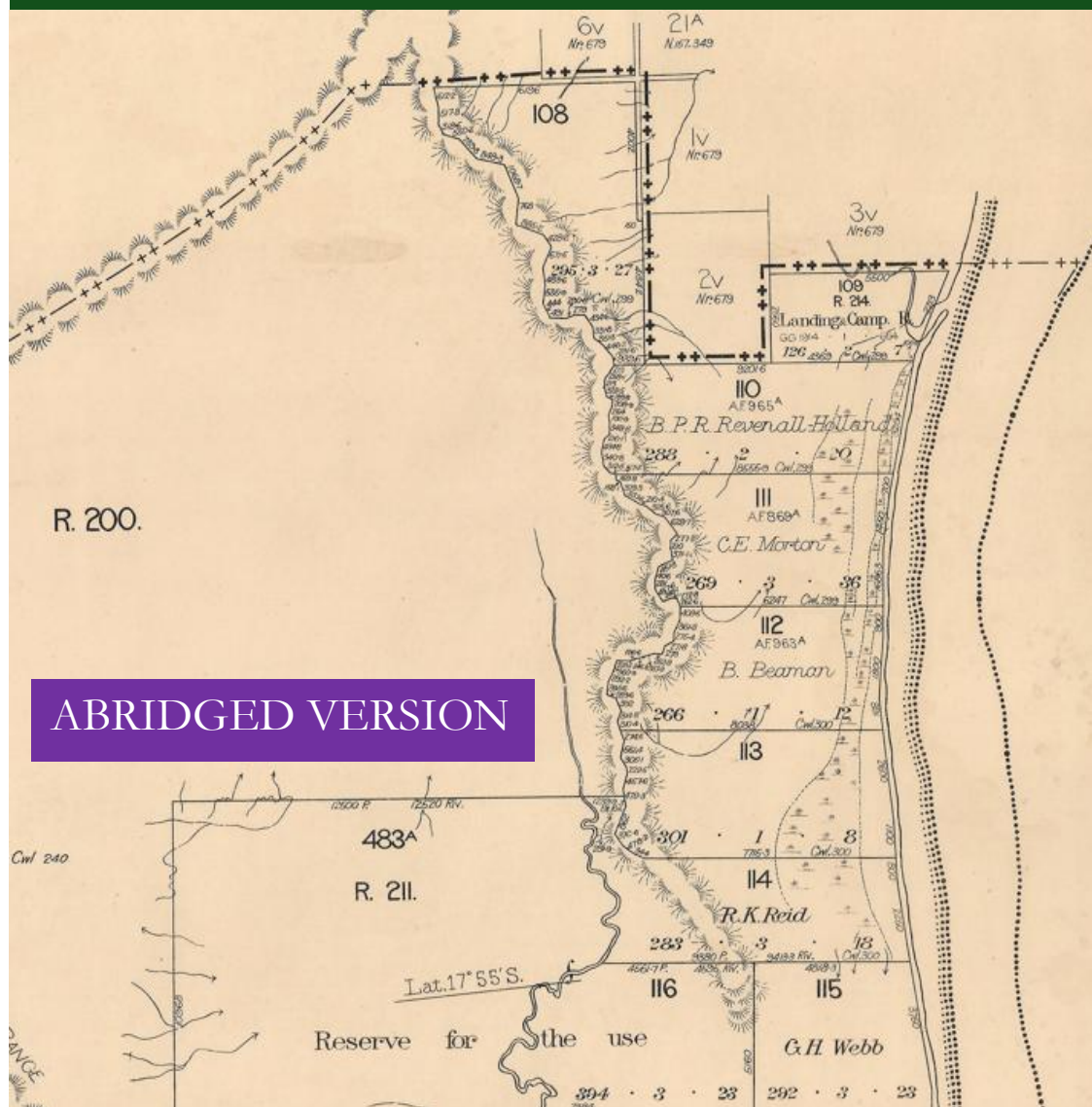


EUROPEAN PIONEERS of MISSION BEACH

Those who settled in the first 60 years 1885 - 1945



KEN GRAY

Published by

Mission Beach Historical Society Inc.

Document AB27 Version 1.

Website: mbhs.com.au



This publication is copyright © Mission Beach Historical Society.

First published by MBHS Inc., in 2026.

Author: Ken Gray. *Editors:* Margaret Remilton, Rhonda Jarvis and Diane Bull.

