthenia" and declared as prevalent in southern cities as in the tropics (Wood, 1925).

Despite the lack of supporting medical evidence, however, the notion that the white man was physiologically less suited than coloured peoples to undertake manual work in the tropics died hard. Less than two years before the outbreak of the Second World War, the report of a government board appointed to enquire into the land and land industries of the Northern Territory (Report of Board of Inquiry etc., 1937) came down unequivocally in favour of the White Australia policy on the basis of the ardent desire of 'all the States, all political parties and all sections of the people ... to maintain racial purity'. The board was concerned, however, about the health of the European population of the Territory and commented especially on the absence of green vegetables and fresh fruit since the cessation of gardening operations by Chinese soon after the taking over of the Territory by the Commonwealth, and on the fact that Darwin women did their own housework. Its solution was simple

We think the speediest method of solution would be to permit a limited number of Chinese gardeners to be indentured so that these gardens might be commenced afresh. Unless the health of the people is guarded, the White Australia policy will be endangered.

Similarly, in regard to housework. Most of the women at Darwin do their own housework. The result is that they have all the disadvantages of living in the tropics without any of the usual compensations which tropical countries provide, such as hours of leisure, social intercourse and labour for household duties. The introduction of a strictly limited number of eastern natives under indenture for domestic duties would, paradoxical as it may seem, help to strengthen the White Australia policy by guarding the health of females on whom the success of that policy depends.

The north was still believed, by some at least, to be plantation country!

1. Admittedly the definition of the 'white man' or even 'European' was gradually narrowed! The Buchanan Report on the Development and Administration of the Northern Territory, presented to the Commonwealth Parliament in 1925, classified schoolchildren, in one incredible table, as European, Greek, Philippine, Cingalese, Spaniard, Chinese or half-caste!
REFERENCES

Barrett, Sir James, (1925), 'Tropical Australia', United Empire, 16, pp. 37-43.


Buchanan, Sir George, (1925), Report on the Northern Territory Development and Administration, Govt. Printer, Melbourne.


Report of Board of Inquiry, (1937), Land and Land Industries of the Northern Territory of Australia, Govt. Printer, Canberra.


SHIPWRECKS AND PEARL SHELLS: SOMERSET CAPE YORK 1864-1877.

Dr. D.J. Farnfield

At the eastern tip of Cape York lies Albany Passage. It is a narrow very deep channel with strong currents between the mainland and Albany island with steep hills on both sides. It was here on a beautiful mainland site that the British and Queensland governments established in 1864 a settlement they named Somerset.

Mark Twain once remarked that Australian history was full of curiosities; which was what made it so exciting. Somerset was in many ways a curiosity; a throw-back to the early years of Australian settlement when outposts were positioned around the coast as "spring-boards for guarding or promoting a trade route, not beachheads for settling the interior." In the 1860s most Australian colonists were concerned with developing the natural resources of the interior of their continent; mineral, pastoral and agricultural wealth. The main flow of trade was between the south-eastern colonies and Britain. But Somerset at this time was symbolic of matters which had been an earlier interest of New South Wales; guarding a sea-lane, promoting trade with South-East Asia and a maritime industry. It was out of its time, the last of 'the limpet ports'; to use a phrase coined by Geoffrey Blainey.

In conception Somerset was many things to many people who had high hopes for it as a multi-purpose establishment. Its main purpose was humanitarian; to provide a harbour of refuge for mariners from the numerous ships which were wrecked in the perilous passage through Torres Strait. Since the closure of Port Essington in 1849 there was no refuge nearer than Portuguese Timor. The Torres route was being more frequently used with the introduction of steam-ships which were able to proceed in both directions through the Strait. Sailing ships dependent on the south-east trade winds had only been able to sail from east to west.

The British government also thought of Somerset as a strategic outpost to guard the increasingly important sea-lane which linked the Indian and Pacific oceans. TheQueenslanderst had visions of a busy commercial port; a replica of Singapore. With an optimism blind to the geographical realities they compared the Straits of Malacca to the Torres Straits. The Admiralty and the shipping companies saw the vital necessity of a coaling station to supply the needs of the steamships,
JEAN FARNFIELD

with an enormous appetite for coal, making the long journey from Batavia to Brisbane. Missionary societies in Britain with a vision of civilizing and Christianizing the poor benighted heathen of the world saw Somerset as a base for evangelizing the Cape York Aborigines and the savages of the Torres Strait islands and New Guinea.

Today Somerset is little more than a memory. The physical evidence of its former existence is the site of the magistrate's house, an old stone wall, and the graveyard close to the beach, for it was abandoned in 1877 as an official outpost. What buildings had survived the destructive erosion of white ants were removed to Thursday Island, which became the administrative centre for the Torres Strait islands. The scenery is as beautiful as ever but the human life has gone except for occasional visitors from the Bamaga Aboriginal Reserve.

On August 1st 1861 the scene was quite different. The beach was alive with men going about their tasks of establishing the settlement or looking round the unfamiliar site trying to assess its capabilities. They were twelve hundred miles and a dangerous sea journey from Brisbane but a government department there had managed nevertheless to make their work doubly arduous by sending up a totally unsuitable dray. According to an eye-witness it was "made entirely of pine, the shafts are not long enough to admit a horse of the smallest size, and the wheels are but three feet high." To get the building materials up to the position they were needed on Somerset point, they had to devise another method, "a tramway laid down along the beach to the foot of the cliff, to which the timber was carried on a truck, and from thence hauled by a winch and block to the top." This incident, one of many, was typical of the Brisbane government's lack of appreciation of the real problems of the isolated settlement.

The two ships anchored in the bay from which men were disembarked and livestock and materials unloaded were symbolic of the unusual nature of the outpost, which was a joint venture of the Imperial and colonial governments. One was a Royal Navy vessel, H.M.S. Salamander under the command of the Hon. John Carnegie, and the other the Golden Eagle, a merchantman chartered in Brisbane. By an arrangement between the two governments, the British government had undertaken to supply the initial finance, a detachment of marines for guard duties, a naval surgeon and
regular visits by a naval vessel to supply the station. The Queensland
government, which insisted on overall control of the outpost, supplied
the civilian personnel and some of the buildings.

The 'Imperial personnel', as they were quaintly called at the time,
disembarked from H.M.S. Salamander. They were a naval surgeon, and 21
marines in thick English uniforms under the command of a young lieutenant,
Robert Pascoe. They had recently made the long voyage from Portsmouth.
Garrison duties in far-off outposts were one of the functions of Britain's
'sea-soldiers' but Somerset must have been one of the more outlandish
spots where marines were exiled. Two of them lie in the old cemetery;
one the victim of tropical fever, and the other of a festering wound from
a barbed Aboriginal spear.

The 'colonial party' who disembarked from the Golden Eagle was
headed by John Jardine, whom the Queensland government had appointed
Police Magistrate in charge of the settlement. Jardine, ex-officer of a
Scottish regiment, had had considerable colonial experience on the
squating frontier in the Rockhampton district. He was a disciplinarian,
a keen naturalist and experienced bushman with an implacable attitude to
Aborigines, whom he regarded as dangerous enemies of white settlement.
The harsh methods he used to ensure the safety of the white settlers led
to a sharp disagreement between him and Lt. Pascoe. He also regarded the
marines as 'babies in bushcraft', and adopted the attitude of the old
colonial towards the 'new chums'. All in all relationships were not
particularly harmonious until the marines were recalled in 1867.

Jardine had with him his youngest son, 18 year old Johnny, whom the
naval surgeon describes as 'looking like the ideal of young Australia'
with his 'loose Baltic shirt' showing 'his sinewy, sun-burned neck, his
cabbage tree hat' shading 'his brown curls and comely face'. In the first
year of the settlement two more Jardines arrived, Frank and Alec, who
accomplished an incredible overland journey with horses and cattle from
the Rockhampton district to Cape York. Frank remained after the rest of
the family had gone south again and twice became government magistrate.

Wilson, the Government surveyor, by all accounts an odd melancholy
fellow, was urged to proceed with the town survey of Somerset with all
speed. Considering the land was undulating and covered with thick scrub
he managed very well with a town plan, for town plots in Somerset were sold in Brisbane at well-attended public auctions in April and May 1866. Merchants, master builders, bank managers, the Dutch consul and other optimists bought 109 town allotments for a total of £2093.3.0.

The idea of a 'second Singapore' certainly caught on in Brisbane and in 1865 Somerset was declared a 'free port', with the hopes of capturing the trade with the islands of the Torres Strait and later of New Guinea. In 1857 the Dutch had declared Macassar a free port, emulating British policy at Singapore, and a Joint Committee of the Queensland Parliament was told in 1865 that they showed signs of being successful in syphoning off the trade of the Torres Strait islands. The Queensland government by use of the free port technique hoped in its turn to capture the trade from the Dutch. However the trade did not eventuate, nor was the town of Somerset ever built. The records do not show whether those who invested in town plots ever recovered their money.

There is a wealth of material describing life at Somerset during the first four years of the settlement; the lengthy reports of the police magistrate, a highly-coloured sensational narrative by the naval surgeon, the letters of Lt. Pascoe, and an account by the surveyor. Their attitudes and personalities are very different but they tell the same story, that the reality of Somerset is strikingly different from the Westminster or Brisbane dream of an important strategic outpost or a successful commercial city. The marines are bored and homesick; they are a garrison force but their military duties seem pointless as there is little to defend in the absence of predicted Malay pirates and foreign 'men-of-war'. They spend their days clearing the bush, trying to grow vegetables or looking after the sheep on Albany island. The only enemies of the white settlement are the Aboriginal inhabitants of Cape York, and the marines do not consider killing Aborigines as part of their assignment.

A major part of the accounts of life at Somerset is concerned with the day-to-day conflict between the white settlers and the Aborigines. It is a typical picture of Australian frontier confrontation exacerbated by the extreme isolation of the settlement. For this was truly black-men's country where the explorer Kennedy had been killed by Aboriginal spears in 1848. Naval ships called but three times a year and down the east coast...
Cardwell was the nearest white settlement. The Aboriginal tribes of Cape York felt themselves, no doubt, in a strong position to repel the invaders of their lands and kill their horses and cattle. None of the Jardines took any risk with the Aborigines. They had brought with them four of their own 'black boys' from Rockhampton whom they trusted with their lives but they regarded the 'wild Aborigines' of Cape York as 'cunning and treacherous' and acted accordingly with stock-whip or gun. At first the naval personnel were shocked at the colonial attitude and sharply critical. They disregarded Jardine's strict instruction that no one should go outside the cleared area without a gun, until one of the marines was fatally speared. The naval surgeon relates the incident:

Here, writhing on the ground was poor Saich, Pascoe's servant, with a four-pronged spear through his arm and another tipped with Kangaroo bone quivering in his chest, close to his heart. I hastened to assist the poor fellow, whose gasping breath came fast as his life blood ebbed away and I saved him, only to linger out six months of weary torture.

The inevitable reprisals followed with four times as many Aborigines killed by white men.

In July 1867 the marines were recalled. The British government was reducing unnecessary expenditure and making the self-governing colonies pay for their own defence. Doubtless the marines were only too glad to leave behind the dangers and moral ambiguities of frontier conflict, but their departure left Somerset very poorly manned. The small number of white people were more than ever at the mercy of Aboriginal attack. Jardine was replaced by Captain H.G. Simpson and the marines by a detachment of 'town' police, an inspector and six men. It is hard to detect the presence of white women at Somerset, except for occasional shipwrecked refugees, but at this time the records do show that one or two of the police had their wives and even children with them for there is talk of 'married' quarters. Mrs. Simpson accompanied her husband, but firmly refused to leave the Magistrate's house and take up residence in the police compound in the interests of safety. She had already, she said, been through the terrors of the Indian mutiny and Somerset was no more dangerous.

Frank Jardine, who some years later married a Samoan girl, resided at Port Vallack, his cattle station a few miles from the main settlement, and when Simpson went south on account of ill-health he took over the duties of
Police Magistrate. Frank found the white police utterly unsuitable for Cape York and did not hesitate to inform the colonial secretary in one of the most amusing letters written from Somerset. He was obliged to do all the bush patrols himself as "Mr. Howe (police inspector) has never been two miles inland from his Barracks, simply because he cannot find his way home again." The government took notice of Frank Jardine's requests and shortly after replaced the 'town police' by a detachment of Native Police and a number of 'water police'.

All in all by 1870 Somerset had failed except in one respect: as a harbour of refuge. From time to time it did provide a haven for shipwrecked refugees. Official records show there were 14 wrecks in the Torres Strait between 1866 and 1875 and 85 persons were rescued and somehow looked after at Somerset until a visiting ship could take them to their destination. The harbour of refuge had its deficiencies but it was better than nothing in reef-strewn waters and 'the jumping seas of Torres Straits'. The fate of Somerset hung in the balance between 1867 and 1870: it might have been relinquished like Port Essington, but the harbour of refuge deterred both Imperial and Queensland governments from making the final decision for abandonment.

From 1870 the scene changed. A new lucrative maritime industry grew up in the Torres Strait which transformed the functions of Somerset. This was the Pearl-Shelling industry which operated on the reefs and islands of Torres Strait, covering an area of approximately 80 miles between Cape York and the southern coast of New Guinea.

Many people still make the mistake of thinking that this industry was concerned with diving for pearls. This is a misconception: there were few pearls, and those that were found in the oyster shells were small and of poor quality. The harvest of the sea so eagerly sought by entrepreneurs was the large gold-lipped Pearl Shell, Pinctada maxima, known to the Victorians as 'mother-of-pearl'. All writers on the pearl-shelling industry accept 1868 as the year in which the exploitation of the pearl-shell beds in the Torres Strait began. The 'legend' is that it was started on the Warrior Reefs by a Captain Banner who entered into an agreement with Kebisu, chief of Warrior island, for native skin divers to collect the pearl shell. Banner, the owner of a brig from Sydney, already had a beche-de-mer station and was well acquainted with the area.
Indirect evidence makes this appear the right date. Police magistrates at Somerset make no mention of pearl-shelling before 1868. Yet by 1874 Aplin, the current police magistrate, reports a rapidly growing lucrative industry with the value of shell obtained at £27,840, and "18 vessels besides 40 boats employing 707 persons", and helmet-diving replacing skin-divers. Obviously what appears a chance lucky find by Captain Banner does not explain the rapid growth of a major industry, especially as pearl-shelling in the north of Western Australia began about the same time. The coveted large gold-lipped shell was already known in Europe, but as a luxury product found in small quantities in the Indian archipelago. So when large beds of the world's best pearl-shell were discovered off the north coast of Australia there was a stimulating demand from Europe and America. This demand was increased by improvements in manufacturing techniques. People in Europe and America wore pearl-buttons made from Torres Strait pearl-shell. The famous gunmen of the American west shot it out with pearl-handled revolvers, and the English gentry matched their red hunting jackets with pearl-handled whips. The coster-mongers, the 'pearly kings' of London's east-end wore whole suits made from small pieces of mother-of-pearl. Upper and middle-class Victorian ladies on both sides of the Atlantic cherished the mother-of-pearl inlaid ornaments among the congested bric-a-brac of their drawing rooms. All of which made a great difference to Somerset at the tip of Cape York.

On the management side this was a white-man's industry but the labour force for boat-handling, work on the shell-stations, and diving comprised Pacific islanders, Malays, Filipinos, Torres Strait islanders and Australian Aborigines. Many were dubiously recruited and highly exploitable in the circumstances. Until 1872 the pearl-shellers operated in an area where there was no official jurisdiction. The native labour employed in pearl-shelling had no protection from the Queensland Polynesian Labourers Act of 1868 which applied only to the use of 'kanakas' in Queensland. The British government was seriously concerned and a number of important changes were made in 1872. The Queensland boundary was extended to all islands within sixty miles of the coast. The British government passed the Pacific Islanders Protection Bill. Known as the Kidnapping Act, this legislation made it mandatory for all vessels employing natives to carry
licenses obtainable from Australian governments or British consuls in the Pacific. The limits of the Australian naval station were extended to include the Torres Strait and waters around New Guinea, while the Navy provided additional vessels to police the Kidnapping Act.

On 16th February 1872 another naval vessel anchored in Somerset Bay, H.M.S. Basilisk under the command of Captain John Moresby, whose task was to apprehend unlicensed vessels. His whole heart and soul were in the business of catching kidnappers for he was a man brought up in the evangelical, humanitarian tradition of the 19th Century and the son of Admiral Fairfax Moresby, famous for his exploits in suppressing the slave trade on the African coast. Captain Moresby describes Somerset as he saw it.

There are but six white settlers here now, - the Government police magistrate, and his boat's crew; the other fifteen or twenty men resident here are native troopers and pearl-shell divers; and most of the wooden houses are falling into decay from the ravages of the white ant. The gardens cultivated by the marines have now grown wild, and the small cleared spaces before the inhabited wooden houses, alone are free from primeval forest or bush.

Successive police magistrates at Somerset, Frank Jardine, G.E. Dalrymple and H.M. Chester did their best with limited resources to prevent abuses in Pearl Shelling. When possible they visited the shelling stations on the islands in the small cutter Lizzie Jardine provided by the Queensland government. It was the task of the police magistrate as 'shipping master' at Somerset to issue licenses and supervise labour relations between masters and crews. To minimize exploitation the magistrate would have the master line up his men in front of him and explain the contract as far as language barriers would allow. When they returned to Somerset from a shelling expedition the master had to pay his men before the magistrate. Dalrymple had a ship's telescope fixed up in an elevated position to "observe what goes on amongst the numerous fishing boats and shipping with Aboriginal crews constantly coming in from the Pearl fisheries."

Strange dubious stories were the stock-in-trade of ship's masters coming into Somerset without licenses. One of the most extraordinary was related by Chester to the colonial secretary. The vessel was a British schooner the Montiara, registered in Singapore with a crew of 27 natives
of the Pellew islands in the Caroline group. The master, a Dane, had no license to carry natives but pleaded ignorance of the Kidnapping Act. He showed Chester an agreement signed by the King of Konor, one of the main Pellew islands, witnessed by two British traders. The agreement was as follows:

The men agree to serve as divers on board the 'Montiara' on a voyage from Pellew Island to Torres Strait on coast of Australia on a pearl fishing cruise. Term of agreement not to exceed six months. The master in payment for the work of the divers agrees to carry a cargo of Stone Money from Pellew to the isle of Yap - at the return of the voyage.

Chester was nonplussed and commanded the ship to remain at Somerset for the time being. He went on board and questioned the crew, two of whom could speak a little English. They corroborated the captain's statement concerning the agreement and explained further that the natives of Pellew island made a quantity of stone money every year of great weight which they sold at other islands of the group. Because it was too cumbersome for their canoes, the King had entered into a labour-in-return-for-conveyance contract with the master of the Montiara. As everyone seemed satisfied and Chester formed a good opinion of the Danish master during his stay at Somerset he let the ship go with a certificate of permission in case he should be apprehended by a naval patrolling vessel.

Somerset had only one more year to go after this incident for in 1877 the government establishment was transferred to Thursday Island with any buildings which were in a moveable state. The remainder were sold to Frank Jardine for a nominal sum. Somerset had out-lived its usefulness, and the decision to move the outpost to a more commanding position in the Torres Strait was determined by a number of considerations. Most of the Torres Strait islands were now part of the territory of Queensland; the increasing pearl-shelling industry needed constant vigilance and control from a more central position; New Guinea was being opened up by explorers and missionaries; the Strait was being used by steamships of other Imperial powers who were taking an interest in the area. A strategic outpost much nearer the main shipping-lane seemed important to Queensland and British interests.
JEAN FARNFIELD

REFERENCES

Official Papers

Reports of Police Magistrates at Somerset to Colonial Secretary, Queensland 1864-1877. Queensland State Archives.

Governors' Despatches to Secretary of State 1861-1877. Q.S.A.

Somerset Letterbook. Q.S.A.

Votes and Proceedings of Queensland Legislative Assembly 1861-1877.


Other References

E. Streeter, Pearls and Pearling Life, 1866.


Captain J. Moreby, Voyage of the Basilisk, London, 1876.


Dr. R. Cannon, 'Savage Scenes from Australia: being a short history of the settlement at Somerset, Cape York, in form of a lecture delivered for the Y.M.C.A. of Valpariso at opening of Session 1885.'
This lecture is essentially a progress report on my current thesis work, on pastoral settlement in North Queensland. As a considerable amount of research material remains to be covered, there may be significant factors of which I am as yet unaware, and the theories offered must be considered as only tentative.

April 11th 1861 was a significant day in North Queensland History. On a small hill above the beach at Port Denison, on the present site of Bowen, a flagstaff had been erected around which were gathered an assortment of ship's crew, prospective squatters and settlers, native police and their European officers, Government officials and the leader of this frontier consortium, George Elphinstone Dalrymple. As the ensign ran up the flag, in the best British tradition all gave three hearty cheers for her most gracious Majesty, and three more for his Excellency the Governor Sir Geroge Ferguson Bowen. Thus the first settlement of North Queensland, and the Kennedy district in particular, was begun.

The Kennedy district had been declared in 1858 when Queensland was still a part of N.S.W., however it wasn't until 1861, two years after Queensland's colonial autonomy was granted, that the new state government was able to go ahead with the development of the Kennedy. The map indicates the declared districts of settlement in Queensland in 1861, and of these the Kennedy was the northern most district. The remainder of the north and west still had no European settlement, and was generally referred to by the colonists as 'terra incognita'.

I mentioned that there were squatters amongst the small proclamation gathering on the shores of Port Denison. In Australia the term 'squatter' was originally a derogatory one, indicative of bush harpies and grog peddlars. However during the great pastoral age in N.S.W. of the 1830s and 1840s the term was applied to the pastoralists who moved out from the restricted areas of settlement around Sydney and illegally settled on what was then inalienable Crown Land. The squatting rush spread rapidly, and by the 1840s vast areas of N.S.W., Victoria and border South Australia had been taken up, and the Leslie Brothers had settled on the rich black soil
country of the Darling Downs. The British Colonial Office reacted to this illegal seizure of land with furious protests, but there was no force that could now reverse the squatting movement, as the successive governors of the time, Bourke and Gipps pointed out to their superiors in London. With time the squatters won the legal battle to hold their land, and eventually they achieved prosperity and class respectability. Thus the term 'squatter' lost its earlier connotation of lawlessness, and it remained in Australian terminology to refer simply to those who owned pastoral grazing property. The men who settled the Kennedy country were such pastoralists, and thus it can be described as a squatting frontier.

I propose to look first into the background of Kennedy development - to consider Government attitudes and policy, and also the origins and ambitions of the squatters. This done I shall investigate the actual pioneering experience of squatting in North Queensland and some of the dominant patterns which emerge during the first ten years of occupation. Time permits us to look in detail at only one squatting families experience in the Kennedy, but I believe we can gain useful insight into frontier society through this exercise.

What then motivated the squatters to come to the Kennedy? After all it was a very remote area with very little known of the interior. Early explorers to the region had been plagued by unknown tropical fevers and there were well established doubts as to whether Europeans could survive in this harsh tropical environment. In addition past frontier experience gave every reason to believe the "blacks would be bad".

Despite this the squatters headed north with optimism. The great pastoral age in the southern states had shown the viability of Australian wool production and the gold boom of the fifties provided ready capital for pastoral investment. The explorers who first traversed the Kennedy country, such as Leichhardt, Gilbert, Gregory and Dalrymple himself, had all spoken highly of the region's potential for sheep grazing and it was reasoned that despite distance, the North Queensland wool clip could be easily and cheaply transported to Southern markets.

Of these factors the supreme confidence in the future of wool was very significant, but also the squatting example in the southern states had left a deep impression on the minds of ambitious settlers from the Old
DECLARED DISTRICTS OF SETTLEMENT IN QUEENSLAND IN 1861

100 MILES

MILES

BOWEN
KENNEDY
MCCAIN
LEICHHARDT
WIDE BAY
MARYBOROUGH
BRISBANE

200

300

50

0
PIONEER SQUATTING IN THE KENNEDY DISTRICT

Country, who were hopeful of making a new start in this land of opportunity. They had come from a society where ownership of landed property represented social prestige, respectability and political responsibility, and thus many strove to achieve landed status in Australia. Moreover, the success story of such as the Macarthurs, the Wentworths, the Leslies and the Henty Bros., was part of the Australian legend. How men took up virgin land for sheep grazing and through hard work and perseverance achieved those ambitions of wealth, social status and leadership in government. Therefore enthusiastic settlers, keen to emulate the achievements of these pastoral pioneers, looked to the new districts in Queensland for an opportunity that no longer existed in the established areas of settlement in the South. The first North Queensland frontier was then to be a pastoral one, with wool as the economic staple.

There were in addition, other factors operating to encourage the settlement of the Kennedy. The Queensland government was most anxious to hasten northern development for economic reasons. At this time Queensland had only recently achieved separation from N.S.W., in 1859, it had been a bitter divorce and there were plenty of gloomy Southern predictions that the new state would soon founder. And indeed the new colony was decidedly broke. Premier Herbert and his government reasoned that their most valuable resource was land, and they determined to settle the empty North with all speed so that the pastoral industry could be established. It was hoped that in the process mineral discoveries would be made, which would then create a dual economy of pastoralism and mining that would enhance the state's seriously inadequate revenue.

In order to entice these desirable explorer pastoralists to the North, the government offered comparatively liberal terms in the Unoccupied Land Act of 1860, encouragement was all the more effective because it coincided with squatter discontent over land legislation in N.S.W. and Victoria. New democratic policies had recently been introduced in these states, which were designed to break the established squatters' stranglehold on the land, and to provide farming opportunities for diggers returning from the gold fields. Thus southern squatters, feeling their establishment threatened, could see Queensland as a much more pro-squatter state, and many decided to move north to "greener pastures".
Thus the early sixties saw a minor squatting rush to the Kennedy as settlers hurried north to secure for themselves the most favourable leases with good grass and permanent water. It seems likely that quite a number of the earliest squatters had been latecomers in the occupation of the Leichhardt district, and when they found that the best land was already occupied there they waited in Rockhampton for the opening of the new district to the north, so that they could be amongst the first to select in the Kennedy. At least twenty prospective squatters had overlanded with Dalrymple's first party to Port Denison in 1861. On their arrival they lost no time in organizing an exploration party which included Edward Cunningham, William Stenhouse, Christopher Allingham, Michael Miles and Philip Somer, and following Leichhardt's recommendation they set out for the upper Burdekin, where each selected promising runs on the river frontage.

It seems that early exploration in the Kennedy was no easy matter. Edward Cunningham's brother Michael described the astonishment and amusement of the tiny Port Denison population when the bedraggled party rode back into town, like so many Australian Don Quixotes. After three months in the bush men and horses were exhausted and Cunningham reported:

Some of the party were altogether divested of their nether garments...whilst others were escounced in suits made, or rather tied together out of the skins of kangaroos, wallabies or warrigals.(1)

Other squatters soon followed the example of this early party and rode out to select leases, and a great many more were already on the road north with their flocks. De Satge, a squatter in the Leichhardt district immediately to the south of the Kennedy commented at this time:

the number of stock on the road was hardly to be credited.(2)

As occupation progressed, Dalrymple as Commissioner for Crown Lands, was inundated with more lease applications than he could manage, but by mid 1862, 454 leases had been approved and some 31,500 square miles of Kennedy land had been selected. Dalrymple's task in fact was a formidable one. The Kennedy district comprised some 51,000 square miles of largely unknown country, and along with his administrative duties in establishing

---

the port and also the continual demands for his services as police magistrate and everyone's personal advisor, Dalrymple had to ride out and survey each new lease before it could be allocated. He was aided by only a small staff, and the factors of distance and poor communication with his government superiors in Brisbane, created obvious difficulties.

The squatters who came to the Kennedy came from varied backgrounds. They included a considerable number of younger sons of English, Scottish and Ulster landed families, and ex-India British army officers. There were former agricultural labourers and tenant farmers and there also seem to have been a substantial number of ex-diggers who had made money on the gold-fields and who now sought an independent future on the land. But the Kennedy was a harsh, lonely environment which proved a tough training ground to any so-called 'pommy new-chums'. Certainly an appreciable number of the last mentioned found their way to the Kennedy, however my research indicates that because of the comparatively late opening of the North Queensland frontier a good many of the early settlers came already equipped with previous pastoral experience under Australian conditions.

Such an established bushman was Joseph Hann, who sailed from Melbourne for Port Denison in 1861 to take up land in the Kennedy. I intend to consider in detail the Hann family and their first ten years of residence in North Queensland. We are fortunate to hold the original diaries of Joseph Hann and his eldest son William in the James Cook University Library. These date from November 1861, when Joseph left Melbourne for the north, and with a few breaks they provide a useful though brief day to day coverage of squatting life in the Kennedy, a record extending into the early twentieth century.

The Hanns originally came from the village of Donhead St. Andrew in Wiltshire whence Joseph, his wife Elizabeth and family of four sons and one daughter migrated to Victoria in 1851. The shipping record provides brief details of the migrants, and lists "Joseph Hann: husband: agricultural labourer: 37 years: reads and writes." Each member of the family is recorded and categorized, ending finally with "Frank Hill Hann: son: 5 years: reads." To these basic statistics was added information which was of particular interest to nineteenth century Victorian immigration authorities: the family's religion was episcopalian, and each possessed a Bible. Actually I find it difficult to accept the statement of the ship's
record, that Joseph Hann's previous occupation was that of agricultural labourer. What I have learned of his character and life-style in Australia seems to contradict this classification. If the ship's record is not in error, then it may be that he deliberately listed himself as agricultural labourer, in order to take advantage of an assisted passage for himself and his numerous family.

The social and economic situation of the Hanns in Victoria provides further evidence to refute the agricultural labourer status, because by 1854 Joseph Hann held "Coolort" a property of some 17,000 acres, on which he ran over 4,000 sheep and some 1,200 cattle. In addition William had married Mary Hearn, the daughter of a well established squatter family in Victoria, so these factors hardly suggest labourer origins, in a colony where a strong British consciousness of class had been transplanted along with the European settlers.

Professor G.C. Bolton has pointed out in his history of North Queensland, *A Thousand Miles Away* that the north was not to be a big man's frontier, however I would suggest that neither was the Kennedy in particular the place for impoverished battlers. For one thing, distance and isolation meant that the squatters had to be well stocked with provisions and essentials to tide them over long periods, and secondly they needed considerable resources to establish their homesteads from absolutely nothing. In addition the Queensland Land Act stipulated that runs had to carry at least twenty-five head of sheep or five cattle or horses per square mile, otherwise the leases would be liable to forfeit. Finally it would be a long time before the first wool cheque would be forthcoming, so even barring unpredictable catastrophes it seems reasonable to believe that some considerable capital was essential to begin a squatting enterprise in North Queensland.

When Joseph and William Hann arrived at Port Denison in search of land in 1862 they were greeted with discouraging news. That night Joseph recorded in his diary: "they say all the country is taken up, all the way to Rockingham Bay, and all up the Burdekin". His further comment that there was plenty of land being offered for sale indicated that the speculators had been at work, taking up attractive leases early, so that they could sell to the late comers at inflated prices. However the 1860
Land Act was designed to discourage this very practise. It provided for only lease hold tenure of land in order to prevent the immediate alienation of land from the Crown. Furthermore, strict stocking regulations and an annual rental of ten shillings per square mile had been instituted to prevent absentee landlords from tying up Kennedy land in unproductive idleness. Men such as John Melton Black (later the co-founder of Townsville) and Emelius Hilfing, were early applicants who took out a great number of probationary licences. Perhaps they did so in order the better to scrutinize the country and then surrender all but the best leases. Alternatively they may have had speculation in mind. However after the first year they released all but a small number of runs. The Queensland government wanted genuine resident squatters, to ensure pastoral development and that essential productivity.

Despite the early warnings that all the best land had been taken, the Hanns went out and selected a total of ten runs in the north Kennedy, on Maryvale Creek and the Basalt River, both western tributaries of the Burdekin. Under the Land Act, runs were restricted to areas of from twenty-five to 100 square miles in extent, but there was no limit to the number of continuous runs that could be taken out. Joseph and his son rode back to Port Denison delighted with the country that they had found. In May 1862 they lodged their applications for leases at the Chief Commissioners unpretentious tent above the beach, and they hurried aboard the first south-bound steamer to collect the women folk and to purchase livestock and equipment.

Like many of the Kennedy squatters the Hanns purchased sheep, cattle and horses from established properties on the Darling Downs and by September 1862 William was on the road north, supervising the movement of two mobs, one of sheep and a smaller herd of cattle. Seven months and some 800 miles later they arrived at Red Bluff on the Basalt River. The diaries give a vivid impression of the difficulties associated with the long droving expedition, with straying horses, unknown terrain, shortage of stockmen, discomforts of rain and heat and so on. What is also impressive is the warm hospitality extended to the travellers by the established squatters along the way. Included among these were the Archer family of Gracemere near Rockhampton, the Stuarts at Oxford Downs and
Rachael and Biddulph Henning of Exmoor station. These settlers would appreciate the difficulties of long droving expeditions and pioneer squatting in general, for they themselves had been through that demanding experience very recently.

By early 1863 then, the Hanns could set about the task of establishing their grazing properties. They established homesteads at Red Bluff, and Maryvale, and it is interesting to note how the settlers transferred their English homemaking traditions to the North Queensland situation. Of course at first they had to make do with tents and rudely erected slab huts, but with time they replaced these with attractive thatched cottages, they built stone walls and planted hedges and rose gardens, and most essential in this remote area, vegetable plots. Whenever he visited the south, Joseph Hann made a point of visiting the plant nurseries to collect fruit trees and seeds for his homestead gardens.

The British tradition of the great landed estates with imported exotic game, seems to have so impressed William Hann, that in the 1870s he introduced Axis deer from India to run free on his North Queensland property. There remain today at Maryvale several hundred semi-tame deer, a reminder of an earlier colonial era when Australian settlers looked back to England for the standards to be recreated in this new country.

Many of the early settlers, especially those who had recently arrived in the colony, comment on the monotony and austerity of the Australian landscape. Lucy Gray of Hughenden Station who usually faced the difficulties of pastoral pioneering with cheerful enthusiasm, wrote down her first impressions of the Australian bush with obvious disappointment:

But you in England could not imagine any kind of wooded country so utterly ugly. The trees were the ugliest kind of gum tree, tall and bare, with just a few leaves on the top.

And some time later she returns to the subject, which suggests that the stark unEnglish environment has continued to disturb her:

If the trees were beech, the copses oak and hazel it would be lovely but they are not, alas! only that variety of gums known as Iron bark.(3)

Thus English trees and gardens were established around the frontier

3. Diary of Lucy Gray, October 1868, Journey from Townsville to Hughenden. Grav MSS, Oxley Library, Brisbane.
homesteads, where they provided expatriot Englishmen with a happy and comforting reminder of the Old Country.

