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NORTH QUEENSLAND HISTORY
No. 4

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

The series in which this volume appears began some ten years ago. All papers in the first two volumes, published in 1974 and 1975, were originally lectures in the literal sense, given by students and staff on the basis of their own research, as part of a North Queensland component in the Australian History subject then offered by the History Department. This determined the length and influenced the style of the individual papers. By the time the third volume was published in 1979, comprehensive changes in the Department's teaching programme had curtailed opportunities for specialist lectures of that nature, so that some of the papers in it had not originated in the same way. This is also true of the present collection, one obvious result being a wider variation in length. In other respects this volume is of a piece with its predecessors.

Each paper arises out of research undertaken within the Department by a student or member of staff. Only two of the authors have contributed to earlier volumes in the series. The range of subjects extends in time from the Separation of Queensland in 1859 to the Civil rights movement of only half a decade ago, touching upon every decade in between. Two result from research projects privately funded: a jubilee history of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville, and a centennial history of local government in the Hinchinbrook Shire. Commissions like these, quite frequent in recent years, are especially welcome at a time when both the number of post graduate scholarships and the level of financial support for them lag far behind real needs.

This volume, like other publications emanating from the Department, was typed by its clerical staff and printed and bound by the University Printery. Relatively swift and inexpensive, this method of production makes it feasible to publish works which commercial publishers think too limited in appeal to be profitable to them, and to offer them to readers at attractive prices. Keeping prices as low as possible is particularly important to students, who constitute our primary, though perhaps not our largest, body of readers; yet each volume must raise enough from sales to cover at least the entire costs of production. Lacking the commercial publisher's resources for advertisement and distribution, we are heavily dependent upon personal recommendation to extend our circle of readers. All our previous publications have reached hundreds of readers throughout Australia, as well as some in other countries. It is hoped that this one will also be widely read.

B.J. DALTON
In 1920, William Douglas Reid compiled a memoir on the early life of his late brother, George Macfarlane Reid. It provides not only a rare insight into the life and experiences of a family migrating to North Queensland in the 1860s, but also an invaluable account of early Bowen and the gold rushes of the 1870s, especially to Ravenswood, Charters Towers and the Palmer River. Few first hand accounts of the first years of settlement in North Queensland have survived; among them W.D. Reid's short memoir is outstanding for its graphic descriptions.

In editing and annotating Reid's typescript, approximately twenty percent of his text has been deleted: the more personal reminiscences of George's character, idiosyncrasies and boyhood adventures, and some family matters. The effect is to emphasize broader themes and highlight episodes on which little else has been recorded. Spelling, grammar and punctuation have been retained in their original form both in reproducing the memoir and in citing extracts of the Diary of Abijou Good for purposes of comparison.

A copy of the W.D. Reid transcript was provided by the Bowen Historical Society, and permission to reproduce the memoir was given by Sir George Ranald Macfarlane Reid who deposited the original. The University of Melbourne Archives has permitted the reproduction in part of two letters from the J.S. Reid papers, and James Cook University authorised the use of excerpts from the diary of Abijou Good.

The Reverend James Reid and his family departed Liverpool on 18 June 1863. They arrived at Keppel Bay on 13 October, the voyage lasting 118 days. Reid was appointed to the new parish of Bowen soon after: he was the first Presbyterian minister in North Queensland and only the third clergyman to be stationed north of the Tropic of Capricorn. A graduate of Glasgow University, James Reid came from a professional background,
as did his wife, Eliza (nee Smith).  For many years the Reids had lived at the Manse, Rathmelton, in County Donegal, but as W.D. Reid relates:

Our path in life was largely determined by the fact that my father lost all the capital he possessed through becoming surety for one of his brothers. Left to depend entirely upon family, there was small hope of education and a start in life for his sons. And so my mother and he agreed that there would be a better chance for us in a new country. We were originally destined for Canada and my father had secured a church at St. John's, New Brunswick, on the eve of the civil war. Before war actually broke out he visited the United States, to judge for himself, and the impression gained was that the conflict would be more protracted and be more disturbing to the whole of North America than it actually proved. Consequently, in agreement with my mother, he decided to go even further afield and take us all to Queensland. That was a decision which needed some courage, for in those days an emigrant for Australia had little hope of ever seeing his country or friends again. My father never saw even a remote prospect of returning; while yet hardly seasoned to the climate he contracted dysentery through drinking impure water; he had partly recovered, but, never previously having been sick, he was careless, and his carelessness brought on a fatal relapse.

The Reids emigrated on the barque Rockhampton under the command of Captain Joseph Brough. James, then aged 50, and Eliza (38) were accompanied by their five children: James Smith (15), Mary (13), John (11), William Douglas (10) and George Macfarlane (8). The voyage has been recaptured in considerable detail:

Over four months from port to port cooped up with some hundreds of others in a great ship (for 1,200 tons was a great ship in '63) was a splendid experience for boys.... My father acted as chaplain and in spite of some discomfort and inferior food, we were a contented family - with not only surroundings of daily and constantly changing interest, but with that beacon ahead, helpful in all circumstances - something to look forward to at the journey's end. Smith alone was a sufferer -
seasick almost continually, he nearly lost his life through exhaustion. In our wanderings we sighted South America, the Cape, and Tasmania, and during some stormy weeks far down South, we "smelt ice". And there were incidents not likely to recur nowadays.

A month out from Liverpool, when the sailors had worked off the "dead horse" - that is, the pay advanced for their families before sailing - they threw the painted canvas imitation of the animal overboard, after much ceremony, together with blazing tar barrels that lit up our wake long after sunset. Then crossing the Line was made the occasion for celebrations which were according to immemorial precedent, and lasted from midday till well into the night. They began with Neptune and his retinue of ministers and officers boarding the ship coming up from the bottom of the sea, dripping and with seaweed clinging to them. Our Captain and officers formally received them at the gangway. Neptune took command of the ship, and for the rest of the day she was given over to drunken revelry. Several passengers who had refused to subscribe to a drink fund and some stowaways were roughly handled. Shaved with a razor made of hoop-iron and while choking with some greasy abomination prescribed by Neptune's doctor, each victim was pitched into a large square-sail, slung amidships and full of water, there to be pounced on by the ship's apprentices, impersonating some sort of sea devils, who went very near to drowning the poor wretches. One passenger climbed into the rigging, and producing a knife had the temerity to defy the sailors. He was quickly surrounded, his knife thrown overboard, and he himself lashed spread-eagle fashion to the rigging. When liberated in the evening he had to be carried below. The whole crew became more or less drunk, and it was fortunate there was little wind. The decks had been cleared with a powerful hose but we were allowed to remain, to witness and take some part in the absurdities and rough play the men, who had constant work and no relaxation, considered fun. It was a great show for us, and I don't remember feeling shocked at any part of it. By that time we had many friends amongst the men, and were quite safe with them.
K.H. KENNEDY

Owners were parsimonious, as was evident in the quality of food supplied - though we apparently suffered no harm from it. In the "deep sea" we showed no lights and for that small economy we risked and just escaped going to the bottom with another ship - also without lights and "lying to", consequently helpless. We rolled together, as we passed, and lost a little of our rigging.

One morning we had a great surprise, in finding ourselves completely landlocked. It had been very dark in the night and the ship had sailed in amongst the Solitary Islands without land being seen until daylight disclosed it all around us. According to the captain's reckoning we were 200 miles from the nearest land. He was generally under the influence of drink, and now, with rock-bound coasts on every hand, he began to make ready to beach the ship. He was frustrated in this intention by a few leading passengers, who without waiting to discuss the matter, rushed him to his cabin, where they locked him up and gave the command to the chief officer....

During such a voyage there was inevitably every variety of weather, from the wearying calm when the sails hung idle against the masts to the hurricane in which the wind and waves played with the ship. We wearied to distraction in the doldrums, rolling heavily for days on a glassy swell, the monotony all through the stifling nights, being dreadfully trying, every one of a thousand planks and beams grating on its neighbour at each discomforting roll and giving out its individual creak. In squalls we twice actually saw, as well as heard, a great square-sail split with a crack as startling as tropical thunder and rapidly dissipate away in the wind with a noise like innumerable pistol shots. And there were times when the elements seemed to combine to show what could be done in a hurricane. Then the sea was blown into a sheet of flying spray; the ship, plunging and rolling and driven this way and that, was like a living thing trying to escape from its tormentors - with the bare rigging quivering under the intense pressure, each vibrating rope and cord yielding its individual part in a grand organ note that, rising and falling, voiced the wild fury of
'SONS OF THE MANSE'

the storm. In such a scene, crouching under some shelter, where in
awe we watched and listened, what small figures we felt ourselves to
be!'

After a week or more on the same course, lying over to a strong, steady
breeze, it came as a pleasant change when we got on to the other tack.
And the change was brought about with spectacular ceremony that might
well have been designed for the entertainment of boys....The whole crew
being assembled on deck by the command "All hands to bout ship", a
quiet order from the captain became a bellow from one of the mates and
reverberated from the powerful throats of the quarter-masters, as with
a great chorus of "Aye, aye, Sir!" the crew dashed to their places at
the ropes. There was heard the voice of the best singers in the ship -
and all sailors seemed to sing then. - He sang a verse of unconscionable
length, of love and ships and the sea, in a clear voice that easily
carried all over the vessel, and with nasal and throat embellishments
that we thought very fine. The chorus was to us the most attractive
part. The words in them-selves might have no meaning, but in the mouths
of 50 or 60 lusty seamen, they meant a great deal, joy and sadness,
and anything else we wanted them to mean. As the final note was
given to the breeze, there was a volley of orders, and instantly ropes
were let go and others hauled by rushing squads of men; all the spars
and much of the running gear of the ship, so taut and trim, fell
/suddenly into loose disorder. Without a pause, however, the yards
on every mast swung round in unison, to the tune of rattling blocks and
creaking irons, and were hauled upon until they again assumed rigid
symmetry. Then it was "Belay, all!" and the ship laid over and
gathered way on her new tack.

...We had thirty-three burials at sea, all alike save one, and that one
was very memorable. When our flag was at half-mast any ship in sight
would similarly pay tribute to the dead. One day when there was to be
a funeral a fine full-rigged ship on the same course and only perhaps
two miles away, had in sympathy hoisted her flag to half-mast, and,
being faster than we were, stood in until she was little more than half
a mile distant without losing her position abreast of our ship.

...The body was that of a little girl of three or four, and it may be
that the majesty of death has seldom found grander recognition.

We witnessed the whole sad tragedy of a man lost at sea - a fine
powerful bronzed and bearded sailor. Heavy booted and clad, we saw
him spring into the Captain's gig (slung athwart the stern) to give a
hand at a rope. It must have been rotten, for under the extra strain
it gave way, and overboard he went. The ship was brought to and a
boat lowered but there was no plug in the boat, which began to fill,
and the men with difficulty got back to the ship. Seeing this and no
doubt fearing that the boat had been recalled and that he was to be
abandoned, the man left the hencoop which had been supporting him and
started to swim with desperate energy towards us. He had not got
many yards on the way when there was a great splash, and he was gone,
and we were told that the horror of the sea, a shark, had taken him
before our eyes....

We lost another man, also one of our friends, at our journey's end.
He was a sturdy little man, a Londoner, I think, and was said to be
the most evil and worst-tempered of the whole ship's company....

We were standing off and on, waiting for a pilot from the Brisbane
River, but the weather was too bad for him to come out. In a violent
squall, when all hands were taking in sail, four of the men were
knocked off the bowsprit. Three of them caught in the chains, but
the fourth....fell into the sea....and there were many anxious faces
over the lee bulwark as the ship swept past the poor fellow....

Our old wooden ship had been rough and at times very uncomfortable,
and yet we had a homesick feeling for her - a feeling short-lived,
however, in the midst of all the wonders and attractions, as well as
discomforts, of the new land. We had been put ashore at Rockhampton,
and after a few days' experience of the tropical thunderstorms and
steamy heat of that place, then little better than a black soil flat,
we were glad to escape, although bound still further north....
No sooner had the vessel discharged passengers at Keppel Bay, prior to sailing for Moreton Bay, than the local police magistrate and the acting district health officer filed condemnatory reports on its state and on the competence of the master with the immigration authorities in Brisbane.

Jardine, the magistrate, found the ship "in a wretched condition" on several counts: accommodation cleanliness, ventilation and light in the steerage section were inadequate. Further, he drew attention to Captain Brough's relationship with Eliza Cassidy: he had removed her to superior accommodation and she had spent "a great portion of her days & nights in the Capt'n's Cabin". Similarly, Callaghan, the health officer, complained of poor ventilation in steerage and that "too many passengers were carried in proportion to the tonnage". Jardine substantiated his charges with a letter from James Reid, who, although chaplain for the voyage from Liverpool to Brisbane, deserted the ship at Keppel Bay for fear of the lives of his family. That "the ship left Liverpool in a dirty and unfinished condition, that she was overcrowded", that the "health and comfort of the passengers was neglected", that "dietry fell short" and "medicine necessary to disease for the climate was wanting" was only incidental to the "conduct of the Capt'n". As Reid claimed:

From the commencement of this voyage I regarded his procedure as strange and somewhat erratic in mind, but dreamed not for some time the cause. Soon however I had cause to attribute his strange conduct to intemperance....From the time of our sighting Tasmania until that of our dropping anchor in Keppel Bay we had several most providential escapes from shipwreck and perishing. The imminent dangers in those cases, attributable as I believe to the intoxicated and consequently incompetent state of the Capt'n.

At subsequent inquiry it was concluded that "the Captain was an habitual drunkard", "that he removed a single female from the berth she occupied...and that there can be no moral doubt of their improper intercourse during some weeks of the voyage". Further the matron
"neglected her duties" and the surgeon "did not duly estimate his position on board, or the importance of his charge". As for the Rockhampton, its fittings were "altogether very defective", "some cabins were most unwarrantedly crowded", "the water closets were kept in a most offensive condition and the hospital rendered useless by the bad construction of one immediately over it", and there was, moreover, "a serious want of discipline and order on board in everything relating to the social comforts of the Immigrants". 17

At Bowen, with a handful of others, we were in possession of a new world, and a beautiful and attractive world, in spite of drawbacks. There were new beasts and birds and fish; new trees, new fruit and flowers. It was a mystery to us, an absorbing mystery. We were present at another creation, seemingly, for everything was new. It was early summer and the scent of flowers was in the air - the golden wattle, the long sprays, in fiery red and warm yellow, of the ti-trees, laden with honey and heavy with scent, the cool, sweet water lilies in every lagoon, and many others. Here, in certain favourite little valleys was a wealth of orchids hanging from the trees not long to survive, for even those that escaped the collector and wanton destroyer seemed to find the breath of settlement uncongenial. The gumtree blossoms, scarcely noticeable kept countless thousands of parrots busy - Blue Mountain parrots, the most active, energetic and noisiest birds. From almost before day till dark, bodies and tongues were in perpetual motion, save in the universal midday hush of the bush....

Strange birds were common; black and crimson, black and yellow and white cockatoos, fiercely wild and untameable and the easily tamed; parrots and pigeons in endless variety and gorgeous plumage; the friendly and jovial laughing jackass, the magpie, with sweet and joyous voice, the rarer emu, tall and graceful native companions, that played "tig" on the plains and danced like children; and bower-birds that built and paved arcades for playgrounds....The bush and scrubs and hills were full of kangaroos and wallabies, and there were lots of
'SONS OF THE MANSE'

possums. Snakes occasionally bit and sometimes killed people, but we soon got used to them. Flies, mosquitoes, sandflies and ants did not allow us to overlook them - the fly a greater pest than all the rest put together. We found a sudden interest, too, in various biting and stinging dwellers in the scrubs, of hornets, black and yellow, big and little, there seemed (in a sense) to be no end, and on one particular afternoon it appeared to us two that one sort might have sufficed....

It was a long time before we saw anything of those wary brutes, alligators, but there was proof that they were about, in rivers and lagoons. At Jarvisfield, on the Burdikin a man in the act of dipping a bucket was seized by the leg, and just saved himself from being drawn in by grabbing a sapling. The alligator was small, obviously quite young, yet the man had a struggle for life, it was a desperate tug-of-war until his leg was suddenly released, what was left of it, torn to shreds. He was a shepherd, all alone, and he managed to crawl to his hut, where, in the heat of summer - (and the flies) - he was found alive on the sixth day. Carted ninety odd miles to Bowen, his leg was taken off at the hip, and he recovered. That was when the country was being stocked with sheep - an amazingly stupid error. Kangaroo grass grew close and tall, excellent for cattle and horses, and in its seed there was a very curious provision of nature. With a finely-barbed head as sharp and almost as hard as a needle, it had slender, wirelike tails four or five inches long; at first straight, the burning heat during months of drought caused the tail to wind into a tight coil. When rain came, the moisture set up the reverse motion, and each seed, becoming an automatic boring machine, buried itself in the damp earth. The poor sheep, unable to wait for that process gathered the abundant seed direct from the grass, and with every step a thousand deadly instruments moved a tiny space, with cruel slowness, through wool and skin and flesh until, turned by the hard substance, they sheathed every bone in a dense black covering. In time the animal grew too sore and stiff to rise again, and so perished tens of thousands. Yet half-an-hour's walk through that grass would have brought it home to any man in flannel trousers what would happen.
On that same station of Jarvisfield an alligator showed its brute strength by pulling the fore legs clean out of the body of a horse, seized while being ridden across the Burdikin on a rocky bar.

Near by were the Alligator Lagoons, where old "Yorkie's" son sometimes fished. "Yorkie" was a small settler, a "cockatoo squatter", his son a level-headed boy, a fine rider, in much request at the annual three days' races. One morning after the boy had failed to come home, "Yorkie" found a hat, a fishing line, and other evidence beside a great log that stretched like a pier into one of the lagoons. With his heavy old duck gun, that took a handful of powder and shot, and a plentiful supply of tobacco, he sat down beside the log. He watched there for two days and two nights without a sign (and without food), and on the third morning at dawn a great alligator broke quietly through the water and slowly drew its hideous length up the bank, just on the other side of the log. Yorkie blew a hole through it - and he found sure proof that he had got the right one....

Christmas 1863 came round soon after we settled in Bowen, and to us boys that was an ever-memorable Boxing Day, for we then saw, for the first time in our lives, real horse-races, and other sports. They took place on the beach, not a bad place when the tide was out, but when it was in, the going was very heavy for both men and horses. George and I were competitors in boys' races, but we had never before performed in public and our shyness (which I regret to this day) sapped our strength, and we were "nowhere". From building material stacked on the beach many boards were spread out on the sands and covered with good things - sandwiches, cakes and biscuits, fruit and sweets, ginger beer and lemonade - free and ample for all. Who were the donors of the feast or whence came the many prizes I have no idea. We had music, too, from the bagpipes - the first musical instrument heard north of the 20th degree - and how the skirl of it scared the blacks! The piper was a Scot of fine physique and proud bearing, to whom it was play to toss the caber and throw the hammer against all comers: but it was work, hard work, to ply the needle, he being a tailor! That was 56 years ago last Boxing Day, and the fourscore though he be, the good
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man Donald Miller still gars his pipes to skirl on festive occasions and, summer and winter, takes his daily swim in the sea. On that great day were gathered together many fine enterprising men, pioneers most of them, and I believe that of those present whom I knew or soon after got to know each one has had his day, the piper being the only survivor....

About that time the contractor was starting work on a jetty which, when finished, reached out three quarters of a mile into the harbour. It proved a pleasant promenade, especially in hot weather, and from the end there was a fine panorama, of sea and shore, grassy and wooded hills and distant mountains, conspicuous being Gloucester Island, a bald eminence of rugged peaks that to West of Scotland people recalled Arran. Here we escaped from the pests, flies and mosquitos; here when in luck we caught lots of fish; and here, on certain hot evenings, generally when there was thunder in the air, we could watch multitudes of moving creatures, great and small, each body luminous and sharply defined with phosphorus....

At my father's death my mother, with a young family and in a strange land, found herself penniless: when all the bills were paid, she had but one half-crown left. It was suggested that we should get a loan - there were relations on each side who were well off. But she would not hear of it: her sons were not to begin life on borrowed money, but must trust in God and their own exertions....

It was in these circumstances of immediate necessity, but with great latent possibilities in four strong and very healthy boys, supported and cheered as we were by our mother and sister, that we had to face the world....

In September 1865, the offer by Townsville interests of a reward of £1,000 to the discoverer of payable gold sparked ephemeral rushes to Star River and the Cape River. By late 1868 Ravenswood had burst into prominence, soon to be followed by a number of gold discoveries at
Before George had reached 16, Gold was discovered within 130 miles of Bowen - the first to be found in North Queensland. The news sent a thrill of excitement throughout the whole of Australia, and there was a "rush" of diggers from all parts of the south. The new goldfield, Ravenswood, was not of great extent, but what there was of it was good while it lasted. No large fortunes were made: it was "a poor man's field" - capital for development was not needed, and almost all the diggers were on gold / and doing well. For the most part it was a young man population, full of vigour and hope and restless energy. After a long and heavy day's work, men in crowds spent half the night walking up and down the main street in the bright white light of the tropical moon or under a sky of sparkling brilliance. Everybody wanted to see everybody he knew, to tell and hear how things were going, and above all to find out about reports of new gold finds - always in the air. A hundred camp-fires along the creeks and gullies and circling the hills, with here and there a flute or concertina, or someone singing, were more suggestive of life and activity than even the flags and busy windlasses which, visible by day, marched in irregular order over ridges and hilltops. The day was dusty - coaches and buggies coming and going, and many cartloads of quartz on the way to one of the batteries that were seldom silent except for Sunday rest. And everybody rode and was in a hurry, pounding and adding to and scattering, the almost impalpable dust of the busy main street of the Main Camp. We were used to dust. Before we took our first trip South, George and I had lived 17 years without seeing a paved street, a railway, a gas....

It was in Ravenswood Smith started his first newspaper (the first of seven altogether, in six of which I was his partner) and George accompanied him to the field. Smith was young and inexperienced for the responsibility of conducting a newspaper, but he was not long in showing that he had a clear mind and sound judgment, and in gaining a reputation as a fearless journalist....
'SONS OF THE MANSE'

The richest find on the field would not have induced George to work underground, and the life of the gold-digger - seemed to have no attraction for him. He made himself useful in the printing office when disposed to work there; but with freedom to do as he chose, he generally preferred to knock about the field, getting news wherever he could for the paper. In doing so he made friends here and there amongst the best of the diggers - and the best were very good. In the early days there arrived from the old country many young men of good education and family who had not the means to start in cattle or sheep, or sugar-growing, and the goldfields offered the opportunity of escaping from the risk of becoming mere "wages men". And so, in a community of altogether enterprising and independent men, there was an appreciable percentage of the finest type from "home". The good sense of the general body maintained order, the British idea of fairplay being the ruling principle. Fighting was common, but it had to be fair, and any man who even showed a knife or revolver in a difference quickly found that the best thing for him was to clear out. Even the dissatisfied Irishman, nursing his discontent wherever he is, was made to behave himself. For a year there was only one constable and no lockup. Prisoners - usually men arrested for being drunk and disorderly - were chained to a log, and some mornings they found themselves in sufficient force to pull it to the nearest public-house - and back again after they had had a drink. 25

...Amongst George's friends was J.M. Macrossan, owner of the Saratoga mine and one of Smith's regular contributors, who soon afterwards went into Parliament, became Minister for Mines, and was noted for his wonderful memory.... 26

After a visit to his home in Bowen George started to return to the goldfields with a mob of horses he meant to sell. Almost all horses had to find their own living, even the teams of bush draught horses being turned out to grass after their day's work. On stations or at farms they had regular beats or "runs", and the quietest horses, when they realised they were being driven right away from their runs, would
make determined efforts to get back. With the small mob George had there should have been at least two men for the first day, and they, well mounted and expert at the work, could have blocked at the start any such attempt. George was unaided, and although he was riding a splendid mare, handy and quick at the work and very fast, he had his work cut out. Twice the mob had broken back - once in two lots, when he had to drive one after the other and then swing them all round. After that he kept them going and had got them on some miles, when for the third time they made a bolt for it. This was on Salisbury Plains Cattle station, and it happened that just there there was a stretch of "devil-devil" ground, the whole surface being miniature hills and valleys, over which few horses were safe except those bred on it. The mare was hot and keen, and fast as the mob broke from the track, she was faster, but as she headed them she went down crash and rolled over George. Both up quick, George was instantly made aware that a glass flask in his trousers pocket (where it should not have been carried) was smashed. Blood spurted over his head, the femoral artery having been cut, and his handkerchief was bulged before he could tie it round his thigh. In his desperate emergency he thought his only chance lay in galloping back to the head station, three or four miles away. He had only taken a few steps / towards the mare, however, when he fell in a faint.

The road between Bowen and Ravenswood was so little used as to look a mere bridle-track. Station bullock drays went over it, but the grass quickly covered their tracks, and one might have camped a week on it without seeing anybody, except perhaps, Toms, the weekly mailman, or some of the ever-wandering blacks. And yet help was at hand, to save as by a miracle a life very precious to all who knew George. There were two travellers on the road, a lawyer and a doctor (Blakeney and Doudney) riding from Townsville to Bowen on some urgent legal business. It was nothing unusual to see a number of horses anywhere along the road, but their interest was aroused when they saw one with a saddle on, and when a figure appeared and fell they knew something was wrong. Finding George unconscious and bleeding, they hastily tore a blanket
into strips, which they wound many times tightly around his thigh.
Behind them there was no help nearer than Inkerman Downs station, fifty miles back, but they thought they could not be very far from Salisbury Plains. So the lawyer rode quickly there, to return with a springcart, driven by a station hand, and carrying everything thought needful. It was some hours after the accident that George became conscious that he was extremely weak, but lying soft and comfortable on the floor of a springcart, with a stranger sitting beside him. Then he again forgot, - to awake in Bowen Hospital....

Mosman, Fraser and Clarke registered their claims to prospect auriferous country, soon after to be known as Charters Towers, in January 1872. Over the following forty years the reefs were to yield over six million fine ounces of gold:

There was a big rush on, to newly discovered gold, 60 or 70 miles from Ravenswood. George went on to have a look, without any fixed idea, I think, of what he meant to do. On the way he found a lot of miners "bailed up" by a flood in the Burdekin - a mighty river, but too rapid for navigation, and like all other streams in the north, it shrank until for most of the year it was little more than a chain of water holes. For a long distance up from its mouth it was infested by alligators, as many a three-legged cow on the cattle stations along it bore witness. The diggers camped on its bank were eager to get on the new goldfield, but they had had no experience crossing rivers, and when George suggested that they should swim their horses across they bluntly thought him a young fool. A boatman was carrying passengers and leading horses across over behind his boat - for those willing to pay a very exhorbitant fare. And even at that, it was a slow business. The river there was comparatively narrow - only something over 100 yards - (at the "lower crossing", on Leichhardt Downs station, where we often crossed, it was nearly a mile wide) - but the current was above the average. George swam over and back again, and thus encouraged, some of the men crossed that evening, after being shown exactly how it should be done, George had given them confidence by swimming one or two or their own horses to mid-stream and back again. A horse's strength with a man on his back is soon exhausted, but nearly
every horse will swim a long distance if the rider slips off to lay
hold of and be towed by the tail, steering him as easily as a boat by
splashing water along either cheek. With reins tied up to prevent
them getting around the horse's legs and drowning him, we always
started far above where we meant to land. In the morning George was in
great request, but it promised to be too long a job getting the lot
(about 200) across, and many could not swim. So he changed his plan.
With all hands at work, he quickly made a fork and rail yard - three
sides, standing partly in the water, which made the fourth side. With
the horses packed in this, George swam his horse in front, to give
them a lead, / and at a whistle from him 20 or 30 men with rods sent
the lot in as fast as they could make them go, the rest of the men
being spread down stream, in case any horses should turn back. All got
across and the men were then ferried over, the boat men having been
brought into a more reasonable mood. Seeing that his monopoly was
being spoiled, he had become abusive but George, well qualified to
defend himself, was difficult to drag into a fight on his own account,
and one of his new friends took up the quarrel. The diggers wanted to
show him appreciation, and, had George been willing to accept their
money, would have paid him well....

Soon after George left Charters Towers Smith started his second
paper there. It proved a very successful venture, for the Goldfield
prospered and supported a large population.

Other gold discoveries followed, further north, and there were
rushes on a large scale to the Etheridge, the Palmer, and the ill-
starred Hodgkinson.

The Hann expedition was the first group to penetrate the Palmer
River district, but despite the presence of a geologist in the party,
no payable gold was located. In September 1873, however, the prospector,
J.V. Mulligan, on his return to Georgetown, disclosed rich alluvial
yields. Their confirmation sparked probably the most famous alluvial
rush in Australian history, for in less than five years the Palmer
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gave up over a million fine ounces of gold. The Reids were early-
comers to the Palmer:  

For a few years the Palmer was a great gold producer. The gold was
alluvial, got easily in shallow workings, in the beds of watercourses
that were dry most of the time, and in crevices in the rocks. Further
north than any other settlement, an outlet had to be provided, and
Cooktown, at the mouth of the Endeavour River, was brought into
existence to supply the want. There many enterprising young men
quickly gathered to do business for the goldfields, and in rather a
hurry to set about it. The noise of hammering was about as great as
on the Clyde, as the town of wood and iron was knocked up - a town
boasting of a mile-long main street of closely packed stores and
shops, hotels and offices, finished and painted and mostly sign-
boarded inside of six weeks, and that in spite of the fact that the
growing trees had included a good deal of ironwood, from which an axe
rang as from an anvil.

We had sold the Northern Miner, and, removing the printing plant
of the Ravenswood Miner to Cooktown, made a fresh start there.  

The rainy season that year commenced early in December, and lasted
almost three months. There was a famine on the goldfields and
provisions were scarce in Cooktown - one Sunday dinner I remember, the
best that could be produced at Poole's, the leading hotel, consisted
of potted herrings and a collapsed "plum pudding" made of ship's
biscuits. Our privations were trifling, however, as compared / with
those on the goldfields, where for many weeks men were in desperate
strait for food. Many diggers had reached the Palmer overland, by
way of the Etheridge, bringing on pack horses what food they could
carry, flour, tea and sugar, and sun-dried beef. But this did not
last long, and the supplies they had looked for from the coast were
held up for months by the floods.  

[17] At even the worst times an odd
daring and resourceful packer would get through, at the cost of a few
horses and their loads, carried away in rapid streams, or crashed
down the steep side of a gorge, where the sodden and narrow edge of a

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siding gave way. And he gathered a rich harvest, his loading bringing him a profit of from 500 to 2,000 per cent on original cost - and salt more than that. There was much sickness, including scurvy through the want of salt. That very common article for a time fetched a high price, being weighed in one scale against gold in the other, and the fortunate possessors of some carried it in chamois-leather gold bags and were careful at meal times lest theirs should be the ill-luck of spilling even a few precious grains. 5,000 or 6,000 diggers were camped at Cooktown waiting to go to the Palmer, and sick people wanted to come down to the coast - to die when they got there, many of them - but traffic was almost completely stopped by floods.

New surface soil was invariably unhealthy, and that at Cooktown was especially so, until men and stock had tramped over it for years and completely changed its character. There was sickness - fever and dysentry - amongst the diggers, who were mostly from the Southern Colonies and as soft as newchums, and on the wet ground under calico tents they had a poor chance. Seeing the urgent need for a hospital, Smith took the matter in hand: in one short afternoon he collected about £800 from the business people - few of whom would have been there had they been well off; a large building of wood and iron was run up, men giving their time for the work, and within a week of the time the money was available, it was full of patients, mostly young men - getting a new lease of life or an easier exit.

That was the state of affairs when George arrived in Cooktown with a schooner-load of cattle - the first ever seen in that part of the world. He had brought them there to sell, as a speculation but on finding how things were he decided to sell as butcher's meat. From amongst the diggers he chose several men - glad enough of something to do - and his judgment served him, for he could not have had better or more reliable men. Arrangements were quickly made and the business started - on simple lines, as indicated by that useful institution in most new settlements, the public billman. In a high-pitched, unvarying voice, as devoid of commas as a lawyer's document, he announced at

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regular intervals down the main street that "There will be sold at 1 o'clock, at the bough shed - Butcher's Flat - the prime beef of two fat bullocks - newly killed and cut into convenient pieces at eighteen pence a pound God save the Queen". With grass free everywhere, the cattle were "tailed" (herded by a man on horseback) during the day and "camped" at night. Driven as near as they would go to the bough shed - cattle being terrified by the smell of blood - the butcher's work began when it was light enough to shoot straight and when all was ready and the long queue moving, any man dissatisfied with the piece of beef offered had to wait for better luck next day.

Having seen the business started, George returned to Bowen and chartered two more schooners - the three being at the time the only vessels obtainable. The coast country was stocked with cattle up to and a little north of Bowen, so there was no difficulty in getting fat bullocks, but there was trouble enough and to spare in shipping them...

With the shelter of the Great Barrier Reef, which closed in going North until it was only 10 or 12 miles from the land, the passage from Bowen to Cooktown was usually good, the steady South-east trader being fair winds, but there were occasional calms, when the closely-packed animals were stifled by the heat....

...Confined as we were to such narrow waters, the land was always near, and there, spread before us and changing quickly enough, slow as was our little coasting steamer, was a splendid succession of hills and valleys and mountains, bays and estuaries, and glistening beaches. And it was empty. Looking due West, we knew there was an expanse of 2,000 miles without a white resident - only a handful of diggers attracted temporarily / by gold. And the coast upon which we gazed, being uninhabited save by a few nomadic blacks, suggested every possibility imaginable....

The blacks soon forgot Captain Cook and his big canoe; and they forgot our friend and enchanting story-teller James Morrell, who came
in to Bowen in '63, after having been with a tribe for 17 years — as they forgot everything, in fact, for there could be no tradition amongst a people who dared not to speak of the dead or mention their names. It was only the "blackboy" who, having left his people young and been long "civilised", would speak of the departed — such as my mother's "boy" Harry. When gorgeous sunsets were common, there happened one evening to be one of amazing splendour, turning the West into a blazing fiery furnace. In answer to a question, put to find if such a spectacle made any impression on the native mind, Harry said "Me think good many black-fellow dead, go alonga heaben, makenin big-fellow fire, cookum possum".

Cooktown was a busy port, as long as the Palmer gold-fields flourished, which was only some two or three years. George was making money and Smith and I had made a good beginning with our business. We were all three of us putting our backs "into the work". The Chinese — individually unobjectionable but collectively intolerable — were arriving in shiploads under terms which gave their work to their "bosses" for three years for their fare and keep. They had their Chinatown on the outskirts of Cooktown — a place of sewage, where they gambled their money away, and their credit, and even all that might remain to them of life; where they administered their own laws and inflicted penalties, even the death sentence being carried out — to the knowledge of the police, who tried in vain to discover the parties responsible. Many of them were used as beasts of burden, competing against pack-horses in carrying provisions to the Palmer, and polluting the roads as they went. Dying compatriots looked in vain for even a drink of water, until force was used by passing whites; and the authorities had to keep parties of men constantly employed burying Chinamen. Smith was head and front in an agitation against the influx, and eventually succeeded in getting a poll-tax put on them — but not before nearly 40,000 had landed at Cooktown, and they had got, it was estimated many tons of gold.
In our newspaper business Smith was always the head, and his policy ever was to get the ablest men available for our literary work. One of our staff at Cooktown was H.E. King, a well-known politician, fluent both with tongue and pen. At great sacrifice we broke a three years' agreement with him, to permit of his accepting an offer of the portfolio of Minister for Mines. At that time we had as our chief correspondent on the Palmer Goldfields a very brilliant writer. "One-armed Jenkins" was a mystery: no one knew anything of his origin or how he lost his left arm. But we knew his work – we knew too, he had many virtues and one vice. After three or maybe six months of splendid work he would suddenly set to and swallow by the bottle the poison sold as whisky – lying out under the fierce heat of the tropical sun or in torrents of rain. Yet even while so debasing himself, the instinct of his class kept him, in word and bearing, an English gentleman. His drunken fit having worn itself out in a week or so, he would appear on the morning after his last bottle, with an eye as clear and a hand as steady as a healthy child's. He had been on all the Australian goldfields; a geologist and authority on mining matters, he appeared at home on whatever subject he took up....

...When gold was reported in New Guinea (after we had left Cooktown) there was an ill-fated rush, and the early history of One-armed Jenkins, accredited "special" of the Queenslander and Brisbane Courier, was lost under the clubs of the savage natives. I do not think any of us looked upon George's business as a permanent thing, even although it was paying well and his occupation in connection with it was not uncongenial - the buying and shipping of cattle and a general supervision. We were therefore not surprised when he decided to give it up. He had at last caught the gold fever, and that doubtless had much to do with his decision. The "Gold fever" was a state of mental restlessness hard to combat, depriving the victim of sleep, and impelling him to abandon everything and join in some new mad rush. Instances were common of men under a vow against gold diggings and long settled comfortably in the south, suddenly throwing
up everything to rush off to the other end of the country on the mere
report of gold being found. Once such an attack would have made me
throw away very good prospects, but for Smith's restraining influence.

Having made up his mind, George lost no time in selling out and,
with a mate, starting for the gold-fields—where, as it turned out,
he was not to remain long. On the Palmer gold was scattered over a
wide area, and new rushes were frequent, to creeks or gullies or ravines
in that broken, mountainous country. When "good gold" was found the
practice was usually to "keep it dark" until the discoverers had time
to tell their friends, but it was remarkable how the news got out.44

When George and his mate arrived at the main camp—so called because
it was the principal centre, with the Government officials and public
offices—there was a big rush on and the air was filled with rumours
of wonderful finds. By the time they reached the locality, however, the
rush was already overdone, so they went off prospecting on their own
account. They got gold—it was to be found almost everywhere—but
not rich enough to satisfy them, and they kept working out until, some
20 or 30 miles from the nearest camp, George became ill. The water
was bad. Fever of a malignant nature was prevalent, and presumably
George's powers of resistance had not yet wholly recovered from his
prolonged attack of fever and ague, the effects of which remained
persistently in the system. At any rate he was now laid up with a most
severe attack of fever....

George's mate, Joseph Larkin, was a Celtic Irishman, better
educated than the average, whom he had known slightly.45 With all
the world looking on, he would probably have shown courage enough, but
like many of his breed, he was at heart a mean coward. One could not
always get just the sort of mate he wished, and the gold fever had
precipitated George's arrangements....

George's condition quickly grew worse, and Larkin took fright.
Beyond giving him some of the fever medicine everybody carried, he
did nothing to help his presumably dying mate, and when George became
very weak, Larkin took the two strongest horses and cleared out. He did not even report the matter to the police, but continued / a very hurried journey right through to Cooktown. There he declared that he himself had had fever and in delirium had left George, "then as good as dead". That was his story, and taking it together with the man's appearance, our doctor told us it was incredible. The day after his arrival in Cooktown, he managed secretly to get away in a South-bound steamer and we never saw or heard of him again. There was no telegraph wire, or we might have had him detained, for his conduct suggested murder.

When George realised that he had been deserted, which he did in a kind of stupor, being much of the time unconscious, it seemed to him, as he thought afterwards, that one dominant idea became fixed in his brain - to get away - to look for help. The effort to get on his trousers and boots completely exhausted him. It was fortunate the two remaining horses were weak, from want of food, and were hobbled and close to the tent, it took him most of the afternoon, he thought, to catch one of them and, after many failures, to put the saddle on him. And then he was so tired he had to lie down again. And it was in the early morning, he thought, that he awoke to where he was and what he had to do. But he knew he could not mount; all he could do was to stretch his arm over the saddle and lean on the horse, which, being weak, walked very quietly along with him. And many times he tripped on the rough ground, and sometimes fell, but he held the reins, and the horse waited for him until he had rested and was able to get up again. And when he had been travelling a long time, his horse lifted his head and neighed, looking intently at something straight ahead. And there, sure enough, was a tent, and not far from it, by a rock waterhole, were two men, intent upon a "prospect" one of them was washing in a tin dish. Probably George had only travelled two or three miles, but the marvel was that he could move at all, and at the tent he collapsed. They put him to bed and he became delirious. But they were good men; they watched over him night and day until he was well enough to be lifted on to his horse, to be held on while they took him
slowly to a camp having some accommodation and a doctor. A few weeks later he was brought to Cooktown, on horse-back all the way, for as yet in that rough country no route suitable for wheeled traffic had been found....

That for George proved to be the last of the goldfields, and so for the time might be taken as his school days, for he was little more than of age when, a gaunt wreck of what he had been, he returned to Bowen, once more to be nursed back to health....

...The social atmosphere was not altogether good in those early days. The men on the goldfields were generally a splendid lot, yet there was much dissipation, and the climate and the conditions under which men had to live encouraged dissipation. Very many strong men found the temptation more than they could resist and went under....

Thereafter for a number of years, we did not see much of each other. Smith and I went on to the Hodgkinson gold-field - high in promise, but a bitter disappointment, where for the first 18 months two-thirds of the deaths were violent - thence to the great wool country, and subsequently to the silver fields, while George remained at Bowen....

In 1880, the Reid brothers opened the Western Grazier at Wilcannia (N.S.W.), a prosperous wool depot on the Darling River. Four years later, J.S. Reid commenced the journal with which his name has been identified by many historians - the Silver Age. It was his Silverton presses which chronicled the rise of Broken Hill, and in fact Reid printed the Proprietary's first prospectus in 1885. His appetite for railways and mining company promotion was insatiable once he successfully launched the Silverton Tramway Company. In 1888 he was elected a director of B.H.P. with the strong backing of Adelaide shareholders, but resigned in November 1889. Thereafter he was the driving force behind the Tarrawingee Flux Company (1891), the Emu Bay Railway Company (1897) and the Chillagoe Proprietary Company (1897) which operated private railways in western New South Wales, Tasmania and North Queensland respectively. His mining activities included the Euriowie Tinfields in New South Wales.
'SONS OF THE MANSE'

(1892), gold mines at Coolgardie (1893), the Sulphide Corporation (1895), Chillagoe Railways and Mines Limited (1897) and its associated ventures at Mount Garnet, Mungana, Forsayth and Mount Mulligan. Indeed Chillagoe was his major enterprise for the last twenty five years of his life: its failure and the Mount Mulligan disaster probably hastened his death on 15 January 1922. Although 72 years of age when he died, the impact of the Mount Mulligan fatalities must have been immeasurable; at least W.D. Reid appreciated his brother's despair when writing to him in October 1921:

The papers have published cables announcing the utter destruction of the Mount Mulligan coal workings and I take it that, if their statements are in accordance with the facts this terrible convulsion which had killed and wrecked all within reach means the end of the Chillagoe Co. I am very sorry to think so, for a very selfish reason, but my regret I think is chiefly on your account, knowing that it will be a very bitter disappointment to you, after the hard and long sustained effort you have made, really against fate, to turn defeat into success. Sad yet it may prove to be a good thing to you. If it does really mean the end of Chillagoe and you can accept the inevitable, a crushing load of worry and anxiety will have been removed from your shoulders, and you will be the gainer in improved health. That is what I hope, and I believe it will prove to be so, if you give up this most unfortunate concern.49

For his part, W.D. Reid led a more constrained life, though for many years in the shadow of his eldest brother. He departed for England in 1889, but returned in the early 1890's to join George on the Western Australian gold-fields. Connected with the rise of Mount Lyell, he served as a director of the Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company for two years until returning to England permanently in early 1897. However he retained his links with the Australian mining industry, initially through J.S. Reid, as a London director of many companies.50 After serving the Chillagoe Company (1899-1919), Mungana (Chillagoe) Mining Company (1901-15) and Mount Garnet Freehold Copper and Silver Mining Company (1901-3), he was invited to joint the London boards of Mount Elliott Limited (1908-21), Hampden Cloncurry Copper Mines Limited (1907-16), Mount Cuthbert No Liability (1909-11) and finally B.H.P. (1909-32). He died at Balcombe, Sussex, on 9 September 1932 aged 80.
George Macfarlane Reid bred cattle at Bowen for many years after leaving the Palmer. He visited Scotland in 1890 where he married Gertrude Macquisten; at Coolgardie in 1893, he quarrelled with his brother W.D. and returned to Ayrshire in Scotland. They were not reconciled for several years, but afterwards re-emerged strong friends. Largely through J.S. Reid, George was appointed a director of the Sulphide Corporation (1895-1919), St. George (Coolgardie) Gold Mines (1895-8) and Mount Burgess Gold Mining (1894-9), though, in his own right, was involved in other mining ventures in Scotland and the United States. He died, aged 65, in November 1919.

ANNOTATIONS AND REFERENCES

* "Sons of the manse" is an expression used by W.D. Reid in a passage of the Memoir not reproduced here.

1. By 1864, three denominations had been established at Bowen: Roman Catholic (William McGlnty), Church of England (F.T. Grovenor), and Presbyterian (James Reid).

2. James Reid was the son of John Reid, "a farmer with a University education", and Margery Dill, an "accomplished, well-read and deeply religious" woman "of a most happy disposition". Eliza was the daughter of "the leading lawyer in Glasgow", James Smith. W.D. Reid, Memoir, p.1.

3. See "Names and Descriptions of Passengers", IMM/112:171 Q.S.A. The Rockhampton of 1065 tons was from the Black Ball Line of James Baines and Company, probably the best-known company in the Australian immigrant trade. It is believed that the Reids' first child, a son, died in infancy. Curiously, the typescript refers only in passing to Mary, and does not mention John by name: little is known of these two children.

4. It is worth comparing W.D. Reid's recollections with those of H.H.S. Hurle and Abijou Good. Hurle's voyage in 1865 on the Queen of the Colonies was reconstructed some fifty years later with the aid of diary notes, and has been published in Queensland Heritage I, 6 (1976), pp. 30-35. Good kept a diary of his voyage on the Belapore in 1863, a copy of which is held at 69R, J.C.U. Archives.
For details on the Great Circle route sailed by immigrant ships, see G. Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance* (Melbourne 1966), Chapter 8.

Hurle also recalled this event: "Saturday the 5th [August] was marked by being just one month since the Crew had been hired for the voyage, so that they had worked off the dead horse, as the saying is, amongst sailors so to commemorate the day, the sailors had made up an effigy of a horse, which was hauled to the Main yard arm, and then let drop into the Sea. That is what is so often referred to, as burying the dead horse. There was more dancing and singing on deck, in the evening, or I may say by Moon light".

Similarly Hurle recounted crossing the equator: "Wednesday 9th One of the most eventful days of the voyage. The Morning was fine, and a fair wind, so the Captain was in a good humour. At 4 P.M. Neptune came on board, The whole affair was splendidly got up And one of the sailors dressed up, made a splendid Neptune, who was drawn along the deck on a truck, by his four Bears, to the first saloon door, where he was met by the Captain and other Officers of the ship. After he had made his speach, and given us a harty welcome in his Kingdom, he was given a good stiff glass of Rum, no doubt to prevent him from catching cold. Grog was also sent forward to all the other members of the Crew, a collection having been made in the morning on their behalf. The time honored custom of shaving all those who had not crossed the line before, was the next item on the program. The Captain gave his consent, so long as no body was forced, for really, the custom was then illegal. Anyhow I got shaved, and had good fun over it, although it cost me a bottle of grog". Good recorded celebrations, but no ceremony: "on the night of the 17th we passed the line. Sailors & several of the petty officers got a great deal of drink & in fact the drinking has been continued amongst the petty officers even since yesterday it was carried to a fearful pitch almost all the officers were drinking & at night they quarrelled & very strange things occurrd, the third mate & another officer & one sailor were put in irons, the captain & the doctor were walking the deck through the night armed with pistols threatening to shoot the first man who attempted any disturbance".

Good's diary lists a week's rations for all adults over twelve years of age. Children under one received no allocation while those aged one to twelve received half the adult measure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>biscuit</td>
<td>3½ pound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>3½ &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>potatos</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flour</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oatmeal</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sugar</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rice</td>
<td>½ &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peas</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butter</td>
<td>4 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raisins</td>
<td>8 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peper</td>
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<tr>
<td>mustard</td>
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<tr>
<td>pickles</td>
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<tr>
<td>lime juice</td>
<td>6 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>12 quarts&quot;</td>
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</table>
By mid-voyage he noted: "this morning a petition was sent to the captain demanding the dismissal of the cook & the baker the provisions have been cooked in a very bad manner".

Presumably Kerguelen's Land (îles de la Désolation) located on the clipper route, about 50°S midway between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Leeuwin. Named after their discoverer, the French navigator Kerguelen Tremaree, the islands were visited by Cook during his voyage in the Resolution. In the mid-nineteenth century, they were considered a serious danger to shipping. Indeed G.R. Leggett, "The Early Emigrant Ships", Victorian Historical Magazine 15, 4 (1935), pp. 145-7 has cited an extract from the diary of John Fenwick, a passenger on the James Baines Clipper Lightning, dated 16 July 1854 which vividly records being almost shipwrecked on Kerguelen's Land through the Captain's lack of caution. However there is no confirmation of the Rockmouth's "near-miss" in the subsequent inquiry. See p. 6.