Apart from fair dealing for private study, research, criticism, or review, as permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this work may be stored, reproduced, or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the publisher.

A record of this title is held at the National Library of Australia (eBook) and the State Library of Queensland (Print and eBook).

The text and opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and of the people interviewed by the author and do not reflect the views of the Mission Beach Historical Society or its members.

Mission Beach Historical Society's logo is designed by Leonard Andy, copyright © Leonard Andy. The design depicts a Djiru shield with a cassowary, which is the endangered, iconic flightless bird living in the north Queensland rainforests.

The histories published by the Mission Beach Historical Society are as accurate as we can make them. Few accounts of history are 100% correct and there are going to be more errors when we recall events of many years ago. We always welcome suggested edits and additions.

Cover Image

Cadastral map of Mission Beach (Wongaling Beach area) 1923.

PIONEERS | 1885 - 1945

These are thumbnail sketches of ten of the pioneers who have not been featured in MBHS publications to date. The full list of 61 pioneer families known to have lived here in the early days is available in the full version, *European Pioneers 1885-1945*, Ken Gray, MBHS, H027, 2026. Those pioneers who have streets or places named after them are omitted in this version and those stories can be accessed in Deirdre Holmes' four volumes, *Mission Beach Street & Place Names* on mbhs.com.au or in the full version of *Pioneers*.

Willoughby and Alice **SMITH** Clump Point, 1887. This was the second family to arrive. Willoughby managed a 1,280 acre property at Clump Point. He arrived in 1897 and married Alice Thornton in 1888 after their two-storey house was built. The Smiths had 14 kanakas and two white men as labourers and planted fruit, tobacco and bamboo. A remnant of the bamboo remains on Alexander Drive today. In 1890, a cyclone wrecked their home and crops. They sold the home remnants to the Cuttens and migrated to the USA.

Henry **BLAKESLEY**, Carmoo, 1889. Henry came from England to Adelaide in 1856. He was a timber cutter at Gympie and in 1873 led a prospecting expedition from Noosa to Cardwell. He married Carolyn Ingleby in 1883 and had four children. Henry selected 160 acres on the Hull River where Carmoo is today. He built a wharf and used his lugger to transport supplies to Bingil Bay when the Cutten family settled. He returned to Brisbane in 1897 and died there in 1919, aged 78. In 1939, his land became Carmoo.

Edwin Frank **MASTERS**, Garners Beach, 1915. Edwin is listed on electoral rolls at Clump Point for 1915-1917. His brother married Lorenzine Wildsoet, sister of Carrie Garner. Edwin spent years working with his Garner and Wildsoet relations before setting up on his own. He moved to Townsville in 1919, then back to Brisbane.

William **ELDER**, Narragon, 1925. Elder appears briefly in newspaper records in 1925 when he complained to the Council about his high land valuation. He had retired to Narragon and selected 46 acres on the north headland of the Beach and, with some justification, explained that the land was far too steep to be anything but a goat farm. The land was not cleared.

He named his property *The Hermitage* and stayed there until his health failed in 1937. When he lived there, the headland was known as *Elders Point*, a place name no longer used.

A J **BOLTON** and family, Wongaling Beach, 1931. The Boltons lived in Tully before acquiring Lot 114 in 1931. *Boltons Saddle* was named after A J Bolton, a low point in the small range at the rear of the lot. His wife was a persistent advocate for roads to Mission Beach in 1933. AJ owned a lorry used to transport people and supplies between Tully and Mission Beach.

George and Emily **MORRIS** and family, Dunk Island, 1932. George migrated from England in 1905 with cattle and married Emily Maidment in 1909, settling at Tolga where he had the first traction engine on the Atherton Tableland, which he used for contract ploughing. They had seven children Beatrice, Violet, George, Eileen, Ernest, Lesley and Albert. They purchased a tourist facility on Orpheus Island in 1931, then moved to be caretakers of a resort Spenser Hopkins was planning on Dunk Island in 1932. When Hugo Brassey purchased the freehold land in 1935, George stayed on as a licensee. During WWII, the RAAF took control and used the Morris family to cater for them. They returned to Orpheus in 1947, then retired in Tully. George died in 1954 and Emily in 1960.