The Kennedy was of course often a lonely environment, especially for those settlers whose homesteads lay off the established teamsters routes. The Robert Grays of Mt. McConnell recorded how they went for months on end without meeting another European. However the Hann diaries suggest quite a bit of contact with neighbouring squatter families, more perhaps than might have been expected. The upper Burdekin had attracted early settlers and there were several well established properties in the 20-40 mile radius of Red Bluff. The two Mrs. Hanns and Caroline often made social visits by horse or buggy to Burdekin Downs and Hillgrove, to Mrs. James at Nulla Nulla and to Mrs. Daintree of Maryvale, visits which were of course returned. Practical gifts such as recipes, plants, kittens and laying hens were exchanged, and thus despite their isolated situation, the early settlers made concerted efforts to maintain social contacts and preserve the niceties of the society from which they came.

In addition to the established squatters in this area, there also seems to have been an intermittent stream of travellers wandering through the Kennedy district during the early 1860s. Labourers in search of work, bush tinkers and hawkers and occasional Europeans naturalists and adventurers, taking a first-hand look at the North Queensland bush. Some of this latter group were quite well educated but academics were of little consequence on the frontier, for it was men with practical skills who were in demand in the Kennedy. Thus these 'new chums' often took on unskilled labouring work or shepherding, and fortunately some of their number, along with a few of the former squatters, returned home and wrote down and published their reminiscences of colonial experience. Those publications which have survived are of great value in the construction of our colonial history.

As Pauline Cahir pointed out in her lecture on women in North Queensland earlier in this series, males dominated the North Queensland frontier. The 1876 statistics of 5,582 females as against 21,907 males indicate that if you were female and could take the frontier life-style, then it was a good time to be around. The Hann diaries mention the womenfolk only occasionally, presumably because the practicalities of a squatting enterprise were an exclusively male domain, where the primary
concern was with building homesteads and fences and attending to property management. But one does get slight insights into the women involved with sheep mustering and other outside activities. Moreover a strong impression of male respect for the white woman on the frontier is transmitted, this is especially so in regard to the elder Mrs. Hann who seems to represent the capable, enduring frontierswoman stereotype, around whom the homestead life revolved.

Port Denison was of course the service centre for the Kennedy, and the grazing properties were supplied by bullock wagons which inched their way slowly out along the teamsters tracks. We can appreciate that the arrival of the wagons with mail and supplies was an occasion for celebration because in the early sixties they took up to two months to reach Red Bluff from 'the Port'. During the wet season the crossing of the Burdekin River always presented difficulties, but perhaps another good reason for the slowness of the teamsters journey was the high incidence of grog shanties and bush inns strung along the wagon routes. Certainly Joseph Hann recorded in his diary his occasional difficulties in extracting his shearers from these establishments, on the long journey from Bowen.

Because of isolation and poor communications, sickness was a serious matter on the frontier, and at least in the early years it was almost impossible to secure the services of a doctor. There was however one practitioner who took his healing skills to the remote stations, and though he was innocent of any formal medical training, one early observer commented:

But he seldom did much harm, for he knew that a kill or cure business would involve the principle 'no cure no pay'. In spite however of all his caution he managed to kill one or two people.(4)

Early settlers in the north suffered from recurring attacks of fever and ague. The latter was suspected to have been a form of malaria but not a great deal is known about it as it seems to have declined as Europeans became more acclimatized to North Queensland conditions. Everyone seems to have had their own pet remedy for ague: Holloways pills were a great

PIONEER SQUATTING IN THE KENNEDY DISTRICT

standby, and quinine and opium were said to be worth their weight in gold on the gold-fields when the fever was rampant. Fever and ague seem to have plagued all Europeans when they first came to the tropics, especially in the humid coastal areas. However the Hanns 120 miles inland suffered from it constantly, sometimes for days in succession the diaries are marked by a single entry of "Fever", or "Fever and ague".

The mortality rate on the frontier was extremely high, as the result of sickness and aboriginal attack and Carrington did not exaggerate much when he wrote of the Kennedy:

No great value is set upon human life in the new colony. Every man is supposed to take care of himself and the weakest go to the wall. If a man meets his death in any way, the principal thing is to get someone to take his place, and he is soon forgotten. The bush is a wide place and men disappear in it mysteriously and it is useless to enquire about them.(5)

It seems that of necessity the early settlers came to terms with disaster rather than succumbed to it, because it was such a recurring factor in their lives. This is clearly illustrated by the example of William Hann: in 1864 he lost his son, who died a week after birth, his father Joseph was drowned while crossing the flooded Burdekin, and his mother who died at Red Bluff after a long illness.

After his father's death William took over the running of the stations, and in the same year (1864) Richard Daintree, a geologist from Victoria became a partner in the Hann pastoral company. Daintree had been to the North previously, and he was delighted at the prospect of exchanging his office desk in Melbourne for the life of a squatter-geologist in the Kennedy. In September 1863 he had written to a fellow geologist, the Rev. William Clarke:

I hear that they have had a splendid year on the Burdekin and the flocks and herds increase. So ho! for Queensland. I shall then have new country to geologize and not quarter sheets to do. I weary of this topography and filling in of gullies.(6)

Thus Daintree brought his family to the Kennedy in 1864 and settled at Maryvale.

Daintree was a remarkable character, the type of explorer pastoralist that the Queensland government hoped would settle in the Kennedy. He divided his time between pastoral pursuits at Maryvale and wide-ranging geological surveys throughout the north. His contribution to North Queensland development was very significant; he discovered the Gilbert and Cape River Gold fields and surveyed the Bowen River coal basin. He and William Hann mined copper on the Lynd River, and in the 1870s he took a very successful Queensland geological exhibition to England. He sold his Maryvale interest to Hann in 1871 and ended his career as Agent General for Queensland in London. Additional to these accomplishments Daintree was a pioneer photographer of notable skill, and he left a fine collection of photographs of early North Queensland colonial life. This Daintree collection is largely held in the Oxley Library, but we can see a good selection of the photographs reproduced in Geoffrey Bolton's publication, Richard Daintree, A Photographic Memoir.

William Hann may have felt that Daintree spent more time geologizing than was good for his pastoral interest and in 1865–66 a note of disunity begins to creep into their relationship. Hann is disapproving of his partners extravagance, notably for what Hann sees as his too grandiose design for a new house, and also his unauthorized employment of shearsers at high rates of pay. But Hann's concern for economic matters was very much a sign of the times for bad fortune had struck the Kennedy. Pioneer optimism gave way to widespread disillusionment and a number of the original squatters such as Michael Miles, Ernest Henry and Phillip Selheim decided to cut their losses and sell out.

A principal cause of the depression was the collapse of the Agra and Masterton Bank of London which had underwritten the Queensland government's excessive borrowing, and one writer comments that throughout Queensland -

Everywhere was ruin and calamity and members of the government scarcely dared to show their faces.(7)

But coincidental with this were squatter problems closer to home. 1863–65 had produced poor seasons and many sheep had died in the summer droughts. Transport and labour costs were very high, but much worse than this - it had become increasingly apparent that sheep were quite unsuited to North

Queensland conditions, except on the open Downs country to the west. Footrot, dingoes, aboriginal attack and speargrass all took heavy toll and a run of low wool prices worsened a very serious situation. Robert Gray wrote of the speargrass pest:

the sheep become covered with its barbed seeds, like hedgehog spines which penetrate the body of the animal and cause death. This grass is so intermixed with the better kinds that sheep cannot possibly be grown in this country.(8)

Walter Scott of the Valley of Lagoons, with a touch of frontier gallows humor summed up the squatter's situation:

Cattle are certain ruin, but sheep are even quicker.(9)

The Hann-Daintree partnership was fortunate that it was able to secure backing from Melbourne financiers to help them through the crisis, one of the reasons for Daintree being taken into the partnership initially was so that he could contribute additional capital to the enterprise. However they were forced to give up a number of leases during the depression and had to live very carefully. Moreover it was obvious that the time would come when they would have to abandon sheep for a more suitable product.

It is interesting to consider squatter/labour relationships in North Queensland. Squatters needed considerable labour on their runs to shepherd and shear the sheep, and general station hands and blacksmiths were always in demand. In the 1860s Kennedy workers could demand 30-40 shillings weekly, plus rations, as opposed to £1 which was the going price in N.S.W. and southern Queensland, so high wages provided incentive for labour to come to the north.

Typical of many squatters, William Hann seems to have driven a hard bargain with his labourers, and the diaries contain several accounts of heated incidents over pay and conditions. Workers on the frontier were in a very insecure position in the event of employer injustice. If, as sometimes happened, a squatter withheld his worker's pay the man could take out a summons against his employer. But the problem was that he had to walk to Port Denison to do so, which meant a 200 mile journey from the more remote areas, and one could get speared along the way. So in fact, summonsing the squatter was not a common occurrence. One shepherd who made

the effort found when he got to the Port that his squatter employer was sitting at the magistrates desk, and needless to say his appeal for justice went unheeded.

It seems apparent that there developed in the Kennedy a class conscious society reminiscent of rural England, with clearly defined employer/worker stratification, and with segregated meal tables on the basis of both class and race. One early writer describes the early Bowen River race meeting, and how the squattocracy held themselves aloof from the ordinary run of colonials. I don't think this particular observer liked squatters very much, and he remarked that after the races they drank themselves blind drunk in their own exclusive booth. It seems that egalitarianism remained a myth in the Kennedy.

During the early 1860s the Herbert government introduced an immigration scheme in order to bring British workers to Queensland, and for a period just before the economic collapse of 1866 they were estimated to be coming into the Kennedy at the rate of approximately 1,000 per month. However in the second half of the decade because the immigration scheme faltered and also because many workers went off to the northern gold-fields, squatters had great difficulty in securing labour. Kanakas had played an important laboring role on the properties ever since they were first introduced into Queensland in 1863 and after 1866 they, along with aborigines tended to replace European labour in 'the bush'.

An interesting and unique character found on the Australian frontier was the shepherd he was a familiar figure in the Kennedy as in the sheep lands of the older colonies. His role was an essential one, because sheep runs in the early times were not fenced and it was his task to graze the sheep during the day and to herd them into enclosures for safety at night. The shepherds lived alone in isolated huts where they very rarely encountered other Europeans and led a life of remarkable loneliness and privation. Not surprisingly many of them became eccentric and abstracted. To pass the time they commonly took to making cabbage tree hats to sell, and one shepherd has commented on his fellow professionals:

90
They are almost always to a certain degree mad. They talk to themselves, to their materials, to the sheep and the gum trees, hence the Queensland meaning of the expression, as mad as a hatter.(10)

The isolated huts of the shepherds were an obvious target for aboriginal attack and early records and newspapers mention countless instances of these hapless individuals being murdered in the bush. However as indicated previously this was a harsh human environment and no great value was placed on 'cranky' shepherds, so long as they could be easily replaced.

By this time I imagine the race relations historians will have concluded that I have taken the narrow European view of Australian history and entirely neglected the aboriginal aspect. There have already been several lectures in this series covering aboriginal-European conflict and there is not time for me to go into great detail here in this matter. However what happened in the Kennedy was typical of other frontier situations in the history of race relations in this country.

The early explorers in this area seem to have had very little opposition from the aborigines. Leichhardt, Gilbert and those who came later point out that they rarely sighted an aborigine along the Burdekin until they reached the Valley of Lagoons, though they often came upon their hastily abandoned and still warm campfires. This suggests that the news of the coming of the white man and the threat which they represented had proceeded European settlement, and the aborigines determined to conceal themselves from this fearsome intruder, who possessed weapons which could kill from a great distance. However the squatters soon followed, they trampled the vegetation with their flocks, scattered the natural game and took the best watering places, and the aboriginals soon appreciated the full implications of the European invasion. Thus deprived of their food supply and increasingly resentful of European ignorance and abuse towards them, they reacted with guerilla war tactics such as attacking isolated travellers and shepherds and spearing and disturbing stock. In the violent conflict which ensued the Europeans gradually gained the ascendency, as a result of their superior weapons and also through the efforts of the

notorious native police squads. But before they were subjugated the aborigines took a heavy toll of European life and one Kennedy squatter estimated that probably 10-15% of the European population lost their lives at the hands of the blacks in the first ten years of settlement in North Queensland.(11)

We will never know how many aborigines were killed during the conflict, but the figure must have been well into the thousands. One traveller on the Burdekin in the mid sixties reported:

I have seen two large pits covered with branches, full of dead blackfellows of all ages and both sexes.(12)

and the same writer commented that there was a general understanding among the early settlers that it was wise policy to kill off as many aboriginal women as possible, so that the black race would be more quickly exterminated. For us it sounds horribly reminiscent of Auschwitz and Belsen, but it seems that environment and economic ambition combined to dwarf humanitarianism in the Kennedy.

After the race conflict was decided many of the aborigines who remained were allowed into the station homesteads where they were employed as domestics and stockmen, and especially in the latter capacity they performed a very valuable service for the squatter. I would point out however, that compassion for the indigenous people of North Queensland is not an exclusive 1970s phenomenon. Contemporary records indicate that a number of the early settlers grappled with the moral questions associated with the entry of the European, which problems have continued to disturb the humanitarians of the present. Undoubtedly the aboriginal families who moved into the stations were very vulnerable to exploitation and most certainly abuse took place, however finally on aborigines I shall echo Professor Bolton's remark that "in truth the aborigines who lived under the paternalism of a North Queensland cattle station were not ... the least fortunate of their race."(13)

In European affairs the first ten years of settlement brought significant changes in the Kennedy. Bowen had grown from its insignificant beginnings to become an impressive centre, complete with churches,
government buildings, a meat processing plant and a fine court house was in the process of erection. Even by 1865 rough Kennedy bushmen preferred to celebrate their Christmas spree at the bush inns because Bowen had become too civilized and law abiding.

To the north settlements had been established at Cardwell and Cleveland Bay. The latter was the brain-child of entrepreneur John Melton Black, who persuaded the elderly Sydney financier Robert Towns to lend his funds to the scheme. However her patron was to have grave fears for his investment, after Townsville's proclamation celebrations in 1865, when Towns learned that the whole community had been drunk for three weeks. Despite these inauspicious beginnings, Townsville soon began to gain the ascendancy over Bowen, as a court house, port facilities and meat works were built to rival the Port Denison centre. In addition the native police force was moved to Dalrymple township on the Burdekin River west of Townsville and many of the north Kennedy squatters including William Hann took advantage of the new Townsville service centre to avoid the longer, more difficult journey to Bowen. As early as July 1866 his diary suggests that Hann was a familiar dinner guest at John Melton Black's hillside home, and on one such occasion he contributed to the after dinner speechmaking with an address on behalf of the pastoral industry.

Bowen soon felt threatened by the growing centre to her north and the columns of the Port Denison Times rang with vitriolic condemnation of Cleveland Bay's unhealthy mangroves and mud flats, her ugly Cootharinya Hill and her less than honest founding fathers. The North Queensland community was divided over the Bowen - Townsville conflict, as they threw their support behind one or other of the rival centres.

Several reasons have been put forward for the decline of Bowen. Some have suggested that J.M. Black was responsible when in a fury he had sworn to heaven with clenched fist: "The day will come when I shall make Bowen tremble!" But perhaps we should look for more satisfactory explanations. Distance and difficulty of access to the inland from Bowen were important factors but perhaps the deciding issue in favour of Townsville was the discovery of gold in her hinterland. Starr River, the Gilbert, Cape River and later Ravenswood and Charters Towers all attracted a rush of miners to the north in the late 1860s and 70s and Townsville as entrepot shared the
new prosperity and associated development. Townsville became the service centre for the North Kennedy, with the bullock teams going west via Hervey's Range and Dalrymple township, out into the Burdekin and the western Flinders country. The teamsters track branched at Dalrymple with the southern route leading to the Cape River gold field, and once a week the native police rode gold escort, bringing the precious metal back to the port of Townsville. North Queensland had found its mineral staple.

The discovery of gold came at an opportune time for the squatters. The decline of sheep and difficulty of exporting beef cattle products had plagued them through the late 1860s but with the influx of the mining population and the opening of the popular Palmer River gold fields to the north, they found a ready local demand for their beef. In 1870 William Hann embarked on a mammoth droving trip from Maryvale to Victoria, where he sold his entire sheep flock and on his return north he converted his stations entirely to beef cattle.

Finally on William Hann, it is noteworthy that he was also an explorer and amateur geologist of considerable ability and in 1872 he was chosen to lead a government exploration party into Cape York peninsula, and in fact a member of his party discovered the first gold on the Palmer field. However it was left to James Mulligan who came later to publicize the major gold discovery there. Thus like his former partner Richard Daintree, William Hann went beyond the limits of his private squatting enterprise, and made a significant contribution to the exploration of this northern 'terra incognita'.

The first decade in the Kennedy which began with wool as the economic staple, ended promisingly with a dual economy of gold and beef cattle. In fact by this time the sugar industry had developed appreciably so that it added a third agricultural staple to the North Queensland economy. In those ten years the aborigines had gone through a progression of attitudes, with initial cautious avoidance of Europeans, followed by violent resistance and finally total subjugation. The squatters for their part had started with optimism, had encountered near disaster, and ended the decade with their properties well established: they could now look forward to a future of security and moderate prosperity. In the meantime they had developed into a distinct squattocracy class, a little rougher perhaps than their southern
PIONEER SQUATTING IN THE KENNEDY DISTRICT

counterparts, but confident and conscious of their landed gentry type position in society. In addition they were, in the manner of rural dwellers generally, essentially conservative.

The Kennedy district remains today a predominantly primary producing area, based on the grazing of beef cattle. It is interesting to note that quite a number of the pastoral holdings are still in the hands of descendants of the original squatters, which indicates that the optimism of 1861 over the opportunities available to new settlers in the north was well founded. Today's pastoralists, like their forefathers before them can gain confidence in the knowledge that Queensland remains a distinctly pro-squatter state.

REFERENCES


Carrington, G., Colonial Adventures and Experience by a University Man, London, 1871.

Clarke MSS. Mitchell Library, Sydney.

Cunningham, M.W., The Pioneering of the Burdekin River, xerox copy held by James Cook University Library.


Gray MSS. The Diary of Lucy Gray, Oxley Library, Brisbane.


Hann, Joseph and William, Personal Diaries, 1861-1871, held by James Cook University Library.


Port Denison Times, March 5th, 1864 - December 1871.

WOMEN IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

Ms. P. Cahir

A contemporary female social historian has written,

The search for women's history is not simply a question of filling in gaps, of writing ourselves back into history to restore our 'amour propre'. We need to know our past.... By showing that the role and 'nature' of women changes with each society we are helping to defeat the argument 'that's how it's always been'. Since oppressive ideology is justified by reference to a false past, it is important for us to show what the past really was.... Historical understanding is essential to our struggle: we must know where we come from to understand what we are and where we are going....

This is the only justification for isolating women from the society in which they live to study them as a group. Indeed, it is not so much isolating women as seeing society as a whole; men and women in society, not men alone. "Women's history" for any other reason is destructive, adding to the suspicion which many men and women have frequently held: that females are extraneous to the mainstream of history, that they are merely freaks or ornaments, quite rightly to be looked at in total separation from real history. It is essential, therefore, that before the tenets of North Queensland history become too entrenched, the contribution of women to that history is examined and understood. What follows is merely a tentative first step.

It is a fair generalization that women in Australia as a whole have been content to allow their roles to be defined as an adjunct to those of men. This willingness to submit to a male-dominated ethos is nowhere more evident than in early North Queensland. It is not that the first generation of women in North Queensland played no part in the formation of its society; they had a vital economic importance as housekeepers and population-producers. But it was a passive, non-active casting. There was no consciousness of the sex as a group, or as a group that might possess rights or needs which the traditional wife-mother mould might not satisfy. It was within the domestic sphere that the female contribution to the development of tropical Queensland's society was made; a non-contribution, in a sense, as this necessarily implied a subordination to the values and expectations of a larger society which was male-controlled. Women were, therefore,
frequently the victims of society. Even more frequently, they were unconscious yet active perpetrators of this state of affairs.

The pioneering women of this region were not weak. Physically and psychologically, they were strong. They had to be, to withstand the rigours and isolation of their lives. Many travelled with their husbands in bullock drays and carts, over rough terrain, camping in tents and cooking over open fires. Mrs. James Lamond for example, was on the road for eighteen months as she, her husband and small family moved, jolt by painful jolt, from Victoria to Cooktown. Mrs. Brown, one of the first white women to reach the Atherton Tablelands, packed her two young children in kerosene cases that dangled from the sides of a mule, as she made her journey north. Rachel Henning, Mary Costello and Lucy Eden are only three of the more celebrated of such bushwomen. The C.W.A. North Queensland Pioneers is full of the accounts of the doings of immigrant women following their menfolk to establish new lives on northern sugarlands or pastoral runs: Mrs. Allingham who arrived at the Burdekin in 1858, Mrs. F. Bundock of Peegunia, Mrs. Mann of Maryvale, Mrs. F. Halfpapp of Atherton, Mrs. Fulford of Lyndhurst, Mrs. John Kennedy of Kensington Downs, Mrs. Daintree of the Upper Burdekin, Mrs. Robert Gray and many others.

These women were frequently the only white females in an area of a hundred square miles, and were often left alone with only a gin or European servant for company when their husbands went off for business or exploration. They had to cope with the ordinary problems of isolation, such as sudden illness and plain loneliness, as well as the danger of attacks by Aborigines. Mrs. James Hall Scott, for example, had to cope by herself with the deaths of her two small children, from diphtheria, as well as the death of the handyman left to protect her. Later, when the family moved to Bowen, she spent a night of terror keeping attacking Aborigines at bay from the deserted homestead.

Far from medical aid, such women frequently brought children into the world without any help at all or, at best, with that of a gin. As Mary Cusack in Kings In Grass Castles recalls of her grandmother's days -
sometimes women gave birth alone while the frantic husband rode to the nearest neighbour fifty to a hundred miles away, perhaps returning to find mother and baby dead. But these were times to be spoken of in whispers, in female company only, and a woman tried not to cry out in labour lest her intimate distress be heard by menfolk and children.5

Their houses were initially just tents or bush shacks, with an open air cooking gallery. Houses of sorts, made of slabs or bark were generally soon erected, with perhaps a proper homestead following that in the course of time. Visitors were rare; lady-visitors even rarer. Rations were hard to get and planning to make them last, when teams were delayed because of cyclones or floods, was no small problem. Salt meat, pigweed and camp-oven bread - sometimes made from weevily flour for lack of anything better - were the staple fare for much of the year. Yet women valiantly set about establishing poultry runs, orchards, vegetable plots and flower gardens, unfavourable weather conditions notwithstanding. Thus little oases of productiveness were established, scattered throughout the frontier colony, from Mrs. Allingham's house at Hillgrove which, by 1860, was "a happy social centre, surrounded by a wealth of beautiful flowers, creepers, gaily coloured foliage and glorious trees", to the flower garden of the first Mrs. Christison of Lammermoor, to the rose-trees, chrysanthamums and watercress carefully tended by the two Henning sisters.6 Stations usually employed a married European couple, or a Chinese, or the wives of stockyard Aborigines, to cook and work around the kitchen, though the woman of the house often did some of the cooking herself.

This domestic sphere was the horizon of a woman's world, apart from the exceptional circumstances of the death of a husband or his continued absence. It was then "acceptable" for a female to step out of her female sphere. Mrs. Margaret McDonald continued to fulfil the contract her accidentally-killed husband had undertaken, to supply timber for the construction of the northern railway. For three years in Townsville she supervised the feeding and loading of five teams. Mrs. Brown of kerosene case fame, set up and ran a dairy farm while her husband "went after the cedar"; and she alternated this activity with "scrubbing" timber and driving a bullock team.7

But normally the woman was content with household life. The description of Mrs. William Mark of Burdekin River, for example, epitomizes
this: "she looked after the household part of the business very well, but took no part in the public life of the place, keeping herself and her little girls apart and secluded." As for others ... "Mrs. Edward Mytton of Wando Vale is essentially a homemaker"; Mrs. James Rollinson of Braceborough "is a real homemaker. Her pot plants and garden are a revelation"; Mrs. Andrew Wagner of Townsville "is an expert buttermaker and housekeeper". These were the ultimate compliments for a woman.8

Indeed, one is tempted to believe that many women - who, after all, were direct from Sydney, Melbourne or the Old Country - threw themselves into a domestic life almost as a defence against a surroundings and a male-oriented life they neither understood or sympathized with. Mrs. Miles of Mt. Elsie, "was a devoted wife and mother. Her happiness was always in her homelife and she thus ever remained just the refined city girl grown older, with a shrinking dread of rough and ready colonial ways and manners." And Mrs. Frank Anning of Reedy Springs was

a city girl who never became a bushwoman in its true sense, all through those twenty-eight years. She was absorbed in her husband and her family, the responsibility of their well-being resting on her....She never became interested in the stock or station work, for years at a time never going outside the little paddock surrounding the homestead, never even on a ride or a drive or a family picnic.9

Even the intelligent and witty Rachel Henning was content simply to do her brother Biddulph's accounts and copy his letters, and leave all station details and major decisions to his discretion and wiser judgement.

For the frontier was a male society. In the 1876 census, the North Queensland population proved to be 5,582 females as against 21,907 males.10 It was men who were opening up the country, men developing trade and resources, men making decisions affecting the location of settlements and townships. In some ways, it was a world that had no need of women. Roughness, the male domain, was essential in the wilderness. And the words of one adventurer,

This is the country for Young Men. Go North! Go North!... Mother Earth....She loves the compelling touches of rough determined hands. Patience, courage, industry - these are her lover's words11

indicate the almost sexual relationship between the explorer and the virgin bush. Similarly, in Devanney's Sugar Heaven later-generation canecutters
WOMEN IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

experience a sensual longing for "the cut", a love-hatred for the cane.
"Look at it," exclaims Hefty, "there it is! Hot for the knife! How a man
hates it, begad!...Look at it! It's alive, begad! Waiting for the
knife."  

It was a relationship completely beyond the comprehension of the
womenfolk of these men. Indeed, when a man overdid attention or concern
for women, he was a figure of fun. A.J. Draper, a Cairns businessman, for
example, was ribbed by his friends for his "domesticated" state. The
standing joke told against him was that once, in a pub, he had asked the
barmaid where she had got the peculiarly-cut whiskey decanter from, as it
was "the very thing my wife wants for some sauce or something." His mates
were amazed at this eccentric unmasculine interest in home affairs.  

The sphere of women in developing North Queensland was therefore a
domestic one; their part in its development was seen as a civilizing one.
"An educated man begins to deteriorate as soon as he gets beyond the reach
of ladies' society," remarked Charles Eden of his experience in the Port
Denison region in the 1860s.  

Edward Palmer, in his early history of North Queensland (written in the 1890s) refers to only four women in all of his
268 pages, and each reference is along the lines of - "Mrs. Thompson's
hospitality at Mt. Emu is proverbial and the refinement that prevailed in
all the arrangements at the head station gave additional value to the
welcome."  

Women painted, like Christison of Lammermoor's first wife;
wrote diaries (many of which, like Mrs. Allingham's were lost) or letters,
or poetry (the most prominent poetess being Sarah Sloan Thompson who came
out from Scotland especially to wed her building contractor sweetheart);
organized musical parties and picnics, like Mrs. Mytton of Wando Vale and
the two Mrs. Allinghams of Hillgrove and Muralambeen; made lampshades,
papered walls and hung pictures, as did Annie and Rachel Henning. It is
interesting that no one ever sat in the Henning parlour without a coat, and
that visitors to the Edens, "in honour of Lucy", the lady of the house,
also wore coats at night. Often these bushwomen continued playing the
genteel role expected of them in middle-class England, even though it was
frequently utterly unsuitable to Queensland conditions. Most outback women
of the early days persisted in wearing crinolines. For instance Robert
Gray wrote that his wife lost much of her wardrobe in a fire, including her
crinoline - "a most necessary article in those days and her ingenuity was

101
Lucy Eden caught fire three times in six weeks, simply because her voluminous skirts almost inevitably touched the red-hot logs of the open-air fireplace she had to cook over. Some women actually died of such burns. It is not too far-fetched to say that the crinoline under the hot Queensland sun was a symbol of women's preparedness to submit to the stereotype expected of them, and the force of that stereotype.

Not all outback and farming women accepted the narrow world of domesticity thrust on them by a society which regarded marriage and motherhood as the only goals for womankind. The second Mrs. Christison of Lammermoor hated station life and the C.W.A. Book's waspish comment is "she had absolutely no pioneering instincts." The same book is equally curt about women who actually left their husbands because they hated the restricting North Queensland environment. There are two and one half pages on Ernest Henry, pioneer of Cloncurry, and then only a tiny paragraph on his wife: a tantalizing, unfinished sketch of a girl who stayed at Cloncurry only a short while and then returned south. Silence hangs over her action, perhaps because she knew - as did her biographer - that in her society she was both a rebel and a failure.

Then there was the young wife of Charles Armstrong, who detested her domestic career on a sugar plantation at Mackay and left it for Europe and fame as the great Dame Nellie Melba. But such dramatic summary action was rare; stoic acceptance was the commonplace. Frustrations did, however, unleash themselves in diaries, as is revealed in the description of one woman's day - 23 January 1903 - as she sits alone, with her two children, on a drought stricken station:

Is my life to be all grey? There are times when I feel, oh, so rebellious. That is when memory recalls the pictures, galleries, sculptures and the lovely gardens and the holy music in the churches and the concerts and the operas...

And she ends the entry with:

The saddest thing is that there are so many others facing and bracing themselves to bear bravely the same dreary fate.

But there was no communication between them, and isolation was the hardest thing that bushwomen had to bear. Menfolk came and went and were always sharing the company of their own sex. Yet how could there be consciousness
by women of themselves as a group, or of their contribution to the
formation of a society when individual women were often separated by a
hundred miles and often never left their properties for twenty years at a
time?

Even when an organization was finally established - the Country
Women's Association, in 1922 - to forge communication between women deprived
of close links with others of their sex, it proved to be an organization
fundamentally supporting the status quo, geared to make life more tolerable
for countrywomen without questioning the established relations of the sexes.
Though one contributor to its Newsletter in 1972 might write, "The power
of women is enormous; we have the numbers, but we must also gain the
expertise...we must...recognize the real needs of the community and hammer
away until we get something done," the C.W.A. has concentrated too much
on Cookery and Crochet competitions, handicraft classes, catering for
functions etc, so that its members were given only an institutionalized
or enlarged version of their own household concerns. It did not really
widen the woman's horizon.

Significantly, one of the major themes through much of the work of
North Queensland female novelists is an attempt to define the male-female
relationship, and to examine the workings of this relationship in the
North Queensland setting. In The Northerner by Joan Colebrook, the station
owner's wife Elizabeth

was dimly aware, from behind the welter of her ceaseless
activity, that part of herself had never lived, that it had
been buried beneath the needs of her children and her
husband, that it had died from inanition and loneliness so
that like a continually lopped tree, she could grow no other
way now than the way she had grown.21

Sarah Campion in The Pommy Cow explores the reaction of Mo Burdekin, a
typical strapping outback male, to his English suffragette sweetheart.
"A woman has no business with principles!" he explodes; and later, "You
can think all you like when it's light, but at night you must stop thinking."22
But he never really understands her ideas, or regards them as important
enough to merit his attention. Nor does he comprehend her basic needs and
exasperations that result in the articulation of Women's Rights, and the
suspicion of marriage as "a piece of superstitious mumbo-jumbo" in which
the female finishes up being "possessed." Disappointingly, but perhaps realistically, the end is inconclusive.

Not so with Jean Devanney, a New Zealand Socialist who came to live in tropical Queensland. Especially in three of her novels, Cindie, Sugar Heaven and Out of Such Fires, she focuses on the situation of a woman entering a man's world and changing that world. The heroine of Sugar Heaven Dulcie, is a Sydney girl brought by her cane-cutter bridegroom Hefty to Silkwood (twenty miles south of Innisfail). At first hating the life and opposing the A.W.U. strike going on at the time, she gradually becomes sympathetic both to her surroundings and the strike - so much so that her husband resents her interference. Moreover, she actively sets out to organize the women of the area as a group, for educational and social-action purposes. When Dulcie excitedly begins to tell Hefty of this momentous decision of hers and of her plans, he - thinking along typical male lines of what is momentous to a female - believes she is about to tell him she is pregnant. The lack of woman's involvement in society is seen by Devanney as a direct result of men's attitude to women. Dulcie finds it hard even getting women to help in strike relief work because "lots of husbands are too jealous to allow it." "I think that this interest I feel now in women," she confesses, "may arise out of my love for Hefty. Not until I loved Hefty did I realize the relationship of woman to man."23

In Out of Such Fires Devanney takes this examination a step further by looking at the oppression laid on women by society as a whole, especially the Church. An intelligent, educated city girl Helena comes to a station for a working holiday and, rather incredibly, falls in love with and marries the owner's son, a stern, conservative and religious Catholic. Helena disbelieves in the religious and legal bonds of marriage as a merely procreative institution. "Legal trivalities have nothing to do with morality and love," she tells her aghast husband, who can only echo the words of his priest-friend: "A woman must submit herself to her husband. The Church has laid it down. The husband, the wife, the child."24 Helena eventually converts her husband to a perception of the hypocrisy and superstition, as Devanney sees it, under which he is living. But, unfortunately for happy-ever-after-hankerers, he is murdered before they can begin a New Life together!

But, as so often with literature, it is only the creative artists (even if they are not first class creative artists) who explore the darker
side of society's serene surface. And though the women of Devanney's or Campion's worlds might prove themselves as individual beings and wring immense attitudinal change in their menfolk, such vanguard action was not noticeable in the real world outside the fictional one.