Hurle's account included several notations of "dead calm", "No wind again today", "Nearly a calm and not very pleasant" and "a dull, uneventful, day, nothing to do but smoke and talk", which contrast with dramatic descriptions of violent weather: "The Mizen top-sail was carried away this evening, the wind blowing very hard A great commotion on deck. Sails ropes, pulley. block etc dashing about in all direction, and the women, screaming, the night was squally". "Wind very high, and the ship rolled a great deal, More so than it had ever done before. Impossible to keep plates and dishes, on the dinner table". Good likewise commented on the storms: "the wind increased & the sea boiled & foamed, the ship rolled & it became impossible to sit or stand on deck i became very sick & went below where i found everything in the greatest uproar every one was fearfully sick & at every roll of the ship children were screaming as loud as they could - bottles, tins, biscuits, bread, meat, soap & in fact every thing we had which was not secured was rolling about the ship - the fitting of the berths were creeking as if the whole ship was coming to pieces".

The Queen of the Colonies experienced only seven deaths on its 1865 voyage, all of whom were children. Hurle noted the first death as "one of the most touching and mournful sights to be seen. A corps commited to the deep. A child has died during the night". Thereafter he confined his entries to a terse notation, though on one occasion he added "no wonder there were sharks about". The Belfapore was less fortunate: Good recorded the loss of many children from "measles which are very bad amongst the children". Between 6 and 12 June he listed the deaths of 13 children, "several other not expected to reach land", and after noting that 32 deaths had occurred by 10 June included four others before the voyage ended. As this was a fortnight's interval, it is probable that the
the number exceeded forty for the voyage. The large contingent of Irish on board seems to have suffered the majority of the losses. Further, Good also recorded panic when it was discovered that "a great many of the passengers had the itch, seventeen females were placed in the hospital & a general inspection taken place". This was probably an outbreak of scabies.

12. On a previous voyage in 1863, the Queen of the Colonies also experienced loss of life in Moreton Bay when a storm struck the ship while some passengers were ashore on Moreton Island. This misadventure is recorded in the Notes to Hurle's account. See Votes and Proceedings, 1863, pp.31-2 for details of the rewards to Inspector McDonald and his men for their part in the rescue. A.G. Davies, "Immigration and the Immigrant Ships", J.R.H.S.Q. 11, 6 (1935), pp.304-26 mentions the perils of Moreton Bay.

13. By 1863 Rockhampton still retained all the raw features of a frontier outpost, judging from Abijou Good's impression: "we found that most of the dwellings were calico about seven feet high along what they call the streets we found some sudstansal buildings of wood covered with zink these were at intervals of sixty or eighty yards apart & there were a few brick buildings which were too story high & which is a novelty here...i found there were more publis houses than any thing else & a fine business it is here for drunkeness is very common".

14. J. Jardine to Immigration Agent, 18 October 1863, 63/2559, COL A/46 Q.S.A.

15. W. Callaghan to J. Jardine, 14 October 1863, ibid.


17. Report of Immigration Board Inquiry on ship Rockhampton, November 1863, 63/2609. ibid.

18. J.M. Black's Jarvisfield station was situated on the northern bank towards the mouth of the Burdekin River.

19. Similar sentiments were expressed by Edward Palmer, Early Days in North Queensland (Sydney 1903), p.129: "Several of these first newcomers took up coast runs and stocked them with sheep, believing they would thrive there. This was a mistake....For a few years in some places they did well enough, but they soon began to die from fluke, worms, and grass seeds, and they were accordingly replaced with cattle. The sheep on being removed to western pastures throve well, and soon recovered health. The seeds of the spear grass (Andropogon Contortus) were a terrible scourge - they are finely barbed and intensely sharp
and hard; once entered they pass right through the skin of
the sheep, even into the flesh causing great annoyance and
leading to poverty and death". For a full discussion on sheep
in the Kennedy District, see A. Allingham, *Taming of the

20. John Fenwick (cf. fn 9), part owner of Nulla Nulla station
some 250 miles west-north-west from Bowen, drove a mob of
cattle from the port to his property in mid-November 1863
and left an account of the sixteen days en route which has
Though providing very little information on the early years
of the district, the diary at least discloses the dangers of
crocodiles in the Burdekin River: "I went down to the
river to get a good wash before putting them [moleskins] on,
being duly cautioned not to go into the water for fear of
the crocodiles, which are numerous and large. I saw the
skins of two, 16 feet long in port, which were caught here".

21. The first jetty was commenced on 12 April 1865 by William Walton;
when completed it stretched nearly 1,000 yards from the shore.

22. For an account of the gold rushes, see G. Bolton, *A Thousand
Miles Away* (Canberra 1963), Chapter 3.

23. A little known account of the discovery of Ravenswood is
contained in the first issue of the short-lived *Charters
Towers Mining Journal*, 1, 1, 1884, pp.4-5. See also
D. Roderick, "Ravenswood, 1868-1917", *Lectures in North
Queensland History*, 2nd Series (Townsville 1975), pp.147-68.
Ravenswood was North Queensland's first reefing field, though
it was not until the turn of the century that a process was
devised to release the gold from the mundic ores. Thereafter
A.L. Wilson's New Ravenswood Company became a very profitable
concern for nearly fifteen years.

24. J.S. Reid published the first issue of the *Ravenswood Miner*
in mid-October 1879, having gained previous experience as a
printer on the *Port Denison Times*. The imprint showed
J.S. Reid as sole proprietor until 24 May 1873 when W.D. Reid's
name was incorporated. Information on the Reids' newspapers
was supplied by Jim Manion of North Queensland Newspapers.

25. Life on the goldfields in the 1870s has often been
romanticized, and even contemporary exaggerations by writers
such as W.R.O. Hill have to be treated with caution. For
example, Hill described the Cape River as a "decidedly rough
locality, there being fully two thousand five hundred men,
representing many nationalities, and among them the scum of
all the Southern Gold Fields....Dreadful stuff, called whisky,
rum and brandy, was sold in shilling drinks, and there was
no need to wonder that many of the poor fellows, after the usual spree, became raving maniacs. Picture in your imagination a mob of two hundred or three hundred half drunk semi-madmen running amok with each other in the brutal fights which were a daily occurrence! I have seen a man kicked to death in the open daylight". W.R.O. Hill, Forty-Five Years Experiences in North Queensland, 1861-1905 (Brisbane 1907), p.47. Curiously neither Daintree nor Jardine, government officers who filed reports on the field in 1870 and 1872 respectively had cause to comment on the society at Cape River. Indeed Jardine, referring to the new rush at Charters Towers, acclaimed "the love of order amongst the majority of the population". Report by J. Jardine on the Goldfields of Charters Towers, Broughton, Cape River, Ravenswood and Normanby, 31 December 1872, Votes and Proceedings, 1873, p.1074. Again emphasizing the violent nature of the Palmer River goldfield, Hill wrote: "I was sound asleep in my tent, and awakened by an awful scream....[We] found an unfortunate woman lying on the ground in a small tent, with her right arm chopped completely off above the elbow. The wretch who did it was never found, but I believe the woman eventually recovered. A man was stabbed through the heart by his mate G—which without the least discoverable provocation, and a storekeeper who lived not far from my camp was butchered, and his store ransacked by the blacks. Scores of other exciting incidents made life on the Palmer active enough....[On] the road we met a constable who was riding out with the sad news that Sub-Inspector F—— had just shot himself. We went at once and broke open the door of the poor fellows office, to find he had discharged a rifle into his mouth, his head being blown to pieces. I noticed two holes in the iron roof, one of which was made by the bullet, and the other we found out afterwards was made by a piece of the skull being blown clear through the iron, as I found the piece on the roof". Hill, op.cit., pp.73-4. Leaving aside obviously implausible features in these anecdotes, the general impression of the Palmer given by Hill is totally at variance with the view of an experienced reliable Warden, P.F. Sellhelm, who reported in 1878: "this goldfield has been very orderly all along". A.R. Dept. of Mines, 1878, p.22.

26. For a full account of the career of the North's most influential politician of the nineteenth century, see Harrison Bryan, "John Murtagh Macrossan: 'Jack the Hatter'" in D.J. Murphy and R.B. Joyce (eds.), Queensland Political Portraits (Brisbane 1978), pp.93-117.

27. Charles Powell's Salisbury Plains station was situated about 25 miles west north west from Bowen.
The medical practitioner was probably E. Doudney, later a surgeon at Ipswich, and the lawyer was either C.W. Blakeney, former M.L.A. for Brisbane, appointed a district court judge in 1865, or W.T. Blakeney, a commissioner of the Supreme Court of N.S.W. residing in Queensland.

A gold mining city of world renown, little has been recorded of Charters Towers history, beyond the mining yields. See A.R. Dept. of Mines 1887, pp.23-7; D. Green, Mining History of Charters Towers (Charters Towers 1897); W. Lees, The Charters Towers Goldfield (Brisbane 1899); J.H. Reid, "The Charters Towers Goldfield" G.S.Q. publication 255 (Brisbane 1917). There are unpublished B.A. (Hons.) theses by L. Colwell, Aspects of Social Life in Charters Towers 1872-1890 and S. Hayston, Interaction of Religion and Society in Charters Towers, 1872-1900, James Cook University of North Queensland.

Patrick Cassady's Leichhardt Downs station was situated on the Burdekin River, inland from Jarvisfield.

J.S. Reid launched his second newspaper, The Charters Towers Miner on 2 June 1872, presumably using the Ravenswood Miner's presses. He purchased the plant of the Gladstone Observer which arrived in Charters Towers several weeks later, and installed it initially in a building at Millchester. In August, he changed the name of the journal to the Northern Miner.


Thaddeus O'Kane had acquired a half share of the Northern Miner in August 1873, and in January 1874 purchased the Reid's remaining interests. The last issue of the Ravenswood Miner was published on 17 January 1874. The new paper was the Cooktown Courier which appeared in March 1874. Edward Palmer, Early Days in North Queensland, pp.154-5 recalled that the "Journalistic standard of the early days of Cooktown was esteemed, comparatively speaking, brilliant". Certainly there was rivalry between J.S. Reid and his competitor, the Cooktown Herald, as in November 1874, a court case resulted from Reid trespassing on the Herald's premises, daubing paste on the type in the galley and plying the employees with grog. No fine was imposed.
35. For examples of shortages on the Palmer, see Palmer, *ibid*, p.170-1: "Rations were dear in the early days; carriage to Maytown was up to £120 per ton, beef was selling at 1s. per lb....Early in 1874, the last of the flour was selling at 3s.6d. per pannikinful, and even an old working bullock when killed was eagerly bought up at 1s. per pound; the last pairs of Blucher boots were sold at 39s."; and Corfield, *Reminiscences of Queensland*, p.50: "I disposed of everything at high prices. Thus flour, 200 lb. bag for £20, and other things at like value".

36. "Palmer fever" was a constant threat to the diggers, though probably some instances were malaria. Of the 175 deaths officially recorded between 26 October 1873 and 4 July 1875, 47 were attributed to fever and 73 to dysentery.

37. The gold rushes conferred several years of prosperity on the northern pastoral industry. Allingham comments that they "probably saved the Kennedy squatters from complete insolvency and retreat, as befell many western counterparts, and in the 1870s gold continued to shape their fortunes". Further, that the Palmer was "the most irresistible and numerically spectacular of the North Queensland fields, which the squatter welcomed as representing an even wider local market". *Taming the Wilderness*, pp.204, 206.

38. James Morrill was shipwrecked on the barque *Peruvian* in 1846. After his rescue from Cleveland Bay, he was repatriated to Bowen, but in 1864 agreed to accompany Dalrymple to Rockingham Bay to survey the township of Cardwell. He died the following year. For details of his life, see Farnfield, *Frontiersman*, pp.58-9, 67-9; R.E. Johns, *The Story of James Morrill* (Bowen Historical Society, n.d.)


41. While Reid was editor to the *Cooktown Courier*, his journal published many letters-to-the-editor propounding anti-Chinese views, but it was not until he established a newspaper on the Hodgkinson Goldfield (see fn.47) that aggressive
anti-Chinese editorials emanated from his pen, the thrust of which called for a poll tax lest the colony "becomes the habitation of wealthy graziers, Mongolians and Kanakas". [Hodgkinson Mining News, editorial 7 April 1877]. In one of his last editorials while at Thornborough, Reid blamed the Chinese for polluting the Hodgkinson River: "The same outpouring of filthy suds and stirring of muddy ooze by Chinamen's feet continues, and in consequence the water is too offensive for ablutionary purposes". [ibid., 4 August 1877]. The resentment of Chinese intensified with the arrival of large numbers from overseas in 1875, coinciding with Reid departing the Palmer. His agitation from the Hodgkinson was motivated not from the numbers on that field, but by fear of a repetition of the economic competition between Europeans and Chinese which had developed on the Palmer and by a popular fervour for restrictive legislation. Significantly European miners' sentiments were mollified by the Chinese Immigrants Regulation Act (assented 20 August 1877) and the Gold Fields Amendment Act (assented 2 October 1877). The former placed a poll tax of £10 per head on Chinese immigrants. Noreen Kirkman of James Cook University Library supplied copies of many editorials from the Reids' newspapers.

42. Henry Edward King worked as a goldminer, journalist, government administrator and solicitor during his lifetime. He was also a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1870-73, 1874-83, and Secretary for Public Works and Mines from 1874-76. He was on the staff of the Cooktown Courier during 1874, prior to his election in the Ravenswood constituency.


44. The characteristics of the northern digger were perceptively recorded by the Palmer River warden in 1878: "If the Northern miner has one besetting sin, and, if since a thing is possible, even in a larger degree than his southern brother - and it certainly proves the existence of, at any rate, a remnant of energy that even the severity of a Northern climate has not been able to deprive him of - it is his readiness at a moment's notice to sacrifice his all, if required, to enable him to hurry off to the scene of some new discovery - good or bad authenticated or not. He most probably leaves a claim that means good wages, if nothing better, and tramps, suffering all kinds of danger and hardships, on his way to some locality where, on calm reflection, his own commonsense and long experience would have told him that payable gold at the best could be but a very remote contingency; but his rememberance of having once missed a rush where his mate made a rise is too powerful an argument for him to overcome, and hence his determination at all hazards not again to lose another chance attached to some new Eldorado". A.R. Dept. of Mines, 1878, pp.21-22.
'SONS OF THE MANSE'

45. This man was more than likely their former business associate in the *Cooktown Courier* as the imprint of the early editions read: "Printed and published by James Smith Reid and Joseph Edward Larkin". This partnership was dissolved on 1 October 1874.

46. Twenty years after leaving the Palmer, J.S. Reid wrote to his wife of a church service in Scotland which triggered strong memories of his youth: "The minister was speaking of the great and lasting benefit which must always result from the early training of children by pious parents, and he told a story of a young man who had been brought up as a child to love and fear God, but who had gone to Australia and given way to drink and evil habits, until he brought himself down almost as low as he could come. The thought of his early training came to him, and he had the courage left to abandon his evil courses and bring himself back to be an honored and respected man. It was my own story to the very letter - so true that I wondered if Mother could have told the Minister". J.S. Reid to Martha Reid, 8 November 1895, Reid Papers 1/1/38, University of Melbourne Archives.

47. J.S. and W.D. Reid sold the *Cooktown Courier* to Henry Hoghton in June 1875. After a respite at Bowen, J.S. Reid returned north and opened another newspaper at Thornborough, the *Hodgkinson Mining News*. He relinquished to W.D. Reid and William Isaac Booth in October 1877; they in turn sold out in 1879.


49. W.D. Reid to J.S. Reid, 2 October 1921, Reid papers 1/7/4.

50. In 1917, the fire-brand Labor member for Bourke (Vic.), Frank Anstey published an anti-capitalist tract entitled *Money Power* in which he named the "economic lords" of the Metal Gang: along with the Robinsons, Baillieus, Monty Cohen, H.V. McKay, Sir John Grice, Bowes Kelly, Duncan McBryde and others was listed W.A. and J.S. Reid. For a description of J.S. Reid's lifestyle and economic influence on Australian business, see P. Moore, *Pride of the Hills: The Story of Rostrevor House* (Blackwood, S.A. 1975).
Among the distinctive features of the Queensland timber house is the widespread practice of elevation on high "stumps" two metres or more in height. So remarkable in appearance are these highset houses that the feature has frequently attracted comment from casual visitors, and has received attention from many writers in the field of Australian architectural history.

Almost the first thing that arrests the attention on going into Queensland is the style of the houses. They are nearly all of wood, and generally stand on high and rather unsightly, because exposed, studs.... The typical North Queensland house is seldom much to look at, even when the architect has evidently done his best. At their worst they are square wooden boxes on long legs...

While little research has been done on the origins and development of the highset house, it has generally been claimed that the technique arose in southeastern Queensland at the end of the nineteenth century: "...these houses were first built in and around the hilly terrain of Brisbane and were later adopted for building in northern areas from 1890 onwards." J.M. Freeland mentioned isolated examples in the late 1870's, but found that frequent use of "six to nine feet" stumps came about only at the turn of the century. Ray Sumner described the practice as originating in Brisbane, and remaining relatively rare until the 1920's, although she recognised examples in North Queensland from as early as 1877. Peter Newell depicted the elevation of houses as a slow, continuous process:

By the 1870's houses were raised about 20 centimetres above ground level. The floor levels were gradually raised to one metre over the next 20 years, but the traditional Queensland house raised on its two-metre stumps was relatively slow in development.

A study of building practices in North Queensland from the early years of European settlement suggests that these estimates of the time of adoption of high stumps are several decades too late, that the process of adoption was not one of gradual evolution but of abrupt
transition, and that the practice probably became commonplace in the north of the colony before the south. While the origins of the technique are not entirely clear, it was certainly used in North Queensland from 1870 onward, documented by a variety of contradictory explanations for its popularity.

The highset house did not involve any major change in building techniques, for no structural modification was called for, simply a substantial increase in the length of the foundation stumps normally used to support timber buildings. At the time of European settlement in North Queensland, all but the humblest cottages and outbuildings were provided with a wooden floor elevated a few centimetres above ground, and early photographs and a number of the oldest extant buildings demonstrate the widespread adoption of low stumps. J.M. Black's house in Townsville (1865) was so elevated, and the Cardwell Telegraph Office (1870) originally stood on timber stumps about 30cm in height. The Ravenswood teacher's residence (1873) and School of Arts library (1875) are on low stumps. Even in the primitive tradition of slab construction framed foundations and elevation on stumps were not unusual. Four substantial slab buildings surviving in North Queensland were all elevated and timber floored: the Bowen River hotel (c. 1862) at about 50cm; the Eureka hotel at Thornton Gap (1865) at 40cm; the Wambiana hut (c. 1879) about 50cm; and Blechynden homestead at Murray Upper. Manuals describing the construction of slab buildings differed in their descriptions of foundations and flooring. Some advocated an earth floor, while others gave detailed instructions for raised timber floors similar to those found in North Queensland. C.W. Bryde's reminiscences describe the construction of a slab house with a floor of sawn boards, and C.H. Eden's slab house was carpenter-built and floored, although he advocated an earth floor in his advice for other settlers. These lowset floored buildings usually had insufficient space beneath them for access: the reasons for stumping must have been to do with cleanliness and prestige, to provide ventilation, alleviating fungal decay; and to allow enough height for a comfortably sprung timber floor.
However from about 1870 a quite distinct practice had appeared in the coastal sugar growing areas near the Pioneer, Burdekin and Herbert rivers. In these communities there was no slow tendency to increase the elevation of houses, but an abrupt adoption of stumps two metres or more in height in some houses from the earliest period of settlement. A number of the first plantation houses on the lower Burdekin and Pioneer rivers were depicted on high stumps in the 1870's and early 1880's. Elevated houses were also built at Thomas Swallow's Hambledon plantation south of Cairns in 1882. Swallow's own house was described as "...an ideal tropical bungalow. Built on piles and surrounded by fine broad verandas..."; his overseer's residence and a number of workmen's cottages were all highset – some of the cottages to well over three metres. By far the best documented region for early highset houses is the lower Herbert, where descriptions of at least nine houses on high stumps were recorded from 1871 onward, supplemented by a remarkable set of photographs taken in the district by Thomas Mathewson, probably in 1874. But dramatic as the ascendancy of the elevated house was on the northern coastal sugar fields, it does little to resolve the historical problems of antecedents and motivation; indeed, it raises far more questions than it answers.

Neither the origins nor the reasons for the practice of elevating houses has ever been satisfactorily and simply explained; there are several possible origins and numerous undoubted motivations. Elevation of buildings is by no means unique to Queensland: it occurs in several other parts of the world, notably in Melanesia, Indonesia and mainland southeast Asia. Throughout Europe, buildings such as granaries were elevated on staddles for protection from vermin, and Australian farmers adopted the use of a wooden post foundation to protect harvested crops from ground damp. Market produce in English towns was from medieval times frequently stored in buildings elevated on posts up to two metres in height. Even within the grander architectural traditions of Europe, the principle of high elevation with partial enclosure at ground level is not dissimilar from that of
Roscommon Homestead, Herbert River, about 1871
[Mrs Fardon, Townsville]

Workmen's house, Hambledon, about 1881
[Cairns Historical Society]
a ground floor loggia in a two story building. In New Zealand in
the 1840s there evolved the more idiosyncratic practice of supporting
buildings on elevated foundations unconnected to the floor, to
mitigate the transmission of earthquake shocks. Thus there were
ample precedents which North Queensland builders might have drawn
on, although most are too remote to suggest a direct connection.

There are two antecedents which might have had more direct
influence on the construction of highset houses in North Queensland,
but which at present remain inconclusive for want of evidence. One
is suggested by the early adoption of high stumps in the coastal
sugar-growing areas. The earlier experience of the planters in these
regions remains to be studied, but it is at least conceivable that
some had previously been involved in sugar cultivation in the
Caribbean and Louisiana. Cane planters in the nineteenth century
were a loosely-knit international community, exchanging journals and
visiting other sugar-growing areas. In Louisiana there had existed
since the French colonial period a tradition of house construction
which in general form resembled the Herbert River plantation houses:
either a highset house with partial enclosure underneath, or a two
story house with a wide ground floor loggia. No North Queensland
house can be shown to have its origins in Louisiana, but the question
at least remains open.

The second is the earlier attempt at settlement in north Australia,
at Victoria, Port Essington. Two buildings there, the officers'
 mess and a storehouse, had been built "on piles 8 feet high" when
the settlement was established in 1838. Why this was done is not
made clear in any account of the Port Essington settlement, but there
are several comments on advantages subsequently discovered. A likely
originator of the idea was George Windsor Earl, who was in large
measure responsible for the establishment of Port Essington, and was
present to guide its fortunes. Earl was familiar with the East
Indies, and his accounts of his travels contain passing reference
to the Malay practice of highset house construction, which was
being adopted by European colonists in southeast Asia during the nineteenth century. A description of Singapore in its early years of British occupation refers to their houses as "elevated some five or six feet from the ground". 30

The two buildings at Port Essington were apparently the first known to have been elevated in Australia, and several writers on Queensland houses have drawn attention to them, 31 but there is difficulty in establishing any causal link between these buildings and later practice elsewhere in Australia. Possible connections exist, not strong enough to establish direct influence, but suggesting mechanisms by which it might have occurred. In 1863, just as European settlement was commencing in North Queensland, Earl published a "Handbook for Colonists in Tropical Australia". 32 Its timing suggests it may have been the medium transmitting pioneer experience from Port Essington to North Queensland, but no such supposition is sustained by its text. The handbook refers in passing to a "building with the floor raised 5 feet above the ground" at Port Essington, and praises the durability of Ironbark timber for "piles" - which could mean wharf piles - but nowhere does it specifically advocate elevated construction, nor indeed offer advice of any kind on building, beyond the rather obvious statement that a "better description of dwelling than a tent will reduce the temperature within doors very considerably". 33 It is likely that members of the Port Essington community dispersed in Australia after 1849, for Earl mentions that some of the marines purchased their discharge in Sydney, 34 but their subsequent activities are unknown. In the absence of a clearer link between the elevated buildings of 1838 and those of 1870 onward, it would be unwise to make too much of the Port Essington precedent. Direct influence from southeast Asia to North Queensland after 1861 is quite conceivable, through the migration of British settlers or indentured labour, but cannot be substantiated by present evidence.

Though the geographical origins of the practice remain obscure, numerous reasons have been proposed for the adoption of high stumps
under Queensland houses. Freeland considered protection from termites to have been the original reason. Newell expanded this to "seasonal flooding, mosquitoes and white ants", while Sumner similarly found hillslope construction problems, control of termites and flooding to have been the principal motivations. All three writers have drawn attention to the discovery at Port Essington that elevation of buildings made possible the detection and control of termites in the stumps before they entered the building:

This temporary method of piling in order to raise the buildings has proved very useful. Had they been fixed on the ground in the usual manner, they must have been destroyed long since by vermin...The Blockhouse and Fort are particularly infested by the White Ant; having so much solidity in the construction, it is not possible to reach the destructive creature, and ultimately it must be destroyed by them...

Protection from termites was certainly one consideration in the decision to elevate buildings, although whether this idea was transmitted from elsewhere or arose independently in North Queensland is not clear. The point of high stumps was not that they prevented termite attack but that the space beneath the floor permitted inspection of the stumps for signs of infestation. In 1874 this was pointed out by the telegraph operator at Junction Creek, who reported that the telegraph station, built in 1871, was severely infested:

... the white ants are causing considerable damage to these buildings and I see no way of checking them as the blocks are too low to allow a person to get under the house. The kitchen and water closet will not last this wet season...

Perhaps as a tardy response to such observations the colonial architect began to design government buildings elevated to about two metres in some northern areas: the earliest such highset plans extant are those for the Georgetown and Geraldton (Innisfail) post and telegraph offices, drawn in June 1884.
The problem of protecting timber buildings from termite infestation exercised designers and builders throughout Australia. At the time of North Queensland's settlement, no systematic methods had been adopted to alleviate termite damage, and a number of experiments were undertaken in subsequent years: construction in a material unattractive to termites, treating timber with toxic substances, installing an impermeable barrier between the ground and the building, and providing for regular inspection of termite activity. The defence finally adopted in the north combined several of these techniques, so that a characteristic use of materials and building practices became associated with elevation on high stumps.

The search for a material which termites would not consume was ultimately successful, but oddly was never carried to its logical conclusion. For a time a myth flourished that termites would only infest softwoods, and that hardwoods were impervious. This is reflected in statements like "a hardwood floor is insisted on as a protection from the ravages of white ants", and "...there being no pine or other softwood about it the white ants cannot injure it". Such beliefs were not long sustained, for the Superintendent of School Buildings reported from Townsville in 1883:

The white ants in this ground are the largest I have ever seen, being about half an inch in length, and equally destructive, eating hardwood as readily as pine.

In later years the contrary belief was occasionally expressed, that certain softwoods were immune from termite attack because of their resin content:

Cyprus Pine....is used in preference in railway buildings for blocks and almost exclusively for telegraph poles in this district on account of their durability. White ants never touch it.

This assertion appears to have no foundation, and in the context of the letter in which it appears is best dismissed as sales talk. There are no timbers which termites will not attack, although some tree species and some parts of the log are less attractive.
Brick was only rarely used as a building material in North Queensland because of its cost, but a number of timber houses in Townsville were given brick foundations from the 1880's onward, possibly in response to the ferocious reputation of the local termites; Currajong, Rosebank, Matthew Rooney's house and a nearby cottage at North Ward were all built on brick piers from 35 to 50cm in height between 1884 and 1890. Concrete was recognised as a desirable foundation material as early as the 1870's, but only irregularly specified until the twentieth century. In 1878 the specification for light-keepers' cottages read:

Foundations of Buildings: Are to be concrete piers moulded in a timber box 12" square at head and 18" at the foot, 4 ft. in length; Sunk 2 ft. in the ground.46

And again in 1889 the Collector of Customs at Normanton advised:

I would further recommend that any new buildings which are erected at Normanton should be placed on concrete blocks, as the white ants at that place are exceedingly destructive.47

Two houses in Walker Street, Townsville were built in 1890 with 30cm circular concrete piers, and occasional examples occur from that time onward, but the material did not achieve real popularity for decades, presumably because of its cost relative to timber stumps until serious timber shortages hastened the use of concrete in the 1950's.

It was obvious enough that iron buildings would resist termites. The Superintendent of Electric Telegraphs recommended in 1876 that the Maytown post and telegraph office be built of galvanised iron, "because white ants are so destructive in that locality",48 and the Georgetown Police Magistrate pointed out in 1884:

The white ants are such dreadful pests that an elaborate building as specified would be utterly destroyed in three (3) years - it would at the least be a constant source of trouble in annual repairs. The inhabitants having proved, this erect new buildings of iron, with hardwood frames...49

But this discovery seems never to have been logically applied in North Queensland. Although iron was routinely employed for telegraph poles and sometimes for railway sleepers50 in the region, it was not
put to use by builders as a structural material, simply as a cladding; the stumps and frames of iron houses remained vulnerable to termite attack.

The builders' dilemma was that economy demanded the use of timber in the north, but it was folly in a region uniformly and heavily populated by termites to erect buildings of the very material that constituted their natural diet. In the quest for a termite-proof wooden building, experiments with toxic substances played an important part. A Bowen school-teacher in 1882 reported treating termite infestations with arsenic in treacle; "the remedy prescribed in the official Circular". Although the possible consequences of daubing that mixture on the stumps of school buildings are horrifying, similar reports are common in school correspondence; as are experiments with such substances as kerosene, copper sulphate and various patent preparations such as Streets and Fauldings White Ant Poison, an arsenic compound. The same remedy was specified to contractors:

At the surface level, bore (with one (1) inch auger) into each of the new stumps, about half way through same, with a downward slope and fill the hole with arsenic and treacle, mixed to the consistency of thick paste. Also treat in a similar manner, all the old stumps, and tar same two (2) coats. The treacle and arsenic must be mixed in the presence of the Head Teacher, or other person appointed by the Department.52

The defence finally adopted everywhere in the north was to elevate timber buildings above ground to provide access for checking termite activity in the foundations, to poison the stumps, and to install a metal barrier between the stumps and the bearers. A.C. Bicknell described this as standard practice by the 1890's:

The white ant is a curse to this country, and great precautions have to be taken against it when building a house. The usual plan is to drive into the ground wooden piles steeped in creosote; on the top of these are placed dished galvanised iron plates, and on these the house is built.53

The evolution of these ant caps (or stump caps) was gradual. No such protection seems to have been used at the time of first settlement;
the early extant buildings were originally without a termite barrier. The Cardwell telegraph office (1870) was re-stumped with ant-caps in 1897, and the Eureka hotel (1865) is still largely without them, although the verandah perimeter has been re-stumped with caps in recent decades.

Provision for a termite barrier appears in an 1867 specification for buildings at the Bustard Head lighthouse: "Cap with strong sheet zinc projecting 1¼" all round." It is clear that no standard form was developed by that time, nor indeed by 1874, when the school buildings at Cooktown were simply specified to have "galvanised iron for the tops of stumps, between them and the plates". But by the mid-1870's a galvanised iron barrier was being widely adopted. The Australian Joint Stock Bank at Maytown was built in 1876 with stumps capped by squares of sheet iron, roughly hammered down at the corners. This requirement was formalised in succeeding years, and in government buildings from 1875 stumps were to be "capped on top with No 11 VM brand zinc overlapping stump 3" all round". About 1880 mass-produced dish shaped caps came into use, and by 1884 both the form of the item and its nomenclature were established in government contracts:

Cap each stump with an approved 24 gauge galvanised iron stamped stump cap projecting from stump at least 3" all round.

But conservatism in specifications for some years afterward allowed contractors' practices to outrun the Works Department's requirements. In 1892 the District Inspector of Schools reported indignantly that the builder of the Ravenswood Junction State School had supplied stamped stump caps instead of the galvanised iron sheeting specified! However, the stamped galvanised iron cap gained ascendancy in the 1880's and has remained in use on round timber stumps to the present.

But, while the termite problem can be shown to have encouraged the use of stumps, and to have brought about the methods of chemical treatment and capping which became associated with them in later years, the earliest documented explanations for the practice of elevation give quite different reasons. Arthur Neame, an early planter on the
lower Herbert, commented on the district in 1871: "as a precaution against fever one ought to sleep 7 or 8 ft. above the ground." This was apparently orthodox opinion in the area, for a description of Avoca plantation in the same year reported, "A fine substantial house has been erected on piles ten feet high, the object of which is to get the sea breeze and to avoid miasma." This reflects contemporary belief that malaria and other fevers were contracted from vapours rising from stagnant water or damp ground. Earl had warned colonists:

that land-locked harbours in tropical climates are always unhealthy unless they are acted on by a breeze constantly blowing, so as to dissipate at once, the malaria which arises from stagnant sea-water exposed to the rays of a tropical sun. Belief in the injurious properties of tropical miasma was extremely persistent. Fifty years after Earl wrote, although the means of malaria transmission by mosquitoes had become well known in the meantime, the topic was raised at a parliamentary committee in New South Wales:

Have you heard that fogs in North Queensland largely cause fever and ague? That was common belief until the last ten years, but it is now known to be not correct.

The sea breeze that dispersed miasma was of course conducive to comfort more generally, as another traveller on the lower Herbert found at the Gairloch Native Police camp:

The dwelling-house is substantially built on high piles, a peculiarly [sic], by-the-bye, everywhere noticeable. It might be thought to be suggestive of floods, but on enquiry it appears that by building in this manner, cool and airy dining-rooms and store rooms are provided.

Thus health and comfort were served simultaneously by the elevated house. It was obvious, too, that by utilising the space underneath the building a great increase in floor area could be obtained at very little cost, a discovery that had been made at Port Essington. McArthur, summarizing the virtues of his highset buildings, observed: "The capacity of every house so raised was doubled." Early in 1884, mining magnate John Moffat had a new highset house built in Irvinebank, and set out his reasons in a letter to a colleague:
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As up to the present our living accommodation consisted of five 6 x 8 tents and a little hut for feeding in, we went in at once for a respectable house built on 8 feet stumps the house for residence purposes and the space underneath for working in and stores - upstairs we have a sitting room 16 x 14, two bedrooms 10 x 8 and the makings of four verandah bedrooms each 8 x 7½, with front verandah, from which a nice view of the dam is had. On the ground we have fine cool rooms for offices, stores, assaying room etc.67

By the early 1880's, houses on high stumps were encountered quite commonly throughout North Queensland. In Townsville, Witham's house in Sturt Street, built in 1881 or 1882,68 and Robert Philip's house Ellerslie were on stumps about two metres high.69 The manager's house at Homebush sugar mill, near Mackay, was built in 1883 on brick piers nearly three metres in height.70 For a decade or more, such elevation seems usually to be associated with the houses of the well-to-do, but as Moffat's house demonstrates, the motives of even the wealthy stemmed from utility rather than prestige. With acceptance of the technique by the Colonial Architect about 1884, the highset house had certainly entered the mainstream of Queensland building practice, and rarely attracted comment or explanation by residents of the colony thereafter.

It remains to explain why recent writers have tended to identify the early twentieth century as the period in which elevation of houses became common. Part of the explanation may lie in the advertising literature distributed by Queensland building firms at that time. In the decade after 1900, construction of houses throughout the state came to be dominated by Brisbane builders offering cheap prefabricated homes which undersold those erected by less efficient local tradesmen; the most prominent of the ready-to-erect firms were James Campbell and Sons 71 and Brown and Broad.72 Their illustrated catalogues and newspaper advertisements were widely disseminated during the following twenty years, and as they usually depicted houses on high stumps, undoubtedly assisted in fostering a popular association of elevated
houses with Brisbane suppliers. These, however, create a completely misleading impression of the houses' influence on building practices. There was in fact no prescription for high stumps implied in the advertisements: the stumps were the one element of the house the suppliers did not provide.

House stumps, and Battens between stumps, are not included in our quotations. Stumps are usually more cheaply procured locally.73

While the literature of the early twentieth century building firms may have served to foster the public image of the elevated house, the actual houses supplied did nothing to increase its prevalence, for the elevation at which the prefabricated houses were erected remained entirely a matter for the purchaser, and thus entirely dependent on personal taste and local custom.

The highset house was in use in North Queensland from 1870 onward, and had become commonplace by the 1880's. Whence it derived remains a matter for investigation, but its early adoption in this region is clearly connected with the eastern coastal plain and the nascent sugar industry. Contemporary sources provide four explicit reasons for the practice in its first decade - defence against malaria, improved ventilation, control of termites and increased space at low cost - but it would be idle to speculate on which of these was the original, or the foremost, reason. A combination of advantages is given in most written accounts, and its popularity seems to rest not on one clear explanation, but on a more general conviction of its appropriateness. This satisfaction with the technique quickly expressed itself as orthodox building practice, sufficiently strong to persist until the present.
Witham's house, Townsville, about 1881
[Townsville City Library]

John Moffat's house, Irvinebank, 1884
[Cairns Historical Society]
REFERENCES

1. The term "stumps" is most commonly used, although they are variously referred to as "stilts", "blocks", "piles" and "posts" in writings on the subject.


8. Black's house was demolished about 1964; it is described in A.J. Wallwork, "Four Early Timber Homes in Townsville", Architecture in Australia 57, 1968, pp.96-100.

9. Colonial Architect to Undersecretary for Works 20 August 1889, 89/2871, WOR A577 Q.S.A. The telegraph office was restumped at its present height of 1m in 1904.


13. The date of construction of Blechynden is not known: it was probably in the 1870s. When seen in 1978 it had been moved from its original site, but photographs held by the Cairns Historical Society and Pamela Watling of Cairns show that it was built about 30cm above ground level.

15. P. Fletcher (ed.), *Hints to Immigrants to Queensland*, London 1887, pp.33-34.


18. See illustrations in R. Connolly, *John Drysdale and the Burdekin*, Sydney 1964, plates 2, 4 & 6 after p.64; H.L. Roth, *The Discovery and Settlement of Port Mackay*, Halifax 1908, pp.50, 63 & 66; and Winterbourne, Mount Spencer and Branscombe homesteads, Marten album, Mackay City Library.


21. See Arthur Neame, diary 1870-1897, typescript held by Hinchinbrook Shire Council; *Queenslander* 23 September 1871 & 5 June 1875. I am grateful to Janice Wegner for bringing this material to my attention.

22. Albums held by Mrs. Fardon of Townsville and the John Oxley library. Mathewson's 1874 visit to the lower Herbert is mentioned in "A Veteran Photographer", Harrington's *Photographic Journal* 2 October 1922, p.13. The highset houses identified in these sources were at Ashstone, Avoca, Cudmore selection, Galdra, Macknade, Roscommon, Victoria and the Native Police camp.


24. John Oxley library album APO-6, 1894, p.49 shows lucerne stacks near Warwick raised on round stumps let into half-round bearers, closely resembling the foundations of the Eureka Hotel.

30. J. Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India, London 1865, p.75.
33. Ibid., pp.6, 16 & 70.
34. Ibid., p.134. Another barely possible mechanism for influence is McArthur's despatch of 1847, but it was unlikely to have been read in Australia before its publication in H.R.A.
35. Freeland, Architecture, p.119.
37. Summer, "Environment & Architecture", p.84.
39. S. O'Brien to Superintendent of Telegraphs 20 November 1874, 75/119, WOR/A95 Q.S.A.
40. Plans held by Australia Post Historical Section, Brisbane.
41. Undersecretary for Public Instruction to Secretary, Charters Towers Girls' School Committee 20 January 1882, EDU Z560 Q.S.A.
42. George Seymour to Secretary for Public Instruction 1 May 1883, EDU Z606 Q.S.A.
43. R. Ferguson to Undersecretary for Public Instruction 20 March 1883, 83/62, EDU Z 2738 Q.S.A.

44. A. Taylor & Son to Undersecretary for Public Works 23 May 1903, EDU Z 2539 Q.S.A.


46. Specification 1878 in WOR P2 Q.S.A. The place is not given.

47. Collector to Colonial Treasurer 30 January 1889, 89/454. WOR A401 Q.S.A.

48. W.J. Cracknell to Undersecretary for Public Works 25 April 1876, 77/5357, WOR/A140 Q.S.A.

49. W. Samwell to Undersecretary for Public Instruction 21 June 1884, 84/3820, EDU Z1020 Q.S.A.

50. Phillips' steel sleepers were adopted for the Normanton-Croydon railway after testing on a short section of the Fassifern railway: *Cairns Post* 8 June 1887.

51. R. Abraham to Undersecretary for Public Instruction 13 March & 17 April 1882 82/1305 & 82/1850, EDU Z 284 Q.S.A. The circular mentioned has not been found.

52. Specification for State School, Normanton, January 1894, WOR P9 Q.S.A.


54. Specification December 1896 in WOR/A577 Q.S.A.

55. Specification 1867 in WOR P1 Q.S.A.

56. Specification April 1874 in WOR A129 Q.S.A.

57. Photograph in *North Queensland Register* 18 July 1921, taken between 1876 and 1878.

58. Specification for Reception House, Cooktown, July 1875, and see essentially similar clauses in specifications for Cooktown lockup April 1878; additions to reception house May 1878; and Thursday Island seamen's barracks 1881, WOR P1 Q.S.A.

59. Specifications for Boatmen's Cottages, Cairns, April 1884, WOR P5; and see similar provisions in specification for Maytown post & telegraph office, July 1888, WOR A401 Q.S.A.
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60. M. Cripps to Undersecretary for Public Instruction 23 July 1892, 92/07372, EDU Z 2311 Q.S.A.

61. Neame diary, p.32, and similar comments appear on pp.28 & 36. Elsewhere (p.20), Neame specifically equated "fever" and "Malaria".

62. Queenslander 23 September 1871.

63. Earl, "Handbook for Colonists", p.34.


65. Queenslander 5 June 1875.


67. Moffat to J.H. Reid 20 February 1884, Moffat letterbook 1883-84, held by Cairns Historical Society, p.82. Moffat's use of the word "stumps" to an Australian colleague is interesting, for in a letter to his parents in Scotland (ibid., 24 March 1884) he described them as "8 feet piles". Moffat's is the only elevated house described here which is still standing, and thus may be the earliest highset house extant in North Queensland.

68. The house was destroyed by cyclone Leonta in 1903, but it appears in commemorative photographs of that event, held by Townsville City Library. Its date of construction is uncertain, but it replaced earlier premises destroyed in the Townsville fire of 6 August 1881: Northern Miner 9 & 11 August 1881.

69. See photograph in H.C. Perry, Memoirs of the Hon. Sir Robert Philp, Brisbane 1923, after p.76. The date of construction is not recorded, but the Queenslander 16 January 1886 mentions "Ellerslie, the residence of Mr. Philp."

70. Photograph in album 142/3649 p.68, CSR records, Archives of Business and Labour, Australian National University. The date is confirmed by a reference to the photograph in Edward Knox to J. Robertson 26 November 1883, 142, ibid.

71. Established in 1854, Campbells commenced their expansion into provincial Queensland in 1903: see advertisement, Queenslander 8 August 1903.


73. James Campbell & Sons Redicut Homes, Brisbane [c.1924], p.5.
CATHOLIC MISSIONS TO THE ABORIGINES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

John Maguire

By the time the first Catholic priest set foot in North Queensland in 1863 the general attitude of the white immigrant society toward the original inhabitants had already been well determined. By and large Catholics were no different in their attitudes from the rest of the European settlers. Ignorant of the basic presuppositions and values of aboriginal society, fearful of what was strange and unknown, they were primarily concerned with their own survival in an alien environment. The image of the blacks painted by reporting in the *Freeman's Journal*, (produced by a group of Liberal Catholics) did little to challenge the general attitude:

"murder of two sawyers by the blacks", "more outrages by the blacks...Burnett district: 1400 ewes driven away from Mr Hay's station and the shepherd murdered", "more murders by the blacks...a man and his daughter about 12 years of age on the Station of Mr Wilkins 12 miles from Gayndah", "the aborigines in the neighbourhood of the lower Condamine once again in arms driving everything before them and killing cattle in all directions", "a Mr Stuart on Mr Trevethan's run beaten in a most barbarous manner...some of his sheep driven off", "murder of Mr Colin McKay and four of Mr Trevethan's men by aboriginal natives", "deadly fued among the blacks", "aborigines have again commenced hostilities", "Mr Clarke has fallen a sacrifice to the assaults of these savages".1

That the white settlers were themselves doing violence to Aboriginal people and customs was adverted to by only a few. Some Catholics in New South Wales had spoken out against what was being done to the Aborigines: W.A. Duncan had written in 1840, "We have deprived them of the means of subsistence; we have driven them from their haunts we have communicated to them our diseases and vices; in a word, an edict has gone out for their extermination."2 Archbishop Polding had appeared before the 1845 Select Committee on the Condition of the Aborigines decrying the values prevalent among many of the settlers:

I have myself heard a man, educated, and a large proprietor of sheep and cattle, maintain that there was no more harm in shooting a native, than in shooting a wild dog. I have heard it maintained by others, that it was in the course of Providence, that the blacks should disappear before the white, and the sooner the process was carried out the better,
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for all parties. I fear such opinions prevail to a great extent. Very recently in the presence of two clergymen, a man of education narrated, as a good thing, that he had been one of a party who had pursued the blacks, in consequence of cattle having been rustled by them, and that he was sure they shot upwards of a hundred. When ex postulated with, he maintained that there was nothing wrong in it, that it was preposterous to suppose they had souls.3

The first priests who came to North Queensland were almost exclusively concerned with the spiritual welfare of the Catholics among the immigrants. The memory of the complete failure of an earlier attempt to establish a mission to the Queensland Aborigines on Stradbroke Island in 1843 probably helped ease their conscience concerning their responsibilities to the blacks. That mission at Dunwich had failed for many reasons: a frightening isolation, a lack of administrative skills on Archbishop Folding's part, the problem of religious obedience when the superior with the final decision was living in a totally different environment, thousands of miles away geographically and mentally from the practical pastoral problem. There was also a lack of adequate preparation of the men selected for the work, coupled with probably the most important factor: the priests' complete absence of understanding of Aboriginal culture and custom, allied with a certain naivity concerning the ease with which the Aboriginal people would understand and accept the Catholic belief:

The missionaries were confident that, with a knowledge of the language, they would be able to bring them all to the worship of God..............The missionaries calculated also on being able to get the blacks to live in huts together, so as to form themselves into a little community, and should they succeed in doing so, they were confident that all would soon embrace the Christian faith.4

After two years at Dunwich the priests were discontented and dispirited. In June 1846 three of them, a Frenchman, Father Joseph Snell, and two Italians, Father Luigi Pesciaroli and Maurice Lencioni, left the mission heading for Western Australia; the fourth, Father Raymond Vaccari, superior of the mission, remained till mid-1847 before he too left for Sydney and thence Valparaiso.5 Whatever knowledge of the Aboriginal languages and culture they had gained over
their three years on Stradbroke Island was never to be used. Their sojourn there also left no lasting memory with the Aborigines. Archdeacon Rigney in 1858 met a young Aboriginal man who had been part of that early mission: "All traces of his religious education had completely vanished from his mind."\(^6\)

Polding had been well aware of the probable effect the failure of the mission would have. In 1845, when Cardinal Franzoni in Rome had been considering withdrawing the religious priests from the Moreton Bay mission Polding had pleaded with him not to do so since withdrawal would produce a bad effect on the minds of both the Aborigines and the Europeans:

> The former would lose all confidence in the missionaries...
> The Europeans would be only too glad to lay hold of it as proof that it was useless to attempt to civilize the Aborigines.\(^7\)

Polding evidently saw a direct relationship between evangelisation and "civilization". The Archbishop's presentiment was correct; no other attempt at a Catholic mission to the Aborigines in Queensland was made till 14 years later. In 1860 two priests, Father Tissot and Father Cusse, were sent to Brisbane by an Augustinian community from Nîmes in France to work with the Aborigines in Queensland. In regard to an Aboriginal mission however nothing eventuated. Father Tissot, already 60 years old, took charge of the mission to the European settlers in the Maryborough area; Father Cusse worked for a time as a professor in the Bishop's seminary in Brisbane before moving to Newcastle where he died in 1866.\(^8\)

By the 1860s in Queensland the idea that the Aborigines were a doomed race was growing in acceptance. The missionaries, Protestant as well as Catholic, considered that their work among the native people had been a failure. There was also the belief that the Aborigines were dying out. The neglect of the Aborigines was so great that in 1868 the Pope felt obliged to "remind all Australian bishops of their duty towards their Aboriginal brethren."\(^9\) Not that Archbishop Polding had lost his deep concern. In 1869 he wrote:
We have dispossessed the aboriginals of the soil.... In natural justice, then we are held to compensation.... The Fathers of this Council [the Australian Provincial Council of 1869].... desire solemnly to lay upon the conscience of all who have property in these colonies the thought that there is blood upon their land, and that human souls, to whom they are in so many ways debtors to natural justice, and in the name of the Redeemer, are perishing because no man careth for them.10

In North Queensland about that time there was one Catholic priest who felt a similar concern for the Aborigines. Father P.M. Bucas, a native of Brittany, had come to Queensland via New Zealand. In the latter place he had worked with the Maori people and had run into trouble with authorities after instructing Maoris in some aspects of modern warfare and the use of rifles.11 (Peter Marie Bucas had fought with the Papal Zouaves in Italy before coming to New Zealand.) In 1870 in Mackay Father Bucas took up lands "on his own account and responsibility...with a view to make a home for the native aborigines of the district."12 In this he was assisted between 1870 and 1880 by the Sisters of St. Joseph. However the project ran into trouble from two directions. The idea of an Aboriginal settlement became fused with the idea of an orphanage for white children of North Queensland.13 The local Catholics felt they were being saddled with uncalled-for responsibilities, even though the orphanage was a very simple affair with slab huts and uneven clay floors. By 1879 both the orphanage and the mission to the Aborigines were viable but Bishop Quinn was not happy with the project.14 Eventually in 1880 Father Bucas was sent to work in the recently established Vicariate of North Queensland. About the same time the Sisters of St. Joseph were replaced by the Sisters of Mercy. The latter were not used to Aborigines; one of them complained to the Police Magistrate about the "considerable number of Aboriginals in the Neighbourhood". The Native Police were sent to warn off "the wild Blacks".15 The result was the Aboriginal part of Father Bucas's idea died. The orphanage alone continued — eventually to be moved to Neerkol outside Rockhampton.
Father Bucas had been advised earlier that it was impossible to
wed an Aboriginal mission and a white orphanage. The man who had
given that advice was perhaps the only Catholic priest in those early
days in Queensland who had any clear insight into Aboriginal needs
before the advancing white settler society: Father Duncan McNab.
Father McNab came late to his work among the Aborigines. Born in
1820 in the Highlands in Scotland, he was ordained in 1845. Until
1867 he worked in Scotland when, seeking a cure for tuberculosis, he
left for Australia. For nine years he worked in Victoria, mainly at
Melbourne, Portland and Sandhurst. In 1875, already 55 years old, he
was accepted by Bishop Quinn to work among the Aborigines in
Queensland. McNab based his work on a few simple propositions: if
the message of Christianity was to be taught to the Aborigines, they
had a right to be taught it in their own languages; if they were to
be free to listen to his teaching, they needed the security of their
own land, and at the same time the equal protection of the laws of
white society. McNab encountered difficulties both from the Church
and from the Government. Bishop Quinn expected McNab to take up land
for the Church, but McNab argued that the Blacks would not leave
their land for permanent Reserves unless forced to do so. Also he
thought Church Reserves could create the idea that the Church was
there to support the Aborigines, rather than leaving them in the
position to support themselves, and perhaps the Church. Nevertheless
for a time he acquiesced in Bishop Quinn's wishes and cooperated in
the early stages of Father Bucas's schemes in Mackay. Later the
Bishop was to accuse McNab of becoming a tool of the Government.
McNab believed that unless one worked through the Government and the
legal processes in the Colony little could be achieved for the Blacks.
Appointed a Commissioner for the Aborigines by the Government, McNab
argued that individual Aborigines should have as much right to grants
of land as white settlers, but that they should not be forced to pay
for it as if they were aliens in their own land. In 1876 as a result
of his efforts, two resolutions about land grants and care for the
Aborigines were passed by the Queensland Legislative Assembly, but
without any real effect. The Secretary for Lands did nothing in face
of local pressures. Even when land was set aside for Aborigines, white
settlers complained that it was good land; the Aborigines should have only mountains and scrub. McNab also ran into trouble with the Government when he fought for the legal recognition of Aboriginal marriages. He fought this battle with the hope of thereby protecting the property and inheritance rights of Aborigines in terms of white man's law. In 1879 he took his fight to Europe. In Rome he argued that the Catholic bishops of Australia, although they had done much for the religion among the colonists, and desired the conversion of the unbelievers (ie the Aborigines) would not apply themselves to it, thinking they had enough to do with the Catholic colonists. One of them was said to hold the theory that God wished to save the Aborigines through the natural law alone, others said that the natives were not of their dioceses. After the Provincial Synod in Melbourne, the Bishops declared publicly, that they had neither the men nor the money, and they fulfilled their obligations towards the natives when they helped, according to their promise to the Holy Father, a Society of religious men commissioned by him to do the work of conversion. Because of this situation, McNab argued that missionaries should not only be sent by the Supreme Pontiff, but also that they should remain directly subject to him.17

In London he wrote to the Colonial Office that, although the Aborigines did not have homes in the sense of fixed abodes, they had a territory which was their own, on which they had a right to reside and did so for their maintenance to the exclusion of all others. This home and right they had never resigned. It was taken from them.18

In June 1880 he again wrote to the Colonial Office, this time from Paris suggesting that issues be raised with the Governor-in-Council in Queensland under relevant headings as protection, provision, acknowledgement of natives as British subjects, with the right to legalised and registered marriages, Black troopers to be limited as to power, redress to be given by Law and natives to be given sufficient land, allowed to have homestead areas, to be given boats and nets along the coasts, and to be allowed to live with dignity rather than being forced to live like paupers.19 It was as if Duncan McNab had known the message the Aborigines of the Burdekin area had asked James Morrill to carry to the white settlers when he returned to the society of his birth after 17 years living
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with the Aborigines following his shipwreck in 1846. The Aborigines begged Morrill:

with tears in their eyes that I would ask the white men to let them have some of their own ground to live on. They agreed to give up all on the south of the Burdekin River, but asked that they might be allowed to retain that on the other, at all events that which was no good to anybody but them, the low swampy grounds near the sea coast.

