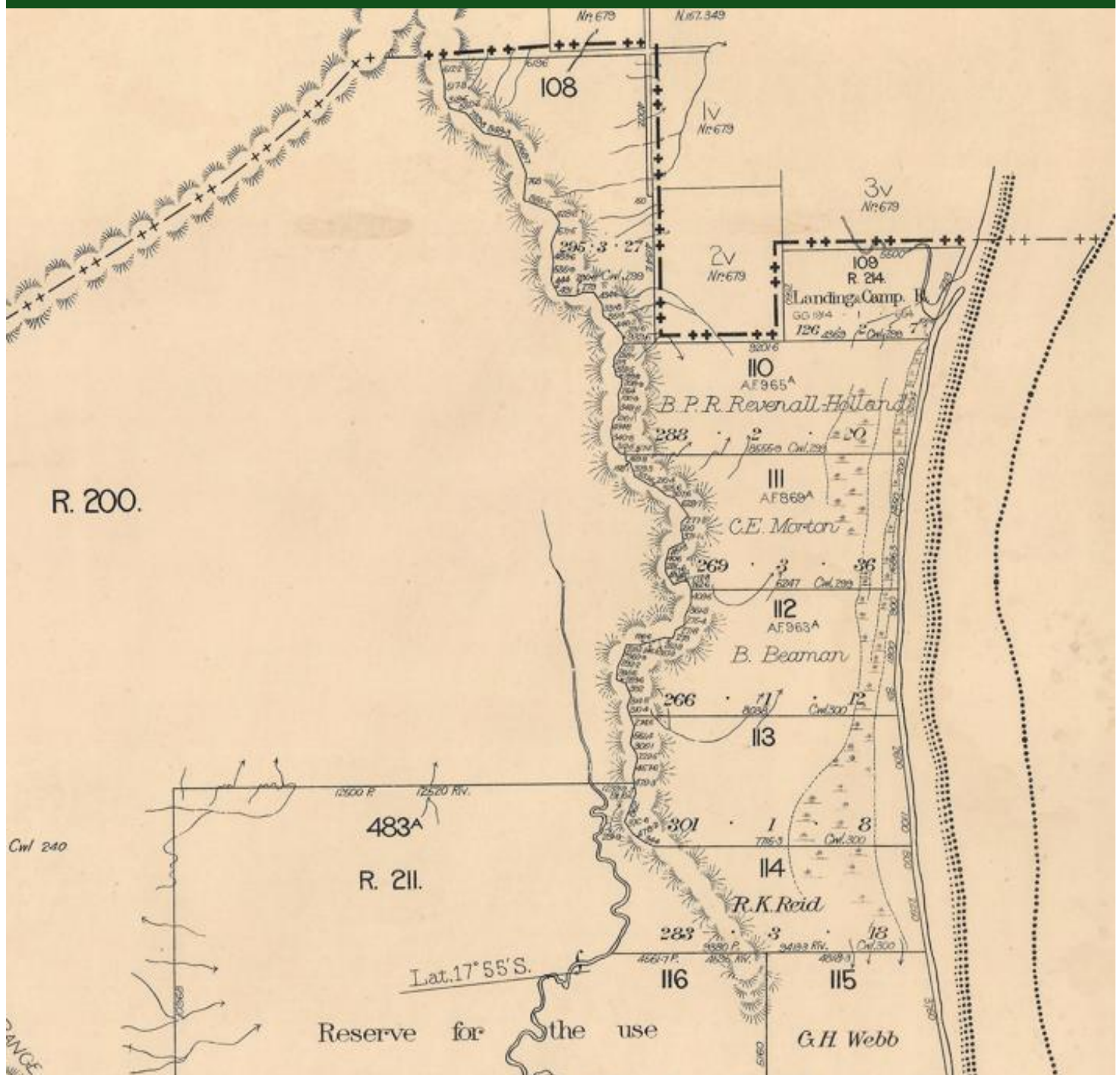


EUROPEAN PIONEERS of MISSION BEACH

Those who settled in the first 60 years 1885 - 1945



KEN GRAY

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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.

EUROPEAN PIONEERS | 1885 - 1945

In this record, we list the order of arrival of families or individuals who are believed to have lived in the district for a year or more during the first 60 years of European settlement. In some cases, there is some doubt about settlement dates because there are differences in the data available. Typically, we look for recollections and statements by settlers and others in newspapers, books or other publications and seek evidence from electoral rolls, land titles or land selection notices, diaries and oral histories. Many people selected land here but did not settle on their land, and those people are not generally included.

Some people show up in the records transiently but are not included if we lack information on them, so the list is not complete, yet we have listed most people who were here for a significant time.

The town's European settlement anniversary is **27 August 1885** when the Cutten family settled.

The first land selected was in October 1880 when two lots were selected by Mackay people – **William Henry Hyne** (Lot 21A, 1,280 acres) and another Mackay owner (unnamed, 800 acres). At South Mission Beach the first selection was in 1882 when Townsville storeowner, **Hollis Hopkins**, selected 1,280 acres for his sister on the beachfront extending to the end of Kennedy Bay. Neither Hollis nor his family settled there. Hollis' son, Spenser, later purchased the Dunk Island freehold land from the Banfields and had a holiday home there and his sister, Lilian, lived here for some time after marrying George Webb.



William Hyne.



Hollis Hopkins.

The order of arrivals is numbered. There are some families and people we have not written much about. That is either because there is little known about them for now, or more often, because we have a fuller history published on them or plan to do so. The symbol [#] denotes that status. Some of these names are used as street or place names in the district, and Deirdre Holmes has written a four volume book on those names, which provides more information and images. They are available on mbhs.com.au.

When referring to the places people lived, we use today's names rather than *Clump Point* or *Hull River* of early days. When Miss Mackness wrote our first history in 1959, she referred to lots south of Wongaling Creek as being at South Mission Beach. Most of those people were living at Wongaling Beach as it is named today. South Mission Beach was all but uninhabited until the 1970s but had a handful of holiday homes.

The population of European residents reached an early peak in 1915 at approximately 80, then quickly declined as farmers left the district when the ships were taken for the war effort. Len Cutten said that there were 21 farming families here in 1915 and only three (an exaggeration) by mid-1917. When the cyclone hit the district in 1918, the population was down to almost half, at around 45 people. By 1952, there were 16 farming families in the district according to Ted Boyett.

1. #Leonard, Herbert, Sidney and James **CUTTEN**, Bingil Bay, 1885

The Cuttens were our first European settlers. They selected their first six lots of land earlier, in 1884, and had visited Clump Point before that on 01 April 1882 seeking land without success. James left soon after he married, so he lived here for 20 years while Leonard and Herbert were here for 44 years and Sidney for 38. Frederick, Margaret, Florence, Jessie, and Alice Cutten came in late October 1885. Florence was here for a short time and left for work, then married, but returned in 1913 and lived in the district for 40 years in all. Alice left soon after arriving and getting married. Margaret junior married earlier and did not live in the district.