What of women in the North Queensland towns? Little has been written about townsfolk, yet what is revealed in the patchwork insight into their lives gleaned from early newspapers is not very different from the situation of their bush sisters. The town woman's sphere was basically a domestic one also, the typical arrangement summarized in the description of the Draper's arrival in Cairns:

While Mrs. Draper was busy making herself familiar with the best housekeeping methods in the primitive community, her husband settled into the business and public life with the energy that marked his progress.25

Very often their lives were as fixed as the women isolated on stations for years at a time. Mrs. Hannaford, who arrived in Townsville with her husband in 1873, moved to Eyre Street, North Ward and lived there, without shifting or going south once, for fifty-five years.26 But at least she had pleasant views and sea breezes. The worker's houses in South Townsville were much less kind to the housewife. Built of wood and iron, with badly drained yards, their kitchens were usually poky little cupboards on the hottest side of the house.27 Even on such basic architectural matters directly affecting their comfort and working conditions, women did not lobby for improvement. Their acceptance of the short-sighted spec-builder's faults - which, in the case of the kitchen's positioning, could easily have been averted - was an acceptance of the male builder's assumption that women's work did not really matter sufficiently to warrant special thought or planning. Not all women were submissive about what went on around them. Mrs. Tom Lynett of Winton was instrumental in agitating for a wide main street so that lady-shoppers could browse and chat in comfort under the tree-lined streets;28 and at Bowen in 1878 a group of women physically prevented the demolition of a convent, forcing their parish priest to buy it back.29

But all too often women took a back seat. As settlements grew in size and community needs, facilities like hospitals were required. Frequently it was a woman who first saw the need and set the ball rolling.
In Barcaldine, the wife of the police magistrate, Mrs. Francis, began raising funds for the establishment of a hospital on her own initiative. Building began in 1887 and when it was finished, except for the resident male doctor, it was fully staffed by a female matron and nurses. Yet the committee who ran the hospital and determined its policy, from the appointment of staff, to how many needles should be ordered, was all-male: local men, not local women. This is typical of most North Queensland hospitals. The woman's place was in the backroom as fundraiser - a task she took up whole-heartedly, judging by the number of Euchre parties, balls, afternoon teas and concerts which newspapers record. The same kind of casting is found in School Committees. Sunnyside School at Mackay and Charters Towers Central State School were certainly not alone in having all-male committees, or definite separation of sex activities. At the 1911 Sunnyside Arbour Day, Mr. Fox, the Committee chairman, extended a separate thanks to "the Committee, and the ladies" - the Committee for their efficient running of school administration; to the ladies for their excellence as tea and scone-makers in satisfying hearty Arbour Day appetites. Various church groups also had ladies committees to raise money and provide refreshments. The townswoman, naturally, had more opportunity to indulge wider interests. There were musical societies, opera and dramatic groups, discussion groups. But when women did meet regularly on an educative basis, it all too often degenerated into an excuse for tea, chat and sing-song. Or when, as with the Townsville District Women's Christian Temperance Union, it was urged that meetings should be made "more educational", the order of the topics suggested for instruction reveal the thrust of their interests: "cooking, housekeeping, hygiene, divorce laws and women's franchise". When a male speaker was invited by a male organization in Charters Towers to speak publicly on a serious topic, the organizers must have taken for granted that few women would think to attend, and so went out of their way to advertise a special "invitation cordially extended to the ladies." From an early age, of course, a girl was educated to this belief that her only goal and only sphere of influence, was a homely one. In Queensland schools girls were not taught the same standard of maths as boys till 1900; they were expected to do needlework instead. As one observer in 1875 said,
Fancywork of great ingenuity and little use, and novel reading, seem to be the main occupation of girls. They are never forced into close painful application in their schooldays.... They have forgotten the small amount they learnt by the time they are twenty.  

Secondary schools rarely gave academic education to the few girls who progressed past primary classes. More often they were like the Bowen Sisters of Mercy Convent which offered to its students the subjects of "violin, pianoforte, singing, French-oil painting, Irish Point lace, Limerick lace, dancing and darning." Before the establishment of State Schools in towns and rural areas (beginning in 1875) most education was left to private academies run by women. Even after these were things of the past, women predominated in Education Department staff. For it was one of the most prestigious of the respectable jobs open to females. All Queensland teachers underwent the pupil-teacher system. They spent four years teaching by day, and studying in their free time to pass annual examinations, exams which were of a lower standard for females. Women teachers were thus poorly trained, and generally taught as they had been taught; and looked on their teaching as "just a job", a fill-in till marriage. One female ex-teacher who began teaching in 1909 remembered that many of her peers happily accepted transfers to country areas in order to find a husband. Her successor at Prairie was keen to go there for that reason, and soon married a local farmer. Female teachers, therefore, perpetuated the oppression at work moulding the feminine self-attitude. A woman had no incentive to see education in any other light. She found it difficult to make a successful career of teaching as women did not have the automatic public and Departmental acceptance which men possessed, and they lacked security of tenure which their male colleagues enjoyed. It was nearly always the case that women were left in the primary area, males supposedly possessing the superior academic power required by secondary schools. When women were employed at the secondary level, they were generally in an inferior position to the headmaster and were sometimes there simply to teach "light-weights" such as Music or Drawing. Some women did succeed, however, though at personal cost. Mrs. Fitzpatrick, deserted by her husband and left with three young children, opened the Girls and Infants School in Townsville in 1876, in primitive conditions. Despite these, despite six pupil-teachers who resigned in rapid succession, and a
Department which was rigidly unsympathetic, she battled on till she became ill and was transferred to a South-east Queensland country school. The Inspector congratulated her for "the masculine complexion of her mind and her abnormal governing power," and she ended up headmistress of a big Ipswich school. Nuns were also prominent in education. Convent schools were being set up in most northern towns to cater for the Catholic population from the 1870s and the special attitude towards women, and nuns in particular, can be seen in the description of the Mercy Sister's arrival in Charters Towers: "When in 1882 there arrived in the Towers two refined, sweet-faced ladies in the habit of nuns, there arrived with them a first touch of gentle culture."36

What other alternatives were open to women between the years of school and marriage? Robert Gray's comment in 1913 is as accurate as any:

Girls in most cases on leaving school desire to enter as assistants in shops and millinery establishments, or seek employment as typists, or in other genteel occupations. Domestic servants, so-called, are not in favour with the youth of either sex in North Queensland.39

In every colony, Australian girls showed a refusal to be tied down to the drudgery of domestic service, though they readily submitted to similar work within marriage. The same applied to North Queensland. This lack of servants was one reason why even middle-class women spent so much time on household duties. Advertisements for house-maids, general servants and cooks were constantly appearing in the various towns' papers and their repetition revealed the lack of response. What servants there were, were generally "new chums"; and the boatloads of single women who arrived at the North Queensland ports were targets not only for wife hunters (and many of these women arrived especially to marry - a man in particular, or any man), but also for intending employers. They were housed at a Depot on arrival where their intending mistresses could look them over and bid for their services. But the girls could afford to be choosy. Charles Eden acquired an Irish girl from the Depot at Port Denison for thirty pounds a year to go out to his station and was told "to think yourself lucky to get anyone at all to go to such an outlandish place." But the arrangement did not work, at least not for Eden. The girl wept the whole time at the prospect of the bush, where she'd be "kilt entirely" and made herself so disagreeable that her employer sent her packing, after having paid her passage - which
he found was "exactly what she wanted, having been offered more wages by other persons in town." Then there was the scene in the employment bureau in Townsville in 1886 when a woman, come to hire a maid, was not even given an opportunity to interview the girl before the latter began to interrogate her and flounced out on hearing she would only get Thursdays and Sunday afternoons off. And a traveller in an upcountry North Queensland hotel noted that the two maids did their work in the mornings but in the afternoons they used to dress themselves in the most elaborate manner and lounge about in our chairs in the verandah....Servants at these hotels consider themselves of quite as much importance as the visitors and so in fact they are, and give a great deal more trouble.

Many of the "local girls" became dental or shop assistants, dressmakers, nurses, governesses, waitresses, cafe proprietors, landladies, hotel proprietors, barmaids. When novel careers were urged upon women, as by the editor of the North Queensland Herald in 1905, stressing the need for female photographers, the reasons were depressingly traditional: "the ordinary man has not the necessary tact and patience to overcome a child sitter's timidity and strangeness...whereas to the average woman a child is always interesting." A few women did break free from the set female job mould: Phoebe Lewis, a sixteen year old Townsville girl, in 1898 became the first linotype operator in Australia with the Townsville Daily Bulletin.

On the topic of newspapers, women's pages had early appeared in North Queensland papers. The North Queensland Herald had a "Ladies Page" every week, with a gossip column, jokes, poems concerning love and marriage, recipes and handy hints; the Wild River Times had a "Gossip From Woman's World" weekly feature in which were enumerated all the latest news about fashion, dress and trims; and the Charters Towers Mining Standard had an "Our Ladies Column" recording the ins and outs of everyone's doings — such as "The Misses Summers spent a day in Townsville last week" or "The Whist Club entertained Dr. Clatworthy on Friday afternoon at the Crown Hotel." But it was only through reading such items that the female was reminded of her womanly position and of what ought to interest her. Advertisements aimed at a similar goal. It is not only today that women are seen by manufacturers as consumer objectives.
The overwhelming number of unclassified advertisements in these early papers seem to be for medical products, and the weaker sex was a major target for their sale. Attractively set out, with the appearance of actual news items and with such inducing titles as "Are Women Wise?", "Fearless Cloncurry Lady", "The Case of Mrs. Esther Simpson", "A Lady Sick Unto Death", "Choosing a Wife", "Mothers Who care", these catchy little paragraphs zip their way to a telling conclusion, when the reader has no rational choice but to rush out and purchase Ayer's Sarsparilla, Clement's Tonic, Dr. William's Pink Pills for Pale People or whatever else is being articulately offered. Certain of these advertisements are a definite put-down to any attempt on women's part to rouse herself from that family-centred, family-minded consumer. "Against New Women" ran one heading -

The 'new women', with her aspirations and mannish mode of airs, can never become a success, for the simple reason that Nature is against her. Woman is not constituted like Man. Her internal organism can stand less strain and needs a great deal more attention than that of the male being. If any part of the digestive or female organs become deranged, the whole system becomes affected.\textsuperscript{46} Obviously, the only cure for such a doomed creature was Bile Beans for Biliousness and an end to any move towards equality with the male of the species whose internal organs were of a hardier nature. And if women were not convinced of their own weakness, male readers almost certainly were. North Queensland, pronounced Robert Gray, possessed "a climate where the white woman physically deteriorates" and the only solution as he saw it was for either coloured servants, or a trip south to cooler latitudes every summer.\textsuperscript{47}

This frailty extended to mental frailty also. One letter-to-the-editor-writer in the Mackay Mercury was so put out that a mere female had written and criticized his contribution that he felt impelled to write another letter so that he, the male, would have the last word. His condescending tone was evident in: "Another thing I should like to impress upon her mind, if it is possible to impress her with anything weightier than her own plum pudding...." Predictably enough, the woman wrote back, angrily denouncing the implication that her cooking was anything but the lightest and the best.\textsuperscript{48}
White women in North Queensland therefore were pushed into - and pushed themselves - into a subordinate position in society, natural enough in a frontier society which regarded marriage as the natural destiny for all women, and where women themselves were prepared to accept marriage on practically any terms. When mating was the name of the game, and possession and security the prizes, there was little room for delicate personal relationships to grow prior to the "hitching" - on either side. It was a situation that debased the male-female relationship. In an environment where a woman was rare, it was her "femaleness" that was the dominant characteristic rather than the personality as a whole. Entry into marriage - if it came to actual marriage - was a frequently hurried and very unsacred affair. Blainey tells the story of a coach arriving in Cloncurry one day with

a buxom woman sitting beside the driver. It seems that the woman caught the eye of the butcher as he stood in his apron outside his shop and he shouted out, 'Hi there, will you marry me?' To his amazement she shouted her consent and they went to the courthouse and were married.59

And one station-owner arranged a wedding-breakfast for one of his Chinese shepherds, who was marrying an Englishwoman. When the Chinese failed to arrive, and the congregation became impatient, the owner, "with a mighty oath said 'that sooner than disappoint her he would marry her himself' and married they were, then and there."50 Most other station owners were more delicate in their affairs du coeur. Having the money to travel south or to Europe, most went to those civilized havens in search of a soul-mate and life-partner. Christison of Lammermoor journeyed - twice - to Edinburgh for his wives.

Little reference is to be found regarding European prostitutes, but they certainly existed, and even more certainly, were well patronized.

If European women - members of the ruling race - were regarded as second-class citizens, what of their sisters in other races? It is impossible to account for Kanaka and Chinese women, as the information is so scarce, apart from the fact that they were very few in numbers. Among Pacific Islanders, men outnumbered women by 10 to 1, and only a few Chinese introduced their wives to Australia. But there is more data available about Aboriginal women. Gins were frequently employed by
stations as cooks, kitchen helps or nursemaids and many were mistresses or
prostitutes, for white men's pleasure. But in their traditional state,
Aboriginal women possessed a domestic rank not greatly different to the
white woman's.

Aboriginal society was divided into three ranks: initiated men,
initiated youths and women. Until puberty, Aboriginal children of both
sexes lived similar lives, but once they reached puberty then entered quite
different worlds. For the male, circumcision was the threshold to a life
of increased spiritual knowledge and power. The meagre ceremony involved
with the female's introcision symbolized the virtual cessation of her
spiritual development and her readiness for marriage. The male's pursuits
were thus on a higher plane. It was he who hunted big game, painted and
created artistically, had access to sacred objects and sites. The woman's
position was a more menial one though many tribalwomen did have their own
secret ceremonies from which men were excluded - some commemorating their
"femaleness" and some very erotic, although as Abbie says, all being "pale
imitations of the men's."\(^{51}\)

In various northern areas, women provided 60-70% of the food, and at
some times of the year 90%.\(^{52}\) Women worked more regularly than the men.
Taking the children with them, they spent the day collecting witchetty
grubs, frogs, honeyants, reptiles, birds, eggs, small mammals, roots, seeds,
herbs. They always carried a digging-stick with them for such purposes and
everything, theoretically, collected during the day was put into a common
pool at evening. (In practice, much was eaten on the spot). Women winnowed
the seeds and made seed cake back at camp, collecting the firewood in the
late afternoon, sometimes carrying 50-60 pound bundles on their heads.

Men could use their power of tabu to their own advantage at times.
Roth, the Northern Protector of Aborigines in the early part of this century,
reported that certain foods were forbidden to any woman, young or old and
that whenever a particular food was scarce, the old men could institute a
ban for his wives over any food which they wanted to reserve for themselves.
When pregnant, a woman also had the limits of her menu lessened. A female
could sometimes declare a tabu, but only in a male's interest - for example,
a wife declaring a tabu on a certain food to ensure her husband, or son,
partook of it.\(^{53}\) A woman had no marriage freedom; she was bestowed.
Promised to a certain husband at birth, or before birth, a woman generally went to live with her husband at about twelve years of age and began having intercourse with him on reaching puberty. The first child usually came when she was about sixteen. Roth observed that at Torilla and Pine Mountain, when the time for the marriage consummation came, the woman was not told, but was "captured" by the male while she was out working. At Pennefather and Proserpine Rivers, a girl during her first three menstrual periods underwent the ceremony of being buried from the waist down all day for five days — without being able to scratch herself or eat anything except one sort of yam. Only her mother and sister could be with her.

This lack of marital freedom reduced women to the level of chattels. Exchange of wives was a frequent communal action, whether wives were willing or not. Such exchanges took place before a revenge expedition, to show the unity and friendship of the members. When a party was about to attack another tribe, if that tribe did not want to be attacked, it sent out its women; and if the attackers were prepared to settle the dispute without fighting, had sex with the women. If not, they sent them back untouched. Any final making of peace always included a temporary exchange of wives to show friendship; and at times of great excitement in the male ceremonies, the men went aside and had intercourse with the women. A visitor to an area was usually given the loan of a wife in return for some gift. This was a custom that the white man did not understand.

The woman, therefore, was very much something to be used; though that is not to say that no affections existed in Aboriginal relations. Men could have as many wives as they wanted, though it was rare to find one with more than four; and a widow automatically became the property of her late husband's brother, to dispose of as he wished. Divorce was permitted to a male, but not to a female and it was common for a man to beat his wife. The woman however, had the universal feminine weapon of her tongue, and her digging-stick was the Aboriginal equivalent of Western woman's rolling pin. A woman could always appeal to her male relations if she was beaten too often. They might kill the tyrannical spouse, or enable her to leave her husband and retire to the women's camp. The women's camp was the community refuge for all unattached women, where widows too old for marriage went, as did pregnant and menstruating women (men feared the
magic power of a woman's blood). It symbolized the apartness of woman, her sexual inferiority.

Aboriginal woman, therefore, like white woman, shared the common fate: submission to the demands of a society which was male run and gave her no option but that of the wifely stereotype. In the case of the whites the reasons for this are evident. North Queensland was a frontier society, where masculine values that made up "the Australian Legend" were to the fore. It had to be a rough and ready society, as life and death were often the stakes. But women, who were so frequently there, risking everything in these stakes, because of the inevitable biological and economic role separations a frontier society imposes, hardly left a mark on the fabric of the era, except via home influence on their menfolk.

Moreover, North Queensland was colonial in its make-up till quite late and its role therefore was very much producing raw materials, with little industrialization or urbanization. Towns in the area were not true cities and certainly did not produce an urban intelligensia, a class which questions the mores and assumptions of a society, a class to which women of ideas and originality could gravitate.

The very pertinent fact of the timing of North Queensland settlement also must be remembered. The decades from 1860 to 1900 were years of High Victorianism, with strong social and moral pressures on women to conform to a submissive, wifely model that the rotund Windsor widow herself embodied. It was a period when non-domestic and childless women were widely regarded as a danger to social purity and national stability; and it was this self-view which women took to Queensland with them and which the frontier environment nourished and expanded.

And distance. Distance shaped Australian history in more ways than Geoffrey Blainey realized. Distance between outback women was certainly one factor in their powerlessness as a group. There was no means of achieving any sort of group consciousness or a shared awareness of common problems.

Many people do not see the point of Women's Studies. But if history, among its other uses, is the study of developing cultures and societies, then the very basic element in this is an understanding of the male-female nexus that makes up the foundation of this society. To reach such an
understanding, it is necessary to forage behind the male-oriented, male-written history books and to reach a truly social history. We must see society as an organism: not just women, but men and women in their whole contemporary relationship. If we lack this utterly fundamental comprehension then we cannot even begin to understand our own age. Studies beginning with, or centring on, women are thus more challenging and complex explorations. They are certainly a more accurate guide to social development and to a "what it was like to be there" approach to an era than the kind of history which merely records battles, treaties and political feuds.

Perhaps John Stuart Mill's words might be the gauge of North Queensland's progress - "The elevation or debasement of women is the surest and most correct measure of the civilization of a people or an age." How far, in fact, have we moved from the rude days of our colonial past?

REFERENCES

4. C.W.A., p. 84.
7. C.W.A., p. 76; J. Devanney, op.cit., p. 28.
8. C.W.A., passim.
12. J. Devanney, Sugar Heaven, (Sydney, 1936), pp. 9, 14, 40.


35. *Port Denison Times*, 26 October 1901.


41. Townsville Herald, 28 August 1886.
45. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 10 August 1901, 12 October 1901.
46. Mackay Mercury, 22 December 1898.
47. R. Gray, op.cit., p. 255.
48. Mackay Mercury, 26 June 1911, 4 July 1911.
50. C. Eden, op.cit., p. 47.
53. W. Roth, North Queensland Ethnography, Bulletin No. 11, Miscellaneous Papers (1897?), p. 76.
54. W. Roth, Marriage Ceremonies, Bulletin No. 7 (1897?), p. 7.
WHIPS AND RUM SWIZZLES

Mr. C.R. Moore

By the title of this lecture: "Whips and Rum Swizzles" I intend to capture and caricature the two major aspects of life on a nineteenth century sugar plantation. Or at least the general conception of the life styles on sugar plantations: the leisurely lives of the plantation owners and their families; and the hard down-trodden existence of their coloured labour force: the Melanesian people "black birded" (for want of a better description) from their Island homes in the Solomons and the New Hebrides.

This is the popular conception of plantation life, and by tracing through the day to day existences of Europeans, Pacific Islanders and Asiatic labourers on the plantations, I hope to be able to draw some conclusion as to the validity of the "Whips and Rum Swizzles" conception of North Queensland's past.

Before delving into the past, there is a very valid comment to be made on the formation in late 1974 of the Australian South Sea Islanders United Council, the first general meeting of which was held in Mackay in May 1975. Today, over 10,000 full and part blood descendants of the original "Kanakas" - the South Sea or Pacific Islanders - live in Queensland and Northern N.S.W.; mainly still in the sugar growing coastal towns that first gave employment to their fore-bearers when they were brought, some forcibly, some willingly, to work in the sugar fields.

Even though the intention of the 1901 Commonwealth legislation was to deport all of the Islanders, many managed to gain exemption;

1. The aged and infirmed.
2. Those who had married into other races or other island groups, thus making their return to their home Island rather dangerous.
3. Holders of free hold land, (13 in all).
4. Those who had lived in Australia for over 20 years.
5. Others managed to prove that they would be in physical danger if they returned to their home Islands.
6. Some just headed for the hills and the bush and stayed there until all the fuss had died down.

By 1901, there were 9,324 Islanders in Queensland, but only about one-third of this number were recent recruits, as the numbers taking advantage of the pre-paid return passage had declined over the last two years.
decades. Petitions to the King (1902) and to the Governor General (1903) and the formation of a Pacific Islanders Association (1904) by the more articulate Islanders, were to no avail.

The 3,000 still indentured in 1901 were easy to return home, and in all 4,269 other Islanders were repatriated under the 1901 Act. On 31 July 1908, the Offices of the Pacific Islands Branch of the Queensland Immigration Department were closed: the deportation was officially complete. Figures for 1909 show that 1,654 Islanders had been granted exemption and were still in Australia. An unknown number, probably not much more than 100 were hiding in the hills.

Today their 10,000 descendants, as a non-indigenous black community, are beginning to negotiate their contemporary position with the Australian government in relation to the special rights afforded the members of the indigenous (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands) black community. They form an accepted part of the coastal sugar towns, though in many ways they are an underprivileged group in Australia.

The descendants of the plantation owners are a harder group to trace, mainly because of the chameleon quality of their white skins in a white Australia. But given their better education, social standing and economic position, they were a more mobile community than their labourers. The majority of the planters came to North Queensland in the 1860s and 1870s hoping to make their fortunes, and left when the plantations gave way to the small yeoman farmers and Central Mills of the twentieth century.

Some names remain prominent in Queensland, such as the Drysdales' of "Pioneer" on the Burdekin or the Denmans' of "Etowrie" at Mackay. It is rare for a planter's family to have stayed in one area for more than one or two generations. In most cases the planters subdivided their land for small farmers in the 1880s. But few stayed to share the adequate but comparatively small-time rewards of small scale farming.

Too few of the plantation owners got out on top of the boom of the 1880s. John Spiller's case was rare. He sold two of his three plantations for c95,000 in the 1880s, after 16 years as a plantation owner. Many more went bankrupt, or had to give way to companies with the finance to meet the expenses of the scientific and technological advances necessary for sugar production in the second half of the nineteenth century.
Some, like M.H. Black went into politics and later with one of his sons, went to the Western Australian goldfields in the 1890s - one of the new Australian frontiers. Many of the more financial and aristocratic returned to the antipodes: to England and to the lifestyle they had left behind to adventure on the plantation frontier. Many of their children became the professional and business people of North Queensland, and even today in North Mackay, a Baronet lives, minus his title, deep in suburban anonymity. The Europeans employed around the mills, as managers, sugar boilers and mill hands, often became the farmers of the central mill period, and today these employees' descendants rather than the planters, are the major families of the sugar areas.

The 1860's then, saw the beginnings of the plantation society on the Queensland coast: an aristocratic plantocracy to rival the squatters of the inland, but never to rival that of the Southern States of America or the West Indies.

1883 was the peak year of the boom, and the late 1880s saw a doldrum caused by 1885 anti-kanaka legislation which refused the entry of recruits after 1890, and the floundering of the 1885 Central Mill legislation that was intended to save the industry. The 1890s saw a revival, and 1892 brought the "Griffith Manifesto" when the Premier Sir Samuel Walter Griffith explained his change of heart in extending the recruiting period for Island labourers. And in 1893 the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, (a re-vamping of the 1885 Central Mill legislation), stabilized the future for sugar as a viable small farmers' crop.

In 1901 the Commonwealth government and its White Australia policy began the exclusion of the majority of the Islanders, to be complete by 1907-08. And in the Mackay region at least, 1901 was also the first year that Central mill production outdid that of the plantations and signified their decline, though some lingered, remnants of the past, until the 1920s.

With this 40 year period in mind, I intend to examine plantation society from Whips to Rum Swizzles. From the point of view of the plantation labourer, South Sea Islander, Coolie, Japanese, Javanese, Singhalese were their lives:
C.R. MOORE

- all hard work for cruel relentless masters?
- were the hours long?
- were they ill fed and maltreated?

From the perspective of the plantation owners:
- was this all rum swizzles consumed on the shady verandahs of their palatial residences?

This is the general question I intend to answer.

The initial 1864 Sugar and Coffee Regulations specified a development ten miles from the coast or equidistant from navigable water ways. So the plantations were to be found on the river flats and in the rich alluvial soil around the rivers and creeks. One Irish author in the turgid literary style of the 1890s described this idyllic plantation scene:

The roads outside the municipal boundary were prairie tracks to a large extent, but fairly good for traffic, and were bounded by hedgerows of rantan with a pretty flower, giving, with the bell-shaped hibiscus of blood-red bloom, the brightest of coloured borders to the yellow tints of the ripening fields of sugar cane on each hand. Now and again we got charming vistas of plantation scenery; houses perched on pretty knolls, groves of coconut palm trees spreading their graceful boughs and grateful foliage over the roadways, as if fanning the delicious air with their feathery fronds, while birds with the brightest plumage flew from field to field.

Miles upon miles of cane, in all stages of growth, from the dark green of the young plant to the golden hue of the ripened stalk, lay to the right and left as we wended our way over the luscious plain, with Kanakas moving about at work and filling in with a human detail...a landscape picture of the richest hues.¹

The plantation owners and managers were mostly wealthy well-educated English and Scots: minor aristocracy, middle gentry and middle bourgeoisie: the third sons of country squires who could hope for no future in England: the British middle class and merchant class, and some, as I was told, who came to Australia "for the good of their health and their Country". Native born Australians were a minority among the plantation owners.

Plantation owners like John Ewen Davidson of 'Branscombe', Maurice Hume Black M.L.A., of 'the Cedars' at Mackay, Drysdale and Brandon on the Burdekin, and the Youngs at Kalamia. Mackay the main plantation centre was often nicknamed "Sugaropolis" or the "Aristocratic corner of Queensland".

122
Usually colonial society lacked any aristocracy. Mackay had them with a vengeance. Sir John McCarthy (Bart.), Sir John Bennet Lawes (Bart.), (a famous English experimental agriculturist and owner of Farleigh and Foulden plantations) Reginald Pole-Carew (later General Sir Reginald), and a nephew of Lord Amhurst of Hackney. Perhaps most famous of all was Henry Finch-Hatton, (13th Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham), who had property in the Pioneer valley and was often visited by his aristocratic friends and relations. Many others lacked the actual titles but not the aristocratic inclinations, being related to country squires, and high government officials at home and in other colonies, or related to the aristocracy through their wives.

Many of the plantation owners and managers (I say managers, because if we examined the accounts closely enough, often family money or funds from more than one source were used) had influential family, friends and business associates who were in, or had connections in, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. These men were quite capable of lobbying in England; going over the head of the Queensland government. This was especially so over the issue of Separation and the proposed use of Coolie labour. These men and their wives, created the social elite of the towns and maintained high standards that would grace any Victorian drawing room. In the Planters' Associations, the town councils, the School of Arts and as Queensland Parliamentary representatives, they dominated life in the sugar towns.

Plantation housing was of three types, for the three classes of society one found there. While the plantation houses never mimicked the Grecian pillars of the American south, they were usually quite substantial houses built of wood, of one or two storeys, with wide verandahs on all sides, hung with creepers and vines. The mill technical staff and overseers lived in less pretentious cottages, which were still comfortable by anybody's standards. The Kanaka quarters were usually some distance from the main house, and consisted of wooden barracks for the single men. Many preferred to build their own huts: grass humpies made of cane tops and tree trunks. Married couples usually had separate huts from the rest of the men.

My model of a typical plantation is the Cedars owned by Maurice Hume Black. Consisting of 2156 acres, but with only about 300 acres
cultivated, it was 7 miles from Mackay. The land was rich hilly scrub land, most of which was still covered in the original vegetation. Mr. and Mrs. Black had 7 children and the family came from England (but initially from Scotland), and was well endowed with political and family connections. Black was later to become M.L.A. for Mackay (1881-93), and one of Queensland's representatives in London in the Agent Generals Office. Two other brothers lived in Mackay. One owned a newspaper, the *Mackay Standard* (established 1877), and the other owned a general store and an early coffee plantation.

The house was situated on a slight rise and was approached by a long drive through a big set of entrance gates. All on one level, and made of wood, it had the usual verandahs kept cool by vines creeping up the sides of the house. It consisted of eight bedrooms and maids' quarters at the rear. The ornamental gardens were full of fruit trees, and the verandahs were the centre of the house's leisure activities, comfortably furnished with canvas and cane chairs, as well as the conventional straight backed wooden variety.

Most of the furniture was locally made, as the Blacks had come from South Australia, rather than directly from England, making transport difficult. But a solid dining room centre piece, like the oak sideboard with a marbel top, provided a touch of England to the colonial surroundings. Silver serving platters and fine china and cutlery helped add to the solid English middle class surroundings. The kitchen, typical of the period, was at the back of the house, joined by a short passage, as were the maids rooms and staff dining room.

The staff consisted of Australian born and immigrant girls. Usually at least one maid, and a seamstress-laundress was needed to help run the home. Domestic staff were not very skilled, nor were they keen to be so far out of the towns where they might find the prospective husbands they sought.

In those pre-motor car days, one or two seater buggies and sulkies were all the rage; indeed a necessity. It was rare to see a carriage, but the wealthy planters often possessed 4 and 6 horse carriages for their wives to use on the bumpy dusty road to town. The men usually rode their horses, and the younger women preferred side-saddle to the buggies and sulkies.
The planter's children were usually educated at home, though some were sent as far as Adelaide or Melbourne to attend a decent school. Before development of a state school system in the early 1870s, some private tuition was available in towns. The girl's education was oriented more towards sewing, painting, music and singing than the 'masculine' arts of arithmetic and science.

Entertainment was on the whole home made. All plantation houses had pianos, most had tennis courts and some had billiard tables. The girls were often as proficient at billiards as were their brothers. Tennis, croquet, cricket, riding, horse racing, shooting, boating and picnics provided the bulk of the outdoor entertainment. Indoors, cards, musical evenings with small orchestras including pianos and cellos, and singing and dancing (properly chaperoned of course) helped fill in the evenings. Fancy work, sewing and reading, (and I suppose drinking rum swizzles made from the local plantation rum) kept the evenings occupied.

If only they had known at the time residents of Marian plantation in 1883 could have thrilled to the voice of Helen Porter Armstrong, the mill manager's wife, later to achieve world renown as Dame Nellie Melba. But the 23 year old Nellie was fond neither of her husband nor of the climate and soon afterwards made a hasty exit to the south.

Children's games seem to have varied little in a century. Rounders, skipping (though made more difficult by a full length skirt) and pony riding seem to have featured in the childhood of a now 95 year old niece of Maurice Hume Black when she visited her cousins at the Cedars in the mid 1880s.

In the towns, the School of Arts, the race meetings, Balls, recitals, the Annual Agricultural Show, and private visits were the main events that would bring the planters into the hurly burly of the town society. Of course, the young men were careful to avoid the ever growing China Towns and their seedy establishments: at least while their fathers were in town. One 'usually reliable source of information' (as today's media would phrase such a delicate point), told me that in the 1890s, one of the highlights of exhibition dancing was to see Lord Yarmouth, later to be the 7th Marquess of Hertford, then a dashing young beau about town and well-known poultry

125
farmer of North Mackay, doing the Butterfly Dance in fancy coloured costume in front of the lime lights. Truly a once in a lifetime experience!

In the 1880s, Harold, brother of Henry Finch-Hatton, described the comfortable life of a sugar planter when after a day's hard work he would return home to "recline in a shady verandah with a pipe and a novel, and drink rum-swizzles". Clothes, someone once said, maketh the man. If this is so, then the voluminous skirts and crinolones of the women and the starched whites of the men typified the plantations. And the two "suits" (as they were described) given to each Islander - in reality a shapeless shirt and pair of trousers, created for modesty rather than for their beauty of design, typified the "unironed" side of plantation life.

A final quotation on plantation life, again from that arbiter of good taste, Hon. Harold Finch-Hatton:

The fashion of wearing no coat is peculiar to Mackay, and has been adopted by the planters, who consider themselves the elite of the place. At a dinner party on one of the plantations it is a most curious sight to see all the ladies, en grande tenure dressed in the latest fashion, and the gentlemen sitting down with no coat or waist coat and their arms bare to the elbow. Though disparaging, Finch-Hatton does admit that climatically this seems quite sensible; but should we really trust the opinion of a man, aristocrat or not, who also says of a fellow passenger on the ship on the way to Australia:

I cannot help thinking that a man who wears knickerbockers on board ship in the tropics, must be capable of committing almost any crime.

So much for the Plantation owners and their society, but what of the Islanders that have so far flitted in and out of our canefield saga. Perhaps a word from Michael Davitt, a nineteenth century Irish politician:

The Kanakas are very intelligent-looking, both men and women. The men, as a rule, are of moderate stature, averaging 5'6" or 7", but well proportioned and strong. The faces are in no way repulsive. They suggest potential passions, however, of a bad kind if provoked into activity. The heads are well formed, and are not like negro heads except in colour, the forehead does not slope inwards. It forms a favourable intellectual comparison with the heads of land labourers among European races.

Their work hours were from 6.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. Monday to half Saturday in Summer, and starting an hour later in Winter. One hour was
allowed for "Ki-Ki", the midday meal, and two "Smoke-Oh" breaks were also taken. The women were expected to work alongside the men, hoeing and cutting the cane. The midday food supply was brought out to the fields in drays, and food like potatoes was sometimes just tipped onto the ground. Often as not black treacle was used in their tea instead of sugar, but this was apparently well liked by the Islanders. The food supplied was adequate in quantity but of the wrong type. Salted beef, English potatoes and tea is okay for European workers, but sweet potato, taro, yams and tropical fruit and fish is the traditional food in the Pacific Islands, and much better suited to their digestion. Michael Davitt commented:

Feeding canaries on beef would also be generous, but scarcely calculated to make them sing and live long. Food was just one area where the Europeans failed to understand the different needs of the Islanders' different culture.

Medicine for black and white alike was rather primitive in frontier settlements. One visitor to a plantation town in the 1860s claimed that the easiest way to find the town doctor was to look in the gutters in front of the hotels. In 1884, the Pacific Islanders Hospital in Mackay was ordered temporarily closed. A letter to the paper described

The painfully disgusting, heartrending state of affairs at that institution... The stench from these poor creatures, unable to move or help themselves was awful... there was no system, no discipline, nobody knew anything; boys and women all huddled up together.

The planters and local officials did a marvellous cover up job, but when the local Municipal Inspector of Nuisances goes as far as threatening to summons a hospital for creating a public nuisance, something is likely to be wrong. The new doctor appointed lasted exactly 11 days before resigning in disgust and backed up the earlier allegations. He reported one case of gangrene of the mouth, which had been classified by the previous doctor as dysentery.