McNab's concern for the Aborigines became well nigh an obsession. Yet his was a realistic assessment of the economic and cultural problems created by the clash of the two races. He saw clearly the first steps towards some type of resolution of these problems. However, in his lifetime, few in Church or State would take any effective notice of his voice. Between bouts of illness brought on by fever and sunstroke he continued to work directly with the Aborigines in the Kimberleys, and in the Townsville area, and indirectly for them through speaking about and collecting for their Mission in other parts of Australia.

The year McNab died, 1896, another Catholic approach to the Aborigines in Northern Australia also ended. In that year Father Donald MacKillop (a Jesuit, and a brother of the Foundress of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Mother Mary MacKillop and a cousin of Duncan McNab) was withdrawn from his mission. Though this mission was not immediately situated in North Queensland it still deserves mention here because the organisation of Aboriginal society was not limited by colonial boundaries, and because of the general approach to the Aborigines MacKillop envisioned. The Jesuit mission had been Rome's response to Father Duncan McNab's suggestions in 1880. From 1887 to 1889 Father MacKillop worked near Palmerston on the Daly River. Later in 1890 he was appointed superior of the mission based in Darwin. He saw his missionary work as one of long-term dialogue with the Aboriginal people, though he too was to become disillusioned, and want to give up the mission in 1894. He made a special study of their social customs and laws, their medicine, their sorcery and religion, and of the structure and idiom of their tribal languages. He too argued for "land rights" for the Aborigines. In his case he had thought in terms of

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CATHOLIC MISSIONS TO THE ABORIGINES IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

territories for Aborigines similar to the Reductions in Paraguay, set up by the Jesuits in 1609 to protect the Guarani Indians. Like McNab his was a voice crying in the wilderness. He always knew the odds were against his vision, and he knew the reason:

Not from any unfitness on the side of the aborigines; not certainly from want of will, or through the failing of the spirit of sacrifice in the Society of Jesus, but to put it kindly, because the Anglo-Saxon race is what it is. Proud in its present superiority, that race will remember the lessons of history only when an invading people shall have meted out to it the justice which it has shown to the helpless black man. A hundred years, perhaps hundreds, may pass; but with the teeming millions of Asians at our door, who shall say no day of retribution will come upon Australia?23

There was one other specific initiative taken by the Catholic Church in relation to the Aborigines in these early years of settlement, though this too was to be quickly side-tracked from its original purpose. As a result of a meeting of Archbishop Polding and the Australian Bishops in Sydney in 1873, Rome decided in 1877 to set up a distinct Vicariate in Queensland24 whose responsibility was to be for the Aborigines throughout the whole of Queensland. The difference between a Vicar-Apostolic and a diocesan Bishop in Roman Catholic Church organisation is that Vicars-Apostolic are seen as direct representatives of the Pope; they have a wider, roving authority with powers more flexible and less restricted than those of bishops – ideal for a missionary situation. Quinn let the new Vicariate be based in Cooktown which had its own church since 1874.25 Aborigines there would be less contaminated from contact with white society than their brothers further south and as a result more open to evangelisation. This was to overlook the racial violence that had been associated with the establishment of the Palmer gold-field. The new Vicariate, originally called the Vicariate of Queensland, was set up on 27 January 1877. Its boundaries were described as being "cut off from the diocese of Brisbane by a line running due west to South Australia from Cape Hinchinbrook."26 However its territorial boundaries were not always clearly understood. As late as August
1927 the Apostolic Delegation in Sydney in writing to Bishop Shiel still referred to it as the Queensland Vicariate for the Aboriginals.27 Earlier Robert Dunne, the Bishop who succeeded Quinn in Brisbane was caustically enquiring what was the situation as there appeared to be a Vicariate in Queensland coextensive with his own diocese. If any other missions to the Aborigines were to be created he wondered what would be their relationship to the Vicariate and to the existing dioceses. A Plenary Council (in 1885) considered appointing a Prelate to have charge of the Blacks over all Australia. That scheme was not realised. "Luckily perhaps" - Dunne wrote, "as it might simply have meant a body of ecclesiastics under that pretext collecting irresponsibly over the colonies."28 However it was not the matter of boundaries nor collections that led the Vicariate to change from being a mission to the Aborigines to being equivalent to any other diocese for the white settlers; that development was brought about by the growing number of white settlers in the area, and by the personalities of the early Pro-Vicars Apostolic. Dr. Cani, an Italian priest who had come to Brisbane with Quinn in 1861, was appointed the first Pro Vicar-Apostolic of the Northern Vicariate. His missionary ideas seem often to have been romantic rather than realistic, more suited to dreams from a city chapel than to the wilds of North Queensland.29 When Cani became the first Bishop of Rockhampton in 1882 Rome appointed another Italian, Monsignor Paul Fortini to succeed him in the far north. This self-styled familiar of the Bourbon was an even more disastrous choice. Believing that the dress and manners of a Renaissance ecclesiastical prince were fitting to Port Douglas and Cooktown of the 1880s Fortini lasted two unfortunate years until replaced in 1884 by Mgr. John Hutchinson, as Irish Augustinian. From that time the Vicariate was more or less equivalent to any other diocese in Queensland, the needs of the white Catholic population consuming the greater part of the Vicar-Apostolic's energy as well as his clergy's.

About the time the Augustinian Fathers were taking over responsibility for the Vicariate to the Aborigines the last stage of Aboriginal resistance to the white advance in Queensland was being acted out.
Father McNab in his letters to the Colonial Office had described how effective the Native Police had been in North Queensland in putting down resistance. On Hinchinbrook Island he reported a missionary, Mr. Fuller, had found only women and children, as the men had all been shot by the Native Police a few weeks previous. In September 1884 the battle of Battle Mountain in the Argyle Mountains, sixty miles north of Cloncurry, was fought between the warriors of the Kalkadunga and the Native Mounted Police. This battle marked the effective end of any large scale Aboriginal resistance. The Kalkadunga were slaughtered in great numbers, the survivors dispossessed of their tribal lands, their way of life destroyed. In 1878 it was estimated that the tribe consisted of 2000 men and at least as many of women and children: twenty-one years later, a police sergeant reported that he could only locate 101 people from the tribe. By the late 1880s a definite Government policy began to emerge. This policy was to be based on the idea of missions or reserves where the Aborigines would be provided with food and protection - till they died out. Archbishop Duhig as late as 1947 still took it for granted that the Aboriginal race was dying out. Eventually in 1897 the Government decided on definite Aboriginal Reserves, and Protectors of Aborigines were appointed for specified districts. In the same year the first estimate of numbers of Aborigines revealed no tribe with any country south of Cardwell.

* * * *

No other serious attempt at establishing a special Catholic mission to the Aborigines in Queensland was made till the 1920s when attention turned to the newly created Aboriginal Reserve on Great Palm Island. The Queensland Government had created this Reserve in 1918 after a cyclone had devastated an earlier Reserve at Hull River near Tully. Prior to this time a few Aborigines had been living on Palm. Walter and Reggie Palm-Island were sons of the chief of this original small group. In setting up the Reserves the Government
gave little thought to the significance of tribal distinctions. Over the years Aborigines were brought to the Reserve from many parts of North Queensland and beyond: from Cape York, Cloncurry, Alice Springs, and the Northern Territory. By 1926 there were over 600 there. Aborigines who had not been "broken" did not accept willingly their transportation to Palm Island. Some when taken there escaped apparently by swimming to other islands before getting back to the mainland. The first Government Superintendent of the Reserve, Captain Robert Curry understood something of Aboriginal customs. On Palm he respected their decision to camp in different parts of the island. This maintained at least the basic tribal differences, and allowed tribal elders to exercise a little of their traditional role. Curry encouraged the blacks to collect shell and to make spears and boomerangs to sell to tourists who came to the island by boat each Wednesday. Though reduced to being a side-show attraction, performing on cue for the visitors, the Aborigines did maintain a certain independence under Curry; at least they could keep the money they earned by their enterprise. After a time the Government began to use Palm as a dumping ground for Aborigines who had failed to cope with life on the mainland, people with a problem with alcohol, or in need of medical care. In part Palm also became a penal colony. In 1927 a special "Lock" hospital was set up on Fantome Island, about a dozen miles across the water from Great Palm. This was mainly for people suffering from venereal disease. The Aboriginal population continued to grow, mainly by reason of the numbers removed there from other parts of Queensland. In those years the death rate always surpassed the birth rate. Not till many years after World War II did this picture change.

The Catholic approach to the Aborigines on Palm accepted the general paternalistic vision within which the Reserves had been conceived. Bishop McGuire, the man most immediately responsible for the establishment of the Catholic Mission on Palm Island, spoke of the Aborigines as "naturally moral", living 'with honour among their own people'. But he still saw them as an inferior race, the "poorest,
It seems a few of the Aborigines were already baptised Catholics by the time they were brought to the island through some earlier contracts in various parts of the North. Between 1918 and 1924 some priests visited the Reserve on the coastal steamer which also brought the tourists. However regular steamer visits ceased after 1924 with the completion of the Cairns-Brisbane railway link. From about that time the pastoral responsibility for Palm Island fell on the shoulders of the parish priest of Ingham, who travelled over by launch from Taylor's Beach. In 1926 the Bishop of Rockhampton, Dr. Shiel requested permission to establish a mission on Palm but was refused. At that time the Government was said to be not in favour of a mission being set up within the Aboriginal Reserve, though ministers of religion could visit regularly. There was one piece of land on Palm however, that was not included in the Aboriginal Reserve. In 1913 a private lease had been taken out covering about 21 acres at a place later called Butler Vale. By the 1920's a small boarding-house had been built there, run by a Mrs. Curzon and her two daughters. Two Baptist ladies lived there, working at the Aboriginal Reserve as missionaries whenever they could. The Anglican Bishop of North Queensland, Dr. Feetham, also visited from time to time. Dr. Kelly admits that neither he nor Father Mambrini, who also used to visit the island from 1926 onwards had any success in increasing the number of Catholics among the Aborigines. This was seen as being due to the fact that the priests spent insufficient time on the island to give any adequate instruction in religion. In 1927 an option on the Butler Vale property was obtained. The acquisition of this property gave the Catholic Church the ideal site for a mission only a couple of miles from the administrative centre of the Reserve but Bishop Shiel still had no way of providing a priest who could reside permanently on the island. The Reserve remained the pastoral responsibility of the parish priest of Halifax, Father Dave O'Meara,
until shortly after the first Bishop of Townsville, Terrence McGuire, took possession of his diocese in 1930. In the meantime the religious life of the few Catholics on Palm was kept alive largely through the work of two of the blacks, Emily Prior and Louie Bamfield, who used to gather the people to say the rosary each week.51

Within a month of his consecration, Bishop McGuire visited the Palm Island Reserve. The next month he asked a visiting Missionary of the Sacred Heart, Father Paddy Molony to give a short mission to the aborigines there. Father Molony later described his first visit to the island:

I spent four days here and found only 15 Catholics and only one of those confirmed. Fifteen Catholics out of a population of eleven hundred.....Who is to blame for this shocking neglect? At once my own conscience stung me, when I remembered that I had given many missions near Black settlements and never gave those poor neglected souls even as much as a thought. Looking back now I cannot understand how I could have been so indifferent towards the spiritual welfare of the poor Blacks. I suppose the oft repeated calumny that nothing could be done with them had borne its evil fruit.52

Paddy Molony's conscience and imagination had been stirred. The following year he returned to give another mission on the island. This time he stayed a year and a half. The first Mass he said on Palm Island on this trip was on 26 July 1931, the feast of St. Anne. For this reason he dedicated the Mission under that title. On this visit the Aborigines gave Father Molony a great welcome:

As I drew near the dining-room, I could see many lanterns waving too and fro on the beach. I soon realised that these were so many beacon-lights of welcome. When the boat was still far from the shore quite a number of black-fellows rushed out, knee-deep in the water to welcome me. Only one of these was a Catholic - all the others have become Catholics since.53

By 1933 the number of Catholics had grown to 262, including some new arrivals; 209 had been baptised, 110 confirmed, about 50 were attending Holy communion every Sunday.54

The Anglican Bishop of North Queensland Dr. Feetham, accused the Catholic missionary of proselytizing.55 There were probably some
grounds for the accusation: many of the early Aborigines on Palm came from the former Anglican mission at Yarrabah, while the possession of Butler Vale which allowed a permanently resident priest, gave the Catholic mission a definite advantage. "The authorities accused the Church of getting in by subterfuge." Sectarian rivalries became strong. Father Connors, the priest who succeeded Father Molony, and the Rev. E. Gribble, the Anglican Minister to the Aborigines on Palm remained openly hostile towards each other, as each did towards the Government Superintendent, Mr. Delaney. It has been suggested that one good effect of this Reformation legacy was that it allowed a partial replacement to develop for the earlier tribal identities that were being eroded. The identification with a particular Church, and eventually on Palm with a particular school - "I'm a St. Michael's boy" - has been seen in this light. The general hope however was that the Aborigines would be converted to the extent that they would come to accept the normal structures of any Australian Catholic parish. St. Anne's Mission was promoted as the missionary concern of the whole Australian Catholic Church. In the Townsville diocese, Lenten collections were directed to that end; school children were encouraged to see Palm Island as their special project. Special financial assistance was received from the Pontifical Mission Aid Society. Archbishop Michael Kelly of Sydney added his personal interest and financial help. In 1933 that prelate agreed that some Sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady Help of Christians, who were under his authority, would work on Palm Island. In February 1934 the Archbishop insisted on coming to Palm Island to bless the foundations of the convent there, as a fitting way in his estimation to mark his 84th birthday. When the religious sisters arrived on the island they spent their time visiting the people in the camps, teaching the mothers some aspects of Western hygiene and sewing as well as catechising them in their faith. A simple school began in October 1934 with a roll-call of 97. Three years later Archbishop Kelly offered £700 to build "a perfectly equipped school" on the island hence the school's name "St. Michael's and All Holy Angels".
An anonymous "Visitor" to Palm Island in 1936 expressed both the Catholic hope and the reality of the Mission at that time:

In the savage state the lubra was condemned by tribal custom to be a man's slave, a half-starved drudge, liable to be beaten, deserted or sold according to the will or at the need of her lord and master. Living on the fringes of white civilisation her condition was little better, but under the paternal rule of the Settlement she is protected and fed, and in the Christian community of St. Anne's, her rights as maid, wife and mother are recognised and respected.63

When the Government decided in 1939 to move all the Aborigines who were suffering from Hansen's disease to Fantome Island the Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians were asked to take responsibility for staffing the Hospital.64 When they arrived they found the moral conditions of our poor people in a deplorable state. The building accommodation is temporarily inadequate. The sexes are intermixed. There is much to be desired in the way of cleanliness and so on....Tomorrow we hope to set some people on the way to make their own bread, which will provide occupation and may overcome the present problem of their diet.65

By June "the general hygiene and cleanliness of the place" had improved, the cooking of meals more satisfactory and specific treatment of leprosy had commenced.66 As well, eleven people were coming for daily prayers and instruction and six children were at school for an hour each day.

Over the following years the major changes in the Mission were concerned with its internal workings: towards the end of the war the Australian Sisters of Our Lady Help of Christians were replaced by an international order, the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary; the priests from the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were replaced by Townsville diocesan priests, who in turn were replaced by Franciscan Friars. At times there were complaints that the new religious sisters had little understanding of the Aboriginal people; at other times there were complaints that too much emphasis was given to the requirements of the inner religious life of the Sisters to the detriment of their work among the Aborigines. There were charges of
mutual lack of concern between clergy and religious; there were also
the almost inevitable psychological depressions and mental break-downs
occasioned by isolation from the wider community of European priests
and religious.

In the 1960s serious thought began to be given to the possibility
that the Church's approach to the Aborigines needed a profound re-
evaluation. Already by the early 1950s Father Basil Foster had been
aware that "the days of the simple 'myall' native are practically
over and we now have an ever growing reading public among the new
generation of natives who are eager to read anything and everything".67
As the Aborigines began to agitate for change in their relationship
to white Australian society, some Catholic priests and religious
sought to move with them. In the process several were to discover
the need to face their own deep religious and psychological
re-education. They also discovered what it meant to be labelled
"communists" and "radicals" as they questioned some of the
preconceptions of their society and their Church. But that part of
the history of Catholic missions in North Queensland is still being
lived out.

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10. Ibid. p.120.
11. Bishop Shiel Journal notes - Archives St. Patrick's Cathedral Rockhampton (ASPR)
12. QVP 1885 Vol I p.668 No. 47. Rev. Father Bucas to Dr. Cani 29 July 1885.
15. Nailon, op. cit. p.14
16. Bishop Quinn had set up a place at Nudgee outside Brisbane to provide land, employment and food, but the Aborigines had not remained there. ibid. p.14.
21. McNab was in Townsville between August and December 1882 (Baptismal Register No. 1 Archives Sacred Heart Cathedral Townsville [ASHT]) His name appears again in the Baptismal Register 1888-1893 at Ayr-Brandon. The Townsville Herald 8 July 1882 carried a highly complimentary article on his work among the Aborigines (Advocate 5 Aug. 1882).
22. Dunne to Moran 25 May 1894 Archives St. Mary's Sydney (ASMS) Qld. file.


27. ASPR Shiel file.

28. Dunne to Moran 30 June 1894 ASMS Qld. file. This was probably an oblique reference to Father MacKillop’s successful lecture tour in 1893. He raised £800 (O'Farrell, op. cit. p.273).

29. An unsigned critique of Dr. Cani and Mgr. Fortini in Italian is held in the Archives at the Cairns Cathedral - a translation of which is in ASPR.


33. N. Loos Invasion and Resistance Aboriginal-European relations on the North Queensland frontier 1861-1897 (Canberra 1982) p.110.

34. James Duhig D.D. Crowded Years (Sydney, 1947) p.49.


38. Sister Barbara Linge FMM to Father Publius Cassar 4 April 1975. (Fr. Cassar File Ingham Presbytery) (Sister Linge spent 26 years on Palm Island).


41. Linge to Cassar 4 April 1975.


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Between the separation of Queensland from New South Wales in 1859 and federation of the Australian colonies in 1901 the Pacific Island labour trade was probably the most contentious perennial issue confronting Queensland legislators. From its inception in 1836 the trade aroused opposition; from its abolition in 1906 to the present day it has continued to provoke controversy. It has been calculated that 62,475 Pacific Islanders were brought to work in Queensland between 1863-1904.¹ They came almost exclusively from Melanesia, the south-western Pacific Islands lying between the Bismark Archipelago, Fiji, New Caledonia and Australia:² approximately 64% hailed from the New Hebrides, the remainder largely from the Solomons.³ Several thousand did not see out the term of their three-year indentures. Some perished on the voyage to Queensland; the bulk of the deaths occurred in the canefields. Most survivors were repatriated, but there remain today, mainly in the sugar-growing areas of Queensland, small communities descended from the Pacific Island field labourers, a reminder of a dubious episode in Queensland history.

There has been considerable writing on the subject, especially in recent years.⁴ Much of it reflects the hostility aroused by the trade, and is unbalanced, partisan and emotional, even when not frankly sensational. A new level of understanding was reached in the late 1960s by academic historians, in particular by workers of the Australian National University's School of Pacific Studies.⁵ However the work of these scholars has not yet made much impact on the general reading public. That there were abuses in the labour trade in the early years, which led to its regulation by Governments, is undeniable. Scholars such as Peter Corris and Deryck Scarr have highlighted several instances. Scarr has concluded:

There is good evidence that in some areas recruits were first obtained by outright force....there is no reason to dispute the established view that in Melanesia...
recruits in the early years of the labour trade to Fiji, Queensland, Noumea and Samoa were kidnapped. However, after years of careful research, these historians emphasise that in each of the areas successively opened up by recruiters, abuses disappeared rapidly. By the early 1870s in the New Hebrides, and the early 1880s in the Solomons, recruiting was largely a voluntary affair of mutual benefit. Moreover, the vast majority of Pacific Islanders came to Queensland in the last three decades of the trade.

After the first ten years of intensive recruiting, it was a regulated two-way exchange between discerning entrepreneurs on both sides. By the early 1880s most Island groups were familiar with the trade: many of their kinsmen had been to Queensland, had returned with a cache of trade goods and could tell others of their experiences. By this time many could understand English and some could speak the language. They comprehended what was expected of them and that they, and indeed their community, had much to gain by recruiting and working in Queensland for three years. Contemporary accounts indicate that, by this time, many were well able to discriminate between different ships, captains, employers, and localities. Before offering their services they would often inspect both the ship and its trade goods as well as asking to which port it was destined. Similarly, Queensland Government officials and recruiters had become increasingly familiar with the culture and behaviour of the Islanders: both the legal framework and its enforcers were far more suited to the task after 1885. Corris has argued that "the majority of Solomon Islanders venturing abroad went in the later years of the labour trade when the regulation of recruiting was at its most strict, when conditions on the plantations were at their best, and when the rewards for labour migration were at their highest."

By the 1890s significant numbers of recruits were returning for a second or third term in Queensland, a fact often cited by those who defended the trade. At the same time, it has to be acknowledged that these "old hands" were sometimes motivated by unsatisfactory conditions at home rather than by the attractions of the Colony: fear
AUSTRALIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS:
ports and island groups involved in the labour trade
THE DIARIES OF S.M. SMITH, GOVERNMENT AGENT

of punishment for tribal offences, inability to re-adjust to traditional life, and the effects of tribal warfare all played their part. While recruiting was largely voluntary, there were isolated exceptions. And, though recruits understood their agreements, the outward voyage and the impact of a new diet and lifestyle in unfamiliar surroundings must have been traumatic for many. To acknowledge however that the trade was in the main voluntary, legal and well-regulated does not imply that it was morally justified, or that the lot of the Islander in Queensland was not one of harsh monotonous toil.

Although historians now concur on many of the trade's features, little research has hitherto dealt specifically with the 1890s, not least because of the paucity of contemporary evidence. For the period 1890-1906, there are but two official Government Agent's logs: F. Gooding, Roderick Dhu, 2 September-24 November 1898; and John Kirkpatrick Craig, Claneman, 13 July-12 October 1904, held as evidence for an enquiry. In addition, there are the private logs of W. Wawn mate of the Borough Belle, 21 October 1890-24 April 1891; Para, 26 April-12 October 1894. Another contemporary source on the later period is the writings of Joseph D. Melvin, a journalist who sailed incognito with the Helena on a recruiting trip throughout the Solomon Islands in 1892. Originally printed as a series of articles for the Melbourne Argus, Melvin's reports were collected and published by Corris in 1977. Collectively, these accounts can give only glimpses into the nature and character of the trade. Any new addition to the literature would be valuable and welcomed by researchers to substantiate or challenge their conclusions on the nature of the trade.

Only recently has there become available to the historian the Smith Diaries, compiled by Government Agent Sydney Mercer Smith who undertook 18 voyages between the years 1893-1904. These are not Smith's official logs, but a personal record kept in conjunction and covering the same ground in greater detail. While only 12 of the
Diaries have survived they are an exceptional collection: authentic un-retouched daily records of the whole of a substantial number of recruiting voyages, spanning nearly the entirety of his career as Government Agent. They are unique for the period after Griffith's renewal of the trade in 1892. A significant contribution to the history of the labour trade, the Diaries make it possible to study the work of a Government Agent in greater detail than ever before, and therefore to examine generalizations against a solid body of hard evidence. A photocopy of the Smith Diaries was first presented to the History Department at James Cook University by a family member a decade ago. More recently, the originals were lodged with the John Oxley Library, Brisbane.

At first sight, Smith's Diaries may appear repetitious, even tedious, giving endless accounts of routine events and the weather. But closer scrutiny provides an intimate insight into the day-to-day existence not only of a Government Agent but also of all people, European and Melanesian, on board Queensland labour trade vessels. During his eleven years in the trade, Smith experienced the whole gamut of conditions from boredom while becalmed, to malaria, armed attack, storms and shipwreck. Historically, the most significant record is of the long undramatic periods spent landing returns and enlisting new recruits. There is every indication that the events were recorded dutifully, usually at the end of each day. Smith probably wrote his brief, compulsory, official log at the same sitting. Accounts of some voyages were entered in diaries especially acquired for the purpose, others in ordinary exercise books. Conditions for writing were obviously not ideal – the originals betray occasional haste, the ink is sometimes blurred, and there are often indications of strain and weariness. There is no trace of later revision and nothing to suggest that he ever thought of publishing. However, there is good evidence that his wife read at least some of them: she published some stories on the trade which clearly drew on the Diaries for background, if not for actual incidents. As regards the six missing Diaries, it is much easier to believe that they were accidentally lost than that they were destroyed deliberately or that Smith discontinued
THE DIARIES OF S.M. SMITH, GOVERNMENT AGENT

a custom which he had followed for so many years and which was so deeply rooted in seafaring practice, especially as there is a Diary for the thirteenth voyage, but none for the twelfth.

Government Agents were first appointed in 1870 to enforce Queensland regulations on board vessels engaged in the labour trade. In view of their importance to the trade, it is surprising that they have received so little attention. What comment they have attracted has been almost uniformly unfavourable. Contemporary and recent writers alike have judged the Government Agents who served in the final fifteen years as unequal to the responsibilities of the post. This was a natural consequence of their lack of independent authority and the absence of effective backing from the government, of poor remuneration and casual employment status. Improvements in 1875, by which some were made permanent civil servants, were considered inadequate remedies. However too many generalizations about Government Agents are based on these early years and too little account has been taken of the transformation brought about after 1885.

Like so much else in the labour trade, this change was the work of the newly-elected Griffith Ministry, reacting to the public outrage in the wake of a Royal Commission into the atrocities of recruiters in New Guinea. No government thereafter "could afford the scandal involving corrupt colonial officials, either as Inspectors, Government Agents or even Immigration Agents". With only one exception, all men involved in the New Guinea incidents were debarred from the trade. Moreover, Griffith thereafter took a personal interest in the appointment of every Government Agent. No other crew member - master, mate or recruiter - could be employed on a recruiting vessel without the approval of the appropriate minister. Not only was the Government Agent's salary raised but his position was at last firmly defined: he was responsible to the Government only, and could rely on its authority. Prosecution for an erring crew member was no longer an idle threat. That Government Agents were cursed as "Griffith Sneaks" implies that not only were men of integrity appointed, but also that the Government was supporting them.
Our popular notion suggests that most men who became Government Agents did so when they could get no other employment. But after careful investigation, Scarr has concluded that although it was true in some cases, biographical details were insufficient to test the view thoroughly. This did not prevent him reaching broad conclusions: while conceding that there were some good men amongst them, Scarr claims that around Government Agents the prevailing air was one of seediness and general dilapidation. The best of them would hope to become minor civil servants in some other branch of the administration....To grub around in the lower ranks of the colonial service was a precarious way of living.

This has little relevance to the conditions established in 1885, when all Government Agents became permanent civil servants on a salary 250% above the rate set in 1870 and 50% higher than that paid the minority granted permanent status in 1875. A civil servant on £300 a year, together with full board during voyages, was not exactly "grubbing", especially in the depression years of the 1890s. Indeed, it is significant that Smith regarded the salary and the security as outweighing the many disagreeable aspects of his job. After the labour trade was closed he became a Pilot in the Port of Brisbane, an eminently respectable and responsible permanent civil service post but with a salary one third lower than he had drawn as Government Agent.

Smith's career before and after his years as Government Agent cannot be reconciled with the usual disparaging stereotype. By 1893 he had served 14 years in the merchant marine, on emigrant ships plying between Britain and Australia, and in the Australian coastal trade. He had held a Master Mariner's Certificate since 1884, and had served as Navigating Lieutenant and second-in-command on board the Queensland Naval vessel, Gayundah, for three years, terminating when the ship was laid up in October 1892. The certificates of discharge from the successive vessels on which Smith served, carefully preserved among his papers, reveal an unbroken record of professional competence and exemplary conduct.
Sydney Mercer Smith, as Lieutenant in Queensland Maritime Defence Force
Smith was appointed Government Agent on 27 January 1893. His first engagement was the schooner Helena, on 26 February. Griffith, the Premier who had inaugurated the strict new regulations of 1885, had intended the traffic to end in 1890, but, by a reversal of policy in 1892, guaranteed its continuance for a further ten years. Smith's appointment therefore coincided with a marked upsurge in the traffic which lasted until importation of Pacific Islanders ceased under legislation passed by the new Commonwealth Parliament in 1901. There is no direct evidence why he took the job and persisted in it, but it is reasonable to see a major part of the explanation in a diary entry during his first voyage: "...wish I could get £300 a year in any other way." The attractions of a secure position carrying a relatively high salary would not have diminished as the full impact of the maritime strikes was felt, the long depression of the nineties dragged on, and the Smith family grew from two to four children. He remained in the labour trade for 12 years during which he made 18 voyages as Government Agent in ten different vessels from various ports in Queensland to the Pacific Islands and back. In June 1902, as the trade was gradually coming to an end, Smith, along with many others, was placed on supernumerary staff. Although he remained on this list until 15 February 1905, his last voyage was completed in November 1903. In retrospect, Smith described this period of his life as not a very happy time, what with fever, shipwreck and being amongst niggers, being shot at and other little troubles. And if asked to describe the manners and customs of the Natives, I would answer like Marrlett, 'Manners they have none and their customs are beastly.'

It would be quite mistaken to presume that Smith was guilty of bigoted racism, of tolerating his job for the lucrative salary alone. On the contrary, his dislike for the conditions under which he had to work as Government Agent make the more impressive the dedication he displayed throughout his ten years' service. The Immigration Agent's comments at the end of that service were no mere conventional tribute.
In February 1904, at the age of 47, Smith rejoined the Australian United Steam Navigation Company, serving as Second Officer for the next two years. Finding promotion slow, he sought and received appointment to the Pilot Service where he served for the remainder of his working life - more than 20 years - as a Pilot in Brisbane. During the First World War he served in the Naval Reserve as Chief Examining Officer for the Port of Brisbane and later was awarded the General Services Medal and promoted to the rank of Commander (retired). He died in Brisbane in 1933, aged 75.

The duties of Government Agent during Smith's years of service were onerous, prescribed in detail and carefully policed. They called for firm character and independent judgement in conditions often unpleasant and sometimes dangerous. His primary function was to supervise the recruitment and return of labourers, to see that the laws and regulations were observed. Before departure from Queensland he was required to check that all food, water, clothing, medical supplies and accommodation facilities were satisfactory. Until this was done, a licence could not be issued to the ship's master. He was instructed to keep an official log, listing each day every occurrence of consequence and each recruit's full particulars. He was responsible for the general welfare of the Islanders, for ensuring that they were fed, and issued with the prescribed tobacco, clothing and blankets. When medical treatment was needed, he had to provide it. He also had to see to the cleanliness of their quarters. Any irregularities or offences by crew members had to be reported either to the first Naval vessel he sighted or immediately on arrival in port. He was vested with discretionary power to order a ship's immediate return in the event of any impending danger (e.g. shortage of provisions) or serious offence. Should he fall gravely ill, or die, the ship could not continue recruiting but had to return to Queensland immediately. He was required to accompany the boats at all times whether recruiting, landing returns at their correct domiciles or simply procuring wood, water or native food. Escorting the boats
frequently meant considerable discomfort and danger as the craft were often launched at dawn, pulling around bays and river mouths, along coasts characterised by tropical downpours and severe exposure to the sun, heavy seas and inhospitable communities. While ashore there was a considerable risk of contracting diseases such as dysentery or malaria as well as being attacked or shot at by hostile Islanders. The boats often had a long pull back to the ship, returning after dusk. On board he had to re-inspect the recruits, ensure that they understood their contracts and complete the certificates of engagement. Paperwork was then begun. Entries were made to his official log, ready for delivery and inspection by any Naval vessel which might come along, and for the Immigration authorities immediately on arrival at port in Queensland. The evidence from Smith's voyages makes possible a substantive comparison with popular notions of the labour trade during the 1890s, an assessment of Government Agents and their overall importance to the character and efficiency of that trade.

What is immediately apparent from the Diaries is the sheer physical effort that was involved in recruiting 60-100 labourers during the 1890s. It was not a matter of sailing to a convenient island and enlisting the complement at one anchorage. Occasionally it was possible to recruit up to a score of labourers in one day but almost invariably they were enlisted in ones and twos. There were also periods of up to a fortnight on some voyages when not a single recruit was to be had. For example, during 111 days of recruiting in 1902 Smith obtained only 26 recruits. Similarly, a lot of time was spent landing returns at their correct "passages": "nearly a week lost in trying to land one 'Return'." The evidence from every voyage completely refutes the persistent allegation that returns were dumped at any point convenient to the recruiter, without regard to their proper destinations.

As Smith's Diaries are the only records of the kind known to survive from the period 1893-1902, it is of some importance to
consider whether they can be taken as typical of conditions prevailing in these years. There are a number of reasons for concluding that they can. From official records kept of every recruiting voyage of the period it can be calculated that the average recruiting voyage lasted about four months - 121 days - and enlisted about 80 recruits: the corresponding figures for Smith's voyages conform to this median.\textsuperscript{35} As regards the origins of recruits, Smith's agree with recent overall estimates for the same period (1893-1904) by Price and Baker,\textsuperscript{36} indicating that the Solomons were the main labour supply source at the time: 59% of Smith's recruits hailed from the Solomons, 40% were New Hebridean and a further 1% came from other Islands.\textsuperscript{37} In the labour trade, an "old hand" was an Islander who had previously worked a three-year term in the sugar industry, usually in Queensland. Corris found that a significantly high proportion of Solomon Island recruits in the 1890s were old hands.\textsuperscript{38} Smith's figures for the same period illustrate the trend: table VIII, a breakdown of his voyages shows a similar pattern for both the Solomons and the New Hebrides with an overall average of 20.9%, exceeding 30% in two separate years, and never falling below 12% in any single year.\textsuperscript{39} Though lower than the figures given by Corris, they are still high enough to support his conclusion that knowledge and understanding of the Queensland labour trade system was widespread in the Islands. They make nonsense of the view that any large proportion was recruited by force or fraud or in ignorance in this period.

The one clear respect in which figures from Smith's voyages are atypical concerns female recruits. Queensland Government Statistics indicate that throughout the 1890s females constituted just on 6% of recruits, a reflection of legislation which did not favour female field labourers:\textsuperscript{40} Corris estimated that they represented approximately 8% of the Solomon recruits during this time.\textsuperscript{41} Only 1.82% of Smith's recruits were female. Even more significantly, the largest number on any voyage was three, and on six voyages - one third of all he undertook - there were none. The figures might suggest simply a particularly strict regard to the restrictions on recruiting women.
The Diaries indeed, furnish ample evidence of Smith's scrupulous regard to the regulations on this score, but they show more. Throughout, Smith displays a preference for not recruiting women at all: "We got no less than 17 Recruits, the most ever I have seen in one day, two women are included in this lot. I did not want them but could not get out of taking them." However, it is not altogether clear why: to say that he regarded them as a source of trouble is not so much an explanation as a paraphrase of his attitude; but the fact remains. In his study of the Malaitans, C.R. Moore concluded that it would scarcely have been possible to have any Melanesian women on board a recruiting vessel without infringing very powerful taboos governing male/female relationships. While neither Smith nor anyone else in the trade would have had more than a vague notion of these taboos, they would certainly have encountered some of the reactions to infringing them.

The Diaries are also valuable for providing further evidence on aspects of the labour trade already familiar to Pacific historians but not yet reflected in more popular works. Much writing on the labour traffic depicts the Islanders only as the objects of white actions, passively exploited in the early phase, successfully accommodating to white practices in the later stages. Apart from underestimating their intelligence, such interpretations ignore the direct actions of Pacific Islanders. Violence, exploitation and deceit were not one-sided: there are numerous examples of Islanders attacking open boats and even ships. During his time in the trade, Smith received many warnings of premeditated armed attacks. While recruiting in 1901, the boats were fired on at Malaita and the European recruiter, James Arthur, was killed. Understandably crews were usually well-armed and continually on their guard. The few respite was welcome relief: "...quite a treat to be in a missionary Island again, no guns in the boat and no one to watch." Clearly, even after thirty years, recruiting was still a dangerous affair. Indeed, Scarr contended that in the 1890s shooting at boats was on the increase, largely because the older members of the community resented the absence
Evidence to substantiate this view can be found in the Diaries, but this was not the reason for Arthur's fatal shooting — seemingly an act of revenge for the misdeeds of a storekeeper in Queensland. Smith explained:

...it was in revenge for the defrauding of a large number of Malayta men by a sum amounting to over £1,300 by a Bundaberg Storekeeper named Williams who received the Boys' hard earned wages in trust, and then levanted... When returning home the Islanders gave warning that 'Government better look out'.

Sometimes Pacific Islanders enlisted only to abscond after receiving their payment in trade. This was one of Smith's most persistent problems.

In New Britain, New Ireland and many parts of the Solomon Islands, some recruits could be obtained through "chiefs" or "passage masters", local dignitaries who were paid in trade for their services. Contrary to popular belief, none existed in the New Hebrides. Perhaps the best known in the Solomons was Kwaisulia of Ada Gege, an artificial island in the Lau Lagoon area. Both Scarr and Corrís concluded that such men had acquired an undeserved reputation as instrumental to satisfactory recruiting. Smith's experiences reinforce this view. In eleven years of recruiting, he mentioned having had contact with two chiefs: twice with Kwaisulia and once with "Gaela", also a Malaitan.

In 1877, the Queensland Government outlawed the offering of gifts to relatives and friends of recruits because of allegations in Queensland that captives were being sold in the Islands, especially by "chiefs". This was a hasty, ill-considered measure which completely ignored Melanesian custom. It was customary to "buy" a recruit: this term simply meant that in exchange for the temporary loss of one of their members, the community received compensation in the form of trade goods; if this was not provided he was considered "stolen". Misinterpretation of this term, as being synonymous with "kidnapped" created much misunderstanding. So did its antonym "catch", which, to the Islanders, meant "legitimately recruited". In a report to his Commodore, Captain Dale of the Australian Station pointed out the difficulty:
a) Signalling a labour vessel in the Pacific Islands

b) Recruiting

Backed into shore, surrounded by armed Islanders, the boat is very vulnerable despite the covering boat in the background

[Queenslander, 9 July 1892]
If the present or pay passes from the Recruiting Agent to the tribe, Article 22 of the Queensland Instructions to Government Agents is distinctly infringed. If, on the other hand, the rule was carried out by any vessel engaged in the labour traffic...there is little doubt but vessels would obtain no recruits. Article 22 is therefore practically expunged from their Instructions by the Government Agents themselves, [sic] and the pains and penalties in Article 23 are without doubt never enforced. In the case where no present or pay passes from Recruiting Agent to the tribe, and the native surreptitiously recruits, the tribe considers itself cheated, and bloodshed invariably follows.55

Even missionaries had to comply with this custom. Bishop Patteson himself obtained young trainees for his missionary schools by methods essentially the same as those of legal recruiters. In the 1890s Smith continually ignored that particular regulation in order to ensure the well-being of both recruits and recruiters.

The Smith Diaries also contain pertinent evidence about labour vessels. Overcrowding has been by far the most common criticism levelled at the trade's ships. This should be viewed from three aspects: the outward voyage, the period spent recruiting in the Islands, and the homeward voyage. Complements on the outward voyage varied considerably. For his part, Smith admittedly participated in three voyages during which the number of returns exceeded the registered capacity;56 for each, official approval had been obtained beforehand.57 On the other hand, ships he accompanied had fewer than a dozen returns to transport on at least one third of his voyages. Queensland Government Statistics indicate that this same pattern prevailed in the case of other vessels in the trade. Having reached the Islands (after less than two weeks at sea) as many returns as possible were usually landed before recruiting was commenced. This minimised responsibility and maximised space on the recruiting vessel. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the vessels Smith supervised were overcrowded during the period of recruiting. Indeed, the landing of returns exceeded the rate of signing on recruits by the general ratio of one return per day disembarked to one recruit per three days enlisted. Furthermore, Smith's vessels never managed a
full complement of recruits. Ratios of actual tonnage to recruits indicates that this was most often the case with other Queensland labour vessels, a fact tending to negate the possibility that Smith was much more scrupulous than others. The usual licence to recruit was of six months' duration. Obviously, captains were returning vessels to Queensland with less than a full complement after only four months out. Once a substantial number of recruits was on board in the Islands, the captain, traditionally a part-owner of the vessel, would have to weigh the risks to health and discipline of recruits and crew against the chance of completing the complement in a reasonable period. The condition of ship, sails and rigging, food supplies, the weather and the season were all factors to be considered, which, combined with the rigours of inspection both at home port and in the Islands, suggests that serious overcrowding was highly unlikely.

Another widely-held view is that Queensland labour trade vessels were plagued by disease, and that the Government Agents' physical examination of the recruits was perfunctory. This allegation cannot be sustained in the light of Smith's figures for the homeward voyages. Out of a total of eighteen recruiting excursions, during which in excess of 1,300 Islanders were transported, there was only one death. Further, only seven recruits were rejected after medical examination on arrival in Queensland, four with measles. Occasionally recruits were hospitalised on arrival, but invariably for minor treatment. In contrast, the mortality rate among returns on board Smith's vessels was more substantial. Much of the sickness and death on board can be attributed to medical conditions probably contracted while working in Queensland. Smith was only too well aware of the problem. He said of one return: "poor beggar is dying of consumption, six years in Queensland!!!!"; and of another who died on board before the vessel even cleared Maryborough: "one Islander dead, not surprised, no business to have been sent aboard, consumption". Interestingly, all cases of "insanity" were among returns only. The practice of the Queensland authorities repatriating recruits
on the expiry of their indentures even when their medical condition was suspect was probably the most tangible factor in the death rate amongst returns. It is to be noted that the Government Agent had no authority to reject returns placed aboard his vessel.

In addition, there has prevailed a notion that labour ships were unseaworthy, capable of remaining afloat only while the bilge pumps were constantly manned. That four out of 18 Queensland vessels engaged in the trade were lost at sea in the period 1893-1903 might seem to support this view, but these figures are of little value in the absence of comparative statistics. Considering the size of the vessels, the perils of uncharted reefs, and the frequency of cyclones and tidal rips in the Island waters, it is surprising that a greater number were not lost. Smith, a master mariner, served on 10 different labour vessels, more than half the number operating out of Queensland during his years as Government Agent. That he commented adversely on only one of them is significant. The only wreck he was involved in was the unavoidable sinking of the Ariel which he repeatedly described as "a very good little sea-boat". Moreover, he never found cause to complain about the crews' seamanship.

Throughout his Diaries, however, Smith displays a general disapproval of the character of white crew members, expecting "officer-gentleman" behaviour from all seamen: "Owner and Cook had a big row in the cabin at 8 a.m. I could hear the Owner call the Cook a s-n of a b--h and a b--y, d--n, b--d; labor (sic) trade language I suppose, very unpleasant to hear, spoilt my breakfast." Even so, he only lodged two complaints in eleven years: both concerned members of the notorious Tornaros family. Smith had no hesitation in reporting people like Agesilaus Tornaros who breached the Queensland regulations while on board the Sybil by selling four gallons of rum to a trader and leaving two cases of brandy in the latter's charge to be sold. Significantly, Captain Tornaros, the owner of the vessel, was only ever carried as pilot and passenger after 1892. Nevertheless, the incident illustrates that at least some Europeans were prepared to
violate regulations if not checked by a responsible Government Agent. Another facet of Smith's voyages which merits attention is the amount of contact he had with Europeans while recruiting. On every trip he made, Smith met with other vessels in the Islands. Often they were Island traders or mail steamers, but on other occasions they were Queensland, Fijian, Samoan or French recruiting ships and British or Colonial men-of-war. Over the years, the number of his friends and acquaintances in the Islands multiplied. They were mostly missionaries, copra traders and Island-based officials who welcomed conversation and exchanged reading material. Smith too looked forward to company, a brief escape from the loneliness and monotony of his job, even though most acquaintances were in a sense rivals, ready to lay complaints against competitors. Missionaries were no exception. Only one complaint was ever laid against Smith, and upon investigation it was found to be false. The trader concerned was an ex-recruiter and long-standing opponent of the labour trade whose previous complaints concerning the trade, once examined by the Immigration Department, were also proven to be without foundation. Rivalry sometimes developed into outright hostility. This was reflected by an entry in 1893: "...We got five recruits... 'Sybil' in company and her owner Old Tornaros very wild with us for getting so many recruits."