2. Willoughby and Alice **SMITH** Clump Point, 1887

This was the second family to arrive. Willoughby Lewis Smith was William Hyne's brother-in-law and was appointed to manage his 1,280 acre property, 21A at Clump Point. That was the land the Cuttens tried to select in April 1882 only to find that William Henry Hyne of Mackay had secured it earlier that year. Willoughby arrived in a whale boat in 1897 with several armed men believing the false rumours that the Djiru people were aggressive. Soon after, Willoughby married Alice Thornton who arrived in 1888 after their two-storey house was built by carpenters, Don and Buchanan from Rooneys in Townsville. The Smiths had 14 kanakas and two white men as labourers and imported 100 goats.

They planted fruit, tobacco (four acres), and bamboo. A remnant of the bamboo remains on Alexander Drive today. In 1890, a cyclone wrecked their home and crops, and Mr Hyne did not wish to rebuild. They sold the home remnants to the Cuttens who used them to rebuild their homestead. The Smiths then returned to their family at Noosa then to Perth before finally settling in Seattle, USA. Lot 21A was sold to a speculator, Bolton, who subdivided the land into six lots in 1914.

3. Yankey Dan **KEOGH**, Carmoo, 1889

Dan did not show up in electoral rolls but land records show that he selected a 160-acre lot at Carmoo in 1884 and had the deed in 1889. That land is not marked with his name on the 1923 cadastral maps. Dorothy Jones in *Cardwell Shire Story* says Dan planted bananas on the Hull River without stating when. A street in Wongaling Beach was named after Dan, so he must have made some sort of impact in the short time that he was here.

4. Colin **MUNRO**, Carmoo, 1889

Colin Munro settled in the Tully area before coming to the Hull. Munro Plains is named after Colin. His 160-acre lot (Lot 483) was selected in 1884 and the deeds were granted in 1889. He grew bananas and lived there according to Constance Mackness but moved on soon after. In early 1909, he wrote to the papers from Proserpine alleging corruption in the way that land selections were administered.

5. Henry **BLAKESLEY**, Carmoo, 1889

Henry Blakesley migrated from England to Adelaide in 1856 and moved to Brisbane in 1864. He was a timber cutter at Gympie and, in 1873, led a prospecting expedition from Noosa to Cardwell. By 1876, he was a captain

of a ship in Sydney and took an expedition to PNG. He had a lugger (*Polly*). In 1883, he married Carolyn Ingleby and had four children: Violet, Frederick, Cora, and Mary (Nelle).

In 1884, Henry selected 160 acres (Lot 483b) on the Hull River where Carmoo is today. In 1889, he was granted the deed to the land. Henry built his own wharf on the Hull where the Cassowary Coast Regional Council boat ramp is today at Hull Drive in Carmoo. He used his lugger to transport supplies and possessions to Bingil Bay when the Cutten family settled here. He returned to Brisbane in 1897 and lived with his daughter, Nelle. He was listed as being a ferryman in 1903 and died in Brisbane in 1919, aged 78.

In 1939, Henry's land at Carmoo was sold to Alex Dunlop who then sold it to Archie Lindsay who grew bananas there. That land became the Carmoo subdivision later.

6. Robert **SKAMP**, Carmoo, 1889

Robert Skamp selected Lot 483c (160 acres) on the Hull River in 1889 and had the title issued in 1889, as for his three neighbours mentioned above. He does not appear on the electoral rolls at the time. His land was near to the current day settlement at Carmoo.

7. Jack and Mary **UNSWORTH** and daughter, Narragon Beach, 1897

Anthony John (Jack) Unsworth selected a 160-acre block, Lot 5v, on Narragon Beach in 1892. He built a house in 1897 and worked the land with his Kanaka helpers planting bananas, citrus, and guava trees, but was still mainly working elsewhere while waiting for his orchards to start producing. For the first few years, *Jacky Walkabout*, as the Djiru people named him, walked long distances to the Atherton Tablelands and beyond for paid work, doing fencing and the like. He worked on Kirrama Station west of Cardwell for most of 1902.

Jack married Mary Reimer, Margaret Cutten's homestead help, in 1907. Mary may well have resided in the district before Jack did. They had a daughter, Miss J Unsworth. Jack joined the *Bicton* team in 1903 as a foreman for the workers. He named his property *Narragon* which is reportedly what the local Aborigines call the area after a local Djiru hero. Today however, we know from Djiru Traditional Owner, Leonard Andy, that the name was probably *Jarragon*, meaning scrub hen, and there was no local hero of that name.



Jack and Mary Unsworth with their daughter (on balcony), 1917, from *Sydney Mail* 02 January 1918.



Right: Foreman Jack Unsworth, working at his hut with his daughter on the Cutten farm, 1903. Image from R. J. Taylor, *The Lost Tea Plantation*.

The Unsworths sent fruit to the southern markets, but by late 1915, the steamships had stopped coming due to the war and Jack had to take his family and leave to find paying work again. The property was vacant just before the 1918 cyclone hit. The Unsworths returned to Narragon after the cyclone but were disheartened by the damage and decided to sell their farm to the Mackness family and head south.

In 1918, a young adventurer and photographer staying with the Cutten family, wrote under the name *Ryco* (Edward Reichenbach), and published an article in the *Sydney Mail*, *Pioneering in Tropical Australia*. He wrote of the Unsworth family and their struggle to make their farm work. He referred to a picture (above) that he included of their humble house:

In the picture with Unsworth are his wife and daughter. Southern women should have the deepest respect for them. They are two of hundreds of wives and daughters who are faithfully sticking to their menfolk in the bush, fighting against heart-breaking odds. They are the real pioneers, whose work is helping to open up fertile regions ... Unsworth's wife and daughter used to wade into the Pacific surf and load up bananas and pineapples into skiffs which the husband lightered his produce to the calling outlying ships, which seldom called, and were often delayed, so that the fruit was rotten before it reached our distant markets...

But plucky Unsworth and his wife and daughter are now working on a council road job to knock up sufficient money to enable them to subsist before some Australian Government ... sees fit to encourage the development of an area ... [of vast potential].

When Ryco wrote this, the Unsworths had recently abandoned their fruit farm leaving pineapples ripe and ready to pick. Sad days; soon to be sadder. That was published merely two months before the deadly 1918 cyclone ended their dreams at Narragon Beach.

8. [#]Bertha and Edmund **BANFIELD**, Dunk Island, 1897

The Banfields arrived in 1897 and more has been written about them than any of our district pioneers. Ted died in 1923 and Bertha stayed on for a further year before moving south to Gympie. She died in 1933 and was buried on Dunk Island beside her husband, Ted.