These were extreme cases. But more than showing up nineteenth century medicine, where a good dose of caster oil did for most occasions, it does reveal a disregard for the welfare of the plantation labour force. Many common European ailments, such as influenza or chicken pox could be quite devastating to an Islander lacking natural immunity. The colder climate
and the change in food, coupled with the solid working hours obviously took
their toll, and the mortality rate varied between 50 - 100 in a 1,000. In
the 1870s, approximately 9% of the Kanakas died every year. The equivalent
death rate for whites between 15 and 35 years, was only 5.6 per 1,000.

Often when the Islanders were put into hospital, they seemed to pine
and exhibit a lack of will to recover, perhaps because of alienation and
despair in separation from their fellow tribesmen. But it would be
interesting to know just what proportion of the deaths were caused by pouri-
pouri and sorcery, rather than an unexplainable lack of will to recover.
Over the general health and mortality conditions, strong censure must be
applied to the planters and the Queensland government.

Accommodation varied from plantation to plantation, and its type
depended on one's status as single or married. On Townsvale, Robert Towns'
plantation, the original living quarters consisted of a large building,
sixty feet by forty feet, divided into two rooms, built of weather board,
covered with grass, and surrounded by a broad verandah. There were no
windows, only one door and ventilation holes close to the roof. The bunks
were made large enough for two and had thick sacking as matresses. Towns
later had separate huts built for the men from different Islands.

This was fairly typical of the accommodation provided, and it was
often sadly in need of sweeping out and whitewashing. One similar report
three decades later, went as far as to say that the quarters "resembled, as
a rule, a fairly clean stable for a horse or donkey".

Considered with less favour by the Government were the grass humpies
that the men preferred to build for themselves, corresponding more or less
with their huts in the islands. These huts were 12' to 15' long, 6' to 8'
wide and 4' to 5' high, thatched with bladey grass or cane trash, with
quite waterproof roofs of a 2" to 3" thickness. These huts were fire traps,
and the men usually kept their valuable possessions in the barracks while
they slept for preference in the huts. Commentators seemed perplexed by
their obvious preference for these humpies, and Sir Ralph Gore, a Polynesian
Inspector, even suggested the preference was partly from "a natural love of
dirt". Though the men were quite happy, the huts were probably partly
responsible for the high disease rate, and the white authorities continued
to discourage them. We must also view this accommodation in the light of
Pioneer Plantation House on the Burdekin River
Early Agricultural Settler's House, Upper Burdekin, in the late 1860s. (Daintree Collection)

Pacific Islanders in Queensland: A typical family home, early 1900s. (Fanny Toga and family, Tweed Heads).
WHIPS AND RUM SWIZZLES

the standards of the time. Many early settlers' houses had dirt floors, and early plantation houses in the 1860s - 1870s often had thatched roofs, as did the Church of England church in Mackay up until a much later date.

I would like to revert for a while to the arrival of the recruits in Queensland. Terrible word pictures were painted by those wishing to damn the system:

naked, emaciated from sea-sickness or disease, their bodies covered with scars or festering ulcers, abject terror in their faces, looking wildly around as if seeking escape.7

Or this missionary's version, 1870 style, of the initial experience of an Islander on a plantation:

Toomburra could not manage to use a hoe at all. The other new chums got on badly enough, but he did not seem to be able to make the thing work any how. The overseer was convinced that he was scheming, and, as a warning, sharply cracked his whip so near Toomburra's ear that he staggered and fell over a clod of earth; whereupon the overseer rushed forward and gave the prostrate Kanaka a savage kick in the ribs. In an instant a dozen islanders made for the cowardly man, with uplifted hoes. But when he drew his revolver they sullenly went back to their work.8

The intended picture is clear. The poor Kanaka forced into subservience by the cruel whip wielding, gun toting overseer.

But compare the last quotations with this light hearted picture of the Islander's life in the fields. The answer obviously lies somewhere in between, and varies from master to master and improved in the later decades of the nineteenth century.

Not like tired labourers, but rather as frolicsome urchins school-released, do the gangs make for their huts.

Some have long reeds with which they practise throwing the spear, others are sky-larking, all are talking or shouting, with the exception of a few musical enthusiasts who stride along to the strumming of their jews-harps or reed mouth organs.

A gentleman from the Solomon Islands, perhaps, bringing up the rear; with a small cloth around his waist, a black clay pipe stuck in the lobe of one ear, a round tin matchbox in the other, and a red hibiscus flower in his hair...9

After the evening meal musical entertainment was provided around the fire with reed mouth-organs, jews harps and concertinas. Singing in their
own Island's dialect and dancing to their music, the strange cacophony of which upset many a finely trained European musical ear, telling stories of their ancestors, speaking 'Pidgin' English to men from different Islands.

In an 1898 assessment of their leisure time talents one Irishman had this to say:

Kanakas are fond of melody, and learn to play accordions and other of the simpler instruments of music. I noticed, both at Mackay and Maryborough, rude attempts at "art" on the doors and walls of their residences. Figures of men and animals - none of an obscene kind - are made with chalk or pencil on wooden rails and doors, and show evidence of some natural artistic taste.10

Another 1890s source described the Saturday half-holiday when the Islander dons those cherished garments stowed away in his box, and, accompanied by his Mary, also gorgeously attired, proceeds to "walkabout". He visits his friends, and if there is a town within reasonable distance it will be thronged by a law-abiding dusky crowd on Saturday night. The stores are never ending sources of pleasure...11

The author quite omits to mention the cheap junk sold to Islanders: trinkets and useless baubles or the cheating of the unscrupulous Europeans who kept the "Kanaka" stores, and the shady merchants of China Town selling sly grog at exorbitant prices.

Hunting was also a favourite pastime, and the Islanders were often proud possessors of decrepit rusty old shotguns. On record is the case of one Solomon Islander who thought the harder he pulled the trigger, the further the shot would go. No so odd a thought when we consider his experience with bow and arrow.

Perhaps a feast would be arranged on one of the plantations, and Islanders would gather from miles around with a pig and fowls as centre pieces for the meal. One not so dainty, but apparently tasty method of pig killing was to tie up the animals snout, and allow it to run around until it dropped from suffocation, its blood vessels distended or burst from the strain.

All plantation areas had missionary contact, particularly from the Presbyterians and Church of England, with missions in the main towns like Bundaberg, Maryborough, Mackay and on the Burdekin. The Presbyterian Minister at Walkerston visited the district plantations in rotation, two
Boating, planter-style: the Hon. Henry J. Finch-Hatton (later the Earl of Winchelsea and Nottingham) with Basil Burke. Mount Spencer, Mackay 1883. (H.L. Roth, *The Discovery and Settlement of Mackay* (Halifax, 1908)).

Boating, Islander-style: Jack Mumius and Dick Satavi on the Pioneer River, Mackay.
Dressed for Town: An Islander Woman in Mackay

Two generations: a Solomon Islander, Sam Willie, Sr, with two young Australian relatives, Sam Willie, Jr, and Eric Willie.
WHIPS AND RUM SWIZZLES

every Sunday, and held a night school four evenings per week, teaching the Islanders reading, writing, arithmetic, singing and religious instruction. The Islanders also assembled on the plantations to conduct their own services when the Minister was absent. The baptism rate was high, (approximately 150 per year in Bundaberg), and 75% of the Islanders attended church or religious instruction: some at their own wish as many had come under the influence of the missionaries on the Islands. But on other occasions religion was compulsory, in the quest to civilize the 'dumb savage'. The planters subscribed heavily to keep the missions going, and their wives also helped to teach religion to the Islanders, some a little misguidedly it seems, as in the story of one planter's wife who sold "Tickets to Heaven" to the Islanders in her control.

Of interest is this rendition of the Ten Commandments into Pidgin English:–

1. Man take one fellow God; no more.
2. Man like him God first time, every thing else behind.
3. Man no swear.
4. Man keep Sunday good fellow day belong big fellow master.
5. Man be good fellow longa father mother belonga him.
6. Man no kill.
7. Man no take him Mary belong another fellow man.
8. Man no steal.
9. Man no tell lie about another fellow man.
10. Spose man see good fellow something belong another fellow man, he no want him all the time.\(^{12}\)

But for all the work of the Missionaries, (and even today a century later), the Island people still retained a great amount of their indigenous pre-Christian beliefs:

Belief in Totemic symbols;
Control of the community by the elders and their appointed pouri-pouri men;
Belief in garden magic and love and other white (i.e. beneficent) magic.

I cannot understress the vast importance of these indigenous beliefs, especially those based around the Tarunga huts, the sacred huts where the male elders made the decisions for the community. Nor should we underestimate Mansang or Mana: the mysterious magical force that provided
the base for much of this control. Much more research is needed to fully explore aspects of indigenous Islander beliefs, but much of the previous research is obviously inadequate.

It is interesting to consider the criminal offences that the Islanders managed to be convicted for. In Queensland from 1873 to 1883, nine Melanesians were convicted of capital offences, 36 of felonies. In the same period 41 Melanesians were convicted and 15 committed to prison. This compares favourably with the crime and convictions of the Malays and Singhalese, both much smaller proportions of the population.

A more detailed survey was completed for the years 1890 to 1900. Islanders were brought to Justice for crimes in the same proportion as the white community: the difference was in the type of crime. Islanders showed their criminal talents best in aggravated, indecent and common assault and murder. None kept Houses of ill fame, were forgers, embezzlers or insolvents. If we can rely on these statistics, Melanesian crimes centered around physical offences, while those of the whites involved literacy and its abuse, and trickery over money. The reasons for this physical violence are many.

On plantations, as a reaction to the violence of an overseer, it was common for one Islander to go to the defence of another and end up on an assault charge. Inter-tribal skirmishes and retaliatory raids were common on the plantations, and pitched battles between 200-300 Solomon and New Hebridean Islanders are recorded. Drunkenness in the towns also led to violence. But government crime statistics are always inadequate. Most of the justice administered in the plantations was rough and ready, and there is no record of this unless the Polynesian Inspector was involved, and was honest in his report. The white man's law worked in favour of the white community.

The number of murders committed by the Islanders is disproportionately high. They did not understand white justice, but only the taking of an 'eye for an eye' and 'a life for a life'. They could never understand imprisonment for causing a death. Their answer to death was simply another death. And we have no way of knowing how many of these were purely personal quarrels; inter-tribal fighting; or death by sorcery.
Previous research conducted with the Islanders has reported an absence of priests and sorcerers among the Melanesians. Traditional religious practices and other customary observances were supposed to have been neglected on the plantations. The picture presented is of the Kanaka as a slightly thick headed Christian, conforming to white laws. Recent research has begun to reveal that plantation society for the Islanders was controlled by the Elders, and in many cases, although the white man thought he kept law and order, it was in reality the Elders who held the real sway over their people.

The original Pacific Islanders claimed various techniques for performing destructive magic. Obviously there is a fine line between sympathy and gullibility when modern day researchers explore the magical beliefs of another culture. But when research finds equivalent practices in Melanesian society back in the Islands, it is not difficult to assume that they brought these abilities and beliefs to Australia with them. The old men claimed the ability to transform themselves into snakes and animal form. They claimed the power of invisibility and the ability to fly through the air and walk through solid walls. These abilities may sound closer to the realms of science fiction to most people today. But even with a healthy amount of sceptism, we must recognize that perhaps some of their indigenous cultural practices are at variance with those of European society.

There are many points I could go on to develop:

1. Racial tension in the cosmopolitan sugar towns where British and European, Solomon, New Hebridean, Indian, Chinese, Singhalese, Japanese and Javanese, all worked together. And the antagonism between the various Island tribes.

2. The role of women in the male dominated plantation society.

3. The truth behind the actual obtaining of the Island labour: the Black-birding on the recruiting ships.

But I think this will suffice to present an adequate picture of plantation life. I leave it to you to pass judgement on the Europeans and their main labour force - the Solomon and New Hebridean Islanders without whom the development of the sugar industry would not have been possible.
REFERENCES


3. Ibid., p. 7.


5. Ibid., p. 275.


11. Blake, H.I., op.cit., p. 82.

Mention of relations between Chinese and Europeans, in the early days, usually calls to mind some instance of goldfields conflict such as Lambing Flat. In Queensland the Palmer River Goldfield is the best known example of Chinese settlement, again a place where no love was lost between the races. It is useful to examine the mining situation in so far as it demonstrates the importance of economic competition in promoting hostility. However, this extreme of antagonism did not necessarily typify all instances of racial contact between Chinese and Europeans.

It is true that distaste for alien races, Chinese in particular, was a theme of the late nineteenth century in Australia. Significant variations on the theme did occur, however, and in order to try and account for this diversity I intend to make a case study of race relations in the area comprising Cairns and a radius of about seventy miles. This district lends itself well to such an investigation as the period of most extensive Chinese settlement coincided with the climax of Australian racism, and the clearly defined variation in geography and economic pursuits from town to town gives rise to a surprising contrast in forms of racial contact within such a small area.

The district was originally settled as a result of an exodus from the Palmer Goldfields by both Europeans and Chinese in the late 1870s and early 1880s. Initially, the Chinese undertook the functions of market gardening and small storekeeping, for which they are usually noted. However by the mid 1880s, they had expanded into the growing of cash crops on the tropical lowlands, producing maize and more importantly bananas. The 1890s and the first years of this century were the heyday of Chinese enterprise on the coast. At that time the Chinese constituted a quarter to a third of population of coastal towns, and the Cairns census district contained the largest concentration of Chinese in Queensland. After the turn of the century, the many problems afflicting the banana industry, combined with the increasing reliance of the area on white-grown sugar, brought about the decline of banana growing both in real terms and in importance. However for more than a decade the prosperity of Cairns and Innisfail was virtually dependent on bananas, as the export of the product attracted shipping and
provided work for many Europeans.

Meanwhile, settlement had expanded during the early 1880s to the tin-mining centre of Herberton and from there to the Barron Valley where Atherton is now situated. The Chinese again were much in evidence. Being excluded from mining on the tinfields, they became more involved in storekeeping and the carrying trade. However in the more fertile Atherton area they soon rose to prominence in agriculture, and the maize industry developed largely as a Chinese concern, reaching its peak of importance about 1912.

Before examining the type of race relations which developed in these areas it is necessary to re-emphasise my previous statement regarding the relative uniformity of opinion on the Chinese throughout Australia during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most people are aware of the type of hysterical attitudes which underlay the anti-Chinese election of 1888 and which led to the institution of the White Australia policy. According to the Sinophobe press the Chinese were racially and culturally inferior, morally destitute, economically dangerous, inherently unhygienic and prone to ghastly diseases. Hostility on these grounds was tinged with fear by the conviction that the yellow hordes were poised to overrun Australia.

In the local environment, extreme doctrinaire views on the Chinese were seldom expressed except during periods of national panic such as 1888. Nevertheless the influence of the Chinese stereotype upon the man in the street is demonstrated by the tendency at the time to seize upon any Chinese activity which seemed to exemplify vice, cunning or unfair economic competition, and to attribute it to the commonly-held characteristics of all Chinese. Being distinguished from the white community by appearance and cultural habits, the Chinese constituted an ideal focus for hostility when the occasion arose. At the most basic level they were often the victim of drunken assaults, and the more refined wrath of editors and aldermen was vented on them over anything from the inadequate fish supply to the low moral tone of the community. By far the most frequently voiced objection to the Chinese, however, was on economic grounds, and this endured long after the palmy days of racial hysteria had passed.
Frequently the Chinese were regarded with amusement and contempt rather than outright hostility, their physical appearance (particularly during the pigtail era) and lifestyle providing the press with unlimited material for satire. The theme which pervades even seemingly harmless digs at the Chinese is the assumption that they are so alien as to be not exactly human. One of the Cairns Post staff, visiting a leper colony, conceived it as a major flash of insight when he realised that the Chinese are "capable of feeling as deeply as we do."

In speaking of various individuals or groups at the time as "pro-Chinese" one should bear in mind the pervasiveness of the attitudes I have just described. Even those noted for their friendly attitudes to the Chinese were products of the age and prone to lapse into familiar racial cliches from time to time. However it can be stated that a significantly greater degree of tolerance was extended to the Chinese by some people than by others, and in the area under study a contrast from region to region is also perceptible. The main distinction in this respect can be made between the tropical coastal areas comprising Cairns, Innisfail and Port Douglas on the one hand and the Tablelands town of Herberton and Atherton on the other. Whereas on the coast the Chinese presence was almost welcomed, on the Tableland it was actively resented.

It seems to have been the coastal area rather than the Tableland which deviated from the norm in its relatively liberal attitude to the Chinese, as Cairns became a byword as the place "where white men take their hats off to Chinamen". Visitors to Cairns at the time noted the apparent lack of ill-feeling between the races and newspapers in other centres gibed at the pro-Chinese reputation of the town. In 1896, following a Chinese celebration attended by the mayor and aldermen of Cairns, the Herberton Advertiser proudly proclaimed that in Herberton the inhabitants do not attend "free Chinese guzzles", nor do they "raise their kadies to the Chow". Cairnsites were painfully aware of their reputation with regard to the Chinese. The newspaper editors of the town lived in dread of events involving inter-racial fraternisation being brought to the notice of the Sydney Bulletin. After the social event mentioned previously, the editor of the Cairns Argus speculated that "...the horrible misrepresentation will doubtless be marked and sent to the Worker which means nothing, and
to the Sydney Bulletin which means a great deal. And then the old gag about Cairns men taking their hats off to Chinamen will be trotted out again and Scribes and Pharises of the Townsville Star order of architecture will bring out a good old stock article." It is clear that to be regarded as pro-Chinese at the time was a source of acute embarrassment. Only very rarely was an effort made to defend the reputation of Cairns by saying a word in favour of the Chinese. As a rule it was either fiercely asserted that the inhabitants of Cairns were Sinophobes at heart or reluctantly admitted that economic factors forced them to swallow their pride where the Chinese were concerned.

The comments of contemporary newspapers on race relations in the various towns are substantiated by an examination of the degree and type of anti-Chinese action taken by Europeans in these communities. The formation of anti-Chinese Leagues was not an uncommon activity during the late nineteenth century and in 1886 John Potts, an anti-Chinese crusader, visited the Cairns area with the object of promoting such organisations. Significantly, he was greeted with more enthusiasm in Herberton than in Cairns or Port Douglas. Potts himself, speaking in Herberton, said he was glad to find such unanimity of opinion on the Chinese there. While in Cairns he had to put up with a good deal of opposition. A correspondent from Port Douglas to the Wild River Times commented "Mr. Potts has been and gone. Diverse opinions exist here anent the Chinese, but I believe a League will be formed. Your mining district is very different from this agricultural district as regards Chinese." Particularly apparent is the contrast in attitudes between the leading citizens in Cairns and Herberton. A large number of Herberton identities were present at Potts meeting, while in Cairns the Mayor made a deliberate attempt to prevent him speaking at all and no town dignatories attended. This does not rule out the possibility of anti-Chinese feeling amongst the rank and file of Cairns citizens, but it establishes the existence of an influential group who were tolerant towards them. In subsequent years, there was a continuation of this tendency for organisations with professed anti-Chinese aims to spring up on the Tablelands, while in Cairns apathy on the issue prevailed.

The activities of the ordinary civic organisations on the Tableland also display an anti-Chinese bias not found to the same extent in Cairns.
For instance, the Herberton Agricultural, Mining and Pastoral Association banned Chinese from exhibiting in the annual show: in Cairns several Chinese merchants and farmers were regular exhibitors. The Herberton Chamber of Commerce was at the vanguard of a concerted movement by the townspeople to have the Chinese excluded from the Russell River Goldfield in 1890, and in this capacity was described as "a good anti-Chinese League". The Cairns Chamber of Commerce expressed a token objection to their presence on the field, only after being reprimanded for its apathy by the laborite Cairns Post. A popular outcry on the issue was conspicuous by its absence. On other occasions, the Cairns Chamber of Commerce and the Chinese merchants worked hand in glove over issues of mutual concern. The records of the Tinaroo Divisional Board (Herberton), when examined over a number of years, also indicate a greater pre-occupation with Chinese economic competition. The regulation relating to coloured labour on council projects is rigidly observed whereas in Cairns it was somewhat of an embarrassment, particularly with regard to the sanitary contract, and was frequently waived.

In order to account for the greater inclination of the coastal areas to tolerate the Chinese presence, I shall examine in turn Cairns, Herberton and Atherton, pointing out the interplay of economic, social and purely local factors, as they effect the European attitude to the Chinese. My omission to treat Innisfail and the Port Douglas area separately, results firstly from the comparatively sparse documentation of these areas and secondly from their apparent similarity to Cairns in most respects.

CAIRNS

During the late 1880s and 1890s Chinese enterprise was a conspicuous feature of the coastal lowlands. A.J. Draper, a prominent Cairns townsman, speaking in 1912, recalled that twenty years earlier the banana trade had been the lifeblood of the place. So important was the banana industry that wharf labourers were thrown out of work during Chinese New Year when no bananas were being shipped. However workers were not the only beneficiaries of the industry. Practically all the money expended by the Chinese in exporting bananas found its way to Europeans and was thus put into circulation, benefitting the local business community and increasing the prosperity of the area. It is not surprising that the vested interest of the townspeople in presence of the banana industry, caused them to look tolerantly on the Chinese who kept it afloat.
Moreover Chinese banana growers did not compete with European enterprise, in fact a mutually beneficial relationship developed between white farmers and Chinese. Until about 1910 very few Europeans wished to undertake the arduous task of banana growing, but many wanted their land cleared in preparation for other crops. Therefore, most were willing to lease their land to Chinese at a rent of £1 per acre per annum and allow the tenant to cultivate it for several years prior to repossessing it for sugar-growing. This system was not entirely tension-free. Disputes arose about termination of leases or non-payment of rent from time to time, but basically economic co-operation rather than competition prevailed.

The tropical environment and consequent presence of Pacific Island labour also exerted a softening influence on the European attitude to coloured labour and hence to the Chinese. From a psychological point of view, reliance on the Chinese as hewers of wood and drawers of water could be rationalised without excessive loss of morale on the grounds that white men are incapable of hard physical labour in the tropics. Economically, the use of cheap Kanaka labour was seen as a buffer against Chinese agricultural competition, particularly in the sugar industry. This was evidenced by the panic which occurred in cane-growing circles whenever Chinese were found to be attracting Kanakas to their employment. While this combination of circumstances endured, the Chinese were seen as necessary, useful and not dangerous if kept in their place, an ideal environment for racial harmony by the standards of the day.

The prosperity of the banana industry was of more than purely economic importance to Cairns. During this period of intense regional rivalry, when town competed against town for facilities and prestige, Chinese enterprise was a crucial factor in the development of Cairns, the expansion of commerce and the acquisition of transport facilities which might otherwise have been delayed. The pride which Cairnsites displayed in local agricultural development apparently outweighed the humiliation of being dependent upon Chinese.

The ramifications of the Chinese domination of agriculture were also felt in the day to day relations between the races. To the extent that Chinese and Europeans were mutually interested in maintaining the prosperity of the banana industry, they occasionally met to discuss problems, or took
combined action to pressure an unco-operative shipping company or Government authority. Members of the European commercial elite in particular often had close economic ties with their Chinese counterparts. Moreover, given the influence which Chinese merchants wielded over the humbler banana growers, it was in the interest of Europeans who benefitted from the banana industry and associated capital inflow, to take cognizance of them. Since it was this very merchant clique which dominated civic affairs, it is not surprising that a fairly tolerant attitude to the Chinese was taken by those in public life. The Chinese merchants, in turn, being reliant upon Europeans to plead their cause in various economic and other matters, were aware of the necessity of maintaining amicable relations and hence efforts were made to draw favourable attention to the Chinese community.

Public relations activities by the Chinese merchants included addresses to visiting dignitaries, the organisation of displays or parades in aid of European charities, and lavish New Year hospitality. Leading European citizens occasionally appeared at Chinese celebrations in the capacity of guests of honour.

This social intermixture does appear to have added a dimension of personal esteem to the respect in which Chinese merchants were held for their economic importance. The same European businessman and top public officials often acted as referees for Chinese merchants seeking naturalisation around the turn of the century and their testimonials bear evidence of personal acquaintance with the admiration for the Chinese applicant. It is true that, even in Cairns, contacts of a purely social nature were virtually limited to the elite of both races, but by nineteenth century standards even this was exceptional.

HERBERTON

An examination of the situation in Herberton reveals a set of conditions which were in most respects the reverse of those in Cairns. The Chinese in the immediate vicinity were not involved in any agricultural pursuit which brought prosperity to the town and in the tradition of mining areas, were regarded as an unwelcome intrusion. The conviction that Herberton had nothing to gain from the Chinese presence was strengthened by the self-sufficiency of the Chinese community in this area. Whereas in Cairns,
Chinese enterprise caused money to circulate throughout the community, there was no Chinese occupation in Herberton which had this effect. Chinese patronised their own storekeepers, had their own market, employed their own packers. This state of affairs brought no business to the European, and in fact deprived him of it, insofar as Europeans as well as Chinese dealt with Chinese storekeepers. In short, Herberton was characterised by a lack of any community of economic interest between the races, hence other areas of contact remained undeveloped.

The composition of the European population in Herberton also posed a hindrance to friendly relations. The mining interest predominated, and though Herberton did not reach the extremes of Sinophobia found in certain sections of the Charters Towers population, the hypersensitivity of the inhabitants to instances of economic competition reflected its mining mentality. Chinese on the tinfields were excluded from mining and practically every other occupation except market gardening. As the local member commented in 1888:

> There are no Chinamen left on the tinfield at all. A Chinaman is not allowed to turn a windlass, wheel a barrow or drive a cart; the only thing they are allowed to do is cultivate the land.

Even their monopoly of market gardening was resented and the boycotting of Chinese produce frequently advocated.

The fact that hostility to the Chinese in Herberton became officially embodied in various regulations excluding them from certain occupations and activities, can be attributed to the connection of the leading citizens of the town with either mining or commerce, neither occupation having a vested interest in the Chinese presence, but rather the reverse. By way of qualification, it should be noted that a dissenting voice against anti-Chinese proposals was occasionally raised (usually by Dr. Bowett, the local medical practitioner), invariably on the grounds of their usefulness as market gardeners, the speaker usually beginning rather apologetically to the effect, "I don't like them, but..."

The contrasting racial attitudes which prevailed in Herberton and Cairns, particularly during the 1890s, can be attributed to fairly straightforward economic considerations: one town benefitted directly from the presence of the Chinese, the other did not. An investigation of
ATHERTON, however, reveals a rather more complex set of circumstances. Until about 1910 a markedly hostile attitude to the Chinese prevailed in this area. In view of the physical proximity of Atherton to Herberton, the influence of the latter on race relations should not be under-estimated as Herberton was for some time the focus of Tablelands settlement. Paradoxically however, it was the enmity rather than the rapport between the towns which reinforced anti-Chinese sentiment in the Barron Valley. In order to appreciate this purely local factor, however, it is necessary to trace the type of settlement which occurred in the Atherton district and the factors arising from this which predisposed the Europeans to ill-feeling against the Chinese.

In some respects the agricultural development here was reminiscent of Cairns, in so far as the Chinese were responsible for a great deal of land clearing, leasing uncleared land on the same basis as those on the coast. This, combined with their domination of the maize industry, made them an important factor in the economic growth of the area. It might be imagined that these circumstances would result in racial toleration, but other factors intervened to jaundice the European view of the Chinese.

Despite being less than 50 miles from Cairns as the crow flies, Atherton has a subtropical rather than a tropical climate and the pioneers of the area, conscious of this fact, set about establishing a community of sturdy independent white farmers, uncorrupted by dependence on coloured labour. This "vision splendid" was enhanced by a strongly held conviction that the Tablelands combined the best in climate and fertility of any region in Australia. However agriculture did not run smoothly for the Europeans. The forests were difficult to clear and Chinese were hired for this purpose: maize was arduous to grow on newly cleared ground and the price for the grain often low. Hence farmers began leasing to Chinese who cultivated successfully with the hoe, and who were satisfied with a lower profit margin. Europeans who continued to grow their own corn complained of being undercut on the maize market by the Chinese, blamed other farmers for bringing this about by leasing land to the Chinese, and often proceeded to lease all or part of their own farms to the Chinese, complaining that they had been forced into it. White farmers found themselves competing unsuccessfully with their own tenants, and by the mid 1890s farming was said to be unprofitable for whites.
The economic importance of the Chinese to the Atherton population was not such that any powerful interest group welcomed their presence, as in Cairns. The situation was similar to that in Herberton, in that a large degree of economic self-sufficiency prevailed within the Chinese community. Maize did not require the same amount of European labour or transport as bananas. Again, the Chinese employed their own carriers and, as one disgruntled European packer calculated, £20,000 per annum was thus lost to the white community. Though there is no doubt that the maize industry contributed to the arrival of the railway line in Atherton in 1903, Europeans complained that the entire profits of the industry went to China.

The labour situation provides another contrast with the coast. Not having access to a pool of cheap Pacific Island labour, the white settlers turned their attention to the aborigines and here again a source of conflict with the Chinese arose as the latter were more successful at attracting aborigines to their employment than the whites. The matter came to a head in 1898, when the Inspector Roth visited the district in order to examine the claims of the Barron Valley Farmers Association that the Chinese paid their aboriginal employees in opium. Roth reported, among other things, that anti-Chinese feeling was "rife and rampant throughout the area", but his investigation did not substantiate the claims of the B.V.F.A. There is no doubt that the aborigines were supplied with opium by Chinese, though not necessarily as wages. However, Roth concluded that basically the Chinese were more humane employers. Indeed, the very person responsible for most of the agitation was heard to say "I've shot thirteen or fourteen niggers in this district, and this is all the Government does for me. I can't even get one to work for me when I want one."

As the 1890s progressed, Atherton like Cairns achieved a reputation for being a hotbed of Chinese and the civic pride of the inhabitants became tinged with feelings of persecution. They sensed that the resources of the district were being under-estimated in the south, selectors were failing to flock there, and one reason for this was assumed to be the Chinese presence.

Closer to home, the domination of Atherton by Herberton was identified as an impediment to progress, and during the 1890s the Barron Valley members of the Tinaroo Divisional Board (which represented both
towns) waged a struggle for independence. Yet again the Chinese became an albatross around the Athertonian neck, as requests for extra facilities were greeted by the Herberton members by gibes to the effect that they would only benefit Chinese.

It was probably partly a reaction to the derisive attitude of the Herberton members and partly out of feelings of genuine grievance that the Atherton representatives on the Divisional Board became the most active anti-Chinese campaigners, even criticising the miners of Herberton for being apathetic on the issue. An examination of the activities indulged in by the leading personalities in the anti-Chinese agitation indicates that all were conspicuous in other projects designed to overcome the obstacles which the rest of the world was allegedly placing before the progress of Atherton. It seems, therefore, that anti-Chinese feeling was part of a more general malaise resulting from the failure of individual farmers to prosper and of the district generally to progress at the anticipated rate.

It is difficult to know how much importance to place upon one particular individual who was responsible for a large proportion of the hysterical statements on the Chinese. This person was of a fanatical turn of mind and it is doubtful whether the extremity of his views on the Chinese typified the rest of the community, though his ability as an organiser and demagogue may have caused anti-Chinese sentiment to become more overt. Certainly, he had a dedicated following on the Tinaroo Divisional Board, to which he was returned for a number of years, and if a flight of fantasy will be permitted it is difficult to imagine such a person obtaining much public response in Cairns or Innisfail during the nineties.

The major problem in discussing racial attitudes in the historical context is the impossibility of discovering the views of the "silent majority", and I have probably relied rather heavily on the utterances of vocal and/or influential minorities in discussing the three areas. However the conclusions thus indicated are supported by contemporary observations (mentioned previously) on the attitudes of the communities at large.

In summary, I hope to have demonstrated my view that economic factors were of crucial importance in setting the tone of race relations, the influence of the market place often extending into other areas of racial contact. However, other conditions of a purely local nature may also play
a part in determining the attitude of the dominant group to the Chinese, and for this reason it is instructive to study race relations at a local as well as a state or national level.
ESTABLISHMENT AND EARLY CONFIDENCE

The establishment of Bowen in 1861 provided a base for the pastoral development of North Queensland. All the early explorers who had been in the region had spoken highly of the rich pastoral lands of the North, and with great optimism the new settlers moved into the Kennedy area.

Bowen soon proved to be too distant from many of the settlers and was cut off yearly by the flooding of the Burdekin - closer ports were needed, resulting in the establishment of Townsville and Cardwell.

The initial optimism of the settlers was soon to be dampened by difficulties, unsuitable conditions for sheep, lack of markets for beef (which replaced the sheep), lack of experience by many of the settlers and that hardy perennial - high labour costs. The difficulties compounded themselves and the new settlers contemplated their imminent ruin.

Gold had been the key to the development of Victoria and New South Wales and the citizens of Townsville with great enterprise, and in a bid to save guard their investments in their new town, offered a premium of 1,000 pounds to the finder of payable gold in the Northern Region.

The first gold was discovered at the Star River - it did not prove to be payable, but the Townsville Committee, obviously delighted with even this find, agreed to pay the finder 500 pounds; it was obviously a promising start. Subsequent finds were also small until the discovery at the Cape River where a sizable community of miners established themselves at Capeville to win the alluvial deposits and to sink shallow shafts into the caps of the reefs which provided the alluvial gold. By all accounts the Cape River miners were a disreputable community, however disreputable or not, they had a hearty appetite for beef - the problems of the Cape River graziers were solved - a large and hungry market for their beef was brought to them. Their cattle sold at good prices for meat - and replaced the subsistence market of rendering their cattle into tallow with an associated 'hides' market.

The Curr brothers, Montague and Marmaduke, had established a station at Merri Merriwa where Elphinstone Creek meets the Burdekin. Like the vast majority of their fellow settlers they were also experiencing the hard
D.C. RODERICK

times of the early North Queensland settlement. Montague Curr is accredited with the first find of gold in the Ravenswood area; while mustering in the Elphinstone Creek area he found a 'show' of gold in his pannikin when drinking at the Creek. Thomas Aitken, a stockman on the neighbouring station, Ravenswood, (owned by Forbes and Dalrymple) had also found small deposits of gold in the area, but like the Curr brothers he was interested in land and cattle and subsequently made his way to Townsville to purchase large areas of land adjacent to the new town. (These areas were subsequently to become Aitkenvale).

He took with him to Townsville the small amount of gold he had obtained in the Ravenswood Station area and persuaded three prospectors, Crane, Brooks and Kelly to try their luck in the area. This party on their way to the Burdekin River met Marmaduke Curr on his way to Townsville. Curr advised he knew of likely areas for gold and asked them to wait at his homestead until his return from Townsville. He subsequently took them to a place on Connolly Creek about eight miles from where that creek met the Burdekin.

H.H.C. Hurle was also camped in this area a few hundred yards lower down the creek bank (Mid October 1868). He reports in an address to the Historical Society of Queensland in 1917:

One day, at the end of the month. Brooks appeared at our tent door, his face all smiles, and carrying a miner's prospecting dish, his eyes fixed on the bottom, judging from the expression of his face, it might have been full of minted sovereigns. He had come to let us know, and to show us, about a half ounce of gold which he had got in one dish full of wash-dirt taken from a gully not very far away.