Overall, the Smith Diaries confirm the impressions of present day historians that the period from 1892 to cessation of the labour trade was well-regulated. To suggest that Smith's personal character was typical would be pure conjecture: sufficient biographical details on other Government Agents simply are not available at this stage. Without doubt, Smith was an exemplary officer, deeply concerned for his human cargo, but there is reason to believe that most of his contemporaries maintained a similar high standard of official conduct because in this period when the traffic was continuously subject to close scrutiny there were but two serious charges laid. In 1904 the
THE DIARIES OF S.M. SMITH, GOVERNMENT AGENT

Clansman inquiry established that Government Agent, John Craig, had not been accompanying the boats to shore. Although the Clansman was only returning labourers on this occasion, Craig was dismissed and debarred from the trade. There was nothing in Craig's official diary to suggest negligence, demonstrating that little escaped the authorities at this time. And the William Manson case supports this argument.

The ship's captain, Joseph Vos, and Government Agent, George Olver, were charged under the Imperial Kidnapping Act of 1872 following allegations by three young Islander missionaries who were on board the William Manson at the time, that Vos, the owner of the vessel, had offered Kwaisulia (a Malaitan chief) a lucrative reward to supply recruits. The plaintiffs further testified that Kwaisulia, with only a handful of his men, seized three members of a neighbouring tribe in the presence of the captives' chief, Sooba (and his large band of heavily-armed warriors) and forcibly delivered them to the William Manson's recruiting boats. The proceedings leave no doubt that the plaintiffs were not impartial witnesses: they had joined the William Manson intending to disembark at Kwaisulia's stronghold and establish a mission. Kwaisulia's unwillingness to share his domain was attributed to Vos' influence. Disgruntled, they had no option but to return to Queensland. Faced with conflicting evidence, the court dismissed the charges, but Vos and Olver were subsequently banned from the trade. It is clear that the recruits in question were at least unwilling. But it is equally patent that the William Manson incident was an isolated exception: Vos offered Kwaisulia a whaleboat, an unusual inducement, one that neither he nor anyone else would be in a position to hold out often. As well, Vos had not been involved in the trade for almost a decade and his actions might be considered more characteristic of the trade's earlier phase when avenues for complaint were not so numerous.

Indeed, in response to a sweeping suggestion that the William Manson incident was typical, O'Neil Brenan (Immigration Agent to the Colonial Secretary's Office) sagaciously replied:

Such an assertion is untrue and most unjust to the respectable staff of Government Agents in the service. People who know anything of the trade nowadays are well aware that irregularities cannot take place and remain undiscovered and the William Manson case, I submit, proves it.
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The limited and more fragmentary documentary evidence for these years surviving from other hands reinforces this conclusion. For example Melvin's newspaper articles contain sentiments strikingly similar to those of modern Pacific historians:

Whilst kidnapping and fraud in the traffic has been made by wise and elaborate laws, by strict supervision, and by enlightenment amongst the islanders themselves, as impracticable as crime in a well-governed, civilised community, the desire on the part of the natives to recruit for Queensland is so pronounced that kidnapping is rendered unnecessary.\(^75\)

In addition, Henry H. Montgomery, Anglican Bishop of Tasmania who voyaged throughout the Islands in the Melanesian Missionary vessel *Southern Cross* in 1892,\(^76\) wrote to the Governor of Queensland, Sir Henry Norman, on completion of his journey:

I imagined that natives were induced to engage themselves for Queensland while they were in ignorance of the real terms of the contract. This I believe to be an entirely erroneous conclusion. The lapse of time has altered the old condition....I am convinced that the boys are treated with the greatest kindness....and your regulations are carried out in their spirit as well as in the letter.\(^77\)

That there were only two serious breaches of the law reported after 1885 indicates that Government Agents were doing their duty. True, the possibility that some abuses went undetected cannot be dismissed entirely. But given the extent of Government intervention, the awareness of the Islanders, the avenues for complaint both in the Islands and at port, the readiness of rivals to lay complaints, the vigilance of organised philanthropic bodies and the eagerness of the press to expose abuses, it is unlikely there were many. The collusion between captain and Government Agent, and silence from all crew and recruits, necessary to a successful cover-up would not be easy to engineer or to sustain. In making the Queensland labour trade an orderly, well-regulated business, Government Agents played an important, commendable role.
The *Sydney Belle* at Bundaberg, returning Islanders mustered on deck

[A.C. Davies Collection, John Oxley Library]

The *Fearless* at Cairns

[Cairns Historical Society]
THE NEW HEBRIDES
THE DIARIES OF S.M. SMITH, GOVERNMENT AGENT

REFERENCES


2. There were a few Polynesians, and an estimated 2,800 Papuans introduced from the New Guinea Islands during the period 1883-1884. Ibid. The majority of the Papuans were returned after arrival when it was revealed that many had either been kidnapped or did not understand their contracts.

3. I have calculated this percentage from the statistics in ibid.


7. See table I.


9. Corris, Passage, p.43.

10. Ralph Shlomowitz has estimated that between 1892-1903 about 1/3 of recruits were re-indentures; 22% had been previously employed in Queensland and 6% outside their own islands in places other than Queensland. Shlomowitz, "Markets for Indentured and Time-expired Melanesian Labour in Queensland 1863-1906. An Economic Analysis". J.P.H. Vol. 16, No. 1-2, 1981, p.70.

11. Roderick Dhu IPI 3/21 No. 2840 QSA. Clansman PRE/A91 No. 4419 QSA.


14. Throughout his years in the trade, Smith had 23 contemporaries.

15. See Scarr, Fragments, pp.150-4; Giles, Cruise, pp.10-12; Scarr, "Recruits", pp.233-240.

16. 1884 Royal Commission into New Guinea and Papuan Islands, QVP 1885, No. 11, pp.813-832. See also Peter Corriss, "Blackbirding in New Guinea Waters 1883-4: An Episode in the Queensland Labour Trade." J.P.H. Vol. 3, 1968. New Guinea was closed to recruiters by the Queensland Government in 1885 and most masters and officials directly involved were debarred from the trade.


18. Wawn, South Sea Islanders, p.159.

19. See Saunders, Uncertain Bondage, p.107. Saunders claimed that this was particularly so after 1885.

20. Scarr, "Recruits", p.239.


22. Blue Books (annual) QVP and QPP.


24. For fuller discussion of Smith's career, see Edmondson, Government Agent, Chpt 1.


26. Blue Books, and Statistics (annual) Polynesian Immigration and Emigration, QVP and QPP. For a list of Smith's voyages, see table IV. For a descriptive account of his voyages, see Edmondson, Government Agent Chpts. 3-15.
The Pacific Island Labourers Act No. 16 of 1901, a Commonwealth enactment, provided for the progressive reduction of the number of Pacific Islanders introduced until 31 March 1904, when the trade would cease; with few exceptions all Pacific Islanders still in the country on 31 December 1906 were to be deported.

28. QVP and QPP: refer fn. 25.

29. Frederick Marryat (1792-1848) naval officer and writer, then well known for his sea stories, especially Mr Midshipman Easy (1836). I have been unable to trace this quotation: others in the trade use it: see for example John Gaggin, Among the Man-Eaters, London, 1900, p. 171. This quote derives from an autobiographical sketch in Smith's handwriting: it was written about 1930 and spans his life; he entitled it "An Australian Seaman". Mercer Smith Papers, private possession, Brisbane.

30. A.L.S. Immigration Agent, Department of Immigration, Pacific Island Labour Branch to Smith, Brisbane, 13 August 1907.


32. A fresh licence was issued at the beginning of each new voyage.

33. Diary of the "Roderick Dhu", 1902.

34. Diary of the "Roderick Dhu", 28 February 1895. In regulations, "passage" meant the precise place on the seacoast from which he had to be returned: in the recruiters' jargon, it was used to describe points known from experience to be profitable recruiting centres. See Corris, Passage, p. 36.

35. Statistics; Report (annual) Pacific Island Immigration, QVP and QPP. Reports, Q.S.A.

36. Price and Baker, "Origins"; see Edmondson, table I.

37. Refer table VIII.

38. Average : 1892-1903 = 27.5%
Highest : 35.5%
Lowest : 22.3%
These figures are percentages of the annual total numbers of recruits introduced to Queensland. Corris, Passage, p. 49.
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39. Shlomowitz's estimates for this period are more in line with Smith's: he calculated that 22% were old hands while 6% had been previously employed elsewhere outside their Island homes. Shlomowitz, "Markets" p.70. Smith's corresponding figures for the latter is 5%: See table VIII.

40. Queensland regulations forbade recruiting females unaccompanied by their husbands and without the consent of their chiefs. Proof of "marriage" in a non-literate society was often dubious. Moreover, "chiefs" simply did not exist in many parts of the Islands, especially the New Hebrides. This virtually excluded women, who customarily married older men beyond the normal age limit of recruits.

41. Corris, Passage, p.46.

42. Diary of the "Sybil", 4 January 1897.


44. Saunders, Uncertain Bondage.

45. Moore, Kanaka Maratta, App. 2.

46. Edmondson, Government Agent, Chpt. 15, p.461.

47. Diary of the "Ariel", 21 March 1894.


49. Diary of the "Helena", 17 October 1893.

50. Edmondson, Government Agent, Chpt. 15, p.461.

51. For a detailed account, see Corris, Passage, Chpt. 4.

52. Scarr, Fragments, p.143.


54. For example, see Giles, Cruise, p.17, and "The True Story of a Recruiting Voyage" by 'a Government Agent', originally published in the Queensland Patriot, reproduced with review in the Queensland, 26 January 1878, p.13. It was written by Arthur Nixon, Government Agent, Bobtail Nag.

55. The Under Colonial Secretary, Queensland, to The Secretary to the Commodore, Colonial Secretary's Office, Brisbane, 9 August, 1883. Royal Navy Australian Station Records, Vol. 16, p.61.
56. A ship's carrying capacity was calculated by a formula clearly laid down in the 1868 Act. For details, see Edmondson, Government Agent, Chpt. 2.

57. Ibid. Chpt. 15.

58. See table III.

59. Reports QSA.

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid.

62. Diary of the "Helena", 18 October 1893; Diary of the "Helena", 10 February 1893.

63. Statistics, QVP and QPP. Smith sailed mostly in the smaller vessels, around 120 tons.

64. i.e. the Fearless.


66. Diary of the "Sybil", 5 November 1898.

67. Statistics, QVP and QPP.


69. Reports, QSA.


71. See f.n. 14.

72. Reports, QSA.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

75. Melvin, Cruise, p.111.

76. Montgomery, father of the Field-Marshall, had an impeccable reputation. The letter was subsequently published in the Queenslander, 10 December 1892.

77. Ibid.
The South African War lasted for more than two and a half years – from 11 October 1899 to 31 May 1902. Initiated ostensibly over the rights to citizenship of the "Uitlanders" (foreigners) working in the Johannesburg gold mines, it was in reality a struggle for political supremacy between British and Dutch nationalities; it had overtones of a war to protect vested economic interests. The war had three distinct phases. In the first, invading Boer armies inflicted heavy defeats upon the British and besieged Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking. In the second, armies reinforced from Britain and the Empire, under new leaders, defeated the main Boer forces. The two Boer republics were annexed in October 1900. The war appeared to be over, but was entering a third phase longer than the first two combined: huge numbers of mounted troops strove to suppress stubborn and elusive guerillas. Australians were involved in the second and third phases of the war, after colonial governments, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, decided to affirm their loyalty to the Empire by a military commitment.

Following the Jameson Raid in 1895, relations between Britain and the Boer Republics rapidly deteriorated. By mid-1899 they were at crisis point, and the Colonial Office sounded out the premiers of self-governing colonies about local public opinion and possible commitments should war come.

George Reid in New South Wales refused overtures from the Colonial Office and from the Premiers of Tasmania and South Australia to make an early commitment. His ministry fell on 13 September 1899, and Reid was replaced by Sir William Lyne, a man of equally reluctant imperialism, understandable while New South Wales, gripped by drought, was struggling to recover from the depression of the 1890s. Sir George Turner of Victoria also saw difficulties in justifying the expenditure. Tasmania's Neil Lewis, Sir John Forrest of Western Australia and Charles Kingston of South Australia were openly
supportive of the war. The Queensland Premier, J.R. Dickson, supported the Colonial Office from the outset; in July 1899 he cabled the Colonial Office with Queensland's offer of troops, the spontaneous gesture which Chamberlain had been anticipating from Victoria and New South Wales. Seeing "a chance to help the Mother Country", 1 a way to reaffirm loyalty to Queen Victoria, Dickson committed a contingent from Queensland solely on a cabinet decision. His successor as conservative leader, Robert Philp, "was heart and soul with Mr. Dickson in the step taken". 2

Opposition to the war came from colonial Labour leaders, some of whom renounced pro-Boer views as the war progressed. Among those unrelenting in protest were W.A. Holman, W.M. Hughes and Anderson Dawson. Holman initially hoped the British would lose, but then declared that he did not care who won provided the Boers retained independence. Billy Hughes' scathing comments on the Boer War continued for its duration. He compared Britain to "a great pugilist attacking an infant" and asking his little brother to come and "hold the infant while he gets at him": "It savours too much of political bravado and swashbuckling to be on all fours with the noble traditions of the British race." 3 Anderson Dawson condemned the Queensland government for sending a contingent, and denounced as "cowards" men who would volunteer for it:

[I] disapprove of the action of the government in making an offer of troops to serve with Her Majesty's army in South Africa, and thus committing the colony to an indefinite and practically unlimited expenditure without the sanction of parliament. 4

However, most Australian politicians adopted a middle of the road stand, accepting the commitment once made. Opinion did not divide along party lines. While subsequent premiers in Queensland (Philp), South Australia (Holder), Tasmania (Lewis), Victoria (McLean), and New South Wales (Lyne) upheld the decision of their predecessors, the votes in respective parliaments cut across party lines with government members crossing the floor in many instances to join the opposition.
The Queensland contribution to the war was considerable. Seven contingents were despatched between October 1899 and April 1901, and the subsequent Commonwealth forces also included many Queenslanders. Until recently little had been written on Australia's role in the Boer War; there has still been no attempt to assess Queensland's contribution or the war's impact on local society.

Charters Towers volunteers were included in every contingent raised in Queensland and also served with Commonwealth contingents. Nurtured by the wealth of its gold mines, the city had a common background with the Rand in South Africa. As migration to South Africa from Charters Towers had occurred after the 1890s, many residents had a personal link with Uitlanders. At the same time, the city had close ties with Britain; residents revered the link with the "Mother Country" and the Empire. A number of mining companies had London directors, and several of Charters Towers' leading citizens were British-born, including the Mayor of 1902, Robert Gardner, and E.H. Plant, the most influential mining magnate. Even some of the native-born community leaders in Charters Towers were in a financial position which enabled them to visit England frequently. The cause of the Uitlanders and the necessity of proving Australia's worth to the Empire were major issues for Charters Towers, perhaps more than for most other Queensland and Australian towns. The prosperity in Charters Towers during the Boer War period meant that "wages men" could afford the luxury of concerning themselves with outside events.

The activities of the Queensland contingents were closely followed in the press by a large majority of the city's residents. The small but vociferous group of dissenters and their organ, the New Eagle, Labour's weekly journal, were rendered ineffective by the well-orchestrated campaign in the daily press, the Northern Miner and the Charters Towers Mining Standard, in support of the war. The Boer War was a major event to be discussed, supported, participated in and celebrated, especially when Charters Towers men were directly involved in a major engagement.
CHARTERS TOWERS AND THE BOER WAR

A prosperous city, one of the world's leading goldfields in 1899, Charters Towers supported a population of just under 30,000 and achieved a record production of over 300,000 fine ounces. From the mid-1880s output was increasingly dependent on deep-reefing which required considerable capital, much of which came from Britain. The development of company activity however, had an immediate effect on the gold miners who were compelled to become employees, though well-paid. "Wages men" earned from £3.10.0 to £4.0.0 a week; this gave everyone the possibility of home ownership and often "a surplus for dabbling in investment". Theirs was a society of "little capitalists", but there was a "radical tinge to their politics".

Charters Towers had carried Queensland through the 1890s depression in agriculture and pastoralism, as local politicians were forever reminding the government. The former republican propagandists, Anderson Dawson, John Dunsford, and others, now Labour politicians in the State Assembly, had not moderated their radicalism, but they were engrossed in the Federation question and the issue of White Australia in particular. War in South Africa and public support for the British and the "Uitlanders" cause, confronted them with a pressing ideological dilemma: Labour's philosophy was anti-war yet probably more than any other North Queensland town Charters Towers adopted a keen interest in the struggle.

Early opinion was scornful of Boer independence. According to the North Queensland Register, it was about as important as saving the Greeks - "both are back numbers". Many believed that annexation of the South African Republics would occur very rapidly. By January 1900, Charters Towers residents were becoming accustomed to speeches by its leading citizens on patriotism and the glory of the Empire. It was claimed that England was not to blame for the war: she had done all in her power to resist it, but the insults and oppression which British South Africans had to endure could be borne no longer. Prominent citizens spoke of kinsmen from every part of the Empire "giving their life's blood in upholding the Empire". Cheers greeted speeches which asserted that the British soldiers had shown they were as good as
ever; patriotic fervour reached a pitch unparalleled by any other issue in the history of Charters Towers, even separation. No short-lived phenomenon, visible support for Britain and the colonial troops in South Africa was sustained to the very end of the war. Critics at home and abroad were sharply rebuked by the local press. Indicative was a reply to a claim by Rudyard Kipling in *The Times* that the colonies were not sending men willingly: the *Charters Towers Mining Standard* featured the reply in full, which clearly reflected popular sentiment.  

A definite link existed between residents of Charters Towers and the "Uitlanders" in Transvaal. The 1886 recession, following a period of over-speculation and the petering out of the "Black Jack" mine, had created serious unemployment in Charters Towers; emigration to new fields, including those in Transvaal, occurred soon after. Indeed, diamonds and gold on the Rand attracted miners and mechanics from many Australian mining fields. The "Uitlanders" from Australia and their relatives at home in Charters Towers and elsewhere continued to correspond. In 1900, the *Northern Miner* carried the story of Mr. T. Jones who had left Charters Towers for South Africa in 1888. Boss of a shift at Johannesburg when war broke out, he decided to go to Matabeleland; captured by Boers, he escaped to join the forces of General Plumer north of Transvaal. His wife, still resident in Charters Towers, had been about to join him when war was declared.

In response to a call for volunteers, more than twenty Charters Towers men attended for medical examination at the Drill Shed on Friday, 13 October 1899, the day following the declaration of war. Thirteen were examined and six selected. Preference was given to single men, good riders, and "good shots", who had been connected with the Queensland Mounted Infantry or Imperial Cavalry. The six men selected, William Cox, Henry Rossiter, Bedford Butler, Arthur Furness, George Wright and Joseph Mundy, were then scrutinized by Brisbane authorities. When the First Queensland Contingent sailed for South Africa it included five: the sixth, Furness, was to accompany the Third Contingent. Two other Charters Towers men, R. and E. Anderson,
were late selections. When it was confirmed that these men had been included in the First Contingent, Fred Johnson (Alderman and Building Contractor) and H.B. Walker (Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce) lost no time in calling a meeting of citizens to organize a public send-off.

One hundred and twenty-five guests were seated at the function; chairman for the evening was E.H.T. Plant, Charters Towers' premier mining magnate, who deputized for Mayor Benjamin, absent at Ravenswood. It was no coincidence that Plant was a major in the Kennedy Regiment. Plant, proposing the toast to the Army, Navy and Auxilliary Forces said that "though we in Australia did not like war, still we desired to see those of our own race treated with that fairness which was meted out to foreigners living in British possessions". He predicted a successful outcome and the firm establishment of British suzerainty throughout South Africa. In conclusion, he declared that Charters Towers men would bring honour to themselves, the town and the British Empire. Then cheering broke out and all those present spontaneously rose and sang "The Red, White and Blue". Major Hooper briefly responded, pointing out that though the numerical strength of the contingent was not great, it still showed the world that every portion of the Empire would be represented.

Robert Russell, director of the Day Dawn Reserve Mining Co., Stock Exchange Director and a former captain in the Charters Towers Mounted Infantry, proposed the toast to "The Towers Members of the Queensland Contingent". Amid cheers, he stated, "the man who volunteered to fight for his country and his race was no cur". Russell informed the audience that Anderson Dawson had been a friend of his, but was no longer. He told the contingent that he hoped they would come back safely, "but if any were killed, which was just as likely in a mine as in a battle, then they at this end would do their best for their bereaved ones". Each contingent member responded briefly, Sergeant Wright saying that a cable had been received stating that only six would be included but that E. Anderson was accompanying them to Brisbane "on the chance of his services being required".
In his toast to the Queensland government, Alderman R. Kirkbride, Manager of Day Dawn Freehold Ltd., referred to the controversy in parliament over the sending of a contingent, stating that, if consulted, three-quarters of Queensland's people would have supported the Premier. Fred Johnson made the salient speech of the evening in toasting Sir Alfred Milner: he stirred the crowd to a pitch of patriotic zeal and those outside the hall even joined in singing "Rule Britannia". The toast to the press was proposed by a Director of the Victory Mine, P. Allan. He used it to condemn once again Anderson Dawson's remarks.

The reporter who covered the function for the *Norther Miner* felt that all shades of political opinion were present. Between speeches local vocalists sang patriotic songs. While Mr. Portous was singing "Soldiers of the Queen", the crowd exuberantly joined in the chorus. D. Winterbottom received an encore for "Every Bullet has its Billet" and responded with "True Till Death". Prolonged cheering and singing of patriotic songs continued after the speeches, "The gathering being remarkable for the fervour and genuineness of the loyal feeling evinced".19

A large crowd farewelled the men in Lissner Park and again at the railway station as they departed for the coast. About 2,000 people were on or about the platform and a military band played outside amid the cheering. A large foreigner, who announced "I'm a Boer Man" and "hooted vigorously" was knocked down by a bystander, and the *Miner* reported: "The indiscreet enemy of the country he makes a living in would have got a good deal more from a Queensland native if the police had not insisted on order being maintained."20 The First Contingent sailed on 1 November 1899 aboard the Cornwall: it consisted of fourteen officers, 248 other ranks, 284 horses and two machine guns. The enlistment period for these volunteers was one year.
The organization for the Second Contingent was well underway by 4 January 1900. While public affection for the volunteers was at a high pitch, reservations were expressed about the competence of the state's military authorities:

It is fortunate indeed that the general idiocy of the military management in Brisbane has no effect on the generosity and enthusiasm of the public.\textsuperscript{21}

The \textit{Northern Miner}'s comments reflected a characteristic which was to prevail for the duration of the war: Charters Towers feeling was first for local troops; governments and Empires came second, and if condemnation was needed it was freely given. Charges of incapacity and indifference were made by Charters Towers people over the handling of the Second Contingent. The war office in Brisbane, the public was told, could not handle even half a dozen men without some error being made. As these men were volunteers "running risks and making sacrifices for their country, their treatment at the hands of the authorities was distressing".\textsuperscript{22} Arrangements for a temporary training station were poorly organized. Camp was pitched on a swampy flat below high water mark, and the men, sleeping on the ground, were flooded out on the Saturday night and had to stand until morning in water up to a foot deep. The weather was stormy and the ground became sodden with the flood; finally the tents collapsed, "altogether the men experienced a wretched night". Camp was eventually struck on the Sunday, provoking the \textit{Miner} to comment: "It is not known whether the Acting Commandant will gazette the site as a Naval Station".\textsuperscript{23} Conditions improved with the move to the Exhibition Building but public opinion in Charters Towers was not appeased by remarks by the camp commandants, Lyster and Hutchinson, as to the good qualities of the volunteers. Indignation remained, and the Brisbane papers were condemned by the \textit{Miner} "[being] afraid to criticise asinine officialdom at the capital".\textsuperscript{24} In conclusion the \textit{Miner} hoped that the volunteers' opinions of the officers supervising the camp would soon be available for publication.

As preparations continued there was some discord over the appointment of officers. Lieutenant Stodart of the Queensland Mounted
Infantry was appointed Lieutenant in the Second Queensland Contingent to replace Captain Fred Toll of Charters Towers who was assigned as special service Officer. This appointment was notified together with information that one of the Charters Towers volunteers, Goos, who travelled to Brisbane to join the contingent, had been rejected because he was under age. Having learned that Lieutenant Stodart, son of the member for Logan, had only recently turned twenty, the Miner exclaimed indignantly: "It seems our war office considers a man is entitled to command men before he is twenty-one but not to be commanded". But there was no harping on official shortcomings: the dominant theme was pride that Towers men "more than held their own", one which began during training:

The rifle shooting contest consisted of squads of 40 men each, Haylock securing first honours in his squad at 500 yards range with 25 out of a possible 30, and coming second at 300 yards with 22. Carpendale headed his squad at 300 yards securing 26 out of a possible 30.

Initially there were seven volunteers from Charters Towers in the Second Contingent, excluding the two officers, Captain F.W. Toll and Lieutenant J. Walker. However, only three of them accompanied their officers to South Africa - Carpendale, McMahon and Price. Goos and Jamerson were rejected on the grounds of age and riding ability respectively, Haylock for reasons unknown; Jones later joined the Seventh Australian Commonwealth Horse. Public farewells and formal gatherings became common practice when groups of volunteers departed Charters Towers to join later contingents including the Imperial Bushmen.

The most distinguished contingent which included several Charters Towers men, was the Fifth, departing on 6 March 1901 on S.S. Templemore. It included the veteran, Captain Frederick William Toll, who was to be Queensland's most decorated soldier of the Boer War. In 1899 Toll had enlisted for service in the South African War as a private, but was recommissioned as Special Service Officer with the rank of Captain, and first served in South Africa with the Second Contingent. Joining Lord Robert's army near Bloemfontein he was given charge of a company
of the 44th (Essex) Regiment. He was in the advance from Bloemfontein, and operations around Leeuwkop and Paadekrall where his horse was shot from under him; at Boksburg, he captured an armed Boer. In addition to his other duties, he became officer-in-charge of Intelligence and Signallers. On the occupation of Nelspruit, he was appointed Provost-Marshall until the expiry of his service period. He returned to Brisbane on 8 December 1900, but re-enlisted in 1901, to accompany the Fifth Queensland Contingent as second-in-Command to Lieutenant-Colonel J.F. Flewell-Smith. On arrival in South Africa, Flewell-Smith was appointed District Commandant in the Cape Colony; Toll, promoted to Major, assumed command. The "Fighting Fifth" saw considerable action - in Orange River Colony, Caledon River, Wepener and Mokarai Drift. In March 1902, the contingent returned on the S.S. St. Andrew. F.W. Toll had been promoted, awarded two medals, seven bars and five times mentioned in despatches. Burla claims: "Eight bars were the highest possible number a soldier could attain and Colonel Toll then a Brevet-Major held seven".

The exact number of Charters Towers men who served in South Africa cannot be established. The public honour board on the Memorial Kiosk records eighty-two men, three of whom were officers. For certain, this was not the full complement; at least two officers, Carroll and Glasgow, are not among the names, and there would have been a number of other Charters Towers men enlisting in other centres, such as Townsville and Brisbane. The most likely figure would be just over a hundred.

A study based on New South Wales has found that the bulk of volunteers were drawn from the defence forces and reservists. While the officers from Charters Towers were members of the Kennedy Regiment, and while some members of the local defence unit tried unsuccessfully to enlist, like Dr. Huxtable, the vast majority of volunteers had no military connection whatever.
It is difficult to gauge the motives of individual volunteers in seeking to serve in South Africa. Certainly it was not an alternative to unemployment: Charters Towers mines were short of men now that cyaniding was developing on a larger scale. Army pay for a private was not attractive, at just over thirty shillings a week, when average earnings in mining were nearly £4. Volunteers from surrounding rural properties may have seen the war as an escapade suited to their skills of horse riding and marksmanship, but they were few. Popular Imperialism seems the most plausible answer: its chief elements were an earnest conviction by colonials that they were part of the Empire and pride in British tradition. The large majority of volunteers from Charters Towers were colonial-born, even though their parents might have been immigrants: pay books record only one volunteer's next of kin living abroad. Many of them would have been seeking adventure but whether their response can be interpreted as a manifestation of nascent nationalism is debatable. If it existed to any extent it must have been within the context of Imperial sentiment so demonstrably exhibited by the citizens of Charters Towers at large. Certainly there was pride in the achievements of colonial volunteers; certainly newspapers emphasized Australia's coming of age, as the Boer War coincided with Federation: but the theme of Empire was always present. The same newspapers viewed the volunteers' sacrifice as a contribution to Empire.

It may help to explain sustained support for the War that only two Charters Towers men were killed, both late in the war: J.P. Hannon on 8 January 1902 and J.H. Anderson the following month. Five men were wounded: Mundy, Rossiter, Cox, Furness and Anderson. These were numbers sufficient to lend dignity to rhetoric about sacrifice, but not to induce the feeling of wasteful slaughter so widespread in the Great War of 1914-18.

* * * *

Engagements in South Africa involving the Charters Towers troops were cause for much public rejoicing. These events included the
engagement at Sunnyside and the surrender of the Boer General, Cronje with four thousand troops on 29 February 1900, but undoubtedly the highlight of the war for Charters Towers was the Relief of Mafeking. The news that Mafeking had been relieved on 18 May 1900 reached Charters Towers the next day. Fire bells clanged for two hours, the telephone exchange was unable to cope with the hundreds of calls. In mines and mills whistles were blown, and all the churches including the "German Church" rang their bells. Flags appeared everywhere, and in Hodgkinson Street the blacksmiths at Malcolm Brennard's shop "beat out a merry musical jingle with their hammers on swinging iron". At the Town Hall £10.13.6 was collected in shilling subscriptions and Mayor Benjámin immediately despatched the following cable:

Colonel Baden-Powell: Citizens of Charters Towers, Queensland, congratulate you on your noble and heroic defence of Mafeking. Convey sympathy to your people who are our people, in suffering endured in upholding the honour of the dear old flag. Invite you to visit this town at your earliest convenience.

"Ever foremost in patriotic movements", the Mayor followed up with a telegram to the Premier enquiring which day was to be a public holiday. To his delight, authority was given for 23 May to be set aside. This holiday applied not only to Queensland, but also to the rest of Australia.

Informal lively celebrations continued throughout the day at the Exchange, and many other hotels:

The news had a remarkable effect on staid and usually imperturable citizens and many a cheque has on its butt a fair figure for "Mafeking expenses" as a consequence.

Meanwhile Major Hooper of the Kennedy Regiment was arranging a torchlight procession of the Defence Force and Fire Brigade for that evening. Early in the afternoon crowds began to assemble in Gill and Mossman Streets and business came to a standstill. At the Stock Exchange, "Mafekings superseded Brilliant Centrals, Queen Crosses or Papuans and members spurn [ed] buyers, sellers and commission". Shortly after seven o'clock in the evening, the fire alarm was sounded and the brigade rushed to the house of a doctor whose
"patriotism exceeded his caution" in lighting a bonfire. An hour later, the fire brigade formed up behind the Mayor and marched from Central Station in a torchlight procession to the corner of Gill and Church Streets, where they joined with the Defence Force and Band, members of the Rifle Club and Londoners' Club and public. As they marched past Drummond & Co's Caledonian House, hats were taken off and cheering erupted from the crowd. A life-size painting of Baden-Powell hastily completed from a photograph had been erected on the awning surrounded with flags. More flags were suspended from the Post Office to the Bank of North Queensland. As the procession marched along Gill Street, the band played "Soldiers of the Queen", "Hero of Trafalgar", and other patriotic songs. The throngs lining the route joined in the singing. Many buildings along the route had put up gas lights especially for the occasion. Prominent citizens followed the procession, including Fred Johnson who was carried shoulder high by the crowd which "recognised the services which Mr. Johnson had rendered in the national cause". The celebrations did not end with the procession; later that night groups of men were singing patriotic songs in the streets and many impromptu concerts took place in hotels, "more remarkable perhaps for their enthusiasm than for their sweet melody".

On Sunday morning the Relief of Mafeking was a major topic for sermons in the churches. In the No. 2 Methodist, the Rev. W. Smith selected the text from Luke 21-19, "in your patience possess your souls". He declared that the victory which was being celebrated throughout the Empire would make the British people "stronger and healthier". They were coming out of the present conflict "chastened, purified, uplifted, more worthy [and] more fit to rule". The evening service conducted by Rev. T.F. Thurlow also concentrated on Mafeking, and the congregation enthusiastically sang "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow". At the No. 1 Methodist Church the Rev. W. Dinning told his congregation "a great burden had been lifted from off their hearts", and he concluded by reading a long extract from the British Weekly describing the appearance of the men at Ladysmith before help came. At the Presbyterian Church the Rev. Galloway addressed young
people at "Sunday School" on the siege and Relief of Mafeking, and led the congregation at the evening service in a special hymn, "National Thanksgiving". References were made to the occasion by Anglican ministers at St. Pauls and at St. Georges, Queenton. Rev. J. Pike of St. Pauls spoke of "the quickened national life such heroism as that of the defenders has created". Finally, the Baptist Church of Rev. C. Rose praised the efforts of Baden-Powell and Lord Roberts:

"Two things go to make a real man and a reliable soldier. There are high morality and a keen sense of duty stimulated with an unostentatious Christianity."

The *Northern Miner* issued several hundred "extraordinaries" fully illustrated for the Mafeking celebrations. The response was overwhelming and in answer to numerous applications a second edition with additional illustrations "in khaki coloured ink" was produced. The *Miner* office also printed "A Souvenir of Mafeking Night" in colour, the cover showing a photograph of Baden-Powell surrounded by Union Jacks. Some local business houses such as Daking-Smith and Co. did good trade in souvenirs, especially in medals and facsimiles of the Generals. A small brass one containing a photograph of Baden-Powell sold for one shilling, but supplies sold out, and ten shillings was the asking price by those who had bought one. (Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, sold for only five shillings.)

By Wednesday morning, preparations were well under way for the official Mafeking celebrations. The Londoners' Club postponed its smoke concert in aid of the Indian Famine Relief Fund which was to have been held that night. Fred Johnson, who usually acted as marshall on such occasions, opened the procession to "public bodies" and arranged the Wednesday night march and order of floats and bands. A large crowd lined the streets as the numerous organisations assembled under a bright "electric star" outside Winterbottom's Excelsior Hotel. Church and Gill Streets and hotel balconies were congested with spectators. Promptly at 8.00 p.m. Johnson commenced the procession, and the Defence Force of one hundred and fifty men
led off marching to "Soldiers of the Queen". The procession was the largest and most representative ever witnessed in Charters Towers.

Marching eight to ten abreast, the long procession moved off from the Excelsior Hotel into Gill Street. Business houses en route were brilliantly lit up and decorated for the occasion. At Collins' and Clarke's Hotel "the balconies trembled with their human burden"; the crowds enthusiastically sang along with the band. The route taken followed Mossman Street down to Mary Street as far as Towers Street. In the Fire Brigade Group each man marched holding a torch. Each group in the march was described in detail by the Northern Miner reporter: from the Druids, "in their quaint attire...it was fitting that the descendants of Boadicea should participate in the honour done to a true heart of oak-Baden-Powell", to the Bankers, "it is not often the sedate and aristocratic bankers wax warm, unless over a dishonoured cheque or a leaden sovereign". The bankers' lorry carried a Union Jack and a huge banner, depicting a cartoon of "President Kruger with an air of deep humility holding his hat with black streamers from it, in his hand was a bill of mortgage to John Bull - Bill of Mortgage; Transvaal to John Bull and heirs. P. Kruger, Witness: Bobs". The large number of athletic clubs which existed in Charters Towers "in such poor surroundings" received special mention by the reporter who considered their display reminiscent of Wellington's remark "that Waterloo was won on the football fields of Eton".

The highlight of the procession was the Stock Exchange lorry drawn by Messrs Allen and Sons' four large greys and draped in the national colours. High in the centre was the British lion, jaws distended with the Transvaal flag disappearing down his throat. The chorus of the Stock Exchange members provided amusement and laughter among onlookers: 

The members of the Stock Exchange, possibly from their habit of evading calls, do not possess a songster with any range of voice, and though Mr. Goodyear heroically strove to lead his comrades up and onwards through half a dozen octaves, the enthusiastic neck stretching top
notes were missing...The brokers attack on the high notes of "Soldiers of the Queen" was as noble and heroic as the charge of Balaclava, but also like that charge it was magnificent, but it was not war, and it was not music.37

The celebrations continued after the procession with a huge bonfire at the mullock heap of Mill's United. Several men had been engaged for many hours beforehand building the bonfire under the supervision of F.C. Brewer, Deputy Superintendent of the Fire Brigade. It contained tar barrels, pine and other timber, "while a slightly literary element was imparted to the structure" by several loads of old books from the School of Arts. The mullock heap was surrounded by participants from the procession and thousands of onlookers, the crowd estimate being twelve thousand. The fire brigade, carrying torches, climbed to the top of the mullock heap and saluted Mayor Benjamin as he lit the fire. This was followed by the firing of a feu de joie by the Defence Forces, while the Liedertafel sang "God Save the Queen". As the Northern Miner reported:

It disclosed a scene such as has never before been seen in Charters Towers, for never before has such an enormous concourse of people...been gathered together on Charters Towers soil.38

Impromptu celebrations continued after the bonfire; one of the largest was at Collins' Hotel. Thomas Austin Craven "gave us the 'Death of Nelson' from the balcony", with jockeys Ray O'Neill and Ross, "tight as bottles",39 holding the music on each side of him and joining in the chorus. Fred Johnson addressed the crowd from the balcony with a "spirited account" of the defence of Mafeking. He concluded by leading the crowd in three cheers for Baden-Powell.40 The festivities lasted well into the night. When Anderson Dawson, State Labour Leader and member for Charters Towers, attempted to address the crowd at Collins' Hotel, he was received coolly because of his criticisms of the volunteers in parliament.41 With glasses filled, Goldsworthy and Fred Broomhead, Dick Hand and the Halls led the patriotic singing at the close of the event, and for the finale Tom Craven, "the best tenor ever heard on the field", led the
assembled crowd with "Good Company". The festivities were subsequently adjourned to many private homes. At P.J. Allen's residence, Mt Alma, another bonfire was lit, topped with an effigy of President Kruger - which was demolished by the guests throwing stones before it was engulfed in flames. The last act of the Mafeking celebrations was the reply to Baden-Powell's telegram which arrived on 11 June, "Hearty thanks for generous greetings and invitation".

In contrast to celebrations for Mafeking and a public dinner party for Major Toll's return, peace came almost as an anticlimax. Fewer people attended gatherings notable for their restraint. When the cable arrived on 2 June announcing an end to the war, church bells were rung and whistles sounded at the various mines and batteries. R. Millican, President of the Stock Exchange invited all members and a few leading citizens to Collins' Exchange Hotel to "have a glass of wine". Official celebrations hosted by the Mayor, Robert Gardner, were confined to a gathering of selected citizens at the Town Hall that same afternoon. Plant, proposing the toast to "the King" said that the peace had not come about suddenly; they had been expecting it for some time. He prayed that "the peace would be a lasting one, but should the occasion arise again, Australia, Queensland and Charters Towers would do their best to help the Empire". All speakers pledged their loyalty to the Empire; some emphasised the virtues of war in bringing various parts of the Empire together and "knitting them in one common bond". A public procession was held, but the crowds lining the streets saw only the fire brigade and band, as the Defence Force and other organisations were given insufficient notice. Starting from the Divisional Board, the line of the procession was marked by the "glare of torches" and "the shooting of balls of variegated colours from Roman candles". The fireworks continued from Mossman Street where a fire balloon was sent up "to disgorge a shower of coloured fireballs". The bank played patriotic tunes and many of the crowd joined the procession. When it dispersed the celebrations continued privately. A gathering of seventy or eighty people at the Club Room of the Australian Hotel was entertained by the music from the Liedertafel and numerous speeches.
Clearly, public enthusiasm and fervour for the war had waned by 1902; the efforts of a few zealous citizens, however, sustained "patriotic" exhibitions. As early as February 1901 the Charters Towers Mining Standard had commented that the public was becoming increasingly bored with the tedium of the war. However, there was no up-surge of anti-war feeling, merely a decline of public interest in events of the guerilla war.

Writing of Australia generally Field and Connolly noted the patriotic receptions and processions and their subsequent decline. 

"[The] size and enthusiasm of the welcoming crowds had fallen to humble proportions by August 1900" according to Field. Connolly suggests that "few people farewelled contingents which left in the later stages of the conflict", as the "fascination with the war and pride in colonial troops [which] probably rivalled imperial enthusiasm as motives for attendance" had long subsided.

In Charters Towers the decline was neither so quick nor so steep; moreover enthusiasm revived at least briefly on Toll's return and in the peace celebrations. The sustained level of volunteer enlistment underlines the point. Charters Towers furnishes no support whatever for Field's claim that the declaration of peace provoked little response because of a newly acquired guilt complex over the participation in the war:

The Australians went home to find their nation bent on forgetting the whole thing. Peace came as a blessing to the Australian people, not because it ended a period of national bloodshed and grief, but because it closed an episode in their history which in their enthusiasm and ignorance they had elevated into a great national trial and triumph; only to find as their enthusiasm dulled and their ignorance lifted, that they were embroiled in a war that brought no national honour.

In accounting for the celebrations by large crowds on Mafeking night, it was significant that although the events of 23 May were official and planned in advance, paralleling those in other Australian cities, there should be such impromptu jubilation in Charters Towers on the
receipt of the news of the lifting of the siege, as there was over the victory at Sunnyside. This clearly demonstrated a genuine sense of involvement. By comparison, crowds at the Federation celebrations were much smaller; there were fewer impromptu gatherings and publicity was insignificant compared with Mafeking. The receptions for Toll were probably more enthusiastic than those given for other returning officers in Australian cities because he was "the local hero returning", at the head of the Fifth Contingent. The sense of personal involvement possibly accounts for the absence of widespread dissent in Charters Towers throughout the entire war.

The tide of pro-war feeling in Charters Towers was fuelled by a number of factors. There was the influence of two major newspapers. Both took a pro-war stand, and from the outset endorsed the action of Dickson's cabinet in offering troops in advance of pressure from the Colonial Office.

Charters Towers was a prosperous city at the turn of the century, with little unemployment and steady wages; residents could afford the luxury of becoming involved in outside issues. The mining link with the "Uitlanders" was strong in addition to closer ties with the miners of South Africa than most other Australian cities (husbands, brothers and friends who were on the Rand) there was sympathy for the miner based partly on its democratic heritage. Moreover the mining industry also provided for close links with Britain as British capital sustained mining in the city. The large companies were British, and often had British-born managers. It did not escape the local boards that should British investors withdraw from the field the prosperity of Charters Towers would be seriously jeopardized.

The newspapers maintained interest and enthusiasm for the war by devoting an extraordinary proportion of their copy to news of South African events, and by constant publication of letters from Charters Towers volunteers at the front. Community leaders were outspoken in their support for the war and demonstrated tangible sympathy through the Patriotic Fund which was one of the largest in Queensland. The
war permeated every aspect of Charters Towers Society - from public lectures and debates by local "experts" on South Africa to street collections and sales of work for the Patriotic Fund, to magnificent public celebrations, ostentatious send-offs and receptions for the troops, notable for their large crowds. The Mafeking celebrations with street processions, numerous floats, bands and defence forces reflected the opulence of Charters Towers in its hey-day.

Revisionists such as Connolly and Field have viewed the support for the war by groups and individuals as a manifestation of class divisions in Australian society rather than loyalty by birthplace. Evidence from Charters Towers provides some qualified support for this view. On the one hand, the middle class, especially mine managers, brokers and businessmen, were unanimously behind the government's decision to despatch troops, and were at the fore-front of the local patriotic demonstrations during the war, as might be expected. There were also a large number of expatriate Britons on the field, who probably provided strong public support for the war effort. On the other hand most volunteers appear to be Queensland-born. There is also abundant evidence that the community as a whole shared a strong pro-war sentiment, seeing themselves as British Australians with genuine affection for the Empire.

Charters Towers lends no support whatever for Connolly's conclusion, that "grievances of class, nationality and religion produced dissident middle class elites and an articulate working-class leadership at odds with the prevailing imperialism" and that the "working classes were the largest group containing significant numbers hostile or apathetic towards the prevailing imperialism." There was no anti-war middle class element: there was only a small anti-war element gathered around Dawson and Burrows. There was no substantial opposition from the working class organisations such as the miners' union, or from groups of Irish Catholics. The strong and sustained pro-war movement attracting widespread public support, seen in the demonstrations, the donations, an official peace celebration and
JOAN NEAL

displays of marked hostility towards pro-Boers, can probably be explained in terms of popular imperialism.

Paradoxically, the war was not a significant political issue. Despite sustained support for the war on the part of the overwhelming majority, Charters Towers and district maintained its strong pro-Labour character at election time. Dawson, who was so trenchantly assailed by the Northern Miner and the Charters Towers Mining Standard for his outbursts against the war, successfully transferred to the Senate in 1901, and was succeeded in the by-election for his former state seat of Charters Towers by none other than Burrows, the bête noire of the city's financial elite who had revealed much animosity to the war in his columns in the New Eagle. Mayor Paull, who had been so prominent in the pro-war movement increased his vote on his 1899 bid for parliamentary election, but was still handsomely defeated. This suggests that many of the city's working class, who had turned out in support of the pro-war civic leadership to celebrate Mafeking and hail returning troops, saw the war as an event above party loyalty and separate from the issues of domestic politics.

REFERENCES

4. Q.P.D., LXXXII, October 1899, p.347.
7. "It is essentially necessary for this reason, if for no other ...that we federate in order to bring to our assistance the real power of our democratic brothers in the other colonies... we shall put a very speedy and a very effective check on the coloured aliens". Brisbane Courier. 8 August 1899.
8. *North Queensland Register*, 6 November 1899.

9. *Northern Miner*, 4 January 1900

10. **Australia's reply:**

   Lord of the loud-lunged legions!
   Prince of the purple press
   Are we but pigmy people,
   Lost in the wilderness?
   That we of a younger nation,
   Should call back our fighting men,
   At the blast of your tin war trumpet,
   Or the scrawl of your scathing pen?
   Safe in your inky dugout,
   Flinging your jibes about,
   What know you of Australia
   Or the Quest that brought us out?
   We of the younger nation,
   Reared on the range and plain
   Scornful, out of the battle,
   Hurl you the lie again.

   *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 29 March 1902.


12. Even Anderson Dawson, M.L.A., one of Charters Towers' most vocal opponents of the war, had been away at the South African goldrushes, returning penniless to Charters Towers in 1887.

13. Charters Towers had a number of citizens who were members of the 3rd Queensland or Kennedy Regiment at this time. Several of these, including Captain V.C.M. Sellheim and Captain F.W. Toll, saw service in South Africa.

14. *Northern Miner*, 21 October 1899. E.H.T. Plant was born in England. He was a director of a number of mines, Bonnie Dundee, Victoria and Queen, Band of Hope, and the four principal mines of the Brilliant Group. These mines had a high capital investment from England but control was left to Plant.