9. #John and Margaret **BUNTING** and family, Carmoo (Hull River), 1902

John Bunting (1859 – 1944) migrated to Australia on the *Alexandrina* in 1875 and his wife to be, Margaret, came on the *Scottish Bard* in 1877. Margaret Eakin, nee Graham (1857 – 1938) had been married previously. They came from Townsville with cattle to settle on the Hull River in 1902. John had run a taxi and bus company in Townsville and was the President of the Aitkenvale Progress Association. They went timber cutting on the Hull River instead of cattle farming.

10. James **DILLON**, Garners Beach, 1903

James Dillon first appears on the electoral rolls in 1903, the first roll on the district records. He was listed on the Herbert roll, Geraldton, as living at Horn Hill, Clump Point. That was where he selected land and had a farm from 1903 until 1909 when he forfeited the land, which was then selected by Ted Garner.

1923 cadastral maps show he still owned one block of land at Bingil Bay then. There is little information available on James Dillon and we assume that he lived on the land for some time.

11. Essie **McDONOUGH**, Dunk Island, 1905

Another person who left a light footprint on the district was Esther McDonough who was described by Ted Banfield as *a quaint little Irish woman*. Essie was always a vital part of the Banfield family. She was a servant and companion of Bertha and joined their household when she was 36 years old in Townsville. Without Essie, it is difficult to believe that the Banfields could have stayed on their island paradise for as many years as they did.

When the Banfield's moved to live on Dunk Island in 1897, they did not take Essie with them because they could not afford her wages and were unsure of their future. A friend of the Banfields who had always wanted to hire Essie was pleased to oblige and provide alternative employment. Essie lived in the homes of her employers and took annual leave to take a break from them.

In 1905, she rejoined the Banfields on Dunk Island. She was on leave when Ted Banfield died in 1923 but returned and stayed with Bertha until she left Dunk in 1924. When Bertha agreed to bequeath her half share of the island property to co-owner, Spenser Hopkins, she had a clause in the agreement that required Spenser to pay Essie a small income for the remainder of her life. He did so.

Essie, after the death of Bertha in 1933, moved to Charters Towers. She died in the Towers in 1936 at 83 years old.

12. #Dick, Lily and Bill **PORTER** and family, Mission Beach, 1908

The Berry Porter family, Richard (Dick) and Bill (William) first arrived to select land at Carmoo around 1902. They found the land was too infested with mosquitoes, snakes and crocodiles for comfortable, safe living and moved north to select three 160 acre lots (2v, 3v and 4v) at Mission Beach, just north of Wongaling Creek, now also known as Porters Creek. They built their first home on Dick's lot in 1908 and started farming, planting bananas and rubber trees. Both brothers married, but Bill lost his wife to bubonic plague soon after they had married in Townsville.

13. #Chris and Maud **WILDSOET** and family, Carmoo, 1908

Many related Wildsoet families lived in our district or nearby at Tully and El Arish in the early days. Christian Wildsoet (1883 – 1966) was born in Port Douglas and was living in Murray Upper and enrolled to vote at Bedford Creek in 1903 and he first enrolled as living at the Hull River as a selector in 1912. However, news reports show he was working and living in the Hull River area in 1908 with his brother-in-law, Jack Bunting. Chris married Maud Bunting, son of John and Margaret Bunting of Hull River in 1910.

In 1910, Joe Wildsoet and family, Carrie Wildsoet (nee Garner) and family and Lou Wildsoet and family also came to the district. Several of the children of Penuel and Marcus Wildsoet also married locally and remained in this district for a considerable time.

14. #Ted and Edith **GARNER** and family, Bingil Bay-Garners Beach, 1909

Edward Thomas (Ted) Garner and his wife Edith came with their family to Bingil Bay to build and operate a sawmill for the Cuttens at Bingil Bay. Ted's son, Edward Henry Garner, his nephew, Arthur Garner from Mundoo, and his son-in-law, Lou Wildsoet were employed in the venture. Ted and his wife Edith selected land at Garners Beach and built four homes for the families to live in. Arthur initially lived in a tent. By 1911 they were living on their selections at Garners Beach. Several family members are buried in a heritage listed cemetery on their land.

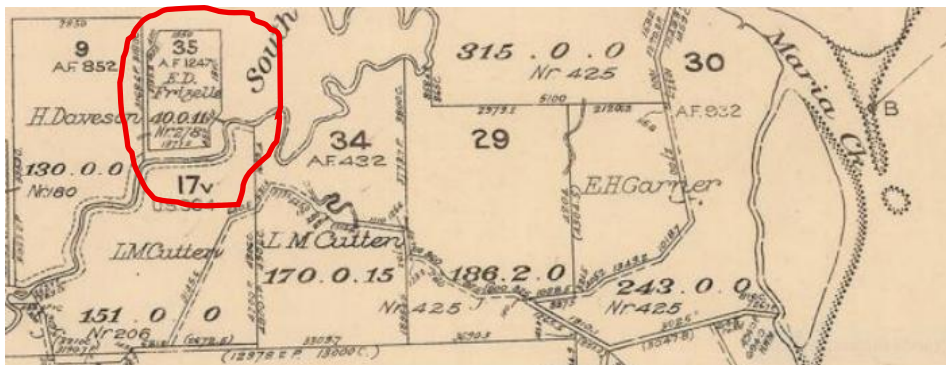
15. #Rupert **FENBY**, Mission Beach, 1910

Rupert Fenby migrated from England in 1910 and selected 160-acres, Lot 6v, which is located near Fenby Gap, named after him. He cleared the land a little and had a small fruit farm but largely lived a subsistence life in the bush for 50 years and was buried on his land in 1960. He bequeathed the land to the First Nations people and it was never subdivided.

16. Edmund **FRIZELLE**, Garners Beach, 1911

Edmund Daymon Frizelle was born near Dublin, Ireland in 1869. He was an Oxford science graduate. After migrating in 1893, he worked as a naturalist for an English company. He tried sugar cane farming in Mackay around 1900 and then worked in Martintown (Tolga) from 1903 until 1911. While working as a timber getter at Tolga in 1908, he was joined by ornithologist Sidney Jackson, and they collected birds' eggs. Jackson had stayed with the Banfields on Dunk Island earlier and may have told Edmund about that.

Frizzie as he was known, purchased land from the Cuttens in 1910 near Garners Beach and was probably living there in 1911 as he was already on the electoral roll in 1912.



Top left: Edmund Frizelle's 40-acre Lot 35 beside Maria Creek, 1923 cadastral map.