This was afterwards called Tucker Gully, at the head of which was afterwards discovered the Perseverance, Donnybrook, and other gold-bearing quartz reefs.

The Perseverance was the first gold claim to be granted on the new goldfield, to John Slattery and party. The ground was pegged off by Mr. James Gordon, of Townsville, then the nearest police magistrate, who had come, or I may say been fetched to the district for that purpose.

Marmaduke Curr anxious to publicise the new find took some gold, which he had traded for beef and other rations, to Bowen and returned to his property with fifteen diggers following him. Soon the area around Tucker Creek was a prosperous small township subsequently named Middle Camp.
On March 20, 1869 the *Port Denison Times* reports:

We have news from Ravenswood to the 12th instant. At that date there were about 100 people on the ground, all apparently doing well. So far it was all shallow sinking and gully raking. Opinions differ as to the prospect of the place becoming permanent diggings. There were no rations whatever on the ground at this date, but plenty on the road, handy. Fifty six ounces of gold have reached Bowen from Ravenswood. Considerable accessories to the population from Cape River and elsewhere are expected.

The community that developed was a canvas and bark hut town. The diggers moved up and down Connolly Creek to start the camp at Trieste called Lower Camp and subsequently from Sandy Creek to gullies running into Elphinstone Creek to form a town on the present site of Ravenswood called "Top Camp" or "Upper Camp". Buchanan and Jessop gave their names to gullies in this area that were far richer than any of the previous sites. These gullies were the real commencement of the gold field for besides producing a large quantity of gold from surface workings, they bore unmistakable signs of being close to a large reefing district, this giving the early diggers a promise of something better.

A rush took place to this new area and about October 1869 a township was established in the new area. The first mine discovered was the 'General Grant' closely followed by the 'Sunset' and 'Melaneur' and soon after the 'La Perouse'.

The full value of the new reef could not be ascertained until crushing plants were established on the field. The ore was won and placed "on the grass" pending the arrival of adequate milling equipment. Mr. C. Zimmerman of Bowen travelled to the field from Bowen in mid 1869 to assess the demand for crushing machinery and returned to Bowen to float a company that "would yield a handsome profit to the shareholders". He had obtained guarantees in the area that the miners would favour his proposed Ravenswood Quartz Crushing Company with supplies of ore; however his venture failed to materialise for a number of reasons; the promoters required a bonus of 250 pounds worth of scrip in the new company for their act of promotion - this did not please the community, and it was pointed out that the prospectus issued made no mention of any management expenses, or of a margin for contingencies "the well known bugbear of all joint stock companies", nor did it allow for any future opposition - the proposed
stamping mill did not eventuate.

In late 1869 the gold field was in the grip of a drought and alluvial workings were virtually stopped. It was feared that the new township would have to be deserted for a while. Sixty men were engaged in alluvial mining at Lower Camp where their proximity to the Burdekin made conditions a little easier. New reefs were being found at daily intervals and the promise for the future was well established in spite of the current condition — "want of water for alluvial miners and crushing machinery for the reefs".

The first mill arrived on the field on December 29, 1869 and was the property of W.O. Hodgkinson, a colourful character who had been on exploring expeditions, edited the Mackay Mercury and who later became a Member of Parliament and the Minister for Mines. The new mill the 'Lady Marion' was situated at Burnt Point, a site midway between the Upper and Middle Camps and beside Connollys Creek. This site offered the potential to build a dam to supply water for the mill and provide good grazing and timber, all necessary for a successful venture. However the machine did not arrive in good condition — parts were broken in transit and it was not until May 7, 1870 that we read in the Port Denison Times:

Monday, April 18, 1870 — the great event has taken place at last and Monday the 18th instant (Easter Monday) will hence forth be a red letter day in the history of the Ravenswood Gold Field. On the day mentioned the 'Lady Marion' quartz crushing machine started in the presence of a small number of interested spectators actually to crush; but owing to the incompleteness of some batters the public christening was announced to take place on some day next week. Thursday 28th instant I understand being the day appointed for the ceremony.

The first months crushing resulted in 1,083 oz of gold from 150 tons of stone from the principal mines. At Buchanans Gully in December 1869 the following reefs were being worked — The General Grant, Sunrise, Sunset, London, Welcome, Melaneur, Shilmaleer, Overlander and Rose of Denmark with four unnamed reefs being prospected. At the Lower Camps we find the following — Donnybrook, Nil Desperandum, Triests and Perseverance.

The drought eventually broke and the new field now found a new problem to further irritate the miners — "the unusually protracted wet season", communications with the coast were shut off and "owing to the wonderful display of business talent of our store keepers, the field is now entirely bare of supplies of every description."
Storms were also encountered at this time of the year with disastrous results for the tents and temporary buildings and the Port Denison Times correspondent at the Ravenswood Diggings notes the considerable disaster that the field was without any alcohol. "Fancy a poor devil getting wet daily, and not a drop of PB or any other B to cheer him or the place - and pity us".

The population of the new town was growing with stores, banks and public houses quickly appearing. The town was administered by an Acting Gold Commissioner, John P. Sharkey from the Gold Commissioners Office, Bowen. The miners were highly dissatisfied with this arrangement as Mr. Sharkey was not a resident of the field, merely including the local work among other responsibilities.

Disputes at the field were very common.

What with disputes, jumping cases, and claims for gold field rewards, and measuring off new prospecting claims, Mr. Sharkey is apt to have his hands full for some time, and the pressure of work might induce him to make sufficiently strong remonstrances to the Secretary for Works to cause His High Mightiness to appoint a resident Commissioner. It is perfectly absurd that an important and extensive gold field like this should depend on an occasional visit of an already overburdened officer.

Eventually the miners' claims were heeded and the gold field was awarded its own Commissioner and Magistrate; Mr. T.R. Hackett. He was assisted by W.R.O. Hill who subsequently had a long and illustrious career in the Public Service of mining towns.

Sickness on the field was common and described as "a malignant fever" with a "great resemblance to the so-called Gulf Fever". These early mines were primitive affairs - the profits were for living and not for investment in better equipment. A windlass and a greenhide bucket lifted the ore from mines that were seldom more than forty feet deep. The miners were a hardy crew - their ability to survive was measured by their ability to outride, outdig and outfight the next man. It comes as somewhat of a surprise to read of the diggers setting out with their long-barrelled Colt revolvers at their side.

A miner called Macrossan horse-whipped the Mining Warden in the muddy bed of Elphinstone Creek.

Foot races were common and large wagers made on the results.

There were forty-two pubs or shanties within a three mile radius.

Police had tough times and often had to chain men to a log outside their tent while they went down town again to quell some fresh disturbance.

The 'Lady Marion' mill made a substantial difference to the field and more energy was devoted to establishing reefing claims. The demand for more mills was strong, and the 'Vulcan', 'Enterprise' and 'Blanche' mills followed in the near future.

North Queensland's first inland town of importance was emerging and Bowen and Townsville fought a considerable battle for the trade to and from the Ravenswood Diggings. Mr. Dippel from Bowen had established 'Dippels Track' from Townsville. Mark Reid was the manager of the Robert Towns and Company property at Woodstock and no doubt received instructions from his employers to establish a route from Cleveland Bay in order to catch this significant trade. The virtues of Dippels track and the Bowen Harbour were compared with the steepness of Reid's Track and the lack of an adequate harbour in Townsville. When Lords new stamping mill arrived in Townsville destined for the Ravenswood field there was considerable difficulty in unloading the equipment as the vessel had to wait for a sufficiently high tide to enable the unloading of the machine. The Bowenites were elated and the Port Denison Times, August 21, 1870 reports:

Mr. Lords Machine arrived per City of Townsville from Maryborough in Cleveland Bay early last week, but up to this has not been able to discharge her cargo, having to wait for spring tides to enter the little puddle-hole of a creek which serves as a port for Townsville.

The battle waged on with the Bowen community offering free port dues for a period of six months for all goods bound for Ravenswood; but Townsville was eventually to win with their trump card - tracks to Bowen had to cross the Burdekin, often flooded; while the trade to Townsville did not encounter this obstacle. When the Cleveland Bay Express referred to the Northern Goldfields as "our inland goldfields" the wrath of the Port Denison Times was considerable.

Dippels track passed over a reef on the other side of the Range from Ravenswood. This reef was soon recognised by the travellers and a further centre was added to the Ravenswood field called 'The Eight Mile Rush' later to be called Hillsborough.
The Ravenswood District
Under the Gold Fields Regulations of 1867 the finders of payable gold were to be rewarded by the Government. Claims for this award were heard by Mr. Sharkey at McLarens Store, Buchanan's Gully on May 1, 1870, and subsequently paid to Jessop, Buchanan and Smith.

The Bank of New South Wales and the Australian Joint Stock Bank opened premises at the field. The gold escort from the Gilbert was routed to pass through Ravenswood on its way to Townsville, taking on its first journey 387 oz of gold.

The new Court House was completed in 1871 and replaced a 12' x 10' tent that had served as a temporary place of business. The first newspaper for the field, the Ravenswood Miner, owned by J.S. Reid first went to press in October 1870.

By late 1870 the alluvial gold was nearly exhausted for highly profitable winning and the fossickers were reported to be hardly 'making tucker'. Reefing was now the normal and a report dated November 5, 1870 notes with some surprise that a 'Celestial' had discovered a reef at Lower Camp. The Chinese were essentially alluvial miners and not given to 'quartz-reefing'. As in all Australian Gold Fields the Chinese were to be found, working alluvial deposits, picking over deserted claims and engaged in market gardening. At the Ravenswood field there is no doubt they enjoyed the same unpopularity as on other fields and their market gardens, while reported by one mining warden as providing much welcome additions to the diet of the area are also reported by another as having charged a half crown for a cabbage (weekly wages at this time would be about 3 pounds). The Chinese caused the Warden much despair as they would not report their winnings as required. Their gold was smuggled out of the country to China and they met the Warden's Request for the amount won with the reply 'Lитеe Gold'. Daintree reports the existence of 2,000 Chinese on the Ravenswood field at this time.

By November 26, 1870, Mr. P. Hishon is reported as having nearly completed his pretentious new grocery store and in December of the same year moves were afoot to build a hospital. Money for the Hospital was collected by donations and by means of amateur entertainment which realised 13 pounds. When the sum of 50 pounds was gathered a temporary hospital was to be constructed. Mr. West built a 'large commodious hotel' on the site 'lately occupied by the Jews Harp'. There was also
news of new crushing machines on their way from other gold fields and from as far away as New Zealand.

A Gympie company sent the 'Central' crushing machine. Mr. W.F. Lloyds machine was erected at Upper Camp and the Valentine Machine from Rockhampton was on its way. A total of 52 stamps were expected to be in motion in early 1871 and the new field now felt that the initial problems of establishment were solved. Mr. Steifletz, a Government Surveyor arrived to lay out the town in late 1870 and the regular appearance of clergymen to take services signified that the town was now a proper part of the Victorian British Empire. The residents of the town must have felt very satisfied with the situation and the rapid progress of a few years - there were reefs everywhere one looked, and crushings were revealing very substantial results for their efforts. The 'Working Miner' was added to the number of the crushing mills, and the escorts accompanied increasing amounts of gold each trip. New reefs such as 'The Morning Light' and 'The Premier' proved to be as rich as previous finds, such reefs often being found as little as six feet below the surface. However 'The Morning Light' claim proved to be the advent on the field of a new experience for Ravenswood. The finders had registered their claim, sold three 'half-shares' in the same and then 'decamped'. The claim proved to be 'salted'. Another difficulty was soon to arise. Bateman and Buchanans' Sunset mine was sunk to the water level at 62 feet depth. Below this water level the quartz was to change in nature to the 'Mundic Stone' that baffled the miners until the late part of the century.

The Royal Commission on Gold Mining had sittings in Ravenswood in 1871 under the chairmanship of the Hon. R. Pring Q.C. The proceedings record the number of miners on the field as:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Camp</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Camp</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Camp</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eight Mile Rush</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Hospital was completed in January 1871 with Dr. P. Scharffenburg as House Surgeon. Subscriptions for the hospital totalled 210 pounds.

The Warden announced in February 1871 that cakes of gold in excess of 500 oz would not be taken by the escort as they were too difficult to handle. The miners who paid 6d per on for transport felt this was not reasonable and requested that a spring cart be used instead of the pack horses.
Improvements to the town continued at a rapid pace and reflected the increasing amount of gold coming from the crushing machines. W.A. Ross and Company, S.F. Walker and Company both Townsville firms 'have erected commodious stores', the old premises of 'Ross and Company having been purchased by James Lynch to convert them into a hotel'.

Mr. Harne's 'public house' was being built and improvements were being made to Fulton's 'Melbourne Hotel' and Aisbett's 'Family Hotel'. As well as the above 'there are innumerable small business places and residences springing up daily like mushrooms.'

Substantial weatherboard buildings with iron roofs slowly took the place of the sapling walls and calico roofs of the shanties which were now only to be found on the outskirts of the town. There was an Amateur Dramatic Club whose profits went to the Hospital, two cricket teams and a jockey club.

There was a great need for a normal school. The Roman Catholic community were opening subscriptions to establish a church and on July 20, 1871 - a tender of 300 pounds was accepted for the erection of the new Roman Catholic Chapel. Fr. Connolly of Townsville laid the foundation stone of the new Roman Catholic Chapel in early August 1871.

As 1871 drew to an end the new town knew no end to its confidence in the future. Prospectors were reaching out from Ravenswood to adjoining areas. Mosman, Clarke and Frazer were prospecting in the Burdekin Area. We read in the Port Denison Times, August 26, 1871:

The Future of Ravenswood - though by no means professional prophets, we think that the time is not far distant when the gigantic strides of Ravenswood into wealth and position will be prominently brought before the whole of the colonies. Any person who has felt any misgiving in reference to the solidity of our mineral wealth will have to won before many months (not to say years) have passed that Ravenswood will rival the richest of the Victorian mines in population and amount of production. Situated in the midst of a vast mining region, where countless gold bearing reefs crop up in all directions - with galena and other ores in abundance - is it too much to say that we must eventually occupy the position we have stated! On some of our reefs - notably the General Grant, Sunset and Mellnuer - the proprietors are sinking deep shafts to test the ground. Pumping engines and gear are also being prepared to get rid of the water at lower levels. Let these shafts or any one of them prove to the croakers (if any exist) that our reefs are rich below as on the top, and our
predictions will be found to be under not over the mark. The machinery and labour referred to are the result of capital, not foreign but of home growth - the fruit of the toil of the industrious miner; and we trust that no man who has put his brains, his labour and his money into the enterprise will be disappointed.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF STUBBORNNESS

The 'Gigantic strides' of Ravenswood were real. The Cape River diggings were quickly being worked out and Ravenswood stood alone, close to the coast and supplies, as the major centre of gold mining in North Queensland. In 1870, 8,261 oz and in 1871, 60,444 oz of gold had been won and the prospects for the future could not have been better. However, two major difficulties lay ahead. Hugh Mosman returned from the upper areas of the Burdekin with news that took a considerable number of the miners to his new bonanza at Charters Towers; the second difficulty was of far more consequence. When the water level was reached the nature of the stone changed to a 'mundic' ore that baffled the miners for the next twenty five years. The difficulty of extracting the gold from the mundic ore was such that we read in the Mining Warden's Report:

An exodus now took place, and Ravenswood decreased, while the newer goldfield, Charters Towers, went ahead with great rapidity. The year 1872 was one of memorable depression, yet one of the chief incidents in connection with it was the erection of machinery for the treatment of tailings; many and various were the experiments tried without success; the general body of the miners became disheartened, and with the exception of a new claim, the field became deserted almost, but not quite: some of the old identities stuck to the old place.

Accurate records of the years 1872-1876 are not available, but in 1877 we note a total production of 13,252 oz and a population of 950 people. The 'great future' had not materialised.

Charters Towers boomed and in the competition for capital, equipment and manpower, Charters Towers with its far more treatable ores won every round. However, like Ravenswood, Charters Towers was also to suffer in these years with 'rushes' to other centres in the North. The miners were essentially nomadic - the slightest news of even more riches in other areas was sufficient to cause a considerable movement in their numbers.
The year 1880 saw an important new development for Ravenswood. Mr. King, an experienced silver miner from New South Wales, had prospected the area for silver. Initial prospecting happened at Dreghorn and Mt. Wright before finally selecting 'The One Mile' or 'Totley' and the best site for silver mining. They took up two selections comprising 320 acres and in 1880 had obtained 130 oz to the ton for their first winnings of 40 tons. Silver was to sustain the town through the difficult period of the 1880-1890. The gold production dropped rapidly over the years 1880 to 1882 and about this period the succession of endless solutions to the problems of the mundic stone start to appear in the Mining Warden's reports.

In 1881 we read:

Mr. Flude, a good authority from the Ballarat School of Mines, visited us recently and was greatly impressed with the richness of this district in different kinds of minerals, and he gives it as his opinion that it will not be a very difficult matter to erect proper furnaces to treat them satisfactorily. I believe he intends visiting us again, when I trust he will be able to enlighten the mill owners, and be the means of benefitting not only them but the working miners also and the inhabitants of the field in general.

About 1882 the Mundic Ore is mentioned as being exported. The assays showed that it contained considerable amounts of gold and export of the ore was the only solution to the problem for the local miners. The cost of freight together with the uncertainty of the return from the ore put the community into even more despair, while their neighbouring town Charters Towers lived a life of easy splendour. However, the railway branch from the Charters Towers line was being built which promised cheaper freights for both the mundic ore and the silver so there was still a promised future for the town. Warden P.W. Pears reports in 1883:

Mundic Ore - With reference to the export of mundic ore, the results of the year's work have been, I regret to say, by no means so satisfactory on the whole as could be wished. There appears to be a great difficulty in arriving, on the ground, at a correct estimate of the amount of gold contained in the stone on an average. This arises from the absence of proper appliances for sampling. The result has been in several cases the exporting has even resulted in considerable loss to the senders.

1884 saw an improvement in production to 14,192 oz. The Black Jack, Grant, Mellaneur and John Bull were producing well and a new hope was the
establishment of "The Ravenswood Smelting Company". They promised to beat the mundic by producing from the ore a copper bullion, and thence by the aid of an electric-dynamo machine the separation of the gold from the copper and zinc. The railway had been opened in 1883 connecting the field with the seaboard promising cheaper freights from the town of the mundic ore and silver concentrates and similar cheaper freights to the town for machinery.

The Ravenswood Smelting Company operations were reported in 1885 as a failure, but they were changing the techniques and this would surely be the beginning of a new era removing the necessity of exporting the ore to England and Germany.

1886 brought new despair, a significant drop in gold production to only 9,244 oz. The Grant, Sunset and Black Jack mines were under exemption and the only mine with any promise was the John Bull where they were free of the problem of the mundic stone.

Warden John Archibald reports for 1886:

The results of the year's operations are anything but satisfactory, considering the apparent bright prospects which showed themselves on every hand when I penned my report for 1885. Then the Ravenswood Gold Smelting Company's Works were in full swing reducing large quantities of ore, the owners affirming they were not only a financial success, but by them they had overcome the treatment of the Ravenswood complex ores, which had baffled scientists for so many years. Cassell's Gold Extracting Works were then in course of erection, by which, under an improved form of the application of chlorine gas, it was earnestly hoped something satisfactory in the treatment of gold ores would have been the result. Not so, however....Failure after failure of processes patented for treatment of the mundics of this field are not calculated to inspire the miners with bright hopes of any early solution of this great question.

Mechanical means are to my mind entirely out of the question. It is a matter which commends itself to the attention of scientists more than to the practical miner or amalgamator, as it is by chemistry alone that we may hope to have solved the reduction of our base mundics to the same conditions as they would be by long exposure to sun and weather. I am glad to notice that Mr. J. MacDonald Cameron, M.P. for Wick (Who for five years had the post of instructor in the original research Department of the Royal School of Mines, London) when interviewed a few days ago, at Townsville said - "I believe before long science will provide a satisfactory solution to the difficulty by the aid of chemistry." Let us hope this may be so, as goldmining at Ravenswood cannot, in my opinion, advance until that epoch arrives.
In 1887 the properties of "The Ravenswood Gold Smelting Company" changed hands having been brought by a London Company who were going to install at Ravenswood machinery to enable the processing of the ore by "the lately patented Newbury-Vautin 'process'" - "should this process prove successful a splendid future is before the field."

The principal mines reported in 1887 were:

- Black Jack - Underlie 475 feet
- Grant - Vertical Shaft 110 feet, Underlie 390 feet
- Sunset - Vertical Shaft 130 feet, Underlie 170 feet

The new company which owned these mines was the "Ravenswood Gold Company Limited" with a capital of $100,000. This is the first reference in the Warden's Reports to the introduction of British capital in large amounts into the Ravenswood scene. The practice of English capitalists putting money into Queensland mines had been increasing in other areas for a time and in 1886 the Charters Towers Mining Exchange was in the zenith of its 'boom conditions'. The considerable advantage of any mine having a 'Queensland' location was no doubt important in floating this new company.

Again Ravenswood felt the future was their's and Warden Vaughan reported in 1887:

In conclusion, although the only interest on this field to date has been the mining interest, the agricultural interest will, in the future, go hand-in-hand with it. The climate is well known to be exceptionally good, while the rainfall is regular and amply sufficient for the growth of cereals, and although the only agriculture on the field is to be found in Chinese gardens, the necessities of the inhabitants will induce agriculturists to settle on the soil, which in every valley is rich enough to grow anything. It requires no stretch of imagination to see that in a few years a very large population will be found here following agricultural and mining pursuits, and enjoying a health, wealth, and prosperity that a district so richly endowed by nature as this is can give.

The 1888 Report sadly tells that the main mines of Ravenswood, the Black Jack, Sunset and Grant have not been worked for a large portion of the year - the new process of their owners the Ravenswood Gold Company (Manager H.H. Barton) does not seem to be working well, however, a company previously known as Cassells Company has had two men in town called Duncan and MacIntyre who have "a new secret process of their own which if it proves successful will revolutionise our mundic workings and prove the philosophers stone to Ravenswood".

159
The next year 1889 brought a significant increase in the gold yield from 10,666 oz in 1888 to 15,719 oz in 1889 and the chief portion of this increase came from Bartons mines the Grant, Sunset and Black Jack, from Trenfields mine the John Bull, and from the New England. Mr. Barton's process (a chlorination process) was working considerably better than in the past and the treatment of the ores given in their Mabel Mill was recovering significantly more of the gold than in the past.

In 1890 Barton's mines were going well enough to consider taking up the re-working of the Mellaneur which had been so profitable in previous times and the availability of Barton's Mabel Mill for the rest of the community was a considerable impetus to the other mines.

The period 1890-1893 again marks a decrease in the gold production, while there was an increase in the number of tons of ore treated. The yield per ton of ore was dropping from 16 dwt to 13 dwt and some mines were still compelled to send their ore to the 'Aldershot' refinery at Maryborough. Warden Kelly Cusack writes in his usual clear style in his report for 1891:

It is speaking but very weakly indeed for our so-called "advanced" machinery in works, "improved" modes of treatment, and newest "styles" of furnaces, and treatment by the "chlorine process", etc. etc. when we find mine-owners, after raising the ore, being obliged to bag it, cart it to the railway, and ship it to Aldershot Works, Maryborough to get the best value for their ore. Yet such is the case - the proof is there by the returns - and there is no gainsaying the fact that the Shelmalier miners have found more profit, after doing all this, by sending their ores to Maryborough than either selling or treating them locally. Such should not be the case; and how long is this going to last? For, until our pyritous ores are treated locally, and at a fair and moderate rate, or at a rate profitable to those who raise them the mundic reefs here must be a complete 'dead letter' - a matter not to be discussed. I am perfectly convinced, the more I see of our treatment here daily, that for the main body of our mundic ores, smelting, or some form of it, will ultimately prove successful. There are certainly processes here, such as Barton's Chlorinating Works and Cassell's Works, which act satisfactorily on certain classes of ores, but are not suited to all ores. I believe that smelting can and will prove satisfactory and profitable to all by-and-by, when science has advanced a little more. Mr. H.H. Barton claims to be able to treat all ores at his works, and I believe he can do so: but treatment alone is one thing, and profitable treatment quite another. Still a good deal could be done locally by united action if the divisional board could see its way to take
the matter up, and that every business man acted "with a will" in assisting the board's endeavours in the direction indicated.

The silver mining had now been in abeyance for a number of years - the costs of extracting the ore had grown, the yield per ton was down and the Warden saw fit to issue a pastoral letter to his flock.

By 1893 the gold production was down to 9,036 oz one of the lowest results for many years, but in this year of failing returns a most significant entry in the Warden's Report is to be found in his account of the matter-of-fact details of the field.

The John Bull Leases (37 acres) at Sandy Creek have been idle through being exempted the entire year, the mines dismantled, and the pumps drawn. About the last part of September quarter the owners (Messts. Sidley and Trenfield) put their mines, and St. George (twenty head) battery, with all pumping and winding machinery thereon, under a fixed offer to Mr. Archibald L. Wilson, a mine manager, here, who, with the assistance of local subscriptions, proceeded to London with a view to floating the property into a company, or selling the concern outright to capitalists there, if possible to do so. The figure asked was very moderate and reasonable. Recent cablegrams from Mr. Wilson go to show that he has been successful in forming a syndicate to purchase the mine, subject to approval, and it is intimated that a director is coming here with Mr. Wilson leaving London about March 1 next, for that object. A substantial deposit in cash has been lodged upon this understanding in the local branch of the Queensland National Bank here, and it is hoped by everyone in this district that the flotation may be completed without a hitch, as while the two John Bull Leases were working, a large mining community was prosperously settled at Evlinton, the little township surveyed some years ago close to the leases in question. The yield from this mine proved for many years a very constant and no mean factor in our output of reef gold, and the loss of which has been felt materially in every way by the business people here. We are led now to the hope that the worst is over, and that the John Bull Mile will again come to the front as a gold producer.

The hospital was closed for a major portion of 1893, the lack of funds and patients named as the cause, for apart from one epidemic of measles which closed the "State and Nun's Schools" the health of the community was excellent.

1894 saw an increase in the amount of gold from 9,036 oz in 1893 to 15,973 oz in 1894 and we find the Warden in his annual exhortation to his
community advising that this field needs the 'importing of capital' with new
methods of treatment to put the field in the rank of the first class gold
producers. The Ravenswood Gold Company was reported as labouring under
many difficulties.

The most significant entry for the year 1894 is as follows:

At Evlinton, Sandy Creek, easterly from Ravenswood three miles,
the John Bull mines have been again started. As given previously
in my quarterly reports, Mr. Archibald L. Wilson proceeding in
England, succeeded in floating this property in London during
the end of 1893, and took possession of the mine and mill in
April 1894, for his syndicate, represented locally by Mr. E.D.
Miles, of Charters Towers, with Mr. Wilson as general manager.
A new straight 3-compartment shaft was blocked out (expected
to cut the Bull Reef at 600 feet vertical), and valuable
double-winding and pumping gear, with all the latest
improvements, placed thereon. Three rock-drills are used in
the sinking, which is by contract, and fair headway has been
made, all things considered, up to the end of the year. The
shaft is down 165 feet, and progressing satisfactorily.

Some trouble arose at first until the rock-drill arrived, but
at present everything is working smoothly and well. The
whole of the works erected are most substantial, and with due
regard to economy, and reflect much credit upon Mr. Wilson's
ability, judgment, and enterprise.

1895 tells of great difficulties for many mines and the New England
mines were closed for reasons of 'great outlay, reckless expenditure,
misfortune in mining, mismanagement and collapse!! While in comparison:

The John Bull Leases, at Sandy Creek, have under the
management of Mr. A.L. Wilson, done excellent work during
the year. A very superior shaft (with the necessary winding
machinery and pumping gear) has been sunk, cutting the reef,
as anticipated, at 606 to 610 feet. This was sunk by contract
through the agency of the Ingersoll drill in wonderfully quick
time for Ravenswood and at a cost far below anything of the
kind ever previously attempted here.

1896-97 completes the Second Stage of the Ravenswood story. Mr.
Wilson's John Bull Mine is reported as being in a most prosperous and well-
managed state while the town suffered the severe blow of the closing of the
Grant and Black Jack, the same having been closed when the Q.N. Bank
registered a lien over these leases. Many other mines were reported to be
in trouble and the Warden's report for 1897 indicates that the field needs
'new capital and new techniques'.

162
In 1897 tributors were working the Grant, Melaneur and Black Jack, together with the Mabel Mill. The Warden laments again that poor management in the treatment works was costing the field thousands of ounces of gold all for the lack of proper scientists. Cyaniding made its appearance in these years with much improved results for the yield of gold. In 1898 the results of the field were considerably better than in the previous year reaching 30,835 oz, the consequence of better methods on the field and the results of the cyaniding process. Donnybrook and Trieste were once again showing good returns. Mr. A.L. Wilson was in London again to arrange for capital to take over the Grant, Sunset, Black Jack and Melaneur properties, together with the Mable Mill and the Warden reports that he has had a cable that negotiations were going successfully. The yield for 1898 was the highest to that date in the history of the field - 30,835 oz - without a significant rise in population. New Ravenswood was about to arrive.

The period 1872 - 1898 marks a period in Ravenswood of endless changing fortunes. In spite of the endless problems the community apparently lived a fairly stable life.

The population after an initial build up to about 2,000 in 1883 showed only small variations until 1898. While the yield of gold was low in some years, it was compensated for by the products of the silver mines in the early eighties. Pugh's Almanac gives us a picture of the structure of the town in these times. A School of Arts had been established early in the life of the town and in 1876 the Almanac notes that the School of Arts had 70 members, with a very fair library and all of the leading newspapers. The Church of England had erected a substantial building in 1879 in Elphinstone Street, and in 1885 a Convent and Convent School were established. No hotels of this period remain, there having been between 5 to 7 hotels on an average. The new hospital must have been built in this period as surveys of the area in 1890 indicate that it was not on the site indicated in 1872. A Mining Warden's House named 'Grant Cottage' replaced the home shown on the 1872 drawing and it is likely that it was built in this period. The town was serviced by hotels, butchers shops, bakers, blacksmiths, plumbers, chemists, grocers, hairdressers, cabinet makers, bootmakers, builders, newsagents, drapers, painters, tinsmiths, dressmakers,
printers, an ironmonger, music teacher, product merchants, livery stables, saddlers, saw mills, tailors, tobacconists, undertakers, photographers, and a watchmaker. Ownership of the shops changed frequently.

Professional services were provided by 'medical men', solicitors, assayers and brokers. Sporting opportunities were provided by a jockey club (3 meetings a year), lawn tennis, football and cricket.

NEW RAVENSWOOD

New Ravenswood is an appropriate name for the third phase of the Ravenswood history. 1898 had been a record year in both Ravenswood and Charters Towers because of the increased yields given by the cyanide process. Confidence was high in the region and in Ravenswood Mr. Wilson fresh from his triumphs at the John Bull mine had control of the major mines of the town as Manager of the New Ravenswood Limited. A Charters Towers share-broker, Sydney Hood Thorp, had established a Mining Exchange in Ravenswood and was able to introduce capital to the area with successful 'flotations' of many of the mining properties into joint stock companies. At last Warden Kelly-Cusack's hope was to materialise - capital, management and energy had arrived simultaneously.

Our day for small things has passed away, and the fossicker in the brown stone with it. We must be now capitalists or nothing. We undertake the formation of companies, not syndicates, or little mateships as heretofore.

The Donnybrook P.C., the Donnybrook Blocks and the Erin's Hope at Brookville were the first mines to perform well in 1899. The Donnybrook P.C. had been started again by a syndicate of 10 men, five to work the mine and five to guarantee their wages - their first crushings ensured the continuity of the mine.

A.L. Wilson set about to re-equip the mines of the New Ravenswood Limited - the tramways and machinery were put in order and the Mabel Mill was equipped with the new 'Wilfley' Tables, a vibrating table that made the concentration of the gold bearing ore a very simple task. The re-equippping process was reasonably long and expensive and it was not until January 1900 that the Mabel Mill was ready to crush again. The concentrates from the Mill were to go to the Aldershot Refinery which had a business connection with the New Ravenswood Limited. Cyaniding was not used, the ore being too refractory for this process.
Mr. Bartons Mill 'The Brothers' was re-equipped mainly to handle the ore from the Donnybrook P.C. in which Mr. Barton and his son were shareholders. A cyanide plant was established at 'The Brothers' Mill to purchase sands and slimes from the miners, treat them and retain the profits. Samples of Ravenswood ores had been sent to London for the Greater Britain Exhibition of 1889 and no doubt this publicity did much to help the Ravenswood demand for capital.

In earlier times many reefs had been worked down to the 'mundic' and then deserted - these were now taken up again and capital for the field came from Charters Towers, Townsville, Gympie and the capital cities of Australia as well as overseas. The Hillsborough Mines were revived and one claim purchased by a group through Mr. A.L. Wilson gave crushings as high as 27.5 oz to the ton. At the Donnybrook mine a township called Brookville grew up around the mining area and contained four hotels and stores as well as housing and a mill to crush the ore of the mines.

In November 1901 a lease was applied for to start 'The Deep Mines' the first real deep mining venture on the Ravenswood field. The worst drought in the history of the field occurred in 1902, but while it caused some inconvenience in the supply of water for crushing, it was generally seen as a bonus for the area - the shafts were able to sink at a faster rate without the inconvenience of pumping and work to establish dams for the Mabel and Brothers Mills was able to be put in hand. The 'Sunset' mine, the principal mine of the New Ravenswood Limited settled down to produce a seemingly endless supply of 3 oz stone - 2 oz of free gold at crushing with a further ounce coming from the refinery at Aldershot.

By 1903 the population had reached a peak of 4,707, an increase of 1,900 since 1899, and the gold production climbed to 50,000 oz for the year. In 1903 Warden Kelly Cusack reports:

Anyone familiar with this town and the works around it, as they existed at the end of 1902, and contrasting the present appearance of the place with that period, must be forcibly struck with the rapid development that has taken place in every way - in mining, building, machinery, and increased population - the last the most marked sign of all. New shafts - to us "deep" shafts - are most conspicuous, their surface works standing out boldly from hill top to hill top, and forming on the Grant and Sunset line along (from the Rob Roy on the south to the New Irish Girl on the north) almost a mile in extent without a break. Our progress has been
indeed excellent; and the numerous new buildings - cottages, stores and shops - emphasise the face beyond question in every direction.

The progress of the field, on the whole has been sound. Adventures that had not an "honest face" upon them have gone to the wall, and are getting left behind. Those that were merely 'spec' under takings - company flotations dependent on others before them to "make the running" - have not succeeded in doing so; and the result will in most cases, be non-payment of the current rents, refusal to get continued exemptions without fulfilling the necessary labour conditions, forfeiture of the holdings, and cancellation of the applications. I do not, however, anticipate that we shall have much of this to deal with.