16. Major Hooper was a member of the Kennedy Regiment and Headmaster at the Queenton School.

17. This was an unmistakable reference to a remark in Parliament by Dawson ten days before: "My observation of dogs has been that when one dog gets another dog down, every other mongrel in the immediate neighbourhood thinks it is bounden duty to bite the dog underneath [The Boers]."
23. *Ibid.* Following the incident Hutchinson and Lyster commented favourably on the riding and shooting abilities of the Northern volunteers.
26. Many volunteers who enlisted for one contingent sailed with a later one. Thus, Furness, recruited for the first contingent, sailed with the Third. Goos, earlier rejected, left with the Third Australian Commonwealth Horse.
29. If there are added two men known to have been invalided home, the casualties as a percentage of total Charters Towers men serving rise to 9%, rather higher than the Australian average, as is that of men killed in action. But no Charters Towers man was among those who died of sickness, a number greater in all than those killed in action.
30. For full details of the Relief of Mafeking see *Northern Miner*, 21-23 May 1900. This reaction paralleled that in Britain where the verb "to maffick" was coined for hysterical mob rejoicing. *Shorter Oxford Dictionary*.
32. Fred Johnson, Building Contractor, was an Alderman of the Charters Towers City Council on the executive of the Patriotic Fund and a fine orator - who was called upon to give the major speech at most civic receptions of the time.
34. Major Hooper was in command, Sergeant-Major Stronach in front of the band, with Sergeant Drummer Wilson.
41. See above, p. 97 & fn. 4.
42. Black, *North Queensland Pioneers*, p.34.
43. Telegram, Colonel Baden-Powell to Mayor, Charters Towers, 11 June 1900. City Council Correspondence laid before Council Meetings. Q.S.A. 11 CHA/06.
44. Present were Fred Johnson, F. Parkinson, R.J. Sayers, E.H.T. Plant, Captain Carroll, Sub-Inspector McNamara, and others.
45. *Northern Miner*, 3 June 1902.
48. Bolton, "Labour Comes to Charters Towers".
50. With at least twenty different organisations taking part in the procession and an estimated crowd of twelve thousand spectators at the Bonfire which followed, Mafeking was to be long remembered. Among the groups participating in the procession, two societies of English origin, the Druids and the Oddfellows, were joined by the Hibernian society, whose membership was confined to practising Catholics of Irish descent, the Rechabites, a friendly society committed to temperance, and the Australian Natives Association, whose members were scattered throughout the procession as members of other associations.
51. Connolly, "Class, Birthplace and Loyalty", p.216. Connolly's conclusions were based on the occupation and origin of members of parliament in the colonies; a similar breakdown of the entire Charters Towers population is not possible.

52. Charters Towers returned Labour members for the two member constituency: Dawson and Dunsford; in the neighbouring electorates of Kennedy and Flinders, the Labour men, Jackson and MacDonald, were returned. At the 1902 state poll all four seats continued to be held by Labour men, while MacDonald captured the Federal Seat of Kennedy in 1901.
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY:
AN HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Dawn May

Queensland has been the premier cattle producing state in Australia since 1885. While the industry is the major user of land resources in North Queensland, the climate is not naturally conducive to this activity. A short summer distribution of rainfall is followed by long, dry periods in which native grasses lose much of their nutrition with the result that beasts put on weight only during a few months of each year. Parasites also revel in the warm tropical climate. Distance is a disadvantage, though less onerous than in previous times. The earliest pastoralists who pushed out into this alien environment brought with them their British breeds of cattle. Ultimately Herefords became established in the more settled regions along the coast and immediate hinterland; Shorthorns were favoured in the west, north and north-east. Three distinct periods can be detected in the development of the northern industry. The first dates from 1861 with the arrival of the initial herds and draws to a close in the early 1890s. During most of this period cattle production far exceeded demand with an obvious fundamental disequilibrium existing. Some significant structural changes in the 1890s ushered in a new period, characterised by erratic fluctuations resulting ultimately in stagnation. The beginning of the third period is discernible in the 1950s. With massive injections of capital, both private and public, the industry was poised on the brink of maturity.

* * * *

1861 - 1890s

Confronted with limited resources and a vast undeveloped area in the north of the colony, the newly formed Queensland government formulated a land code in 1860 to favour pastoral activities. The initial allocation of large tracts of land to relatively few squatters was intended as a short term solution; closer settlement was the ultimate objective. An 1875 editorial bearing the marks of agrarianism reflected popular opinion at the time:
[A great] but not excessive desire to see cultivation flourish has always been apparent in this colony. All classes look to the cultivation of the soil as a means of increasing the production of the country, and of enabling it to support a larger population.  

In drawing up the first Queensland land legislation, one aim was to eliminate speculation which retarded genuine settlement; the stocking of runs was viewed as an imperative forerunner to any extensive settlement.

Unaware of the problems which lay ahead, most early squatters who ventured north stocked their runs with sheep; within a decade they were to find that footrot, fluke, lung worm and speargrass rendered much of the area unsuited to that purpose. There were some individuals, however, who stocked with cattle from the start. The demand for sheep for stocking new country drove prices beyond the means of the less affluent squatters.

Another advantage of cattle was their greater mobility. As the right of occupancy was bestowed on the first to stock the country, those with cattle sometimes obtained the best land. But with only a small population and no satisfactory way of exporting surplus meat, it must have been obvious that those who chose cattle would have marketing difficulties.

The typical northern squatter in the 1860s was an owner-manager who frequently had the backing of a sleeping partner, business house or family member, but there was some company ownership. Most noticeable in this respect were the numerous runs taken up on behalf of various Towns partnerships and operated by managers. Another pastoral company operating in North Queensland in the 1860s was the Landsborough River Co. which in 1864 used cattle from its Bowen Downs station to stock Beames Brook near the present site of Burketown.

Throughout the entire nineteenth century most North Queensland cattle stations operated as cheaply as possible using the open range system. Except in the more settled areas, little fencing or herd
management was used. The typical outside station consisted of a fairly primitive homestead, an assortment of buildings used as store, saddle room and men's quarters, a stockyard where drafting, branding and spaying was carried out and perhaps a couple of paddocks near the house for horses and stud cattle. On large properties, the erection of outstations, usually consisting of a hut and a series of stockyards, made cattle management more efficient. The widespread use of Aboriginal labour from the 1870s was a further means of reducing operating costs. In fact many station owners, plagued with high expenses and low returns were only able to retain their holdings by using low or unpaid black employees.

Although North Queensland was not to be a "big man's frontier", the capital required to form a station was even in the earliest stages quite considerable. Taking into account the cost of stock and sundry other items, one pioneer squatter estimated that capital formation alone amounted to over £11,000. Other substantial cash outlays were also necessary; the cost of obtaining the lease for the land and rent for instance. It was also necessary to have sufficient capital to pay for wages and rations until the station produced income - often two or three years. Many pioneers failed to accurately gauge the amount of capital required to form a new station. Rachel Henning wrote to her sister that "there [was] very little prospect for anyone out here now who had not a large amount of capital to begin with - £8,000 or £10,000 at least".

Throughout most of the period squatters experienced severe labour shortages. Distance and isolation, poor working conditions and Aboriginal attacks, forced squatters to offer high wages to induce workers into the industry. Labour shortages were further exacerbated by the need to have extra staff for personal and property protection. Phillip Somer, one of North Queensland's earliest pioneer squatters wrote to the Colonial Secretary explaining that:

the very great distance between the headstations, and still greater distances between the few police camps, and townships, compelled every squatter to keep a larger
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staff of men to protect each other - than would otherwise be necessary to work the stations; and altho' in nearly every case squatters had extra hands, still they would have been entirely at the mercy of the blacks if the blacks had been allowed into see the Squatters weak points, for instance what could a half a dozen or twenty men do if surprised and surrounded by a host of savages...\(^{14}\)

In addition Aborigines waged a highly successful economic campaign against pioneer squatters killing cattle, destroying huts and looting stores. Indeed it has been argued by Reynolds and Loos that "Aboriginal resistance presented a many pronged threat to the economic viability of frontier squatting".\(^ {15}\)

In the 1860s, almost the only means of disposing of surplus cattle locally was to sell them to other squatters stocking new runs,\(^ {16}\) until boiling down works, opened in Townsville\(^ {17}\) and Burketown\(^ {18}\) in 1866, provided an alternative outlet. Five hundred head from Dotswood were the first mob to be treated in Townsville,\(^ {19}\) followed by drafts from Salisbury Plains, Burdekin Downs, Bluff Downs\(^ {20}\) and Inkerman.\(^ {21}\) However, in the ensuing four years the boiling-down works mainly operated on sheep\(^ {22}\) and throughout the 1870s stock were not boiled down at all in the north. The export of canned meat appeared a possible solution to the marketing problem, but the Australian product never really appealed to the English palate. Moreover for preserved meat to be profitable, it was necessary to obtain stock at low prices. With prices increasing canning came to a standstill in 1874. The editor of the Queenslander was one who welcomed the suspension, considering canning wasteful of stock and unsatisfactory to consumers; its only virtue in his eyes was that for removing surplus stock, it was better than boiling down.\(^ {23}\) Some local demand for fresh meat was created in the late 1860s by the discovery of gold in various parts of the north. Among the fortunate squatters who found markets at the diggings was Robert Gray of Glendower who made small sales to the Cape diggings in 1868 and Ravenswood in 1870.\(^ {24}\) Throughout the 1870s and 1880s additional fields were opened exposing more squatters to local markets. All properties for sale stressed
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

this point: Lolworth was "close to the Northern goldfields", Woodhouse's owners claimed that "over the past two years numerous and continuous drafts of fat stock have been disposed of at the diggings in the neighbourhood"; and Natal Down's also "near the northern goldfields".

The unbounded optimism which accompanied the earliest pastoralists began to abate as more and more difficulties emerged. In 1866, with the colony reeling from the effects of a financial crisis, Burke, Cook and Kennedy squatters petitioned the government for rental relief. As the price of wool and stock fell throughout the 1860s pastoralists continually appealed to the government for more secure and extended tenure. Popular consensus was that it was "absolutely necessary that pastoral tenants should be able to offer a more tangible security to capitalists than they at present possess".

The severity of the situation can be gauged from Table 1: four times as many runs were abandoned in 1869 as in the previous year. New land legislation, enacted in 1869, which extended leases, reduced rental and gave pastoralists the option of buying one block of 2560 acres per run, came too late for many squatters.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pastoral District</th>
<th>1866</th>
<th>1867</th>
<th>1868</th>
<th>1869</th>
<th>1870</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Kennedy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Kennedy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those pastoralists who did not abandon their runs in the late 1860s had little success in raising additional funds from banks. While at Oxford Downs Dalrymple found it impossible to get any advances whatsoever on his future clip. The removal of sheep from the eastern
watershed and the gulf country had given the area a bad reputation.

As M.M. Bennett explained:

One of the difficulties of pioneering in western Queensland was to persuade southern bankers that that part of the country consisted of something better than spear grass six feet high in which if man did not die of fever he would probably be speared by natives. 31

Recounting the experiences of squatters who turned to banks for financial assistance R. Gray wrote that:

Banks and financial companies refused to lend money on northern stations and for some years for the want of capital to aid in developing this portion of the country things were almost at a standstill. 32

The opening up of the Palmer goldfields in 1874 triggered a second wave of pastoral expansion. 33 At the beginning of 1874, miners on the field were cut off from Cooktown. With rations in short supply one man cut up his horse on the road to the Palmer and sold the flesh for food 34 but as time progressed and all food resources were depleted, several men actually died of starvation. 35 With rapidly increasing herds cattlemen responded to this much publicised fact with a mass convergence on the Palmer as soon as it was possible to travel. The demand for cattle continued there with good bullocks bringing £15-£17 a head in 1875. 36 The Palmer market was supplied by stations from all parts of North Queensland, even as far west as Lawn Hill near the Northern Territory border. 37 It remained the principal market for North Queensland throughout the 1870s until, with population declining, prices fell to an unacceptably low level. 38

Initial financing of the second wave of expansion appears to have come in part from the retained earnings of existing North Queensland squatters. 39 By 1877 net profits of sales to the Palmer from one cattle station was between £7,000 and £8,000. 40 Presumably the North Queensland goldfields would also have provided direct finance for the development of properties: Frank Stubley, for instance, one of Charters Towers "mundic kings" 41 bought and improved the northern properties of St. Arnaeus, St. Ronans and Evelyn in the 1870s. 42 But according to one Queenslander, it was the Victorians who rediscovered
North West Queensland and put the northern industry on its feet. The earliest Victorians in the second wave of expansion invested in cattle properties but by the end of the decade they turned their attention to sheep. Several cattle properties in the Flinders were thus purchased for restocking.

By the end of 1882, when the influx of Victorian capital into the Queensland pastoral industry began to abate, British capital had become an important source of finance. Owing to a series of defaults, British foreign lending to the United States collapsed in the late 1870s, and there was a lack of investment outlets within Britain. The relative absence of demand from these two areas favoured Australia where existing Anglo-Australian land mortgage companies were making large profits.

Improvements on northern sheep stations in the 1880s were aimed at increasing yields through fencing and water conservation. Few cattle stations followed this example but most appeared to have substantial mortgages. Obviously loans were obtained to service past debts. Roger Sheaffe and Alexander Kennedy, who owned Devoncourt in 1887, obtained a mortgage of £40,000 from the Australian and New Zealand Mortgage Co. Ltd.; after bills were paid, the partnership had £10,000 left to develop the property. The easy availability of money in the 1880s may well have encouraged cattlemen to be over-optimistic. N.G. Butlin has suggested that from the mid 1880s, well before the depression of the 1890s, the industry was in serious difficulties through expansion into marginal lands and increased indebtedness.

How then did squatters manage to dispose of their cast in the 1880s? The second wave of expansion had created a demand for stores and breeders not only in North Queensland but in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. But while this helped to ease the situation in the short run, it only served to exacerbate the problem in the long term. The market was already grossly oversupplied as evidenced by the extremely low price of cattle at the end of the 1870s.
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and the stocking of new country further increased the potential supply. The export of frozen meat was the only possible solution to a situation where supply was increasing much faster than demand. With runs grossly overstocked, no viable markets and the frozen meat export problem unresolved, North Queensland pastoralists once again turned to the despised boiling-down, the Townsville works reopening in 1880.49

Meanwhile squatters received a respite as the prices of cattle on the southern markets were beginning to rise in the 1880s because some southern pastoralists were switching to sheep. However until 1886 North Queensland squatters found it more profitable to send their cattle to the boiling down works in Townsville50 or to the proliferation of scattered mining and plantation settlements. The drought of 1884-1886 would also have restricted the marketing of cattle because of inability to travel. But from 1886 North Queensland cattlemen began to participate in southern markets, especially Melbourne and Adelaide. Those cattle bound for the Wodonga saleyards travelled overland to Bourke whence some were railed to Victoria. Others made the entire journey on the hoof. It was estimated that up to 1891, 50,000 cattle per annum had been dispatched from stations within 200 miles of Normanton alone.51 However the relatively high prices of the 1880s began to fall; Edward Palmer of Canobie reported that 900 bullocks did not realise more than 35s per head after all expenses, droving, commission and losses on the road. Pleuropneumonia was an additional hazard when overlanding cattle. The disease had initially been introduced to North Queensland in 1864,52 but deaths were greater in travelling stock as a result of increased stress.53

Up to 1890 a fundamental disequilibrium existed in the northern cattle industry. Except for the five years between 1874 and 1878, when the northern population grew rapidly because of the Palmer goldrushes, the supply of cattle greatly exceeded demand. Consequently, cattle prices were extremely depressed and did not allow a sufficient margin of profit for the industry to be viable. Very
few northern squatters made a financial success of their pastoral activities in the nineteenth century and it would seem that undue effort and capital was wasted in an industry established years before it should have been. But in spite of their financial failure northern squatters were highly regarded by their contemporaries. In the view of one:

No greater pluck, determination, and self-sacrifice have been shown at Mafeking than these men displayed and be it remembered that their trials extended over as many years as those of Baden-Powell's...did months.

* * * *

1890s to 1950s

Three major structural changes occurred in the industry in the 1890s. The first was a change in the pattern of ownership. Whereas a majority of stations in North Queensland had been operated by owner managers, separation of ownership and management occurred quite rapidly in the first half of the decade. The financial crisis of 1893 together with low cattle prices and restricted markets resulted in many large stations passing into the hands of banks and pastoral finance companies. This was particularly evident in the Gulf country, saddled with the "tyranny of distance". In 1895 a Queenslander correspondent wrote that "most of the old-time pioneer squatters have 'gone down' and...the bulk of the station properties are now in the hands of the banks." There were a few tenacious families who through sheer deprivation and with loans from relations managed to hold onto their properties. Amongst these were the Watson brothers who had restocked the abandoned Gregory Downs in 1873. Likewise Coolullah, purchased by the Power brothers in the early 1880s, had the "distinct and enviable advantage of not being controlled by a financial institution". While some station owners remained to manage their former properties, in other instances the financial institutions installed their own personnel.
The change in the nature of ownership had implications for the level of investment in the northern cattle stations. The depressed state of the economy in the 1890s made it impossible to dispose of properties acquired through foreclosure, but with larger reserves than the former owners, banks and companies were in a position to undertake more improvements. Water conservation and fencing were the most significant. Bunda Bunda station, owned by the Commercial Banking Co. of Sydney, was described in 1903 as "one of the best improved runs in the state". In equipping the property for sheep and cattle the bank had spared no expense. On large outside stations, boundary fencing was initially erected with the primary aim of containing stock more effectively. For instance in 1901 the manager of Lorraine station recommended to the owners that a fence be erected on the Augustus Downs boundary "as much to keep our neighbours cattle off as our own cattle on. Cattle here, unlike conditions you speak of which obtain in other parts, make in any direction - some seasons south and others north." Subdivision of properties, permitting more efficient animal husbandry, was not yet in evidence on outside stations. Although extremely costly, artesian well drillers became an increasingly familiar sight on the northern landscape from the 1890s. It was claimed in 1892 that the Gulf and western country was "rapidly becoming a network of artesian waters, fresh supplies being struck every month". In reality the Flinders sheep men were the most prominent investors in this type of water conservation. A few northern cattle stations including Compton Downs, Richmond Downs, Rocklands, Dalgonally and Port Constantine installed bores in the 1890s but the majority of cattle stations did not follow suit for a number of years. While Rocklands had 20 bores in 1912 the owners of Augustus Downs and Fiery Downs, like many others, were still contemplating the expense. Magowra, Rosella Plains and Spring Creek were amongst the first of the more northern Gulf stations to have bores put down, prompting one northern observer to remark that "bore sinking on cattle stations in the Gulf and Etheridge districts is going to revolutionise the pastoral industry in these parts as with ample water supplies, the loss of cattle in dry seasons will be reduced to a minimum".
A second major change in the industry in the 1890s was the appearance of a new breed of owners: grazing selectors, initially given 30 year leases on areas not larger than 20,000 acres (subsequently altered to 60,000 acres). Strong popular support for closer settlement had always been evident in the colony; the 1884 Land Act was framed to that end. The first North Queensland stations in the remote areas subjected to resumption were those situated along the railway, the majority suitable for sheep. In 1886 88½ square miles was resumed from Glendower. Redcliffe, Hughenden, Tamworth, Wongalee, Telemon and Afton Downs soon afterwards attracted the attention of the dividing commissioner. In 1897 it was estimated that in the previous 18 months 50 to 60 grazing farms had been taken up along the railway line for 160 miles from Hughenden. Many of the more remote properties which were obviously cattle country did not begin receiving notices of resumption until 1913. In that year the Land Commissioner recommended substantial resumptions from cattle stations between Charters Towers and Clermont but these were not effected until 1917 owing to the scarcity of surveyors and the drought. While substantial resumptions had been made from the Burke and North Kennedy properties, very little attention was given to the Cook pastoral district; Forest Home, in 1913 was the first station to have land resumed. One Labor supporter expressed disappointment that pastoral land in the Croydon district was still in the hands of the large landholders. "What a pity it is that this country is not thrown open to the small man. We would see numerous homesteads...dotted all over the country instead of its present desolation". Similar views were expressed by Edward Palmer, an experienced northern cattleman who had lost his station Canobie to a pastoral finance company in the early 1890s. He believed that the cutting up of large stations was most desirable.

Many of the large cattle stations in the West and North-West cannot be very economically managed, on account of the extent of country to be worked over: they are far too large, and too much rent is paid on country not utilised: besides there is an annual waste through cattle straying on to neighbours' runs causing expense in mustering and returning them. Another cause of loss in increase is the long, dry period between the rains, causing breeding cattle to become
weak and get bogged in the drying up waterholes. If runs were fenced in and of smaller area, with water more easily within reach of weak cattle, these losses would not occur. However even in the 1920s the large landowner was more characteristic of the North Queensland cattle industry.

Tension between small and large landholders was evident almost from the beginning. Many operators of big stations believed that selectors were responsible for stealing unbranded calves. Faced with the prospect of a selector as neighbour in 1920, the manager of Lorraine wrote to his superiors:

I note that it is desirable to put a substantial fence on the boundary of the resumption on the West side. I wish we could charge the incoming selectors with half the cost of it but of course they would prefer to do without it.

But even before the appearance of selectors, cattle stealing was rife in the Gulf with several cases being heard in 1907/8. In one case it was alleged that the owner of Claraville station and his employees were responsible for the theft of cattle from nearby Savannah Downs while three men who had a small property in the vicinity of Van Rook were charged with stealing cattle from that station. Given the sparse nature of settlement, it was inevitable that many cases of cattle stealing went undetected. A Gulf writer was of the opinion that while the increase in small operators in the industry might result in increased duffing it should provide an incentive for larger landowners to look after their cattle better.

Closer settlement also made the large station owners less hospitable. It had been the custom of pioneer squatters to keep on good terms with travellers by giving free rations to all who passed the station. Casual labour was brought to the door free of charge at intermittent intervals; it was also in the interest of squatters not to provoke itinerants who had the opportunity of doing "incalculable damage to station men that had miles of grass in...paddocks to burn, woolsheds to demolish, and gates on the main road to be left open". With closer settlement large landholders reviewed their rations policy. It was noted that:
Even at far-out back stations, where not so long ago everybody, men or beast, black or white, rich or poor, were heartily welcomed, the gates display numerous placards notifying that there is 'no thoroughfare here', 'no rations given', 'poison is laid all over the run' etc.81

A third major structural change in the industry was the successful establishment of freezing plants in North Queensland: at last cattle producers were able to enter the world market. The first northern freezing works, Queensland Meat Export Co., opened in Townsville in 1892.82 The Bowen Meat Export and Agency Co. Ltd. followed in 1896; the Burdekin Meat Works Co., previously operated as an extract and canning works, became in 1901 the third works to install refrigeration.83 The export of meat received a boost from the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act of 1893. Under this Act a fund was raised by means of a tax on stock and advances were made to existing and projected meat freezing plants. In 1894 four North Queensland works received grants from the meat fund: the Queensland Meat Export Co., Townsville, Bowen Meat Export and Agency Co. Ltd., Mareeba Meat Preserving and Export Co. and the Cardwell Meat Preserving Co. Ltd.84 However freezing did not provide a complete solution for North Queensland squatters' problems. British demand greatly preferred Argentinian chilled meat, a commodity which the Australian producers were technically unable to provide until 1934. Moreover exceedingly poor prices for frozen meat were offered in the 1890s on the London market. Evidence from a joint committee enquiry in 1895 confirmed that exporting frozen meat to London was unprofitable. It was shown that 389 cows treated at Townsville and shipped to the United Kingdom incurred a total loss of £72.5.6; added to this were the costs associated with raising and transporting the cattle to the port.85

Coinciding with these three structural changes was the fact that stock numbers were severely depleted in the 1890s: initially from the effects of ticks and subsequently from the long drought of 1898-1902. The cattle tick (Boophilus microplus) entered Queensland from the Northern Territory in 1891. Within five years it had spread
throughout North Queensland wreaking havoc on the northern herds. In the Cairns district mortality averaged 40 percent but on individual northern stations losses were frequently much higher. J.H.S. Barnes noted on passing through Wando Vale that the cattle had almost gone with only 400 calves branded compared with the usual 4000. In an attempt to contain the spread of ticks, strict quarantine measures were imposed. In 1894 the whole of the Gulf country and parts of Cape York Peninsula west of the 144th meridian and north of the 21st parallel were placed in quarantine. This step was taken when the seriousness of red water fever and its association with cattle ticks were recognised. Given the low price for frozen meat and the inability to take cattle into uninfected southern areas, northern pastoralists were once again in dire straits. A deputation of Burke pastoralists who waited on the Minister for Lands claimed that in 1896 all markets were practically closed to them: "The herds were disseminated and those herds that were clean might as well be in Fiji as in their isolated condition caused by the tick pest." Those cattle which withstood the onslaught appeared to display an immunity. In 1899 a Land Commissioner reported that:

Having travelled through the infested parts of the North, hearing statements etc. and from general observations, I am of the opinion that the enormous losses have not in any way been exaggerated by the lessees in the past, and that fully 60 per cent of the herds have succumbed to the disease. Most of the remaining cattle north of Bowen are now apparently immune but deaths are still occurring between Bowen and Rockhampton.

Whilst not reaching the extent of the initial outbreak, redwater fever attacks occurred at regular intervals. Large northern landowners were especially dilatory in dipping. The Northern Deputy Chief Inspector of Stock reported in 1916 that dipping on small holdings in Queensland has been carried on more or less systematically for about two decades, but the majority of stockowners on large unfenced holdings still hesitated to dip their herds regularly and systematically.

The most glaring example of utter neglect is to be found in the Normanton Stock District which is about 50,000 square miles in extent and according to the stock returns carries roughly 342,000 cattle. The whole area
Old meatworks at Normanton
[N.Q. Register, 7 April 1919]

Branding calves at Chadshunt
[N.Q. Register, 20 February 1921]
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is grossly tick infested, and the total number of dips erected in the vast district is 13, some of them are never used, while the remainder are only occasionally put into commission.\footnote{91}

The Croydon Mining News reported that "many practical men believe that ticks are necessary to keep up the immunity as no one can tell how long the immunity lasts. The present immunity is obtained from ticks getting on calves from birth up."\footnote{92} When in 1904 it became mandatory to dip all cattle travelling from an infested area,\footnote{93} cattlemen objected, particularly if the cattle were on their way to northern meatworks. One observer believed that it was "patent to everyone versed in cattle that the depreciation in the condition and quality of the meat caused by undue handling and consequent upsetting of the temperament of the cattle will be a serious loss to the owner."\footnote{94} In fact within a few years northwestern graziers were sending undipped cattle to market. Reporting on this one official noted:

The most serious dissemination of ticks by travelling cattle is observed in connection with cattle travelling from the Gulf districts, and I regret to say that the Department's effort to prevent the distribution of ticks by Gulf cattle are much less effective than they were some 7 or 8 years ago. At that time, cattle travelling by the various routes were dipped either at Quamby, Sedan or Taldora. During the past year only Sedan Dip has been used, and cattle travelling by the other routes have mostly escaped dipping, or in a few instances have been ineffectively dipped and have distributed ticks freely along what should be clean country.\footnote{95}

While all northern stations were affected by the drought at the end of the century, some areas suffered more than others. Around Hughenden, with "not a vestige of grass to be seen", the results were devastating. Those lucky enough to find land for agistment moved their stock out of the area while the more affluent graziers such as the Ramsay brothers of Conooroo purchased cattle stations including Burleigh\footnote{96} and Charlotte Plains\footnote{97} as relief country. In a bid to feed the stock that remained, numerous scrub cutters were employed. Nevertheless losses were high. In 1900 the Land Commissioner for the area reported that one third of the cattle and almost one half of the sheep had perished during the year.\footnote{98} The Charters Towers district was another to be badly affected. Some
stans including Lolworth were abandoned while other stations agisted their stock for long periods. To the south west, Aberfoyle fared badly with the former substantial homestead falling into decay. At Yacamunda only 680 bullocks could be salvaged from a herd of 20,000. North of Julia Creek, Dalgonally station had to remove 7,000 cattle to a station near Normanton with many dying on the road. Meanwhile the cattle country in the Woolgar district was in "a worse condition than ever known in the history of settlement". Undoubtedly the drought set back the cause of closer settlement by many years. In 1901 only 6 percent of available land was selected and the Land Commissioner was of the opinion that demand would be dormant for a considerable time. Edmund Jowett a prominent pastoralist believed that:

...the experience of the last six years has shown that pastoral occupation of Queensland can only be conducted on a large scale. That is, not only on a large area of country in one locality, but on runs in different districts, so that if there is drought in one area, stock may be removed wholesale to another run.

The scarcity of cattle at the end of the drought sent stock prices spiralling. At this stage the Gulf cattlemen's fortunes began to change; while the rest of the country faced the prospect of restocking, north western pastoralists had quite substantial herds. Indeed a list of cattle on various Gulf stations revealed that at the beginning of 1903, 56 stations had 684,000 cattle among them. In that area cattle had weathered the effects of ticks earlier than elsewhere and there had been several good seasons, but for several years graziers had been unable to get surplus stock through the drought stricken areas to market. When stock routes reopened, large numbers of cattle were taken from the Gulf in order to restock stations in the west and south. For instance the entire draft from Rocklands station for several years after the drought was purchased by Sidney Kidman for restocking his properties. In addition, fat stock markets in Sydney, Adelaide, Broken Hill and Perth had to be supplied. Popular opinion was that "the big drought was certainly a godsend to stations in the far north". Approximately 50,000 cattle
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were treated at the three remaining northern meatworks in 1903; together with cattle overlanded or sold to butchers, it was estimated that returns to the cattlemen in the Gulf would be "over half a million sterling". Remembering the hardships endured by most pioneer squatters a correspondent wrote thus to the North Queensland Register. How it would warm the hearts of men such as J. Allingham of Hillgrove, W. Hann of Maryvale, J. Robinson of Roxborough, John Anning of Charlotte Plains, W. Anning of Chudleigh, J. Fulford of Springfield, W. Mytton of Wando Vale, J.B. Thompson of Fairlight...and many other good old pioneers to be now alive and well and see how the Price of good fat bullocks has at last risen to something near paying point.

However southern demand raised prices beyond a viable level for meat exporters; the Manager of North Queensland Meat Export Co. complained that "years ago we had no markets and plenty of stock. Today we have plenty of markets and no stock". The editor of the North Queensland Register was of the opinion that:

It is regrettable...that the cattle which are going away on the hoof were not finally dealt with in North Queensland but the producer is deserving of most consideration, and the sales made in the Gulf the last year or so have given a stability to the industry and a profit to the producer which will result in big station improvements, and an increased production. The exodus to the South is a passing as well as a paying phase of the industry.

In 1903, difficulty in procuring stock forced the Queensland Meat Export Agency and Co. to purchase a chain of Gulf stations including Carpentaria Downs, Miranda Downs and Magowra from O'Brien, Cobbold and Co. These stations were ideally situated for the company's proposed freezing and meat preserving works at Karumba, but Miranda Downs was subsequently sold to another meat exporter, William Angliss in 1916, during a second period of vertical integration in the industry. The acquisition of the Burdekin works by Birt and Co. in 1913 saw that firm purchase three local stations. In 1917 Bergl and Co., owners of the Bowen meat works, purchased Longton station to
More recently Borthwicks have acquired 20 percent of the shares in Rocklands station which straddles the Northern Territory Queensland border. Other parties showed considerable interest in northern cattle stations. Those banks and pastoral finance companies which had acquired properties as a result of foreclosure in the 1890s were now in a position to dispose of any unwanted holdings, but decided to retain them. For instance Queensland National Bank Limited set up a separate company, Queensland National Pastoral Co. Ltd. to handle their properties "thus creating an exceedingly sound investment company to develop the valuable freehold and leasehold lands and stock connected therewith". Syndicates were also formed to secure runs; one of the most prominent was the Augustus Downs Pastoral Co. Ltd. whose subscribers included Sidney Kidman, A. Hay, S. Burdekin, F.A. Brodie, A.S. Kidman, George Barron Rochdale and James Alison. With companies holding stations in different locations the separation of breeding and fattening in different areas first appeared in the north. For example when QME and A. acquired the Gulf stations it was envisaged that Carpentaria Downs would be used as a fattening depot for Miranda Downs, Forest Home and Magowra.

Southern markets continued to attract North Queensland cattle until the end of 1908 when a sensational reduction in the price of fat cattle in Sydney halted further consignments. Moreover, with stock routes restricted by fencing and closer settlement, overlanding fat cattle increasingly risked loss of condition. As a result, the northern meat works once again became the major means of disposing of the northern cast. Indicative of rapidly declining prices, two additional meat preserving establishments were able to reopen: Torrens Creek in 1910 and Bibbohra in 1912. The meatworks now had a virtual monopoly on northern cattle and their cavalier attitude towards cattlemen was a source of considerable annoyance. For example A.M.P. Thompson, chairman of the Mt. Emu Pastoral Co. told the Royal Commission on the Meat Industry that meatworks would take only 4,000
Graziers were forced to dispose of the balance as stores if indeed buyers could be found. Even the meat preserving works could afford to be selective. A northern correspondent complained that NQME Co. was "pretty hard to please in quality 'We want young fresh oxen' is the reply when aged cattle are offered". Growers also complained of collusion between meatworks to keep prices down. Whereas A.J. Cotton had been able to obtain £8 for an export bullock in 1908, offers declined progressively until 1912 when the ruling rate offered by northern works was down to £5.12.6. To justify the lower prices some works managers claimed that there had been a deterioration in stock due to a number of factors: the best country in North Queensland had been converted to sheep, the effects of ticks had left cattle inferior, the cows normally culled had been used as breeders because of great losses during the drought and there was a need for new blood in the herds. The Royal Commission found that only in certain areas, around the Georgetown goldfields and areas recently switching to dairy cattle, could the claim be substantiated. When, in 1913 a subsidiary of the American consortium Swift Limited purchased the NQME works in Townsville it was heartily lauded by northern pastoralists. The President of the Central and North Queensland Pastoralists' Association believed that:

American competition will have the effect of putting the meat industry on a better basis than it has hitherto occupied, its effects will be modernized methods... (and) large investment of capital in the cattle branch of the industry in improving the quality of stock.

Meanwhile with the sheep industry entering a period of increasing prosperity, many smaller cattle owners switched to sheep as a solution, but the prevalence of dingoes forced many to revert back to cattle after a few years.

With the outbreak of war in 1914, meat prices rose quickly in response to world food shortages, generating optimism in the industry again. Beef sold at 50 shillings per 100 pound: "slightly different to some 20 years ago when a pastoralist would have been in danger of
a heart attack from too much joy, were he offered 50 shillings a head instead of 50 shillings per 100 pounds". The period 1914 to 1920 was in general one of prosperity for northern cattlemen. With 190,000 cattle treated by northern works, Townsville was the chief Australian meat exporting town in 1916. Graziers were not without their problems, however, during this relatively prosperous period. Considerable industrial unrest was experienced at the two Townsville meatworks from the end of 1918 to September 1919, a large number of North Queensland cattle which could not be treated in Townsville were forced to travel south. The ramifications of the 1919 strike were still evident in 1920: overseas vessels were reluctant to call at the port having experienced loading difficulties the previous year. With freezing chambers packed to capacity meatworks had to curtail the killing season in 1920.

North Queensland cattlegrowers also believed that during the period they had been unfairly treated by the government. The price for cattle was largely determined by the prevailing price in London. In 1917 the Queensland government legislated to ensure that a certain amount of meat treated at the export works was retained at a lower price for home consumption. Being more dependent on meatworks than other areas, North Queensland cattlemen believed that they were being subjected to discrimination. The editor of the North Queensland Register obviously agreed and called for action.

There are four North Queensland constituents in which cattle owners have the majority of votes, viz, Kennedy, Cook, Burke and Eacham...[they] should use their voting power to relieve themselves of the burden which the Government, in seizing 10,000 tons of North Queensland beef a year, has placed upon them. The seizure is at 15/8d per pound below the market (Imperial) value and means a direct tax in cash on the cattle-owners of North Queensland of over £150,000.

In 1920 considerable hostility was also generated by the government's decision to redetermine the rents on runs, decided by the Land Court. The increases asked for ranged from 100 to 200 per cent. Pastoralists scathingly referred to the new legislation as the
Another problem which re-emerged in the 1920s was cattle stealing. In north west Queensland, especially around Cloncurry, it was particularly prevalent; one correspondent likened it to "an industry". Another wrote that "It is alleged that in Cloncurry there is an organised system of stealing and disposing of cattle and that this organisation is so widespread and impudent in its operations that those who oppose it are severely dealt with, mainly by the wholesale poisoning of their stock. In fact the system is akin to terrorism". To cope with the problem the Burke and North Gregory Graziers' Association was formed in 1920 and by February the following year it had been instrumental in having 64 prosecutions made. However stealing persisted with 400 cattle being stolen from Saxby Downs in 1922. Stations in other areas had different methods of coping with the problem. For instance at Chudleigh Park, north of Hughenden, the owners paid rent on 400 square miles of unusable country to prevent cattle rustlers getting too close to the station cattle.

The collapse of the beef export trade in 1921 saw the North Queensland cattle industry enter a long and serious depression from which it did not emerge until 1939. Few stations were profitable during the period. Canobie, for instance showed a loss every year between 1924 and 1938. No longer receiving preferential treatment from Britain, Australian beef was forced to compete on the open market. One government official attributed its lack of success to the relatively poor quality of northern beef.

The grading of meat into classes which is now in vogue at the meatworks and which is essential to placing a prime article upon the European market to compete with American exports has dealt a crushing blow to the Gulf pastoralist. The demand is for prime young beef, and the lands of the Gulf do not mature their stock as quickly as the inland country. The condition of a Gulf beast is soft and will not carry long distances on the hoof without wasting, so it is very difficult to land Gulf fat stock at the coastal meatworks in prime condition.
While much of what he reported was correct, the problem did not rest solely with the quality of northern cattle. As R. Grant points out:

During the war period and for a short time thereafter, the exportable surplus of Australian meat was purchased by the Imperial Government, but when this arrangement was terminated, the industry received a severe blow by the release of large quantities of meat which had been held in cold store for years as supplies for the Allied armies. Much of the meat deteriorated owing to the effects of long storage, and its sale had a disastrous effect on the frozen-beef market. Following on this came the vastly increased production of South American countries whose advantage in geographical position allowed them to supply beef in the chilled instead of frozen state.146

The chief international outlet for North Queensland frozen meat had always been London. While overseas prices plummeted in 1921, they remained high on the southern Australian markets. However the Navigation Act of 1921 prevented international vessels being used to convey local goods; coastal traders which plied between states were not equipped to handle significant amounts of frozen meat. As a consequence, North Queensland returns were very much below those of other states. For instance in 1926 graziers received only 20 shillings per 100 pounds while beef was selling at 40 shillings in Sydney, 47s.6d. per 100 pounds in Melbourne and 60 shillings in Adelaide.147

Accompanying the decline in prices was an inevitable curtailment of expenditure on improvements, creating considerable unemployment in the Australian outback. "More swagmen have recently passed through Croydon in search of work than have been seen for years", wrote one correspondent.148 An air of pessimism pervaded the whole northern cattle industry. On the eve of the Royal Commission into the Beef Cattle Industry in 1928, many growers had come to believe that a prosperous cattle industry in North Queensland was a thing of the past. Costs of production had far outpaced returns, the Royal Commission finding that as:

the average price realised for frozen beef on the overseas market for the period 1922-27 was substantially higher than that of 1909-1914 when production of cattle was profitable, the conclusion to draw is that, during recent years, the
Sticking to it at Chadshunt
[N.Q. Register, 28 February 1921]
increased expenditure of production, raiilage, treatment, 
and shipment has not only absorbed the higher value of 
the profit of the industry, representing a direct loss 
to the producer.\textsuperscript{150} Those who were in a position to switch to sheep did so. However not 
all country was suitable for conversion and improvements were 
restricted by lack of capital.

One of the most outstanding aspects of this period was the lack 
of unity in the industry. The Meat Council was set up in 1923 to 
assist with marketing beef but from the beginning northern cattlemen 
believed it to be grossly ineffective. A.H.W. Cunningham complained 
that:

The Meat Council was devoting more attention to the interest 
of those who already have access to the Brisbane and Sydney 
stock markets, than it is to the welfare of the Central and 
Northern Division of Queensland upon whom has fallen the 
burden of exporting at a loss.\textsuperscript{151} The isolation of northern production was attributed to this and 
similar organisations. "For some unexplained reason the Queensland 
Cattle Council refuses to invade the 'sacred right' of Southern beef 
producers to their own market", wrote one disgruntled observer.\textsuperscript{152} An irate Richard Anning called for the dismissal of the Meat Council 
when it became known that the Director of Navigation had power to 
issue permits for the transport of frozen meat from Queensland to 
southern ports. He demanded to know:

did the famous Australian Meat Council know of the existence 
of the permits, if it didn't it should be sacked, and if it 
did it should still be sacked for keeping the fact dark.\textsuperscript{153} At the same time a rift had also developed between the cattle and 
sheep interests in the United Graziers Association. In 1922 a 
separate cattle organisation, the Queensland Cattle Growers 
Association was formed to cater solely for cattlemen. Under the 
direction of R.C. Philp this organisation attempted to handle the 
problem of low prices by establishing co-operative works; it 
also advocated acquiring wholesale markets and distribution houses 
in London and other overseas countries.\textsuperscript{154} Meanwhile in 1924 
cattlemen in the far north had decided to strike out on their own in
a bid to realise a reasonable price for stock. The possibility of forming a northern branch of the Cattlegrowers Association was rejected in favour of a more union oriented identity. In fact the body titled itself the Gulf Cattle Producers' Union and considered that "even if we [only] form a sort of brotherhood amongst the cattle men it is a step in the right direction and some will reap the benefit." Disunity amongst members forced the body to disband in 1929 and a majority of the members were persuaded to amalgamate with the United Graziers Association. Premier McCormack deplored the lack of organisation in the cattle industry which he believed displayed no evidence of co-operation at all.

In 1928 North Queensland frozen and chilled meat was grudgingly admitted to the southern markets. In Victoria, legislation required that the northern product be appropriately labelled. However owing to the prolonged drought of the 1920s fat cattle were in short supply at this time. Indications from Georgetown, Croydon, Normanton and Burketown areas were that there were probably less than 10,000 bullocks of fattening age available. In part this was due to the area undergoing a transition from breeding and fattening to breeding alone. There was a growing awareness that because of deterioration in native grasses, much of the Gulf was no longer fattening country. Consequently it became the practice on some stations to transfer males to southern fattening depots when old enough to withstand the hardships of travel. A considerable aid in the transfer of stock between stations was the extensive amount of railway construction which had taken place culminating in 1924 with completion of the link between Cairns and Brisbane. Also this permitted northern fat cattle to be marketed in Brisbane, where better prices could be secured, but many graziers were deterred by the disadvantages: added cost, loss of condition in cattle during the sometimes slow journey and the added bruising of cattle which then attracted lower prices.

During the interwar period northern stock were exposed to three additional diseases. Having watched the march of the buffalo fly...
Musterers at Rocklands
[N.Q. Register, 4 June 1928]
across the Northern Territory, northwest pastoralists geared themselves for the onslaught which occurred in 1928. Whilst it was to prove another major disability for graziers to contend with, its spread was not as rapid as the tick outbreak of the 1890s. Pegleg first appeared in Northern herds in 1929; tests indicated that it was due to phosphate deficiency. It was reported that on Millungera Station:

 Practically the whole herd commenced to lose weight from August...the Government Veterinary Surgeon diagnosed the trouble as "pegleg" a malady resulting from malnutrition. He recommended feeding Nauru Phosphate and salt in an endeavour to replace deficiencies in the grasses. In May 1936 a large number of Gulf cattle were affected by ephemeral fever or "3 day sickness", but mortality was practically nil and a further widespread outbreak did not occur until 1955.

All Queensland cattle graziers suffered badly from the low prices from 1921 but northern cattlemen were the hardest hit. It can be seen from Graph 1 that the prices received by a group of cattle properties in the Burdekin area did not rise substantially until 1942. Some relief was afforded by the Cattle Relief Act of 1923, under which the rents of cattle holdings were reassessed by the Land Commissioner for a special slump period of five years made retrospective to 1 July 1921. Reduced rentals remained in force until 1936.

Meanwhile important developments in chilling techniques were made in the early 1930s. In 1933 and 1934 most Queensland works installed chilling facilities while shipping companies undertook the necessary structural alterations to vessels. However prices for chilled meat were often low:

 Indeed, from 1935 onwards Australian chilled commanded lower prices than that of any other country, except sometimes Rhodesia. In these circumstances at least one exporter, QME and A. Co. found that chilled beef was not always profitable. This situation, of course, reflected the deep-seated weaknesses of the Australian industry. Graziers could not supply enough cattle of "chiller" quality, so that shipments often included coarse, heavy quarters from old cattle, exporters, could not manage regular supplies, and grading was poor.
With the depressed nature of the industry in the interwar period, little was done to improve the herds with the notable exception of an experiment with Zebu cattle. It was obvious that the English breeds of cattle were not well adapted to the severe tropical climate. On the recommendation of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, a syndicate composed of Queensland Stations Ltd., Winter-Irving and Alison, C.W. Wright and Meredith, Menzies Pty. Ltd. decided to import Zebu cattle from the United States. It was hoped that the infusion of Zebu blood into English strains of cattle existing in the North would give them the necessary resistance and stamina to overcome the adverse tropical conditions. Millungera Station (Meredith Menzies Pty. Ltd.) contributed £600 to the scheme receiving in return two bulls in 1933. By 1940 the station had 912 Zebu and Zebu cross cattle on the books. In 1945 the manager was able to report:

The Zebu experiment has been successful in that the hybrid does rather better than British breeds, weights and gradings are better and at times they can fatten a year younger. The outstanding disability is that they are wild and hard to handle and need smaller paddocks. The expense in providing additional paddocks could not be justified unless an extension of the leases can be obtained, the main lease expiring in 1951.

Obviously unsuccessful, the pure bred Zebu bulls were sold the following year to Atkinson and the remainder of the Zebu crosses merged with the general herd.

With the outbreak of World War II there was again a rapid escalation in demand for beef. Meat as well as other primary production became subject to Commonwealth control under the National Securities Act. All surplus meat available for export was sold under yearly contract to the United Kingdom. Along with the suspension of chilling in 1940, this meant that Australian producers directed their attention to quantity rather than quality as the incentive to produce choice beef for export no longer existed. Moreover a severe shortage of labour in the north, especially after 1941, had an adverse effect on station management, operations being handicapped by the lack of improvements. In 1944 a contract was made with the
AVERAGE PRICE REALIZED FOR FIRST GRADE BULLOCKS BY A GROUP OF CATTLE PROPERTIES IN THE BURDEKIN AREA OF QUEENSLAND 1927 to 1957

Graph I

Shillings per 100 lb. dressed weight

- - Actual Price Realized

- - Price excluding deficiency payments
The above graph shows cattle of all kinds in Queensland each year, and, to a different scale, the number of cattle slaughtered for home consumption and export, plus net outward border crossings, roughly indicating the productivity of the cattle industry. In calculating the number of cattle slaughtered, nine calves have been taken as equal to one head of large stock.

(By courtesy of Government Statistician.)
United Kingdom whereby a market was assured for all classes of Australian meat until 1948 and this was extended to 1951 when a new 15 Year Meat Agreement was made between the British and Australian governments.

In summary, then, between 1890 and 1950 the poor results in the beef cattle industry were due to its haphazard functioning. The Royal Commission on Abattoirs and Meatworks of 1945 found that the Queensland cattle industry had made no progress in the previous thirty years and, in many respects, had regressed.\textsuperscript{175} In fact it was not until 1953 that the herds surpassed the 1894 level. The erratic fluctuations in numbers can be detected in graph 2. Reduction in the size of stations due to resumptions had not resulted in better managed properties. Whilst the industry had experienced some extremely profitable years, overall the unprofitable ones predominated. During these periods beef prices were so low that there was little surplus for improvements such as internal fencing which permitted better herd management. Because of this the area, especially in the Gulf region, experienced deterioration in natural pastures resulting in significant areas reverting to a breeding only role.\textsuperscript{176} Mortality had risen considerably compared with the pre 1890 rate,\textsuperscript{177} owing to poor management practices and the introduction of several new diseases which necessitated more frequent handling of stock. This in turn added to production costs and caused cattle to lose condition. Even in the good years when profits were available for improvements, it was not always possible to implement them because of the shortage of labour and material. This was particularly evident during the Second World War. External factors also operated against the cattleman as North Queensland was dependent on an unstable export market. Moreover, in the international arena Australia was forced to compete with countries such as Argentina which could produce better quality chilled and frozen meat at lower prices. J.H. Kelly accurately summed up the situation in 1952 when he noted that:

The history of the beef cattle industry in the North has been largely one of struggle against bankruptcy by the smaller holders and of small dividends or no dividends at all, for the shareholders of some of the big company holdings of the very large areas.
DAWN MAY

In his view this had bred an outlook of caution, even pessimism.  

1950s onwards

Although the cattle industry was in a moribund state at the close of the War, things were beginning to change by the early 1950s. Virtually all cattle producers who appeared before the Royal Commission on Pastoral Land Settlement in 1951 were emphatic that numbers of cattle and turnoff could be markedly increased by the provision of more paddocks, ringbarking and water points. With the conclusion of the 15 Year Meat Agreement growers were assured of good beef prices irrespective of market trends. This generated the optimism and confidence necessary to embark upon developmental work. Between 1952 and 1957, over £30 million was invested by private producers throughout Queensland. A survey undertaken at the end of this period revealed that in the gulf and peninsula regions 82 percent of producers had increased turn-off and 41 percent were able to market cattle at a younger age. Not all of this resulted from voluntary actions by lessees as the Queensland government had begun, at last, to insist on a good standard of structural improvements as a condition of pastoral leases. In addition the government itself was taking a more active role in the industry. The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by a number of innovations including a higher degree of cattle control, the provision of beef roads, increased emphasis on pasture management and the establishment of better adapted breeds such as Brahmin & Brahmin Cross including Santa Gertrudis. Although undoubtedly there is room for further improvement it is clear that from the 1950s cattle raising throughout most parts of North Queensland has undergone a transformation.
REFERENCES


5. A detailed account of squatters in this category can be found in D. May, *From Bush to Station: Aboriginal Labour in the North Queensland Pastoral Industry, 1861-1897*, Townsville, 1983, p.11.