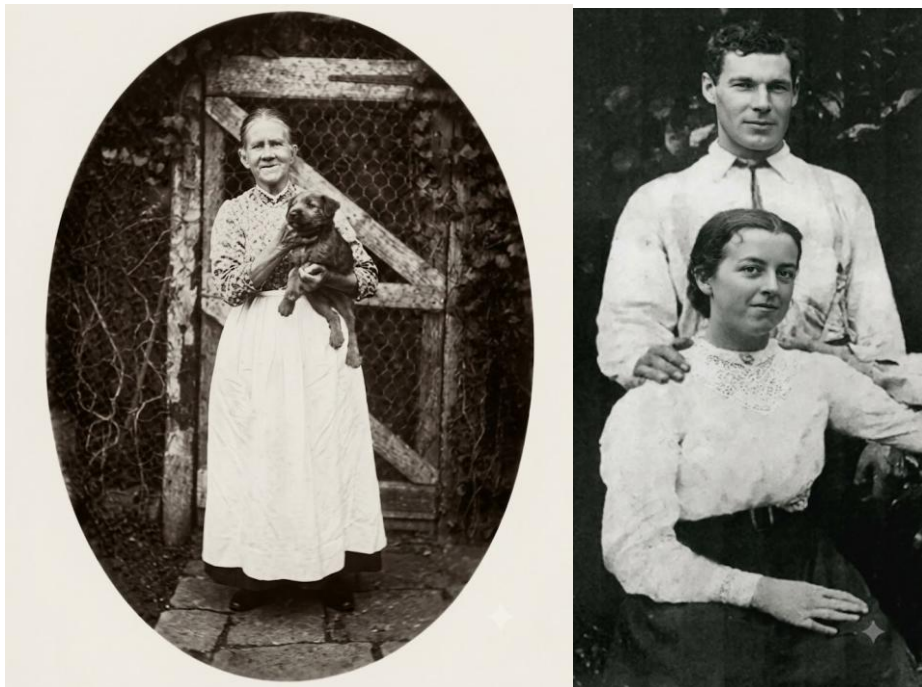
Frizelle also worked as a scientific collector of moths and butterflies for the Rockefeller Foundation in the USA. Australian ornithologist, Ian J Mason, has written many scientific papers and books on birds and their eggs. His collection holds many papers submitted by Frizelle. Edmund Frizelle died in 1959 aged 90.

Constance Mackness in her district history relayed a story her brother Leonard told of Edmund Frizelle that showed he was a positive, humble man of good humour who related well to others:

... the Frenchman (sic) proudly showed a big and gaily coloured moth of which America badly wanted a specimen. For years he had sought it in vain at night, and now he had come upon it by some happy chance in the daytime ... From admiring it, they passed on to talk of one thing and another, till they turned, just a second too late, to see that a starveling stray dog had crept up behind them and was making an appetiser to its next meal of the moth's plump body. Comical were the bereaved collector's bi-lingual execrations as he gazed at the shining fragments of his lost treasure; but he shrugged his disappointment off with a grin and said: "Ah well! A good yarn is worth the loss, anyway!!"

17. Bert BRYANT and Adam DEWAR, Mission Beach, 1912

Adam and Albert were banana and citrus farmers at Lot 1v, a 160-acre lot beside the Porter lots. Adam Dewar stayed on in the district for some time after Albert's death in 1916 in WW1 but was absent from the district for a time after 1917 when coastal shipping was unavailable.



Essie McDonough, from Noonan, *A Different Drummer*, Mitchell Library. Right: Bert Bryant and Margaret Alexander (later Bunting.) Image from Doug Bunting.

Their names first appeared in the electoral rolls for Geraldton (Herbert) in 1913 and Dewar remained on the roll until 1925 but was not on the farm during the 1918 cyclone. They listed their address as *Carinya*, Clump Point. *Carinya* is an Aboriginal word meaning *happy peaceful home*. Albert and Adam were interested in the First Nations people way back then, perhaps. Often early settlers used estate names from their origins to name their new homesteads and farms but these two chose a local name. George Webb nearby called his property *Koongul* which may also have been a local name and while the Garners used an old English estate name for their property (*Wilford Hill*), they chose to call their tourist venture *Nemourna* after the name they thought, incorrectly, that Djiru people used for their beach area.

Minutes of the first meeting of the Clump Point Progress Association were published in March 1912 and Albert and Adam were there. By 1915, Dewar and Bryant were actively clearing more land to expand their farm as

reported in the *Cairns Post* at the time. The best information on Albert Bryant is found in Helen Pedley's book on *Tully Street Names*. I cannot trace the event she records of Dewar leaving for WA after Albert's death, but there was also an *Adam Edward Dewar* of WA around that time who was born in Victoria and that may have caused the confusion. That person was married though, and Adam Dewar of Mission Beach was not married.

It was a sad story for 29-year-old Albert Bryant when he enlisted in the Army on 31 January 1916. He briefly visited his family in Somerset, England and reached France on 17 March 1917 only to be cut down in battle 28 days later. His war record and memorials are well recorded by Helen Pedley, who notes that Albert's brother, Robert, served in WWI on the battlecruiser, HMAS *Australia*. Bryant Street in Tully is named after Albert and Dewar Street in Mission Beach is named after Adam Edward Dewar.

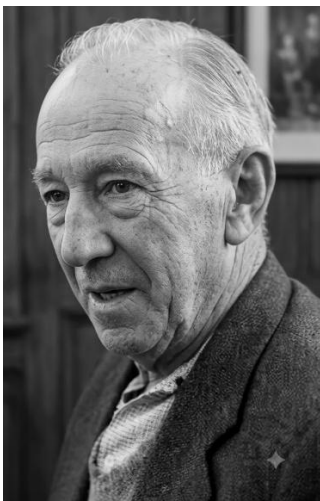
18. Captain David **REID**, Bob and David Reid, Wongaling Beach, 1912

Around 1912, cousins Robert Kirkmichael Reid (1891-1967) and David George Reid (1888 - 1914) came to the district to farm Lot 114 at Wongaling Beach. That lot was selected earlier by Robert's father, Captain David Reid. Captain Reid had been a mariner all his life and left the Torres Strait shortly before selecting the land. He had been a harbour master and pilot there for many years. One of his early ships was the Queensland Government Steamer, QGS *Albatross*.

Bob and David began clearing to farm bananas and citrus fruit. Captain Reid delivered a 33-foot launch, *Grae*, to the Hull River for Robert to use to deliver produce to the larger boats that pulled into Dunk Island. By 1913, Robert had his third-class engineer's license and could take passengers on board. There are various reports over the next few years, indicating that Robert skippered the boat on many social outings from as far away as Ingham to Clump Point or Maria Creek.

David worked on the farm until his death in mid-1914. He was found dead in the scrub, alone with severe head wounds from a gunshot. There is a memorial headstone in Rotary Park, Reid Road, dedicated to David from his colleagues at the Australian Gaslight Company in Sydney. David's father, Peter, held a directorship on the company's board for many years before David's tragic death.

In 1916, Lot 114 was owned by Robert Reid, who married Grace Dixson of Sydney in December that year. Shortly after, Robert and Grace moved to Sydney, and he was working as an engineer on larger ships. There was no one living on the Reid property when the 1918 cyclone hit the district hard. Edmund Banfield reported that Captain David Reid's motor launch, which was still moored in the Hull River, was lifted and thrown into the mangroves.



Left: Robert K Reid.