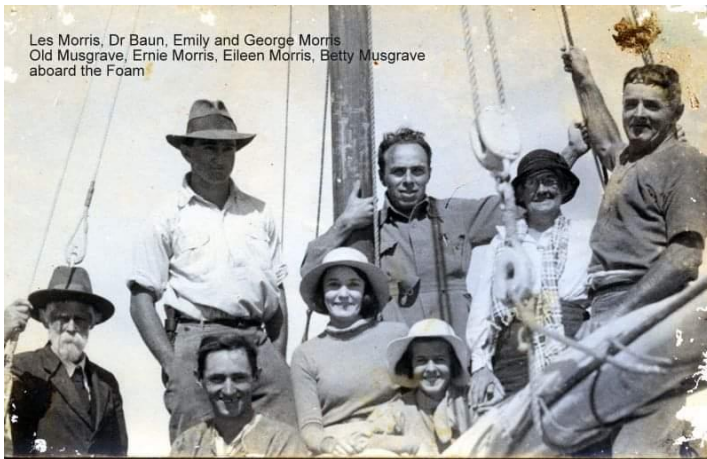
Peter **WHITE**, South Mission Beach, 1933. Peter White was a councillor for Cardwell Shire Council before being elected Chairman in 1940, serving one term. In 1933, he acquired the 1,280-acre lot at Tam O'Shanter Point. He built his home inland where the road from Tully forks to South Mission Beach, cleared some land and had cattle there. He sold 1,154 acres in 1954 to the Campbell family.

'Gunboat' **SMITH**, Wongaling, 1934. *Gunboat Smith*, or *Old Smith* as George Webb referred to him, was a friend to George and lived near to where the big cassowary is today in Wongaling Beach on the Dunlops land. He was a squatter and according to Don Wheatley, who knew him after the Wheatley family arrived at Mission Beach in 1940, he swore like a trooper and lived in a long tin shed. *Old Smith* appears regularly in George Webb's diaries from 1935 to 1937 and may have been here longer either side of that.

Clarissa and Claude **WATSON**, Narragon, 1938. They came to the area after their friend, Don Brown, Principal at El Arish School, recommended it. The land they acquired was much of the original 1,280 acre W Hyne selection on Clump Point farmed by Willoughby Smith, stretching from Boyett Road to Wylie Creek. They lived on the land at the Narragon end around for a short while before Claude died of scrub typhus. Clarissa moved to El Arish soon after and subdivided the land to provide for her 13 children. A condition of the subdivision was that land at the beachfront was set aside for roads (Alexander Drive and Porter Promenade). Their son, Jock Watson and his wife Marie lived on one of the lots (88 Porter Promenade) until recently. Jock died in 2014 and Marie in 2018.

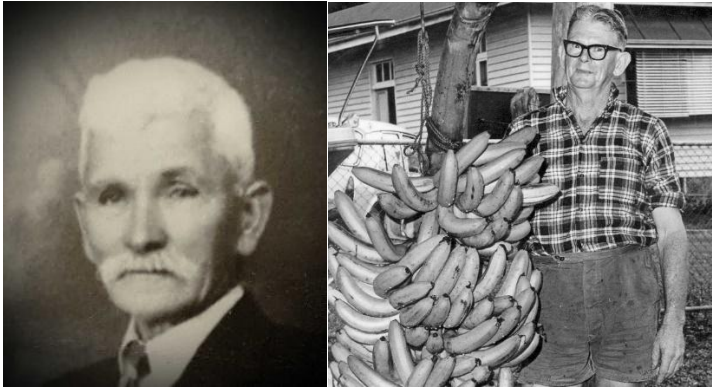
Stanley **MACKAY** and family, Mission Beach, 1945. Stanley John Mackay OAM and his wife Agnes and three children came to Mission Beach to grow bananas in 1945. Their initial farm was 6.5 hectares, which they cleared by hand.

They started out with only 2 hectares of bananas and today, the Mackay family farms total 5,860 hectares in Tully and Lakeland near Cooktown. They grow bananas, pawpaws, sugar and avocados and graze cattle, producing 13% of the national banana crop.



Back row: Les Morris, Dr Baun, Emily George Morris, front: 'Old Musgrave', Ernie Morris, Eileen Morris, Betty Musgrave aboard George's boat Foam. Image c. 1940 from Eileen's son, Barry Anderssen, a resident of Mission Beach since 1977.

PIONEERS



A J Bolton. Stanley Mackay, record banana bunch 1968, image from Ruby Rise.



Clarissa Watson nee Hawkins.



Jock and Marie Watson. Images from *Ancestry.com*