8. One of the factors which contributed to the persistence of this inefficient system was that land legislators failed to encourage improvements as a condition of holding a lease until 1927. One agricultural economist believes that, most of the difficulties of beef production in remote northern Australia in the early 1950s could be traced to this practice instituted by the earliest pastoralists J.H. Kelly, *Report on the Beef Cattle Industry in Northern Australia*. Canberra, 1952, p.51.

9. *Kamilaroi* - a slab house with thatched roof and flagged floor, *Queenslander*, 11 January 1879, p.46; *Elvira's* homestead was built entirely of tea tree bark, *Queenslander*, 18 January 1879, p.77; at *Lawn Hill* there was an iron house with a rough sapling fence, *Queenslander*. 9 November 1878, p.185.

14. P. Somer to Colonial Secretary, 14 October 1869, Q.S.A. COL/A134 69/4272.
17. *Queenslander*, 5 May 1866, p.8.
19. The tallow sold in Sydney for 46s. per cwt. and the hides netted an average of 16s. each, giving a profit of £5 per head after deducting expenses. *Port Denison Times*, 14 July 1866. (Hereafter PDT)
22. 6,196 boiled in 1867, 6,117 in 1863, 34,488 in 1869 and 19,699 in 1870. Reports of Registrar General.
23. *Queenslander*, 14 February, 1874, p.4.
25. *Queenslander*, 11 April 1874.
30. Dalrymple was a North Queensland explorer, government official and pastoralist. Bolton writes that "If anyone deserved to be called the father of North Queensland it was Dalrymple". *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.15.
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34. *Queenslander*, 21 February 1874.
37. 200 fats sent to the Palmer in 1878. *Queenslander*, 9 November 1878, p.185.
39. Many squatters from the Kennedy district took up additional leases in the Burke district. See May, *From Bush to Station*, pp.20-1.
41. So called because he made a lot of money out of the gold bearing stone below the watertable. Stubley was the major syndicate member in the two biggest mines in Charters Towers in the early 1870s.
42. *Queenslander*, 23 August 1879, p.249; 29 July 1882, p.131.
45. May, *From Bush to Station*, pp.12-3; 16-7.
48. Inkerman, *Leichhardt Downs, Woodstock and Jarvisfield*, all properties in the estate of R. Towns were sold to the North Australian Pastoral Company. It was claimed that the cattle from these stations were required for stocking western country. *Queenslander* 1 December 1877, p.29.
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49. Ibid., 13 March 1880, p.327.


51. Queenslander, 10 February 1894, p.271.

52. QVP, 1864, p.1069.

53. Pleuro pneumonia was finally eradicated from North Queensland in 1960 after a stringent innoculation campaign. QCL, 30 September 1965, p.1.


55. Queenslander, 2 June 1900, p.1048.
Mafeking was a small South African town besieged by a Boer force early in the South African War. Its relief in May 1900 was the occasion of mass public rejoicing in Australia as well as in Britain. (See the article by Joan Neal in this volume.) Colonel R. Baden-Powell, who commanded the garrison, later founded the Boy Scout movement.

56. New South Wales and Victoria were imposing and increasing border taxes.

57. Queenslander, 25 May 1895, p.971.

58. North Queensland Register, 18 September 1899. (Hereafter NQR)

59. Cotton, With the Big Herds.

60. NQR, 15 February 1904, p.45.

61. Banks sometimes had a detrimental effect on properties by pressing for unnecessary sales to clear mortgages.

62. NQR, 15 June 1903 Supplement.

63. J. Kikkaldy, Manager to Pastoral Superintendent A.J.S. Bank Limited, Lorraine Station letter book 18 October 1901.

64. Queenslander, 26 November 1892, p.1052.

65. NQR, 28 October 1912.

66. Ibid., 20 May 1912, p.3.

67. Ibid., 2 February 1914, p.33.
Believing the country to be only suitable for cattle, the lessees of Woodbine, a block off Redcliffe, stocked the run with cattle in 1896. However low prices soon forced the selectors to switch to sheep. "After Messrs. Savage Brothers had broken the back of opposition to sheep on their class of country, a very decided rush set in and many thousands of acres in the neighbourhood were selected for sheep". Dalgety Review, 1 April, 1912, p.64.


Annual Reports Department of Public Lands, QVP, 1888, 1889.

NQR, 6 October 1897.

Ibid., 31 December 1917.

The resumption was actually due in 1904, QPP 1913, Vol. 2, Annual Report Department of Public Lands. Until the land was actually put up for selection the original lessee could obtain an Occupation Licence giving temporary tenure to the unused but unresumed portion of the run.

Croydon Mining News, 17 March 1911. (Hereafter CMN)

Queenslander. 2 January 1897, p.35.

J. Kirkaldy to Chairman of Directors, Lorraine Station Letterbook, 3 November 1920. The division of Lorraine originally took place in 1899 when 2944 square miles was resumed. However the owners, the A.J.S. Bank exercised depasturing rights on resumed parts of the run the following year. In 1908 a portion of the property was thrown open for selection at the Burketown Lands Office, E.P. Wells being the only applicant. (Lorraine Run file, Q.S.A., LAN/AF55)

CMN, 24 April 1908.

Ibid., 12 April 1907.

Ibid., 15 October 1904. Cattle stealing has a long history in the north with intermittent bouts occurring from the 1870s. In 1879 27 stations formed the North Queensland Cattle Stealing Prevention Association offering a reward of £200 for the capture and conviction of cattle thieves.

Palmer, Early Days in North Queensland.

NQR, 30 January 1899, p.39.
Under the guidance of Sir Thomas McIlwraith WME and A. Co. was floated in 1890 with a second works being located in Brisbane. Poole Island was actually the first station to be erected in North Queensland but in 1884 the works sustained extensive damage from a cyclone while the first shipment of frozen meat was being loaded. *Queenslander*, 2 February 1884, p.226.

In addition boiling down plants had been established at Torrens Creek, Normanton and Burketown in 1892 and at Cardwell and Mareeba a few years later. See May, *From Bush to Station* for a list of proposals and initiatives of N.Q. pastoralists to deal with marketing problems between 1889-1896. At Alligator Creek, near Townsville, the old boiling down works of the 1880s re-opened as a meat extract company in 1890. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away*, p.216.


THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY

99. NQR, 21 March 1904 Supplement.
100. NQR, 21 April, 1902, p.35; 14 March 1904, p.36.
101. Ibid., 27 March 1905, Supp.
102. Just prior to the drought the owners had refused an offer from QME and A. Co., Townsville of £4 per head for 2,500 bullocks and £2 for 1,000 cows. Queensland Country Life, 21 January 1960, p.10. (Hereafter QCL)
103. NQR, 15 June 1903 supplement.
104. Ibid., 7 May 1900, p.45.
105. Annual Report Department of Public Lands, QPP, 1902 Vol. 3.
106. NQR, 22 June 1903 p.33.
107. Ibid., 9 March 1903, p.46.
108. Scarcity of fat cattle and the difficulty in travelling stock through arid stock routes resulted in most boiling down and extract works closing by 1902. The illfated Hughenden works erected by Bergl in 1898 only operated for one season. At that time the Burketown works were offering such 'absurdly low prices' that growers in the Normanton/Croydon areas opted to take their cattle to Cardwell. Lorraine station Letterbook 12 April 1900.
109. NQR, 22 September 1902, p.34.
110. Ibid., 9 November 1903, p.41.
111. Ibid., 27 July 1903, p.29.
112. In 1897 cattle were fetching £2 and in 1903 three times that figure.
113. NQR, 7 April 1902.
114. Ibid., 6 June 1904, p.4.
115. Ibid., 9 March 1903, p.46. In 1921 QME and A. Co. transferred all of its stations to the Australian Stock Breeders Co. Ltd., NQR, 21 February 1921.
116. This project was dependent on the continued dredging of the Norman River so that ships would be able to come alongside the company's wharves. In 1901 QME and A. Co. had purchased the Burketown plant which only operated as a canning and extract works, NQR, 16 November 1903, p.56.

118. Ibid., 1 September 1913.

119. Ibid., 9 April 1917.

120. This occurred in 1938. QCL 2 May 1968.


122. NQR, 25 May 1914.

123. Ibid., 16 November 1903, p.56.

124. CMN, 12 November 1908.

125. NQR, 1 September 1913, p.15; Dalgety Review, 1 April 1910.

126. NQR, 27 May 1912. NQME works had re-opened in 1905 preserving and extract making but at no time in the ensuing seven years did the company work at anywhere near full capacity. Royal Commission on Meat Industry. QPP, Vol.2 1913, p.536.

127. Ibid., p.1297.


130. Ibid., 824-8.

131. NQR, 11 May 1914, p.86.


133. NQR, 18 January 1915, p.7.


135. NQR, 5 April 1920 p.61. Only 16,500 cattle were treated in 1919 at QME, Townsville compared with 81,570 in 1916 and 22,781 at Alligator Creek compared with 55,000 in 1916.

136. NQR, 1 March 1920, pp.48-9.
THE NORTH QUEENSLAND BEEF CATTLE INDUSTRY


140. *Pastoral Review*, 16 August 1920, p.537.

141. *NQR*, 7 February 1921, p.78.


147. *NQR*, 7 June 1926. In London meat was selling at under 40 shillings.


155. *Ibid.*, 25 February, 1924; 28 April 1924; 25 May 1925; 20 July 1925. The intention was to eventually secure the Bibooha meatworks as a pastoralists' concern "running it on much the same lines as Henry Ford [ran] his works". (Gulf News, 20 July 1931 - letter to Ed. from G.J. McIver.)

156. *NQR*, 1 February 1929; 28 February 1929.
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160. Australian National University, Archives of Business and Labour, Australian Estates Co. Ltd. Records, 158/190, Manager's Annual Report for Millungera Station.


162. Australian National University, Archives of Business and Labour, Australian Estates Co. Ltd. Records, 158/189, Manager's Annual Report on Millungera Station.


174. Ibid.

175. Royal Commission on Abattoirs and Meatworks, 1945-6, p.821-931.

176. This was most forcibly asserted in the Royal Commission on Meatworks and Abattoirs, 1945-6.

177. Pre 1890 the normal mortality rate was around 5 percent, in the second well over 10 percent. Statistics presented in evidence from two large gulf properties indicated that from 1925 to 1950 the number of cattle lost through death was 50 percent greater than the number marketed in that period. Royal Commission on Pastoral Land Settlement, QPP, 1951-2, Session 2 Vol. 2.


179. In stark contrast with the earlier periods, the post World War II industry has been subjected to considerable analysis. The most prolific writer on the subject is J.H. Kelly who was engaged in continuous economic surveys of the northern beef industry between 1948 and 1965. Other writers to make significant contributions have been B.R. Davidson, R.A. Patterson and W.A. Beattie.


183. Under Part 4, Section 5 of the Lands Act Amendment Act of 1927 lessees could be granted concessions such as an extension of lease of a promise of no resumption for a specific period on condition that certain improvements were carried out. However in the early days, it often happened that having acquired the desired concessions lessees were unable to carry out the developmental work because of the shortage of labour.

184. Cape York Peninsula has always been the most backward in the northern beef industry.
THE RAVENSWOOD STRIKE

Doug Hunt

The declining years of a gold-mining town are fraught with the tensions and bitterness of unfulfilled hopes. As the supply of gold diminishes, surviving mining companies desperately seek more capital to maintain operations; some take the gamble of new and risky ventures, others try to cut costs by updating machinery and streamlining production overheads. A gradual population exodus occurs, leaving those who stay to savour the memory of elusive wealth. Local folklore offers varied reasons for the collapse of the field. As Geoffrey Blainey acknowledges, this is rarely attributed simply to the exhaustion of payable ore: "If only the company had bought new pumps, if they'd extended that drive at the 1600 foot level another seventy feet, if they'd sacked that mean manager."\(^1\)

In the "merry-go-round of blame"\(^2\) attached to the demise of the North Queensland town of Ravenswood, one event stands out: an industrial dispute affecting principally the New Ravenswood company from November 1912 to July 1913. The villain of the piece, however, differs according to prejudice: on the one hand, Archibald Lawrence Wilson, general manager of New Ravenswood Limited, who at the height of the dispute allegedly declared, "I made this town and I'll bugger it before I'll give in to the strikers!";\(^3\) on the other hand, the workers themselves, led astray by "irresponsible outside agitators" from a "purely Socialistic" trade union.\(^4\) Of course, apportioning blame in any industrial dispute is an exercise of dubious merit, more so when historical records are incomplete. Notwithstanding, a study of the Ravenswood strike does reveal some of the economic and social pressures affecting a small, isolated gold-mining field in its twilight years.

Visitors to Ravenswood in 1912 would have observed scant evidence of community decline. Indeed, a more likely impression was one of solid prosperity. After the formation of the New Ravenswood company in 1898, the town had flourished. New timber, masonry and red brick
buildings — hotels, shops, residences and public utilities — all lent an aura of permanence to Ravenswood. A.L. Wilson's own house, an imposing structure overlooking the central town area, symbolised his position as shire council chairman, patron of societies and sporting clubs, and "uncrowned King of Ravenswood". This superficial opulence, however, masked the underlying insecurity of Ravenswood's wealth, as Roderick records:

The population reached 4,707 in 1903, but its decline soon after mirrored the fortunes of the field. Many mines were returning lower yields to the ton; some were forced to close to avert financial losses. By 1911, Ravenswood's future was bleak: the population had decreased to 3,300; ore treatment was still high at 36,000 tons, but the yield was the lowest since 1897; and the New Ravenswood Limited recorded its smallest returns and dividend (6% percent) since its inception.

That New Ravenswood was still profitable was due to the efficient management of the company. By constantly updating machinery and extraction methods, Wilson had reduced mining and milling costs by 12½ percent in three years. As a result the gold yield increased and a dividend of 18¾ percent was paid in June 1912. Earlier that year, however, the first portent of impending industrial conflict also appeared in Ravenswood: in February, following the visit of a union organiser, most workers joined the Amalgamated Workers' Association.

Unlike their counterparts in the coal and base metal industries, gold miners were not among the most militant of Australian unionists. Even while working for wages many retained hopes of sudden riches; they frequently supplemented paid employment by prospecting and working small claims. It was usually during recession, with easily-won gold exhausted, mining activity dominated by one or two large companies, and employment opportunities diminishing, that trade unions were successfully established. This was certainly the case in Ravenswood and, to a lesser extent, in the neighbouring reefing district of Charters Towers: previous attempts at industrial organisation had resulted in small, ephemeral unions devoted more to political campaigning than to improving working conditions. By 1912, however,
Wilson's concern with cutting costs in the interests of economical mining had clearly placed him at loggerheads with his own employees, who made unfavourable comparisons between their own conditions and those enjoyed by other North Queensland workers. In these circumstances, the AWA's enlistment of Ravenswood mine workers was hardly surprising.

Since its formation in the mining districts of Chillagoe and Herberton in 1907, the AWA had earned a reputation for industrial assertiveness, energetic organisation and commitment to Labor politics. In 1911 it won the admiration of unionists throughout Australia by conducting a lengthy but successful strike leading to better conditions in the sugar industry. Enrolling miners, railway navvies, sugar workers and labourers generally, the northern union fostered an amalgamation movement culminating in a merger with the Australian Workers' Union in January 1913. In joining the AWA, Ravenswood employees thus became members of the most dynamic labour organisation in Queensland. Wilson recognised the potential threat posed to New Ravenswood by the AWA's entry to the field. Commenting on the general political and industrial situation in Queensland in March 1912 he apprehensively - though prematurely - forecast a local strike for "shorter hours of work and higher wages".

In mid-May 1912 two rock drillers from the Sunset mine approached Wilson on behalf of all machine men engaged by New Ravenswood Limited, and requested a rise in wages from 10s. 10d. to 11s. 8d per day, amounting to 5s. per week. The men had strong grounds for such a claim: at Charters Towers the rate of 11s. 8d. had been paid for many years. Wilson agreed to grant the increase, but terminated a customary bonus paid to men sinking shafts or winzes. Informing his London directors of the compromise, he confided that "in reality I am conceding nothing, but in a manner of speaking, I have saved the company a large sum owing to the fact that the men have not received the higher [Charters Towers] rate of wages since we started operations. Had we been paying this higher rate of wages since the inception of the company,
it would have run into several thousands of pounds."

Subsequently Wilson continued his economies by installing labour-saving machinery in the mines and improving the efficiency of milling operations. In August he proudly recorded the visit of a Charters Towers mine manager, who was impressed with the New Ravenswood methods: "...although our reefs are much smaller and erratic, and we have a lesser number of men at work than he had, we extracted a larger tonnage than was the case at Charters Towers". When the power house drivers asked for an assistant for each shift in October, Wilson's response was characteristic: calculating that this demand would cost £636 per annum, "with no material advantage excepting that the work would be made easier", he chose instead to purchase a modern air compressor to drive the piston drills "with a minimum consumption of steam". This would provide capacity for extra drills, effect a considerable saving in fuel, and make the work of the power house drivers much easier - "and so (I hope) avoid the trouble now impending and save the employment of extra assistants". Such measures, however, coincided with a decline in company profitability towards the end of 1912. On 11 November, noting that the Sunset mine was running at a loss, Wilson discharged 26 men (6 machine men, 16 miners and 4 truckers) from the Sunset, 2 miners and 2 carpenters from the London North mine, and 3 truckers from the General Grant mine - reducing the New Ravenswood workforce by some 15 percent.

The workers' response to the retrenchments was prompt, if somewhat confused in its objectives. The following morning a deputation of local unionists presented Wilson with a demand for an increase in wages for truckers from 8s. to 9s. per day, a move apparently planned for some time (together with a demand for reduced hours) but now stimulated by the dismissals. The mid-day train to Ravenswood brought the northern district secretary of the AWA, Jack Dash, hastily summoned from Townsville by the local workers. Leading another deputation to Wilson, Dash claimed that the dismissed employees were prominent AWA members, and charged the general manager with victimisation. This
assertion was countered with a frosty reply: "I informed them that I had shortened hands in consequence of the poverty of the Sunset Mine and that I had no means of knowing who were and who were not members of this Union".  

The next day, Wednesday 13 November, Wilson again met with Dash and the president of the Ravenswood branch of the AWA with similar results. Accusations of victimisation were made and denied, and Wilson refused to give an undertaking to re-instate the retrenched workers as more labour was required: "I pointed out that I was not likely to require any more men for some considerable time and that the engaging and discharging of miners was left entirely in the hands of the mine managers - and that I was not going to bind myself with a promise I might find difficult to fulfill". He did, however, offer to pay the truckers 8s. 4d. per day, the ruling rate at Charters Towers. Four days later a meeting of AWA members rejected this offer, widening the terms of the dispute by demanding a 9s. per day minimum for all workers and a reduction in hours from 45½ to 44 per week. On 19 November Wilson refused these demands, telling yet another deputation "some home truths which they did not relish". Within twenty-four hours a strike was declared and union picket lines set up around all New Ravenswood shafts and works. 

In the following week the dispute was extended to other Ravenswood companies, involving workers employed by the tributors of the Grant and Sunset Extended and its treatment works, the Deep Mines mill. Yet not all workers downed tools: of the near 200-strong New Ravenswood workforce, approximately 70 non unionists remained at work. A further blow to the AWA's hopes of a general walk-out came when fourteen of New Ravenswood's eighteen engine drivers - all members of the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association (FEDFA) - refused to strike, defying an express instruction from their union executive to support the AWA. Subsequently, new rifts in the workforce emerged, creating a bitter division in the Ravenswood community during the ensuing months.
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In the meantime, there seemed little prospect of an early settlement of the dispute, especially when on 27 November Wilson refused any more meetings with the union: "I have already received five deputations from the AWA....and I do not feel disposed to meet any more....I have already conceded the truckers 8/4 per day and do not intend to concede any further".19

Wilson was clearly perplexed by the strike - the first serious dispute in the company's history and perhaps the only strike ever at Ravenswood.20 He appears to have genuinely believed that his employees were satisfied with their conditions and that the strikers were misrepresented by "extremists" and "paid agitators". No doubt he was encouraged in this belief by the less than universal support for direct action among the workers. Consequently, Wilson could only attribute the cause of the dispute to the notion that the AWA, "a political as well as an industrial union", was bent on disruption.21

It is unlikely, however, that the strike was particularly welcomed by the AWA district and executive officials. The 1911 sugar trouble, the Brisbane general strike in January-February 1912, state elections in April 1912, and planning for amalgamation with the AWU, had already strained the energies and resources of the union. In the northern district, the AWA's main industrial objective in 1912-13 was securing better conditions for its several thousand members in the Cloncurry copper mining district. Nevertheless, once the Ravenswood dispute began, union officials judged it expedient to endorse the claim for higher wages and a 44 hour week, which was, after all, union policy and long-standing practice in North Queensland mines. It is possible that the promise of improved wages and conditions was instrumental in gaining Ravenswood members for the union early in 1912. Success in the strike would enhance the prestige of the AWA and secure the loyalty not merely of its local members but also of workers throughout the state - especially those in the north-western copper mines. Hence Wilson - "a stubborn foe of unionism"22 - must be forced to give in regardless of his company's capacity to concede the demands. Indeed,
it is probable that neither the AWA nor the Ravenswood miners even understood New Ravenswood's latest financial difficulties. Rather, as Roderick affirms, "the mining workforce saw the current 18 3/4 per-cent dividend, the increased value of the yield, and nearly £35,000 in general reserves, as strong grounds for wage claims".23

During December 1912 non-union "loyalists" continued with small-scale development work in the mines and the annual overhaul of boilers and machinery. Christmas saw the arrival of several Ravenswood men from the Cloncurry district, enlivening the town's festive period and intensifying feelings between strikers and "scabs". Epitomizing community divisions, brawls, slanging matches and stone-throwing were commonplace, culminating shortly before midnight on New Year's Eve with a revolver shot in the main street, wounding a 20 year old Cloncurry miner, Michael Gorman, in the leg.24 By mid-January, however, Ravenswood was "very quiet": heavy rain had further curtailed mining operations, most of the strikers had gone west looking for work, and the nearby Donnybrook and Erin's Hope United mines had closed down.25

With the New Ravenswood company now operating at a loss, its directors in London became increasingly concerned about the strike. Early in January 1913 they refused Wilson's request to transfer £25,000 from the reserves to the company's working capital;26 a few weeks later they suggested that operations by shut down at least temporarily. Wilson rejected this as "very unwise":

In the first place, the men who have remained loyal and borne with all the contumely and intimidation from the strikers would have to be discharged, which would simply be playing into the hands of the AWA in as much as nothing would be more natural than for those men to be gathered into the ranks of the AWA. There would then be no question as to them being masters of the situation and the company their slaves. It is of the utmost importance that our loyalists should be kept on, and in the meantime I am hopeful of procuring a few more men.... By working as at present, although a loss may arise in the month during which there is no crushing there is a profit to be made when the crushing takes place, and this would recoup the previous losses either wholly or partially, or at any rate be less of a loss than shutting down entirely.27
Wilson struggled to keep New Ravenswood going. Early in February he travelled to Brisbane for interviews with the Minister for Mines and Judge Macnaughton of the Industrial Court ("a personal friend of mine of many years' standing") with a view to settling the dispute under the recently-gazetted *Industrial Peace Act*. This legislation, passed by the Denham Liberal government in response to the Brisbane general strike, provided heavy penalties for strikes. In the capital, however, Wilson learnt that the necessary court machinery would not be ready until late April. He had more success — "with some difficulty and expense" — in recruiting non-union labour, engaging 16 miners in Brisbane and Gympie. By the end of February New Ravenswood had 95 men on the pay sheet, and had commenced crushing small amounts of ore. "I am striving day and night to break the strike", Wilson reported; "...it is only the fear and terror of the agitators that is now keeping some of the men still out on strike". 28

The stalemate nevertheless continued. On 7 April 1913 work resumed at the Grant and Sunset Extended following voluntary local arbitration which granted the men a 44 hour week but no wage increase. Wilson deplored this decision as breaking the unity of the employers, but shortly afterwards also conceded the reduced hours to his loyalists, expressing the hope that this might induce a general settlement of the dispute. 29 Yet the union (now part of the AWU) remained firm on the wages issue: no more men returned to work and the strike at the New Ravenswood Limited dragged on through May and June.

The pressures now began to tell on Wilson. His relations with the company staff, already strained by his obsession with costs, deteriorated. At the end of May Wilson's eldest son, who had been employed in December 1912 as surveyor and assistant metallurgist, was suspended by order of the board of directors in suspicious but mysterious circumstances. 30 In June the company secretary, J. Snelham, and the metallurgist, W.A. Caldwell resigned their positions, leading the directors to urge the general manager to "throw aside all petty
quarrels and jealousies and to work harmoniously and energetically with the other officers of the Company with a view to extricating the Company from its present position".  

The feeling engendered within the Ravenswood community by the strike exacerbated Wilson's worries. It was difficult for a man who had for so long enjoyed almost universal respect and popularity not to be troubled by the seething bitterness which set apart neighbours and friends, and even divided families. While some workers were drawing regular wages, their former colleagues were getting by on meagre incomes in the form of irregular strike pay. With the strike now in its sixth month, it is little wonder that both sides to the dispute were anxious for a settlement. The local branch secretary and several union members who had remained in town were reported to be in favour of declaring the strike off, and a return to work seemed imminent early in June when Wilson offered a minimum rate of 8s. 6d. per day. This olive branch was to no avail, however, as Jack Dash, the district secretary, could not be contacted: he had gone to Cloncurry, where a dispute over contracting and piecework had blossomed into a full-scale lock-out affecting 1500 men. Unable to secure official sanction for a settlement, the Ravenswood unionists again dug in their heels, and the strike was not called off until 16 July 1913, when a compulsory conference was summoned in Townsville by Judge Macnaughton. There it was agreed, on his recommendation, that the company should pay the 9s. per day for a 44 hour week, and that the men should resume work at once.  

To the Worker the strike settlement was "a complete victory for the AWU": a claim which ignored local reality in Ravenswood. In fact the union had placed a very low priority on resolving the dispute. Indicative of this attitude was a report by Dash early in April 1913, at the height of the strike, that there were "no disputes of a serious nature" in the northern district. In their determination to win a paper victory over New Ravenswood, the AWU neglected the employment prospects of its members. Indeed, after seven months' strike involving loss of pay and hardship, the men involved gained little:
only 20 or 30 former strikers secured their old jobs; many returned to the Cloncurry district; others joined the general population drift from Ravenswood to the coastal towns and sugar districts.

It is difficult to assess the significance of the strike in contributing to the demise of Ravenswood. Wilson himself expressed reservations about the importance of the dispute as a cause of New Ravenswood's losses in 1913: development work confirmed the gloomy prospects of payable ore in the company's mines. Certainly the lengthy strike had placed further strains on a company struggling to make returns; the terms of settlement obviously meant higher costs in the future. The strike was most significant, however, in its effect on New Ravenswood's London directors: it was a determining factor in their decision not to provide more capital for the mines.

For some years after 1913, New Ravenswood continued to extract gold, frequently winning enough to cover expenses - a tribute to Wilson's energy and commitment. However, rising costs and a shortage of materials made mining the narrow reefs increasingly uneconomical. A number of local miners joined the armed forces during the Great War, and their replacements were less skilled. One by one the mines closed, until finally in 1917 the New Ravenswood company ceased operations and was liquidated. By then the strike - Ravenswood's "last hurrah" - was only a memory to the despondent residents who remained.
REFERENCES

2. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 23 May 1912.
13. Ibid., 29 August 1912.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Wilson to the general secretary, FEDFA, 26 November 1912, ibid.; North Queensland Register, 9 December 1912.
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21. Wilson to the Directors, 14 December 1912. On 26 December Wilson wrote that "it is now clear that the strike here was a pre-arranged matter, and intended as the starting point of a general upheaval throughout North Queensland for political purposes in view of the forthcoming Federal Elections". NR Records.


27. Wilson to the Directors, 24 January 1913, *ibid*.


29. *Ibid.*, 10 April 1913, 8 May 1913; *QGMJ*, 15 May 1913; *North Queensland Register*, 14 April 1913.

30. Fortnightly Reports for 8 May 1913, and 19 June 1913, NR Records.


32. Fortnightly Report for 19 June 1913; *Worker*, 19 June 1913; *QGMJ*, June 1913, p.324.


34. *Worker*, 17 July 1913.


37. Wilson to the Directors, 24 January 1913; Fortnightly Reports for 8 May 1913 and 22 May 1913, NR Records.

By 1925 the Australian Labour Party had held power in Queensland continuously for ten years. The dominant faction within the Party was the Australian Workers' Union [AWU] which had achieved its level of influence through organisation, discipline and the skilful - at times ruthless - use of strikes. Now however it was committed to the pursuit of its aims through the arbitration system. A rival within the ALP, and within the labour movement broadly, was the Australian Railways' Union [ARU] committed to direct industrial action to achieve its aims: the key importance of rail transport in Queensland, at a time when long-distance road transport was insignificant, gave the ARU a position of apparent strategic strength. In the latter part of 1925, following a dramatically successful use of strike action over basic wage cuts, the ARU, flushed with success, was eager to seize every opportunity to demonstrate its industrial muscle and to assert its hold over the Labor government. Not only had the railway unions been successful in by-passing the Arbitration Court and winning their demands, but they had driven from office the vacillating premier, William Gillies. However if the militants believed that their influence could be extended to the Labor party machine, they were misguided if not naive. Their success in 1925 was attributable to a rare harmony attained between unions over an issue of wage justice. The AWU and the moderate craft unions could not be expected to relinquish power to the militants indefinitely, and at the first sign of further direct action would dissociate their members. In the meantime Gillies' successor, William McCormack, sounded an ominous warning to the railway unions with a promise to resist militant pressures.

ARU leaders were well aware that with the election of McCormack to the premiership they would have a tough fight on their hands in any future resort to strike action. When it came to industrial and union issues, McCormack was probably the most experienced strategist in the Labour movement. He had been the driving force in the old Amalgamated
McCORMACK, RYMER AND THE BOWEN INDUSTRIAL TROUBLES: 1925

Workers' Association, the mastermind of the 1911 sugar strike and the brains behind the amalgamation movement which created the AWU in 1913. Now a champion of arbitration, McCormack told the militants that he would resist any challenge to his Government's authority, and would not tolerate disruptive tactics by union leaders which might affect the State's financial well-being. Clearly his warning was intended for the ARU "bosses" whom he saw as threatening to the AWU and more moderate unions within the Labour movement. No doubt the praise heaped on him by the conservative press for his outspokenness made him determined to stand by his pledge to deal firmly with the militant unions. It was not long however before McCormack's words were put to the test in what was to prove a watershed in the struggle between militant unionists and the state Labor administration.

The scene for a showdown was the port of Bowen which in 1925 ranked sixth in the value of exports from Queensland. Bowen was the outlet for primary products, in particular sugar from the Proserpine and Inkerman mills and beef from the Merinda meatworks. Whereas most visitors to Bowen over recent decades have considered it a sleepy hollow, it was a different case between the wars. With strong contingents of wharf labourers, railwaymen and meatworkers, Bowen had a reputation as a seedbed of militant unionism. It was probably appropriate that the first shots of the struggle between the new premier, McCormack, and the supremely confident ARU under the guidance of George Rymer, over who should dictate labour policy, were fired in Bowen in what would become known as the Port Hardy dispute.

Throughout the winter of 1925 a strike by British seamen disaffected shipping in Australian ports. When members of the British union appealed to Australian unions for support, a controlling committee - the Overseas Transport Union Strike Committee - was formed in Brisbane, with George Rymer as its president and representatives from the Seamens' Union, Waterside Workers, Coal Workers and ARU. Branch committees were set up in Townsville, Cairns, Gladstone and Bowen, and Rymer's central strike committee subsequently placed a black
ban on the supply of coal to all strike-bound British ships; they exempted coal necessary for refrigeration purposes.

Coinciding with this dispute was a separate strike which started in Cairns in September 1925 when members of the Waterside Workers' Federation walked off the job, demanding a rotary system of labour. This strike quickly spread throughout northern ports at the height of the sugar crushing and meat killing season. Farmers, angry at the inconvenience caused by the waterfront troubles, attempted to load vessels tied up at the strike-bound ports, but were dispersed by police.

Both disputes extended to Bowen in the latter part of October 1925 when seamen refused to coal the vessel Port Hardy, and Waterside Workers' Federation members decided by a nearly two to one majority, not to resume work unless the rotary system was introduced. When a secret ballot ordered by the Arbitration Court, was arranged for 23 October, none of the 'wharfies' presented themselves to vote. Their action understandably alarmed many farmers. While the Port Hardy was primarily held in port by the British Seamens strike, farmers were clearly worried over the effect of the waterside workers strike on the export of their produce. According to one report, "the feeling was rampant throughout the town that the farmers were coming to Bowen to work the Port Hardy." Cane farmers in the district had cause to be angry. After years of battling with dry seasons, the completion of a State Government scheme of irrigation had resulted in a bumper crop in 1925. However, if the dispute continued, approximately half of the cane could not be harvested. Already mill storage was full and there were several thousand tons of sugar at Bowen awaiting shipment. The North Queensland Register reported:

The position is a disastrous one for all branches of the sugar industry in the Home Hill district. Their only port is Bowen and it is blockaded as effectively as if an enemy ship were anchored in Port Denison. Already the losses of the canegrowers have been enormous, and
pretty well a couple of hundred thousand pounds worth of cane remain to be harvested. Unless the farmers can obtain shipment for their sugar, the majority of them will be ruined.5

Telegrams to the Premier requested that a vessel be sent to remove the stockpiled sugar from Bowen. Unless something was done immediately, the farmers argued, the mill would cease crushing and the sugar season would close prematurely.6

McCormack deemed the request "impractical" at that stage of the dispute; however the Sugar Board ordered the chartering of several vessels in an endeavour to ease the situation.7 One attempt to coal the Port Hardy by the John Burke Ltd. steamer Palmer failed when 'black' bans imposed by the Queensland branch of the Seamens' Union on all ships of that line resulted in the Palmer returning to the wharf and discharging her coal. However other ships, including the steamer Port Curtis and the collier Corrimal, which had also been declared 'black' anchored in the Whitsunday passage awaiting further instructions. The Transport Strike Committee, formed to coordinate the strike, submitted a resolution to the ARU declaring "all cargo to and from, and also the Port Hardy itself 'black' and requested that railwaymen refrain from handling same".8 A combined meeting of railwaymen on 29 October endorsed the resolution, and the ARU, undoubtedly testing the Government's mettle, came out in support of the strikers by placing a black ban on all coal to the Port Hardy.

This was the very development McCormack was awaiting. Subsequently he claimed that as the railwaymen had refused "to carry out the [Railway] Commissioner's instruction to deliver the coal to the Bowen jetty", the position represented "a direct challenge to constituted authority and the Government is reluctantly compelled to take the necessary steps to see that its authority is not undermined".9 As might be expected, the rural and metropolitan press revelled in the prospect of a looming confrontation. The North Queensland Register argued:

The general strike of railwaymen a couple of months ago, was a very different matter to that which the Seamens'
Strike Committee, headed by a noted extremist in Mr. Rhymer, is endeavouring to force on the Railwaymen...."Rhymer and Co." are apparently much more desirous of winning a reputation for desperate leadership, than they are anxious for the real welfare of the Railwaymen.10

The conservative *Brisbane Courier* also took up the issue, taunting McCormack to make good his earlier promise to take a firm stand against the militants:

> Have we reached the position of control on the railways when every man in the service can do as he wishes so long as it is not against the order of Boss Rymer?....Mr. Rhymer says in effect this is so. The next move now lies with the Premier. This is the acid test. Mere professions are useless; the time has come for action.11

Even one Labor journal, the *Daily Standard*, blazed with double-column headlines: "Bowen Dispute, Mr. Rymer to Blame, says Premier McCormack."1

Rymer lost little time publicly defending the ARU's actions. Not only was the decision to black ban coal to the *Port Hardy* a joint one by the Transport Unions Strike Committee, but, he declared, "the committee has all along authorised the supply of sufficient coal to overseas ships in order to prevent the primary products on board from rotting - without any influence from Mr. McCormack, because to allow it to do so would not assist the overseas men in the fight against the ship owners for reducing their wages".13 Further he hinted that his union was reconsidering its position:

> Mr. McCormack wants a brawl with the railwaymen in order to wipe out the victory obtained by them by the restoration of the 5/- per week, also the introduction of the 44 hour week in this state, both of which were accomplished against the bitter opposition of Mr. McCormack, but Railwaymen are too wide awake to allow him to embroil them in a general strike for the purpose of allowing him to play the role of the strong man.14

During the following days the unions stood firm despite pressure from a "lawless element" in Bowen.15 While the majority of farmers aired their grievances at noisy street and waterfront demonstrations, it appeared that those "who had come in, some 200 strong, from the Burdekin, had the place more or less in terror, first pulling
McCORMACK, RYMER AND THE BOWEN INDUSTRIAL TROUBLES: 1925

individuals from their boarding house...going all over certain hotels, ransacking the premises". Then on 3 November, as a result of a directive from the Strike Committee, railwaymen delivered 70 tons of coal to the Port Hardy for refrigerating purposes. At midnight that same night, after loading the coal, the Port Hardy slipped from the coal wharf across to the jetty where farmers immediately commenced loading sugar into its hold. By 5 November 1200 tons of sugar had been loaded. In response, railway engine drivers refused to obey departmental instructions to bring down extra trucks of coal. The Port Hardy moved at noon to be coaled in the outer harbour by the Port Curtis, and subsequently sailed from Bowen. It is unclear who authorised the loading of sugar on the Port Hardy; however the vessel and its cargo came under the jurisdiction of the local Harbour Board.

It was at this point that McCormack played his trump card. Anticipating retaliatory action by the ARU, he suspended thirteen railwaymen for refusing to handle the stockpiled coal. He justified his action on the grounds that the Government had no alternative, and that "the railwaymen must decide that they were not prepared to allow themselves to be dictated to by a body, which set itself up above a government authority". McCormack's manoeuvre left the ARU with two options: either back down or face a "full scale lockout for which it had made no preparations". A stopwork meeting of Bowen railwaymen was held on 6 November and it was finally decided that in the event of suspended employees not being reinstated within 48 hours the branch line between Merinda and Proserpine (used primarily to convey beef from the Merinda meatworks) be declared 'black'. This restriction effectively tied the hands of ARU officials: if they ignored the Bowen meeting's sentiments, they would alienate many members; if they supported the black ban they would be in a very weak position to pursue the dispute. When the State Strike Council met, the Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen submitted a motion to instruct the Bowen men to withdraw their ban as a preliminary to the Premier being requested to withdraw
the suspensions. But the ARU delegates successfully amended the resolution "to interview the Premier first and to request the withdrawal of the suspensions on condition that the Bowen men withdrew their threat".

When the delegation met with McCormack, he intimated his preparedness to lift the suspensions, provided the unions gave an assurance that their members would in future carry out the instructions of the Railway Commissioner. At a subsequent meeting of the State Railway Strike Council it was decided after lengthy discussions that McCormack's demands could not be acceded to unequivocally. However the Council unanimously resolved to "instruct the railwaymen at Bowen to cancel the threat of declaring sections of the Northern Railway Line black on the promise of the Premier that the employees suspended be immediately reinstated without any victimisation". McCormack refused to accept the Strike Council's resolution and threatened to fight the railwaymen by sending men from the 'South' to take their place.

McCormack subsequently called a compulsory conference of union leaders at which certain suggestions for a settlement of the dispute were offered, without success. As he told Parliament:

I told them that they were not going to be permitted to hamstring the whole railway service of Queensland by declaring certain sections "black". I told them they had to meet this issue. If that was their opinion and that was the stand they were going to take up, then the railways would not work until I got a decision on this issue.

And as was later revealed:

[A]fter discussion, the Premier suggested an amendment which though not acceptable to the Australian Railways Union representatives was accepted by the majority of the delegates at the conference, thus overruling the Australian Railways Union delegates.

McCormack agreed to waive the suspensions on condition that railwaymen carry out future instructions of the Railway Commissioner. The ARU delegates agreed that its members would abide by the Commissioner's orders "provided that such instructions [did] not conflict with the recognised principle of unionism and the Labor Movement". Soon afterwards the men went back to work, obviously on instructions from
McCORMACK, RYMER AND THE BOWEN INDUSTRIAL TROUBLES: 1925

the ARU officials, who could "ill-afford to lose the advantages"
gained from the August railway strike.\textsuperscript{25}

The Bowen dispute was successfully resolved when the Seamens'
Union entered negotiations, and watersiders resumed work at Bowen on
7 November 1925 under award conditions pending an enquiry to be held
by the Arbitration Court into the rotary system.\textsuperscript{26} Commenting on
the episode, Rymer declared that "the railwaymen have merely done
what Mr. McCormack and Mr. Theodore taught many of them to do - that
is, to be unionists. Had they refused to scab for any other employer
than the government they would have been applauded by the politicians".\textsuperscript{27}
In Rymer's view the undertaking meant that unionists "must scab if
requested to do so".\textsuperscript{28}

While the \textit{Worker}, mouthpiece for the AWU, understandably applauded
McCormack's "Strong Stand"\textsuperscript{29} against the strikers, his prompt action in
dealing with the militants also earned him the praise of the anti-
labor press:

In Mr. McCormack he [Rymer] seems to have a Premier who
cannot be so easily swayed by bluff and bluster....Quite
apart from the political issues or party politics, the
Premier can rest assured that if he maintains the
authority of his Government, he will have the full weight
of the community behind him. But there must be no more
temporizing, no more Gillies bargaining.\textsuperscript{30}

McCormack understandably had angered the militant unions, and
according to Rymer, the Trades and Labor Council "recognised in Premier
McCormack's actions in the shipping and railway troubles yet another
would-be strong man prepared to respond to the urgings of the Tory
Press to deal out law and order".\textsuperscript{31} There was substance in his claim
as the Brisbane TLC not only made history by refusing to congratulate
McCormack on his accession to office, but also resolved at their
November meeting:

That in view of the anti-working class attitude adopted
by Premier McCormack in the present shipping strike, his
open preference towards scab labour in the matter of police
and other protection, this Trades and Labour Council
repudiates Mr. McCormack and considers he is not a fit
and proper person to continue in office, and that the
resolution be conveyed to the Premier by deputation.\textsuperscript{32}
ANNE SMITH

Furthermore it urged that "Caucus investigate the actions of the Premier for the purpose of ending the dictatorship set up by Premier McCormack in the shipping strike".  

Clearly McCormack had planned to isolate the ARU, and his tactics proved largely successful. For its part, the ARU had alienated the railway craft unions during the Bowen dispute. Despite Rymer's insistence that "the Port Hardy was finally coaled by a scab ship out in the harbour, and not by scab railwaymen", and despite ARU branch support for their President, craft union officials considered the ARU had "backed down in principle when McCormack pressed the issue". However, McCormack's victory over the ARU leadership was a hollow one and was soured by the result in the northern electorate of Herbert in the 1925 general election. Here his long-standing friend and colleague, E.C. Theodore, had been favoured to win the seat and enter Federal politics. But following a campaign fought mainly on State industrial issues, Theodore was defeated at the polls by 268 votes: "the high informal vote [2188] clearly demonstrated that many trade unionists had followed Rymer's advice to abstain or vote informal as Labour had betrayed the trade union movement". McCormack subsequently hit back at the ARU leaders by invoking the anti-Communist pledge which was aimed at a number of trade union officials with alleged communist sympathies, among them George Rymer. Their expulsion first from the Queensland Central Executive of the ALP and then from the 1926 Southport labor-in-politics Convention was deliberately engineered; this indirectly bolstered the influence of the AWU in labor politics.

For Rymer and the ARU the outcome was little short of a disaster. They had set out to consolidate the success they had won in the week-long railway strike during the Port Hardy dispute, but they had badly misjudged the complex situation and were forced into a humiliating public withdrawal. Moreover they were now denied representation at both administrative and policy making levels of the ALP, and their expulsion seriously impinged upon the ARU's immediate influence not only within the Labor Party but also within the trade union movement.
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In the light of later developments McCormack's actions in isolating the ARU were most unwise. Had he relented and agreed to bury the hatchet, by sheer weight of numbers he could have exerted his authority. Instead of alienating the railway union with his 'strong man' tactics he should have endeavoured to reconcile the Labour movement in general. As it was, McCormack not only earned the undying hatred of Rymer and the ARU, but caused considerable disquiet among moderate unionists, illustrated by the loss of Herbert in the 1925 election. Having been rendered the political leper of the Labour movement, the ARU was left with but one recourse - further industrial action. The bitter personal feud between McCormack and Rymer which emerged publicly during the Port Hardy dispute at Bowen was to prove critical to the course of industrial relations in the late 1920's and ultimately to the defeat of the Labour government in 1929.

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1. Brisbane Courier, 26 October 1926. "The new Premier seems resolved that he shall not be taken as a weakling....It is rather refreshing to see a Labour Premier assuming this attitude and it will be more refreshing to find Mr. McCormack living up to his creed".

2. A system of rostering on a rotation basis all available work equally between all members of a registered union at a time when there was insufficient work to keep all members fully employed.

3. North Queensland Register, 26 October 1925.

4. The Advocate, 10 December 1925.

5. North Queensland Register, 26 October 1925.

6. The Advocate, 10 December 1925.


8. The Advocate, 10 December 1925.

9. Worker, 5 November 1925.
The following week further trouble seemed likely when the WWF refused to load the collier Corrimal, earlier declared 'black'. However consultations between farmers and watersiders settled the matter - the watersiders union gave undertaking "to work any 'white' ship provided the farmers also gave undertaking in writing not to bring in any other 'black' ships".

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Ibid., 15 January 1926.

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   1925.

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36. Ibid., p.255.

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   Anti-Communist Pledge Crisis", in D.J. Murphy et. al., 
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MOSLEM ALBANIANS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

J.C. Carne

So much of the unrest in today's turbulent world directly involves Moslems that it might almost seem that any Islamic community at peace with its neighbours, would qualify as "news". In fact the existence of such an Islamic community in the hinterland of Cairns for nearly half-a-century has gone almost wholly unnoticed outside the immediate district. The reasons for this tranquil existence are worth examining, not least because the opinion is again being heard in Australia that any influx of migrants with a sharply different culture must of itself arouse hostile reactions.

Albanians have never been present in North Queensland in large numbers, and of those resident in North Queensland at any time not all have been Moslem. In Australia as a whole only 2.7% of male settlers originating in southern Europe came from Albania between 1890-1940:1 even in North Queensland absolute numbers were never very large. By 1941 only 224 Albanians, Moslem and Christian alike, lived north of Ingham: in 1976 only 98 adults of Moslem Albanian origin were living in the district of Mareeba,2 the main centre of concentration. These small figures certainly provide part of the explanation for the lack of friction between Albanians and their neighbours; just as certainly it is not the whole explanation. The concentration of Albanians not only in one region but in a single industry, coupled with religious and linguistic barriers clearly isolating them from all their neighbours, would seem to be circumstances likely to arouse prejudice irrespective of numbers.

* * * *

The nation-state of Albania is younger than Australia having been carved from the remains of the decaying Turkish Empire in 1912.3 An Albanian national identity, however, is very old. Tradition and archaeological evidence have shown that the Albanian people had their origins in the time of the ancient Greeks. Since that period, they
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have needed to maintain constant vigilance against aggressive neighbours who sought to erase their identity. Romans, Greeks, Turks, Italian Fascists and German Nazis all left their indelible stamp upon this people. A legacy of this history is the great value Albanians attached to hard work, honesty and family relationships, values which served them well as pioneers in North Queensland.

Most of the Moslems who finally settled in North Queensland came from the Korcha region of south Albania. They were country people, quite used to manual labour. However, farm work proved unsatisfying to many young men of this region, who throughout history, sought their fortune in other countries. Egypt's last king, Farouk I, was descended from an Albanian who ruled that country in the early nineteenth century. Towards the end of the nineteenth century a combination of stagnant local economic conditions and a steadily rising population spurred greater numbers of young Korchari to find work in foreign countries. The industrial east coast of the U.S.A. provided such opportunities until the government of that country placed restrictive laws on immigration in the mid 1920s. Australia then became a potential source of new jobs, through which enough money could be earned to pay off debts and to increase family income. These hopes were soon dashed, for world economic Depression and World War II created circumstances which prevented travel. After World War II the communist government of Albania prevented emigration, so the only people to enter Australia were political refugees or the brides of men already here. This abrupt conclusion of migration to Australia encouraged Albanians who settled here to integrate with Australian society, at a rate which Australians found acceptable.