After the years of exhortations, advice and pleas the Warden's town had arrived, but at the moment of arrival the beginning of the end was also starting to be evident. The Donnybrook P.C. lost the reef and the Grand Junction which had been sunk to cut the Sunset reef 'wedged out' on the only promising reef they had found. The London could not cope with the water which flowed in from Elphinstone Creek through underground fissures while the Shelmalier found that the ore was not up to expectation. However, the Sunset continued to supply good stone and maintained the productivity of the field.

Warden Kelly Cusack's prophesy at the beginning of the New Ravenswood era had turned out to be correct, the town continued to be prosperous because capital was available for new exploration in the mines that were in trouble. However by 1906 all was not well, many of the mines were closed, Brookville had come to its second conclusion and the Deep Mines had been closed having been a miserable failure. A total depth of 1,536 feet had been sunk at The Deep for a total yield of 240 oz of gold. Even the mighty 'Sunset' was starting to fail as "the gold appears to be getting poorer in quality as depth is attained and the yield decreasing".

In 1910 the beloved Kelly Cusack died having been Warden of the Ravenswood Gold Field for a period of twenty-two years. By 1912 the first major strike appeared in Ravenswood - one wonders whether these two facts are related in some way. Kelly Cusack had been an endless supporter of A.L. Wilson; he had made complimentary remarks about his ability in every Warden's Report for many years, and newspaper reports of the time show that they were close personal friends. Wilson was by all reports abrasive.
Ravenswood in its heyday: two views of the main street
Ravenswood: a general view

Ravenswood: the Mabel Mill
in his manner, yet he had the ability that Kelly Cusack had often hoped for in the second period of his history. He was no doubt assisted in his work by the support of the Warden - "We must be capitalists or nothing!" - without this support the radicalism of the Charters Towers miners was able to gain a foothold in Ravenswood.

The strike divided the town previously strongly united perhaps by 25 years of 'little mateships' into two opposing factions. 'Scab labour' was used to work the mines and those miners who would not join the 'scabs' left the town to seek work in the Sugar Industry and the Copper mines of the Far West. The 1914 war saw the enlistment of many men of Ravenswood almost as an answer to a collapsing situation and by 1917 New Ravenswood Limited was in liquidation. New Ravenswood had ended.

Interviews with old residents of Ravenswood reveal a rich quality of community life in the period of New Ravenswood - perhaps twenty five years of shared difficulties made them determined that their ultimate triumph was not to be spoilt. The town was rich in social and sporting activities, dramatic societies and Rugby Union football clubs flourished all under the patronage of A.L. Wilson 'the uncrowned King of Ravenswood'. This period came to an end with Wilson's statement - 'I made this town and I'll bugger it before I'll give in to the strikers!', the unfortunate statement of a man pressed by employees for higher wages and by shareholders for returns in a period of collapsing returns from his mines.

It is in this period of the town's history that most of the buildings which are to be found in Ravenswood today were built. Jim Delaney's Imperial Hotel and Jim Moran's Railway Hotel were built in 1902. 'Thorps Buildings' were built as premises for Hollimans Limited in about 1905-1906. The Ambulance Centre was built in 1904 and the Catholic Church and State School were extended in 1905 for the increased population of the New Ravenswood era. With the collapse of Ravenswood the town was mined of its buildings mainly to Home Hill, Ayr and Giru - in 1975 only the Community buildings and the masonry structures remain, fortunately enough to enable our generation to understand the structure of a mining town in the period 1868-1917.
The landscape dominated by poppet-heads, mullock-heaps, and brick-chimneys, and the perpetual din of crushing mills, were constant reminders that Charters Towers was a puppet to the whims of Mammon. During its first three decades, it was nothing more than a mining town dependent upon the lustre of gold for its very existence. Such an essential reliance conditioned the characteristic nature of the society, assuring it of its pervasively materialistic philosophy of life.

During its first fifteen years or so, the community was very unsettled and fluctuating in character. As alluvial deposits were never really of much significance in this goldfield's development, the glory that was "The World" emanated from the maze of reefs that lay under the surface at varying depths. Miners worked relatively shallow lodes on their own, or in small co-operatives, each believing that his Eldorado was just around the corner. Such confidence sustained many until the rich ore was theirs, but a great many others despaired of constant disappointment and moved onto other more recent, and perhaps more promising fields.

By the mid-1880s, however, it had become necessary to go to much greater depths in order to win sufficiently remunerative quantities of ore and, fortunately, the development of more sophisticated equipment made such an enterprise possible. But just as surely as the rock-drills and powerful winding apparatus transformed the nature of the gold mining process so did their appearance correspondingly reorient the entire social fibre. The need for greater quantities of capital was imperative, and hence large companies often backed by overseas investors replaced the individualistic character of the mining scene. Most breadwinners were compelled to become employees rather than remain precariously self-employed, and this was no doubt the central reason for Charters Towers becoming the bulwark of Trade Unionism in Queensland during the 1890s. Perhaps more significantly still, deep reefing ushered in a period of material growth and prosperity for the entire mining community. Lucrative returns for the companies guaranteed the mining employees plenty of relatively well-paid work, and during the 1890s, the municipal authorities strived to provide greater public amenities.
commensurate with the town's accelerated growth. Indeed, it could be said that life in Charters Towers became more attractive with each crushing of ore. Essentially, it was this history of spectacular prosperity that imbued Towersites with the belief that material wealth and progress were the ultimate precondition for human happiness and advancement.

An obvious outcome of this ingrained notion was a preoccupation with enjoyment and pleasure. Circuses, dancing and acting companies, and singers frequently visited the Towers where large audiences enthusiastically welcomed and acclaimed them. Sport was recognized as an obsession amongst the miners: "Are we not on the way towards gaining a monopoly of muscle to the exclusion of the brain?" queried one observer who expressed concern at the eagerness with which all manners of sport were followed. Footballers Harry Speakman and the Richards brothers, Cricketer McDonell, and Ted Easton, the all-round athlete, were venerated as the 'priests' of the sporting 'cult'. Sunday afternoons were consecrated to its 'worship', because most of the larger mining concerns did not operate on that day, and because the rest of the week was punctuated by an unpredictable variety of shifts that made team practice next to impossible.

Needless to say, arduous labour in the hot, cramped, and latently dangerous conditions underground, induced hearty thirst and a desire for congenial company. Thus, the public-house was a common rendez-vous for the male population, and constituted an integral part of the community's pattern of social life. By the end of its first two years when an estimated 2,500 people were resident on the goldfield, 92 liquor licenses were in force in the vicinity. Although such a high figure was not attained in any one year again, licensed hotels consistently numbered between 60 and 70 for most of the period, while backyard shanties had more liquor to offer, although often of a dubious origin and standard. Speculation, very much a part of the miner's nature, was exemplified in the compulsive gambling that consumed many a Towersite's pay as he bet on anything from a cockfight to a horserace. It was well-known too, that in most rough-hewn societies of migratory, unmarried miners, prostitution was a concomitant fact of life; in this, Charters Towers with its Japanese 'Houses of Ill-Fame' along Gard's Lane, was no exception. In retrospect then, one could not but agree with O'Kane of The Northern Miner who, while
discussing the large attendances at the visiting St. Leon's Circus in 1882, commented, "This is human nature, and it is very strong in Charters Towers."^7

When excesses in one direction exist, other opposing forces usually come into play in an attempt to restore equilibrium. This was so in Charters Towers. While the tenets of materialism and of human nature were becoming thematic of this community's life style, the corresponding presence of what Australians colloquially term as 'Wowserism',^8 made itself felt. 'Wowserism' generally refers to the zeal of a religiously inspired group, derived predominately from the Protestant clergy and laity, who attempt to reform the morality of their fellow-men by imposing their own personal norms of spiritual devotion and sobriety of character onto the society as a whole. Charters Towers, where intemperance, Sabbath 'desecration', gambling, and prostitution were very much a part of the social milieu, provided an enticing challenge to this aggressive puritanical spirit. In a discussion limited to the aspects of Temperance and Sabbatarianism, the questions how this spirit manifested itself in the Towers, and to what extent it was successful in modifying the community's philosophy and pattern of life, will now be discussed.

In order to counteract the particularly pronounced drinking habits of the centre's first few years, some of the more sober citizens decided to group together into various temperance societies. The Good Templars and the Rechabites were among the first to be established, and their frequently overlapping memberships, consisted almost totally of staunch Protestants. For example, John R. Cork, a prominent Charters Towers' teetotaller, was a keen lay preacher within the Methodist tradition, and was loyal to both these organizations.^9 The Presbyterian, Baptist, Wesleyan, and Primitive Methodist denominations all possessed Bands of Hope during these early decades, in which their youth were educated in the creeds of Temperance, and several devout Protestant ladies had organized themselves in 1888 into the Women's Christian Temperance Union (W.C.T.U.).^10 Even the Roman Catholic Church, which traditionally paid little attention to the drinking habits of its members, boasted a Temperance organization, the St. Columba's Temperance Society, in its Towers Parish during the early 1880s.^11
Although these organizations were of the most serious intent, they had characteristically short, interrupted life-spans, and their memberships were usually small and fluctuating in numerical strength. The early history of the Good Templars in the town was one of perennial frustration and discontinuity. Several lodges, both of the Senior and Juvenile orders, were instituted at different stages, but almost exception, they quickly fell into abeyance. After having been notified in 1882 that one lodge in the town had been closed and the other had not been operating for some 18 months, a leading spokesman for the Good Templars in Queensland concluded: "...this can only be accounted for from a lack of interest on the part of many who have grown cold and indifferent to the importance of the cause." In 1896, when the population of the Towers was nearing 23,000 people, the Rechabites had only a paltry membership of 123. Owing to a much decreased interest, the W.C.T.U. lapsed for two years in 1890, and even in its reorganized state its numbers gradually dwindled until at the end of the century it had only 61 members of varying status. The Bands of Hope were never permanent features in the programmes of the various churches, with the possible exception of the Methodists, and the Catholic effort appeared not to have endured into the 1890s.

This pronounced transience and lack of significant support for the Temperance societies had a somewhat stultifying effect upon the progress towards their ultimate victory over the 'evils' of drink. It was obvious that in such a situation no widespread reformation of the local drinking habits could ever have been achieved because the various organizations expended much of their energies in gasping for very survival. However, despite its unstable basis and its relatively small number of adherents the campaign against alcohol persevered, often making its presence felt within the community, particularly during the 1890s, when it was stimulated and spurred on by several superficially successful missions and by some rather insignificant and short-lived victories over the 'demon drink'.

The first mission of any significance was that of Father Henneberry. A prominent Catholic Temperance reformer from the United States, this priest obtained no less than 500 pledges of abstinence during his visit in 1879. Other visitors of note were Mrs. Leavitt during her visit of 1885 to establish the W.C.T.U. throughout the Australasian colonies; Matthew
Burnett who claimed 702 pledges in ten days of tight-scheduled lecturing in 1889; and Mrs. Harrison Lee, twice a visitor during the 1890s. To large crowds of several hundred people, Temperance advocates dramatically described the unfortunate consequences that resulted from even a moderate alcoholic consumption. Lectures with such descriptive titles as "Life and Its Possibilities", "The Bible or the Bottle", "Danger, Disease, and Death in Moderate Doses", and "Wedding Bells", were strewn with details of miraculous conversions of the inebriate to abstinence, and impressive statistics and scientific evidence were quoted in length to substantiate the usual warnings that only poverty, vice, dislocated family relationships, spiritual destitution, and deteriorated health and vitality, would result from intemperate habits.

It may be asked why the seemingly great interest in these occasions? For many it was curiosity that attracted them. No doubt this was part of the reason for Burnett's phenomenally successful visit to the town. Most likely this evangelist's colourful reputation had preceded him to the Towers: in the Southern colonies, it was widespread knowledge that he was a forerunner of the Salvation Army in his use of unorthodox tactics and strategies of sensationalism: torchlight processions, placards, noisy, stirring gesticulations, and enthusiastic expressions of joy, salvation and conversion, were characteristic of his approaches. The lectures he delivered in the Towers, particularly "Battles Fought and Won in England and Australia", and "Men I Have Slain Through Drink" clearly illustrated this affinity with Booth's 'war machine'. In addition, the opportunity of being pinned with 'a badge of blue' was sufficient incentive to impel 1,000 children to sit still for an hour, listening to Burnett consider the advantages to be accrued from total abstinence. It was quite possible too, that the W.C.T.U. attracted otherwise uninterested listeners to its outdoor Temperance rallies when the novel topic of Woman Suffrage came up as a subject of feverish debate. Nevertheless, there were several people within the audiences who were genuine supporters of the Temperance cause, and primarily it was this element that accounted for a large proportion of the pledges that were often quoted as having been taken at various missions. In fact, pledges were, and still remain so today, very poor indications of...
of any sustained and widespread patronage of the Temperance movement. Many who took the pledge were already abstainers who had perhaps renewed their vow several times throughout their lives, and typically did not include a significant number of people who had been recently converted to the cause. As well, children who are by nature uncritical of, and susceptible to the advice of verbose and seemingly knowledgeable elders, were attracted by the novelty and honour of the pledge, and were thus in years to come, very often to disregard or forget a promise that had been made in a rather light-hearted manner. Indeed the success of the Temperance missions on the Towers were more apparent than real; in truth, they essentially served to reinforce the principles and fervour of those citizens who had all along constituted the central core of abstainers within the community.

Thus, it had become obvious at least by the end of the 1880s that the respective Temperance societies had done very little towards revolutionizing the town’s customs through their constant efforts to educate and convert the individual. Now various teetotallers changed their point of reference to the society as a whole to vehemently chastise it for its 'undesirable' habits, by pressuring the authorities into strictly upholding the provisions of the legal code with reference to the drink question. As a result, Temperance in Charters Towers developed a unity that it had formerly lacked, as the majority of its disciples focused their efforts onto the numerous and obstinate violations of the Licensing Act of 1885 that were commonly known to occur within the town. The most significant issue in this enactment that had caught the attentions of the Temperance advocates, was the restriction of the sale of liquor on Sundays to the lodgers of public-houses and to travellers from a radius of greater than five miles.28

Sunday closure on the Towers was, as one writer termed it, "a farcical futility".29 When members of the Royal Commission enquiring into the administration of the Licensing Act visited the centre in 1900, publicans openly admitted that they had served and would continue to serve liquor on Sundays although often having been charged for doing so.30 The editor of the Mining Standard was scarcely exaggerating when he voiced the opinion that "...it would be hard to find an hotel between Cape York and the Tweed that does not flagrantly violate and defy the law so often as the Sabbath comes around."31 So accustomed to this existing situation in the town was
WOWSERS AND DIGGERS: THE IMPACT OF PURITAN IDEALS UPON CHARTERS
TOWERS, 1872-1900

the Police Magistrate that the responsible publicans were usually only fined the nominal fee of one shilling,\(^{32}\) and it was widely known that the Police Force often overlooked this breach of the law. "The front doors are closed of course, on Sundays," Sub-Inspector Malone once admitted, "but the side doors are opened."\(^{33}\) Perhaps such a situation would have continued on happily undisturbed but for the considerable pressure brought to bear by the Towers' 'apostles of abstinence'.

The most vocal agitators against illegal Sunday trading were the women of the W.C.T.U. In addition to their normal individualistic tasks of distributing tracts, visiting hospitals, and finding suitable alternative employment for barmaids,\(^{34}\) these ladies sent several deputations to the Police Magistrate, the Mayor, and the police,\(^{35}\) and penned letters to the press in order to call the attentions of the authorities to the numerous violations of Sunday liquor restrictions. The Union had even formed a vigilance committee to report on the misdemeanors of the town's hotel proprietors,\(^{36}\) and it was largely owing to this earnest surveillance that several publicans were fined for breaches of the Act.\(^{37}\) Specifically, also, through its efforts, one Sunday in 1897 saw a police constable placed outside every prominent hotel in the main section of the Towers.\(^{38}\) "Needless to say," read the Union's report of that year, "it was a 'record day' on the Towers."\(^{39}\) That same year, it was also cited that the organization had been successful "in preventing the erection of a new hotel by petitioning the residents in the neighbourhood, and quietly waiting on the different members of the Licensing Bench,"\(^{40}\) and in 1899, "Our Union helped to prevent one hotel going up and another license being removed from the country into the town."\(^{41}\) The visit of the Licensing Commission offered an excellent chance for the Union to expose the illegalities of the Towers' liquor trade, and consequently, its representatives, together with those of the Good Templars and the Rechabites, were most virulent in their criticism of Sunday trading in particular.\(^{42}\)

After the Commissioners' report was presented to the Parliament, Temperance supporters throughout the State bombarded the Government with petitions concerning its recommendations to permit restricted hours of Sunday trading. 107 petitions of some 17,522 signatures were received.\(^{43}\)
As a result, the authorities still refrained from legalizing this hidden reality of Queensland life. Nevertheless, it was a shallow victory for the Temperance cause because Sunday drinking continued as an ingrained social custom, viewed in a somewhat ambivalent manner by officialdom: although it still had not been deemed legal under the law code, it remained virtually undisturbed by the police authorities who recognized its permanently popular presence in the Queensland community.

Drinking liquor was not the only Sunday pastime in Charters Towers that came under the corrective scrutiny of this same astute Protestant minority of the community. Railway excursions to the Burdekin River or to Townsville, balloon ascents, rifle practice, football, and other sports, and concerts, were typically scheduled on the Towers as avenues of Sunday entertainment, but whether they became realities or not was another matter, for their proposed staging usually elicited vehement criticism from these teetotallers cum Sabbatarians. Under the guidance of the Charters Towers Ministers' Union, a fraternity of Protestant clergy founded in the mid-1880s, and of the W.C.T.U., this small group persistently argued for the strict preservation of the Christian Sabbath as a day of worship, and consequently it severely deprecated "the tendency of the times in the direction of making Sunday a secular, rather than a sacred day."

Perhaps the loudest outcry from this group was heard on the several occasions on which the Railway Department decided to run Sunday excursion trains to the Burdekin or even on to Townsville. 1884 saw the institution of this practice, and owing to the overwhelming response of a society still to see the arrival of the mobile age signalled by the motor-car, such a treat was to become a frequent occurrence in the summer months for many years after. Immediately this first trip was announced, some Sabbatarians organized a 900 signature petition to the Minister for Works, protesting against it as "a fruitful source of temptation and intemperance, and of accidents through bathing and unlawful modes of fishing; and furthermore it would endanger the moral character especially of our servant girls, who are deprived of parental restraint and counsel..." Although such a remonstrance went unheeded these avid Protestants were not deterred. The Ministers' Union lodged a protest in 1895, when the Anglers' Association was permitted to hold an excursion to the Burdekin for "games, dancing, and
a baby show. But the only consolation the Government would give the
Union was that "the police would be instructed to take prompt action in the
event of any breach of the law occurring." Again, sometime during the
next year when the Richmond Hill State School Committee advertised its
plans for a similar Sunday entertainment, the W.C.T.U. promptly gathered
together 275 signatures of deprecation, and petitioned the Premier. The
Ministers' Union quickly followed suit with petitions signed by every
Protestant clergyman and chief lay official in the town, and, as well, it
uncharacteristically enlisted the support of the Catholic Parish Priest,
Father Comerford, who also sent a letter of protest to Brisbane. To
Rev. Robert Stewart of the Ministers' Union, such occasions as this would
only "lead to consequences not contemplated", and were "simply outraging
the consciences of thousands of Christian people living here and bringing
about a state of demoralisation that is appalling." Withstanding this
barrage of complaints that it typically received on each occasion of a
Sunday excursion, the Government did not bend to the demands of Sabbatarianism;
the Railway Department believed that such acquiescence would have been
unfair to Charters Towers because trains for similar purposes of weekend
recreation were simultaneously running in the Brisbane and Rockhampton
areas, and it was loath to cancel them when it was evident from the public
response that the majority of the Towers' population desired the
continuance of the service.

Although the Sabbatarians had no success in this venture, such was
not to be the case with other Sunday pursuits. On three occasions, female
aeronauts arrived on the Towers to attempt to stage balloon ascents on
Sundays. In 1890, the two sisters Van Tassel had managed to perform their
feats in Townsville on a Sunday but when they intended to repeat the
performance a week later in the Towers, the Colonial Secretary prompted by
the objections of local Sabbatarians, stopped the proposed ascent. Consequently, in order that the public could witness the parachuting and
trapeze acts, a half-holiday had to be granted during the following week.
Again in 1894, a similar act was stopped by the Police Commissioner's
orders, immediately prior to its taking place in front of a considerable
crowd. The same series of events ensued the following year to once again
thwart both the performers and eager spectators. The Ministers' Union's
complaints were partly responsible for stopping rifle practice by the town's Kennedy Regiment and the local rifle clubs on Sundays. Predictably, too, these reverend gentlemen were far from casual when the Mount Morgan Football Team journeyed to the Towers in 1891 to play matches against the local side on two consecutive Sundays. Immediately, these alert critics brought the attention of the Government to these intended events and, on the recommendation of the Colonial Secretary, the Police Magistrate tried to deter the promoters in their plans. Although the latter initially refused to effect any alteration to their programme, they finally compromised by playing the first match on a Sunday, but postponed the other to a week-day. After another protest of the Ministers' Union, an unhappy proprietor of the popular Theatre Royal was promptly reprimanded for holding concerts on Sunday evenings, and was warned by a Government official that "should any person or persons take legal proceedings in the matter, and obtain a conviction the license of the Theatre will be in jeopardy." Although Sunday concerts were still often chanced, the Theatre management was always ready to temporarily desist if the clergy revived its criticism; for instance, after the Ministers' Union confronted the proprietor again in 1900 about more Sunday concerts on his premises, the latter quickly gave his assurance that he would discontinue theatrical activities on the Sabbath!

Thus this vigorous Protestant minority, devoted to Temperance and Sabbatarianism, constituted a viable pressure-group that frequently convinced the authorities to act upon its complaints in an often positive and direct manner. But if this section's success is gauged in terms of the achievement of its ultimate goal of remoulding society along the lines of sobriety and religious devotion, its victories were indeed shallow. As mentioned before, Temperance missions were essentially only agents of reinforcement and sustenance for those who had previously accepted the creeds of abstinence, and did not serve to inspire any widespread moderation amongst Towersites. Even when the Temperance supporters turned to political agitation, they failed to motivate a tighter administration of the State's Licensing Act, and Sunday drinking remained a favourite pastime amongst the miners. Indeed the popularity of Sunday entertainments, which either eventuated or were aborted, testified to the superficial triumph of the
Sabbatarian impulse. Excursion trains were always overcrowded as around 1,000 eager picnickers clambered for an opportunity to spend a day on the banks of the Burdekin; "thousands" were said to have waited in vain for the Sunday balloon show of 1890, and when a principal football match managed to escape the surveillance of the Sabbatarians, between 2,500 and 4,000 were estimated to have been present.

In fact, it could be argued that, on the contrary, these religiously and morally astute citizens did extensive damage to the attainment of a permanent modification of their society's attitudes. When a miner came for a beer only to find a policeman standing outside his favourite pub, or took his keenly expectant family out to the racecourse to witness a trapeze act at 6,000 feet only to find more police cancelling the advertised event, he was not likely to be favourably disposed towards the agent who had frustrated his intended leisure time pursuits. Seemingly, the majority of the population were not contented about a situation in which at any time a minority could dictate how the public should spend its recreation, or what or how much it should drink. The population's constant irritation at what was widely held to be self-righteous, pimping interference, was exemplified in its hostility at the cancellation of the balloon events of 1890. When James Stewart, the Brisbane City Missionary, who visited the Towers for the express purpose of thwarting this proposed activity, addressed an open air meeting to justify his part in the action, the audience showed their utter indignation and disapproval:

The result was a scene. Recriminations ensued between the rev. speaker and persons in the crowd, which was very demonstrative, and eventually became necessary for the friends of the rev. gentleman, aided by the police, to cover the retreat of Mr. Stewart to a place of safety.

Popular too, was the notion that the crusading teetotallers were "extremist fanatics and rigid moralists...who would shut down all hotels and would fine a youth for whistling later than Wednesday for fear he would desecrate the coming Sabbath." In general, this community simply wanted to choose its own life-style, and regarded the interference of the authorities on behalf of an influential few as a trespass upon a basic human desire for freedom of choice. In 1890, the Australasian Republican Association furiously and emphatically protested "against the action of the authorities
in Brisbane in preventing the balloon ascent of Miss Van Tassel this day as we consider such an action of the authorities an infringement of the liberties of the people (a wrong to one being a wrong to all) and we consider such action as an insult to the intelligence of this community."

As a corollary, it was contended that if church adherents were permitted to devote their leisuretime to any manner they saw fit, it was only fair that the same right should be extended to the remaining citizens. Summing up this issue as simply one of democratic treatment, one irate Towersite replied through the local press to the allegations of a prominent Sabbatarian:

if he finds pleasure, or rest of body or mind in church, by all means let him have it, from morning till night, certainly I should be the last to interfere with him, in the same way, if he does not like football I should not wish to force him to it. Why should he deny his neighbour his innocent game of cricket or a picnic, which may be far greater refreshment to him than any religious experience.70

Predictably, the inconvenience and frustration that was often created in the lives of many by frequent manifestations of this puritanical impulse, partly conditioned Charters Towers' attitude towards Religion in general. It was quite likely for instance, that Religion came to mean the deprivation of pleasure and enjoyment. "When we hear protests from these saintly folk," went one candid remark, "we are always seized with a sinister suspicion that the primary purpose of the outcry is more the curtailment of the people's enjoyment than the preservation of the Sabbath's sanctity."71 The radical journalist O'Kane thundered:

We have no doubt that the pious humbugs 'learn with regret' that the people want to enjoy themselves on Sundays.... These 'holy ones' - the 'salt of the earth' - the Pharissee's of Charters Towers would like to see every man, woman, and child in the district tied down on Sundays with the bond of Mosaic law, sitting glum and praising the 'Looard'...72

Additionally, Religion was often regarded as becoming impractical and devoid of reality; laughable perhaps to many Towers' folk was the poorly attended public-meeting held by some teetotallers in 1886, at which it was resolved to convince the general population of the town to stop drinking so much alcohol, then place the money therein saved into a syndicate fund, and within a year, it was envisaged that enough finance would have been accrued to establish a desperately required water scheme!73 Time and time
again was it complained that clergymen had largely failed to identify themselves with the obvious needs of the miners. To one Mining Manager, total restriction of Sunday trading was anathema, for such a principle was very much contrary to the recreational requirements of the miners:

people after labouring for six days in the week, like to idle on Sunday, and they want a little exercise in the evening. They do not approve of going to church but they promenade the road, and they want something to freshen up.71

Another critic put a similar argument in a somewhat satirical vein:

I should like to see one of the clergy who protest against recreation and pleasure on Sunday, compelled to work a few thousand feet below the surface with pick and shovel instead of the Bible in hand, with constant danger and no recreation, and then when Sunday comes to be told: 'Your body and mind have been under great pressure all the week, today you must add to the strain, you must deny yourself all pleasure; instead of taking a walk to the Athletic Reserve you must be at church all day, so that your home may be your hotel no more. You are in danger of everlasting fire, and you must spend your time in prayer for yourself and others. Society is made for the church; the church has no duties towards individuals or society; you may have difficulty in making ends meet, but the treasury of the Lord must come first.'75

The churchgoers' great concern with Temperance and Sabbatarianism was regarded as peripheral when so many other practical problems faced the life of the community. For example, several witnesses at the Licensing Commission's hearings were adamant in the opinion that for a mining town, Charters Towers was a sober centre, implicitly denying that there was any real occasion for Temperance's condemnation of the Towers as if it were in a profound state of inebriancy.76 O'Kane could not understand why even at least one clergyman did not attend a large 2,000 strong Anti-Chinese rally in 1886:

it is a man's duty to protect himself, his wife and children from evil influence that is natural law and Christianity, too. To meet and organize against Chinese is a sacred duty. It cannot, therefore, be against God's law, or any law, to meet on Sunday to take legal and constitutional measures for our own protection against the Chinese...77

"It is not Sunday amusements which works the scandals," argued another, "but the dishonesty, the running into debt, the swearing, drinking, cruelty to
children, the allowing the poor to remain poor, the ignorant to be taught, and the old to die alone; these are the scandals which the church allows, and is careless of them." Still another allegation was that these Protestants were often guilty, although unwittingly, of class discrimination in their campaigns, for it was claimed that if they were successful, it was only the poorer members of the community that felt the results: it was pointed out that

The leading resident can afford to drive out to the Burdekin every Sunday in the year taking a hamper of liquid and solid refreshments in his buggy. The thousands of working miners, labourers, clerks, and others can neither afford the hamper nor the buggy, but they are as much entitled to enjoy themselves at the Burdekin, or elsewhere as the leading citizens.\(^7\)

While Sabbatarians claimed that Sunday entertainments necessarily jeopardized the leisure time of railway workers, nothing was said about the servants of the richer citizens who often lent their support to this cause. "Those who hold such opinions should be consistent and grant a general holiday to their cooks and other servants on every Sunday," was one such conscience-disturbing remark.\(^8\) Sunday closure of hotels appeared to favour the wealthier members of the community too, because as a Mayor once observed of the miners: "They cannot afford to take in their case of beer or dozen of beer on Saturday."\(^9\) In fact, in their final report to the Parliament, the Licensing Commissioners concluded: "We are of the opinion that persons who cannot afford to keep a supply for use in their own homes are entitled to keep a supply at home, or to take it home on Saturday for Sunday's use."\(^10\)

Charters Towers, with its pervasively materialistic philosophy of life by which Man's happiness and prosperity on this earth are paramount, was not a congenial atmosphere in which an enthusiastic minority could promote its puritan ideals. How prophetic was an early journalist in the Towers when he warned some optimistic Temperance workers: "It will take them quite all their time to make our friends of the 'mountain city' pure water-drinkers!"\(^11\) Although Temperance and Sabbatarianism won several successes, any triumph was transient and shallow, and both of these causes were widely rejected as being unrealistic and unjust in their objectives. Largely unperturbed by the warnings of these relatively few but eager
moralists, life in the mining centre continued on unchanged, with its citizens being more willing to pursue avenues of immediate pleasure than be 'in the running' for the deferred promises of heavenly bliss.

REFERENCES


4. Q.V.P., 1874, II, p. 127.

5. Q.V.P., 1875, I, p. 1134.

6. See Table 'Publican Licenses' in "Statistics of Queensland" section of Q.V.P. 1872-1900.


8. For an interesting discussion of this phenomenon in Australian history, see Dunstan, K., Wowsers, (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1973).

9. For a description of John Robert Cork, see Q.V.P., 1901, III, p. 131.


12. From Members' Register of the Grand Lodge of Good Templars: the Ark of Hope No. 38, the first Senior Lodge (21/6/1875), the Ark of Safety No. 10 (Junior, 11/4/79), and the Try Again No. 6 (Senior), did not last long into the 1880s; the Loyal Charters Towers No. 27 (United, 10/6/84) ceased working in 1901, was reopened later in the same year, but finally closed a year later; the Pioneer No. 18 at Queenston (2/2/88) was surrendered in 1895; the Excelsior No. 56 (21/12/91) lasted until 1893, and the Jubilee No. 100 (12/7/97) did not see the year out.


15. The Charters Towers Mining Standard, 11 December, 1897.


17. By 1900, the Methodists had eight Bands of Hope of 620 members in Charters Towers. Minutes of the Annual Conference Of the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, 1901, p. 92.

18. There is no mention of this society again in later editions of The Catholic Almanac and Directory that were consulted (1893-5, 1897, 1901).

19. Australian, 6 September, 1879; The Brisbane Courier, 13 September, 1879.

20. Northern Miner, 6 October, 1885.


22. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 23, 25, 27 April; 1, 2, 4, 8, 9 May, 1896; 9, 13 July, 1898.

23. In a lecture titled "Danger, Disease, and Death, in Moderate Doses", a leading Good Templar from the south quoted largely from the vital statistics compiled by life insurance societies to show that total abstinence was conducive to longevity of life (Northern Miner, 11 November, 1892). On his next visit, he referred to scientific authorities to substantiate his claim that alcoholic drinks had "not the least particle of nutriment" in them (Northern Miner, 29 September, 1893). Also, the Secretary of the Rechabites in the Towers attempted to prove his belief that Temperance promoted health and vitality by citing figures from the report of the Registrar of Friendly Societies for 1896 - in the non-temperance societies in the town, 382 members were sick for a total period of 1,767 weeks 3 days, the average per member being 6 days 8 hours and the proportion of members sick was 22.8%. In the Rechabites' Refuge Tent, 12 members were sick a total period of 76 weeks 1 day, the average for the whole Tent being 5 days 12 hours per member, and the proportion of members sick was 14.4%. (Charters Towers Mining Standard, 27 November, 1897).


26. Ibid., 26 August, 1889.


30. See the testimonies of the following publicans at the Licensing Commission - Robert Collins (pp. 135+), John McGarvie Brooks (pp. 146+), John Raper (pp. 166+), and Arthur Earl (pp. 183+) in Q.V.P., 1901, III.


32. See testimonies of Robert Collins (p. 135) and Rev. William Dinning (p. 154) in Q.V.P., 1901, III.


34. See numerous references to these tasks of the Charters Towers women in Minutes of W.C.T.U. Annual Conventions 1888-1900.


36. Ibid., 1899, p. 64.

37. Ibid., 1893, p. 66; 1898, p. 56. Mary Elizabeth Baxter, Q.V.P., 1901, III, p. 189.

38. Ibid., 1897, p. 47.

39. Ibid., p. 78.

40. Ibid., p. 48.

41. Ibid., 1899, p. 64.

42. Q.V.P., 1901, III, 123ff.

43. Lawson, R., op.cit., p. 152.

44. Minutes of Queensland Northern District of Wesleyan Church, 23 October, 1896.

45. Northern Miner, 8 February, 1884.


47. Brisbane Courier, 24 January, 1895.


49. 'Petitions from Wesleyan Methodist, Presbyterian, United Welsh, Primitive Methodists, Baptist, Salvation Army, and the Church of England denominations' 1896. (Q.S.A. HOM/A3, 48/1479, No. 15149).


53. Acting Secretary to the Commissioner to Revs. Vigis and Stewart, 8 October 1896; General Traffic Manager to Acting Secretary to the Commissioner, 12 November 1896. (Q.S.A. HOM/A3, 48/1479, No. 15149).


55. Northern Miner, 4 July 1890.


58. Rev. A. McWatt Allan, Hon. Secretary of Charters Towers Ministers' Union to Secretary of Sabbath Observance Society, Brisbane, 30 July 1890; Hon. Secretary of Lord's Day Observance Society, Brisbane to Chief Secretary, 11 August 1890. (Q.S.A. COL/A777, 48/1446(a), No. 8861).