Right: QGS *Albatross*, from *Ancestry.com*

19. Charles **MORTON**, Wongaling Beach, 1912

Several of our early settlers, Webb, Beaman and Morton, came from Ingham. Charles Evors Morton was a miner there before he settled on Lot 111 at Wongaling Beach in June 1912. Until 1916, he worked as a storekeeper on Mt Fox Road, Ingham, to supplement his income while the banana trees were maturing. That was common practice with new farming ventures in the district. Then, for several years, until around 1927, he grew bananas and commonly sold them in Adelaide.

20. Walter **JOHNSON**, 1913. On the Geraldton-Clump Point electoral rolls in 1913, 1914, 1916.

21. Captain Henry and Maud **ALLASON**, Bedarra Island, 1913

The Allasons were the first to own and live on Bedarra Island but were only there for a year or perhaps two before Henry was called by the British Army to serve in the war. They did not return due to Henry's war injuries after he was gassed in France. They lived thereafter near Nice in France.

22. #Florence **ALEXANDER** and family, Bingil Bay, 1913

Florence returned from the Atherton Tablelands in 1913 to the Cutten family home with her six children, Charles, Ken, Margaret (Bunting), Eric, Les and Alick who all spent many years in the district, especially Les, Ken and Margaret.

23. #John **KENNY** with family and staff at 'Mission', South Mission Beach, 1914

John Kenny came to build the Hull River Aboriginal Settlement in early 1914. It was fully built by the end of the year and in 1915, his wife and three children settled there and they had five staff (Hazeldeans, Taylors and Hamilton). The number of inmates rose to over 400 at its peak and it was all swept away in the 1918 cyclone after only operating fully for little more than three years.

24. #George, Lilian and Elizabeth **WEBB**, Wongaling Beach, 1914.

George Webb selected 292 acres (Lot 115) at Wongaling Beach while he was serving for the police in Ingham and moved here in September 1914. He married Lilian Hopkins in 1925. Lilian was an engaging, cultured and well-travelled woman of independent means, while George was well known for his taciturn nature. They had a daughter, Elizabeth in 1926 and in 1935, Lilian took her 'home' to England for her education.

25. Benjamin **BEAMAN** and family, Wongaling Beach, 1914

Ben selected two beachfront lots (320 acres), Lots 112 and 113, and he and his wife left Ingham to settle on them in 1914. They cleared the land and planted bananas but had to leave the area with other farmers when ships were no longer available during WWI.

Neighbour, George Webb, reported in his diaries that Ben Beaman returned shortly after the 1918 cyclone. There are obituaries that provide information. He died 29 May 1932 and was laid to rest *in a beautiful spot, amid bush and close to the sea he so dearly loved*. Like so many who were interred on their land, the graves are not marked.

One obituary speaks of how popular and highly respected he was and that not many had known of his brief illness. Archdeacon Brown of Tully celebrated the Holy Communion and a Masonic ceremony was conducted at the graveside. Some officials and bereaved friends and relatives were transported to the area from Tully in a

lorry owned by the Beamans' neighbour, Mr A J Bolton on Lot 114, but as was common on this rough track, they all had to walk from the crossing of the North Hull River which was too deep to cross at high tide.

Some people came from a distance, such as his son-in-law, Charles Marnane from Mareeba (married to Ben's daughter Valmai), and Mrs Beaman's nephew, Thomas James of Japoon. His son was not there as he lived in WA at that time. Mrs Beaman was well cared for by her neighbour, Lilian Webb.

In the *Cairns Post*, it was reported that *Mr Beaman was a noted figure in the Chillagoe boom days*. That was around 1907, when it peaked in production of copper and lead. Ben had been a hairdresser in Tully before coming to Mission Beach. He had many careers: miner, hairdresser and in Mission Beach ... banana farmer.

26. Edwin Frank **MASTERS**, Garners Beach, 1915

Edwin is listed on the Herbert electoral rolls at Clump Point for 1915, 1916, and 1917. He moved to Townsville in 1919, then back to his family home in Brisbane. This entry had me perplexed, but searches on *Ancestry* eventually revealed the secret. His brother, John Masters of Ingham, married Lorenzine Wildsoet, sister of Carrie Garner, nee Wildsoet and Lou Wildsoet, both of whom lived at Garners Beach. Edwin spent years working with his Garner and Wildsoet relations on their farm before setting up on his own. He went to Ingham for supplies in 1916 and on his way home, near Hinchinbrook Island, he lost a sailboat he was towing behind his motor launch with his load of livestock and a buggy.

On the Australia Day celebrations in 1915, there was a big gathering with many people coming from afar on boats run by Robert Reid, Ted Garner, and G Daniels. Edwin provided a floor for them all to dance on.

27. #James and Alice **MACKNESS** and family, Narragon Beach, 1922

James and Alice Mackness retired from Tuena, NSW to Narragon Beach in 1922 when the family purchased land vacated by the Unsworths after the cyclone. Two of their sons, Leonard and Raymond, followed them. Raymond built them a new home while Leonard was farming at Liverpool Creek. The Mackness brothers did much work to build bridges and dray tracks in the district, helped by other settlers but Leonard became incapacitated. Their daughter, Constance Mackness, retired from teaching in 1949 and returned to the district to live with her family. She remained in the area until her death in 1973, aged 91.

They split the 160-acre lot (5v) into four lots, and two lots went to Alice's granddaughters. Violet Mackness's daughter, Mrs Marjorie Esma James (nee Pope), had lived at Narragon when she was a girl. Her sister, Sadie Pope, who married Richard Dixon had visited the Narragon farm often as a child. The Dixon's had a beachfront lot where they grew fruit. Mrs James lived here until 1980 and James Road was named for her.

28. Thomas **BELL**, 1916. Geraldton electoral roll, banana grower, 1916, 1917, 1919.

29. Adolph and Catherine **HENSCHEL**, 1916.

Adolph was on the Geraldton electoral roll as a farmer in 1916 and 1917. He was a naturalised citizen from Germany and was charged in 1916 on a breach of the War Precautions Act for having gelignite without permission; perhaps the police were being overzealous because farmers clearing land at the time used explosives to remove tree stumps. Nonetheless, he was charged £3 plus costs for his 'crime'. He left the district soon after.

30. #Sydney **HARRIS**, Mission Beach, 1921

After serving his country for the duration of the first world war in New Guinea, Syd purchased a small farm on the beachfront near to where the visitors information centre is today. Syd was clearing it to plant vanilla when he lost control of a fire and was killed, only six months after arriving. A sad end for a man who deserved so much more. His headstone remains visible on a track near the entrance to the Norm Byrnes Arboretum.

31. William **ELDER**, Narragon, 1925

William 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.

32. John **WYLIE**, Dunk Island and Narragon Beach, 1925

Like many in the day, local fisherman John Wylie did not bother to enrol to vote, yet he is mentioned in newspaper articles in 1931 when there was a sensational court case. It was alleged that a Mr Frank Boyce had fired a gun at Spenser Hopkins (half owner of the freehold land on the island). The charge was attempted grievous bodily harm and George Webb and John Wiley were witnesses. Frank Boyce's brother, A J Boyce and his wife, had been living on Dunk Island for two years, and Spenser was evicting Frank Boyce. John Wiley said he was tending the boats on the island at the time.