Many of the earliest Albanian migrants landed in Western Australia where they found work associated with the grain-growing industry. As world Depression set in, casual jobs became scarce, so many moved to the cane areas south of Cairns, where employment opportunities were better, due to the continued high domestic price for sugar. Northern Queensland also provided work through the cotton industry
around Biloela, the maize industry on the Atherton Tablelands, and later, the tobacco industry at Mareeba. This work provided adequate returns for those who wished to return home and also gave work experience to those who decided to remain in Australia. Competition for jobs with Australians caused trouble, but much of this was directed against the more numerous Italian. In fact contact between Australians and Albanians was probably limited to work or the occasional meeting at local pubs. Social life for the Albanians, especially in the Babinda sugar area, was centred on the "Albanian Club". This establishment served as a temporary boarding house, but its main function was as a focus for workers whose main recreation was talking and playing cards. Thus sustained contact between these early labourers and their Australian neighbours was limited because the residence of the Albanians in North Queensland was regarded as only temporary.

After World War Two, many Albanian workers returned to families in Albania, but others remained in order to fulfil a wish to own land. This desire to become independent landholders, which was the ambition of many Southern Europeans like the Italians, was accomplished mainly by syndicates of like-minded men who pooled their finances and worked together until all owned land. Many Albanians sought land in the newly-opened tobacco lands around Mareeba, but others preferred to settle the maize country on the Atherton Tablelands where returns on investments were more secure. Land had to be taken where it was available, so no "exclusive communities" were established as was feared by some Australians. This did not prevent these new settlers from co-operating over financial and labour commitments, in a way which guaranteed the success of their ventures. Such co-operation proved effective in the tobacco industry, which faced all the problems associated with the cultivation and marketing of a crop that was totally new to most of the farmers. Legal obstacles to land purchase were minimized as soon as the Albanians became naturalized.

In 1937, an Australian Security Service report stated: "Albanians are concentrating on tobacco and cotton-growing rather than on working
A MOSQUE IN ALBANIA
in the sugar cane areas.\textsuperscript{5} This preference by the Albanians for settlement in what were considered to be unimportant industries relieved both the Australian authorities, and these new settlers themselves, of the worry associated with anti-Southern European sentiment from those Australians who resented Italian success in the profitable sugar industry. The tobacco industry also proved to be a fortunate choice in one other respect: family labour could significantly cut capital costs. This advantage was significant for new settlers who lacked large financial reserves, despite the fact that Albanians willingly loaned money to their fellow countrymen. Tobacco-cultivation was risky in the early days without irrigation and firm price level guarantees, but these new settlers were willing to co-operate with other communities in improving these circumstances. As this industry evolved, they were able to integrate gradually into the developing economic structure. Albanians have never been numerically strong in the tobacco industry, in which they concentrated. In 1937, there were only eight Albanian producers of tobacco registered under the Excise Act in the Mareeba district, compared with 320 British and 109 Italians.\textsuperscript{6} By 1973, they still formed only 6\% of farm operators in the North Queensland tobacco industry, who were born outside Australia.\textsuperscript{7} There was no ground, therefore, for accusing Albanians of trying to dominate a particular rural industry.

Relations between the Albanians and Australia's State and Commonwealth authorities were influenced by a desire on the part of the government to maintain harmony in the Australian community. Government attitudes appeared to have been determined by immediate considerations, such as concern over the rate of land occupation by aliens and the need to intern "enemy aliens" during World War II. However, these attitudes were at least consistent, in that Albanians were seen in purely national, rather than religious terms. In times of peace, these new settlers were given faint praise by Commonwealth investigators:

The Albanians in Queensland have a reputation of being excellent workers, honest and reliable. With one exception, all who came under notice were men of good type who could readily be assimilated into the general community. Albanians are essentially tillers of the soil.\textsuperscript{8}
In times of war the manner changed to one of petty bureaucratic concern. Albanian Nationals were declared "enemy aliens" after Italy declared war on the Allies in June 1940, because the Italians had conquered and incorporated the Albanian state into their Empire during April 1939. As a result they were either put under police surveillance or made to work under the direction of the Civil Aliens Corps. Their response to these impositions varied between acceptance and reluctant cooperation. One report on the Townsville prison stated that Albanians were satisfied with conditions, while a report from the Civil Aliens Corps stated that the poorest performance at directed work was made by Bulgarians and Albanians. Such a bitter response was understandable, for many men felt that in this war they were natural allies of Australia against Italian conquerors of their country. At the conclusion of hostilities many migrants returned to their families in Europe, while others moved away from Queensland, where the restrictions had been harshest. Those who remained regarded conditions in Australia as significantly better than those to be found in their war-torn homeland with its new and aggressive communist government under Enver Hoxha.

Relations between Albanians and the general Australian community proved to be peaceful at most times. Petty prejudice was sometimes expressed in hotels by individuals, but the Australian business community seems to have welcomed all new settlers as potential clientele. Most Australians did not differentiate among the various Southern European nationalities, and Albanians might have been expected to share some of the hostility which was directed against Italians in North Queensland in the inter-war years; but these feelings were strongest in sugar areas where Italians were competing for work and land with native Australians. Conditions around the Mareeba area were peaceful enough to receive favourable comment from a visiting Italian Consul in 1932. Albanians were concerned only about their own affairs and concentrated most of their time and effort upon establishing profitable farms. Perhaps the chief reasons for peace between Australians and these European Moslems were the facts that their interests coincided in the economic sphere and that events in Europe had little noticeably
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detrimental effect upon North Queensland. Peaceful relations continued even when Australia and Italy were at war, and this maintained an atmosphere free of resentment for past wrongs.

The early Albanian workers in North Queensland were careful not to offend the local authorities or population on whom they relied for protection and employment, but personal disagreements between themselves were sometimes settled outside the Australian law. Violence was endemic to a group of men living in an alien land, and isolated from normal family life. One Albanian man stated at his trial that he carried a firearm as there might always be trouble in the Albanian Club, Babinda. Such behaviour became more infrequent as individual troublemakers left and the remaining settlers established families.

One of the main reasons for good relations between Moslem Albanians and their neighbours is that they were able to integrate into the affairs of their new Australian community. In the tobacco areas, this integration was made easier through the institutional framework of the North Queensland Tobacco Growers' Co-operative Association which fought for growers' rights after World War II. Though Albanians formed only a relatively small percentage of growers, on at least two occasions, members of their community have been made directors of this organization. This involvement in community affairs has been limited to older men, but in recent years, younger people have expanded their social horizons through work in urban centres.

Economic integration came first followed slowly by social integration, for business partners cement commercial contacts through social relationships. Albanians have been invited to join service clubs in Mareeba and in some cases have responded. Affluence and the relatively less stringent demands of tobacco cultivation in recent times have encouraged this process. Expansion of friendships with Australians has also been a necessary process for those Albanians living outside Mareeba, in places like Dimbulah and on the Atherton Tableland. However social integration of the children was achieved
by an expansion of social contacts through the school. New friendships were stabilised by organizations like the Junior Farmers, and in more recent times through sporting clubs and social activities at the Mareeba International Club, which was established in 1972. This process of integration has been accompanied by growing self-confidence and a desire by older people to express their religious and political beliefs.

Expression of political beliefs was always dangerous in Albania, especially under the rule of the Turks. After 1912, political inexperience led to conflict, which in turn limited the ability of people to improve their country's economic and diplomatic position. After World War II, the Communist regime espoused a dogmatic ideology which accepted no criticism. Liberal values such as support for national sovereignty and freedom of belief were supported by men who had worked in the U.S.A., but were not well received or understood at home. When Albanians in Queensland sought to form a Society, the U.S. experience of some provided a suitable model. In 1943 the "Albanian Association of Queensland" was formed with branches in Mareeba, Atherton, Babinda, Biloela, and headquarters in Brisbane. By 1945 membership of the Far North Queensland branches totalled 134. The Association Constitution stated that friendship between Albanians and Australians was to be promoted, but conditions produced by World War II made this aim difficult to achieve. Association efforts concentrated upon financial relief for needy members and their families. Following the cessation of hostilities, many unnaturalised members returned home and the Association's branches in the North were closed. Nevertheless this experiment in community co-operation provided useful experience for men who settled in Australia and relied on the help of neighbours from all nationalities to build successful farms.

The formation of a purely religious society had to await the creation of a more stable community, made up of family farmers. In 1942, of 458 Albanians in Queensland, only 43 were naturalized British subjects, and
of these many were Orthodox Christian. At that time men were more concerned with making enough money in order to return to their families in Europe, than in following an institutional religion. However, after the War, most Albanians settling in North Queensland were Moslems who wanted to recreate the religious institutional framework which they left in Europe. Therefore the Mareeba Islamic Society was formed in 1953, under the leadership of an Albanian Imam or religious leader from Cairo.

The Islamic religion professed by these Albanians is not a dogmatic creed such as the politically-oriented religion of revolutionary Iran. For them as for all Moslems the Koran or holy book of Islam contains all the basic teachings of their faith, but its legal authority has been abrogated in favour of Australian criminal and civil law. The essential commitments of this religion are belief in One God; regular prayer; almsgiving; fasting at appropriate times; and pilgrimage to Mecca, if possible. Such commitments do not conflict with the values of general Australian society, and in specific instances, the values of Muslim and Australian societies coincide. Albanian Islam is also tolerant of other religions, perhaps because Christians formed a significant minority in that country, and especially in the Korcha region where most of Australia's Albanian settlers originated.

Mareeba's Islamic Society has tried to preserve and transmit these traditional values, to compensate for the fact that Albania's communist regime has actively suppressed all religious activity in that country. It has catered more for the spiritual aspects of life, than the material concerns which were most important for the earlier Albanian Association. One of the Society's first actions was the purchase of a house in Mareeba for use as a mosque; this building was replaced in 1970 by a modern brick structure, designed by a local Australian. This new mosque, which was opened by the Shire Chairman on Anzac Day and dedicated to Australia's fallen servicemen is a symbol of the Albanian desire for close links with the general community. The opening coincided with another welcome development, when the Imam of the
Mareeba mosque was authorised to register marriages. In 1973, Albanians were granted another expression of community respect, when they were given a section of the local cemetery in which to bury their dead. Their unsealed graves which face westward together with the mosque are now symbols of a confident and stable Islamic community that has been fully accepted by the local non-Islamic communities.

Perhaps the final test that may be applied, in order to estimate whether peoples of different ethnic communities have fully integrated, is that of intermarriage. The earliest settlers brought wives from Europe or brides from countries with large Albanian populations, as emigration from communist Albania was halted. Australian-born persons of Albanian descent in North Queensland have continued this preference for partners of similar ethnic descent, though partners are now sought from communities in places as varied as Shepparton, Victoria and York, Western Australia.

The story of Albanians in North Queensland is relatively modern compared with that of the Chinese and even Italians. This story is basically one which describes how a small group of transient workers from Southern Europe came to work in the sugar areas where their presence was not encouraged by many local people. Despite the setbacks of World Depression and World War, a number of these casual labourers settled down and through a combination of hard work and community co-operation established profitable farming ventures. Moreover, this was achieved without the loss of their religious identity by which they are mainly distinguished today. The lesson of this story is that Islamic and non-Islamic communities can reside together peacefully, provided the negative attitudes spawned from historic confrontations can be forgotten.
The new mosque, Mareeba

MAREEBA AND DISTRICT MEMORIAL MOSQUE

Erected by the Albanian Australian Moslem Society.

This house of God is dedicated to those who gave their lives in the defence of Australia and in appreciation of all who served. "Lest We Forget"

25th April, 1970.
MOSLEM ALBANIANS IN NORTH QUEENSLAND

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11. As the Italian Consular Agent in Townsville pointed out to the Ferry Committee in 1925. *Northern Herald*, 22 April 1925, p.17.


15. Enclosure to letter from Mr. Hanlon, 30.1.1942. 'Alien Internment Policy.' The Premier's Department, A/6481 190/18 Queensland State Archives.

**RELIGIONS OF KORCHA PREFECTURE, 1942**

<table>
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"THEIR COUNTRY, NOT MINE": THE INTERNMENTS

Diane Menghetti

The internment of Italians had a profound affect in the sugar producing districts of North Queensland where, by the outburst of World War Two there were some seven thousand people of Italian birth. In Hinchinbrook Shire they constituted over a quarter of the total population, in Johnstone about one in eight. The actual numbers of people of Italian extraction were far greater as the migrant chains date back to the nineteenth century. Much of the early migration was from Lombardy and Piedmont, particularly Alessandria; by the 1920's there was also a considerable inflow from Catania and the Veneto. Due to chain migration identifiable regional groups occupied different areas of North Queensland: there was a distinct Sicilian group in the Innisfail district; Ingham was predominantly northern Italian, the home for many of the late-comers from the north-east. It is arguable that this pattern gave Hinchinbrook the strong antifascist bias which sets it apart from other areas of migrant settlement and justifies a separate study to supplement Cresciani's considerable work on migrant politics. Further it accounts for the strongly felt attitudes of these communities to this day to the internment episode.

Although the Commonwealth Investigation Branch had been compiling files on the Italian community since 1929, no real attempt to assess it as a potential security risk was made until 1939. In June of that year the Commonwealth Government passed an Act relating to the Registration of Aliens compelling the registration of foreign nationals. Many of the North Queensland Italians were unnaturalized. They may have been influenced to remain so by fascist propaganda, but more important was the introduction of farm and mill peaks at the beginning of the decade. Restricting the expansion of the sugar industry, these peaks also removed the strongest incentive to naturalization, the desire to take up freehold land. When war broke out in 1939 it was estimated that in Hinchinbrook alone there were some eight hundred unnaturalized adult Italians who, under the National Security (Aliens
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Control) Regulations of 13 September 1939 became subject to a plethora of restrictions on their movements and private lives and liable to interment in the event of war with their country of origin. Despite this, and the growing tension around them, the migrants were disinclined to believe that Italy would enter the war on the side of Germany, and they were psychologically unprepared for the world events which turned them into enemy aliens in June 1940. Overnight their status changed dramatically. Gino, who had recently bought a small mixed farm at Kennedy, travelled to Ingham on 11 June. When he entered a store his order was rejected with an assertion that "You are the enemy now." "Who me?" asked the bewildered migrant. "What did I do?"

Internments had begun that morning and arrests were carried out in accordance with lists drawn up from the aliens register. The Italians were categorized according to their politics, occupation and standing in the community, and although North Queenslanders were unaware of this rationale, it was nevertheless perceived that the "clever people" had been taken. Officially, arrests were "carried out with despatch, but without harshness or the exercise of any greater amount of force than is necessary in all the circumstances." The Minister for Defence further stipulated: "In particular, unless there is reason to suspect that the proposed internee is likely to endeavour to evade arrest, internments should be carried out in daylight, or at least before the proposed internee has retired to rest." Since the arrests were effected by the local police, however, the internee's experience depended on the character of the officer concerned and his previous relationship with and, inevitably, the social standing of the migrant concerned. Ignazio, a communist boot repairer from Ingham, was picked up in the middle of the night. His house was ransacked and his precious books, and the anti-fascist newspapers he was receiving from France and California, were heaped in his front garden and burned. Mario, a Giru field hand who had served as a volunteer in Abyssinia, was allowed to take nothing with him after a nocturnal police raid on his barracks. On the other hand, Giuseppe, an Innisfail bus driver and a popular local soccer player, was taken
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from his bus by friendly detectives who explained his arrest in terms of orders from Military Intelligence. He was allowed home to pack a suitcase for the jail, and his most unpleasant memory is of being handcuffed to a Calabrian during the train journey.16

During the following eighteen months the migrants' positions became increasingly difficult. As enemy aliens their movements were restricted and they were required to present their aliens registration certificates at the local police station each week.17 To exacerbate their plight naturalization ceased18 and the lease or purchase of land was forbidden.19 Rural life was hampered by the prohibition of radios, electric torches, motor vehicles and fuel. Hunting and fishing were terminated by the seizure of guns and boats.20 Moreover, employment opportunities were restricted21 and, despite the enlistment of many British Australians, the Italians lost the few jobs they had at the sugar mills22 and any prospect of employment on Council works.23 The resignation of Guiseppe Cantamessa from his position as Shire Councillor24 was symbolic of the loss of a prestige which had taken decades to acquire. As in other districts the returned servicemens' organisations contributed to the problems faced by migrants. Following a meeting in the Sydney town hall, Townsville, Ayr and Cairns branches passed resolutions calling for the immediate internment of all enemy aliens, and the Association convened a public meeting in the Burdekin district for the same purpose.25 It is undeniable, however, that the old North Queensland disputes about land occupation underlay much of the campaign. The Innisfail R.S.S.I.L.A. overtly couched their appeal to the Attorney General in these terms26 and Inspector P.J. Honan of the Cairns police, advising against approval of the purchase of a Mareeba tobacco farm by a naturalized citizen, noted that local feeling was hostile to further land acquisition by Italians.27 During 1941 the Director of Security, reporting on land transfers in the Ingham district, cited a resident as saying:

I expect a lot of trouble here with the Dagoes, but we will handle them - the boys only need the slightest thing to start them and they will clean out the North.
A roll call was held the other day - if a Dago had been picked up they would have had a clean up. Anyway why should a Britisher take second place all the time while they have the pick of all the jobs here and Dagoes can get as much benzine to run about with [sic] and white men cannot.  

Such sentiments, of course, were only voiced by a small sector of northern society. Nevertheless they produced a strand of violence which was intimidating to some and provocative to others. Augusto and his wife retreated to his brother's farm where they saw no Australians. Giovanni and his family stayed home as much as possible "in case something happened". Angelo on the other hand recalled with enthusiasm his scraps with name callers and Vittorio blamed many of the confrontations on "hot headed" Italians who patrolled the streets and hotels waiting to be called dagoes. He remembered with respect the Ingham police sergeant who converted brawls into one-to-one fist fights behind the Italian-owned East Ingham Hotel. On at least one occasion, however, a mob successfully gate-crashed an Italian function at the Ingham Workers' Club and fought with the men while women and children escaped through the windows. Matters came to a head in December 1941 when Japan entered the war on the side of Germany and Italy. North Queensland was considered vulnerable to Japanese attack and pressure on the Italians increased rapidly. On 12 February 1942 the Minister for the Army imposed a curfew on all enemy aliens resident in Queensland, confining them to their homes between eight in the evening and five in the morning. Its impact, however, was subsumed by that of the large scale internments which began a week later. Of the three thousand Queenslanders interned during the war about six hundred were arrested on omnibus warrants executed in the small sugar towns of the north during the following three months. Suddenly it was no longer the "clever people" who were involved. Mario's brother, naturalized during 1926, was arrested. Joe, aged thirty-six, was born in Charters Towers and had never seen Italy. He was taken away in a truck driven by his brother Steve, a member of the Citizens' Military Force. Giovanni's sixteen year old son was seized during the night and an eighty year old farmer was prodded down the Halifax road with a rifle. No one
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explained why they were taken or where they were going.

The arrests and safe custody of the prisoners to Brisbane were the responsibility of the police. On one occasion a police sergeant and a security man had visited Joe's house in his absence. Ignoring his wife and children, they ransacked his home; "they even looked under the saucepan lids" before leaving, all without speaking to the frightened family. Notwithstanding this forewarning Joe was taken by surprise when, in March, two local policemen arrested him in a pre-dawn raid. He was allowed to dress, but not to pack; his wife sent a suitcase after him. Angelo was picked up when he collected his unemployment cheque from the police station in Ingham. He was instructed to go to the back of the station, where he was arrested without explanation. Gino, who owned a sawmill at Mount Fox where he was producing gunstocks for the army, was detained early in March. It was his wife's birthday and the sergeant of police, an old friend, ate lunch with them, too embarrassed to explain his errand. Guisepe was again arrested on the job. He was driven home in a police car, ate a meal with his parents and packed before being driven to the police station. At the lock-up he found a dozen other prisoners, some crying but all frightened, whom he attempted, as a second-time internee, to reassure. Giovanni and his young son were taken during the night. The police were "very rough"; his wife was weeping, but they were allowed to take the cases they had packed in advance. Indeed, by late March nearly every Italian household in the district had suitcases prepared; no-one knew whose door would be knocked on next.

The internments ended in April 1942, as abruptly and to their victims, as inexplicably as they had begun. The "prisoners" were kept in local lock-ups until the arrival of the south-bound train which took them, under police guard, to the Stuart Creek jail near Townsville where their cases were impounded and where they remained until there were sufficient numbers to fill an internee train. At night they occupied the cells; they spent their days in overcrowded
exercise yards. Since the jail's facilities were quite inadequate for so many inmates they remained for about a week, bearded and unwashed, wearing the clothes in which they were arrested. Eventually they were marched under guard to Stuart Railway siding to board the "internee special", its doors sealed, its windows barred. Some had seats; some sat on the floor. During a respite at Mackay station one group was pelted with tomatoes and another given apples by an Australian who explained that his son was interned in Italy.  

For many their arrival at the Gaythorne transit camp outside Brisbane was the end of a bad dream; there they officially became the responsibility of the Army. They were accommodated in tents, fed well, allowed to bathe, dressed in the red-dyed army clothes which were to be their uniforms until release, interviewed and categorized by the officer-in-charge. Some memories of this interlude include the anti-fascists beginning again their painstaking collection of literature through the agency of a communist soldier, and the cook, an early internee from Ingham, surreptitiously supplying extra food for their trip south. When they left Gaythorne for New South Wales or South Australia it was by passenger train with no bars, only a soldier at each end of the carriage. English-speaking internees actually disembarked at some stations to buy sandwiches, and at Albury the guard tried to prevent Joe from getting back into the train which, he said, was reserved for Italians.  

In 1940 most of the first wave of Queensland internees had been sent to Camp 9 at Barmera in South Australia. In 1942, although families and some of the naturalized men went to Cowra in New South Wales, the majority of the North Queensland Italians were interned at the new camps about two kilometers from Barmera, number 14, Loveday. Here they took over compounds A and D. Initially they had camp A to themselves; in 14D there were already some fifty or sixty German farmers from Monto and Central Queensland and about one hundred and twenty refugees from Dunera, mainly Jewish, who had been transferred there from Tatura in Victoria to make room for the incoming prisoners of war. The Germans and Italians, both groups
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having rural backgrounds in Australia, got on well together. Indeed they seem to have regarded themselves as pioneers, carving out a home in the wilderness, for, on their arrival, 14D consisted only of a central kitchen and store surrounded by barbed wire, with guard towers and spotlights at each corner, and the prisoners had to be accommodated in army tents. Gino, the sawmiller, was elected camp leader and organized parties to go outside to cut timber with which, under the direction of five Italian carpenters, they erected barracks. 52 14A, under Doctor M. Piscitelli of the Ingham Italian hospital, was less enterprising; his charges lived eight to a tent for some months before constructing corrugated iron huts under army direction. They did, however, collect scrap iron and supply themselves with beds. 53

Both camps quickly set about creating occupations. They planted vegetable gardens, played bocce and tennis and organized boxing and wrestling matches; soccer was extremely popular as a participant and spectator sport. Generally speaking the Army interfered very little with internal organization. Gambling was forbidden, and Gino attempted to enforce this rule in 14D. The result, however, tended to be that covert games of two-up replaced overt games of poker. 54 In Piscitelli's camp the men gambled openly with playing cards hired out by Joe. 55 The guards were reluctant to become involved, and it was understood that, provided the internees denied that money was involved, no action would be taken. The only incident recalled was the harsh punishment of an Italian who refused to deny that he was gambling. 56 Wine making was not discouraged; indeed large quantities of grapes could be purchased at the canteen. No alcohol was sold, however, and grappa stills were raided and dismantled. 57

Food, clothing and medical care were universally remembered as excellent. The internees appointed their own cooks, most with experience in the cane cutters' barracks, and ingredients for Italian style food were provided. 58 In general relationships between the soldiers and internees were good. In both camps the Italians supplied their guards with vegetables and panini. Working parties often
pooled their food with the guards who permitted an occasional rabbit hunt to supplement the rations and drove slowly back to camp to facilitate petty pilfering from overhead fruit trees. Sometimes the parties swam together in a creek. One group of workers remembered driving to their job in a horse and cart; while the guard held the reins one of the prisoners looked after his rifle.

One young soldier came there direct from the Middle East and wanted to prove something, but the other guards pulled him into line.

The work was paid at a rate of one shilling a day (two shillings for cleaning latrines) in camp currency which, at Loveday, consisted of paper money in denominations of up to one shilling. Apart from a brawl in one of the 14D huts when the communal mailbag revealed that an Ingham wife was corresponding with more than one man in the hut, the early months passed peacefully.

Less contented were the Dunera refugees. As urban intellectuals they attracted scorn for their inability to help establish the camp and moral censure for their alleged tolerance of homosexuality in their huts. The scorn was reciprocated, and the refugees bombarded the military authorities with demands to be moved to a "non-Nazi" camp. Despite the political implication their practical complaints were that they were interned "with 700 Italians, whose educational standing is far below the average standard of a civilized nation;" and that rations for Germans "are bigger and better than those for the Italians. Italians are not entitled to tinned fruit, but take our fruit and distribute them evenly amongst all 500, instead of our 170 men." Despite the incompatibility of the two groups and the prejudice and intolerance displayed by both, no real trouble was experienced until Loveday received the political prisoners from Barmera Camp 9.

Among the intake were the communists and anarchists interned from North Queensland in 1940, and a small group of very active fascists, together with a much larger number of fascist supporters, many of whom came from West Australia, particularly from the mines of the Kalgoorlie
district. Trouble broke out immediately in 14A, from which about one hundred and thirty men had been working on farms outside the camp as paid volunteers. Piscitelli, although a fascist, had not been active or vocal in politics either in Ingham or in his early months at Loveday, and had encouraged outside work on health grounds. After the fascist influx, however, he declared that volunteer labour constituted a contribution to the Australian war effort and therefore a betrayal of Italy. The work parties were menaced by a mob armed with sticks and rocks and, though a brawl was avoided, the damage was done. The compound became tense and divided: "We did not sing together any more."

The tension surfaced in a variety of ways. The heavy censorship of the daily newspaper was a constant source of irritation; missing news items were interpreted as reporting Axis victories and Allied losses. The more naive internees began keeping diaries in the belief that after Australia had fallen they would receive compensation for their time in Loveday. The North Queenslanders discovered among their numbers fascist supporters who had been too timid to declare their sympathies before the arrival of the West Australians afforded them adequate support. The refugees were subjected to a nerve-racking campaign which included the decoration of their breakfast tables with swastikas. Physical assaults occurred in both camps, although it is often difficult to separate political attacks from extensions of North Queensland feuds, particularly in 14D. For example, the beating of an ex-manager of a northern finance company was almost certainly the result of his business relations with the Hinchinbrook farmers, and an assault on Gino, though ascribed by him to his "pro-Australian" leanings, may well have resulted from his earlier financial dealings. Indeed collections for the Aid to Russia movement were carried out peacefully in 14D, but in the adjacent camp provoked a series of incidents leading up to the murder of the North Queensland (Mareeba) anarchist, Francesco Fantin.
Partly due to the problems in the camps, but mainly as a result of the acute manpower shortage, it was decided, in January 1943, to release numbers of Italians into the workforce. Informal committees began examining and interrogating internees at Loveday late in February. The questions posed by the tribunals were almost as mystifying to the men as the original internment orders; they were asked how much wine they drank and whether they had ever had dealings with the Ingham police. Angelo was asked what he would do in the event of a Japanese invasion. Although a few sick or naturalized migrants were released to return to their own homes, most internees were sent out as labour conscripts: naturalized and Australian born men under the Civil Construction Corps and the others in Civil Aliens Corps squads. They worked in gangs on government projects such as dam, railway and road construction: one group from 14D worked on the Barron Gorge project in Tasmania; one from 14A formed construction gangs on the Northern Line of the South Australian railway. In view of the political divisions in the camp it is interesting to note that when this party of some eighty North Queenslanders was released the Italians were instructed to divide themselves into two gangs. After a brief discussion on the north-bound train the northern Italians took the first job while the southern Italians went on up the line to Edwards Creek. After the armistice with Italy in September 1943 the Italians were transferred from the Civil Aliens Corps to the Civil Construction Corps. They were paid award wages and belonged to trade unions but, as labour conscripts, their place of work was ordained by the manpower authorities. Some found themselves in Brisbane (Rosewood); others were sent to the Northern Territory where the Corps played a major role in the construction of the Stuart Highway. Those few who returned to North Queensland were consigned to farms as cane cutters or were employed on the Lucinda harbour works. Most of the internees were away from home until the end of the war, a situation which inflicted considerable hardship on their wives and children.

Families left entirely without means were given subsistence government pensions. Frances received nine shillings a week for
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herself and her two babies, dropping to 8/9 when it was discovered that she was being given milk from a neighbour's cow. 85 For those with farms to maintain these were lonely, back-breaking years and mental and physical scars are still felt in the north. In Hinchinbrook alone one hundred and forty-seven cane farmers and three hundred and eighty-six canecutters and field hands were interned. 86 In addition, large numbers of trucks and tractors were impounded for war work and the internees' farms were denied fertilizers. 87 Italian wives and children used horse-drawn ploughs and planted, chipped and harvested the sugar cane to keep themselves alive and to maintain the loan repayments on their farms. 88 Sugar production fell dramatically and attempts to introduce Australian soldiers to the work of cane cutting were not successful and are remembered with scorn.

More useful was the introduction of Aboriginal labour from Palm Island. 89 During 1942 the Women's Land Army arrived to grow cotton and, the following year, vegetables in the Burdekin district. 90 In conjunction with this project came the ultimate irony of setting up an Italian prisoner of war camp near to Home Hill to fill the labour shortage created by interning local Italians.

The rationale of the internments is still a matter for speculation in North Queensland and three theories are current. Some believe that individual decisions were arrived at for each internee on the basis of nationality, political involvement and whether he had been reported to the police as a fascist or trouble maker. Local returned servicemen and veterans are widely suspected of reporting individual farmers, especially in the Innisfail district. 91 In Tully suspicion falls on the "Masons" (freemasons), although this term is sometimes used as a synonym for English or protestant. 92 In Ingham jealous neighbours hoping to take over abandoned cane farms are high on the list of suspects. 93 One wife believes herself guilty of triggering her husband's internment. Some years before the war she had bought a floor rug with a swastika pattern in Ingham; she believes that "somebody" had seen it and reported him. 94 A second theory is that some were arrested for non-cooperation with the manpower authorities. Radical
canecutters early in the war had held a meeting at which they had decided to "stick together" and "stand firm" in opposing what they saw as labour conscription. They perceived the government as a conservative power punishing striking workers. The third notion is that the internments had nothing to do with individuals, but that powerful agents such as the R.S.S.I.L.A. and the journal Smith's Weekly agitated until it became politically desirable to intern a number of Italians. According to this the police arrested people at random until the quota was filled.

Given the small size and intense economic activity of the communities it is reasonable to suppose that some feuds were settled by internment since the dossiers which led to the arrests were compiled locally. Nevertheless there appears to have been a strong element of strategic consideration behind the omnibus warrants of 1942. In Hinchinbrook Italians were taken from Trebonne, Stone River and Mount Fox, which intercept the Mount Fox military road, Ingham's excavation route into the interior in the event of a Japanese invasion. Ironically it was the families whose men had been interned who most feared that the arrival of the Japanese would find them unprotected. A contingency plan was drawn up and the Home Defence instructed an Italian farmer to keep twenty saddle horses in readiness for the evacuation of Ingham. Another area which was stripped of its Italian inhabitants was the triangle formed by the Victoria and Macknade roads; Halifax in particular was completely depopulated. Within this triangle is the road linking Ingham with its port, Lucinda, and Victoria and Macknade, the two Hinchinbrook sugar mills which were considered prime targets for sabotage, presumably by the Italian farmers whose livelihood depended on their efficiency.

What is certain in retrospect is the high financial, mental and spiritual cost of the internments. Although some of the bitterness of the early war years evaporated as the few men, Australian and Italian, who were left rallied to help their stricken neighbours, throughout the war years the threat of internment hung over the district:
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the final missile in farmers' squabbles; the ultimate revenge. The internees constantly described their experiences in terms of "guilt": one said he "felt like a murderer", another "like a criminal". Saddest of all was a comment from a North Queensland pioneer of sixty years standing who justified his internment with the remark that "After all, it is their country, not mine."

NOTE ON THE SOURCES

The material in this lecture is drawn from both archival and oral sources in an attempt to convey, without loss of accuracy, the Italian view of the North Queensland internments. Because of the sensitivity of the subject matter many of the interviewees prefer not to be named. Therefore individuals have been allotted pseudonyms which are used consistently throughout the lecture. Some of the interviews were conducted by Sammi Reindl of Ingham, to whom I am heavily indebted.

REFERENCES

1. This lecture is a revised version of a paper given at the Second Australian Conference on Italian Culture and Italy Today, Frederick May Foundation for Italian Studies, University of Sydney, 6 August 1982.

2. The 1933 census gives the figure at that date as 6,573; due to the war no further figures exist until the 1947 census.


5. Australian Archives: Attorney General's Department, Correspondence Files, Annual Single Number Series; CRS A472, 1929--; (hence AA: CRS A472, 1929--).


8. Evidenced by letters to the editor and reports of Italians being "hooted" while appearing in a local amateur theatrical production. *Herbert River Express*, 19-26 October 1939.


12. Category A, the politically active, members of the armed forces and criminals; B, those employed in communications, public utilities and key industries; C, community leaders; D, men of arms bearing age; O, others. See Cresciani, *Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia*, p.172.

13. AA: CRS A472, 1929- ; W601.


16. G.C. Ingham, taped interview conducted by Sammi Reindl 1982. It is possible that Giuseppe was arrested because of his employment in transport, although he perceives that he was mistaken for another migrant with the same surname. In all events he was released at Gaythorne, only to be reinterned during 1942.


18. AA: CRS A472, 1929- ; W1200.


21. AA: CRS A472, 1929- ; W703.

22. A.P. Ingham, taped interview conducted by Sammi Reindl 1982.
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25. AA: CRS A472, 1929-; W1200.


27. AA: CRS A472, 1929-; W4542/2.


32. V.S. Ingham, taped interview conducted by Sammi Reindl 1982.


34. AA: BP 242/1, 1942-1950; Q33794.

35. M.P.


38. J.B.

39. A.L.

40. G.P.

41. G.C.

42. G.S.

43. G.P.

44. In fact the government was influenced by an increasing civil labour shortage, as well as by the state of the emergency.

45. G.C.

46. AA: BP 242/1, 1942-1950; Q33794.

47. I.C.
50. G.P. In September they were joined by the few members of the Australia First Movement who were still interned. See Bruce Muirden, *The Puzzled Patriots: The story of the Australia First Movement* (Melbourne 1968), p.125.


56. G.C. The incident is revealing. The card game was invaded by a very large squad of soldiers (thirty to forty) and the internee was repeatedly asked to deny that he was gambling. It is clear that the guards wished to avoid a confrontation and the migrant was anxious to provoke one. Further, after his arrest the poker player was sentenced to thirty days solitary confinement under extremely trying conditions. His partners' denial that they were gambling was accepted. This suggests that there was a political undercurrent to the incident.

57. M.P. See also AA: BP 242/1, 1942-1950; Q33794.

58. Australian internment camps, although not in fact covered by the Geneva Convention, were operated under the same rules as the prisoner of war camps which were.
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67. G.S. This was ascribed to German Nazis who also came into the camp from Barmera 9. The German internees also were divided on political lines.

68. G.C. When discussing farm purchases and interest rates, several interviewees said of unpopular financiers "They were taken care of in the internment camps."

69. G.P. For a discussion of this incident see Cresciani, Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia, p.176.

70. J.B. It should be noted that although the internees found the questions irrelevant they were, of course, part of a carefully designed format.

71. A.L. Aldo, who was suffering from cancer was released on condition that he work as a canecutter.


75. M.P. Herbert River Express, 28 May 1942.
89. A.P.
91. G.P.
92. C.E. informal communication.
93. G.P.
94. F.B.
95. A.L.
96. M.P. A similar idea was voiced by Senator J.I. Armstrong during 1950. See Muirden, The Puzzled Patriots, p.95.
98. Mines were laid by the Army along this road. See Janice Wegner, Hinchinbrook, work in progress.
99. A.P.
North Queensland's sparse population has long been prey to fears of invasion. Suspicion has rested on the French, Russians, Chinese and Germans in turn, and though the region's isolation has in fact kept it comfortably insulated from direct military threat, the defence issue has been useful in gaining Government concessions and public works to encourage settlement. Even the 1914-1918 war had little effect; for Hinchinbrook, a rich cane-growing Shire centred on Ingham, war-related activities were mainly confined to fund-raising by patriotic organisations and recruiting drives. Prices rose, the coastal steamer service became even more erratic than before, there was a brief labour shortage and farmers were terrorized by an official threat to take their draught horses for military use, but apart from the stir caused by the conscription debate and the localised impact of men killed or wounded in action, the community's routine was disturbed little. World War Two however brought a genuine threat of invasion to north Queensland; its effects were to be more dramatic.

Its first impact was muted and reminiscent of World War One. The Shire Council's first reaction was to hope that defence works might include the coast road from Cardwell to Townsville and the Ingham aerodrome. Military camps were held, arrangements begun for the remote possibility of air raids, and a Women's National Emergency Legion was formed even before war actually broke out in September 1939. The Shire Chairman, Larry Kelly, then convened a meeting to form an Emergency Committee which was to decide on air raid and gas precautions and an evacuation procedure; before long red crosses were painted on the Hospital roof and sirens were being tested. Local branches of the Patriotic Fund, Comforts Fund and Red Cross were formed, and after some bickering defined their respective roles to the satisfaction of the community. However, their activities were still overshadowed by school and church benefits. More ominous were the warnings of impending petrol restrictions, censorship of weather forecasts and shipping movements, and the requirement that aliens register with the
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police. This initial excitement gave way over the next two years to a steadily lengthening list of restrictions and deprivations. The high level of defence spending meant Federal cuts to State loan programs, and a corresponding decrease in local authority funds; many of the Shire Council's works loans ended up on the deferred list or were considerably reduced. Private resources were tapped for the war effort through war savings certificates and the fundraising efforts of patriotic organisations, including now the Red Shield and women's auxiliary of the R.S.S. and A.I.L.A., or drives for special causes such as relief funds for Greece and Finland. Building controls were introduced to divert funds and materials from inessential industries, though initially the value of work allowed was a relatively generous £500. Most trying were the shortages experienced from the disruption of shipping and cessation of imports from enemy and occupied territories. As predicted, petrol supplies were the worst affected, leading to rationing and enthusiastic proposals for the production of power alcohol as an alternative fuel and new industry for the district. Despite some Government price-fixing, the cost of oil and fuel increased. There were occasional shortages of goods such as batteries, and local authorities were urged to increase their stocks of parts and fuel. Paper pulp had been almost entirely imported, leading to a salvage drive for wastepaper and rags; the enormous need for base metals was expressed in official directives to sell scrap metal to licenced dealers. The Shire Council even had to request that the extension of electric power to Macknade be considered an essential service to obtain the necessary cable. The difficulty was most severely brought home when the ship carrying the Council's new generating plant from Britain was torpedoed and sunk. A less powerful engine purchased from New South Wales was promptly impressed for an oil exploration company, leaving the town with a shortage of generating power. The search for another engine outlasted the War; this meant that the Council's electricity undertaking was forced to run its engines continuously, increasing oil consumption dramatically when it should have been decreased. Power was rationed to heavy consumers such as welders and the water supply, so that water restrictions were common to the end of the war, and supplies interrupted whenever
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the generating plant was overhauled.16

There was a gradual depletion of labour, though it was not as yet a serious concern, and the recruiting drive was enthusiastically supported.17 Those unable to enlist could join home defence organisations such as the local corps of the Volunteer Defence Force (VDC) and the Naval Auxiliary Patrol, while women were being recruited to auxiliaries of the armed services to release men for active duty.18 After Italy's declaration of war in 1940, pressure increased on the Italian-born section of the community as well. Many were interned; one growers' organisation wanted the families of internees disenfranchised as they were said to be giving internees a proxy vote.19 Paradoxically there was an official decision to recruit "approved" aliens and the Ingham R.S.S. and A.I.L.A. began a volunteer group, though one youth must have spoken for many when he protested against military training, pointing out that Italians did not have the same rights as British citizens.20 Nevertheless there were reports in the local press of Italian immigrants' sons enlisting,21 though the shock of finding their native and adopted countries at war must have made many try to remain neutral.

Despite internments, air raid preparations and shortages, the war was safely distant until the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.22 Within two months Singapore had fallen and Darwin was under attack; invasion seemed imminent and north Queensland suddenly found itself at the front line of defence. The Government was faced with the task of building up a substantial military presence in Queensland and safeguarding the civilian population, while still continuing its commitments to Britain and the European war; American aid could not be expected for some months yet. A National Security Act gave the Commonwealth government sweeping controls over population and resources, curbing or prohibiting work considered inessential and instituting price and commodity controls over a wide range of goods and services. First priority was the impending threat of air raids and invasion.23 The area north of Mackay was declared a war zone;
in Ingham, blackouts were declared, the Red Cross was ordered to stock medical supplies, and the Council told to build public air raid shelters, one in East Ingham and one on Palm Creek. Hotels and larger businesses were also expected to provide shelters and practice air raids were held regularly, while windows were taped against bomb blasts and lectures given on the construction and use of stirrup pumps for fire-fighting. The wearing of identity discs was made compulsory and property owners were required to insure under the War Damage Commission. After Townsville was bombed in July, a volunteer Air Observer Corps was set up, though shifts of enemy aircraft spotters had been watching from the fire lookout post on the East Ingham Hotel since March. All schools were closed until they could be provided with trench shelters and even then could only operate under staggered hours. More directives were inspired by the threat of invasion, the resulting need for a large military presence in the north, and the fear of useful intelligence reaching enemy hands. Road signs were removed in coastal areas, newspapers heavily censored, railway travel and phone calls restricted, airmail services temporarily cancelled, demolition squads formed, and a scorched earth policy adopted. Even the district's pleasure boats were immobilised under guard at Halifax. A census was taken for evacuation purposes though many people chose to evacuate themselves without direction. This was given some official encouragement; women and children who could not afford train fares south were given free passes and the families of VDC men were required to leave the war zone for the duration of the emergency. The VDC was armed, while the number of police and military intelligence agents in the district was strengthened to intern Italians. Large numbers were sent south, those remaining being subjected to such harassments as a curfew, restrictions on their movements, and being refused fertilizer for farms or insurance under the War Damages Commission; though the latter ruling was later relaxed. Those internees released on appeal were not normally permitted to return north of the Tropic of Capricorn until 1944, though some were allowed home under special circumstances; the police were then required to submit regular reports on their behaviour. The remaining population was
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bombarded with demands on civilian resources. All petrol was put under military control, retail stocks of tools and spare parts frozen, rifles called in, motorcycles and fuel drums impressed, and tractors hired out to the MRC or impressed by the American army for defence work. Even CSR's two sugar freighters were requisitioned. However, the initial hysteria did not last. Even before air raids on the Australian mainland had ceased, people were returning to the district, the schools had reopened and the blackouts converted to lighting restrictions or "brownmouts". The haste and apparent lack of logic behind the internments was being attacked by September, the Federal and State members for the area accusing the authorities of interning mainly Labor supporters and demanding their release for the troubled sugar industry. Certainly the industry was in need of assistance; internments and evacuations led to the abandonment of 24 farms of approximately 1600 acres on the Herbert alone, while some farmers even neglected their fields because of the threatened invasion. Overproduction, at least, was no longer a problem.

The world quota system was suspended for the war, the British Ministry of Food contracting to purchase all sugar not required in Australia at £11 a ton, a price below the world market. Still, prices rose to an average of £17 a ton in 1940, and there was considerable demand for sugar and its byproducts for a surprising variety of uses, including munitions factories, emergency stored food supplies and even road surfaces, using molasses to make up a shortage of bitumen. However this was offset by the dislocation of shipping, manpower shortages, transport difficulties both of raw sugar and farming supplies, tractor impressments, and a chronic shortage of fertilizer and cane grub fumigants. The average yield per acre dropped from 22 tons to 15 because of the lack of fertilizer, only the less effective meatworks byproducts such as blood and bone being available in any quantity after 1940. The labour shortage meant that farmers were forced to cut, thus neglecting planting and the cultivation of the young cane.
The mills in consequence were reduced to two shifts, reducing efficiency and prolonging the crushing season, which was further interrupted when ships were not available to take the sugar. Shortages of fuel together with the high number of tractor impressments forced some farms to revert to horses, though most relied on co-operative sharing of the remaining tractors. Ingham line farmers were particularly affected because of the added disability of disrupted railway transport, with trucks either in short supply or unsuitable for carrying cane. Though conditions eased as the threat of invasion receded, production in 1943 had dropped to 137,172 tons from the normal output in 1939 of 319,297 tons.

The evacuations and internments adversely affected business, farming and cutting, though the return of evacuees proved equally disconcerting because it coincided with the build-up of troops in the north. The military presence in Ingham itself was minimal, consisting mainly of two survey corps quartered at the showground. However there were military installations from Rollingstone to Townsville and artillery practice ranges in the back country, so that soldiers often spent leave in the town. Despite occasional brawls at the hotels, the town welcomed such visitors; a restroom was set up for them in July 1943, the Council put on extra sanitary services free of charge, and the Picture Company agreed to special showings for the troops, though these were apparently unsuccessful. Prices became noticeably higher though Ingham's citizens did not complain of the deprivation and stresses forced on Townsville civilians, partly because the military presence was considerably smaller and partly because a rich farming district such as the Herbert could grow much of its own food. However, the police did have trouble with Army trucks driving on the wrong side of the road.

Apart from the extra stresses imposed by preparations for invasion and air raids, the district suffered with the rest of Australia from the escalation of effort required to fight a new war in the Pacific. Besides the recruitment of men for the armed services, men were
called up by the Allied Works Council for defence works and munitions factories: employment generally was restricted under the Manpower Regulations of January 1942. Not only was there a resulting shortage in farm and manual labour, but skilled tradesmen became very scarce. The Council lost most of its workforce, including its engineer, largely to the MRC which was the constructing authority for the Allied Works Council's Queensland defence works. So that essential services did not suffer, some occupations were reserved and undertakings such as the electricity and water supplies declared protected. There were attempts to fill the positions so vacated by women, to the point of compiling a list of those suitable for work and threatening compulsory call-ups; 51 became A.R.P. wardens in Ingham and others kept their farms operational in the absence of their menfolk, but service in the women's forces, the Women's Land Army and civil employment remained voluntary. A plan to use internees for farm labour was also discarded as requiring too many guards, though they were released from the camps for agricultural and defence work in the south after Italy's surrender in September 1943.

Between 1942 and 1945 Australia found itself trying to satisfy several demands on its resources. Not only was it contributing to the war effort in Europe, Africa and the Pacific, but it was also continuing food exports to Britain and other countries under an agreement with the United Nations, and meeting its obligations under the lend-lease arrangement with the United States which provided for reciprocal aid in the form of food and clothing for American troops. Materials, goods and labour had to be divided between these and the country's own civilian requirements, leading to rationing and the discouragement of non-essential business. In addition wages, prices, rents, profits and speculative dealings were pegged or limited to prevent profiteering and divert funds to essential war uses. Shortages were aggravated in the north by transport difficulties, with rail and sea routes congested with military traffic. Rationing and restrictions were felt in the Herbert River district on many levels. The petrol shortage was the most serious: bread and meat deliveries were
cancelled, bus services severely curtailed, and pleasure motoring totally banned; with the concurrent lack of tyres and tubes, civilian traffic almost stopped. At a time when the district was in desperate need of skilled tradesmen, the local plumber was unable to do urgent repairs because his car was on blocks for the war. It was recommended that essential vehicles be fitted with producer gas units but few were so modified. Petrol ration tickets were introduced in June 1942. Rubber and metal products such as plumbing supplies and barbed wire were scarce; scrap metal drives were intensified and rubber collections instituted early in 1943. Alternative sources were sought through official encouragement of base metals prospecting, while the Council was asked to prevent the destruction of rubber vines and determine the number of rubber-bearing fig trees in the Shire. Various other commodities were rationed, including tea, clothing, eggs, shoes, meat, butter and other groceries. Vegetables were in short supply, causing an Australia-wide drive to encourage vegetable growing; on the Herbert, farmers were requested to plant up their spare land and the Boy Scouts even harvested Primo Capra's potato crop. Sugar was also rationed, to the consternation of Hinchinbrook's residents, who did their best to obtain releases of raw sugar from the mills. Price controls created some anomalies; butchers went on strike in 1945 because prices for meat, but not cattle were fixed, and the Shire Council complained that electricity charges had been pegged, but not oil prices.