59. Rev. B. Bottomley telegram to Honourable Colonial Secretary, 19 July 1894. Q.V.P., 1894, III, p. 1693.

60. Police Magistrate, Charters Towers telegram to Principal Under Secretary, 21 July 1894, loc.cit.

61. John Marsland telegram to Colonial Secretary, 21 July 1894, ibid, p. 1694.


63. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 19 February 1900.

64. Typical of the response was the excursion of 10 August 1896, with 873 passengers (General Traffic Manager to Acting Secretary to the Commissioner, 8 September 1896. (Q.S.A. HOM/A3, 48/1479, No. 15149).

55. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 5 May 1896.

56. Sydney Mail, 17 August 1895.

68. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 16 June 1900.

69. Australasian Republican Association, Charters Towers, to Colonial Secretary, 7 July 1890. (Q.S.A. COL/A622, 48/1292, No. 7541).

70. O'Presa in Charters Towers Mining Standard, 24 August 1896.

71. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 8 August 1900.

72. Northern Miner, 8 February 1884.

73. Northern Miner, 11 November 1886.

74. James Carroll, Q.V.P., 1901, III, p. 149.

75. O'Presa in Charters Towers Mining Standard, 19 August 1896.

76. Joseph Pike (p. 145), Arthur Earl (p. 184), Dr. R.B. Huxtable (p. 191), Walter Jarvis (p. 193), and Hugh Malone (p. 195), Q.V.P., 1901, III.

77. Northern Miner, 1 October 1886.

78. O'Presa in Charters Towers Mining Standard, 24 August 1896.

79. Charters Towers Mining Standard, 1 October 1896.


82. John Asher Benjamin, Q.V.P., 1901, III, p. 124.

83. Q.V.P., 1901, III, p. 77.

84. The Northern Advocate, 28 November 1874.
The Rise of the Amalgamated Workers' Association

Dr. K.H. Kennedy

In the decade prior to the First World War, the trade union movement, the institutional means by which wage-labourers transform themselves into active elements in society, and the Labour Party, the political body of organized wage-labourers, gained new impetus and authority in Queensland politics. The Amalgamated Workers' Association, although remaining an autonomous union before merging into the Australian Workers' Union in 1913, had a most significant and far-reaching impact on the development of trade union alignments, and on the direction of the Labour Party in this period. From a small miners' union founded in 1907, the A.W.A. had become one of the most influential organizations in the country within six years.

The mineral boom on the Chillagoe, Walsh and Etheridge fields at the turn of the century induced new socio-economic conditions in Far North Queensland. The new towns of Chillagoe, Mungana, Zillmanton, Etheridge, Redcap, O.K., Einasleigh, Nymbool, Stannary Hills and Cardross had that raw edge of impermanency, characterised by hessian and iron architecture; and crude living conditions, as illustrated by Bolton:

Poor sanitation still caused outbreaks of typhoid, and the water supply was heavily impregnated with lime - "but", shrugged one observer, "Chillagoe-ites don't drink water as a rule."¹

These were bawdy, brawling townships that owed their reputation as much to the potency of the liquor and to the excitement of the gambling schools, as to the wealth won from the mines. Railway navvies, miners and smelter hands stormed the many hotels on pay nights to drown their grievances with adulterated spirits and to mix with fellow workers at the "two-up" games, which often climaxed in stand-up fights and brawls.²

However, such social behaviour was defensible as symptomatic of the general working conditions of the wages-men: long hours, moderate wages, a high cost of living combined with a lack of safety regulations, high temperatures, poor ventilation and the ever present threat of dust and damp in the mines, clearly gave rise to rankling discontent and increasing conflict between management and labour. But for the "wages-men", there was little recourse to unionism. A number of embryonic unions with a single work-site base had been formed, only to wither through apathy. A Miners'
K.H. KENNEDY

and Smelters' Union was launched at Chillagoe in 1906, but attempts to promote branches at Mungana and Redcap had failed for several reasons: partly, it had displayed little initiative in improving the lot of its members; partly, the opposition of the powerful mining companies, controlling both communications and job opportunities, ensured that activists were discouraged. More important, it was, as Young points out, the attitudes of the workers themselves which impeded unionism:

Attempts had been made to organise the workers, but rugged individualism, a capacity for endurance, frequent movement of people and, above all, a lack of knowledge of trade union techniques made corporate action difficult.3

In April-May 1907, unco-ordinated strikes at the Vulcan mine near Irvinebank failed for want of industrial organization. At the same time, mine managers throughout the Far North proposed wage cuts to maintain company profits.4 It was not unexpected in view of this action and the workers' past experiences when a number of determined miners met at Irvinebank in September 1907 to launch the Amalgamated Workers' Association.

Much of the credit for the union's early success belongs to E.G. Theodore, and to a lesser extent W. McCormack. Son of an Adelaide tugboat operator and grandson of a Rumanian Arch-bishop, Edward Granville Theodore was a bellicose young man of twenty-two, who had been accustomed to industrial protection at Broken Hill before arriving in North Queensland. He had the distinct advantage of union experience, and was widely read in socialist literature. His colleague, and five years his senior, was William McCormack, St. Lawrence born with previous experience in mining at Mt. Morgan, but now employed at Stannary Hills. On forming a close friendship in 1906, their careers became intertwined over the next twenty-five years: both were trade union officials, Labour politicians, Cabinet Ministers and, at different intervals, Premiers of Queensland. Despite their public association with Labour politics, it was the strong bond of friendship which still puzzled observers as late as 1931:

What attracted one to the other it is very difficult to say, for Edward was the very antithesis of William. They were both big men physically and both clever men in a different sense, but while Theodore was abnormally sphinxlike, McCormack resembled more nearly the irrepressible but clever parrot who was proud of airing his knowledge of a foreign language.5
Notwithstanding, they succeeded in moulding a "fighting machine" under the
direction of a small executive, unsurpassed in the Queensland industrial
movement before the First World War.

Operating from Irvinebank as a full-time organizer, Theodore spent
the following months recruiting members, and by May 1908, had established
A.W.A. branches at Stannary Hills, Mungana, Herberton, O.K. and Irvinebank.
Members were not always recruited by the organizer's expounding of the
benefits of corporate action, for as Bolton puts it:

... some non-members were persuaded to join after a stand-up
fight, others after losing their money to Theodore at two-up.
One miner at Irvinebank who refused to strike found himself
followed home from work every afternoon by a group of
unionists whistling the 'Dead March' from Saul.6

By July 1908, it was clear that the A.W.A.'s energetic executive was
determined to secure a politico-industrial base, encompassing all shades
of working class opinion and all unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the
region. McCormack, now general secretary of the A.W.A., sought to register
the union with the Australian Labour Federation, and more importantly, with
the Central Political Executive of the Labour Party to afford it recognition
as "the leading political Labour body in Woothakata".7 The defection of
Mick Woods, the former Labour member, to the Kidston-Liberal coalition had
caused widespread resentment among the miners. Shrewdly, McCormack not
only aligned the A.W.A. with the mainstream of unionism in the State, but
also now encompassed nearly all Labour sympathizers in the region under
its influence and authority.

To affirm the ascendancy of the union, Theodore and McCormack urged
intervention in the Etheridge railway dispute: the executive declared
support for the navvies, and voted them financial assistance; while Theodore
enrolled the strikers in the A.W.A., and set up strike camps, maintained
for three months by compulsory levies on union members at work.8 By
September 1908, there seemed little hope of a settlement, until Theodore,
using his trump-card, enlisted the support of the Opposition Leader, David
Bowman, and the prominent Labour spokesman, Albert Hinchcliffe, to negotiate
with the government and the Chillagoe Company. The move was successful;
and on 25 September 1908, a jubilant McCormack announced that the demands
on pay and conditions had been met in full. This unprecedented victory
over the management of the largest company in the North had immediate
repercussions for the union: not only did it precipitate an influx of new members, and the founding of new branches at Chillagoe, Einasleigh and Etheridge, but it confirmed the union's permanency as an effective industrial body. 9

Still eager to expand A.W.A. activities, McCormack scheduled the inaugural conference at Chillagoe for February 1909, to adopt a constitution and rules and a manifesto outlining the union's aims, which had been prepared by the executive. 10 The original draft constitution was adopted by delegates from eleven branches without significant amendment, along with an elaborate set of rules numbering over seventy. The principal feature was the centralization of control: all effective power was vested in the executive, which could suspend any rule or policy between conferences, and which was to direct all strikes, endorse all industrial agreements and supervise the union's finances. The branches were required to appoint delegates to conference and to the executive, collect membership subscriptions and levies, and implement executive decisions. 11

Significantly, the constitution and rules were concerned almost exclusively with organization, not aims, with means, rather than ends. This determined pragmatism which was to characterise the A.W.A. under the domination of Theodore and McCormack, was unusual at that time when most unions throughout Australia professed aims of a strongly utopian character. Even Rule 21 concerning political activities was no exception, empowering the executive to conduct plebiscites in conjunction with W.P.O.'s "for the selection of parliamentary candidates to run in the interests of Labour." 12 The same hard-headed realism and concentration on practicable ends to the exclusion of rhetorical ideals dominated the objectives, which dealt with conditions of work and catered to the parochial interests of the members.

Perhaps the most important decisions of the conference in the short term related to the union secretariat: firstly, the general secretary was afforded full-time status at a salary of 200 pounds per annum to ensure that he was "beyond the reach of victimizing mine managers"; and secondly, the union's headquarters were transferred to Chillagoe, a more central location with telegraph and rail communications with Cairns. An office was established in what is now Theodore Avenue, at the base of a huge limestone outcrop, centrally situated between the railway station, the smelters and Byrne's Imperial Hotel.
Other significant decisions included resolutions to fight all cases of victimization, designed to encourage membership; and the admission of sugar workers at Nelson and Mossman, foreshadowing rapid expansion into all sugar growing areas.\textsuperscript{13} Embodied in this last decision was the very spirit of the A.W.A. - to extend union activity into a multiplicity of industrial sectors, an initiative which made the organization the dominant industrial power in Queensland.

Anxious to consolidate both organization and finance, the A.W.A. steered clear of industrial strife until July 1909 when it called out its members working at the Mungana mines.\textsuperscript{14} Five months beforehand, a miner, John Lee, had been killed in a fall; and soon after, a fire had engulfed the Lady Jane mine. The management subsequently concentrated the workforce in the 700' and 800' levels of the Girofla mine where working conditions were oppressive. The A.W.A. secured pay loadings for all underground workers, again demonstrating the value of corporate action and union protection.\textsuperscript{15}

However, three months later, the union experienced its first failure in a strike action at the O.K. mines. Poor local leadership and a lack of solidarity among the miners resulted in capitulation after five weeks;\textsuperscript{16} but the failure in no way checked the impetus of the union's expansion. On the contrary, as the O.K. dispute was overshadowed by Theodore's successful bid for election to Parliament in Woothakata, now affording the A.W.A. direct parliamentary representation. Childe has related the unusual circumstances surrounding Theodore's nomination:

\begin{quote}
The main energies of the organization were, however, devoted to putting its organizer into Parliament. It is said that Theodore and McCormack tossed up to see who should run for the Woothakata seat. Theodore won both the toss and the seat.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

The turning point in the union's early history was the decision by the executive in July 1910 to endorse McCormack's proposal to incorporate all rural workers, sugar workers, railway navvies, smelter hands, miners and town labourers throughout the North, a scheme which would transform the A.W.A. from a regional grouping to a large scale industrial amalgamation. Circulars listing the benefits of amalgamation - continuity of membership, reduced management expenses, and one effective controlling body - reflected McCormack's practical approach to the scheme. Additional
propaganda attacked the parochial interests and attitudes of craft unions, and extolled the weight of industrial bargaining power that the amalgamation would be able to marshal.\textsuperscript{18}

An amalgamation conference met in Townsville in December 1910, comprising delegates from the A.W.A., Mt. Morgan Workers' Association, Western Workers' Association, Southern Railway Branch A.W.A., Amalgamated Workers' Union and Australian Sugar Workers' Union.\textsuperscript{19} In an opening address, A.J. Frazer, an organizer from the Australian Labour Federation assisting the A.W.A., claimed that it would prove the most important conference in Australian trade union history and forecast the decline of sectional and craft unionism.\textsuperscript{20} While Frazer may have grasped the amalgamation's potential strength, he could not have anticipated the rate of the A.W.A.'s expansion and industrial achievement.

The objectives adopted by the conference again concentrated on conditions of work, but were much more sophisticated, and included a new emphasis on political action to secure the "socialization of the means of production, distribution and exchange", and to strive for "district representation of Labour in Parliament." Organizationally, a more complex structure was adopted, highly empirical in design. Queensland was divided into five districts with a full-time secretary and organizer, and a district committee of delegates from each union branch. The union's executive council comprised the five district secretaries and district organizers, and the president, general secretary and two vice-presidents. The conference comprised the executive officers with two delegates from each district for the first 1,000 members and one for each additional 1,000. However, the executive council retained the real power and authority in the structure, even greater than under the original constitution: it had the right to suspend policy, to call strikes, to vote strike relief, to impose levies, to vary industrial agreements, and to exercise control over the union's finances.

The increasing political nature of the union's activities was reflected in the conference decisions to subscribe to the \textit{Worker}, the principal organ of the Australian Labour Federation, and to apply directly to the Central Political Executive of the Labour Party to have political committees in each electorate registered as Workers' Political Organizations, with authority to issue political tickets rendering the holder eligible to
THE RISE OF THE AMALGAMATED WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

vote in plebiscites for A.L.P. candidates, and to determine purely political questions at W.P.O. level. The re-affirmation by conference of the principles and platforms of the A.L.P. further betrayed a strong political character in the A.W.A., not to be found in craft unions and other groupings affiliated with the Australian Labour Federation. In the years after the General Strike of 1912, the A.W.A. (later A.W.U.) dominated not only the trade union movement but more importantly the Labour Party in Queensland because of its strong politico-industrial composition.

Contrary to the opinions of some historians, there is little evidence of any British or American influence within the A.W.A., even though both Theodore and McCormack were well-versed in socialist literature. The A.W.A. had readily accepted the traditional socialism of the A.L.F., which despite an early American influence in the 1890s, had adopted evolutionary and moderate methods: Bellamy, Gronlund and Henry George had little relevance for Queensland unionists after the turn of the century. Although aspects of the A.W.A.'s methods and character, such as direct action, opposition to craft unionism, anti-arbitration and recognition of the existence of class conflict, resembled I.W.W.-ism, later embodied in the One Big Union movement, no connection can be discerned. Similarly there is nothing to indicate that resemblance between the Amalgamated Workers' Association and Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated model is other than coincidental. The A.W.A. was founded on the collective experiences of its leaders, with little attention to abstract theories or overseas models: it was moulded under their bureaucratic control, and adapted to meet the needs of the membership; and it was readily aligned to the existing channels of political expression.

With the amalgamation schedule completed by January 1911, McCormack and his other officers were aware that a trial of strength was inevitable, but wisely contrived that it should be one of their own design. Just as the infant A.W.A. had become involved to advantage in the 1908 Etheridge strike, McCormack reasoned that the 1911 sugar-milling season would provide an opportunity to test the amalgamation's viability, as there existed widespread dissatisfaction with working conditions in the sugar industry. It was an ambitious project as the union's experience was confined to isolated strike action: to disrupt the sugar industry from Bundaberg to
Mossman would require a supreme effort in co-ordination, but the stakes - the leadership of the union movement outside the metropolitan area - were correspondingly high.

On 1 February 1911, McCormack tested his future protagonists - the General Manager of the Government Central Mills, C.S.R., and the Australian Sugar Producers' Association - drawing their attention to the recent amalgamation and requesting a conference of millers and A.W.A. officials to discuss wages, hours and working conditions. As might be expected, his request was rejected, thus providing the A.W.A. with propaganda ammunition to rally sugar workers to a dislocation programme.

As a preliminary, all district secretaries and district organizers were instructed to finalise outstanding membership subscriptions; to conduct a membership drive; and to avoid disputes which might involve unnecessary financial commitments. To McCormack, it was essential to marshall all resources, particularly finance, in anticipation of a bitter struggle in the sugar industry. However, in April 1911, his plans suffered a serious set-back: a cyclone battered Chillagoe, disrupting all communications, and several mines were forced to close down after retrenching scores of miners. McCormack's remedy clearly demonstrated his pragmatism and shrewdness both as a tactician and as an organizer: A.W.A. members were advised to accept work on the reconstruction of communications, despite lower wages, while any members unable to gain employment were encouraged to set out for the sugar districts where strike camps were being established. This scheme had the advantage of placing in the midst of the newly acquired sugar workers, A.W.A. members experienced in the union's methods.

Similarly, McCormack took the precaution of writing to many unions in southern states, outlining the A.W.A.'s aims and strategy, and seeking their co-operation in discouraging any influx of non-union labour to the North, which might act as a strike-breaking contingent. Typical was the letter to the Tasmanian union official, Arthur Nation:

... We are asking the Millers for an 8 hour day in the mills and also for a minimum wage of 30/- per week and food. We think that the sugar industry should be able to run an eight hour day as it receives a bonus from the consumers for the express purpose of making the industry a white man's industry. In connection with the cane cutting we have asked for a
THE RISE OF THE AMALGAMATED WORKERS’ ASSOCIATION

different agreement so that the men will have equal rights with the employers, and we think this is only fair. If you have been in the sugar fields you will know how much the men suffer through these legal obligations which they are compelled to sign, and we ask that the reprehensible system of bonus be abolished and a percentage system be adopted.

... We intend making the fight general from Mossman right down to Bundaberg ...

We will make every effort to stop men coming, and will ask the Waterside Workers not to handle sugar in which scabs are employed in the manufacture.25

So determined was the A.W.A. to exclude scab labour that McCormack informed the northern district secretary that he even approved violence and man-handling of intinerants, and the intimidation of farmers standing in their way.26

By June 1911, the strike was in full swing: strike camps had been set up in each district, and several mills had been unable to commence crushing. The delineation resembled the classical socialist pattern of workers opposing the capitalist monopoly, as related by McCormack to the Secretary of the Broken Hill Amalgamated Miners' Association:

The men involved are solid in the fight, and we expect to give the big gun C.S.R. the fight of its life. Of course there are hundreds of small farmers who would willingly give the better hours and conditions asked for, but they are under the thumb of the monopoly and dare not move in the matter.27

Both moral and financial support was forthcoming from southern unions,28 but there appeared little prospect of an immediate settlement.29

On 13 July 1911, State Parliament debated the dispute. It was clear that the strike had become more than simply an industrial question.30 A letter from McCormack to William Bertram, later Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, prefaced the debate:

The real fear is that success will enable us to thoroughly organize both the farmers and the labourers in this important industry and in some places the farmers are recognizing that they should be shoulder to shoulder with the workers in the fight against the monopoly. Of course the big guns know that this will mean political power and that is the real issue at stake.31

Indeed, the Liberal Premier, Digby Denham, realised the implications for both industry and his Government should the A.W.A. be successful. He
lost little time denouncing the union for irresponsible strike action, and
for intimidating non-union labour; but affirmed the Government's impartiality:

This is a strike that was contemplated and designed...to
strike at the psychological moment....The amount of
intimidation that goes on is simply deplorable....It is not
the function of the State to join issues at all. We have
acted perfectly impartially.32

It was a guarded stand on Denham's part, as his sympathy for big business
was well-known, as was his antagonism towards the unions. Convinced that
the strike would collapse as the months passed, Denham refused to commit
his Government to any form of intervention.

It was the co-operative millers and small farmers, confronted with
large personal financial losses, who eventually capitulated, prevailing on
the Australian Sugar Producers' Association to seek a settlement. Ironically,
when a settlement was finally announced in August 1911, the A.W.A. was at
the end of its tether: morale was low, and many difficulties were
experienced in maintaining solidarity. The demands on pay, hours,
employment conditions and bonuses were agreed to, and soon after, a
Commonwealth Royal Commission into the sugar industry acknowledged that the
A.W.A.'s demands had been justifiable.33 For the union's part, it was a
"splendid victory",34 boosting membership, and demonstrating the
effectiveness of organized labour in rural industry; but on the other hand,
it undoubtedly foreshadowed the confrontation between the Government-big
business alliance and the union movement which erupted in 1912.

The strike had highlighted many organizational deficiencies in the
A.W.A., which McCormack remedied in a number of urgent administrative
reforms: the headquarters was removed from Chillagoe to Townsville to
improve communications; the northern district secretary, Barton, having
demonstrated considerable incompetence, was forced to resign and was
replaced by Jack Dash, later member for Mundingburra and Transport Minister
in the Forgan Smith Government; and all temporary organizers were dismissed
to reduce financial commitments to administration.35 Contrary to long held
opinion, the 1911 strike clearly showed that McCormack, not Theodore, was
the driving force behind the A.W.A. after 1909.36 The militant apologist,
Ernie Lane, correctly attributes much of the union's success to McCormack
as general secretary.37

198
The first annual conference since the amalgamation of December 1910 was scheduled for Townsville in the last week of January 1912. While the conference made negligible alterations to the rules and platforms of the A.W.A., it marked an important milestone, coinciding with the General Strike of 1912. The subsequent dislocation was significant for the A.W.A. as it not only discredited the Australian Labour Federation, but resulted in the A.W.A.'s emergence as the most influential force within the Queensland industrial movement.

Ostensibly arising from a claim by members of the Australian Tramways Employees' Association for the right to wear union badges on duty, the dispute mushroomed when the Brisbane Tramway Company dismissed a number of unionists for defying company regulations. Even though the issue was already listed for hearing by the Arbitration Court, a meeting of delegates from the forty-three unions affiliated with the Australian Labour Federation agreed to call a general strike on 29 January 1912 to counter the "attack on unionism" by the company. The strike which lasted five weeks eventually fragmented trade union organization within the State, accelerating a re-alignment of industrial and political forces.

For the A.W.A., the decision to call a general strike caused considerable confusion: although its members were not even indirectly affected, affiliation with the A.L.F. created a moral obligation to support the action. Furthermore, the Brisbane delegates to the Townsville conference were eager to involve the A.W.A., and were deterred only by McCormack's counsel to await developments in the south.

The General Strike is probably best remembered not for its paralyzing effect on industry in the metropolitan area, not for the intense bitterness and political manoeuvring that followed, but for the clash between strikers and police in Albert Street on 2 February, culminating in a police baton charge on the assembled marchers. Although both sides suffered only minor injuries, "Black Friday" or "Baton Friday" was magnified in trade union and Labour Party circles to such a degree that when exaggerated reports of violence and police intimidation reached Townsville, together with a proclamation prohibiting assemblies, the A.W.A. executive council called out all members in Townsville and urged unionists throughout the North to strike. As Murphy points out, the strike action was seized upon by the
Liberal Government for it "revived Denham's political fortunes as he emerged and was praised as the custodian of law and order":

... To those residing outside the metropolitan area who had not witnessed the procession and who could rely only on inflammatory newspaper reports, it was seen as an attempt at revolution condoned by the Labor Party and prevented from producing complete anarchy only by the government's firmness.

McCormack was elected chairman of the strike committee in Townsville, and immediately scheduled a number of open-air meetings and protest marches, one of which culminated in a clash with police in Flinders Street on 5 February. Thereafter, nightly rallies were convened in the Lyceum Stadium near the railway station. When the first signs of defeat emerged in Brisbane during the second week of February, McCormack, alarmed that the A.W.A.'s standing might be damaged by continued resistance, disbanded the northern strike.

It was no easy task for McCormack to call off the strike, for, while he had been fully in command, the imagination of the strikers had been fired, as illustrated by Lane:

I was in the strike committee rooms the first morning of the strike. A man with bulging eyes rushed in exclaiming 'Mac, three cabbies are out on the cab rank - what will we do?' 'Do?' replied McCormack. 'Why, upset the bastards, but, don't come and tell me you have done it.'

However, to the disappointed militants, McCormack explained that it was easy to start a strike, but to conclude it required intelligence and courage - a stand clearly demonstrating the realistic approach by A.W.A. officials to union strategy. Contemptuous of the Brisbane strike leaders, whose intransigence was leading the A.L.F. to a humiliating and crushing defeat, McCormack scorned their plans for further action. In fact, he was considering the consequences for the industrial movement and the A.W.A.'s future: the A.L.F. had demonstrated its obsolescence and inability to co-ordinate the strike. With a leadership vacuum now created, the moment was ripe for the A.W.A. to make its bid for leadership and control of unionism within the State. The insistence of McCormack and Theodore that industrial unionism, free of craft interests, was the only effective method of organization clearly gave new impetus to the amalgamation movement.

The General Strike failed for a number of reasons. First, the absence of any concrete grievance or definite principle provoked an adverse
reaction from the community, as many felt that with the badge question already before the Arbitration Court, the unions were holding the public to ransom for purely political motives of discrediting the Denham Government. Second, there had been a lack of preparation for a lengthy strike particularly regarding finance, as once the strike was underway the southern counterparts' contributions were far from adequate. Third, by involving the railway unions, the strike committee automatically involved the Government, which had remained aloof, but intervened on the pretext of maintaining law and order. Fourth, a general strike was a tactical error, as the A.L.F., by confining the dispute to the metropolitan area and not seeking interstate supporting action, isolated itself from the jurisdiction of the Federal Arbitration Court. In contrast, the 1911 sugar strike had been successful because it was restricted to one industry; it was thoroughly organized in advance; it was sustained by the financial backing of unions not involved, both within Queensland and interstate; and it had been based on specific grievances.

The repercussions of the General Strike were two-fold: Labour suffered a reverse in the Queensland State elections in April 1912; but industrially, new support for union activity was forthcoming. The A.L.P. lost seats held by Mullan, Ferricks and Collins, and failed in a number of others about which it had reason to be optimistic. However, the loss of numbers was offset by an influx of new talent to the State Parliamentary Labour Party: McCormack, undeniably ambitious like Theodore, captured Cairns, while Gillies, Fihelly, Larcombe and Bertram were elected, and joined T.J. Ryan, Theodore and Coyne, the young vanguard in caucus. As might be expected, Labour supporters were disappointed with the results. Although delighted with McCormack's performance, Dash, the acting general secretary of the A.W.A. recorded his sentiments over the Mt. Morgan and Burke figures, electorates considered strongholds of the A.W.A., and both of which were captured by ex-Labour members:

I don't know what the Mount people are thinking about when they allow a rat to beat a straight out Labour man. I would sooner see a Labour man beat with a rank Tory than a rat at any time. I have a dead set against Rats. I think Collins will be defeated by Murphy the Rat.

With McCormack, Theodore, and a number of other union officials now
in Parliament, it might have been expected that the former A.W.A. leaders would detach themselves from union activity. This was not the case, as their immediate efforts greatly contributed to the reshaping of trade union alignments in Queensland. The one far-reaching decision of the 1912 A.W.A. conference in Townsville had been to appoint McCormack and Theodore as delegates to a Sydney conference to consider further interstate amalgamations.

In June 1912, the Australian Workers' Union, the Rural Workers' Union, the Carriers' Union, the Rabbit Trappers' Union and the A.W.A. commenced negotiations for an Australia-wide non-craft amalgamation. Strongly supported in principle by the A.W.A., McCormack and Theodore argued in favour of the proposal, claiming that it would be a source of strength to have a multi-purpose union structure, and advanced a draft scheme closely incorporating the structural features of the A.W.A. and concerned principally with financial arrangements. However, several New South Wales delegates from the Australian Workers' Union were cautious, fearing that a merger with the A.W.A. might not only endanger existing rural awards, but also the status of their union under Federal Arbitration legislation. On the other hand, the most formidable obstacle to any amalgamation, the vested interests of paid officials, did not jeopardize negotiations as the A.W.A. leaders had obtained seats in Parliament, "and were devoting themselves to the pursuit of political rather than industrial ends."

To resolve the impasse, the scheme was referred to the membership of all unions represented at the conference prior to a final decision on amalgamation in January 1913. In Queensland, at least, the weight of A.W.A. numbers assured solid backing for the proposal. A publicity campaign was mounted in the Worker, in which Theodore, as A.W.A. president, argued that amalgamation will accomplish manifold advantages to all concerned. There will be additional money available for propaganda and the distribution of literature; a more systematic action in industrial warfare; and the recognition of one ticket in all industries covered by the amalgamation.

Rank and file support for amalgamation was overwhelming, although the Australian Workers' Union vote contained a considerable bloc of opposition. In order to secure agreement, the second conference, held in Sydney in January 1913, had to make concession on points of organization that had previously proved stumbling blocks. With Queensland inheri
the centralized A.W.A. framework, and other states retaining the looser
A.W.U. organization with its large measure of local autonomy, the conference
displayed a sensible attitude to compromise. The amalgamation schedule
was adopted by the second (and last) A.W.A. conference at Rockhampton three
weeks later, and the Australian Workers' Union as it remains today came
into existence on 1 July 1913.

Probably the most far reaching decision of the second A.W.A.
conference, aside from ratification of the amalgamation schedule, was a
recommendation to acquire for the new A.W.U., the valuable commercial
assets of the Australian Labour Federation, namely the Worker newspaper,
its printery and stationary business and the new three-storied Worker
building in Elizabeth Street, now known as Dunstan House. As Murphy
relates:

With the acquisition of the Worker building, the A.W.U.
removed its office from the Trades Hall and so established
two physical centres of power in the Labor movement, a
move which was to have significant long-term effects in
the industrial and political areas.

With the eclipse of the A.L.F., the Central Political Executive of the
A.L.P. moved offices to the Worker building; while the A.W.U. was afforded
five delegates to the C.P.E., thus cementing its influence within the
Labour Party.

Initially, the A.W.U. forged ahead towards the creation of a
pan-Australian amalgamation of unions: a number of small unions were
absorbed, and by 1914 it looked as if the majority of non-craft unions
would amalgamate. However, this progress was halted with the breakdown
in discussions with the Australian Meat Industry Employees' Union; and
following the re-creation of industrial labour councils in most cities in
Queensland. Craft unions and those based on specialized industry
affiliated with the industrial councils, thereafter shunning the A.W.U.
primarily for its political connections, its bureaucracy and its new
commitment to arbitration.

The creation of the A.W.U. in Queensland remains a tribute to
McCormack and Theodore. The brief history of the A.W.A. clearly
demonstrates the success and capabilities of these unionist-politicians,
not only in organizing the nomadic northern labourers, sometimes by not
too fastidious methods, into a strong and cohesive industrial force, but
also in closely aligning trade unionism to the Labour Party. This close connection enhanced Labours' electoral support and in part contributed to the party's victory in Queensland in 1915. In fact, apart from a three year interval during the depression, Labour retained office for nearly forty years. More important, it was partly the severing of the alliance between the political wing and the A.W.U. in 1956 which fragmented the Labour Party in 1957, following the expulsion of the Premier, V.C. Gair, and his supporters.

For several decades, the myth of the militant North was perpetuated, with the A.W.A. singled out as the embryo of that spirit. Writing in 1939, Lane commented:

The A.W.A. in many a hard fought battle had established a reputation for militancy second to none, and was popularly known as the 'fighting A.W.A.'

Further, he bitterly denounced the successors of McCormack and Theodore, commenting on Riordan's election as A.W.U. President in 1916:

It is hardly necessary for me to note how faithfully Riordan carried out his mission....Like many other servers, Riordan foreswore his militancy once he had obtained office through its agency. He became a boon companion and well-beloved comrade of Dunstan and commenced his reactionary career.

Notwithstanding Lane's apologia for the militants and their want of success, he has misconstrued the actions of the A.W.A., confusing its methods with those employed by the I.W.W. in southern states for a brief period after 1913. In fact the only connection was one of inference. The A.W.A. employed direct action methods as it had no recourse to arbitration under the existing Wages Board legislation. At the Sydney conference in June 1912, McCormack, who had been responsible for most A.W.A. strike decisions, acknowledged the value of arbitration: at worst it gave workers an opportunity to air their grievances with comparative impunity. Indeed his criticism was always directed not at the principles of arbitration but at features of Queensland legislation, the shortcomings of which were remedied by Labour's Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, which provided for registration of industrial unions with the court, and amalgamation by agreement.

As a fighting machine, the A.W.A. was effective only because its
leaders adopted a consistently pragmatic approach to industrial relations, free from the restraints of ideological commitments. Only during the General Strike did the A.W.A. temporarily depart from its successful formula, and even then retrieved the situation without loss of prestige. The solidarity of its members and the often unrefined methods employed by its leaders were not exclusively criteria for militancy, but characteristics of frontier unionism in mining and unskilled labour intensive industry: frontier unionism was a tough school requiring capable leadership with a degree of cunning and ruthless for survival, qualifications which both Theodore and McCormack had attained. Further it was also partly the propaganda of the opponents of organized unionism, reacting to the A.W.A.'s success, which gave considerable credence to the myth of the militant North.

There has been no satisfactory account of the A.W.U. in Queensland after 1913, which partly explains many of the deficiencies in writings on the Labour movement in this State. Notwithstanding, it is doubtful that intensive research into trade unionism and Labour politics will substantiate the previously accepted myths of militancy and radicalism in North Queensland.

REFERENCES


2. While vaudeville troupes and cultural organizations often visited Chillagoe, one miner recollected that the major social event of 1909 was the sparring bout between McLaughlin, the local medical practitioner, and Tommy Burns on the Chillagoe Common soon after Burns had lost his world heavyweight boxing title to Jack Johnson at the Rushcutters Bay Stadium in Sydney. See A.C.C. Lock, People We Met, Townsville, 1950, p. 274.


4. Bolton, A Thousand Miles Away, p. 293 commented: "Inflated through over trading, the world copper market had been hit by a New York financial panic, and within a few months, prices had tumbled from a peak of 100 pounds a ton to under 60 pounds. Tin and silver-lead prices fell at the same time. Most mine managers reacted by tightening up on wages and disciplinary conditions."


8. Ibid., 17 July 1908.

9. A.L.P. Organizer, Charles Collins, commented, "that organization seems destined to become a great power in the North". Worker, 19 September 1908.


11. The proceedings of the conference were reported in the Worker, 6 March 1909.

12. Ibid.

13. For details, see ibid.

14. The Mungana group, six miles west northwest of Chillagoe comprised the Girofla, Lady Jane, Dorothy and Griffith workings.


16. Ibid., 5 November 1909.


18. For details, see ibid., pp. 127-8.

19. The Amalgamated Workers' Union delegates came from the Charters Towers and Townsville branches; and the Australian Sugar Workers' Union delegates represented branches at Mossman, Nelson, Mackay, Burdekin, Childers and Bundaberg.


22. The correspondence was tabled in State Parliament by William Lennon, member for Herbert, on 13 July 1911. See Q.P.D., CVIII, p. 34.