Constance Mackness mentioned that John Wiley had been employed on Dunk Island shortly after Ted Banfield's death. In later years, she notes that he retired to Narragon Beach and built a home beside the creek now bearing his name. His common name was *Scotty*, and he worked for Spenser Hopkins after Bertha Banfield left Dunk Island in 1924. Spenser set up a small resort on Dunk and Scotty Wylie met visiting boats and bought visitors to the island. He also acted as a tour guide. Wylie died in 1946 of alcohol poisoning aged 70.

33. Harry **PLUMB**, Bingil Bay, 1926

Harry served in WWI in Gallipoli and France before being discharged with a leg injury. In England during his recovery, he met and married Eleanor Elford of Middlesex. He cleared a 679-acre lot near the mouth of the Murray River for cane in 1924 and sold it and purchased a 160-acre lot from the Cuttens at Bingil Bay and lived there with his wife until his death in 1957. He suffered from his war wounds and needed help to run the fruit farm. Charlie Nelson helped him on the farm.

34. William **DOUGALL**, 1928. Innisfail electoral roll, farmer, 1928, 1930.

35. Helen **KEANE** 1928. Innisfail electoral roll, home duties, 1928, 1930, 1932, 1934.

36. Richard, Johanna and Helen **MOYLE**, Garners Beach, 1928

Richard Moyle is first seen on the electoral roll at El Arish in 1925; then he appears on the roll at Clump Point, with Johanna and Helen up until 1934, listed as carpenter. He had a banana farm next door to the Garners and leased Ted Garner's banana plantation for some time. In 1930, a Mr Bradford owned a farm on Brookes Beach adjacent to the Moyles land, and he was clearing the scrub to plant bananas at the time but left soon after.

37. Edmund **WATKINS**, Mission Beach, 1930

Edmund Watkins was from Cardwell, and he acquired Lot 108 just south of Fenby's Lot 6v in 1929 and had a well-known citrus farm there, run by Mr Blundell. His brother from Cardwell took the produce south in his motor launch. In 1931, Edmund was full steam ahead, exporting 1,300 cases of oranges a year, and he planned to plant 300 more trees, but he gave up the venture in 1936 when prices became unviable.

38. Arthur **BUCHANAN**, 1930, Innisfail electoral roll, banana farmer, 1930, 1932, 1934.

39. F **MALTBY**, 1930, dairy farmer. Not on the electoral rolls but mentioned in newspaper articles.

40. A J **BOLTON** and family, Wongaling Beach, 1931

The Boltons lived in Tully for many years before acquiring Lot 114 in 1931 at Wongaling. It was previously owned by the Reids. *Boltons Saddle* was named after A J Bolton, a low point in the small range at the rear of the lot but that name is not widely known today. AJ was reported to have grown a pineapple weighing 10 pounds and four ounces in 1933. His wife was a persistent advocate for roads to Mission Beach in 1933, politely pestering Cardwell Shire Councillors at every meeting for six months. AJ also owned a lorry that was used to transport people and supplies between Tully and Mission Beach.

41. George and Emily **MORRIS** and family, Dunk Island, 1932

George migrated from England in 1905 with a shipload of cattle for a station in western Queensland. He married Emily Maidment in 1909 and settled 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.



Left: 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. Right: A J Bolton.

They sold their farm at Tolga and purchased a small tourist facility on Orpheus Island in 1931. They leased that in 1932 and moved to be caretakers of a resort Spenser Hopkins was planning on Dunk Island. They got a fledgling resort going for Spenser. When Hugo Brassey purchased the freehold land at Dunk in 1935, George stayed on and was the licensee. During WWII, the RAAF took control of the resort and used the Morris family initially to cater for them. They returned to Orpheus in 1947, then retired in Tully. George died there in 1954 and Emily in 1960.

There were other families on Dunk Island around this time who were employed by the resort with Frederic and Enid Treuthardt arriving around 1933 to work for Spenser Hopkins. They sued Hugo Brassey in January 1936 for wrongful dismissal when Hugo hired his relations, Aurther and Frieda Pollok to run his resort.

When Hugo had his resort running from 1936 to 1939, there were many of the staff living on Dunk Island such as the Morris family, the Anderssens (Laurie and Eileen, Laurie was the licensee for a short time), Malcolm Baddiley (engineer), Frederick Laurence, Roy Wilson (steward), and Lou Wiskar who was the chef for Hugo. Lou was married to Olga Wagner, the aunt of Noel Wagner, who lives with his wife, Dianne, today in Mission Beach. Several other employees of the resort are shown in old photos of the resort such as Barbara Skraggs and Vi Louden.

42. Ellen and Stanley **ANDERSON**, 1932

We know little of Stanley and Ellen Anderson apart from seeing them on the rolls for Innisfail in 1932, 1934 and 1936 where Stanley is listed as a farmer at Clump Point. However, their daughter, Florence, married Alick Alexander in 1935 when she was merely 15 years old and had her first child seven months later.

43. Alex and Mary **DUNLOP** and family, Wongaling, 1932

Alex Dunlop came to the Banyan in 1916 and had a farm on the side of Mt Mackay, alongside that of Albert and Mary Hanson. Albert had the first sawmill at Banyan. Alex was the first to have a dray in the district and used it to transport timber and supplies for the early settlers. Albert Hanson died of pneumonia after crossing a deep creek to transport his wife, Mary, to have their third child.

Alex married Mary Hansen in 1923 and the couple had three children, Bill, Alex, and Mary along with Mary's three Hansen children, Albert, Max, and Eric. Alex purchased the large site or part of it that was originally the 'mission station' at South Mission Beach in 1920 and ran cattle and horses on it. Shortly after, he acquired Lot 111 at Wongaling Beach, which was previously owned by Charles Morton. The Dunlops moved there in 1932 and built a tiny private school as well on the beachfront at the south-east corner of the land, probably near to Banfield Parade's north end. They had a stud dairy cattle operation, and in 1932, Mary's son Max Hansen was injured scrub felling at age 17. Max had a dairy farm here in 1936.

In 1937, they all moved to a cane farm at Proserpine and by 1952 they were cane farming in Feluga. The Dunlops and Hansons were mentioned in George Webb's diaries of 1935 – 1937 more than any other families were. George Webb and Alex Dunlop took turns riding to Narragon Beach each week to pick up the mail at the Mackness home. Max and Eric Hansen enlisted in WWII and on their return had cane farms nearby.

In 1952, their only daughter, a popular nurse at Innisfail, married James Theodore, son of Stephen and Margaret Theodore of Tully. Stephen had succeeded Percy Pease as the MLA for Herbert from 1940 to 1950 and his brother, Ted Theodore, was the Queensland Premier 1919 – 1925 and Australian Treasurer in the 30s. He founded the Australian Workers Union and left politics and joined Frank Packer to start his newspaper empire, *Australian Consolidate Press*. Ted and Frank created the *Australian Women's Weekly Magazine*.