Once the A.I.F. and American troops began to arrive in the country, Australia's role in the conflict changed to that of a supply base; more emphasis was given to agriculture and there were controlled releases of materials, including fuel, and manpower to the faltering rural industries. Some munitions factories were turned to tractor production and men in protected undertakings could obtain leave to cut cane, shear or harvest. The pressure eased slowly as fighting receded northward, but shortages in agricultural and industrial materials persisted until well after the end of the war. However, other controls were easing from the end of the invasion scare. In 1943
some rifles were returned to their owners for pest control, boats were released for fishing to supplement the meat ration, petrol rationing was taken out of military hands, street lights and road signs were restored and some rations such as tyre allocations increased. By 1944 internees were being released and were returning to the district, while the Italian community in the shire formed an Anti-Fascist Italian Society to raise funds for the prosecution of the war. 63 Civil defence organisations were scaled down, ceasing altogether early in 1945, and the Council was offered a loan to demolish its air raid shelters; it had hoped to convert them to public conveniences but lack of finance forced it to accept the offer. 64 There was a noticeable return to ordinary community activities after Germany's surrender in May: telephone restrictions were lifted and the value of permissible building work increased to £150. 65 With the end of the Pacific war in August 1945 there was a rush to lift controls, including those on the use of electricity, sales of land, telegrams and the need to carry identity cards. The tunnels built to mine the Mt. Fox road in case of invasion were filled and the Army vacated private dwellings in Ingham. 66

Postwar planning had begun as early as 1940. The major concerns were to prevent unemployment, repatriate soldiers as efficiently as possible, and make the transition from wartime austerity to normal conditions as smoothly as possible to prevent the economic instability that had occurred after World War One. 67 Special emphasis was laid on housing because of the shortage caused by building and land sale restrictions, the Council being required to contribute to a housing survey in 1944; it also compiled lists of post-war works for the district for the Co-ordinator General of Public Works with unemployment in mind. 68 Most important was the proposal for a soldier settlement scheme. Initially there were plans to use small areas along the Ingham line, but the Ingham RSL successfully championed the Abergowrie area. 69 Reminders of the war lingered for some time afterward; some shortages extended rationing to 1950, notably for butter and tea, 70 and there were problems obtaining building and
road-making materials as late as 1951. Even some physical dangers remained, such as unexploded shells on the artillery practice ranges and mines washing up onto the beaches. A more deliberate reminder was a move late in 1945 to construct a war memorial; however the community was unable to reach consensus on the form it would take, and a monument was not erected until 1958.

The recovery of the sugar industry on the Herbert was remarkably rapid compared with other canegrowing areas, based principally on the introduction of two new cane varieties - Trojan and Eros - and new pesticides and insecticides developed during the War. Output from the two Herbert River mills often topped the state production figures. Indeed the post-war period was a prosperous one for the Herbert, the best since 1927 when the worst flood in the district's history had ushered in the beginnings of the Depression. However, nothing positive came out of Hinchinbrook's war experiences. Invasion was averted, and no air raids occurred; but its population suffered rationing and restrictions, its rural industries declined, the community was divided and the treatment accorded to those residents of Italian origin left deep emotional scars. Post-Depression advances were almost wiped out. At best, it escaped the heavy concentrations of troops to be found in Townsville and Cairns, general morale remained high enough to ensure a substantial contribution to the war effort, and its exposure to the threat of invasion caused it no irreparable damage.
REFERENCES


2. In fact the defence road was declared over an inland route from Toowoomba to Mt. Garnet, though the lack of a good road between Charters Towers and Mt. Garnet caused heavy military traffic between Townsville and Cairns without financial recompense to the Shire Councils for the resulting damage. Report of the Main Roads Commission (MRC), *PP* 1939, Vol. 1.

3. It conducted lectures on such matters as home nursing, child welfare, transport, keeping fit, and volunteer air defence. *Herbert River Express (HRE)* 5 September 1939.


6. *Ibid.*, 19 September 1939, 9 September 1939, 18 July 1939. By November, 1000 aliens had registered. Though Italy was not yet in the war, some anti-Italian feeling became evident at this stage; however Kelly spoke against a Local Authorities Association conference motion that rate notices and advertisements in foreign languages be prohibited. *HRE*, 3 October 1939, 19 October 1939, 26 October 1939, 8 August 1939.

7. *HRE*, 28 December 1939; Hinchinbrook Shire Council (HSC) Minutes, Finance 13 November 1940. Less significant were the frequent donations to patriotic organisations and the decision to extend rate relief to soldiers on active duty overseas upon application, e.g. HSC Minutes, 18 September 1940, 16 December 1940, Finance 9 December 1943.

8. Now the R.S.L.

9. HSC Minutes, Finance 10 April 1940; *HRE*, 27 February 1941. By February 1941 £23,980 had been subscribed in war savings certificates from the district. *HRE*, 15 February 1941.

10. HSC Minutes, Health 11 December 1940.


12. A local Fuel Committee was set up to deal with rationing anomalies. Earlier plans for a test evacuation were scrapped because of the petrol required. *HRE*, 2 October 1941, 9 December 1941.

14. The district sent four bales of paper to Brisbane by August 1941. A Council shed served as a collection depot until it burned down in September, and the job was contracted out. *HRE*, 15 February 1941, 26 August 1941; HSC Minutes, Health 11 December 1940, Health 15 October 1941.

15. HSC Minutes, Finance 21 August 1940.


17. An office and clerical assistance was provided for the recruiting officer by the Shire Council. HSC Minutes, 18 June 1940; *HRE*, 9 August 1941, 25 February 1941.


20. There were fears expressed by mid-1941 that war enlistments were reducing the British proportion of north Queensland’s population. *HRE*, 17 July 1941.

21. Once, opposite a report on the Italian campaign. It was during this period that Giuseppi Cantamessa resigned his seat on the Council after the latter made enquiries about his eligibility for membership; he was forced to retire from the chairmanship of the Herbert River Canegrowers' Executive when interned in February 1941. *HRE*, 4 February 1941, 26 July 1941, 3 April 1941, 11 February 1941; HSC Minutes, 26 August 1940, 18 June 1940.

22. It was followed shortly after by the sinking of the battleship *Prince of Wales* and cruiser *Repulse*, linchpins of the British defence policy in the Pacific. Their destruction shocked Australians into an awareness of Japanese air superiority and their own vulnerability. I am indebted to Wendy Mansfield for bringing this to my attention.

23. Though the threat of invasion was accepted as real by Australia, it was in fact unlikely; the Japanese navy, flushed with a succession of victories, planned initially to invade Australia through Papua-New Guinea but was restrained
by the immense military commitment required. Instead it was planned to cut off supplies to Australia by successively taking Noumea, New Caledonia and Fiji and establishing strategic positions on its perimeter to contain any offensive originating here. The plan called for harassment of the Northern coastline by raids and naturally military bases such as Darwin and Townsville were under threat. John Costello, The Pacific War (London, 1981), pp.218, 249.

24. HSC Minutes, 15 December 1941; HRE, 22 January 1942, 13 December 1941, 23 December 1941, 30 December 1941; Deputy State Publicity Censor to Editor, Sunday Australian, Innisfail, 11 January 1943, Commonwealth Investigation Service, Queensland, Correspondence File: BP 361/1 Item 1-3 Australian Archives (AA).


26. Ibid., 24 January 1942, 29 January 1942, 24 February 1942. There was a long-running argument over whether the water tower should be camouflaged; shortages of labour and paint decided the Council against the idea. HSC Minutes, Finance 15 April 1942, Works 16 September 1942, Finance 9 December 1942.

27. HRE, 10 March 1942, 7 March 1942, 28 April 1942; Editor, Sunday Australian, to State Publicity Censor, Brisbane, 14 December 1942, BP 361/1 Item 1-3 AA.

28. HRE, 13 June 1942. Thereafter, the Council had to appeal for their release each season. HRE, 2 January 1943; HSC Minutes, 11 November 1943.

29. HRE, 29 January 1942, 5 February 1942; interview with Sir John Row, Ingham, 1983. Evacuation from Ingham was supposed to occur over the Mt. Fox road. HSC Minutes, Works 11 March 1942.

30. HRE, 25 April 1942, 28 May 1942, 2 June 1942, 14 February 1942, 17 February 1942. Community hostility worsened; hospital workers went on strike over the employment of an internee's wife there, and the Department of Education later refused to provide a teacher for a small school while the only board offering was with Italian families. HRE, 21 April 1942, 12 January 1943.

31. Deputy Director of Security, Queensland to Commissioner of Police, Queensland, 16 February 1943; Director-General of Security to Deputy Director of Security, Queensland, 25 August 1942, 21 February 1944; BB 242/1 item Q 33794, AA.
32. *HRE*, 31 January 1942, 21 May 1942, 20 December 1941, 1 July 1942. Even in December 1941 a change was noticed in Ingham's traffic, from cars and motorcycles to bicycles and heavy vehicles. HSC Minutes, 15 December 1941.

33. *HRE*, 24 February 1942, 5 March 1942, 25 July 1942. These still created problems as car lights had to be screened and only a few street lights were restored; under these conditions straying stock became an alarming menace. *HRE*, 20 December 1941, 7 February 1942; HSC Minutes, 20 July 1942, Health 13 May 1942.

34. E.g. *HRE*, 12 September 1942, 8 October 1942, 13 October 1942. It was noted in the *Express* that Italians in the United States were classified as friendly aliens. *HRE*, 15 October 1947.

35. A total of 500 farmers, cutters and field workers were interned. Royal Commission into the Sugar Industry, 1942 (Royal Commission of 1942), evidence, p.585, ROY/22, QSA; Report of the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, PP 1941, p.645.


37. Reports of the Department of Agriculture and Stock and the Main Roads Commission, PP 1940, pp.918, 1941; Reports of the Bureau and the Department of Agriculture and Stock, PP 1941, pp.601, 860.

38. Impressments totalled 111 out of 467, the worst proportion of any sugar district. Royal Commission of 1942, evidence, pp.580-584, ROY/22, QSA.

39. Royal Commission of 1942, evidence, pp.525-662, ROY/22, QSA. As fencing wire was unobtainable and many guns impressed, little could be done about stock or wallabies damaging cane; controls over building materials also limited the amount of timber available for cane ladders, used to load cut cane into the trucks. *HRE*, 20 December 1941, 9 October 1943; HSC Minutes, 9 March 1944.


41. *Ibid.*, 24 March 1942, 19 March 1942. Probably the oddest effect was the sudden increase in stray dogs, a problem the Council thought it had solved years before. Sanitation charges also went up because the large number of empty houses represented considerable losses to the contractors. HSC Minutes, 16 June 1942, 20 July 1942, 31 August 1944.
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44. HSC Minutes, 21 September 1942, 8 June 1944; *HRE*, 8 June 1944; I.N. Moles, "Townsville during World War Two", in B.J. Dalton (Ed.), *Lectures on North Queensland History* No. 2, (Townsville, 1975).

45. Enemy aliens were also called up into labour battalions, and there were a number of Italian volunteers from the Herbert. *HRE*, 14 March 1942.


48. *HRE*, 2 April 1942, 2 March 1943, 30 November 1943, 11 March 1944. Those unfit for work were allowed to return home. *HRE*, 13 January 1944.


50. *Ibid.*, p.9. One such "inessential" industry was banking; the Halifax bank closed in April 1942, over the protests of its customers. Building restrictions were also tightened, to a limit of £25. *HRE*, 2 April 1942; HSC Minutes, 20 July 1942.

51. E.g. Director of Shipping, Sydney to Minister for Supply and Shipping, Canberra, 9 April 1943; Editor, *Evening Advocate*, to State Publicity Censor 18 December 1942, BP 361/1 item 1-3 AA.

52. *HRE*, 10 June 1944, 16 March 1944.


55. HSC Minutes, Health 13 January 1943; *HRE*, January 1944. One patriot was highly indignant that scrap aluminium was being collected in a box marked "Made in Japan". *HRE*, 24 January 1942.
56. *HRE*, 1 September 1942; HSC Minutes, Health 13 May 1942. The Council in turn suggested that Jayasuria, a local farmer experimenting with tea and spice growing, be contacted and encouraged.

57. *HRE*, 9 April 1942, 30 April 1942, 8 September 1942, 11 July 1942, 9 October 1942, 8 June 1943, 13 January 1945; HSC Minutes, 9 December 1943. The meat shortage was partly due to difficult conditions in the west because of drought, restrictions on railway travel, buffalo fly and manpower problems, and partly to military and export commitments. *HRE*, 19 May 1942, 15 June 1944.

58. *HRE*, 9 June 1942, 8 August 1942; HSC Minutes, Health 19 October 1943, 9 March 1944, 20 April 1944.

59. *HRE*, 4 August 1942. CSR was opposed to general retailing of raw sugar, but made supplies available locally from the mills. *HRE*, 4 August 1942; HSC Minutes, 16 March 1942.

60. HSC Minutes, 21 December 1944; *HRE*, 16 January 1945.


62. HSC Minutes, 15 February 1943, 17 July 1943; *HRE*, 13 November 1943, 16 December 1943, 28 October 1943.

63. *HRE*, 16 November 1943, 11 March 1944. Money raised was given to the Red Cross. *HRE*, 28 September 1944.

64. Ibid., 1 March 1945, 5 June 1945, 24 June 1944; HSC Minutes, Finance 11 May 1945, 18 May 1944. The Brisbane City Council had decided to convert 50 of its shelters to park sheds and waiting rooms. *HRE*, 10 March 1945.


68. HSC Minutes, 9 December 1943, Health 13 July 1945, Works 12 October 1945; *HRE*, 12 February 1944. It also tried frequently to have restrictions lifted, particularly as this process appeared to be occurring faster in the south, or obtain better supplies of scarce materials. HSC Minutes, 14 September 1945; *HRE*, 4 November 1944.
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69. HSC Minutes, 8 July 1948, Health 11 November 1948, 18 November 1948, Health 14 September 1945, 20 September 1945. A new mill for this area was rejected by the government as too expensive but in 1953 CSR's Victoria Mill was enlarged to take cane from an Abergowrie soldier settlement.

70. Butlin, War Economy, p.785.


72. HRE, 19 February 1946.

73. HSC Minutes, 18 October 1945, 29 November 1945. A pool was initially favoured but the RSL preferred a building, while the War Memorial Committee recommended a park and Hall; the N.F.C. suggested a community centre and the Council was considering a town clock or library. Financial difficulties eventually decided the issue in favour of a granite monument and gardens in the centre of the Lannercost Street-Townsville Road roundabout, in front of the Shire Hall. HRE, 19 November 1945; HSC Minutes, 20 December 1945, 15 February 1946, 21 February 1946, Finance 15 March 1946, Health 8 September 1949.

74. Also on the debit side, 45 men from this district were killed in action. Honour board, Ingham RSL Club.
On 4 September 1977, in the aftermath of violent clashes between anti-uranium mining demonstrators and police in Sydney, the premier of Queensland, Mr. J. Bjelke-Petersen, announced that his government would in future prohibit all street marches in Brisbane other than "recognised non-political processions." The premier's advice to would-be street marchers was "You can shout yourself hoarse in the Square. Don't bother applying for a march permit. You won't get one. That's Government policy now." The following day he announced that the ban would apply to street marches not only in Brisbane but throughout Queensland. A little over a week later the Queensland Legislative Assembly passed a law which amended the Traffic Act so as to give the Commissioner of Police in Queensland absolute power to permit or to prohibit street marches. The old law stipulated that any appeal against a police traffic superintendent's refusal of a permit to march had to go to a magistrate; the new law stipulated that any appeal would now go directly to the Commissioner of Police.

The statements of the premier and the new amendment to the Traffic Act revived an old issue in Queensland politics, that of the right to march. The ban elicited protests from a diverse number of groups and individuals both within Queensland and throughout Australia. The state branch of the Australian Labor Party immediately registered its opposition. Even members of the state branch of the Liberal Party, the junior partner of the Queensland coalition government, and the prime minister, Mr. M. Fraser, later expressed their misgivings about the ban. The Anglican and Uniting Churches in Queensland publicly protested. The ban not only gave added impetus to long-standing civil liberties organisations in Brisbane such as the Council for Civil Liberties but also led to the creation of new groups, particularly the Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committees in Brisbane and in some provincial centres. Groups even sprang up in Sydney and Melbourne to express their solidarity with the civil liberties movement in Queensland. During the nearly two years since
the ban was imposed. Brisbane had become the scene of several violent demonstrations, of clashes between street marchers and police, which have resulted in the arrest of over 1500 protesters. Far from preventing street marches the ban has provoked them. At the time of writing the controversy is still very much alive, the protests by no means abated. The re-emergence of this issue allows one to examine at close quarters its effect not only on Brisbane but on population centres throughout Queensland. One such centre, often described as the gateway to North Queensland, is Townsville, which, embracing well over 100,000 people, is the third largest city in the state. The purpose of this writer is to trace the origins, composition, aims, arguments, activities, and achievements of the civil liberties movement in Townsville from September 1977 to the present.

* * *

The ban on street marches in Queensland stimulated the formation of three civil liberties organisations in Townsville. The first formal expression of dissent with the government's action was made when a meeting of about 40 people in the Townsville Civic Centre in late September stated its concern over the government's recent moves "to limit traditional rights of citizens to march in the streets and at the removal of the right to appeal to a Magistrate Bench against a decision by police." The meeting also formed a Townsville Civil Liberties Interim Committee, the spokesman for which became Mr. Digby Wilson. One of the first actions of this committee was to organise a public meeting to form a more permanent organisation, the Townsville Council for Civil Liberties. This meeting was held in early November, attended by over 200 people, and addressed by a lecturer in criminology at the University of Queensland, Dr. Paul Wilson. The meeting expressed unanimous concern "at the erosion of civil liberties within Queensland" and elected an executive of 15 to manage the organisation. Thus the TCCL, unlike similarly-named groups in Brisbane and other capital cities, was formed as a direct response to the stand taken by the state government over street marches in Queensland.
The second civil liberties organisation in Townsville was formed as a result of an initiative from the Townsville Trades and Labor Council.\textsuperscript{11} In January the TTLC, probably in conjunction with the TCCL, invited two leading members of the Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee in Brisbane, Mr. D. O'Neill\textsuperscript{12} and Ms. J. Gruchy, to visit Townsville and address meetings so as "to acquaint the public with the objectives of the movement."\textsuperscript{13} Soon after his arrival O'Neill told the press that he and Ms. Gruchy were specifically in Townsville as part of a three-week tour of centres in Queensland in a bid to set up a state-wide network of civil liberties committees.\textsuperscript{14} The main public meeting at which they spoke, held in the City Administration Building on 10 February 1978, chaired by a minister of the Uniting Church in Townsville, the Reverend W. Sanderson, addressed not only by O'Neill and Gruchy but also by Mr. G. Dean, the Liberal MHR for the federal seat of Herbert, and Senator J. Keeffe, a longstanding ALP Senator for Queensland, attracted about 150 people.\textsuperscript{15} Within the following fortnight a Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee on the Brisbane model had been formed and had applied, unsuccessfully, to the police in Townsville for a permit to march through the city in early March.\textsuperscript{16}

The third group, even less formal than the second, was the product of student meetings held at the James Cook University of North Queensland in March and April 1978. In October 1977 the Students' Union had pledged its support for the right-to-march movement in Brisbane, the president of the Union, Mr. T. Whelan, stating then that it was opposed to the "erosion of the traditional civil liberties of the community".\textsuperscript{17} But the nucleus of the right-to-march movement on the campus was a small group composed mainly of tutors and post-graduate students in the History Department. At a meeting of about 200 staff and students on campus on 31 March the group was given formal status as the James Cook University and Townsville College of Advanced Education Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee.\textsuperscript{18} The title was perhaps pretentious. The group never lost its initial ad hoc character nor did it at any time incorporate any staff or
students from the TCAE. However it would not be exaggerating to
describe it as having been the university branch of the TCLCC
formed earlier in the year.

The establishment by early April 1978 of not one but three more or
less separate civil liberties organisations in Townsville was a
recognition of the fact that there were differences within the
civil liberties movement as to how opposition to the ban on street
marches should be expressed. These were demonstrated at a very early
date. In late February a spokesman for the TCLCC, Mr. F. LeRoy, declared that the committee would hold an illegal march through the
streets of Townsville on 4 March. At the same time he described the
TCLCC as an arm of the TCCL. He admitted, however, that his
organisation was "a more activist group". The TCCL was quick to react
to this statement. The secretary of the council, Mr. B. Pentony, strongly denied any connection between the two groups.

The council expressed two objections to the TCLCC. The first, but
not precisely stated, was that it was too closely associated with the
ALP. As early as November 1977 the member for Townsville South and
the sole member of the North Queensland Labor Party in state
parliament, Mr. T. Aikens, had claimed on local television that the
TCCL was associated with the ALP. Pentony had responded on that
occasion by stressing that the TCCL was "a non-political, non-sectarian
organisation." He said that less than a quarter of the council's
executive were members of any political party. On the later occasion
he claimed, again ambiguously, that the TCLCC was "politically
orientated" and "in that respect" differed "fundamentally" from
the TCCL. He added that it was "presumptuous and incorrect" for
LeRoy to refer to the TCLCC as an appendage of the TCCL.

The TCCL's second objection to the TCLCC was that the latter was
prepared to hold illegal marches, that is, to practice civil diso-
bedience. Pentony emphasised that the TCCL was not in any way
promoting the TCLCC's first march. The following day the president
of the council, Mr. D. Gleeson, reaffirmed the distinction between the two groups and urged people not to take part in an illegal march. He said that the TCCL was opposed to any confrontation with the police. "Breaking the law will achieve nothing....We won't go outside the law." "This march", he also said, "is not going to do anyone any good. The first thing it will do is alienate any possible support because people will think they are a mob of ratbags." Gleeson's denunciation of the proposed march drove even deeper the wedge between the two groups.

Many members of the TCCL executive had misgivings about the efforts of Pentony and Gleeson to dissociate the council from a group with which it had much in common. Nevertheless the two statements pointed to real differences in the aims and political character as well as in the organisation and composition of the two groups. The TTCCL was concerned exclusively with civil liberties. It stated that its principal purpose was "to protect the traditional freedoms of the individual" and included among these "freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom from arbitrary arrest, the right to a fair trial, equality before the law," and "freedom of religion." In contrast the TCLCC, as will be seen, although focusing primarily on the right to march in Queensland, came increasingly to concern itself with other issues, particularly the mining of uranium and to a lesser extent the state government's proposed right-to-work legislation. Thus while both were multi-issue organisations the TCCL's aims stayed within and the TCLCC's aims went beyond the ambit of the protection of civil liberties.

The TCCL, too, was, as Pentony's statement suggested, extremely sensitive about any connection the public might have made between the council and one or more political parties. Thus its pamphlet claimed that the council "is non-political, not enquiring into the political affiliations of its members and not discussing matters from a political point of view" and that "it is non-partisan in that it seeks to work with all governments in protecting civil liberties". The TCLCC, on the other hand, was apparently indifferent to any association that
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could have been made between it and what might loosely be termed the "Old Left". In 1978 speakers at its rallies included federal and state ALP members of parliament and officials of the local branch of the Communist Party of Australia. In 1979 the TCLCC was heavily supplemented by a group of young members of the CPA several of them university students. While the one group claimed to welcome supporters from all hues of the political spectrum the other made no pretence that it was other than a left-wing organisation.

Although not specifically stated it was clear that the TCCL intended to be a permanent, the TCLCC only a semi-permanent organisation. The council was, from the outset, a more formal, more tightly organised group than the committee. Although neither group had the financial resources to acquire and maintain its own office the former at least elected office-bearers and held regular executive and general meetings. In contrast the TCLCC, throughout 1978, remained an ad hoc group centred around a community welfare officer with the Townsville City Council, Mr. J. Moloney. The differences in the occupations of the leading members of the two groups was also noticeable. The TCCL executive was composed largely of people in professional or managerial positions. It included, for instance, university lecturers, businessmen, and ministers of religion. In contrast the chief spokesmen for the TCLCC were trade union officials, most notably an official of the Waterside Workers' Federation in Townsville, Mr. B. Timms, and the president of the Townsville Trades and Labor Council, Mr. W. Irving. Their supporters tended to come from the ranks of youth rather than the middle-aged. All of the 14 people arrested at one TCLCC march were aged between 20 and 30. Both groups accepted that to the public the TCCL was the more, the TCLCC the less "respectable" of the two organisations.

Having identified these groups and some of the differences between them it is necessary to examine their aims more closely. Initially and ostensibly the principal aim of all three groups was to so influence the state government that it would repeal the new amendment
to the Traffic Act and in so doing return the right of appeal from the Commissioner of Police to a magistrate. But, from a relatively early stage in the development of the movement, this objective was seen to be inadequate. Thus in late January 1978 a spokesman for the TCCL claimed that the group's "basic aim" was to have the Australian constitution amended to include an Australian Bill of Rights to ensure "that no person, group or level of government will erode the proper civil liberties of all Australians." In May Moloney emphasised that the TCLCC would continue its campaign "until this oppressive legislation is removed and [the] right of appeal is returned to the judiciary away from the police commissioner." But little more than a fortnight later, at a rally organised by the committee and held in Hanran Park, a speaker claimed that the restoration of the right of appeal to a magistrate would be "farcical" because the state government would then simply instruct magistrates to refuse appeals. Three weeks later a spokesman for the committee, possibly Moloney, said that the South Australian Public Assemblies Act of 1972 - whereby would-be street marchers were required to notify police of their intention to march but were not required to seek from them a permit to march - should be used as a model for new legislation in Queensland. Thus both of the two civil liberties groups, whose formation was a reaction to the amendment made to the Traffic Act, were dissatisfied with legislation concerning street marches both prior to and after September 1977. Neither group desired a return to the status quo.

Another development in the movement, particularly in the TCLCC, was its tendency to concern itself with more and more issues other than that of the single one of the right to march. There was, perhaps understandably, a strong link between the right-to-march and the anti-uranium mining movement. Thus the meeting which formed the JCU/TCAE CLCC was one of many which expressed its opposition to uranium mining and urged support for the activities of the anti-uranium movement. Throughout 1978 most of the rallies held under the auspices of one or more of the civil liberties organisations in Townsville were addressed by speakers urging opposition to other
policies of both the federal and state governments. Thus a reporter, describing a civil liberties rally held in Hanran Park in June, derisively commented that "little was said about the right of people to march but abortion, unemployment, politics in India, rape, uranium, conditions in Canada, foreign investment and the judiciary received considerable attention." The activities of supporting groups also contributed to the image of a movement multiplying rapidly the number of issues with which it was concerned. Thus the TTLC held a rally in early December at which speakers raised not only the street march legislation but also the state government's right-to-work legislation and the federal government's last budget. The civil liberties movement never lost sight of its original aim but, as time passed, placed increasingly less emphasis on the street march ban vis-a-vis other issues.

A closely related tendency was for the movement to become increasingly opposed not just to the policies of the state government but to the government itself. In late September 1977, soon after the first moves to form a CCL in Townsville had been made, a local weekly newspaper commented rather snidely that most if not all of those involved in the new group probably held "directly opposing political views" to those held by the state government and predicted that it would therefore probably campaign actively for the removal of that government "remembering once in a while to mention civil liberties." The civil liberties movement was divided over this development. The TCCL, as noted before, was very wary of being seen to favor one or more political parties. In contrast the TCLCC saw no need to hide its unequivocal opposition to the state government. Indeed, when in Townsville, O'Neill stated quite clearly that the CLCC in Brisbane had focused on the street march ban because it was the "most spectacular symptom of the authoritarianism" of the state government. O'Neill said he hoped that the movement pressing for the right to march would "bring together all repressed forces in Queensland" and went on to enumerate such groups. The belief that the street march ban should
be used as a focal point for those concerned about what they considered to be the repressive and restrictive actions of the Queensland government was probably held by most supporters of the movement in Townsville. Very few members of the movement had only one grievance against the state government.

There was also general agreement within the movement as to why Bjelke-Petersen had imposed a ban on street marches. Certainly most people saw it as an attack on those opposed to the mining of uranium. On the other hand there were slight disagreements as to precisely what the premier hoped to achieve by such an attack. O'Neill said the CLCC in Brisbane believed the ban was an attempt to stifle at birth the growth of the anti-uranium movement in Queensland. Gruchy, who said the state government was "seeking to make sure that any opposition [to it] could not be heard", apparently believed the ban had an even wider purpose. But a point often made by Moloney at meetings and rallies was that the premier wanted to manipulate confrontations presumably between the forces of dissent, the protesters, and the forces of the state, the police. The premier, he argued, did not want peace but violence in the streets. He assured supporters that the committee would not be "manipulated into conflict with fellow citizens by irresponsible so-called leaders." Thus while the movement generally agreed that Bjelke-Petersen's purpose was to reduce if not eliminate the effectiveness of opposition to the state government, particularly the anti-uranium mining movement, there was no agreement as to whether he hoped to do this by silencing the movement or by provoking its involvement in violent clashes with the police and thereby discrediting it in the eyes of the public.

There was an even greater variety of opinions within the movement as to why the ban should be lifted. However most civil liberties supporters claimed that the essential reason was that the right to march in the streets was one of several rights which traditionally characterised Western democracies. At the meeting in the City
Administration Building in February Keeffe claimed that "mass assemblies and street marches had always been a part of democracy and a denial of these rights was a denial of democracy." O'Neill went on to refer to the right to march as "an ancestral right". In September a university supporter pointed out that it was precisely one year since "the people of Queensland were denied the democratic right that other Australians take for granted." And, later, one of the most articulate supporters of both the civil liberties and anti-uranium movements in Townsville, Ms. L. Martinez, claimed that marching was a right which "[was] still venerated as an undeniable liberty in other parts of Australia." All these opponents of the ban, then, believed that the premier's action established a dangerous precedent, that it broke a tradition of Western democracies, and that it set Queensland apart from the other Australian states.

Another argument against the ban was that it was likely to exacerbate already existing divisions in the community. "The ban", said Mr. Alex Wilson, "is provocative...and designed to create confrontation for the political convenience of the Premier." Three ministers of the Aitkenvale Uniting Church claimed that "during times of social polarisation and political unease a legal demonstration by a dissident group...is a social safety valve. This is a widely held assumption and is seen to be valid in many countries, whose political and governmental institutions have stood the tests of time, and turmoil far more than ours have." A year later Keefe claimed, quite unequivocally, that "the anti-march law...has divided the community." The belief that the ban was a wedge driven deep into Queensland society was often put forward as a reason why the new law should be repealed.

A related argument was that the ban was damaging to the morale of the police force in Queensland. "The Police have been placed in an impossible position", wrote the ALP candidate for the state seat of Townsville. "They are being forced into a political arena, and their public image will suffer." The JCU/TCAE CLCC was more explicit. "The police cop the blame from those of us who don't like the law,"
declared one of their leaflets. "It's police arresting people, police who are seen to be intolerant and violent. Joh seems to be completely insulated." What effect the ban had on the police force was unclear. But Keeffe claimed that, rather than enforce the law, many Queensland police had either resigned or transferred to the Commonwealth Police Force.  

Another argument concerning the police was more pragmatic. This referred to the more tangible costs of the ban to the community. Thus a leading member of the Labor-dominated Townsville City Council, Alderman M. Reynolds, strongly criticised Bjelke-Petersen's priorities in putting the containment of demonstrators in Brisbane streets above the need to combat "the increase in serious crimes which continue to take place in Townsville and North Queensland." At the rally in Hanran Park in March 1978 Alex Wilson maintained that as a result of the ban "valuable police strength and time is being grossly misused." Civil liberties supporters were not loth to be more specific. The university group claimed that the cost to the community in having the police in the vicinity of a single demonstration on the campus was "probably in excess of $2,000." In October of that year Victorian Labor Senator G. Evans told a combined civil liberties and anti-uranium rally in the Old Magistrates' Park that the ban, involving government expenditure on the control of street marches and other meetings, and on extra court and legal costs, cost the government and hence the taxpayers about $2 million over the previous year. As a result, he added, the government had ended the year with a deficit of nearly $1 million.

But the argument used most often and put most forcefully by all groups was that, given the premier's stated reasons for imposing the ban, it was unnecessary, and especially so in Townsville. In defending the government's action Bjelke-Petersen repeatedly claimed that there was no blanket ban on street marches "only on ones that could end in violence." Civil liberties supporters in North Queensland were quick to point out that few if any marches in Townsville could be
placed in that category. A spokesman for the Townsville Movement Against Uranium Mining, Mr. M. Hamel-Green, retorted that the group's demonstrations were "always peaceful" and that the ban was therefore "quite unwarranted." Digby Wilson claimed that in recent years all marches held in Townsville had been "without exception, peaceful and well-conducted" and his namesake echoed him and added that such demonstrations had attracted "only token police surveillance, which had proved to be quite adequate". In April 1978 a spokesman for the TCLCC said protest marches in Townsville "including recent illegal marches" had consistently "been totally free of violent incidents." The point was perhaps best made by a frequent speaker at civil liberties rallies in Townsville, Mr. H. Reynolds.

No-one in their right mind could seriously expect violence [during civil liberties marches in Townsville]. Not a single punch has been thrown in more than a decade of local political processions. Marchers from the University would have met no one to be violent towards - beyond the odd marsupial or two. Any traffic problems could have been controlled, as so often in the past, by a single constable. All banned local marches could have passed off with little comment and less concern.

Civil liberties supporters believed that there was even less justification for the ban in Townsville than there was in Brisbane.

The activities of the TCLCC throughout 1978 were designed to provide even further fuel for this argument. In March Moloney announced that the committee had adopted a plan for a guerilla-style campaign against the ban. He said the committee would stage a series of illegal marches but, so as to avoid a confrontation with the police, would not provide details of the marches before they were held. He added that in so doing the committee wanted to show that it was a peaceful group. Over the next few months the TCLCC claimed repeatedly that the peacefulness of both its legal and illegal marches demonstrated that Bjelke-Petersen was concerned not simply to ban potentially violent but all marches staged in opposition to one or more of the policies of his government. The committee's first series of illegal marches reached a climax in early July when, having stated its intention beforehand, the TCLCC held an illegal march in the city.
during which 11 demonstrators were arrested,\textsuperscript{65} among them Moloney.\textsuperscript{66} The committee staged a second series of guerilla marches toward the end of the year, none of which resulted in either violence or arrests.\textsuperscript{6} The TCLCC's reputation as a nonviolent protest group and Townsville's record as a place where only peaceful marches had been staged, remained unimpaired. In contrast the TCCL staged few legal much less illegal marches. Rather, its spokesmen contented themselves with making public statements reaffirming the council's opposition to the ban and reiterating that street marches in Townsville had always been peaceful. With respect to activities the TCCL preferred indoor public meetings to outdoor rallies and marches. While critical of the TCLCC's approach, it was certainly not unsympathetic. Thus its spokesmen expressed their disappointment whenever the police rejected the TCLCC's applications to stage street marches in Townsville,\textsuperscript{68} executive members frequently addressed rallies organised by the committee,\textsuperscript{69} and the council itself appealed to the public for donations to defend those arrested during the illegal march in early July.\textsuperscript{70}

However, apart from the rally, march, and public meeting, few other modes of expression of opposition to the ban were utilised. Admittedly leading figures in and supporters of the three groups wrote constantly to the local newspapers, particularly the daily TDB. But the movement as a whole produced very little literature. It did not engage in the widespread distribution of leaflets nor did it produce a booklet or even pamphlet setting out in detail the movement's case against the ban. Paid advertisements inserted in the local newspapers outlining the aims, arguments, or activities of one or other of the groups were very rare. Occasionally but not frequently spokesmen appeared on television or were heard on local radio. No large-scale forum on the ban was organised. Opposition in Townsville to the ban on street marches was expressed in limited and unimaginative ways.

Perhaps partly as a consequence overt support for the civil liberties movement in Townsville was also very limited. The number of
those who attended the movement's meetings, rallies, and marches in 1978 ranged between 30 and 300 with the average probably being 75-100. Staff and to a far greater extent students from the university probably provided a large proportion of those who supported the movement by attending rallies or by marching. Many of the civil liberties marches organised in Townsville were held within the boundaries of the university campus at Douglas. The movement's dependence on university staff and students was shown in other ways. The TTLC march in early December 1978 was the only march held during either the 1977-78 or 1978-79 "wet seasons", that is, when many staff and most students had left Townsville for the duration of the summer vacations. It was perhaps also significant that 8 of 14 people arrested during a civil liberties march in Flinders Street in April 1979 were either students or unemployed. Speakers at rallies and meetings typically included university lecturers as well as local officials and members of the ALP, the TLC, and the Communist Party of Australia.

In spite of the minimal active support given the movement, there were several indications that incomparably more people in the community at large were opposed to the ban on street marches than were prepared to declare it publicly. A Gallup poll taken in October 1977 suggested that only 48% of Queenslanders approved of the ban. Moreover approval was decreasing, disapproval increasing. Another such poll taken in May 1978 suggested that by then only 35% of Queenslanders approved while 60% disapproved of the ban. A random survey of a hundred people in Townsville conducted by a reporter for the TDB prior to the state elections in November 1977 suggested that 17% of local electors considered the ban one of the three principal issues around which the election would be fought. Moreover all 17 percent expressed opposition to the ban; no one supported it. Opposition may well have come from a large proportion of the political spectrum. All ALP and at least one other of the candidates for the three Legislative Assembly seats in Townsville expressed their opposition to the ban. In April 1978 the Townsville South-Cranbrook
sub-branch urged the conference of the North Queensland area of the Liberal Party to adopt a policy that the right of appeal be restored to a magistrate. Some months later the executive of the North Queensland area of the Liberal Party, echoing the increasing disquiet over the ban within the Queensland Liberal Party as a whole, expressed its opposition to the ban. In short, while there appeared to be widespread opposition to the ban in Townsville, this was certainly not reflected in support for the activities of the civil liberties movement.

Yet, if the movement aroused little local active support it also elicited little such opposition. The principal opponent in Townsville of the aims and activities of the civil liberties movement was, without doubt, the TDB. Its support for the ban was always guarded. In September 1977 it stated very cautiously that it "appears to be warranted". But its hostility toward the movement was far more obvious. Between early September 1977 and May 1979 it editorialised well over a dozen times against the personnel, aims, and activities of the movement both in Brisbane and in Townsville. But, considering the probability that few people read its or any other newspaper's editorials, its influence was limited. Certainly it displayed little obvious bias in its news items. The weekly and much less influential give-away newspaper, the Townsville Advertiser, was also hostile toward the movement but devoted very little attention to it. Beyond the two local newspapers most opposition to the movement was expressed by individuals. In early September 1977 Aikens commented that he "fully supported" the ban and added that it was an action which "should have been taken years ago". But Aikens' influence was very much reduced by the loss of his parliamentary seat during the elections in November 1977. Apart from the TDB, the most constant critic of the movement in Townsville was the spokesman for the Townsville Movement For Uranium, Mr. D. Stackhouse. However, Stackhouse, like most local critics of the movement, was content to express his opposition to it by way of letters to the editor of the TDB. It could not be said, then, that the opposition to the
movement did much to create a climate of antipathy toward it.

The little harassment of the movement that there was in Townsville came, understandably, from the police. It was perhaps inevitable that the illegal marches staged by the TCLCC would involve it in public conflict with those whose duty it was to enforce the new amendment to the Traffic Act. But the TCLCC's problem was that it became difficult to ascertain not only whether the Townsville police had a policy on street marches but by whom that policy was decided. It was not obvious whether the Townsville police were acting on the orders of the state government, or the Commissioner of Police, or were formulating their own policy toward street marches. Almost a week after the ban had been imposed a spokesman for the Townsville police claimed that they had as yet received no directive from Brisbane regarding the government's decision. Yet in February 1978 the district superintendent of traffic, Mr. F. Bopf, maintained categorically that "the law states that it is illegal to march," an oft-made claim that Bjelke-Petersen and several government ministers were constantly at pains to deny. However, a few months later, and in a seeming contradiction of Bopf's statement, the police in Townsville granted the TCLCC a permit to march through Townsville on 27 May. On that occasion Bopf told the TCLCC that the police could not grant it or any other group "more than one or two" such permits a year. A week later, after he had refused another application from the TCLCC for a permit to march, he insisted that "no influence" had been brought to bear on him to make that decision. His rationale for the decision to refuse the application seemed to be that if all such applications were granted "there would be processions everywhere". Thus Bopf's stated reason for imposing a ban on some marches differed from that given by Bjelke-Petersen. While the one claimed that the ban's purpose was to reduce the frequency of demonstrations, the other always maintained that it was to eliminate only those demonstrations that were likely to become violent. It was not clear, then, whether the police in Townsville imposed restrictions on the activities of the TCLCC on the basis of its own policy or on one formulated in Brisbane.
What, then, did the civil liberties movement in Townsville achieve? Firstly, and most obviously, it created a number of groups whose principal purpose was, at least initially, to seek the repeal of the \textit{de facto} ban on street marches in Queensland. The existence by early 1978 of one permanent and two semi-permanent civil liberties groups in Townsville provided the precedent and the organisational nucleus around which civil liberties movements of the future could develop. The creation of three groups maximised the appeal of the movement as a whole. Those who found one group unacceptable were able to join one (or both) of the others. Secondly the movement did much to keep before the Townsville community not only the street march issue but also many other issues on which the state government's stance had provoked dissent. The movement in Townsville, its aims, arguments, and activities were given a degree of publicity out of all proportion to the number of active supporters the movement could muster. This publicity was largely the result of the considerable attention given the movement by the \textit{TDB}, \footnote{91} which had the largest circulation of all daily newspapers in North Queensland. Thirdly, the movement enhanced the reputation for nonviolent activity which street demonstrators in Townsville had established over the previous decade. The peaceful character of the civil liberties movement and its activities in Townsville during 1977-79 presented a challenge to the assumption on which the street march ban was based.

On the other hand the movement failed to gain a level of active support which would have convincingly demonstrated to the government that the ban on street marches was politically unwise much less unpopular. There were, as this paper has shown, strong suggestions that public opinion, both in Queensland in general and in Townsville in particular, did not favor the ban. But that opposition, if it existed, remained latent. The civil liberties movement in Townsville failed completely to tap it. It failed not so much to change opinion on the ban as to demonstrate that that opinion existed. If there were many in Townsville opposed to the ban they were apparently uninterested in taking active steps to express that opposition by joining the groups
or supporting the activities and statements of the groups formed to oppose the ban. It was as if the community saw the right to march as too abstract a freedom and the loss of that right as an event of little importance. Probably the community agreed with the TDB when, on the brink of the state elections in November 1977, it argued rhetorically that:

A heavy blast has been directed at the Premier for alleged violations of civil liberties. But the question may be asked: Could the average citizen - peaceful, law-abiding, and intent on doing his share for self, home, and the community - genuinely feel that his freedom is under threat? Is his way of life in danger? Could he honestly feel that his freedom to work, his freedom of enterprise, his freedom to enjoy life, his freedom to worship, his freedom to engage in politics, his freedom to criticise authority, are in peril?

That editorial did much to explain why most people in Townsville, as in Queensland as a whole, saw little justification for protesting actively against the authoritarian proclivities of their rulers in Brisbane.

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In summary, the Queensland government's new policy on street marches, announced and given legislative form in September 1977, aroused considerable opposition outside Brisbane. During the six months which followed three groups sprang up in Townsville each of which sought the repeal of the state government's controversial amendment to the Traffic Act which effectively banned all but non-political processions in Queensland. However the repeal of the ban on street marches was only one of the aims of each of these groups. The Townsville Council for Civil Liberties, composed largely of professional and semi-professional people, eschewing a close association with any political party and adopting innocuous and moderate methods of protest, sought to protect a wide range of freedoms of which the freedom of procession was but one. The Townsville Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee, peopled mainly by left-wing trade unionists and radical university students, uninhibitedly associated with the left wing of
the ALP and the CPA and adopting a deliberate policy of civil disobedience, in particular, the holding of illegal street marches, welcomed the support of all who opposed what they considered to be the authoritarian character and repressive policies of the Bjelke-Petersen government. The James Cook University and Townsville College of Advanced Education Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee was, in effect, a university chapter of the latter group. Although the evidence suggested that the ban was unpopular, and although both groups, particularly the second, stimulated much publicity, they did not win much support for their activities nor did they arouse much opposition. On the other hand they did succeed in establishing a precedent for opposition in Townsville to many of the policies of the Bjelke-Petersen government and, by avoiding both the use and occurrence of violence during street marches, succeeded in enhancing the reputation for peacefulness enjoyed by demonstrators in Townsville in the past. But these very modest achievements could not overshadow the fact that the movement failed completely to demonstrate the widespread disapproval of the ban that might have existed in the community at large and in so doing did little to threaten either the credibility or the political stability of the government whose policies it opposed.

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9. D. Wilson was a mature-age student at the university and a former president of the Students' Union.

10. TDB, 7 November 1977, p.3.

11. O'Neill was a lecturer in English at the University of Queensland.

12. TA, 12 April 1978, pp.1 and 5.

13. LeRoy was a teacher.

14. Pentony was a lecturer in Commerce at the university.

15. Gleeson was chairman of the Thuringowa Shire Council.

16. One occasion on which these misgivings were expressed was a public meeting held by the council on 30 April 1979 and attended by the writer.

17. TCCL, Townsville Council for Civil Liberties, (no date).


21. TDB, 7 April 1978, p.3.

22. TDB, 11 February 1978, p.3.

23. TDB, 28 February 1978, p.3.


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33. TDB, 1 April 1978. p.2.
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42. TDB, 11 February 1978. p.3.
43. P. Sekfy, TDB, 15 September 1978. p.4. See also P. Sekfy, Civil liberties - What is happening?, (March 1978). Leaflet.
44. In February 1979 Martinez was appointed acting director of the Townsville Environment Centre (TDB, 22 February 1979. p.3).
45. TDB, 3 November 1978. p.3.
50. JCU/TCAE CLCC, The people united will never be defeated, (June 1978). Leaflet. This leaflet may not have been distributed.
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58. TDB, 17 October 1977. p.3.


60. TDB, 28 April 1978. p.2.

61. Reynolds was a senior lecturer in history at the university and a foundation member of the TCCL.


64. See, for instance, TDB, 7 June 1978. p.3.

65. TDB, 10 July 1978. p.3.

66. Two of those arrested won further publicity for the movement by electing to spend ten days in Stuart Prison rather than pay fines imposed for their offences (TDB, 12 July 1978. p.4.)


68. TDB, 7 June 1978. p.3.


73. TDB, 1 May 1979. p.3.


75. TDB, 28 October 1977. p.3.

81. This writer could identify no more than eight news items concerning the civil liberties movement in the *T* between September 1977 and May 1979.
91. On the other hand the publicity given the civil liberties movement in Townsville in the Brisbane press was almost negligible. This writer could locate fewer than a half a dozen references to the movement in the *Courier-Mail* between September 1977 and May 1979. But see M. Sands, "Queensland's deep north marching for civil rights", *Semper Floreat*, 19 July 1978. pp.3-4.
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ABBREVIATIONS

ALP  Australian Labor Party
CPA  Communist Party of Australia
JCU/TCAE  James Cook University and Townsville College of Advanced Education
CLCC  Education Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee
TA  Townsville Advertiser
TCAE  Townsville College of Advance Education
TCCL  Townsville Council for Civil Liberties
TCLCC  Townsville Civil Liberties Co-ordinating Committee
TDB  Townsville Daily Bulletin
TTLC  Townsville Trades and Labor Council
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John Maguire tutored in History for many years at Queensland University and James Cook before taking up the Hanbro Research Fellowship within the History Department. His paper is a by-product of his jubilee history of the Catholic diocese of Townsville, now nearing completion.

Diane Menghetti is one of only two history graduates to be awarded university medals at James Cook. Her honours thesis was published as The Red North, No. 3. of Studies in North Queensland History. She is a Tutor in the Department and a part-time candidate for the PhD.

Joan Neal wrote her honours thesis on the Impact of the Boer War on Charters Towers. A secondary school teacher, she has since completed a centennial history commissioned by Dalrymple Shire.

Malcolm Saunders a PhD graduate of Flinders University in South Australia, is a Tutor in the Department. He has published extensively on the movement opposed to the Vietnam War, and the wider peace movement in Australia.

Anne Smith based her paper upon research done for her honours thesis on George Rymer, leader of the militant A.R.U. in the inter-war years. She is currently writing for her M.A. a centennial history of a Townsville firm of solicitors.

Janice Wegner is a full-time PhD candidate working on the History of Croydon. Her paper arises from research undertaken for her centennial history of Hinchinbrook Shire Council.
JAMES COOK THESES ON NORTH QUEENSLAND HISTORY
COMPLETED SINCE 1978*

PhD
Bell, P.G., Houses and Mining Settlement in North Queensland, 1861-1920 (1982).
Hunt, D.W., A History of the Labour Movement in North Queensland: Trade Unionism, Politics and Industrial Conflict, 1900-1920

MA

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Gibson-Wilde, Dorothy M., Gateway to a Golden Land: Townsville 1884 (1982).
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*For a list of earlier theses, see Volume 3 of this series (1979) pp.261-2.