24. W. McCormack to A. Hinchcliffe, 14 April 1911, ibid.

25. W. McCormack to A. Nation, 14 April 1911, ibid.

26. W. McCormack to P. Barton, 8 May 1911, ibid. "We have had a great battle with gangs of Tasmanians re coming north. I am not sure how we have got on but they will not come publicly and will have to sneak up. We can handle them if they come up in two and three and will man handle them if they insist on going to work. The farmers are pretty frightened and we are trying to get weak men away from the mills and strong men pushed in so that they can command the situation....This is how we will win and it all depends on whom we have to handle."

27. W. McCormack to Secretary, A.M.A., Broken Hill, 30 June 1911, ibid.


29. W. McCormack to J. Dash, 8 May 1911, ibid. "We would be pleased if you could keep your chaps quiet out in Elliott until we have some settlement in the sugar as any disturbance in our mining districts will greatly weaken our chance of bettering the sugar workers lot."


31. W. McCormack to W. Bertram 5 July 1911, A.W.A. Letterbook.

32. Q.P.D., CVIII, p. 40.


34. W. McCormack to A. Hinchcliffe, 7 August 1911, A.W.A. Letterbook.

35. Ibid.

36. Young, Theodore, pp. 16-18 is perhaps the best example of exaggerating Theodore's role after 1909.

37. Lane, E. Dawn to Dusk, Brisbane 1939, p. 88.

38. McCormack had attempted to steer clear of industrial trouble until after the conference, but prophetically acknowledged that "we are not likely to have a great deal of peace in the future". W. McCormack to Business Manager, Worker, 2 January 1912, A.W.A. Letterbook.

The Queensland Shearers' Union formed in 1886 and the Queensland Labourers' Union formed in 1888 negotiated with other "Bush Unions" to constitute the Amalgamated Workers' Union of Queensland in 1891, with regional offices at Hughenden, Longreach and Charleville. In 1894, "Bush Unions" in the southern states formed together under the name Australian Workers' Union and the Queensland counterparts merged in 1904 as branches of that organization. Former branches of the Amalgamated Workers' Union, particularly the Townsville and Charters Towers Branches, did not participate in the 1904 merger, and retained autonomy until amalgamating with the A.W.A. in 1910. By transcending State boundaries the Australian Workers' Union (as it was prior to 1913) was thus subject to Federal awards. For details on the conference, see Official Report of the Amalgamation Conference, (Sydney, June 1912), A.N.U. Archives, M.50, Reel 1.


47. Worker, 14 November 1912.

48. Voting figures in the ballot were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Union</th>
<th>A.W.U.</th>
<th>A.W.A.</th>
<th>R.W.U.</th>
<th>A.C.U.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For</td>
<td>18,417</td>
<td>3,349</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>684</td>
<td>23,001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Against</td>
<td>7,060</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

49. The conference proceedings were recorded in the Worker, 15, 22, 29 January 1913, 5 February 1913.


51. Murphy, Labor in Politics, p. 184.

52. Lane, Dawn to Dusk, p. 88.

53. Ibid., pp. 138-39.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCES

This lecture was compiled from trade union and Labor Party records, official government publications and a number of secondary works.
THE RISE OF THE AMALGAMATED WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

1. Records relating to the A.W.A. are available at the Archives Unit, Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, Canberra.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Workers' Association Executive Council Minutes, May 1908-</td>
<td>M.44, Reel 30,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1910.</td>
<td>Item 105.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Secretary of Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland's</td>
<td>M.44, Reel 30,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letterbook, March 1911 - June 1912, and loose letters</td>
<td>Item 104.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville, December 1910.</td>
<td>Item 106.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland Annual Conference Minutes,</td>
<td>M.44, Reel 00,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townsville, January-February 1912.</td>
<td>Item 004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland Annual Conference Minutes,</td>
<td>M.44, Reel 00,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockhampton, January 1913.</td>
<td>Item 005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Report of the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland Inaugural</td>
<td>M.50, Reel 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference, Townsville 1910.</td>
<td>Item (a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference, Townsville 1912.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Report of the Amalgamated Workers' Association of Queensland Second Annual</td>
<td>M.50, Reel 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference, Rockhampton 1913.</td>
<td>Item (d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official Report of the Amalgamation Conference - A.W.U., Rural Workers'</td>
<td>M.50, Reel 1,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union, A.W.A., A.C.U. and Amalgamated Rabbit Trappers Union, Sydney, June</td>
<td>Item (c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Trade Union Records are accessible at James Cook University, viz.: Minutes, Reports and Records of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council 1867-1961, on microfilm.

3. Minutes of the Central Political Executive of the Australian Labor Party and Official Reports of the Labor-in-Politics Conventions are also held by the James Cook University Library.

4. Queensland Parliamentary Debates and Queensland Parliamentary Papers are available at the James Cook University Library.
5. Important secondary works readily accessible include:
   E. Lane, *Dawn to Dusk*, Brisbane, 1939.


6. Theses held by the History Department are also a most useful source for further research:

7. The major newspaper for students researching aspects of Labour history is the *Worker*, the files of which are held in Brisbane. The *Daily Standard* (1912-1936) is also useful for daily commentary.
THE HOTTEST TOWN IN THE NORTH:
CLONCURRY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DEPRESSION

Mr. M.J. Richards

This paper is a preliminary portrait of aspects of a small society and an attempt to answer questions which I see as important in discussing north-west Queensland in transition from the frontier years to the recent past and to the present day. It has strictly limited aims and must be seen as such.

The society is that living in and near Cloncurry; the time is the first years of the Depression - 1930 to early 1933. The question: was Cloncurry a community in more than geographical proximity? How did the group of people in the town interact with each other and with the surrounding district, how were they affected by the Depression and what was the meaning of these few years to be in relation to the larger history of the north-west?

Who then lived in Cloncurry in that period. There were about 1,000 people. Cloncurry is not a place to attract the wealthy and those of independent means: people were there because they had to earn a living and because the opportunities to do just that were there. We can get an idea of what these opportunities entailed by looking at their advertisements in the town's two newspapers, the Cloncurry Advocate and Flinders Pastoral and Mining Register and the Cloncurry News and Mt. Isa Record, which were also two obvious avenues of employment.

The Advocate, by the way, recorded the death in 1931 of its founder, which tells us something of the way in which one of the numerous small newspapers of the north began. R.C. Hensley had been in the district since 1879, first as a drover. He had then been trained as a blacksmith and had diversified with the gaining of contracts to build telegraph stations. The profits from these enabled him to become a property owner of some significance in Cloncurry and he served as president of nearly all the town's many public associations. He was remembered as having been "one of the strongest supporters of the Cloncurry-Normanton Railway when the Gulfites were agitating against the present Cloncurry-Townsville line" - an indication of how important the pattern of railway development had been to Queenslanders living in isolation; and an area I will return to later.¹
Who then used the pages of these two papers to announce to the town and surrounding district that they were prepared to exchange services for cash?

There was a contract builder; three plumbers and borers, important as installers of windmills and tanks; four carriers, one of whom specialised in carrying passengers; and two auctioneers, one a branch of a Sydney firm, offered everything from fire insurance to the sale of houses and stock. There were two blacksmiths, one of whom doubled as the town's undertaker, and one hardware merchant. Three firms of solicitors, two of them partnerships, offered their expertise; as did the town's two dentists, also in partnership. Four drapers shops were engaged in stern competition with each other and with the big mail order firms, and also competing were three grocers, supplied with bottles of 'The Waters of Jordan' - aerated waters manufactured by R.M. Jordan.

Those able to afford motor cars had the choice of seven motor dealers and mechanics: Ford, Chevrolet, General Motors, Chrysler and Plymouth franchises being shared by three firms. Creedon's refreshment rooms competed with the rival attractions of A.S. Miers' Post Office Refreshment Rooms, the latter having secured their own bakery and pastry cook. Two butchers continued an enterprise represented in the area from its very beginnings. The task of keeping their wares cool in the heat of Cloncurry (remembering the title of this paper) was no doubt aided by the town's iceworks, owned in fact by one of these butchers. The town boasted also a saddler and three barbers, one of whom also ran a billiard saloon.

And Hackim Rambindar Singh advertised every week that he was the only source of Hunghaj painless eye lotion, which "will cure 32 different diseases of the eye. Eight weeks constant use and you will never need spectacles".

A different form of medical aid was offered by first one and then two private hospitals specialising in gynaecology, and the publicly funded Cloncurry District Hospital, of which more later. Another public institution, the Commonwealth Savings Bank, competed with the Queensland National Bank. The State Government was represented by the State School the Cloncurry Police, the Clerk of the Magistrates' Court and the all-important railway, amongst whose employees was Tom Aitkens, later of
Townsville fame. Clerics represented the Church of England, the Methodist Inland Mission and the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic faiths, the last backed up by St. Joseph's Convent. Different ways of using up excess energy could be found at any of the seven hotels; one in particular pursued an energetic advertising campaign based on the attractions of wireless, flashing electric sign and, of course, its wares. I quote Walter Rose of the Central Hotel:

Laugh and grow fat Walter still says, though
Depression's a bit of a curse,
No use being mad because things are so bad,
business might even be worse,
Wages are down and so is the town, but maybe
for only a while,
Still there's three meals a day, that's something
to say, and even the ghost of a smile,
Each day he gets news and political views, but
only confusion is there,
So he tries to forget, and tunes in the set, to
hear what he can from the air,
The glasses still shine with ruby-red wine, he
stocks only the best of good beer,
So help put some grace in Depression's glum face
and chase his shadows with cheer,
So we'll join with him too, when we're having a
few, and admit Depression's a curse,
But once in a while we'll manage to smile, for things
might even be worse.2

If you were so inclined you could also take your ease in the evening at any of the town's three picture shows, and many were so inclined, going to the talkies two or three times a week to see a constantly changing stream of movies. On the 20th January 1931, for example, patrons of the Australian bioscope pictures were entertained by "Young Woodley".

An all British talkie which in itself is a recommendation. It is the most discussed picture released in Australia for years. It was held up by the censor for some months before it was finally released for public exhibition with this qualification. It was to be exhibited to adults only and children under sixteen were not to be admitted. This must be clearly understood. The picture is set mostly in an English public school and contains some wonderful views of school life. It is the story of an impressionable young man, a husband who is the most devastating bore imaginable, his young easy-going wife with more than a suggestion of voluptuousness in her appearance and an obvious lack of strength of character.
The fare was not entirely light entertainment, though; six months later Cowling's talkies screened the sex enlightenment feature How Shall I Tell My Child, "portraying where ignorance, prudery, and weak modesty will eventually lead the children ... no boy on the threshold of manhood should on any account be allowed to miss it".  

Some of these people, obviously, related economically to other townspeople, some to the economic 'hinterland' of Cloncurry and most to both. Yet, whilst it can be seen as a commercial centre, I would argue that Cloncurry served only very specific economic functions. Many people outside the town also clearly felt it worthwhile to advertise frequently. This is, of course, logical. Cloncurry clearly could not produce all the goods and services demanded by its own residents, let alone its neighbours. Therefore Brisbane firms both advertised products available in the town and more importantly, engaged in direct mail-order trade in everything from fruit and furniture to batteries and branding irons. A few Sydney firms did the same, and perhaps more significantly, Townsville and even Toowoomba stock and station agents competed with their few local equivalents.

In other words, an important amount of trade and therefore money and opportunities for further expansion must have by-passed Cloncurry. The railway was significant in this process. It allowed people and goods far easier access to the town, but it also made it easier to get out. The development of commercial aviation would have had a similar effect, limited by the expense involved. It cost 25 pounds in 1930 to fly to Brisbane, although this had fallen to 17 pounds and sixpence by the end of 1931.

Later, of course, Cloncurry was to be challenged by the much more viable retail centre of Mount Isa. But long before that, I believe, the environmental realities and the patterns of transport development in Queensland's sprawling interior had forced Cloncurry into a role that gave it certain central functions, but which could not expand overmuch without the introduction of a completely new variable such as a major mineral discovery. Some residents realised this and clung to the belief that there were important new finds to be made close to the town, but it was not to be.

The town's one significant chance of diversifying had apparently come with the building of an electrolytic plant for the treatment of copper ore by the Great Australian Mine Company. But despite the expenditure of some 128,000 pounds on buildings, railway lines, crushing and roasting plants,
a power house and electrolysis vats, the complex never went into production. The reasons advanced were varied: from the unsuitability of the water, to the whole project having been simply a "sharemarket wrangle" from the very start.\(^5\)

The plant had, in fact, infringed upon patents held by others, as some knew in the town. But by now, justifiably cynical about the morals and efficiency of some mine promoters, other rumours were believed by the disappointed residents. Thus, the town displayed the typical symptoms of a small economy with a restricted range of activities under the stress of the Depression. Competition was keen and superficial change accelerated, but continued development beyond its established functions was greatly retarded.

I have left one important resident of the town until last: James Whitman, the chemist. He was important both because as the town's only chemist he was one of its leading businessmen, and because one of his daughters was to marry Dr. Allan Vickers, whose biography I am chiefly concerned with at the moment. Mrs. Vickers is an important source of material in this paper, and a brief consideration of two generations of her antecedents will illustrate well the transition from frontier to permanent settlement amongst the new European population of North Queensland.

The Whitmans had arrived in Sydney in 1852: father, three brothers and four sisters. William, one of the brothers, tried his luck with gold and hawking and followed the Conoona Rush to Rockhampton in 1858. After seven months on the field and a period of droving and station work, he and his brother James, (the father of the chemist), started a butchering business at Copperfield Peak Downs. They then gained several mail contracts, using 700 horses on runs including Springsure, Blackall and Lammamoor to Thargomindah. After selling this business they built a store, hotel, butchers, blacksmith's and saddler's shops at a spot they named Whittown, now Isisford, and bought the store at what is now Windorah; built a store at what was to become Canterbury and bought yet another store at Birdsville. They also took up pastoral selections near Cloncurry. Their expansion was halted partly by aboriginal hostility, and partly because of a desire to enjoy their modest wealth with a move to Rockhampton.
The brothers retired in 1888, but were wiped out in the Mount Morgan crash. James returned to Isisford and William to Windorah and the family stores at those places. Little is known of their wives, except that the three brothers married three sisters: Charlotte, Elizabeth and Margaret Tucker of Maryvale Station. Mrs. Vickers' father, James who was born at the time of the move to Rockhampton in 1880, had won a State Scholarship to the University of Queensland, where he qualified as a pharmacist, despite the downturn of the family's fortunes. He returned to Cloncurry to serve as the town's chemist for thirty years.

Lilias Whitman, unlike most of her contemporaries, had been educated at the Glennie School in Toowoomba. A few of the town's children went to finish their schooling in Brisbane or Townsville, but the general pattern seems to have been to either leave State School to find work or to go on to the Thornburgh or Blackheath Colleges in Charters Towers - these being most attractive, though, to the families of the stations around Cloncurry. The schools offered, for example, "elocution, voice production, dramatic training in the reconstructed Thornburgh arbour under the supervision of Mr. T.R. MacKenzie, R.A." and an "agricultural section with a college dairy and farm of over 150 acres and an unfailing water supply, a general utility course; training given in a general course in carpentry and woodworking, simple plumbing and tinsmithing, practical electricity in lighting and wireless, elementary practice internal combustion engine including automotive machinery".

The other significant employer was the Shire Council with its small administrative structure and road gangs. The sphere of the Cloncurry Shire Council epitomises one of the important themes which seems to me to have emerged in the 1930s. It included Mt. Isa and Julia Creek, even though Mt. Isa itself had double the population of Cloncurry. Cloncurry was passing from a position of dominance in the district to a much more subdued role. Formerly the railhead with an important function as the district's centre in the previous decades, the town's claims to importance were being challenged by the continued development of the hinterland, despite the hibernating impact of the Depression.

Once hailed by Robert Logan Jack as "the future industrial city of the west" it had been the focus of attention of stock exchanges and mineral
THE HOTTEST TOWN IN THE NORTH: CLONCURRY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DEPRESSION

consortiums across the world. Extraordinarily rich deposits of copper and associated minerals had, in fact, created the town, and the coming of the railway in 1908 seemed to cement its future. But the line was connected to Townsville, not the Gulf, and freight costs were ruinous, especially for large companies. Few ore bodies had a long-term future, unlike Mt. Isa. Small competing companies failed to combine and pool resources, and a peak production of one and a half million pounds worth of copper in 1918 gave way soon afterwards to futile and spasmodic company endeavour and to the work of individual gougers.

Mt. Isa was the centre of interest and the railhead after 1923 and despite an extraordinary series of setbacks was to be, in the long run, the city that Cloncurry still occasionally believed it could be. Geoffrey Blainey has summed it up well with the words "sleepy Cloncurry, the scene of more unfulfilled promises than any other town in Australia". Yet Cloncurry was still very important in the period I am concerned with. That marvellous compendium of things Queensland, Pugh's Almanac, for example, in 1925 still described it as the centre of a district featuring "copper and silver lead lodes amongst the richest in the world. Fares by train from Brisbane, 83 shillings and tenpence".

Institutions and social relationships often exist long after their raisons d'être have come under challenge or have died a natural and/or unnatural death. This is very evident in the strenuous battles for control of the Shire Council, which in 1930 consisted entirely of men from Cloncurry. Minutes of its meetings reveal a wide range of functions. For example, the meeting of January 8th, 1930, discussed the Health Inspector's salary, the width of footpaths in Mt. Isa, complaints about the granting of licenses for travelling shows, road conditions and its Chairman's refusal to allow a performance by the Cloncurry band on Christmas Eve. And it received notice from the newly formed Electrical Light Company of its "intention to apply to the Governor in Council for permission to supply electric light" to the town. (This company incidentally was to run into problems before any electricity, other than that from private generators, had come into use. A meeting to rally support shortly afterwards attracted only 12 people.)
The Council was important if only because of the amount of money involved in its operations. Even its deficit for the 1929-30 financial year of 9,890 pounds 18 shillings and twopence was an impressive amount in those days. Such debts were common as money tightened; more significant was the Council's decision to lay off all roadworks when it realised its financial position, for this threatened to bring unemployment into the town itself, this having been disguised in the past, and the decision was hotly contested and eventually postponed.

Most of the Shire Councillors' attention in that year seems, however, to have been devoted to a fierce contest over the election of the nine people to form the new Council. Most public debate centred on a partially successful attempt to break the Cloncurry monopoly of the Council, the three new Councillors from Mt. Isa including the Chief Engineer of Mt. Isa Mines. Not that Mt. Isa's problems were solely bound up with the older town being unwilling to concede a portion of self-government; the Shire Council meeting in May was told by the State Minister of Railways, the Honourable Godfrey Morgan, that the Government could not at this stage go ahead with bridging the Leichhardt as: "The Government were wishing to make sure of the position of Mt. Isa before spending some thousands of pounds on a bridge. He was sure that Mt. Isa would become greater, but no risks would be taken, as many other similar mining ventures had gone down."

Another centre of discontent in the Shire, Julia Creek, celebrated with "great jubilation" its formation as a separate Shire later in 1930. This township, resulting from the breaking up of several large stations some years earlier and built under the auspices of the Workers' Dwelling Act, appears to have seen itself as a different kind of community from the arrogance of a has-been Cloncurry, although it seems also to have been particularly hard-hit by the Depression and drought. This is further displayed by the decision earlier to close down the Julia Creek branch of the Bush Nursing Association. Receipts for 1929 had totalled only 428 pounds, 9 shillings and twopence, this having to cover 1,295 attendances at surgery and 1,573 miles to reach 675 home cases. This closure seemed also to have been indicative of a desire to rationalise medical services in north-west Queensland. As Ulrick Browne, Honorary Secretary of the Branch, pointed out in an open letter to the Minister of Public Health, "a hospital at
THE HOTTEST TOWN IN THE NORTH: CLONCURRY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DEPRESSION

Julia Creek would have to meet very tough competition from large and well-equipped hospitals who for their own survival, would have to cut into our business as much as possible".\textsuperscript{19}

Having glanced briefly at local government, then, it is time to look at Cloncurry's functions as the medical centre of the district. The most glamorous aspect of this function was, I suppose, the establishment in the town in 1928 of the aerial medical service of the Presbyterian Churches' Australian Inland Mission, later to become the Royal Flying Doctor Service and to spread in the words of John Flynn, "a mantle of safety" across the continent. This is not the place for a history of the service. I will content myself with pointing out, as others have done, that this organised and permanent marriage of the three sciences of medicine, aviation and wireless in the infancy of their modern development, was indeed a unique achievement. But whilst the A.M.S. doctor served a vast area around Cloncurry, he only rarely impinged on the town itself as part of its medical resources, and the impermanence of the doctors before Allan Vickers arrived in 1931 militated against any important role in Cloncurry society. The town's people were not called upon to support the service financially, and whilst Cloncurry people paid due deference to John Flynn and his ideas, they were prepared also to ignore and indeed to criticise the A.M.S. In October, 1930, for example, the Cloncurry Base Hospital Committee pointed out to the A.I.M. that in the last year its aerial ambulance had brought in 15 patients from other hospital districts, whose medical (and burial) costs had amounted to 346 pounds, only 21 pounds of this being refunded.\textsuperscript{20} Not that the Committee should be seen as greedy and grasping. At the same meeting it was informed that even though all bad debts had been written off in March, 1928, they had already regrown to nearly 3,000 pounds.

The presence in the town of the Methodist Inland Mission seems also to have occasioned some strife, although this appears to have been directed mostly at the local branch of the Q.A.T.B., the local Methodist Minister, Ira Menear (soon afterwards elected Chairman of the Hospital Committee) being indignant at what he saw as the lack of appreciation of his Mission's investment of 366 pounds in each of eight cars, patrolling half the continent on missionary and ambulance duties.\textsuperscript{21}
I can find no record of Vickers himself having ever attended a meeting of the Hospital Committee, even though he was its Honorary Medical Advisor. There are indications that he shied away from its turbulent infighting, which peaked with the chairmanship from September, 1930, to February, 1931, or Ira Menear. One meeting in that month, for example, began with two curious items in the inward correspondence: one from a gentleman announcing his willingness to serve on the committee, should a vacancy occur; the second coincidentally being a letter of resignation from the Committee. Mr. Menear called for nominations, another member protesting that "this business was framed before the meeting" adding later "Ned Kelly is not in it". One of Menear's opponents then himself produced an acceptance of nomination from his pocket, much to everybody's surprise.

Mr. Menear was shortly thereafter transferred to South Australia, the meeting to elect a new President attracting a sizeable gallery - possibly in the hope of a free night's entertainment. One feature of the election worth remarking upon was the inevitable defeat of the only female member of the committee. I say inevitable, because, as should have become obvious by now, the women of Cloncurry are very nearly invisible in the areas I have talked about. Even though most of the employees of the Hospitals were female, for example, they usually had an all-male committee to supervise them. I am not competent to generalise overmuch on the role of women, but I can provide a few pointers to the general picture. The local branch of the C.W.A. was remarkable for its general lack of interest in the A.M.S., even though country women were usually pictured as one of its main beneficiaries, although there were exceptions. When the celebrated aviator Amy Johnson passed through the town, the News commented that "she appeared to be a very nice spoken English girl, with nothing whatever masculine about her".

And one regular columnist commented that:

Women know next to nothing of politics as a general rule and are rarely interested in them, but their knowledge of what might be termed minor economics, is usually as good as, if not better than, that of the mere male.

On the other hand, I think it is fair to say, that women whilst they may not have been strenuously encouraged to take major initiatives, by no means met overt hostility when they did. There were robust female role
The Second Cloncurry Flying Doctor Base, February 1940. The original base was at the back of the Presbyterian Church Hall.

VH-UER - the first plane used regularly by the R.A.M.S. by arrangement with QANTAS. A patient with a head injury is on a stretcher alongside the cockpit.
Amy Johnson flying the London-Sydney route via Cloncurry
models, using Dr. Miriam Dixon's terms, both in the traditionally female spheres (for example, the sisters of the A.I.M. Hospitals scattered across the outback), and in such areas as aviation, the activities of Australian "aviatrix" (I use the word of the time) being often reported.

What then of the other often invisible groups in northern society after settlement - the aborigines? A few lived in or near the town - the Whitmans employed an aboriginal woman to help in the house. But their numbers were few - low enough for the emotionalism of earlier years to have given way to regret and melancholy:

They are gone with the exception of a few descendants who work on the big pastoral properties, but when the whites first blazed their tracks into this then unknown western territory, the Kulkadoon [sic] Mippe and Ooonourra tribes were dusky people to be respected, as they were mighty warriors and wonderful hunters. The Kulkadoons in particular were a warlike race and they did not give up their country without many grim encounters being fought between them and the white invaders. With more modern fighting implements, the latter gradually broke down the dusky opposition, and as the years passed vile liquor and disease took a hand in assisting to exterminate the original owners of this country.27

Other manifestations of this "Kalkadoon" legend have been examined in this department by Ian Hughes, who has concluded that rather than having been particularly warlike the Kalkadoons, in fact, simply had the dubious honour of having their part in frontier conflict remembered more accurately by the whites than was the norm. Whatever the facts, (and the only major difference in the Kalkadoon environment from that of allegedly less violent aborigines is the presence of uranium at Mary Kathleen, which I would suggest is an unlikely cause), the numbers of this group alone had fallen from 1,500-2,000 before contact to approximately 100 by 1897, and to less than two dozen full bloods today.28

The other minorities traditional on the Queensland frontier were represented in the town; a few Chinese, an Afghan trader with his camels, and a few Lebanese families, the last being well respected members of the business community.

Not that overt violence had disappeared from the district. Indeed, one could almost argue that a new frontier was developing. Cloncurry was
a Labor town. Voting in the Federal Election of 1931 showed 579 voters in favour of the Labor M.H.R. for Kennedy, Riordan, whilst his opponent won only 248 votes.

Mt. Isa, of course, was even more solidly Labor, a similar conservative vote (253) being overwhelmed by 1,062 for Riordan, and this despite the widely reported Mungana scandal as a result of which Theodore lost his seat in the same election. But, fairly obviously, unemployment and the stress of the depression could only exacerbate relations between employees and the mining firms operating in the district. Strikes were frequent in Mt. Isa, the company being viewed with considerable suspicion. An alleged takeover of the Isa Hospital by M.I.M. in 1930, for example, was reportedly denounced by the town's A.W.U. Organiser as leaving the town's unemployed, and those recently dismissed, at the not-so-tender mercies of the company. Conflict flared into the open towards the end of 1931 at the Mount Oxide Mine, 80 miles from Dobbyn, a township some 80 miles north-north-west of Cloncurry, when strikers attacked an ore carrier and policemen. Their alleged leader, John McCormack, received two months goal and was later charged with attempting to blow up a bridge between Dobbyn and the Orphan Mine to again stop the movement of ore. He was last heard of as having been one of those injured in a battle between unemployed and a coalition of police and townspeople in Cairns in July 1932. The most notable industrial trouble in Cloncurry itself, however, seems to have been the extension of the 1931 Townsville Railway strike to the town, when engine drivers voted 14 to 4 to disobey the instructions of the A.F.U.L.E. executive in Brisbane and to go out in sympathy. More excitement was probably occasioned by the burning down of the Empire Picture Theatre, found later to have been deliberate and surrounded by rumours of 100 pound payments and threats.

The generally peaceful nature of Cloncurry party politics, at least on the surface, is probably exemplified by the Labor Day marches of those years. They were big; most people entered or watched, the dance at night was an important social event, and the prize money offered for the best float for the march probably calmed the uneasiness of any non-Labor entrant. In other words, I am suggesting that political conflict within Cloncurry was a matter of personality clash as much as ideological division. People
were certainly aware of political events elsewhere, and I can find no
evidence that people in the town deprecated such happenings as not being
their concern. They were vitally concerned because their livelihoods
depended on the prosperity of Australia. But, at least in the early years
of the Depression, differing political views were not usually carried
over into serious splits in the town itself.

This was also due to the impermanence of groups that elsewhere would
have led opposition to the Labor consensus of the town. The doctors,
bank officials, ministers of religion, court officials, school teachers
and others were constantly being transferred out of the town as they
progressed to more salubrious postings. Yet, on the other hand, the fact
that they might be in the town for only a few years did not seem to have
discouraged a few of these people from playing prominent roles on the
Town's civic associations. We need only to look at T. Aitkens, elected to
the Shire Council at the age of 23, and the previously mentioned Ira
Menear. Perhaps the impermanence of such people meant that the town
could absorb high levels of personal conflict. It knew it would not last;
lasting divisions would be just as easily cured by the disappearance of
their causes as by the passage of years.

It is time I mentioned the Depression directly. The town went through
many of the strains felt across Australia: wages being cut, prices being
dropped and uncertainty over the future of pastoralism and mining in the
next few years. But fairly obviously many people were in the short run
only marginally affected. Races were still being held all over the
district, the annual at Cloncurry offering 250 pounds prize money in 1931.
Christmas 1931 was quiet but "the business people state that they were well
pleased with the business done throughout the festive season". In July
a polo club was formed, a hockey club was being proposed, a Scout
Troop was begun, and in December, the new golf links were opened.
Lilias Whitman won the Ladies' Stroke Handicap, and shortly afterwards left
for holidays in the south.

In other words, some people could largely avoid the economic down­
turn, and change went on. The very fact that the A.M.S. kept going was
testimony to that. On the other hand, the town was conscious of a constant
stream of unemployed on their way to the Isa and its papers were frequently outspoken on the allegedly harsh treatment of such people. Further, it was no disgrace when Walter Rose, of Central Hotel fame, found he could not keep his business going. He was given one of the frequent public farewell dinners and set off for the Batavia Goldfield. I do not know how successful his trip was but he seems to have been back in business in Cloncurry within a few months.

One response seems to have been a fair degree of cynicism about the politicians' and southerners' handling of the economy. One unknown poet described their policies in the words -

ADVANCE AUSTRALIA

Ye bankers of olde England,
Who sit at home at ease,
List to the cry of help that comes
From the far off southern seas.
"Advance Australia money",
So we don't have to sow,
But merely reap the benefit,
Of the money that we owe.
And we'll pay you what you lent us,
With the money that we owe.

Australia needs no bulwark,
No towers along the steep,
What Australia needs is money,
So we can eat and sleep,
And journey out to Randwick,
Then see the Easter Show,
And buy a Yankee motor car,
To Yankee pictures go.
And we'll pay you what you lent us,
With the money that we owe.

"Advance Australia Money".
If you decline with thanks,
Don't think that it will make us save,
We've always got the Yanks.
Advance Australia money,
"Advance Australia Fair".
You can't advance too much my lads,
Australia will be there.

But there seems to have been little response in the town to the call of a Julia Creek wool grower, U.S. Browne, for a new Federation of Western
THE HOTTEST TOWN IN THE NORTH: CLONCURRY IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE DEPRESSION

Australia, South Australia, Central Queensland, North Australia and Western New South Wales, upholding the principles of free trade and "honouring their share of all public and private indebtedness" no longer "shackled to those irresponsible idealists along the eastern sea wall". Back then to my original question: what sort of a community was Cloncurry? I think the answer is clearly pointed out by the town's response to the Depression. There may not have been exaggerated attempts to solve the economic ills of the town, but there was a general consensus that "We'll stick together and pull through". I would suggest that the Depression was seen in a similar way to other setbacks, such as drought. There was little Cloncurry could do about it, and it would certainly try to do that. But the main response had to be the attempt to keep things going until better times came. This was a result both of the town's normal dependance on external factors (the price of wool and minerals) and of its isolation from the decision centres of Australia. People were aware, often keenly, of what was happening in the cities and abroad, but they had long since reconciled themselves to not carrying much weight in the outside world. Indeed, there was more than enough to occupy their attention in the very real world that surrounded them, in and around the town of Cloncurry.

REFERENCES

1. Advocate, 1 August 1931.
2. Ibid., 13 June, 1931.
3. Ibid.
5. A.R. Vickers, Diary, 4 April, 1931.
6. Manuscript held by L. Vickers; copy of article in Rockhampton? paper, December 1919?
13. Ibid., 10 February, 1930.
15. Ibid., 26 May, 1930.
16. Ibid., 28 July, 1930.
17. Ibid., 13 January, 1930.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 18 October, 1930.
21. Ibid., 8 September, 1930.
22. Ibid., 15 February, 1931.
23. Ibid., 22 February, 1931.
24. Ibid., 15 March, 1931.
25. Ibid., 2 June, 1930.
26. Ibid., 8 September, 1930.
27. Ibid., 7 February, 1931.
30. Ibid., 8 November, 1931.
31. Ibid., 27 March, 1932.
32. Ibid., 24 July, 1932.
33. Ibid., 29 November, 1931.
34. Ibid., 1 May, 1932.
35. Ibid., 3 January, 1931.
36. Ibid., 5 July, 1931.
37. Ibid., 19 July, 1931.

38. Advocate, 7 March, 1931.


40. Ibid., 21 February, 1932.

41. Ibid., 20 June, 1930.

42. Ibid., 31 January, 1931.
ANNE ALLINGHAM is a History honours student in her final year. Her thesis will be written on the early years of the pastoral industry in North Queensland.

HELEN BRAYSHAW is an honours graduate of the University of New England in full-time research with the History Department for the degree of Ph.D. Her research is concerned with the Material Culture of Aborigines in the Herbert-Burdekin region.

PAULINE CAHIR is a Tutor in History. She is an honours graduate of Monash University where her thesis was written on the relationship between British attitudes towards Australia and the British class structure.

PHILIP COURTEENAY is Associate Professor of Geography. A well-known authority on tropical agriculture, he also has a longstanding interest in historical geography.

JEAN FARNFIELD is a Senior Lecturer in the History Department whose main research has been on North Queensland history. She is currently working on the history of the Torres Strait region.

SHARON HAYSTON is a student in the final year of the interdisciplinary degree B.Ed.-B.A.(Hons). Her thesis will be written on the social and religious history of Charters Towers.

IAN HUGHES, a Townsville schoolteacher, is studying part-time for the honours degree in History. His thesis will be written on the history of the Cooktown district.

KETT KENNEDY is a Ph.D. graduate of James Cook University and a Tutor in History. His Ph.D. thesis was written on "The Public Career of William McCormack."

NOEL LOOS, a Senior Lecturer in the Townsville College of Advanced Education, is a graduate of the University of Queensland. He is currently completing a Ph.D. thesis part-time on Aboriginal-White Relations in North Queensland.

CATHIE MAY is an honours graduate of the University of Western Australia and a full-time Ph.D. candidate.

C.R. MOORE is an honours graduate of James Cook University and a Tutor in South-East Asian History. He has been making a special study of descendants of South Sea Islanders in North Queensland using oral history techniques.
MIKE RICHARDS is an honours graduate of the University of Queensland and a Tutor in History. He is writing a biography of Allan Vickers, a key member of the Flying Doctor Service.

DON RODERICK is a leading Townsville architect whose interest in the architecture of Ravenswood and Charters Towers has led to his becoming a formidable authority on both towns.

HENRY REYNOLDS, a Senior Lecturer in History, is an authority on race relations in Queensland, and in Australian history generally.