In 1939, Alex Dunlop still owned the 160-acre lot at Wongaling and donated part of it to the community to allow the road to Mission Beach to be shortened.

44. Peter **WHITE**, South Mission Beach, 1933

Peter White was a councillor for Cardwell Shire Council before being elected Chairman in 1940 after Brice Henry died. He served for one term as Chairman. In 1933, he acquired the 1,280-acre lot at Tam O'Shanter Point, previously owned by Hollis Hopkins. He built his home inland where the road from Tully forks to South Mission Beach. He cleared some of the land and had cattle there. Peter is regularly mentioned in George Webb's 1935 to 1937 diaries. He sold 1,157 acres of the land in 1954 to the Campbell family.

45. 'Gunboat' **SMITH**, Wongaling, 1934

Gunboat Smith, or *Old Smith* as George Webb referred to him, was close 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.

46. Jack and David **HARRIS**, Dunk Island, 1934

Jack Harris was part of a London syndicate that purchased Bedarra Island from Ivan Menzies in 1934. He did not build a house or live on the island but lived instead in a house he built on the Dunk Island spit with his four-year-old son, David. In 1936, he sold 15 acres of the land to artist Noel Wood or, more accurately, to his wife, Eleanor. He sold the remainder of the island to the Coleman family in 1938. They lived on Bedarra Island.

Jack and David moved to Bowen and farmed tomatoes.

47. Albert and Ivy **SCHMIDT**, Clump Point, 1936, on electoral rolls 1936 and 1937

48. #**NOEL WOOD**, Bedarra Island, 1936

Artist Noel Wood came in 1936 with his wife Eleanor, who left the island permanently two years later. Noel remained there with a few absences overseas until 1996 and became our district's most celebrated artist.

49. Caroline Louisa **CARTER**, Clump Point, 1937, on electoral rolls 1937, 1943, 1949, and 1954

50. Clarissa and Claude **WATSON**, Narragon, 1938

Much of the land divided from Lot 21A in 1914 passed into the hands of the Council after purchasers failed to pay rates and Clarissa and Claude Watson purchased it when they came to the area in 1938 on the recommendation of their friend, Don Brown, Principal of El Arish School. For a few years they lived there in a tent near the corner of Clump Point Road and Alexander Drive.

A condition of the purchase of the land was that it had to be cleared. They dragged the logs to the sea and a Garner boat took them to Dunk Island to load them on coastal freighters. Claude died of scrub typhus early on and Clarissa moved to El Arish soon after and subdivided the land to provide for her 13 children.

A condition of the subdivision was that the beachfront land was set aside for building Porter Promenade and Alexander Drive. Clarissa also owned land at Granadilla where she built the first home in that area.

Clarissa's son, Jock Watson and his wife Marie came from Granadilla and built a beach hut on one of the subdivided lots at Clump Point – 88 Porter Promenade. They lived on in El Arish until 1975 then built a home on their Porter Prom lot and retired there. Jock died in 2014 while Marie died in 2018.



Clarissa Watson nee Hawkins.



Jock and Marie Watson. Images from Ancestry.com

51. Bill **DAVID** and family, Mission Beach, 1938

William David (1896 – 1964) and his family arrived here first to acquire land in the 1920s according to Constance Mackness. He had been working as a butcher in El Arish until 1937 and purchased a 300 acre lot at Mission Beach with his brother-in-law, Tom Donkin. They farmed bananas and carried supplies to campers during the holiday season. They were living here on the property just before the war, but during the war their son David, known as *Bluey*, was at school in Ingham and only returned on school holidays.

Bill's sister, Mary Donkin and her husband, Tom retired to Mission Beach in 1945. By 1951, Bill's nephew Jack Donkin and his wife, Roma, and family were living and farming here also. After school, Bluey worked on the farm until he commenced timber cutting around 1958 and moved into Tully. When his wife Ellen died in 1957, Bill divided the farm up and sold it to Doug Campbell and Alf Daveson. Alf in turn, sold his property which included today's Royal Palms estate, to Don and Nancy Wheatley in 1961. Bill moved to Charters Towers where he died in 1964.



Bluey David in the late 1940s with neighbours Myrtle and Archie Lindsay. Wheatley family c.1943. Joe Olsen, Debbie Olsen nee Wheatley, Don, Florence, Alfred, Peter; sitting Alfred's Mum, Polly and baby Jan Olsen.

52. [#]Yvonne and Valerie **COHEN**, Timana Island, 1938

The Cohen sisters, Valerie and Yvonne, were artists of note and arrived in 1938. They purchased Timana Island where they built a home and stayed for long periods in the dry season until 1965 when they leased the island to Deanna Conti. The Cohens usually returned to Melbourne in the monsoon season.

53. Frank **COLEMAN** and family, Bedarra Island, 1938

Frank Coleman purchased much of Bedarra Island from Eric Cawthorn in 1938 and his family came to stay on the island until they sold the land in 1940.

54. [#]WHEATLEY family, Wongaling Beach, 1940

The Wheatley family arrived at Wongaling Beach in May 1940. They moved to Brisbane in 1941 and the male members of the family returned later. This family has several descendants living in the district today. Don Wheatley lived here for 85 years before his death in 2025, so he was the person who had lived for the longest period continuously in Mission Beach district that is on our records.

55. [#]John and Alison **BUSST**, Bedarra Island and Bingil Bay, 1940

John Busst leased most of the land on Bedarra Island with his sister, Phyllis, in 1940. He and Phyllis inherited their family fortune and purchased the land in 1947. Alison Fitchett joined him on the island after they were married in 1950. They stayed until 1957 when they moved to Bingil Bay and his amazing Reef conservation work began in the 1960s.

56. Dick **GREATRIX** and Pierre **HURET**, Bedarra Island, 1940

Greatrix and Huret purchased land on Bedarra in 1940 from the Colemans and built a home and exotic garden where they had paying guests stay until they sold the land to John Busst in 1947 and moved to New Guinea.

57. Carl and Elsie **EHLERTH**, Bingil Bay, on electoral rolls in 1943 and 1949

58. [#]Les **CAMPBELL** and family, Narragon Beach, 1944

Les and Jessie Campbell and family arrived in 1944 and settled on a part of Lot 21A that was subdivided by the Watsons in 1936. They lived in a house they built near to Wylie Creek. That home was demolished after Cyclone Yasi. Owen (Joseph Owen) Campbell, Les' nephew, came to a farm at that time to Ohl Road. The farm was later sold to the Hartens.

59. Stanley **MACKAY** and family, Mission Beach, 1945

Stanley John Mackay OAM and his wife Agnes and three children, John, Robert and Lorraine came to Mission Beach to grow bananas in 1945. While they were getting the bananas started, Stan continued to cut cane in Tully and worked weekends on his banana farm at Mission beach. By 1953, their farm had been expanded fourfold with further holdings on the Tully River.

The initial farm was leased from Jack Donkin Snr at the site of the Royal Palms Estate of today. This was 6.5 hectares which Stan and Agnes cleared by hand. Their crop in 1945 was grown on a little over 2 hectares and they carted water in buckets from Wongaling Creek during dry periods.

At the time, there was no access road along the beachfront to Narragon Beach and the only way to get there with a vehicle was on a road from the Royal Palms estate to Boyett Road. The road to El Arish was steep and windy but Stan managed to freight his bananas across it in his old Chev truck.

Today, the Mackay family farms are in Tully and Lakeland near Cooktown and total 5,860 hectares. They grow bananas, pawpaws, sugar, and avocados and graze cattle. They produce 13% of the national banana crop.

60. Ted and Lina **BOYETT** and family, Mission Beach, 1945

Ted Boyett was a builder at Innisfail. He resigned as a fireman in Innisfail and set up business in Mission Beach late in 1945. Ted had been a regular holiday visitor to the Mission Beach area before 1938 and owned a holiday home there. By 1947, he had built a dance hall at Mission Beach and became the mailman for the district. He opened a general store in 1947, then the Post Office in 1949.

In 1949, he married Angelina (Lina) Bale, who had three children from a previous marriage. They sold the Post Office, store, and dance hall to Frank and Maron Rick in 1951.

61. Tom and Mary **DONKIN** and family, Mission Beach, 1945

Thomas (1872-1962) and Mary (1886-1979) Donkin retired from Innisfail to Mission Beach in 1945. Tom was a dentist before that in Innisfail. Tom and Mary's brother, Bill David, purchased 300 acres of land earlier in Mission Beach. That was located from today's seafront at Seaview Street back to the border of Lot 6v owned by Rupert Fenby. They split the property into two 150-acre blocks and Tom had some cows and grew small crops. The Donkin's had a beachfront house of corrugated iron with push-out windows in Marine Parade.

Their nephew, Jack Donkin and his wife Roma, sold their Tully cane farm and joined them in 1951. They first resided in the house next door to Tom and Mary before building on the ridge next door to Doug and Inez Campbell's property in 1967. They grew bananas and pawpaws and had a small dairy farm. The Donkin family stayed on in Mission Beach until Jack Donkin died in 2001.

Next Wave

Archie and Myrtle Lindsay were farming at Mission Beach in 1946 on land leased from Bill David for a while before buying a banana farm at Carmoo in 1952. At one stage, Dick Humphries owned the farm next door to the Lindsays (now owned by the Sellars) and that was farmed later by Archie's sons in law, Don Steel and Ron Casey, and then subdivided to form the Carmoo urban area. Les Foex owned the farm opposite the Lindsays.

Soon after the Boyetts and Donkins arrived, Nonda and Margaret Stathatos started banana and pineapple farming at Mission Beach (1947) after buying one of the Porter lots. They were followed by Tim Donnelly (c 1948) who was a returned serviceman (Warrant Officer in the RAAF) and had a sawmill that he sold to Frank Rick. It was located on a banana farm he owned at the top of the hill on Boyett Road. He sold that to Ken Campbell.

Jack and Ethel Perrier retired to Clump Point in 1949 and lived near the point itself. Mick and Valerie Bell had a banana farm on Boyett Road around 1951 at the corner of Rick Road and they left the district in 1956. On the first day of the school in 1953, their four children were among the ten who attended.

John Iza operated a farm next door to where the Meals on Wheels building is today. It was owned initially by the Warners who sold it to Stanfield then Torrens and Company around 1954.

At the corner of Boyett Road and Ohl Road, on the left side Pat and Don Gallagher grew bananas for a time then sold to Ted Wildsoet. It was later owned by Peter Hathaway, then Ken Barnes. The Meyer family was here early as well, probably before 1950, as they sold their banana farm to the Ricks in 1951.

In the 1950s, several families settled: #Frank and Marion Rick and family (Mission Beach, 1951), John and Howard Hathaway and family (Wongaling, 1952), #Laurie and Joan Porter (Wongaling, 1952), Dick and Greta Verhey (Bingil Bay, 1952), AJ Daveson and family (Mission Beach, 1953), the Adams family came from England and stayed with the #Ricks (1953), #Ab and Gloria Porter (Mission Beach 1954), the Hurford family (Wongaling, 1954), Alex Crisp (1954), and John and Bill O'Brien who had a farm on Boyett Road opposite the Bells. John

and Margaret Parsons (MARCS Park, pineapples, 1954) may have been here as early as 1946. They sold to Lothar Brueckner in 1970 who had a small banana farm earlier at Bingil Bay. The MARCs Park land was said to be sold for \$1 million in 1990 to JSC. #UE Ohl and family (Mission Beach, 1954), #George West and family (Clump Point, 1955), the Mackney family (Bingil Bay, 1958), #Perry and Brenda Harvey (Naragon Beach, 1959), Frieda and Seppl Jorissen (Garners Beach, 1959), and several more.

On the electoral rolls in 1954, there were other families listed as living here: Thomas Cambridge, Martin Carmody, Joanna Chidgey, Jean Cooper, Herbert Evans, Jesse and Isabella Gardener, Don, Hugh and Mary McConnell, Patay Wagner and Leith and Ivy Warner.

At the time, South Mission Beach was merely a Tully holiday destination with a few shacks. The only permanent residents at South Mission Beach in 1962 were the Beckers and the roads were so bad that their daughter, Linda, had to stay with the Wheatley family in Mission Beach to enable access to the school when it was wet.

To provide some idea of who was here in the 1950s, the following family names were among the new enrollments at the Mission Beach State School between 1953 and 1960. 1953: Adams, Bale (Boyett), Bell, Campbell, Daveson, Donkin, Henry, Julas, Marlow, Pacey, Rick, Segui, Stephenson and Wildsoet. 1954: Anderson, Jepson, Noone, Stibbs. 1955: Brooke, Graham, West. 1956: Harten, Jordana, Moroney, Olding, Schmitt. 1957: Smith, Wagner. 1958: Clarke, Moore, Taylor, Waterhouse. 1959: Hurford, Jerrold, Knesbeck. 1960: Brinsmead, Crawford, Haack, Hondroudakis, Mackney, and Wilson.

As happens today, some families did not stay long in the district; during a year, the student numbers varied greatly as students came and left.

Apologies to those whose families came to the district early on and have not been mentioned. Researching residents by year in any district is not an exact science and some people will inevitably be missed in this record. However, when we publish data, we often learn more when people read the story and sometimes let us know if there are errors or omissions. That always helps in our quest to record the district history.

Acknowledgements

We restored some of the photos a little using *Google Gemini* and *Chat GPT*. Both are excellent AI tools to improve the clarity of old damaged or blurry images and can colour them as well, but we stayed with black and white formats here.